

**SELF-INFLICTED DISASTERS: MORAL DISENGAGEMENT  
IN UNCONVENTIONAL RISK, CRISIS AND DISASTER  
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The impacts of unconventional risks and crises on organisation survival have shifted the focus not just to risk and crisis management but also on business continuity and organisational resilience. At the same time, the effectiveness of current risk and crisis management models or strategies in dealing with unconventional risks and crises remain a challenge, not least due to the regular re-occurrence of similar events. However, this thesis contends that the value of existing models of risk and crisis management is overestimated, resulting in risk underestimation and the same issues becoming evident, repeatedly.*

*This thesis calls for need to subjecting risk/crisis management theories and models to more rigorous testing and re-evaluation against reality. Two significant unconventional crises were analysed within the context of risk/crisis management literature. It was found that moral disengagement is responsible for the difficulties in managing the response to each of the incidents. At the root of most organisational crises, ethical dilemmas underpin the decision-making of leaders and organisational members which are suggested to have initiated a chain of events leading to those crises. It is argued that an awareness of selective risk perception, crisis miscommunication, inflated ethical business practice, trust deficit, organised corporate irresponsibility and moral disengagement is crucial towards improving the management of the Niger Delta crises and similar incidents in future. The thesis also found that issues of moral disengagement mechanisms are responsible for generating competing constructions of unconventional risks, crises and disasters.*

*This thesis demonstrated that moral disengagement mechanisms weaken or destroy established approaches to mitigating and managing risks and crises; facilitate sanctionable behaviours in risk, crisis and disaster situations without self-condemnation; and help to maintain high moral self-image even in obviously detrimental and unethical conducts. It was argued that part of the reason for this was that organisations did not consider a link between moral disengagement and risk/crisis management to determine whether organisational crises are self-inflicted or within organisational risk appetite before escalation. This conceptualisation of moral disengagement contributes to better understanding of risk and crisis evolution and the wider implications for organisational resilience and growth. Of importance was the recognition that decision-based model of risk and crisis management could have address each of the issues that were identified in the case studies. The research implications and limitations were carefully discussed.*

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**DECLARATION**

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.



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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ATS	ALIEN TORT STATUTE
BSI	BRITISH STANDARDS INSTITUTION
CNL	CHEVRON NIGERIA LIMITED
CHEVRON SSR	CHEVRON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REPORT
CIC	CONCERNED ILAJE CITIZENS
CM	CRISIS MANAGEMENT
DPR	DEPARTMENT OF PETROLEUM RESOURCES
ERA	ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS ACTION
EGASPIN	ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS FOR PETROLEUM INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA
GMOU	GLOBAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
GSF	GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES
HYPREP	HYDROCARBON POLLUTION RESTORATION PROJECT
OEMS	OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
ILGA	ILAJE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA
IRDC	ILAJE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
LICS	LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES
LGA	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA
MICS	MEDIUM-INCOME COUNTRIES
MDGS	MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS
MD	MORAL DISENGAGEMENT
MNDA	MINISTRY OF NIGER DELTA AFFAIRS
MOSOP	MOVEMENT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF OGONI PEOPLE
NEEDS STRATEGY	NATIONAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
NPC	NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
NNPC	NIGERIAN NATIONAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION

NPF	NIGERIAN POLICE FORCE
NEMA	NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
NDPI	NIGER DELTA PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE
NDA	NIGER DELTA AVENGERS
NGOS	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
NDDC	NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
OSOPADEC	ONDO STATE OIL PRODUCING AREAS DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
PIB	PETROLEUM INDUSTRY BILL
RSISTF	RIVERS STATE INTERNAL SECURITY TASK FORCE
RMS	REMEDICATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
SPDC	SHELL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
UNEP	UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
UNDP	UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
UNRISD	UNITED NATIONS RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## **DEDICATION**

I embark on this journey not because it is easy but because it is difficult. For decades, relenting because a goal seems or appears unachievable has been the greatest limitation of mankind. I reckon that, and quite cautionary too, deliberate settlement within the comfort zone either consciously or otherwise remain the most miserable evil and regret of human existence. Therefore, I proclaim and declare that, I can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4: 13). I dedicate this work to God Almighty for given me the wisdom and opportunity to complete my PhD programme.

I also dedicate this thesis to my late father, Pastor Edamisan Allen Mafimisebi (1943-2005), who would have been incredibly proud to celebrate his son's achievement as the first PhD holder in the family. *Sun re o!!!*

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## **BOOK CHAPTER**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

With the recent quest to limit the impacts of unconventional crises or disasters on organisation survival and promote organisational resilience (Adrot & Moriceau, 2013; Boin & Fishbacher-Smith, 2011; Egan, 2011; Hopkins, 2006; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2015; Roeschmann, 2014), the question of how organisations manage unconventional risk, crisis and disaster matter. Why do organisations methodological approaches to risk, crisis and disaster management really matter? It has been extensively documented and empirically proven that organisational crisis and disaster affects organisational liquidity, credibility and reputation (Andrew, 2011; Garcia, 2006; Fink, 2002; Jourdan et al., 2012; Simola, 2003), threatens the market position and viability of organisation (Coombs, 2007; Knight & Pretty, 1997; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Wooten & James, 2008), threaten competitiveness and sustainability of the affected entity (Morley, 2002; Snyder et al., 2006; Reza, 2011), cause extensive damage to human life and environment (Allan, 2003; Barton, 2008; Junglas & Ives, 2007; Lerbinger, 2012; Toft & Roynolds, 2005), and disrupt organisational goals (Boin, 2004; Mitroff, Shrivastava & Udwardia, 1987; Pearson & Clair, 1998). Even more specifically today, posteriori observation indicates crises and disasters such as product defects, oil disaster, industrial accidents, environmental degradation, kidnappings, militancy, terrorisms, hijackings, hostile takeovers, flooding, tsunamis, and earthquakes have assumed greater vulnerability, exposure, impact, and consequences. Furthermore, such incidents are now apparently happening at alarmingly rate and dramatic interval such that can effortlessly destroy organisations (Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; Kim & Miner, 2007; Vaughan, 2005).

In another perspective, crisis and disaster events such as the severe acute respiratory syndrome outbreak in Southeast Asia and North America in 2002-2003; the so-called 'Mad Cow Disease' and London bomb attacks in the United Kingdom; the California brownouts of 2000 and 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States; the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010; the Exxon Valdez disaster, Bhopal disaster, Costa Concordia, Piper Alpha disaster, King's Cross disaster, the Tohoku/Sendai earthquake and tsunami in March 2011; Bonga disaster; the Niger Delta environmental crisis in Nigeria; further demonstrate the negative consequences associated with unconventional crises. These dangerous events likewise reveal the vulnerabilities of societies, businesses, and environment to unconventional crisis and disaster. For example, at least 100,000 small businesses were affected by the Deepwater Horizon disaster in 2010, costing BP

\$7.8 billion to settle compensation claims (Goldenberg, 2012). The central Thailand floods which occurred between October and November 2011 resulted in the loss of 2 million jobs and monthly losses totalling \$2.5 billion during the period (Perwaiz, 2012).

The 1979 Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant disaster cost the plant owners and operators \$26 million in evacuation costs, financial losses, and medical surveillance, and estimated cost of repairs and electricity production was \$4 billion (Mitroff et al., 1987). The Johnson & Johnson (J&J) contaminated of dozens Tylenol capsules with cyanide by unknown person or persons in 1982 causing the deaths of eight people and a loss of \$100 million in products recalled further demonstrates the value of methodological approach to managing crisis. In fact, the second case of Tylenol capsules poisoning incident in 1986 forced J&J to withdraw all the products from the market at a cost of \$150 million and the cost of switching to alternative medication was estimated at \$500 million.

Furthermore, in the Union Carbide – Bhopal disaster in December 1984 interim relief payment was agreed at \$5 million in May 1986 by the Union Carbide Company (UCC) but after three years, full and final settlement was put at \$470 million (Sanjib, 2002). Meanwhile, till the year 2000 victims' organisations were yet to get compensations and one lawsuit alone was for \$15 billion (Fink, 2002, p. 188). The Niger Delta environmental crisis has cost the Nigerian government over estimated £400 billion between 1998 and 2009; and multinational oil companies have lost over estimated £750 billion in revenues and escalation costs between the same periods (UNEP, 2011). Escalation costs relate directly to the associated factors such as kidnapping, militancy and oil terrorism which have seen multinational oil companies in Nigeria lose billions of pounds in the event of the crisis. In fact, more recently in February 2014, Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCO) was fined \$6.5 billion (about ₦1.84 trillion) over the December 2011 Bonga oil spill.

These crises and disasters cases cited above typically confirm that managing crisis has never been as important as it is today. These dangerous events can mean the life or death of an organisation because they reveal crisis vulnerabilities, hostilities, ruptures, and associated damages. Therefore, it is not unexpected that organisations must find practical models or paradigms to manage such risks, crises, and disasters. Obviously, crisis is like a fire which requires starvation of oxygen. Existing crisis management methodologies/models have been quite useful in understanding how crisis evolves and what could have been done to prevent, mitigate and address such crises. In most cases, both traditional and contemporary crisis

management theories and research offer rich knowledge of what can be (or could have been) done in the events of crisis and disaster (Augustine, 2000; Boin, 2008, 2009; Fink, 1986; Seymour & Moore, 2000; Turner, 1976, 1994; Toft & Reynolds, 1997; Lagadec, 2004, 2009; Mitroff, 1988; Mitroff et al., 1987; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Mitroff & Pearson, 1993; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Shrivastava, 1993; Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003) but unconventional challenges persist as discussed later in 1.5.

## **1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

Past, current and emerging crises are a continual concern, so the need for risk and crisis management and new ways of managing risks and crises remains greatly essential. This research focuses on linking risk and crisis management framework to real life situations using case studies and questions some of the assumptions of risk/crisis management. The central contribution of this research lies in uncovering moral disengagement in risk, crisis and disaster management practice. The research aim is to uncover the practicality of risk/crisis management theories and latent areas of crisis and disaster that appear neglected by experts especially how existing risk and crisis management models contribute to crises/disasters or the processes involved initiated them.

This thesis broadly conceptualised unconventional crises and disasters in two forms: firstly, those that inflict organisations, and secondly, those that are self-inflicted by organisations (See Chapter Seven). This distinction is comparable to the notion of vulnerable society which is being aggressed from outside (externally) and the risk society which is being threatened by itself (internally) (Rudolf, 2007). The broad conceptualisation of unconventional crises and disasters adds nuance to previous risk and crisis management discussions in the context of risk society, risk homeostasis, normal accident, high reliability and disaster incubation.

As discussed later in this thesis (See Chapter Seven), if unconventional crises and disasters are self-inflicted, the legitimate question should be: what is meant by self-inflicted disaster? I define self-inflicted disaster as a situation created from our deliberate attempt to disengage from emerging risks/issues, caused by contradictory responses to complex and uncertain events such that the response to those emerging events further amplified the situation. Specifically, 'self-inflicted disaster' is defined on the basis that models, approaches and strategies pertaining to the management of unconventional crisis and disaster complicate the very processes of

managing them in ways that worsen or attenuate emerging crisis/disaster and make organisations disengage rather than meaningfully engage in managing the evolving crisis/disaster. This is due to the involvement of a heterogeneous set of stakeholders with different agenda in risk and crisis situations, and the moral disengagement mechanisms used by organisations that complicate unconventional risks and crises (Bandura, 2009; Baker et al., 2006; Caprara et al., 2009; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015).

In this thesis, the notion of self-inflicted disaster captures a broad range of unconventional dangerous events which include safety disaster, environmental disaster, terrorism, large-scale fraud, and financial crisis which were initially under control of management or organisations but escalated because of moral disengagement and imagination failures. Noticeably, lacking from a growing body of knowledge in crisis management is the focus on practicality and effectiveness of crisis management models to solve emerging crises and real-life situations. To address this issue therefore, this study deliberately digresses from the existing view in crisis management suggesting that understanding crisis and how to manage crisis remains the fundamental instruments to effective risk/crisis management.

Critically, it is contended that the assumption that crisis can be managed methodologically has often created the fallacies that crisis management experts and academics know how not to manage crisis. The fundamental contention is that it is not entirely what you manage but how you manage (or perhaps fail to manage) it that matters most in risk and crisis management. This contention and deliberate move represents an effort to encourage greater consideration of how risk and crisis management thinking may infiltrate organisations, how a methodological approach to risk/crisis management alone might spell doom for organisations, and reflects on how well-known models and strategies in risk/crisis management might not fit emerging unconventional risk/crisis situations.

No doubt, theorists and practitioners will find this research most useful and timely because the study draws extensively across different ranges of literature – moral psychology, risk, crisis and disaster management, environmental management, public relations and communication, research methodology and general management. It also reorganises existing risk and crisis management methodologies into a more pragmatic conceptual and policy-oriented framework. Quite imperative and beneficial in this research is that the juxtaposition between moral disengagement and crisis management is revealed and the connection of several other apparently neglected factors which exacerbate crisis situations are carefully discussed. One

argument is that, had theorists and practitioners thoroughly considered the framework of crisis engagement presented in this thesis many of the unconventional crises could have been avoided and effectively managed. Similarly, that assumption further demonstrates why risk and crisis theorists and practitioners are so naturally predictable working on classically closed-cycle models.

Within this context, the research questions are: Is there any relationship between crisis management strategy and moral disengagement? Do existing risk and crisis management models contribute to crises/disasters or the processes involved initiated them? Where can organisations obtain evidence to confirm current approaches might be escalating rather than ameliorating emerging crisis and disaster? Do existing risk and crisis management models fit emerging crises and disasters? Does crisis management suggest risk management failure or does it imply management crisis? These research questions lead to two main propositions generated from reviewing of existing risk/crisis management literature: Are current crisis and disaster management models working? Should crisis and disaster management practice and strategies be context based?

Considering the research aims, the following objectives are critical to achieve the aims:

The research critically seeks:

- ❖ To advance an understanding of how moral disengagement perpetuate organisational crisis/disaster and explore potential possibilities in averting the ‘black swan’ implications.
- ❖ To uncover moral disengagement – crisis management relationship and redirect academic debates, research agenda, policy issues and redefining responsible business practice.
- ❖ To uncover whether existing risk and crisis management models contribute to crises/disasters or the processes involved initiated them?
- ❖ To question the influence of vulnerability, risk perception and behaviour, and distrust on risk and crisis management practice.
- ❖ To examine which risk and crisis management models would be most valuable to help solve unconventional risk and crisis, and crisis management responses/strategies.
- ❖ To challenge the belief that existing conventional risk and crisis management methodologies fit emerging unconventional risks, crises and disasters.

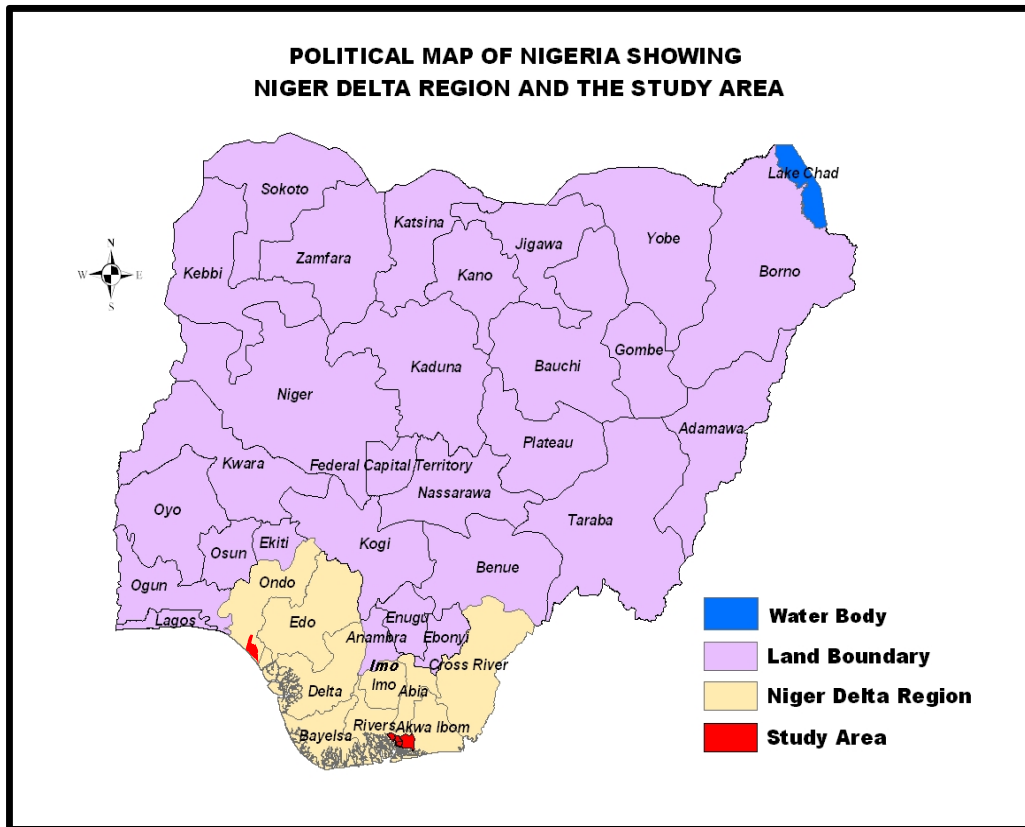
### **1.3 THE RESEARCH SCOPE AND NIGER DELTA CRISES**

The research scope is the entire oil and gas industry in Nigeria. However, the prime focus is on the Niger Delta region (otherwise, refer specifically as ‘the Niger Delta’ throughout this thesis) of Nigeria because all oil and gas explorations and productions are primarily done with the region (Figure 1.1). In practical context, the Niger Delta is an area the size of England or Portugal (Mafimisebi, 2013) and comprises of nine states of Nigeria which are: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers States respectively. These nine states of the Niger Delta region are spread across South-West, South-South and South-East geopolitical zones of Nigeria (Figure 1.2). The majority of the people in Nigeria especially in the Niger Delta region where estimated 35 million people live, over 85 percent, primarily dependent on their habitat for livelihood (Pyagbara, 2010; UNDP, 2006). It was, therefore, in their self-interest to conserve their environment. These efforts were often backed up with normative and ethical sanctions (Bandura, 2007).

The people of the Niger Delta fundamentally depend upon the natural environment for livelihood and survival. These people are fed, clothed, provided with water, generate energy through firewood, and carry out agricultural activities (fishing and farming) on the natural environment. In fact, more than 97% of the businesses in Nigeria have been confirmed to fall under the category of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The environment and the people are most vulnerable to environmental pollution, degradation, climate change, flooding, rise sea level, coastal vulnerability, oil spill, gas flaring, and unclean water (Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2015). Although there is no clear evidence to suggest that environmental victims are worst impacted in fragile and conflict-affected states of the Niger Delta, the major challenge lies in providing holistic and sustainable solutions.



**Figure 1.1: Map of Nigeria Showing Niger Delta Region and Study Area**



Source: Mafimisebi (2013)

**Figure 1.2: Map of Niger Delta Region of Nigeria**



Source: Mafimisebi (2013)

This research critically considers two main case studies – Shell v. Ogoni crisis and Chevron v. Ilaje crisis within the Niger Delta crises. These case studies are selected because they typically demonstrate situations of risk management failure and moral disengagement in processes of risk/crisis management. These crises are not exceptional phenomena in the history of organisational crises but classically revealed and changed how these terms ‘risk, crisis and disaster’ are perceived, interpreted, and managed. In both case studies, a posteriori observation of crisis intensification through the constructs of moral disengagement, vulnerable environment and vulnerable people suggest fundamental need for change in approaches to risk/crisis management. These case studies have been described both as crisis and disaster (Boele, 1995; Ikein, 1990; Richard et al., 2001; Saro-Wiwa, 1995). In 2011, a major new independent scientific assessment of the case carried out by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2011) revealed that pollution from over 50 years of oil operations in the Niger Delta has penetrated further and deeper than many may have supposed. The Niger Delta crises revolves around cases of environmental risks (oil spillage, gas flaring, climate change, ozone layer depletion, acid rain, rise sea level, and environmental waste) and general pollution rocking the Nigerian oil and gas industry.

Despite the environmental degradation by multinational oil companies (for example, Shell and Chevron), local experts and communities have accused them of practicing double standards therefore seen as environmentally irresponsible organisations (Adedayo, 2012; Bassey, 2008; ERA, 2012; Oruamabo, 2005; Richard et al., 2001; Steiner, 2010). Several environmental right activists have been beaten, detained and main leaders summarily executed because of the Niger Delta crises (Richard et al., 2001). Furthermore, the multiple effects have been reveal through militancy, oil terrorism, vandalism, kidnapping, oil theft and bunkering, illegal artisanal refineries, resource control agitation, and military suppression. More critically, the crisis is characterised by both vulnerable environment and vulnerable people phenomena in which case local people have been forced to migrate to urban cities due to destruction of their livelihoods. Why should organisations be concerned about these phenomena in the Niger Delta crises?

The Niger Delta crises fundamentally impact international communities through increases in global oil price and global warming; multinational oil companies through loss of revenue, reputational risk and associated damages; Nigerian government through loss of oil revenues and security challenges; the local communities through acid rain, loss of vegetation and farmland, health, safety and environment challenges. Thus, the methodologies and strategies use in processes of managing the Niger Delta crises remain imperative. In general, the

contention is that the existence of ‘vulnerable environment and vulnerable people’ phenomena in crisis situations not only raises ethical and moral issues concern in processes of risk/crisis management and governance but equally creates a condition which demands that the moral and ethical aspect of risk/crisis management practice be held up for thorough scrutiny and queries (Bandura, 1991, 1999, 2002; Beu & Buckley, 2004; Caprara et al., 2006; Detert, Trevino, & Sweitzer, 2008).

Despite the statements made by the Nigerian government and oil companies, there is no evidence that improving environmental performance of multinational oil companies within the Niger Delta match the environmental degradation and environmental crises already created (UNEP, 2011). In another context, the Niger Delta arguably becomes an ‘*environmental sacrifice zone*’. Though the Niger Delta crises formed the foundation case for this thesis and is practically relevant to test risk and crisis management methodologies they remain incomplete without reference to the global cases of crises and disasters. In clear context, sustainable risk/crisis management involves critical appraisal of managing risk and crisis in a way that reflect the global agenda because crises are not anymore confined to national border but transboundary in nature.

In application to existing theories of risk and crisis management, an explanation for the management of risk and crisis logically requires the inclusion of multiple paradigms approach to crisis situations. In addition, given the complexity involved in understanding and interpreting crisis situations (Adrot & Moriceau, 2013; Billings, Milburn, & Schaalman, 1980; Weick, 1988, 1993, 2005; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001; Ren et al., 2008; Roux-Dufort, 2007) any discourse in risk and crisis devoid of the phenomena of moral disengagement, vulnerable environment and vulnerable people arguably undermine robust risk/crisis management. This argument echoes the position of a burgeoning literature concerned with the various aspect of the Niger Delta crises and environmental degradation (UNEP, 2011; Steiner, 2010) and the view further found expression in much of the different cases of crises and disasters (for example, Bhopal disaster, Exxon Valdez oil disaster, BP Deepwater Horizon disaster, Three Mile Island disaster, etc.).

The case studies adopted in this thesis provided avenues to critically explore factors that contribute to either failure or success in the Niger Delta crises. In addition, the case studies illustrate a gap between empirical reality and literature, and the different perspectives involved further provide opportunities to review crisis incubation and what could trigger crisis, intensify

crisis, and hinder sustainable risk/crisis management. How these pragmatic review concepts fit into existing risk/crisis management framework further remains the subject of this thesis. The research is both explorative and interpretive and multiple sources of data were used, for example, commission reports, archives that were reduced and triangulated, company reports and interviews with key stakeholders in the crisis, and thorough reviews of existing literatures.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION AND FRAMEWORK**

This research is basically inclined by how two concepts – moral disengagement and crisis management impact one another. Can approaches from both concepts to identifying, analysing, and managing the complexity and unconventional nature of risks, crises and disasters be significant to solve real world problems? If an organisation was involved in unconventional crisis and disaster, should established models be challenged and what evidence must be provided to signal existing models might represent endemic organisational risks? The value of existing models of risk and crisis management may be completely overestimated but nevertheless significant in providing directions and guidance. What this suggests is the need to re-evaluate current approaches to the management of risks, crises and disasters facing organisations.

The obvious twist to the research title is meant not to depart from concerns clustered around organisations benefitting from “risk, crisis and disaster situations,” but rather to advance the debate and offer a perspective compatible with them, perhaps even a perspective on what impels them. More pointedly, the research pragmatically demonstrates how moral disengagement mechanisms impact risk and crisis management practice. For critics who would not be persuaded by empirical data, the research framework is set and open avenues to explore how the framework presented converge or diverge within the risk, crisis and disaster management literature. Critically, this thesis appears to be more controversial and might therefore disappoint both traditional and conventional theorists and practitioners of risk and crisis management.

To start, it is not research that merely fill the ‘literature gaps’ which could be worthless to read. In fact, just because there is a gap in literature does not mean that such gaps must be filled. The mere fact remains such research concludes by pointing out the gaps in existing studies; of course, there is a gap and so what? Thus, the novelty in this research is demonstrated through

the conceptual foundations underpinning the study and the juxtaposition of the contrast of moral disengagement and crisis management using empirical case studies of crises/disasters in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

In context, the research contends and demonstrates that moral disengagement exploitation in crisis situations will exacerbate emerging crises, as empirically confirmed and supported in different studies (Bandura, 1991, 1999, 2002; Bandura et al., 1996; Beu & Buckley, 2004; Caprara et al., 2006; Detert, Trevino, & Sweitzer, 2008). In critical term, the potential limitations of the framework and arguments presented in this research are recognised but the interdependencies within the broader risk theories including socio-technical systems (Borodzicz, 2005; Toft & Reynolds, 1997; Veil, 2011; Turner, 1976), normal accident (Perrow, 1984; 1999; Smith, 2005), high reliability (Jarman, 2001; LaPorte, 1994; Shrivastava et al., 2009), risk/crisis communication (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Hayenhjelm, 2006; Hutchins et al., 2009), and risk culture (Hopkins, 2006; Herbane, 2013; Roeschmann, 2014) are well-established.

## **1.5 THE UNCONVENTIONAL CHALLENGES**

There are arguably two main challenges confronting crisis management practice and research today. Firstly, complexity, ruptures, interdependence and uncertainty surrounding the modern business environment and unconventional crisis suggests that conceptually analysing historical data (case study of known crises and disasters) is no longer sufficient and reliable way of predicting and sustainably managing emerging and future crisis events and impacts. While lessons may be learnt but translating that lesson into reality and practice becomes the main challenge for organisations. Although, it has been argued that those concerned with crisis management pay closer attention to the evidence of history because crisis management is a learned behaviour. Unlike certain historical conditions that can never be duplicated, attitudes and techniques gained from historical experience can be studied, taught, and practiced to develops management abilities (see, Gilbert & Lauren, 1980).

The contention in this thesis extends to how can such attitudes and techniques gained from past crises and disasters translate into managing emerging and future crises. Even more broadly, the debate is further extended to what constitute ‘historical reality’ and ‘real-life phenomenon’ in emerging crisis. This thesis calls for need to subjecting crisis management theories and

methodologies to more rigorous testing and re-evaluation against reality such that existing theories and methodologies might become even more sophisticated, differentiated, and capable of practically guiding practitioners and academics in solving unconventional crises and disasters.

In critical term, crisis can engender cognitive rigidity, fears and anxiety due to the collapse of organisational frames of references and sensemaking practices that obviously decrease the lucidity of managers and may prevent them from learning anything from crisis (Jacques, Gatot, & Roux-Dufort, 1999). Impliedly, the need for paradigm shifts to crisis engagement and embracement of broader resilience management becomes more obvious than ever. Although many studies seek to understand how lessons learnt from previous cases of crises and disasters can be translated into reality (Boin, 2008; Elliott, 2009; Elliott & MacPherson, 2010; Jacques et al., 1999; Lagadec, 2004; Toft & Reynolds, 2005; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2003), the field of crisis management remains problematic and controversial. It is also unclear in existing risk and crisis management studies whether crises are entirely preventable or inevitable (for example, Augustine, 2000; Laere, 2013; Navestad, 2009; Roberts, 2009; Shrivastava, Sponpar, & Pazzaglia, 2009). More problematically, there are also challenges with the taxonomy of crises and disasters.

Secondly, the indirect characterisation of crisis management practice into two main classifications – event and process has rarely been clearly resolved in most extant crisis management literatures (Borodzicz, 2005; Fink, 1986; 2002; Forgues & Roux-Dufort, 1998; Jacques & Gatot, 1998; Reilly, 1993; Mitroff, Pauchant, & Shrivastava, 1988; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Shrivastava, 1987; 1995; 't Hart, 2013). Should crisis be treated as event, process or systemic failure? In addition, in past decades, organisational crises have been studied conceptually and empirically and most of these studies reveal the need for incorporating a systemic approach to further analyse crises and disasters to capture their complexity and ambiguity (Andrew, 2011; Kovoov-Misra, 1995; Deschamps, Lalonde, Pauchant, & Waaub, 1995; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Reza, 2011; Turner, 1976; Weick, 1988). What are the possible implications of these various approaches to crisis management practice? Fundamentally, the failure to explicitly recognise and precisely discuss the matter of different objectives, perspectives and definitions of crisis and crisis management has consequential implications in practice. A more recent unconventional challenge is the consequences of moral disengagement in risk and crisis management practice which are largely neglected in most extant CM research (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). The link between unconventional crisis and

moral disengagement is crucial in understanding whether organisational crises are self-inflicted or within organisational risk appetite before escalation.

## **1.6 PRACTICALITY DILEMMAS**

The reality of applying crisis management methodologies during organisational crises and disasters (as seen in the BP Gulf of Mexico oil spill, King's Cross disaster, Piper Alpha oil platform fire, Thames boat disaster, Hillsborough Stadium disaster, Challenger Space Shuttle explosion, Gulf crisis, Shell Brent Spar and other critical dangerous events) reveal severe threat, high degree of uncertainty, urgent and irreversible decisions (Hopkin, 2010; Lerbinger, 2012; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Veil, 2011). On one hand, traditional and conventional research of crisis management suggest the use of strategies such as denial, evading responsibility, silence, no comment, ignoring accusations and blame shifting as some of the most effective approach to managing organisational crisis. On the other hand, recent empirical works found that these strategies are flawed because they eventually amplified and compounded emerging crises as well as raising serious ethical dilemmas labelled as mechanisms of moral disengagement in process of risk/crisis management. Why does moral disengagement in crisis situations matter?

Moral disengagement (MD) theory was established to expound why certain people can engage in inhumane and unethical conducts without apparent distress and mitigate the moral consequences of harmful behaviours (Acquino, Reed, Thau, & Freeman, 2007; Bandura, 1986; 1991; 2002; Bandura et al., 2000; Caprara et al., 2009; Moore, 2008; McAlister, 2001; Jackson, & Spar, 2005; Rogers, 2003; Young, Zhang, & Prybutok, 2007). Moral disengagement presents a fundamental paradox in risk and crisis management. First, it is indispensable for empirically understanding crisis intensification and sustainable risk/crisis management. In addition, a critical analysis of moral disengagement mechanisms in risk and crisis domain reveals that crisis intensification and hostility perhaps occur largely because of the use of moral disengagement mechanisms as risk/crisis management strategies (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). A crucial problem, however, remains the control of MD mechanisms in risk, crisis and disaster situations and their management.

In this thesis, the debate is extended to capture mechanisms of moral disengagement (moral justification, euphemistic labelling, advantageous comparison, distorting the consequences,

dehumanisation and attribution of blame) as a spectrum which perhaps unnecessarily exacerbates crisis and disaster situations (Bandura, 2000; Vardi, & Weitz, 2004; Hauser, 2006; McAlister, Bandura & Owen, 2006; Moore, 2008; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). The mechanisms of moral disengagement cognitively affect the quality of decision making during risk and crisis situations. Well documented historical evidence bears out this phenomenon with examples such as the Bhopal disaster, and the Niger Delta crises. A neglected area in the field of risk and crisis management is the implications of moral disengagement mechanisms in crisis responses and different conceptual methodologies to crisis and disaster. Therefore, this thesis draws on the moral psychology, risk and crisis management literature to delineate the linkage between moral disengagement and crisis management to unravel unconventional solutions to emerging crises/disasters especially in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

The world of risk and crisis management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century witnesses different and unconventional kinds of risks, crises and disasters demanding unconventional approaches and responses. Rightly so, what constitutes these phenomena and their management continue to be more problematic. Previous cases of crises and disasters such as Tylenol case, Exxon Valdez oil spillage, Three Mile Island, Piper Alpha disaster, 9/11 terrorist, Bhopal disasters, BP Texas refinery explosion, BP oil spills, all appear to differ fundamentally in context and provides important lessons for future crisis management practice and research. It is on this basis some theorists and practitioners have developed risk analysis models, organisational risk management techniques, textbook techniques, risk and crisis communication rules, best practice in risk and crisis management, risk and crisis management methodologies.

During this research, there is a growing realisation that the distinction between risk management and crisis management is artificial but necessary for critics. The argument here is that these phenomena – risk management and crisis management appear undistinguishable. In theory, it is much easier to differentiate between the two terms and divert attention to a paradigm shift in risk management. In practice, what theorists and practitioners manage whether called ‘risk, crisis or disaster’ is not so much distinguished from the approaches use to manage them. In context, as revealed later in this thesis, risk management frameworks have been applied to crisis situations and the so-called crisis management frameworks used to manage risks. The methodological tools used classically depend on whether the dangerous event is perceived as risk, crisis or disaster by those responsible for their management.



From another perspective, both risk and crisis management involves decision making under conditions of uncertainty and complexity. Thus, both can be described as a ‘balancing act’ to normalise dangerous events (risks, crises, or disasters) within the organisation risk tolerance level (Andrew, 2011; Barton, 2008; Lerbinger, 2012). This thesis contends that using business case always to make decisions in risk/crisis situations could be practically problematic and cause “black swans” (or unexpected events). Quite notably, the business case comes with endless challenges, for example, the reluctance within organisations to commit resources and the assumption that crisis ownership is present. In addition, changes in management practices during crisis create little resilience to thoroughly cope with emerging crises (or threats) because of flatter organisational approaches, inept crisis leadership, risk tolerance and appetite, flaws in business continuity plans, relying on weak and untested crisis management plans, ineffective crisis communication strategy, escalated commitment, moral disengagement and financial inability to absorb crisis impacts.

In critical terms, unconventional risks, crises and disasters are developing new characteristics which do not fit existing risk and crisis management models (Borodzicz, 2005; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Robert & Lajtha, 2002). Therefore, it is arguable that the most important attribute in crisis management is practicality – and it appears that most of the contemporary risk and crisis management models lack it. Although some crisis management models have been useful in gaining some important insights in managing crisis/disaster. However, these existing CM models still lack the ability to resolve emerging unconventional crises which are arguably outside traditional approaches. To say these words – unbelievable, unimaginable, inconceivable, unexpected, unthinkable in crisis situations is to admit four kinds of failure: in imagination, policy, capabilities, and management (Lagadec, 2009; ‘t Hart, 2013). In modern crisis situations, the unthinkable is clearly thinkable and the unexpected is arguably imaginable. In context, the argument presented in this thesis is integral to our understanding of ensuring sustainable risk/crisis management and prevent imagination failures in crisis management practice.

Although the stakes are exceptionally high and the difficulties more severe than ever, the onus is to rethink our current CM models, tools, culture, mentality, strategies, and training, communication and implementation processes accordingly. To confirm the need for alternative complementary crisis management framework, previous research demonstrates that many fault lines converge in the present approach to managing risk, crisis and disaster (Andrew, 2011;

Ansell, Boin, & Keller, 2010; Jacques et al., 1999; Lagadec, 2005; Hiles, 2011). In fact, since the natural philosophers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century it is as if our approach has remained inert:

*“Causes which result in effects which are rare, violent and sudden must not affect us, they are not part of the ordinary process of Nature. Our causes and reasons are the effects that occur each day, movements that follow one another, effects that are continually renewed and endlessly repeated” (Buffon, 1749) cited in Larousse (1987, p. 397).*

Perhaps, this reveals a more radical paradigm shift and new challenges requiring both moral engagement and resilience approach to unconventional crises or disasters. The argument presented here resonates with Uriel Rosenthal one of the pioneers in crisis study who notes that this tradition has remained central and currently blocks crisis management (Lagadec, 2005). Simply put, scientists feel uncomfortable with phenomena that seem beyond the scope of the neatly crafted theories which have been developed based on normal circumstances and events. Crises seem to be in total opposition to the very foundations of modern social science (Rosenthal, Charles, & ‘t Hart, 1989). Albeit this study questions the idea of ‘neatly crafted theories’, we would like to advance the debate, background of analysis, and our understanding of what constitute ‘self-inflicted crises’ in the field of organisation science and risk/crisis management. It is not the most well-crafted crisis management models that can successfully help manage crisis, nor the most structured models, but the one most responsive to consider flexibility, normality, vulnerability, victims perspective, business case challenges, broader resilience and morality theory of crisis management.

In another instance, crisis management is arguably a global phenomenon which can have numerous and far-reaching implications across borders. The Niger Delta crisis using the case law of *Kiobel vs. Royal Dutch Shell Group* demonstrated the impact of crisis mismanagement across borders. The case of *Kiobel Vs. Royal Dutch Shell Group* was instituted in 2000 at the United States (U.S) and the U.S Supreme Court finally decided the case on April 17, 2013. The *Kiobel* case arose because of the Ogonis protest over environmental effects of oil extraction, exploration and degradation including gas flaring, oil spillage, construction of oil pipelines and climate change by Shell Nigeria.

The Nigerian Federal Government attempted to end the protests over Niger Delta pollution in 1994 led the Nigerian military forces to suppress protests organised by the Movement for Survival of Ogoni People against continues oil pollution and exploration in the Ogoniland within Niger Delta (Owolabi & Okwechime, 2007; Social Action, 2009). The Ogoni

communities were looted and vandalised, and indigenes were systematically shot, beaten, raped, arrested, tortured, and killed for raising environmental concerns about oil exploration and production in Ogoniland (Ubhenin, 2013; UNEP, 2011). In fact, nine prominent Ogoni environmental activists (including Ken Saro-Wiwa and Kiobel) were summarily sentenced to death and executed by a corrupt Nigerian military tribunal (Boele, 1995; TRIP Report, 1999; Pyagbara, 2010). The Kiobel case points to changing corporate culture in multinational organisations and fundamental effect of crisis across the globe. The case also raises important question about the implication of moral disengagement in risk and crisis management practice.

The first round of Kiobel briefing in the Supreme Court focused on corporate liability and the central question was ‘whether victims of the world’s worst atrocities’ who are denied justice at home can turn to U.S courts as their last resort under the Alien Tort Statute (ATS) which was enacted in 1789. A basic premise of the ATS is that it applies universally but the U.S Supreme Court decided the case on a narrower ground. These cases represent the problems facing the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The complaint alleged that Royal Dutch Petroleum Company (incorporated in the Netherlands), Shell Transport and Trading Company (incorporated in England), and Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (incorporated in Nigeria) aided and abetted the Nigerian military in committing extrajudicial killing, torture, crimes against humanity, and other human rights violations. The plaintiffs argued that Royal Dutch Shell “armed, financed, and conspired with” Nigerian military forces to dehumanise the Ogoni people over environmental degradation protests. See *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum Co.*, 133 S.Ct. 1659 (2013). Other lawsuits included *Wiwa v. Shell Petroleum*, *Wiwa v. Anderson*, and *Wiwa v. Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria*. These cases were settled in 2009 but concerns over environmental disasters and pollution in the Niger Delta linger. In addition, both the 1994 and 2001 US financial crisis further demonstrate how crisis has suddenly becomes a global phenomenon. In retrospective, between 1992 and 1998, the Niger Delta crisis forces the global oil price to dramatic escalation figures (UNEP, 2011).

## **1.7 MORAL AND ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN RISK AND CRISIS SITUATIONS**

Moral and ethical issues are common in organisational crises and responses in which different behavioural norms and interests overlap because of crisis dimension, high uncertainty and complexity, and risk involved, ill-defined roles, constants environmental pressure to get things right, and vulnerability of the different stakeholders. Most commonly, crisis leaders encounter

moral issues in crisis situations when choosing between pursuing self-regulation, the type of crisis response to use and upholding normative organisational ethics (Bandura, 2002; 2007; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). In this thesis, moral and ethics are used interchangeably to mean the same. Albeit moral and ethical issues appear to often be neglected in risk, crisis and disaster management partly because of the difficulty in establishing consensus about what constitute morality and ethics. Yet, lacking such insight has significant implications because a situation of unconscious morality and ethics arguably promotes immoral behaviour and unethical decision making in risk/crisis management practice.

In other words, this thesis contends that neglecting morality issues in processes of organisational crisis could intensify crisis/disaster situations (although this might depend on the crisis dimension or kind). However, as contended later in this thesis, morality and ethical consciousness in the processes of risk, crisis and disaster management cannot be ignored. The critical question is not whether the moral and ethical issues of crisis will be revealed but rather when that moral and ethical aspect will become public and under what situations. Ignoring issues of morality and ethics, and perception in crisis management practice would arguably intensify crisis and promote hostility in the Niger Delta crisis (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). In addition, crisis challenges the explicitness of an organisational ethical beliefs and the commitment level of its top management (Snyder, 2006). The moral pragmatism of organisation is also reveal during organisational crisis. It is contended that crises have a way of activating moral beliefs in a manner that everyday events do not (Fritzche & Becker, 1983).

As revealed later, most theorists and practitioners in risk and crisis management are currently advocating ideologies which create avenues suitable for the exploitation of moral disengagement mechanisms in risk, crisis and disaster situations. This perhaps is the source of most crisis intensification especially in the context of the Niger Delta crises. The argument advance here is that incorporating morality and ethical theory into risk and crisis management is crucial in managing conflicting interests of diverse stakeholders in crisis situations. During organisational crises, crisis leaders are frequently confronted by ethical and moral issues that entail risky decision making between ending crisis and prolonging crisis, profiting from crisis and losing in crisis, compromising existing rules and stick to the rules. It may also involves maintaining and compromising behavioural norms and organisational ethics, and draw a line between the pursuit of organisational goals and causing harm to other stakeholders.

More explicitly, high profile cases of crises and disasters such as the Bhopal disaster, Shell Brent Spar, Three Mile Island, Shell-Ogoni crisis brought to limelight the moral and ethical risks present in the processes of risk/crisis management practice. There is disturbing trend in risk and crisis management as existing models appear to ignore the issue of moral disengagement and it is quite easier to exploit moral disengagement weapons in crisis unnoticeably. For stakeholders, it is about their specific interest but there could be real shift in culture and mentality if the concept of moral disengagement is introduced in risk/crisis management practice and research.

### **1.8 FUNDAMENTAL AVENUES OF CRITICISM**

If risk and crisis management is about how to methodologically manage risk and crisis then what is lacking appears to be the ability to recognise and understand how not to manage risk, crisis and disaster. The premise is that attempt to understand the best ways of managing risk and crisis over the years often create the misconception and presumption that practitioners and academics alike know how not to manage risk, crisis and disaster. This argument can be revealed in both traditional and conventional theories of risk and crisis management. A universal maxim in crisis management literature is that organisational crises differ contextually and likewise the management strategies use to manage such crises (Ansell, Boin, & Keller, 2010; Benoit, 1997; Bergeron & Cooren, 2012; Coombs, 1999; 1995; Laere, 2013; Simpson, Clegg, & e Cunha, 2013).

Traditional thinking in crisis management views crisis as an exceptional event, generating alternative behaviours and coordination patterns (Milburn, Schuler & Watman, 1983a; Milburn et al., 1983b; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1977; Smart & Vertinsky, 1977, 1984). The research and practice of crisis management over the recent years fundamentally appears to have been built upon that assumption (Benoit, 1997; Boin, 2009; Boin, Hart, & McConnell, 2008; Coombs, 1995, 1998, 2006; Jackson, Sullivan, & Wills, 2011; Lagadec, 2004; 2009). This thesis question not the notion that crisis is an exceptional event but creating alternative behaviours and coordination patterns seem avoidable. In fact, the alternative behaviours and strategies such as simple denial (Benoit, 1995), finding a scapegoat and attacking the accuser (Allinson, 1993; Benoit, 1995), establish and attribute blames (Coombs, 2007; Drabek & Quarentelli, 1967), contributory errors (Health, 1998), lack of organisational openness (Allinson, 1993), redefining the origin and nature of the crisis (Harlow, Brantley, & Harlow, 2011) are argued to be

mechanisms of moral disengagement in processes of risk/crisis management in this thesis. These crisis management response strategies are useful to think of organisations using business case and conscious of restricting litigation in crisis, and protect their public reputations (Coombs, 2007; Hearit, 2006). However, these crisis management response strategies are classified as ‘crisis disengagement’ in this thesis.

In examining how this contextual structure indicates moral disengagement in processes of risk/crisis management, this thesis draws on the conceptual framework of vulnerable environment and vulnerable people underpinning the Niger Delta crises as discussed in chapter two and three. So, what could be the possible implications of such approach and practice to risk/crisis management? The possible implications are well articulated in the later part of this thesis. Though moral disengagement is coined as an essentially contested concept because of the several meanings and framings of what constitute morality and ethics. Despite this criticism, the concerns for managing risks, crises or disasters must balance with the concerns for how not to manage them. This is the cornerstone of this thesis.

## **1.9 DESCRIPTION OF GAPS IN LITERATURE**

The specific gaps and challenges in this thesis are identified under the following six main areas:

- (1) Moral disengagement: organisational moral disengagement, crisis disengagement issues and implications, and organisational crisis engagement framework;
- (2) Risk governance: the role of risk and crisis leaders in managing unconventional crises and disasters, risk culture implications within organisation, the controversial debates in unconventional risk, crisis and disaster, and risk perception;
- (3) Vulnerable environment and vulnerable people: vulnerability, environmental justice, resource curse and environmental victims, risk identification and assessment, and reducing underlying risk factors;
- (4) Risk and crisis management models: examining relevancy and practicality, issue of theoretical debates and implications, discrepancy in clarification of the phenomena among experts and laypeople, crisis management responses and implications;
- (5) Transcontinental vulnerabilities: risk society, environmental risk and transboundary crisis, and issues of reciprocal susceptibilities in organisational crisis and disaster;

- (6) Environmental sustainability: environmental pollution and degradation, local communities in vulnerable environment, turbulent small and medium enterprises in crisis-affected region, organisational resilience, and resource sustainability in low-income countries (Nigeria).

These are the key areas for developing a robust and relevant sustainable framework for action in managing unconventional risks and crises, and contribute effectively towards the achievement of Nigeria Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria. The present study relates more specifically to environmental sustainability in developing nations as captured in the Nigeria MDGs report (2010). This research accentuated the need for crisis engagement framework, and developed methods of identifying moral disengagement in processes of risk/crisis management, and building communities and organisational resilience to crises and disasters.

#### **1.10 CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRACTICE, METHOD AND KNOWLEDGE**

This research makes several contributions to knowledge, method and practice in risk and crisis management which are discussed in tripartite dimensions.

##### **KNOWLEDGE DIMENSION**

As its first contribution to knowledge, this research contributes to the established bodies of literature in risk, crisis and disaster management, and to the practice within these fields. In context, the research brings a new perspective to the field of risk, crisis and disaster management, terrorism and resilience management through the concept of moral disengagement. The fact that when moral disengagement fragment into risk and crisis situations causes rogue and detrimental behaviours that may not be originally intended, signal the need to revisit current thinking in risk and crisis management. In addition, this thesis challenges both stage-based and process-based models of risk and crisis management as deficient in managing emerging unconventional crises/disasters. Similarly, the notion of best practice or universal application of risk and crisis management models or strategies are refuted due to multiple perspectives and complexities that characterise unconventional risk, crisis and disaster situations. Thus, this research calls for unique fit and decision-based model of risk and crisis management to improve risk/crisis management practice and organisational resilience. The vast amount of previous risk and crisis literatures are mostly dominated by Western thinking

and philosophies over the decades (e.g., Andrew, 2011; Boin et al., 2010; Borodzic, 2005; Constantinides, 2013; Elliott, 2009; Hiles, 2011; Lagadec, 2004; 2009; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Perrow, 2007; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Reza, 2011; Roux-Dufort, 2007b; Shrivastava, 1993; Turner, 1976; 't Hart, 2013) but this thesis adds African perspective using case studies from developing countries (Nigeria) context to the body of knowledge in risk and crisis management. Albeit it is essential to note that different cultures exist within the African context, however moral disengagement mechanisms are prevalent within the notion of self-inflicted disasters which could cut across different cultures.

As another contribution to knowledge, albeit extensive studies have been conducted to evaluate risk and crisis management across organisations in different sectors following the aftermath of major organisational scandals, crises and disasters, the link between moral disengagement and risk/crisis management has not been examined and the implications for practice in risk and crisis management are still under-researched or lacking. This thesis complements this focal area of risk and crisis research due to empirical evidence that individuals and organisations with moral disengagement may make, or at least superficially present as artificial effective risk leaders and organisations (cf. Bandura, 2007; 2009; Caprara et al., 2009; Chugh et al., 2014; Fiske, 2004; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Ntayi et al., 2010; White et al., 2009). The claim is made that when ethical and moral implications in processes of crisis management are neglected, ontological harmful consequences and ethically problematic issues arise. In another perspective, when ethical and moral effect of crisis management are considered, the question of moral nature of an ethically ambiguous situation become epistemological contestable. Thus, the construct of moral disengagement mechanisms is pragmatically fused into crisis management practice to delineate the linkage between the two phenomena. As a result, this research contributes to earlier body of knowledge on risk and crisis management models (e.g., Andrew, 2011; Boin et al., 2010; Borodzic, 2005; Constantinides, 2013; Elliott, 2009; Hiles, 2011; Lagadec, 2004; 2009; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Perrow, 2007; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Reza, 2011; Roux-Dufort, 2007b; Shrivastava, 1993; Turner, 1976; 't Hart, 2013) by connecting them to moral disengagement perspective. Following the recommendation in the literature (Bandura, 1990; Bandura et al., 2002; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Moore et al., 2012), this thesis examined moral disengagement mechanisms in unconventional risk and crisis, whereas most of the previous risk and crisis management studies are devoid of moral consideration in risk/crisis cases. In context, this thesis extends existing knowledge in risk and crisis management by demonstrating that high moral disengagement is associated with



ineffective crisis management response whereas low moral disengagement is associated with unsustainable crisis management.

In addition, this research specifically builds on important risk and crisis management studies such as Andrew (2011), Ansell, Boin, & Keller (2010), Augustine (1995; 2000), Bland (1998), Boin (2004), Boin, 't Hart, McConnell, & Preston (2010), Borodzicz (2005), Coombs (2007), Cutter (2005), Dombrowsky (2007), Fink (2002), Mafimisebi & Thorne (2015), Mitroff, Shrivastava & Udwadia (1987), Pearson & Clair (1998), Reza (2011), Shrivastava (1993), Turner (1976), 't Hart (2013), Toft & Reynolds (2005), and Ulmer, Seeger, & Sellnow (2007) by uncovering that existing risk/crisis models may amplify emerging risks/crises which suggests a new direction when responding to unconventional risks and crises. Therefore, this thesis complements this focal area of risk and crisis research due to empirical evidence that individuals and organisations with moral disengagement may make, or at least superficially present as artificial effective risk leaders and organisations (cf. Bandura, 2007; 2009; Caprara et al., 2009; Chugh et al., 2014; Fiske, 2004; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Ntayi et al., 2010; White et al., 2009). At the same time, ample evidence from this thesis suggests that individuals and organisations using moral disengagement mechanisms can be self-destructive in the long-term.

Furthermore, this thesis is the first original attempt to empirically investigate the relationship between moral disengagement and crisis management. In support of moral disengagement approach to risk and crisis management (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; 2017), this thesis findings confirm results of previous moral disengagement studies (Bandura, 1999; 2007; Bandura et al., 2000; Fiske, 2004; McAlister et al., 2006; Moore et al., 2012; Rogers, 2003; White et al., 2009; Young et al., 2007) by showing a divergence in relationship between moral disengagement and crisis management leading to misclassification of dangerous events and overestimation of existing risk/crisis models. This insight goes beyond existing explanations and models available in the extant risk and crisis research through which previously independent concepts become associated. The models as presented in this research deny certain assumptions of existing risk/crisis management research and practice and suggest 'synthetic a posteriori propositions' (Davis, 1971: 310) grounded in empirical world and provide avenues for new debates and directions in risk/crisis management for practitioners and academics who perhaps are already thinking about it.

## **METHOD DIMENSION**

This thesis has been structured in what has been appropriately described as inverse research approach (See Section 1.11 for more details). The structure is labelled as ‘inverse research approach’ because it contrasts with existing studies on how risk and crisis investigations are often conducted and presented (cf. Boin & McConnell, 2007; Borodzicz, 2005; Reza, 2011; Saunders et al., 2012; Vaughan, 2004). Moreover, as noted later, this thesis argues that crises and disasters are unique, ambiguous, complex and socially constructed which cannot be subjected to the classical close-cycle research approach dominating existing studies (Ansell et al., 2010; Augustine, 1995; Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; Coombs, 2007; Fink, 2002; Roux-Dufort, 2007b). Therefore, given the nature of unconventional risks/crises which do not conform to typical close-cycle risk/crisis models (Andrew, 2011; Borodzicz, 2005; Frandsen & Johansen, 2017; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2017), existing traditional ‘best practice approach’ to researching and presenting risk, crisis and disaster phenomena are no longer sufficient.

Therefore, this thesis addresses a methodological limitation that is identified as hindering effective risk and crisis management (Andrew, 2011; Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; ‘t Hart, 2013). By doing so, this thesis makes methodological contribution to risk and crisis management literature by advocating inverse research approach to risk, crisis and disaster phenomena investigation which entails seven stages of selecting, contextualizing, reviewing, method, conceptualizing, analysing and concluding (See Section 1.11). In addition, this thesis finds that existing research approaches, which typically manifest as close-cycle risk/crisis models, to the investigation of emerging risks, crises and disasters are unfit for unconventional dangerous events. Likewise, this thesis makes the case for understanding the nature of emerging risks, crises and disasters prior to reviewing literature to gather empirical evidences about how best to manage them. In context, the seven stages of inverse research approach propose in Section 1.11 serves as methodological guidelines and contribution to risk, crisis and resilience management. Therefore, the adoption of inverse research approach to risk/crisis investigation as used in this thesis serves methodological contribution to risk and crisis management literature.

## **PRACTICE DIMENSION**

This thesis also adds to existing practice in the risk and crisis domain by identifying the crisis management – moral disengagement relationships, albeit from the Niger Delta crises context. Precisely, moral disengagement mechanisms such as moral justification, attribution of blame,

dehumanisation and distorting the consequences are more specific to the Nigeria case. The wider application is restricted to unconventional risks, crises and disasters involving moral or ethical considerations. In clear terms, this implies that the wider application is restricted to self-inflicted disasters even though several lessons could be learnt from failure to prevent self-inflicted disasters. A conceptual model of crisis/moral engagement (see Figure 5.2) was developed which does not currently exist in risk/crisis management literature. In similar view, the decision-based model of risk and crisis management (see Figure 8.11) was also developed as existing risk/crisis models are rooted in process, event, and systemic views of crisis/disaster. Moreover, the research provided new contextual insights about factors that hinder effective risk and crisis management practice in Nigeria. These factors include selective risk perception, inflated ethical stance, organised irresponsibility, trust deficit, relying on past successes, and misinterpretation of dangerous events. Previous studies investigating the Niger Delta crises have identified broken trust and corporate irresponsibility as part of the main factors affecting risk and crisis management in Nigeria (Aghalino, 2009; Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Bassey, 2008; Bolorunduro et al., 2005; Emmanuel, 2010; Ogbodo, 2009; Okon & Akunna, 2010; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2013; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016; Steiner, 2010; Vidal, 2011). This thesis corroborates these existing findings and extended them by considering their practical implications for sustainable risk/crisis management practice.

This research also made contribution to the risk and crisis management practice by examining the practicality of existing risk/crisis models in context of developing countries, not least due to risk culture and risk governance which tend to vary across organisations and countries. Another contribution of this thesis is that the vast amount of risk and crisis literatures (for example, Allan, 2003; Augustine, 2000; Booth, 1993; Borodzicz, 2005; Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; Curtin & Hussein, 2005; Fink, 2002; Hiles, 2007; Hopkin, 2010; Lalonde, 2007; Lerbinger, 2012; Regester & Larkin, 2008; Shrivastava, 1993; Shrivastava et al., 2009; Smith & Elliot, 2006; Veil, 2011) are dominated by the assumption that all crises and disasters are analogous but this thesis refute this claim by showing that every crisis/disaster is unique and standardisation of risk/crisis management remains inadequate. The broader implication calls for adaptation and unique fit in risk and crisis management practice.

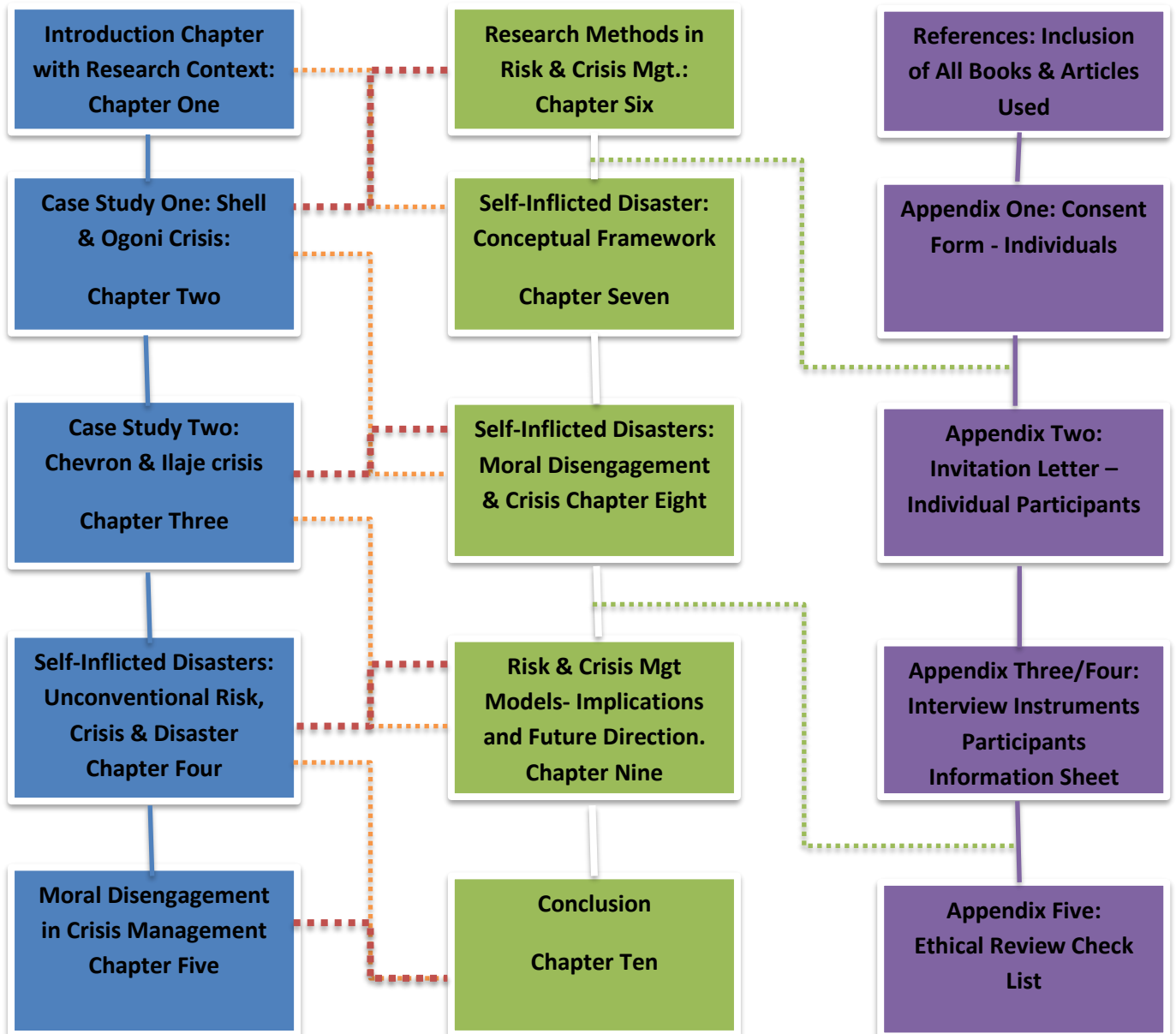
In practical settings, this research adds that risk and crisis management should not proceed as if all crises/disasters are equivalent in which case best practices or standards become a norm. As a result, best fit or unique fit in risk and crisis management which aligns and integrates the risk/crisis management processes with broader organisational strategy, environment, tools,

context, culture, perceptions, governance, moral engagement and social acceptability are proposed as the future of risk and crisis management. The implications are far-reaching for both academics and practitioners.

In addition, the case studies presented in this thesis can serve as springboard for understanding ethical risk and crisis management practice, especially in context of developing countries. This thesis findings are rooted in providing understanding on how Nigeria can achieve its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Vision 20:2020 with reference to Nigeria MDGs goal 1 – Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; goal 7 – Ensure environmental sustainability; and goal 8 – Develop a global partnership for development. Markedly the more vulnerable is the environment and the people are, the greater the risk of achieving the Nigeria MDGs. The MDGs report (2010) indicated that despite unprecedented progress towards the achievement of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and MDGs by 2015, several challenges persist. The cultural specificity of the case studies should be taken into consideration when using practical insights from this thesis.

Thus, this research connects and builds on Nigeria government policy on NEEDS and MDGs to investigate the notion of self-inflicted disasters; and provide effective strategies or approaches that will help environmental victims and multinational oil and gas companies to build resilience to environmental crises and disasters. The results of the project have been published in high impact and relevant international journals and sent to all targeted stakeholders such as Niger Delta Development Commission, Nigeria MDGs Committee, National Planning Commission, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Federal Ministry of Environment, Ondo State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission, and presidential group on MDGs who can monitor frequently the progress of the project results implementation.

## 1.11 THESIS CHAPTER STRUCTURES



The structure of this thesis is as shown in the above diagram. However, some clarifications and justifications should be made about the main reasons why this thesis is structured in this way (that is, case studies chapters then literature and methodology chapters, and analysis chapters). The question of how should risk, crisis and disaster be research remain unexplored and insufficient attentions have been paid to this issue. The assumption has been that risk, crisis and disaster be research in the conventional form of researching most phenomena. The prevailing views suggest that research aims/objectives, and questions are captured in introduction phase, follow by risk/crisis literatures phase, methodology phase, analysis and discussion phase, and conclusion (cf. Boin & McConnell, 2007; Reza, 2011; Saunders et al., 2012; Vaughan, 2004).

However, this thesis argues that crises and disasters are unique, ambiguous, complex and socially constructed which cannot be subjected to the classical close-cycle research approach dominating existing studies (Ansell et al., 2010; Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; Coombs, 2007; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Roux-Dufort, 2007b). Therefore, given the nature of unconventional risks/crises which do not conform to typical close-cycle risk/crisis models (Andrew, 2011; Borodzicz, 2005; Frandsen & Johansen, 2017; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2017), existing traditional ‘best practice approach’ to researching and presenting risk, crisis and disaster phenomena are no longer sufficient. Hence, this thesis follows unconventional research approach which can be appropriately described as ‘**inverse research approach**’. This inverse research approach as applicable to risk, crisis and disaster phenomena investigation entails the following seven stages:

- 1. Selecting:** This is the first stage in the inverse research approach as used in this thesis. This thesis started with selecting or identifying problem in current risk and crisis management literature. Specifically, the issue of moral disengagement mechanisms was identified as being responsible for generating competing constructions of unconventional risks, crises and disasters (See Chapters Five and Eight). The selection or identification of problem stage is consistent with how previous risk/crisis studies normally began researching most risk/crisis issues (Adrot & Moriceau, 2013; Ansell, Boin, & Keller, 2010; Fink, 2002; Pearson & Clair, 1998) which are often capture in the introduction section of research. Therefore, the main issues identified as hindering effective risk and crisis management are captured in Chapter One of this thesis. The research aim, objectives, research questions, gaps in literature and research contributions are capture in the introduction chapter (Chapter One).
- 2. Contextualizing:** This involves situating the phenomena (i.e., moral disengagement and risk/crisis management) of interest in the research context. This thesis makes the argument that risk/crisis case studies or incidents should be presented in research prior to reviewing of existing literature. This is because when previous risk/crisis studies (e.g., Augustine, 1995; Andrew, 2011; Fink, 2002; George & Pratt, 2012; ‘t Hart, 2013) review risk/crisis literatures before understanding the risk/crisis phenomena, existing risk/crisis models are force on to emerging crises and disasters. Thus, to overcome this criticism regarding lack of flexibility and standardisation of risk/crisis models, this thesis contextualizes the phenomena by presenting the case studies (Chapters Two and Three) before reviewing risk/crisis literature. One significant value of this approach is

that it introduces risk/crisis model's adaptation and flexibility into risk and crisis management literature.

- 3. Reviewing:** This involves conducting extensive reviews of existing risk/crisis management literature. In context of this thesis, the reviewing of existing literature is divided into two main chapters (Chapters Four and Five). Chapter Four contains the risk and crisis management theories relevant to this thesis with special focus on risk perception, risk/crisis communication, risk society, risk culture and learning from disasters. The concern raised about each of these theories was not about their validity but rather on their collective synergy which could produce more far reaching effects than when applied in isolation. Chapter Five reviewed the literature on crisis management and moral disengagement. The moral disengagement concept is central to the discussion surrounding this thesis; hence Chapter five examines the issue of moral disengagement in risk/crisis management practice.
- 4. Method:** This stage involves discussing the research method and approach used in this thesis. This thesis argues that method section of risk/crisis research should start after the reviewing stage especially when using the inverse research approach. Thus, Chapter Six of this thesis presents the issues of research design, data collection and research philosophy, choice of analysis, and ethical considerations.
- 5. Conceptualizing:** This deals with the conceptual framework as used in this thesis. Therefore, Chapter Seven of this thesis deals with the philosophical thinking underpinning this research. This thesis argues that the conceptual framework of risk/crisis should be presented prior to data analysis and discussion. The essence of Chapter Seven is to presents theoretical model of self-inflicted disaster. It is essential to state that Chapter Seven is a combination of philosophical and theoretical issues to identify the framework of analysis for the specific case studies. This implies a robust research approach because it does not follow classically close-cycle risk/crisis models which are often force on emerging risks/crises as earlier highlighted.
- 6. Analysing:** The analysis of the case studies is presented in Chapter Eight. The analysis is a synthesis of the theoretical conclusions regarding the research aims and objectives as well as recommendations which incorporated notable risk and crisis theories such as learning from disasters/failures, risk perception, risk culture and risk governance, and risk/crisis communication. In addition, this thesis follows an integrated analysis in the presentation of both primary and secondary data (See Table 8.1; Figures 8.3, 8.4, 8.6 and 8.7, for example) to ensure evidences of moral disengagement mechanisms are

questioned, corroborated and refuted (if necessary). The reason is that the duality nature of moral disengagement mechanisms has been revealed in previous empirical studies where on one hand it could be used as crisis disengagement and on the other hand it could be used as organised corporate irresponsibility (Bandura, 2007; 2009; Moore, 2008; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; 2017). In addition, the rationale for embarking upon integrated analysis of primary and secondary data are (1) due to data sensitivity which can cause harms to the informants and (2) unique nature of the crises (Chapters Two and Three). These crises as presented in Chapters Two and Three are still ongoing and some specific statements have been made in the past which are linked to certain individuals within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Therefore, it was necessary to undertake integrated analysis to ensure that informants' identities are not revealed, particularly when the disclosing or quoting statements of informants can be linked back to them. The broader implications from this thesis empirical findings and lessons learned from the discussions are carefully discussed in Chapter Nine. The focus is to address the 'so what' aspect of this thesis and integrate that discussion into broader risk, crisis and disaster management practice.

- 7. Concluding:** The last Chapter Ten concludes this thesis with overall considerations for robust risk, crisis and resilience management practice. One crucial argument presented in Chapter Ten is that cases of risk failures, crises and disasters as demonstrated in the case studies of Shell and Chevron should be viewed as learning opportunities noting that this requires active learning, collaboration, communication, engagement with other stakeholders, ethical decisions, and constant risk/crisis management auditing.

This thesis argues that knowledge about unconventional risk, crisis and disaster extends beyond linear problems to complex, uncertain and ambiguous problems. This implies that using traditional method of researching the phenomena do not help us better understand their unique, complex and ambiguous nature. One compelling disapproval of existing research approaches to the investigation of risk, crisis and disaster is that of their classical close-cycle model which are often force upon emerging risks, crises and disasters (Andrew, 2011; Augustine, 2000; Fink, 2002; Lerbinger, 2012; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001). This makes conventional research methods approach to the investigation of risk, crisis and disaster situations unfit for unconventional risks, crises and disasters. Therefore, this thesis calls for the adoption of inverse research approach as discussed in the above seven stages to the investigation of future unconventional risks, crises and disasters.



## **1.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provides the overall context to this research and highlights the research aims and objectives, introduces the conceptual framework of moral disengagement, and reveals the unconventional challenges facing risk and crisis management. It also discusses the practicality dilemmas of unconventional risk and crisis management, and draws attention to the hidden moral and ethical risks in unconventional risks and crises. Furthermore, it highlights the fundamental gaps in literature covered within this thesis and clearly state the research contributions. The next chapter discussed one of the case studies underpinning this thesis. It focuses on the case of Shell – Ogoni crisis, from the perspective of vulnerable environment and vulnerable people in Nigeria. This is an ongoing crisis for over two decades and extant studies have not specifically examined the issues from moral disengagement perspective, not the least due to the broader implication for organisational sustainability and resilience within the crisis and conflict-affected areas of Nigeria.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CASE STUDY ONE: VULNERABLE ENVIRONMENT AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE: SHELL NIGERIA & Ogoni CRISIS**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The case study of Shell Nigeria and Ogoni crisis demonstrates a situation of risk management failure. This case study contains valuable lessons and crucial information for those involved in risk and crisis management especially in African context. In fact, this case study was included in this research because it revealed the moral and ethical risks hidden in the processes of risk and crisis management. Thus, the Shell Nigeria and Ogoni crisis is a useful learning tool for multinational companies and those interested in ethical risk/crisis management, not least because reviewing the crisis and similar incidents reveals opportunities to deal with emerging or future unconventional crises/disasters. The crisis involves the people of the Ogoni in Niger Delta region of Nigeria and Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) over environmental pollution, oil spillage, constant gas flaring and environmental degradation of Ogoniland.

The case commences by sketching the background to the discovery of oil in Nigeria, the background to Shell Nigeria and its operations, oil business in Ogoniland and government involvement in oil business. A tripartite detail of the behaviours of the parties and the issues involved are presented. The case continues by examining the roles of the parties, the organisation's (Shell Nigeria) crisis management response and its business operations and concludes with a brief description of several challenges now facing the organisation. The case arguably contains five fundamental lessons for those individuals and organisations involved in the management of unconventional risks, emergencies, crises and disasters:

- Firstly, neglect of moral and ethical obligations in risk and crisis situations undermines risk/crisis management practice.
- Secondly, local risk perceptions when ignored create trust deficit among stakeholders.
- Thirdly, the unconventional crisis was self-inflicted because of risk underestimation and inappropriate crisis management responses.
- Fourthly, risk/crisis responders and emergency organisations may be unable to respond or manage this form of unconventional crisis due to its rapid, instantaneous, amorphous and ill-structured nature.

- Finally, risk/crisis communication plays a central role in bridging trust deficit and responding to unconventional crises.

The Shell Nigeria – Ogoni crisis escalated on November 10, 1995 when Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni environmental activists were hanged in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria for leading a successful protest over environmental degradation and pollution in Ogoniland (Niger Delta region of Nigeria) by Shell Nigeria and other multinational oil companies (Boele et al., 2001; Ibeanu, 2000; Nweke, 2013; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). The environmental pollution in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria by multinational oil companies has attracted national and international attention. However, Shell Nigeria, the largest oil producer in Nigeria, had been subject of environmental pollution accusation and targeted for attack by the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), in a campaign that successfully closed Shell’s oil production in Ogoniland in 1993 (Boele et al., 2001; Shell Report, 2010; 2012).

Following the prosecution of the leading Ogoni activists, Shell was blamed both locally and internationally as the Nigerian government brutally suppressed protests by MOSOP, and finally tried and executed the core of the organization’s leadership (Aigbedion & Iyayi, 2007; ERA, 2012; Steiner, 2010; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2015). The response of Shell to the attacks on its record in Nigeria forms an interesting study in risk and crisis management, and crisis communication practice. The case also creates an avenue to explore moral disengagement issues in risk/crisis management practice, test existing risk/crisis models and explore organisational readiness to deal with unconventional crises/disasters. Collectively, the understanding of these issues can potentially help evaluate risk/crisis management maturity, improve risk/crisis management capability and enhance organisational resilience, advancing and validating this research aim and purpose.

## **2.2 SHELL IN NIGERIA: A BRIEF REVIEW**

The commencement of the Nigerian oil industry can be traced back to 1908 when a German corporation, the Nigerian Bitumen Corporation and British Colonial Petroleum commenced operations in Araromi (present day Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State) – South West of Nigeria. The First World War in 1914 affected oil production and exploration but oil prospecting efforts resumed in 1937 when Shell D’Arcy Petroleum (the forerunner of SPDC) was awarded the sole concessionary rights covering the whole territory of Nigeria. However,

oil exploration activities were also interrupted by the Second World War but resumed in 1947. In 1956, Shell Nigeria discovered crude oil in commercial quantities at Oloibiri (present day Bayelsa State) – Niger Delta region of Nigeria. However, actual oil production and export started in 1958. This discovery opened the oil industry in 1961 bringing in Mobil, Agip, Tenneco, Amoseas (Texaco and Chevron), Safrap (now Elf) and others oil companies (both indigenous and foreign) to join the exploration efforts both in the offshore and onshore areas of Nigeria (ERA, 2012; Steiner, 2010).

Shell Nigeria carried out operations via four subsidiaries (Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company, Shell Nigeria Gas, Shell Nigeria Oil Products and Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas) mainly through Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) Limited (Shell, 2008). SPDC is the largest fossil fuel company in Nigeria which operates over 6,000 kilometres of pipelines and flowlines, 87 flowstations, 8 natural gas plants and more than 500 producing wells (Shell, 2012). The company is an operator of the joint venture which composed of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) (55%), Shell (30%), Total S.A (10%) and Eni (5%) (Steiner, 2010). This is due to Nigerian nationalisation decree in the 1970s which compelled foreign firms to transfer certain percentage of their shares to the Nigerian public. However, Shell is responsible for the daily operations and management of the joint venture in Nigeria (Boele, Fabig, & Wheeler, 2001, p. 75).

