

**AN EXPLORATORY MIXED METHODS ANALYSIS OF
THE MEDIA FRAMING OF CRISIS STAKEHOLDER
SALIENCE: THE CASE OF SINGAPORE AIRLINES SQ006**

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An exploratory mixed methods analysis of the media framing of crisis stakeholder salience: The case of Singapore Airlines SQ006

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Abstract

Crises disrupt an organisation's operations and harm its stakeholders. How an organisation-in-crisis is perceived to respond to the needs of affected stakeholders may significantly affect the firm's recovery and future viability. Stakeholders and observers acquire much of their information about a crisis from news media coverage. This study accepts the principle that media framing can influence audience's perceptions of reported stories. The research explores how three news media sources in Taiwan and Singapore framed the salience of stakeholders affected by the October 2000 crash in Taipei of Singapore Airlines' flight SQ006. The study introduces a conceptual framework of crisis stakeholder salience drawn from stakeholder theory, crisis communication and media framing of crises and disasters. Using a mixed methods content analysis approach, the framework is applied to investigate the news media framing of SQ006 stakeholders in the sampled media texts. The findings show that the SQ006 crisis stakeholders were framed as salient through more dimensions than the three attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency recognised in a seminal stakeholder theory model of stakeholder salience. The findings have implications for further research and applications for crisis management practice, which are discussed.

Key words: crisis management, stakeholder salience, framing, SQ006

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Chapter 1: Identifying the problem: Perceptions of crisis stakeholder salience

When an organisation experiences a crisis, it is expected to respond effectively and appropriately to address the needs of affected stakeholders. Past crises have consistently demonstrated that a key determinant of how much damage an organisation-in-crisis sustains to its reputation, image, legitimacy and future viability is how fairly and empathetically it is judged to have addressed the needs of the parties most affected.

This research project developed from the concept, widely supported in the crisis literature, that effective crisis management requires an objective assessment of the salience of affected stakeholders and their often-competing claims on the focal organisation of a crisis. Understanding stakeholders' disparate perspectives of the situation and their expectations of the organisation may be vital to developing crisis response strategies that are seen as appropriate and fair, make the best use of available resources, and protect the organisation and its stakeholders from being further harmed by the crisis.

This thesis connects research in stakeholder theory, crisis management and communication, and media studies to facilitate insight into perceptions of crisis stakeholder salience. The study draws from these disciplines to introduce a novel conceptual framework of crisis stakeholder salience. This thesis accepts the premise that media frames in news coverage of a crisis may influence audiences' perceptions of the situation and affected stakeholders. Thus, the study applies the crisis stakeholder salience framework to examine how stakeholders involved in the October 2000 crash of

Singapore Airlines' flight SQ006 are framed as salient in sampled media coverage, to answer the research questions:

RQ1: What does the manifest content of the media coverage reveal about the three media sources' depiction of the newsworthiness of each crisis stakeholder?

- (a) What is the extent, frequency, prominence and valence of mentions of each stakeholder?**
- (b) Is the newsworthiness of each stakeholder depicted differently in the different media platforms?**

RQ2: How does the coverage of the crisis in the three media sources frame each stakeholder as salient?

- a) To what extent is each stakeholder framed as possessing the identified crisis stakeholder salience characteristics?**
- (b) What framing devices are employed by the media sources to depict stakeholder salience?**
- (c) How does the salience framing of each stakeholder differ across the three media platforms?**

In investigating these research questions, three broad and intertwined analytical themes are identified: the conceptual challenges in understanding the multi-faceted social construct that is a crisis; stakeholders and the organisation-in-crisis; and news framing in media coverage of an organisation crisis. This chapter provides an account of the significance of these three themes to the research problem and how they contributed to shaping the conceptual framework introduced to answer the research questions.

1.1 Background: Crisis, organisations, stakeholders and the media

Crisis has become an inevitable and prominent feature of the modern business environment; every organisation at some time will face crisis situations that can disrupt

operations, injure or kill people, harm the environment or damage property. Crises can develop from numerous factors or chains of events located outside or inside an organisation, such as faulty decision making, managerial or operational oversights, technological failures, changes in the natural or business environments, and unanticipated events (Argenti, 2002; Baker, 2001; King, 2002; Mitroff & Alpaslan, 2003; Mitroff, Shrivastava & Udwadia, 1987; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer, 2003; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000; Williams & Olaniran, 1998).

Crisis research, which has proliferated since the 1980s, offers an abundance of definitions of crisis. While no one definition has yet been universally adopted, most versions describe a crisis as a low-probability, high-impact situation with complex causes and effects, which needs to be addressed immediately and could threaten the future viability of the organisation.

Experts debate whether organisation crises occur more now than ever in the past or whether that just appears to be the case because more crises are reported by the global news media. But there is no disagreement over the potential of the business modern crisis to cause far more serious and extensive physical, financial and reputational harm than ever in the past (Johannesen, 2001; Seeger *et al.*, 2003; Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2007).

While some crises may originate in and be confined to one specific organisation, the highly-networked nature of modern business increasingly exposes organisations to crises that originated outside their own firm, industry or geographical region. The repercussions from such situations can disrupt social systems and communities across regional, cultural, economic and political boundaries. As a result, organisations-in-crisis frequently find themselves dealing with and being scrutinised by stakeholders and observers across the globe, each understanding the crisis situation from subjective perspectives.

Much early crisis management research only minimally acknowledged the significance of parties affected by a crisis beyond the focal organisation. Even today, the scholarly and practitioner literatures focus on understanding and addressing the operational, financial, technological, competitive, legal and political needs of the organisation-in-crisis, rather than understanding how the expectations of other affected parties may be addressed (Coombs, 2006; Mitroff, 2005; Waymer & Heath, 2007). The bias led Waymer and Heath (2007) to venture that crisis management research and strategy will remain deficient until the perspectives of all publics affected by crises are fully considered.

Crisis management aims at preventing crises or responding appropriately to those that do occur by removing the risk and uncertainty of a crisis situation, so helping to return an organisation-in-crisis to normal operations as soon as possible. Without doubt, this requires addressing operational, technological, legal and financial considerations that may have contributed to the crisis – the so-called industrial aspects of crisis (Zyglidopoulos & Phillips, 1999). But today's business organisations operate in multi-constituent societal networks. So, beyond the industrial/technical considerations, crises raise complex moral and ethical questions around wrongdoing, intent, cause, blame, responsibility, victims, fairness and equality (Seeger, 1997; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013).

Consequently, crisis research has now started to examine also the societal, relational and reputational considerations of crisis response, specifically the ethical and moral responsibilities that organisations-in-crisis have to affected publics or stakeholders. This has been termed the public relations (Zyglidopoulos & Phillips, 1999) or politico-symbolic (Boin, 2004) aspect of crisis. This shift is reflected, in particular, in the proliferation of studies of crisis communication, now acknowledged as an integral aspect of crisis management, distinct from the technical dimension of handling the physical and technological aspects of the crisis (Barton, 2001; Heath & Millar, 2004; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer, 1998). Indeed, some researchers have begun to differentiate operational crises from reputational crises (Sohn & Lariscy, 2014), although this distinction would appear to downplay the significance of the interrelationship and

interaction between operational, technological, legal, financial, social, relational and reputational factors.

Whatever type of impact a crisis may have, effective crisis management requires the focal organisation to address the needs of all constituents affected by its actions, particularly those parties most harmed by the crisis situation. A crisis violates stakeholder expectations of an organisation. But how the firm subsequently responds to the situation can aggravate or mitigate the moral outrage felt toward the organisation (Barton, 1993, 2001; Coombs, 2010, 2015). In this regard, there exists an important interrelationship between crisis and organisation reputation.

Reputation is a valuable, intangible organisation asset that has been linked to attracting customers and employee talent, generating investment interests, and achieving positive media coverage (Dowling, 2002; Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun & van Riel, 2004). An organisation's reputation is formed by the direct and indirect interactions that stakeholders have with the firm (Fombrun & van Riel, 2004). An organisation with a poor reputation is considered more likely to experience a crisis and be significantly harmed by it (Coombs & Holladay, 2006; Larkin, 2003; Lerbinger, 1997). While a prior good reputation does not protect an organisation-in-crisis from reputation damage, it may influence the firm's stakeholders to be more forgiving because of existing goodwill (Coombs & Holladay, 2006; Grunig & Grunig, 1991; Nakra, 2000; Young, 1995).

1.1.1 Diverse stakeholders and disparate perspectives

It is well established in the literature and in crisis management practice that effective crisis response requires organisations to take action to address stakeholders' expectations (Alpaslan, 2009; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Shrivastava, 1993). Significantly, analyses of numerous past crises have identified that the extent of longterm damage sustained by an organisation-in-crisis depends more on how fairly and empathetically the firm was judged to have addressed the needs of those affected, rather than whether the responsible

parties were identified and punished or how quickly the organisation resumed normal operations (Coombs, 2007a; Lukaszewski, 2007; Mitroff, 2004; Mitroff, Pearson & Harrington, 1996; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Seeger *et al.*, 2003; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013; Ulmer *et al.*, 2007).

Every individual, group and community who believes they have been harmed by a crisis expects those they hold responsible for the situation to address their needs (Crandall, Parnell & Spillan, 2010; Seeger & Ulmer, 2001; Seeger *et al.*, 2003; Ulmer *et al.*, 2007). If the organisation is perceived to respond inappropriately by neglecting the expectations of affected parties, communicating ineffectively, or behaving contrary to accepted social norms, it will face intensified public pressure that could affect its credibility, reputation, legitimacy and future viability (Argenti, 2002; Baker, 2001; Brinson & Benoit, 1996; Coombs, 1999; Crandall *et al.*, 2010; Elsbach, Sutton & Principe, 1998; González-Herrero & Pratt, 1996; Heath & Millar, 2004; Ice, 1991; Kash & Darling, 1998; King, 2002; Marra, 1998; Massey, 2001; Milburn, Schuler & Watman, 1983; Mitroff & Alpaslan, 2003; Mitroff *et al.*, 1987; Nakra, 2000; Nelson, 1990; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Post, Preston & Sachs, 2002; Seeger, 1986; Seeger & Ulmer, 2001; Seeger *et al.*, 2003; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013; Sethi & Falbe, 1987; Suchman, 1995; Svendsen, 1998; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000; Ulmer *et al.*, 2007; Williams & Olaniran, 1998; Yu, Sengul & Lester, 2008).

While the risk of reputation damage from a crisis is well recognised, case studies of past crises provide abundant evidence of how organisation leaders have, sometimes seemingly inexplicably, mismanaged crisis response to affected stakeholders. One explanation for this may be the multi-dimensional character of crisis; the uncertainty of crisis situations and the emotions they arouse create significant ambiguity that supports multiple interpretations (Weick, 1995). Every individual, group and organisation affected by or observing an organisation crisis tends to define and understand the situation according to their own worldviews, interests, expectations and connection with the organisation (Billings, Milburn & Schaalman, 1980; Coombs, 2007a, 2009; Elliot, Harris & Baron, 2005; Fox, 1999; Mitroff, Alpaslan & Green, 2004; Richardson, 1994; Smith & Elliott, 2001; Ulmer *et al.*, 2007; Zyglidopoulos, 2001). If the characteristics of

crisis exist in the eye of the beholder, it follows that each constituent's expectations of and demands on the organisation-in-crisis may also differ (Heath, 2004; Mitroff, 2005; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Shrivastava, 1987b; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000; Ulmer *et al.*, 2007).

It would appear vital, then, for crisis management practice to recognise and account for the different frames of reference through which stakeholders understand a crisis, and accept the validity of stakeholders' diverse, and possibly competing, expectations (Elliott, Swartz & Herbane, 2002; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Snyder, Hall, Robertson, Jasinski & Miller, 2006; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000). However, as Heath (2012: 7) pointed out, many studies appear to assume that "... all 'audiences' witnessing, judging, and reacting to the focal organization are of one mind, in such a way that a [crisis management] strategy can achieve universal impact with multiple publics." This assumption, Heath (2012) contended, has undermined the quality of crisis research and the development of best practice.

Divergent sense-making of a crisis can lead to misunderstanding, conflict and even confrontation when an organisation-in-crisis responds to affected constituents (Browning & Shetler, 1992; Entman, 1993; Gephart, 1984; Jemphrey & Berrington, 2000; Mitroff *et al.*, 2004; Pinsdorf, 1991; 't Hart, 1993; Ulmer *et al.*, 2007; Zyglidopoulos, 2001). For example, the psychosocial and material needs of those considered victims of a crisis, such as survivors and the bereaved, have at times conflicted with, and been subjugated to, the priorities of regulatory agencies (Davis & Scraton, 1999; Dix, 1998). This was dramatically illustrated in accounts of the 1988 Pan Am crash in Lockerbie. The bereaved families expected their loved ones' remains to be returned to them as soon as they were located; the investigating authorities needed the bodies to remain in place until search operations were completed, up to four days later (Dix, 1998). The events of the Lockerbie recovery operation, in fact, prompted changes in recommended procedures for airlines dealing with an accident, specifically regarding the treatment of those seen as victims.

In numerous other crises, journalists, arguing the public's right to be informed, have reported intense frustration at not receiving full and timely information about a developing situation because investigating authorities deemed it necessary to withhold certain facts until a later time. This was evident in the days following the March 2014 disappearance of Malaysia Airlines' flight MH370.

The crisis management reality is that, faced with time constraints and competing demands from different constituents, managers of organisations-in-crisis have to decide how to prioritise stakeholders' needs for response. Typically, their decisions favour the organisation's interpretation of the situation, or that of stakeholders seen as most powerful or valuable to the organisation because they control, and could withdraw, needed resources (Coombs, 2007a; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). This defensive, organisation-centric position that prioritises the instrumental interests of the firm over other affected parties can result in strained relationships and conflict with and among other publics, who may feel that the organisation-in-crisis has failed to understand the crisis from their perspective and ignored their needs (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Richardson, 1994).

The unwillingness or inability of organisation managers to recognise, understand and acknowledge a crisis from the perspectives of affected publics may result from the traditional crisis management approach that sees the organisation as the centre point of a crisis arena and emphasises the technical and operational aspects of crisis response (Mitroff, 2005). This approach does not acknowledge that affected constituents each see themselves at the centre of the crisis and understand their own emotional, ecological, social, ethical or moral needs as a priority. Crisis management theory has thus far paid scant attention to understanding and addressing people's emotions in response to a crisis (Jin, Pang & Cameron, 2010) and offers minimal guidance on how managers may objectively assess the salience of crisis stakeholders' diverse expectations, so as to make decisions about the allocation of resources to address concerns.

1.1.2 Role of the news media during crises

The modern organisation crisis is subject to extensive coverage in traditional and Internet-based media. While this research project focuses on the role of traditional news media platforms, specifically print newspapers and news agency services, it also acknowledges that the proliferation of online and social media technologies has changed crisis management practice and altered people's perceptions of organisation crises (Howell & Miller, 2010; Kimmel, 2004; Olsson, 2014). Media audiences around the world today expect immediate information about a developing crisis, wherever it occurs (Brummette & Sisco, 2015; Stephens & Malone, 2009). This information is delivered to them not only through traditional media such as newspapers, radio and television, but also through numerous Internet-based news services and social media platforms.

Many of today's organisation crises are played out globally on numerous social media platform (McCorkindale & DiStaso, 2013). These channels allow the public to participate in crisis communication by sharing and commenting on information (and misinformation) about the situation (Coombs & Holladay, 2014; van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2013; Veil, Buehner & Palenchar, 2011). Crisis stakeholders and observers can even use highly-visible social media to publicly challenge organisations-in-crisis (Argenti, 2006; Brummette & Sisco, 2015). Social media narratives about recent crises provide numerous examples: the Arab Spring protests (2010/11), earthquakes in Haiti (2010) and East Japan (2011), terror attacks including those in Paris (2015, 2016), Nice (2016), Boston (2013), Brussels (2016), Sydney (2014), Dhaka (2016) and Bangkok (2015), and the disappearance of Malaysian Airlines' MH370 (2014).

With the public playing a crisis communicator role, concerns have intensified about the credibility, defined as the extent to which individuals find information accurate and trustworthy (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000), of crisis information on social media platforms. Public awareness of the problem of social media sharing of erroneous information escalated during the 2012/13 BBC child abuse investigations and in the aftermath of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, in particular, when the names of uninvolved

individuals were shared tens of thousands of times on Twitter. Such cases have contributed to increasing public scepticism of crisis information communicated via social media channels.

Research comparing the perceived credibility of news stories on traditional and social media platforms has so far been inconclusive. Studies looking at earlier forms of online media platforms such as web pages, blogs and instant messaging found that media audiences typically reported higher credibility rankings for online news sources compared to offline sources (Johnson, Kaye, Bichard & Wong, 2008; Johnson & Kaye, 2009; Sweetser & Metzger, 2007; Yang & Lim, 2009) or television (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Kioussis, 2001), except for newspapers, which were seen to provide the most reliable information (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000). A study of crisis communication about the 2005 Hurricane Katrina found that affected communities considered traditional media the most important source, followed by word of mouth (Li, Airriess, Chen, Leong, Keith & Adams, 2008). Flanagin and Metzger (2000) found from a survey of university students that respondents generally reported they considered Internet information to be as credible as that obtained from television, radio and magazines, but not as credible as newspaper information.

More recent studies have highlighted audiences' increasing concerns about the credibility of crisis information communicated via social media channels, and a growing preference for information from traditional media sources, which are perceived as more credible (Nijkraake, Gosselt & Gutteling, 2015; Utz, Schultz & Glocka, 2013). For example, Nogami and Yoshida (2014) identified increased scepticism of Japanese Twitter users about the credibility of postings on that channel following the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. Utz *et al.*, (2013) found that people were more likely to cite information found in newspaper coverage, even if that information originated with the organisation-in-crisis, rather than what they read on social media, which was seen to be less trustworthy and credible. One explanation for the perceived greater credibility of traditional media is a prevailing trust in journalists as information gatekeepers (Schultz, Utz & Goritz, 2011; Utz *et al.*, 2013).

While not dismissing the role of social media in crisis management, the present study focuses on the role of selected print newspapers and news agency services. The growing body of evidence on media use during crises suggests that, despite the proliferation of social media channels, media audiences still turn to traditional media to supplement or confirm information, or for interpretative commentaries of the facts that social media do not provide. Unaffected publics follow developments through the media, while affected parties may refer to media coverage to supplement their personal understanding of the situation.

Crises make compelling news coverage in traditional media because they meet most of the journalistic criteria for newsworthiness: timeliness, impact and consequence, prominence, proximity, novelty/rarity, conflict, human interest, conscience, pathos, and drama or shock value (Bunton, Connery & Neuzil, 1999; Hough, 1988; Itule & Anderson, 1991; Lorenz & Vivian, 1996; Mencher, 2006). The media play an indispensable role in providing crisis information. This includes disseminating instructing information such as warnings and alerts, providing updates of what has occurred and how the situation is developing, reporting and analysing investigation findings, and sometimes providing information relevant for individual and community recovery and rebuilding (Houston, Pfefferbaum & Rosenholtz, 2012; Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche & Pfefferbaum, 2008; Scanlon, 2007; Wilkins, 1989).

The public's media use has been shown to increase significantly when a crisis occurs (Andersen & Spitzberg, 2010; Baran & Davis, 2009; Coombs, 2007a; Kim, Jung, Cohen & Ball-Rokeach, 2004; Ledingham & Maseh-Walters, 1985; Lowrey, 2004). This has been explained by media systems dependency theory (cf. Ball-Rokeach, 1973, 1985; Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1975), which holds that when people experience high levels of ambiguity in their social environment and have little direct contact or limited factual knowledge about the events that are causing the anxiety, they become dependent on the media for information and explanation of the situation (An & Gower, 2009; Baran & Davis, 2009; Cobb, 2005; Coombs, 2007a; Graber, 1980; Holladay & Coombs, 2013; Iyengar, 1989; Scheufele, 1999; Seeger, Vennette, Ulmer & Sellnow, 2002; Wenger, James & Faupel, 1985).

However, media coverage of a crisis situation is rarely confined to providing the facts of the situation, but typically also offers analysis and commentary designed to stimulate audiences' emotions or prompt them to focus on specific aspects of the situation.

According to Heath (2012: 9), "... facts actually don't count as much as how they are framed and interpreted." As a crisis progresses, media audiences are exposed to specific narratives about the situation, its causes, who is responsible, how appropriately focal organisations are responding, and how the situation should be resolved (Ball-Rokeach, 1985; Baran & Davis, 2009; Cho & Gower, 2006; Choi & Lin, 2009; Coombs, 2007a; Deephouse, 2000; Fearn-Banks, 2001; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Nelkin, 1988; Nijkraak *et al.*, 2015; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Pollock & Rindova, 2003; Price & Tewksbury, 1997; Scheufele, 2000; Shaw, McCombs, Weaver & Hamm, 1999; Valentini & Romenti, 2011; Vasterman, Yzermans & Dirkzwager, 2005; Wanta, Golan & Lee, 2004).

Media framing has been identified as playing a significant role in crisis evolution and the attribution of meaning to a crisis (Schultz *et al.*, 2011; van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2013). Framing essentially involves highlighting specific aspects of information about an item in a communication text, thereby elevating that information in salience (Entman, 1993). If the concept of news framing is accepted, it can be understood that media outlets' frames in the coverage of a crisis may affect their audiences' perceptions of the situation. At a broad level of news framing, tone in media reporting of a crisis and the involved organisation can be positive, neutral or negative, so providing public expression of approval or disapproval (Elsbach, 1994; Lamertz & Baum, 1998) and perhaps influencing how media audiences think about aspects of the situation (Deephouse, 2000; Nijkraak *et al.*, 2015). The media frames, for example, may incite emotions that could influence audiences' attitudes and attributions of blame towards the involved organisation (Choi & Lin, 2009).

Understanding how crisis stakeholders are represented in media coverage of a crisis may help to sensitise organisation managers to how other parties perceive the situation and what they expect of the organisation (Carroll & McCombs, 2003; Holladay, 2012; Marra, 1998; Ogrizek & Guillery, 1999). In particular, it is the contention of this thesis that analysis of the media framing of the salience of crisis stakeholders and their claims

may help to guide managers' crisis response decision making, so response actions can be tailored to address stakeholders' priority needs.

This opening section of Chapter 1 has so far narrated how the research problem was identified and the thesis argument formulated. The next section outlines how the links between the concept of organisation crisis as a multi-faceted social construct, stakeholder relationships with an organisation-in-crisis, and news media framing of organisation crises shaped the development of the conceptual framework introduced in this study. Then, the research strategy and methodological approach adopted to answer the research questions are presented. The chapter concludes by previewing the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

1.2 Conceptualising crisis stakeholder salience

The research area for this dissertation is the media framing of the salience of stakeholders involved in an organisation crisis. Specifically, the study examines how and why crisis stakeholders and their claims on the organisation-in-crisis are framed as salient in selected news media coverage of the October 2000 Singapore Airlines SQ006 accident in Taiwan. The study proposes a conceptual framework based on aspects of stakeholder theory, crisis communication theory and media framing, namely the stakeholder salience model of Mitchell, Agle & Wood (1997) (MAW), Coombs' (2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2012) situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), and a model of media framing of crises proposed by An and Gower (2009). The resulting framework is applied to the case study of the SQ006 accident.

1.2.1 Stakeholder salience

The current research moves away from a traditional crisis management focus on the organisation-in-crisis, and adopts a stakeholder orientation to examine how the news

media portrayed crisis stakeholders. This study also looks beyond a traditional depiction of organisation-stakeholder relationships as dyads, by considering the concept of stakeholder networks within an issue arena.

Stakeholder theory developed as a tool to help organisation managers formulate and implement corporate strategy in dynamic and unpredictable business environments (Freeman & Reed, 1983; Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar & de Colle, 2010; Wolfe & Putler, 2002). Stakeholder thinking "...views the corporation as an entity through which numerous and diverse participants accomplish multiple, and not always entirely congruent, purposes" (Donaldson & Preston, 1995: 70). Yet, the interests of all stakeholders are seen to have intrinsic value and no one set of interests is assumed to dominate others (Clarkson, 1995, Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

The stakeholder approach is seen as a way that organisations can be guided to manage, in an atmosphere of positive negotiation, potential conflict stemming from stakeholders' diverging interests (Freeman, 1984; Freeman & Reed, 1983; Freeman *et al.*, 2010; Frooman, 1999; Gand, Acquier & Szpirglas, 2005; Sturdivant, 1979). This is important because, if organisation managers overlook or ignore stakeholders, the firm's business, financial and social performance can be adversely affected (Freeman, 1984; Neville & Menguc, 2006). Thus, a stakeholder approach advocates that, in order for an organisation to thrive – or maybe even, as in times of crisis, to survive – the expectations of all key stakeholder groups should be acknowledged and addressed, and the stakeholders should, to some extent, participate in decisions that affect their welfare (Bryson, 2004; Clarkson, 1995; Evan & Freeman, 1983; Freeman, 1984; Wood, 1991a).

In the context of crises, Alpaslan (2009; Alpaslan, Green & Mitroff, 2009) contended that the stakeholder model represents the most ethically appropriate form of corporate governance because it encourages organisations to prioritise the need for proactive and/or accommodating crisis management behaviours over concerns about maximising shareholder value. Alpaslan (2009: 48) argued that more successful crisis management outcomes would be achieved because:

The stakeholder model, with its broad definition of stakeholders, its emphasis on fairness and multiple corporate objectives, and its recognition of the value of ‘non-instrumental’ ethics, seems to provide managers with the moral basis they may need to do the right thing in the context of crises, and perhaps more importantly, before a crisis hits.

However, stakeholder theory has been criticised for its over-emphasis on addressing the claims of all stakeholders, while failing to explain how organisation managers can assign relative weights to various stakeholders’ claims so as to prioritise them (Coelho, McClure & Spry, 2003; Donaldson, 1989; Wasieleski, 2001). Mitchell *et al.* (1997) aimed to address this concern with their stakeholder salience framework that provides a situational assessment of stakeholders’ salience determined by their power, and the legitimacy and urgency of their claims, so guiding managerial decisions about prioritising stakeholders’ claims. Mitchell *et al.* (1997) claimed their model distinguished publics with a legal, moral or presumed claim on an organisation from those with an ability to influence the firm’s behaviour, direction, process or outcomes.

The present study responds to calls from crisis researchers (cf. Elliott, 2006; Mitroff, 2005) for further research into the salience of crisis stakeholders and their claims, by exploring and expanding on the salience attributes identified by Mitchell *et al.* (1997), with specific reference to the context of organisation crisis. With its consideration of normative and instrumental aspects of stakeholders’ salience, the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) model would appear an appropriate organising concept from which to start an analysis of crisis stakeholder salience. The attributes of legitimacy, power and urgency certainly appear relevant to assess stakeholder salience in the context of the rational aspects of a crisis such as operational, technological, financial and legal factors. In order to account for the social and relational aspects of a crisis, however, the range of stakeholder salience attributes may need to be extended. During a crisis, the “... emotional, ecological, social, ethical, medical, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, psychological, and existential criteria” (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992: 129) may be significantly more influential in how stakeholders’ salience is perceived. For this perspective, this research project turns to aspects of crisis communication theory.

1.2.2 **Situational crisis communication theory**

Crisis management theory and industry best practice hold that an organisation's ability to effectively manage a crisis situation depends to a significant extent on its ability to communicate appropriately with stakeholders (Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). By planning, developing and implementing strategic crisis communication with stakeholders, organisation managers may be able to mitigate the negative outcomes of a crisis, so protecting the organisation, its stakeholders and the industry from further harm (Barton, 2001; Benoit, 1997; Coombs, 1999, 2010).

Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) (Coombs, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2012), grounded in attribution theory, is perhaps the most-researched crisis communication framework developed to guide organisation managers in communicating effectively with crisis stakeholders. It posits an audience-centred communication approach determined by how stakeholders are expected to respond to an organisation-in-crisis. The model aims to match specific crisis situations to an appropriate communication approach by analysing an organisation's stability/crisis history, its locus/personal control over the situation, and its prior reputation.

These three criteria were identified by Coombs (2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2012) as determinants of how stakeholders perceive an organisation-in-crisis. This thesis considers the same dimensions may also offer insights towards understanding stakeholder salience during crisis situations. In particular, it has been suggested (Coombs & Holladay, 2005) that the dimensions of stability/crisis history and locus/personal control may contribute to explaining the emotional responses of crisis stakeholders and observers towards the focal organisation, so offering insight into the social/relational considerations identified by Mitroff (2005; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992) as pertinent to crisis stakeholder analysis.

However, it should be acknowledged that most crisis communication frameworks appear to have an inherent limitation in assuming that, during crises, the organisation-

stakeholder communication process is devoid of external “noise” that could distort strategic crisis messages in transmission. During a crisis, the focal organisation may certainly communicate directly with stakeholders who are involved in the situation, such as regulatory bodies, employees, customers and suppliers, as well as with some affected parties and observers who find information through the organisation’s website or its social media pages. But many other affected parties and uninvolved observers do not experience the crisis and the organisation’s response first-hand, for reasons which may include physical distance, lack of direct contact or legal concerns. Such constituents typically acquire information about the situation through the news media and an assumption can be made that the media coverage they access may influence how those individuals and groups understand the crisis. For explanation of this perspective, the present study looks to media framing theory to consider the role of the news media in framing crisis stakeholders and the salience of their claims.

1.2.3 News media framing of crises

Studies have concluded that most information about a crisis acquired by stakeholders is transmitted via the news media, rather than directly from managers of the organisation-in-crisis (Cho & Gower, 2006; Coombs, 2007a; Nijkraake *et al.*, 2015). This may make the media the final arbiter of crisis frames (Nijkraake *et al.*, 2015). Accepting this notion that media users’ perceptions of a crisis may be influenced by how the media depict the situation, the conceptual framework for the present study borrows from media framing theory.

Media content has long been believed to have an effect on users (Krippendorff, 1980). Framing refers to highlighting bits of information about an item in a communication text, thereby elevating them in salience (Entman, 1993). Media framing theories hold that the media go beyond reporting stories to also act as information gatekeepers, by deciding what aspects of a story to highlight and what to play down (Veil & Ojeda, 2010). Consequently, how the media organise and present news stories through specific frames

may affect audiences' evaluation of the issue or topic being reported (Entman, 1993, 2004, 2010).

Journalists, unintentionally or deliberately, impose personal interpretations on their reporting, exposing audiences to subjective views which are given public legitimacy through having appeared in the media (Schudson, 1997). Any news story may, then, be framed differently in different media, exposing stakeholders and observers of a crisis to different interpretations of the situation. This complicates the context in which an organisation-in-crisis must respond to crisis stakeholders and address their expectations (Coombs, 2008; Coombs & Holladay, 2010).

While the extent to which media portrayals affect audiences continues to be debated (Corner, Schlesinger & Silverstone, 1997; Livingstone, 1996; McQuail, 2005), the news media are recognised for exerting significant influence on public perception of what are the most salient issues of the day (McCombs & Reynolds, 2009). In situations like organisation crises, framing effects may be stronger because demand for information is typically high and, as few people have direct contact with any crisis situation, many would rely on the news media for information and analysis (An & Gower, 2009; Baran & Davis, 2009; Cobb, 2005; Coombs, 2007a; Graber, 1980; Holladay & Coombs, 2013; Iyengar, 1989; Scheufele, 1999; Seeger *et al.*, 2002; Wenger *et al.*, 1985).

Certainly, recent crises have shown that the media industries draw the public in as active participants in shaping the discourse on a crisis and determining which parties should be held responsible and why. How media narratives depict an organisation crisis may significantly affect the public's interpretation of events and situations, and influence their perception of an organisation-in-crisis, its crisis response actions and how it treats affected stakeholders (Baran & Davis, 2009; Bridges & Nelson, 2000; Coombs, 2007a; Deephouse, 2000; Fearn-Banks, 2001; Lamertz & Baum, 1998; Nijkraak *et al.*, 2015; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Shrivastava, Mitroff, Miller & Miglani, 1988; Vasterman *et al.*, 2005). Simply put, an organisation's post-crisis reputation and viability is believed to be significantly shaped by the direct and indirect experiences that publics have with the firm during a crisis, including media portrayals

that can influence audiences' viewpoints (Carroll & McCombs, 2003; Coombs, 2006, 2007a; Lerbinger, 1997; Pollock & Rindova, 2003; Romenti & Valentini, 2010; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Valentini & Romenti, 2011).

Given the role of the news media in communicating information about crises, insights into media framing of crisis stakeholders could advance crisis communication theory and benefit crisis management practice by leading to frameworks for more effective crisis response strategies that address stakeholder expectations (Coombs, 2007b; Liu & Pennington-Gray, 2015). Although several scholars (cf. Coombs, 2007a; Holladay, 2012; Houston, *et al.*, 2012) lamented the dearth of systematic analysis of media coverage of crises, the body of research examining crisis news frames is growing (cf. An & Gower, 2009; Cho & Gower, 2006; Kuttschreuter, Gutteling & de Hond, 2011; van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2013; Valentini & Romenti, 2011). This thesis adds to the expanding body of work by investigating the media framing of the salience of stakeholders involved in one organisation crisis. The next section defines the research scope and outlines the methodological approach of the present study.

1.3 Research strategy

This thesis connects research in stakeholder theory, crisis management and communication, and media effects theories to facilitate insight into how crisis stakeholder salience is perceived. It introduces a novel conceptual model to examine how the salience of stakeholders affected by one organisation crisis is depicted in the sampled media coverage of the event, so possibly influencing the perspectives of media audiences. The overarching purpose of the research is twofold:

- (1) To develop a conceptual framework that can be used to examine how and why crisis stakeholders are framed as salient by the news media
- (2) To explore how and why crisis stakeholders are depicted as salient in the sampled media coverage from Singapore and Taiwan media sources of the October 2000 crash in Taiwan of Singapore Airlines' flight SQ006.

As this research developed, it became clear that the study was investigating two distinct interpretations of salience. The term “salience” is typically used to denote “... the phenomenon that when one’s attention is differentially directed to one portion of the environment rather than to others, the information contained in that portion will receive disproportionate weighting in subsequent judgements” (Taylor & Thompson, 1982: 158). In line with this definition, in stakeholder theory, Mitchell *et al.* (1997: 854) defined stakeholder salience as “... the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims”. In this dissertation, accordingly, the term “salience” refers to the degree to which stakeholders’ claims are perceived as a priority for response. However, “salience” applied to the media industries typically refers to the degree to which a topic or event is considered newsworthy and so selected for media reporting. As the present study progressed, it became necessary to differentiate this understanding of salience; consequently, the term “newsworthiness” is used to denote this criterion. The distinction in terminology recognises that while individuals involved in a crisis may be considered newsworthy by the media, they may not be salient crisis stakeholders.

1.3.1 Research scope

The dissertation examines how the main English-language newspapers in Singapore and Taiwan and Taiwan’s national news agency portrayed the salience of stakeholders involved in the crash of Singapore Airlines’ flight SQ006. The case is detailed in Chapter 6. While this study accepts the concept of media framing, it acknowledges that the data generated by this research do not permit inferences to be made about the effects of media content on audiences; however, analysis of media content may serve as a logical starting point for the investigation of media effects (Sparks, 2006). Nor does this single case study generalise media framing of organisation crises; while the findings are discussed in the wider context of crisis management theory and practice, they are not put forward as representative of other crisis situations.

1.3.2 Conceptual and methodological approach

A single case study design is adopted and the SQ006 crash identified as meeting the requirements for the research, as detailed in Chapter 5. To explore how the salience of stakeholders involved in this crisis are framed as salient in the news media, a novel conceptual framework is introduced, drawn from the extant literature in stakeholder theory, crisis communication and media framing of crises. The relevant literature is explored in subsequent chapters. Specifically, the framework extends the concept of the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) stakeholder salience model by incorporating aspects of Coombs' (2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2010) situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) and An and Gower's (2009) media frames of organisation crisis.

Informed by the conceptual background located in the literature and structured around the overarching research purpose, the research questions that shaped this study are formulated to allow for targeted measurement and analysis:

RQ1: What does the manifest content of the media coverage reveal about the three media sources' depiction of the newsworthiness of each crisis stakeholder?

(a) What is the extent, frequency, prominence and valence of mentions of each stakeholder?

(b) Is the newsworthiness of each stakeholder depicted differently in the different media platforms?

RQ2: How does the coverage of the crisis in the three media sources frame each stakeholder as salient?

a) To what extent is each stakeholder framed as possessing the identified crisis stakeholder salience characteristics?

(b) What framing devices are employed by the media sources to depict stakeholder salience?

(c) How does the salience framing of each stakeholder differ across the three media platforms?

The study examines the census of coverage published during the acute and chronic phases of the crisis: 110 articles from the main English-language Singapore daily newspaper, *The Straits Times*; 48 articles from Taiwan's Central News Agency; and 17 articles from the prominent English-language Taiwan newspaper, *The China Post*.

To answer the research questions, a mixed methods content analysis approach is adopted to examine the manifest and latent content of the media coverage. The methodology is detailed in Chapter 5. In the first stage of analysis, quantitative content analysis measures the frequency, extent, prominence and manifest valence of content about specific crisis stakeholders, to answer RQ1. This provides a descriptive statistics overview of how the media sources' coverage depicts the newsworthiness of each of the crisis stakeholders. Informed by these findings, the subsequent qualitative content analysis uses the novel conceptual framework developed from the literature to examine media frames of stakeholder salience in the same census of articles, to answer RQ2. The depicted newsworthiness and salience of crisis stakeholders across the three media sources are compared and contrasted by integrating the findings from both research strands. The mixed methods approach thus provides more comprehensive insights into the research problem by highlighting variations in how and why stakeholders' newsworthiness and salience are framed in and across the media sources.

1.3.3 Contribution

This chapter explains how the research problem was formulated and locates its theoretical underpinnings in the scholarly literature, specifically stakeholder theory, crisis communication theory and media framing theory. As far as was ascertained from the literature review, these three concepts have not previously been woven together theoretically, despite their conceptual interconnections.

While the principle of stakeholder analysis during times of crisis is well recognised in the crisis literature, empirical studies of crisis stakeholder salience have mostly used the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) salience model and its attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency without modification. The present research contributes to crisis management theory and practice by introducing a novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience, and applies the framework to analyse selected media coverage of an organisation crisis. In doing so, the study goes beyond previous research into the expectations and claims of crisis stakeholders to provide new insights, critiques and directions towards a theoretical approach to analysing crisis stakeholder salience.

Specifically, the crisis stakeholder salience framework extends the concept of the stakeholder salience model of Mitchell *et al.* (1997) by drawing also from Coombs' (2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2012) situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), and a model of media framing of crises posited by An and Gower (2009). This approach thus expounds a set of relationships that have been established as relevant to the study of crisis management. Crisis researchers (cf. Elliott, 2006; Mitroff, 2005) have called for further research into the salience of crisis stakeholders and their claims, particularly the role played by social, emotional, ethical, medical, moral, spiritual and psychological factors that may be important determinants of crisis stakeholder salience (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). This research responds to this call and to an identified critical need (cf. Sellnow & Seeger, 2013) for the development and testing of theoretical models to explain crises and inform practice.

The theoretical contribution relates to how the salience of crisis stakeholders is described, conceptualised and analysed, suggesting a future research direction towards a model of stakeholder salience that specifically accounts for the unique aspects of organisation crisis. The framework of crisis stakeholder salience also has important implications for crisis management practice in providing a model to explain how the expectations of those affected by a crisis situation are perceived to be salient. This thesis contends that analysis of the media framing of the salience of crisis stakeholders and their claims may help guide crisis response decision making, so response actions can be

tailored to address stakeholders' priority needs and reconcile disparate expectations of diverse stakeholders.

1.3.4 Dissertation outline

This dissertation is presented in eight chapters. This first chapter locates the research problem and outlines the theoretical considerations that shape the research perspective. The research strategy and structure of the dissertation are outlined.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 analyse and discuss the key literature related to the theoretical perspectives that inform this study, based on three identified theoretical themes: the conceptual challenge to understanding organisation crisis as a multi-faceted social construct (Chapter 2); stakeholders and organisation-in-crisis (Chapter 3); and the significance of news media portrayals of organisation crisis (Chapter 4). While a review of the existing literature revealed little existing research on news media framing of crisis stakeholder salience, concepts within the three identified analytic themes have been widely researched. Each of these three chapters opens with a summary of important research developments and definitions of key terms, before focusing on specific arguments that informed this thesis. Limitations of the existing literature are also identified. Chapter 4 closes by summarising the connections between the three themes that led to the formalisation of the research questions and development of the conceptual model used in this research to analyse the SQ006 accident.

Chapter 5 explicates the methodology. First, the framework of crisis stakeholder salience developed from the literature for this research is described. The chapter then details how the research questions and the identified conceptual themes determined the research design and methodological framework adopted for this study: a case study approach that incorporates mixed methods content analysis of media coverage of a single crisis case study. The chapter explains why a quan-QUAL mixed methods approach was determined the most effective to investigate crisis stakeholder salience and answer the research questions.

Chapter 6 details the Singapore Airlines SQ006 case study. It narrates the key events in the crisis and presents the empirical data which resulted from the mixed methods content analysis.

Chapter 7 discusses the empirical findings in the context of the research problem identified in this chapter and the conceptual themes drawn from the literature review. Limitations of this study are discussed, to call attention to possible future research into understanding crisis stakeholder salience. This study's implications for future research and applications for crisis management practice are considered. Chapter 8 summarises and concludes the research.

1.4 Conclusion

This research project examines news media framing of the salience of stakeholders involved in the October 2000 crash in Taiwan of Singapore Airlines' flight SQ006. This first chapter has sought to introduce the aims of this study, referencing crisis management practice and the academic literature that contribute to defining the research problem. The study draws from several disciplinary traditions to consider the dimensions that contribute to crisis stakeholders being framed as salient in media coverage of an organisation crisis. In doing so, the study identifies a lack of existing research into crisis stakeholder salience and a need for crisis management practitioners to be equipped to better assess stakeholder salience when developing crisis response strategies.

To establish a framework within which to analyse the media framing of the salience of stakeholders affected by the SQ006 crisis, this chapter has introduced the background to the study through three conceptual themes: the conceptual challenge to understanding organisation crisis as a multi-faceted social construct; stakeholders and organisations-in-crisis; and the significance of news media portrayals of organisation crisis. These three

themes are central to the development of the present study's research questions and analysis design

This chapter has first considered the importance of crisis management as an integral aspect of business management. The impact of a crisis can extend far beyond the organisation and harm individuals, groups and communities that may or may not have close connections with the firm. Organisations are expected to do all they can to prevent a crisis occurring and, should one occur, to handle it appropriately, prioritising the needs and expectations of involved or affected publics. It is contended that how organisation managers treat affected parties will contribute to the firm's ability to recover, and its future reputation and business success.

Additionally, this chapter has explored how the concept of crisis is subjectively defined, suggesting that all parties involved in or witnessing an organisation crisis would likely perceive the situation differently. It is argued that managers must understand crises from a stakeholder orientation in order to respond in a manner that the wider public considers appropriate. Studies of past crises show that, in the confusion of a crisis and despite pre-crisis planning, organisation managers may revert to an organisation-centric standpoint to make decisions about crisis response, favouring the interests of constituents who can affect the firm's future.

The chapter has also discussed why the role of the news media is vital in assessing public perceptions of a crisis situation. Many uninvolved parties learn about crises in most part from news media coverage. This thesis accepts the concept of media framing, that frames in news coverage of a crisis may influence how the public perceives the situation, the organisation-in-crisis and affected stakeholders.

The chapter has also explained how reflections on the three identified themes led to the introduction of an analytical framework against which the media framing of the salience of crisis stakeholders is examined in this study. Chapters 2, 3 and 4, which now follow, contextualise the present study's research problem and objectives within their theoretical

foundations by way of a review of the extant literature related to these three themes. The following chapter opens the literature by reviewing the literature related to crisis.

Chapter 2: Crisis: A multi-faceted social construct

This research project examines news media framing of the salience of stakeholders involved in the October 2000 crash in Taiwan of Singapore Airlines' flight SQ006. Chapter 1 identifies three broad and intertwined analytical themes that shaped the formation of this study's research problem and objectives: the conceptual challenge to understanding organisation crisis as a multi-faceted social construct; stakeholders and organisations-in-crisis; and the significance of news media portrayals of organisation crisis. This chapter and the subsequent two review the extant literature related to these three themes.

This chapter is concerned with the conceptual challenges in understanding the multi-faceted social construct that is a crisis. The chapter begins by exploring the concept of crisis and its definition. The subsequent section discusses crisis management, particularly the responsibilities that organisations-in-crisis have to their stakeholders. This leads into a review of the literature on crisis communication, and specifically situational crisis communication theory, which contributes to the conceptual model of crisis stakeholder salience developed for this study.

2.1 The nature of organisation crisis

Crisis has become an inevitable and prominent feature of the modern business environment. Every organisation at some time can expect to face situations that will

disrupt operations, injure or kill people, harm the environment, damage property, or threaten the organisation's reputation and future viability.

Organisation crises are characterised by multiple, intertwined dimensions: technological, social, political, ethical, economic and psychological factors that combine and interact to create a complex situation that requires extraordinary measures to address. That the study of such phenomena is inherently multidisciplinary is not surprising. However, the literature reveals that contrasting perspectives from different academic fields have not been effectively integrated, perhaps complicating insight into the nature of crisis. Even key terminology within the discipline still lacks widely-accepted definitions, starting with the term crisis itself (cf. Boin, 2006; Coombs, 2007a; Elliott & Smith, 2006b; Lalonde, 2004; Lalonde & Roux-Dufort, 2013; Mitroff, 1986; Pauchant & Douville, 1993; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013; Shrivastava, 1993; Smith, 2006a; Smith & Elliott, 2006; Wagenaar, 1996). The literature review for the present research opens, then, by considering various scholarly perspectives on defining and conceptualising crisis and crisis management.

2.1.1 Defining crisis

Defining what a crisis is has proven problematic for scholars. The literature offers many operational definitions but none has yet been broadly adopted by academics or practitioners (Boin, 2006; Elliott & Smith, 2006b; Elliott *et al.*, 2005; Jaques, 2010; Lagadec, 1993; Lalonde, 2004; Lalonde & Roux-Dufort, 2013; Pauchant & Douville, 1993; Pearson & Clair, 1998). Nor is there significant agreement on precisely what differentiates a crisis from other bad events such as an accident, disaster, emergency or catastrophe (cf. Billings *et al.*, 1980; Boin, 2005; Borodzicz & Van Haperen, 2002; Elliott & Smith, 2006b; Lagadec, 1993; Lalond, 2004; Lalond & Roux-Dufort, 2013; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992).