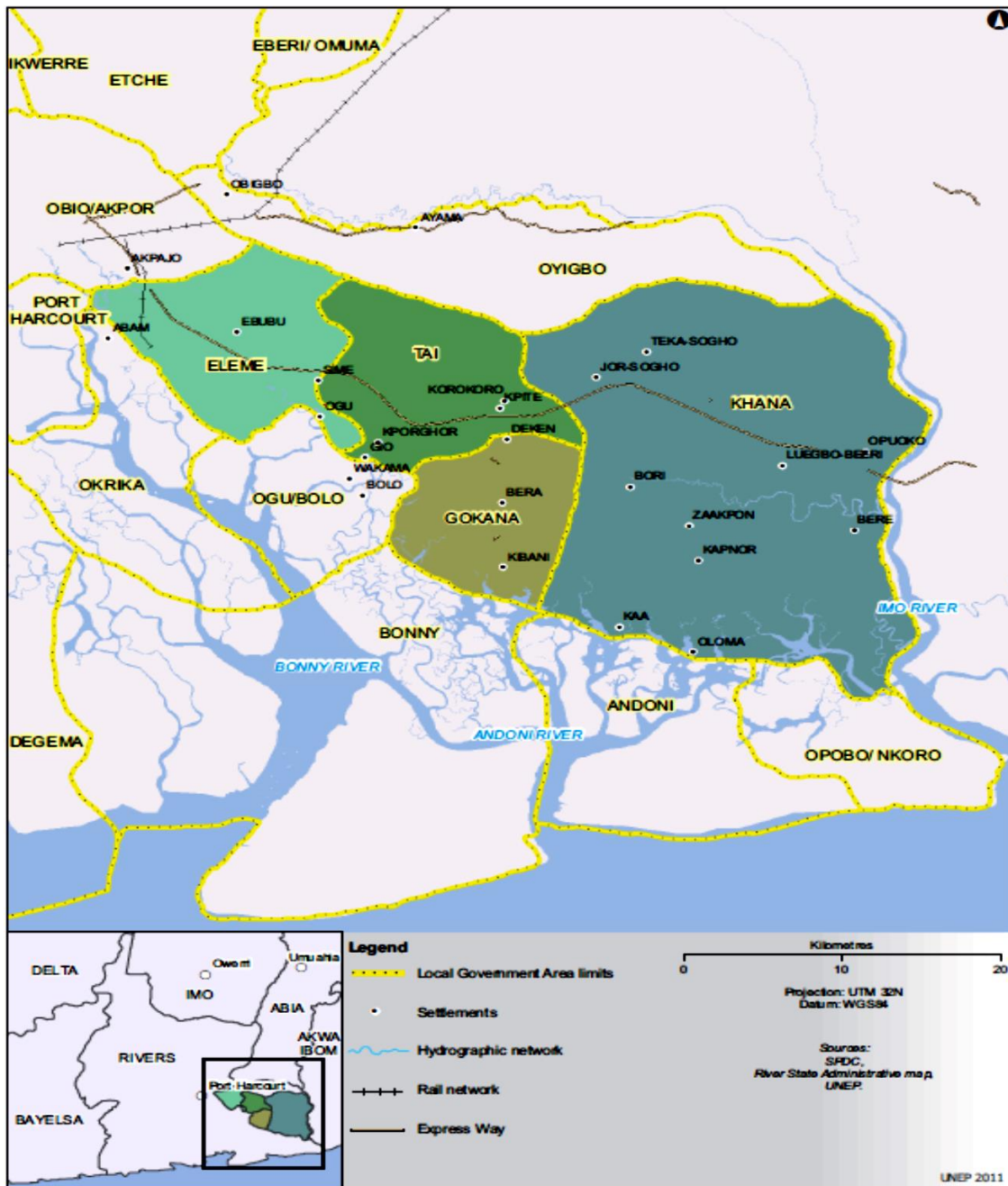
According to Shell International (1995b), Shell Nigeria operations are viewed as arguably Shell's largest and most complex exploration and production venture outside North America. There are several important challenges facing Shell Nigeria including corruption, kidnapping and vandalism, militancy and government inability to provide essential infrastructures and development in Nigeria. The local oil producing communities in the Niger Delta often demand responsible environmental behaviours and other social benefits from Shell and other multinational oil firms (Nwike, 2013; Social Action, 2009; Steiner, 2010; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). However, Shell argues that its' most effective contribution to Nigeria is through taxes and royalties they pay to the Nigerian federal government (Shell International, 1995a). The conflicting views of the different stakeholders about who is responsible for clean-up of the environment and provision of social benefits complicated risk and crisis management practice in Nigerian oil and gas sector.

### **2.3 SHELL IN OGONILAND**

The people of Ogoni mainly occupy Khana, Gokana, Tai and Eleme Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Rivers State, Nigeria (Figure 2.1) and their livelihoods are based on agriculture and fishing. The Ogonis, based on 2006 national census, numbered about 832,000 as an ethnic nation in the present Rivers State, Nigeria (UNEP, 2011, p. 32). Shell discovered oil in commercial quantities within Ogoniland in 1958 where it has since drilled 116 oil wells from twelve oilfields (UNEP, 2011, p. 24). Shell Nigeria and its joint venture partners have five major fields in Ogoniland dating from the 1960s and 1970s, each with its own flowstation (where gas is separated and flared from the oil collected from different individual wells and the oil pumped on to terminals for export). Figure 2.2 shows the oil industry infrastructure within Ogoniland. The total production potential from SPDC's Ogoni fields was estimated at 185,000 barrels per day, representing about 3 percent of SPDC's overall production in Nigeria (Nwike, 2013; Steiner, 2010; UNEP, 2011). In perspective, Shell estimates that a total of 634 million barrels of crude oil valued at US\$5.2 billion were produced from Ogoniland until 1993 but argues that 79% of the amount were paid via taxes, royalties and equity to the Nigerian federal government (Boele et al., 2001).

However, it is essential to state that Chevron Nigeria Ltd also operated on smaller scale until 1993 when oil exploration and production were suspended in Ogoniland. Therefore, because of decades of oil exploration and production in Ogoniland, the local environment was degraded due to constant gas flaring, oil spillages, and pollution arising from Shell's operation (UNEP, 2011). Local environmental activists such as Ken Saro-Wiwa argued that the environment in Ogoniland had been completely devastated by three decades of reckless oil exploitation or ecological warfare by Shell (Beole et al., 2001; Ekpu, 1996; Ikporukpo, 2004; Eweje, 2006). Although, Shell refuted these allegations of environmental devastation in Ogoniland and other areas where it operates in the Niger Delta as simply untrue (Shell Report, 2011; 2012). Yet, in critical context, a recent commission of inquiry estimated that it would take more than 30 years to clean-up the damages to the environment and local people sources of livelihoods in Ogoniland (UNEP, 2011).

Figure 2.1: Map of Ogoniland Showing Eleme, Tai, Gokana and Khana LGAs



Source: UNEP (2011)

Figure 2.2: Oil Industry Infrastructure within Ogoniland



Source: UNEP (2011)

## **2.4 EVENTS OF THE SHELL & Ogoni CRISIS**

The events of the Shell and Ogoni crisis started in December 1992 when MOSOP sent demands notice with an ultimatum to Shell, Chevron, and NNPC to pay back royalties and compensation for environmental damages and degradation in Ogoniland within 30 days or quit operations in the area. The non-compliance with MOSOP demands resulted into a mass non-violent protest which was attended by thousands of Ogoni people on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1993 (Boele et al., 2001; Steiner, 2010). This date has been described as the “Ogoni Day” and widely celebrated among the Ogonis every year (Boele et al., 2001; Ereba & Dumpe, 2010). The main purpose of the protest was to draw national and global attentions to the environmental devastation and extreme pollution in Ogoniland (as shown in Figure 2.3) which have affected their livelihood for decades (Nwike, 2013; UNEP, 2011; Pyagbara, 2010). As a result, Shell was put under pressure from the Ogonis and finally forced to pull out and withdrawal its staff from Ogoniland in January 1993. In fact, Shell cited intimidation and attacks on its staff as the main reason for ceasing production at its Ogoni facilities (Shell, 2008; Shell Report, 2012).

However, the Ogoni protest against environmental pollution by oil companies provoked a military crackdown (Boele et al., 2001; Nwike, 2013). Following a successful military coup in November 1993, which placed General Sani Abacha in power, this repression became more severe in which Ken Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders were detained (Boele et al., 2001; Social Action, 2009). The Nigerian government specifically created a military unit called the Rivers State Internal Security Task Force (RSISTF) in January 1994 to deal with the Ogoni crisis. But, there are several reports (e.g., ERA, 2012; Eweje, 2006; Social Action, 2009; Steiner, 2010; UNEP, 2011) of human right violations, detentions, harassment, and extrajudicial executions of MOSOP activists. Also, security forces were accused of promoting violent clashes between the Ogoni and neighbouring ethnic groups (Ibeanu, 2000; Nwike, 2013).

In perspective, the Head of RSISTF was quoted to have made claims that they were acting on Shell’s behalf so that oil production could resume and that they had been risking their lives in order to protect Shell installations and infrastructures in Ogoniland (Boele et al., 2001). However, Shell group has refuted these claims noting these allegations were simply untrue (Shell Report, 2010; 2011; 2012). The event of May 1994 involving the death of four prominent Ogoni leaders associated with a faction of MOSOP who was considered as government collaborators resulted in the immediate arrest of Ken Saro-Wiwa and several other Ogoni activists on charges of murder and incitement to murder (Boele et al., 2001).



Albeit, there was lack of credible evidence to connect them to the deaths (Boele et al., 2001; Nwike, 2013; Pyagbara, 2010). Nonetheless, sixteen members of the MOSOP leadership were put on trial and nine of them including Ken Saro-Wiwa were eventually convicted and sentenced to death by a special military tribunal established for the case (Boele et al., 2001). These ‘Ogoni nine’ were summarily executed on November 10, 1995 without the right to appeal the decision. Furthermore, several other MOSOP activists were detained in Port Harcourt prison without charge for several days and months, sometimes in deteriorating health, until September 1998 (Nwike, 2013; Social Action, 2009; Ibeanu, 2000). The death of Nigerian president General Sani Abacha in June 1998 helped reduce the level of repression in Ogoniland. Therefore, MOSOP has often organise events to coincide with January 4<sup>th</sup> as Ogoni Day and November 10<sup>th</sup> the anniversary of the execution (Boele et al., 2001). In fact, MOSOP and other local environmental and human rights activists, following military crackdown on protesters against Shell activities, continue to make allegations that Shell colluded with the Nigerian military during and after the crisis (ERA, 2012; Social Action, 2009; Nwike, 2013; Pyagbara, 2010; Steiner, 2010).

A useful insight into the crisis can be gained from a leaked internal Nigerian government memorandum in May 1994 which noted that ruthless military operations were needed for oil production to resume in Ogoniland and that oil companies including Shell should be pressured to bear the cost (Boele et al., 2001). Although the authenticity of the document was questioned by the Nigerian government officials and Shell also disassociated itself from the contents (Shell Report, 2009; 2010; 2012). Nonetheless, there were claims that members of the Nigerian mobile police force attached to Shell facilities and paid for by Shell, were involved in dehumanisation and intimidation of protesters during 1993 and 1994 protest over Shell’s activities in Ogoniland (Boele et al., 2001; Nwike, 2013). All these claims and allegations were refuted by Shell (Shell, 2009; Shell Report, 2012). Similarly, Shell denied any direct collusion with the Nigerian government authorities but later admitted having made direct payments to the Nigerian security forces during the crisis (Shell Report, 2010; 2011).

But, critics continue to argue that such payments were and remain a regularly practice among multinational oil companies in Nigeria (Alaba & Ifeola, 2011; Bassey, 2008; Ibeanu, 2000; Steiner, 2010; Pyagbara, 2010). Notwithstanding, Shell continue to emphasise its roles and contributions to the Nigerian federal government and corporate social responsibility in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Shell Report, 2007; 2008; 2010; 2012). In conclusion, there were conflicting views about what happened in the Shell and Ogoni crisis (Boele et al., 2001;

Bassey, 2008; Emmanuel, 2010; ERA, 2012; Ibeanu, 2000; Nwike, 2013; UNEP, 2011; Social Action, 2009; Steiner, 2010). These conflicting accounts of the crisis complicated the risk and crisis management efforts of Shell Nigeria. The crisis provides opportunities to evaluate current risk and crisis management practice in part because of the hidden ethical risks and moral disengagement.

**Figure 2.3: Shell Pipelines in Okirika - neighbouring Ogoni Communities**



Source: UNEP (2011)

## **2.5 ROLE OF MEDIA AND SHELL'S RESPONSE**

The Nigerian local media and other international media regularly painted Shell as an unethical organisation and a supporter of dictators in Nigeria during the crisis (Boele et al., 2001; Ibeanu, 2000; Nwike, 2013). In fact, following the death of the 'Ogoni nine', Shell became an object of ethical analysis in the media and questions were raised about how far should a multinational corporation in nations with unstable democratic systems go in pursuit of profits (McElvoy, 1996; Nwike, 2013; Steiner, 2010). A few reports suggested that Shell had been in negotiation for the import of arms for use by the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) during the crisis (Boele et al., 2001; Emmanuel, 2010; Steiner, 2010; Pyagbara, 2010). Shell responded to these

allegations by noting that it had indeed imported side arms on behalf of the NPF and that the last time weapons were purchased was 15 years before 1993 (Shell, 2009; 2011).

However, court papers filed in Lagos in July 1995 showed that Shell was negotiating for the purchase of weapons for the NPF as at February 1995 (Boele et al., 2001). Shell claimed that these arms were for use against general crime and vandalism to oil infrastructures in the Niger Delta. In fact, Shell acknowledged that it had conducted these arms negotiations but stated that none of the purchases had been concluded while noting:

*“[We] cannot give an undertaking not to provide weapons in the future, as, due to the deteriorating security situation in Nigeria, we may want to see the weapons currently used by the Police who protect Shell people and property upgraded.”* (Human Rights Watch, 1999, p. 14).

During the trials of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogonis, Shell came under increased pressure both within and outside Nigeria to intervene on behalf of the accused during the trial and after conviction of the Ogoni nine (Boele et al., 2001; Vidal, 1995; Robinson, 1996). However, Shell initial response was that it would be dangerous and wrong to intervene in the trial process or even have the court judgement against the Ogoni nine overturned (Human Rights Watch, 1999). Specifically, Shell claimed that that “a commercial organisation like Shell cannot and must never interfere with the legal processes of any sovereign state.” (Human Rights Watch, 1999, p. 10). In fact, Shell criticises those who advocate public condemnation of Nigerian government actions and suggested that quiet diplomacy is the most appropriate course of action during the crisis (Boele et al., 2001; Vidal, 1995; Robinson, 1996).

Nevertheless, as pressure mounted, Shell sent letter to the Nigerian president General Sani Abacha on November 9, 1995 after the conviction of the Ogoni nine, pleading for clemency and commutation of the death sentences against Ken Saro-Wiwa and his co-accused on humanitarian grounds (Human Rights Watch, 1999; Shell Report, 2010; 2011). At the same time, Shell explicitly denied that this intervention was a comment on the proceedings of the tribunal (Shell Report, 2008; 2010; 2012). The company also reaffirmed that as a multinational company to interfere in such processes such as the Ogoni nine case, whether political or legal, in any country would be wrong.” (Human Rights Watch, 1999; Shell Report, 2008). Despite Shell’s response, there were mounting pressures from local and international campaigns such as Human Rights Watch and Environmental Rights Action to boycott Shell’s products in Europe and the United States (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

These campaigns and pressures had affected Shell's reputation and create trust deficit among all relevant stakeholders in Nigeria (Social Action, 2009; Pyagbara, 2010). In context, Shell realise that its corporate image had been damaged because of its statements claiming that human rights concerns are not for business to get involved with (though its share price was not significantly affected) (Human Rights Watch, 1999). Thus, Shell adjusted its public position earlier made in the early 1996 and reaffirmed on several occasions its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights while continuing to state that it could not comment on any specific case (Shell, 2008; Shell Report, 2010; 2012). However as local communities and activists continue pressure and agitations in the Niger Delta because of the Ogoni crisis, Shell was forced to respond (ERA, 2012; Ibeanu, 2000; Social Action, 2009; Pyagbara, 2010).

Therefore, in May 1996, in response to concerns about the Ogoni nine, Shell stated: "*The Nigerian Government has a duty to investigate the murder of the four Ogoni leaders. And if those investigations lead to the arrest and trial of suspects, then no-one has the right to oppose due legal process. But trials must be fair. And they must be seen to be fair.*" (Human Rights Watch, 1999, p. 16). Yet, Shell's responses were insufficient to resolve the crisis due to claims by local communities and activists that there had been no change in the company's behaviour on the ground (ERA, 2012; Social Action, 2009; Steiner, 2010; TRIP Report, 1999). This is despite Shell's commitment to clean-up polluted sites across Ogoniland and upholding good corporate behaviour in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Shell Report, 2010; 2011; 2012).

## **2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

The issue of environmental stewardship is central to the Shell – Ogoni crisis. Shell's reputation and corporate image largely depends on whether local people view the company as a responsible corporate organisation. Although Shell has shown its commitment to corporate social responsibility (Shell Report, 2009; 2011; 2012), environmental responsibility and ethical corporate behaviour requires more than a statement of commitment. Quite importantly, for Shell, a return to Ogoniland would be a powerful symbol that its corporate commitment to be a socially responsible company is being translated into action in Nigeria (Pyagbara, 2010). However, there is still little trust between the company and the Ogoni people and their representative organisation, MOSOP (ERA, 2012; Shell Report, 2012). This is due partly to destruction of farmland and water pollution which affects sources of livelihoods because the Ogonis were, and are, still largely depend on farming and fishing for their livelihoods (UNEP, 2011). In fact, the Ogonis regarded their land, before the commencement of oil exploration and

production in the 1960s, as the ‘breadbasket’ of the region (Boele, 1995). The oil infrastructures are intertwined with local houses, not least because oil wells and residential homes are located a few metres apart in some extreme cases (Figure 2.4).

**Figure 2.4: A house constructed on a well pad (Yorla 9, Khana LGA)**



Source: UNEP (2011)

## **2.7 THE RESOURCE CURSE AND SHELL’S ROLES**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) found that oil exploration and production in Ogoniland affect the environment and impact on sources of livelihoods of the local people (UNEP, 2011). In fact, the Ogonis claimed that Shell has devastated their environment since its operations in 1958 (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a; MOSOP Canada, 1998c). In addition, Shell was also accused by MOSOP of specific acts of organised corporate and environmental irresponsibility in the Niger Delta (Boele et al., 2001). In perspective, local activists believed that these organised environmental irresponsibility manifest in form of constant operational oil spills, gas flaring, land use, water pollution and deforestation to pave way for oil pipelines across the region (ERA, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 1999; Social Action, 2009).

Shell acknowledges that there were environmental impacts but sought to put these into a wider context of over-population, over-farming, deforestation and industrialisation (Shell

International, 1995c). Nonetheless, the Ogonis argued that Shell's equipment is out-dated because it was poorly maintained over the years and noting that this led to numerous spills across the Niger Delta (Saro-Wiwa, 1995a; MOSOP Canada, 1998c). By contrast, Shell noted that the Ogonis were very active saboteurs as 69% of all spills within Ogoniland between 1989 and 1994 were due to sabotage (in comparison to 28% for the rest of the Niger Delta) (Shell International, 1995c). This claim has been rejected by the Ogonis and other environmental activists (Boele et al., 2001; ERA, 2012) because there was never independent assessment of the oil activities in Ogoniland until 2011 (UNEP, 2011).

During the escalation period of the crisis, oil spills which were never cleaned or partially cleaned remain a crucial source of the unresolved conflict between Shell and the Ogonis. In fact, local people in Ogoniland believed that Shell often claimed that oil spills were due to sabotage to avoid paying compensation (ERA, 2012; Social Action, 2009). This is because under the Nigerian law, oil companies are not obliged to pay compensation for oil spillages which occurred because of sabotage (Steiner, 2010). The Ogonis believed that Nigerian government depended on oil money for survival and Shell depended on profit for survival (Boele et al., 2001). This sentiment was also expressed during the trial of Ken Saro-Wiwa: *The military dictatorship holds down oil-producing areas such as Ogoni by military decrees and the threat of or actual use of physical violence so that Shell can wage its ecological war without hindrance and so produce the oil and petrodollars as well as the international and diplomatic support upon which the military dictatorship depends*" (Saro-Wiwa, 1995b) cited in Human Rights Watch (1999, p. 16).

Specifically, Shell was accused of always seeking and assisting the intervention of the Nigerian security forces when confronted with protest by the local oil producing communities (Duodu, 1996; Human Rights Watch/Africa, 1995; Vidal, 1995; Human Rights Watch, 1999; Robinson, 1996). Therefore, the Ogonis argued that Shell maintained a 'special' relationship with the Nigerian government. Human Rights Watch/Africa noted that: *'Because the abuses set in motion by Shell's reliance on military protection in Ogoniland continue, Shell cannot absolve itself of responsibility for the acts of the military . . . The Nigerian military's defence of Shell's installations had become so intertwined with its repression of minorities in the oil-producing areas that Shell cannot reasonably sever the two'* (Human Rights Watch/Africa, 1995, p. 10).

## 2.8 CRISIS COMMUNICATION FAILURE

The evidence from numerous accounts of the Shell and Ogoni crisis pointed to communication breakdown between Shell and the Ogoni people. In perspective, Shell's difficulty in recognising the role of MOSOP and inability to communicate effectively with local community was noted (Boele et al., 2001; Pyagbara, 2010). According to Boele (1995), Shell's crisis communication was very poor during the crisis. It was noted that Shell also failed to engage MOSOP which represents the bulk of the Ogoni community but instead chose to work with some selected conservative Ogoni leaders. There are reports that adequate communication between MOSOP and Shell would have prevented the ensuing crisis (e.g., ERA, 2012; Social Action, 2009). Shell initial crisis communication response was arguably understandable because efforts were directed at mitigating any potential reputational damages and minimise potential for litigation.

However, much of the crisis communication strategies were that of denial, attribution of blame, distortion of the consequences and displacement of responsibility (Boele, 1995; Frynas, 2000; Robinson, 1996; Steiner, 2012; Vidal, 1995). Had good risk/crisis communication strategies rooted in ethical and moral principles existed such as discussed at 4.7 and Chapter Five, Shell crisis management team may have altered their thinking and perhaps change their communication strategies. The local communities however highlighted the impossibility of Shell to engage and communicate with them such that legitimate concerns over ecological devastations are addressed (Boele et al., 2001; ERA, 2012; Pyagbara, 2010). A useful insight can be gained from the closing statement made by Ken Saro-Wiwa during the trial of the Ogoni nine:

*'Shell is here on trial [. . .] The Company has ducked this particular trial, but its day will surely come and the lessons learnt here may prove useful to it for there is no doubt in my mind that the ecological war the Company has waged in the Delta will be called to question sooner rather than later. . .'* (Saro-Wiwa, 1995b) cited in Human Rights Watch (1999, p. 10).

The lack or inadequate communication between Shell and MOSOP leading to escalation of the crisis draws worldwide condemnation of Shell (Frynas, 2000; Wheeler, 1995; O'Sullivan, 1995; Hammer, 1996). One school of thought is that Shell should have engaged with MOSOP to resolve the ensuing crisis (Boele et al., 2001). Alternative schools of thought believed that MOSOP do not represent the sole organisation and representation of the entire Ogoni people (Shell, 2008). However, research suggested that Shell's crisis communication team during the crisis incubation period misdirected their messages; and misplaced the real issue of



environmental degradation and pollution in Ogoniland (Boele et al., 2001; Steiner, 2010). This is an issue that most indigenes of Niger Delta recognised and deeply shared as responsible for the crisis within the region (Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2015). The concern was shared as early as 1986 by Ken Saro-Wiwa when he wrote that “*We refuse to accept that the only responsibility which Shell-BP owes our nation is the spoliation of our lands [ . . . ]*” Saro-Wiwa (1995a) cited in Human Rights Watch (1999, p. 11). Regardless of what local people believed however, Shell operates in a complex and turbulent environment in Nigeria. Thus, it is possible that Shell cannot be strictly responsible for the demands of local people in the Niger Delta.

## **2.9 EMERGING ISSUES AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are five strategic emerging issues arising from the Shell and Ogoni crisis. Firstly, the crisis reveals there was greater reluctance to proactively engage with, or discuss, ethical issues in risk/crisis situations. Accordingly, risk and crisis management plans and capabilities were mainly directed at reducing damages to corporate reputation and minimise disruption to business operations and continuities within the Niger Delta. This implies that all indispensable issues that would enhance robust risk/crisis management decisions, to mitigate or reduce the effects of Niger Delta crises and strengthen organisational resilience were not completely integrated within crisis management strategies or responses. In context, those involved in the management of the crises clearly demonstrated failure of imagination and lack of readiness to such unconventional crises.

Secondly, the Nigerian crisis and disaster management systems were largely set up so that local and state governments are responsible for initial disaster/crisis management response. The accounts of the crisis clearly indicate corporate organisations such as Shell play a significant role in funding the operations of emergency/crisis responders in the Niger Delta (Boele, 1995; Boele et al., 2001; Robinson, 1996; Frynas, 1999, 2000). However, given the unconventional or ill-structured nature of the crisis, it was clear that multinational organisations such as Shell need to take practical measures and responsibilities to reduce environmental damages arising from their operations.

Thirdly, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) responsible for coordinating and managing disasters in Nigeria was largely absent in ensuring the clean-up of polluted sites across the Niger Delta. The potential implications of this should be considered because local communities and indigenes do not have resources to embark upon disaster mitigation.



Fourthly, despite all the corporate activity in Shell International, one of the MOSOP leaders Ledum Mitee was still forced to conclude in November 1998 that: “Shell – the organisation which promised to balance principles with profit – has not made a single concession to help bring about the peace and reconciliation it says it wants to see. I have a simple question for the Directors of Shell: when will you balance principles with practice in Ogoni” (MOSOP International Secretariat, 1998). In context, because of Shell’s US\$16 million advertising campaign, environmental activists argued that Shell should spend its money cleaning up its mess in Nigeria and not its image (Essential Action, 1999). Although Shell was thought to be strong on the environment, ethical issues and committed to human rights (Boele et al., 2001). Nonetheless, the commitment to doing something right is not necessarily the same as getting them right. Thus, it is essential that senior managers and leaders responsible for managing risks/crises embrace all-inclusive strategies in which local risk perceptions are not discounted but formed part of the risk/crisis management plans and strategies.

Finally, Shell noted in 1998 that all ‘past impacted areas’ will be rehabilitated by the end of 2003 (SPDC, 1998e). However, to date, the impacted areas within Ogoniland and other places across Niger Delta are yet to appropriately clean-up as recommended by the UNEP commission of inquiry in 2011 (UNEP, 2011). In conclusion, the events of crisis suggest that multinational oil companies are judged by how they act and not what they intend to do across the Niger Delta.

## **2.10 THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP) COMMISSION REPORT AND CONCLUSION**

The case of Shell Nigeria and the Ogoni people provides many beneficial lessons for businesses seeking to operate successfully and ethically in developing countries such as Nigeria. This case shows how risk management failure especially over-reliance on established risk/crisis models can escalate instead of ameliorate emerging unconventional crises. In addition, the case reveals how contextual factors such as culture and resource control can mediate risk and crisis management practice in Nigeria. On the other hand, the case typically shows how emotionally induced-crisis can escalate and further suggests that facts are not enough in risk/crisis management and that perceptions clearly matter. This implies that local risk perception is at least an essential part of unconventional risk and crisis management.

However, the broad themes identified from the case include lack of consensus about the proximate cause of the crisis, lack of engagement with local people, physical security including

terrorism and kidnapping issues, communication issues and moral disengagement problems among all stakeholders. These issues are also seen in the next case study at Chapter Three of this research, highlighting the necessity for the research conducted here and the values to the wider risk/crisis management practice. Given the lack of independent scientific evidence on the extent of damages caused by oil exploration and production across the Niger Delta, especially in Ogoniland, the Nigerian federal government invited the UNEP to conduct a comprehensive study which was completed in 2011 (UNEP, 2011). Nevertheless, the UNEP commission of inquiry did not consider the social, cultural and ethical issues of the crisis. This is an important omission which could have vital implications for resolving the unconventional crises in the Niger Delta. Therefore, the report of the UNEP may have reproduced some of the errors in Shell's own internal reports and accounts of the crisis (Shell Report, 2005; 2007; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2012).

In conclusion, the UNEP reported that pollution from over 50 years of oil operations in the Niger Delta region has penetrated further and deeper than many may have supposed (UNEP, 2011). Therefore, it is not surprising that the commission of inquiry proposed an initial sum of US\$1 billion to cover the first five years of clean-up operations within Ogoniland. It was noted that clean-up operations and sustainable recovery of Ogoniland could take 25 to 30 years and will require long term financing of \$30 billion (UNEP, 2011). This clearly show the need for comprehensive strategies which involves all stakeholders and take account of both technical and normative issues. The moral and ethical risks involved in the crisis were unexplored in existing research and the broader implications for sustainable and ethical risk management were neglected. This is an area of the Shell – Ogoni crisis which is central to this thesis. The following chapter will discuss the second case study of Chevron – Ilaje crisis to build on the knowledge and lessons gained here, to inform this thesis recommendations.

## CHAPTER THREE

### CASE STUDY TWO: ENVIRONMENTAL VICTIMS: THE CHEVRON NIGERIA – ILAJE CRISIS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The case of Chevron – Ilaje crisis is presented to form part of the foundational case studies to explore risk and crisis management practice. The detailed accounts and controversial implications are presented for managerial lessons and practical application. Undoubtedly, both the lessons learned and not learnt from the case will ultimately have far reaching future implications on risk and crisis management models. In context, it is intended that organisations could use this case as well as the Shell – Ogoni crisis to improve decision making in risk, crisis and disaster situations. The case study of Chevron & Ilaje crisis is based on original reports produced by Human Rights Watch, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Earth Rights International, Chevron Corporate Responsibility Reports 1999-2013, and the transcripts of landmark human rights case of *Bowoto vs. Chevron 99-2506*.

The Ilajes were environmental victims, as Turner & Brownhill (2004, p. 70) concurs, due to extreme environmental conditions affecting their living standards. The events of Chevron – Ilaje crisis began on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1998 when an estimated 300,000 barrels of crude oil from Chevron’s Deepwater Ewan oil field spilled into the environment across Ilaje riverine communities (ERA, 1998). The use of military forces by multinational oil companies to suppress and harm protesters over environmental degradation had altered Chevron’s reputation and so its ethical business practice and moral responsibility was questioned. The management of unconventional crises cannot be devoid of moral consideration (Andrew, 2011; Bandura, 2007; Lagadec, 2005; Reza, 2011; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015), something which was neglected in the Chevron – Ilaje crisis. It is because of this that Chevron – Ilaje crisis is central to any discussion on risk/crisis management in developing countries such as Nigeria and why it is crucial to include this case study in this thesis.

The Chevron and Ilaje crisis, as reflected in the *Bowoto vs. Chevron* case, could reasonably be argued to have altered the way multinational companies operate in Nigeria. The crisis was emotionally triggered but intensified due to risk underestimation, militarisation approach in crisis management responses, and inability to engage local oil producing communities in Nigeria. The leading plaintiffs’ experts’ witness, during the *Bowoto vs. Chevron* trial, notes

that: during the successive military regimes of the 1990s, and especially in the period of the Sani Abacha government between 1993 and 1998, the Nigerian government security forces engaged in a course of conduct involving a pattern of violent repression of individuals and communities who organised to oppose or protest aspects of petroleum development in the Niger Delta, and of individuals and communities who were alleged or perceived to be associated with such opposition (Illston, 2007).

It is important that clarifications on the difficult position of multinational oil companies operating in Nigeria are made. The Oputa Commission when examining multinational oil companies' activities in Nigeria concluded that the oil companies' "interest became State interest" which must be protected. This logically led to the systematic and generalized violations and abuses which occurred in the Niger Delta during the dark period of military rule in Nigeria as detailed in the Oputa Commission Report (ERA, 1998; Illston, 2007). The political, cultural, economic and legal environment of the local communities, national and international levels complicates the crises in the Niger Delta (Turner & Brownhill, 2004). This brings to light the issue of standardisation or adaptation of risk and crisis management models. This is another reason for the inclusion of the Chevron – Ilaje crisis case study within this thesis. This chapter will now consider background of oil prospect in Ilaje, history and activities of Chevron in Nigeria, its risk management assurance and events of the crisis facing Chevron in Ilaje. The chapter will move on to explore Chevron's initial response and the subsequent crisis management response. It is intended that lessons identified and learned here could be useful to other organisations when responding to unconventional crisis and developing capabilities for resilience.

### **3.2 ILAJE IN CONTEXT: HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF OIL PROSPECT AND IMPACT**

Ilajeland is located along the Atlantic coast of Nigeria between longitude 4°28' and 5°1' east of the Greenwich Meridian and latitude 5°51' and 6°21' north of the Equator (Ololajulo, 2009, p. 4). Ilaje local government area covers an area of 3,000 km<sup>2</sup> and therefore remain the largest LGA in Ondo State in terms of its landmass (Figure 3.1). The area has a shoreline covering about 180 km thereby making Ondo State, a state with the longest coastline in Nigeria (Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Fatusin et al., 2010).

**Figure 3.1: Map of Nigeria Showing Ondo State and Ilaje LGA**



Source: Mafimisebi & Ogbonna (2016)

According to the 2006 National Population Census, Ilaje LGA has a population of 290,615 people. Ilajeland is predominantly fishing communities with over 90 percent of the people involved in fishing directly or indirectly within the area. The Ilajes are a distinguished and distinct linguistic group of Yoruba people and made of four traditional geo-political entities namely Mahin, Ugbo, Etikan and Aheri (Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). The people of Ilaje speak indigenous dialect of Ilaje (Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Fatusin et al., 2010).

The Nigerian Bitumen Corporation (a German firm) was the first to prospect for oil and found oil at Araromi, Ilaje Local Government Area (ILGA) of Ondo State, Nigeria in 1908. However,

the outbreak of World War I and II disrupted oil exploration and production activities in Nigeria. However, in 1952, oil was later discovered at Ogogoro, ILGA, Ondo State of Nigeria but oil production could not commence due to insufficient quantity for commercial sales (Bayode, Adewunmi, & Odunwole, 2011). Modern oil and gas exploration and production began in Ilajeland in 1967 and the activities has been predominantly dominated by Chevron Nigeria. As at 2005, many oil and gas companies including oil servicing organisations are dispersed across Ilaje communities. A number of these oil companies include Chevron Nigeria Limited, Shell Petroleum Development Company, Conoco Energy Nigeria Limited, Express Petroleum & Gas Company, Cronicle, Consolidated Oil & Allied Energy, Agip Oil Nigeria Limited, Atlas Oil Company, Oil & Industrial Services Limited, Cavendish Oil Company, and Global Pipeline (Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016).

Chevron Nigeria, for example, operates in 42 communities across Ilajeland. Although, Chevron is the main oil company operating within the Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria (Fatusin, Afolabi & Adetula, 2010, p. 189). The company had its first oil field, Meren oil Field, within Ilajeland in November 1968. Consequently, operations seem to have spread to other oil fields such as Parabe and Malu oil fields in February and March 1971, Opuekeba flow station in October 1993, the Esan oil field in February 1997, and the Opolo and Ewan oil fields in March 1997, and some other oil fields that were later returned to Ilaje such as Tsekelewu (Bayode et al., 2011; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). There are more than twenty-five different gas flaring stations within Ilajeland which include Mahin 1, Mahin 2, Odofado, Odonla, Ago, Ikorigho, Molutehin, Jiringho, Meren, Parabe, Malu, Isan, Opolo, Ewan, Opuekeba, Okagba, Tapa, Mejo, Omuro, Ojumole, Opuama, Bela, Eko, Obe and Tsekelewu oil fields (Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Fatusin et al., 2010). In all these flow stations, gas flaring and other oil production activities are going on but Ibeanu (2000), Ikporukpo (2004), Omeje (2005) and Ovuakporaye (2012) argued that these activities are harming the environment and have adverse effects on human health within the area.

### **3.3 CHEVRON NIGERIA: HISTORY AND ACTIVITIES**

Chevron began doing business in Nigeria in 1913 when Texaco products were first marketed in the country (Chevron Nigeria Fact Sheet, 2012). However, following the Nigerian Indigenization Decree of 1978 which was designed to raise the level of Nigeria participation in business, Chevron divested 40 percent of its shareholding to the Nigerian public while

retaining 60 percent equity in Chevron Oil Nigeria Plc. In energy exploration and production, Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) obtained oil prospecting license and began business in Nigeria in 1961. In 1963, American Overseas Petroleum Limited – which later became Texaco Overseas (Nigeria) Petroleum Company, discovered oil at the Koluama Field, offshore Nigeria. In the same year, Chevron Nigeria Limited started drilling near the Escravos River and found the Okan Field (Chevron Nigeria Fact Sheet, 2012).

Most notably, Chevron Nigeria is the third-largest oil producer in Nigeria and one of its largest investors, spending more than \$3 billion annually (Chevron, 2012). The company operates in Ondo, Delta, Rivers, Imo and Akwa Ibom States of Nigeria under a Joint Venture Contract (JVC) arrangement with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) (60% stake in the NNPC/Chevron Joint Venture) and has assets on land, swamp and near-offshore concessions covering approximately 2.2 million acres (8,900 sq km) in the Niger Delta region. Chevron Nigeria holds a 40 per cent interest in 13 concessions under the JVC arrangement with the NNPC. In 2011, total daily production of Chevron in Nigeria averaged 516,000 barrels of crude oil (232,000 net), 343 million cubic feet of natural gas (142 million net) and 11,000 barrels of liquefied petroleum gas (4,000 net) (Chevron, 2011).

Chevron has general interests in Deepwater oil projects in Nigeria and was the first to develop the Okan Field – Nigeria’s first successful offshore oil field in March 1965 at Escravos River, about 11km into the Atlantic Ocean (Chevron, 2012). The Agbami Field which is one of Nigeria’s largest Deepwater discoveries was developed by Chevron with a 67.3 percent interest in the field (Chevron, 2011). Agbami Field was discovered in 1998 at a water depth of approximately 4,800 feet (1,463 m). Chevron also has an interest in another Deepwater development, the Usan Field which began production in 2012. Chevron has interests ranging from 18 percent to 100 percent in 10 Deepwater blocks in offshore Nigeria (Chevron Nigeria Fact Sheet, 2012). The activities of Chevron Nigeria are discussed within the following sub-sections.

### **3.3.1 PROTECTING PEOPLE AND ENVIRONMENT**

According to Chevron (2012), managing operational risk is a commitment to protect people and the environment which includes developing energy safely and reliably. In 2013, Chevron stated that “we strive to develop a culture in which everyone believes that all incidents are

preventable and that zero incidents are achievable. Our priorities every day are to get our employees and contractors home safe and to protect the environment.” (Chevron Social Responsibility Report, 2013, p. 4). It is not entirely clear whether these commitments automatically translate into protecting the local people in areas where Chevron operates in Nigeria. This observation was made based on extensive reviews of Chevron social responsibility reports over 15 years which raises serious concerns about environmental pollution and degradation in Nigeria (Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016).

Chevron Nigeria manages its risks by applying policies, processes and technologies to maintain focus on having zero incidents (Chevron SRR, 2013). However, there have been several cases of oil spill from Chevron oil fields in Niger Delta; for example, the total number of oil spill cases recorded was 8,054 in 2009; 9,584 in 2010; and 10,164 in 2011 from Chevron Nigeria operation in the Niger Delta (Chevron SRR, 2013, p. 10). These oil spills are indicative of the how Chevron’s activities might be harming the environment and affecting sources of livelihood in Niger Delta (Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). Although, Chevron constantly argues that its commitment to environmental issues are captured in its four environmental principles that define such environmental responsibility: (1) we include the environment in decision making, (2) reduce our environmental footprint, (3) operate responsibly, and (4) steward our sites (Chevron SRR, 2013).

### **3.3.2 CHEVRON OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (OEMS)**

Chevron has an OEMS model believed to be a comprehensive and proven means of systematic management of process safety, personal safety and health, the environment, reliability, and efficiency (Chevron SRR, 2013). It is through the application of OEMS that Chevron identifies risks and integrates operational excellence processes, standards, procedures and behaviours into daily operations. The OEMS is aligned with ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001, and the Center for Chemical Process Safety’s Guidelines for Risk Based Process Safety. However, questions have been raised in this thesis about whether risk management practice should be standardised or adapted to the local condition in which an organisation operates.



### **3.3.3 RISK MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE**

The risk management assurance statement of Chevron is “fulfilling our goal involves managing the risks inherent in our industry. We work tirelessly to mitigate those risks, even as the scale and complexity of our projects continue to increase. Fulfilling our goal also involves a commitment to responsible and ethical behaviour, which is embedded in our system of values. The expectations of our stockholders, our partners and communities have never been higher. They expect that we will live up to these values and that we will achieve our results the right way. We understand that the stakes are high and the tolerance is low for events that affect people and the environment. We are working to eliminate incidents. Managing risk and executing with excellence are critical to our company’s success. Equally critical are the stability and vitality of the countries and communities where we operate. Chevron operates in some of the most challenging, complex and dynamic places in the world. In many locations, communities must confront critical and economic issues including access to health care, education and the resources needed for sustained prosperity” (Chevron SRR, 2012, p. 2).

The Chevron Social Responsibility Report (SRR) (2012; 2013) revealed how the organisation progresses toward world-class performance in Operational Excellence, highlighting how the organisation builds a consistent safety culture, manages Deepwater risk, eliminates flares, protects biodiversity in global operations and improves the livelihoods of communities near its operations. These efforts are guided by the organisation Operational Excellence Management System which aligns with international standards for safety and environmental performance. One observation based on review of existing Chevron’s social responsibility reports is that its risk management assurance could have been overrated. This is because despite Chevron’s strong risk management assurance, local communities in the Niger Delta continue to have endless crises with the organisation (Fatusin et al., 2011; Eweje, 2005; Ogbodo, 2009; Ologunorisa, 2001; Ololajulo, 2009; Turner & Brownhill, 2004).

### **3.3.4 PEACE AND SECURITY**

Chevron has reviewed its approach to environmental protests and engagement with local oil producing communities in Nigeria. In 2005, Chevron Nigeria adopted a new approach to community engagement in the Niger Delta to encourage local participation in determining the needs its programs should address (Chevron SRR, 2012). This model is called the Global

Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) and gives communities a greater role in managing their development through Regional Development Committees. The main objective of the model is to bring peace and stability to areas where Chevron operates in Nigeria. Chevron provided seed-funding in 2010 for the Niger Delta Partnership Initiative (NDPI) Foundation, which was established to help alleviate poverty and promote peace in the region by building public-private partnerships in focus areas: capacity building, economic development, peace building, analysis and advocacy.

Chevron endowed the NDPI Foundation with \$50 million over five years, 2010 to 2014. The NDPI has also generated an additional \$50 million in funding commitments from other donor partners (Chevron SRR, 2012, p. 33). The NDPI opened the Economic Development Center in Warri as a coordinating hub for development activity in 2012. Three pilot projects were launched to create jobs and increase income for Niger Delta residents within the aquaculture, cassava oil and palm oil sectors (Chevron SRR, 2012).

### **3.4 EVENTS OF THE CHEVRON – ILAJE CRISIS**

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 1998, an estimated 300,000 barrels of crude oil spilled into the environment across Ilaje riverine communities from Chevron's Deepwater Ewan oil field (ERA, 1998). The environmental disaster caused widespread pollution and contamination of water, and affected more than 50,000 micro, small and medium businesses in the area (Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Fatusin et al., 2010). It was also reported that fresh water which remained the normal source of drinking and cooking in Ilaje was polluted and more than 3260 animals died from drinking polluted water (The Concerned Ilaje Citizens, 1998). As a result, there were widespread condemnations of Chevron due to the devastation to the local environment and people's sources of livelihoods in Ilaje (Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Bassey, 2008; ERA, 1998; Fatusin et al., 2010).

However, Chevron did not start clean-up of the affected areas until after one week and months later the presence of crude oil was still visible across numerous Ilaje communities (ERA, 1998). In fact, it was reported that children and women were used as volunteers to contain the spread of the crude oil across Ilaje communities (ERA, 1998). Arguably, the event changed Ilaje people's perception about Chevron operations within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Several reactions from local people to the crisis are documented in the Environmental Rights Action Field Report (1998, p. 1):

*“Chevron wants to turn this place into another Ogoniland; we are fast becoming an extinct people because of the danger from Chevron’s activities here” (Esan Malumi).*

*“This is what I do to feed myself and the children, now it has all gone. We are helpless. The last time our youths went to the Chevron platform to demand our rights; they used soldiers to kill them” (Madam Stella Omoetan).*

*“This oil spill has murdered all my livestock I don’t know how I am going to survive now. I know I am going to die now” (Mrs Mariam Ibinuolapo).*

These reactions from local people within the affected Ilaje communities give an insight about impact of Chevron’s oil spills disaster. This is the source of tensions between Chevron’s and local oil producing communities in the Niger Delta.

### **3.4.1 ILAJE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTEST**

The accounts of the Ilaje environmental protest was clearly documented in the landmark human rights case of – *Bowoto vs. Chevron* which was first instituted on October 27, 2008 in the Federal Court in San Francisco, USA where Chevron has its global corporate headquarters. The case of Bowoto vs. Chevron was brought for summary judgment on the plaintiffs’ claim for crimes against humanity under the Alien Tort Statute (ATS). The case was instituted in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. Crimes against humanity are a valid claim under the ATS. The case narrative here is based on the court document 1637, filed 08/14/2007 and several other documentary reports and witnesses accounts. The account of the crisis begins on May 25th, 1998 when more than 100 Ilaje youths, formed the ‘Concerned Ilaje Citizens’ group, from over 42 communities within Ilajeland travelled via canoes and speedboats miles into the Atlantic Ocean where Chevron has an offshore drilling facility – known as the Parabe platform in Niger Delta (The Concerned Ilaje Citizens, 1998).

The Parabe offshore platform is operated by Chevron Nigeria in territorial waters approximately 15 kilometres off the coast of Ilaje. There was a construction barge adjacent to the platform. The protesters occupied the barge that was servicing the platform (Chevron, 2012). The intention of the protesters was made known on arrival at the platform to members of the Nigerian Security Forces guarding the facility. One of the activist leaders – Larry Bowoto stated during the court case between Bowoto and Chevron “we went there for peaceful demonstration because of the activities of Chevron in our area. We went there to just protest for the development of our community because for 30 years or 33 years now, in which Chevron is operating we don’t have anything (fade) so that’s the reason we went there” (Illston, 2007,

p. 2). The main leader of the protesters – Bola Oyinbo noted that “we don’t even have any weapon, not even a placard. But this is our grievances we have been marginalised that is why we are here. We called Chevron and want them to come but they refused to come. That is why we are here and want them to come to barge” (Illston, 2007, p. 12).

The Ilaje activists demanded to meet with Chevron’s managing director – an American named George Kirkland. At the time of the protest, it has been estimated that 20% of Chevron Nigeria oil production came from Ilajeland or sites immediately off the coast of the area. In addition, Chevron Nigeria only has two Ilaje workers out of approximately 2,500 Nigerian employees.’ The Concerned Ilaje Citizens (CIC) have written to Chevron Nigeria on several occasions detailing the extent of environmental impacts of oil and gas, and the problems facing the communities in Ilajeland due to Chevron’s operations. In context, the CIC specifically detail the accounts of environmental devastation across Ilajeland to then Ondo State Military Administrator on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1998 in a memo as follows:

*“The ecological effects of oil exploration and exploitation in any area cannot be over emphasized. Erosion, sea incursion, destruction of the aquatic lives and its effects on fish farming, destruction of farm land are some of the after effects of oil exploration. The effects of physical and ecological pollution were more pronounced and experienced when Chevron Nigeria opened our freshwater canals into sea for drilling a well at Awoye sea-shore. Later, so many canals were dredged which open visually all the creeks into the ocean. This was the beginning of problems of drinkable water as all the creeks became salty with the introduction of sea water. Before the drilling of the canals into the sea by Chevron, people were enjoying drinking fresh water throughout the years.*

*The present suffering for portable drinking water was not as severe as this. The rivers and canals that were formerly 1.8m – 3m deep are now dry land. Fishing which is the major occupation of all the inhabitants has now become a thing of the past since the rivers and canals had been silted up because of sea-mud passing through the open canal dredged by Chevron Nigeria. This has resulted into mass unemployment of our people. Our predicaments because of these problems are unspeakable. The hazards do not spare human lives and properties. The excessive carbon-monoxide flared into the air has polluted our air to a high degree. The erosion from the gigantic waves and the*

*dredging of canals by chevron Nigeria have displaced the inhabitants, e.g. Awoye, Jiringho, Odofado, Odo-nla, Ikorigho, etc.” The Concerned Ilaje Citizens (1998, p. 2).*

These concerns about environmental devastation in Ilaje were ignored at the time (Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Fatusin et al., 2010). The crucial challenge is that some of the demands from the Ilaje Concerned Citizens are primarily government responsibility. Therefore, it is difficult for multinational oil companies such as Chevron to meet some of those demands.

### **3.4.2 INITIAL REACTIONS AND FAILED DIALOGUE**

The Ondo State Administrator joined with the Concerned Ilaje Citizens (CIC) in requesting that Chevron meet with the CIC. The Concerned Ilaje Citizens report (1998) indicate that Chevron failed to attend any of the meetings. Given the silence from Chevron, the CIC decided to conduct a peaceful protest at the Parabe platform to draw attention to their grievances (Bustany & Wysham, 2000). The protesters occupied Chevron Nigeria for three days between May 25<sup>th</sup> and May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1998. After three days of occupation, Chevron decided to seek assistance of the Nigerian Government Security Forces (GSF). It was revealed that Chevron asked the head of the GSF in Delta State – Captain Ita, to intervene and rescue the situation on May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1998 (ERA, 1998; Illston, 2007). On the evening of the same day, soldiers flew to the barge and platform in Chevron Nigeria helicopters to oust the protesters. The events that followed were traumatic as a protester (Arolika Irowarinum) was killed, and others including Bassey Jeje and Larry Bowoto were shot and some taken into custody by the GSF and tortured in the days following the event (Earthrights International, 2008).

The second similar set of attacks occurred on January 4, 1999 where the government security forces attacked the villages of Opia and Ikenyan shooting unarmed civilians and burning the villages to the ground (Turner & Brownhill, 2004). The attacks began when government security forces circled the villages in helicopters leased by Chevron Nigeria, and fired at the villagers for several minutes. Within the same day, GSF in Chevron-leased ‘sea trucks’ arrived at the villages by river and burned them to the ground. Many communities’ members were killed. In another different account, on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2002, it was estimated that 60,000 barrels of crude oil was spilled into the environment from Chevron’s well A and B located between Ojumole and Ikorigho communities in Ilaje (Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Fatusin et al., 2010). The environment was covered by an oil slick and advanced with the tide and flow of the river (Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Earthrights International, 2008; Fatusin et al., 2010).

### **3.5 NEW LENS SCENARIOS: KEY REFLECTION ON CHEVRON CRISIS RESPONSE**

In the Bowoto case, Chevron's failing to address the concerns of the protesters has generated far-reaching condemnation (Basse, 2008; Earthrights International, 2008; ERA, 2008). The report of Earthrights International (2008) which documents accounts of the Bowoto vs Chevron reveals that communications within Chevron Nigeria, and between Chevron Nigeria and Chevron USA reflected that the Parabe protest was peaceful. Despite this, armed members of the Nigerian Navy and Military Police remained on the barge and in control always (ERA, 1998). It was revealed during the court case that at some point during the protest, additional military personnel were deployed to the platform (Illston, 2007). On 28<sup>th</sup> May 1998, Chevron Nigeria security personnel and government security forces arrived in several Chevron leased helicopters and attacked the unarmed protesters (ERA, 1998).

It was on record that the government security forces started firing from helicopters even before landing as contained in a testimony of one of the pilots involved (ERA, 1998). The helicopter pilots who flew to Parabe platform received their instructions from Chevron Nigeria personnel on board, and not the government security forces. Many of the protesters were arrested and beaten by the Nigerian security forces (ERA, 1998). A group of eleven protesters were locked in a small container, beaten with gun butts and horse whips. They were then taken by the government security forces to Escravos (Delta State) by boat and were told that they would be killed (Earthrights International, 2008). These protesters have suddenly become prisoners of environmental victims, and were later transferred to another prison in Warri (Delta State) from Escravos (ERA, 1998).

Bustany & Wysham (2000) and ERA (1998) revealed that these Ilaje protesters were placed in a jail cell at a naval base with their clothes removed and subjected to torture. They were subsequently placed in another small room where they were constantly tortured for three days (Bustany & Wysham, 2000; Illston, 2007). It was noted that they were later transferred to Akungba, Ondo State and then Akure, Ondo State where it was alleged that Nigerian security forces continued to beat and torture them forcing them to confess they are criminals and militants (Bustany & Wysham, 2000). Quite sadly, among those beaten and constantly tortured was Bola Oyinbo (on whose behalf several claims were brought under the Bowoto v. Chevron case) who died three years later in Lagos, Nigeria because of the crisis (Bustany & Wysham, 2000). There is widespread dehumanisation, attribution of blame, distortion of the consequences and displacement of responsibility throughout the crisis involving Chevron

Nigeria and Ilaje people (Bustany & Wysham, 2000; ERA, 1998; Earthrights International, 2000).

### **3.6 CHEVRON NIGERIA CRISIS: LESSONS LEARNED AND NOT LEARNT**

There are several lessons that can be identified from the Chevron Nigeria crisis. Firstly, the issue of environmental degradation and pollution however trivial it could be, should be carefully addressed (UNEP, 2011). The findings from Alaba & Ifelola (2011) and Fatusin et al. (2010) studies have shown that local oil producing communities want environmental audit and impact assessment of the environmental effects of oil exploration and production, and remediation of polluted sites. In addition, local communities' demands also include demand for compensation because of polluted lands and waters which destroyed sources of livelihood; disaster risk reduction and mitigation for the damages to local properties, farmland and fishing equipment; provision of basic infrastructures, jobs and contracts to local indigenes; stoppage of constant gas flaring and investment in clean air programmes; and local participation and involvement in resource control of the region (Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Fatusin et al., 2010; UNEP, 2011; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016).

Secondly, the lack of preparedness to deal with emerging unconventional crisis/disaster was evident in the case. In fact, Chevron's failures to appropriately identify, analyse and manage host communities discontent and protest exacerbated the crisis (Bustany & Wysham, 2000). Thirdly, the crisis strategy of violently suppressing demonstrators using Nigerian security forces as in the case of *Bowoto v. Chevron* fundamentally required self-evaluation (ERA, 2012). This would arguably create reputational risk and intensify the crisis instead of solving it. Although Chevron was found not liable for the military's actions, the company confirm paying the soldiers, transporting them and directing them on the day of the attacks (Bustany & Wysham, 2000; Illston, 2007). The decision of the court however was challenged by the plaintiffs in the court of appeal.

It was clear lessons were not learnt or partially learnt from the Ilaje crisis because in November 2008 Chevron called the Nigerian security forces (now called Joint Task Force – JTF) to violently suppress another peaceful protest in the Ugborodo, outside Warri city close to Escravos terminal (ERA, 2012). The community members were protesting a lack of jobs and an ongoing request for Chevron to honour a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that the community signed with Chevron in 2002 regarding the allocation of a certain number of jobs for residents

(Turner & Brownhill, 2004). The Vice Chairman of Ugborodo Community Trust (Mr Isaac Botosan) narrated why the protested and what happened:

*To our greatest shock our youths, women and children met with gunfire from Chevron Nigeria Limited security personnel who started shooting at the sight of the community's peaceful demonstrators' boat . . . all we want are the jobs for our youths and contracts for the able community people. (ERA, 2012, p. 2)*

However, Chevron state: “Chevron companies have demonstrated commitment to the social and economic development of the country because we recognize that success in business is linked to human progress” (Chevron SRR, 2012, p. 1). While Chevron Nigeria through the NNPC/Chevron Joint Venture in 2005 introduced the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU), the application of the theory behind the GMoU was not evident in the organisation's crisis management response to recent events. The GMoU is based on the principles of participatory partnership and stakeholder engagement, transparency and accountability, sustainability assurance, peace building, monitoring and evaluation, and most importantly, community driven development planning (Faleti, 2009). Meanwhile, in the *Bowoto v. Chevron* case, Chevron's attorneys argued that its use of the Nigeria security forces was a reasonable response to the peaceful protest at Parabe (Bustany & Wysham, 2000). Nonetheless, the U.S State Department noted that the Nigerian security forces used excessive force and engaged in gun battles, which occasionally resulted in civilian casualties and worsened security (Earthrights International, 2008). With continuous exploitation of moral disengagement techniques by Chevron in Nigeria, can we conclude that indeed lessons were not learnt from this case?

### **3.7 EMERGING ISSUES AND CONCLUSION**

The emerging issue from the case study is best described using the illustration of Niger Delta by Emem Okon (a Niger Delta Women's Rights Activist): “Think about the women who fish in the waters of the Niger Delta in their paddle canoes. Their rivers are filled with oil. Consider the fact that their sources of livelihood – fishing and farming – are crudely destroyed by the powerful and wealthy multinational companies, who have become even more powerful and wealthy by the oil resources derived from the destruction of the environment and the destruction of the women's means of livelihood. Think about the children, whose destinies



have been repackaged by oppression, exploitation, oil politics and the oil business.” (Chevron Alternative Annual Report, 2010, p. 45).

However, the public risk perceptions of environmental impact of oil and gas activities in the Niger Delta may have been utterly underestimated (Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Fatusin et al., 2010). In context, public misperceptions of the environmental risks and disasters could arise due to the environmental victims’ perspective. The Chevron crisis was complicated by wide range of issues: the perception underpinning the question of who are the real environmental victims and how the relationship between perceived and actual risk are judged (Earthrights International, 2008; ERA, 2012). Similarly, public controversies surrounding environmental disasters and crises in the Niger Delta are based on differences in experts’ elucidation and laypeople accounts (UNEP, 2011).

The difficulty in experts’ elucidation to provide a guarantee that observable risk and acceptable risk are totally different raises the most concerns that possible precautions might not have been taken to avert, and where necessary manage, potential hazards of oil and gas activities on both the environment and the people. On this basis and without exception, people living with the consequences of environmental risks of oil and gas are often construed as ill-informed. A cautionary remark here is that even the polluters also suffered the consequences of their activities in Nigeria. This is a situation which makes the issue of who are the real environmental victims most controversial in the Niger Delta. The observation and argument made here clearly resonates with a point made by Wynne (1996a: p. 76) who summarises the position laconically: *“According to this widespread view, expert systems have unmediated access to nature hence peddle only natural knowledge, whilst lay publics are epistemically vacuous, and have only emotional wellsprings of culture and ephemeral local knowledge’s”*.

When the exclusiveness of traditional science, according to Beck et al. (1994), is broken down through reflexive modernisation, the explicit observation of Eden in public understanding of science become more accurate to define the case of environmental victims: *“The politicization and democratization of science allows people, primarily activists within environmental NGOs, to become ‘counter-experts’ who are scientifically competent through self-education, but also employ traditionally ‘non-scientific’ forms of argument, such as morals and emotions, particularly where the issues under discussion could have enormous public impact.”* Eden (1996, p. 194).

The Chevron and Ilaje case provides an avenue for risk and crisis management models to be empirically tested, and range of several academics' concepts to validated or refuted. In conclusion, it would be utterly unreasonable to halt oil and gas exploration and production in Nigeria. However, the pursuits for oil production will have to be responsible, ethical, sustainable, and reduce the vulnerability phenomenon associated with crude oil. The next chapter will analyse the issue of self-inflicted disasters within the broader risk and crisis management literature, with reflection on the case studies presented in this thesis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SELF-INFLICTED DISASTERS: UNCONVENTIONAL RISK, CRISIS AND DISASTER (THE CASE OF NIGERIA)**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

A critical issue is that the waves of series event of disasters and crises in the eighties (1980s) including Bhopal (1984), Challenger (1986), Chernobyl (1986), Piper Alpha (1988), Exxon Valdez (1989) and recent disasters/crises like the Malaysia Airline MH370 (2014), Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant (2011), Bonga Oil Spills (2011), BP Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosions (2010), Air France Flight AF447 (2009), BP Texas City Explosions (2005), and Columbia Space Shuttle Launch (2003) have created conditions that demand crisis and disaster management models and theories are reconsidered and tested whether such models contribute to crises/disasters or the processes involved initiated them. This is rather a novel form of investigating dangerous events (risk, crisis and disaster) – something which has long been obscured and neglected in risk and disaster research.

The analysis of the impact of risk, crisis and disaster management approaches – and resulting crises intensification leads to the conclusion that risk and crisis management models when inappropriately apply initiate future crises. Of course, the theoretical and empirical approach is informed by the large fragmented literature on risk and crisis management and the determinants of self-inflicted or initiated disasters or crises. An important consequence of this perspective is that organisation strategies and approaches in dealing with emerging crises and disasters are not only likely to affect and complicate the successful management of such events but also become the precursor of future crises and disasters becoming self-initiated or inflicted.

To illustrate this argument, there is general reflection on a widespread consensus that tends to emerge after crises or disasters – that this should never happen (or this could have been prevented), and reliance on practical examples of crises and disasters from developing countries (Nigeria). It is proposed that crises and disasters continue to occur for the same reasons it would or could have been avoided. A previous research conducted indicates that the ‘crisis of disaster’ is the most crucial issue that demand attention and empirical research (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). Therefore, this research argues that organisational crises and disasters can be self-inflicted or initiated over times. As a result, it reveals radical innovative options/solutions to deal with these amorphous and unconventional problems that plague organisations, communities and governments especially in developing countries (Nigeria). The real issue is where can organisations obtain evidence to confirm current approaches might be

escalating rather than ameliorating emerging crisis and disaster? These issues are crucial to sustainable risk and crisis management.

The main question addressed in this research is to determine the possibilities that organisational crises and disasters could be self-initiated or inflicted contrary to established convention in risk and crisis management. The importance of questioning and investigating risk, crisis, and disaster management models and practice is critical because most often when organisational disasters and crises happen – lessons from past events are hardly learn, conclusion emerged that such crises and disasters could or should have been avoided, and devastation remains evident. In this research, it is argued that most theories and models of risk and crisis tend either to be too narrow in focus to build a complete risk framework or too general and abstract to be applicable to specific risk and crisis situations. More explicitly, the implied universality in risk, crisis and disaster theories is ineffective because unconventional risks/crises are unique events which render standardisation approach to risk/crisis management unfit for purpose.

One of the core questions in recent risk and crisis management research concerns the extent to which models and methodologies of crisis management are inconsistent, untested and maybe even faulty (e.g. Beck, 2009; Boin & Fishbacher-Smith, 2011; Boin & Schulman, 2009; Elliott, 2002) or the extent to which past events of crises and disasters – learning from failures and accidents remain a viable strategy for organisational crisis and disaster management (Labib, 2014; Labib & Read, 2013; Chourlaton, 2001; De Vries, 2004; Hovden, Storseth, & Tinmannsvik, 2011; Le Coze, 2013; Lindberg, Hansson, & Rollenhagen, 2010). This research's approach is unique and novel in that it explores how established scientific knowledge and evidence, science for government and organisation, and technical expertise, decisions about crisis and disaster models or theories and scientific evidence on crises and disasters are vulnerable to experts' (government and organisations) interest which refute local concerns, interpretation and interest, and complicate the very process of managing crises and disasters. The basis of such approach is informed by risk communication theory as discussed later in this chapter. This area of investigation is often obscured in literature surrounding risk, crisis and disaster management.

In the last two decades, research and policy applications of risk and crisis management have improved or increased substantially but early studies appear to underestimate the nature of unconventional risks, crises and disasters. Albeit it must be accepted that early studies were not as weak or poor as their critics appear to have concluded (Ansell et al., 2010; Andrew,

2011; Simpson, 2008; 't Hart, 2013; Reza, 2011) but many of the first-generation studies (Shrivastava, 1987; Turner, 1976; Weick, 1988) and less traditional studies (Bland, 1998; Boin, 2004; Hiles, 2011; Reason, 2004; Cutter, 2005) misinterpreted a lack of empirical evidence supporting the possibilities of eliminating and preventing risks and crises as evidence that unconventional risks, crises or disasters are normal accident (Perrow, 1984; 1999), systemic failures (Turner & Pidgeon, 1997), consequences of risk society (Beck, 2009), high reliability failures (LaPorte, 2011; Rochlin, 2011; Rosa, 2005), misperception of risk (Dombrowsky, 2007) and inaccuracy in risk prediction (Ulmer et al., 2007). These studies arguably muddled absence of proof in risk and crisis research with proof of absence within the same risk domain.

Risk, crisis and disaster management models are increasingly recognised to play significant roles in organisational disasters and crises (Andrew, 2011; Augustine, 2000; Reza, 2011; 't Hart, 2013; Ulmer et al., 2007). Likewise, it is established that crisis and disaster management models are particularly useful and helpful in times of pre-and-post crises/disasters in different high-risk industries like nuclear power, oil and gas, banking, aviation, and national security (Fink, 2002; Lerbinger, 2012; Perrow, 2007; Regester & Larkin, 2008). However, little is known about their values during the evolving period of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster situations. These models and theories as explained later in this chapter provide a rich framework for describing and explaining why organisations cause or fail to prevent crises and disasters such as oil spills, products recall, financial crisis, environmental disasters, explosions, vandalism and terrorist attacks (Augustine, 2000; Boin & Fishbacher-Smith, 2011; Fink, 2002; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Toft & Reynolds, 2005). Nevertheless, this research advanced the notion that when organisations unwittingly institutionalise practices that encourage gradual erosion of standards then self-inflicted disaster is imminent (Boin et al., 2010; Shrivastava et al., 2009; Pidgeon, 2010; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007). There is a general acceptance that companies as well as their Boards need to be mindful of the risks associated with their strategic objectives (including the risks that those objectives may themselves be deficient).

From another corollary perspective, this research further illustrates how crisis management models and methodologies can deteriorate and escalate emerging crises, and sabotage crisis management success and reveals strategic sustainable solutions. This statement is rooted in Beck's (1992) risk society thesis that institutionalised scientific knowledge and technical expertise have contributed to the proliferation and worsening of risks rather than their amelioration. We are even more justified to explore self-inflicted disasters given the several questions surrounding the notion of risk and Turner's revelation that whether risk should be

consider as something that is taken or something that afflicts us (is it a choice or circumstance) (Turner, 1994, p. 149). The failures of organisations in risk and crisis management have called for a need to rethink existing models and strategies toward emerging crises and disasters. This study suggests that as much as risk and crisis management models and practice are transferring the benefits (profits) or advantages of crises and disasters to a relatively few (organisations and government) at the detriment of many (vulnerable group – local communities, indigenous people and civil societies, creditors and world economy) future crises are inevitable and perhaps self-initiated. The limitations of this line of thinking are acknowledged given the context (i.e., the Niger Delta crises) in which the proposition is made.

#### **4.2 KEY ISSUES IN RISK, CRISIS AND DISASTER STUDIES**

There is a simple paradox that lies in risk and crisis management models: the more these models are developed and supported, the more their validity and practicality are questioned. Focusing on these under-theorised and masked aspects of risk, crisis and disaster management, there are two fundamental research propositions address here. First, are current crisis and disaster management models working? Second, should crisis and disaster management practice and strategies be context based? The purpose of these propositions is to reassess the practicality of existing risk, crisis and disaster management models in managing unconventional risks, crises and disasters.

The original contribution and focal thesis in this research argue that organisations, all too often, unintentionally create their own perfect or worst disasters – a world that is incompatible with what they want to see. The main contention remains that the unintended consequences connected with self-inflicted disasters can be extreme, irreparable and long-lasting. These can range from instability and insecurity; negative publicity; reputational damage; huge, sudden costs; lost revenues; regulatory penalties; lawsuits and criminal judgments; liquidation and take-over; hostile attacks – vandalism, and kidnapping; fallen share prices; shareholder value reduction; to reduced production. Here, it is argued that initial triggers of crisis or disaster which are contextualised to be systemic and exogenous event(s) were often under management control and critical decisions that could have averted disasters or crises are hardly acted upon.

Therefore, it is suggested that the potential downside and consequences of risk underestimation, moral disengagement, over-ruling established frameworks and reducing risk

management to a 'tick-box' approach are often known in advance. This view draws from theorists who argue that rationally organised bureaucracy can translate human errors into crisis outcomes (Turner, 1992; Toft & Reynolds, 1997) and that human errors initiate future crisis (Reason, 1990; Hopkins, 2006). It also advances existing findings that organisations contribute to crises through combination of sloppy management and inherent blind spots (Turner & Pidgeon, 1997; Veil, 2011). The suggestion is inherent in established views that human limitations and environmental factors facilitate crises (Boin, 2004), technical systems produce disasters in waiting because of technical complexity and tight coupling (Perrow, 1984; 1999; Smith, 2005). It reinforces the view that organisations emphasise on efficiency and output targets over safety goals due to environmental pressures compound existing problems and cause future crises (LaPorte, 1994; Sagan, 1993; Shrivastava et al., 2009).

The real issue remains that it is difficult to predict with a high degree of certainty that a future disaster or crisis is inevitable. In addition, it is unclear what effects the use of certain crisis and disaster management models will be because of misperception and miscalculation. This inadvertently leads to diminished perception of risk over time and inappropriate organisational behaviours become normal practices which arguably initiate a future disaster due to companies overlooking or sidestepping their risk management practices – and slowly get into self-inflicted behaviours.

#### **4.2.1 PROPOSITION 1: ARE CURRENT CRISIS AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT MODELS WORKING?**

If our views of risk, crisis and disaster are ambiguous, our thinking on risk, crisis and disaster management is even more confused. Therefore, understanding risk, crisis and disaster is crucial towards their effective and sustainable management. It was reflected in general admissions by both theorists and practitioners that most models of risk/crisis management do not seek to practically connect with cases of emerging crises and disasters or to specifically address the assumption that understanding crisis and disaster management present the opportunities for successful management of crises. This means that crisis and disaster management models present a condition that demands the processes of managing organisational crises and disasters be held up for examination and questions. Following the pioneering work of Roxburgh (2010), Beck (1992; 2009), McConnell & Drennan (2006), Borodzicz (2005), Bauman (2002), Turner & Pidgeon (1997), Weick & Sutcliffe (2001), and Boin & Fishbacher-Smith (2011) there has been substantial interest in antecedents and consequences of organisational crises and disasters.

Indeed, empirical studies have found that models and strategies are useful in responding to crises and disasters. However more recent attention has been drawn by increasingly sceptical public and experts on the wanes of superiority and validity of these scientific models and strategies used by venerable authority structures and figures (organisations, politicians, the legal system, police officers, scientists and engineers, doctors, etc.) in crisis and disaster situations.

Crisis management models and strategies can cause considerable and sometimes irreparable damage to organisations and vulnerable people in crisis, for example, Shell Nigeria & Ogoni crisis. The case for examining 'impact of CM models and strategies' on crisis management outcomes seems to be even robust and telling when we considered the arguments made by Beck (2009, p. 10):

*“Over the past two centuries the judgment of scientists has replaced tradition in Western societies. Paradoxically, however, the more science and technology permeate and transform life on a global scale, the less this expert authority is taken as a given. In discourses concerning risk, in which questions of normative (self-) limitation also arise, the mass media, parliaments, social movements, governments, philosophers, lawyers, writers, etc., are winning the right to a say in decisions.”*

By contrast, in developing countries such as Nigeria, methodological scepticism about venerable authorities and organisations, especially in oil and gas sector, are prevalent and experts' judgement never replaced tradition but instead they are rejected or at least not taken seriously. This argument is validated by the reaction of the Niger Delta people and other publics to environmental devastation and disasters such as constant gas flaring, frequent oil spills and widespread pollution blamed mostly on the multinational oil companies in Nigeria. Examining the western societies, Roxburgh (2010, p. 9) maintained that:

*what began to emerge in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century was a radical shift in the locus of meaning in western societies from a culture where meaning and identity were grounded in loyalty to institutions and structures (like the State and church) to one in which meaning and identity are grounded in the self as the primary agent of meaning. Overnight the institutions and structures of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century quickly entered a place where their legitimacy was questioned and most loyalty to them removed.*



In the perspective of this research findings the suspicion surrounding current models and strategies in crises and disasters management create a credibility crisis and make both environment and people vulnerable to instability, insecurity, pollution and forced migration in developing countries, for example Nigeria. Thus, several tough questions arise regarding the validity of current approaches in risk/crisis and disaster management (Adrot & Moriceau, 2013; Topper & Lagadec, 2013). For Beck, science as well as the forces of law and order also face credibility crisis. For example, unable to deal satisfactorily with suicide bombers, hijacked aircraft used as flying bombs and other manifestations of asymmetrical warfare, the State's legitimacy is undermined and victimised populations unnerved (Beck, 2009). Consistent with this explanation, Okotoni (2004) discovered that most of the crises in the oil producing areas – known as the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, are traceable to what host communities consider as either outright negligence of environmental management or a poor approach to its management. This further resonates with the question of whether the current approach and strategies of dealing with crises and disasters in developing countries are working.

Numerous studies provide important insights as to whether current CM models and strategies are working or not. Example of some studies in risk, crisis and disaster management that have examined whether models and strategies of risk and crisis management are relevant to practitioners and emerging crises and disasters include but are not restricted to Hoare (1997) and Thompson (1997). Traditional research of Rittel & Webber (1973, p. 160) bluntly concluded that “the classic paradigm of science and engineering – the paradigm that has underlain modern professionalism – is not applicable to the problems of open societal systems”. In view of the practical implication in crisis and disaster management, variables such as fundamental and normative values become part of the problem and can easily be elusive in analysis, decision or implementation; risk culture and judgement is crucial and a probabilistic approach becomes ineffective (Topper & Lagadec, 2013). In partial agreement with Topper & Lagadec (2013, p. 7) “every single move triggers possible global alterations within the system and within its global context, trial and error strategies are no longer appropriate: every move is a one-off move”. In fact, this thesis findings suggest that the origin of the crises is no longer the proximate cause, blame identification is insufficient, neither the stick nor carrot approach is appropriate and sustainable particularly in the context of environmental disasters and terrorism (militancy) crises.

Empirical studies such as Adrot & Moriceau (2013), Hutchins et al. (2009), Shrivastava et al. (2009), and Roeschmann (2014) reveal that not all theories of risk, crisis and disaster are always

relevant to real problems. It is therefore unacceptable to reason that theories of risk, crisis and disaster are irrelevant and ignoring these theories, other than specific theory routinely used by organisations and institutions, is not expected to result in best practice. However, it is acknowledged that theories must be tested, modified, adopted or rejected (Hoare, 1997). Although according to Beck (2009) there is a suspicion that the ‘old’ sources of wealth and comfort (like large-scale industry and the development and propagation of new chemical compounds) may pose a threat to human survival, for example witness concerns about global warming and the synergistic and antagonistic effects of new compounds. For Bauman (2002) it is the citizens apprehension with ‘body-cultivation’ that amplifies awareness of manufactured risks. These entire issues combine reveal the complicated nature of current approaches and strategies in risk, crisis and disaster management.

To the frustration and perhaps disappointment of those seeking the quick solution to unconventional risks, crises and disasters, this research does not provide answers as to which crisis and disaster management models and strategies should be generally or universally applied to emerging unconventional crises and disasters in ensuring sustainable success. These answers do not yet exist but rather provocative questions and issues that will provide such answers in the future are the subjects of discussion in this research. In retrospect, Weart (1988, p. 7) in Kirkwood (1997) states that: *“at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many felt that science would lead humanity to an abundance not only of material goods but of brotherhood and wisdom, . . . progressive elites believed that even politics would soon be made scientific.”*

While science has a role to play, the real life decision-making process is a mix of science and subjective perception (Kirkwood, 1997). This is relevant to unpredicted surprises and dangerous events like crises and disasters. Cognitive biases will perhaps affect the quality of decision making regarding crisis and disaster. There are several bias issues such as confirmation, retrievability, and illusion of control that can affect risk/crisis management actions. For example, if we form a hypothesis, it is possible that we will pay more attention to information that confirms this. This is utterly dangerous for crisis and disaster management practice because opposing perspectives such as local perceptions are perceived as irrelevant or not important enough (Adrot & Moriceau, 2013; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2015).

Therefore, the theoretical framing of crisis and disaster as a monolithic view which tends to portray experts and scientists as the most experienced in dealing with emerging unconventional cases of risks, crises and disasters are not particularly useful and sustainable when social

agents, such as local experts, civil societies group, indigenes and communities capacity for active sensemaking are ignored. A striking manifestation is the noticeable attachment to one specific crisis and disaster framework, in which experts have become fundamentalists, within the world of method frameworks – that is, the distinction between experts’ framework and lay-people’s approach to risk and crisis. This also demonstrate the value of risk and crisis communication in bridging the gaps between experts and lay-folks.

The focus should be on how integrated and collaborated frameworks can enhance and enable sustainable solutions to unconventional crisis/disaster. Therefore, the hard question becomes: is the paradigm in which our practices and theories are anchored still valid (Topper & Lagadec, 2013)? If disputed, the perspective of ‘crisis management in crisis’ offered by Kouzmin must be taken on board (Kouzmin, 2008). For an effective approach in dealing crises and disasters, analytical tools must be able to grasp present realities which are no longer those of the last century (Topper & Lagadec, 2013). In conclusion, all known theories and practices of risk, crisis and disaster do not need to be thrown overboard but new windows and paradigms that reflect realities and multiple interests must be embraced.

#### **4.2.2 PROPOSITION 2: SHOULD CRISIS AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT PRACTICE AND STRATEGIES BE CONTEXT BASED?**

Managing unconventional crises and disasters is a notoriously problematic endeavour. This provokes the question whether crisis and disaster management practice and strategies should be context based or applied homogenously. It is even more thought-provoking given the ‘boldness of denial’ which impedes co-operation between the Board, the risk manager and the external stakeholders if the risk outcome is perceived as negative. While the boardrooms are more interested in answers rather than problems, understanding problems such as flaws in current approaches and strategies can produce practical dialogue through which emerging crises and disasters can be managed is critical. There is general recognition that crisis and disaster management practice varies when responding to unconventional crises and disasters in different contexts and various scholars in risk and crisis management have examined the phenomena in different contexts: normal accident, high reliability, systemic failure, human errors, failure of foresight and man-made disasters, risk society, risk perception; risk culture and governance, for example. Despite this, extant literature concluded that prior research on cases of crises and disasters often tended to treat such dangerous events as homogenous

(Hannah et al., 2009) rather than heterogeneous which provides valid grounds to apply and localise models and strategies to a specific situation.