Common usage of the word “crisis” may partly explain the difficulty in defining the term. “Crisis” has been described as one of the most over-used and misused words in

modern society (Elliott *et al.*, 2005; Smith, 2006a), leading writers to dismiss the term as a meaningless construct (Lagadec, 1993), an empty shell (Morin, 1976), a lay term in search of a scholarly meaning (Robinson, 1968), and a "... ready-to-use catch-phrase that is merely a final resort in the face of the distress we feel when we can neither diagnose a situation nor predict where it is heading" (Bejin & Morin, 1976 cited in Lagadec, 1993: 25). Boin (2004: 167) contended that studies aimed at defining crisis have achieved little more than position it as a "catchall concept" for a variety of "un-ness" (Boin, 2004; Hewitt, 1983; Lagadec, 1993) situations: unwanted, unexpected, unprecedented, unmanageable, unscheduled, unplanned, unpleasant, unoperational, unimaginable and uncertain.

While a lack of universally-accepted definitions of key terms is not unique to this discipline of study, it has given rise to considerable debate on the importance of searching for definitive terminology. One viewpoint sees a critical need for a universal definition (cf. Korac-Kakabadse *et al.*, 2002 cited in Kouzmin, 2008). This perspective resounds with many industry practitioners, who believe emergency and crisis responders must share and understand common terminology so they can plan efficient response actions and allocate resources.

A contrasting standpoint challenges the repeated call for agreement on definitions, arguing that the coexistence of multiple perspectives of crisis reflects the complexity of the modern world (Lalond & Roux-Dufort, 2013). Indeed, the literature widely recognises that any crisis will have multiple realities as it is understood self-interestedly by involved parties and observers (Coombs, 2007a, 2009; Fiol & Kooor-Misra, 1997; Fox, 1999; Heath & Millar, 2004; Lupton, 1999; Mitroff *et al.*, 2004; Mitroff & Pearson, 1993; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Smith & Elliott, 2001; Ulmer *et al.*, 2007; Utz *et al.*, 2013; Zyglidopoulos, 2001; Zyglidopoulos & Phillips, 1999). Consequently, it is to be expected that those who study crisis have different ways to define the phenomenon. "To insist, therefore, on agreement as a precondition for studying ill-structured problems is to ignore and to deny their basic nature. It is to misrepresent them ontologically" (Mitroff *et al.*, 2004: 175).

Despite the lack of an agreed definition of crisis, the term is used constantly in the academic and industry literature as if there were a common understanding of what a crisis is. Furthermore, perhaps surprisingly, the literature reflects significant conceptual similarities in how crisis has been described, categorised and analysed (see Appendix A for various approaches in defining crisis).

Hermann's (1963, 1972) seminal definition proposed that crises were different from other adverse events due to three fundamental characteristics: a threat to the organisation's high-priority goals, an unexpected surprise to the organisation, and a short decision-making and response time. In line with Hermann's (1963, 1972) approach, Pearson and Clair (1998: 60) offered a definition of organisational crisis from a management theory perspective, seeing crisis as "... a low-probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly". While this definition has been widely cited in scholarly and practitioner literature, Pearson and Clair (1998) suggested a key revision to better account for the role of crisis stakeholders, as will be discussed later.

Other researchers adapted Hermann's (1963, 1972) definition by focusing on factors such as the infrequency and unpredictability of crisis (Barton, 1993; Seeger *et al.*, 1998; Shrivastava *et al.*, 1988); involvement of a wide range of stakeholders (Elliott & McGuinness, 2002; Elliott *et al.*, 2005; Shrivastava, 1987b; Smith, 2006b); probability of cause by internal or external factors (Hearit, 2006; Mitroff & Kilman, 1984); pressured timeframe for response time (Forgues & Roux-Dufort, 1998; Gregory, 2005; Hermann, 1963); creation of victims (Perrow 1984; Sen & Egelhoff, 1991); confusion and ambiguity (Dutton, 1988; Quarantelli, 1988; Smith, 2006b); and threat to the organisation's reputation, future success and financial viability (Fearn-Banks, 2002; Seeger *et al.*, 1998; Shrivastava *et al.*, 1988).

A review of how organisation crisis has been defined and described in the crisis literature draws attention to the organisation-centric standpoint of much of the crisis research (Waymer & Heath, 2007), even while acknowledging that many other parties are

typically involved or affected. Highlighting a drawback to understanding crisis from only the standpoint of the focal organisation, Shrivastava *et al.* (1988) noted that the 1979 Three Mile Island accident would not satisfy some definitions of crisis as it did not cause costly damage, harm to human life or destruction of the environment. However, it threatened and destabilised local communities and politicians, the nuclear industry and the Three Mile Island organisation and for this reason is considered a paradigmatic crisis (Boin, 2006; Shrivastava *et al.*, 1988).

Recent developments in crisis research have seen a move away from the organisation-centric focus to acknowledge the myriad of diverse perspectives of a crisis situation held by involved constituents. The literature reflects how crisis is now recognised as a multi-dimensional social construct shaped by societal, organisational and personal filters (cf. Billings *et al.*, 1980; Coombs, 2007a, 2009; Elliot *et al.*, 2005; Fiol & Kooor-Misra, 1997; Fox, 1999; Heath & Millar, 2004; Lupton, 1999; Mitroff *et al.*, 2004; Mitroff & Pearson, 1993; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Smith & Elliott, 2001; Ulmer *et al.*, 2007; Utz *et al.*, 2013; Zyglidopoulos, 2001; Zyglidopoulos & Phillips, 1999). Shrivastava (1987a: 85), for example, detailed how the same events at Bhopal were evaluated differently by key stakeholders, who consequently had diverse expectations of what needed to be done.

To Union Carbide, the “incident” was a technical malfunction that needed to be corrected without causing major financial damage to the company. To the government, it was an “accident” that required relief without damaging the political position of the ruling regime. To the victims, it was a disaster that had irrevocably changed their lives; it required grief and anger and beginning the slow process of putting the pieces back together again. To the activists who sympathized with the victims, it was an unnecessary tragedy for which a negligent company and a culpable government ought to be taken to task.

Defining crisis from a more relational perspective focuses attention on the stakeholder point of view. It also acknowledges that a crisis can be triggered by an actual event or situation or by stakeholders’ perception that a situation exists which violates their expectations, supporting Benoit’s (1995) contention that if stakeholders believe there is a crisis, then there is a crisis.

Heath (1997: 290) focused on stakeholder relationships in describing how a crisis may prevent management from creating "... the understanding and satisfaction between the organization and interested parties needed to negotiate the mutually beneficial exchange of stakes." Coombs (2009: 100) emphasised a crisis was "... the perception of an event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can impact the organization's performance ... A crisis violates expectations; an organization has done something stakeholders feel is inappropriate." Reworking their management-perspective definition, Pearson and Clair (1998: 66) described an organisation crisis as

... a low-probability, high-impact situation that is perceived by critical stakeholders to threaten the viability of the organization and that is subjectively experienced by these individuals as personally and socially threatening. Ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution of the organizational crisis will lead to disillusionment or loss of psychic and shared meaning, as well as to the shattering of commonly held beliefs and values and individuals' basic assumptions. During the crisis, decision making is pressed by perceived time constraints and colored by cognitive limitations.

For the purposes of defining crisis in the present study, a modified version of Coombs (2009) definition, as proposed by Fediuk, Coombs and Botero (2010: 638), is adopted. Thus, a crisis is seen as an event or a perception of an event that threatens or violates important value expectancies of stakeholders; and stakeholder reactions to the situation could seriously impact the organisation's performance and generate negative outcomes.

2.1.2 Classifying crises

As the list of criteria that characterised crises grew, it validated a widening range of diverse situations to be classified as crises, raising questions about whether such vastly different scenarios as transportation accidents, business misconduct, terrorism, product recalls, economic downturns and earthquakes could be studied under the same label of crisis, without accounting for the different contexts in which such situations occur (cf. Borodzicz, 2005). Crisis typologies, widely used by practitioners in crisis response planning, have somewhat addressed this question by distinguishing the origins, context

and progression of specific crisis situations, allowing a comprehensive range of situations to be brought together under specific crisis types (Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2002; Hearit, 1999; Lalonde & Roux-Dufort, 2013; Mitroff, Pauchant, Finney & Pearson, 1989; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Seeger *et al.*, 2003).

Simpler typologies differentiate, for example, human-induced versus natural disasters (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1993); abrupt versus cumulative crises (Hwang & Lichtenthal, 2000); or sudden versus “smouldering” or “creeping” crises (Rosenthal, 't Hart & Charles, 1989). Linke (1989) identified four crisis types based on the timeframe for response: exploding, immediate, building and continuing. Widely referenced in the crisis practitioner literature is the model of Mitroff, Pauchant and Shrivastava (1988), recognising four types of crisis based on two axes: technical/economic versus human/organisational/social; and internal versus external. Gundel (2005) proposed a model based on two easy/hard continua of whether the crisis is predictable and influenceable, giving four crisis categories: conventional (easy to predict and influence), unexpected (hard to predict but easy to influence), intractable (easy to predict but hard to influence) and fundamental (hard to predict and influence). Lerbinger's (1997) typology distinguished seven crisis types by their causes: natural, technological, confrontation, malevolence, skewed management values, deception and management misconduct.

Marcus and Goodman's (1991) model contrasted crises with high deniability and concrete, obvious victims, such as in “normal” accidents (Perrow, 1984) in complex sociotechnical systems; and crises with low deniability and diffuse victims, as in “abnormal” crises (Mitroff & Alpaslan, 2003) such as managerial scandals. Alpaslan (2009) extended this typology to include two more crisis types: crises with low deniability and concrete, easily-identifiable victims, such as some financial crises caused by management; and crises with high deniability and diffuse victims such as externally-triggered “abnormal” crises (Mitroff & Alpaslan, 2003) such as terror attacks.

The usefulness and limitations of crisis typologies continue to be debated by researchers (cf. Gundel, 2005; Quarantelli, 2001). In particular, such models are seen to be

inadequate in accounting for the complex and ill-structured nature of organisation crises, which typically involve a series of linked events. Shrivastava *et al.* (1988: 292) elaborated, “Crises are composed of many loosely coupled interdependent events often taking place in geographically dispersed locations and at different times. Each event sets the stage for others to occur in a chain reaction that proliferates the crisis.” The events interact in unexpected ways with their environment for prolonged and extensive impact (Boin & ’t Hart, 2003; Lagadec, 1993; Shrivastava, 1995 cited in Jacques, Gatot & Roux-Dufort, 1999).

As crisis situations escalate, they may extend across different crisis categories; a product tampering case could trigger a consumer boycott, employee walkout, supplier backlash, rumours of managerial misconduct, legal action and financial chaos for the focal organisation. The 2011 events in Tohoku, Japan are a clear recent example. The crisis began with an earthquake and tsunami (natural disasters) that resulted in many deaths, injuries and destruction of communities (human crisis), and triggered an industrial accident in the Fukushima nuclear power plant (physical crisis), a loss of credibility for Japan’s nuclear industry (reputational crisis), and the need for funding to be diverted to rebuild damaged and destroyed facilities and communities (economic and political crisis). The events had widespread, long-lasting societal, economic and political consequences that challenged prevailing assumptions and beliefs in Japan and beyond. Interestingly, the Japan government was later censured for preparedness planning that focused on a too-narrow typification of what could happen and what would be needed in response (National Diet of Japan, 2012).

Despite recognition that crisis situations are complex chains of diverse event, researchers still sometimes identify a crisis situation as a specific event within a typology (Forgues & Roux-Dufort, 1998; Jacques *et al.*, 1999). Typically, the crisis is analysed through its easily-identifiable trigger event that is neatly delineated in time and space (Boin & ’t Hart, 2003; Rosenthal, 1998; Shrivastava, 1995 cited in Jacques *et al.*, 1999). While this is useful to trace the origins of the crisis, it also misrepresents a crisis situation by suggesting it may be managed with a generally-tactical response to address the single

trigger event (Jaques, 2012; Roux-Dufort, 2007). This would leave unresolved the underlying problems that interacted to create the crisis in the first place.

It is important for crisis research and practice to move away from the event perspective to a process-oriented perspective that recognises how crises develop and escalate through several stages. According to 't Hart, Heyse and Boin (2001: 185), crises are "... not discrete events, but rather high intensity nodes in ongoing streams of social interaction." The process approach recognises how a crisis may be incubated from seemingly insignificant events that escalate in unforeseen ways to create an uncertain and unexpected situation (Boin & 't Hart, 2003; Forgues & Roux-Dufort, 1998; Perrow, 1984; Roux-Dufort, 2007; Shrivastava, 1995 cited in Jacques *et al.*, 1999; Turner, 1976). Seeing organisation crises thus draw attention to the similar stages through which most crises progress (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993), as represented in crisis lifecycles. Each stage is characterised by changing pressures, threats and opportunities that require specific actions and resources to address the prevailing dynamics and expectations of stakeholders (Barton, 1993; Fearn-Banks, 2002; González-Herrero & Pratt, 1996; Massey, 2001; Mitroff, 1996, 2005; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Mitroff *et al.*, 1996; Mitroff *et al.*, 2004).

Lifecycles generally recognise three key phases: pre-crisis, crisis response and post-crisis to capture the main process characteristics of a crisis. The (1) pre-crisis stage involves detecting warning signals of conditions that could trigger a crisis; taking steps to prevent crisis; and preparing in the event a crisis escalates. The (2) crisis response stage involves implementing crisis plans to mitigate further threats and damage; addressing the needs of victims; and containing the crisis (Coombs, 1999; Seeger *et al.*, 2003). The (3) post-crisis or restoration stage involves evaluating the crisis response; implementing steps to reduce the likelihood of future occurrences; and re-establishing relationships with stakeholders to restore the organisation's reputation (Coombs, 1999; Heath & Millar, 2004; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005).

Scholars have offered more complex lifecycle models, but these essentially extend the same three phases in different way. Four-stage lifecycles typically extend pre-crisis

functions and activities; for example, Fink's (1986) model, which the present study utilises, recognised (1) prodromal (warning signals), (2) acute crisis, (3) chronic crisis, and (4) resolution stages. Focussing on management actions at each crisis phase, González- Herrero and Pratt's (1995, 1996) lifecycle identified: (1) issue management and crisis planning; (2) proactive crisis prevention; (3) crisis response; and (4) post-crisis evaluation, learning and rebuilding, including repairing stakeholder relationships. Pauchant and Mitroff (1992) advocated six distinct phases: (1) signal detection; (2) preparation and prevention; (3) crisis trigger; (4) containment and damage limitation; (5) recovery; and (6) critical review for the purpose of learning.

Turner's (1976: 379) "failure of foresight" sociological model of crisis is considered fundamental in shaping subsequent crisis research by recognising how organisations incubate the potential for disaster through faulty assumptions. Turner (1976) identified six crisis phases: (1) normal status as regular operations continue in line with culturally-accepted beliefs about hazards; (2) crisis incubation as minor events that contravene accepted beliefs about hazards are undetected or ignored; (3) a precipitating, often dramatic, trigger event occurs; (4) onset of the crisis, when direct harm is caused; (5) rescue, salvage and damage mitigation; and (6) full cultural adjustment, when a review of events brings new insights and learning, leading to a new normal status (phase 1).

If taken at face value, crisis lifecycles may be considered misleading in presenting a simplistic representation of the complex nature of crisis. In reality, crises do not progress through exclusive or discreet phases, and they do not necessarily occur in a linear progression (Fink, 1992; Frandsen & Johansen, 2011; Jaques, 2007; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Sturges, Carrell, Newsom & Barrera., 1991). However, lifecycles can be effectively used to facilitate understanding of how a crisis progresses, allowing deeper analysis of the situation and the required organisation responses at specific points as the crisis progresses.

2.2 Crisis management

By analysing the crisis literature, Zyglidopoulos and Phillips (1999) and Boin (2004) concluded that crisis management has traditionally been approached from two distinct perspectives, broadly corresponding to an operational and a relational response. Zyglidopoulos and Phillips (1999) referred to the industrial crisis perspective, which considers the causes of a crisis and how organisations learn and adapt to prevent future occurrences; and a public relations perspective, which incorporates crisis communication strategies and practices to protect or restore corporate reputation. Boin (2004) identified an operational perspective that focuses on the management of the crisis itself; and a political-symbolic perspective that aims at identifying how stakeholders and the public make sense of the crisis. Essentially, an operational/industrial perspective highlights the needs of the focal organisation, while a relational/political-symbolic approach is concerned with the expectations and needs of all parties affected by a crisis situation.

While most crisis research now sees the operational and relational perspectives as interrelated and inseparable in crisis management, a legacy of the distinction is surprisingly evident in how crisis management is variously defined and described. From an organisation-centric, operational perspective, crisis management is explained with a focus on how an organisation-in-crisis should respond. Thus, it has been defined as an ongoing process of interrelated activities before, during and after a crisis to prevent the crisis or mitigate its impact on the organisation (cf. Cirka & Corrigall, 2010; Coombs, 1999; Fearn-Banks, 2002; Heath, 2007; Jaques, 2007; Lerbinger, 1997; Mitroff, 2005; Mitroff *et al.*, 2004; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Reason, 1990, 1997; Seeger *et al.*, 2003; Spillan & Crandall, 2002; Stocker, 1997; Turner, 1978).

Such definitions contrast sharply with those from a relational/symbolic perspective that see crises as challenging existing norms and practices (cf. Elliott & Smith, 2006b; Lalonde, 2004; Morin, 1992; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Smith & Elliott, 2007; Turner, 1976). From this perspective, crisis management is described as actions taken to

reinstate or confirm existing values and beliefs (Boin & Lagadec, 2000). Highlighting the role of organisation-stakeholder relationships, Coombs (2007a) defined crisis management as actions that seek to protect the organisation, stakeholders and industry from harm by preventing a crisis or lessening its impact; while Pearson and Clair (1998: 61) said crisis management represented a "... systematic attempt by organizational members with external stakeholders to avert crises or to effectively manage those that do occur." Beyond the differing terminology, crisis management best practice recognises that an organisation-in-crisis must acknowledge its responsibilities to all parties affected by its actions.

2.2.1 Responsibilities to crisis stakeholders

Crises complicate and disrupt accepted relationships within an organisation's stakeholder environment. Stakeholders' pre-crisis roles can cross established boundaries and change dramatically if they are involved in causing or resolving the crisis, mitigating the harm, or communicating the developing situation (Lagadec, 1993; Lerbinger, 1997; Richardson, 1994; Shrivastava *et al.*, 1988). Some constituents affected by a crisis situation may have had no prior relationship with the organisation-in-crisis.

Studies of past crises have suggested that managers often either do not analyse crisis stakeholders' expectations or they ignore the outcomes of such analyses, favouring prompt response to the expectations of stakeholders seen to have some type of instrumental authority including financial or informational power. However, crises bring stakeholders' emotions, values and attitudes to the fore, underscoring why crisis stakeholder analyses should consider a more diverse range of criteria from which constituents are recognised as key crisis stakeholders.

Strategy tends to emphasize financial, technological, competitive, legal, and political criteria; crisis management adds to this list emotional, ecological, social, ethical, medical, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, psychological, and existential criteria. Most of these considerations are absent from today's competitive strategic management models (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992: 129).

Mitroff (2005; Mitroff & Pearson, 1993; Mitroff *et al.*, 1996; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992) contended that how organisations understand and respond to stakeholders' expectations during a crisis illustrates the difference between crisis-prepared from crisis-prone firms. Crisis prepared organisations maintain strong and mutually-beneficial relationships with key stakeholders during normal (i.e. non-crisis) times, and incorporate responsibilities to stakeholders in crisis planning. Doing so may strengthen an organisation's capability to prevent or mitigate the impact of any crisis (Coombs, 1999; Fearn-Banks, 2001, 2002; González-Herrero & Pratt, 1995; Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Grunig & White, 1992; Heath, 1997; Lerbinger, 1997; Mitroff & Kilmann, 1984; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Regester & Larkin, 2002; Schwartz & Gibb, 1999; Seeger & Ulmer, 2002; Seeger *et al.*, 2003; Ulmer, 2001).

However, case studies of past crises have illustrated that too few organisations routinely communicate with their stakeholders about crisis preparedness before a situation occurs. When a crisis develops, such firms have limited understanding of their publics' expectations and no base for cooperative crisis communication with those constituents. Consequently, they are more likely to be harmed by a crisis as stakeholders would feel less loyalty and so more readily withdraw support (Brinson & Benoit, 1996; Ice, 1991; Seeger *et al.*, 2003; Seeger & Bolz, 1996; Ulmer, 2001; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000).

That an organisation-in-crisis has responsibilities to all parties affected by its actions is rarely questioned. One of the most visible stakeholder groups in an organisation crisis are the victims. It is acknowledged here that defining the term "victim" and identifying types of victims has proven challenging for scholars (cf. Altheide, Gray, Janisch, Korbin, Maratea, Meill, Reaves & Van Deman, 2001; Beck, 1996 cited in Lupton, 1999; Crandall *et al.*, 2010; Foy, 1992; Fullerton, Ursano, Norwood & Holloway, 2003; Giese, 2002; Hearit, 2006; Mitroff, 2005; Mitroff & Anagnos, 2001; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Perrow, 1999; Raphael, 1986; Smith, Lees & Clymo, 2003; Taylor & Frazer, 1982; Trotter, Day & Love, 1989; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000; Wright & Bartone, 1994). In a crisis, numerous groups could see themselves as victims, and some groups who are perceived by others as victims may not want to identify themselves as such. This means any identification of crisis victims in practice may be problematic as it would depend on

whose perspectives were considered. However, for the purposes of the present research, victims are defined, following Mitroff and Anagnos (2001), as persons, groups or organisations to whom harm is done, whether intentionally or not.

Best practice crisis response recognises that acknowledging and promptly addressing the needs of victims is the highest priority for an organisation-in-crisis (Crandall *et al.*, 2010; Ogrizek & Guillery, 1999). This would appear indisputable. However, evidence from past crises reveals numerous cases where organisations-in-crisis have not immediately and automatically prioritised the needs of victims over those of the firm. Various explanations have been offered for this, including: organisation managers are reluctant to promptly accept responsibility or offer an apology because of perceived legal implications; managers are inadequately trained in ethics and managing emotional circumstances; managers fear being criticised as weak or overly sentimental if they show empathy and sympathy in crisis situations; or managers have cognitive biases that render them unable or uncomfortable to reframe a crisis situation for a more effective understanding of the problem (cf. Bolman & Deal, 2003; Clarke, 2006; Lukaszewski, 2007).

This last factor is a particular concern as it can permeate through pre-crisis planning, responding to a crisis, and post-crisis learning. Biased understanding of a crisis can trap managers in their subjective experience and blind them to their vulnerability (e.g., bad things cannot happen to us, our systems are safe) or lead them to faulty assumptions (e.g., our size will protect us or someone will rescue us) (Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). It has been suggested that organisation managers fail to see beyond their initial mental constructs of a crisis situation because they are affected by the uncertainty of the circumstances and pressure from numerous constituents (Christensen & Kohls, 2003; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Smart & Vertinsky, 1977; Tashman & Raelin, 2013; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). This leads them to turn to self-protection response strategies, usually prioritising the needs of the firm and internal constituents over those of external stakeholders or influencers (Christensen & Kohls, 2003; Ice, 1991; Marcus & Goodman, 1991; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Shrivastava, 1987a; Smart & Vertinsky, 1977; Susskind & Field, 1996; Tashman & Raelin, 2013; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; Ulmer & Sellnow,

2000). Such responses typically serve to further alienate external stakeholders, aggravating the crisis for the organisation.

2.3 Crisis communication

Organisation-stakeholder relationships are developed, maintained and, especially during a crisis, protected, through effective communication. Although considered an integral part of crisis management, crisis communication is typically handled separately from the technical/operational dimension of managing the physical crisis (Barton, 2001; Heath & Millar, 2004; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005; Seeger *et al.*, 1998).

The vital role of communicating with stakeholders in times of crisis is well established in the literature (cf. Coombs, 1999, 2010; Fearn-Banks, 2002; Luoma-aho, Tirkkonen & Vos, 2013; Rowan, 1991; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013; Stephens & Malone, 2009). Rooted in public relations and organisational communication, crisis communication emphasises the need for an organisation-in-crisis to communicate appropriately with crisis constituents and observers. Crises can arouse various emotions in people who are involved in or observing the situation, affecting their relationships with the organisation seen as responsible. Most commonly, people feel anger at the situation having been allowed to develop (Coombs & Holladay, 2005) and anxiety about whether and how they will be affected (Jin & Pang, 2010). Such emotions harm an organisation's relationships with stakeholders and, consequently, damage its business. Effective crisis communication is seen as capable of mitigating such harm (Coombs, 2015).

Crisis communication involves two broad communication strategies: managing information about the crisis situation to protect all parties from further harm and help them understand what has occurred; and managing or influencing how people perceive the situation and the organisation-in-crisis. The literature is replete with studies of rhetorical strategies to influence how an organisation-in-crisis is perceived (Holladay, 2012; Olsson, 2014). Appropriate communication from an organisation-in-crisis tailored

to the specific situation is seen to shorten the duration and reduce the impact of a crisis. However, the challenge lies in matching a specific situation and the desired outcomes to the appropriate communication strategy; selection of an inappropriate strategy may be more damaging to the organisation than saying nothing (Choi & Lin, 2009; Coombs, 2015; Liu, Austin & Jin, 2011). Consequently, scholars have introduced various prescriptive models for best practice crisis communication aimed at reducing blame and helping organisations recover from a crisis with minimal damage to their reputation (Coombs & Schmidt, 2000; Coombs, Frandsen, Holladay & Johansen, 2010; Cutlip, Centre & Broom, 2000; Fearn-Banks, 2001, 2002; González-Herrero & Pratt, 1995; Grunig & Grunig, 1991; Grunig & Hon, 1999; Kim & Cameron, 2011; Miller, 1999; Sellnow & Ulmer, 1995; Spicer, 1997; Young, 1995).

However, prescriptive models of crisis communication have two critical limitations. Firstly, they cannot account for how audiences interpret communication messages from an organisation-in-crisis. Accordingly, more recent crisis communication research has shifted to investigate the message receiver standpoint, considering how crisis communication may influence stakeholders' understanding of a crisis situation (cf. Coombs, 1995, 2009; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2014; Jin & Cameron, 2007; Jin & Pang, 2010). The progression from a message sender to message receiver perspective is marked by the development of two key crisis communication theories: Benoit's (1995, 1997; Benoit & Brinson, 1994, 1999; Brinson & Benoit, 1996, 1999) theory of image restoration or repair; and Coombs' (2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2012) situational crisis communication theory (SCCT). Notably, an examination of the crisis communication literature by Avery, Lariscy, Kim and Hocke (2010) concluded that these two theories have provided the theoretical basis for much of the crisis communication literature.

Image repair or restoration theory (Benoit, 1995, 1997; Benoit & Brinson, 1994, 1999; Brinson & Benoit, 1996, 1999) built on theories of apologia to identify rhetorical strategies that an organisation-in-crisis may use in its crisis communication, with the aim of reducing the negative effects of crises and restoring the firm's reputation. As will be elaborated below, Coombs's SCCT approach (2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010; Coombs &

Holladay, 2002, 2012) expanded Benoit's approach by providing a framework to assess how stakeholders may react to a crisis and to the organisation-in-crisis, so as to predict the degree to which the organisation will be seen as responsible for the situation.

A second limitation of prescriptive crisis communication models is the presumption that the organisation-in-crisis is the sole, or most influential, provider of information about a crisis. Due to the proliferation of Internet-based and social media, when a crisis occurs today, a multitude of voices compete, collaborate or negotiate to influence crisis publics. Frandsen and Johansen's (2007, 2010a, 2010b, 2013) rhetorical arena model explains that in the arena that opens around a crisis, numerous crisis voices may be heard espousing diverse views. Within such an issue arena, crisis stakeholders and observers, typically seen as receivers of crisis messages, can readily become crisis communicators as they react to messages from the organisation-in-crisis or the media. Thus, the voice of the organisation-in-crisis is no longer in the crisis narrative (Coombs & Holladay, 2014; Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010). This multi-vocal rhetorical arena approach more accurately reflects the complexity and dynamics of a crisis situation by taking into account the potentiality of cross-interacting message senders and receivers (Frandsen & Johansen, 2013).

2.3.1 Situational crisis communication theory

Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) (Coombs, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2015) provides a framework to determine the reputational threat posed by a crisis to the focal organisation, based on the public's perception of the situation and the organisation itself. This assessment is then linked to crisis response strategies that may be effective in modifying the public's perceptions of the organisation and its responsibility for the crisis, which may help protect or restore the firm's reputation and social legitimacy (Coombs 1995, 2007a; Coombs & Holladay, 2002).

SCCT draws from attribution theory (Weiner, 1986), which explains how people make sense of the causes of behaviour or events by analysing external control, stability and

locus of causality and personal control (Coombs, 1995; Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Fediuk *et al.*, 2010; Weiner, 1985). External control refers to whether the cause of the event was internal or external to the actor. Stability describes whether the cause was consistently present, reflecting a pattern of such behaviour. Locus refers to whether the cause was due to the actor or an environmental factor. Controllability refers to whether the cause was within or outside the actor's control. Attribution theory research subsequently identified an overlap between the dimensions of locus of control and controllability, which were consequently combined as intentionality of the act (Coombs, 1995, 1998, 1999; Coombs & Holladay, 1996).

Attribution theory suggests that responsibility is typically attributed to either the person involved in the event or someone in the external environment. During a crisis, people search for the cause of the situation to understand why it occurred and who was responsible (Coombs, 1995; Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Fediuk *et al.*, 2010). When responsible parties are identified, other constituents' affective and behavioural responses towards them will be significantly affected. When responsibility for an organisation crisis is attributed to an organisation, then, stakeholders' willingness to interact with the firm in the future, and the nature of any future interaction, will be affected (Coombs, 1995, 2012; Coombs & Holladay, 1996). The higher the levels of perceived responsibility, the more intense may be stakeholders' reactions such as anger and reduced sympathy towards the organisation seen as responsible (Coombs, 2015; Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2002, 2005; Schwarz, 2008).

Informed by attribution theory, SCCT developed out of Coombs' (1995) crisis typology, which incorporated the two dimensions of intentionality and internal/external locus of control, so distinguishing four types of crisis: accidents, transgressions, faux pas and terrorism. This concept was extended to produce the SCCT model that determines stakeholders' perceptions of crisis responsibility and, consequently, their affective and behavioural responses to the focal organisation, by three factors: crisis type, based on level of intentionality; crisis history; and prior relational reputation.

SCCT posits that the initial determination of crisis responsibility is based on crisis type, contingent on level of intentionality, which is the first factor that stakeholders analyse in determining responsibility for a crisis. Three types or clusters of crises are recognised: victim, accidental and uncontrollable, and preventable. The clusters generate different but predictable perceptions of crisis responsibility. Crises in the victim cluster have low attribution of organisational responsibility, such as in natural disasters, unfounded rumours or product tampering. A minimal level of organisational responsibility is attributed for accidental crises seen as unintentional or uncontrollable, such as technological malfunctions. Preventable crises have strong attribution of responsibility since the organisation is seen to have intentionally put stakeholders at high risk, perhaps by failing to prevent a human error accident or managerial misconduct. The greater the perceived responsibility, the larger the negative effect on reputation; thus, a human-error accident represents a more serious reputational threat than a technical error crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2006).

Crisis history and prior relationship/reputation are considered intensifying factors (Coombs, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2015) in stakeholders' perceptions of organisational responsibility. Crisis history refers to the occurrence of previous crises in the organisation's past. A history of similar events points to residual underlying problems and increases reputational threat (Coombs, 2010, 2012), what Coombs and Holladay (2002) termed the "Velcro effect." Consequently, organisations with a history of crises may receive less support and more criticism from stakeholders when a crisis occurs (Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2006). Prior relational reputation assesses how an organisation-in-crisis has treated its stakeholders in other situations. SCCT predicts stakeholders attribute greater crisis responsibility to organisations perceived as having failed to meet stakeholder expectations in the past, compared to those with a positive or neutral prior reputation (Coombs, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2015).

By assessing how much responsibility stakeholders attribute to an organisation-in-crisis, SCCT prescribes appropriate communication strategies. Responses are defined along a defensive-accommodative continuum; defensive responses seek to reduce the organisation's vulnerability to the crisis while accommodative responses prioritise

protecting the victims and accepting responsibility for the situation. Three broad response postures of deny, diminish and rebuild/repair are identified, each of which contains several different response strategies (Coombs, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2015; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2012).

Describing SCCT as a developing theory, Coombs (2012) acknowledged that other, as yet undetermined, dimensions may contribute to stakeholders' attributions of organisational responsibility for a crisis. However, there has been only limited subsequent research into other factors that may contribute to stakeholders' perceptions of crisis responsibility. One further factor that has been considered is the severity of damage or harm caused by a crisis; that is, does more severe damage result in a perception of greater responsibility (Coombs, 1995, 2007b; Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2002).

Studies into the impact of damage severity on perceived responsibility have so far produced inconsistent results. Park and Len-Rios (2012) suggested that severity of injury does not influence attribution of responsibility significantly. Rather, they (Park & Len-Rios, 2012) suggested that a more important criterion was who the injured parties were and the nature of their relationship with the organisation-in-crisis; attribution of responsibility was greater, for example, when the injured party was a consumer rather than a company. However, these two dimensions would appear linked; injury severity might not necessarily relate to the extent of physical damage, but to the extent that stakeholder expectations were violated.

Although SCCT has received support from many researchers (Avery *et al.*, 2010), some limitations have been noted. In developing SCCT, Coombs (2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2015; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2012) described it as an audience-centred communication approach and, indeed, it goes further than approaches in analysing possible reasons behind stakeholders' perceptions of crisis responsibility. For this reason, the present study borrows from SCCT in conceptualising a model of crisis stakeholder salience. Ultimately, however, SCCT was developed for use by managers of an organisation-in-crisis, to lead them to choose appropriate crisis communication

strategies. As such, it centres on solutions for the message sender, i.e. the organisation-in-crisis. Additionally, SCCT appears to share the weakness of crisis typologies in inadequately accounting for the complexity of crisis as a series of linked events. Consequently, applying SCCT to crisis situations that transform as they evolve, such as the 2011 earthquake/tsunami/nuclear emergency in Tohoku, Japan could be problematic.

While SCCT was developed to assess the reputational vulnerability of organisations-in-crisis, the dimensions of attribution adopted by the model may be adaptable to assess the salience of crisis stakeholders other than the focal organisation. Intentionality or responsibility for a crisis may apply to individuals involved in a situation, from passers-by (no responsibility), to system operators responsible for “human error” actions (unintentional responsibility), to a manager who committed a crime (full responsibility). A stakeholder’s crisis history and prior relationships with others in the stakeholder environment may affect the level of support accorded to them or suggest underlying factors that make that stakeholder vulnerable to bad situations. Thus, these dimensions are worth further consideration as attributes of crisis stakeholder salience.

2.4 Conclusions from this chapter

This chapter has explored the literature pertaining to the concept of crisis, the responsibilities of an organisation-in-crisis to its publics, crisis management and crisis communication, specifically situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), which contributed to the novel conceptual framework of crisis stakeholder salience introduced in this dissertation. One recurring notion in this chapter is that focal organisations do not “own” crises. Understanding the situation following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon blowout and fire as “the BP crisis”, for example, is only one of many possible interpretations of the situation. For the other involved companies, families whose members were killed or injured, and local communities, the crisis took on a different form. Chapter 3, which now follows, expounds the complex relationship between

stakeholders and an organisation-in-crisis through an examination of the stakeholder theory literature.

Chapter 3: Stakeholders and an organisation-in-crisis

Three broad and intertwined analytical themes shaped the formation of the present study's research problem and objectives: the multi-faceted social construct that is a crisis; stakeholders and the organisation-in-crisis; and news framing in media coverage of an organisation crisis. Having considered in Chapter 2 how and why crisis stakeholders and observers make sense of the situation from their own perspectives, this chapter looks at the relationship between stakeholders and an organisation-in-crisis through a review of the literature on stakeholder theory.

The chapter opens by considering the tenets of the stakeholder approach and reviews the debate around defining and classifying stakeholders, with specific consideration of the implications for crisis management. It then continues with reviewing how researchers have conceived, identified and measured stakeholder salience. The Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) model of stakeholder salience, developed to prioritise stakeholders and their claims to facilitate management decision making, is reviewed. The model's salience attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency, and critiques of the same, are examined with a focus on their implications for crisis stakeholder salience.

3.1 The stakeholder approach

A key determinant of the damage that an organisation will experience from a crisis is how fairly and empathetically the firm is judged to have responded to the expectations of affected stakeholders (Coombs, 2007a; Lukaszewski, 2007; Mitroff, 2004; Mitroff *et al.*,

1996; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Seeger *et al.*, 2003; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013; Ulmer *et al.*, 2007). Freeman (1984) identified a primary aim of his seminal stakeholder work was to explain the complex relationships between an organisation and its environment during turbulent times, when managers face moral and ethical challenges in deciding how to prioritise competing stakeholder interests. Phillips thus suggested stakeholder theory offers an appropriate basis for a theory of organisational ethics explicitly tailored to managing stakeholder relationships during times of crisis (Phillips, 2003a).

From a stakeholder orientation, organisations are seen as social entities whose activities can affect other organisations, groups and individuals. Under a principle of fairness, organisations are thus seen to have a responsibility to include in corporate governance all stakeholders that might be harmed by the firm's actions or inactions (Alpaslan, 2009; Brenner & Cochran, 1991; Bryson, 2004; Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson & Dunfee, 1999a, 1999b; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Evan & Freeman, 1983; Freeman, 1984; Freeman & Reed, 1983; Freeman *et al.*, 2010; Friedman & Miles, 2006; Frooman, 1999; Gibson, 2000; Hayibor, 2005; Jones, 1995; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Phillips, 1997; Post *et al.*, 2002; Rowley, 1997; Wood, 1991a; Wood & Jones, 1995).

As all stakeholders are seen as having intrinsic value, organisation managers are faced with multiple objectives if they are going to meet the expectations of all parties and not favour the interests of one particular constituent (Bryson, 2004; Clarkson, 1995; Evan & Freeman, 1983; Freeman, 1984; Jensen, 2002; Jones & Wicks, 1999; Wheeler, Fabig & Boele, 2002; Wood, 1991a). While stakeholders' interests may often align with those of the organisation, the complex multiplicity of stakeholder relationships can lead to competing interests, particularly during times of crisis. Despite the contention of equality among stakeholders, the reality is that, especially when faced with conflicting demands from their publics, organisation managers are unlikely to have the resources to respond to the needs of all those considered stakeholders (Bryson, 2004; Clarkson, 1995; Evan & Freeman, 1983; Freeman, 1984; Wood, 1991a).

The stakeholder approach is often contrasted with a traditional corporate governance standpoint that sees the sole responsibility of managers is to engage, within legal limits

and ethical customs, in activities and use the firm's resources to maximise the return on owners' investments (cf. Friedman, 1970; Jensen, 2001). However, researchers have started to question whether the shareholder and stakeholder concepts are necessarily mutually exclusive. Stakeholder theorists see the stakeholder approach as emphasising mutuality of interests among all organisation stakeholders, including shareowners, because maximising shareholder value may benefit all other stakeholders (Alpaslan, 2009; Jones, Felps & Bigley, 2006; Jones, Wicks & Freeman, 2002; (Post *et al.*, 2002). While contesting that shareholder value maximisation should be the overriding objective for all organisations, stakeholder critics acknowledge this does not necessarily go against the principles of social responsibility behind stakeholder theory (Coelho *et al.*, 2003; Jensen, 2001; Sternberg, 1997; Sundaram & Inkpen, 2004). If social welfare is maximised when all organisations in an economy maximise their total value (Jensen, 2001), then organisation managers may be seen to have a responsibility to maintain stakeholder relationships and address any stakeholder concerns that could affect the firm's value-generation activities.

Importantly, however, a traditional stakeholder approach rejects the premise that moral and ethical concerns can be removed from the economic aspects of business (Carroll, 1989, 1991, 2004). Rather, when there is a conflict between the shareholder model and ethical or moral principles, doing what is right is seen to take precedence over shareholder wealth generation. The instrumental/normative dichotomy is reflected in much of the stakeholder theory literature, with considerable academic debate about whether stakeholder research should be classified as normative, descriptive or instrumental, or should be considered as incorporating three separate strands to account for diverse stakeholders' different stakes and expectations (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Eesley & Lenox, 2006). Research from a normative tradition recognises all stakeholders as having intrinsic value and prescribes how they should be treated based on moral, philosophical or ethical rights established through the stake held (cf. Berman, Phillips & Wicks, 2006; Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Freeman & Gilbert, 1988; Gibson, 2000; Jones & Wicks, 1999; Kaler, 2003; Mellahi & Wood, 2003; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Phillips, 2003a; Snyder *et al.*, 2006; Welcomer, Cochran, Rands & Haggerty, 2003; Wijnberg, 2000).

Instrumental stakeholder research emphasises the interdependence of organisation-stakeholder relationships and examines if organisations that are responsive to stakeholder needs are more successful. From a resource dependency perspective, stakeholders represent a resource to be managed strategically to achieve business goals and maximise profit (Agle, Mitchell & Sonnenfeld, 1999; Berman *et al.*, 2006; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman, 1984, 2008; Frooman, 1999; Griffin & Mahon, 1997; Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001; Jones, 1995; Kaler, 2003; Mellahi & Wood, 2003; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Pfeffer, 1981; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Roman, Hayibor & Agle, 1999; Waddock & Graves, 1997; Wood, 1991a). The descriptive stakeholder research tradition examines actual organisation-stakeholder relationships and interactions, so identifying the perceived relative importance of various publics and the strategies employed to manage relationships with them.

The notion of three separate stakeholder research strands, however, has been dismissed by some researchers for suggesting that business and ethics are separate decision-making functions in an organisation (Freeman, 1994; Harris & Freeman, 2008; Lepineux, 2005; Sandberg, 2008). This is seen to dilute the value of the stakeholder approach (Goodpaster, 1991; Laplume, Sonpar & Litz, 2008). Donaldson and Preston (1995), however, argued that the three perspectives should not be considered discrete and mutually exclusive, but nested within each other to explain the complexity of organisation-stakeholder relations. Accordingly, stakeholder theory should be seen as essentially managerial (Donaldson & Preston, 1995):

The external shell of the theory is its descriptive aspect; the theory presents and explains relationships that are observed in the external world. The theory's descriptive accuracy is supported, at the second level, by its instrumental and predictive value; *if* certain practices are carried out, *then* certain results will be obtained. The central core of the theory is, however, normative.

Freeman (1984) forewarned that stakeholder theory's most troublesome aspect for critics was this mixing of business and morality. Certainly, the theory's normative core continues to be seen as problematic, with critics and proponents calling it weak and a key limitation of stakeholder theory, especially compared to the single-minded aim of a

shareholder value maximisation approach (Jensen, 2001; Sternberg, 1997). Referencing corporate scandals at Enron, WorldCom and Tyco, critics have claimed that, far from providing a moral and ethical framework for managerial practice, the stakeholder approach plays into the hands of managers who wish to use firms' resources for their own ends (cf. Carson, 2003; Coelho *et al.*, 2003; Jensen, 2001; Marcoux, 2000, 2003; Sundaram & Inkpen, 2004).

Considering stakeholders in an organisation crisis, some scholars have argued that a normative stakeholder theory should be able to account for humans and all other life forms, such as the natural environment and even unborn future generations, as having absolute irreducible value (Evan & Freeman, 1983; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Starik, 1993; Trotter *et al.*, 1989; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000; Welcomer *et al.*, 2003). Certainly this aspect becomes important in determining who (or what) has been harmed by an organisation crisis.

3.1.1 Stakeholder approval, reputation and legitimacy

Stakeholder approval is seen to have a close relationship with organisation reputation and legitimacy; the importance of these in organisation performance has been well established in the academic literature (Dowling, 2002; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Fombrun & van Riel, 2004; Svendsen, 1998; Wan & Schell, 2007). During times of crisis, an organisation's reputation and legitimacy can come under threat or can help protect the firm from more serious damage.

The present study accepts the popular definitions of reputation as the collective representation of multiple stakeholders' images of the organisation, developed over time through the firm's performance and perceived behaviour (Argenti & Druckemiller, 2004; Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun & Van Riel, 2003); and the interactively and communicatively negotiated evaluation and perception of an organisation by its stakeholders (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). Fombrun (1996) importantly identified the key values and principles that define an organisation's reputation to be reliability, credibility,

trustworthiness and responsibility to stakeholders. Research in the public relations field has long advocated that, while an organisation and its stakeholders may not always agree, well-established mutual understanding can make them less likely to behave in ways that could harm the interests of the other (Grunig, 1992; Grunig & Grunig, 1991, 1992; Grunig & Hon, 1999; Grunig & White, 1992; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Hunt & Grunig, 1994).

Reputation is considered a core element of organisation legitimacy (Metzler, 2001). Legitimacy is broadly described as a type of social contract that "... concerns the normative and social value of the organization's goods, services, processes, and outcomes ... and how the organization presents itself to its constituencies and the larger environment" (Seeger, 1997: 103). An organisation is conferred legitimacy when stakeholders perceive its actions as being in the interests of the collective good and reflecting the socially-defined system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions of appropriate conduct; in return, the organisation is rewarded with the right to operate and is less likely to encounter stakeholder opposition to its day-to-day operations (Bansal & Clelland, 2004; Bedeian, 1989; Branco, Eugenio & Ribeiro, 2008; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Egels-Zandén & Wahlqvist, 2007; Freeman, 1984; Grunig & Grunig, 1991; Johnson, Dowd & Ridgeway, 2006; Massey, 2001; Metzler, 2001; Nakra, 2000; Nasi, Nasi, Phillips & Zyglidopoulos, 1997; Post *et al.*, 2002; Rowley, 1997; Seeger, 1997; Sellnow *et al.*, 1998; Sethi, 1975; Sonpar, Pazzaglia & Kornijenko, 2010; Suchman, 1995; Swanson, 1999; Wartick & Cochran, 1985; Wartick & Wood, 1998; Wood, 1991b; Young, 1995).

From a stakeholder tradition, reputation and legitimacy are seen to create relational value for the organisation. Stakeholder support for an organisation provides symbolic resources and intangible capital that may constitute a competitive advantage, so contributing to wealth creation (Clarkson, 1995; Coombs, 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2006; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Dowling, 2002; Dyer & Singh 1998; Evan & Freeman, 1983; Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun & van Riel, 2004; Freeman 1984, 1994; Freeman, Wicks & Parmar, 2004; Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2007; Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar & de Colle, 2010; Frooman, 1999; Goodpaster, 1991; Hayibor,

2005; Massey, 2001; Meyer & Scott, 1983; Myllykangas, Kujala & Lehtimäki, 2010; Paul, 2015; Phillips, 1997; Porter, 1985; Post *et al.*, 2002; Richards, 2004; Rowley, 1997; Savage, Nix, Whitehead & Blair, 1991; Spitzack, 2009; Wheeler & Davies, 2004).