In responding to and building upon these previous studies, the proposition is that crisis and disaster management practice will be most effective when contextual factors and issues are taken into consideration and models or strategies are localised. This is not particularly a recent insight because taking contextual focus in risk, crisis and disaster management has been acknowledged and established in several past studies (Blatt et al., 2006; Lagadec, 2007; Underhill, 2013; Pidgeon & O'Leary, 2000; Pidgeon, 2010; Shrivastava et al., 2009; Smith & Elliot, 2006; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007). These empirical and theoretical studies have made numerous calls for risk and crisis researchers to take greater account of contextual factors in the formulation of risk and crisis theories as well as in operational definitions, models and strategies of managing risk and crisis. The basic issue is that crisis and disaster management models and strategies cannot be applied uniformly to all cases of crises and disasters; and the appropriateness of any of such models and strategies to emerging cases of crises and disasters should be determined by the organisation (and the crisis management team).

The attention given to practicality of risk/crisis management models and strategies in past studies are critiqued and organisations' focus on this issue appears inadequate. The lack of awareness of practical implication (i.e. what organisations do in crisis situations) and context (i.e. what are the unique conditions in which the crises and disasters is being managed) may account for organisational failure in crisis. This understanding is essential because once frameworks have been developed they become routines (Hoare, 1997). Thus, such practice in risk and crisis management become routines and essentially formed part of the organisations DNA when responding to unconventional crises and disasters.

However, in Africa, models and strategies in risk, crisis and disaster management as developed and recommended by Western theorists and practitioners cannot be adopted as a wholesale paradigm. Albeit this is not to suggest that risk and crisis theories as developed in Western context are irrelevant to African context. There are no guarantees that risk and crisis management theories and strategies developed within the cultural context and values of one country can have positive effects when applied in another country. There are several reasons behind this preference. Some of the Western theories and models in risk, crisis and disaster management are unwelcome, undesirable, and perhaps exclusively or partially inapplicable and irrelevant to other cultures like African countries. The cultural context such as values at work

and in social settings in which crisis and disaster materialise, must be acknowledged and recognised when managing these events. The cross-cultural problems in applying existing CM models and strategies make their universal application impossible.

Another striking flaw in universal application of CM models and strategies is the lack of a pragmatic approach in addressing the interdisciplinary dimension of crises and disasters. These existing models and strategies tended to suggest that crises and disasters are analogous and therefore lessons from previous cases can help us understand how these dangerous events happen or evolve, responded to and best addressed across a range of settings, policy domains and contexts. Although theoretically valid, when we examine from diverse practical perspectives and transnational insights, such approaches can be misleading, dangerous and unsustainable in practice. The interpretation is that risk, crisis and disaster management models and strategies cannot be universally valid or applicable to different cases of emerging unconventional crisis and disaster in different industries, organisations and countries.

There is an additional captivating issue which is the notion of ‘methodological fit’ in crisis and disaster management research where the state of prior studies, questions, models and strategies recommended for managing risk, crisis and disaster are difficult to converge with emerging unconventional crises and disasters. The suggestion is that organisations must continuously question their crisis management response actions and intentions in view of real-world circumstances. In this regard, organisations can become more receptive to a range of diverse explanations in crisis or disaster situations with intent to filter inconsistent perspectives and become empowered to make sound decisions in increasingly complex situations which involve high stakes for organisations, communities, and societies. Specific to this research focus, the positive association between crisis management response and models and strategies of organisations is challenged for several reasons:

- First, senior managers’ perceptions of their own organisation, task environment, crisis and activities for preventing or coping with crisis situations profoundly affect their organisations’ practice of risk and crisis management (Penrose, 2000; Liu, Chang, & Zhao, 2009).
- Second, crisis management models and strategies may not work effectively due to lack of collaboration, disengagement, inadequate implementation, and divergence in commitment at various levels of the process.

- Third, there are intrinsic barriers to crisis management practice, including organisation ignorance, misclassifying the event, organisation denial and over-confidence, dismissing local concerns, distrust, absolute reliance on scientific account or evidence, and disregarding normative issues.
- Fourth, given the unstructured and unconventional nature of crisis and disaster including the non-linear impacts of crisis management actions and responses, a superficial approach to crisis and disaster management, and the complexity of stakeholders, with possible rival explanations, can inhibit organisations' ability to think the unthinkable.

Given these arguments, the proposition that crises and disasters are mutually exclusive events that require different methodological solutions depending on the effectiveness of the models and strategies relevant to the context of the complex situations is supported. The complexity of unconventional crises and disasters arguably presents multiple realities and further reveals the significance of social context in risk and crisis management practice. This conclusion collaborates the position of social scientists stating that risk is a socially-constructed concept which means different things to different people in different contexts. In fact, it is argued that a 'unified theory' of risk and crisis which applies across all areas of unconventional cases of risks, crises and disasters is irrelevant to social life. The pursuit of such a multi-disciplinary theory of risk and crisis will be too vague and unrealistic, and attempt to vigorously force theory to suit emerging crisis and disaster when the social and political context differs will be a mistake or lead to crisis intensification and escalation.

It is now well-stated that crises and disasters occur in several different contexts which make comparisons extremely difficult (Borodzicz, 2005). The amorphous nature of crises and disasters and the different and unpredictable contexts in which they occur makes methodical models and strategies controversial. The possible interpretation is that unconventional crises and disasters will place different difficulties on diverse institutions, agencies and organisations and at different times (Borodzicz, 2005). For example, from the Bhopal, Challenger, Space Shuttle Columbia, Tylenol, Kings Cross, Chernobyl, Exxon Valdez, Hurricane Katrina, Piper Alpha, Fukushima disasters to Bonga oil disaster in Nigeria – these indicate our vulnerability and susceptibility to dangerous, multifaceted and unconventional events. These unconventional events reveal some novel paradigm shifts from uncertainty to ignorance both intellectual or managerial, large-scale to off-scale, interactive complexity to the unreadable, tightly-coupled to unbounded totalities, local events to transnational disruption, high speed to instantaneity,

obstinate-response to collaborative-response and disengagement to engagement. These are the lights under which unconventional crises and disasters must arguably be understood to enhance effective as well as sustainable practices.

Interpretation of the research results taken from these indispensable perspectives is consistent with previous investigations of Boin & Lagadec (2000), Rosenthal, Boin, & Comfort (2001), Kouzmin (2008), Helsloot et al. (2012), Lagadec (2012), Tooper & Lagadec (2013), and Mafimisebi & Thorne (2015). The general patterns of the results suggest that the best approach to the management of crises and disasters remain the intention to limit both intended and unintended consequences of crises and disasters – called self-inflicted disasters. The basic predictions of the argument have achieved support in several previous studies (Beck, 2009; Boin & Fishbacher-Smith, 2011; Hannah et al., 2009; Hopkins, 2007; LaPorte, 2011; Shrivastava et al., 2009). Therefore, and more conclusively, crisis and disaster management practice should be relevant to the contexts, organisations and institutions, location and people involved in the crises or disasters.

#### **4.3 RELEVANT THEORIES AND SCIENCE OF RISK, CRISIS AND DISASTER**

In this section some relevant theories and science of risk, crisis and disaster are identified, critically discussed in the subsequent sections and their implications for sustainable risk and crisis management practice explored. These theories are presented because of their relevance to the research context and focus. The second, and most vital, reason is that reviewing the selected theories remains fundamental for how organisations and stakeholders in crisis may develop sustainable approach to managing the problems presented in the case studies especially with respect to the research recommendations. Crisis management is not an exact science – it is a combination of science and art. Sometimes crises are well managed and at other times, they are mishandled or mismanaged. This raises the question or suspicions as to whether crises and disasters can be self-inflicted or initiated as contended in this research.

For Turner (1994, p. 149), as previously indicated, the issue is whether risk is something that is taken or something that afflicts us (that is, is it as choice or a circumstance?). If crises and disasters are complex and uncertain, and can be self-inflicted, what are the consequences for practices in crisis and disaster management, and consequences on models of risk and crisis management? It is noted that consensus on the exact nature of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster does not yet exist and the practice of risk and crisis management is still problematic. Major contemporary research in risk and crisis management is responsible for reproducing

facile interpretations of crises and providing façade strategies for dealing with emerging crises and disasters without addressing the proximate cause and normative issues. In fact, most studies have advanced to produce global crisis and disaster management models and strategies to a local crisis and disaster. This is arguably an exact opposite of sustainable crisis management and can arguably lead to self-inflicted or initiated disasters for organisations in the long run.

The suggestion is to widen the epistemology of risk and crisis management, from one of disengagement, to one which embraces the possibility for resilience and adaptability, crisis negotiation, collaboration, partnership, communication, inclusivity, local influences and context, integration and engagement as radical change process and supporting transformative cultural changes. The main emphasis is that multiple realities exist in unconventional risks, crises and disasters. Therefore, there is need to consider multi-classification approach to risk, crisis and disaster as most relevant approach. Although there is suggestion that risk theories can basically be divided into three areas: sociological, psychological and cultural (Borodzicz, 2005). While this is not the only method of categorisation, the tri-fold classification was argued to be the most useful approach to the theories of risk because it is an intuitive breakdown of the approaches (Thorne, 2010, p. 51). The support for tri-fold classification in the research conducted by Thorne (2010) was noticeably based on the relevance to the research context and focus. This should not be confused to mean the most appropriate method of classification in risk and crisis research.

However, a multi-classification approach to risk is considered most useful because of the interdisciplinary nature and context of this research which reveals that multiple realities exist. It is argued that this reflects the unconventional phases of risk, crisis and disaster theories which are manifested in terms of the interdisciplinary nature of research. Although irrespective of different empirical frameworks, there are in general substantial problems in current models and strategies of crisis and disaster management. At the root of all risk, crisis and disaster research is the question of how best to manage risks, crises and disasters. This question of how to conceptualise, categorise and manage these phenomena described as mishap, emergency, crisis, disaster, catastrophe, major incident, accident, and dangerous event poses many challenging problems. Research confirms that the apparent uniqueness of event aetiology and manifestation indicate that a general rule categorisation may be difficult to stipulate in advance (Borodzicz, 2005). Generally, research shown that without a model to understand the phenomena that we are describing event response and theorising is made more difficult. This provides a fundamental rationale for several theoretical frameworks and strategies in dealing



with cases of crises and disasters. Universal discussion of these theories and strategies of risk and crisis management in a single research focus seems unrealistic. Therefore, the following risk and crisis theories which directly contribute to the focus and context of this research are discussed:

- Risk society
- Risk perception
- Isomorphic learning
- Risk communication
- Risk culture

Each of the above identified theories are discussed in the subsequent sections.

#### **4.4 RISK SOCIETY**

The paradigm that social and political change contributes to how risk is both perceived and managed in postmodern society is now increasingly endorsed in risk and crisis research (Beck, 1992a; Borodzicz, 2005). Two essential theories of sociological risk research that have dominated the field of risk and crisis management are: the risk society and risk culture approaches. The former as propounded and developed by Ulrich Beck is carefully discussed in this section and the latter expatiates towards the end of this section. Several sociologists and political theorists have explored these important areas in risk research (some notable examples include: Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982; Beck, 1992a; 1997a; The Royal Society, 1992; Dingwall, 1999; Adam & Loon, 2000; Japp, 2000; Elliott, 2002). The notion of risk society is rooted in sociological approach and a significant proposition of research on sociological publications encourages the concept (Beck, 1992b; 1994). Ulrich Beck has been credited for promoting and advancing the concept of risk and risk research through his world “Risk Society Thesis” (Beck, 1995; 1996). For Beck (1992a) we are in a state of transition from a class to a risk society. Risk exposure is replacing class as the principal inequality of modern society because of how risk is reflexively defined by actors and due to the context of postmodernist influences (Beck, 1997b). This is presented in Table 4.1 below

**Table 4.1: Conceptualising the distinction between Class Society and Risk Society**

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Class Society</b>	<b>Risk Society</b>
Basic social organising principle	Collectivization (into families, classes, corporations, status groups, etc.) plus tradition	Individualisation plus reflexivity
Form of inequality	Social class position	Social risk position
Core contentious issues/questions of justice and fairness focus on	Distribution of scarce goods (wealth)	Distribution of ‘bads’ (risks)
Experienced personally paradigmatically as	Hunger	Fear
Experienced collectively potentially as	Class consciousness	Risk consciousness
Utopian projects aimed at	Elimination of scarcity	Elimination of risk

Source: Scott (2000)

It is useful to draw upon Scott’s (2000) explanation of risk society to provide conceptual clarification about the possible implication that the risk society thesis could have in risk/crisis management practice. In full agreement with Scott (2000, p. 39) “what Beck characterizes as the ‘risk society’ may thus be more appropriately labelled the ‘risk-averse society’, or, polemically, the angst society”. From another perspective, one interesting implication of the risk society thesis in risk management practice is the issue of risk perception – by extension the distinction between real or actual risk and perceived risk. Although it would be naive to deny that risk issues are more frequently discussed and recorded, generating local and international attention from theory, policy and practice perspectives, we cannot but acknowledge that the notion of risk society is an interesting observation that does not necessarily help us manage unconventional risks and disasters.

In this context, we are justified to label the risk society as a passive approach to risk management. Nevertheless, risk society is described as an inescapable structural condition of

advanced industrialisation, and the ‘mathematicised morality’ of expert thinking and public discourse on risk profiling is criticised (Beck, 1995; 2006). The concept maintained that even the most restrained and moderate-objectivist account of risk implications involves a hidden politics, ethics and morality. This is something that is also acknowledged in this research: that the management of risk, crisis and disaster embraces multiple paradigms ranging from scientific, anti-scientific, to normative issues and the avoidance of over-confidence on the validity of certain evidence (models and strategies) compared with others. The premises for such contention are anchored on the theory of moral disengagement in processes of risk and crisis management.

In the contemporary world, Beck stressed that industrial modernity has reached its limits and is undergoing a period of transformation moving irreversibly to a new historical epoch that is labelled “Reflexive Modernity” (Beck, 2000) – a concept which implies that as modern society becomes reflexive it constitutes an issue and problem for itself. However, there is caution that risk is not reducible to the product of probability of occurrence multiplied with the intensity and scope of potential harm, but a socially constructed phenomenon in which some people have a greater capacity to define risks than others. According to Beck, the inequalities of definition enable powerful actors (Western governments or powerful economic actors) to maximise risks for ‘others’ and minimise risks for ‘themselves’. Beck (2006) concludes that not all actors really benefit from the reflexivity of risk – only those with real scope to define their own risks. In this perspective, the transformation is propelled by industrial modernity and represents a natural outgrowth of its success rather than any systemic crisis or contradiction. It is this success of industrial modernism and the near ubiquitous spread of industrial capitalism that produces global outcomes that are undermining their own material benefits.

#### **4.4.1 STRANGE PARADOX OF RISK SOCIETY**

The strong concept of risk society is the recognition of the strange paradox that risk might, in fact, be increasing due to technology, science and industrialism rather than being abated by scientific and technological progress. The paradoxical coexistence of progress and risk comprise the principal themes of Ulrich Beck research (Jarvis, 2007) but this theme is rather obvious within the context of risk evolution because there is little or no progress without risk. It is acknowledged here that Beck’s risk thesis provides a useful explanation within the context of risk evolution or aetiology but arguably fall short of revealing a sustainable approach in

dealing with unconventional risks, crises and disasters. In this regard, there are five identifiable elements (though inconsequential considered in isolation but collectively significant) that undermine modernisation and modernity in the world risk society. These interrelated processes include:

- Globalisation,
- Individualisation,
- Gender revolution,
- Underemployment,
- Global risks (e.g. global financial markets crisis and ecological crisis).

Furthermore, we can argue that what makes modernity appear utterly dangerous as claimed in the risk society thesis is the so-called ‘climate of fear’ (Alvarez & Bachman, 2008: 248) and publicisation of risky activities or wider coverage devoted to the issue of risk and disaster. For Beck (2006) the more emphatically the existence of world risk society is denied, the more easily it can become a reality. In other words, the ignorance of the globalisation of risk increases the globalisation of risk. Meanwhile explanation of the phenomenon (i.e. risk) which Beck designates as perception (Beck, 1992) has not always received the same meaning in the debates surrounding risk and crisis management – making Beck’s idea of risk globalisation questionable. If we label and equate every risk in knowledge and perception of risk as “risk”, with its implications for pragmatic risk and crisis management, then organisations can be considered as “risks” even when these are situations that can be diagnose or predicted.

#### **4.4.2 LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF RISK SOCIETY**

There are other notable limitations and controversial implications of the concept of risk society when contextualised within this research focus and questions. The ontological limitation of the risk society thesis cannot allow its universal application to some modernism in unconventional cases of risk, crisis and disaster. Beck’s theory of risk society arguably provides oversimplification of risk because risk interpretation at a micro level of analysis is not accounted for, and Beck is criticised for being unduly pessimistic and rationalistic (Denney, 2005). Furthermore, the risk society approach will be more relevant and practicable in some specific contexts such as environmental disasters than others like terrorism related crises in developing countries such as Nigeria.

Beck's profound argument that reflexive modernity (from structure to agency) where the overall frameworks and assumptions of early modernity were questioned and radically challenged, does not particularly appear most relevant to developing countries (a case of Nigeria) where traditional model of structures like the Churches still flourished within professionalised and corporate model of organisational life. This is contrary to Beck's claims that Church systems and their leaders are struggling to understand why it doesn't work any longer, most church members couldn't care less and younger, 'emergent' type leaders direct their critiques against these forms but tend to use more universalising arguments about structure and institutions in general (Beck, 1992a; 1995). Quite understandably, Beck's view is perhaps influenced by European and Western observations but fundamentally devoid of an African perspective and it appears from the risk society thesis that Beck's explanation failed to account for wider generalisation.

In the context of the explanation above, there is an implication that a scientific approach to risk communication and management would remain ineffective when other traditional and widely celebrated institutions and structures as well as cultural climate are neglected in Nigeria. This is consistent with Cottle's (1998, p. 17) argument that "Beck's statements on the cultural resonance of the environment remain underdeveloped and has yet to incorporate findings and discussion of, inter alia, cross-cultural differences including national political cultures; the romanticised and historically informed opposition between the urban and the rural; and the cultural and hermeneutic dimension of reflexivity."

In another context, Beck's risk society thesis is further censured for falling short on the recommended praxis for dealing with the immediate problems of crisis management (Borodzicz, 2005). In a controversial framework, the risk society thesis is accused of "presentism" – a preoccupation with proximate current events and an assumption of both their ubiquity and universal validity as indices of a new risk civilisation (Jarvis, 2007). The risk society thesis should never be considered as a local strategy for global problem or global strategy for local problem; but more correctly and arguably a representation of current state of risk. Nevertheless, Beck's 'Risk Society' has been particularly influential and his thesis of reflexive modernisation arguing that modernising processes has led to reflexive and intensely risk-aware societies (Adam & Loon, 2000; Shaw, 2004). It remains relevant in understanding conventional risk, crisis and disaster. Finally, while risk society as a concept may not offer much empirically and appeals to only some, the concept do a encourage debate in the academic environment and contemporary social theory.

#### **4.5 RISK PERCEPTION**

One inevitable problem regarding unconventional risks, crises and disasters is the issue of perception. Lack of consensus exists between experts and laypeople on what constitutes risk, and even among experts themselves different interpretations exist. For many decades, several studies have explored this question whether risks are perception or reality and this trend has significantly impact the management practice of risk, crisis and disaster (Rahm & Reddick, 2011; Leiserowitz, 2006; Carlton & Jacobson, 2013; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). Concerns about risks and crises including environmental disasters are not uncommon (Tam & McDaniels, 2013; Adger et al., 2009; Constantinides, 2013), having sporadically characterised public and policy debates in Nigeria over the last three decades. The role of several Nigeria stakeholders (media, local communities, indigenes, government agencies, and organisations) in the social amplification of risk has been highlighted (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). The research found that in crisis management, perception often becomes reality. This finding resonates the position of local people of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria over environmental disasters.

This is also consistent with some selected notable research findings. For example, Rosa (1998) reveals that risk is the same as risk perception. In another case risk coincides with the perceptions of it (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982; Freudenburg, 1989). Beck (1992) concludes that because risks are risks in knowledge, perceptions of risks and risk are not different things, but one and the same. The idea of risk perception as advanced by Beck (1992) does not sufficiently discuss other aspects of risk such as culture, religion, politics, personality and economic factors that may influence risk perception. The notion that “whether accurate or not, the public’s perception is its reality” (Seeger, 2006, p. 239) collaborates with Mafimisebi & Thorne’s (2015) findings regarding risk perception of the Niger Delta crises. In another striking feature, the dislocation in understanding of risks and crises between laypeople and experts was found to be responsible for crisis disengagement in the Niger Delta crises (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015).

The risk perception approach is central to experts and lay people’s discourse of risk, crisis and disaster. In terms of empirical research, within sociology and related disciplines, several studies which can be seen in many publications of risk and crisis research such as Beck (1992; 1999; 2006), Wildavsky & Dake (1990), Dunlap et al. (2000), Gerber & Neeley (2005), Siegrist et al. (2000), and Hawcroft & Milfont (2010) have discussed the issue of risk perception. It is worthy to note that it is the pluralistic nature of risk which often brought about asymmetrical

issues (in which stakeholders' roles and agenda differs) that have made risk perception a focal issue in risk, crisis and disaster management practice.

#### **4.5.1 FIVE THEORIES OF RISK PERCEPTION**

There are various risk perception theories that have been discussed in risk and crisis research. For example, five theories of risk perception were examined in the research conducted by Wildavsky & Dake (1990). These five theories of risk perception are: knowledge, personality, economic, political and cultural. Firstly, the knowledge theory emphasises that individual perceive things to be dangerous because they know them to be dangerous (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). This knowledge comes from different sources such as education, experience, culture and simulation. However, the possibility of uncertainty and imperfection of knowledge creates difficulties when managing unconventional crises and disasters. Secondly, personality theory suggests that some individuals that are risk neutral will accept a possible risk while other categories of individuals are risk averse and therefore will try to avoid as much risks as possible. The implication of this model is that vulnerabilities of communities are influence by personality.

Thirdly, economic theory relates to when individuals take risks based on the perceived greater marginal benefits of undertaking an activity than the marginal costs. In this regard, organisations are more likely to act in a way that promotes profiting from crises and disasters than repairing the damage where the marginal cost is less than the marginal benefit. This is dangerous for sustainable crisis and disaster management practice. Fourthly, political theory suggests that politics account for significant elements of risk perception because it struggle over opposing interests of stakeholders in crisis and disaster. Lastly, cultural theory suggests that attention to risk is a result of the cultural bias or ideologies and worldviews of the people concerned. For example, findings from this research indicate that when compared with Western culture, there are significant major gaps in the cultural view of local indigenes and public managers towards risk and crisis in developing countries such as Nigeria. These differences stem from contextual factors such as traditional values, customs, languages, religion, and social norms.

#### **4.5.2 TWO MAIN APPROACHES TO RISK PERCEPTION**

In another perspective and in addition to the above discussion, two main approaches to risk perception have been identified in the literature (Borodzicz, 2005). One such approach is the cognitive/decision-making strategies which questioned the idea of humans acting as rational beings and advocated that human beings may often make certain types of irrational choices or preferences with a degree of regularity. The validity of this decision-making theory when it is applied to practical risk and crisis management contexts has been questioned (Borodzicz, 2005). This approach has only been found to be most effective when applied in the contexts of laboratory tests but certainly not in crisis and disaster management situations. The second approach which is the psychometric paradigm, arose because of the need to explain lay perceptions of risks (often different from experts' account of risks) and balance it with risk estimates of experts. This research agenda seeks to explain why some hazards with low probability of negative outcomes (e.g. airplane travel, and nuclear weapons) were perceived as riskier than others that carried a much higher probability (e.g. car travel).

The psychometric paradigm of risk perception reveals two factors: dread and risk of the unknown as a set of psychological risk dimensions that influence risks. The dread of an event is reinforced when a hazard has severe consequences (even if rare) thus provoking a gut-level "dread" reaction and effects that are perceived as catastrophic and sudden (instead of chronic or gradual). In the second category, the risk of the unknown is reinforced by characteristics such as novelty, delayed impact, or undetectability. There are other variables (such as the origin of the hazard (natural or man-made), voluntariness of the exposure to the risk, and the real or perceived controversy in the scientific community) that also contribute to the two psychological risk factors. These factors combined make public risk perception judgements outweigh expert judgements of risks. This is comparable to the finding that public perception of risk is much richer than that of the expert (Slovic, 1997).

Furthermore, there are several studies, mostly traditional, using respondents, from different countries like Sweden (Slovic et al., 1989), the former Soviet Union (Mechitov & Rebrik, 1989), Norway (Teigen et al., 1988), Hungary (Englander et al., 1986), Hong Kong (Keown, 1989), Canada (Slovic et al., 1991), France (Bastide et al., 1989; Slovic et al., 2000), Bulgaria and Romania (Sjoberg et al., 2010), Australia (Nurse-Bray et al., 2012), and USA (Weber & Aucker, 2010) that have validated the two-factor structure of the psychometric paradigm of risk perception. The conclusion that emerged from these studies suggested that risk interpretation and models are not only confined to experts' estimates of risk but also to lay



perceptions of risks. These research agendas established that both experts and laypeople can make sense of risk and disaster in a way that promotes effective risk management when appropriately utilised. The goal of psychometric studies is to define risk not purely as the probability of adverse consequences but with extension of some measure of the uncertainty of outcomes (Weber & Aucker, 2010). In practice, Mafimisebi & Thorne (2015) caution that risky decision making based on empirical evidence of risk perception can prove problematic when viewed in the context of practical crisis and disaster management. The findings collaborate with existing empirical research findings that social theories of risk perception when viewed at once is indispensable and insufficient (Wilkinson, 2001).

When the argument that risk perception is based on both probabilistic and non-probabilistic measurement of risk in which case certainty is combined with uncertain outcomes, the psychometric paradigm remains a valid approach to risk management especially as the concept of risk communication grew from this school of thought. The clear illustration is that probabilistic risk measurement does contribute to risk perception by increasing the vividness and salience (including the availability) of the risk. The non-probabilistic risk measurement such as heuristics and intuitive validation of models help concretised risks in realistic term (Weber & Aucker, 2010).

Risk perception requires cross-validation of models using other risk and crisis management approaches such risk and crisis communication, robust risk and crisis leadership, risk appetite and risk culture, and stakeholders' engagement to aid decision makings when proactively and pragmatically managing risks and disasters. In conclusion, when the debate between "experts" and "lay-folks" about risks and disasters is considered, the lame rabbit often wins over the turtle because one would be perceived as providing objective evidence and the other subjective evidence. This is where scientific explanation particularly in risk evolution contexts becomes dangerous given the premise that if you have the correct reference, experts are entitled to say whatever they want, perhaps?

#### **4.6 ISOMORPHIC LEARNING**

There is increasing recognition that organisational systems are more complex, fragile and susceptible to risks, crises and disasters partly due to the transnational nature of unconventional risks, world risk society and the collapse of risk culture (Beck, 2011; Stengers, 2011). It is

propounded that risks, crises and disasters are classified as unconventional partly because of their fragile nature in which multiple interests exist, pluralistic meaning of the events emerges, and there is increased attention on what can be done to avert future similar disasters. The striking issue in these so-called 'fragile fragilities' is that capacity to adequately and consistently identify, prevent and manage potential systemic organisational failures and disasters are much harder. There are cases where lessons have been correctly identified from past risk failures.

Nonetheless, lessons are not learned in past disasters and collapses in organisation risk culture further increase the propensity for unconventional risks and disasters. The unique circumstances of unconventional major disasters and crises may explain why 'lessons learned' from one incident are not applied in comparable settings (Buchanan & Denyer, 2013). Fressoz (2011, p. 201) reveals that 'Fukushima's nuclear accident demonstrates once again that we (regulators, organisations, industry and civil society all together) do not learn from the past because technological disasters continue to reoccur. The more disasters there are, the less we seem able to learn from them. Our faith in progress and our concern for economic efficiency make it clear that, contrary to postmodernist claims, we have not escaped from the illusions of modernity'.

Based on the explanation provided above, isomorphic learning remains useful because it suggests organisations can manage risks better if they are able to learn from similar practices and failures observed in different organisations across the industry (Toft & Reynolds, 1994). Lessons from disasters and organisational failures can serve as isomorphic learning opportunities for other organisations operating within the same industry (or perhaps different settings), even when such organisations do not experience an extreme event (disaster). The core premise behind isomorphic learning is that predicting extreme or dangerous events based mainly on organisation's own operational histories is insufficient instead adopting similar practices on an industry wide-scale is most beneficial, as Borodzicz (2005) seems to imply.

For Toft & Reynolds (1994) because disasters are normally low-event, high impact incidents, it is impossible that an organisation would be able to effectively predict such disasters basically through reflecting on its own experiences. Nonetheless, Toft & Reynolds (2005) establish that lessons from one extreme event can be applied in other settings through isomorphic learning: cross-organisational isomorphism (different organisations, same sector), common mode isomorphism (different sectors, similar processes), event isomorphism (separate incidents, identical hazards) and self-isomorphism (sub-units operating in similar ways). With respect to

this insight, the two case studies included in this research in chapter two and three are considered most useful and relevant to risk and disaster management practice and research. The same disasters keep occurring simply because lessons were hardly learned and collapses in institutional and organisational risk culture became apparent. A typical example is the case of Bonga oil disaster where investigators found that inappropriate organisational procedures and mismanagement in the Bonga field contributed to the disaster despite several similar cases of oil explosions in Nigeria. Buchanan & Denyer (2013) argue that isomorphic learning is a form of naturalistic generalisation and that these modes of generalisation are neither discrete nor mutually exclusive.

Following the pioneering ground breaking research of Turner (1976; 1978) on man-made disasters and Toft & Reynolds (1994; 1997) on isomorphism, recent trends of research have begun to explore ways of learning from failures (Carroll, Rudolph, & Hatakenaka, 2002; Chuang, Ginsburg, & Berta, 2007) and whether organisations can learn from failures and disasters that occur within the same organisation or other organisations (Haunschild & Sullivan, 2002; Denrell, 2003; Haunschild & Rhee, 2004; Vaughan, 2005; Kim & Miner, 2000; 2007; Desai, 2008; 2010; Madsen & Desai, 2010; Labib & Champaneri, 2012; Labib & Read, 2013). Conditions for experiential learning are more likely to increase with learning from failures (Madsen & Desai, 2010; Haunschild & Rhee, 2004) because failures are enablers for change in the status quo and challenge old assumptions (Labib & Read, 2013). It is now generally accepted that even when organisations are isomorphic and disciplined mistakes are still inevitable (confirming Perrow's normal accident thesis). By contrast, new lines of research emerge that learning from disasters are not particularly innovative (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015) with Borodzicz (2005) suggesting that organisations learn more by focusing on successful organisations instead of looking at sick ones, correlating with the argument in traditional schools of thought which also emphasise learning from successes (Sitkin, 1992; McGrath, 1999; Kim & Miner, 2000).

However, past failures and disasters are believed to force decision makers to reflect on what happened, why and how it happened (Morris & Moore, 2000), with Fink's (2002, p. 43) research also recognising that the best predictor of future events is past events. In agreement with Thorne (2010, p. 61) learning from past disasters appears to be a sensible part of risk management but lessons learned need to be passed on effectively so that appropriate action is encouraged. The difficulties in learning from past failures and disasters are acknowledged in Labib & Read's (2013) research where it is correspondingly pointed out that learning as a

process is more beneficial than learning as an outcome. By contrast, Le Coze (2013) argued that learning from accidents and disasters is more effective and useful when multidisciplinary frameworks relevant to specific country, industry and context are adopted. This line of thinking has already been previously recognised in this research especially with the second research question.

The cognitive processes behind learning from failures and disasters are scarcely known in extant literature. For example, self-discipline (whether organisational or personal) which is contextualised as critical to achieving real or actual learning is often obscured in discussions surrounding risks and disasters. In addition, the subjects and issues of ethical and moral consideration when learning from disasters is unfortunately neglected – something that is strongly emphasised in this research. The other factors that can complicate learning from disasters are even more telling. First, Pidgeon & O’Leary (2000, p. 19-20) maintain that (1) information difficulties as well as (2) blame, organisational politics and cover-up are the main barriers to organisational learning from failures and disasters. There are information difficulties in both individuals and organisations attempts to deal with problems that are, in foresight at least, highly uncertain and ill-structured.

Likewise, organisational learning from failures and disasters is likely to be constructed in ways that contribute to the construction of different versions of reality during an emerging event to serve group interests. An indication of that might be the question raised by Shrivastava (1993) was Bhopal disaster a “technical incident” as claimed by Union Carbide or a “catastrophe” as claimed by the victims? The other perspective which can serve as an illustration is Sagan’s (1993) convincing accounts of the failure of the US nuclear weapons command and control systems to learn from incidents and failures during the Cold War in which conflicts over parochial interests lead to faulty reporting of incidents, secrecy, normalisation of errors in the face of external accountability, and the reinterpretation of failure as success.

Second, Borodzicz’s (2005, p. 27) research suggests that isomorphic learning constitutes hindsight and how this form of learning could be brought about in managing current situations and disasters remains controversial. The literature is replete with illustrations from a range of different sectors where lessons had been clearly and correctly drawn from failures and experience, but for one reason or another these lessons had not been translated into effective risk and disaster management in prevent current and future disasters. Although Thorne (2010, p. 62) echoes the significant of having “explicit exchange of information between those who

learn from the disaster and those who are responsible for managing the risk of disaster” to bridge the gap, it is hard for actual learning from disasters to happen if the initial understanding of what has happened is utterly flawed. Examples of this can be found in the UK cases of Taunton train fire and Bradford football ground fire. These cases are explained below.

In the Taunton train fire which occurred on 6th July 1978 at Taunton, Devon, UK, bed linen stored against an electric heater in a railway sleeper car caught fire and set the rest of the car ablaze. There were 12 passenger fatalities with 16 others injured despite the commendable speed with which staff and travellers had reacted. Following an inquiry after the disaster on a Glasgow-Euston train, investigators found that British Rail had received a warning five years previously that bed linen left on the sleeping car heater was a source of danger. The lessons from the accident were not passed on because at the time of the incident all the sleeping cars on the Western Region were steam heated. Regrettably, when the Western Region sleeping cars were converted to electric heating nobody thought it is appropriate to inform them of the previous incident (Toft & Reynolds, 1997).

The Bradford football ground fire started in the main stand during a match at Bradford City’s Valley Parade ground on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1985 causing the death of 56 people and injuring 200 more. Prior to the disaster, the 1969 publication by the Fire Prevention Association entitled ‘Playing Safe in Sporting Arenas’ which gave details of several fires which had taken place in football stands such as the one at Bradford, had warned that should a fire break out especially if a game is in progress, a major disaster could result (Toft, 1992). Despite this, rubbish which had been allowed to gather beneath the wooden stand was ignited by what is believed to have been a discarded cigarette and within a matter of minutes the stand was ablaze.

Also, in the case of the BP Texas City Refinery disaster of 2005 involving a fire and explosion causing death of workers, like all organisations of such complexity, systems and procedures were essential but there was a lack of enforcement in following procedures, and complacency became the norm. There were reports of incidents which had occurred affecting similar facilities which were relevant to the plant’s operations, however, a lack of learning culture and the lessons which could have prevented the disaster were not captured or acted upon. Organisational failures and disasters continue to occur despite abounding studies on isomorphic learning and learning from failures and disasters. There is little scepticism regarding the benefits of isomorphism to organisation risk management in risk and disaster contexts. However, in practice, it is often challenging to learn the lessons of the past because

of several barriers to organisational learning and paradigm shifts. Table 4.2 illustrates and provides useful checklist on barriers to organisational learning from failures derived from empirical and theoretical research in risk, crisis and disaster management.

**Table 4.2: Complexities and Rigidities that Inhibit Isomorphic Learning in Organisations**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ An excessive or undue focus on the immediate event rather than on the proximate causes of failures</li> <li>❖ Rigidity of core beliefs, values and assumptions, which may develop over time – learning is resisted if it contradicts these views</li> <li>❖ Lack of corporate responsibility – it may be difficult, for instance, to put into practice solutions which are sufficiently far-reaching</li> <li>❖ Latching onto one superficial cause or learning point to the exclusion of more fundamental but sometimes less obvious lessons</li> <li>❖ Ineffective communication and other information difficulties – including failure to disseminate information which is already available</li> <li>❖ An incremental approach to issues of risk and disaster – attempting to resolve problems through tinkering rather than tackling more fundamental change</li> <li>❖ People are often unwilling to learn from negative events, even when it would be to their advantage</li> <li>❖ Contradictory imperatives – for instance communication versus confidentiality</li> <li>❖ A tendency towards scapegoating and finding individuals to blame – rather than acknowledging and addressing deep-rooted organisational problems</li> <li>❖ Pride in individuals and organisational expertise can lead to denial and to a disregard of external sources of warning – especially if a bearer of bad news lacks legitimacy in the eyes of the individuals, teams or organisations in question</li> <li>❖ The difficulties faced by people and organisations in ‘making sense’ of complex unconventional events is compounded by changes among key personnel within organisations and teams</li> <li>❖ Human or organisation alliances lead people or organisation to ‘forgive’ other team members their mistakes and act defensively against ideas from outside the team</li> <li>❖ Inability to recognise the financial costs of failure thus losing a powerful incentive for organisations to change</li> <li>❖ High stress and low job satisfaction can have adverse effects on quality and can also engender a resistance to change</li> </ul>
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Source: Derived from Wason (1960), Pidgeon & O’Leary (2000), Firth-Cozens (2000), Toft & Reynolds (1997; 2005), Borodzicz (2005), Haunschild & Sullivan (2002), Haunschild & Rhee (2004), Vaughan (2005), Kim & Miner (2007), Desai (2010), Labib & Read (2013), Mafimisebi & Thorne (2015).

The purpose of Table 4.2 is to offer several of the complexities and rigidities that inhibit isomorphic learning in organisations. Learning and organisation are both dynamics because people within organisations may come and go, however an effective risk culture must persist. This point is expanded in the latter part of this research particularly under the discussion on risk culture and governance reiterating the importance of informed organisational risk culture

and governance as useful sustainable strategy to make learning from disasters active and effective. In this context, a combination of research and experience likewise suggests several ways in which some of the blockades to active organisational learning from failures and disasters can be overcome or abated, thereby facilitating effective risk and disaster management efforts in organisations. These suggestions as presented in Table 4.3 might as well influence research in risk, crisis and disaster management. One could argue that with hindsight it is not difficult to perceive a disaster waiting to happen but the need to develop capability to achieve the much more difficult task – to spot one coming, remain imperative.

**Table 4.3: Overcoming Barriers to Organisational Learning from Failures and Disasters, and Building an informed Risk Culture**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Avoid simplistic counting. Data must be analysed and synthesised to reveal their underlying lessons</li> <li>❖ Raise awareness of the costs of not taking risk seriously. There is a need for more routinely available data on the human and financial costs of adverse events</li> <li>❖ Ensure that concerns can be reported without fear. Bearers of bad news may fear that they will be ostracised or silenced: clear rules about what must be reported, and regarding reporting as good behaviour rather than as disloyalty will all help</li> <li>❖ Focus on ‘near misses’ as well as actual incidents. This can arguably remove the emotion from an incident and allow learning to take place more effectively. It is also easier to keep near miss data anonymous, itself a factor in encouraging reporting</li> <li>❖ Ensure effective communication and feedback to front-line or operational staff</li> <li>❖ Develop effectively-led teams as mechanisms for cultural change</li> <li>❖ Use external input to stimulate learning. External input can help teams to think outside established parameters and challenge assumptions about the way things are done. User involvement can be of particular value in encouraging learning</li> <li>❖ Teams need to be firmly linked into the wider management structure to ensure that alliances within them do not hamper learning. It is here that team-based training can also be useful and relevant.</li> <li>❖ Recognise staff concerns. Try hard to emphasise the personal and service benefits of change rather than the threats</li> <li>❖ Give a high-profile lead on the issue. Make it clear both internally and externally that safety and quality are key goals</li> <li>❖ Teams and organisations must operate on genuinely two-way communication, not just ‘top down’. Communication systems need to be in place to allow people to see what has changed because of incident or near miss reporting</li> <li>❖ Constant and consistent evidence-based training on risk and crisis management. Outsourcing of some selected risk management functions within the organisation to professional risk management consultants can help solve some old assumptions and evaluate the effectiveness of risk management plans.</li> </ul>
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Source: Derived from Firth-Cozens (2000), Toft & Reynolds (2005), Borodzicz (2005), Haunschild & Rhee (2004), Vaughan (2005), Kim & Miner (2007), Desai (2010), Mafimisebi & Thorne (2015).

#### **4.7 RISK COMMUNICATION**

Arguably the risk communication field still lack rigorous empirical evidence and event-specific risk communication strategies are waning, as strongly supported in several studies (e.g. Badr, 2009; Heilbrun et al., 1999; Petts & Niemeier, 2004; Glik, 2007; Covello et al., 2001; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Löfstedt, 2008). There is no comprehensive empirical guidance in mediating how best to communicate risk, to whom, for what purpose, what should be (or not be) included, and in what contexts. These issues as summarised from recent research make risk communication problematic for risk managers and crisis responders (policymakers, leaders or regulators) charged with the task of managing risks and disasters (Sellnow, Ulmer, & Seeger, 2009; Covello, 1991; 2003; McInnes, 2005).

In this research, the goal is to redirect risk communication debates towards two-way and inclusive risk communication approach linking risk assessment and decision-making about risk together in a form that encompasses scientific risk assessment, value judgement, and normative concerns in which scientific-experts, policymakers and lay folks all have their voices. From this perspective, it is argued that risk communication which negates value judgement and normative concerns will be ineffective and can absolutely render otherwise well-conducted risk assessment useless, if wrong impressions are sent to the public. Table 4.4 summarises some of the reasons why risk communication is crucial.



**Table 4.4: Some Reasons Why Risk Communication is Imperative**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Too much complexity and technical difficulty in risk messages</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficult to integrate different organisational cultures and perception</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People and media will want to know what could go wrong, why, and what the company intends to do about the situation.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inability to achieve common risk perception</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ethical issues may be involved and organisation will be expected to be co-operative, open, honest, knowledgeable and consistent.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Too many perspectives and expectations</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Risk communication is based on ongoing projections and calculations of the potential for future harm.</li></ul>

Source: Author (2017)

While some risk communication theorists have argued that risk communication is a science-based and emerging field with evidence from several applied disciplines (e.g. media studies, disaster management, environmental risk studies), this field is still problematic and complex due to the dynamic and interactive process involved in risk communication and the exchange of information about risk between different groups. Risk communication, even though it is identified as conceptually significant because of some fright factors captured in Table 4.5, may be a more convoluted process than initially imagined, supported by both Heilbrun et al. (1999) and Fischhoff (2005). It is unclear from early studies (for example, Slovic, 1987; Fischhoff, 1995; Mileti, 1991; Powell & Leiss, 1997; Renn, 2003; Borodzicz, 2005) in risk communication how risk-relevant messages should be effectively and appropriately communicated – and how they should not.

**Table 4.5: Fright Factors Which Make Risk Communication Challenging. Within this Framework, risks are generally perceived to be more worrying (and less acceptable) if perceived:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To arise from unfamiliar or novel sources</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To result from man-made rather than natural sources</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To cause hidden and irreversible damage, e.g. through onset of illness many years after exposure</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be involuntary (e.g. exposure to pollution) rather than voluntary (e.g. dangerous sports or smoking)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As inescapable by taking personal precautions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As inequitably distributed (some benefit whilst others suffer the consequences)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To pose some danger to small children or pregnant women or more generally to future generations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be poorly understood by science</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To threaten a form of death (or illness/injury) arousing particular dread</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As subject to contradictory statements from responsible sources from responsible sources (or, even worse, from the same source)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To damage identifiable rather than anonymous victims</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from Calman, Bennett, & Coles (1999)

Risk communication can have serious consequences when risk messages are poorly informed, inaccurate and represent exaggerated assessments of risk. Following this contention, there is clear need for informed, valid and more accurate risk assessment communications that take into consideration perspectives of different stakeholders. For illustration, when people are concerned about risk or disaster, there are different scenarios that can happen. Firstly, people focus more on the negative than on the positive nature of risk (Negative Dominance Theory). The negative dominance model is based on an essential modern psychological theorem: when people are upset they put greater value on losses and other negative information or outcomes than on gains or positive information and outcome (Glik, 2007; Covello et al., 2001; Maslow, 1970; Petts & Niemeyer, 2004). In practice, within a risk communication context, negative risk messages should be counterbalanced by a larger number of positive or solution oriented messages (Covello, 1998; Renn, 2003). This concept specifically means that risk messages would be most effective and efficient when the central focus is on what is done to prevent and

mitigate the consequences of risk. People want to know that they would be fine and that the impact from the risk situation will not affect them, especially, given that “lay people tend to arrive at different assumptions from the experts” (Maule, 2004, p. 19). Therefore, positive risk messages are imperative for sustainable risk management practice in this context.

Secondly, the gaps between risk perception and reality often become wider in complex, ambiguous and unpredictable risk situation (Risk Perception Theory). There are more gaps in risk perception when there is high concern possibly because of factors such as untrustworthiness in risk sources, risk is controlled by others, unfairness, human origin; high and clear vulnerability, unclear benefits, multiple victims involved in risk and disaster cases, and fright factors which are represented in Table 4.5. Risk communication would remain ineffective when attempts have not been made to bridge risk perception. One of the consistent findings in risk and crisis research is that specific activities such as obtaining risk information through focus groups, interviews, or surveys on public judgements and perceptions of risk and sustaining an interactive exchange of risk information with potential stakeholders about identified areas of concern, can help overcome the challenges of risk perception and make risk communication effective and productive. In a similar view, Thorne (2010, p. 53) upheld that narrowing the gap between expert and lay folk through information and education, and providing instruction for dangerous events would improve risk management because both sides (experts and lay people) would be talking about the same thing which will ultimately create a more unified approach to the management of risk. It would be difficult to refute the value of such approach in the context of responses to environmental risk, vandalism crisis, and terrorism but there are more issues like the debate regarding moral and ethical risk communication that must be resolved.

Furthermore, people want to know that organisations (or policymakers) care about those potentially affected, before they care about what the risk and crisis-responders (organisations or policymakers) know about the risk and disaster situation (Trust Determination Theory). Risk communication often operates in emotionally-charged environments where anxiety, fear, anger, frustration, helplessness, outrage and distrust are common reactions to dangerous events (e.g. environmental disasters). A decline in trust in the institutions and organisations responsible for managing risks can affect risk messages. Trust is an integral part of risk communication if it is to be successful (Covello et al., 2001; Slovic, 1999; Peters, Covello, & McCallum, 1997; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). When people are frustrated or upset they do not particularly trust venerable authorities (government, experts, organisations). This is the

tenet of the trust determination model. Thus, it is imperative that trust is established well in advance even before risk communication begins and crisis ensued. This can be difficult to achieve in practice. A good analogy is that there is no scientific basis to determine and establish who exactly is at risk and whose trust has been breached. Like in the case of Niger Delta disasters, proactive community outreach, public engagement, sense of ownership and control, environmental remediation activity, corporate social responsibility, public education about the problems and what to do in avoiding the problems are arguably some of the most effective means for achieving trust (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). In such contexts, when inappropriately planned, risk communication can amplify or worsen risk situation.

In addition, people focus on what they hear first and often have difficulty hearing, understanding; and remembering information when they are concerned, upset and stressed about the risk and disaster situation (Mental Noise Theory). This mental noise model, according to traditional studies of the National Research Council (1989), Baron, Hershey, & Kunreuther, (2000), and Fischhoff (1989) hold that when people are in a state of high concern because a significant threat is perceived, their ability to process information effectively and efficiently is severely impaired. Conversely, the risk messages provided are more likely to be understood and accepted by the public when there is a conceptual map or mental model to help them understand the risk (National Research Council, 2000).

From another standpoint, social and cultural factors, within the social constructionist approaches, have been recognised as something which cannot be examined in isolation from risk. These socio-cultural factors and processes might include how risk is actually perceived and acted upon, as well as public trust and individual risk communication. For risk communication purposes, this implies that the same risk can be perceived differently altogether (Gustafson, 1998; Borodzicz, 1999; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). This view further reiterates the proposition that risk and crisis management should be context based and practice-specific. For this reason, risk messages need to be consistent to consider environmental, social and cultural characteristics; language preferences; past experiences and attitudes towards experts opinions and policymakers interventions; appropriateness of the message to target audiences; cultural sensitivity; stakeholders assessment and needs, particularly of those most vulnerable (at greatest risk), as Covello (1991), Hutchins et al. (2009), Joffe (2003), Garvin (2001), Maule (2004) and Morgan et al. (2001) support.

Therefore, we can contextualise risk communication as a critical mechanism for transforming risk management knowledge into effective risk practice, as equally reinforced by Fischhoff, Bostrom, & Quadrel (2002) and Maule (2004); given one of the core arguments in this research that risk management will be meaningless and unproductive without substantial communication. There are two main methodological perspectives about risk communication that have dominated risk and crisis management studies over the recent decade. These methodological perspectives are one-way and two-way risk communication. In a one-way risk communication agenda, risk message is professed as a means of public education, theoretically not at least, in bringing about dialogue or perhaps lack of it between experts and lay people (Borodzicz, 2005).

Characteristically, risk communication is argued to be more relevant in risk management and decision-makings due to an asymmetrical relationship between multiple stakeholders and the pluralistic landscape of risk, with evidence from Fischhoff (2005), Hayenhjelm (2006) and Mafimisebi & Thorne (2015). The asymmetrical roles of stakeholders in responding to risky situations become most noticeable when participants (stakeholders) have access to different information and agenda setting. However, risk communication when properly anticipated and planned can help identify and predict in advance most of the concerns and questions people can have about risk and disaster. Table 4.6 summarises a few benefits of risk communication, when planned appropriately.

**Table 4.6: Potential Benefits of Risk Communication**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide improved risk management practice</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce asymmetrical relationships in risk message</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce conflict between experts and lay-folks, and among rival groups of experts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build trust and credibility in risk and disaster situations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage appropriate attitudes, behaviours and beliefs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage working relationships amongst all interested parties or stakeholders (including the public)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain control over the risk situation</li> </ul>

Source: Author (2017)

Even more fundamentally, lack of opportunity to relate specifically to individual needs, values and perceptions as well as fright factors (summarise in Table 4.5 above) make communication

with folks *en masse* difficult and problematic. In this context, we can draw evidence or perhaps useful advice from the words credited to Abraham Lincoln: “*If I had 8 hours to chop down a large tree, I would spend 6 of those hours sharpening my axe.*” When contextualised within the risk communication domain, possible stakeholders must be anticipated in advance, risk messages vetted and screened for anticipated questions, media relation and engagement practice, information should be clear, concise, layered and devoid of technical complex jargons (terminologies). In terms of risk communication practice, one emerging recommendation is the need to continuously update risk communication plans and resources; ensure that risk messages reach intended audiences, and communities, especially vulnerable people. Needs assessments and public engagement plans are useful in this context.

The one-way risk communication based on the notion of disseminating information to the public (which is largely promoted by those giving scientific or policy advice) tends to underestimate challenges and overestimate capabilities when dealing with multiple stakeholders and multiple realities in a risk situation. Within the one-way risk communication, the goal is to provide the public with meaningful, relevant, accurate and timely information in relation to environmental risks and disasters, for example, to influence choice. Nevertheless, this one-way risk communication can be a complicated and challenging process in that all risk communication operates in a realm of uncertainty where facts about risk could be unclear and science-based underpinning potential responses imperfect. The usual rules of risk communication, for example in oil terrorism and environmental disasters in Niger Delta, can often fall short or make the situation worse.

The second methodological perspective of risk communication, the two-way risk communication, becomes most useful when common risk perception weakens and public involvement in risk and crisis matters are perceived as an integral part of sustainable and effective risk and crisis management. This two-way risk communication stems from the fact that risk communication would remain ineffective when the public concerns are ignored in risk matters, and incorporating the public in risk issues, implementation and monitoring of risk management decisions is considered as a “sustainable-move”. This notion finds support in several studies (such as Wynne, 1992b; Renn, 1991; Irwin, 1995; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Hayenhjelm, 2006; Hutchins et al., 2009; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015) – a notion which established that risk communication should be based on dialogue, shared decision-making, dissemination of information from experts to lay folks and vice-versa, open discussion which recognise the social amplification of risk and pluralistic nature of risk. A synthesis

representation of risk communication principles and strategies that could be used is provided in Table 4.7. This could be argued to suggest that risk communication should be appropriately and strategically plan and implement even when the risk environment appears normal.

**Table 4.7: A Synthesis Representation of Risk Communication Principles and Strategies**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a risk related issue or scenarios</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify main stakeholders (audiences) and accept as well as involve the public as a legitimate partner</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify stakeholders’ concerns and questions; listen to public concerns and plan carefully and evaluate efforts to overcome potential issues</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop key messages consistent with risk communication principles such as openness, honesty, and collaboration with other credible sources</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop supporting information and engage key stakeholders. Risk messages and approaches should be tailored for the different audiences identified and intended.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct testing to eliminate possible ambiguity in risk messages. Use simulation exercise to test existing plan and communicate outcome through debriefing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for delivery – provide explanations of the complexities and uncertainties associated with the nature, magnitude, significance and control of a risk.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address media and public needs with clear and compassionate voice; and take immediate action to deal with emerging issues</li> </ul>

Source: Author (2017)

Risk communication, as exhibited in Figure 4.1 based on review of literature, is a participatory process which involves reciprocal relationships between experts and lay folks through the appropriate communication channels. From the conceptual model of risk communication (Figure 4.1), risk information emanates from the organisation to different channel deemed appropriate to reach the target audience and allow feedbacks from lay folks to ensue. Risk communication should arguably match both risk audience and risk characteristics – complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity.

**Figure 4.1: Conceptual Model of Risk Communication**



Source: Author (2017)

For construct clarity and consistency in this research, risk communication is concisely distinguished from crisis communication – even though some studies have often used both terms as synonymous (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005) but they are not necessarily the same. Therefore, for distinction purpose, risk communication is argued to be a proactive and interactive process in which risk messages are based on ongoing projections and calculations of impending future harms. In this context, risk messages aim at reducing the likelihood of risk becoming a crisis and occur before the occurrence of crisis. This contextual explanation will remain valid if we accept Borodzicz’s (2005) notion that a risk could give rise to crisis which in turn could become disaster.

Risk communication is based on what could happen rather than what does happen. By contrast, crisis communication is perceived as a spontaneous and reactive process which usually happens when dangerous events (crisis or disaster) occurred. In this regard, crisis communication is based on what is known and unknown about a crisis (including its cause, magnitude, consequences, blame, control, duration). In conclusion, risk communication need to target, and be appropriate for, the right audience using the right communication channels. Thus, we can argue and conclude that effective risk communication between organisation (experts) and heterogeneous public (lay folks) leads to better and efficient risk management practice both with and outside the organisation.

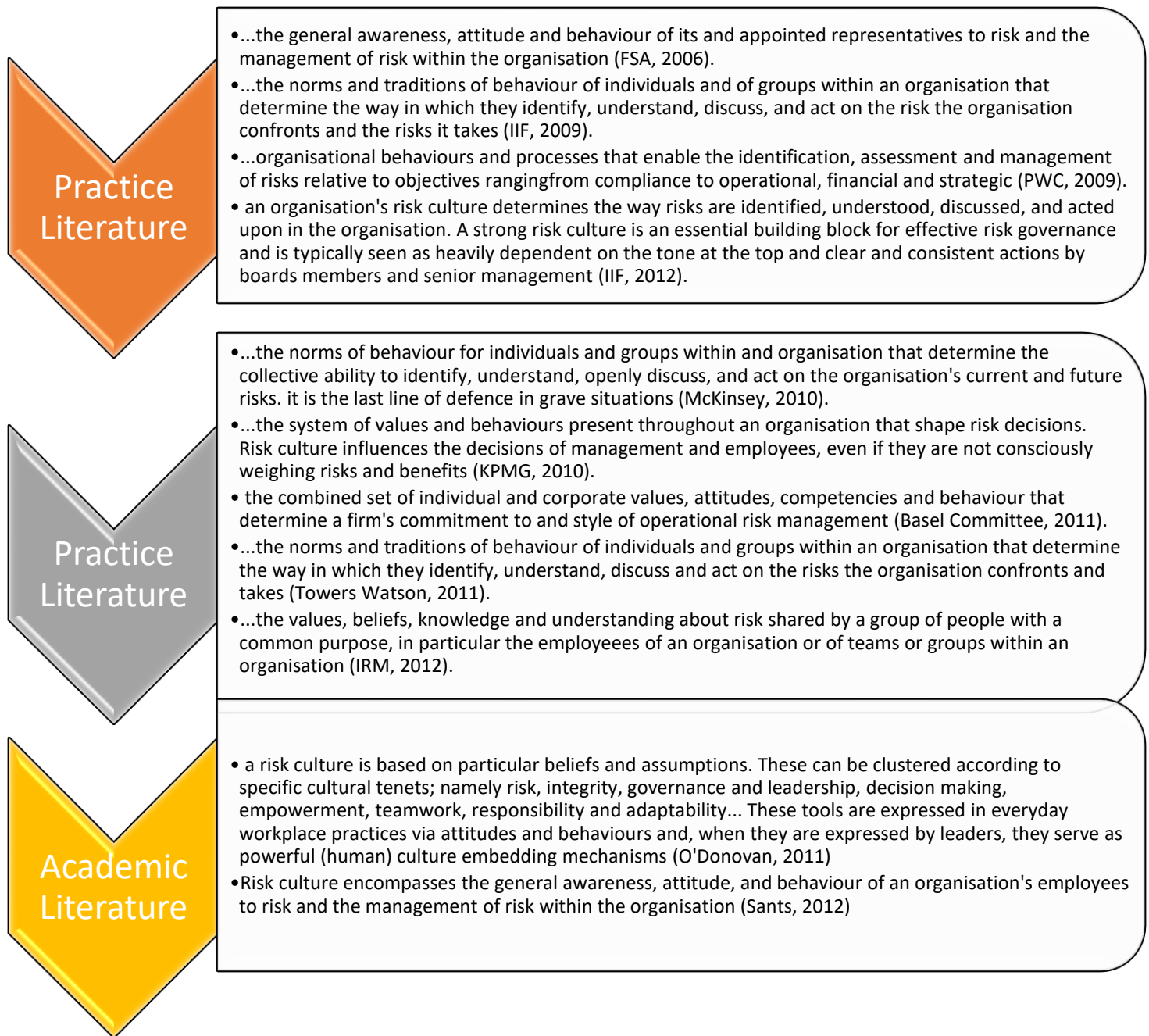


#### **4.8 RISK CULTURE**

Risk culture is critical to the development of robust risk management practice. This is because the risk management process is influenced and mediated by it (Roeschmann, 2014). In the present research, ‘risk culture’ is ontologically different from culture. For Borodzicz (2005) there are two commonest forms of understanding ‘culture’ in relation to risk: 1) culture is perceived as a way of describing an autonomous group or population. 2) culture is a system of ideas, values and behaviours associated with one or more social groups. However, just like culture is often described as “the way we do things around here”, risk culture fundamentally means “the way we do or manage risk around here”.

In this research, risk culture is defined as the consequences of values, beliefs, morality, knowledge, understanding and perception about risk shared broadly within organisation by a group of employees. This definition which is derived from Acharyya & Johnson (2006), Hopkins (2006), Edwards & Jabs (2009), Weber & Ancker (2010), Ashby, Palermo, & Power (2012), Roeschmann (2014) and Nordlof et al. (2015) and applies to different kinds of institutions and organisations including oil and gas, and financial institutions such as banks and insurance firms. The way risk culture is defined and conceptualised in this research advances existing definitions of risk culture as presented in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2: A Selection of Risk Culture Definitions and Statements**



Source: Derived from Ashby et al. (2012); Berkelaar & Dutta (2007); Hofstede & Hofstede (2005); Power et al. (2013); McConnell (2013); Smillie & Blissett (2010) and Roeschmann (2014)

The greater emphasis within risk culture is the perception of value of risk management. Risk management must be perceived and socially validated by most employees of an organisation's as adding real value to the organisation's goals and objectives. For example, resourcing risk management practice can become a shared value and consequently shared assumption, if the

Boardroom decision to increase risk management investment is generally perceived to reduce risk and increase organisation resilience to disaster.

#### **4.8.1 WHY RISK CULTURE?**

One of the emerging fundamental issues dominating current research in risk and crisis management is the need to question and address why culture is relevant to risk management practice. To buttress this point, Waring & Glendon (1998) in Borodzicz (2005, p. 42) stated: *“official inquiries into safety disasters such as Chernobyl, King’s Cross, and Piper Alpha specifically pinpointed cultural characteristics as important both to understanding why the disasters occurred and as indicators for other organisations in reducing the likelihood that they would experience similar events.”* Furthermore, drawing empirical evidence from the global financial crisis, commission of enquiries, several regulators, risk and crisis management scholars, market commentators and the media have all referred to failures in institutional “risk culture” as a key contributing factor to the various collapses of banks and by extension the global financial crisis. In this context, it is now well-established via research that cultivation of a consistent ‘risk culture’ throughout organisation is the most important element in risk management practice.

Recent empirical investigations into how organisations responded to low-probability, high-impact risk events recognised that understanding risk culture is imperative for robust and effective risk management practice (Hopkins, 2006; Nordlof et al., 2015). The rationale is self-evident because the cultural context in which risk decision-making takes place in organisational settings impacts risk management practices (Borodzicz, 2005; Choudhry, Fang, & Mohamed, 2007; Alper & Karsh, 2009). Likewise, the cultural context affects how individuals initially define and identify crises and subsequently how they address and negotiate the situation (Berkelaar & Dutta, 2007). Following this foundation, it is arguable that cultivation of a consistent ‘risk culture’ throughout organisations is the most important, but least understood, element in risk management practice.

On the other hand, it is essential to acknowledge that the concept of risk culture remains a rarely and inadequately defined phenomenon despite its relative wider acceptance and coverage in recent research (e.g. Hopkins, 2006; Guldenmund, 2010; Nordlof et al., 2015). There are several factors or issues responsible for this ambiguity and controversy surrounding the use and application of the concept of risk culture.

- Firstly, what are the main features and parameters of an organisation's risk culture and how can such a risk culture be maintained?
- Secondly, is the view of risk culture consistent at different levels of the organisation?
- Thirdly, what are the main indicators of a robust risk culture and how mature is the risk management culture within the organisation?

These issues require open and honest debate as well as having common understanding of what risk culture means in practice. This point is expounded in much more detail in Chapter Eight of this research.

#### **4.8.2 TAXONOMIES OF RISK CULTURE**

Taxonomies of risk culture are grouped into two main classical schools of thought – namely (1) safety culture and (2) cultural theory. In the first classification, safety culture represents a remarkable theoretical construct for the study of risks, crises and disasters. For Borodzicz (2005) the safety culture model advocates that a risk or safety culture operates at an organisational level and provides a method for perceiving the risk management processes in hazardous operations. Some safety culture theorists like Pidgeon (1991) and Turner (1991) believed that 'safety culture' represents a set of administrative procedures including training, emergency plans and attitudes to safety which cannot exactly be regulated. This view is strongly contested in this research because safety culture assessment is not particularly a mission (Antonsen, 2009) but may create unintended consequences when left unregulated (Edwards & Jabs, 2009) and initiate future disasters.

In Chib & Kanetkar (2014) research, safety culture is conceptualised as a multidimensional concept in terms of the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions and values that employees share in relation to safety. There is recognition or assumption that every organisation has a safety culture that may affect safety (Hopkins, 2006; Nordlof et al., 2015) in which case such organisational safety culture can form the basis for unsafe acts and behaviour. This position is equally shared and supported in extant research (Brown, Willis, & Prussia, 2000; Edwards & Jabs, 2009). The situation described here suggests that future crisis and disaster could be self-inflicted especially when organisational safety culture inhibits proactive risk anticipation, assessment and management.

The climate of risk and risk awareness as well as risk communication requires careful consideration when discussing safety culture which is controversially considered as a subset of organisational culture. Following this line of philosophy, how well safety procedures and regulations are followed within an organisation is measured to be influenced by the governing culture of the organisation (Hopkins, 1999; 2006; Antonsen, 2009; Guldenmund, 2010). Therefore because safety culture, particularly in high-risk industries (e.g. oil and gas, nuclear and aviation, even banking and insurance), regulates organisational norms and policies related to safety (Atak & Kingma, 2011; Hale & Borys, 2013); organisational commitment and communication regarding safety (Haukelid, 2008; Edwards, Davey, & Armstrong, 2013); common values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours regarding safety (Hopkins, 2006; Edwards & Jabs, 2009); and the collective values and risk-taking behaviour in organisation (Nordlof et al., 2015), we can argue that focusing on sociotechnical understanding and implications of safety culture remain relevant in eliminating and preventing crises and disasters. The real challenge however is how to recognise an effective organisational safety culture given that accurate analysis is only possible when organisations are essentially faced with crisis or disaster scenarios, as Borodzicz (2005) supports.

In the second taxonomy of risk culture, classified as cultural theory, risk is not decided at an individual level but rather is culturally constructed (Weber & Ancker, 2010). The cultural experiences of risk are likely to differ across different regions and organisations. It is only appropriate that the cultural frame of risk serves as an alternative but valuable approach to understanding and managing emerging risk and disaster. A risk within the cultural theory model is perceived as an event that threatens values held to be important at the cultural or societal level. For example, environmental risk in the Niger Delta region is culturally constructed because of the perceived threats to values and customs believed to be significant at community or societal level (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016).

In this perspective, culture becomes valid grounds for perceiving what is a dangerous event (risk or disaster) and evaluating possible impacts on the value attached to such events including both the probability of the event and severity of its outcome. This perspective shares Douglas's (1992) and Weber & Ancker's (2010) convictions that providing information about probabilities fails to change risk judgements not particularly because the public does not understand sums, but because many other objectives which it cares about have been left out of the risk calculation. Although this is not principally what risk means to most organisations and how it should be managed, cultural theorists argued that risk perception reflects what a

community or society fears and seeks to blame for individual or group misfortune (Dake, 1991; Douglas, 1992; Rippl, 2002).

The cultural theoretical model focuses on reducing human culture into three terms: (1) social relations (grid), (2) cultural biases (group) and (3) ways of life – which represents a combination of both social relations and cultural biases. It is doubtful whether any meaningful conclusion can be reached from restricting human culture into just three terms as noted because issues such as ethics and morality are equally imperative. As Borodzicz (2005, p. 43) noted, cultural theorists claimed that there are four universal predispositions namely: (1) hierarchical, (2) individualist, (3) egalitarian, and (4) fatalist, which will mediate the nature of any individual's perception and response to risk. Following Weber & Ancker (2010), cultures and individuals that value both rigid societal structures and strong social group loyalties are called *hierarchists*. The hierarchists are less inclined to accept risks except if it is mainly part of an institutional sanctioned process (Borodzicz, 2005). In context, hierarchical disposition is expected to be found where orientation to both grid and group is high. Those who value neither group solidarity nor societal rigidity are called *individualists*. Individualists are distinct from hierarchists in that they are expected to accept high risk level based on the notion that it represents entrepreneurial opportunities.

Additionally, those who view group solidarity as valuable but at the same time disapproving of rigid social hierarchies are called *egalitarians*. Risk, for the egalitarian, is an ever-present threat of disaster caused by the actions of significant others. Dake (1991) and Weber & Ancker (2010) found that egalitarians are sceptical or distrustful of technological risks that may threaten equality by disproportionately harming the poor or the environment. For example, environmental risks were found to be important than economic risks in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria because of the perceived threats to the environment and people's sources of livelihood (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). Moreover, those who accept risk because they have little or no control over it and feel trapped in a social hierarchy without feeling strong social bonds are termed *fatalists*. It has been observed from literature that most scholars tend to limit their focus to the first three categories because fatalists and hermits are uncommon.

The cultural theory specifics have been debated and criticised. For example, Wilkinson (2001) criticised Dake's categories of predisposition as "polemical abstractions", too rigid to adequately capture the complex and dynamic experience of risk perception or cultural predisposition in the real world. Corresponding to this, Rippl (2002) and Sjoberg (2002)

lamented the flaws in the data collection and statistical analyses of Dake's categories of culture; and the adequacy of the original instrument as a measurement of culture by Dake has been challenged (Weber & Ancker, 2010). By comparison, the general overarching theoretical framework of culture in relation to risk and disaster is still lacking. As an example, in the case of the perceived risk of nuclear waste, calls have been made for the rejection of psychometric model and cultural theory in support of regression models combining attitude toward nuclear power and nature (the tampering with nature factor), risk attitude as a trait, different attributes of the nuclear and radiation risk itself, and perception of moral aspects of risk (Sjoberg, 2002). While this is the case, the globalisation of the economy and media means that political or professional groups may have more in common with similar groups in other countries than with others of their own country (Rohrmann, 2000).

In critical terms, organisational risk culture is blamed whenever there is organisational crisis and disaster, safety failures, and major corporate scandal (Acharyya & Johnson, 2006; Roeschmann, 2014) but at the roots, moral disengagement underpins organisational risk behaviour and culture. As a rule, organisational risk culture is more than just a statement of values, beliefs, perceptions and knowledge but relates to how these translate into concrete actions when managing risks. What is more, it includes the notion that pragmatic risk culture embraces safety culture and a cultural model of risk interpretation as well as the ways in which risk culture can be measured and determined within organisations. In many ways, risk culture is measured and determined through some profound indicators found in extant literature – presented in Figure 4.3 and interviews or surveys with employees.

**Figure 4.3: Ways of Measuring Risk Culture**



Source: Author (2017)

These risk culture indicators, as depicted in Figure 4.3 above, are integral in making a risk culture framework actionable within organisations. In conclusion, how senior managers or individuals in an organisation initially perceive and define risks or crises and subsequently how they seek to manage or address the risks or crises are influenced by the cultural context (see also Harro-Loit, Vihalemm & Ugur, 2012). The main issue however is that risk culture can be moderated by moral disengagement. As a result, risk management practice becomes ineffective due to emerging risks being framed in ways that are suitable to the organisation. Therefore, as explained in the next chapter, issues of moral disengagement should be carefully managed if risk and crisis management is to be effective.

This chapter was intended to help understand the issue of self-inflicted disaster and whether current approaches to risk and crisis management are still valid. It is arguable that without such theoretical insights, responses to unconventional risk, crisis and disaster will be ineffective as we may be using inappropriate risk models and strategies to manage unconventional events. The theoretical insights generated from this chapter when combined with the subsequent chapters, it is intended that the reader will have a far better understanding of unconventional risk and crisis and how we may develop capacity for resilience. The next chapter will consider the theoretical framework of moral disengagement in risk and crisis management. The information presented will be used to inform practical recommendations for risk and crisis management, as well as lessons learned from the case studies in Chapters Two and Three.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF MORAL DISENGAGEMENT IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to critically discuss the theoretical framework of moral disengagement in the context of risk and crisis management. This was necessary because this thesis is based on the hidden implications of moral disengagement in processes of managing unconventional risks, crises and disasters. There is a growing realisation during this research that moral disengagement presents a fundamental ethical paradox in risk and crisis management practice. Arguably, on one hand, moral disengagement mechanisms (whether used consciously or unconsciously) in crisis management processes and practice could be well-intentioned but constitute ‘*organisational self-centredness*’ and moral violation because other stakeholders’ interests are disregarded without broader consideration. This view implies that organisations may use moral disengagement mechanisms as clear strategic moves for corporate gains especially when it appears convenient for them.

On the other hand, moral disengagement in processes of risk and crisis management creates serious ethical dilemmas for organisations which undermine their trustworthiness and reputation. The issue of ethical and moral awareness in crisis management decision making calls for detailed and comprehensive investigation because sustainable crisis solutions arguably depend on the normative impact of organisational crises and disasters. Most essentially, it is easier for organisations managing crises or disasters to blame others without destroying their credibility and reputation. However, promoting the use of blame fixing, denial, bolstering, defeasibility, provocation, good intentions and claiming accidental or natural accidents as strategies for managing crises and disasters (Benoit, 1995; Hearit, 2006; Ulmer, Seeger, & Sellnow, 2007; Coombs, 2007; Smudde & Courtright, 2008; Harlow, Brantley, & Harlow, 2011) raises ethical and moral issues with their consequent implications. In fact, there is evidence that moral behaviour begins with moral awareness or the identification of the moral issue (Trevino, 1986; Jones, 1991; Frey, 2000; May & Pauli, 2002; Reynolds, 2006).

Furthermore, the evidence extends to moral imagination, moral evaluation, sense of moral obligation, and integration of managerial and moral competence as fundamental elements in making moral decisions or judgments in different contexts (Bandura, 2009; Haidt, 2001; Krebs & Denton, 2005; Sonenshein, 2007; Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Moore, 2008; Mafimisebi &

Thorne, 2015). However, in this thesis, there is reflection on the argument that although many acts unethically because they intend to, others simply do not recognise the moral aspects of the situations in which they are involved and thus do not initiate the moral decision-making process (Reynolds, 2006).

The main contention is that by applying moral and ethical decision-making in crisis management, publicising the detrimental impacts of moral disengagement and improving managerial moral awareness, most future self-inflicted crises or disasters could be avoided. A handful of researchers have applied such explanations to several cases of questionable ethical and moral events including Exxon Valdez case, Ford Pinto recall, Three Mile Island, and the Nestle case highlighted in Section 1.1 (Gioia, 1992; Key & Popkin, 1998; Bandura, 1998; 2002). Markedly, moral disengagement approaches have appeared in management science research, psychology research, social science for a couple of decades (Bandura, 1986; 1990; 1999; 2002; 2007; Beu & Buckley, 2004; Caprara & Capanna, 2005; Baker, Detert, & Trevino, 2006; Moore, 2008; Caprara et al. 2009; Chugh, Kern, Zhu, & Lee, 2014).

Nevertheless, throughout the literature search and review, though this research focused on moral disengagement in processes of risk/crisis management, very little work and mostly traditional studies have explored moral and ethical decision-makings in a range of different contexts (for example, Bandura, 2002; Fritzsche & Becker, 1984; Victor & Cullen, 1988; Weber, 1992; Brady & Wheeler, 1996; Dukerich, Waller, George, & Huber, 2000; Butterfield, Trevino, & Weaver, 2000; White, Bandura, & Bero, 2009) but empirical investigation and analysis of moral disengagement in risk/crisis management studies remain underdeveloped (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015).

Thus, what this thesis contends is that the current theories and horizons in risk, crisis and disaster related studies need to be expanded to incorporate a moral disengagement perspective of risk/crisis management. As a result, this research is constructed using the moral disengagement (MD) framework in the context of organisational crises and disasters and examines the practicality of crisis management (CM) models (Augustine, 1995; 2000; Coombs, 2007; Fink, 2002; Turner & Pidgeon, 1997). Specifically, this thesis probes Albert Bandura's theory of moral disengagement (Bandura, 1990a; 1990b; 1992; 2002) and Augustine's crisis management framework (Augustine, 1995) to find sustainable solutions to the notion of unconventional crises/disasters pervading the Niger Delta region of Nigeria for decades.

These concepts of moral disengagement (MD) and crisis management (CM) which were formerly viewed as distinct ideas or unrelated concepts are observed and contended as being capable of unified and integrated. In the sciences, integration is a key means by which progress is made and attained because it represents neither a rejection nor an acceptance of existing paradigms (Sternberg, 2007). The prevailing insights of moral disengagement within risk and crisis studies are reviewed, and a broader risk/crisis management typology which incorporate moral engagement view is presented. In addition, an empirical model of MD implication is revealed that helps to identify perceived moral and ethical challenges in processes of risk/crisis management. Thus, this thesis contends that acknowledging and understanding ethical or moral dimensions of unconventional risks, crises or disasters remains one of the cornerstones of sustainable risk and crisis management and increasing organisational resilience. The following section examines the concept of moral disengagement, crisis management, CM frameworks, CM responses and strategies, and then considers MD implications within this research scope, context and aims.

## **5.2 MORAL DISENGAGEMENT: A BRIEF CRITIQUE**

Albert Bandura (1986) was the first to initiate the notion of moral disengagement and ever since several scholars have explored the theory in diverse circumstances (Bandura, 1999; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Bandura, Caprara, & Zsolnai, 2000; Fiske, 2004; Moore, 2007; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Ntayi, Eyaa, & Ngoma, 2010). Although there is lack of theoretical and empirical studies about the association between MD and CM throughout the literature search and review. However, there are some studies that examine MD in different contexts that are critical to understanding how MD mechanisms operate. Specifically, there has been extensive investigation of moral disengagement in the context of computer hacking (Rogers, 2003; Young, Zhang, & Prybutok, 2007), peace and conflict (McAlister, 2001; Jackson & Sparr, 2005), violent and deviant behaviours (Bandura, 1999; Ntayi et al., 2010), genocide, war, greater aggression, and terrorism (Bandura et al., 1996; Aquino, Reed, Thau, & Freeman, 2007), ethical intervention (Chugh, Kern, Zhu, & Lee, 2014), ecological sustainability (Bandura, 2007), organisational corruption (Moore, 2008), corporate transgressions (Bandura et al., 2000; Beu & Buckley, 2004; White, Bandura, & Bero, 2009), and oil terrorism (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015).