3.1.2 Defining and describing stakeholders

The normative/instrumental dichotomy of stakeholder research traditions that has positioned stakeholders as both a means to an end and ends in themselves is also reflected in how the term “stakeholder” has been defined. Although stakeholders are ubiquitously referred to in numerous contexts, the literature reveals neither a broadly-accepted definition of the term nor definitive description of the criteria that define an organisation stakeholder.

In his seminal work, Freeman (1984) defined stakeholders broadly as any group or individual who can positively or negatively affect, or are positively or negatively affected by the activities of an organisation in which they have material, political, affiliative, informational, symbolic or spiritual interests (Freeman, 1984; Wartick & Wood, 1998). These interests are seen to give stakeholders a right to managerial attention.

Broad definitions like that of Freeman (1984) clearly identify organisation owners, investors, employees, suppliers, distributors and customers as stakeholders. But they also appear to allow for a broad and diverse range of other parties to be considered stakeholders, including: all communities in which an organisation operates (Brenner & Cochran, 1991; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Hill & Jones, 1992); competitors (Carroll, 2004); the general public or society (Clarkson, 1995; Hill & Jones, 1992); any naturally occurring entity such as the environment or unborn future generations (Buchholz, 1993; Carroll, 2004; Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Evan & Freeman, 1983; Phillips, 2003a; Shrivastava, 1987b; Starik, 1994; Trotter *et al.*, 1989; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000; Welcomer *et al.*, 2003); the media (Freeman, 1984); terrorists (Phillips, 2003a); industry

associations and trade unions (Carroll, 1991; Jones & Wicks, 1999; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Phillips, 2003a); and any individuals or groups with past or future relationships with the organisation (Clarkson, 1995; Starik, 1994; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997).

The inherent limitation to identifying stakeholders from a broad perspective is that the basis of the stake held can be unidirectional or bidirectional, implying no requirement for a reciprocal impact: a stakeholder can affect or be affected by activities of the organisation. This appears to suggest that almost every individual, group and organisation could be described as a stakeholder of nearly every other individual, group or organisation, so rendering the term “stakeholder” unrealistic, meaningless and untenable (cf. Clarkson, 1995; Coelho *et al.*, 2003; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Hayibor, 2005; Langtry, 1994; Mahon, 2002; Mellahi & Wood, 2003; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Post *et al.*, 2002; Phillips, 2003a; Winn, 2001). This would all but negate the usefulness of the definition as a means to identify organisation stakeholders.

Narrower definitions of stakeholder are seen to better account for the reality of organisation-stakeholder relationships, recognising it is not feasible for organisations to meet all expectations of all publics, particularly if those expectations conflict or if organisations’ resources are limited. Most narrow definitions of stakeholder recognise, as the key determinant of stakeholder status, the existence of a reciprocal organisation-stakeholder impact, usually connected to the firm’s core economic interests.

Thus, stakeholders are defined by their formal, official or contractual relationships with the organisation, often involving a transaction of resources, finances or services (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2000; Clarkson, 1995; Cornell & Shapiro, 1987; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Freeman, 1984; Freeman & Evan, 1990; Hayibor, 2005; Hill & Jones, 1992; Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001; Jones, 1995; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Rowley, 1997; Thompson, Wartick & Smith, 1991; Wartick & Cochran, 1985; Wood, 1991a). Through their vested interest in the firm, stakeholders assume financial or resource dependence and risk (Clarkson, 1994, 1995; Cornell & Shapiro, 1987; Donaldson & Dunfee, 1999b; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Evan & Freeman, 1983; Freeman & Reed, 1983; Freeman *et al.*, 1994; Hayibor, 2005; Hill &

Jones, 1992; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Phillips, 1999, 2003a; Post *et al.*, 2002). Thus, Post *et al.* (2002: 8) defined stakeholders as "... individuals and constituencies that contribute, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to its wealth-creating capacity and activities, and who are therefore its potential beneficiaries and/or risk bearers."

Such definitions would appear to exclude from stakeholder status all non-human entities such as the natural environment, non-human living creatures and future unborn generations. The point about non-human entities should be highlighted in the context of organisation crises as they have been severely affected, to the point of being called victims, by crises including oil spills (e.g. Exxon *Valdez* and Deepwater Horizon), chemical accidents (Chernobyl) and even by day-to-day organisation activities such as the discharge of pollutants into waterways. Starik (1995) asserted that the natural environment is a stakeholder as it represents an essential part of an organisation's business environment. By extension, then, almost every entity existing in the firm's business environment may be seen to warrant stakeholder status, even if no moral obligations exist between the entity and the organisation. However, this perspective was contested by Phillips and Reichart (2000), arguing that non-humans cannot be considered stakeholders because only humans are capable of undertaking the necessary obligations of fairness through voluntary acceptance of a mutually beneficial cooperative scheme (Branco & Rodrigues, 2007; Phillips & Reichart, 2000).

In not according stakeholder status to non-human entities, studies have noted that such entities may still be accounted for on a fairness-based approach through other stakeholders acting as proxies on their behalf (Branco & Rodrigues, 2007; Phillips, 2003a, 2003b; Phillips & Reichart, 2000). From a crisis management perspective and considering the emphasis placed by governments and communities worldwide on the environment today, it would appear imperative to recognise the natural environment and future generations as crisis stakeholders in their own right, without implying the same should hold true for all non-human entities. This will be explored further in this dissertation when considering a framework of crisis stakeholder salience.

3.1.2.1 *Categorising stakeholders by type*

Research has delivered other definitions of stakeholder that lie between the broad and narrow approaches (see Appendix B), as well as classification aimed at reconciling the broad/narrow distinction and providing a means of prioritising stakeholders and their claims. Simpler typologies differentiate primary and secondary stakeholder categories, although the terminology varies; for example, direct/indirect (Freeman, 1984), generic/specific (Carroll, 1989), normative/derivative (Phillips *et al.*, 2003), and transactional/contextual (Winter & Steger, 1998).

Primary stakeholders have formal, official or contractual relationships with the organisation, often involving a transaction of resources, finances or services (Carroll, 1993; Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Freeman, 1984; Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Rowley, 1997; Wartick & Cochran, 1985; Wood, 1991a) – that is, those recognised as stakeholders under a narrow, usually instrumental-oriented definition of the term. This typically includes organisation owners or investors, employees, customers, suppliers, the local community, government agencies and regulatory authorities. Because primary stakeholders have power to affect the organisation's activities by continuing to provide or withholding resources (Clarkson, 1995; Freeman, 1984; Freeman & Reed, 1983; Frooman, 1999; Hayibor, 2005; Logsdon, Wood & Benson, 2000; Mellahi & Wood, 2003; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Nasi, 1995; Welcomer *et al.*, 2003), their claims are seen as a priority for the organisation to address.

Secondary stakeholders have no formal contractual bond with the firm and are not considered essential to the organisation's survival; however, they could indirectly affect or be affected by the firm's activities and so still warrant managerial attention (Clarkson, 1995; Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Freeman, 1984). The media, community and religious groups, non-governmental organisations, and other special interest or advocacy groups including terror organisations (Freeman, 1984) may be considered secondary stakeholders. Such groups may be able to mobilise resources including public support in order to disrupt an organisation's operations so as to get attention to their claims (Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Gibson, 2000; McLarney, 2002; Thijssens,

Bollen & Hassink, 2015). This draws attention to the significance of legitimacy in identifying stakeholder status.

Other stakeholder classifications differentiate, for example, internal/external (Mintzberg, 1983), societal/business (Lepineux, 2005) and institutional/economic/ethical (Gibson, 2000) stakeholders. Dougherty (1992) classified stakeholders by functional roles, recognising four types: enabling publics who control resources; normative publics who share similar values; functional publics who exchange inputs/outputs with organisation; and diffused publics, who are indirectly linked to the organisation and are potentially powerful.

Situational stakeholder classifications are significant in recognising organisation-stakeholder relationships as issue specific and transient, rather than general and immutable. This is very significant in the context of crisis stakeholders, who may have had very different relationships with an organisation before a crisis occurred and whose stakeholder status may change dramatically as a crisis develops. Rawlins' (2006) three-stage model postulates that stakeholder identification should be based on: stakeholder-organisation relationships (functional, enabling, normative or diffused), stakeholders' salience attributes (power, legitimacy and urgency); and stakeholders' relationships to the specific situation (latent, aware or active). This identifies four stakeholder types: active and supportive advocates; supportive but inactive dormants; non-supportive and active adversarial; and non-supportive and inactive apathetics (Rawlins, 2006).

Stakeholder classifications, however, cannot be considered definitive. Firstly, different observers would likely assess organisation-stakeholder relationships differently, suggesting there is no one true representation of the stakeholder environment (cf. Fineman & Clarke, 1996; Frandsen & Johansen, 2011; Mellahi & Wood, 2003). Furthermore, any one stakeholder may have multiple roles and interests that place them in different stakeholder categories. Moreover, stakeholders may move between classifications as their relationship with the organisation changes, meaning secondary or dormant stakeholders can become primary and active (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011; Laplume *et al*, 2008; Luoma-Aho & Vos, 2010; Winn, 2001; Wolfe & Putler, 2002).

Additionally, the internal homogeneity of any one stakeholder group cannot be assumed as members may have diverse interests (Frandsen & Johansen, 2011; Laplume *et al.*, 2008; Winn, 2001; Wolfe & Putler, 2002). As will be discussed below, Mitchell *et al.* (1997) proposed an alternative approach to categorising stakeholders using assessment of salience.

3.1.3 Stakeholder networks and issue arena

An organisation's stakeholder environment was traditionally visualised using a hub-and-spoke approach (cf. Freeman, 1984), with the organisation at the hub and its relationships with stakeholders depicted as dyads (see Figure 2:2). This model is simplistic and does not reflect the reality of the business environment. Specifically, it may be seen to imply that stakeholders are static actors with fixed stakes, emphasises the firm's central role, and fails to portray the multilateral nature of stakeholder relationships and the interactions and interdependencies among them. This depiction of organisation-stakeholder relationships may encourage an organisation-centric approach to crisis management and response.

An important development in stakeholder research has been to move away from an organisation-centric perspective to focus on the multiplicity of organisation-stakeholder ties, acknowledging that neither an organisation nor any of its stakeholders should be considered the sole hub of the stakeholder environment (Friedman & Miles, 2002; Frooman, 2010; Kochan & Rubinstein, 2000; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Neville, Bell & Whitwell, 2005; Pajunen, 2006; Roloff, 2008; Rowley, 1997). Thus, the stakeholder model is reshaped in terms of issue networks, reframing the defining question as, "Who is a stakeholder of an issue?" (Frooman, 2010: 161). Understanding the stakeholder environment from a network perspective gives prominence to the relationships, shared interests, interactions and influences among stakeholders as well as between an organisation and its constituents (Friedman & Miles, 2002; Frooman, 2010; Kochan & Rubinstein, 2000; Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010; Luoma-aho *et al.*, 2013; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Pajunen, 2006; Post *et al.*, 2002; Roloff, 2008; Rowley, 1997). This suggests that

everyone in a network is, in some sense, a stakeholder of everyone else in the network, and there is no clear focal point (Frooman, 2010).

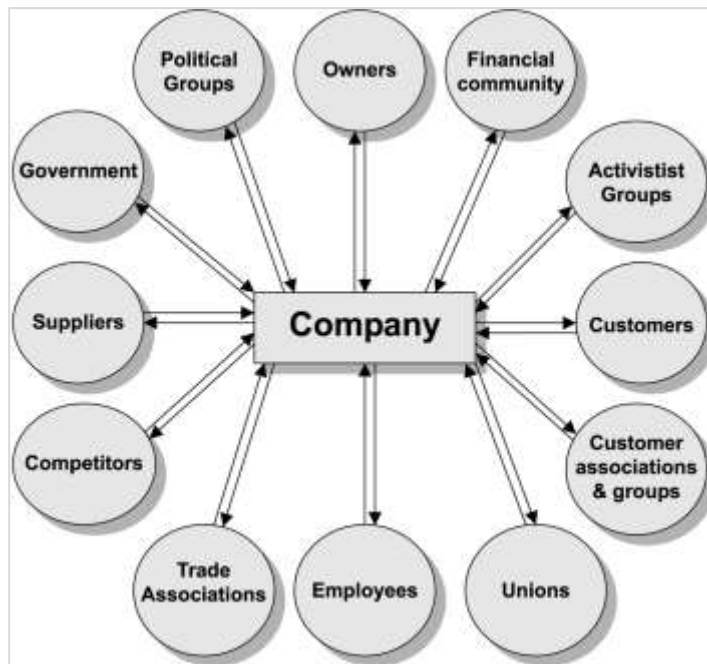


Figure 3.1 Freeman's basic stakeholder map of a large organisation (Midttun, 2007)

In the issue arena (cf. Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010; Luoma-aho *et al.*, 2013), an organisation's stakeholder relationships are not seen as a manageable resource but as dynamic, interdependent relationships through which the issue, such as an organisation crisis, may be resolved. As a crisis develops and progresses, it complicates and disrupts accepted understanding of relationships within the issue arena, which will change continuously through interaction and stake exchange among constituents (Lagadec, 1993; Lerbinger, 1997; Luoma-aho *et al.*, 2013; Richardson, 1994; Shrivastava *et al.*, 1988). Parties that had minimal or no connection with an organisation-in-crisis can suddenly become important stakeholders. Existing stakeholders of the organisation-in-crisis may withdraw their support to distance themselves from the situation.

Other groups not directly affected by the situation, such as the news media, lawyers and social advocacy and pressure groups, may lobby for the interests of a specific constituent

perceived as having legitimate claims (Crandall *et al.*, 2010; Elliott *et al.*, 2002; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992; Seeger *et al.*, 2003; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000; Zyglidopoulos, 2001; Zyglidopoulos & Phillips, 1998). Such coalitions are often vocal, wherein may lie part of their power to influence the situation. Seeing a crisis environment from a stakeholder network perspective highlights the complexity of relationships among involved parties resulting from shifting stakeholder alliances and allegiances. These changing stakeholder relationships can complicate and challenge the response efforts of an organisation-in-crisis (Lerbinger, 1997; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Pajunen, 2006; Svendsen, 1998; Ulmer & Sellnow, 2000; Wheeler & Sillanpaa, 1997, 1998; Winn, 2001).

3.2 The Mitchell *et al.* (1997) model of stakeholder salience

Noting stakeholder theory's lack of robust models of stakeholder identification and prioritisation, Mitchell *et al.* (1997) proposed a salience model that they saw as offering a basis for a normative theory of stakeholder identification and classification (Jones & Wicks, 1999; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Tashman & Raelin, 2013). This model is extensively referenced in scholarly research and is considered to have made a significant contribution to stakeholder theory by reframing the central argument of the broad-narrow definition debate.

The Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) model categorises stakeholders and their claims by their relative salience, defined by Mitchell *et al.* (1997: 854) as "... the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims." This definition was challenged by Tashman and Raelin (2013), who argued that managers' perceptions of stakeholder salience would likely be subjective and, in any case, salience should be determined at a wider societal level. They (Tashman & Raelin, 2013) defined stakeholder salience to the firm as the degree to which managers *should* identify and manage stakeholders' claims, a definition they suggested better accounts for normative expectations of civil society about how stakeholder interests should be managed.

Salience is assessed by perceptions of stakeholders' possession of three attributes: power to influence the organisation, moral legitimacy of their claims, and urgency of their issues (Agle *et al.*, 1999; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997). The number of attributes possessed differentiates more salient from less salient stakeholders; less salient stakeholders may be less likely to have their claims fulfilled by the organisation (Agle *et al.*, 1999; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997). While Mitchell *et al.* (1997) suggested salience may also be influenced by the interaction of the three attributes, the MAW model does not elaborate how this interaction occurs or how it may affect managerial perceptions of stakeholder salience. Subsequent studies have called for further exploration of the interrelationship and interaction among power, legitimacy and urgency (Khurram & Petit, 2015; Neville *et al.*, 2011).

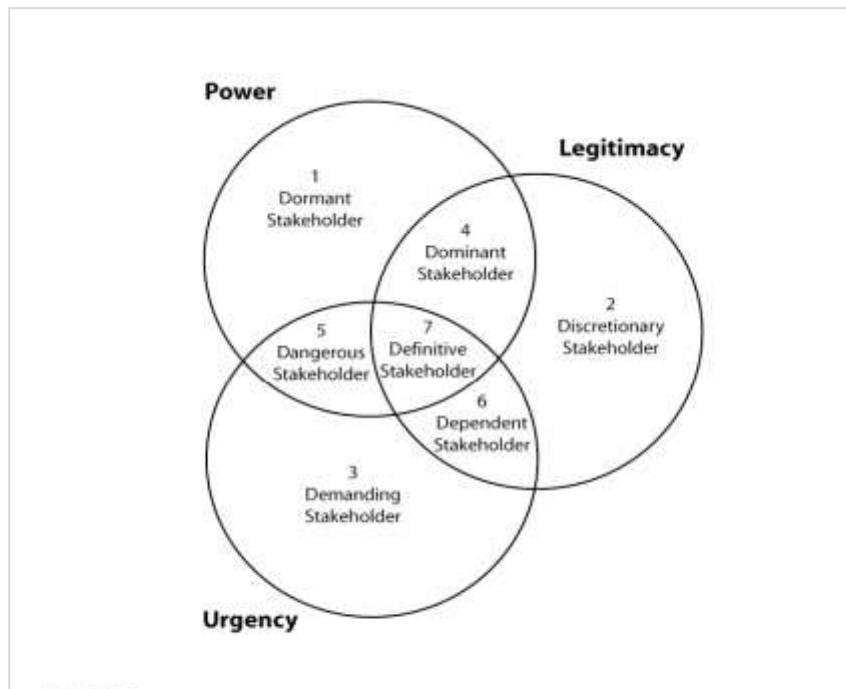


Figure 3.2 Salience classification of stakeholders (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997)

The MAW model recognises three broad stakeholder types: definitive stakeholders with three attributes and high salience; expectant stakeholders with two attributes and moderate salience; and latent stakeholders with one attribute and low salience. Individuals or groups possessing none of the attributes are not considered stakeholders.

Within the three broad stakeholder types are seven sub-classifications (see Figure 2:3). Latent stakeholders with power are labelled dormant; those with legitimacy are discretionary; and those with urgency are demanding. Among expectant stakeholders, those with power and legitimacy are dominant and often receive priority attention from organisation managers; those with power and urgency are dangerous; and those with legitimacy and urgency are labelled dependent as they rely on the advocacy of other stakeholders.

According to Mitchell *et al.* (1997), the salience model recognises the three attributes as variables that can be present or absent and to a greater or lesser degree, so as to account for the transitory nature of stakeholder salience in organisation-stakeholder relationships. Stakeholders may acquire or lose any of the salience attributes as circumstances change, so becoming more or less salient to managers of the focal organisation (Crandall *et al.*, 2010; Friedman & Miles, 2002; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Rowley & Moldoveanu, 2003; Zyglidopoulos, 2001; Zyglidopoulos & Phillips, 1998).

Mitchell *et al.* (1997) also suggested that the cumulative degree of possession of power, legitimacy and urgency should be measured, for a more accurate representation of total stakeholder salience. This contention has found support in subsequent research (cf. Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Neville, Bell & Whitwell, 2004, 2011). However, the MAW framework does not provide a way to assess stakeholders' possession of varying degrees of power, legitimacy and urgency make to overall salience.

3.2.1 Power as a salience attribute

The literatures of various disciplines have provided numerous definitions and typologies of power in different types of political and sociological relationships; this caused Pfeffer (1981 cited in Mitchell *et al.*, 1997) to remark that power is not difficult to recognise but is tricky to define. Mitchell *et al.* (1997) located power in the stakeholder entity and defined it following Salancik and Pfeffer (1974: 3) as "... the ability of those who

possess power to bring about the outcomes they desire” and following Pfeffer (1981 cited in Mitchell *et al.*, 1997: 865) as “... a relationship among social actors in which one social actor, A, can get another social actor, B, to do something that B would not otherwise have done.”

Following Etzioni’s (1964) categorisation of power in organisations, Mitchell *et al.* (1997) identified three types of power by which stakeholders impose their will: coercive (using physical resources of force, threat, restraint or governance), utilitarian (using material or financial means to reward or punish), or normative (using symbolic resources as a reward, such as actions that could enhance reputation) (Etzioni, 1964; Freeman, 1984; Freeman & Evan, 1990; Friedman & Miles, 2006; Gifford, 2010; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Nasi, 1995; Nasi *et al.*, 1997; Rawlins, 2006; Wasieleski, 2001). According to Mitchell *et al.* (1997), these types of power may exist separately or in combinations, although their salience model does not differentiate the contributions that different types of power may make to overall salience.

Despite Etzioni’s (1964) categorisation, the literature reflects a preference to interpret power as based on utilitarian resource dependency (Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Perrault, 2015; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), particularly in situations where conflict exists in organisation-stakeholder interactions and when at least one party is unwilling to negotiate (Frooman & Murrell, 2005). As an organisation acts to gain access to essential resources, the relative power between the firm and its stakeholders is conditioned by links to these resources (Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Frooman, 1999). Thus, argued Eesley and Lenox (2006), stakeholder power depends on both the resource base of the stakeholder and the firm being targeted, making power less an attribute of the stakeholder entity and more an attribute of the stakeholder-organisation relationship (Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Hayibor, 2005).

Defining power from primarily a utilitarian perspective may not adequately account for how stakeholder power could function during an organisation crisis, as it would appear to discount the increasingly-important role of political and social power in understanding organisations’ management of stakeholders (Perrault, 2015). This is evidenced by the

growing influence of social interest groups in an organisation's stakeholder environment. Furthermore, seeing stakeholder power as based solely on resource dependency would appear to diminish the significance of organisation-stakeholder interdependency in creating positive outcomes to a situation (Beach, 2008).

The MAW model recognises power as a dynamic attribute that stakeholders can gain or lose as circumstances change. From a stakeholder network perspective, power has been considered in the context of stakeholder centrality, which may be seen as akin to social power. When a stakeholder's relative centrality within a network increases and the density of its connections grows, that stakeholder is seen to acquire access to the salience attributes of other network members (Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Neville *et al.*, 2011; Rowley, 1997). Network centrality and density of connections, then, may provide social power that contributes to overall stakeholder salience; power is gained or lost through the formation or dissolution of alliances with other stakeholders. Social power would appear potentially significant during times of organisation crisis, so is considered further in the current study's conceptualisation of crisis stakeholder salience.

In defining power, Mitchell *et al.* (1997) rejected French and Raven's (1960) seminal schema of sources of power for lacking a sorting logic to create mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. They (French & Raven, 1960) identified five bases of power: legitimate (formal right to demand compliance), reward (compensate for compliance), expert (high level of skill and knowledge), referent (perceived worthiness of respect), coercive and informational (ability to directly or indirectly control needed information). While these categories somewhat parallel and overlap those of Etzioni (1964), expert power may hold significance in determining the salience of crisis stakeholders and should be further considered in this context.

Although Mitchell *et al.* (1997) suggested power was probably the most critical attribute in assessing stakeholder salience, this perspective has been challenged (Clarkson, 1995; Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Harrison & St John, 1996; Nasi *et al.*, 1997; Parent & Deephouse, 2007; Perrault, 2015; Roloff, 2008). The association between power and

legitimacy is extensively discussed in the academic literature. From a normative perspective of stakeholder theory and following Weber's (1947) definition of authority as the legitimate use of power, influencers who have power but do not have legitimate claims may not warrant priority attention from an organisation. Mitchell *et al.* (1997) acknowledged this, noting that the search for a normative core of stakeholder theory has led some scholars (e.g. Freeman, 1994; Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson & Preston, 1995) to consider legitimacy as more critical than power in stakeholder-organisation relationships.