The application of moral disengagement to organisational crises and disasters is still limited and remains underdeveloped in prevailing risk and crisis management research (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). Nevertheless, in reviewing mechanisms of moral disengagement across different contexts, several methods and measures were used to meet specific features of misconducts under analysis (Caprara et al., 2009). Even though moral disengagement has been extensively researched, most existing research has focused on outcomes (Bandura et al., 1996; Bandura et al., 2001; Beu & Buckley, 2004; McAlister, Bandura, & Owen, 2006; White, Bandura, & Bero, 2009) and neglected the causes. This research explores both causes and outcomes of moral disengagement to determine how MD in processes of risk/crisis management can be averted.

Moral disengagement can be defined as an individual's propensity to evoke cognitions which restructure one's actions to appear less harmful, minimise one's understanding of responsibility for one's actions, or attenuate the perception of the distress one causes others (Moore, 2008). However, for Bandura (1990), moral disengagement is a psychological process by which individuals engage in sanctionable behaviour without distress or self-condemnation. Research suggested that it is moral disengagement that allows ordinary people to do unethical things or actions despite their consequences either in neglect of moral standards or harmful conduct (Bandura, 1990). In a practical context, empirical studies have confirmed that moral disengagement is a process that enables people to engage in negative behaviours, from small misdeeds to great atrocities, without believing that they are causing harm or doing wrong (Fiske, 2004; Moore, 2008; Ntayi et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2012). In fact, studies have well-established and documented the link between moral disengagement and unethical decision-making (Bandura et al., 2002; Detert et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2012). As a result, several existing moral disengagement studies conceptualised organisational moral disengagement as unethical and cruel behaviours across organisational structures and systems which consequently perpetuate poor decision-making process and cause unethical and inhumane actions.

However, research reveals that individuals still maintain a positive self-image while using moral disengagement mechanisms (Bandura, 1986; 1999; 2009; Bandura et al., 1996; 2002). In a practical context, moral disengagement mechanisms can create inflated ethical beliefs which negate reality or that harm is being caused by an individual or organisational action. In fact, the assertion made by Bandura (2002, p. 101) is particularly useful to validate the contention:

*“Moral agency has dual aspects manifested in both the power to refrain from behaving inhumanely and the proactive power to behave humanely; moral agency is embedded in a broader socio-cognitive self-theory encompassing affective self-regulatory mechanisms rooted in personal standards linked to self-sanctions; moral functioning is thus governed by self-reactive selfhood rather than by dispassionate abstract reasoning.”*

The above quote clearly indicates two main dilemmas of moral disengagement: First, moral disengagement can create the illusion that individuals or organisations moral standards often remain at equilibrium. Second, moral disengagement can facilitate and sanction inhumane behaviours. Therefore, it is crucial that organisations have a clear moral engagement framework to counteract issues of moral disengagement. The following sub-section further explains the mechanisms of moral disengagement as related to this research context.

### **5.2.1 MECHANISMS OF MORAL DISENGAGEMENT**

The mechanisms of moral disengagement are particularly useful to understand and clarify how misconducts and unethical practices like thefts, vandalism, terrorism, environmental crisis, financial crisis, embezzlement, corruption, business and financial transgression penetrate organisations and serve self-exonerative functions. More specifically, moral disengagement in detrimental conducts either within organisations or individuals’ level can be achieved through eight cognitive mechanisms which include moral justification, advantageous comparison, attribution of blame, euphemistic labelling, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, dehumanisation and distorting or disregarding the consequences. These cognitive mechanisms of MD are explained in greater details in Table 5.1.

The crucial question is why should there be consideration of moral disengagement when managing crises and disasters? More clearly, why should organisations seek to better understand moral disengagement in crisis and disaster situations? Bandura (2007) and Bandura et al. (2002) provide an excellent overview and evidence of how moral disengagement mechanisms (e.g., displacement of responsibility, dehumanisation, and attribution of blame) are often enlisted in industrial disasters. More recently, Mafimisebi & Thorne (2015) provide additional evidence that moral disengagement is the proximate cause of unconventional crisis intensification because mechanisms of MD routinely operate in environmental crises or disasters and force organisations to re-evaluate their ethical and moral decision-making when managing crises. Although this observation is made in respect to the Niger Delta environmental

crises involving multinational oil companies and local communities, it can be advanced that such observations found expression in most cases of organisational crises and disasters.

Previously, and more crucially, Moore et al. (2012) maintain that the propensity for moral disengagement predicts a broad range of work-related behaviours above and beyond individual difference constructs commonly associated with unethical behaviour. What this suggests is that moral disengagement provides clarification of how unethical practices including moral decision-makings within organisations are perpetuated. From another perspective, research found that moral disengagement explains variance in unethical decision making beyond that expounded by empathy, moral identity, trait cynicism, and chance locus of control orientation (Detert et al., 2008). It has been documented how corporate vindication is achieved by shifting the blame, simple denial, dehumanisation and displacement of responsibility (For example, Bandura, 2007).

In a practical context, the industrial disaster which happened in Bhopal where 40 tons of methyl isocyanate gas escaped from the Union Carbide pesticide production plant killing thousands of people and causing several injuries or partial disability and where approximately 200,000 people were severely affected, illustrates the position. For example, Bandura et al. (2002) reveal how Union Carbide blamed the explosion on sabotage (attribution of blame) and blamed the Indian government for its failure to regulate the plant and for allowing people to live nearby (displacement of responsibility and distorting the consequences).

The critical, yet logical, question is how should organisations respond to organisational crisis and disaster without exploitation of moral disengagement mechanisms, and should there be fundamental shifts in the way organisations manage crisis and disaster? These questions consistently guide investigation in this study and the entire research is framed on the theory of moral disengagement and crisis management models.

**Table 5.1: Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement & Implication**

S/N	Mechanisms	Meaning & Implication
1	Moral justification	<p>People do not ordinarily engage in reprehensible conduct until they have justified to themselves the rightness of their actions (Bandura et al., 2000). Terrorists, for example, preserve a sense of self-worth by perceiving themselves as fighting a due cause while causing harm to others by their actions. Likewise, soldiers penetrate and cause harm to civilians when combating terrorism and their actions perceive as serving and obeying legitimate authority (nation). In another illustration, organisations in the oil and gas industry accused of causing harm to the environment and people through their activities can sanctify their detrimental practices through compliance with industry standards and best practices aimed at dispelling concern over the environmental degradation and harm.</p> <p>Social and moral justifications sanctify harmful practices by investing them with worthy purposes and this enables people to preserve a sense of self-worth purposes while causing harm by their activities (Bandura, 2007). The justifications can take the form of societal benefits, strengthening national security, national, constitutional and economic justification, curbing intrusive government, and competitive global marketplace, among others.</p>
2	Advantageous comparison	<p>Reprehensible conduct can assume very different qualities depending on what it is compared with. When compared with other detrimental conducts, reprehensible industrial practices can be made more righteous. Militants vandalise oil pipelines of multinational oil companies in Nigeria because of environmental pollution in the Niger Delta region. They accused multinational oil companies like Shell Nigeria of causing harm to the environment and taking away sources of livelihood of the local people. In the process, they too are interested in producing the same oil perceived as a resource curse and several militant-owned artisanal refineries clustered in the Niger Delta operate but likewise pollute and degrade the environment. In their perspective, militants argued that they own the resources and therefore have right to carry out production of oil and raise the living standard of their people.</p> <p>In another perspective, multinational oil companies like Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria justified their environmental pollution problems of endlessly oil spills and ceaseless gas flaring by comparing their activities with that of illegal artisanal refineries operated by militants which lack standardised safety procedures and industry regulations. This calls for environmental responsibility not just shifting responsibility. Through advantageous comparison, the competing parties freed themselves of</p>

		restraint over their polluting practices (Bandura, 2007). In clear term, how lifestyle and industrial practices are perceived is coloured by what they are compared against.
3	Attribution of blame	<p>Blaming one’s adversaries or compelling circumstances can serve self-exonerating purposes. Bandura et al. (2000) revealed that in moral disengagement by attribution of blame, people perceived themselves as faultless victims driven to injurious conduct by forcible provocation. This means that by fixing the blame on others or on circumstances, not only are one’s own injurious actions excusable, but one can even feel self-righteous in the process. This notion find root in the case of the Niger Delta crisis involving multinational oil companies and local communities in Nigeria. For example, militants in Nigeria known for causing harm to others by attacking oil pipelines, kidnapping and terrorising assets of multinational oil companies for sometimes alleged pollution and degradation of the environment often express grievances over the circumstances but exploit it for their own gain.</p> <p>From another context, even though there was an internal report on the dangers of the methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas at the Union Carbide India Limited two years before the Bhopal disaster in 1984, and the report had recommended various changes to reduce the risks at the plant but the recommendations were never implemented. The Union Carbide instead blamed the Indian government for its failure to effectively regulate the plant and for allowing people to live nearby (Bandura et al., 2000). The victims were blamed for causing negative outcomes and technically victims were blamed for causing their own death.</p>
4	Euphemistic labelling	<p>Language shapes perceptions and thought processes on which actions are based. Activities can take on quite different appearances depending on what they are called (Bandura, 2007). Rothwell (1982), in his book – <i>Telling It Like It Isn’t</i>, characterises the sanitising form of euphemisms as ‘linguistic novocain’ that numbs us to unpleasant and harmful realities; and the convoluted form as ‘semantic fog’ that obscures and conceals detrimental practices (Bandura, 2007). Reprehensible conducts are made benign through convoluted verbiage and sense of personal agency become obscure. For example, through the power of hygienic words, even killing a human being loses much of its repugnancy (Bandura, 1991).</p> <p>Specific examples of euphemistic labelling include: terrorists label themselves as freedom fighters. Soldiers waste people rather than kill them. When mercenaries speak of fulfilling a contract, murder is transformed by admirable words into the honourable discharge of duty (Bandura, 1991, p. 79). In teaching business students how to lie in competitive transactions, the instructor speaks euphemistically of strategic misrepresentation (Safire, 1979). The acid rain that is killing our lakes and forests loses</p>



		<p>much of its acidity in its euphemistic form as atmospheric deposition of anthropogenically derived acidic substances (Hechinger, 1985).</p> <p>Likewise, the tobacco industry, eager to deny the addictive qualities of nicotine found in cigarettes repeatedly relied on soft language or euphemistic labels in describing the drug-like qualities of ingredients in their products as producing “pharmacological satisfaction” (White et al., 2009).</p>
5	Displacement of responsibility	<p>Personal accountability can become obscure through displacement of responsibility as people view their conducts as springing from social pressures or dictates of others rather than as something for which they are personally responsible. Bandura, Caprara, &amp; Zsolnai (2000) maintain that because people refrain as not the actual agents of their actions, they are spared self-censuring reactions. For illustration purpose, during his trial for war crimes, Adolf Eichmann employed the moral disengagement mechanism of displacing one’s responsibility to organisational superiors and legitimately claims he was not guilty because his evaluation of his own actions has been so completely distorted. In fact, Adolf Eichmann consistently maintained that he would only “have had a bad conscience if he had not done what he had been ordered to do – to ship millions of men, women and children to their death” (Arendt, 1963/ 1994, p. 25) cited by Moore &amp; Gino (2013).</p> <p>Like in the case of Ford Pinto which caused a serious accident by explosion on 10 August 1978, on US Highway 33 near Goshen, Indiana; sisters Judy and Lynn Ulrich and their cousin Donna Ulrich were struck from the rear in their 1973 Ford Pinto by a van. The gas tank of the Pinto ruptured, the car burst into flames and the three teenagers were burnt to death. Previously, the Ford Pinto has caused at least estimated 500 burn deaths by explosion and the top management of the organisation had been informed about the serious design problem of the model. However, despite the warning from their engineers the company continue to manufacture and sell the car with the dangerously defective design. Ford maintained that the ‘Pinto is safe’, therefore denying the risk of injurious consequences. Ford used the technique of displacement of responsibility to justify their claim by referring to the US safety regulation standards in effect till 1977 (Bandura et al., 2000). The responsibility for causing several hundreds of deaths through faulty design to the driving practices of people who would not have been seriously injured if their Ford Pinto had not been designed in a way that made it easily inflammable in a collision was displaced (Bandura et al., 2000).</p> <p>Displacement of responsibility also operates in situations in which hostages are taken. Terrorists warn officials of targeted regimes that if they take retaliatory action they will be held accountable for the lives of the hostages. Bandura (1991) revealed</p>

		<p>that at different steps in negotiations for their release, terrorists continue to displace the responsibility for the safety of hostages on the reactions of the regime. In environmental crises of the Niger Delta, Shell displaced responsibility to achieved corporate vindication by shifting blame of pollution of gas flaring on lack of adequate funding from the majority partners – the government owned Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in its joint venture operations in Nigeria.</p>
6	Diffusion of responsibility	<p>The deterrent power of self-sanctions is weakened when the link between conduct and its consequences is obscured by diffusing responsibility for culpable behaviour (Bandura, 1991). In the case of Bowoto vs. Chevron Nigeria, Ilaje activists occupied Chevron offshore platform for three days protesting over environmental pollution and degradation. Chevron brought more Nigerian security forces to the platform in several Chevron’s leased helicopters and attacked the protesters. The attack caused untold brutal death of two activists instantly on 28h of May 1998, personal injuries on several others as they were tortured and beaten, large scale physical displacement of communities and properties. Chevron used different moral disengagement strategies to defend its highly controversial decision and crisis management efforts. First, Chevron continuously claimed that its use of the Nigerian security forces was a reasonable response to the peaceful protest at the Parabe offshore platform in Ilaje, Ondo State, Nigeria (Chevron, 2012).</p> <p>In a critical context, Chevron justified their claim by continually referring to the security situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria in 1998 where there were constant attacks on oil pipelines, oil companies, hostage taking and oil terrorism. The company tried to diffuse responsibility through division of labour. The Nigerian security forces that carried out the attack on behalf of Chevron were argued to have exercised personal judgments in carrying out the actions but their actions were remote and link to the result of the crisis.</p> <p>The aim was to routinize the activities or actions of the Nigerian security forces into sub-functions thereby shifting attention from the impact of Chevron has done to the details of the roles Nigerian the security forces play in the crisis. This obviously represents diffusion of responsibility in processes of environmental crisis management.</p> <p>Furthermore, group decision making was another fundamental factor that enable such unethical conducts to have been perpetuated because no single individual feels responsible for the decisions that intensify the crisis. Bandura (1991) argued that where everyone is responsible no one is responsible. In conclusion, collective action has been found as another diffusion expedient for weakening self-restraints because any harm caused can easily be ascribed to the behaviours of others</p>

7	Dehumanisation	<p>Evidence suggests that the strength of moral self-censure for harmful practices depends on how those who suffer the consequences are regarded. Quite critically, research found that it is difficult to inflict suffering on humanised persons without risking self-condemnation (Bandura, 1992). However, when such people are re-categorised or perceived differently as sub-human objects or as terrorists, militants, separatists, criminals, etc., it becomes easier to inflict harm on them. In a clear term, people perceived as sub-humans are not only regarded as lacking sensitivities but as being influenceable only by severe methods. This implies that self-sanctions against cruel conduct can be disengaged or blunted by divesting people of human qualities. The possible implication is that once dehumanised such people are no longer viewed as persons with feelings, hopes, and concerns but as subhuman objects. Bandura (1991) advocate that if dispossessing antagonists of humanness does not blunt self-reproof, it can be eliminated by attributing bestial qualities on them. Therefore, it becomes easier to brutalize victims when they are re-classified or re-defined.</p> <p>However, a sense of common humanity arouses empathy and compassion for the plight of the needy and the most vulnerable, and such sentiments motivate efforts to improve their life conditions (Bandura, 2004). In a practical sense, the Union Carbide Bhopal disaster (causing at least 2,500 people deaths, 10,000 serious injuries, 20,000 partial disabilities, and 180,000 others affected in one way or another) the company could locate its industrial gas factory in the middle of Bhopal, just 2 miles from the Bhopal railway station. All the three worst-affected communities in the disaster apparently existed before the Union Carbide plant opened. However, in court trials Union Carbide refused to pay anything to the Indian victims and their families whose impoverished status made them easy to be dehumanised and disregarded (Bandura et al., 2000). The victims were blamed for living close to the plant and initial strategy was to attribute the cause of the disaster on sabotage suggesting the victims caused their own havoc and death.</p>
8	Distorting or disregarding the consequence	<p>When people pursue activities that serve their interests but produced detrimental effects they avoid facing the harm they caused, or they minimised it. Bandura (2007) maintain that if minimisation does not work, the scientific evidence of harm can be discredited. This allows doubt and controversial version of the harm despite considerable evidence to the reality. In specific term, the consequences of the action are deliberately misrepresented. The misrepresentation may involve active efforts to discredit evidence of the harm they caused and therefore there is little reason for self-censure to be activated. For example, the case of Three Mile Island (known as the most severe accident in US commercial nuclear power plant and occurred at the Three Mile Island Unit 2 in Harrisburg on 28 March 1979) – involving Babcock and Wilcox who built the reactor, General Public Utilities ran Three Mile Island, and Metropolitan Edison owned it. The seriousness of the accident was disregarded and the</p>

consequences distorted by Metropolitan Edison as the company continually issuing denials and minimising the accident (Bandura et al., 2000).

Research found that it is relatively easy to hurt others when their suffering is not visible and when causal actions are physically and temporally remote from their effects (Bandura, 1991). This argument echoes the position of vulnerable people in the Niger Delta, Nigeria where the impacts of oil and gas activities are obscure and invisible in extreme cases but the enormous public impacts are most evident (UNEP, 2011). The consequences of oil and gas activities on the local communities are disregarded, distorted, minimized or refuted. This makes the affected local communities farther from the end results and the restraining power of the foreseeable destructive effects becomes weaker. Clearly, obscuring or distorting mechanisms reduce the causal link between unethical actions and outcomes so that moral self-sanctioning is no longer required (Johnson & Buckley, 2014).

To put the environmental crises of the Niger Delta in perspective of moral disengagement by disregarding or distorting the consequences, gas flaring scientifically proven and known to have contain mostly large amount of methane and limited quantity of carbon dioxide and has significant effects on global warming, climate change, acid rain and rise sea level is a continuous practice in Nigeria (Steiner, 2010; UNEP, 2011). Methane is more powerful than carbon dioxide in trapping heat in the atmosphere (Bandura, 2007). Organisations responsible for this practice of flaring gas often use lack of complete scientific certitude as a handy justification for inaction. However, despite there are substantial unpredicted effects on the world's atmosphere, local environment and health, the disputes about the true causes of the detrimental outcomes are disputable. Flaring of gas is illegal and considered as violation of the rights to life and dignity in Nigeria under the Associated Gas Re-Injection Act 1979, 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, and Federal High Court ruling in 2005 (Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). Nonetheless, oil companies continue to flare gas and result to paying nominal fines of \$0.003 (0.3 cents) per million cubic feet of gas flare but now increased to \$3.50 for every 1000 standard cubic feet of gas flare for breaking the law. The consequences of the effect of gas flaring are disregarded or distorted because it is cheaper to pay fines than investment in gas flaring elimination projects to stop the practice. From another view, multinational oil companies often blamed the majority partner (NNPC) in their joint venture operations in Nigeria for not providing appropriate funding for investment in gas elimination projects.

		Like in the ‘Ford Pinto case’, Ford convinced itself that it was better to pay millions of dollars in Pinto jury trials and out-of-court settlements than to improve the safety of the model. By placing dollar values on human life and suffering, Ford simply disregarded the consequences of its practice relating to the safety of millions of customers (Bandura et al., 2000).
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Source: Author (2017)

### **5.3 CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

The context of the research evidence here is that no firm is exempt from the potentially overwhelming effects of crises or disasters. Critically, unconventional crises have become a fact of postmodernity and the risk society in which organisations operate. Thus, crisis management models and responses to crises really matter because unconventional crises can impair, threaten and make it impossible for organisations to achieve their fundamental strategic goals. While there is ongoing debate about the definition of crisis management (Andrew, 2011; Borodzicz, 2005; Clarke, 2005; Dombrowsky, 2007; Perrow, 2006; Regester & Larkin, 2002; Rudolf, 2007), it is widely agreed that crisis management concerns the development and application of the organisational capability to deal with crises.

The complexity in organisational structure and even technological systems are becoming more interdependent, vulnerable, and problematic in their intended and unintended consequences, industrial organisations and societies are confronted with an increasing susceptibility to numerous and diverse catastrophic events (Perrow, 1984; Lagadec, 1982; Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1997). The consequent implications have been the development and design of several crisis management models or frameworks. These crisis management frameworks as discussed in 5.4 are intended to provide strategies and steps crucial to ensure a crisis management capability and response, organised around anticipation, identification and assessment, preparation, response and communication, recovery, review and learning from risk failures and crises. These are the essential phases during which risk and crisis managers should put their crisis management frameworks or models to test.

### **5.4 CRISIS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS**

Several academics and practitioners (Alpaslan, Green, & Mitroff, 2009; Coombs, 2007; Comfort, 2007; Fink, 1996; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Turner, 1976; Turner & Pidgeon, 1997) have sought to develop frameworks for managing and responding to crises and disasters, which can be useful in making appropriate managerial and strategic decisions. In this context, crisis management is the systematic attempt to identify and detect possible crises in advance and to take actions and measures to prevent them, contain their effects or disruption, and recover and learn from risk failures (Constantinides, 2013; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015).

Typically, crisis management involves two broad phases – the preparation phase and response phase (Alpaslan et al., 2009). At the preparation phase, organisations aim to identify and interact with stakeholders and/or potential victims to prevent crises from happening and affecting stakeholders. The response phase, provide organisations opportunity to minimize stakeholders' losses that result from the crises. However, Boin & 't Hart (2003) observed that crisis management consists of at least three broad phases – before (revolves around a crisis audit and developing the skills needed to manage the crisis – proactive phase), during (involves the use of organisation's capabilities to contain the damage occurring during the crisis – reactive phase), and after (revolves around examining and learning from what one did right, as well as wrong, in past crises in order to improve the system for dealing with future crises – pre-active phase). These three broad phases of crisis management are consistent with findings from most of recent risk and crisis management studies.

Empirical studies (e.g., Pearson & Clair, 1998; Fink, 2002; Morley, 2002; Boin, 2004; Lagadec, 2005; Coombs, 2007; Reza, 2011; Andrew, 2011) have confirmed that crisis management framework, crisis management teams, crisis leaders, business continuity plan, crisis communication team and crisis communication strategies are some of crucial fundamental factors affecting whether an organisation will survive a crisis or not. Thus, a few crisis management frameworks or models were developed in response to the need to increase organisational capability and resilience before, during and after major organisational crises (For example; Cassedy, 1991; Booth, 1993; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Smith & Sipika, 1993; Turner, 1976; 1997; Seymour & Moore, 2000; Augustine, 2000; Fink, 2002; Clarke & Varma, 2004; James & Wooten, 2005). There are comparable phases such as warning signs, avoidance, incubation period, precipitating event, rescue and salvage, and cultural readjustment (Turner, 1976; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Turner & Pidgeon, 1997; Seymour & Moore, 2000) in most of these crisis management frameworks as represented in Table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2: Crisis Management Frameworks**

3-Stage Framework:	CM	3-Stage Framework:	CM	3-Stage Framework:	CM	3-Stage Framework:	CM	4-Stage Framework:	CM	4-Stage Framework:	CM	5-Stage Framework:	CM	6-Stage Framework:	CM	6-Stage Framework:	CM
(Alpaslan et al., 2009)		General		(Smith, 1990)		(Richardson, 1994)		(Myers, 1993)		(Fink, 1996)		(Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; James & Wooten, 2005)		(Augustine, 2000)		(BSI, 2014)	
Preparation phase		Before the crisis		Crisis management		of Pre-crisis/disaster phase		Normal operations		Prodromal crisis stage		Signal detection		Avoiding the crisis		Anticipate	
												Preparation/prevention		Preparing to manage the crisis		Assess	
Response phase		During the crisis		Operational crisis		Crisis impact/rescue phase		Emergency response		Acute crisis stage		Containment/damage limitation		Recognising the crisis		Prepare	
								Interim processing		Chronic crisis stage				Containing the crisis		Respond	
Recovery phase		After the crisis		Crisis legitimization		of Recovery/demise phase		Restoration		Crisis resolution stage		Recovery		Resolving the crisis		Recover	
												Learning		Profiting from the crisis		Review and learn	

Source: Author (2017)



These crisis management frameworks as shown in Table 5.2 above account for various stages of crisis but evidence about whether crisis manifest as a stage or process and event remain blurred in previous studies (Andrew, 2011; Coombs, 2007; Fink, 2002; Morley, 2002; Boin, 2004; Lagadec, 2005; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Reza, 2011). This lack of robust empirical evidence represents shortcoming in existing traditional CM models and questions the validity of both stage and event views of crisis management frameworks. As expounded in 8.1, it suggests a significant paradigm shift towards decision-based framework/model of risk/crisis management. Although critics suggest that such processes and event frameworks of crisis management are a useful way to organise and classify the phenomena of dangerous events. Nonetheless, the nature of unconventional crises characterised by unpredictability, urgency, rapid change, complexity and transnational impact (Boin & Lagadec, 2000; Comfort, 2007; Garnett & Kouzmin, 2007; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015) appear to have rendered traditional stage and event views of crisis management archaic and unsuitable for most emerging unconventional crises.

Though, as revealed in Table 5.2 above, British Standards Institution (BSI) 11200 CM framework involves six stages of anticipate, assess, prepare, respond, recover, and review and learn (BSI, 2014). This BSI CM model represents some of the latest thinking in crisis management. Although the BSI 11200 CM model (BSI, 2014) is comparable to Augustine's (2000) CM model which includes avoiding the crisis, preparing to manage the crisis, recognising the crisis, containing the crisis, resolving the crisis and profiting from the crisis. In contrast, Fink's (2002) crisis management framework revolves around four stages – prodromal crisis stage, acute crisis stage, chronic crisis stage and crisis resolution stage. On the other hand, Mitroff & Anagnos (2001) developed a CM framework which identified five factors (the types and risk categories of crises, mechanisms, systems, stakeholders and scenarios) companies must manage before, during and after a major crisis.

James & Wooten's research (2005) identify five crucial phases: signal detection, preparation and prevention, containment and damage control, business recovery, and learning. In critical terms, most of the existing authors that have developed crisis management models are not explicitly clear whether such models represent an ideal event sequence or phases in the sense of a predictable sequential process. Although Buchanan & Denyer (2013) were more specific in their six-phase event sequence: pre-crisis or incubation, event, crisis response management, investigation, organisational learning, and implementation; incubation to implementation perspective as suggested by these researchers are inadequate for several reasons:

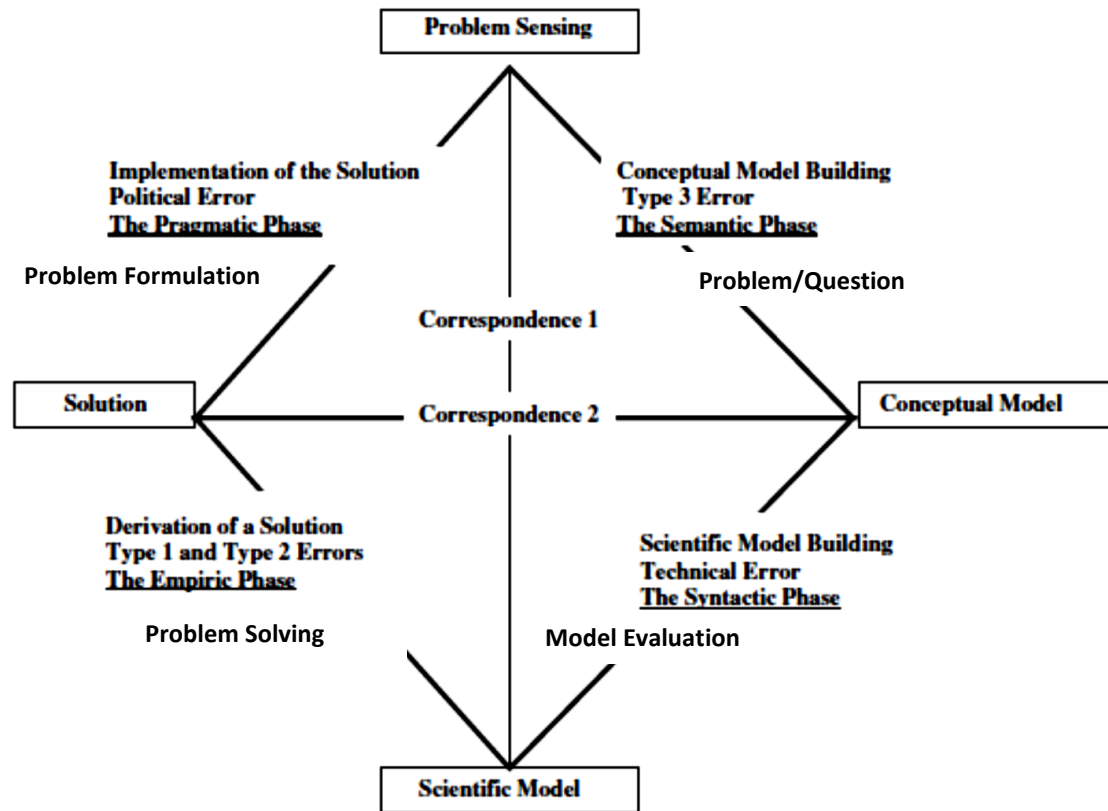
- Firstly, crisis management is very practical and so it is appropriate to depend on models with practical orientations and implications. While the theoretical foundation cannot be underestimated, the complex networks of risk behaviour, perception, organisational risk culture, proximate cause factors (systems, structures, accident, etc.) and transnational nature of the unconventional crisis would render any universal generalization and application of model inappropriate and ineffective.
- Secondly, organisations should methodologically and strategically determine which model is appropriate for the nature of crisis it wants to manage. This would ensure that there is assurance that clear and robust crisis management strategies and processes are in place before the occurrence of any major disruption and crisis.
- Thirdly, flexibility and creativity, which are essential when responding to unconventional crises, appear to be lacking in most extant CM models.
- Fourthly, unconventional crises require unconventional crisis management which challenge an ‘inside the box’ thinking and create fierce sense of urgency with robust engagement with all relevant stakeholders before, during and after dangerous events.
- Finally, empirical evidence suggests that most CM models lack discussion about moral and ethical dimension of crisis management.

Therefore, with respect to the cases of risks, crises and disasters under investigation in this research, the Bandura moral disengagement framework and Augustine’s crisis management framework are integrated to explore and provide effective management strategies that can help shed insights into the ongoing crises in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. Albeit, initially, the Augustine and Fink crisis management models are influential to this thesis, however both models are in themselves unpredictable in managing crisis situations. These models (Augustine, 2000; Fink, 2002) represent a single paradigm model which can lead to intellectual provincialism with the researcher biased either consciously or unconsciously against alternative accounts of the phenomenon investigated.

Thus, the investigation and adoption of the concepts – crisis management and moral disengagement, used throughout this research are well-grounded in a general systems model of scientific inquiry called “the diamond model” (Mitroff & Kilmann, 1978). This model involves: grounding the problem and question, developing a conceptual model to address the question, evaluation of how well the model applies to the case, and implementation of solutions that solve the problem/question (Figure 5.1). In conclusion, this is the most, arguably, useful

and well-established approach that is relevant to policy, industry and practice of risk and crisis management.

**Figure 5.1: Diamond Model of Scientific Inquiry: Transdisciplinary Systems Thinking**



Source: Adapted from Mitroff & Kilmann (1978)

### 5.5 CRISIS MANAGEMENT RESPONSES: ETHICAL DILEMMAS AND TRUST

Crisis management responses can be defined as the behaviours which an organisation exhibit as well as the communication strategies used during and after major crises. Previous studies have concentrated on communication, coordination, control and cognitive (4Cs) processes of risk detection, recognition and interpretation that initiate the crisis and emergency response process (Comfort, 2007; Lalonde, 2007). In another context, several guidelines for the selection of the appropriate crisis management response strategies have been developed in extant research (Coombs, 1995). More specifically, some selected conceptual and empirical studies offer different frameworks for understanding crisis management responses (Coombs, 2007; Quarantelli, 1988; Shrivastava, 1993; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Seeger, 2006; Smith & Elliot,

2006) and most research favoured scientific and experts' elucidation for crisis responses (Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; Comfort, 2007; Dezenhall & Weber, 2007; Hannah et al., 2009; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Smith & Elliott, 2006; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007). The crisis management responses are best understood within the context of crisis communication.

### **5.5.1 CRISIS COMMUNICATION THEORIES AND STRATEGIES**

This section discusses the most important theories of organisational crisis communication: (1) corporate apologia, (2) image repair theory, (3) organisational renewal theory (or image restoration discourse), (4) attribution theory, (5) situational crisis communication theory, (6) terminological control theory, and (7) blog-mediated crisis communication model. Each of these crisis communication theories contain basic assumptions and strategies that organisations can use in the process of crisis management. Here it is important to make the distinction between crisis management and crisis communication.

The main distinction between crisis management and crisis communication is that the former deals with the reality of the crisis whereas the latter deals with the perception of the reality. At this stage, the focus is on crisis communication which is simply define as the 'dialogue' between the organisation and its publics (Fearn-Banks, 1996). Although this definition of crisis communication is criticised as insufficient (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017), it does offers initial insight about crisis communication. Sturges (1994) makes a distinction between three types of external crisis information:

- (a) Instructing information, which is 'information that tells people affected by the crisis how they should physically react to the crisis' (p. 308).
- (b) Adjusting information, which is 'information that helps people psychologically cope with the magnitude of the crisis' (p. 308).
- (c) Internalising information, which is 'information that people will use to formulate an image about the organisation' (p. 308).

These three types of crisis information are mutually independent communication strategies but sometimes combine in different ways depending on the crisis stage. Frandsen & Johansen (2017, p. 91) pointed that Sturges' (1994) definition of crisis communication is questionable because of 'his distinction between the three types of crisis information and their distribution

according to a staged approach to crisis management, not least due to how image or reputation is conceptualised'. The previous approach to crisis communication favour mainly communication from the organisations to outside stakeholders (Coombs, 2007; Fink, 2013; Hood, 2002; Fishman, 1999; Sandy & Ian, 2009; Seeger, 2006; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). However, the perceived extrication of '*local interpretation*' from '*sole scientific elucidation*' infuse into crisis management responses in recent years is responsible for 'crisis disengagement approach'. The fundamental task then requires uniform interpretation and de-constructing the crisis in the context of multiple interests and multiple meanings and carefully select appropriate solution from the available options.

Therefore, this thesis recognises that crisis communication is made up of two parts: (1) managing information (collecting and analysing crisis-related information) and (2) managing meaning (influencing how people perceive the crisis and the organisation in crisis) (Coombs, 2015). In context, each of these two parts exists in two variations, (a) public crisis communication (directed at external stakeholders) and (b) private crisis communication (directed at employees or exchanged among members of crisis management teams) (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017, p. 91) which could assist in managing both rational and normative expectations in processes of crisis management. This point is significant because when responding to organisational crises rationality must be separated and distinguished from morality. The reason is that the commitment that an organisation is doing something right is not the same as getting them right. Quite critical to this debate is the fact that there is a parallel line between "*doing the right thing*" and "*doing things right*" in risk and crisis management responses. The most useful instrument to manage crisis and respond appropriately is the organisational moral courage to commit planning into action, remain flexible and be responsible to other key stakeholders in crisis. The following subsections briefly discuss each of the crisis communication theories earlier identified.

#### **5.5.1.1 CORPORATE APOLOGIA**

This thesis has shown that an organisational crisis forces an immediate decision or reaction from the organisation (cf. Stephens, Malone, & Bailey, 2005). The corporate apologia is a post-crisis communication theory which suggests that organisation should focus on managing threats and apologising and features strategies for the apology. The notion of corporate apologia is originally seen as language of self-defence and used by an organisation to account

for its actions after a crisis (Coombs, 2007; Reza, 2011; Ryan, 1982). This thesis has found that crisis places survival of the organisation at serious risk due to element of surprise and issues outside the organisation's complete control (Coombs & Holladay, 2010; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2015; Stephens et al., 2005). Organisations are often criticised during and after major crises which could lead to turbulent circumstances beyond management's control. Therefore, corporate apologia which is not an apology but a response to criticism, can help organisations offer a competing account in process of crisis management.

This is mainly defensive strategies and implies that crisis arises from accusation of wrongdoing (Hearit, 2006). Corporate apologia is rooted in the assumption that organisation can carefully craft its own version of the crisis events to redeem lost reputation, protect itself and others, as well as to regain control. The main corporate apologia strategies include persuasive accounts, expressing sorrow, and using dissociation strategies such as opinion/knowledge dissociation, individual/group dissociation, and act/essence dissociation (cf. Hearit, 1995; Frandsen & Johansen, 2017, p. 102). However, according to previous risk and crisis studies, crisis management response towards stakeholders in crisis situations can also range from denial, avoidance (Hood, 2002; Brandstrom & Kuipers, 2003; Sandy & Ian, 2009), defensive, reaction, accommodation, pro-action (Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001), forced compliance, voluntary compliance above legal expectations, making extra efforts (Shrivastava & Siomkos, 1989), aggressive, pretending and ignoring, blaming, admit, differentiating, bolstering, and transcending (Boin, 't Hart, McConnell & Preston, 2010; George & Pratt, 2012). To put into perspective, a number of these crisis management responses are consistent with four-fold typologies provided by other scholars: deny responsibility, admit responsibility but fight it, accept responsibility, anticipate responsibility (Clarkson, 1995, p. 108-109); fight all the way, do only what is legally required, be progressive, and lead the industry (Carroll, 1979).

Alpaslan et al. (2009) suggest that organisations should adopt the principles of stakeholder models of corporate governance when responding to crises, which perhaps will lead companies to engage more frequently in proactive and/or accommodating crisis management behaviours even if these CM behaviours are not perceived to maximise shareholders value. These researchers further provided examples of different crisis management behaviour (reactive, defensive, accommodative, and proactive) in both the preparation and response phases of crisis management (Table 5.3).

**Table 5.3: Crisis Management Behaviour in Preparation and Response Phases of a Crisis**

CM Behaviour	Preparation Phase	Response Phase
Reactive	Deny the responsibility of a crisis.  Deny the potential effects of a crisis on the firm and its stakeholders.	Deny any responsibility for the crisis and its effects on stakeholders.  Be uncooperative, hide the truth, and shut all communications.
Defensive	Perform cos-benefit analyses, and prepare only for crises with high expected cost to the firm.  Involve stakeholders in crisis preparations, only if mandated by law.	Admit some responsibility for the crisis but fight it.  Comply when forced, and do only what is mandated by law.
Accommodative	Accept the possibility of the crisis and its effects both on the firm and on a broad set of stakeholders.  Involve in crisis preparations a broader set of stakeholders than mandated by law.	Accept responsibility for the crisis.  Voluntarily attend to the needs of the victims, and tell the truth as you know it.
Proactive	Develop mutual trust and cooperation based relationships with all stakeholders.  Try to involve in crisis preparations all stakeholders that may be harmed by organisational decisions and actions.	Anticipate that the crisis may trigger a chain reaction of other crises.  Get the worst about yourself out on your time before the media dig it.

Source: Adapted from Alpaslan et al. (2009)

### **5.5.1.2 IMAGE REPAIR THEORY**

The image repair theory is initially known as image restoration discourse, which depends on the complaint or attack which in turn motivates the corporation to respond (Benoit, 1997). The image restoration discourse focuses on message options and how a corporation can use them to respond in crisis situations (Harlow, Brantley, & Harlow, 2011). The image repair theory is credited to Benoit (1995) who developed the concept to explain how and why individuals and organisations defend their reputation by applying a set of image repair strategies when accused or suspected of wrongdoing. It is based on two main axiomatic assumptions: (1)

communication is a goal-oriented activity, and (2) a key goal of communication is to maintain a favourable reputation (Benoit, 2015).

In context, image repair theory explains how organisations and individuals attempt to correct negative public perception of themselves after a specific event or series of events (Harlow et al., 2011). Although some of crisis communication and management strategies (as shown in Table 5.4) are aim at repairing organisational image and reputation and avoiding legal liability (Benoit, 1995; Hearit, 2006; Harlow et al., 2011) but given their moral implications and potential negative effect on organisational sustainability and resilience, their sustainable impacts in repairing corporate image and reputation become contestable. The image repair strategies are attempt by organisations to change or create new beliefs (or values) about an offensive act and the accused's blame for this act (Benoit, 2015).



**Table 5.4: Strategies of Responding to Crisis**

Code	Strategy	Example
(1)	Simple denial	We did not do it
(2)	Shifting blame	Someone else did it
(3)	Provocation	We did it, but were provoked
(4)	Accidents	The incident was an accident
(5)	Defeasibility	Lack of information or control
(6)	Good intentions	The error was the result of good intentions
(7)	Bolstering	Our good characteristics outweigh any error
(8)	Minimization	The problem is not that bad
(9)	Differentiation	This incident is different from some other act
(10)	Transcendence	The act should be understood in a different context
(11)	Attack accuser	The person blaming us is the one at fault
(12)	Compensation	The victims will be compensated
(13)	Corrective action	We will fix the problem
(14)	Mortification	We admit responsibility, apologise and ask for forgiveness

Source: Derived from Benoit (1995); Hearit (2006); Harlow et al. (2011)

It should be made clear that the nature of crises (whether environmental crisis, product recalls, terrorism, industrial disaster, financial crisis, or ecological crisis, etc.) affects the effectiveness of crisis management response strategies. More critically, a number of these crisis management response strategies such as minimisation, denial, shifting blame, provocation, bolstering, and good intentions correspond greatly to and are rooted in moral disengagement mechanisms. Although these crisis management could as well be classified as crisis disengagement techniques or strategies, they raise serious ethical and moral concerns. This represents

fundamental flaws in previous crisis management responses/strategies and suggests the need for a paradigm shift towards ethical risk and crisis management responses.

The basic image repair situation, which serves as the platform for the verbal defense strategies, can be represented as a process with two phases (see Table 5.5). In conclusion, image repair strategies contain five general strategies ranging from denial, evading of responsibility, reducing offensiveness of event, corrective action to mortification (Benoit, 1997; 2000).

**Table 5.5: The Basic Image Repair Situation**

Process	Example
<p>Phase (1): from attack to crisis</p> <p>An undesirable event takes place</p> <p>An actor accuses or suspects another actor for being responsible for the undesirable event</p> <p>The image of this actor is threatened</p>	<p>On December 20, 2011, an oil spill occurred off the coast of Niger Delta. It was estimated that more than 40,000 barrels (or 1.68 million gallons) spilled into the environment and spread along the Nigerian coast. The spill was regarded as one of the worst spills in the area for a decade. A group of affected local communities draw attention to the environmental and economic damages resulting from the disaster. Shell received much of the blame for the disaster, and that blame resulted into what Benoit (2015) called image restoration strategies.</p>
<p>Phase (1): from crisis to image repair</p> <p>The accused or suspected actor defends itself against the attack by means of one or more image repair strategies</p> <p>If the defense is successful, the image of this actor will be repaired (Frandsen &amp; Johansen, 2017)</p>	<p>In a press release, Shell defend itself against local communities' attack and disputed the \$4 billion fine levied upon it by the government. Shell statement claims that at the time of the incident it was oil from a third-party spill that impacted some parts of the shoreline. The company regrets that the incident took place and promises to be cleaned up impacted areas and notes that it will continues to review and respond to all claims received in respect of the spill.</p>

Source: Author (2017)

### **5.5.1.3 ORGANISATIONAL RENEWAL THEORY**

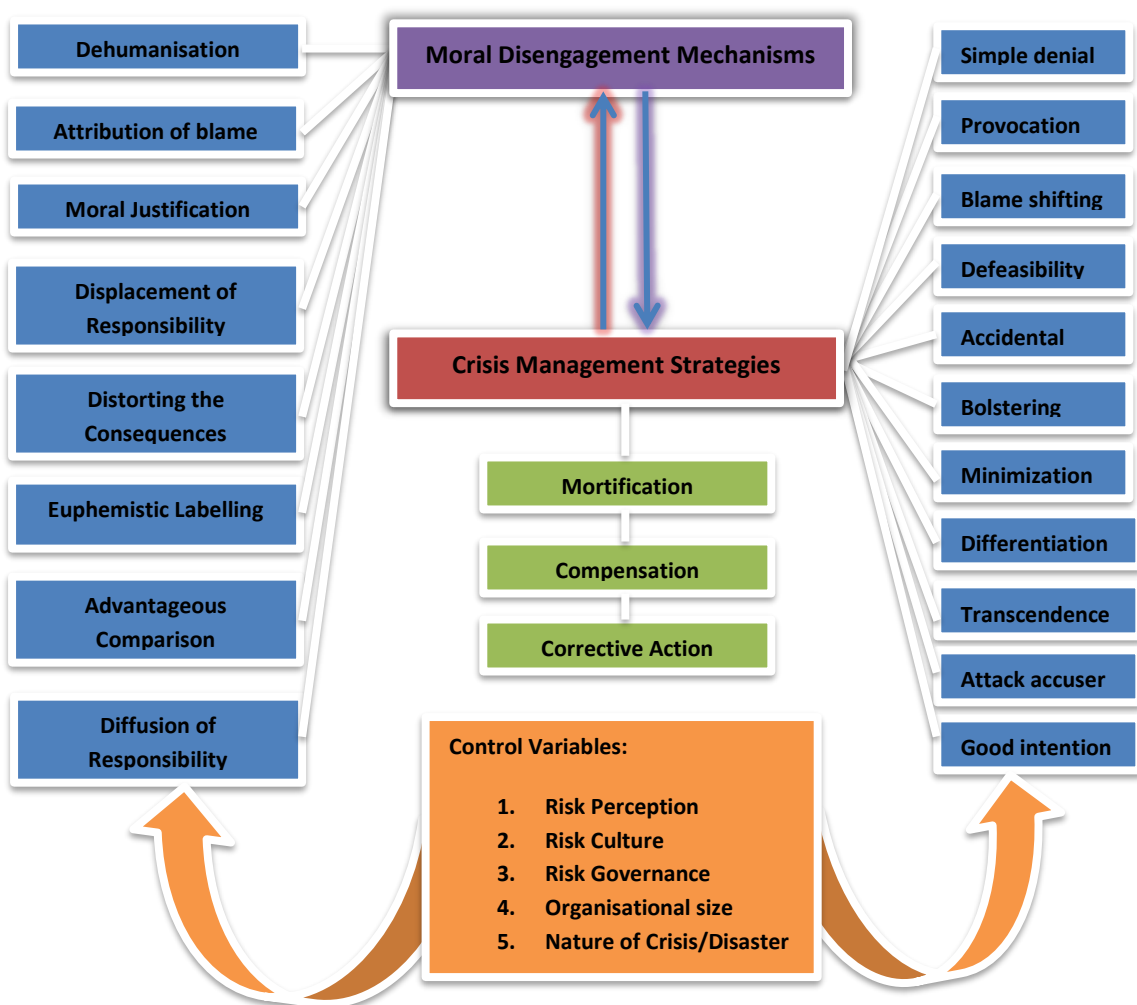
The core assumptions of organisational renewal theory are rooted in constructive communication and ethical communication before, during and after the crisis. It emphasises organisational learning and building on lessons learned from crises. As noted previously, some of the CM response strategies which are advocated in previous studies raise ethical and moral implications and amount to neglecting vulnerable people in crisis. The claim has been made that people suffer from the wrongs done to them regardless of how perpetrators justify their inhumane actions (Bandura, 2002; Jordan, 2009). This claim reflects the environmental pollution and crises in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Chapters Two and Three). As found in previous studies, the success of crisis management response efforts depends on at least two factors: the nature of an organisation's established relationship with its stakeholders, and the accuracy of an organisation's understanding of how its stakeholders might behave in the context of crises (Pearson & Clair, 1998; Ulmer, 2001).

It was argued that some indicators of successful crisis management outcomes such as early warning signals detection, effective damage containment, minimal crisis downtime, positive effects on corporate reputation, and profit from crisis can only happen when organisations exhibit appropriate crisis management behaviours, build alliances and share accurate and truthful information with the stakeholders (Boin & McConnell, 2007; Coombs, 2012; Kouzmin, 2008; Lagadec, 2007; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Reza, 2011; Sellnow & Ulmer, 1998). Although, critics argued that crisis management response strategies and behaviours are mostly conferred within public relations and communications research. In context, several traditional researchers have discussed some fundamental crisis communication and response strategies which organisations can adopt when responding to crisis situations (Burns & Bruner, 2000; Burke, 1970; 1973; Coombs, 2007; Harlow, Brantley, & Harlow, 2011; Rosenfield, 1968; Ryan, 1982; Smudde & Courtright, 2008; Ware & Linkugel, 1973). Of importance is that crisis communication has also extends to moral and ethical field as demonstrated in this thesis.

Therefore, as indicated from this research, there is a need to re-evaluate existing crisis management response strategies because of their impacts on future organisational sustainability, flexibility and resilience. For example, some of the crisis communication and management strategies such as consigning responsibility for the crisis to oneself or others, attacking an accuser, redefining the origin and nature of the crisis, and refocusing attention on post-crisis activities as established in previous research have implications on organisational sustainability and resilience.

In view of the above discussion, researchers have called for evidence-based management and the use of scientific evidence to guide managerial decision-making because of the presence of moral dilemmas in risk and crisis situations (Avery, Lariscy, Kim, & Hocke, 2010; Comfort et al., 2004; Ansell, Boin & Keller, 2010; Palttala, Boano, Lund & Vos, 2012; Rousseau, 2005). Therefore, in response to calls for evidence-based crisis management strategies, this research through comprehensive review of existing CM literatures models the crisis management response strategies and moral disengagement mechanisms to show evidence of their association in practice (Figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2: Moral Disengagement & Crisis Management Framework**



Source: Author (2017)

Figure 5.2 shows the synthesis of crisis management communication/behavioural strategies and moral disengagement mechanisms. In context, based on review of existing empirical studies, it was found that crisis management strategies such as mortification, compensation and

corrective action are more effective than others. In fact, the results in Figure 5.2 clearly suggest that other forms of crisis management strategies with the exemption of mortification, compensation and correction action, are rooted in moral disengagement mechanisms. Although, all crisis management strategies are influenced or moderated by factors such as risk perception, risk culture, risk governance, the size of the organisation and the nature of crisis or disaster. In a practical context, organisations that aim to maintain and enhance their credibility and reputation during and after major crises should focus more on using mortification, compensation and corrective action.

#### **5.5.1.4 ATTRIBUTION THEORY**

The concept of attribution is built on the assumption that people need to assign responsibility for events (Weiner, 1986) cited by Coombs (2007, p. 136). Therefore, attribution theory suggests that people look for causes of events, especially unexpected and negative events. Within the context of attribution theory, the threat of a crisis is a function of crisis responsibility and blame (Coombs, 2007; Coombs & Holladay, 2001; 2010; 2015). This implies that managers should evaluate the crisis to determine which crisis response is best for the situation (Coombs, 2015). It is expected that crisis response can help reduce or eliminate the negative effects of crises on market share, stock prices, sales of the recalled product, purchase intentions, and sales of other products by the company (Coombs, 2007).

However, when inappropriately planned, crisis communication or response to unconventional crises can escalate or harm the organisation's image and reputation, not least disrupt working relationship with external stakeholders. In a practical context, the attributions stakeholders make about crisis responsibility have affective and behavioural consequences for an organisation (Coombs & Holladay, 2005; 2006). If the organisation is deemed responsible for the crisis, the reputation will suffer (Coombs, 2007). In turn, stakeholders may exit the relationship and/or create negative word-of-mouth. At the extreme, like the Niger Delta crises, external stakeholders such as local youths have resulted into vandalism of oil and gas infrastructures because of the perceived corporate irresponsibility of oil companies.

From another perspective, crisis management response usually involves dealing with a high degree of uncertainty (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007), 'wicked problems' (Stubbart, 1987), crisis perception divergence (Penrose, 2000), communication issues and challenges (Burns & Bruner, 2000; Coombs, 2007; Smudde & Courtright, 2008), time pressure created by a sense

of urgency (Kotter, 2008), public relations and politics issues (Dezenball & Weber, 2007; Coombs, 2007), blame allocation and resentment (Elliott, Swartz & Herbane, 2010), ambiguity, crisis responsibility and ethical concerns. When taken collectively, it is critical to suggest that crisis management response may well be difficult to codify (Buchanan & Denyer, 2013) or remain an impossible task to accomplish (Boin & 't Hart, 2003).

Alternatively, actions or strategies that are crucial to resolving the crisis may also escalate it when not properly planned and implemented. Therefore, it clear that standardisation or adaptation of crisis management strategies should be considered to ensures that appropriate messages and behaviours are exhibited before, during and after unconventional crisis. Albeit attribution theory can help to classify crises: victimised (natural disaster, rumours, etc.), accidental (challenges and technical error accidents), and preventable (human error and misconduct), resulting in categories that help to determine response strategies (George & Pratt, 2012). This is consistent with the notion that crises may be considered as a function of external or environmental threats and internal or organisational weaknesses (Stephens et al., 2005). Nonetheless, crises often create uncertainty (including ethical uncertainty) which could render crafted crisis communication strategies ineffective. As a result, some researchers suggested the need for situational crisis communication strategies as discussed below.

#### **5.5.1.5 SITUATIONAL CRISIS COMMUNICATION THEORY**

The situational crisis communication theory is grounded in attribution theory but applies to a wider array of crises. It advances and test hypotheses related to how perceptions of the crisis affect the crisis response and the effects of crisis responses on outcomes such as emotions, purchase intention, and reputation (Coombs, 2007). The basic assumption of the situational crisis communication theory is that the best way to protect the reputation of an organisation in crisis is by selecting the crisis response strategies that best fit the reputational threat presented by the crisis (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017). There are three components of the theory: (1) a list of crisis response strategies, (2) a framework for the categorisation of crisis situations, and (3) a procedure for matching a given crisis with the right crisis response strategy. The situational crisis communication theory starts with the risk/crisis manager examining the crisis to assess the level of the reputational threat of a crisis.

Coombs (2007, p. 137) notes that three factors such as (1) initial crisis responsibility, (2) crisis history, and (3) relationship history/prior reputation, shape the reputational threat in the crisis.

Two-step process has been identified when using these three factors to assess the reputational threat. Firstly, crisis managers need to determine the initial crisis responsibility attached to a crisis. This is stakeholder-centred approach, in which the initial assessment is based upon the crisis type. By identifying the crisis type, the risk/crisis manager can determine how much crisis responsibility stakeholders will attribute to the organisation at the onset of the crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2001; 2006). The more cause of the crisis is perceived as beyond an organisation's or individuals control, the lower the attribution of responsibility. Secondly, the reputational threat can also be assess using two intensifying factors, consistency and distinctiveness. Consistency is operationalised as crisis history whereas distinctiveness is operationalised as relationship history/prior reputation (Coombs, 2007). In a practical context, high consistency or low distinctiveness increases the threats from a crisis. This could intensify attributions of crisis responsibility thereby indirectly affecting reputational threat (Coombs, 2007; 2010). Thus, a victim crisis becomes treated as an accident crisis and an accident crisis becomes treated as an intentional crisis when either distinctiveness is low (negative relationship history) or consistency is high (crisis history) (Coombs & Holladay, 2001; Coombs, 2007; 2015).

So, what can organisations in crisis situations do to overcome the challenges associated with crisis management responses? The fact that 'action that is instrumental to understanding the crisis often intensifies the crisis' (Weick, 1988, p. 305) demands that crisis management response should be considered in a normative context of both ethical and moral implications. Given several practitioners' debates on the adoption of crisis response plans and procedures and 'the mere existence of policies and procedures which may be false signals of preparedness' (Pearson & Clair, 1998, p. 68), the logical question is should innovation and decentralization be allowed or encouraged ('t Hart, Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1993) for people at the 'sharp end' during and after organisational crises (Flin, O'Conner, & Crichton, 2008)? This is because fundamental factors such as intuition and recognition (Zsombok & Klein, 1997), improvisation and bricolage (Weick, 1993), flexibility (Turner, 1994), leadership roles in crisis situations (Flin & Yule, 2004; Hannah et al., 2009; Probert & Turnbull, 2011), and moral disengagement issues (Bandura, 2002; 2007) are critical in effective and sustainable crisis management response. In conclusion, and in the context of this research, for research in risk and crisis management to be helpful and translate into sustainable management of emerging unconventional crises and disasters, moral disengagement implications of the various strategies of crisis response must be acknowledged and pragmatically considered and addressed.

### 5.5.1.6 TERMINOLOGICAL CONTROL THEORY

This is credited to Keith Michael Hearit and it is grounded in apologetic ethics of crisis communication (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017). The apologetic ethics is ‘a method by which to ethically judge the apologetic decision making offered by individuals and organisations’ (Hearit, 2006, p. 77). The core premise of terminological control theory is that in any crisis, it is essential for the organisation in crisis to be able to control the terminology and thus to influence the interpretations and counter-interpretations used and produced by the actors involved (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017, p. 101). In this context, “crises are terminological creations conceived by human agents and, consequently, are managed and resolved terminologically” (Hearit & Courtright, 2003, p. 87). The terminological control theory is presented as a process model of crisis management response involving five phases:

- First, an action is committed that is considered wrongful by (certain parts of) society. This wrongdoing can be traceable to a specific organisation.
- Second, an accusation (i.e., what the rhetoricians call a *kategoria*) is made against the organisation, which is made responsible for the wrongdoing.
- Third, because of the accusation, organisation now face a legitimacy crisis. That is, part of the society perceives the organisation as either unprofessional, incompetent and unable to ‘get the job done’ or as indifferent to the laws, rules, values, and norms of the society (Hearit, 1995).
- Fourth, the organisation in crisis defends itself against the accusation. The organisation can use corporate apologia strategies such as persuasive accounts, expressing sorrows, and using dissociation strategies to handle the crisis.
- Fifth, this is last phase which signifies the potential end of the crisis to the extent that the corporate apologia allows the organisations to restore its legitimacy and to continue its business.

Recent research has shown that terminological control theory of crisis communication is yet to receive the attention it deserved (Frandsen & Johansen, 2017). The value of terminological control theory of crisis communication is most evident in a crisis involving multiple actors, and in a situation where organisations risk facing multiple socio-cultural orders simultaneously.



### **5.5.1.7 BLOG-MEDIATED CRISIS COMMUNICATION MODEL**

The blog-mediated crisis communication model focuses on the use of social media as instrument of crisis communication. Organisations operate in dynamics environment where they must constantly evaluate how they will respond to stakeholders. Research suggests that organisations should examine the attributes of stakeholders to classify how they may formulate their reactions to pressures and inquiries in process of crisis management (Stephens et al., 2005). The age of risk society implies that crisis information can be disseminated instantaneously using social media. Therefore, blog-mediated crisis communication model can help managers to identify influential external blogs and bloggers to engage them. In this process, understanding blog content is as important as the need to identify the dissemination process of that content.

The blog-mediated crisis communication approach can help to inform, convince, or motivate certain stakeholders to action (Stephens et al., 2005). Social media can impact organisational crisis coverage because events of the crisis can spread quickly to numerous stakeholders. Influential bloggers can spread information about the crisis, which may further damage the organisation image and reputation. Therefore, it is essential that organisations in crisis target the right audience and attempt ‘damage control’ to prevent drastic negative changes in relationships with environmental components (Sturges, 1994). As a result, the blog-mediated crisis communication model can help follow up issue involvement when bloggers discuss experiences or self-involvement when they seek self-affirmation by discussing the crisis with others.

### **5.5.2 TRUST ISSUES IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT RESPONSE: A REVIEW**

Trust is a multidimensional construct containing both cognitive and affective contents, and both micro (interpersonal) and macro (inter-organisational) elements (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). This implies that trust is a complex phenomenon, shaped by environmental, organisational, and individual contingencies (Luo, 2002). Given the multidisciplinary nature of trust, it is essential to understand what it means and why it matters in risk and crisis management. Traditionally, trust is “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another” (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). This definition suggests that trust composed of two interrelated cognitive processes. The first involves a preparedness to accept vulnerability to the actions of another party. The second is that, despite uncertainty about how the other will act, there are

positive expectations regarding the other party's intentions, motivations, and behaviour (Lewicki, Tomlinson, & Gillespie, 2006).

Baier (1985, p. 235) suggested that trust is "accepted vulnerability to another's possible but not expected ill will (or lack of good will) toward one". In a similar view, trust is also defined as a person's "expectations, assumptions or beliefs about the likelihood that another's future actions will be beneficial, favourable or at least not detrimental" (Robinson, 1996, p. 576). Furthermore, trust is defined as the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform an action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995, p. 712). This implies that trust is a situation characterised by uncertainty where one party (trustor) is prepared to depend on the actions of another party (trustee) (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015).

Most definitions of trust, as discussed above, are grounded in the assumption that a state of uncertainty exist between the trustor (the focal decision maker) and trustee (the receiver of the trust). Thus, the trustor must decide how much to cooperate with the trustee and is assumed to make this decision rationally (cf. Becerra & Gupta, 2003; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009; Hurley, 2006; Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998). For example, in the context of the Niger Delta crises, research reveals that the local people have often rely on scientific experts in the past to provide information concerning severity of environmental hazards and disasters, and depend on multinational oil companies to take meaningful decisions in preventing, mitigating and addressing the 'invincible' environmental harms from oil and gas activities (Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2014; 2015). This suggests that the trustee's intention, motives, and trustworthiness are inferred from the frequency and level of cooperative choices made. In unconventional crisis situations, trust is indicated by cooperative moves by the affected stakeholders, and distrust is manifested in competitive moves (Lewicki et al., 2006, p. 995). Therefore, the essence of trust in crisis management response is the choice to cooperate or not to cooperate.

Indeed, trust is viewed as "confident positive expectations regarding another's conduct," whereas distrust is "confident negative expectations regarding another's conduct" (Lewicki et al., 1998, p. 439). Albeit both trust and distrust are often invoked to describe certainty judgments about the other's conduct (Luhmann, 1988). Trust allows the possibility of undesirable behaviour by the other to be removed from consideration whereas distrust reduces

complexity by allowing undesirable conduct to be likely (if not certain) and to be managed (Lewicki et al., 2006, p. 1002). Trust and distrust are separate dimensions independent of each other. Research suggests that a breach of trust between those who take (and manage) risks and those who are (apparently) victimised by the risks others take is at crossroad (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). In such situation, there may be simultaneous reasons to both trust and distrust another stakeholder experiencing the same crisis due to the complex view in which unconventional crisis normally occurs.

In this perspective, trust is a crucial factor of crisis management response and becomes even more important if individual knowledge about potential cause of crisis is low. Research has demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between the uncertainty of the risk and the role of trust (Wachinger, Renn, Begg, & Kuhlicke, 2013). Paton (2008) argues that trust only becomes necessary when the decision-maker faces a situation of uncertainty. When responding to crisis, decision-makers are normally confronted with uncertainty. In this situation trust functions to reduce the uncertainty and complexity that people encounter when faced with novel events such as crises (Paton, 2008). Trust then becomes a construct of considerable importance when responding to crises. This means that organisations need to develop trust with stakeholders before, during and after major crises. Effective measures to enhance cooperation of stakeholders should be developed as part of the crisis management plan. Trust remains an essential element of successful crisis communication or crisis management response.

## **5.6 MORAL DISENGAGEMENT OR CRISIS DISENGAGEMENT: IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Previously, it was emphasized that despite extensive research on moral disengagement mechanisms in different contexts such as war, terrorism, aggressive behaviour, organisational corruption and transgression, little or no research exists on moral disengagement implications in crisis management. However, the lack of investigation into moral disengagement in processes of crisis management might simply demonstrate ‘crisis disengagement’ rather than ‘moral disengagement’. The fact that moral disengagement focuses mostly on outcome rather than proximate cause, is controversial and can simply denote organisational business case strategy to manage crisis or disaster, and not moral disengagement. Nonetheless, since the contention in this thesis is that moral disengagement represents an *‘irony of evil’* because irrespective of how it’s justified – evil is evil.

While the focus is not to sound too philosophical, the fundamental purpose is to argue that moral disengagement or crisis disengagement might potentially escalate, rather than reduce, organisational crisis. In this context, crisis disengagement refers to the collective instruments of denial, blaming, provocation, accidental defense, good intentions or justification, bolstering, minimisation, attack accuser, differentiation, transcendence, and provocation to selectively and strategically detach or disengage from organisational crisis with the view of building reputation, recover from the crisis, and ensure business continuity despite the moral implications. Therefore, this thesis suggests the need for a crisis engagement approach based on moral consideration as a vital tool towards effectively managing unconventional risks, crises and disasters (see Figure 5.2). Furthermore, it is argued that under certain circumstances in risk and crisis situations employing moral disengagement mechanisms might spell organisational doom, cause crisis intensification and initiate future disasters.

In an alternative context, crisis disengagement, more than any other crisis management strategy, illustrates both the intensification and mystification of risk and crisis situations. In most cases, risk and crisis management research has advanced as if crises and disaster decision-making, models and response strategies are, restricted to rational behaviours and culture of scientific clarification of the phenomena. Again, this characterises overly rationalised accounts of unconventional crises and disasters rendering a landscape penetrated by organisation's transgression and technical irrationality in decision-making leading to crisis intensification and crisis management failures. The recent cases of unconventional crises and disasters (e.g. MH370, VW emission scandal and Bonga oil disaster) suggest how superiority of rational decision-making and the experts (scientific) mentality in managing crises and disasters have become doubtful and even unreliable.

In practice, the question of moral disengagement mechanisms, and the processes that lead to them, can be masked, disguised, or denied, and organisations can use business case to justify their rational decision-makings. In this thesis, the most fundamental assumption of moral disengagement mechanisms is that application of morality and ethics in processes of crisis management is appropriate when such application does not challenge, undermine, or counteract organisation's business case to risk and crisis management. To confirm the validity of this paradigm, some years ago, Chris Argyris in *Overcoming Organisational Defenses* (Argyris, 1990, p. 10 - 13) recognised that:

*“Management, at all levels, in many organisations, creates, by their own choice, a world that is contrary to what they say they prefer and contrary to the managerial stewardship they espouse. ...This, of course, is a prime illustration of the disparity between espoused theory – what we say we do – and theory-in-use – what we actually do”.*

As put forward in this research, moral disengagement represents unnoticeable moral and ethical extermination inconsistencies in crisis management response strategies, and organisations most often act as if such immoral conducts are humane and ethically consistent. But, such ‘*irony of evil*’ becomes conformable to organisational norms, risk culture and risk governance. This logic perhaps found expression in the way Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria manage the environmental risks and crises in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria especially the Ogoni crisis. Likewise, the logic can also be established in the Bhopal disaster of 1984 involving Union Carbide and the Bhopal local community. These cases demonstrate that crisis intensifications are the results of dehumanisation, moral justification, euphemistic labelling, attribution of blame, advantageous comparison, distorting the consequences, displacement and diffusion of responsibility – all these are mechanisms of moral disengagement. More specifically, it is expected that understanding how moral disengagement penetrates organisational crisis and disaster management can help practitioners, policymakers, and academics redirect strategies, policies, and debates.

Of what value is the epistemological clarification of moral disengagement to organisational methodological approaches in crisis management? It has been contended, and very accurately, that there is irrefutable thesis lacking empirical proof and evidence that the way organisations manage crisis and disaster absolutely matters. Therefore, the theory of moral disengagement, as applied in this research, provides an avenue to understand why most organisations are vulnerable to unconventional crises and disasters and perhaps clarify how crisis management strategies can become flaws and archaic.

A distinction should be made between deontological and consequentialist ethical (moral) transgression in risk and crisis management practice. Deontological ethical perspectives consider certain acts as wrong (or good) in and of themselves whereas the latter looks at the consequences of an act for guidance of whether it is right or wrong. Furthermore, this research contends for both moral absolutism (certain actions are wrong irrespective of the reasons) and moral consequentialism (a perspective that whether an act is morally right depends only on consequences) approach to risk and crisis management decision making as a pragmatic guide. This is because one person’s morality is another person’s evil. In relation to the consideration

of moral disengagement in crisis management, deontological arguments tend to prevail – especially in terms of the moral disengagement mechanisms covered in this thesis, for example, advantageous comparison, dehumanisation and euphemistic labelling are regarded as ethically and morally wrong.

On the other hand, consequentialist arguments in moral psychology and management science literature do occasionally surface. Clearly, some have argued that some people engage in unethical practice because they do not recognise it's ethically wrong and as such the consequences become unclear. With specific reference to the Niger Delta crises, Alaba & Ifelola (2011), Bustany & Wysham (2000), ERA (1998), Fatusin et al. (2010), and Steiner (2010) have provided consequentialist arguments that environmental practice such as gas flaring is wrong because it causes harm to the environment and affect the health of the local people. As such, the current and future debates would perhaps require thorough examination of both deontological and consequentialist perspectives when discussing moral disengagement in crisis management processes.

In conclusion, whatever one's position, there is apparently agreement that justifiable evils such as moral disengagement mechanisms are harmful and risky strategies; arguments that would remain valid despite the perceived benefits of moral disengagement exploitation in risk and crisis management processes. The next chapter will consider the research methodology used in this thesis. The case study research method was adopted because of the need to studied risk, crisis and disaster in their practical context. The basis for the chosen research method is that the utility of existing risk and crisis management models cannot be known without their practical application. Therefore, several issues such as research strategy and design, data collection methods and triangulation, and sampling techniques and case studies selection, research philosophy and ethical considerations are covered in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN RISK AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

One of the most crucial aspect in the research process is the methodology underpinning the research; and the second issue is how to build explanations from data generated from the research process (Vaughan, 2004). The question of how should risk, crisis and disaster be research remain unexplored and insufficient attentions have been paid to this issue. In this thesis, a research method refers to a technique for collecting data such as a self-completion questionnaire, structured or semi-structured interview, or participant observation. It is a systematic process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information (data) to increase our understanding of the phenomenon in which we are interested or concerned (Saunders et al., 2012). This process involves questioning assumptions, theories and perceptions through objective or evidence-based approach in providing ground-breaking alternative, innovative, radical and novel ways of examining the familiar such that it contributes to existing knowledge and made significant contributions to the field of risk and crisis management. Therefore, this chapter discusses some methodological issues within the context of this research.

Firstly, it introduces the research philosophy and strategy underpinning this research and explains the rationale for mixing philosophical paradigms. The issue of research design and justification for adopting a qualitative approach via a multiple case-study approach was explained. Secondly, it discusses the instruments used for data collection (semi-structured interviews, documents, transcripts of case laws, group network videos, reports and fact sheets) and explains how and why these sources of data were selected and used in this thesis. Furthermore, the chapter discusses sampling procedures, sample size, informants' inclusion criteria and justification, and issues related to confidentiality and anonymity. This follows by discussion of why the research settings (cases) were selected as appropriate for this study. After this, there is discussion about data and method triangulation. Thirdly, the chapter explains how the data were managed and procedures used for analysis. Fourthly, it explains how the research dependability and transferability were achieved. Finally, there were discussion about the ethical issues and how this thesis complied with them.

## 6.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

This research extends past theoretical and logical curiosity and aims not simply to uncover the interaction between moral disengagement and crisis management but also builds the empirical paradigm in ways that existing risk models and strategies are tested, probed, validated. And, as a result, alternative effective and sustainable strategies or approaches to deal with unconventional risk, crisis and disaster are revealed. Specifically, risk and crisis research is crucial to understand the utility of existing risk models and strategies given the view that “like theories, methodologies cannot be true or false, only more or less useful.” (Silverman, 2001, p. 2). Thus, the approach taken in conducting this research is guided by the researcher’s philosophical standpoint and his view of the relationship between ontology (nature of reality or knowledge) and epistemology (how knowledge is generated or acquired).

Of what relevance is research philosophical awareness to risk, crisis and disaster management research? The significance of paradigm in risk research cannot be overemphasised. As Guba & Lincoln (1994, p. 116) explain it: “*paradigm issues are crucial; no inquirer, we maintain, ought to go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs and guides his or her approach.*” Previous research found that the philosophical commitments and positions adopted in research have a substantial impact on both what we do and how we understand what it is we are examining (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 128). Therefore, it is imperative to make clear, the core philosophical assumptions underpinning this thesis.

Firstly, this thesis is not intended to generate or test hypotheses about moral disengagement and crisis management to predict events and try to avert them. This perspective implies that a positivist and quantitative approach was inappropriate in this study (Saunders et al., 2012). This is because positivism approach is concerned with discovering rules and patterns (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006), look for causality and fundamental laws (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008), and obtain theories that are almost universal in their implications (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). The thesis also rejected positivism paradigm because of its basic tenet that only one reality exists, which is inconsistent with core assumption of this study.

Secondly, this thesis argues that it is practically possible to understand reality from multiple views. Thus, the alternative view of anti-positivist/interpretive paradigm was adopted as the philosophical orientation for this study. This was confirmed as the most appropriate as the research is concerned with multiple conflicting versions of the Niger Delta crises and to some extent, understanding the subjective meanings attached to moral disengagement and crisis



management from informants' own frame of reference (Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Saunders et al., 2012). This last point is supported by the fact that crises and disasters are ambiguous, complex and socially constructed, and therefore cannot be well understood and managed from a single viewpoint (Ansell et al., 2010; Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; Coombs, 2007; Elliott et al., 2010; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Vaughan, 2004; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007). As a result, the phenomena of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster are conceptualised as a formless reality which creates unprecedented challenges not in terms of how best to analyse the capability of the flea but rather, the failures of the elephants. In determining the most appropriate responses to such unconventional events, it is imperative to obtain multiple perspectives about the Niger Delta crises to develop a robust theoretical and empirical account of such events.

Thirdly, this thesis favoured practical implications of research due to the researcher "*analytical curiosity*" to understand how moral disengagement and crisis management shape each other and affect established risk management standards, firm's reputation and growth, and weaken organisational resilience and risk culture. Through such an "analytic curiosity" in which it is argued that risk professionals and academics need to move away from often examining primarily responses to managing risks and crises, not in terms of the catastrophic nature of risks and crises but in terms of probing and questioning flaws in risk and crisis models or strategies. Specifically, risk and crisis research is dominated with multiple interpretations and diverse perspectives focusing on how best to manage events (Boin & McConnell, 2007; Coombs, 2007; 2012; George & Pratt, 2012; Harlow et al., 2011; Kouzmin, 2008; Lagadec, 2007; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Reza, 2011; Sellnow & Ulmer, 1998) without spending more time analysing the failures of risk models and strategies. This suggests that perhaps we should also spend more time analysing the failure of the elephants rather than the capability of the fleas. From a pragmatic perspective, it becomes clear that such complex and sensitive issues cannot credibly be studied without considering their practical implications.

Fourthly, although the critical issue is not so much whether research should be philosophically informed, but how well we are able to reflect upon our philosophical choices and defend them in relation to the alternatives we could have adopted (Johnson & Clark, 2006; Saunders et al., 2012; Table 6.1). Nonetheless, when philosophical positions are neglected, the appropriateness or relevance of the research is undermined and the reliability of the findings when matched with objective evidence becomes questionable. Therefore, this thesis takes the position that dangerous events (risks, crises and disasters) are not necessarily governed by pre-determined

configurations (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 1991; Collis & Hussey, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Saunders et al., 2012) but evolve over a period because of individual and organisation actions; and that risk/crisis models are mostly relevant where they support action (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008).

Lastly, the discussion above suggests that this thesis approach is based on an interpretivist paradigm. This is largely the case, but not exclusively so. This thesis asserts that the relevance of risk and crisis management models and strategies is their practical implications. To inform practice, part of this research is to challenge the belief that existing conventional risk and crisis management methodologies fit emerging unconventional risks and crises. Therefore, the thesis involves evaluating risk and crisis theories or beliefs in terms of the success of their practical application, aspects associated with a pragmatist paradigm. It is reasonable to state that the philosophical approach is mixed: a mainly interpretivist approach with some aspects of pragmatism. Hence, pragmatist and interpretivist paradigms were adopted using subjective evidence combined with multiple existing secondary data and primary data as discussed later in this chapter.

**Table 6.1: Research Paradigms Affecting Risk, Crisis and Disaster Research**

Paradigms	Basic principles	Investigator Role	Implication and ideal methods
Positivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The world is external and objective.</li> <li>• Knowledge is valid only if it is based on world observations of external reality.</li> <li>• Universal or general laws exist or that theoretical models can be developed that are generalizable, can explain cause and effect relationships and which lend themselves to predicting outcomes (Hatch &amp; Cunliffe, 2006).</li> <li>• Observer is independent.</li> <li>• Science is value-free.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on facts gathered through direct observation and experience (Saunders, Lewis, &amp; Thornhill, 2007).</li> <li>• Look for causality and fundamental laws.</li> <li>• Reduce phenomenon to simplest elements.</li> <li>• Formulate hypotheses and then test them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operationalising concepts so that they can be measured.</li> <li>• Taking large samples.</li> <li>• Measurement takes the form of using quantitative methods such as surveys, experiments, and statistical analysis (Eriksson &amp; Kovalainen, 2008).</li> <li>• Data gathering is meant to move toward universal theories and prediction of behaviour.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neutral-objective person with an authoritative voice in write-up.</li> <li>• Obtain theories that are (nearly) universal in their implications.</li> <li>• Uses quantitative measures to show relationship between a small numbers of variables abstracted from context.</li> </ul>	
Phenomenologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How humans make sense of the world around us.</li> <li>• The world is socially constructed and subjective.</li> <li>• Observer is part of what observed.</li> <li>• Science is driven by human interests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on meanings.</li> <li>• Try to understand what is happening.</li> <li>• Look at the totality of each situation.</li> <li>• Develop ideas through induction from data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena.</li> <li>• Small samples investigated in-depth or over time.</li> </ul>
Pragmatism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts are only relevant where they support action (Kelemen &amp; Rumens, 2008).</li> <li>• The relevance of the meaning of an idea (or a research finding) is its practical implications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentrate on the research questions which help determine the researcher position on the continua.</li> <li>• Evaluate theories or beliefs in terms of the success of their practical application.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is perfectly possible to work with different philosophical positions (Saunders et al., 2012).</li> <li>• Reflecting this research position that multiple methods are often possible and highly appropriate within one study.</li> </ul>
Interpretivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider that multiple realities exist.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grasp the subjective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification and explanation is made through the researcher</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding is subjective. Meanings and understandings are plural; individuals and groups see and interpret reality through their own lenses.</li> <li>• All knowledge is relative to the knower.</li> <li>• How people view or perceive an object or event and the meaning that they attribute to it are what really matter.</li> <li>• People look at matters through distinct lenses and reach somewhat different conclusions.</li> <li>• Multiple conflicting versions of the same event or object can be true at the same time. For example, the person who call for adoption of denial, blame, and attack the accuser as strategies for managing crisis is no more correct than the person who calls for apology response, accidental issue, and/or differentiate the fact. Each person has different experiences, knowledge, and perspectives.</li> </ul>	<p>meaning of social action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking an interpretative stance can mean that the researcher may come up with surprising findings or at least findings that appear surprising if a largely external stance is taken.</li> <li>• Understand differences between humans in our role as social actors.</li> <li>• Highlights the difference between conducting research among people rather about objects (Saunders et al., 2012).</li> </ul>	<p>own lenses base on participants' observation, and/or interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe particular events, processes, or culture from the perspective of the participants often using qualitative techniques.</li> <li>• Specifies the conditions under which themes seem to hold.</li> <li>• Interested in contending and overlapping versions of reality.</li> <li>• Many truths are possible.</li> <li>• Descriptions and analysis foster understanding of political, social, and cultural processes and practices; may be relevant to theory, practice or policy on which action can be based.</li> </ul>
Realism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relate to scientific enquiry.</li> <li>• What we sense is reality: that objects have an existence independent of the human mind (Saunders et al., 2012).</li> <li>• There is a reality quite independent of the mind.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on finding independent objective facts.</li> <li>• Contrast two practices of realism to illuminate meanings. For example, realism is opposed to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using comparative analysis to map different philosophical stance to make the philosophical assumptions underpinning research becomes clearer.</li> </ul>

		idealism – the theory that only the mind and its contexts exist (Crotty, 1998).	
Postmodernism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reality is not fully knowable.</li> <li>• Truth is impossible to define.</li> <li>• At the extreme, claim that nothing at all can be known and experiences and feelings can only be share with one another.</li> <li>• Neutrality is impossible because everyone has interests and attitudes that influence how topics are selected, what questions are asked, and what means of analysis are considered appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider that the researcher’s view is only one among many views and has no more legitimacy than the views of the people studied.</li> <li>• There is no one correct view as positivists claim.</li> <li>• Aware that literary texts do not have objective meanings and true interpretations.</li> <li>• Present a range of views and conclusions in as raw a fashion as possible.</li> <li>• Consider that only the interviewees’ voices should be presented through unedited videotapes or transcripts of recordings of what was said.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out what to do now that both the age of faith and the enlightenment seem beyond recovery.</li> <li>• Use different analysis and aware of the limitations. Given that no two researchers are exactly alike, so the conclusions researchers are unlikely to match.</li> </ul>
Feminism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reality is interpreted through gendered lenses often in ways that reflect existing male/female hierarchies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on how gender relations and gender dominance impact social behaviours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research is undertaken to increase understanding of gender-based differences and dominance patterns often with the goal of</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectfully listen or observe and show empathy toward those being studied.</li> </ul>	reducing gender-based inequalities.
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Source: Author (2017)

### 6.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND DESIGN

This thesis views research strategy as a general orientation to the conduct of social research (Bryman, 2008). The current view is that the ontological and epistemological standpoints of researchers' influence their research strategy, whether they chose a qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell et al., 2003; Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Saunders et al., 2012; Mkansi & Acheampong, 2012). In a practical context, qualitative research strategy is associated with an interpretive philosophy (Saunders et al., 2012) because researchers need to make sense of the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the phenomenon being studied (Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al., 2012).

Qualitative approach is focused more on the 'why' and 'how' of human behaviour. It usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data; and maintains that researcher's role is to try to make sense through interpretation: to explore, elucidate and then interpret bits of reality (Bryman, 2008; Creswell et al., 2003; Saunders et al., 2009). By contrast, quantitative research strategy is generally associated with positivism, which tends to favour the notion that the objective facts can only be understood and mastered by statistics and experiments (Bryman, 2008; Johnson & Clark, 2006; Saunders et al., 2014). It entails a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research where focus is placed on the testing of theories; and it embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality (Bryman, 2008, p. 22).

The qualitative/quantitative debate has been recognised as a useful way of classifying different techniques (Bryman, 2008), however research is a complex task and studies may employ one method or a combination of techniques (Saunders et al., 2012; Silverman, 2000; Steen & Roberts, 2011). The mixing of qualitative and quantitative approaches has also become popular in research. This has added another dimension to research strategy, called mixed-methods research. The general idea is triangulation and complementarity between research approaches

(Bryman, 2008). Though, it is found that some ideas are not categorically shared between approaches so triangulation of this kind may not function well. Thus, critics recommend the triangulating or complementing of data within one approach. This involves that the data used to investigate the same phenomenon come from two or more research methods, tools, or strategies (Bryman, 2008; Creswell et al., 2003; Saunders et al., 2012).

As a result, there was greater attention paid to “mixing” of theories and data but given the nature of risk and crisis research (especially the research questions, context and focus of this study) quantitative and mixed research approaches were consider as inappropriate. Table 6.2 provides a summary of the differences among qualitative, quantitative and mixed research orientation, in context of their various epistemological and ontological philosophies.

**Table 6.2: Fundamental differences between quantitative, qualitative and mixed research strategies**

	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed
Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Inductive: generation of theory	Deductive: testing of theory	Deductive and inductive: theory testing and generation
Epistemological orientation	Interpretivism, post-positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; McNabb, 2008).	Naturalism, positivism, post-positivism (Polit & Beck, 2008; Steen & Roberts, 2011)	Interpretivism, critical realism, pragmatism and/or positivism (Johnson & Onwuegubuzie, 2004; Denscombe, 2007; Barrett, 2010)
Ontological orientation	Constructionism, critical theory, critical paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Saunders et al., 2009)	Objectivism, critical realism, social constructionism (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009)	Pragmatism, Objectivism, subjectivism, and/or constructionism (Saunders et al., 2009).

Source: Author (2017)

### **6.3.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

This study adopted qualitative research strategy because of its relevance to the nature of the research aims, and not least due to the richness of qualitative data (Creswell et al., 2003). Yet, critics of the researchers who adopt a qualitative approach argue that interpretivist researchers have abandoned scientific rigour and that their studies are not valid because it is impossible to generalise about findings which are based on a specific set of circumstances or individuals (Bryman, 2008). The opponents also argue that findings of qualitative research are not tested to discover whether they are statistically significant or due to chance (Saunders et al., 2014). Nonetheless, there are four main reasons for chosen qualitative research in this study.

Firstly, a qualitative paradigm was chosen because it offers the opportunity to operate within a natural setting or research context to establish trust, participation, access to meanings and in-depth understanding (Saunders et al., 2012). This type of research allows the researcher to extract and understand the informants' account of events, and copes better with uncertain and complex nature of unconventional risks, crises and disasters (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Elliott, 2009; Elliott & Macpherson, 2010). It offers a richer explanation in our understanding of complex and unconventional risks, crises and disasters.

Secondly, qualitative research adopts flexible methods that are sensitive to the social context in which data is produced (Bryman, 2008). This paradigm is relevant to this study because any investigation of an issue concerning unconventional risks, crises and disasters ought to be flexible enough to accommodate negotiated knowledge of reality being a subject that is multifaceted, sensitive and difficult to research (Gundel, 2005; Chikudate, 2009; Poortinga et al., 2004; Weick, 2010). The design of methods for this study is non-standardised and flexible enough to manage this necessary complexity.

Thirdly, qualitative research embodies a view of social reality as a continuously shifting emergent property of individuals' creation (Bryman, 2008). This position is integral to the view that unconventional risks and crises by their nature are always changing, and evolve in part due to individuals' creation (Okon & Akunna, 2010; Perrow, 1999; Steiner, 2010; Turner & Pidgeon, 1997). The research aims and questions in a qualitative study can focus beyond individuals to entire organisations or industries. This was the case with this study, as the research extends to organisations and industry.

Fourthly, qualitative research is also rooted in interpretivism philosophy because it is concerned with the interpretation of the social world (Bryman, 2008), in which unconventional



risks, crises and disasters are constructed, understood and experienced. Through qualitative research approach, which favour an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon, this study captured moral disengagement in processes of risk and crisis management. This helped the researcher to produce a holistic picture of the interaction between moral disengagement and crisis management in the Niger Delta crises.

### **6.3.2 CASE STUDY RESEARCH**

The fact that qualitative research is a complex, changing and contested field because of multiple methodologies and research practices (Punch, 2005, p. 134), makes researchers to have difficult task in choosing an appropriate research method from the many available (including survey, experiment, archival analysis, historical and case study) (Yin, 2009). As described in section 6.3.1 above, the nature of this study and type of data needed fall into a case study, multiple-case study. Although case study research can involve quantitative or qualitative data, either one or both, there is a strong association between qualitative research with case study research (Saunders et al., 2014) owing to the need to consider in detail, intensity and contextual characteristics of the phenomena (Yin, 2009). Therefore, the case study design is selected due to the subjective and sensitive nature of risks and crises pervading the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

The case study strategy provided the means to test, validate, or refute existing risk/crisis models and their practical relevance. Furthermore, given that this research design is influenced by a pragmatic view asserting that it is perfectly possible to work with different philosophical positions and that mixing multiple methods are possible in a single research project (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Saunders et al., 2012), a case study research design is adopted. The case study design provides opportunities to cover the multifaceted procedures of combining, integrating, linking, and employing multi-methods due to the amorphous nature of unconventional risk, crisis, and disaster (cf. Creswell, Plano, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegubuzie, 2004).

There are other two fundamental reasons for adopting case study research strategy. Firstly, research relating to risks, crises and disasters are now frequently studied in the context of practical past or current case studies (For example, Vaughan, 1996; Perrow, 1999; Gundel, 2005; Chikudate, 2009; Weick, 2010). Despite being perceived as unexpected events; most crises and disasters are known to have several precursors or warnings identified in hindsight

by crises investigators and consultants. This expression is rooted in Barry Turner’s failure of foresight framework (Turner, 1976; Turner & Pidgeon, 1997) which was based on practical cases of risk, crisis and disaster. Turner examined public inquiry reports from 84 accidents over an eleven-year period published by the British Government, in developing his framework. Turner’s framework was developed using grounded methods by conducting, a more in-depth analysis of three practical cases of accidents (Turner & Pidgeon, 1997). These accidents were the landslide disaster in Aberfan, Wales in 1966, the collision between a large road transporter with a train at a railway crossing in Hixon in 1968, and a fire in a holiday resort at the Isle of Man in 1973 (Turner & Pidgeon, 1997). A common feature of these three accidents was that a large and complex safety problem was dealt with by several groups operating in separate organisations with information and coordination failures among them. Based on these findings, Turner emphasized the process leading up to a disaster, by proposing six stages of crisis development (notionally normal starting point, incubation period, precipitating event, onset, rescue and salvage, and cultural readjustment) which can unfold over long periods of time (Table 6.3).

**Table 6.3: Summary Explanation of Stages in Man-Made Disasters Model**

<b>The Sequence of Events Associated with a Failure of Foresight</b>	
Stage I	Notionally normal starting point:  (a) Initial culturally accepted beliefs about the world and its hazards (b) Associated precautionary norms set out in laws, codes of practice, mores, and folkways.
Stage II	Incubation period: the accumulation of an unnoticed set of events which are at odds with the accepted beliefs about hazards and the norms for their avoidance.
Stage III	Precipitating event: forces itself to the attention and transforms general perceptions of Stage II.
Stage IV	Onset: the immediate consequences of the collapse of cultural precautions become apparent.
Stage V	Rescue and salvage – first stage adjustment: the immediate post-collapse situation is recognised in ad hoc adjustments which permits the work of rescue and salvage to be started.
Stage VI	Full cultural readjustment: an inquiry or assessment is carried out, and beliefs and precautionary norms are adjusted to fit the newly gained understanding of the world.

Source: Turner (1976, p. 381)

Like Turner & Pidgeon (1997), Constantinides (2013) studied the Mari disaster in a naval base in Cyprus in July 2011 where a large explosion killed 13 people and injured 62 others, whilst destroying the major power plant of the Island using secondary analysis of the public inquiry report (Polyviou Report) into the detainment of the vessel Monchegorsk by the Cypriot government in 2009 upon the request of the US government was used. More specifically, Constantinides's (2013) methodology involves using mixed data which were carefully analysed by labelling and categorising the phenomena encountered, and following grounded methods of analysis (Glaser, 1992) patterns of relationships between the observed categories were sought and common themes were developed. Furthermore, in the study of the King's Cross underground fire, Borodzicz (2005) employed a case study approach based on an original investigation report produced for the European Union by the Department of Transport under the direction of Desmond Fennell OBE, QC. The Inquiry produced a publicly available report and transcription of interviews carried out with selected witnesses and consultant experts, copies of letters and reports from all the key agencies involved and the transcripts which comprised 300 box files of data each relating to different aspects of the public inquiry were likewise available.

Borodzicz's (2005) underlying methodology used in the case study was an ethnographic treatment of secondary data, where both the findings of the inquiry and the inquiry process itself were problematically considered as data. In addition, several other studies have adopted the case study approach founded on Public Inquiries Reports (Toft & Reynolds, 2005; Brown, 2005; Perrow, 2007; Elliott, 2009; Elliott & Macpherson, 2010). These past studies present robust evidence that risk, crisis and disaster research cannot be complete without a link to real-life case. In fact, as suggested in this thesis, consultants have been like big game hunters embarking on their safaris for tusks and trophies while academics have preferred photo safaris – keeping a safe distance from the animals they pretend to observe (Lampel, Mintzberg, Quinn, & Ghoshal, 2014). Accordingly, risk and crisis research that does not link to case-studies arguably only raises interesting findings and observations that do little to support action or how to practically manage unconventional risks, crises and disasters. Thus, 'relevance to practice' is crucial in risk and crisis research. In context, this creates a "susceptibility problem" in which we simply end up analysing the capability of the flea instead of spending more time analysing the failures of the elephant.

Therefore, like these previous studies (e.g. Turner, 1976; Turner & Pidgeon, 1997; Perrow, 1999; 2007; Borodzicz, 2005; Toft & Reynolds, 2005; Brown, 2005; Perrow, 2007; Elliott,

2009; Elliott & Macpherson, 2010; Constantinides, 2013), this study is anchored on practical case studies (Chapters Two and Three) in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria using datasets from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) inquiry report into the investigation of risks, disasters and crises within the study area (see section 6.4.6).

Secondly, the nature of the research context and questions inspired the case study research strategy due to evidence from empirical studies that concepts are only relevant where they support action (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008) and that combining different research methods can provide a more comprehensive view on risk issues than any one methodology alone (cf. Bryman & Bell, 2003; Poortinga et al., 2004). Albeit this does not provide conclusive evidence that one strand of research is superior to another. Moreover, the question of which approach/method is more or most appropriate for risk and crisis management research has not been explicitly addressed in extant studies. Thus, it was maintained in previous research that the appropriateness of the techniques/methods used in risk, crisis and disaster assessment should be reviewed by other experts who can comment on the data used in the risk assessment and the validity of the research (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015).

### **6.3.2.1 CASE SELECTION STRATEGIES**

The two foundational case studies of Shell & Ogoni crisis, and Chevron & Ilaje crisis (Chapters Two and Three) were selected because of the different allegations of human rights abuse in those crises, and the ineffectiveness of the risk/crisis management models used. The research also selects the case studies to investigate risk and crisis management methodologies and practices of two different multinational organisations in dealing with similar cases of crises and disasters in Nigeria.

The two communities (Ogoni and Ilaje) were chosen for similar specific reasons. These communities are oil producing communities where multinational oil companies operate. Like in Ogoni where Shell Nigeria operated from 1958 until December 1993, Chevron Nigeria has been operating in Ilaje since 1962 to date (Steiner, 2010; UNEP, 2011). Likewise, the two multinational oil companies have both been accused of causing massive environmental harm to both the people and the environment where they operate. In addition, these companies have been extensively criticised for ineffective risk and crisis management practices within the chosen communities (Eweje, 2006; Aigbedion & Iyayi, 2007; Bassey, 2008; Aghalino, 2009; Ololajulo, 2009; Ubhenin, 2013). Furthermore, both companies have been accused of human

right abuses in processes of crisis management and for further causing devastation to the already vulnerable people where they operate (Okon & Akunna, 2010; Steiner, 2010; Alaba & Ifelola, 2011; Oshowofasa, Anuta, & Aiyedogbon, 2012).

Shell and Chevron were often named as sponsors of Nigerian government soldiers known for their oppression, suppression, dehumanisation, abusing women, maltreating civilians, torturing, and killing protesters who possibly campaign against multinational oil companies for polluting and degrading the environment (ERA, 2012; Steiner, 2010). For example, the prominent case of Chevron vs. Bowoto in Ilaje community instituted in USA and Shell vs Saro-Wiwa case in Ogoni community also instituted in the United States further provide additional information. In both court cases, these organisations were accused of environmental pollution and degradation, committing human right abuses and dehumanising the local communities, and sponsoring the Nigerian government soldiers' who consequently attacked and killed protesters and local communities' members because of environmental protests.

Previous alternative standpoints maintain that the case study approach that focuses on an intense investigation of multiple variables within a real-life context could contribute to building the best available evidence to guide practitioners (Silverman, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 2004; Dattilio, 2006; Saunders et al., 2012). This thesis further relies on comparing several other similar global cases of crises and disasters to increase the reliability and validity of the research data. Thus, it can be concluded that external and construct validity, credibility, and reliability of the findings from this research are greatly enhanced and improved through the chosen research methodology.

### **6.3.3 PILOT STUDY OF RESEARCH DESIGN**

This thesis strictly complied with the recommendation that techniques or methods used in risk, crisis and disaster should be reviewed by other experts who can comment on their appropriateness (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). Thus, the research instruments or tools were initially piloted with five risk professionals and academics who comments on the appropriateness of the research method. The purpose of testing the research instrument (semi-structured interview) was to ensure that informants will have no problems answering the questions (Saunders et al., 2014). It is also intended to ensure that the data collected will enable the research questions to be answered. Three risk professionals commented on the suitability of the questions and suggested areas that need improvement. Likewise, two other academic

experts make suggestion about the nature of the questions, purpose and fit to the research aims. These recommendations from experts allow the researcher to appropriately refine and structure the research questions and instruments (Yin, 2009).

The pilot study also allows the researcher to ensure that main elements of a field research project (Edmondson & McManus, 2007) such as research question, prior work, research design, contribution, validity and reliability and organisation of results/findings are considered (Table 6.4). The opponents of pilot study argue that the research can become structured, in which case biases are introduced into the findings. However, following the pilot study, the case-study research design was found most appropriate given this research philosophical assumptions, context, questions and objectives. In fact, as previous stated, the fundamental purpose of this thesis is to explore and advance understanding of moral disengagement in risk, crisis and disaster situations.

Thus, from the pilot study findings, alternative research strategies such as experiment and ethnography were not considered due to their inappropriateness as a framework for analysing the case studies of Shell and Chevron Nigeria. Also, the need to understand sensitive and normative issues like ethics, perceptions, trust and moral disengagement in risk and crisis situations make practical case studies most appropriate (Creswell et al., 2003; Johnson & Onwuegubuzie, 2004; Saunders et al., 2012). In conclusion, the influence of earlier research experience of the researcher also helped to make the final decision in chosen case study approach for this study. The researcher accepts that the case studies on their own are insufficient for drawing generalised conclusions for the whole population of multinational oil companies in Nigeria within a strict methodological sense (Saunders et al., 2012), it is intended that further research will support this research findings. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic under investigation, the researcher belief that the findings from these case studies can make a significant contribution towards a better understanding of moral disengagement in context of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster management.

**Table 6.4: Highlights of Key Elements of This Thesis**

Element	Description and Notable Issues Consider
Research question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focuses a study</li> <li>▪ Narrows the topic area to a meaningful, manageable size</li> <li>▪ Addresses issues of theoretical and practical significance</li> <li>▪ Points toward a viable research project – that is, the question can be answered</li> </ul>
Prior work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The state of the literature</li> <li>▪ Existing theoretical and empirical research papers that pertain to the topic of the current study</li> <li>▪ An aid in identifying unanswered questions, unexplored areas, relevant constructs, and areas of low agreement</li> </ul>
Research design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Type of data to be collected</li> <li>▪ Data collection tools and procedures</li> <li>▪ Type of analysis planned</li> <li>▪ Finding/selection of sites for collecting data</li> </ul>
Contribution to literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The theory developed as an outcome of the study</li> <li>▪ New ideas that contest conventional wisdom, challenge prior assumptions, integrate prior streams of research to produce a new model, or refine understanding of a phenomenon</li> <li>▪ Any practical insights drawn from the findings that may be suggested by the researcher</li> </ul>
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are the results of the study repeatable</li> <li>▪ Are the measures devised for concepts consistent</li> </ul>
Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the integrity level of the conclusions that are generated from the research</li> <li>▪ Does the measure of a concept really reflect the concept that it is intended (measurement validity)</li> <li>▪ Does the conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables hold water (internal validity). For example, if we suggest that x causes y, can we be sure that it is x that is responsible for variation in y and not something else that is producing an apparent causal relationship</li> </ul>
Organisation of results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How well is the objectivity of the research process through which the data and field notes are developed into conclusions demonstrated.</li> <li>▪ Are the process of the case description detailed and emerging issues or constructs carefully captured</li> <li>▪ Is there cross-case analysis which compares and contrast the patterns emerging from the detailed write-ups.</li> </ul>

- Like in this research, the researcher selects two cases at a time and compares them noting the differences and similarities and repeat the procedure until all cases have been considered.
- Results are organised on different chapters with each of the chapter having a separate research questions and background but linked to the overall aim and objectives.
- The research outcomes in each of the chapter can be published and disseminated easily because of their nature. The work of every chapter is perhaps a mono-research within a broader study and therefore makes publication quite easy.

Source: Adapted from Edmondson & McManus (2007)

## **6.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Relevant studies (as discussed above) suggest that qualitative research through multiple case study is contingent on the use of multiple-sources for collecting rich evidence to understand the phenomenon. Therefore, data for this study were collected through five main research instruments: (1) semi-structured interviews with practicing risk/crisis leaders and other stakeholders; (2) transcripts of case laws and historical records; (3) reports and fact sheets; (4) archival videos and footage; and (5) documents. The data were collected between October 2013 and September 2015, guided by saturation of the information, when the non-contribution of new data relating to the research aims was observed.

### **6.4.1 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

The semi-structured interviews are one of the main sources of data used in this study. The informants responded to several questions (see appendix 3) to help offer special insights in the understanding of moral disengagement and crisis management in the Niger Delta crises as a phenomenon of investigation (Creswell et al., 2003). Although interviews are labour intensive, time-consuming and sometimes responses can be open to bias (Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al., 2014; Silverman, 2000), there are associated advantages to consider in this research. First, the semi-structured interviews were necessary to explore what might have changed over the period of the crisis incubation and the current reality of the case studies under investigation (historical period covered: 1990-2016). Secondly, the researcher was able to elicit



local communities' concerns and observe their emotional responses to the environmental crises and disasters in the Niger Delta, and endeavour to deal with ethical implications of the research.

Thirdly, the semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to elicit more relevant information that would help to further answers the research questions relating to impact of vulnerable environment on vulnerable people, moral disengagement and crisis management in Nigeria. More specifically, the targeted interviewees/informants were selected through purposive sampling as to ensure that only those directly responsible for the management of the crises and those affected are recruited and included. Although, purposive sampling has relative limitations because other stakeholders involved in the crisis but outside the researcher knowledge could have possibly been neglected. However, given the research context, time and cost, the semi-structured interviews were used to validate findings from other sources of data (e.g. national inquiry documents, case laws, and archival videos) as confirmed in previous research (Saunders et al., 2012).

Furthermore, research has even confirmed that open-interviews (in-depth interviews or semi-structured interviews) are perhaps the most frequently used form of qualitative research in management science and linked to exploratory and explanatory research (Saunders et al., 2012). In total, there were twenty (n=20) semi-structured interviews conducted due to time and resources constraint, and feasibility of the research project. Each of the interviews lasted an average of thirty minutes to one hour. The interviews were tape recorded with the informants' permission. One disadvantage with the use of voice recorder was that it prolongs the length of time it took to transcribe the audio data captured. The transcription exercise took over three months to transcribe the data and read over again to ensure data are not lost in the process. The approach however allowed the researcher to concentrate on the participants' responses, secures accurate accounts of conversations and helps to avoid losing data or misinterpreting it (Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al., 2014). Though, it would have been most appropriate to increase the interview numbers for increased sample size. Nevertheless, the strategic nature and relevance of the recruited participants to the phenomena investigated in the thesis reduce the possibility of inappropriate and relative sampling in the research.

#### **6.4.1.1 SAMPLE PROCEDURES AND ISSUES**

The issue of research sample is critical to the credibility, validity and relevance of the potential research findings, conclusions and possible recommendations of any research. Therefore,

sampling issues remain critical. The issue of concern is that the sample represents the population of the study; the sample size is adequate, practicable and considerable of time and cost; representative sample provides avenues to generalise the research findings; the research samples are not biased; balance over-representation and under-representation of sample to reduce sampling error.

In practice, the sampling frame which involves stating clearly the listing of all units in the population of the study from which the research samples were selected is well-established in this study (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Thus, the exact sample size for the semi-interviews composed of twenty (n=20) informants purposively drawn (as against quota, simple random and multi-stage cluster sampling techniques) mainly from key informants who are well-informed, involved or concerned with the Niger Delta crises. The sample size justification, participants' inclusion criteria as well as number of interviewees per organisations are presented in the Table 6.5 below.

**Table 6.5: Sample Size, Inclusion Criteria and Justification**

S/N	Interviewees Data	Stakeholders Data	Stakeholders Classification	Informants Inclusion Criteria	Justification
1	Two (2)	Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)	Government Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants with past and current knowledge of government roles in the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with the crisis.</li> <li>• Informants responsible for managing risk and crisis situations</li> </ul>	<p>The nature of this research topic and issues covered demand that only relevant participants or informants are included in the study. Most importantly, multiple sources of data which have been extensively discussed in this research are being used to triangulate data, but fewer interviews are further use to enrich the data collected. In fact, to increase the research content validity, interviews are only intended with key informants in the organisation who are most familiar with the crisis and disaster situations under investigation.</p> <p>Therefore, for critics who would suggest or argue that sample size of twenty (20) interview is insufficient, such critics should note that number of interviews required in research fundamentally depends on the nature of</p>
2	Two (2)	Ondo State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (OSOPADEC)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants with past and current knowledge of government roles in the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with local people.</li> <li>• Informants responsible for making crisis decisions.</li> </ul>	
3	Two (2)	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)	Nigerian Oil and Gas Regulators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants with past and current knowledge of how regulators have managed the crisis</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with the crisis.</li> <li>• Informants responsible for strategies implementation.</li> </ul>	
4	Two (2)	Department of Petroleum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants responsible for taking actions when oil</li> </ul>	

		Resources (DPR)		<p>companies violate oil and gas regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants with past and current knowledge of government roles in the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with multinational oil companies.</li> </ul>	<p>research questions, how many sources of data used, and the research strategy. In practice, the issue further concerns whether interviews are the only source of data collection, in which case large number of interviews might be required. Thus, where multiple sources of data are being used like in this research, critics who call for several numbers of interviews to be conducted must acknowledged that by simply conducting multiple interviews do not necessarily increases research credibility and trustworthiness.</p> <p>Furthermore, the sensitive nature of risk and crisis research often requires that only fewer interviewees or informants can be identified and are willing to be interview. In fact, even though crisis and disaster situations often affect several stakeholders, only handful individuals are responsible for making decisions affecting their management or directly involved in processes of managing them. The implication is that only relevant number of individuals who have different roles, experience, backgrounds, and any other source of variability that might influence answers are included in risk and crisis research. This is the basic distinction of risk and crisis management research from other fields.</p> <p>In addition, this research is an in-depth exploration of moral disengagement in which sensitive and organisational issues are being explored. This requires longer and less structured interviews technique to allow for more probing into the issues identified from extant studies which are pertinent to effective risk and crisis</p>
5	Two (2)	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)	Local and Regional Community Representative Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants responsible for negotiation with multinational oil companies.</li> <li>• Informants with past and current knowledge of government roles in the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants responsible for negotiation with government agencies.</li> </ul>	
6	Two (2)	Ilaje Regional Development Committee (IRDC)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants responsible for managing communities' agitations.</li> <li>• Informants responsible for dealing with multinational oil companies on behalf of local communities.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with the crisis situations.</li> </ul>	
7	Four (4)	Shell Nigeria	Multinational Oil and Gas Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants who have first-hand knowledge about the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with the risk, crisis and disaster situations.</li> <li>• Informants who have deal with regulatory agencies, government and local communities.</li> </ul>	
8	Four (4)	Chevron Nigeria		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants who have first-hand knowledge about the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with the risk, crisis and disaster situations.</li> <li>• Informants who have deal with regulatory agencies, government and local communities.</li> </ul>	

					management. Thus, it is vital to take into consideration time resources (for both conducting interviews and analysing the interview data) and the need to avoid “ <i>drowning in a sea of data</i> ” syndrome because once data is collected, researcher is obliged to analyse it.
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Source: Author (2017)

Overall, the sample consists of senior managers/leaders purposively drawn from government agencies (NDDC and OSOPADEC), oil and gas regulators (NNPC and DPR), local and regional community representative organisations (MOSOP and IRDC) and two multinational oil companies operating in Nigeria (Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria). The aim of selecting the sample purposely was twofold. First, we wanted to document the phenomenon of moral disengagement in extreme case context and show that it could perpetuate organisations in at least one major industry. Secondly, we wanted to delve into empirical validation of existing risk, crisis and disaster management models and techniques.

As a result, we searched for an industry (oil and gas) that *a priori* we believed would have a large representation of risk, crisis and disaster management models – an extreme case. Therefore, we chose to explore the oil and gas industry, an industry where anecdotal evidence suggested that multinational oil firms were plagued with several cases of risk, crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria were often accused of double standards in their risk, crisis and disaster management practice in Nigeria. For each firm, we attempted to determine whether moral disengagement perpetuates their risk, crisis and disaster management practice. This information came primarily from independent inquiry datasets and documentary datasets.

#### **6.4.2 TRANSCRIPTS OF CASE LAWS AND HISTORICAL RECORDS**

The second research tool used to collect raw data came from transcripts of case laws, the case of *Bowoto v. Chevron Corporation*, C99-02506 SI (2007), *Ejama-Ebubu community v. Shell Petroleum Development Company* (2010), *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Shell Group*, 133S.Ct. 1659 (2013), *Wiwa v. Royal Dutch/Shell Petroleum* (2000), *Wiwa et al. v. Shell Petroleum Development Company* (2000). The transcripts are over thirty (n=30) files, numbering over 600 pages of documents. These transcripts of the case laws were obtained from publicly available database and treated as data for this study due to the following reasons. First, these

transcripts contain accounts of the Niger Delta crises especially the Shell – Ogoni crisis (Chapter Two) and the Chevron – Ilaje crisis (Chapter Three). Secondly, the accounts of events contain in the transcripts are direct evidences from the organisations involved in the crises and testimonies of the different stakeholders from the local communities.

Thirdly, the transcripts contain each stakeholders’ version of events during the crises incubation period. Fourthly, the transcripts contain sensitive issues which the organisations (Chevron and Shell) would not have given the researcher access to obtain. Therefore, the transcripts allow the researcher to gain rich qualitative data especially on the proximate cause, rationalisation, arguments and irrationalities behind stakeholders’ perceptions, and responses to the Niger Delta crises. Furthermore, these transcripts contain historical records of the Niger Delta crises, which may have been lost to any single informant due to ‘*historical amnesia*’. Although these transcripts are legal documents which means that blame issues are present and parties are also trying to minimise their legal liability. Moreover, parties may have overstated their versions of the events. However, the transcripts contain valuable information which are integral to evaluate issues of moral disengagement in processes of risk and crisis management. The transcripts were carefully read to ensure that relevant data are extracted, and subjected to cross-interpretations using data from other sources as discussed in section 6.4.

### **6.4.3 REPORTS AND FACT SHEETS**

The researcher goal was to gain a broad objective understanding of the Niger Delta crises, reports and fact sheets obtained from companies (Chevron, Shell and NNPC) archival database allow the researcher to gain first-hand information about the crises. The reports include corporate responsibility reports, annual reports, technical reports, and special reports on the Niger Delta crises. These reports (e.g., Shell Reports 1999-2015; Chevron Corporate Responsibility Reports 2000-2016) contain valuable information from the companies’ perspectives about the crises in the Niger Delta and their responses to them. One disadvantage of the selected reports is that only the views of the companies are presented. However, these reports are important because they detailed how the organisations have responded to the numerous demands of local communities in the Niger Delta. Furthermore, these reports were helpful in areas where questioning was difficult; for example, multinational oil companies preferred to offer a detail account of their operations through annual reports rather than commenting on some specific situations. However, the fact sheets contain specific accounts of

what Shell and Chevron have been doing in the Niger Delta, in terms of their responses to security situations, vandalism and related crises. The fact sheets are also useful because they supplemented and supported data from the interviews. They also helped in cross-checking data where information contradicted the actual practice expressed by the key informants.

#### **6.4.4 ARCHIVAL VIDEOS AND FOOTAGE**

The archival videos and commercial videos footage reporting and interviewing stakeholders in the Niger Delta were obtained from public database. More than 30 archival videos and 25 commercial videos footage (e.g., BBC and CNN videos footage on Niger Delta crises) were obtained. The archival videos contain a series of audio reporting and interviews conducted with the stakeholders in the Niger Delta. These tools were selected because the Niger Delta crises have persisted for more than five decades. The videos transcription provides additional valuable information to enrich the data especially on the proximate cause, rationalisations, arguments and irrationalities behind stakeholders' perceptions, understanding, and responses to the Niger Delta crises. The most crucial point when using archival videos is for the researcher to consider the political and social context under which the videos was produced (Silverman, 2000). This implies that the authenticity, credibility and representativeness of the video must be accessed using the meaning of the transcribed text and the conditions in which it was produced to establish the producer's intentions (Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al., 2012).

#### **6.4.5 DOCUMENTS**

The datasets for this study were also obtained from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Commission of Inquiry Report into the investigation of risks, disasters and crises in the Niger Delta (UNEP, 2011). The UNEP team over a 14-month period examined more than 200 locations, surveyed 122 kms of pipeline rights of way and reviewed more than 5,000 medical records in the Niger Delta. The datasets are helpful to evaluate claims and counter-claims from the different stakeholders involved in the Niger Delta crises. In addition, detailed soil contamination investigations were conducted at 69 sites and more than 4,000 samples were analysed, including water taken from 142 groundwater monitoring wells drilled specifically for the study and soil extracted from 780 boreholes. The main issue with the inquiry document is that it is politically motivated because the UNEP was directly invited by the

Nigerian government to conduct the investigation into the extent of environment devastation and crises in the Niger Delta.

The UNEP team carried out a total of 264 formal community meetings between November 2009 and January 2011 with more 23,271 people present in those meetings; and carried out series of consultations and interviews with relevant leaders, communities, representatives of oil companies, and consultants (UNEP, 2011). The UNEP documents contain over 1000 pages of field notes, interviews transcripts, maps, pollution sites photograph and technical reports. This research treated both the inquiry process and findings of the inquiry as datasets and relevant data crucial to measure moral disengagement in risk, crisis and disaster situations were carefully extracted. The datasets are useful for this study because the researcher could evaluate the conflicting claims of the stakeholders; and supplemented the data from the interviews and other sources discussed above. Therefore, the documentary evidence may form an excellent means of data triangulation, helping to increase the trustworthiness and dependability of this study (Saunders et al., 2014). In conclusion, the documents give the researcher adequate data that would not have been possible to collect when working alone; and help reduces cost and access problems.

## **6.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

Research has suggested that qualitative research is susceptible to difficulties both in the planning for adequate data collection approach and the analysis procedures, which may become overshadowing tasks for researchers (Saunders et al., 2014). The lack of a well-defined or formulated method is the central difficulty in qualitative data analysis (Yin, 2009). The consideration of these potential difficulties combined with a thorough examination of how to analyse qualitative data, a *thematic analysis* was chosen as the appropriate method (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al., 2012). Data analysis comprises of two main stages in this research: coding data and interpreting findings. The coding of data helps the researcher to ‘get to know’ and understand the data. Also, the researcher undertakes an integrated analysis of primary and secondary data to ensure that informants’ identities are protected. The sensitive nature of the data which can cause harms to the informants also influence the adoption of integrated analysis. The researcher follows several steps in coding the data, as recommended by Bryman (2008, p. 550).

### **6.5.1 READING THROUGH TRANSCRIPTS AND IDENTIFYING SIGNIFICANT OR INTERESTING POINTS**

The 'matrix based method for ordering and synthesising data' (Ritchie, Spencer, & O'Connor, 2003, p. 219) was used when the researcher read through the transcripts. This process involves numbering the transcripts according to their different categories, extract central themes and subthemes, which are presented in a matrix that closely mirror the findings in Table 8.1. At this stage, the researcher indicates where in the transcripts the data comes from and use limited quoted material.

This stage also serves as familiarisation with the data stage (Bryman, 2008), which occurs during the data collection process, data transcription and reading of the data. The researcher is guided by (1) sensitising questions: which help to identify what might be happening, what stakeholders are involved and how events are constructed; (2) guiding questions: which help guide interviews, reports and documents gathering and analyses; (3) theoretical questions: which help in recognising process and variations to link concepts; and (4) practical questions: which assist in developing the structure of the theory and determine whether the researcher's theory is logical (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 72). This step assists in focusing the analysis to ensure coherence; and it is an iterative process where the researcher constantly review the data and the categories to which the data is assigned. The researcher found that repeatedly reviewing the data helped identify patterns and themes.

### **6.5.2 ASSESSING PRELIMINARY CODES**

This stage starts with themes and issues that had been identified in the case studies (Chapters Two and Three), which are considered crucial to resolving the problems. The researcher uses a two-level coding system in which the first level comprises labelling groups of loosely associated categories of words based on the research questions and a second level which involves grouping the data into themes or subsets (Bryman, 2008). The analysis was time-consuming due to the range of data used. The researcher started by reading and summarising the initial codes. This was necessary to ensure that meanings were kept within their contextual usage. Each unit of the data were examined and codes were assigned to key concepts. The challenge for the researcher was to ensure that bias is not introduced, resulting to peer-reviews of the initial themes for possible elimination of bias.



The researcher recorded the preliminary codes on large sheets of paper, paying attention to the frequency with which each coded comment occurred. The data is then grouped into themes through the identification of clusters, patterns or groups. The themes identified largely related to key concepts outlined in the research questions. This process of themes searching involves looking for topics that recur again and again, categories in term of local expressions that are either unfamiliar or are used in an unfamiliar way (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The researcher examined the data for links between the various themes, relationships to the research questions, and to the theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Eight. These linkages and relationships are outlined in Table 8.1 (see Chapter Eight).

### **6.5.3 REVIEWING CODES**

The initial codes generated too much occurrences. Therefore, the researcher reviews the preliminary themes earlier generated to ensure that they work together with the coded extracts from transcripts (Bryman, 2008). Figure 8.1 captures the initial themes generated from this thesis findings. There were twelve themes generated at the preliminary coding stage which were later reduced to seven themes after extensive review. These themes: selective risk perception, crisis miscommunication, inflated ethical stance, organised irresponsibility, trust deficit, relying or leaning on past successes, and misinterpretation of dangerous events – were distinct within each of the case study discussed in Chapters Two and Three. The researcher decided based on previous research (Creswell et al., 2003) recommendation to link the themes with the theoretical framework of moral disengagement and crisis management. This serves as a springboard for understanding the issues identified from the case studies.

### **6.5.4 CONSIDERING CODED DATA IN RELATION TO THEORETICAL CONCEPTS**

Measures or mechanisms of moral disengagement were classified as perceptual if they were based on rankings made by others (Bandura, 2009; Caprara et al., 2006; Caprara et al., 2009; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015) or objective if they were based on quantified sources or independent panel reviews of moral disengagement. Based on a priori definition (Bandura, 2007; Caprara et al., 2009), the moral disengagement mechanisms were manually coded using the criteria established by Bandura et al. (2000) and Caprara et al. (2009); and risk, crisis and disaster management strategies meeting the criteria as representing moral disengagement or

crisis disengagement were also coded (Bandura et al, 1996; Moore, 2008; White et al., 2009). The risk, crisis and disaster management strategies were coded as moral disengagement or crisis disengagement when they involved selection and implementation of the moral disengagement mechanisms. The criteria include moral justification, advantageous comparison, attribution of blame, euphemistic labelling, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, dehumanisation and distorting the consequence (Table 5.1).

### **6.5.5 SENSEMAKING OF DATA**

Research has shown that people try to make sense of organisations, and organisations themselves often try to make sense of their environment (Weick, 1995; 2010). Like organisations, researchers also embark upon ‘sensemaking of data’ to answer their research questions and clarify potential ambiguity and uncertainty in their findings/results. Sensemaking often involves gathering information, gaining an understanding of the information and then using the understanding to complete a task (Waterman, 1990; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). This research adopted sensemaking analytical approach because it conceptualises negotiated meanings as the product of interactions between equals, ignoring the way that meanings may be imposed by a dominant group upon a subordinate one (Weick, 1988; 2010). This does not necessarily renounce the notion of unequal access to knowledge (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988; Weick et al., 2005) rather it is integral to one of the core arguments in this thesis that the perceived extrication of local interpretation from sole scientific elucidation infuse into risk and crisis management responses should be de-constructed or re-evaluated (See Chapter Five).

Therefore, the data collected were analysed as product of interactions between equals. This implies that equal attentions are paid to the different sources of data and themes to comprehend, extrapolate and recommend robust risk and crisis management strategies to manage the Niger Delta crises. Based on previous studies (Weick, 2010; Weick et al., 2005), the researcher delineates the process of sensemaking in this research as a three stages model:

- **Noticing:** This involves recognising patterns from the data collected and matching them based on the criteria outlined in section 6.5.4. This sensemaking analytical approach helps to balance the conflicting views and accounts of the Niger Delta crises. Through the process of noticing, the researcher attentively evaluates and re-evaluate what might constitute moral disengagement in processes of risk and crisis management, and

subsequently captured their characteristics (Table 9.1, Chapter Nine). The process of noticing also allows the researcher to identify most plausible themes and issues which may blocked plan of action towards effective risk and crisis management. The researcher started noticing evidence of moral disengagement in processes of risk and crisis management at this stage. The counter evidence of crisis disengagement was also observed resulting into if some identified issues can be classified as moral disengagement. By the process, the researcher transformed the encountered ambiguity in the findings as “*problematic situations*” for further processing (interpretation).

- Interpretation: The ambiguity in findings due to various potential “*alternative facts*” necessitate the need to embark upon complex process of interpretation (stage two). This process allows the researcher to consciously combine the noticed characteristics of moral disengagement in processes of risk and crisis management with counter-arguments of business case and measure of corporate responsibility, and in doing so, the researcher actively constructed this thesis findings in a meaningful form. Through this process, the researcher reached conclusion about the research findings and considered potential implications.
- Action: The researcher’s sensemaking analytical approach is a continuous process throughout the research process, in which the ‘*so what*’ questions are always considered. This is a stage in the data analysis process at which the researcher is concerned with action or practical implications of the research findings. The interpretation of the findings based on established crisis management – moral disengagement framework discussed in Chapter Eight, allows the researcher to make some practical recommendations. The recommendations are intended to improve existing risk and crisis management practice.

## **6.6 DATA AND METHOD TRIANGULATION**

The data were considered within their social and cultural settings, and reasonable measures have been taken to deal with data inconsistencies through data and methods triangulation. This approach helps to overcome the shortcomings in this research. Triangulation is a process by

which the same phenomenon is assessed with different methods to determine whether convergence across methods exists (Bryman, 2008). Thus, it is a research approach that involves using several perceptions as a means of explaining and illuminating meaning, verifying the replication of perspectives, interpretations and/or observation.

A well-established literature reveals that triangulation approach is most useful in overcoming personal bias of researcher, data inconsistencies, bias of respondents, and salient bias in secondary data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2014). The multiple methods approach (comprehensive inquiry datasets, relevant transcripts of case laws, transcripts of archival interviews with senior executives of Shell Nigeria, semi-structured interviews, and secondary data) adopted meant that the research quality and validity are generally improved.

In this research, there is strict adherence to four validity criteria (construct/confirmability, internal/credibility, external/transferability, and reliability/dependability) for empirical research as suggested by Yin (2009). Construct validity refers to the proper definition of the concepts used within the study. This also means that the constructs used in this thesis are confirmed by external reviewers through submitted articles and peer-review feedback from colleagues to ensure that every concept are clarified and research methods explained in detail. For this research, well-established concepts of moral disengagement and crisis management, vulnerability of the environment and people in fragile and conflict-affected states of the Niger Delta were used to underpin the conceptual framework and guarded construct validity. These concepts are well-defined and illustrated using practical case examples in previous Chapters Two and Three.

External validity and transferability concerns whether the research findings are generalisable beyond the selected case studies of this thesis (Yin, 2009). To help to achieve this, external peer-review feedback from articles submitted to *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Emergency Management*, and *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* provided the assurance that this thesis's findings are generalisable beyond the case studies of Shell and Chevron Nigeria. The internal validity which concerns relations between concepts could be threatened by incorrect facts and results from the different sources of data. Therefore, in-depth semi-structured interviews or open-interviews were held with main stakeholders (oil companies' workers, industrial experts and consultants, government officials responsible for policies formulation and implementation, and local chiefs, etc.), and archival documents and videos analysis to cross-check documentation found, reverse causality and confirm facts stated

in each interview, obtain independent confirmation of data (through content analysis of inquiry report) and cross-referencing of data.

In practical context, rival explanations were addressed, and patterns were matched and most plausible explanation put forward. For example, as discussed both in Chapters Five and Eight, moral disengagement in processes of risk/crisis management could also mean crisis disengagement as a rival explanation. However, given the range of available multiple data and evidences, the descriptions are rich and the findings arguably remain internally coherent which further improves the research credibility.

In conclusion, the qualitative nature of this research implies that formal reliability test appears impracticable especially when compared with quantitative research. However, careful measures have been taken to ensure that later investigators following the same or similar procedures using case study will generate comparable findings and reach the same conclusions. Given that risk behaviours and perceptions of stakeholders in risk and crisis situations differ, using quantitative reliability testing appear inappropriate. Nonetheless, the research questions and context are clearly stated from the onset and the research design is compatible with these. Therefore, a claim can be made about reliability and dependability of this research because most recent risk/crisis studies mostly followed the case study design using multiple sources of data.

## **6.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

It is incumbent that potential ethical issues and implications in research, particularly, involving human subjects are pragmatically considered and explicitly discussed. This research involved human beings and aimed at advancing understanding of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster. It was undertaken to validate existing risk and crisis management models (or perhaps refute them), dispel a lack of awareness of moral disengagement in crisis and disaster situations, analyse unconventional methodologies of dealing with emerging crisis and disaster, and to understand risk behaviours and perceptions during crisis and disaster. Undoubtedly, the research outcomes will benefit a wide range of stakeholders involved in the management of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster. Therefore, it is imperative to maintain participants' privacy and confidentiality, and credibility of the findings, conclusions and perhaps generalizations.

The application of ethical principles such as seeking ethical approval prior to primary data collection, negotiating access to participants to collect data, informed consent, participants protection, authorised use of data, appropriateness of the research design, funding sources, behaviour in reporting data, subjective data interpretations, and plagiarism issue are reflected and complied within the entire research process of this thesis. These identifiable ethical principles if not carefully discussed and applied could seriously affected the research credibility, validity and generalizability. The researcher obtained ethical approval from the University Research Ethics Committee prior to data collection (Appendix Five). Likewise, when dealing with sensitive aspects of participants' behaviour such as vandalism and oil terrorism transgression, it was imperative that ex-agitators and other stakeholders involved understand the essence of the questions posed and that harm cannot be caused to them. This scenario requires proper management to ensure that "old-wounds" and secrets are not shared or reported verbatim. This helps reduce new risks to the participants and the researcher.

The case studies involve controversial issues with sensitive outcomes; as such access to informants and other information relevant to answer the research questions and achieve the overall objectives was problematic. The researcher collaborated with several practitioners, local youth leaders, and community leaders (in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria). Several engagement telephone conversations prior to primary data collection were made with relevant informants, which allow access to apparently unreachable research settings. It took more than eight months in one extreme case to get in touch with an informant after several attempts have been made. Persistence and resilience further help to overcome data access issue.

Quite interestingly, as the discussion and networking with relevant informants continue and information relating to the proximate causes and outcomes of the Niger Delta crisis emerged, it became abundantly obvious that I could be stocked in "data nightmare" which could take hours, days and months to unravel. The crises were emotionally charged (anger, frustration, sorrow, guilt, anxiety) and revelations of frequent dehumanisations, destruction of properties and sources of livelihood were controversial and inconsistencies in account. In another situation, I was faced with more than one version of the crises – individuals' perspectives conflict with independent investigation, and therefore play the roles of historian and detective in trying to reconstruct event sequences from origin to present state, make sense of sometimes partial and contradictory evidence because of the existence of more than one 'factual account' of the crises.

In overall, the foreseeable harms (physical, psychological and social) of the research did not outweigh anticipated benefits. Furthermore, while the risks involved in the research have been considered and minimised through the research designs and strategies, the difficulties in gaining access to primary data for the study were equally acknowledged. Nevertheless, the researcher contacts with key indigenes of Niger Delta (Ilaje and Ogoni communities) and experience both as native of Niger Delta and working within the region help in facilitating primary data access. Essentially, bias issue is another major ethical challenge in this research and like Borodzicz (2005, p. 184) the ability to treat data as strange might be compromised by the researcher personal familiarity with the case. Therefore, it is all but impossible to interpret the data outside the context of the researcher personal experience (Borodzicz, 2005). Nonetheless, personal experience of the researcher as native of Niger Delta and those of other indigenes of Niger Delta whom the principal investigator had lived with does have ethnographic advantages by allowing thick description to be gain as is practically possible.

The researcher did not only promise to maintain confidentiality but likewise search prudently for strategic ways to deal with the ethical and legal issues that may materialized. In this context, as evidenced from previous research (Kenneth, Linda, & Gary, 2000), anonymity becomes extremely important because of the sensitivity of the research. Therefore, the data presentations and interpretations provide complete anonymity to participants in this research. This is achieved through exclusion of real names of key informants and informed consents were obtained. The researcher obtained approval from the University of Portsmouth Ethics Committee prior to data collection.

In a specific term, the participants understood the purpose for which the data were used and that information was freely given. It should be acknowledged that researchers often differ widely over what is and is not ethically acceptable in research and that it almost impossible to exhaustively lists and discusses possible issue that can warrant ethical violation. Nevertheless, considerable measures have been made to critically explore and discusses ethical issues and implications of this thesis. In conclusion, considerations have been taken to address 'research quality criteria' of credibility (i.e. how believable are the findings?), transferability (i.e. do the findings apply to other contexts?), dependability (i.e. are the findings likely to apply at other times?), and confirmability (i.e. has the researcher overtly allowed personal values or theoretical inclinations to intrude to a high degree?).

## **6.8 RESEARCHER'S COMPETENCE**

The researcher's personal experiences have benefited this research in several forms. Firstly, I have adequate knowledge of risk management having worked over a decade serving as chief risk officer and risk manager among others in multinational and national banks and insurance companies in Nigeria. Secondly, I belong to a few professional organisations such as Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria and Institute of Strategic Management, Nigeria. Thirdly, I contributed to teaching in higher education at postgraduate level; and I have also undertaken Associate Lecturer Professional Development and Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy course. In addition, I completed over thirty research modules besides attending and presenting papers at numerous research seminars and conferences including the British Academy of Management and Operational Research Society Annual conference.

The findings from this doctoral research have also been presented to external organisations such as Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment, National Disaster Management Organisation in Ghana and Petroleum Technology Development Funds in Nigeria. I have also had the privilege of writing external research funding applications to the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) and Department for International Development (DFID) as principal investigator and write a number of research contract projects to external organisations. Some of my papers have been published as book chapter, for example, "Mafimisebi, O. P., & Thorne, S. (2017). Strategies for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management: Are Lessons from Past Disasters Actionable? In C., Kuel & C. N., Madu, Handbook of Disaster Risk Reduction & Management (pp. 843-866). London: World Scientific Press." Notably, a few my articles have appeared in peer-reviewed international journals such as: Journal of Emergency Management (Volume 15, Number 5, pp. 447-58), International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters (Volume 35, Number 3, pp. 1-31), Journal of Environment and Earth Science (Volume 6, Number 3, pp. 180-204), Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development (Volume 7, Number 1, pp. 93-99), and Journal of Civil and Environmental Research (Volume 8, Number 3, pp. 129-146). I have also submitted articles to Academy of Management Review, Public Relations Review, International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, and Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal. Thus, I am confident that the research projects and training I have undertaken as well as the numerous research seminars and conferences I have attended, and my professional experience in research and publication benefited this research.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SELF-INFLICTED DISASTER: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter synthesises the discussion in previous chapters with the main research findings and expounds the central conceptual thinking instrumental to this thesis. There are two models presented here. The first conceptual risk model deals with the philosophical thinking underpinning this research's aims and objectives. The second theoretical risk model synthesises evidence from extant research and thesis findings and how these guided the research overall recommendations in the following chapter. As a starting point, the conceptual risk model connects with existing thinking in risk and crisis management (Andrew, 2011; Ansell, Boin, & Keller, 2010; Cutter, 2005; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Hiles, 2011; Fink, 2002; Reason, 2004; Dombrowsky, 2007; Toft & Reynolds, 2005; 't Hart, 2013; Ulmer, Seeger, & Sellnow, 2007).

The notion that organisational crisis and disaster are caused by human, technological, and organisational failures is challenged (Drabek & McEntire, 2002; Shrivastava, 1987; Weick, 1988; Simpson, 2008; McGuire & Schneck, 2010). The conventional taxonomies of organisational crisis and disaster are based on three levels of analysis: micro-level, meso-level, and macro-level. The evidence at the micro-level is that individual factors such as human errors, blunders and mistakes in most crises – if not all, initiate organisational crisis.

Additionally, the evidence at the meso-level of inquiry is that organisational factors and processes including human limitations and environmental factors contribute to organisational crisis. This view suggests that the crucial issue of human errors and the consequences of human failure are contextualised as inevitable and unpreventable (Reason, 1990). The alternative view reveals that a combination of sloppy management and an inherent blind spot for recognising crisis triggering events or indicators modern firms contribute to crises in the making (Turner & Pidgeon, 1997). Thus, it is the combination of normal human errors and normal organisational forms that efficiently translate into crisis outcomes.

The macro-level of inquiry established that combination of issues such as technical systems, technical complexity, tight coupling, and environmental pressures lead firms to emphasise efficiency and output targets over safety goals produce a disaster (Beck, 1992; Perrow, 1999). The risk model as conceptualised in Figure 7.1 moved from general issues as identified in the

literature, to more specific and contextual detail. The model components were derived from research findings (e.g., Adrot & Moriceau, 2013; Borodzicz, 2005; Hopkins, 2006; Herbane, 2013; Hutchins et al., 2009; Shrivastava et al., 2009; Smith, 2000; 2005; Perrow, 1999; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Roeschmann, 2014) and based on extensive empirical findings within this thesis. There are similarities and overlapping issues between extant findings and the current findings of this research but these findings collectively informed the research recommendations in the later part of the thesis.

The crucial question is not whether an organisational crisis and disaster is normal, inevitable, complex and uncertain but whether organisations could self-initiate crises and how we can proactively manage these? There are two broader way of conceptualising and explaining unconventional crises and disasters:

- Those that inflict organisations, and
- Those that are self-initiated by organisations themselves.

This is akin to the notion of vulnerable society which is being aggressed from outside (externally) and the risk society which is being threatened by itself (internally) (Rudolf, 2007). If unconventional crises and disasters are self-inflicted, we should ask under what circumstances are firms most likely to cause a crisis. The empirical evidence is that over the past two decades, senior executives and managers were responsible for more than half of all organisational crises (Institute for Crisis Management, 2011; McDonald, 2013). It was evident based on empirical research findings that most unconventional risk, crisis and disaster are mostly self-inflicted due to range of issues presented in Figure 7.1.

## **7.2 SELF-INFLICTED DISASTER CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

What conceptual standard or framework can help us better understand the nature of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster? There is no simple answer to this question. Thus, the notion of self-inflicted disaster fundamentally aims to draw our attention to the fact that established risk and crisis management standards, best practices and strategies could have unintended consequences which serve as a springboard for future organisational crises/disasters. All risk and crisis decisions have consequences which can sometimes cause irreparable destruction to organisational goals and objectives. This can be illustrated in research which reveals that “the Piper Alpha accident was one of the cases that can hardly be attributed to ‘an act of God’: it was mostly self-inflicted” (Pate-Cornell, 1993, p. 215).

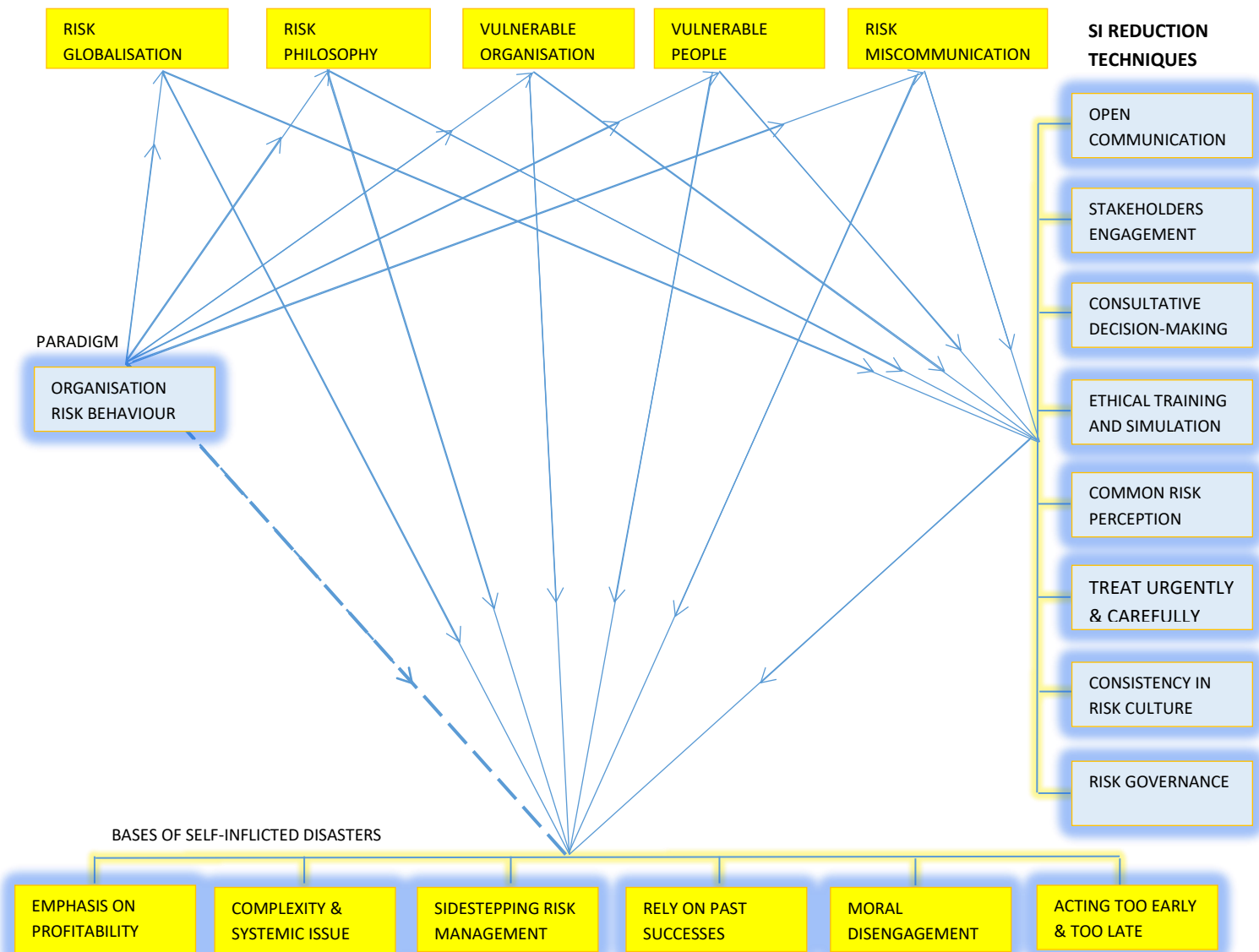
Albeit the coincidence of the final events that triggered the catastrophe was not in itself controllable, the failure resulted essentially from an accumulation of management errors (Pate-Cornell, 1993). The case of Piper Alpha disaster (July 6, 1988) which caused the death of 165 men (out of 226) on board the platform itself and two men on board a rescue vessel, provides useful lessons for future risk management. For instance, a piece of equipment (a critical pump with one redundancy) had been turned off for repair and the night crew that operated the platform had not been informed of it. This problem, in turn, was mostly a failure of the “permit-to-work system” that did not ensure proper communications (Pate-Cornell, 1993). As a result, the conceptual framework of self-inflicted disaster recognises that risk awareness among board and senior managers is imperative but most crucially, all organisation employees require a risk management awareness culture, need to understand what risk management can and cannot do, articulate the limitations of managing risk, and examine the risks of risk and crisis management.

Drawing upon previous studies (e.g., Ansell et al., 2010; Cutter, 2005; Drabek & McEntire, 2002; Dombrowsky, 2007; Hiles, 2011; Reason, 2004; Simpson, 2010; De Smet, Lagadec, & Leysen, 2012), many causal factors responsible for initiating disasters are recognised. These factors which collectively refer to the central mechanisms of self-inflicted disaster include risk globalisation, risk philosophy, vulnerable organisation, risk communication and vulnerable people. For example, risk globalisation manifests in interconnected nature of unconventional risk, crisis or disaster (Ripley, 2008; Rosenthal, 2009). This means that the increasing dependence on network society (or global society) not only makes our lives easier and more comfortable but also enlarges the possibility of fast-spreading disasters (cf. De Smet et al., 2012).

Risk philosophy suggests that unconventional risks and disasters are drastically changing and they often trigger cross-border effects and affect future generations (Lagadec, 2009). Risk communication is crucial to inform, educate and dialogue with relevant stakeholders. Vulnerable organisations are those that place emphasis on profitability, complexity and systemic issue, sidestepping risk management, rely on past successes, acting too early and too late, and using moral disengagement mechanisms in managing risks and crises (Lagadec & Carli, 2005; Rosenthal, 2009). These are the bases of self-inflicted disasters as conceptualised in this research (Figure 7.1). The conceptual framework also reveals that factors such as open communication, stakeholders’ engagement, consultative decision-making, concerns for environment and people, common risk perception, treat emerging crisis urgently and carefully, maintain consistence in risk culture, and risk governance are useful tools in preventing self-

inflicted disaster (Adrot & Moriceau, 2013; ‘t Hart, 2013; Shrivastava et al., 2009; Simpson, 2008; McGuire & Schneck, 2010; Ulmer et al., 2007; Roeschmann, 2014). These moderating factors are linked to discuss the case studies presented in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis.

**Figure 7.1: Self-Inflicted Disaster Model**



Source: Author (2017)

### **7.3 HOW IS SELF-INFLICTED DISASTER DEFINED AND CONTEXTUALISED?**

In the context of this research, self-inflicted disaster refers to (1) a situation created from our attempt to disengage from emerging issues, and caused by contradictory responses to complex and uncertain events such that the response to those emerging events further amplified the situation; and (2) a situation which produces inescapable dilemma due to inadequate responses to uncertain and dangerous events. The notion of 'self-inflicted disaster' is contextualised, in a broad range of unconventional events which include safety disaster, environmental disaster, large-scale fraud, and financial crisis, as extreme events which were initially under control of management or organisation but escalated due to inability to act before the anticipated and unanticipated consequences happen. The empirical evidence from previous research is that some organisations have inflicted disasters upon themselves because of mismanagement and unfortunately some others will still do (Andrew, 2011; Beck, 2009; Shrivastava et al., 2009; Turner, 1976; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Reza, 2011; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). The concept of self-inflicted disaster may look too simplistic but it is a mirror of how organisations often cause or initiate future organisational crisis or disaster.

For operational purposes, 'self-inflicted disaster' is contextualised based on the notion that models, approaches and strategies pertaining to the management of unconventional crisis and disaster may complicate the very processes of managing them in ways that can worsen or attenuate emerging crisis/disaster, and make organisations disengage rather than meaningfully engage in managing the evolving crisis/disaster. This perspective suggests that different risk management practices are needed in different contexts, and that risk or crisis management models or standards should not be universally applied to all risk and crisis situations. The unintended or unanticipated consequences of attempting universal application of most risk and crisis models, approaches and strategies to emerging dangerous events could be an unsustainable solution or crisis intensification especially when these risk models or strategies are applied based on previously held assumptions in a context totally different from the new situation (Adrot & Moriceau, 2013; Beck, 2009; Lagadec, 1997; Shrivastava et al., 2009). In fact, such thinking accords with Beck's (1992) risk society thesis that institutionalised scientific knowledge and technical expertise have contributed to the proliferation and worsening of risks rather their amelioration.

However, it is crucial to point out that Beck's risk thesis is primarily informed by a sociological perspective and therefore is subject to controversial implications in practice. According to Beck

(2009), natural hazards have given way to manufactured risks of epic proportions as the unmanageable and not necessarily apparent side effects of modernisation. Equally so, Borodzicz (2005) put forward the concept that major risks are no longer seen as an ‘Act of God’ but consequences of risk failure. At the same time, the paradox of self-inflicted disaster, mismanaged crisis or managed crisis reflects the irony of a world risk society stressed by Beck (2006; 2009) and further captured in Clarke’s (2006, p. 161) reference to ‘living and dying in worst case worlds’. This is analogous to the concept of the boomerang effect where attempts to eliminate one risk creates another, also known as risk homeostasis (Adams, 1988; 1995; Wilde, 1982; 2001). This calls for the need to re-evaluate the ontological status of conventional approaches in risk, crisis and disaster management. Furthermore, Beck (2009, p. 10) maintains that the belief that science offered a solution has evaporated:

*“We live in a world that has to make decisions concerning its future under the conditions of manufactured, self-inflicted insecurity. Among other things, the world can no longer control the dangers produced by modernity; to be more precise, the belief that modern society can control the dangers that it itself produces is collapsing – not because of its omissions and defeats, but because of its triumphs.”*

There are a range of issues rooted in the conceptualisation of ‘self-inflicted disaster’ when we consider the argument made by Beck in the above quote:

- First, risk and crisis management practice requires a methodological approach which should be flexible and robust to accommodate complexity and emerging issues (rational, irrational, normative and non-normative).
- Second, as Green (1997, p. 154) noted: *“Accidents are no longer the inevitable and necessarily marginal remnants of a cosmology, but have been brought to the very centre ... if accidents are the archetypical outcome of the miscalculation of risk, they are the paradigmatic event with which to demonstrate the possibility of risk calculation.”*
- Third, what we are witnessing, in some cases of current unconventional crises and disasters, is a case of a benign crisis and disaster turned malignant.

The pragmatist position adopted in this research is that causes and effects are not the proximate reality of unconventional crisis and disaster but the interactions of systemic failures and moral disengagement from risk decision-making as well as self-inflicted behaviours which have allowed those causes and effects.

#### **7.4 KEY ISSUES AND DEBATES IN RISK, CRISIS AND DISASTER RESEARCH**

There appears to be an emerging consensus that organisational crisis/disaster cannot be sufficiently understood or addressed without a primary recognition of interrelationship of variables; also, an assumption of the need for interdisciplinary approaches or strategies. Yet, crisis and disaster management practices are widely characterised by disciplinary compartmentalization. The ongoing fragmentation of knowledge and resulting chaos in crisis management strategies are not particularly reflections of the real world but artefacts of crisis scholarship. The argument here is that reductive understanding of crisis and disaster management informing policy and actions in the real world contributes to problems. For example, it is not a coincidence that the current fragmentary form of thought is leading to self-inflicted crises in organisations and in society.

The thesis is that prevailing crisis management approaches involved high levels of abstraction resulting in deductive conclusions (mainly positivist and devoid of normative issues), which are generalised to the real world with little awareness of the dangerous consequences of doing so. More optimistically, the case of Niger Delta crises demonstrates an historical shift taking place from vulnerable of the common affecting both environment and people characterised by multiple realities towards a more pragmatic picture. This implies that issues of vulnerable environment and the vulnerable people affected by the effects of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta must be totally addressed. In a practical context, it is insufficient to identified root causes of unconventional crises and disasters. There must be moral responsibility and courage to commit risk management plans into actions.

Therefore, it can be argued that although current approaches of crisis management literature and practice reflect the diverse nature of risks, crises and disasters. However, such models place particular emphasis on antique case studies and modelling past crises and disasters as a precursor for emerging crises and disasters, remains highly controversial and contentious in reality. Quite critically, these crisis management methodologies as discussed in Chapters One, Four and Five unfortunately do not explain much about a range of factors including:

- The variables of unconventional crises and disasters,
- The nature of emerging unconventional crises and disasters,
- Issues of self-inflicted crises, manufactured risk and uncertainty,
- Moral disengagement and normative concerns, and
- What constitute historical reality in crisis management practice?

The context in which crises and disasters exist further makes issue of crisis management models and comparisons exceptionally difficult due to the amorphous nature of the phenomena (Borodzicz, 2005). Existing crisis management methodologies reveal hindsight knowledge and help us to understand why things went wrong and what could/should have been done. So, what are the practical implications for managing emerging crises and disasters? Hindsight knowledge of past crises and disasters does not automatically help practitioners manage emerging crisis/disaster. It follows from this premise that dominant approaches to crisis and disaster management fail partly because they do not sufficiently take seriously the role of risk and crisis engagement in managing organisational crisis and disaster. If the prediction is right, the variety and capability of theoretical and empirical research in crisis management methodologies to successfully defuse emerging crisis and disaster is further complicated.

It has been contended that current cases of risk and crisis management failures are definitely not perceived as mere natural events but of the consequences of risk society (Beck, 1992; 2009), communication crisis (Irwin, 1995), human error (Reason, 1990), risk homeostasis (Adams, 1995; Wilde, 1994), systemic failure (Turner, 1978; Perrow, 1984), irrationality (Lopes, 1987; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), cultural misconstructions (Pidgeon, 1992), rupture and manufactured uncertainty (Giddens, 1999), and as in this research, self-inflicted through 'management crisis or crisis mismanagement'. As rightly pointed out by Borodzicz (2005), it is doubtful that crises and disasters could ever be successfully managed when these theories are taken equally. In other words, crisis and disaster are mutually exclusive events that occur in different definitive contexts thus arguably demand different methodological solutions depending on the effectiveness of the approach employed.

Therefore, the practical questions are:

- At what point can practitioners in risk and crisis management recognise indeed there is a crisis?
- Which approach can be used to manage the crisis/disaster?
- Which approach is more effective over the others and why?
- Are there antecedents/precursors that might suggest we are using a failing (or more correctly self-initiated) approach?
- What approach can be classified as a 'failing approach'?
- More critically, can there ever be universal approach to managing crises/disasters if they differ in context and interpretation?



Finding practical answers to these questions are crucial for sustainable risk and crisis management. The lack of attentions to these questions may cause the transition from crisis management to management crisis or mismanaged crisis refers to as *self-inflicted crisis (or perhaps crisis made-worse)* in this research. In a practical context, self-inflicted crisis is the crisis created through the exploitation of moral disengagement mechanisms in processes of organisation crisis, and progression in valuing a certain approach in crisis management (either through fear, embarrassment, communication crisis, arrogance, human error and systemic failure, and cultural misconstructions) over some other techniques to defuse the emerging event. It is useful to state that critics might argue that diverting attention to mismanaged crisis, management crisis or more precisely management inability to control and manage emerging crisis and disaster presents no or little approach to effective and sustainable crisis management. However, it must equally be acknowledged that what constitutes acceptable and sustainable crisis management practice is evidently to some extent highly subjective. In critical terms, self-inflicted crisis refers to the intensification of organisational crisis through flaws in the choice of crisis management techniques and strategies adopted which provide very little help to successful and sustainable crisis and disaster management.

Furthermore, present theory in crisis and disaster management disputably fails to achieve sustainable and effective management of crisis/disaster because historical reality and elements of the real-life phenomenon were left out or oversimplified in the formulation of the theory. As a result, their implications for practice have received little testing against emerging unconventional crisis/disaster. Quite significantly, this new classification and paradigm in crisis management is expanding in most dimensions of unconventional organisational crisis life-cycle. For example, three well known cases of crisis and disaster such as the Bhopal disaster, Shell Brent Spar, Shell-Ogoni crisis, reveal how organisations can further exacerbate crisis and create what has been called self-inflicted crisis in this study. Crisis management research and practice should recognise this paradigm and the idea of mismanaged crisis or management crisis and even so, the concept of self-inflicted crisis raises other problems and controversial implications in practice as well.

## **7.5 SUMMARY**

The challenges with risk, crisis and disaster management are well recognised, and numerous empirical studies have offered insights on what constitute effective risk and crisis management.

The central argument running through this research is that models of risk, crisis and disaster can be used to assist in comprehending or diagnosing the meaning of crisis/disaster situations and in identifying various strategies or approaches that can be used to manage risk, crisis and disaster situations. However, what is crucial in this context is that organisation(s) sometimes in the process of managing emerging risks and crises initiate future disasters by the very choice or strategy used. This implies that risk and crisis models or strategies when inappropriately applied can cause irreparable damages to organisations. This is the paradox of risk models which requires the attentions of modern organisations.

More specifically, what emerges from this research is a clear, deeper, more pragmatic, and more enriched understanding of the relationships of interest in risk and crisis management (Rindova, 2008). The paradox of the self-inflicted disaster is that organisations and scientists are sometimes reluctant or unwilling to admit to the possibility of being wrong. This is despite the obvious possibility that their risk models and strategies could be strategically incoherent.

The controversial thesis is that when organisations unwittingly institutionalise practices that encourage gradual erosion of standards then self-inflicted disaster is imminent (Shrivastava et al., 2009). The cases of Bhopal, Challenger, Deepwater Horizon, and Bonga disaster reveals how organisations unconsciously institutionalised practices that encourage gradual erosion of standards. As Vaughan (2005) explains an acceptable outcome of risky behaviour in the immediate past is then allowed to set the expectation for risky behaviour on the next occasion. The changes in the harmful direction take place in such small increments and get injected into daily routines through normalization of deviance so surreptitiously that it is impossible to detect them until it is too late (Vaughan, 2005). This is the reality of self-inflicted disasters and the solution lies in what Beck called 'reflexive scientisation' (Beck, 1992) and radical foresight. Therefore, it will be argued that changes in risk culture, better internal audit and buy-in across the organisation are crucial to overcome self-inflicted disaster behaviours.