3.2.2 Legitimacy as a salience attribute

The MAW model identifies legitimacy as located within stakeholders' claims and conceptualises it in line with normative dimensions of stakeholder theory, underscoring the moral considerations of stakeholders' claims. Legitimacy is defined following Suchman (1995: 574) as "... a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions". While acknowledging this definition to be imprecise and difficult to operationalise, Mitchell *et al.* (1997) claimed its value lay in recognising that legitimacy may be defined and negotiated at individual, organisational and societal levels of social organisation (Eesley & Lenox 2006; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997).

Subsequent research, however, has argued that this conceptualisation of legitimacy obscures the different sources of legitimacy that Suchman's (1995) definition aimed at bringing together (Neville *et al.*, 2011; Suchman, 1995). While the scholarly literature widely recognises that organisations are rewarded for behaving in a legitimate manner, it reflects two distinct standpoints in defining legitimacy and explaining its source. Institutional theory approaches emphasise legitimacy's normative dimension, seeing it as a social construct based on ethical and moral criteria and cultural support (cf. Berger, Ridgeway, Fisek & Norman, 1998; Egels-Zanden & Wahlqvist, 2007; Massey, 2001; Meyer & Scott, 1983). Strategic approaches centre on legitimacy's instrumental role as a vital organisation resource (Carroll, 1989; Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson & Preston, 1995;

Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Evan & Freeman, 1983; Sonpar *et al.*, 2010; Suchman, 1995).

Within these two broad approaches, legitimacy has been examined from moral (right and in the interests of society), pragmatic (value of claims), and cognitive (taken-for-granted cultural accounts) perspectives (Gifford, 2010; Johnson *et al.*, 2006; Suchman, 1995). While the three perspectives are based on different sets of behavioural dynamics they all broadly accept that legitimacy is a dynamic social construct that sees the organisation's activities as consistent with a taken-for-granted system of cultural norms, values and beliefs (Johnson *et al.*, 2006; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Santana, 2012).

An organisation's possession of the different types of legitimacy can increase or decrease; for example, when the firm is seen to no longer meet societal expectations, stakeholders may withdraw support, causing the firm to lose legitimacy (Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Metzler, 2001; Nasi *et al.*, 1997; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013; Sethi, 1975). Different types of legitimacy can also reinforce or cancel out one another. For example, attempts by an organisation to increase its pragmatic legitimacy may result in diminishing moral legitimacy, as stakeholders become increasingly sceptical of legitimisation attempts (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990; Suchman, 1995).

Reviewing the MAW salience model, Neville *et al.* (2011) accepted only moral legitimacy as appropriate to determine stakeholder salience, being broader than self-interest and having, at its core, a pro-social logic that is inherently different from the logic of organisations' narrow self-interest (Suchman, 1995). Accordingly, a number of researchers have operationalised legitimacy as determined by organisation managers based on ethical norms derived from personal, organisational, and social sources of ethical behaviour (Agle *et al.*, 1999; Neville *et al.*, 2011). However, Eesley and Lenox (2005) argued that, as legitimacy is cast in terms of societal norms and values, it is best measured by perceptions of the general public.

Neville *et al.*, (2011) endorsed the contention of Mitchell *et al.* (1997) that legitimacy exists on a continuum of moral intensity, allowing managers to prioritise stakeholder

claims by comparing their degree of fairness, although this could increase subjectivity in attributing legitimacy. Pragmatic legitimacy was discounted as it was seen to be based on self-interested calculations and could be “purchased” through inducements such as bribery (Neville *et al.*, 2011). Cognitive legitimacy was also discounted, as Neville *et al.* (2011) contended it accounted only for the amount of deliberation required to reach a judgment on legitimacy and not the process of how that evaluation was made. However, this argument was based on seeing legitimacy as located solely in stakeholders’ claims.

Phillips (2003a, 2003b) proposed distinguishing normative legitimacy, based on moral obligation, from derivative legitimacy, based on power. Normative legitimacy is accorded to stakeholders who accept the risk of entering a relationship with the organisation, whether or not the firm has any functional interest in them (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Shankman, 1999). The organisation has no such contractual relationships with derivatively-legitimate constituents, for example, social activists, terrorists, the media and competitors, and so has no moral responsibility to them. However, such parties may have power to affect the organisation and its normatively-legitimate stakeholders and so are accorded instrumental legitimacy based on the firm’s obligations to others, for as long as they may affect the organisation or its normatively-legitimate stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995; Jones *et al.*, 2006; Phillips, 1999, 2003a, 2003b).

Phillips’ (2003a, 2003b) understanding of derivative legitimacy has been criticised since it would appear to confuse power and legitimacy. Furthermore, it suggests that all stakeholders must be accorded some legitimate basis for their claim on the organisation; there is, conceptually, little room for envisioning an illegitimate stakeholder (Perrault, 2015). From this perspective, it would appear important to reconsider where legitimacy resides. Mitchell *et al.* (1997) located the attribute within stakeholders’ claims. Subsequent studies, however, have debated the extent to which legitimacy of the stakeholder as an entity, or of the stakeholder’s actions or behaviour, may influence determinations of the legitimacy of that stakeholder’s claims (cf. Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Neville *et al.*, 2011; Santana, 2012). Eesley and Lenox (2006) argued that legitimacy of the stakeholder as an entity, its claim and its actions were assessed separately and were

all seen as capable of influencing overall legitimacy positively or negatively. Other studies have proposed that legitimacy of the stakeholder alone may be insufficient to attract managers' attention if the claim is not seen as legitimate (Santana, 2012). From a normative stakeholder theory perspective, Neville *et al.* (2011) argued that if the claim is morally legitimate, it will receive organisational attention even if the tactics are seen as not legitimate. However, this suggests legitimacy would be accorded to violent activists as long as their claim is seen to be legitimate on moral grounds; the violence perpetrated by some animal rights groups comes to mind.

In conceptualising crisis stakeholder salience, the bases and locations of legitimacy may need to be reassessed as legitimacy of the stakeholder entity, claim and behaviour may all contribute to overall perceptions of salience, creating different degrees of legitimacy. The most legitimate stakeholder would be perceived as being legitimate as an entity, possessing a legitimate claim, and behaving in a legitimate manner. Legitimacy of the stakeholder, related to reputation, develops over time and may be rooted more in moral and pragmatic forms of legitimacy. Legitimacy of the claim and the constituent's behaviour are specific to a situation. Legitimacy of the claim appears to be based on moral considerations, while legitimacy of the stakeholder's behaviour may be rooted in moral or cognitive considerations.

3.2.3 Urgency as a salience attribute

Urgency as a salience attribute was included in the MAW model to more effectively capture the dynamics of stakeholder-manager interactions (Jonker & Foster, 2002; Hayibor, 2005; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997). Locating urgency within stakeholders' claims, Mitchell *et al.* (1997: 867) defined it as "... the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention." Urgency exists when two conditions are present: time sensitivity or the degree to which managerial delay in attending to the claim or relationship would be unacceptable to the stakeholder; and criticality or the importance of the claim or relationship to the stakeholder. Studies have typically concluded that urgency is insufficiently strong alone to determine stakeholder salience, but as a

secondary attribute it can increase the salience of already salient issues (Jones *et al.*, 2006; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Rawlins, 2006).

In defining the three salience attributes for their model, Mitchell *et al.* (1997) acknowledged that determination of possession of any of the attributes called for what could be subjective assessments by organisation managers. The definition of urgency is particularly problematic as it implies possession is determined by managers' assessments of stakeholders' perspectives. This could draw out self-interested assessments by managers and stakeholders, resulting in different understandings of the urgency of claims (Agle *et al.*, 1999; Driscoll & Crombie, 2001; Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Eesley & Lenox, 2006). Organisation managers may be more likely to attribute urgency to stakeholders' claims when there exists the likelihood of that stakeholder taking action against the organisation. Accordingly, Gifford (2010) suggested criticality as an aspect of urgency would be better interpreted as the presence of shareholder behaviour that illustrated a resolve or determination to address the issue of concern; such behaviours might include the stakeholder being persistent, assertive and dedicating resources to advance their claim. However, Eesley and Lenox (2006) reasoned that a stakeholder's desire for immediate action on an issue would not necessarily move the focal organisation to respond positively as organisation managers would also be likely to consider the stakeholder's power to act.

Thus, referencing Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997) original contention that urgency was situated within stakeholders' claims, Eesley and Lenox (2006: 769) argued a more effective definition of urgency would cast it "... in terms of whether an individual stakeholder claim or request is intended to stop or alter present, ongoing actions of the firm versus altering future, planned actions." For this reason, Neville *et al.* (2011: 361) rejected urgency as a stakeholder salience attribute as it was "... subsumed within the power attribute." However, this would appear to overlook the possibility that stakeholders without power may be motivated to act when social support is forthcoming from within the stakeholder environment, suggesting a link between urgency and social power.

In the context of organisation crisis, an assumption can be made that harm to human and/or non-human stakeholders could be caused or exacerbated by any delay in their claims being addressed; thus time sensitivity may be an important salience attribute. Additionally, stakeholders' apparent motivation to act would appear a more effective and more objectively measurable conceptualisation of criticality, and may also warrant further consideration as a separate salience characteristic of crisis stakeholders.

The present study responds to a recognised need for research into the salience of crisis stakeholders and their claims. With its consideration of normative and instrumental aspects of stakeholders' salience, the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) model would appear an appropriate organising concept from which to start an analysis of crisis stakeholder salience. While legitimacy, power and urgency appear relevant in assessing stakeholder salience from an operational/industrial perspective of a crisis, the range of salience characteristics may need to be extended to take into account the relational/ reputational factors that may influence stakeholder salience.

3.2.4 Broadening the stakeholder salience model for crisis

The MAW model has been used as the theoretical basis for numerous studies. Its approach and relevance of its salience attributes have generally been endorsed (Agle *et al.*, 1999; Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Laplume *et al.*, 2008; Parent & Deephhouse, 2007; Perrault, 2015; Winn, 2001). However, findings from several empirical studies have highlighted divergences between the theoretical model and the organisational reality, raising questions about the practical use of the model. In particular, studies investigating the relationship between organisation managers' perceptions of stakeholder salience and the firm's financial or social performance have yielded inconsistent and inconclusive results (cf. Agle *et al.*, 1999; Gifford, 2010; Perrault, 2015; Tashman, & Raelin, 2013), suggesting a possible problem of over-reliance on managers' subjective perceptions.

This suggests an intrinsic limitation in the MAW model's application. Indeed, studies have shown that managers may not even consider stakeholder power, legitimacy and

urgency in making decisions (Frooman, 1999; Magness, 2008; Perrault, 2015; Tashman & Raelin, 2013). Rather, they may make a holistic decision to favour stakeholders, typically those they perceive as able to affect short-term business goals (Agle *et al.*, 1999; Driscoll & Crombie, 2001; Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Gifford, 2010; Parent & Deephouse 2007; Perrault, 2015; Tashman & Raelin, 2013).

If power, legitimacy and urgency are socially-constructed variables, their possession should be co-determined by the perceptions of managers, focal stakeholders and other constituents, as long as these perceptions are consistent with general societal expectations (Tashman & Raelin, 2013). In this way, decisions about who warrants managerial attention would truly be made at multiple levels of social analysis. From this perspective, Tashman and Raelin (2013) drew on stakeholder-agency theory to define stakeholder salience to the firm as the degree to which managers *should* identify and manage stakeholders' claims, a definition they suggested better accounts for normative expectations of the civil society about how stakeholder interests should be managed. This approach, while compelling, would seem complex and difficult to achieve since it may be unrealistic to suggest that organisation managers could objectively assess and reconcile the perceptions of all constituents.

With regards to the salience attributes themselves, critiques of the MAW model have offered diverse views on how power, legitimacy and urgency may be defined and operationalised and what other attributes may contribute to determining stakeholder salience. The abundance of perspectives, few of which have received wide support from researchers, may somewhat explain why the MAW model has not progressed significantly beyond Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997) original framework. Studies have suggested, for example, that the salience model should also take into account the role of corporate culture (Henriques & Sadorsky, 1999; Jones *et al.*, 2006), values of organisation managers (Agle *et al.*, 1999), organisational lifecycle stages (Jawahar & McLaughlin, 2001), trust and learning potential (Myllykangas *et al.*, 2010), relative size of the shareholder and their stake compared to the organisation (Gifford, 2010), and frequency (Luoma-aho, 2006). However, some specific extensions of stakeholder salience research are identified as potentially having relevance in conceptualising crisis

stakeholder salience: the effect on salience of stakeholder alliances; the limitations of managerial perceptions; and the salience of non-humans.

From a network theory perspective, the MAW salience model has been criticised for its one-way perspective of stakeholder relationships that suggests individual stakeholders are dependent on the organisation and represent a resource to be managed (Beach, 2008; Berman *et al.*, 2006; Frooman, 1999; Frooman & Murrell, 2005). This is seen as an inaccurate reflection of the reality of a dynamic business environment. Rather, organisations and stakeholders should be seen as existing interdependently within larger network systems and having reciprocal relationships that open the way for negotiation to resolve conflicts and achieve positive outcomes (Beach, 2008; Evan & Freeman, 1983).

In stakeholder networks, the ability of any constituent to influence others or affect the focal organisation's decision making is seen to depend on the density of its contacts and centrality of its network position (Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Frooman, 2010; Gifford, 2010; Hayibor, 2005; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Rowley, 1997). A network perspective suggests a dynamic model of stakeholder salience should account for the multiplicity of effects created when stakeholders interact, or enter or leave alliances within their networks (Beach, 2008; Frooman, 1999, 2010; Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Friedman & Miles, 2002; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Neville *et al.*, 2005; Pajunen 2006; Rowley, 1997; Rowley & Moldoveanu, 2003). Stakeholder salience derived from alliances could be consequential during an organisation crisis; for example, groups with some type of power may support the perceived legitimate claims of stakeholders who lack power. Thus, the role of the stakeholder network during an organisation crisis should certainly be considered in conceptualising a framework of crisis stakeholder salience.

The inability of the MAW model to recognise the salience of non-human stakeholders such as the natural environment, or "absent" stakeholders such as future generations or potential victims, has been identified as a limitation by many scholars (cf. Branco & Rodrigues, 2007; Buchholz, 1993; Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Starik, 1995). Driscoll and Starik (2004: 61) suggested the omission of such entities could be explained by how Mitchell *et al.* (1997) defined and operationalised power, legitimacy and urgency,

making them inadequate for “... incorporating the near and the far, the short- and the long-term, and the actual and the potential.”

To account for the salience of non-human entities, Driscoll and Starik (2004) suggested that coercive and utilitarian power could incorporate pervasiveness, defined as the extent to which a stakeholder’s impact is dispersed over space and time; legitimacy could incorporate ecological as well as individual, organisational and societal; and urgency should include probability or likelihood of action, as also identified by Eesley and Lenox (2006) and Gifford (2010). Additionally, the attribute of proximity was proposed, defined as “... the state, quality, or fact of being near or next” in “space, time, or order” (Soukhanov, 1984 cited in Driscoll & Starik, 2004: 64).

The MAW framework identifies the environment as a dependent stakeholder possessing legitimacy from a fairness-based approach insofar as its claims are in the interests of society; urgency from the critical threat of irreversible damage; but is reliant for power to carry out its will on alliances with other (powerful) stakeholders such as government agencies and non-governmental organisations. Considering Driscoll and Starik’s (2004) proposed extensions of the MAW salience attributes in the context of organisation crisis, the inclusion of ecological legitimacy may be unnecessary as environmental claims already have moral legitimacy. However, pervasive power and likelihood of action as an aspect of urgency may be significant to elevate the environment to the highest level of salience, which it may warrant as an entity most harmed by some crises.

Regarding the notion of proximity, Torre and Rallet (2005) further defined the concept, distinguishing between geographic and organised proximity. Geographic proximity refers to actual or perceived physical distance. Organised proximity is relational, referring to the existence of interactions between members of an organisation. The members are close to each other because they interact following a shared system of rules, knowledge, beliefs and routines of behaviour (Torre & Rallet, 2005). Both these aspects of proximity may have relevance to perceptions of crisis stakeholder salience. Modern communication technologies may diminish the significance of physical geographic proximity. However, organisation managers may still perceive the claims of

stakeholders located within a nearby community as more salient because the potential for direct contact suggests more influence to affect the organisation. Organised proximity may also influence crisis stakeholder salience; past crises have suggested that managers of an organisation-in-crisis may prioritise the claims of internal stakeholders or those within the same industry over external stakeholders. A search of the literature found limited evidence of the contribution that proximity may make to stakeholder salience; however, it warrants further consideration.

3.3 Conclusions from this chapter

This chapter has examined the stakeholder theory literature, focusing on aspects that relate to stakeholder expectations of organisations-in-crisis and how the salience of stakeholders' claims may be assessed in order to prioritise them for response. The chapter reviewed the literature related to the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) stakeholder salience framework, and noted, significantly, that Mitchell *et al.*' (1997: 854) definition of salience as "... the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims" represents an organisation-centred perspective. Implications of the MAW model's three salience attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency for the conceptualisation of crisis stakeholder salience were considered through a review of relevant literature. Chapter 4, which now follows, explores the role of news frames in media coverage of crises and how analysis of media frames of stakeholder salience may provide information that can guide managerial decisions on prioritising stakeholders' crisis claims for response.

Chapter 4: News media framing of organisation crisis

This research project investigates the media framing in news coverage of an organisation crisis and accepts the premise that media audiences' understanding of a crisis may be influenced by how the news media depict the situation. The previous two chapters have examined the literature pertaining to the concepts of crisis and stakeholder salience. In this chapter, the role of news frames in media coverage of crises is explored.

Organisation crises are considered newsworthy stories and so generate extensive media coverage, which often goes beyond reporting the facts to providing analyses of the situation. Framing essentially involves highlighting a specific piece of information in a communication text, thereby elevating that information in salience (Entman, 1993). Studies have shown that news media frames of crisis situations can influence how the public understands the situation and perceives the response of the focal organisation, and, consequently, how this may affect the organisation's ability to recover from the crisis (Carroll & McCombs, 2003; Choi & Lin, 2009; Coombs, 2006; Romenti & Valentini, 2010; Schultz *et al.*, 2011; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; van der Meer & Verhoeven, 2013; van der Meer, Verhoeven, Beentjes & Vliegenthart, 2014).

This chapter opens by comparing and contrasting the related media effects theories of agenda setting and framing. The key concepts of news media framing are then detailed, including how framing is used by the media industries and the ways in which frames are applied to a media text. Following this, studies of the media framing of disasters and crises are examined, particularly the framework of crisis framing proposed by An and Gower (2009), from which the conceptual model of crisis stakeholder salience introduced in the present study to analyse media framing of the SQ006 accident draws.

The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the review of literature pertaining to the three key themes that shaped the research problem examined in this thesis.

4.1 Media effects approaches

The suggestion that the media may structure issues for the public's consumption can be traced to the work of Lippmann (1922), who suggested that people in general were ill-equipped to deal directly with the vastness and complexity of the real environment. The press were seen as offering a simpler model of the world by "... bringing one episode and then another out of the darkness into vision" (Lippmann, 1922: 364). In this way, the media are seen to shape people's understanding of the world around them. In their study of media objectivity, Molotch and Lester (1974: 111) contended, "We see media as reflecting not a world out there, but the practices of those having the power to determine the experience of others."

Early theoretical studies saw media effects as direct and powerful in influencing audiences about the world beyond their direct experience. Such theories proposed that "... mass communications 'inject' ideas, attitudes, and dispositions toward behavior into passive, atomized, extremely vulnerable individuals" (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1982: 163). This perspective reflects early communication theories such as the "magic bullet" and "hypodermic needle" approaches. From this standpoint, Lippmann (1922: 4) called the world beyond a person's own experience a "pseudo-environment" created by the mass media, and claimed that people would believe what the media told them, as long as it appeared to be true and reasonable. In this way, the media were seen to have the capability to leverage certain attitudes and beliefs to shape societal views.

Later studies, discrediting the magic bullet model and hypodermic needle communication models as simplistic, argued that media effects were not direct and powerful, but indirect and limited. Dearing and Rogers (1996) claimed behavioural psychology had over-emphasised the media's power to change audiences' attitudes and

behaviours while, in fact, media research had shown that the intention of most news is to provide information rather than persuade audiences. Contemporary research accepts that people actively process media information and make decisions about it, rather than being passively manipulated by media content.

4.1.1 Media agenda setting and framing compared

A review of the literature shows wide recognition by researchers that the news media influence the public agenda and public opinion through various factors involved in the selection, organisation and evaluation of news content, as set out in theories of agenda setting and media framing. Despite extensive research on the effects of media agenda setting and framing, the evidence is still inconclusive regarding the extent to which audiences may be influenced (Corner *et al.*, 1997; Livingstone, 1996; McQuail, 2005; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009; Valentini & Romenti, 2011).

The basis of media agenda setting is illustrated by the oft-cited adage that the media “... may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (Cohen, 1963: 13). The agenda setting hypothesis links the emphasis given by the media to specific topics or issues to the public’s perceived salience of those topics or issues. By choosing what to report and how extensively to report it, the media are seen to highlight the significance of events, topics and issues, so setting the topical agenda for the public (Corner *et al.*, 1997; Dearing & Rogers, 1996; Duffy & Rowden, 2005; Kim, Scheufele & Shanahan, 2002; Kiousis, Popescu & Mitrook, 2007; Krippendorff, 2004; Larson, 2012; Livingstone, 1996; McCombs, 2004; McCombs & Reynolds, 2009; McCombs & Shaw, 1972, 1993; McLeod, Kosicki & McLeod, 2009; McQuail, 2005; Price & Tewksbury, 1997; Scheufele, 2000; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Shoemaker, 1991; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009; Valentini & Romenti, 2011; Wanta *et al.*, 2004; Weaver, 2007; White, 1950). Agenda setting research, consequently, measures the effects of an issue’s accessibility on public perceptions of issue importance.

The agenda-setting hypothesis has been widely researched. Historically, studies were in political communication settings and considered how the prominence of media coverage of public issues and political candidates affected public perception of the salience of these issues and candidates. More recently, the agenda setting approach has also been adopted to examine media coverage of business topics. From their review of 112 empirical studies, Dearing and Rogers (1996) found that 60 percent of the studies supported the hypothesis that media agendas influence public agendas. Several notable studies (cf. Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Sparks, 2006; Weaver, Graber, McCombs & Eyal, 1981) have delivered reliable evidence of a cause-and-effect relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda.

Media framing research, in contrast, focuses on how the meaning, cause, implication or treatment of an event, issue or person is presented and characterised in media stories (Kosicki, 1993; Price & Tewksbury, 1997; Scheufele, 2000; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). Frames are constructed realities that establish connections among events and issues, ostensibly to help people organise, store, interpret and recall those events and issues (Benford & Snow, 2000; Entman, 2004, 2010; Gamson, 1988; Gitlin, 1980; Goffman, 1974; Norris, 1995; Steffans, Wilkins, Vultee, Thorson, Kyle & Collins, 2012; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). Public perception of events, issues or people is seen to be influenced by how news media frame information about those events, issues or people (Pollock & Rindova, 2003).

Agenda setting and media framing have been extensively compared and contrasted in the scholarly literature. Some researchers have defined media framing as a second dimension of agenda setting, such that agenda setting is seen to account not only for the accessibility of specific topics or issues in media coverage, but also how the media select and present attributes of those topics and issues, so highlighting their salience (Chyi & McCombs, 2004; Ghanem, 1997; Hester & Gibson, 2003; McCombs, 1997, 2005; McCombs & Reynolds, 2009; McCombs, Shaw & Weaver, 1997; Muschert & Carr, 2006; Severin & Tankard, 1997; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009; Weaver, 2007; Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). In the way, the extent of news coverage about specific attributes of events, people or issues is linked to public perception of the salience of those attributes.