In conclusion, risk and crisis management starts and ends with an organisation's workforce. As a result, their behaviours and decisions about whether to engage or disengage from emerging extreme threats are critical to organisation resilience and sustainability. The next chapter will present the moral disengagement conceptual groundings underpinning this research. It will discuss this thesis main findings and how this meets the initial aims and objectives presented in Chapter One. Also, it will expound the crisis management – moral disengagement

relationship and the main issues evident in each of the case studies considered here and start to suggest possible practical recommendations to prevent their occurrence in the future.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

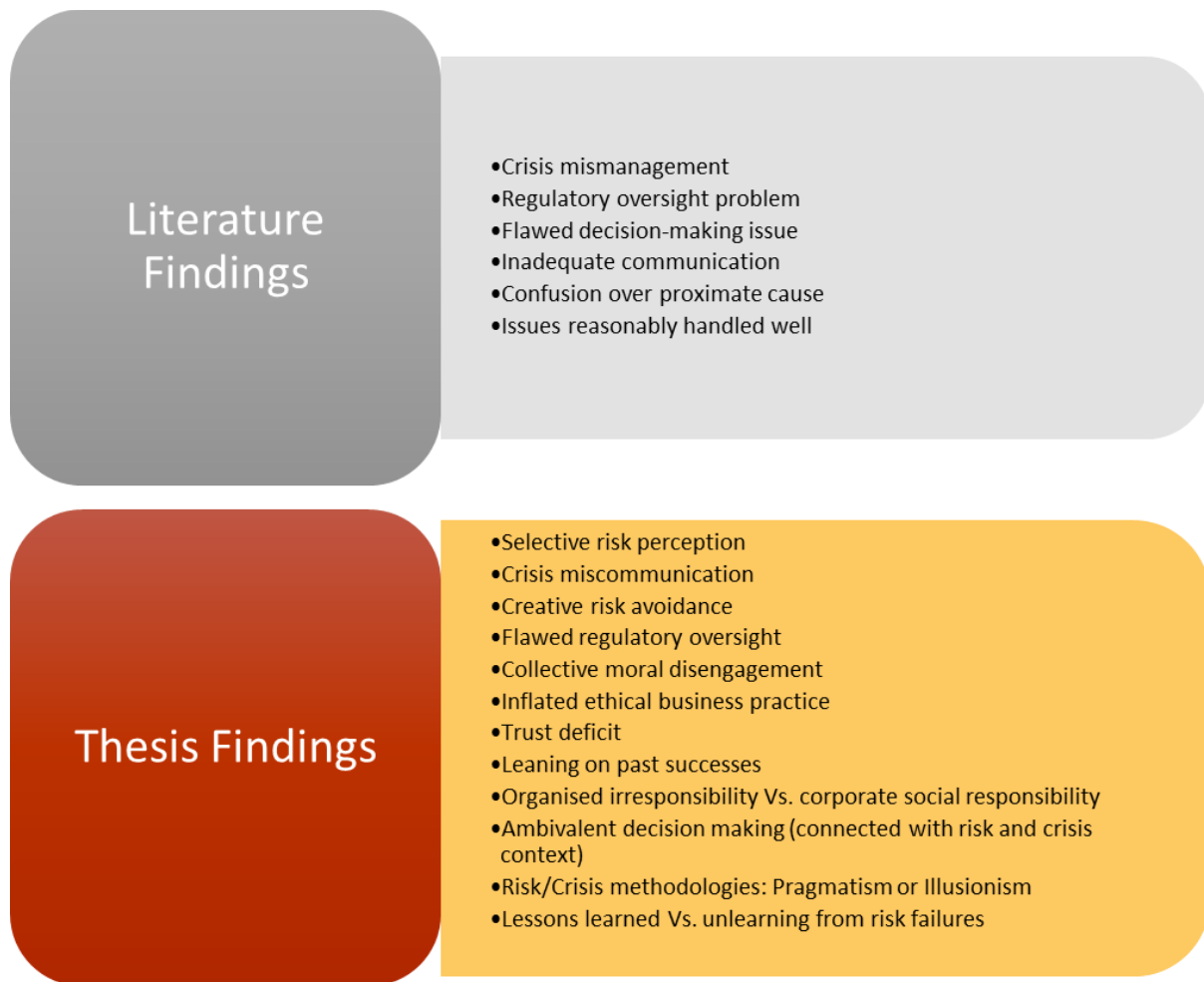
### SELF-INFLICTED DISASTERS: MORAL DISENGAGEMENT IN ERA OF UNCONVENTIONAL RISKS, CRISES AND DISASTERS

#### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings from an empirical investigation of moral disengagement in the risk and crisis domain. The research uses ‘sensemaking accounts’ as a novel methodical approach which entails semi-structured interviews, archival dataset, commission of inquiry datasets, reports and fact sheets to explore unconventional risk, crisis and disaster management in two case study organisations. In this research context ‘sensemaking’ means articulation of the unknown, “*the making of sense*” (Weick, 1995, p. 4) and process of “*structuring the unknown*” (Waterman, 1990, p. 41) by “*placing stimuli into some kind of framework*” that enables us “*to comprehend, understand, explain, attribute, extrapolate, and predict*” (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988, p. 51). The sensemaking of the cases of crises and disasters studied here (Chapters One, Two and Three) enables us to examine and turn the ongoing complexity of unconventional crises and disasters into a “situation that is comprehended explicitly in words and that serves as a springboard into action” (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 409).

Given the crucial overlaps that existed between the literature findings and this research findings, it was evident that some form of sensemaking is needed to improve the current risk and crisis responses/strategies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. On examination of the unconventional crises, it was clear that even the most innovative firms are uncertain about how best to connect with “*hyperconnected*” stakeholders, who are simultaneously more informed about risk, crisis and disaster situations. This section is divided into two main parts. The first deals with the main theoretical conclusions addressing the research aims and objectives presented earlier in the introduction chapter. These conclusions were juxtaposed with current risk and crisis theories considering issues of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster that was reviewed in Chapters One, Two, Three, and Four. The issues and points raised from the literature and thesis findings guided the recommendations offered in the second part of this section (Figure 8.1). The second provides recommendations and critical insights into the management of unconventional risks, crises and disasters presented in the case studies (Chapters Two and Three). The essence was to contribute to better ways of improving organisational resilience and robustness when managing future crises and disasters; and also, to enhance current risk and crisis management practice.

**Figure 8.1: Main Issues Identified from the Literature and Thesis Findings**



Source: Author (2017)

## **8.2 FINDINGS**

We first present our crisis – moral disengagement framework: crisis management – moral disengagement relationships and links with risk and resilience management practice (see Table 8.1). However, to illustrate a fuller range of examples, more extracts were included in the framework (Table 8.1). This framework emerged from the synthesis of literature and data analysis but also guided the structure of the findings. The framework illustrates a range of vital crisis-moral disengagement relationships, and each relationship form is linked with an aspect of potential risk and resilience management practice. Examples from risk and resilience management practice illustrate the potential uses to risk managers/leaders of engaging with, or encouraging, ethical risk and crisis management. More importantly, there are three main points

that should be made about Table 8.1: Firstly, it is a synthesis of primary and secondary data to ensure that informants' identities are not disclosed; secondly, less quotations from informants are included to ensure that sensitive information which can be linked back to them are not included; and thirdly, the key words from the informants have been used to form the diagram for the trigger causes of the risk/crisis in the Niger Delta crises (Figure 8.2).

The concept of moral disengagement has been discussed elsewhere (Chapters One and Five; Bandura, 2002; 2009; Baker et al., 2006; Caprara et al., 2009; Chugh et al., 2014; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015) and is worthy of much greater discussion than space allows. The profiles of the case study organisations (Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria) are also reiterated in Table 8.2 as part of the overarching findings. The research findings uncovered from this research clearly relate to the objectives indicated at the opening chapter of this thesis and eventually help to address the main aims that this research is seeking to achieve. That is: Did moral disengagement issues exist in the response to unconventional risks, crises and disaster? Is there any relationship between crisis management and moral disengagement? How can existing risk and crisis management models help solve emerging crises and ensure sustainable crisis management, and broader resilience? Do existing risk and crisis management methodologies fit emerging crises and disasters?

The objectives that should be met to achieve these aims are:

- To advance an understanding of how moral disengagement perpetuates organisational crisis/disaster and explore potential possibilities in averting the 'black swan' implications.
- To uncover the moral disengagement – crisis management relationship and redirect academic debates, research agenda, policy issues and redefining responsible business practice.
- To question the influence of vulnerability, risk perception and behaviour, and distrust in risk and crisis management practice.
- To examine which risk and crisis management models would be most valuable to help solve unconventional risk and crisis, and crisis management responses/strategies.
- To challenge the belief that existing risk and crisis management methodologies fit emerging unconventional crises and disasters.

The following Table 8.1 provides a useful breakdown of the research findings and explains the relationships between crisis management and moral disengagement. The different relationship

forms are explained using illustration from the data collected. In addition, their links within the broader risk and resilience management practice were discussed. This was necessary to explain how moral disengagement could perpetuates risk and crisis management practice. Therefore, it is intended that by understanding these relationship forms between crisis management and moral disengagement, future unconventional crises could be prevented. In a practical context, the crisis – moral disengagement framework as presented in Table 8.1 is useful when organisations may be looking at the re-evaluation of their current risk and crisis management practice. The framework suggested a range of useful recommendations that could help organisations proactively manage risks and increase organisational resilience. Thus, the inclusion of this framework here because it can also be used to check the robustness of risk and crisis management especially when considering ethical risk and crisis management practice.

**Table 8.1: Crisis – Moral Disengagement Relationships: Links with Risk and Resilience Management Practice**

Relationship Form	Description	Illustration from Data	Links with risk and resilience management practice	Data Source
Selective risk perception	This is a view that one risk school of thought is superior to another or at least forms the most valid representation of the risk or crisis situation. It undermines the possibility for comprehensive crisis engagement in which all stakeholders' views are seen as complementary rather than incompatible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The vast majority of environmental disasters especially oil spillages are due to third party interference.</li> <li>Our organisation [Shell] is committed to international best practice and cannot reasonably cause harm to the local people or environment.</li> </ul>	The empirical evidence that risks and crises are best understood by experts is no longer valid and sustainable view of risk and crisis management. The divergence about risk and crisis should be seen as opportunity for dialogue and not issue of legitimacy over who is right or wrong.	Key Informants; UNEP (2011); Steiner (2010); Ereba & Dumpe (2010); Pyagbara (2010); Slovic & Peters (2006); Panzer & Renner (2009); Shell (2012)
Inflated ethical stance	This denotes that individual or organisational ethics could be overstated when not subjectively evaluated. It suggests that code of ethics and corporate governance standards are insufficient because individual or organisational ethics never remain at equilibrium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We [Shell] have robust ethical code of conducts and abide by international operational standards in our areas of operations.</li> <li>We [Chevron] are committed to delivering superior value for investors, customers, partners, host governments, local communities and staff.</li> </ul>	The notion that organisational code of ethics and corporate governance code/standards are adequate when evaluating corporate ethics should be discarded. Although, these codes/standards may be useful but do not guarantee that organisational ethics will remain at equilibrium throughout the firm's lifespan. Therefore, risk culture and risk appetite should be continually monitor due to the possibility for excessive risk-taking or unethical behaviours that could erode risk management standards.	Key Informants; Shell (2012; 2015); Chevron (2015; 2016); Andersen (2016); Moore (2008); Gino & Bazerman (2009); Mafimisebi & Thorne (2015).
Organised corporate irresponsibility	This is a systematic or well-coordinated approach to managing emerging issue(s) which obstruct good corporate citizenship behaviours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We [Chevron] conduct our global operations consistent with the spirit and intent of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.</li> <li>We [Shell] are a committed and responsible partner in the</li> </ul>	The commitment that an organisation is doing something right is not the same as getting them right. The mechanism of corporate organised irresponsibly in which firm may be trying to avoid liability or take responsibility for actions emanating from its operations has consequential implications for risk and resilience management.	Key Informants; TRIP Report (1999); Chevron (2011; 2015); Dominic, Swartz, & Herbane (2010) (2010); Jakob (2009); Reza (2011); Beck (2009), Gerber & Neeley (2005); Shell (2015); Wildavsky &



		environmental space. We work closely with regulators and host communities in ensuring that we adhere to the highest international operational standards in our areas of operation.		Dake (1990); Mafimisebi & Thorne (2015).
Trust deficit	The gaps in credibility of those who manage risks on behalf of others. Trust in organisations and their ability to reasonably manage their risk exposures as well as refraining from acts that disadvantage or cause harms to others appears to be waning. This poses crucial challenge for organisation(s) when responding to major crises that involved multiple stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We [Key Informants] don't trust multinational oil companies to appropriately treat or clean up the polluted environment of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.</li> <li>Multinational oil companies apply double-standards in their operations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.</li> </ul>	The need to repair trust following a major crisis is crucial for robust risk and crisis management. It is essential for organisations due to its implications for risk and crisis communication in the aftermath of crises as reflected in the case studies of Shell and Chevron. Trust deficit may undermines all major efforts in enhancing stakeholders' cooperation. This can impact the overall success of risk and crisis management strategies when responding to emerging crises/disasters.	Key Informants; Ferrin et al. (2007); Galford & Drapeau (2003); Korsgaard, Brodt, & Whitener (2002); Kramer (1996); Lewicki & Bunker (1996); Mafimisebi & Thorne, (2015); Mafimisebi & Ogbonna (2016); Elangovan & Shapiro, (1998); Gillespie & Dietz (2009).
Relying on past successes	This view suggests that the arrogance of success is to believe that what was successful or useful in the past would continue into the future. The fact that a risk/crisis strategy has been successful in managing past dangerous event(s) does not mean it will be useful in managing emerging or future crises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We [Chevron] have successfully used our global memorandum of understanding strategy in responding to local communities' needs and concerns.</li> <li>The use of government security forces have been the most viable option to manage disruption and vandalism of our oil infrastructures and assets [Shell].</li> </ul>	The clear concerns about universal application of risk and crisis management remain relevant when organisations are seeking to manage emerging crises/disasters. No two crises are exactly the same and the fact that a strategy has been successful or helpful in the past should not be a license for their universal application. If risk and crisis management strategies are to be successful and sustainable, context matters.	Key Informants; Boin & Lagadec, (2000); Comfort (2007); Garnett & Kouzmin (2007); Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo (2014); UNEP (2011); Palm & Ramsell (2007).

Crisis categorisation	<p>This is a situation whereby we routinely and rapidly sort emerging crises into existing models rather than think of each as unique. The notion of crisis categorisation while offering prejudgement advantage in crisis/disaster situations, it reinforced both our default risk strategies as best available solution and solidified unconscious assumption that our existing risk/crisis models fit emerging crises and disasters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These crises in the Niger Delta are often due to sabotage, oil bunkering, and resource control agitation.</li> <li>• Our [Shell] new Remediation Management System model can help manage any situation occurring from oil disaster in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.</li> </ul>	<p>While it is essential to evaluate and categorise emerging crises into selected pattern(s), it must also be remember that unconventional crises/disasters transcend borders and are unique in their respective right. Thus, risk and crisis management models need flexibility and engagement with local context in the course of responding to emerging crises or disasters. This may help avoid the mistake of constantly believing that existing risk/crisis models fit all emerging crises or disasters.</p>	<p>Key Informants; Buchanan &amp; Denyer (2013); Chikudate (2009); Gundel (2005); McConnell &amp; Drennan (2006); UNEP (2011); Toft &amp; Reynolds (1994); Turner &amp; Pidgeon (1997); Vaughan (2004); Weick (2010)</p>
Misinterpretation of dangerous events	<p>This idea is about how moral disengagement cause dangerous events whether crisis, disaster, terrorism, or militancy to be cognitively redefined into wider issues of globalisation, risk society, normal accident, systemic failure, and force majeure, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is the lack of Nigerian government ability to provide basic infrastructures that cause local youths to engage in militancy and not calls for environmental justice.</li> <li>• The Niger Delta crises are due to global climate change to which everyone is responsible.</li> </ul>	<p>The use of moral disengagement mechanisms such as attribution, displacement of responsibility, moral justification and distorting the consequences as reflected in Shell and Chevron case studies are the easiest way to escalate emerging crises. Therefore, given the asymmetrical relationship between moral disengagement and crisis management, such mechanisms of moral disengagement should be avoided altogether. This is consistent with previous studies which established that denial, silence, no comment, evading responding, blame shifting, and distorting accusations are the least effective crisis management response strategies. In practical context, risk and crisis management practice should be transparent, truthful, ethical, and inclusive of multiple views raised by different stakeholders especially in context of environmental disasters, climate change, militancy and terrorism as demonstrated in the Niger Delta crises.</p>	<p>Key Informants; Bandura (2009); Cope et al. (2010); Frewer (2004); Kahan et al. (2012); Lofstedt (2003); Rutsaert et al. (2013); Mafimisebi &amp; Nkwunonwo (2014); Cohen (1999); Coombs (2007b); Dean (2004); Kellerman (2006); Lukaszewski (1999); Niels &amp; Maarten (2011)</p>

Source: Author (2017)

**Table 8.2: Profiles of Case Study Companies**

S/N	FOCUS	CHEVRON NIGERIA	SHELL NIGERIA
1	Business Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chevron is the third-largest oil and gas producer in Nigeria but operate through its subsidiary – Chevron Nigeria Ltd., and hold a 40 percent interest in 13 concessions under a joint-venture with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) for the onshore and offshore assets in the Niger Delta region.</li> <li>▪ In addition, the firm does business through other subsidiaries in Nigeria. For example, Chevron is the largest shareholder in the West African Gas Pipeline Company Limited with 36.7 percent interest. The West African Gas Pipeline supplies customers in Benin, Ghana and Togo with Nigerian natural gas for power generation and industrial applications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shell is the largest oil and gas producer in Nigeria but operate through its four subsidiaries – Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCo), Shell Nigeria Gas Limited (SGN), Shell Nigeria Oil Products and Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) of Nigeria. Collectively, these four subsidiaries of Shell are referred to as Shell Nigeria or Shell Companies in Nigeria (SCiN) throughout this thesis. Shell Nigeria first discovered commercial oil field at Oloibiri (present day Bayelsa State, Nigeria) and started oil exports in 1958.</li> <li>▪ SPDC is the largest fossil fuel company in Nigeria which operates over 6,000 kilometres of pipelines and flowlines, 87 flowstations, 8 natural gas plants and more than 1,000 producing wells. Shell also holds a 25.6% stake in Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG).</li> </ul>
2	Operational presence in Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chevron began doing business in Nigeria since 1913 when Texaco products were first marketed in the country.</li> <li>▪ Energy exploration and production work started more than 50 years ago.</li> <li>▪ Following the Nigerian Indigenization Decree of 1978, Chevron divested 40 percent of its shareholdings in Chevron Oil Nigeria Plc to the Nigerian public while retaining 60 percent equity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shell began doing business in Nigeria since 1937 as Shell D’Archy and by 1938 the company was granted its first exploration license. The first deep water production was in 2005 from the Bonga Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel operated by the SNEPCo.</li> <li>▪ Shell Nigeria operation is through a joint venture with the government – Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Total E &amp; P Nigeria Ltd and Nigeria Agip Oil Company Ltd. Collectively, the joint venture produces oil and gas from land, swamp and shallow water field, swamp and shallow water fields in the Niger Delta.</li> </ul>
3	Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The averaged net daily production of Chevron Nigeria was 224,000 barrels of crude oil, 246 million cubic feet of natural gas and 6,000 barrels of liquefied petroleum gas in 2015. This contrast with average daily production of 516,000 barrels of crude oil (232,000 net), 343 million cubic feet of natural gas (142 million net) and 11,000 barrels of liquefied petroleum gas (4,000 net) in 2011</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Shell companies in Nigeria produced an average 693,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day (boe/d), with 535,000 boe/d from the SPDC Joint Venture and 158,000 from SNEPCo operated ventures in 2013. This contrast with overall production of 949,000 boe/d in 2012, primarily reflecting the impact of militancy, oil bunkering and theft, sabotage and related deferments.</li> <li>▪ The SPDC JV can produce an average of approximately 900,000 boe/d.</li> </ul>

4	Natural gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chevron is involved in several natural gas projects including the optimization of the Escravos Gas Plant (EGP), the Escravos Gas-to-Liquids facility and the Sonam Field Development project. A number of these projects like the EGP focused on eliminating routine flaring of natural gas associated with crude oil production.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Shell Nigeria Gas (SGN) Limited operates a gas transmission and distribution network of approximately 115km. The SGN operates many gas distribution systems including the ones at Ogbor Hill industrial area of Aba (Abia State), Port Harcourt (Rivers State), and Agbara-Ota (Ogun State), serving more than 70 industrial customers. In fact, its gas distribution systems at Ota has a capacity of 42 million standard cubic feet per day and supplies customers in the industrial parks of Agbara, Igbesa and Ota (Ogun State).</li> </ul>
5	Health, environment and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In 2004, Chevron upgraded the Okan Platform which was installed in 1963, and other mature platforms to improve pollution prevention measures and safety systems.</li> <li>▪ Working across all operations to eliminate routine gas flaring and venting in line with company requirements and local regulations. However, gas flaring has been a continuous practice till date. This practice plus other environmental concerns have been part of the reasons for the agitation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.</li> <li>▪ Chevron has also constantly used the services of Nigerian security forces to protect its oil infrastructures and assets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPDC reduced flaring volume from its facilities about 75% between 2003 and 2012 and flaring intensity (the amount of gas flared per barrel of oil produced) by around 60% over the same period.</li> <li>▪ Since 2000 SPDC has designed all new facilities to have no continuous flaring and has also monitored ambient air quality levels around its flare sites since 1998 and regularly reports the results to government authorities as required by the Nigerian regulatory standards.</li> </ul>
6	Responding to community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In 2005, Chevron Nigeria became the first multinational firm to adopt the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) as a new approach to community engagement in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, giving communities a greater role in managing their development through the Regional Development Councils.</li> <li>▪ Through the GMOU in over 10-plus years, the NNPC/Chevron Joint Venture spent more than \$100 million on estimated 600 programs that provided more than 40,000 scholarships, new schools, medical facilities and supplies, and housing and support agriculture development and projects improving water, bridges, jetties, drains and roads.</li> <li>▪ In 2011, Chevron partnered with the U.S. Agency for International Development in contributing \$50 million to the Niger Delta Partnership Initiative (NDPI) Foundation to support programs that promote economic development and help reduce conflict in the region.</li> <li>▪ In 2014, Chevron committed an additional \$40 million to the NDPI over the following five years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shell actively promotes projects in the Niger Delta that support small businesses, agriculture, training, education, health care and capacity building. A number of these projects are done in collaboration with the government and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).</li> <li>▪ For example, in 2013 Shell operations contributed over \$180 million (Shell share \$69.8 million) to the NDDC as required by law.</li> <li>▪ The company also contribute an additional \$104 million (Shell share over \$32 million) was directly invested voluntarily by the SPDC JV and SPENCo towards addressing social and economic development challenges in the Niger Delta working with NGOs, companies and government agencies.</li> <li>▪ In 2013, SPDC and SNEPCo reported to have paid about \$177 million into education fund, bringing the total investment in the past five years (2009-2013) to \$703 million.</li> <li>▪ Shell also work implement its social investments in four areas of enterprise development for youths and women, education, community health, and other community driven development</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In 2008, Chevron directed \$5 million of the \$30 million contributed to the Global Fund to fight AIDS treatment programs.</li> <li>▪ In 2015, Chevron committed an additional \$5 million to Nigeria through the Global Fund to support prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.</li> <li>▪ In 2012, Chevron through partnership with nongovernmental organisation support an initiative designed to eliminate mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV in Bayelsa state. Also, Chevron partnered with Born Free Africa to help develop capacity within state ministries of health. This partnership help equip more than 670 health facilities to date in order to PMTCT of HIV activities in Nassarawa, Bayelsa and Rivers states.</li> <li>▪ Chevron also supports the Lekki Conservation Centre which is a 190-acre (0.8 sq km) sanctuary for the flora and fauna of the Lekki Peninsula, Lagos.</li> <li>▪ Chevron also claimed to have established a postgraduate research scholarship for doctoral students in environment and conservation. This is questionable due to lack of openness and transparency in the application process.</li> </ul>	<p>initiatives implemented through the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5,575 Niger Delta youths trained in business management and enterprise development through Shell LiveWIRE programme since 2003.</li> <li>▪ \$7 million invested in scholarships in 2013; and 14,000 beneficiaries of Shell school and university scholarships granted over 50 years. For example, 1,795 scholarship grants were awarded to secondary school students and 850 to university undergraduates in 2013.</li> <li>▪ 27 health facilities supported by SPDC in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.</li> <li>▪ 91% of SCiN contracts awarded to Nigerian companies in 2013.</li> <li>▪ 4,000 people directly employed by SPDC and SNEPCo.</li> <li>▪ SCiN typically employ 30,000-40,000 staff and contractors at any one time, the large majority of whom are Nigerian.</li> </ul>
7	Recognitions received	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chevron Nigeria won the U.S. State Department's Award for Corporate Excellence in 2003.</li> <li>▪ The Nigerian Conservation Foundation honoured Chevron Nigeria in 2002 for its Award for Environmental Excellence.</li> <li>▪ Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria honoured Chevron with its Human Resources Best Practice Award in the overall and oil and gas categories in 2014.</li> <li>▪ Chevron was named Best Community Development Company of the Year by the National Association of Energy Correspondents in 2012.</li> <li>▪ Chevron was named as one of the 100 Most Respected Companies in Nigeria by Businessday in 2015.</li> <li>▪ Chevron was given an Award of Appreciation from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund in recognition of contributions made to improve the quality of education in Nigeria.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Shell Companies in Nigeria (SCiN) have received numerous awards in recognition of performance in local content development. These awards include:</li> <li>▪ The 'Excellence in Local Content' award at the Nigerian Oil and Gas Conference in 2012.</li> <li>▪ The 'Local Content Operator of the Year' awarded by the Petroleum Technology Association of Nigeria (PETAN) – the umbrella organisation of Indigenous Nigerian oil and gas companies.</li> </ul>

Source: Author (2017)

### 8.3 THE MAIN ISSUES

It is argued that the extreme issue or weakness in each of the case studies was that of moral disengagement. As expounded from the thesis findings, moral disengagement causes crisis warnings to be ignored, creates conditions in which dangerous events are misclassified, increases the risk of dangerous omissions, and encourages rogue individual behaviour within a weak management framework. Moreover, moral disengagement expedites senior managers' failure to acknowledge and act prudently on risk concerns and perception dilemmas. As one senior informant involved in the Niger Delta crises noted (UNEP, 2011, p. 110) there is a culture of 'organisational denial' and risk issues raised by local people or residents were often overlooked. The problem also extends to senior managers "*taking their eye off the ball*" as standards erode and risk management becomes a tick-box approach or mere regulatory compliance. The consequence of moral disengagement similarly manifest through inability of management to engage with the ethical and moral dynamics of unconventional risk and crisis.

However, the issue is not merely one type of moral disengagement: moral disengagement arose at individual, team and organisational levels and between regulatory agencies and local communities and the public. Moral disengagement in the risk and crisis domain creates conditions for which senior managers/ leaders latch on to one superficial cause of crisis/disaster to the exclusion of more fundamental but sometimes less obvious issues. The risk and crisis management responses in dangerous events studied here are influenced by three layers of moral disengagement: individuals, team, and organisations. At the individual level, moral disengagement upsurges or reinforces rigidity of core unethical beliefs, values and assumptions, which may significantly affect how one responds to risk and crisis situations. In some cases, of course, individuals may refrain from moral disengagement as a kind of '*personal defence mechanism*' but this can be overridden by team and organisational moral disengagement, as illustrated from both Shell and Chevron case studies.

The nature of unconventional risk and crisis situations in which organisations must respond decisively are most markedly characterised by decision-making in groups among senior personnel. Thus, moral disengagement becomes a collective problem within the organisational context occurring at team, group and enterprise-wide level. In practice, though senior managers and Board can apportion responsibility more reasonably, organisational structure can mask risk and crisis decision such that it becomes complex or multifaceted and hence impossible to separate who is morally disengaged in such a situation. This form of moral disengagement is

recognised as organisation's moral disengagement, especially as senior managers and Board are acting on the organisation's behalf.

In general, moral disengagement obfuscates causes of unconventional risk and crisis such that initial interpretation of what constitutes dangerous events becomes seriously flawed. Therefore, it is difficult for effective risk and crisis management to take place if the initial interpretation or understanding of what has occurred or evolving is fundamentally flawed. These findings validate the purpose of this research and demonstrate that existing ways of managing risk, crisis and disaster are insufficient and the need to incorporate moral disengagement framework into risk and crisis management becomes most essential for practice, policy and research in risk and crisis domain. The level of moral disengagement within organisations needs to be tested and validated, although ethical principles are often assumed as organisations develop a code of ethical conducts and corporate governance. If the points within each of the case studies are carefully considered, this becomes increasingly clear. These points are presented within the following subsequent sections.

### **8.3.1 SELECTIVE RISK PERCEPTION**

This subsection sheds insight into 'selective risk perception' as one of the crucial factors that influences risk and crisis management practice, as this research findings suggest. The data suggest a 'climate of blaming' whereby stakeholders in risk and crisis situations often attribute the proximate cause of crisis and disaster to each other:

*Chevron has ceaselessly dig artificial canals all over our communities in Ilaje without proper Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) thereby opening the areas to inflow of the ocean into fresh water. Seawater enters the originally fresh water environment through these canals which cause serious ecological problems. The seawater influx has resulted in serious vegetation damage. Our fishermen and women can no longer catch enough fish to earn a living. Our farmlands, fishponds and waterways are polluted or contaminated by oil spills because of prolonged exploitation by Chevron and other oil companies.*

The above quotation as disclosed by one of the informants confirmed what has been established in extant research that advocated that blame could be identified in risk, crisis and disaster situations (Borodzicz, 2005). This view is rooted in the existing notion that current risk, crisis

and disaster situations are no longer an ‘Act of God’ or mere natural events but the consequences of risk society, communication crisis, human error, systemic failure, cultural misconstructions, and rupture and manufactured uncertainty (Adams, 1995; Bland, 1995; Boin, 2004; Borodzic, 2005; Irwin, 1995; Reason, 1990; Beck, 2009; Pidgeon, 1992; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Toft & Reynolds, 2005; Reza, 2011; ‘t Hart, 2013).

But, the combination of these existing risk and crisis theories: risk perception, isomorphic learning, risk society, risk communication, and safety culture as discussed in Chapter Four do not sufficiently explain the unconventional nature of risk, crisis and disaster:

One of the informants revealed that *“it is fair to say that Shell knows it is causing much damage in the Niger Delta but won’t commit to stopping gas flaring and ending oil spills.”* As another local informant recalled, *“for more than five decades now, Shell has been doing business in Nigeria’s Niger Delta with total disregard for the environment, the people and their livelihood. The Ogoni as well as other peoples of the Niger Delta, given Shell’s past records, do not want Shell back in the region again; ....Shell insists on coming back to the region despite its terrible records of human and environmental rights violations.”* Reflection on the Niger Delta crisis experience makes it clear that it created situation involving dehumanisation of local lives and disregarding the consequences, and this should be taken into consideration in organisations risk/crisis management planning.

One informant from Shell Nigeria reacts to some of the allegations by noting that *“we are committed to stopping flaring and we’ve spent \$3 billion on it so far, but the fact is that at the moment both funding restrictions and the security situation have meant that many gas gathering projects have been halted. It’s also a fact that 85% by volume of oil spilled was caused by criminal activity of one sort or another – but we are pledged to clean them all up – no matter what the cause.”*

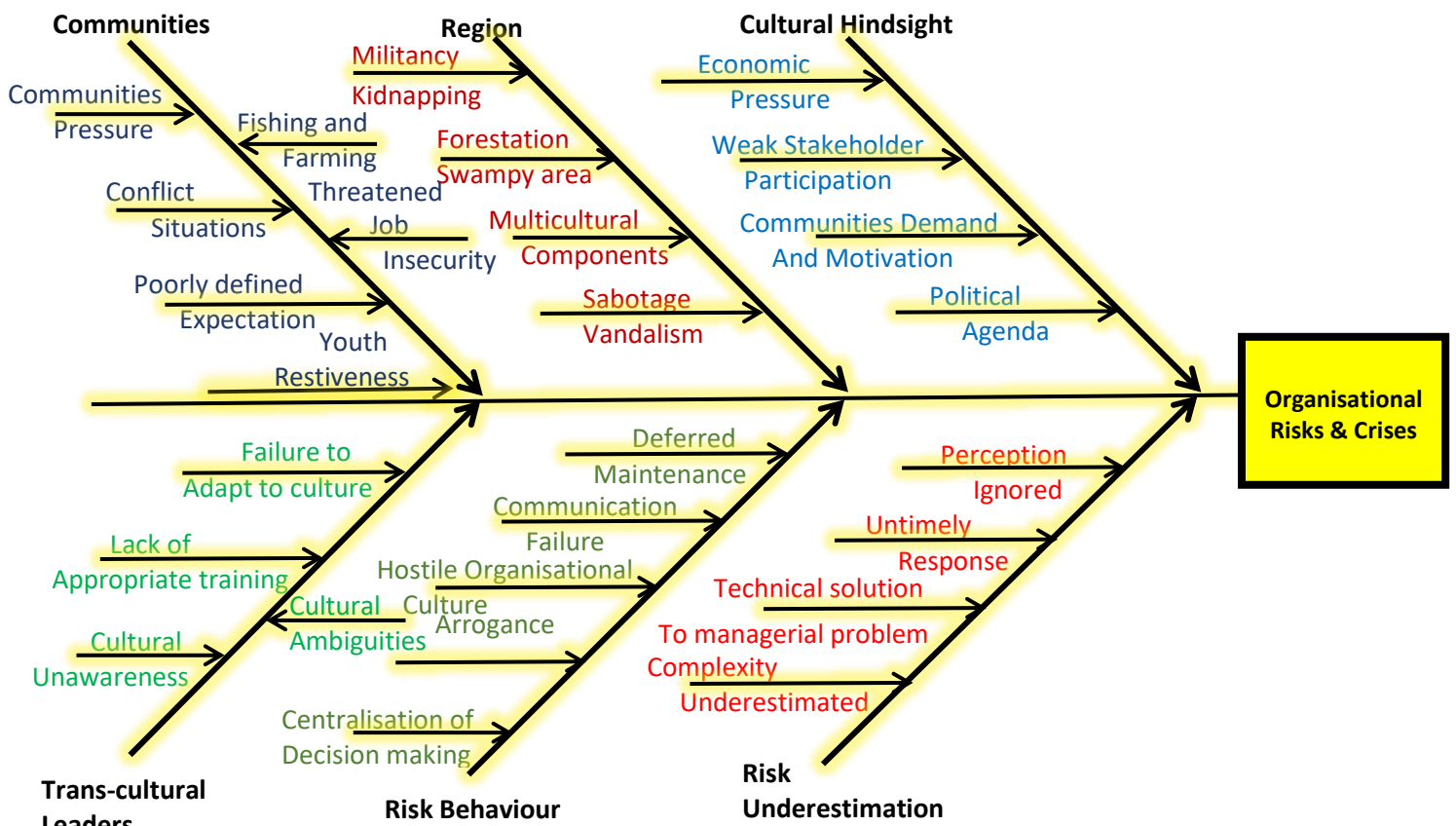
Historical experience, catastrophes, and disasters in the Niger Delta are divergence in nature and root causes are complex to establish. The complexity of the Niger Delta crises is clearly captured by another informant from an international oil company operating in the region: *“the problem is that in some areas of the Niger Delta the situation is way beyond ‘good neighbours’. It’s militancy, violence, crude oil theft and other criminal activity, lack of education and employment and so on plus, and I have to*



*say this, years of government neglect, that have created problems that are way beyond the scope any single company to fix.”*

While it was found based on the above quotations that establishing root causes of the Niger Delta crises is almost impossible, trigger causes and other basic preconditions to the unconventional risk, crisis and disaster are possible to recognise based on data from informants (Figure 8.2). This view is possibly a more useful technique for proactive risk and crisis management in the Niger Delta. This is due to the fact that trigger causes and preconditions of crisis or disaster can stimulate tailored and contextual risk and crisis management responses and policies.

**Figure 8.2: Selected Trigger Causes of Organisational Risks/Crises in the Niger Delta**



Source: Author (2017)

When both case studies (Chapters Two and Three) of crisis and disaster are examined, a climate of blaming increases the propensity for selective risk perception. The notion of selective risk perception suggests that decision-makers responsible for managing risk, crisis and disaster are more likely to favour risk messages that benefit them. What our findings show is that risk decision-makers can glean essentially the same information about emerging crisis or disaster situations as lay-folks do but value their own accounts or sensemaking as more legitimate. This

is a typical example of confirmation bias as already discussed. In each of the crisis/disaster incidents despite the location and external differences, each of the multinational organisations involved selectively provided risk messages in ways that often discount local concerns or views. The practical implication of this finding is that experts' and lay-people accounts of emerging crisis and disaster should be treated as interchangeable sources of risk and crisis management strategies and practice. The response of Chevron to the Ilaje crisis revealed five areas of selective risk perception that related to moral disengagement mechanisms:

- (1) Local communities' concerns over environmental damages were downplayed as poverty and unemployment problems (i.e. *risk displacement versus displacement of responsibility*).
- (2) Chevron's crisis management team decided to seek the Nigerian Government Security Forces (GSF) assistance to free their workers, based on conflicting reports that staff on the barge were being held hostage (i.e. *absolute unrealistic risk perception versus moral justification and attribution of blame*).
- (3) Chevron's claim that its workers on the Parabe barge were under emotional strain and had been subjected to physical abuse, when in fact the Ilaje protesters were under siege by the GSF (i.e. *comparative unrealistic risk perception versus advantageous comparison and euphemistic labelling*).
- (4) Chevron's negotiators are also reported to have been threatened and briefly held hostage by the Ilajes, and that a series of brutal, firearms attacks upon unarmed protesters and unarmed innocent citizens are caused by a rogue GSF who only use Chevron's helicopters and boats (i.e. *comparative unrealistic risk perception versus distorting the consequences and displacement of responsibility*).
- (5) The GSF, who assisted Chevron, killed Ilaje protesters but blamed victims for screaming, running or raised objects in their hands (i.e. *absolute unrealistic risk perception versus dehumanisation and attribution of blame*).

However, if we considered Shell's response to the Ogoni crisis, similar issues could also be identified:

- (1) 'Demand notice', – which includes request for social and environmental justice, compensation for devastating impact of oil activities and environmental damages in Ogoniland, to Shell, Chevron and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

(NNPC) were largely ignored (i.e. *risk underestimation versus displacement of responsibility*).

- (2) The crisis was attributed to resource control and ethnic clashes while incessant oil spills were attributed to sabotage, instead of reparation of environmental damage (i.e. *comparative unrealistic risk perception versus attribution of blame and displacement of responsibility*).
- (3) The military repression of Ogonis protesting against destruction of farmland, oil pollution and gas flaring, pipeline construction on farmland, results in thousands of Ogonis death, beatings, detention, exile and core leaders' summary execution, is attributed to actions of government (i.e. *bias risk framing versus dehumanisation, distorting the consequences and displacement of responsibility*).
- (4) Shell was accused of environmental devastation in Ogoniland, but this was put into a wider issue of over-farming, over-population, deforestation and industrialisation (i.e. *comparative unrealistic risk perception versus euphemistic labelling*).
- (5) Shell's pollution issue was compared to oil bunkering and pollution from local artisanal refining (i.e. *comparative risk perception and advantageous comparison*).

From this, selective risk perception consists of two risk judgements: the perceived likelihood of 'incurring cost' (or value at risk) and the perceived severity of such cost. These two risk judgements in both case studies manifest through the perception of being at risk and the perception of control over risk. This is an illustration of control bias in the process of risk and crisis management. If organisations predominantly bias comparative risk perceptions because of the need to maintain a positive self-view, absolute risk perception becomes underestimated and the selective risk perception dilemma materialises. Both cases revealed that selective risk perception impacts risk framing and risk response efficacy (*defined as the effectiveness of risk-reducing behaviour*), and hinders proactive risk and crisis management strategies. Like selective risk perception, the likelihood of 'risk ownership' (or being responsible for causing a risk problem) is often due to risk framing and our world view.

This research's findings suggest that our views of risk and crisis are hugely influenced by historical, economic, legal, environmental and cultural factors and modern risk or crisis theories are similarly underpinned by our views of the world. Our findings reveal how risk perceptions of the '*Niger Delta crisis and disaster situations*' are skewed towards experts' validation as the most accurate and valid account of those crises. Empirical evidence that risk and crisis are best understood by experts is no longer valid and sustainable. What is emerging

is an understanding that experts' views of risk and crisis management only form part of 'risk reality'. This research argues risk experts' views and methodologies play a key, but not exclusive, role in risk and crisis management practice. There is no agreement on the theory and methodology of risk and crisis management in practice. This lack of consensus challenges the very legitimacy of experts' view of risk and crisis management as constituting best practice in the field.

Therefore, the effective management of unconventional risks, crises and disasters requires serious risk engagement, unbiased risk perception, a well-coordinated risk framing, and overcoming self-defensive denial or motivated reasoning (Croyle, Sun & Hart, 1997; Kunda, 1990; Harris, Griffin & Murray, 2008; Helzer & Dunning, 2012; Shepperd, Klein, Waters & Weinstein, 2013). One intriguing conclusion from this point is that selective risk perception may often facilitate, instead of reducing, ineffective risk and crisis management. For this reason, this research contends that valuable insights can be gained using 'learning from disasters', isomorphic learning, risk culture and risk communication methodologies discussed in Chapters Four and Five. However, the crucial issue is not to simply acknowledge the existence of selective risk perception. The vital implication of such suggestions must be factored into risk and crisis management, as presented below.

### **8.3.1.1 RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPONSE TO SELECTIVE RISK PERCEPTION**

In principle, organisations in crisis or disaster situations can selectively perceive risk due to their risk analysis, experience, business case, motivations, environment and culture. Given these motivated reasoning factors, organisations have a constrained choice between how emerging risks and crises are perceived inwardly (within organisations) and outwardly (outside organisations). At first glance, given the range of risks facing Shell and Chevron in Nigeria, it appears that these multinationals will be motivated to change their risk and crisis management practice. However, from a selective risk perception standpoint, the process is more complex and controversial: organisations do not only need to know their risk exposure but also value at risk before risk decisions can be taken. This view is supported by the empirical evidence from the archival dataset, documentary interviews and commission reports on the Niger Delta crises.

As a rule, the more cognitive resources organisations spend on undesirable or unexpected risk information, the more plausible alternative explanations are likely to emerge. As a result, the

likelihood that undesirable or unexpected risk information from other stakeholders will be perceived as being less valid or legitimate, increases. Under these circumstances, unexpected or undesirable risk information (like oil pollution, sabotage, environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources as shown in Shell and Chevron case studies) is less likely to be accepted than anticipated positive risk information. These findings validate but extend previous studies showing that risk framing effect impact how risk messages are perceived or received (Slovic & Peters, 2006; Panzer & Renner, 2009).

At the same time, several contextual and environmental factors such as vandalism, sabotage and oil bunkering in the Niger Delta are expected positive risk information for multinational firms (e.g. Shell and Chevron), because these issues exonerate them from liability and allow them to declare *force majeure* in Nigeria. The research findings reveal that declaration of *force majeure* (i.e. *unavoidable accident, disambiguation*) is a common risk and crisis management practice of multinational firms (Shell and Chevron) in Nigeria. However, it was found that this is often done to avoid environmental justice and compensation for environmental damages to sources of livelihood (e.g. farmlands and fishing waters). Therefore, it is crucial to bridge the divide between how multinational firms (Shell and Chevron) perceived risk and crisis, and how local communities within the Niger Delta perceived the same problem. In a practical context, situational crisis communication theory as discussed in Chapter Five can clearly help to bridge the gaps.

The selective risk perception dilemmas can be addressed using simulation and group risk exercises incorporating stakeholders' views of risk and crisis. This must be pragmatic to incorporate and reflect lessons learned from past risk failures and disasters and consequently leads to improvement in risk decision-makings. The suggestions concerning learning from disasters and isomorphic learning especially how to overcome barriers to organisational learning from failures and building risk informed culture discussed in Chapter Four (Table 4.3) can be most useful here. Likewise, three additional recommendations can be offered for overcoming selective risk perception dilemma.

Firstly, the continuous review of environmental, social and health impacts assessment of Shell and Chevron operations on local indigenes demands adequate attention. This would have ensured that local risk perceptions and concerns are factored into risk and crisis management practice of both organisations. This view confirms previous studies relating to the Niger Delta crises that inadequate risk and crisis management is partly due to neglect of local concerns

(Steiner, 2010; Turner & Brownhill, 2004; UNEP, 2011). This is the case for Shell Nigeria, who initially neglected MOSOP demands notice over accusation of environmental devastation and irresponsibility (Boele et al., 2001; ERA, 2012; Pyagbara, 2010).

Secondly, the need for both organisations to actively engage stakeholders on community relations and allow bottom-up community project approach is strongly recommended (Ereba & Dumpe, 2010; Pyagbara, 2010). The research findings suggest that Shell and Chevron need to review their current Global Memorandum of Understandings (GMOUs) and Community Projects Approach. The current practice of using selected community leaders as representatives of the wider local indigenes to determine which community projects to embark upon is inadequate. Alternatively, both organisations would need to work closely with local indigenes and not just community leaders to understand and respond to agitations and concerns on a timely and frequent basis. The crisis management team of both organisations can organise and facilitate large meetings and focus group with local indigenes with leaders in attendance to obtain review or feedback on areas where their risk and crisis management practice in the Niger Delta need substantial improvements.

The use of social media can also help the crisis management team in both organisations to incorporate local concerns into risk and crisis management practice; although Shell often provided public information on oil spills in the Niger Delta and remediation activities on its website (Shell, 2012; 2015). The use of online Web-Chat 'Tell Shell' has been another good way in which Shell interacts with critics and other stakeholders, but this medium of communication is not readily available to local indigenes in rural areas of Nigeria. Again, other popular sources of social media (e.g. Twitter and Facebook) in Nigeria, crucial for risk and crisis communication, appear to have been neglected, as the research findings revealed. This should be incorporated before, during and after crisis.

The third recommendation, is that the UNEP Inquiry recommendations into the Niger Delta crisis as pertaining to multinational oil firms (e.g. Shell and Chevron) must be fully heeded and adopted (UNEP, 2011). The UNEP inquiry recommendations must be comprehensively addressed and not partially adopted by Shell and other multinational oil firms. For example, it is recommended that Shell conduct a comprehensive review of its assets in Ogoniland and develop an Asset Integrity Management Plan for Ogoniland and a decommissioning plan (UNEP, 2011). The need for Shell and Chevron to work with the Nigerian regulators to clarify the paradox of remedial intervention with the parties need to agree on a consultative approach

to setting site-specific clean-up values are strongly recommended (UNEP, 2011). Although an 18-month roadmap has been agreed by the Nigerian government, UNEP and Shell which includes a governance framework; it is unclear how this new governance framework will help to put an end to all forms of oil contamination, pollution and environmental devastation in the Niger Delta. Unfortunately, the specific roles of the different stakeholders in the Niger Delta crises are not specified. This adds to the complexity and ambiguity in such crises, which could have been minimised through risk education and communication, and alternative livelihood programmes. This point will be expanded later in this Chapter.

### **8.3.2 INFLATED ETHICAL STANCE**

This is a view that organisations' ethical practices are often overestimated. Theoretical and empirical studies using a range of frameworks have shown that ethical standards and beliefs both at micro and macro levels are related to workplace behaviours, attitudes and other organisational outcomes (e.g. Bandura, 2009; Haidt, 2001; Krebs & Denton, 2005; Sonenshein, 2007; Phelps, 2006). This perspective has been challenged and extended to the risk, crisis and disaster domain, in our recent research (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). The current assumption about ethical business practice is that codes of 'ethics' and 'corporate governance' are crucial towards building and developing robust organisational ethics and behaviours (Daily, Dalton, & Cannella, 2003; Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Trevino et al., 2006). That is, once organisations have developed codes of ethics and corporate governance as well as compliance with all relevant regulations and legislations, ethical behaviours within such organisations will be enriched and strengthened. Nonetheless, this conventional wisdom is misleading, grossly inadequate and encourages rogue behaviours within modern organisations especially when managing risk and crisis situations, as this research's findings indicate. The argument is that organisational ethics are never at equilibrium throughout the organisation's lifecycle. It is argued here that any organisation's that believed the contrary has an inflated ethical business practice. That is, the assumed ethical business practice is grossly overstated.

Associated with the problem of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster situations is the issue of inflated ethical business stance or practice. In Chapter Five, we challenged the longstanding evidence that organisations are ethical and will therefore behave in a consistent, ethical manner. Specific to the focus of this current research, the degree of robust ethical practices within the multinational organisations considered in this thesis depends largely on detecting and

correcting moral disengagement across all levels within those organisations. For example, Shell noted that where communities grant access, the company cleans up and remediates oil spills from its facilities, irrespective of the cause of the spill (Shell, 2012; 2015). In addition, Shell make claims of providing transparency to all stakeholders with respect to its management of oil spills and environmental disasters; and work closely with regulators and host communities in ensuring that we adhere to the highest international operational standards in our areas of operation (Shell, 2011, p. 15). However, the inflated ethical business practices of both organisations (Shell and Chevron) are readily visible from the Niger Delta crises. In the practical context, in 1996, Bopp van Dessel (former head of environmental studies for Shell Nigeria 1992-1994), who had quit Shell because of professional frustrations, raised fundamental concerns with respect to Shell's poor environmental practices in Nigeria:

*“Wherever I went; I could see that Shell was not operating their facilities properly. They were not meeting international standards. Any Shell site that I saw was polluted; any terminal that I saw was polluted. It is clear to me that Shell was devastating the area.”* (Steiner, 2010, p. 30).

This quote shows some insights into what Shell claimed to have done in the Niger Delta and what actually happened on the ground. The UNEP inquiry report (UNEP, 2011, p. 12) into the Niger Delta crises also highlights some empirical evidences:

- Ten out of the 15 investigated sites which Shell records show as having completed remediation, still have pollution exceeding Shell and government remediation closure values.
- Despite claims of clean-up and remediation, people have been consuming water with benzene over 900 times the World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline.
- The control, maintenance and decommissioning of oilfield infrastructure in Ogoniland are inadequate.
- Industry best practices and Shell's own procedures have not been applied, creating public safety issues.
- Despite Shell's adoption of a new Remediation Management System in January 2010, Shell still do not meet the local regulatory requirements or international best practices.

From this, it is apparent that there are indeed violations of Shell's own ethical business practice. An extended view of this is that of organisations developing culture that violates ethical practice or professional conducts in a way favourable to them (cf. Haidt, 2001; Krebs &



Denton, 2005; Sonenshein, 2007; Daily, Dalton, & Cannella, 2003; Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Trevino et al., 2006; Tenbrunsel et al., 2010). Does heightening ethical stance and corporate governance change people's intentions and behaviours? Merely upholding 'the rules of code of ethics and corporate governance' are not sufficient to underpin organisation's moral values and embedded risk culture across the organisation. This underlines the need for an explicit framework to detect moral disengagement and ethical evaporation across modern organisations. It is argued that without such frameworks, organisations become morally vulnerable to moral disengagement, in which case corrupt practices perpetuate risk and crisis decision-makings.

For instance, Chevron prides itself as an organisation committed to creating superior value for investors, customers, partners, host governments, local communities and workforce (Chevron, 2015). The organisation relies on its Operational Excellence Management System (OEMS) as a comprehensive, proven means of systematic management of process safety, personal safety and health, the environment, reliability and efficiency. The OEMS helps to identify and manage the risks facing Chevron's global business operations. It was noted that leaders are responsible for managing the OEMS and enabling the OE performance but every individual in Chevron's workforce is accountable for complying with the principles of "do it safely or not at all" and "there is always time to do it right" (Chevron, 2015).

In practice, however, evidence of unethical conducts in risk and crisis management practices abound; but this also extends to both Shell's and Chevron's record on human rights and ethical business practice in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Figure 8.3 and 8.4):

One of the informants from local oil producing community in the Niger Delta who experienced Chevron's dehumanisation through the activities of Nigerian security forces re-counts: *"On the 25th of May 1998 we made a peaceful demonstration to Chevron place, when we got there we talked to the naval personnel that was hired for security and the mobile policeman. They decided to call Chevron to them that the Ilajes are around. When they called them, [someone from] public relations [wanted to speak] to us but we refused to speak to him, we wanted to talk to Kirkland who is the managing director here. So later they linked us to Lagos where they have their head office, we talked to [the Community Relations Manager] he said he was coming over but we said we would not listen to him if we don't see Kirkland . . . So on the 26th [the Community Relation Manager] came on board the barge saying what [Chevron] wanted. We told*

*him we cannot discuss with him, he insisted that he should dialog with us. We said no, he should go back and either call Kirkland or he should go back to [our] community to discuss with the elders . . .*

*On the 27th of May they went to our community where they had a meeting . . . [Our community] gave them our proposal: we need portable drinking water, employment, [we want Chevron] to resume their pledge of scholarship - because they always promise to give us scholarships without paying, and we need a medical facility. Since our water has been polluted they should compensate the people in the area for the damage to the area . . . [The Chevron representatives said] that before they could take any decision we should leave the barge and they . . . [would] arrive at a good conclusion on the 29th. So on the night of the 27th May they sent news to us on the barge that we could meet with . . . [the Community Relations Manager] be part of the discussion [in our community]*

*But surprisingly on the 28th, as early as 6:45 in the morning before the sun could come up, what we saw was choppers with military men, soldiers, and mobile police inside. They started shooting before they even landed, start shooting indiscriminately . . . The end result was that we lost two of our boys and a lot of them got injured . . . Some of them jumped overboard and they were rescued. Then the balance of us, we refused to [leave the barge]. Personally, I refused to go because if you can kill two why not add me?*

*So they decided to arrest 11 of us. We were first taken to a Nigerian naval base at Warri. We were kept for four days in a cell. Then on June 1st they transferred us to another cell [in a different town] before taking us to the state security service at the Fort of Orcuri where we were detained for 22 days before being released again . . . Chevron . . . first accused us of sabotage . . . and then later, I don't know if they induced the police but [Chevron] asked them to make me sign an undertaking that we destroyed their chopper, vandalised their equipment - which was a lie. [Then] I was hanged up by the handcuffs on my wrists on the hook on the ceiling fan.*

*They asked me to sign a statement that I lead a team to the Parabe platform and that we vandalised the things there . . . but I refused . . . The day they took us to Warri naval base, one of [the soldiers] was telling us that [Chevron] promised them each 10 thousand Naira [less than 20 pounds] to come and do the shooting. But after I was*

*released, because I knew some of them I went to them and asked, "Why did you have to come and shoot us"? They said that it backfired because they promised them 10 thousand Naira (approx. 20 pounds) but they only ended up giving them 3 thousand Naira (approx. 6 pounds). When they brought us to the naval base the Chevron representative handed them their money and actually there was a row between them, there was a disagreement that was not the amount they had agreed on.*

The above quotations show that the presence of rational and bounded thinking increases the propensity for unethical conduct in risk and crisis situations. The two multinational organisations violate their own ethical business practices and other Nigerian regulatory agencies guidelines on environmental damages/degradation. The normal practice of gas flaring in Nigeria, for example, and the collective structures of risk decision-making contribute to the ‘wicked problems’ in the Niger Delta (Steiner, 2010). The interaction of these factors: normal practice or industry best practice and collective structure of risk decisions compound the ethical dilemma, as supported in recent research (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). Accordingly, this thesis argues that people involved in risk and crisis situations engage in unethical behaviour both because of ‘rational’ and ‘bounded’ thinking, as it is conventionally understood, and because of emotional and irrational arousal. These findings were corroborated by numerous previous studies which discovered that bounded rationality and inordinate risk taking facilitate unethical behaviours especially in situations where moral dilemma appears controversial (Daily, Dalton & Cannella, 2003; Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Haidt, 2001; Krebs & Denton, 2005; Sonenshein, 2007; Phelps, 2006; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Trevino et al., 2006; Tenbrunsel et al., 2010).

**Figure 8.3: Selected insights about Shell's risk and crisis management practice**



Findings from literature/local informants

- There was a widely reported and recorded case in Umuechem, where Shell began operations in 1959. Like most communities in the Niger Delta where oil companies operate, this community remained underdeveloped and suffered from oil-related environmental disasters.
- In 1990 our community staged a peaceful demonstration to voice its complaints. Community members noted that during the demonstration they were carrying simple placards and dancing. Shell requested that the Nigerian police come to control the situation, and this time the result was an outright massacre. From October 13 to November 1, 1990, the community was constantly bombarded by the Nigerian mobile police. This causes the death of more than 100 people during this protest including a chief, who was shot at the entrance of his house as he came out to try and calm the situation. Houses were burned and looted, and the police occupied the town for months while most of our community were forced to flee.
- But Shell is not alone in this, Chevron too has employed the military to repress community protests of its own negligent practices, as the case of Ilaje reveals (TRIP report, 1999, p. 18). It is essential to note that both companies have refuted these allegations of human rights violation in the Niger Delta.

**Figure 8.4: Selected insights about Chevron's risk and crisis management practice**



Selected insights about inflated ethical stance

Excerpts from local informant (a witness to Chevron's brutality in Ilaje)

- Chevron operates in our area, in Ilaje area in Ondo State. During their operation we've not got one thing for development apart from a wooden six-classroom block, and a potable drinking water system that was not working from the first day that is commissioned. So, there was nothing coming to us, so we decided to write [Chevron] a letter to call them to dialog.
- The writing of letters began [in] 1989. Then we decided to go to government directly. We wrote a letter to the deputy governor. [He] invited Chevron and us to a meeting but Chevron refused to turn up . . . So we now invited them a second time again, on the 15th of May 1998. When they refused to turn up, saying they have no office in our state we decided to protest to their working zone. However, instead of dialoging with us, they invited the police and military personnel to fire shot at us resulting into death of two people and several injuries to our people.

### **8.3.2.1 RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPONSE TO INFLATED ETHICAL STANCE**

The initial recommendation is for multinational organisations like Shell and Chevron to develop a robust organisational self-awareness in Nigeria. In this context, organisational self-awareness is the ability to detach from view which only affirmed organisational stance on an issue and dismissed input about shortcomings. This is crucial to improve our assessments of ourselves given that what we know and don't know, skills we have and don't have can still be woefully inaccurate (Andersen, 2016, p. 99). For Chevron, "our company's foundation is built on our values, which distinguish us and guide our actions. We conduct our business in a socially responsible and ethical manner. We respect the law, support universal human rights, protect the environment and benefit the communities where we work." (Chevron, 2016, p. 2). Our findings suggest that Chevron's risk and crisis management practice in the Niger Delta contradicts its business conduct and ethics code (see Figure 8.4 above). The apparent ethical blindness that ensued should not have occurred.

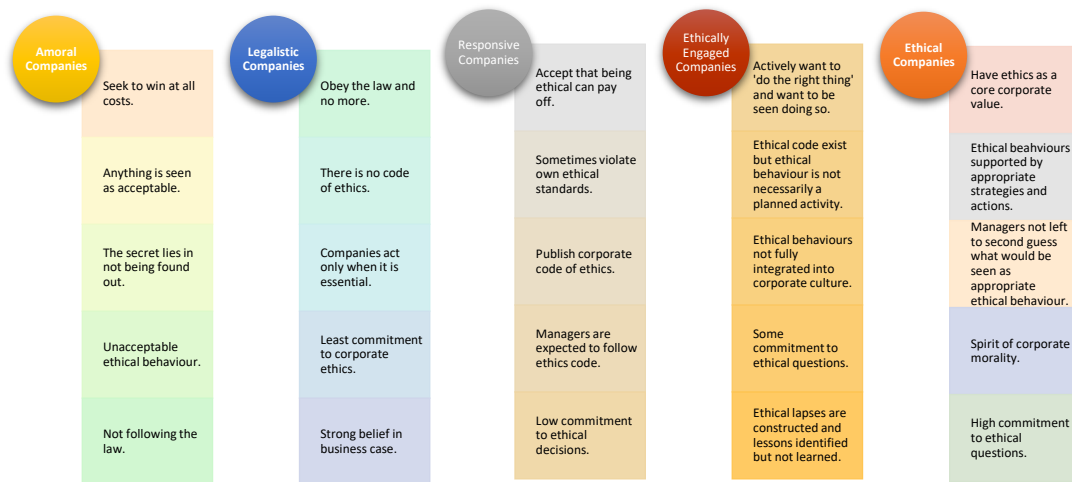
In both case studies of Shell and Chevron, it was easier to see too much attention being paid to the idea that 'we have business conduct and ethics codes' in place and that risks and crises are managed according to firms' own frameworks, industry standards and international best practices. There is a seeming assumption that organisational ethics will remain at equilibrium in both case studies organisations. However, the notion that organisational ethics in risk and crisis situations would perhaps remain at equilibrium has been refuted in this research. Thus, this thesis argues that recognising the possibility for ethical failure in risk and crisis situations regardless of the presence of robust ethical codes of conduct and corporate governance within modern organisations, is critical to sustainable ethical practice and achieving resilient outcomes. But how could organisations recognise the possibility for ethical failures? In this case, there are four guiding principles to making the right ethical decisions when faced with a difficult situation, in the case of Chevron:

- Is it legal?
- Is it consistent with company policy, including human rights policy?
- Is it consistent with the Chevron way?
- If it were made public, would we be comfortable?

These four principles guide Chevron's operation in Nigeria (Chevron, 2016, p. 4) but no ethical code or manual can provide complete answers to all complex and ethically problematic questions. Under these circumstances, this thesis recommends reflexive moral engagement and

explicit adoption of an organisational moral engagement model to counteract unethical conducts and improve risk culture. From this perspective, a moral engagement typology develops based on synthesis of moral issues from Badaracco & Webb (1995), Bandura (2009), Frederick (1988), Houlden (1988), Thompson & Martin (2010) and Hollensen (2017) is a useful tool to moderate an organisation ethical decision during crisis/disaster situations. This corporate moral engagement typology as represented in Figure 8.5 below can provides practical insights into ethical risk and crisis management practice.

**Figure 8.5: Typology of Corporate Moral Engagement**



Source: Author (2017)

This research findings suggest that the presence or adoption of code of ethics and corporate governance, organisational policy and guidance from senior executives, corporate compliance group, and relevant ethical regulations and legislations do not particularly motivate individuals to engage in ethical conducts when managing risk and crisis situations. These elements are 'moral engagement factors' because they are in most cases intended to predominantly stimulate ethical or moral behaviours and decisions within the workplace.

However, there is a caveat that must be heeded about moral engagement factors. That is, the presence of moral engagement factors: (1) organisation ethical code of conducts, (2) corporate compliance group, (3) ethics committees, (4) firms' own ethics regulations, and (5) external legislations on ethics and corporate governance do not in themselves promote ethical behaviours but serve primarily to prevent unethical conducts within organisations. Specifically, moral engagement factors are comparable to good hygiene which does not in itself produce good health, but the lack of it will cause disease. Alternatively, we can also conceptualise moral

engagement factors as ethical enrichment factors because their absence or inadequacy causes unethical and detrimental conducts at workplace. Accordingly, ethical enrichment factors need constant reinforcement because they are perceived as expected or standard method of behaviours, rather than incentives to greater ethical behaviours or decision-makings.

In practice, the value of moral engagement can be recognised through the involvement of ethical committees at Board level to focus on ethics and values as well as corporate responsibility and sustainability. In addition, ethical simulation training would help ascertain and detect possible indicators or mechanisms of moral disengagement in organisations before a real event ensued. The value of ethical simulation training cannot be overstated since advanced moral reasoning requires high levels of cognitive complexity (Moore, 2008, p. 133). For this reason, this thesis also advocates moral evaluation, automatic reaction and affective reactions, environmental and social cues to recognise the moral implications of risk and crisis (Haidt, 2001; Krebs & Denton, 2005; Sonenshein, 2007; Phelps, 2006; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). Although critics might argue that these suggestions are unrealistic because it is too controlling.

Nonetheless, if an organisation is serious of ethical risk and crisis management practice, these are extremely useful tools to counteract unethical business conducts especially in the risk and crisis domain. For instance, risk failure information about the Shell and Chevron crises contains valuable ethical dilemmas which can be used to train and communicate to senior executives to strengthen organisational resilience and improve risk culture and risk governance. Like traditional theorists of moral development (e.g. Bandura, 1986; Kohlberg, 1969; 1984; Rest, 1986) and modern moral theorists (e.g. Daily, Dalton & Cannella, 2003; Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Trevino et al., 2006; Tenbrunsel et al., 2010) moral awareness and moral evaluation are crucial to overcome an inflated ethical stance. This requires some reality checks through comprehensive training and education about risk management and ethical decisions.

Organisational self-deception can diminish any appetite for ethical behaviour, as the case studies indicate. As a rule, crucial questions such as is our organisation ethical stance accurate or reflecting of reality with our stakeholders? What facts do we have to support our ethical stance? Are our datasets used to evaluate our organisation's ethical stance consistent with different views of stakeholders? These are essential to counteract an inflated ethical stance. These questions about an inflated ethical stance and with actions on those questions can reinforce ethical values across organisation like Shell and Chevron in Nigeria. In conclusion,



some good practical advice about overcoming unethical risk management can be offered here for senior executives: *“All managers’ risk giving too much because of what their companies demand from them. But the same superiors, who keep pressing you to do more, or to do it better, or faster, or less expensively, will turn on you should you cross the fuzzy line between right and wrong. They will blame you for exceeding instructions or for ignoring their warnings. The smartest managers already know that the best answer to the question “How far is too far?” is don’t try to find out.”* (David & David, 2015, p. 113).

### **8.3.3 ORGANISED CORPORATE IRRESPONSIBILITY**

The issue of organised corporate irresponsibility is another fundamental factor that impedes risk and crisis management in the Niger Delta. Organised irresponsibility means that there is a diversity of humanly created risks for which people and organisations are certainly ‘responsible’ in a sense that they are its authors but where no one is held specifically accountable (cf. Beck, 2009). For example, this thesis found that multinational firms have been criticised regularly for failing to protect the local environment, defend human rights, be good corporate citizens, and apply the same standards in their operations especially in developing nations; noting that they appear concerned with profit over safety, health and environment (Shell Report, 2011; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). This has been classified as a double-standard elsewhere in this thesis (Chapters One, Two and Three).

However, it is difficult to specifically attribute all blames on oil companies operating within the Niger Delta because illegal refineries operators are also polluting the environment and endanger human survival. The UNEP inquiry recognised and identified the need to address some of the issues of corporate irresponsibility in the Niger Delta crises (UNEP, 2011). By organised corporate irresponsibility, it is meant a systematic or well-coordinated approach to managing emerging issue(s) which obstruct good corporate citizenship behaviours. The following quote from a leaked confidential communication from the British Trade Commissioner in Lagos to the UK Foreign Office in 1963 illustrates the organised corporate irresponsibility that has dominated and clouded the Niger Delta region for more than five decades:

*“Shell/BP’s need to continue, probably indefinitely, to flare off a very large proportion of the associated gas they produce will no doubt give rise to a certain amount of difficulty with Nigerian politicians, who will probably be among the last people in the*

*world to realise that it is sometimes desirable not to exploit a country's natural resources and who, being unable to avoid seeing the many gas flares around the oilfields, will tend to accuse Shell/BP of conspicuous waste of Nigeria's 'wealth'. It will be interesting to see the extent to which the oil companies feel it necessary to meet these criticisms by spending money on uneconomic methods of using gas."*

*"In the longer run, Shell/BP is going to have to consider very carefully how it should explain publicly the large outflow of capital that is likely to take place towards the end of the decade . . . it will no doubt come as something of a shock to Nigerians when they find that the company is remitting large sums to Europe. The Company will have to counter the criticisms which will very probably be made to the effect that the company is 'exploiting' Nigeria by stressing the very large contribution it is making to Nigeria's export earnings." (ERA, 2005, p. 2)*

Instead of cleaning-up of polluted sites, multinationals often displaced responsibility to the wider issue of globalisation and oil theft by local militants, causing indirect but significant pollution (UNEP, 2011; Steiner, 2010; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2014; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). In fact, the official response of citing economics and lack of markets for regular gas flaring in the Niger Delta was complacent and exhibits the organised corporate irresponsibility that has persisted there for decades: *"Until there is this worthwhile market and until there are facilities (e.g. pipelines and storage tanks) to use the gas, it is normal practice to burn off this by-product from the oil wells."* (ERA, 2005, P. 2).

Similarly, multinationals have regularly cited their contributions to Nigeria's export earnings as part of their corporate responsibility at the expense of detrimental operations to local farming, fishing, clean water, and quality air within the Niger Delta region (Shell, 2009; 2011; 2012; Chevron, 2015). To further illustrate this point, exclusive focus on the business case and profitability as well as corporate focus on protecting shareholders' values and business continuity can also sporadically facilitate organised corporate irresponsibility (Steiner, 2010). For example, gas flaring which releases greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere in the Niger Delta, has been a regular practice since 1958, despite endless calls from local communities, environmental activists and some government representatives to end gas flaring (Bassey, 2008; Aghalino, 2009; Alaba & Ifeola, 2011; Ekpu, 1996; Eweje, 2006; ERA, 2012; UNEP, 2011; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2015). This issue

has been attributed to corporate reluctance, collective denial of environmental impacts and lack of corporate morality in the case organisations.

Perceived as corporate irresponsibility or as corporate immorality, and even worse, lack of corporate conscience, multinational oil firms are criticised for their risk and crisis management practice in Nigeria. These polarised insights represent a form of ‘moral disengagement’ that does apply to risk and crisis situations. In fact, existing research shows that corporate irresponsibility and immorality are manifested in the form of moral disengagement (Bandura, 2007; 2009; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). Contextual data from key informants provide further support to these findings:

*“Shell’s attitude in Ogoniland represents an awful side of corporate Europe, a company without morality, a company without conscience. Its operations have killed over 4,000 Ogonis between 1993 and 1999 (Informant, Senior Executive, Government Regulatory Agency)*

*“[This] oil spillage that has occurred since December 1998 to September 1999 has not been cleaned. The government of the state is also aware of that. You can see the level of injustice the community is going through. We have approached the company on several occasions to go and clear this spill. We have written [a] series of letters guaranteeing the security of their personnel. Yet the company has refused and the ecosystem of the place is destroyed.”*

*“Our people are afraid to sue for clean-up and compensation because history shows that oil companies will appeal repeatedly until the plaintiffs run out of money, give up, or die. Going to court is something companies have no reason to fear because they can extend a case indefinitely. There was a case in which community took Shell to court in 1984 but no compensation has been reached till date and nothing has been done to clean up water and soil.”*

*“Shell shows its sense of corporate irresponsibility by failing to appreciate the simple truth that its operations destroyed our sources of livelihood, and that it should acknowledge its failures, pay compensation for the damages and hands off the Ogoni oilfields (Informant, Community Leader, Regional NGO)”*

The refusal to compensate local indigenes for environmental damages to their sources of livelihood, clean-up of the polluted environment and an end to gas flaring in the Niger Delta is

more evidence of corporate irresponsibility, but multinational oil companies have often refuted these claims. Even though we find evidence of commitment to human rights and corporate social responsibility in both Shell and Chevron annual reports (Shell Report, 2011, p. 32), at least on paper. For example, according to one informant from Shell:

*“Shell is a committed and responsible partner in the environmental space. We work closely with regulators and host communities in ensuring that we adhere to the highest international operational standards in our areas of operation.”* The view of local community members is different as revealed from the following quotation by another local community informants:

*“These oil companies don’t keep to their own operational standards, not to mention international standards. Their operations have completely cut us out from the state. Transport boat[s] no longer apply because of oil pollution. They don't go to Epubu community. You have no communication with the outside world. So, we are appealing to the international community to come to our aid by providing boats that will enable us [to] communicate with the outside world, because we are completely cut out. And, to assist [in] establish training schools, so that our children can go to school and we too will know that is happening. Because if you are not educated you cannot come here and talk the way I am talking. So that is our passionate plea to the international community.”*

In another instance, Shell Nigeria reported in its sustainability report that: *“we support the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and have made specific reference to this in our Business Principles.”* (Shell, 2012, p. 44). Equally, Chevron’s Human Rights Policy 520 states that *“we conduct our global operations consistent with the spirit and intent of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”* (Chevron, 2016, p. 9). Human rights, in this context, are basic standards of treatment to which all people are entitled regardless of nationality, gender, race, economic status or religion.

Despite our case organisations’ (i.e., Shell and Chevron) commitment to human rights, their operations in the Niger Delta regularly encroach upon human rights from constant gas flaring to lack of clean-up of contaminated soil and water, leading to deprivation of the right to good air, clean water and good health (Bolorunduro et al., 2005; Okon & Akunna, 2010; Steiner, 2010; Ubhenin, 2013; UNEP, 2011). Under Nigerian law (National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency Act 2007), companies are not obliged to clean up or

compensate for the effects of oil spills caused by sabotage (Steiner, 2010). According to key informants and existing findings (Steiner, 2010; UNEP, 2011), multinational oil firms often depend on this law to refuse compensation for oil spillages, delayed clean-up exercises and sometimes cite community hostilities and government responsibility as basis for non-compliance with environmental right in the Niger Delta. This is clear in the following quotations from informants:

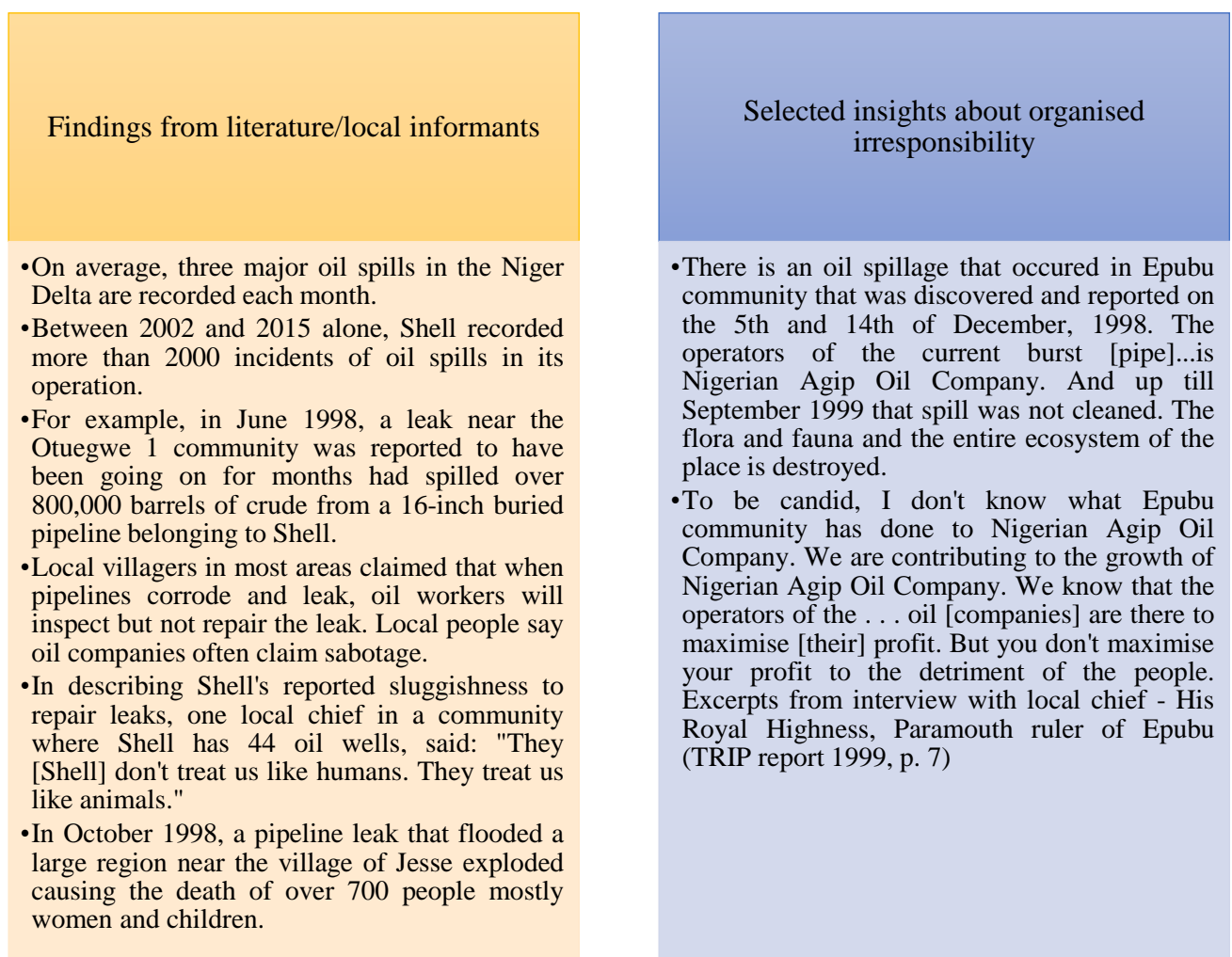
*“Umuechem has been the scene of spectacular failures of Shell’s ‘corporate social responsibility’ projects. In 2002 the Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility, an NGO linked to various Ecumenical NGOs based in the UK, reported that a programme of community projects has been a “100 per cent failure”. I visited Umuechem recently and observed that six ‘community projects’ funded by Shell, and two funded by the NDDC (i.e. a water supply system and a hospital) were not operational. I observed that because the water supply system was not operational, women from the community spent much of their time walking to and from a polluted stream nearby, the only available source. I also observe a gas flare near the village. These situations have continued to date.”* When attribution of blame is present in risk and crisis situations, it makes organised irresponsibility even more prevalent:

*“Shell waited until it had run out of options before deciding to settle in the Saro-Wiwa case, during which time its relationship with host communities deteriorated badly. Surely it could have saved itself a lot of bad press and illwill if it had rather put its efforts into addressing the kind of issues that informed the law suit in the first place. More than 20 years after the lawsuit was instituted, Shell is hardly seen as a force for good in the community.”*

These situations noticeably offer an example of organised irresponsibility pervading the Niger Delta crises (Figure 8.6 and 8.7). When the Ogoni and Ilaje crises began, evidence emerged that senior executives in both Chevron and Shell were more concerned about business continuity and the effects of community protests on firms’ profitability (ERA, 2012; UNEP, 2011). The evidence suggests that multinationals often violate the Environmental Guidelines and Standards for Petroleum Industry in Nigeria (EGASPIN) and other environmental legislations like the Associated Gas Reinjection Act 1979. In fact, the Associated Gas Reinjection Act 1979, for example, makes flaring of associated gas illegal in Nigeria since 1984 but multinationals have continued to flare gas till date. This practice has continued partly

because of research evidence that it is cheaper to flare gas and pay the nominal fine than the huge investment involved in gas flaring elimination projects in Nigeria (ERA, 2012; Steiner, 2010; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). It is argued that in this instance, overcoming the predicament of organised corporate irresponsibility requires several issues intended to challenge the status quo across organisation, as highlighted in the subsection below.

**Figure 8.6: Issues of organised corporate irresponsibility**



**Figure 8.7: Issues of organised corporate irresponsibility**

Findings from literature/local informants	Insights about organised irresponsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Eleme, Ogoniland of Rivers State, Nigeria, the site of a pipe blowout and massive oil spill that took place in 1970 and according to Shell has been "cleaned up" was left unclean till 1999.</li> <li>• Ilaje women protested and occupied Opuekeba Flow Station, Ewan field and Isan field in Ilaje Local Government Area of Ondo State, but instead of dialoguing with them, ChevronTexaco Nigeria Ltd attacked them by hired armed mobile policemen by pouring hot water on the women; flogged them with horse tail, capsized their boats and their out-board engines, and women were fired at by policemen.</li> <li>• Even when the oil companies do provide compensation for damage caused by spills and leaks, their system of assessment and payment are often very unsatisfactory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The truth about the whole situation is that Epubu was attacked through the sponsorship of the Nigerian Agip oil company. We are appealing to the international community to come to our aid. Specifically to rehabilitate the people of the community. All our wealth is burned down. People are dying daily of starvation and hunger. All our schools are closed . . . We are going back to the primitive primordial days where people don't go to school anymore. And for fear of possible attack, . . . teachers are afraid to go there. - Excerpts from plea to the international community by local chief - His Royal Highness, Paramouth ruler of Epubu (TRIP report 1999, p. 17)</li> </ul>

### 8.3.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPONSE TO ORGANISED CORPORATE IRRESPONSIBILITY

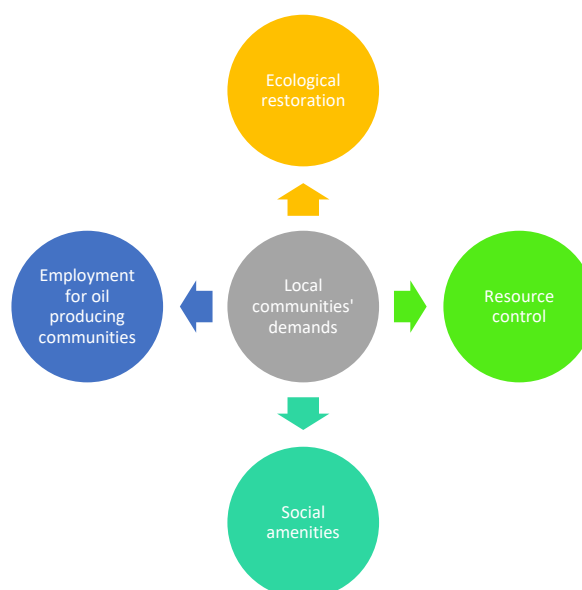
It is crucial to emphasise here that the notion of organised corporate irresponsibility remains loose, complex and controversial. Within our case organisations we find a range of moral disengagement mechanisms from moral justification, advantageous comparison, and attribution of blame to euphemistic labelling and distortion of the consequences in risk and crisis domain. These findings advanced previous studies on moral disengagement to the risk/crisis domain but diverge strongly in terms our reconceptualization of the mechanisms of moral disengagement, as discussed in Chapter Five, as constituent to organised corporate irresponsibility. For these reasons we have elsewhere (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015) referred to these mechanisms both as organised corporate irresponsibility and crisis disengagement.

As a result, we suggest that repairing organised corporate irresponsibility requires building mutual trust, exhibiting appropriate ethical values and standards, demonstrates moral courage and consistency in corporate responsibility. In this context, it is argued that the Board and senior executives must set the moral and ethical tone for risk governance and culture across our case organisations. This is something that Shell and Chevron are both committed to doing

in Nigeria (Shell, 2012; 2015; Chevron SRR, 2012; Chevron, 2015). A reasonable approach is to ensure ethical leadership in which the Board serves as a role model and sets moral standards and risk culture that discourages organised corporate irresponsibility and moral disengagement. One possible implication is that ethical risk management and leadership through reporting of minor ethical violations in risk governance and management practices could signal a zero-tolerance policy for rogue and questionable behaviours. This is not about a finger pointing approach but shifting ethical risk management to ‘we must’ approach.

The alternative implication would be that failure to report incidents of moral disengagement or ethical violations in risk decisions and crisis management responses are tolerated, not least become routine practices within the organisation. Given the polarised views and many different interest groups including those defending human rights in crisis and disaster situations, regular ethical awareness training for managers and senior executives is crucial to resolve the corporate irresponsibility dilemmas in the Niger Delta crises. Under these circumstances, robust commitment to continuous professional development programmes to identify and assess areas they are at risks of possible violation of human rights is indispensable to maintaining positive corporate responsibility. In addition, it also means addressing some of the fundamental concerns and demands raised by local communities in the Niger Delta (Figure 8.8).

**Figure 8.8: Main Themes Emerging from Local Communities’ Demands**



Source: Author (2017)



At times some demands from local people in the Niger Delta crises would seem problematic for multinationals like Shell and Chevron to fulfil. We recognise that factors such as dramatic global change, rapid improvements in technology, risk globalisation, forces of globalisation, and instantaneous global communication via social media have intensified tension and created confusion about what is – and is not – expected of multinational business. Here, two main complex dilemmas face multinationals oil companies (e.g., Chevron and Shell) in Nigeria: First, should multinationals provide infrastructure and social services where government does not, and afterward face allegations that they are interfering or buying influence from local elites (political class)? Second, should these multinationals concentrate on their core business functions: serve their customers and get the best return for shareholders?

It is argued here that multinationals desirous of sustainable risk and crisis management, in the context of Niger Delta crises, should determine what risk outcomes are acceptable to them. For instance, Shell acknowledged (Shell Annual Report, 2011; Shell, 2012; 2015) it played an insufficient role in the tragic execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogonis by the Nigerian authorities; these local environmental activists had protested Shell's environmental pollution and degradation in Ogoniland (Chapter Two). It is imperative to state that adequate crisis communication by the crisis teams could have helped prevent the emerging crisis in Ogoniland. For example, Shell's inadequate crisis management response to crisis was clear as depicted in Figure 8.9. In the global context, Shell also acknowledged that it's ill-preparedness for the public reaction to plans to dispose of the Brent Spar off-shore storage buoy in deep water in the Atlantic (Shell, 2011). Though Shell's crisis management approach to the Brent Spar differs substantially to that used during the Ogoni crisis. In fact, as shown in Figure 8.10, while Shell engaged the protesters against the Brent Spar in a two-year dialogue process, the Ogoni protesters were not – suggesting possible double standards in its risk and crisis management practice as assumed in several existing studies (ERA, 2012; Pyagbara, 2010; Steiner, 2010).

### Figure 8.9: Shell's initial crisis management response to Ogoni's emerging crisis

Before Mr Saro-Wiwa's arrest we said that while we did not necessarily agree with all of his views, he had right to voice his opinions. After his arrest we said he should be treated fairly in prison and should be given the necessary medical attention. We did not seek to influence his trial, but after the verdict the Chairman of the Shell Group's Committee of Managing Directors sent a letter to the Nigerian head of state urging him to grant clemency for all those sentenced.

Twenty Ogonis were detained in Nigeria in connection with the same incident. We are the only major company operating in the country to call publicly, and repeatedly, for humane treatment, a fair trial for the detainees and clemency for those found guilty. We have made these appeals both publicly and privately. We will continue to promote humanitarian values in Nigeria.

For example, when oil unions took part in the general strike of 1995, production by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) fell by a half. We took the position that we would not work under military protection to increase the flow of oil . . . Nigeria has many development challenges.

There is a lack of government investment in the social infrastructure of the area in which we operate. We recognise a responsibility to act. In 1997, the Shell joint venture spent US\$ 32 million on a wide range of community and development projects, including the building of hospitals and schools. - excerpts from Shell Annual Report (2011, p. 43)

### Figure 8.10: Shell's initial crisis management response to Brent Spar

Brent Spar, the redundant storage and loading buoy which was the centre of controversy over plans for its deep-sea disposal in 1995, will be used to build a quay extension near Stavanger in Norway, if the plan meets official approval.

The original plans, which were given statutory and government approval, were opposed when the time came to carry them out. Protesters felt that the sea should not be used as a dumping ground and were concerned that other oil installations would be disposed of in the same way if the sinking of the Spar went ahead. Many false allegations were made but these were difficult to rebut in the highly-charged atmosphere of confrontation that prevailed at the time.

Protests were vocal and physical. They ranged from the personal intervention of senior politicians in several European countries, to the occupation of the Spar by Greenpeace activists. There were violent attacks on Shell service stations in Germany, with 50 damaged, two fire-bombed and one raked with bullets.

In the face of such public opinion against its plan, Shell UK halted the disposal and the Spar was towed to a mooring in a Norwegian fjord while its final fate was decided. Tests by an independent Norwegian foundation, Det Norske Veritas, disproved claims by Greenpeace later apologised.

A two-year dialogue process then started with a series of meetings in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK to help Shell UK identify a solution by gathering a wide range of views - known as the Brent Spar Dialogue. Shell UK consulted with non-governmental organisations, opinion formers and experts on the best disposal options. Participants were asked for their opinion on the issue, and later on in the selection process, to help choose between the shortlisted options for the Spar's disposal.

- excerpts from Shell Annual Report (2011, p. 61)

The fundamental lesson from both cases is that the conviction that an organisation is doing something right is not the same as getting them right. Although it appears that some of the elements of the so-called 'effective crisis management' strategies such as taking immediate actions to cope with emerging crisis (Gottschalk, 2002), establishment of crisis management teams before crisis (Regester & Larkin, 1997), crisis management plans (Augustine, 2000; Fink, 2002), and business continuity plans (Morley, 2002) were present within our case organisations. However, these were not sufficient to deal with the emerging crises. In fact, as we argue, two fundamental elements of unsustainable and ineffective crisis management that were included in both case organisations approach are issues of moral disengagement and organised corporate irresponsibility. The evidence from existing studies is that crisis or disaster situations are the moment of truth (Edward, 2009) in which organisations moral stance are called into question (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015).

Like previous research conducted with respect to the Three Mile Island incident, it can be concluded here that 'fear of the unknown caused a large of the human crisis; fear of the truth caused a large part of the business crisis' (Fink, 2002, p. 6). How does an organisation like Shell or Chevron overcome these issues of corporate immorality and organised corporate irresponsibility? It will be indicated here that senior executives are more likely to perceive emerging dangerous problems including complex emergencies, crises and disasters to be ethical issue because they know them as posing complex ethical dilemmas. This corresponds to the knowledge view of risk perception discussed in Chapter Two, Beck (2009), Gerber & Neeley (2005), Wildavsky & Dake (1990) and Mafimisebi & Thorne (2015).

Thus, senior executives in our case organisations need frequent risk and crisis training that incorporates spotting early warning signals of emerging crises or disasters, situational awareness, exercise preparedness, learning from past disasters or failures, real-life scenarios of crises, business continuity and crisis planning (Borodzicz, 2005; Dominic, Swartz, & Herbane, 2010; Jakob, 2009; Reza, 2011; Mayer, Mayer, Moss & Dale, 2008). The crisis training and exercise preparedness should:

- 1) Focus on addressing complex dilemmas of organised corporate irresponsibility: This must be done to ensure organisational commitment to high standards in risk and crisis management;
- 2) Clearly and concisely simulates the boundary among corporate morality, senior management ethics, corporate responsibility and crisis management: The intention is to

describe in broad terms how unethical decisions or conduct by senior executives could impact overall organisational ethics, corporate morality and crisis management decisions;

- 3) Focus on thinking the unthinkable by challenging the status quo: The existing risk and crisis management frameworks must be challenged and dissected to uncover their practicality or otherwise in the event of crises or disasters;
- 4) Make unethical practices or conducts visible for senior management or those involved in the training to see clearly: The more unethical conducts or practices in risk and crisis situations are seen easily by decision makers, the less likely their nature and consequences can be disregarded, minimised or distorted for long. This implies that lessons would be learned and incorporate into future risk and crisis management decisions.

In conclusion, whatever approach that is adopted by our case organisations in counteracting moral disengagement and organised corporate irresponsibility, it must focus on personalising and publicly addressing the concerns of stakeholders (Bandura, 2002; 2009). Thus, organisations should focus on robust corporate social responsibility programmes as signs of good corporate citizenship; and ensure that stakeholders' concerns are not distorted but taken into accounts.

#### **8.3.4 TRUST DEFICIT**

The complex, controversial and emotive nature of unconventional crises, as reflected in the Shell and Chevron case studies underpinning this research, indicates why trust is pivotal to risk and crisis management. This thesis findings suggest that trust in risk management and risk managers, and organisational ability to exercise its corporate conscience in proactive and ethical risk management appears to be waning. Clearly, in both cases, trust between multinationals and local stakeholders, particularly local indigenes, environmental activists, government agencies and non-governmental organisations has been largely decimated. Albeit various definitions of trust exist in previous research but a generalised trust, defined as a set of “socially learned and socially confirmed expectations that people have of each other, of the organisations and institutions in which they live, and of the natural and moral social orders that set the fundamental understandings for their lives” (cf. Barber, 1983) is used here.

This conceptualisation depicts the duality of trust in which the trustors form an estimate of the trustworthiness of the average person (cf. Luhmann, 1988; Paxton, 2007). Although existing studies on generalised trust is largely bifurcated and controversial producing mixed results (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002; Glaeser, Liabson, Scheinkman, & Soutter, 2000; Nannestad, 2008; Paxton, 2007; Mewes, 2014; Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007). Nonetheless, there is convergence evidence about the implications of trust deficit for organisation in risk and crisis situations, as found from the two case studies. First, trust deficit appears to have undermine reputation of the organisations involved in those crises. Second, trust deficit also appears to have damage the effective working relationships imperative for organisational resilience and authenticity. Furthermore, trust deficit also affects the public evaluation of the trustworthiness of organisation to act both in the public interest and with respect to best possible technical standards and practice (Flynn, Burns, Mertz, & Slovic, 1992; Poortinga & Pidgeon, 2003; Slovic, 1993; Wynne, 1980; 1992a; 1996b).

The evaluation of one of the local informants reflect the perception that oil companies in the Niger Delta can be hardly trusted due to refusal to clean up the environment: *“institutional system failure in Shell Nigeria to promptly and properly respond to the containment and clean-up of oil spills including associated compensations and remediation promotes community conflicts. In Bodo City, Ogoniland Nigeria, it took several months before SPDC came to do containment and this was following the intervention of the Rivers State Commissioner for Environment following SOS by a local NGO. The process of bringing relief materials did not follow any survey or assessment. Also, community contractors have been instigated against the community and due process.”*

The analysis of case studies revealed that there was no disputing trust deficit among stakeholders. For example, as revealed in the quotation and corroborated by existing literature decades of oil pollution and environmental devastation without sustainable comprehensive clean-up and compensation generates an atmosphere of distrust among stakeholders in the Niger Delta (UNEP, 2011). Yet, senior executives in our case organisations were still in denial. This practice of organisational denial is in direct contrast to the fundamentals of effective risk and crisis management practice, reviewed in Chapters One, Four and Five. It also appears that the crisis management methodologies of both organisations were deficient due to MD mechanisms such as diffusion of responsibility and attribution of blame. This was previously identified in Chapter Five as crisis disengagement problem, complicating organisational crises

that could have been avoided. The views of staff within the case organisations seem to reflect the notion that the Niger Delta crisis is mainly caused by issues of resource control and economic benefits for local communities (Chevron, 2015; Shell, 1995; 2011; 2014):

*“On stakeholder management of the Niger Delta community. It has been Shell’s position that when it comes to providing electricity and most structural development in the communities we operate, we leave it to the Government. The trust is that most of the communities need only pipe borne water, electricity, roads and a means of livelihood. Why can’t we provide these for the communities we operate in? I am sure the cost of this is nothing compared to the NPV we lose every day due to militant problems. I say this knowing that the Government has been unable to deliver these basic needs which every human should have. Is Shell willing to change its position on relying on the government to deliver these promises that have remained empty for decades to the communities? The cost can, am sure, be treated as part of the operations cost which will reduce the tax paid to the government.”*

These views are inherently rooted in mechanisms of moral disengagement, particularly attribution of blame, displacement of responsibility and diffusion of responsibility as discussed in Chapters One and Five. Overall, the main sources of trust deficit between multinationals and local indigenes were issues of resource control, environmental injustice, corruption, corporate social irresponsibility and maltreatment of human rights and environmental protesters, as a number of key informants revealed. Specifically, the disconnection between organisational behaviour and corporate ethical conduct in unconventional risk and crisis situations is largely responsible for the trust deficit between businesses and the public in the Niger Delta (Steiner, 2010; UNEP, 2011). The position of Shell to environmental damages caused by fossil fuels is telling, at least based on the following quotation from an informant from Shell:

*“Society depends on fossil fuels. Shell cannot be blamed for this. The role of energy companies is to deliver the energy that consumers need. We have a responsibility to that as efficiently as possible protecting the environment and benefitting people as we do so. At the same time, we are looking at developing new energies that will become more important in the future and help reduce the carbon footprint. With regard to Nigeria we act responsibly. More than 85% of oil spilled there is due to sabotage. SPDC is committed to cleaning up oil spills and restoring the environment for every spill no matter the cause and works hard to do so.”*

Although our case organisations operate in a volatile region of Nigeria characterised by civil disorder, oil bunkering and oil theft, malicious practices, extremism, armed insurgency, militancy and terrorism or guerrilla warfare, cultism and inter-tribal conflicts, and oppressive regimes. These situations prompted them to engage security arrangements in protecting their assets and people in Nigeria (Shell, 2011; Chevron, 2015). There were assurances in both organisations that security guidelines and actions do reflect current international best practices in risk and security management. For instance, Shell Nigeria stated that it has reviewed its “*security force guidelines against three United Nations documents: UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officers; UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials; and UN Pocket Book on human rights for the Police.*” (Shell, 2011, p. 72). For Chevron Nigeria, its security policies and practices are “*consistent with Chevron’s participation in the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, a global initiative that provides guidance on companies’ engagement with security forces.*” (Chevron, 2015, p. 9).

Accordingly, Chevron noted that “preserving the trust of our stakeholders is the responsibility of every individual in the company. Our Business Conduct and Ethics Code is designed to help each of us meet that obligation.” (Chevron, 2016, p. 1). But, the strategy of using military personnel in protecting oil infrastructures and in the process causing violation of local indigenes human rights undermines trust in those organisations and their ability to proactively manage risks to the environment and local people without compromising ethical standards. The UNEP inquiry into the crisis recommends the creation of an Ogoniland Environmental Restoration Authority and an Environmental Restoration Fund for Ogoniland are crucial to build trust (UNEP, 2011). The creation of the Hydrocarbon Pollution Restoration Project (HYPREP) – an organisation charged to fully implement the UNEP report is vital to repair trust deficit. The Nigerian government is required to take the lead in coordinating the activities of the many stakeholders involved in the crises. Presently, the government has commenced the process of environmental clean-up in Ogoniland (Shell, 2015; 2016). However, it has been noted by the UNEP Commission of Inquiry report into Ogoniland that decades of oil pollution and environmental devastation would take at least 30 years to clean-up (UNEP, 2011).

#### **8.3.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPONSE TO TRUST DEFICIT**

There is compelling research evidence about trust repair after an organisational crisis (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Ferrin, Kim, Cooper, & Dirks, 2007; Gillespie & Dietz, 2009; Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). Trust repair requires moral engagement, benevolence and integrity. Firstly, moral engagement, defined here *as the ability to care for others and nature even without the legal obligation to do so*, is crucial to repairing and restoring trust during and after an organisational crisis. In our context, senior executives in Chevron and Shell Nigeria face multiple stakeholders for which issues of ‘interest prioritisation’ become problematic and difficult to ascertain without constructive engagement. Thus, if these organisations continue to depend on using only the business case and corporate social responsibility as the basis for stakeholders’ engagement in risk and crisis situations, trust in those organisations will continue to suffer.

Secondly, organisational benevolence or kindness is critical to repairing and rebuilding the trust of local stakeholders. For example, crisis management response strategies of simple denial, shifting blame, minimisation and transcendence regularly promoted as best practice (Benoit, 1995; Coombs, 2007; Harlow et al., 2011; Smudde & Courtright, 2008) undermine stakeholders trust. More critically, when organisations in risk and crisis situations suppress information via no comment, outright denials, countersuits, attribution of blame and redefining the crisis origin and nature as well as focusing attention on profitability or economic performance, the probability for building and repairing trust during and after major crisis will decline. Therefore, acceptance of culpability and remorse are more likely to be seen by local stakeholders as display of corporate benevolence and integrity.

In contrast, the disclosure of organisational errors and mistakes may damage working relationships with stakeholders and trustworthiness perceptions in the short term, particularly if it shows that previous lessons from risk failures were not learned. Nevertheless, non-disclosure of mistakes can be interpreted as concealment of material facts, in which the organisation is trying to hide the truth, which could have an even more deleterious effect (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009, p. 139). Thus, it is recommended that benevolence form of crisis management responses including corrective action, compensation, and mortification should be used in handling the Niger Delta crises. These crisis management strategies have implications with respect to reduction in pipeline vandalism, militancy, oil terrorism and constant destruction of oil infrastructures in the Niger Delta.



Thirdly, openness and engagement with local stakeholders can be used to correct negative expectations and prevention of moral transgressions (Bandura, 2009; Ferrin et al., 2007; Galford & Drapeau, 2003; Korsgaard, Brodt, & Whitener, 2002; Kramer, 1996; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Although there have been repeated violations which make trust repair during and after the Chevron and Shell crises much more difficult. Thus, correcting the problem of trust deficit in such risk failure and crisis situations would broadly involves two major interventions of distrust regulation and trustworthiness demonstration (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009). Table 8.3 provides a range of examples of trust repair interventions which can be used to resolve some of the issues identified in the Niger Delta crises.

**Table 8.3: Examples of Trust Repair Interventions for Each Organisational System Component**

Component	Distrust Regulation: Untrustworthy Behaviour	Trustworthiness Demonstration: Signal Renewed Trustworthiness
Leadership and management practice  Culture and climate  Strategy  Structures, policies, and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Suspend operations and/or withdraw faulty product(s)</li> <li>▪ Reprimand, discipline, or remove culpable parties</li> <li>▪ Investigate practices, conduct, and attitudes</li> <li>▪ Ensure enactment and compliance of reforms; influence other system components to regulate trustworthiness (e.g., change incentives and reporting structures)</li> <li>▪ Use cultural interventions (e.g., induction, socialisation) to instil values and norms that discourage trust violations</li> <li>▪ Impose sanctions for breaches of trust-related norms</li> <li>▪ Create ‘cultural artefacts’ that act as deterrents (e.g., ethical codes of conduct, public statements)</li> <li>▪ Shape organisational and unit-level priorities and goals (e.g., primacy of safety and integrity), resource allocations, and the content of policies and procedures</li> <li>▪ Direct behaviour in line with organisational strategies</li> <li>▪ Revise decision-making authority and accountability</li> <li>▪ Impose checks, balances, and disciplinary procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enact transformational leadership: act as a role model, symbolising organisational values and conduct; create a shared, value-driven vision and goals</li> <li>▪ Issue trust-enhancing communications</li> <li>▪ Enhance the trustworthiness of other system components (e.g., procedural fairness, ethical strategic goals and implementation)</li> <li>▪ Commit resources to trust repair effort (e.g., money, time, manpower)</li> <li>▪ Use cultural interventions to instil values and norms around integrity, honesty, competence, responsibility, reliability, and respect</li> <li>▪ Create ‘cultural artefacts’ that symbolise and promote trustworthiness and affirm its priority over competing imperatives (e.g., codes of conduct, commemorative events, legends and stories)</li> <li>▪ Revise strategy to be consistent with espoused trust-based values</li> <li>▪ Reform strategy to show an enduring commitment to treat shareholders benevolently and with integrity</li> <li>▪ Promote ethical conduct and corporate social responsibility</li> </ul>

External governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Standardise work processes and training to compensate for lack of skills and/or knowledge</li> <li>▪ Offer coaching and mentoring to assist employees facing ethical dilemmas or difficult decisions</li> <li>▪ Comply with external regulatory codes of conduct and monitoring (e.g., professional, industry, consumer)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revise policies and procedures to ensure employees perceive them to be fair, effective, and just (e.g., transparent and equitable appraisal systems, dispute resolution and whistleblowing procedures).</li> <li>▪ Use recruitment, selection, induction, and training procedures, emphasising personal values symbolising trustworthiness</li> </ul>
Public reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gain external accreditation, licensing, approval, or audit</li> <li>▪ Make public statements committing the organisation to uphold reformed strategies, operations, and targets</li> <li>▪ Internally publish the diagnosis, evaluations, and audits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Voluntarily engage with external regulatory bodies</li> <li>▪ Seek licensing/accreditation (e.g., SA8000 on ethical conduct)</li> <li>▪ Campaign government for sector-wide regulations</li> <li>▪ Use trust-enhancing communications, marketing, and branding</li> <li>▪ Offer public apologies and reparations (where appropriate)</li> <li>▪ Voluntarily communicate to the public (the diagnosis and evaluations)</li> </ul>

Source: Gillespie & Dietz (2009, p. 135)

In conclusion, the four-stage process of organisational trust repair: (1) immediate responses; (2) diagnosis; (3) reforming interventions; and (4) evaluation can be useful for Shell and Chevron in Nigeria (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009). At the immediate response stage, both Shell and Chevron would need to acknowledge local concerns and divergent perceptions; express regret and commit extensive resources to prevent reoccurrence of constant oil spillages and gas flaring in the Niger Delta. In practical context, this means demonstration of accuracy and transparency in crisis communication with relevant stakeholders. The senior executives of Shell and Chevron must express sincere compunction, through local engagement meeting, for the consequences of the decade environmental pollution and devastation in the Niger Delta. This local engagement meeting can help aid forgiveness and trust repair (Bottom, Gibson, Daniels, & Murnighan, 2002).

The diagnosis stage requires systematic and multilevel examination of triggering causes of the crisis. Examples include the use of independent risk assessors and joint investigation with relevant regulators to discuss and clarify potential risks that could affect health, safety and environment. While Shell Nigeria has adopted the UNEP commission of inquiry report as basis for independent diagnosis and the services of private firm called Bureau Veritas to verify the oil spill investigation system in Ogoniland (Shell, 2012), Chevron Nigeria still lack any form of independent exercises over its operation in Ilajeland. The reforming interventions stage

involves taking crucial steps and actions to correct any act of organisational irresponsibility, environmental clean-up of the affected areas and offers of reparations to affected stakeholders (Bottom et al., 2002; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2015; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). As noted, Shell and Chevron have face shareholders and senior management pressures to “save face” and “never admit culpability” (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009), probably closing off avenues for reconciliation and settlement with local communities in the Niger Delta.

However, Shell Nigeria has started a series of programmes such as desktop inventory of assets in Ogoniland, completion of a comprehensive review of its Remediation Management System (RMS), re-training of its contractors and their supervisors on clean up and remediation techniques, as well as convening meetings with relevant government regulators to discuss and clarify aspects of the Environmental Guidelines and Standards for Petroleum Industry in Nigeria (EGASPIN) (Shell, 2013; 2015). These efforts are laudable but sustainable crisis management strategies must also include local indigenes and other stakeholders in the Niger Delta. Therefore, evaluation stage of the organisational trust repair must take into considerations the complex and unconventional nature of the crises in the Niger Delta. The additional recommendations involve addressing the triggering causes of the crises, evaluate impact and proximity, and actively engage local community (Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). Thus, we summarise these recommendations in the Table 8.4 below:

**Table 8.4: Examples of recommended strategies for resolving trust deficit in the Niger Delta crises**

Mechanisms of Resolution	Impact and Proximity Consideration	Mechanisms for Trust Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examine and evaluate issue of local communities’ agitations and concerns</li> <li>▪ Listen to local stakeholders and discuss the problem of environmental pollution and devastation</li> <li>▪ Determine appropriate settlement method with local stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Assess the potential risks to the organisation and local communities</li> <li>▪ Express regret over damages done</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider which stakeholders are most affected and the extent of damages to their interests</li> <li>▪ Examine how likely will future damage or risk failure occurs</li> <li>▪ Inform local stakeholders about environmental impacts and what actions are available</li> <li>▪ Manage expectations of local stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Actively engage with local communities</li> <li>▪ Communicate frequently about organisational efforts to address local concerns</li> <li>▪ Take responsibility for damages caused especially clean up exercise</li> <li>▪ Welcome community participation</li> <li>▪ Clarify and explain any environmental issue via crisis communication team</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stop the use of attribution of blame.</li> <li>▪ Consider how issues of perception and culture are likely to impact risk behaviour.</li> <li>▪ Correct mistakes and make statement of assurance about the robustness of future risk mitigation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examine the possibility for reputational damage</li> <li>▪ Conduct environmental impact assessment</li> <li>▪ Check the closeness of oil infrastructures to residential areas</li> <li>▪ Investment in pipeline protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Treat local concerns as urgent matter</li> <li>▪ Maintain close monitoring</li> <li>▪ Constant review of environmental performance</li> <li>▪ Create stakeholders' forum within communities</li> <li>▪ Focus on direct meeting with local youths</li> </ul>
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Source: Adapted from Mafimisebi & Ogbonna (2016, p. 202)

### 8.3.5 MISINTERPRETATION OF DANGEROUS EVENTS

This research conceptualises unconventional risks, crises and disasters as dangerous events due to their rapid variation, urgency, complexity, unpredictability, globalisation and volatility nature (Boin & Lagadec, 2000; Comfort, 2007; Garnett & Kouzmin, 2007; Palm & Ramsell, 2007). The successful management of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster may depend profoundly on their conceptualisation or the meaning assigned to them. Specifically, this does not suggest the need for universal definition of risk, crisis or disaster but that these terms should be defined in terms of what they mean to an organisation with relative to its stakeholders.

The initial discussions about risk, crisis and disaster as noted previously in Chapters One and Four challenge the notion of a unified definition of dangerous events. This universal definition of dangerous events is desirable, as empirical studies suggest the need for common understanding of risk, crisis and disaster (Andrew, 2011; Ansell et al., 2010; Augustine, 1995; 2000; Borodzicz, 2005; Boin et al., 2010; Lerbinger, 2012; 't Hart, 2013), but the practical implication is that such approach promotes rigidity instead of flexibility in risk and crisis management (Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). This was apparent in the two incidents considered here (Chapters Two and Three) in which multiple interpretations of those crises exist but both Shell and Chevron initially treated the events as militancy and oil terrorism problems. The following quotations from informants are typical examples of misinterpretation of dangerous events:

*“We are as concerned about oil spills as you are. Remember that the majority of spills follow attacks at our installations, cutting into pipelines or spills that follow the oil theft which is a major problem. To be able to assess damages and clean up as speedy as we want to, it requires safe access for our staff. This is not always the case in the Niger*

*Delta, and our handling of the spills gets an unfortunate delay. Following access we stop leak and make an assessment together with authorities and community what clean-up is required. Irrespective of reasons for the pollution, we are cleaning up.”*

*“Shell believe that pollution and environmental damage associated with the oil industry (including oil spills, gas flaring, waste disposal, river dredging) over the past five decades has contributed to poverty and conflict in the Niger Delta. But even more so is the baseline demand of the people of the region for the Federal Government to grant them greater share of the oil proceeds (a political matter), as well as corruption, criminality, and general poor governance.”*

It also appears from the quotations above that both Shell and Chevron were also treating these incidents as government laxity in providing employment, lack of basic infrastructures and technical problems instead of public relation and crisis disengagement problems. Clearly, had the general principles of what constitute crisis or disaster were agreed upon among main stakeholders prior to those incidents, appropriate crisis management strategies or responses would have been used. There was evidence about this lack of consensus among stakeholders. For example, the UNEP commission of inquiry report established that treating the environmental contamination and disasters within Niger Delta (Ogoniland and Ilajeland) merely as a technical clean-up exercise would ultimately lead to failure (UNEP, 2011, p. 224). This confirms our previous proposition that risk, crisis and disaster management strategies or models should be context-based.

From our case studies (Chapters Two and Three), it is apparent to see that the initial incidents were misinterpreted as attempts were made to force existing crisis management models on to the emerging crises without flexibility or adaptation. Therefore, the stage-based models of risk and crisis management should be avoided altogether due to their intransigent nature. As the case study analysis revealed, Shell and Chevron were treating the crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta using stage-based models of risk and crisis management as the incidents were treated in isolation from other complex issues of environmental injustice and local communities' demands. In another instance, the incessant oil spillages from corrosion and gas flaring incidents in the Niger Delta, Nigeria were treated as normal accidents inherent to the oil and gas sector (Perrow, 1994; 1999; 2004). This view appears to reinforce the notion of normal accident as proposed by Perrow (Perrow, 1994; 2004) but failed to account for the role of internal and external interventions during disaster incubation period. The discourse of some

informants was more emotional (including outright disengagement and diffusion of responsibility) than critical risk/crisis assessment or even addressing the public relations crisis:

*“In any country in the world the government has primary responsibility for the development of its people and this is true of Nigeria . . . and the Niger Delta communities. The contribution that Shell makes anywhere it operates is intended to supplement this.”*

*“Most of the over 30 million people living in the Niger Delta remain poor despite oil production. Unrest has grown. Frustrated by the lack of benefits from oil production, communities have targeted the operations of energy companies including Chevron and Shell.”*

*“The funds we contribute in our social investment will not solve the problem but we do our best to make a difference. Our greatest contributions are through the taxes and royalties we pay. The federal government receives about 95% of the revenue after costs from oil and gas production in the Niger Delta.”*

*“You may be aware that the most crisis impacted parts of the Niger Delta is the marine and riverine part completely devoid of Government’s social and economic infrastructure. This has hampered development. The little there is what oil companies have provided. . . . But given that this is an area the size England the oil companies can help but really it is for Government to do.”*

Here, using the above quotations from informants, it is essential to argue that part of the conceptual fuzziness of Perrow’s idea of normal accident is that unconventional risks, crises and disasters are no longer ‘normal’ (cf. Perrow, 2004) but consequences of micro and macro moral disengagement. In other words, Perrow’s notion of normal accident is at best passive approach to risk management (Hopkins, 1999; 2001; Shrivastava, Sonpar, & Pazzaglia, 2009) which does little to change the way organisations and risk managers manage unconventional risks and crises. The manifestation of normal accident view was seen in both incidents (Chapters Two and Three) but this increases risk failure propensity and escalate the problem from incubation period as proposed by Turner’s model to rescue and salvage stage and later full cultural readjustment stage (Appendix One, Chapters One and Four).

In practice, risk management experts in our case organisations were so focused on data that subjective and cultural views from local people appears to have been neglected. The following

quote from an informant is an example where local community concerns are displaced into wider issue of government laxity:

*“The challenges facing the Niger Delta are complex and covers poverty, unemployment, growing population, governance and several other issues. Handling of these issues are for the State and Federal government and for the communities to handle. The oil industry’s footprint is impacting on small parts of the Niger Delta. Something you will know if you have been in the area with the size of Portugal. Environmental impact is according to the World Bank mainly from local industrialisation and population growth. We are handling environmental issues linked to our operations.”*

In terms of classification of dangerous events, this example as shown in the above quote represents an attitude in which the organisation is convince of their ability to handle environmental risk management. However, this prevented effective risk and crisis communication before, during and after those incidents in the Niger Delta. Specifically, the two organisations (i.e. Shell and Chevron) involved and their risk management experts appear to have been too rigid in their interpretation of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster. This rigidity negates innovation, resilience and creativity critical to successful risk and crisis management. The misinterpretation of those incidents also caused them to often use the crisis management response strategies of denial, differentiation, defensibility, minimisation and accidental or normal accident to handle the emerging crises in the Niger Delta.

However, these crisis management strategies are harmful to sustainable risk and crisis management, and represent organisational moral disengagement or crisis disengagement (Chapters One and Five). There were discrepancies among stakeholders about risk communication messages to the local communities; and the fact that each organisation involved in those incidents treated them as normal accident and not systemic or ambiguous risk problems is also of concern because it muddles the management of those crises and disrupt the entire risk and crisis management practice in the Niger Delta. As a final point, the lack of agreement or consensus as to what constitutes the Niger Delta crisis and the extent of damages to stakeholders in those crises hindered effective crisis management response.

### **8.3.5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPONSE TO DANGEROUS EVENTS MISINTERPRETATION**

Following the initial demand notice to Shell by MOSOP, it was recognised that Shell failed to accurately establish the nature of the ensuing crisis due to inability to proactively engage with MOSOP and underestimation of the severity and magnitude of the situation. Also, in the aftermath of the Chevron – Ilaje crisis, initial crisis management response was based on understanding that the protesters were armed militants whereas the evidence refuted that claim. This is where isomorphic learning and learning from failures theories could be useful in identifying lessons which were not captured or learnt in previous crises. Although, it is important to consider cultural factors when learning from past risk failures, as the Niger Delta is known for its tenacious culture in which broken trust could be difficult to repair.

To counteract the effect of continual risk failures in the Niger Delta, risk simulation training with local stakeholders' involvement and independent assessment of the problems are essential. The issue of emergency response organisations such as NEMA, NIMASA, NNPC and DPR working independently need to be addressed. The coordination and collaborative action among inter-agencies (such as NEMA, NDDC, MOSOP, IRDC, MNDA, NNPC, and DPR) and local communities in the Niger Delta are imperative to develop common understanding of the Delta crises. This thesis would argue that amplified dialogue and developing trust between all the parties involved should form part of the broader business continuity and resilience management strategy.

The emergence of a new militant group called Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) in 2015 further complicated issues for multinational oil firms in Nigeria. The triggers of the crises have not been specifically addressed. Thus, the lasting solution to the crisis and disaster situations rest upon addressing and treating all triggering causes and preconditions to crises/disasters as illustrated in section 8.3.1 above. For example, negotiation with local communities and incorporation of social concerns into risk and crisis management practice in the Niger Delta should be high on multinational companies' agenda. The assumptions and perceptions underlying risk and crisis management should be clear to stakeholders due to different attitudes regarding crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta.

The review of the Shell – Ogoni crisis highlighted the confusion over how the incident was perceived and this undermines overall strategies used to handle the crisis. The extent of sustainable risk and crisis management decisions is arguably related to the definition and strategies adopted. The lack of consensus about what constitutes crisis or disaster suggests that



we need to shift attention to more pragmatic issues: (1) crisis management behaviour; (2) crisis management response; (3) risk management behaviour. These three main issues as contained in the decision-based model of risk and crisis management should be context-based and not purely applied as a universal or best-practice approach (see section 8.4 below). This concept would make crisis and disaster management more flexible and responsive to change and consequently make the organisation more resilient and robust.

Overall, the Board of directors in organisations cannot abrogate the responsibility of managing emerging crises and disasters anymore but should be thoroughly informed and trained in risk and crisis management, just like in every other activity such as auditing, governance, leadership, human resources and finance. Shell and Chevron are examples of best practice in this area. The practical implication is that classification and conceptualisation of events remain an important component of risk and crisis management. This view supports the tenet of this thesis that those responsible for managing risk, crisis and disaster should be sufficiently trained, which suggests that risk and crisis management experts should at least be part of the Board in organisations.

### **8.3.6 CRISIS MISCOMMUNICATION**

There is compelling evidence that crisis miscommunication was another significant factor undermining the effectiveness of risk and crisis management practice of multinational oil firms like Shell and Chevron in Nigeria. For example, communication breakdown between MOSOP and Shell in 1993 led to the ensuing complex crisis facing Shell in the Niger Delta. The case analysis reveals how Shell cited intimidation and harassment of its staff in Ogoniland; and used that as the basis for engaging the services of the Nigerian military in suppressing protesters. This is reflected in the following quotations from informants across the organisations:

*“The loss of civilian lives in the recent military offensive in the Niger Delta is a cause for grave concern. The offensive indicates that the Nigerian military is more interested in protecting oil company facilities than it is protecting its people.”*

*“We regret any use of violence. Of course, it is not in line with our principles to operate behind a military shield. In the Niger Delta, we’ve seen violence escalate in recent years, as armed militants have attacked oil installations. It is hard to make sure that*

*our staff and operations are safe, in this situation – as you know we have shut down parts of our operations since 2006.”*

A similar situation happened in the case of the Chevron and Ilaje crisis where the protesters were brutalised by the Nigerian security personnel who acted on Chevron’s instructions in 1998. Comparing the two incidents, crisis miscommunication was a common factor that escalated the problems. The individuals and local groups involved in both incidents were poorly handled due to inappropriate crisis context analysis. The initial context of the Shell – Ogoni crisis was misdiagnosed due to risk underestimation and misplaced crisis management response. This is clear in the following quotation from one of the informants:

*“Given the fact that the political demand by the people in the Niger Delta for a greater share of the oil income is the main cause of the crisis in the region (as every person in the region will tell you) and not pollution or other secondary issues, I believe that the current dialogue between the Federal Govt. and the people of the region if approached honestly and generously will lead to a solution.”*

The prodromal crisis stage (Fink, 2000) comparable to the first stage of Turner’s models (Turner, 1976; 1978) was missed in both incidents when ‘demand notices’ were sent to both Shell and Chevron. These demand notices could have signalled warnings of impending crises to the crisis management team and calculated crisis communication message which incorporate some of the principles of effective crisis communication discussed in Chapters Four and Five could have help avert the incidents. The empirical evidence from this research and existing studies (e.g., Andrew, 2011; Augustine, 1995; Hoffman, 1996; Kash & Darling, 1998; Fink, 2002; George & Pratt, 2012; Olaniran & Williams, 2001; ‘t Hart, 2013; Morley, 2002; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2014; 2015; Seeger, 2006; Stephens, Malone, & Bailey, 2005) reveals the utility and value of risk and crisis communication strategies as crucial success factor in managing risk and crisis situations. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of Shell and Chevron crisis communication strategies in both incidents are doubtful. There is an asymmetrical relationship between what these two organisations professed to do in terms of risk and crisis management, and the reality of constant militarisation approach which alienate and suppress protesters over environmental injustice in Nigeria. Although the wider responsibility lies with the Nigerian government.

During the acute crisis stage Shell was declared ‘*persona non grata*’ by MOSOP on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1993 and eventually forced to move out that same month as a result of crisis

miscommunication. The sentiment of local communities in the Niger Delta region concerning oil companies was expressed by one of the informants:

*“Gas flaring is still a major occurrence in most of Shell’s operations and its impact both on the environment and on those living in these Niger Delta field are quite significant. Having worked on several SPDC locations both in the east and west of Nigeria, I have personally witnessed the devastating effect of gas flaring. My national service in Sangana-Akassa also afforded an opportunity to live and interact with people living in a typical oil community and I could see that most of them had developed a deep-rooted anger for oil communities as a result of their alteration of their natural environment which deprives them of their primary source of income, being fishing and farming.”*

Overall, with the benefits of hindsight, effective business continuity and crisis planning could have helped to spot the complexity of the problem and allow senior executives to use adapted crisis communication strategies in responding to the emerging crisis. In this instance, inclusive risk and crisis communication strategies which integrate normative and social concerns such as corrective action and compensation are crucial to gain local stakeholders acceptance and social trust in the Niger Delta.

The chronic crisis stage of both incidents resulted from the series of warnings from local communities and activists which went unheeded by both Chevron and Shell. The consequences manifested in form of oil terrorism and vandalism as well as constant kidnapping of oil workers usually for ransom and in protesting environmental injustice in the Niger Delta (Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2014; 2015; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Mafimisebi, 2016; Mafimisebi & Ogbonna, 2016). The mechanisms of moral disengagement clearly manifest in risk behaviours of both organisations and the local communities’ response towards multinationals attitudes in handling crises. For example, moral justification of oil terrorism and vandalism were apparent in militants’ behaviours whereas attribution of blame, displacement of responsibility, and distorting the consequences also manifest in risk and crisis management behaviours of multinational oil companies. The following quotation, from an informant, clearly reveal the element of moral disengagement in the crisis:

*“First, no-one wants flaring. It is not good environmentally and it is not good economically, and we would have liked to have stopped it well before now. So why flare in the first place? That’s because Nigeria’s oil contains a lot of gas, which is produced*

*with the oil. When the fields were first developed there was no local market for the gas, and the fact that many Nigerian reservoirs are small and geologically faulted meant that it couldn't be reinjected. And, of course, there was no awareness of global warming at the time. So the gas was flared, in line with normal industry practice. And bear in mind that the flares were generally installed away from where people were living – it is the communities that have since grown up around industry operations.”*

The crisis communication messages to local stakeholders were incompatible with the nature of the crisis. Specifically, local communities were told that most oil spillages and pollution were due to activities of illegal bunkering and militancy in the Niger Delta. Meanwhile, in both cases, independent assessment of the different incidents demonstrated that corrosion, lack of maintenance and unending gas flaring within the local communities have caused untold damages to the environment which would take at least 30 years to clean-up (UNEP, 2011). In this regard, crisis miscommunication occurs largely due to inaccurate risk assessment, selective risk perception, generalised risk messages and moral disengagement. The overall lesson was that generalised risk and crisis messages were ineffective to engage stakeholders due to trust deficit and different risk perceptions.

Therefore, it is essential to design risk and crisis messages in such situations that incorporate real-time feedback into the broader risk and crisis management strategy. This is essential at the crisis resolution stage or resolving the crisis stage. Several attempts including a Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) strategy targeted at local community participation have been made by Shell and Chevron to resolve the crises within the Niger Delta but these have been insufficient. There are other practical recommendations that could help organisations become more resilient and responsive in such situations, as highlighted in the following subsection.

#### **8.3.6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPONSE TO CRISIS MISCOMMUNICATION**

The evidence is clear that knowing how and when best to intervene in an emerging crisis is difficult in practice. This was the case with both Shell and Chevron in responding to the emerging crises in the Niger Delta. The crisis miscommunication issue arose partly due to misunderstanding of the nature of the incidents. Also, in the aftermath of the crises, mistakes were made regarding whether efforts should be directed mainly towards crisis communication or risk communication because both concepts are marginally different in practice. In this

context, risk communication deals with what might occur or has already happened, whereas crisis communication deals with what is presently happening. This distinction is crucial to address problems of crisis miscommunication in dangerous events.

For example, instead of Shell addressing the ongoing crisis, efforts were directed at attributing the causes of the incident to resource control agitation, deforestation, sabotage, vandalism and wider governmental neglect of local communities. Likewise, multiple agencies such as the DPR, NNPC, Nigerian Police Force, NEMA, Nigerian Navy, and Joint Military Taskforce were working from different perspectives which often leads to conflicting information, compounded issues of crisis communication. However, an effective crisis communication team working from the victims' perspective and acting flexibly by incorporating messages from different sources could have helped minimised the crisis impact on Shell and Chevron. This suggestion is rooted in image repair strategies which recognise the need for crisis communication to be initiated from a variety of perspectives (Olaniran & Williams, 2001; Stephens, Malone, & Bailey, 2005).

Crucially, it is important to state that evidence about crisis miscommunication is mixed as one strand of evidence reveals that reasonable attempts were made to engage local communities but another strand confirms calculated attempts were made to use local leaders as mediators between multinational firms and local indigenes. This sometimes manifests in forms of hiring as many local people as possible including 'ghost workers' such as community leaders or members who lack the relevant skills and were not needed for a project but put on the payroll even though they are not expected to report for work (Oilwatch, 2006, p. 45). The findings suggest that both companies failed in areas of wider consultation and engagement with the public. Here, this thesis argues that four fundamental macro strategies of crisis communication including (1) empathy and caring, (2) competence and expertise, (3) honesty and openness, and (4) dedication and commitment, are essential tools of moral engagement, trust repair and sustainable survival during and after major incidents like that of Shell and Chevron.

The risk and crisis communication strategies should have been tailored towards cultural diversity to gain trust and aim to establish or maintain relationships with local indigenes, and networking with other stakeholders (e.g., agencies, the media, and officials) in Nigeria. This corresponds to the situational crisis communication theory which asserts that the threat to an organisation increases as stakeholders' belief that the organisation was responsible for the crisis intensifies (Coombs, 2007a; Ferguson, Wallace, & Chandler, 2012). Hitherto, it was revealed

that the use of social media as a medium of risk and crisis communication could assist organisations and their risk managers to provide instantaneous, up-to-date information about what they are doing to reduce or minimise crisis impact, and respond to questions from concerned individuals (Rutsaert et al., 2013; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2014). Social media provides vast public networks which could help create a forum for actual dialogue where public concerns are integrated into risk and crisis communication messages, and not just purely depending on traditional communication platforms such as newspapers, television, radio, and press conferences. The implementation of this approach could assist organisations and their risk managers to directly address stakeholders' concerns instead of simply giving them information that risk professionals think is important and valuable (Cross, 1998; Cope et al., 2010; Frewer, 2004; Kahan et al., 2012; Lofstedt, 2003).

The expression of regret (mortification), corrective action and compensation are essential tools that can be used to shape public relations of Shell and Chevron in Nigeria. This recommendation advanced previous empirical research findings that initial crisis response should focus on expressing concerns and/or compassion for the vulnerable victims instead of using strategies such as denial, accidental, provocation, shifting blame and attack accuser (Cohen, 1999; Coombs, 2007b; Dean, 2004; Kellerman, 2006; Janoske, Liu, & Madden, 2013; Lukaszewski, 1999; Niels & Maarten, 2011). Although, image restoration theory of crisis communication suggests the need to use five fundamental macro strategies of mortification, reducing the offensiveness, denial, evading of responsibility, and corrective action (Benoit, 1995; Ferguson et al., 2012).

However, macro strategies of crisis communication including denial, diffusion and evading of responsibility, attribution of blame, and advantageous comparison are analogous to moral disengagement mechanisms which are considered in this research as least effective strategy in crisis management response (Chapter Five). The reason being that the presence of moral disengagement in both organisations (Shell and Chevron) appears to have escalate the situations which should have been prevented. The broader implications of organisational moral disengagement include the need to review the senior management team responsible for risk and crisis management and complete restructuring of the crisis communication team.

### 8.3.7 RELYING ON PAST SUCCESSES

Relying on past successes can sometimes cause organisations to be ill-equipped to plan and prepare for potential crises, communicate and work with local stakeholders during and after crisis. This point is reflected in the two case studies considered in this research (Chapters Two and Three). For example, Shell Nigeria believed that its operation has been successful due to its Remediation Management System Models, Business Principles and Standards relevant to managing risks and crises (Shell, 2012; 2015), whereas Chevron Nigeria relies greatly on its OEMS models for managing risk, crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta (Chevron, 2010; 2015). Both Shell and Chevron are convinced that their successful operations in the Niger Delta, before the start of militancy era since 1998, are due to robust global risk management standards and compliance. The increased dependence on planned risk and crisis models without flexibility and regards to creative thinking can be, and has been, counterproductive. For instance, too much belief in the past successes of using selected local leaders as mediators in the Niger Delta made both the Chevron – Ilaje crisis and Shell – Ogoni crisis as ‘disasters waiting to happen’ (ERA, 2012; Steiner, 2010; UNEP, 2011).

The cross-case studies analysis reveals how both Shell and Chevron depend on their past good deeds to excuse current practices relating to unending gas flaring, environmental contamination and oil pollution in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. This position is reflected in the following quote from an informant within the organisation:

*“The future is going to depend on a number of things – many of which are outside the control of the oil and gas producers. We are committed to Nigeria for the long haul – we’ve been in the country for more than 50 years and thousands of people depend on us directly or indirectly for their livelihood. We also generate a significant proportion of the Country’s income. The keys to the future are peace and stability in the oil producing regions, a stable economic and political foundation, which will enable investment and development and strong leadership at national and state level. We have said many times that the real issues in the Niger Delta are violence, criminality, corruption and poverty. Eliminating these is the key to real progress and development.”*

While Shell Nigeria has been successful in creating a reputation as a safety-conscious and socially responsible firm since 1958, Chevron Nigeria is also known for its several corporate social responsibility programs in Nigeria. Although, the empirical evidence reveals that Shell is more associated with negative publicity than Chevron due partly to scale of operation. Shell

is the biggest oil and gas multinational firm whereas Chevron is the third largest oil and gas multinational firm in Nigeria (Table 8.2). However, the events of the Ogoni and Ilaje crises which started in 1993 and 1998 respectively appear to have dramatically alter the corporate reputation and public perceptions of both Shell and Chevron (Chapters Two and Three). This is also reflected in the following quotations from informants:

*“Now Shell’s image has been battered in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, the people cannot trust Shell again. . . . Shell is not loved in our local community because of their operations which cause devastation to our sources of livelihood.”*

*“Shell missed an opportunity to apologise when it settled with the Saro-Wiwa family. I think all but the most cynical would believe that Shell has changed its outlook as an organisation, and now take its social responsibilities more seriously. Isn’t it the ideal time for Shell to just say “sorry” for its behaviour in the 80s, a time when its’ not alone in believing that making money was the only factor of any importance.”*

It is argued that relying on past successes can, and has, caused laxness in risk and crisis management practice. For example, “much belief in the success of previous shuttle missions caused NASA to ignore warning signals related to both the O-rings damage prior to the Challenger disaster in 1996 due to cold weather before launch, and again on the fuel tank foam losses prior to the Columbia disaster in 2005” (Labib & Read, 2013, p. 407). Like NASA in the Challenger disaster, Shell’s and Chevron’s safety culture had become reactive, complacent and subjugated by moral disengagement mechanisms and unjustified optimism in Nigeria (Steiner, 2010). According to the UNEP investigation report ‘industry best practices and Shell’s own procedures have not been applied’ creating public safety concerns (UNEP, 2011).

In worst-case scenarios, overdependence on previous successes and established risk models without periodic independent assessment promotes excessive confidence so that future organisational crises or risk failures will follow similar patterns of past crises/disasters. To substantiate this claim, empirical evidence from both Shell and Chevron crises reveal how senior management team are stuck with the habits of using military personnel to suppress environmental protesters and local indigenes (Bustany & Wysham, 2000; ERA, 1998; 2012; Steiner, 2010; Turner & Brownhill, 2004) despite warnings that such an approach could cause a black swan event. Local indigenes still cannot understand why these senior executives of multinational oil companies could not change their detrimental habits and look for exceptions (ERA, 2012). Thus, relying on past successes of previous risk strategies seemed to have supply



the blinders. The misconception of relying on past successes might be a reason why most unconventional risks and crises are self-initiated. Misconception about previous successes over risk and crisis situations initiates risk behaviours and decisions which undermine learning from past disasters and masked human errors across the organisation (Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2015; Pearson & Sommer, 2011).

#### **8.3.7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPONSE TO RELYING ON PAST SUCCESSES**

The solution to overcoming excessive reliance on past successes in risk and crisis management lies on several recommendations. First, reorienting those responsible for managing risk and crisis situations should be high on the senior management agenda, emphasising that future threats and crises could defy existing knowledge and risk models. Therefore, Shell and Chevron should act to immediately review and revise their risk and crisis management policies, models and strategies in Nigeria. The fact that risk behaviours and decisions are viewed by local indigenes as double-standards and irresponsible corporate behaviours could be an indication of the need to restructure those in charge of risk and crisis management in Nigeria. Otherwise, both Shell and Chevron could continue to experience negative publicity as well as hostility to their staff, facilities and oil infrastructures in Nigeria. It is also suggested that current risk and crisis management strategies should alter old and produce new risk policies which incorporate repeated concerns raised by local indigenes, communities, non-governmental organisations and staff of both Shell and Chevron in Nigeria.

#### **8.4 RISK AND CRISIS METHODOLOGIES: BEST PRACTICE VS CONTEXT BASED**

This thesis maintains that risk and crisis management models are most valuable when trigger causes of crises/disasters can be proactively identified, eliminated, prevented, or managed within the organisation(s) risk appetite level. In this context, if we applied Augustine's six stage model of crisis management to the case studies (Chapters Two and Three) to evaluate the effectiveness of Shell's and Chevron's responses to the crises, a few events can be identified.

Firstly, the avoiding the crisis stage which correlates to prevention of emerging crisis was missed in both case studies despite this being recognised as the least costly and best means to

control potential crisis (Augustine, 2000). In both cases, there were demand notices sent to both Shell and Chevron which could have signalled possibility for impending crises but this was missed altogether (Boele et al., 2001; Pyagbara, 2010; Steiner, 2010). This was akin to structural failure of foresight and crisis disengagement which make intervening in an emerging organisational crisis extremely difficult (Barton, 2008; Edward, 2009; Garvin & Roberto, 2001; Morley, 2002; Andrew, 2011). Although, research acknowledges that perfect prevention of organisational crisis/disaster is clearly unachievable (Augustine, 2000).

Secondly, the preparing to manage the crisis stage in both cases occurs due to lack of control over the crises origin but does not prevent both Shell and Chevron from living with the consequences in Nigeria. This stage started when Shell was declared 'persona non-grata' by MOSOP and as a result forced to leave Ogoniland on January 1993. This was also true of Chevron –Ilaje crisis, in which Chevron ignored warnings of impending crisis when Ilaje protesters occupied its Parabe platform and demanded for open negotiation in July 1998. In hindsight, both incidents could and should have been prevented with effective crisis leadership, crisis planning, excellent crisis communication and crisis engagement (Kash & Darling, 1998; Borodzicz, 2005; Coombs, 2007a; Curtin & Husein, 2005; Dominic, Swartz, & Herbane, 2010; Fink, 2002; Ferguson et al., 2001; Olaniran & Williams, 2001; Thorne, 2010). This stage ended shortly leading to the next stage of crisis recognition.

Thirdly, the crisis recognition stage could have been avoided when 'demand notices' were sent to both Shell and Chevron but lack of flexibility in crisis management response and ignoring the victims' perspectives complicate both incidents. There is no doubt that acting flexibly in crisis management response and incorporating local perspectives into risk strategies could have helped manage those crises (Constantinides, 2012; Denis & Dominic, 2006; Farazmand, 2007; Ulmer, 2001). In critical context, both Chevron and Shell refuted local communities' claims noting how the indigenes were active saboteurs and thus displace responsibility, distort the consequences and morally justified their actions. The implications of such strategies include: (1) the issue of how local people and non-experts perceived the crises were overlooked, (2) they failed to challenge their own assumption, and (3) the crises were misclassified in which issues of local vulnerability, perceptions and ethics were finally neglected.

Fourthly, containing the crisis stage was missed due to the complex nature of both crises and the tough decision-making process involved. This was not particularly a surprise due to the fact warnings of impending crisis often go unheeded in most past cases of risk failures (Augustine,

2000). The crises could have been contained using strategies such as admittance, increased openness to dialogue, collaborative stakeholders' engagement, environmental remediation, apologetic and mortification, bolstering, compensation, and corrective action (Kellerman, 2006; Ferguson, Wallace, & Chandler, 2012; Stephens, Malone, & Bailey, 2005). It would be argued that decisiveness is crucial when organisations are trying to contain and manage emerge crises as both incidents demonstrated.

Fifthly, resolving the crisis stage in both incidents was lost and the crises escalated into large scale disasters causing reputational damages, trust deficit, destruction of oil infrastructures, and reduction in crude oil production. In context, both crises have still not been successfully resolved but initial clean-up costs of oil contamination in Ogoniland was estimated at over \$1 billion for the first five years and the process is expected to last at least 30 years (UNEP, 2011). This is nothing compared with the \$20 billion fund set-up by BP to manage the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon incident in the Gulf of Mexico (Steiner, 2010).

Sixthly, the profiting from the crisis stage which offers opportunities to regain control over the crises, repair trust and maintain robust close working relationships with stakeholders still cannot be reach at the moment. The analysis of the case studies reveals that the crises contain different stratum and remain difficult to manage due to their recurrent nature, as supported by previous studies (Andrew, 2011; Constantinides, 2012; 't Hart, 2013; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Mafimisebi & Nkwunonwo, 2015). In a practical context, Augustine's warned that doing what is right within each of the six stages do not guarantee successful management of crises or disasters. Thus, this research would argue that neither the stage nor process based models of risk/crisis management provide sufficient means to manage emerging risks, crises or disasters.

Quite critically, this thesis refuted the idea of stage-based model of risk and crisis management as too simplistic view which (1) fail to capture the simultaneous and overlapping nature of risks, crises and disasters, and (2) tends to conceptualise risk and crisis as purely linear events. The fact remains that knowledge about unconventional risk, crisis and disaster extend beyond linear problems to complex, uncertain and ambiguous problems. For example, linear risk problems can be managed using stage-based risk and crisis model whereas complex risk problems can be manage using process-based risk and crisis model. Retrospectively, stages of crisis can easily be identified once the event has occurred but it is much more difficult to use stage-based and process-based models such as Turner's, Augustine's and Fink's models in

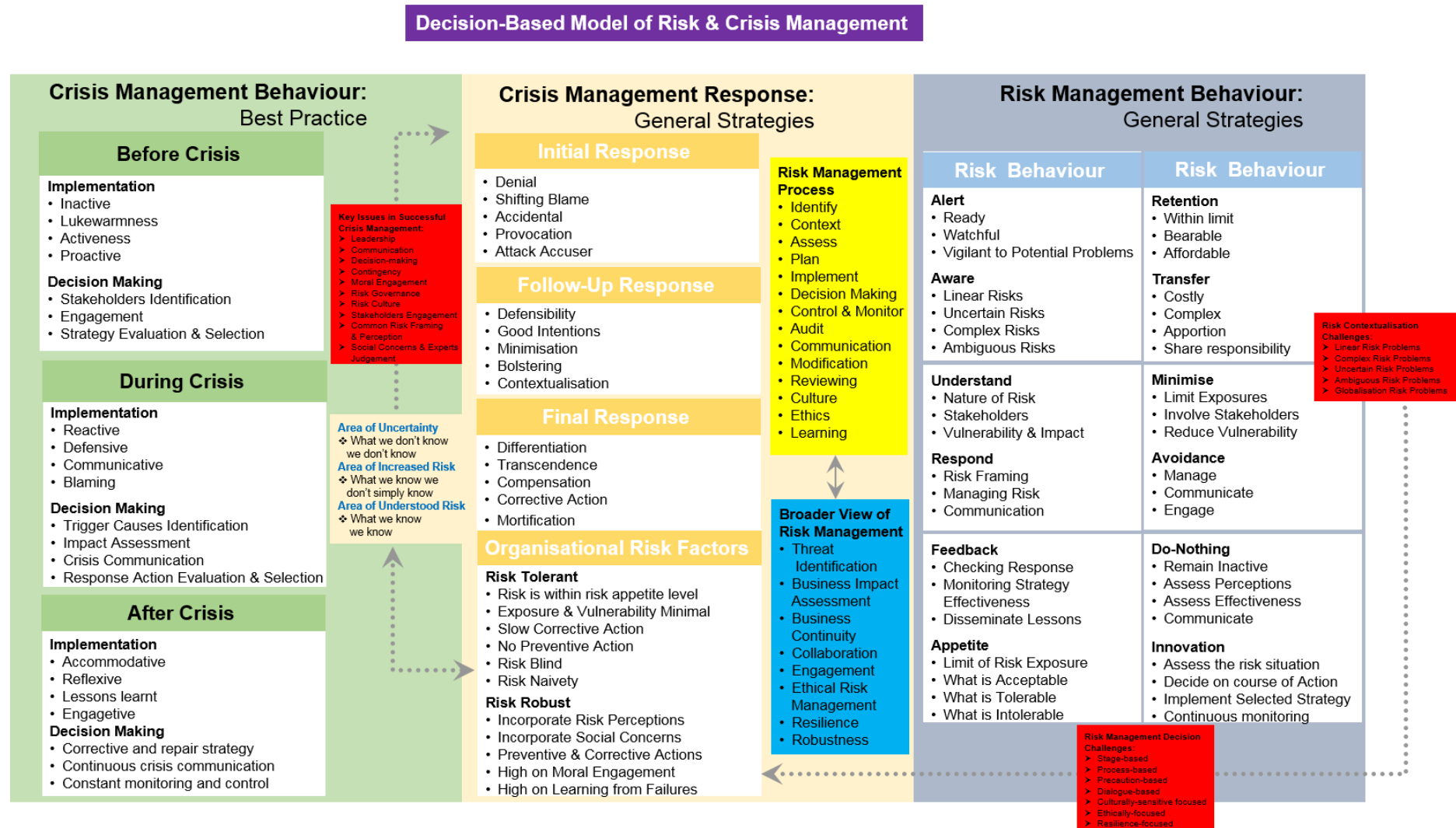
managing emerging unconventional crises and disasters which often do not fit existing risk models.

Therefore, this research calls for a decision-based model of risk and crisis management (See Figure 8.11 below). This is due to the complex, uncertain and ambiguous nature of unconventional risk and crisis as reflected in both case incidents. The uncertain risk problems require the use of ‘resilience-focused’ and ‘precaution-based’ strategies whereas ambiguous risk problems require ‘dialogue-based’ and ‘culturally-sensitive’ strategies. Therefore, since unconventional risks and crises are characterised as uncertain, complex and ambiguous situations a decision-based risk and crisis model which takes into considerations resilience-focused, precaution-based, dialogue-based and culturally-sensitive strategies is crucial to successful risk and crisis management practice. In fact, decision-based models of risk and crisis management arguably represent the latest thinking in the risk and crisis domain due to its ability to consider:

- The overlapping nature of risk, and crisis/disaster,
- Multiple phases or processes of crisis/disaster concurrently,
- The interwoven links of stage/process model of risk and crisis management, and
- The significance of external interactions and multiple views with their implications for risk and crisis management. This can be the subject of future research.

In conclusion, it would be argued that had these crisis management success factors such as leadership, communication, moral engagement, common risk framing, social concerns and experts’ judgement, and risk governance contained in Figure 8.11, both incidents could have been avoided or at least managed effectively. Figure 8.11 suggests that risk and crisis management models should be context-based given that their universal application could mean ignoring issues of culture, perception, moral engagement, and social concerns which are critical to effective risk and crisis management. The implication is that emerging unconventional risk and crisis should be conceptualised and managed in a contingent and contextual manner rather a prescriptive manner, usually depicted by stage and process based models of risk and crisis management.

Figure 8.11: Decision-Based Model of Risk and Crisis Management



Source: Author (2017)

## 8.5 SUMMARY

The intended consequences of risk and crisis management programs and strategies are well-documented in extant research. However, the unintended consequences of risk and crisis management are less-known in most theoretical and empirical studies. The empirical evidence from this research draws our attention to both the intended and unintended consequences of risk and crisis management practice. The implications of the research findings are crucial towards changing current risk and crisis management practice. First, the Nigerian government can deal more proactively with cases of terrorism and militancy related crises when there is clear understanding of what motivate delinquents to perpetuate such acts. This research, through the incorporation of moral disengagement into the risk and crisis domain, demonstrates how multinational organisations operating in conflict and crisis-affected areas of Nigeria, can overcome the emerging crises in the Niger Delta.

Second, it was found that the activities of terrorists and militants pragmatically reduce the production of crude oil in the Niger Delta. This affects revenues of multinational oil companies and the Nigerian government. The research findings indicate how organisations can deal more proactively and effectively when responding to complexity and uncertainty surrounding their business operations in conflict-ridden and crisis-affected regions of Nigeria. The empirical findings revealed that crises and disasters affect different stakeholders differently in Nigeria. At the basic level, lack of sustained growth of businesses and local communities suggest the impossibility of lifting people out of poverty. In contrast, reduction in crises and disasters in Nigeria can lead to increased sustained growth for small and medium size firms in crisis-affected areas, improve firm's performance, increased profitability and wealth creation, expansion of businesses and employment opportunities, reduction in poverty and increase opportunity cost of disasters, and consequently the environment and local people become less vulnerable.

Collectively, this research findings provided additional impetus for comprehensive risk and crisis management reform, policy and strategies, informing a robust approach to risk, crisis and resilience management in Nigeria. In conclusion, robust regulation is needed in the Nigerian oil and gas sector and the government should avoid being defenders of vested interest (Turner & Brownhill, 2004; Steiner, 2010), opposing reform especially the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) to protect the status quo. The PIB is a right step in the right direction but several pundits (Adedayo, 2011; Aghalino, 2009; Emmanuel, 2010; Fatusin et al., 2010; Steiner, 2010;

Pyagbara, 2010; UNEP, 2011) have raised concerns about its perceived over politicisation which undermined collaboration and engagement among stakeholders in Nigeria. In this research context, it is argued that if the PIB is successfully pass into legislation, it can help addresses some of the main issues raised by local oil producing communities (Figure 8.8); and resolves issue of distrust between local oil communities and multinational oil companies.

The next chapter examines the implications of risk and crisis management models and highlights areas for future directions. The chapter contains useful suggestions about the potential implications of moral disengagement in risk/crisis management and what can be done to enhanced organisation resilience against unconventional risks and crises.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **RISK AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT MODELS – IMPLICATIONS**

#### **9.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR RISK AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

The existing studies and commission reports about the Niger Delta crises considered each of the case studies in isolation but this research is the first study to collectively integrate and discussed these case studies within the risk and crisis domain. This area was not initially considered but realised in the process of this research. This research extends existing risk and crisis management scholarship on the management of risks, crises and disasters and argues that issues of moral disengagement mechanisms are responsible for generating competing constructions of unconventional risks, crises and disasters. At the root of most organisational crises and disasters, ethical dilemmas and moral disengagement mechanisms are noted to have underpinned the decision-making of leaders and organisational members which are suggested to have initiated a chain of events leading to those crises. Moral disengagement can prejudice our thought and decision process and keep us from not just doing the right things but also inhibit us from doing things right.

The implications for senior executives and organisations is that moral disengagement suspends moral reasoning or awareness at micro and macro levels and causes the magnitude and consequences of moral violations to be overlooked or disguised, and consequently potentially promotes excessive risky behaviours beyond the organisational risk appetite or limit. The empirical evidence suggests that moral disengagement mechanisms (1) weaken or destroy established approaches to mitigating and managing risks and crises, (2) facilitate sanctionable behaviours in risk, crisis and disaster situations without self-condemnation, and (3) help to maintain high moral self-image even in obviously detrimental and unethical conducts. These findings which are consistent with several previous empirical studies related to moral disengagement in different domains (e.g., Bandura, 1999; 2002; 2007; Beu & Buckley, 2004; Baker et al., 2006; Caprara & Capanna, 2005; Caprara et al., 2009; Chugh et al., 2014; Frey, 2000; Jones, 1991; May & Pauli, 2002; Moore, 2008; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Trevino, 1986; Reynolds, 2006) have crucial implications on firm's reputation, shareholders value, corporate integrity and trust, community acceptance, resilience and sustainability of organisation(s).



For example, moral disengagement at the organisational level when publicised (or made known) degrades corporate reputation, reduces public trust in organisations, and affects social and community acceptance of firms, as validated by the findings from this research. Due to these factors, organisational resilience weakens and organisational survival or sustainability within an environment becomes doubtful. Collectively, these issues call for robust risk engagement, decisive risk/crisis communication, ethical risk management, and resilience-focused strategies which embrace multiple views and take into consideration social, environmental, cultural and moral issues that are incorporated into organisational learning and strategies. These are longer-term views of moral disengagement implications in the risk and crisis domain.

This research emphasised that crisis management and moral disengagement are not mutually exclusive phenomena but collectively exhaustive paradigms because at least one of the events must happen. One implication is that with the presence of moral disengagement in organisations, those responsible for managing risks, crises or disasters wouldn't care enough to proactively prevent them. At a surface level, this could be interpreted by risk practitioners to mean that organisations need to invest more into risk and crisis behaviours programs/training as well as extensive ethical/moral simulation and risk auditing programmes. However, investment in risk and crisis management training does not automatically translate into improved and better risk management decisions. This would suggest organisations should also frequently have their risk and crisis management reviewed. This may help organisations create better tailored risk training, obtain feedback about the maturity of their risk/crisis management models from external risk consultants and avoid using risk and crisis management strategies which could be producing unintended consequences when some unplanned happenings occur.

Alternative implications are that moral disengagement considerably constrains risk/crisis management strategies and infiltrates individual risk-decisions within organisations. As a result, risk and crisis management activities before the occurrence of dangerous events become overrated and local perspectives or contexts are discounted in the process. This research has implications for our conceptualisations of the risk and crisis management decision-making process. Regardless, these findings generate a plausible explanation of why existing risk and crisis management models or strategies may fail to prevent, reduce or contain emerging crises/disasters and illustrates the importance of understanding moral disengagement in risk and crisis management processes.

It would be premature for organisations to conclude that their risk management activities are robust and resilient without some form of stress testing and independent risk verification. Therefore, it is the suggestion of this thesis that the risk management of such organisations as reflected in Shell and Chevron cases need risk management. In other words, your risk management needs a risk management. The real implication is that because the presence of moral disengagement in the risk and crisis domain across organisations diminishes risk management practice or at least causes risk management to be overrated, companies should have their risk and crisis management activities audited by external risk experts/consultants much akin to the auditing of financial statements.

This research rejected the conventional wisdom that ‘the best predictor of future events is past events’ (Fink, 2002, p. 43). The implication suggests that current existing risk and crisis models proceeded as if future crises and disasters will always follow similar patterns of the past; views that have been challenged by the nature of unconventional risks and crises. The fact remains that no two crises or disasters are the same even though comparable lessons could be learned from them. Attempts to force existing risk and crisis models on to emerging crises without adequate regard for their context, uniqueness and complexity are commonly responsible for organisations unintentionally creating their own worst disasters. The unintended consequences connected with self-inflicted disaster can be extreme: ranging from regulatory penalties; negative publicity; huge, sudden costs; lost revenues; lawsuits and criminal judgments; liquidation and take-over; hostile attacks – vandalism, and kidnapping; fallen share prices; shareholder value reduction; and reduced production or sales.

In contrast to conventional perspectives (e.g., learning from disaster, normal accident, risk society, systemic failure and risk homeostasis), the implications from this research further suggest that initial triggers of disaster which are contextualised to be systemic and exogenous event(s) were often under management control and critical decisions that could have averted the disaster/crisis were hardly acted upon. This perspective reveals that the potential downside of moral disengagement, risk underestimation, over-turning established risk framework and reducing risk management to ‘tick-box’ or compliance exercises are known in advance prior to organisational crisis/disaster. The crucial matter is that perception of risk across the organisation diminishes over time and inappropriate organisational behaviours become normal practices initiating future crisis/disaster. This is comparable to the so-called ‘no texting while driving rule’ – a driver who has successfully text while driving at times thinks little of the rule.

Companies engage in similar habits – overlooking or sidestepping their risk management practices to temporarily benefit themselves and slowly get into self-inflicted behaviours.

Another implication of this research is that moral and ethical components of risk and crisis must be divulged and factored into risk and crisis management models to provide more informed or better decisions. The findings further suggest that when attempting to improve risk/crisis management culture and strategy in organisations, leaders or senior executives should take the initiative to better educate managers and other staff about the moral values of risk management processes, models, strategies and standards more generally. Markedly, improving managers’ and other staff’s appreciation for such moral guides increases their ability to access moral frameworks in the face of harmful situations and in cases of seemingly inconsequential violations of norms (Reynold, 2006; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015). This point is significant because many of the scandals, organisational crises and disasters began with simple violations of professional norms, safety standards and sidestepping risk management in which harm did not emerge until much later in the process (Table 9.1 below). This calls for an explicit ethical crisis management framework as depicted in Figure 5.2 (Chapter Five) to detect moral disengagement across organisation(s). As revealed, the lack of an explicit framework to detect moral disengagement within organisations makes them vulnerable to unethical and irresponsible corporate behaviours.