From this perspective, second-level agenda would appear to converge theoretically with media framing (cf. Kiousis, Bantimaroudis & Ban, 1999; McCombs *et al.*, 1997).

However, while both hypotheses pertain to how events or issues are depicted in the media, some researchers point to their different philosophical bases as justification for considering them distinct theoretical concepts (cf. Entman, 1993; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Thus, Weaver (2007: 145) contended that "... framing does seem to include a broader range of cognitive processes – such as moral evaluations, causal reasoning, appeals to principles, and recommendations for treatment of problems – than does second-level agenda setting."

The present study, in investigating the news media depiction of the salience of crisis stakeholders, accepts agenda setting and media framing to be related concepts that both contribute to the overall depiction of themes, topics, events and people in media stories. In analysing the SQ006 case study, agenda setting measures are used to quantitatively assess the apparent newsworthiness of crisis stakeholders, and media frames are examined interpretively to explain why stakeholders may have been depicted as having salient claims in the crisis situation.

4.2 Framing of news in media stories

Framing has been described as a "fractured" (Entman, 1993) paradigm that lacks clear conceptual definitions to guide research; however, the concept's flexibility has allowed framing to be applied across a broad spectrum of communication situations. A search of the literature highlights a plethora of framing effects studies in numerous academic disciplines, examining framing effects across intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organisational, inter-organisational and societal levels of communication.

Studies of news framing in media coverage have contended that the impact of news stories is achieved not only by the factual information delivered to audiences, but also by how the media organise and package the information and how media audiences interpret

that information (Graber, 1988; Iyengar, 1990, 1991; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; McLeod, Kosicki & McLeod, 2002; Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Schultz *et al.*, 2011). Media frames are seen to result from the interaction between journalists and media users or audiences (Birkland, 1997, Kuttschreuter *et al.*, 2011; Scheufele, 1999). Journalists respond to the public's interests by covering topics and issues that are relevant to the social, cultural and political contexts of their audiences (Cunningham, 2005; Kuttschreuter *et al.*, 2011). In so doing, they may set the frames of reference that audiences use to interpret and discuss events, encouraging the public to focus on specific issues covered by the media (Kuttschreuter *et al.*, 2011). Entman (1993: 52) thus defined framing as a process "... to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation."

Although media frames may be deliberately created for persuasive effect, framing is seen to differ from other processes of persuasion because it aims at interpretation of information – to the extent of mobilising adherents and demobilising antagonists, according to some researchers (cf. Schultz *et al.*, 2012; Snow & Benford, 1988). Rather than presenting new information aimed at creating new beliefs, frames are structured to resonate with information already in media users' cognition (Nelson, Oxley & Clawson, 1997; Schultz *et al.*, 2011; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). In this way, frames "... introduce or raise the salience or apparent importance of certain ideas, activating schemas that encourage target audiences to think, feel, and decide in a particular way" (Entman, 2007: 164). Since frames are carried through contextual cues in media content and writing style, they are seen to have more subtle and powerful influences on audiences than overt persuasion or bias (Scheufele, 2000; Severin & Tankard, 1997).

Research in various disciplines has studied media framing effects in different communication vehicles (cf. Druckman, 2001; Entman, 1993; Hallahan, 1999; Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Iyengar, 1991; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). This has produced distinct research streams that examine framing from the separate dimensions of how messages are created by the sender and how message receivers examine information and

draw inferences about the world around them. Thus, Scheufele (1999) described framing as having two dimensions. The individual (message receiver) frame is conceptually connected to the psychological processes that people use to assess and interpret media content, so explaining how audiences make sense of news media stories (Hallahan, 1999; Scheufele, 1999). The media frame serves as a central organising idea or story line in media output that "... provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events... the frames suggest what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987: 143).

Although they have been studied separately, the individual frame and the media frame are interconnected and are generally considered to contribute equally to the framing process by explaining the encoding and decoding of communication via media texts (cf. Liu & Pennington-Gray, 2015; Neuman *et al.*, 1992; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Scheufele, 1999). This suggests the importance for research to investigate both dimensions, although the literature search indicated that framing studies in the most examine only one dimension. It is relevant, then, to consider how the two dimensions have been conceptualised and investigated.

4.2.1 Media frame

Although frames are not unique to the media as message senders, the literature shows broad support for the contention that, in gathering and processing information for news stories, journalists use frames to construct social reality for audiences. Dunwoody (1992 cited in Hallahan, 1999) called frames central to journalism, serving as mental maps that could be activated quickly.

Scholars have described framing in media output as cognitive structure building that allows actors to reduce complexity of a story by emphasising certain issues or topics (Entman, 1993; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). For example, Esrock, Hart and D'Silva (2002: 210) defined news framing as "... the process by which the thematic or stylistic

organization of news accounts emphasizes a particular story line.” Gitlin (1980) linked framing to Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony, suggesting that those who control the media can impress their interpretations on audiences; this would appear to imply that media framing is deliberate. However, studies have recognised that news framing may occur unintentionally, since journalists cannot avoid organising information through their own worldviews, shaped by factors including social values, organisational expectations and constraints, pressure from interest groups, journalistic routines, and ideological or political orientations (Goffman, 1974; Hackett, 1984; Scheufele, 1999, 2000; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009; Tuchman, 1976; Valentini & Romenti, 2011).

Whether intentional or not, how a journalist frames a story will introduce some slant or bias to the information presented (Cheek, 2000; Entman, 1993, 2010; Fowler, 1991; Gitlin, 1980; Hook & Pu, 2006; King, 1997; Norris, 1995; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). Frames may promote a particular definition, causal explanation, moral evaluation, attribution of responsibility, or solution to an issue or event (Entman, 1991, 1993, 2004, 2010; Esrock *et al.*, 2002; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987; Gitlin, 1980; Iyengar, 1991; McLeod *et al.*, 2002; McQuail, 2005; Nijkraake *et al.*, 2015; Pan & Kosicki, 1993, 2001; Price & Tewksbury, 1997; Tankard, 2001; Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss & Ghanem, 1991; Tuchman, 1976). Iyengar (1991) suggested that some of the most powerful media framing, particularly relevant to media coverage of organisation crises, involves suggesting who is responsible for a problem and who can help provide a solution.

Framing effects in media output result from the use of persistent patterns in how information is selected, interpreted, evaluated and elaborated on (Entman, 1991, 1993, 2004; Esrock *et al.*, 2002; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987; Gitlin, 1980; McLeod *et al.*, 2002; McQuail, 2005; Pan & Kosicki, 1993, 2001; Price & Tewksbury, 1997; Tankard, 2001; Tankard *et al.*, 1991; Tuchman, 1976). Typically, frames are applied through subtle nuances in content, tone, wording and syntax that introduce a slant or bias (Cheek, 2000; Entman, 1993, 2010; Fowler, 1991; Gitlin, 1980; Hook & Pu, 2006; King, 1997; Kuttschreuter *et al.*, 2011; Norris, 1995; Scheufele, 2000; Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). According to Gamson (1988; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), the ideas that appear

in news stories are best explained as media packages that feature a central organising idea that is supported by various symbolic or framing devices.

Hallahan (1999) identified simple and complex forms of framing. Some frames simply highlight the positive or negative valence of information; others may involve the alternative phrasing of terms (semantic framing) (Hallahan, 1999). The most complex form of framing, according to Hallahan (1999) is storytelling or story framing, which involves selecting key themes or ideas that are the focus of the message and then incorporating storytelling or narrative techniques to support that theme. Ghanem (1997) proposed that frames may be applied through four dimensions: topic (choice of content to include or exclude); presentation (size and placement); cognitive attributes (specific details included); and affective attributes (tone and valence).

Pan and Kosicki (1993) suggested framing can be evidenced in: syntactic structures (stable patterns of arranging words and phrases); script structures (orderly sequencing of events in a predictable pattern); thematic structures (presence of hypotheses that explain the links between elements); and rhetorical structures that hint at how a text should be interpreted. These rhetorical devices include metaphors and similes, familiar exemplars, provocative language and descriptors, catchphrases, and visual imagery (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, 1989; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

4.2.2 Individual frame

Media frames are seen to achieve cognitive effects through making issues and topics accessible and salient to media audiences (Cobb, 2005). Studies of individual frames, then, focus on the outcomes of media framing by examining how individuals assess information, make judgements and as a result draw inferences about an event or issue in the world around them (Hallahan, 1999).

Despite being contentiously debated in the psychology literature, the concept of priming is referenced extensively in the framing literature to explain individual frames. From a framing perspective, priming explains knowledge as being organised in an individual's memory in cognitive structures or schemas, which control the arrangement and interpretation of situations and events (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar & Simon, 1993; Price & Tewksbury, 1997; Scheufele, 2000; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Weaver, 2007). Frames in media output are seen to interact with individuals' existing knowledge and experiences by selectively influencing which schemas are activated to interpret a message. If no competing perspectives are immediately available, audiences may be more likely to apply the media frames to interpret the media content (Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

One of the most-cited studies is that of Kahneman and Tversky (1979), whose study showed that identical data may be interpreted differently when presented within a positive or a negative frame, depending on the interpretative schema applied by the message receiver. The study suggested that the valence framing of a decision operates as a cognitive heuristic to guide decision making in uncertain or risky situations (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

Other studies have evidenced how media frames activate different knowledge structures in individuals, who will consequently derive different meanings and understandings from a story (Davis, 1995; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; McCombs, 2004; McLeod *et al.*, 2002; Severin & Tankard, 1997; Sparks, 2006; Steffans *et al.*, 2012; Swanson & Neuman, 1994). Consequently, no one media story can present a single, clear meaning to all audiences, explaining why the varied and inconsistent extent of framing effects. Furthermore, any individual media user could be exposed to competing narratives in several media platforms. Ultimately, each individual chooses to accept or reject specific media frames depending on a range of factors which may include personal values (Shen & Edwards, 2005), physical and social circumstances (McLeod *et al.*, 2009), political involvement and beliefs (Shen, 2004; Valentino, Beckmann & Buhr, 2001), credibility of the specific media outlet (McQuail, 2005; Wanta & Ghanem, 2007), extent of conflicting evidence (Wanta & Ghanem, 2007) and need for orientation (Wanta & Ghanem, 2007;

Weaver, 1980). Studies have shown this last criterion is a strong determinant of the influence of media frames: individuals who actively seek extensive information from the media are more likely to be influenced by media effects (Matthes, 2005; Wanta, 1997; Wanta & Ghanem, 2007; Weaver, 1980).

4.3 Media framing of organisation crisis situations

Crisis management researchers and practitioners widely accept that the public's perception of an organisation crisis, and particularly perspectives of where responsibility lies, is not formed so much by the hard facts of the crisis situation but by how the news media construct the story. Media frames are seen to constitute a powerful mechanism that can shape or modify public perspectives of a crisis and direct public perception (Coombs, 2007a; Knight, 1999; Liu & Pennington-Gray, 2015; Walters, Wilkins & Walters, 1989).

The examination of framing of organisation crises in the news media is a relative new development in the crisis literature but there is now a growing body of work in this area. Given the limited number of studies so far, some findings have been inconclusive but pointed to a future research direction. As evidence emerges, media framing of crises appears promising for crisis management practice by providing more objective insights for managers of an organisation-in-crisis to probe stakeholders' understanding of the situation. This may help managers detect signals of a growing crisis (Paraskevas & Altinay, 2013) and guide them in determining appropriate response strategies to address the situation and accelerate the recovery process (Coombs, 2007).

Examining the framing of crises in the tourism sector related to bed-bug outbreaks, Liu and Pennington-Gray (2015) concluded that their study showed how news coverage of a crisis can have a secondary impact on the situation, exacerbating the financial and reputational impact on the organisation-in-crisis, and so affecting future viability of the business and possibly the entire industry. This underlines an important learning for

managers of an organisation-in-crisis: ineffective or inappropriate crisis communication, for example that which appears to favour only the firm's interests, may aggravate the impact of the crisis on the organisation.

Hook and Pu (2006) analysed the distinct ways in which the Chinese and US media framed a collision between a Chinese interceptor jet and a US intelligence-gathering plane, concluding that the news coverage in each country consistently framed the crisis around themes that reflected their respective governments' perspectives. Comparing coverage of the SARS crisis on the CNN and BBC websites, Tian and Stewart (2005) found similarities in the framing of the news from a global perspective, but also some significant differences, notably that CNN referenced the SARS situation in Taiwan and Canada more often than the BBC. Many organisation crises today cross borders and so attract international news coverage. These two studies suggest a significant direction for scholarly research to further examine the role of social and national cultures and values in media framing of crisis. The findings also alert organisation managers of the need for culturally-sensitive crisis communication in specific contexts.

In a crisis situation, media audiences receive information from numerous sources, including the focal organisation, and so may be exposed to various frames. Another recent development in the crisis research has been to adopt a public relations perspective to compare how organisations-in-crisis have framed their crisis communication messages to how the news media framed the same information about the situation (cf. Kioussis *et al.*, 2007; Meijer & Kleinnijenhuis, 2006; Nijkraake *et al.*, 2015). Nijkraake *et al.* (2015), for example, compared tone and frames in media coverage of a health crisis in the Netherlands with the hospital's crisis communication messages. The findings importantly indicated that, while the news media used some information from the focal organisation's messages, the information was typically reframed, often using more and different frames (Nijkraake *et al.* 2015).

The extant crisis literature revealed an important gap in the lack of empirical studies of crises comparing frames in media output and their outcomes in terms of how audiences interpreted the frames and so understood the crisis situation. Although Scheufele (1999)

identified framing as having two dimensions, the two aspects are interdependent. This highlights the need for further investigation into how media and individual frames interact to make sense of an organisation crisis for media audiences.

4.3.1 News frames in media coverage of crises

Iyengar's (1991) widely-cited research into how the media frame poverty, crime and employment was among the first studies to categorise types of frames employed by the media. Iyengar (1991; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987) identified two broad but distinct news frames in media coverage of social issues. An episodic frame involves storytelling, in which an issue is presented in a specific event or personal case (An & Gower, 2009). A thematic frame places issues and events in a broader context such as organisational or societal (An & Gower, 2009). Since the attribution of responsibility for a crisis is often a vital theme in media coverage about social issues, the use of episodic or thematic frames in media stories can depict an issue and its solution as being either the responsibility of an individual or of society in general, and so influence how audiences may attribute blame (Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). For example, Iyengar (1991) concluded that the television coverage of social issues examined in his study used mostly episodic frames, suggesting that during turbulent times, people want to know more about the local impact than wider policy implications.

However, an over-use of an episodic media frame may also serve to misrepresent an important social issue as a series of human-interest snapshots, rather than connect them to the issue's broader social, political and economic factors (Gitlin, 1980). This can be seen in media coverage of some organisation crises, particularly since the proliferation of 24-hour television news programming, when stories about victims dominate the news coverage, detailing intimate details of victims' suffering. Frames in this type of coverage may overwhelm and obscure wider implications of the crisis.

The style and content of news media reporting of crises typically change throughout the lifecycle of a crisis. Studies have identified three distinct phases through which media reporting appears to pass (Berkowitz, 1992; Graber, 1980; Jemphrey & Berrington, 2000; Muschert & Carr, 2006). As the crisis breaks, coverage centres on the known facts of the situation, often provided by the organisation-in-crisis and eye witnesses (Graber, 1980; Steffans *et al.*, 2012). Such coverage typically uses episodic framing to narrate how normalcy has been disrupted and the human tragedy of those affected. When the crisis situation starts to stabilise, the focus of media coverage shifts to a discussion of the causes and who should be held responsible, often with considerable input from those seen as experts, while statements from involved organisations may be treated with scepticism (Miller & Riechert, 2000; Nijkraake *et al.*, 2015). Stories may use episodic and thematic framing to explain the situation in a broader societal context. During the post-crisis phase, media reporting focuses on response efforts to restore normalcy. Stories often analyse the crisis in depth from a broader perspective, typically using thematic themes (Graber, 1980; Steffans *et al.*, 2012). This pattern of reporting was identified in the SQ006 case study examined in this dissertation.

Furthering Iyengar's (1991) conclusions about episodic and thematic framing, subsequent studies have examined how emotions conveyed through news frames may affect how audiences process the media content (cf. Bodenhausen, Sheppard & Kramer, 1994; Nabi, 2002, 2003). From their study of audiences' perceptions of Mattel following their 2007 toy recall, Choi and Lin (2007) concluded that emotions carried by news frames influenced how audiences evaluated the company; consumers who were angry about what they read were more likely to consider Mattel as having a poor reputation.

Studies following a similar line of research have consistently identified five distinctive, readily-identifiable news frames used to help the public interpret crises: conflict, economic consequences, responsibility, human impact or interest, and morality (An & Gower, 2009; Cho & Gower, 2006; Coombs & Holladay, 1996; Neuman *et al.*, 1992; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Valentini & Romenti, 2011). Presence of these news frames is considered to activate explicit perceptions and responses among the public; emphasis may be placed on different frames depending on the type of event being

reported and the nature of the media platform (Cho & Gower, 2006; de Vreese, 2005; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Nijkraake *et al.*, 2015; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Valkenburg *et al.*, 1999).

An and Gower (2009) used this schema in their systematic review of crisis news frames, aimed at identifying insights and directions for future research. They (An & Gower, 2009) examined media coverage of 25 organisation crises in three major newspapers to investigate how the crisis, its cause and the actor(s) responsible were framed. The findings confirmed the use of all five frames; attribution of responsibility occurred most frequently, followed by economic, conflict, human-interest and morality (An & Gower, 2009). Significantly, the study showed use of the attribution of responsibility frame depended on the type of crisis being reported. If a crisis were seen as preventable or controllable, and responsible parties were deemed to have acted intentionally, news coverage would more likely use the frames of responsibility, conflict and morality (An & Gower, 2009). This finding supports accepted knowledge of crisis practitioners that following a crisis, the media and public want primarily to know who caused the situation and so should be held responsible. An and Gower (2009) concluded that accidental crises were predominantly covered using the economic frame, and crises in the victim cluster (cf. Coombs, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2015) were usually depicted through the human interest frame.

In An and Gower's (2009) study, the second most frequent frame used in the crisis coverage was the economic frame, projecting perspectives concerning the costs, benefits and financial implications of the situation (de Vreese, 2005; Nijkraake *et al.*, 2015; Valkenburg *et al.*, 1999). Besides affecting the business potential of the focal organisation, some crises have financial implications in terms of medical costs, repairs to damaged property or the environment, and compensation claims. Consequently, the economic impact of a crisis is a significant media and public concern, particularly in the later stages of the crisis lifecycle. Conflict has long been recognised as a key criterion of newsworthiness (Bunton *et al.*, 1999; Hough, 1988; Itule & Anderson, 1991; Lorenz & Vivian, 1996; Mencher, 2006). The conflict frame, the third most predominant in An and Gower's (2009) study, emphasises conflict and disagreement between individuals,

groups or organisations. In tense and emotion-laden crisis situations, conflict occurs frequently among involved and affected parties; besides making interesting news content, such conflict can affect the resolution of the crisis.

Human interest is another key criterion of newsworthiness (Bunton *et al.*, 1999; Hough, 1988; Itule & Anderson, 1991; Lorenz & Vivian, 1996; Mencher, 2006). An and Gower (2009) found use of the human interest frame, the fourth most prominent in their study, depended significantly on the type of crisis being reported. This frame emphasises the human and emotional side of a crisis, often to maintain audience interest. Coverage employing this frame may affect audiences' emotional responses to the crisis, possibly influencing where they attribute responsibility for the situation (Cho & Gower, 2006; Nijkraake *et al.*, 2015). In their study, Cho and Gower (2006) highlighted how the human interest frame may contain so-called hysterical journalism – over-dramatised, exaggerated coverage written in a frightened, angry or otherwise emotive style. Such reporting may, more than other news frames, lead media audiences to feel negatively towards parties seen as responsible for the crisis. Coverage of crises categorised as accidental was found to use only limited human interest frames (An & Gower, 2009); while it was posited that the human interest frame could emerge as dominant in media coverage of preventable crises involving a large number of casualties (An & Gower, 2009).

The frame identified least often in An and Gower's (2009) study was that of morality. This finding was explained as suggesting the media may be hesitant to try to influence people's moral judgement of the organisation-in-crisis, perhaps because it could incite action against the firm (An & Gower, 2009). The morality frame looks at a crisis from moral and ethical perspectives in order to judge the behaviour of those deemed responsible (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Typically, journalists employ the morality frame indirectly through quotations or inference, which Neuman *et al.* (1992) suggested could be to ostensibly maintain the appearance of journalistic objectivity.

An important conclusion that An and Gower (2009) drew from their study was that the type of crisis can determine which frames may be employed in media coverage:

economic frames may be more common in business-related crises, and the responsibility frame in crises in which people were harmed. A study by Valentini and Romenti (2011) of news coverage of a crisis surrounding Alitalia before its privatisation found the economic frame was used most often, followed by conflict, responsibility, human interest and morality. In a study of media reporting about an explosion at a fireworks factory in which 23 people were killed, Kuttschreuter *et al.* (2011) found that the responsibility frame was the most frequently used, followed by conflict, human interest and economic. Interestingly, the morality frame was not found in the texts examined.

One limitation of An and Gower's (2009) study is that it did not account for how the changing dynamics of a crisis situation could affect media framing. Crises have a dynamic character and rapidly-changing events can quickly change how the story is framed by the news media. Additionally, in order to keep a news story alive and fresh, media coverage may reframe an event, person or theme by emphasising different attributes, so exposing media audiences to multiple news frames and possibly competing explanations about the situation (Coombs, 2007a; McCombs, 2004; Nijkraake *et al.*, 2015).

The process of media framing of a crisis can, then, extend across lifecycle of a crisis, with varying frames and re-frames dominating as events unfold (Chyi & McCombs, 2004; Muschert & Carr, 2006). As Boin & 't Hart (2003: 545) elaborated:

A crisis may smolder, flare up, wind down, flare up again, depending as much on the pattern of physical events as on the framing and interpretation of these events by the mass media, politics, and the general public. The scope of the crisis may expand and contract depending on which themes and issues command attention at different points in time, as the crisis impinges upon and is produced by the broader developmental context of the society in which it occurs.

The work of Steffans *et al.* (2012) thus stands out for highlighting how media frames may change as a crisis progresses. This study of media frames of natural disasters extended An and Gower's (2009) schema by identifying seven distinct disaster frames. Besides the economic, responsibility and conflict frames which parallel those in An and

Gower's (2009) study, Steffans *et al.* (2012) also identified prediction (discussion of potential impact or future events), devastation (scope and impact of damage), helplessness (people at the mercy of uncontrollable events) and solidarity (cooperation, working together and not being helpless). They (Steffans *et al.*, 2012) concluded from their sampled media coverage that pre-crisis reporting tended to use the prediction frame; coverage in the early acute crisis phase used the devastation, helplessness and solidarity frames; and coverage in the chronic and post-crisis phases used the economic, blame and conflict frames. Since natural disasters are typically recognised to be a type of crisis, certain aspects of the additional disaster frames, i.e. the frames of devastation/extent of hurt, helplessness and solidarity, may be relevant in conceptualising crisis stakeholder salience for the present study.