**Table 9.1: Case Studies of How Moral Disengagement Perpetuate Scandals, Crises and Disasters**

Mechanisms of MD	Description	Case Examples
Attribution of blame	Blaming one’s adversaries or compelling circumstances can serve self-exonerating purposes. This implies that by fixing the blame on others or on circumstances, not only are one’s own injurious actions excusable but one can even feel self-righteous in the process.	Union Carbide – Bhopal disaster; Shell – Ogoni Crisis; BP Deepwater Horizon disaster; Three Mile Island; Challenger; HIH Insurance Group crisis, Chevron – Ilaje crisis, etc.
Moral justification	People do not ordinarily engage in reprehensible conduct until they have justified to themselves the rightness of their actions or decisions.	Chevron – Ilaje crisis; Bonga oil disaster; London 7/7; 9/11 Terrorist Attacks; Enron scandal; Satyam scandal; FIFA 2015 scandal; BCCI scandal, etc.

Displacement of responsibility	People view their conducts as springing from social pressures or dictates of others rather than something for which they are personally responsible.	WorldCom; BP Deepwater Horizon disaster; Union Carbide – Bhopal disaster; Chevron – Ilaje crisis; Shell – Ogoni crisis; New York 9/11 Terrorist Attacks, etc.
Distorting the consequences	When people pursue activities that serve their interests but produce detrimental effects they avoid facing the harm they cause or minimise it	Parmalat; Enron; Bonga oil disaster; BP Deepwater Horizon disaster; Bhopal disaster; Shell – Ogoni crisis, etc.
Euphemistic labelling	Language shapes perceptions and thought processes on which actions are based. Activities can take on quite different appearances depending on what they are called.	Environmental protesters are labelled as militants in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria; Drones and Terrorists; Civilians killed because of counterterrorism measures are called collateral casualties; Enron scandal; WV emission scandal, etc.
Advantageous comparison	Reprehensible conduct can assume very different qualities depending on what it is compared with.	Shell Brent Spar; Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria pollution and environmental devastation compared with local illegal oil refining pollution, etc.
Diffusion of responsibility	The deterrent power of self-sanctions is weakened when the link between conduct and its consequences is obscured by diffusing responsibility for culpable behaviour.	Three Mile Island; Exxon Valdez disaster; Shell Nigeria crisis; Chernobyl; Challenger; Chevron Nigeria crisis; Maxwell Group scandal, etc.
Dehumanisation	The strength of moral self-censure for harmful practices depends on how those who suffer the consequences are regarded.	Bhopal disaster; Shell – Ogoni crisis; Chevron – Ilaje crisis; Bonga oil disaster, etc.

Source: Author (2017)

The real challenge and controversial issues include: who is morally disengaged in the organisation, to what extent is the moral disengagement, what is the nature of morality or ethics (i.e., social contracts, rights/wrongs, virtue ethics, rights/liberty, legislation/regulation), and

how does individual moral disengagement shape organisational ethics and vice versa. These are crucial issues that should be addressed by organisations to gain the benefits of operating as good corporate citizens and ethically conscious organisations. It was clear that wider consideration of the risk and crisis context and conceptualisation of dangerous incidents to reflect multiple perspectives is crucial for robust risk and crisis management.

This research has substantial implications for theories of moral development, moral behaviour, risk and crisis management. Given that practitioners and researchers focus more of their energy on developing methods and programs to standardise and institutionalise ethics in organisations, but as expounded in this research, a critical component of corporate ethics resides at the micro level of analysis and is driven largely by how leaders or managers think about morality of situations and decisions. This could limit efforts to improve moral behaviour and ethical leadership in organisations when individual differences and moral disengagement are not addressed from the onset.

Perhaps these findings will encourage a re-examination of moral development, moral reasoning and moral behaviour theories in risk and crisis situations to glean from their basic arguments insights into other areas of ethical leadership, moral decision making, and risk management. Although much research has been conducted about their details, their limited applications to risk, crisis and disaster management has somewhat undermined the value these theories espouse in managing emerging unconventional risks, crises and disasters.

## **9.2 RISK AND CRISIS MODELS – UNCONVENTIONAL CHALLENGES**

The concerns noted above suggest three unconventional challenges face all risk and crisis managers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Firstly, deciding whether unconventional risks, crises, and disasters should be treated as stages, processes, or both. That is, how should managers organise the management of organisational risks, crises, and disasters? The extant research treating crisis as a triggering event or a process of incubation remains inconclusive and inadequate. The event view of organisational crises portrayed crises as unexpected, low probability and high impact events which involve high stakes and demanding urgent action (Adrot & Moriceau, 2013; Boin & McConnell, 2007; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Roux-Dufort, 2007b).

In contrast, the process view of organisational crises emphasises how organisational conditions (e.g., managerial ignorance, imperfections, organisational failures, resistance to learning)

cumulate for crisis to be triggered but largely centred on the pre- and post-crisis stages, besides the pressing crisis response (Andrew, 2011; Ansell, Boin, & Keller, 2010; Coombs, 2007; Reza, 2011; Roux-Dufort, 2007a). Neither the event nor the process view of organisational crises sufficiently addresses the concerns that unconventional crises/disasters are highly fluid, temporal, interwoven with complicated factors and multiple perspectives, which could be passive. This implies that risk and crisis models should not be rigid, but flexible to accommodate diverse views. These are some of the challenges that risk/crisis managers should overcome when managing organisational risks, crises or disasters.

Secondly, deciding whether risk and crisis strategies should be applied as best practice, context-based, best fit or unique fit. That is, should risk and crisis models or strategies be applied uniformly, contextually, or perhaps intuitively?

Thirdly, deciding whether the risk and crisis management process should be top-down, bottom-up, or enterprise-wide across the organisation? These are challenges that should be overcome if organisations are to remain relevant and proactive in managing unconventional risks, crises and disasters.

### **9.3 MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO EXISTING KNOWLEDGE, METHOD AND PRACTICE**

As noted throughout this thesis, the ideas argued here are clearly not unfamiliar to moral psychologists and ethical researchers, particularly the paradox of moral disengagement and the impossibility of conducting moral disengagement research without substantive context and case studies (e.g., Bandura, 1999; Bandura et al., 2000; Fiske, 2004; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; McAlister et al., 2006; Moore et al., 2012; Rogers, 2003; White et al., 2009; Young et al., 2007). The broader contribution of this research is that it would require a courageous, ethical and socially responsible decision to overcome issues of moral disengagement in the risk and crisis domain. This research further advanced previous studies on moral disengagement to the risk/crisis domain but diverge strongly in terms of our reconceptualization of the mechanisms of moral disengagement, as constituent to organised corporate irresponsibility. There are five main contributions from this research to existing knowledge in risk and crisis management that are worth noting.

Firstly, this research contributes to the established bodies of literature in risk, crisis and disaster management, and to the practice within these fields. In context, the research brings a new perspective to the field of risk, crisis and disaster management, terrorism and resilience management through the concept of moral disengagement. The fact that when moral disengagement fragment into risk and crisis situations causes rogue and detrimental behaviours that may not be originally intended, signal the need to revisit current thinking in risk and crisis management. It may be that the entire conceptual confusion surrounding the effectiveness of risk and crisis management responses, strategies and models is rooted in this idea. However, one can also argue that absolute elimination of moral disengagement in risk and crisis situations is practically impossible especially in cases where organisations operate in an environment or society which inherently promote the use of such moral disengagement mechanisms. Nonetheless, an alternative explanation is to create new forms of research agenda capable of uncovering the heinous aspect of organisations' behaviours and decisions in processes of risk and crisis management. Specifically, this is the first original attempt to empirically investigate the relationships between moral disengagement and crisis management. Following this view, this research shows a divergence in relationship between moral disengagement and crisis management leading to misclassification of dangerous events and overestimation of existing risk/crisis models. This insight go beyond existing explanations and models available in the extant risk and crisis research through which previously independent concepts become associated (Adrot & Moriceau, 2013; Andrew, 2011; Ansell et al., 2010; Aquino et al., 2007; Bandura, 2007; Beu & Buckley, 2004; Boin & McConnell, 2007; Caprara et al., 2009; Coombs, 2007; Jackson & Sparr, 2005; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Reza, 2011; Roux-Dufort, 2007a; Fiske, 2004; McAlister et al., 2006; Moore, 2008; Rogers, 2003).

Secondly, albeit extensive studies have been conducted to evaluate risk and crisis management across organisations in different sectors following the aftermath of major organisational scandals, crises and disasters, the link between moral disengagement and risk/crisis management has not been examined and the implications for practice in risk and crisis management are still under-researched or lacking. This thesis complements this focal area of risk and crisis research due to empirical evidence that individuals and organisations with moral disengagement may make, or at least superficially present as artificial effective risk leaders and organisations (cf. Bandura, 2007; 2009; Caprara et al., 2009; Chugh et al., 2014; Fiske, 2004; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Ntayi et al., 2010; White et al., 2009). At the same time, ample evidence from this research suggests that individuals and organisations using moral

disengagement mechanisms can be self-destructive in the long-term. In critical terms, high moral disengagement is associated with ineffective crisis management response whereas low moral disengagement is associated with unsustainable crisis management. The perspective is that moral disengagement mechanisms create multiple and conflicting interests in risk/crisis situations; too much MD mechanisms the organisation self-inflicted disaster; too little create complexity and chaos in which organisational risk culture become contaminated.

Thirdly, this thesis challenges both stage-based and process-based models of risk and crisis management as deficient in managing emerging unconventional crises/disasters. In addition, the notion of best practice or universal application of risk and crisis management models or strategies are refuted due to multiple perspectives and complexities that characterise unconventional risk, crisis and disaster situations. In practical settings, this research adds that risk and crisis management should not proceed as if all crises/disasters are equivalent in which case best practices or standards become a norm (Andrew, 2011; Boin et al., 2010; Borodzic, 2005; Constantinides, 2013; Elliott, 2009; Hiles, 2011; Lagadec, 2004; 2009; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Perrow, 2007; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Reza, 2011; Roux-Dufort, 2007b; Shrivastava, 1993; Turner, 1976; 't Hart, 2013). As a result, best fit or unique fit in risk and crisis management which aligns and integrates the risk/crisis management processes with broader organisational strategy, environment, tools, context, culture, perceptions, governance, moral engagement and social acceptability are proposed as the future of risk and crisis management. Thus, this research strongly calls for unique fit and decision-based model of risk and crisis management in order to improve risk/crisis management practice and organisational resilience. The vast amount of risk and crisis literatures are mostly dominated by Western thinking and philosophies over the decades but this thesis adds African perspective using case studies to the body of knowledge in risk and crisis management. Albeit it is acknowledged that different cultures exist within the African context, however it is claim that moral disengagement mechanisms are prevalent in cases of self-inflicted disasters which could cut across different cultures.

Fourthly, this research uses qualitative rather than quantitative or mixed approach to evaluate issues of moral disengagement and crisis management practices. Although, there is significant mixed approach at theoretical level in terms of combining theories from moral psychology, ethics, risk and crisis management. This was due necessary because of the initial proposition in this thesis that the way organisations manage disasters/crises matters. The context suggests that it is difficult for effective risk and crisis management to take place if the initial



understanding of what constitutes risk, crisis or disaster is utterly flawed. The wider implication of moral disengagement in risk and crisis domain is that it complicates the initial understanding of what constitutes crisis or disaster as demonstrated by the case studies.

The last main contribution is that moral disengagement in the risk and crisis domain is about people and risk management. In this context, the use of moral disengagement mechanisms in risk and crisis situations has short-term benefits but long-term detrimental consequences. For example, the use of attribution of blame and displacement of responsibility could help minimise the amount of compensation an organisation would have to pay in the event of culpability. In contrast, the use of such MD mechanisms could signify that organisations are irresponsible and that could lead to hostile attacks on such organisations as the Chevron and Shell case studies reveal. Somewhat surprisingly, however, use of MD mechanisms were also viewed as crisis disengagement mechanisms.

These potentially important results raise the possibility that moral disengagement may be a double-edge sword, fostering detrimental conducts and disengagement from ethical conducts/behaviours in the workplace (Bandura, 2007; Beu & Buckley, 2004; Chugh et al., 2014; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Rogers, 2003; White et al., 2009; Young et al., 2007). Specifically, the two-fold implications are about ‘the dark side of leadership’ and ‘the dark side of organisation’ in risk, crisis and disaster situations. These represent new directions for future research to consider. These directions include a large-scale research project investigating organisational ethics and risk governance, inflated-organisational ethics and risk culture, and the disequilibrium nature of organisational ethics. These issues are critical to understand how responses to risk, crisis and disaster situations are influenced and informed by factors such as environment, ethics, culture, perception, moral disengagement and philosophy. In conclusion, this thesis contributes that the presence of moral disengagement in organisations increase the complex and multi-categorical descriptions of unconventional crisis or disaster. This view indicates that causes of crisis and disaster are diffuse into wider problems of complexity, normal accident, risk society, risk homeostasis, and force majeure. In closing, this research contributes to understanding why, despite the adoption of enterprise risk management framework, organisations still seem unwilling and unable to mitigate unconventional risks/crises and to provide an effective solution.

## CHAPTER TEN

### 10.1 GENERAL CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to add to scholarship on risk and crisis management which has increasingly acknowledged that the current risk and crisis models are incompatible with emerging dangerous events (Andrew, 2011; Ansell et al., 2010; Boin, 2004; Boin & McConnell, 2007; Toft & Reynolds, 2005; Roux-Dufort, 2007a). Numerous attempts have earlier been made to highlight different, alternative ways of understanding the nature of risk, crisis and disaster and to provide several risk and crisis models (e.g., Andrew, 2011; Boin et al., 2010; Borodzicz, 2005; Constantinides, 2013; Elliott, 2009; Hiles, 2011; Lagadec, 2004; 2009; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Perrow, 2007; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Reza, 2011; Roux-Dufort, 2007b; Shrivastava, 1993; Turner, 1976; 't Hart, 2013). However, what these accounts have lacked is a recognition, or incorporation, of perspectives from the moral psychology and ethical leadership literature, specifically in relation to the connections between moral disengagement and risk/crisis management. This, as argued in this thesis, has proven detrimental to the pursuit of pragmatic and sustainable risk, crisis, disaster, and resilience management. As a result, it is crucial that organisations do what they do on purpose and mindfully rather than habitually or because they are simply following conventions in risk and crisis management.

Given the above, this thesis has sought to encourage greater reflection about the relationship between moral disengagement, crisis management and a broader resilience approach to managing emerging unconventional risks, crises and disasters. The opening chapter addresses contemporary challenges and salient issues of militancy and oil terrorism rooted in the Niger Delta crises. In fact, it was argued that an attention to moral disengagement and the practicality of risk/crisis theories can contribute significantly to current efforts in improving risk and crisis management practice; and the need to develop a truly interdisciplinary risk/crisis research, firstly by bringing to the fore the moral and ethical dimension of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster which represent a defining, yet neglected, characteristic of risk and crisis research.

The fragmented nature of risk and crisis management literature was noted to have contributed to the inadequacy and insufficiency of current risk and crisis management practice. The lack of consensus about what constitutes risk, crisis and disaster was noted to have undermined efforts towards their management. This has potential implications for the management of unconventional risks, crises and disasters; if our views of risk, crisis and disaster are

ambiguous, then our approaches to their management are even more confused and increasing organisational resilience become most difficult. These issues are consistent with several existing traditional and current risk and crisis research (Andrew, 2011; Augustine, 2000; Bauman, 2002; Beck, 1992; 2009; Borodzicz, 2005; Boin & Fishbacher-Smith, 2011; Fink, 2002; Coombs, 2007; Lerbinger, 2012; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Ulmer et al., 2007; Roxburgh, 2010; Turner, 1976; Turner & Pidgeon, 1997; 't Hart, 2013; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

Of importance, this thesis expands upon arguments about the ontological and epistemological nature of unconventional risk and crisis, and induces a greater sensemaking appreciation of dangerous events, that flows among risk experts (researchers and practitioners) and non-risk experts (lay audience or people). The practical implication suggests that by seeing risk/crisis experts not as separate and superior to non-risk experts but as one amongst many others, then such collective interdisciplinary and multiple views will help to soften the divide that has characterised unconventional risks, crises and disasters and their management. This is an area for which many resources and increased attention are still required in risk and crisis management practice. The lack of consensus among those responsible for managing risks and crises, as well as the tendency to treat non-risk experts as less superior or lacking understanding of risk/crisis nature, undermines sustainable risk/crisis management; something that was clear following the emerging crises of Niger Delta especially the Shell – Ogoni crisis and Chevron – Ilaje crisis discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

The second and third chapters of this thesis contains an early empirical section in which two unique case studies of crises were considered, focusing on the challenges posed to the organisations involved and other stakeholders, in managing the emerging crises and disasters in the Niger Delta. The opening section deals with issues of vulnerable environment and vulnerable people, especially how local militants often clashed with multinational oil companies in Nigeria due to the so-called 'resource-control dilemma' and environmental justice. Each of the case studies provide unique challenges for organisations and their risk/crisis managers operating in conflict-ridden and crisis-affected areas of Nigeria. The inclusion of the two case studies are notable due to their global and ill-structured nature, complexity and large-scale impacts on the environment and local people.

The consequences of crises/disasters are unprecedented for stakeholders in Nigeria and even extend to countries beyond, as reflected in the well-known human rights legal cases of Kiobel

vs. Royal Dutch Shell Group, and *Bowoto vs. Chevron*, both instituted in the United States under the Alien Tort Statute (ATS) for crimes against humanity. The case studies were secondary analyses of Shell and Chevron responses to dangerous events. The thesis found that the detrimental impact from Niger Delta crises/disasters intensifies as vulnerabilities of local people increase. For example, rapid migration from local communities is linked to destruction of natural resources that usually trap people to remain in rural communities. Critically, both case studies represent opportunities to learn from risk failures and disasters with an increased advantage to improve early warning, disaster preparedness, risk model verification, simulation and training which focus on flexibility, resilience, sustainability and business continuity. The importance of local engagement and a sustainable view of ethical risk management were also identified as two characteristics of successful risk and crisis management. The role of regulation and regulatory agencies in managing the persistent crises in the Niger Delta were noted. A mounting interest and increased environmental campaigns about the consequences of oil and gas exploration and production in Nigeria was also apparent. This was a positive move towards improving environmental management practices and crisis management in Nigeria.

The most crucial risk and crisis management theories relevant to this thesis were also considered with special focus on risk perception, risk/crisis communication, risk society and risk culture, and learning from disasters in Chapter Four. The concern raised about each of these theories was not about their validity but rather on their collective synergy which could produce more far reaching effects than when applied in isolation. This perspective was rooted in the recommendations emanating from this research, as it provides an all-encompassing approach to responding to or managing emerging risks, crises and disasters. Arguably, it is insufficient to manage risks and crises using one model or theory but a more pragmatic approach incorporating multiple views and strategies leading to greater flexibility and resilience is likely to have greater success.

There are several issues regarding the inadequate, incompatible and insufficient nature of current risk, crisis and disaster models also raised in the fourth chapter of this thesis, especially with respect to divergence in the conceptualisation of risk, crisis and disaster, or other dangerous events. The debates about event, stage and process views of risk and crisis management were expounded to highlight the dynamic and complex nature of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster. The inclusion of these debates was deliberately intended to suggest the need for incorporating multidisciplinary research into the risk/crisis management literature to reflect the multiple realities of unconventional risks, crises and disasters.

The fourth chapter also considered the epistemological and ontological nature of risk, crisis and disaster by focusing on the definition and debates surrounding these terms. The difficulties surrounding gaining consensus about what constitute risk, crisis and disaster were highlighted; it was argued that understanding what these terms mean for different people is critical to effective risk and crisis management. Although it is recognised that not all situations described as crises or disasters should be labelled as such, but understanding and incorporating multiple views into risk and crisis management could lead to broader approaches which may increase resilience and robustness of organisations before, during and after major crisis/disaster.

In concluding Chapter Four, a call was made for risk and crisis management to be context-based and focus on the uniqueness of unconventional risks, crises and disasters, instead of often attempting universal application of existing risk/crisis models or standards which have dominated risk and crisis research for decades. It was also suggested that a few risk theories such as risk society and Normal Accident are still influential but represent a passive approach to unconventional risks, crises and disasters which did little to change the way risk/crisis managers manage emerging risks and crises. The conclusion from the literature is that successful risk and crisis management requires moral engagement, flexibility, improved risk culture and governance, and robust leadership.

Chapter Five reviewed the literature on crisis management and moral disengagement. The concept of moral disengagement is central to the discussion surrounding this thesis; it emphasised that moral disengagement presents a fundamental paradox in crisis management practice. Following the review of the moral disengagement literature, the conclusion is that moral disengagement and crisis management may co-exist. The thesis underscored the fact that both concepts are mutually exclusive only if crisis management is defined in a restrictive way as the absence of crisis or disaster. In context, the introduction of moral disengagement into the risk and crisis domain exposes some potential factors or issues that make modern organisations vulnerable to crises and disasters. The duality of moral disengagement in risk and crisis situations was revealed where on one hand, moral disengagement is the use of mechanisms which sanction detrimental conducts/behaviours in risk/crisis response; and on the other hand, it manifests as crisis disengagement mechanisms in which organisations are constantly seeking to reduce or discount culpability in risk/crisis situations. Although each of the mechanisms of moral disengagement was corresponding to some crisis management response strategies, this research focused on the need for broader resilience and sustainability when managing emerging crises/disasters. In concluding Chapter Five, it was noted that moral

disengagement mechanisms represent justifiable evils which are harmful and risky strategies that potentially lead to crisis intensification and greater vulnerability of organisations.

The philosophical and methodological perspectives adopted for this research were reviewed in Chapter Six. The issues of research design, a multiple case research approach, data collection and research philosophy were clarified. There was extensive discussion about the rationale for the case research approach and justification for the selection of the chosen case studies. In addition, explicit attention was paid to the research philosophy in risk and crisis research as well as discussion regarding sample issues and techniques, and case selection strategies. Given the extremely emotive nature of this research, great care was taken to ensure that the research validity, reliability, generalisation and ethical concerns were reflected upon. The implications for conducting sensitive research of this nature was extensively discussed.

While Chapter Seven focused on the philosophical thinking underpinning this research, Chapter Eight presented the empirical evidence of this thesis. The analysis of the case studies considering the issue of moral disengagement in risk and crisis situations posed exceptional challenges for organisations. The research findings were presented in Chapter Eight with two main sections. The first addressed the theoretical conclusions regarding the research aims and objectives while the second part provided extensive recommendations which incorporated notable risk and crisis theories such as learning from disasters/failures, risk perception, risk culture and risk governance, and risk/crisis communication. The empirical section also discussed moral disengagement in the context of risk and crisis management. The research model was presented and discussion of the moral disengagement and risk models were connected to further justify the recommendations.

Chapter Nine of this thesis extensively discussed the research implications and lessons learned from the discussions and empirical findings. The essence was to address the ‘so what’ aspect of this research and to integrate that discussion into broader risk, crisis and disaster management. For example, despite the increasing evidence of moral disengagement mechanisms in risk and crisis situations, it was found that less attention was being paid to their implications. Perhaps equally disturbing is the fact that due to use of moral disengagement in risk and crisis situations, organisations and their risk/crisis managers may not be persuaded about the detrimental or dark side of their activities or strategies which could be disastrous for several other stakeholders. To date, the most compelling evidence for this claim derives from studies demonstrating that moral disengagement is positively associated with peace and

conflict (Jackson & Sparr, 2005; McAlister, 2001), computer hacking (Rogers, 2003; Young et al., 2007), ethical intervention (Chugh et al., 2014), ecological sustainability (Bandura, 2007), corporate transgressions (Bandura et al., 2000; Beu & Buckley, 2004; White et al., 2009), organisational corruption (Moore, 2008), genocide, war, greater aggression, and terrorism (Aquino et al., 2007; Bandura et al., 1996; Caprara et al., 2009; Fiske, 2004; Ntayi et al., 2010; Mafimisebi & Thorne, 2015).

At first glance, evidence of moral disengagement in risk and crisis situations seems compelling. Yet many of the earlier studies on which this research was based are marked by methodological and contextual flaws that do not adequately address the trigger causes and features of moral disengagement in environmental or organisational settings which are characterised by inherent ethical or moral contamination. Nevertheless, the evidence of the ‘double-edged sword’ of moral disengagement in risk and crisis situations was robust. Albeit the evidence is still at a preliminary stage, there is need for more research to replicate and extend the samples to other contexts and domains. Moreover, if moral disengagement indeed functions as a double-edged sword, it is unclear whether moral disengagement is suspended in situations that naturally promote detrimental conducts (e.g., terrorism and counter terrorism, climate change and climate change mitigation), or whether different components or mechanisms such as unethical contagion, moral hypocrisy, ethical salience, moral barrenness, ethical pollution, or ethical fading, are preferentially linked to one set of mechanisms and outcomes.

Critically, this thesis contributes to better ways of improving organisational resilience and robustness when managing future crises and disasters, also enhancing current risk and crisis management practices. At the beginning of this thesis, it was acknowledged that the effectiveness of conventional risk and crisis management models and strategies remain difficult to measure or define at incident onset. How do we measure or define risk and crisis management models/strategies effectiveness? Also, effectiveness of risk models and strategies can only be validly and empirically defined with the benefits of hindsight. For this reason, the inadequacy of existing risk and crisis management models is well documented. Yet, the crucial issue is whether risk experts and academics have become trapped in the logic of their field, obstructing knowledge from the outside world? Risk and crisis management models/strategies have rational foundations but people’s actions and decisions about risk, crisis and disaster situations comprise complex and not necessarily rational behaviours. Clearly, a paradigm shift in how we manage emerging crises and disasters, and response strategies is essential. In summary, the effectiveness of risk and crisis management models and responses is affected by:

1. Organisation's risk culture: This defines how organisations manage or respond to risk/crisis.
2. Organisation's risk governance: This play pivotal role in the way an organisation develops strategies for risk/crisis management and affected the way relationships are forged with stakeholders.
3. Elite cues (i.e., importance of trusted elites as risk messengers): Risk managers play a crucial role in how successfully their organisations respond and adapt to unconventional risks/crises.
4. Contextual influences (e.g., political, social, economic, security, regulation, trust, etc.): No two crises are exactly the same; thus, understanding contextual influences remain central to effective and sustainable risk/crisis management.
5. Situational influences (e.g. past experiences, communication, lack of dialogue, local climate or temperature, vulnerable people and environment, etc.): This change how an organisation would respond to actual crisis/disaster especially the broader enterprise risk management strategy.
6. Models fundamentalism (the conviction that our models or strategies are flawless or at least the best available risk/crisis management practice): This impact how an organisation perceived external perspectives or lay-folks opinions which may be crucial to robust risk management strategy.
7. The individual's pre-existing worldview (egalitarian/communitarian vs hierarchical/individualistic): This may cloud risk decision making and overshadow an organisation's own risk culture.
8. Moral disengagement and contagious effect: This may confuse risk/crisis evolution with respect to defining or re-defining the risk origin and consequently influences overall risk management decisions.
9. Imperfection in risk knowledge: This may lead to failure of imagination and causes flaws in the risk/crisis management practice of an organisation.
10. Taken-for-granted values and assumptions; and organised irresponsibility: This results from over dependence on business case as the best rationale for managing risks/crises, leading to confusion over best practice v. best fit in risk/crisis management.



Overall, it was clear that the domains of risk and crisis management need to be expanded. The awareness and understanding of the multiple, interdisciplinary nature of unconventional risk/crisis management is crucial to building robust and resilient organisations. Although, the real challenges of managing emerging crises and disasters, especially terrorism and related crises in the Nigerian context, should not be underestimated. However, the consistent discontinuation of risk/crisis management practices from risk and crisis theories are partly responsible for the ineffectiveness of organisational capability in responding to emerging unconventional risk, crisis, and disaster. The value of risk simulation, training and consultation with independent risk consultants should not be undervalued.

In conclusion, it will be argued that past cases of risk failures, crises and disasters as demonstrated in the case studies of Shell and Chevron should be viewed as learning opportunities but this requires active learning, collaboration, communication, engagement with other stakeholders, ethical decisions, and constant risk/crisis management auditing. It is interesting that most organisations and their risk/crisis managers forget to conclude that the main reason they are failing in managing emerging crises or disasters is because they are either following a process that does not work or using strategies that do not fit the unique nature of unconventional risk, crisis and disaster.

## **10.2 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

The UNEP commission's construction of documentary reality on the Niger Delta crises had directly affected the researcher. There had been damage done to the environment and the local people because of the crises in the Niger Delta before the UNEP Commission started its investigation which was completed in 2011. There have been notable concerns such as attribution of blame, displacement of responsibility, moral justification and distorting of consequences of detrimental conducts arising from the environmental pollution and disasters in the Niger Delta over the decades. Collectively, these issues create familiarity with the case studies and multiple perspectives regarding the crises. Therefore, the organisation of the Commission investigation and hindsight had prevented the UNEP Commission from grasping ethical or moral issues in the risk and crisis situations of the Niger Delta, Nigeria. The researcher had initially duplicated the Commission's errors in their starting hypothesis about vulnerable environment and vulnerable people in the Niger Delta. The working hypothesis had assumed harm to both environment and people which appears to discount normative issues such as moral dilemmas, perceptions, and culture which are passive in the crises.

However, the hindsight bias was overcome through collection of data from multiple sources and data triangulation. Likewise, working alone, the researcher could never have amassed the amount of datasets that the UNEP Commission produced, but the unconventional nature of this investigation and creativity gave the researcher a resource they did not have: the opportunity to reconstruct the events in context of moral disengagement, putting actions, interpretations and meanings into risk and crisis management context, and revising social, cultural and ethical aspects of risk and crisis leading the researcher to different conclusions. Taken together, these points provide robust assurance about the internal validity, construct validity and trustworthiness of this research.

The generalisation of the research findings should be taken into consideration when interpreting the research conclusions. The context and scope of this research are limited to the Niger Delta crises especially the two foundational case studies of the Shell – Ogoni crisis and Chevron – Ilaje crisis, although several other global case studies of crises and disasters have been cited during this research. Nonetheless, the empirical settings and contexts should be considered in future research. It is crucial to note that findings from this research are consistent with several existing studies but also extend to issues which were not explicitly discussed in extant research. The findings were robust across data sources and cross-analyses until data saturation was reached.

A limitation of this research that should be acknowledged is that the thesis does not address moral disengagement in contexts where it is almost impossible for businesses or organisations to operate without compromise and inducement. The Nigerian context provides a typical illustration of such a context, and it is reasonable to conclude that the moral disengagement model may not sufficiently explain unethical or detrimental conducts or actions in such contexts. In addition, the issue of self-reported moral disengagement is a major concern; and extracting data about moral disengagement could depend largely on proxy or dummy methods. For example, organisations and their staff may be reluctant to give information about moral disengagement because of the need to avoid scrutiny that may produce embarrassing or negative findings.

The sensitive nature of moral disengagement in risk and crisis situations may involve issues of liability, trust, confidentiality and reputation. Organisations and their senior executives may understandably be anxious about revealing to researchers their inner thoughts and concerns about moral disengagement, for instance, if they fear that research data and reports may be

discoverable in the event of a legal proceedings and subsequent major dangerous events. Researchers and practitioners should think more clearly about the role that moral disengagement mechanisms can play in disrupting organisations' survival, business continuity, and resilience. Specifically, moral disengagement research is more likely to be valid using case research method or strategy due to the need for empirical analysis which directly involves case(s). These issues should be taken into consideration in future research.

Finally, the highly emotive nature of risk and crisis management especially the case studies which formed part of the Niger Delta crises was another factor that tended to affect objective analysis. Yet, with careful planning and collation of empirical evidence from multiple sources and data triangulation, possible inherent bias was overcome. As a result, the researcher feels that the thesis is robust and consequently the research aims and objectives have been fulfilled.

### **10.3 NEW DIRECTIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The thesis aims have been achieved during this research process. Nonetheless, there are new directions and future research areas that are essential to risk, crisis, disaster, and resilience management.

Firstly, theoretically, moral disengagement and crisis management interacts at two levels of analysis and is a robust predictor of unethical and detrimental conducts across different organisations in different industries. Moral disengagement emergence is a micro phenomenon as evidenced by several early studies of moral disengagement (Aquino et al., 2007; Bandura et al., 1996; 2001; Bandura, 2007; Beu & Buckley, 2004; Caprara et al., 2009; Jackson & Sparr, 2005; Fiske, 2004; McAlister et al., 2006; Moore, 2008; Rogers, 2003) – that is, moral disengagement emerges at individual level. The current research contributes empirical data and analysis to compare moral disengagement mechanisms with crisis management responses in risk and crisis situations. The datasets did not specifically seek to test or address the detrimental conducts of leadership and organisations in risk and crisis situations but the data allows some theoretical generalisation with respect to risk behaviours, crisis management strategies and organisational resilience. The caveat is that the relationships between moral disengagement and other concepts like risk management, sustainability and resilience, may be more complex especially where harm was not involved; and issues such as magnitude of consequences, selective risk perception, corporate organised irresponsibility, and social consensus should also be considered. This offers potential for more future theoretical and empirical research to understand these complex relationships and their implications.

Secondly, moral disengagement, as conceptualised and represented in this research, can also emerge at the macro level particularly when managing risk and crisis situations in which senior managers or leaders exhibit behaviours that appear to protect their organisations but could be detrimental to other stakeholders. Thus, moral disengagement is defined in terms of micro – macro phenomenon. Therefore, while an individual’s level of moral disengagement has been investigated, subsequent evaluation cannot be devoid of the organisation’s level of moral disengagement. Although, individual moral disengagement and organisation moral disengagement could be distinct in theory but in practice the criteria sometimes become blurred, particularly when individuals (leaders) acted in the organisation’s interest. The empirical investigations of micro and macro levels of moral disengagement are scarce and under-researched in extant literature.

Future research should also analyse the interaction between micro and macro moral disengagement in dangerous events. The implications for disaster risk reduction and risk behaviours/decisions especially in cases such as environmental disaster, climate change related crises, terrorism, fraud, tax avoidance and emission scandals, which are found to be rooted in moral disengagement, requires deeper understanding and extensive research. For example, research should investigate the mediating role of moral disengagement in climate change mitigation. It would be interesting to see if despite the empirical scientific evidence about climate change or global warming, whether critics would be persuaded as moral disengagement may influence how they responded to climate mitigation actions and policies.

In another context, a large-scale project examining responses to terrorism and militancy using the concept of moral disengagement in de-radicalisation programmes would be an interesting area for future research. Specifically, given the lack of understanding about the best way to reduce unconventional terrorist attacks, and the ineffectiveness or counterproductive nature of repressive policies, it would be interesting to research how moral disengagement scales can help combat terrorism root causes. In fact, due to the recognition (Owolabi & Okwechime, 2007; Turner & Brownhill, 2004; Ubhenin, 2013) that militarisation approaches as counterterrorism tools may be insufficient, research on moral disengagement could help uncover best non-militarisation strategies to sustainably combat root causes of terrorism. For example, given that it is impossible to kill or capture all potential terrorists, should the Nigerian government invest more resources into improving education, roads, access to business loans, and essential public services for those who reject terrorist or militant violence? Of course, in

order to address these questions, data must be collected about what governments have been doing in response to terrorism.

Another possible area of future research is the investigation of sustain growth, sustainability or business continuity of small and medium scale firms operating in conflict and crisis-affected areas especially in low-income countries. For example, the crucial issue of how the Niger Delta crises are affecting small and medium scale (SMEs) businesses within the crisis-affected areas remain unexplored. The policy and practical implications of understanding how SMEs can sustained growth or increased resilience would be significant for economic development, growth and poverty reduction in low-income countries or developing nations.

Finally, perhaps the most crucial stream of future research, pertains to the relationships between attribution of blame, displacement of responsibility, distorting the consequences, moral justification, moral awareness, moral judgement, ethical evaporation, and moral decision in risk and crisis situations. The multiple factors and issues involved will be difficult but it is essential to unravel and document the full moral or ethical implications in dangerous events and other rare cases. The challenge for future research would focus on the issues of data collection, sensitivity and ethical issues involved during investigation. Given the sensitivity of moral disengagement, risk and crisis management research, data collection methods should be carefully planned and fitted into achieving the broader research aims and objectives. The research conducted in this thesis has positively contributed to the risk/crisis management debate, highlighting the need to more clearly account for the role that moral disengagement mechanisms can play in disrupting organisations' survival, business continuity, and resilience. These suggested areas for future research would further help build on the work in this thesis.

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## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX ONE**

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**Consent Form: Individuals**

**Study Title: Self-Inflicted Disasters: Moral Disengagement in Unconventional Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management.**

**REC Ref No: E319**

**Name of Principal Investigator:** Oluwasoye Patrick Mafimisebi *Please tick box as appropriate*

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated xx/xx/2015 for the above study. I have had opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have these answered satisfactorily.

I understand my participation is completely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, up to the point where the data is being analysed.

I agree to my interview being audio recorded, and to being quoted in an anonymous manner that would not identify me, using my original words, in reports of the research.

I am aware that I would be given the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the transcribed recording

I agree that the information collected during the study can be shared with authorised people for academic purposes. These authorised people mainly include the research supervisors and possibly the examiners.

I agree to the data I contribute being stored securely, until all academic publications (PhD thesis, journal articles, book chapters and conference presentations) have been completed.

I agree to take part in the above study.

**Name of Participant:** .....

**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Name of person taking consent:** .....

**Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

*(When completed, one copy to be retained by participant; one copy for researcher's file)*

**Thank you for taking out time to complete this consent form and answering these exploratory questions. Any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the principal investigator using the email address: [oluwasoye.mafimisebi@myport.ac.uk](mailto:oluwasoye.mafimisebi@myport.ac.uk)**

## APPENDIX TWO

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### Invitation Letter: Individual Participants

**Study Title: Self-Inflicted Disasters: Moral Disengagement in Unconventional Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management.**

**REC Ref No: E319**

Dear Potential Participant,

I am Oluwasoye Patrick Mafimisebi currently undertaking a PhD research degree at the University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, United Kingdom. I am conducting a research on the impact of moral disengagement in risk, crisis and disaster management practice using case studies of multinational oil companies and local communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The research fundamentally focuses on sustainable strategies and models of risk, crisis and disaster management that could help uncover proactive ways of managing emerging unconventional risk, crisis and disaster situations. I have already collected multiple data from different sources such as United Nations Environment Programme; Nigerian National Petroleum Company; companies' annual reports and internal documents; community reports; media reports; archival data and documentary videos on the crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

However, I will be asking you questions to validate or refute claims made in the series of documents that have been obtained. Thus, I will be asking questions relating to the strategies and approaches use by multinational oil companies in handling the Niger Delta crisis and disaster situations. There are no right or wrong answers because the questions are intended to ascertain the current practices relating to the crisis and disaster situations within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The research questions aim at identifying mechanisms of moral disengagement in the Niger Delta crisis and disaster situations. The interview questions may change slightly from one individual to another to allow further probing of any issue raise during the interview discussion. In addition, it is expected that all questions will be related to the research problems and limited to the crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. You are free to made comparison to other global incidents of risk, crisis and disaster across the globe for illustration. The response you provided will contribute towards enriching the research and provide avenues to validate or refute the conceptual model developed from the research. The research provides sustainable strategies and models of managing unconventional complex situations such as crises and disasters, pipelines vandalism, oil theft and bunkering, militancy and terrorism, conflicts, and illegal refineries causing extensive pollution and environmental degradation which make people and environment most vulnerable in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

You have been invited to participate in this research due to your knowledge of the crisis and disaster situations in Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Please note that participation in this research is totally voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether you want to participate or not. However, if you

voluntarily agree to participate in this study, I will describe the study and go through this information sheet with you again and I will ask you to sign a consent form. I must state that you will not be asked about personal involvement in the Niger Delta crisis therefore there is no personal reputation risk. This research aim to contribute to long-term reconciliation process between the parties involved in the crisis. Therefore, the intention is to seek to minimise rather than ameliorate the existing problem in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Please contact me via email if you are interested in taking part in this research. Participants are under no obligation to participate, and there will be no negative consequences if they withdraw from the study.

Thank you for reading this letter. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Yours faithfully,

**Oluwasoye Patrick Mafimisebi**

## APPENDIX THREE

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## INTERVIEW FOREWORD

I really appreciate your time today and for agreeing to take part in this interview.

I understand that you must have seen the information sheet about the research project. However, I would also like to draw your attention to the research purpose which is to critically assess the impact of moral disengagement in risk, crisis and disaster management practice using case studies of multinational oil companies and local communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The data you provided will help me ascertain the current practices and strategies of multinational oil companies in dealing with emerging complex unconventional risk, crisis and disaster in Nigeria. In addition, the data will enable the claims made by multinational oil companies like Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria to be validated or refuted and suggest sustainable methods of handling the crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Please understand that there are no wrong or right answers and that your comments or perspectives will be treated solely for academics or research purposes only.

In addition, I understand that you have been given a consent form to read and sign. I would like to inform you again that all the data or information provided to me will be treated confidentially and personal data will be eliminated from the data presentation and analysis. Although you have been given the participant invitation letter, information sheet, and consent form which provide details information that you will be completely protected, I will like to state again that your name, position and organisation that you represent cannot be easily identified. This will be achieved through anonymization of data and the data collected will only be used for this research purpose including future publications.

Please note that I will appreciate that you ask any questions or concerns that you may have at this stage before we continue with the interview. I will also like to inform you that the interview will be recorded and please confirm that you have given consent that the interview can be audio-recorded.

Research Objective	Questions	Themes	Data Sources
Objective I: To what extent moral disengagement could impact on risk, crisis and disaster management practice.	Interview Question (1, 4, 5, 6 and 7)	Self-Initiated Disasters	
Objective II: Identify moral disengagement and crisis management relationship.	Interview Question (4, 5, 6 and 7)	Risk and Crisis Disengagement	
Objective III: Identify how moral disengagement perpetuates organisational crisis and disaster; and how to avert the black swan implications.	Interview Question (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8)	Moral Disengagement Mechanisms	
Objective IV: Examine the influence of vulnerability, risk perception and behaviour, and distrust in risk, crisis and disaster management practice.	Interview Question (1, 3, 6, 7 and 9)	Communities At Risk	
Objective V: Examine the impact of vulnerable environment on vulnerable people using two case studies of multinational oil firms in Nigeria.	Interview Question (3, 5, 7 and 9)	Vulnerable of the Common	

Interview Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you think multinational oil companies in Nigeria often collaborate (or should collaborate) with the government to use military and mobile police force in protecting their assets and suppressing protests environmental practices?</li> <li>2. If so, what other measures or approaches should (or did) multinational oil companies often adopt in managing the emerging escalation of crisis and disaster in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?</li> <li>3. To what extent does the environmental pollution and disaster in the Niger Delta affect local communities?</li> <li>4. Are local communities through aggressive youths justified in attacking</li> </ol>
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	<p>oil facilities and assets of multinational oil companies in Nigeria? If so, what measures can be adopted in managing the problems?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. What are the factors that contribute to the crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?</li> <li>6. Do you believe that multinational oil companies in Nigeria would have acted differently in managing the crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria if these situations happen in Europe or America? If so (or if not), why would this be case?</li> <li>7. How would you react to this statement: Who does more damage or harm in the Niger Delta region (is it multinational oil companies, federal government, or local militants)?</li> <li>8. What alternative measures would you suggest in dealing with the ongoing crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria?</li> <li>9. Do you think there is any trust left between local communities and multinational oil companies; and does this trust level as well as the environmental disasters affect how local people react in the whole situations?</li> </ol>
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**END OF INTERVIEW**

I really appreciate your time and thank you for the answers you have provided to the interview questions. These answers will contribute towards enriching the data already collected and will help validate or refute claims made by the three main stakeholders (government, multinational oil companies and local communities). However, I would appreciate if you have further materials or documents that are relevant and useful to this research project. Materials or documents needed include: (1) community letters to multinational oil companies; (2) complaints letter to government agencies and representatives; (3) government current policies documents on Niger Delta; (4) Shell Nigeria Environmental Policy document; (5) Shell Nigeria Risk Management Policy; (6) Chevron Nigeria Environmental Policy document; (7) Chevron Nigeria Risk Management Policy; (8) Technical Experts Policy document on Niger Delta crisis and disaster. Notably, giving these documents is totally voluntary but where you have decided to provide any of the documents, there will be no mention of your name, organisation, location and other details that may linked the documents to you. In conclusion, I can assure you that your confidentiality is guaranteed due to the research design and strategy.

Thank you and God bless.

**Oluwasoye Patrick Mafimisebi**



## APPENDIX FOUR

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### Participant Information Sheet: Individuals

**Study Title: Self-Inflicted Disasters: Moral Disengagement in Unconventional Risk, Crisis and Disaster Management.**

**REC Ref No: E319**

I would like to invite you to participate in my PhD research study. However, before you decide, I would like you to understand the purpose of this research and what it would involve for you. If you have any specific concerns, please feel free to contact me and I would be happy to clarify any concerns or issues that you may have or you can discuss these issues with friends or colleagues.

#### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of moral disengagement in risk, crisis and disaster management practice in Nigeria. In specific context, my PhD research scope is the Nigerian oil and gas industry but limited to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The research draws on practical case studies of risks, emergencies, security, terrorism, militancy, crises and environmental disasters – oil spills, pollution, explosion, industrial hazards, gas flaring, climate change, oil theft and pipeline vandalism. The overall aim of the research is to uncover and evaluate: (1) moral disengagement impact on risk, crisis and disaster management practice; (2) moral disengagement-crisis management relationship and redirect debates, policy issue and redefining risk, crisis and disaster management practice; (3) how moral disengagement perpetuate organisational crisis and disaster, and explore potential possibilities of averting the black swan implications; (4) the influence of vulnerability, risk perception and behaviour, and distrust in risk, crisis and disaster management practice; (5) impact of vulnerable environment on vulnerable people using two case studies of multinational oil firms in Nigeria.

The response you provided will contribute towards enriching the research and provide avenues to validate or refute the conceptual model developed from the research. The research provides sustainable strategies and models of managing unconventional complex situations such as

crises and disasters, pipelines vandalism, oil theft and bunkering, militancy and terrorism, conflicts, and illegal refineries causing extensive pollution and environmental degradation which make people and environment most vulnerable in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. There are several other practical case studies of actionable learning from disasters or failures (Bhopal disaster, Exxon Valdez, BP Deepwater Horizon disaster, Piper Alpha disaster, Challenger, Three Mile Island, Fukushima disaster, Shell Brent Spar, Kings Cross, Bonga oil disaster, etc.) that are presented and comparison of the Shell-Ogoni crisis with that of Chevron-Ilaje crisis. This research is significant because of the mechanisms of moral disengagement which are espoused in the context of risk, crisis and disaster management. The understanding of how moral disengagement could impact risk, crisis and disaster management is critical to sustainable development. ***Please note that the use of “moral disengagement” does not make negative value judgements on participants own attitudes or actions.*** Instead, the concept is adopted in this research due its impact in risk and crisis evolution, and risk management failures.

### **Why have I been invited?**

You have been invited to participate in this research due to your knowledge of the crisis and disaster situations in Niger Delta region of Nigeria. You are identified as key informant in this study because: (1) you are a stakeholder within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and in the Nigerian oil and gas industry; (2) you have lived and worked within the Niger Delta region for over 10 years; (3) you have in-depth knowledge about multinational oil companies and their activities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

### **Do I have to take part?**

Participation in this research is totally voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether you want to participate or not. However, if you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, I will describe the study and go through this information sheet with you again and I will ask you to sign a consent form.

Please note that your participation in this research project is completely voluntary and you do not have obligations to continue with the study if you wish to withdraw at any stage prior to the data being analysed. There are no negative consequences if you discontinue from this research project.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

The nature of the interview is semi-structured and you will partake as an individual to express your perspectives and knowledge on the subject matter. There will be list of questions that will be asked to each key informant but the questions may be modified to reflect individual accounts and allow for probing of further questions. With your consent, the interview will be audio recorded and once the data have been transcribed you would have the privilege to confirm the accuracy. The essence is to ensure that the views you have provided during the interviews have not been misrepresented. The interview is estimated to last for 45 minutes each. It is important to state that I may asked that you provide additional information through company documents,

government reports, community reports, civil society organisations report on the subject matter. You do not have to provide these documents because it is totally voluntary to do so.

Please note that the consent form states that the information you have provided may be shared with authorised people (i.e. research supervisors and examiners) when requested for academic purposes. In addition, data will not be shared to any other unauthorised persons and your personal data will not be included in this research findings and analysis. The collected data through audio-recorded of the interviews and copies of documents that may be provided will be transferred to a computer. Data will be anonymised and password protected. Data on the recording device will be transcribed and immediately deleted or erased from the recording device once the file has been transferred to a secured computer system. The information collected will be saved securely because of the possibility of future academic publications and data will be completely erased once all relevant publications have been made from the project.

Please note that there will be no data linked to your name or organisation because personal data are deliberately eliminated from the initial stage of the interview process. In all reports and publications that may emerge from this project, data will be anonymised and your name or organisation you might represent cannot be easily identified.

### **Expenses and payments**

The interview is scheduled to take place at your most convenient time and no payment will be made to participants for offering their views about the subject matter. Please be reminded that participation in this study is completely voluntary and the interview is non-paid activity.

### **What will I have to do?**

Once you decide whether to accept this invitation and kindly return the consent form, I will contact you again to arrange and fix a convenient time that is most suitable for you. This will allow effective audio-recording of the interview especially when you have been asked questions relating to the issues covered in this study.

Please note that the interview is intended to be conducted in a quiet environment to facilitate recording purpose. The interview is anticipated to be completed within 45 minutes of your time. Although, additional time may be required if you are asked to send documents that could support your claims. Please note that you will not be asked about your own involvement in the Niger Delta crisis hence no embarrassment and personal reputation risk. The interview data will be transcribed and documented to form part of the research findings and analysis. You should wish to be updated about the future publications that emerge from this research project; I would ask that you verbally inform me about it. This will allow me to add you to my mailing lists of research publications – which provide update about any of my research publications.

### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks from taking part?**

There are risks associated with you taking part in this research. However, these risks which may include personal safety and reputational risk have been minimised due to the research design. For example, data provided will be anonymised which means personal data, names,

gender, location, and organisations will not be disclosed. This means that your name or organisation will not be provided; and the research findings and analysis will be presented in such a way that name or company cannot be identified.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

The understanding of how moral disengagement impact risk, crisis, and disaster management is critical for sustainable strategies in managing complex unconventional dangerous events. The conceptual models emanating from this study is valuable for key stakeholders in Nigeria and international community (government, organisations, local communities, civil societies, and individuals) because of the adaptability, mitigation, behavioural change, business continuity, environmental and sustainability impact. The findings from this research will inform debates about risk, crisis and disaster management; and the practical implications on government and multinational oil companies in Nigeria is crucial for current best-fit in risk, crisis and disaster management.

### **Will my participation be kept confidential?**

Participation in this research is strictly confidential and as such your contributions will keep as confidential. The complexity of the research topic and the sensitivity of the case studies particularly suggest that participants must be protected. In this case, both in the data collection and the research findings stage of the research, there would be no link of comments from the participants to their actual persons in terms of name, position and organisation they might represent. The respondents' names and positions will be deliberately excluded from the research findings; and during data transcription data will be anonymised to guide against reference to respondents and organisations they represent. This would help safeguard anonymity and eliminate perceived risks from the research to the participants. As a result, the risk of reputation and attack to persons who might have participated in the research would have been eliminated.

### **What will happen if I don't want to carry on with this study?**

You are not compelled to complete the interview once you have given consent because it is understood that your situations may change and that you may no longer wish to participate in this research anymore. Therefore, you are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time prior to data analysis. You are not also obliged to give reasons for leaving the study and all the information you have provided will be deleted.

### **What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should contact the researcher; **Oluwasoye Patrick Mafimisebi** via email ([oluwasoye.mafimisebi@myport.ac.uk](mailto:oluwasoye.mafimisebi@myport.ac.uk)) or my first supervisor **Dr Sara Thorne** ([sara.thorne@port.ac.uk](mailto:sara.thorne@port.ac.uk)) who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can contact **Dr Judy Rich**, Faculty Research Degree Coordinator, Portsmouth Business School, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, United Kingdom ([judy.rich@port.ac.uk](mailto:judy.rich@port.ac.uk)).

### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The results of the study will be published in a PhD thesis which would be publicly available at the University of Portsmouth library and the British library. It is also hoped that the results will produce journal articles, book chapters and academic conference presentations, which again, will be available via the University of Portsmouth library electronic resources. You will not be identifiable from the results in any document. Once the research and the publications are completed all data collected will be deleted.

### **Who is organising and funding the study?**

This research project is self-funded but future research funding collaboration is highly welcomed.

### **Who has reviewed this study?**

Research in the University of Portsmouth is looked at by an independent group of people, called the Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the Portsmouth Business School Research Ethics Committee.

### **Further information and contact details**

If you would like to know the further details of research in the University, please follow the following link to the University of Portsmouth research website;  
<http://www.port.ac.uk/research/>

If you would like details on the research carried out in the Portsmouth Business School, please follow the following link to the Portsmouth Business School research website;

<http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/faculties/portsmouthbusinessschool/research/>

If you would like further information about this research, please contact the principal investigator: **Oluwasoye Patrick Mafimisebi**, E-mail: [oluwasoye.mafimisebi@myport.ac.uk](mailto:oluwasoye.mafimisebi@myport.ac.uk)

*Thank you for your time in reading through this document. I do hope that the information provided has answered all your questions and should you have further concerns please do keep in touch. If you decide to participate in this research project you will be given a copy of this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a consent form.*

## APPENDIX FIVE

### Ethical Review Checklist – Staff and Doctoral Students

This checklist should be completed by the researcher (PhD students to have DoS check) and sent to Sharman Rogers who will coordinate Ethics Committee scrutiny.

**No primary data collection can be undertaken before the supervisor and/or Ethics Committee has given approval.**

If, following review of this checklist, amendments to the proposals are agreed to be necessary, the researcher must provide Sharman with an amended version for scrutiny.

#### 1. What are the objectives of the research project?

The research critically seeks to uncover and evaluate:

- a. To what extent moral disengagement could impact on risk, crisis and disaster management practice.
- b. The moral disengagement-crisis management relationship and redirect academic debates, research agenda, policy issues and redefining risk, crisis and disaster management practice.
- c. How moral disengagement perpetuates organisational crisis and explore potential possibilities in averting the black swan implications.
- d. The influence of vulnerability, risk perception and behaviour, and distrust in risk, crisis and disaster management practice.
- e. Impact of vulnerable environment on vulnerable people using two case-studies of multinational oil firms in Nigeria.

Note: *Moral disengagement signifies a psychological process through which individuals make unethical, sanctionable and detrimental behaviours or conducts become congruent with their moral and ethical standards. In fact, moral disengagement equates to switching off one's conscience and there is nothing like self-righteousness to exonerate and sanitize misconduct in the name of worthy causes.*

#### 2. Does the research involve *NHS patients, resources or staff*? YES / NO (please circle).

If YES, it is likely that full ethical review must be obtained from the NHS process before the research can start.

#### 3. Does the research involve *MoD staff*? YES / NO (please circle).

If YES, then ethical review may need to be undertaken by MoD REC. Please discuss your proposal with your Director of Studies and/or PBS Ethics Committee representative and, if necessary, include a copy of your MoD REC application for quality review.

#### 4. Do you intend to collect *primary data* from human subjects or data that are identifiable with individuals? (This includes, for example, questionnaires and interviews.) YES / NO (please circle)

If you do not intend to collect such primary data then please go to question 15.

If you do intend to collect such primary data then please respond to ALL the questions 5 through 14. If you feel a question does not apply then please respond with n/a (for not applicable).

5. How will the primary data contribute to the objectives of the dissertation / research project?

The primary data will contribute to the research objectives in the following ways:

- Reduce philosophical and research bias as well as increase trustworthiness, data reliability and credibility, and provide confirmatory data evidence (fundamental for triangulation purpose).
- Enable data on the current state of crisis and disaster situations in Niger Delta region of Nigeria, and current response strategies of multinational oil firms (crucial to explore research objective 1).
- Data from key informants on crisis disengagement approach involved in the two case-studies (critical to explore research objective 2). Studies involving risk, crisis and disaster situations are often design retrospectively and have been criticised for often neglecting the perspectives of the direct or main actors involved in such crisis and disaster situations. Thus, the primary data is necessary to overcome this limitation in previous studies and further add thick description to the research problems and the case-studies.
- Enable data on the mechanisms of moral disengagement in risk, crisis and disaster situations (crucial to explore research objective 3).
- Data to measure influence of vulnerability, risk perception and behaviour in risk, crisis and disaster management (crucial to explore research objectives 4 and 5).

The breakdown of how the primary data contribute to the research objectives is as shown below and the interview questions are attached as a supplementary material.

Research Objective	Questions	Themes	Data Sources
Objective I: To what extent moral disengagement could impact on risk, crisis and disaster management practice.	Interview Question (1, 4, 5, 6 and 7)	Self-Initiated Disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNEP Dataset</li> <li>• World Bank Dataset</li> <li>• National Inquiry Report.</li> <li>• Case Laws Transcripts</li> <li>• Archival and Industry Dataset from NNPC.</li> <li>• Companies Annual Reports (1999-2015).</li> <li>• Personal Interviews with Senior Managers.</li> </ul>

<p>Objective II: Identify moral disengagement and crisis management relationship.</p>	<p>Interview Question (4, 5, 6 and 7)</p>	<p>Risk and Crisis Disengagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNEP Dataset</li> <li>• World Bank Dataset</li> <li>• Archival Video Interviews with main stakeholders.</li> <li>• National Inquiry Report.</li> <li>• Case Laws Transcripts</li> <li>• Archival and Industry Dataset from NNPC.</li> <li>• Companies Annual Reports (1999-2015).</li> <li>• Personal Interviews with Senior Managers.</li> <li>• Literature Review</li> </ul>
<p>Objective III: Identify how moral disengagement perpetuates organisational crisis and disaster; and how to avert the black swan implications.</p>	<p>Interview Question (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8)</p>	<p>Moral Disengagement Mechanisms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNEP Dataset</li> <li>• National Inquiry Report.</li> <li>• Documentary Evidence from national and international media.</li> <li>• Case Laws Transcripts</li> <li>• Archival and Industry Dataset from NNPC.</li> <li>• Companies Annual Reports (1999-2015).</li> <li>• Personal Interviews with Senior Managers.</li> </ul>
<p>Objective IV: Examine the influence of vulnerability, risk perception and behaviour, and</p>	<p>Interview Question (1, 3, 6, 7 and 9)</p>	<p>Communities At Risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Interviews with Senior Managers.</li> <li>• UNEP Dataset</li> <li>• UNDP Dataset</li> </ul>



distrust in risk, crisis and disaster management practice.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Bank Dataset</li> <li>• Case Laws Transcripts</li> <li>• Archival and Industry Dataset from NNPC.</li> <li>• Companies Annual Reports (1999-2015).</li> <li>• Literature Review</li> </ul>
Objective V: Examine the impact of vulnerable environment on vulnerable people using two case studies of multinational oil firms in Nigeria.	Interview Question (3, 5, 7 and 9)	Vulnerable of the Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature Review</li> <li>• UNEP Dataset</li> <li>• UNDP Dataset</li> <li>• World Bank Dataset</li> <li>• National Inquiry Report.</li> <li>• Case Laws Transcripts</li> <li>• Archival and Industry Dataset from NNPC.</li> <li>• Companies Annual Reports (1999-2015).</li> <li>• Personal Interviews with Senior Managers.</li> </ul>

6. What is/are the *survey population(s)*?

The survey population for this research project comprises of all senior managers within the main stakeholders' organisations and government agencies (Niger Delta Development Commission and Ondo State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission), oil and gas regulators (Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and Department of Petroleum Resources), local and regional community representative organisations (Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People and Ilaje Regional Development Committee) and two multinational oil companies operating in Nigeria (Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria).

This research is based on case study approach using two embedded cases of multinational oil companies in Nigeria. The two case studies of multinational oil companies (Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria) are selected because both case-studies are well documented in case laws, companies reports (1999-2015), national inquiries and government reports. The results of the case studies will also allow moral disengagement mechanisms to be measured and validated in

the context of risk, crisis and disaster management. There are two main sources of data utilised in this research: (1) datasets and; (2) empirical data obtained through personal interviews. Notably, there are panel datasets on the Niger Delta crisis and disaster situations available from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Bank. Therefore, following the advice from the Major Review Panel and based on the sensitivity of the research project, survey will not form part of the primary data collection methods. There are already multiple data available for this research project: documentary evidence; case laws transcripts; archival and industry data from Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation; companies reports; video transcripts on the case-studies; and web-transcripts interviews with officials involved in the crisis and disaster situations.

7. How big is the *sample* for each of the survey populations and how was this sample arrived at?
  - The sample consists of senior managers purposively drawn from government agencies (Niger Delta Development Commission, and Ondo State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission), oil and gas regulators (Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, and Department of Petroleum Resources), local and regional community representative organisations (Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People and Ilaje Regional Development Committee) and two multinational oil companies operating in Nigeria (Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria). The goal for selecting the sample purposely was twofold. First, we wanted to document the phenomenon of moral disengagement in extreme case context and show that it could perpetuate organisations in at least one major industry. Second, we wanted to delve into empirical validation of existing risk, crisis and disaster management models and techniques. As a result, we searched for an industry (oil and gas) that *a priori* we believed would have a large representation of risk, crisis and disaster management models – an extreme case. Therefore, we chose to explore the oil and gas industry, an industry where anecdotal evidence suggested that multinational oil firms were plagued with several cases of risk, crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The two case organisations (Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria) included in the research were often accused of double standards in their risk, crisis and disaster management practice in Nigeria. For each firm, we attempted to determine whether moral disengagement perpetuate their risk, crisis and disaster management practice. This information came primarily from independent inquiry datasets and documentary dataset.
  - It essential to state that there are numbers of data collection available for this research which include – archival data, inquiry commission report and data, internal organisational reports on the crisis, archival video interviews with those directly involved in the crisis and disaster situations, series of documentary evidence, and extant literature. The interviews become necessary to explore what might have change over the period of the crisis incubation and the current reality of the case studies under investigation (historical period covered:1990-2015).
  - The exact sample size for the interviews composed of twenty key informants purposively drawn mainly from key stakeholder organisations identified above.

More specifically, a total of 20 interviews is intended to be conducted with informants drawn from these eight organisations mentioned above; sample size justification, participants' inclusion criteria as well as number of interviewees per organisation are captured in the table below. However, it is important to state that two informants are selected purposively from each stakeholder organisations except in case of Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria where four informants are being selected. The reason being that these multinational oil companies are often blamed for the crisis and disaster situations in Niger Delta; and it crucial that more perspectives from informants in these organisations are included in this research in order to refute, verify and censure the problems and phenomena under investigation.

S/N	Interviewees Data	Stakeholders Data	Stakeholders Classification	Inclusion Criteria	Justification
1	Two (2)	Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)	Government Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants with past and current knowledge of government roles in the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with the crisis.</li> <li>• Informants responsible for managing risk and crisis situations</li> </ul>	The nature of this research topic and issues covered demand that only relevant participants or informants are included in the study. Most importantly, multiple sources of data which have been extensively discussed in this research are being used to triangulate data, but fewer interviews are further use to enrich the data collected. In fact, to increase the research content validity, interviews are only intended with key informants in the organisation who are most familiar with the crisis and disaster situations under investigation.
2	Two (2)	Ondo State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (OSOPADEC)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants with past and current knowledge of government roles in the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with local people.</li> <li>• Informants responsible for making crisis decisions.</li> </ul>	
3	Two (2)	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)	Nigerian Oil and Gas Regulators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants with past and current knowledge of how regulators have manage the crisis</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with the crisis.</li> <li>• Informants responsible for strategies implementation.</li> </ul>	

4	Two (2)	Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants responsible for taking actions when oil companies violate oil and gas regulations.</li> <li>• Informants with past and current knowledge of government roles in the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with multinational oil companies.</li> </ul>	<p>interviews required in research fundamentally depends on the nature of research questions, how many sources of data used, and the research strategy. In practice, the issue further concerns whether interviews is the only source of data collection, in which case large number of interviews might be required. Thus, where multiple sources of data are being used like in this research, critics who call for several numbers of interviews to be conducted must acknowledged that by simply conducting multiple interviews do not necessarily increases research credibility and trustworthiness.</p> <p>Furthermore, the sensitive nature of risk and crisis research often requires that only fewer interviewees or informants can be identified and are willing to be interview. In fact, even though crisis and disaster situations often affect several stakeholders, only handful individuals are responsible for making decisions affecting their management or directly involved in processes of managing them. The implication is that only relevant number of individuals who have different roles, experience, backgrounds, and any other source of</p>
5	Two (2)	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP)	Local and Regional Community Representative Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants responsible for negotiation with multinational oil companies.</li> <li>• Informants with past and current knowledge of government roles in the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants responsible for negotiation with government agencies.</li> </ul>	
6	Two (2)	Ilaje Regional Development Committee (IRDC)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants responsible for managing communities' agitations.</li> <li>• Informants responsible for dealing with multinational oil companies on behalf of local communities.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with the crisis situations.</li> </ul>	
7	Four (4)	Shell Nigeria	Multinational Oil and Gas Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants who have first-hand knowledge about the Niger Delta crisis.</li> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with the risk, crisis and disaster situations.</li> <li>• Informants who have deal with regulatory agencies, government and local communities.</li> </ul>	
8	Four (4)	Chevron Nigeria		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants who have first-hand knowledge</li> </ul>	

				<p>about the Niger Delta crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informants directly responsible for dealing with the risk, crisis and disaster situations.</li> <li>• Informants who have deal with regulatory agencies, government and local communities.</li> </ul>	<p>variability that might influence answers are included in risk and crisis research. This is the basic distinction of risk and crisis management research from other fields.</p> <p>In addition, this research is an in-depth exploration of moral disengagement in which sensitive and organisational issues are being explored. This requires longer and less structured interviews technique to allow for more probing into the issues identified from extant studies which are pertinent to effective risk and crisis management. Thus, it is vital to take into consideration time resources (for both conducting interviews and analysing the interview data) and the need to avoid “<i>drowning in a sea of data</i>” syndrome because once data is collected, researcher is obliged to analyse it.</p>
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8. How will respondents be *selected and recruited*?

- Key informants are to be selected based on their knowledge about the risk, crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.
- The nature of the research problems requires key informants with thorough knowledge of the risk, crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. In this context, it is only appropriate to use purposive and cluster non-

probability sampling technique to arrive at the sample size for the interviews. This would ensure that only participants who are residents and informants within the study areas and having full knowledge of the risk, crisis and disaster situations are included in the sample size.

- Therefore, the participants are to be selected through purposive and convenient sampling technique as to guide against recruiting participants who are unaware about the risk, crisis and disaster situations within the study areas. The target is to recruit key informants who are main stakeholders within the study areas; and participants shall be drawn from government agencies (Niger Delta Development Commission), regulators (Nigeria National Petroleum Company and Department of Petroleum Resources), multinational oil companies (Shell Nigeria and Chevron Nigeria), local community representative organisations (Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People and Ilaje Regional Development Committee).
- The recruitment process will typically involve sending out letter of introduction and invitation to the participants. This can be found in the appendices or supplementary materials. This would ensure informed consents are sought and uninformed respondents as well as unwilling respondents are eliminated from the study. It is important to state that respondents can withdraw consent at any time. However, prior to sending out the letter of introduction and invitation for participation in the research, personal contacts would have been made to reduce the rate of non-participation and response.

9. What steps are proposed to ensure that the requirements of *informed consent* will be met for those taking part in the research? If an Information Sheet for participants is to be used, please attach it to this form. If not, please explain how you will be able to demonstrate that informed consent has been gained from participants.

A letter of participation and informational sheet for participants in the study would be sent out for the completion before the semi-structured interviews and respondents shall be assured of their confidentiality and anonymity. The essence of the research shall be made known and respondents would voluntarily agree if to partake in the research. Letter of participation, information sheets and consent forms for this purpose have been developed (please see the attached documents in the supplementary materials).

10. How will *data be collected* from each of the sample groups?

The primary data will be collected using semi-structured interviews with key informants (employees in multinational oil firms, senior management, industry regulators, government agencies, community leaders, and senior consultants) conversant with the risk, crisis and disaster situations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The key informants are main stakeholders within the Nigerian oil and gas sector, and knowledge about the Niger Delta crisis and disaster situations. A copy of interview guide is attached to this ethical approval form. The interview guide was developed from extant literature and inputs from leading experts in risk, crisis and disaster management. In another context, the emerging results from the interviews with key informants will be cross-reference with findings from literatures. A conceptual model

of self-initiated disaster and moral disengagement which has been developed from the research project will be enriched through the primary data collected.

The interviews data will be recorded and where written data are collected such data will also be collated in their raw form. There will be written note taking during the interviews as well as real-time recording of voice data. However, respondents have option to refuse recording of voice data or note taking. Consents will be sought and respondents can choose whether to allow audio recording or not.

11. How will *data* be *stored* and what will happen to the data at the end of the research?

- The research data are to be stored electronically and all digital information will be downloaded and securely stored on the N drive of the university. The voice data will be transcribed and the resulting data as well as other word documents will be securely stored on the university N drive. Handwritten notes will be typed in word documents and stored in a secure locked location and hard copies will sent for secure disposal via electronic shredding at the end of the research project.
- Data will not be available for open access because of the extremely sensitive nature of project. However anonymised data may be made available at the end of the research project. All data will be stored until publications are finalised and this will form part of the participant consent obtained prior to data collection. The publications expected include PhD thesis, journal articles, book chapters and conference presentations. The findings and results in the research will fundamentally base on anonymised data. The data collected will be kept for least as long as the latest retention period required by any journals in which any data resulting from the project is published.
- The interviews will be conducted in English and there is no need for translation of data.

12. What measures will be taken to prevent unauthorised persons gaining access to the data, and especially to data that may be attributed to identifiable individuals?

- Key informants will not be identified by their real names and organisations they might represent. The names of key informants will be anonymised and this will be used during the recording and data transcription process. The data collected during the fieldwork will be protected using secured brief-case and filing cabinet with lock. This implies that only the researcher has access to these data. However, once the fieldwork is completed, data collected and transcribed will be stored securely on the N drive of the university and password protected, and consent forms will be stored separately from the data collected and locked in cabinets provided at the university.
- The raw data will only be made available on request mainly to the supervisory team (Dr Sara Hadleigh-Dunn and Dr Andreas Hoecht) and the PhD examiners on request. The data collected will be coded and identifying data stored in a separate file. However, to completely remove the possibility of identifying key informants, their names, positions and organisations they represent will be anonymised.

13. What steps are proposed to safeguard the *anonymity* of the respondents?

- Anonymity of the respondents shall be assured through the letter of participation that names and positions are not to be included in their responses. Likewise, the interview form would be devoid of name and position of the respondents in the design process. The complexity of the research topic and the sensitivity of the case studies particularly suggest that participants must be protected. In this case, both in the data collection and the research findings stage of the research, there would be no link of comments from the participants to their actual persons in terms of name, position and organisation they might represent.
- The respondents' names and positions will be deliberately excluded from the research findings; and during data transcription data will be anonymised to guard against reference to respondents and organisations they represent. This would help safeguard anonymity and eliminate perceived risks from the research to the participants. As a result, the risk of reputation and attack to persons who might have participated in the research would have been eliminated. Copies of the completed research work shall be disseminated through publication in international journals and participants can therefore have access to the research outputs.
- Finally, to safeguard the anonymity of the informants, the researcher may have to further anonymise participant details such as location, gender, organisation, etc. or other contextual information if necessary in order not to compromise identities.

14. Are there any *risks* (physical or other, including reputational) *to respondents* that may result from taking part in this research?  YES / NO (please circle).

If YES, please specify and state what measures are proposed to deal with these risks.

- The research is highly complex and sensitive because of the persistent cases of militancy, kidnapping and vandalism in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Hence, it is imperative that participants are protected potential risks. The opinions of respondents in the research can generate media attacks which can cause reputational risk and physical assaults or attacks on them.
- The names, positions and organisations which the participants may represent would be protected and eliminated from the research findings and analysis. This measure of anonymization technique is crucial to protect key informants from future risks that may arise as a result of taking part in this research. The anonymization approach will reflect in the research findings and analysis, and future publications.
- None of the respondents will be asked about their own personal involvement in the Niger Delta crisis or disaster situations presented in the research hence no embarrassment and no personal reputation. Previous research on the topic has already been done and respondents are used to being asked questions on this topic because the crisis has gone for more than 20 years.
- This research aim to contribute to long-term reconciliation process between the parties involved in the crisis. Therefore, the research seeks to minimise rather than ameliorate the existing problem in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.



15. Are there any *risks* (physical or other, including reputational) *to the researcher or to the University* that may result from conducting this research?  YES / NO (please circle).

If YES, please specify and state what measures are proposed to manage these risks.<sup>1</sup>

- There may be risks arising from this study to the researcher but not to the University. The research process would particularly involve collecting primary data from relevant stakeholders in the Niger Delta crisis. In other words, this implies that data would be collected from key stakeholders such as the government representatives and multinational oil companies' representatives within the study areas. Therefore, it may not be surprising to see that the research might be perceived as propaganda for revealing environmental disasters and damages in the Niger Delta. Likewise, it may become risky to interview some groups of informants like ex-militants in the process of the research. Therefore, to eliminate personal risk, some notable key informants like armed militants have been eliminated purposely from the research participants.
- In addition, being a native of the Niger Delta region and having lived in the region for over 28 years, experience of living with some of the key informants would contribute to personal safety. Most importantly, following the advice from the Major Review Panel and discussions about personal safety, semi-structured interviews with key informants will be conducted outside the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. I have already made established contact with relevant stakeholders. This work involves the investigation of moral disengagement in risk, crisis and disaster management practice. Quite critical to the research, the study cannot be completed without collecting data from the actors involved in the crisis. Thus, the participants targeted for the research are to be drawn from local organisations in host oil communities in the study areas and representative of the government and multinational oil companies.
- It is important to state that the key informants contacted for the purpose of facilitating the process of data collection have been briefed and they understood the purpose for which data collection will be used.

16. Will any *data* be *obtained from a company or other organisation*? YES  NO (please circle) For example, information provided by an employer or its employees.

If NO, then please go to question 19.

17. What steps are proposed to ensure that the requirements of *informed consent* will be met for that organisation? How will *confidentiality* be assured for the organisation, such that unauthorised persons will be prevented from accessing the data? N/A

18. Does the organisation have its own ethics procedure relating to the research you intend to carry out? YES / NO (please circle). N/A

If YES, the University will require written evidence from the organisation that they have approved the research.

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<sup>1</sup> Risk evaluation should take account of the broad liberty of expression provided by the principle of academic freedom. The university's conduct with respect to academic freedom is set out in section 9.2 of the Articles of Government and its commitment to academic freedom is in section 1.2 of the Strategic Plan 2004-2008.

19. Will the proposed research involve any of the following (please put a  $\checkmark$  next to 'yes' or 'no'; consult your supervisor if you are unsure):

- |   |     |                                     |    |                                     |
|---|-----|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| • Vulnerable groups (e.g. children) ?       | YES | <input type="checkbox"/>            | NO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| • Particularly sensitive topics ?           | YES | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| • Access to respondents via 'gatekeepers' ? | YES | <input type="checkbox"/>            | NO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| • Use of deception ?                        | YES | <input type="checkbox"/>            | NO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| • Access to confidential personal data ?    | YES | <input type="checkbox"/>            | NO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| • Psychological stress, anxiety etc ?       | YES | <input type="checkbox"/>            | NO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| • Intrusive interventions ?                 | YES | <input type="checkbox"/>            | NO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

If answers to any of the above are "YES", how will the associated risks be minimised?



**Sensitive topic:** It has been clearly stated in question 14 that this research is a highly sensitive topic which required that both the researcher and respondents are protected from potential risks. The associated risks will be minimised through data anonymization approach. The real names and organisations of key informants will not reflect in the research findings and analysis. Informed consents will be fully sought and obtained from all participants; and purpose of the data collection will be made known to the respondents. The voluntary nature of the participation in the research will be emphasised and verbal consent will be obtained in addition to written consent. The case studies are well-documented and crisis situations in the Niger Delta are therefore not sensitive to the individuals (informants) that participate in this research.

20. Are there any other ethical issues that may arise from the proposed research?

There are no other ethical issues anticipated other than those already discussed in this ethical approval form.

### Details of applicant

The member of staff undertaking the research should sign and date the application, and submit it directly to the Ethics Committee. However, where the researcher is a supervised PhD candidate, the signature of the Director of Studies is also required prior to this form being submitted.

	Name	Signature
Researcher	Oluwasoye Patrick Mafimisebi	
Director of Studies	Dr Sara Hadleigh-Dunn	
Date	03/10/2014	

### Approval by Ethics Committee

I/We grant Ethical Approval

**FREC –APPROVAL NO. E319**

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