Several studies have examined how organisations framed their own social media reports of crises in which they were involved. Liu (2009) identified seven frames in organisations' reporting of disasters: anniversary/memorial, collaboration, human interest, leadership (in the response by the focal organisation) seasonal (holiday or weather seasons), severity (actual or potential) and special events (activities that help the public respond to the situation). Investigating health crises, Shih, Wijaya and Brossard (2008) identified five typical frames: conflict, action (the current or past crisis response by the focal organisation), new evidence, reassurance (emphasising readiness and/or past successes of the organisation to allay public concerns) and uncertainty. In conceptualising crisis stakeholders' salience, the additional frames of collaboration, severity (of hurt) and action/leadership may be relevant.

If it is accepted that the news media frame organisation crisis through specific frames, it can be surmised that media portrayal of crisis stakeholders may also be filtered through these themes. Consequently, the present study draws from the concept of crisis news frames to formulate a conceptual model of crisis stakeholder salience.

4.4 Conclusions drawn from the literature review

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 have sought to expound the concept of crisis stakeholder salience through a review of the scholarly literature, following three interrelated analytical themes identified in Chapter 1: the conceptual challenge to understanding organisation crisis as a multi-faceted social construct; stakeholders and organisations-in-crisis; and news media framing of crises. This section reprises the key points taken from the literature review in these three chapters, to link them to the model of crisis stakeholder salience introduced in the following chapter as the conceptual framework of this thesis.

In exploring the key debates on explaining and defining crisis in Chapter 2, one consistent theme that emerges is the multidimensional aspect of crisis. Every party involved in, affected by or observing a crisis would have their own understanding of the situation. This is important to this dissertation because it underlines why effective crisis management must be stakeholder oriented. While this may seem self-evident, the crisis literature indicates that many organisations-in-crisis either fail to analyse crisis stakeholders effectively, or allow an organisation-centred instinct for survival to override objective consideration for stakeholders.

Typical stakeholder analyses focus on financial, technological, competitive, legal and political considerations; this may be partly explained by the traditional technical/operational approach to crisis research. When assessing stakeholders and their expectations during a crisis, managers of the focal organisation also need to account for emotional, ecological, social, ethical and moral considerations that may come to the fore. To examine a more relational perspective of the role of crisis stakeholders, the literature review turned to research on crisis communication, considered an integral part of crisis management. In particular, situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) suggested insights into how crisis stakeholder salience is constructed.

Based on attribution theory, SCCT identifies the main determinants of how an organisation-in-crisis is perceived by stakeholders and observers as stability/crisis

history, locus/personal control over the situation, and prior reputation. Understanding organisation-stakeholder relationships from an issue network perspective, the criteria identified in SCCT may be transferable to investigate how crisis stakeholders other than the focal organisation are perceived within the crisis arena.

Chapter 3 considered stakeholder theory debates around measuring stakeholders' salience so as to prioritise their claims, and reflected on the salience attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency, as presented in the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) stakeholder salience framework. It is noted, significantly, that the Mitchell *et al.* (1997: 854) definition of salience as "... the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims" represents an organisation-centred perspective. This may constitute an intrinsic limitation in applying the MAW model to crisis stakeholders. Faced with competing demands from stakeholders, managers' perspectives may be biased towards defensive, short-term steps to protect the organisation, at the risk of further alienating stakeholders and worsening the impact of the crisis on the firm.

The MAW model may also be limited in accounting for some of the emotional, social and ethical factors unique to crisis situations that affect how crisis stakeholders are perceived. However, the salience attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency and additional salience dimensions identified in critiques of the MAW model provide a well-founded basis for a conceptual model of crisis stakeholder salience.

The present chapter has looked at media news framing of organisation crises. While the theories of media agenda setting and framing are used extensively in media research, the extent of their effects continues to be debated. Nonetheless, as the public is usually dependent on the news media for information about organisation crises, this thesis accepts the premise that mediatisation of crisis may influence how the phenomenon is socially and culturally constructed and understood. Significantly, the news media have been shown to adopt an identifiable set of frames in reporting crises: responsibility, human interest, economic, morality and conflict. Several other frames have been suggested as potentially significant in news coverage of specific types of crisis. These

frames appear relevant to how the salience of crisis stakeholders may be understood by media audiences.

While the research problem identified for this thesis spans several broad disciplines of study, the literature revealed very few studies into the specific question of how crisis stakeholders may be identified and prioritised based on their salience. However, the broader literature around the three conceptual themes identified in Chapter 1 of this dissertation provides various dimensions to conceptualise crisis stakeholder salience.

Having reviewed the insights drawn from the literature, Chapter 5 introduces a conceptual framework of crisis stakeholder salience to further investigate media framing of crisis stakeholder salience in the context of one specific organisation crisis, the October 2000 crash of Singapore Airlines' flight SQ006. The methodological implications for investigating the application of this framework of crisis stakeholder salience are explained. Then the methods adopted for the case study of the SQ006 accident are described.

Chapter 5: Conceptual framework and methodological approach

A review of the literature has found minimal prior research into understanding how the salience of crisis stakeholders is perceived by parties other than managers of the focal organisation. This research project introduces a novel conceptual framework of crisis stakeholder salience which is used to investigate the framing in selected media coverage of the salience of stakeholders involved in the October 2000 crash of Singapore Airlines' flight SQ006. It is the contention of this thesis that analysis of the media framing of the salience of crisis stakeholders and their claims may help to guide managers' crisis response decision, particular in assessing which stakeholder have priority claims.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation explains how the research problem for this thesis, the conceptualisation of crisis stakeholder salience, was identified. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 present a focused literature review and critical analysis of the relevant extant academic knowledge. The review located the research problem within theoretical perspectives from several disciplines around three identified themes: the conceptual challenge to understanding organisation crisis as a multi-faceted social construct; stakeholders and organisations-in-crisis; and the significance of news media portrayals of organisation crisis.

The review of the crisis literature draws attention to important considerations in examining crisis stakeholder salience. It highlights how crisis management practice and research have traditionally adopted the perspective of the organisation-in-crisis, focusing on what actions its managers should take to minimise damage to the firm's business and

reputation. Yet, it is also emphasised in the literature that crisis is a social construct; every involved and affected party would understand the situation subjectively, and so have different perceptions from each other and from the focal organisation about who has been most harmed and how the organisation-in-crisis should respond. This underscores the inherent complexity of assessing stakeholder salience: determining whose perspectives are closest to an objective understanding of the situation.

The stakeholder theory literature reveals that models of stakeholder salience are typically constructed from the subjective perspectives of organisation managers. The notion of stakeholder networks formed around an issue arena would appear to offer a more complete understanding of the interrelationships, interdependencies and interactions among parties involved in or affected by a crisis. The literature related to the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) stakeholder salience framework is reviewed, drawing attention to the Mitchell *et al.* (1997: 854) definition of salience as “... the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims”, suggesting a clear organisation-centred perspective. Implications of the MAW model’s three salience attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency for the conceptualisation of crisis stakeholder salience are also considered through a review of relevant literature.

The literature review also examines prior research pertaining to the three theoretical approaches that informed the conceptualisation of crisis stakeholder salience: the stakeholder salience model of Mitchell, Agle & Wood (1997) (MAW), Coombs’ (2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010; Coombs & Holladay, 2002, 2012) situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), and a model of media frames of crises proposed by An and Gower (2009). The limitations of these three concepts are also considered.

Finally, the literature of media framing is reviewed. Since the public are rarely directly involved in a crisis, they rely on media coverage to gather information that helps them understand the situation. This thesis accepts the notion that news media content is framed through certain perspectives, and that the frames applied to media coverage of a crisis depict the situation and involved parties in specific ways. Media frames of crisis

stakeholder salience may contribute to audiences' understanding of the situation and the involved parties.

Informed by this consideration of the extant literature, the following research questions are identified:

RQ1: What does the manifest content of the media coverage reveal about the three media sources' depiction of the newsworthiness of each crisis stakeholder?

(a) What is the extent, frequency, prominence and valence of mentions of each stakeholder?

(b) Is the newsworthiness of each stakeholder depicted differently in the different media platforms?

RQ2: How does the coverage of the crisis in the three media sources frame each stakeholder as salient?

a) To what extent is each stakeholder framed as possessing the identified crisis stakeholder salience characteristics?

(b) What framing devices are employed by the media sources to depict stakeholder salience?

(c) How does the salience framing of each stakeholder differ across the three media platforms?

To answer these questions, this study adopts a situation-centred approach to conceptualise crisis stakeholder salience; the organisation-in-crisis is seen as part of a stakeholder network within an issue arena, the issue being the crisis. The salience of crisis stakeholders is assessed not from the perspectives of managers of the organisation-in-crisis, but from news frames in the media coverage. The use of framing analysis in this study provides a broad understanding of media discourse concerning the salience of crisis stakeholders and their demands. In accepting the concept of media framing, this study makes no claims about the extent to which news frames may influence media audiences.

This chapter elaborates on how the literature informed considerations regarding the theoretical and methodological approaches adopted for this research. Firstly, the chapter explains the novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience that was developed from specific concepts and theories identified in the literature: namely, the MAW model of stakeholder salience, situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), and media frames of organisation crises. The chapter continues by outlining the data collection and analysis methods, explaining why a case study design and mixed methods content analysis approach were deemed appropriate to examine the sampled media coverage through the lens of the crisis stakeholder salience framework. Subsequently, the data gathering and analysis procedures are described.

As this research progressed, it could have followed various directions as new lines of enquiry emerged. At certain points, decisions had to be taken to delimit the scope of the study to conform to available resources. It is acknowledged that some of these decisions may have limited the findings from the study. Some of these limitations are referred to in this chapter and discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

5.1 Conceptualising crisis stakeholder salience

In developing the research focus of the present study, it became clear that an examination of the media framing of crisis stakeholders would incorporate two distinct understandings of salience. As the literature review showed, stakeholder theorists employ a specific understanding of salience. Mitchell *et al.* (1997), for example, defined salience as the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims, while Tashman and Raelin (2013) suggested it be defined as the degree to which managers *should* identify and manage stakeholders' claims. In media studies, salience is often understood as referring to newsworthiness, broadly explained as what journalists think media audiences want or need to know, based on such criteria as timeliness, impact and consequence, prominence, proximity, novelty/rarity, conflict, human interest,

conscience, pathos, and drama or shock value (Bunton *et al.*, 1999; Hough, 1988; Itule & Anderson, 1991; Lorenz & Vivian, 1996; Mencher, 2006).

In media reports about an organisation crisis, salience equating to media newsworthiness and salience of stakeholders and their claims would refer to different concepts, even if applied to a specific stakeholder. For example, during some types of crisis, a prominent focus of media coverage may be the plight of those most harmed by the situation, that is, those identified as victims; their personal stories of the crisis would be considered newsworthy. Those parties may also be perceived by other constituents to be the most salient stakeholders of the organisation-in-crisis; that is, their claims would be seen as a priority for response by the organisation. Certainly, crisis management best practice holds that victims are the most important stakeholders in a crisis.

In other crises, in contrast, a key angle of media interest may be the crisis “villain(s)”, that is, the individuals(s) who created the situation, perhaps by committing a crime or perpetrating an attack. Media coverage may sensationalise the villains’ past lives, dissecting and reporting in miniscule detail what they did leading up to the crisis; indeed, international news media platforms have been criticised by audiences for this type of exaggerated and sensationalised reporting of criminals and terrorists (Cousins & Brunt, 2002; Crelinsten, 1994). While villains of a crisis may be perceived by journalists as newsworthy, leading to extensive media coverage of them, they would typically not be considered salient crisis stakeholders from a stakeholder theory perspective.

The present study employs the term “salience” according to the stakeholder theory definition; that is, stakeholder salience refers to the degree to which stakeholders’ claims are perceived as a priority for response. This is distinguished from the understanding of salience as the weighting given to certain topics, events or people in media coverage, which is referred to in this study as “newsworthiness”.

An assumption may be made, based on an understanding of how the news media work, that crisis stakeholders reported on most frequently, extensively and prominently in the sampled media texts are seen as newsworthy by journalists; however, they may or may

not be framed as salient stakeholders. Further, parties framed by the news media as salient crisis stakeholders are likely to be those featured most frequently, extensively and prominently in media coverage, because their needs in the situation make them newsworthy. However, this may not always be the case, since news reporting can use editorial devices other than frequency, extent and prominence to carry media frames; Hertog and McLeod (2001) contended that powerful media frames may not necessarily have to be repeated many times to be impactful in framing an issue or object as salient.

Thus, the present study is designed to examine the media's apparent depiction of the newsworthiness of each stakeholder, as reflected in the frequency, extent and prominence of coverage about them. The valence of that coverage, whether positive, neutral or negative, is also important as it may broadly suggest why a particular stakeholder is depicted as newsworthy, for example, distinguishing newsworthy villains from newsworthy crisis stakeholders. The need to differentiate newsworthy parties from salient stakeholders is a key factor in determining the methodological approach to this research, which is detailed later in this chapter.

5.1.1 Framework of crisis stakeholder salience

The background literature reviewed previously in this dissertation provides the underpinnings for the novel conceptual framework introduced in this research. The crisis stakeholder salience variables are drawn from theoretical approaches within different disciplines: situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) (Coombs, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010), which is based on attribution theory and has a heritage in communication studies; stakeholder salience framework (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997) from stakeholder theory research; and media framing of crises (An & Gower, 2009), which incorporates a media studies approach applied to crisis management research. These three theoretical approaches, each of which contributes a different perspective on the research problem, are combined and synthesised (Figure 5.1) to develop an analytical tool aimed at explicating dimensions of stakeholder salience during times of crisis.

Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) (Coombs, 2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010) identifies the attributes of crisis history, degree of responsibility for the crisis, and prior reputation as determinants of how an organisation-in-crisis is perceived. When a crisis is analysed from a situation-centred stakeholder network perspective, the organisation-in-crisis becomes one of several directly-affected stakeholders. Since the attributes identified in SCCT are seen as determinants of how the public perceives an organisation-in-crisis, they may be reconceptualised as significant characteristics of the salience of other crisis stakeholders (Table 5.1).

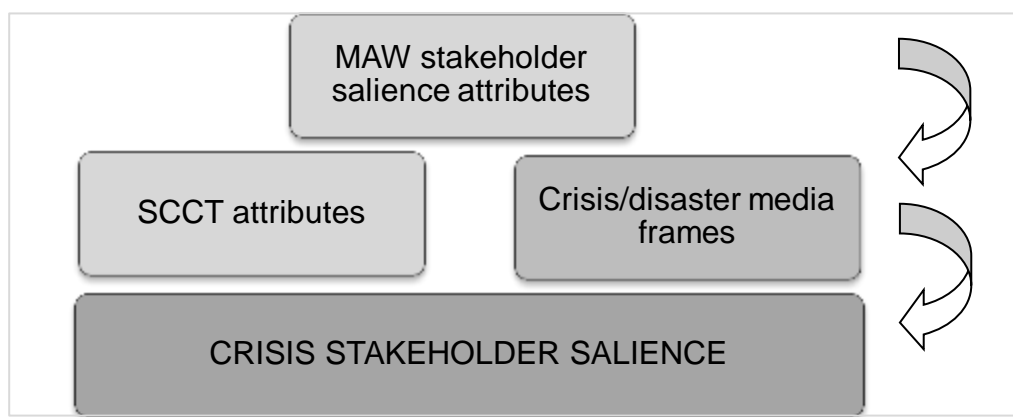


Figure 5.1 Foundation of the crisis stakeholder salience model

Although severity of hurt has not been incorporated as an SCCT attribute, Coombs (1995, 2007b; Coombs & Holladay, 1996, 2002) proposed this could be a fourth dimension of crisis situations that may intensify effects of attributions of responsibility – the more severe the hurt or damage, the greater the perceived crisis responsibility. Subsequent studies have produced inconsistent results. Park and Len-Rios (2012), for example, suggested that severity of injury *per se* did not influence attribution of responsibility as much as the extent that stakeholder expectations were violated. This suggests that extent of injury is assessed not as absolute but as relative, as determined by the perception of those making the assessment.

For the present study, a decision was made to include as a crisis stakeholder salience dimension the criterion of severe hurt, with sub-categories of physical, financial, mental/emotional and reputational hurt as factors which may account for the aspect of violation of expectations identified by Park and Len-Rios (2012). Specifying the hurt as severe rules out minor hurt as a salience criterion; however, it is acknowledged this increases subjectivity in assessment.

Table 5.1 Stakeholder salience dimensions adapted from SCCT

Situational crisis communication theory (Coombs, 2010)	Corresponding stakeholder attributes
Crisis history	Crisis history
Crisis type	Responsibility/intentionality
- Victim	
- Unintentional or unavoidable	
- Intentional or avoidable	
Prior reputation	Prior reputation; prior relationships with stakeholders
Severity of crisis impact	Severe hurt/harm
	- Economic
	- Physical
	- Mental/emotional
	- Reputational

The Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) stakeholder salience framework incorporates the attributes of power (coercive, utilitarian and normative), legitimacy (pragmatic, moral and cognitive) and urgency (time sensitivity and criticality) to assess the salience of an organisation's stakeholders. Mitchell *et al.* (1997) defined power as located within the stakeholder entity, and legitimacy and urgency within the stakeholder's claims. This thesis broadly accepts the definitions and descriptions of power, legitimacy and urgency as proposed by Mitchell *et al.* (1997), with some modifications suggested by evidence from subsequent studies of the model.

Political power is identified as potentially significant in understanding stakeholder relationships during times of crisis, such that it should be recognised as distinct from the

broader category of coercive power. Additionally, the concept of expert power, as signalled by a high level of specific, context-relevant skill or knowledge (French & Raven, 1960) is included as an aspect of political power.

To acknowledge the growing influence of support provided by relationships within stakeholder networks (Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Neville *et al.*, 2011; Perrault, 2015), social power is also identified as important in conceptualising crisis stakeholder salience. Although Etzioni's (1964) definition of power adopted by Mitchell *et al.* (1997) referenced network support in defining power as, essentially, the ability to gain access to the means to impose will, this study recognises social power as a distinct sub-category of power. Additionally, pervasive power (Driscoll & Starik, 2004) is included in the as a crisis stakeholder salience characteristic to recognise the natural environment's potentially massive impact on humankind through natural disasters, climate warming, or the "withholding" of essential resources through depletion. Six types of power are then recognised as germane in conceptualising crisis stakeholder salience (Table 5.2).

Evidence from the literature suggests that legitimacy as a dimension of crisis stakeholder salience may exist within the stakeholder entity (Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Santana, 2012), stakeholder's claim (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997) or stakeholder's behaviour (Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Santana, 2012). Legitimacy of the stakeholder entity is based on longterm, pre-crisis reputation and social legitimacy, whereas legitimacy of the claim and stakeholder's behaviour are context-specific. In operationalising legitimacy for the present study, then, a total of six sub-categories of legitimacy in the three locations are recognised as possible determinants of the salience of crisis stakeholders (Table 5.2).

Mitchell *et al.* (1997) defined urgency as located in the stakeholder's claim and incorporating both time sensitivity and criticality. Based on evidence from previous studies, this study maintains the dimension of time sensitivity of the claim as one type of urgency, and adopts likelihood or potential to act (Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Eesley & Lenox, 2006; Gifford, 2010) as a second facet, so moving the location to the stakeholder entity (Table 5.2). An additional attribute of proximity of the claim is considered,

recognising both geographic and organised proximity according to the definition and categorisation of Torre and Rallet (2005).

In identifying the sub-categories of the crisis stakeholder salience dimensions, the present study accepts the contention of Mitchell *et al.* (1997) that the different types of power and legitimacy may exist separately or in combinations, and it is the overall assessment of power or legitimacy that contributes to stakeholder salience. The original MAW model does not differentiate the contributions that different types of power and legitimacy make to overall salience. In the present study, the separate contributions of sub-categories of power, legitimacy, urgency, proximity and severe hurt, as depicted by the media frames, are identified to elucidate the reasons why stakeholders are perceived as having salience.

Table 5.2 Stakeholder salience dimensions drawn from the MAW model and critiques

Salience dimension	Types identified in MAW model (Mitchell <i>et al.</i> , 1997)	Types identified in critiques of MAW model
Power (of stakeholder)	Coercive Utilitarian Normative	Political Social/network centrality Pervasive
Legitimacy	Pragmatic (of claim) Moral (of claim) Cognitive (of claim)	Social (of stakeholder entity) Moral (of stakeholder entity) Ethical (of stakeholder behaviour)
Urgency	Criticality+time sensitivity (claim)	Time sensitivity (of claim) Potential for action (of stakeholder)
Proximity		Geographic (of claim) Organised (of claim)

An and Gower (2009) identified five key news frames employed in media coverage of organisation crises: attribution of responsibility, conflict, economic impact, human interest/emotional, and morality. To operationalise these frames as salience attributes for the present study, they are reinterpreted as stakeholder characteristics (Table 5.3). Since the crisis frames refer to aspects of situations rather than to people or organisations, it is acknowledged that multiple interpretations are possible. To arrive at the corresponding stakeholder attributes that appear to best parallel the original crisis frame, further reference was made to An and Gower's (2009) study and to previous research by Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) and Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), on which the An and Gower (2009) study built. Based on evidence in the literature, the additional salience dimensions of devastation/severity of harm, helplessness, solidarity and action/leadership are adopted from prior studies of crisis frames (Liu, 2009; Shih *et al.*, 2008; Steffans *et al.*, 2012).

Table 5.3 Stakeholder characteristics derived from media frames

Media frames of crises and disasters	Corresponding stakeholder characteristics
Attribution of responsibility	Responsibility for crisis
Conflict	Conflict in relationships with other stakeholders
Economic impact	Financial impact
Human interest/emotional	Personal harm/suffering
Morality	Moral, ethical behaviour
Devastation/severity	Severity/extent of hurt/suffering
Solidarity	Cooperating with other parties
Action/leadership	Active/leading role to solve problem
Helplessness	Helpless

The salience dimensions derived from the three research lines in the literature were then compared and contrasted, with further reference to the literature, to identify similarities or overlaps that could present problems in operationalising them as crisis stakeholder salience variables (Table 5.4). For example, the underlying notion of the crisis media frame of responsibility was understood to parallel the SCCT characteristic of responsibility, while the concept implied by stakeholder theory's legitimacy of the stakeholder appears similar to the SCCT dimension of prior reputation. Furthermore, all

three research lines presented a concept relating to stakeholder harm or hurt: the crisis media frame of devastation or severity, pervasive power as derived from stakeholder theory, and the SCCT dimension of severe hurt.

Table 5.4 Comparison of derived crisis stakeholder salience dimensions

MAW salience model	SCCT	Crisis media frames
Power (stakeholder): coercive		
Power (stakeholder): utilitarian		
Power (stakeholder): normative		
Power (stakeholder): political		
Power (stakeholder): social		
Power (stakeholder): pervasive		
Legitimacy (claim): pragmatic		
Legitimacy (claim): moral		Morality
Legitimacy (claim): cognitive		
Legitimacy (stakeholder): social	Crisis history Prior reputation/relationships	
Legitimacy (stakeholder): moral	Crisis history	Morality
Legitimacy (stakeholder behaviour): ethical	Responsibility for crisis	Responsibility for crisis Morality Cooperation Leadership Conflict (relationships)
Urgency (claim): time sensitivity		
Urgency (stakeholder): potential to act		
Proximity (claim): geographic		
Proximity (claim): organised		
	Severe hurt (stakeholder): economic	Personal harm/suffering Economic impact Helplessness
	Severe hurt (stakeholder): physical	Personal harm/suffering Devastation Helplessness
	Severe hurt (stakeholder): mental/emotional	Personal harm/suffering Helplessness
	Severe hurt (stakeholder): reputational	Personal harm/suffering

The novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience thus includes five salience characteristics (power, legitimacy, urgency, proximity and severe hurt), which together provide a total of 20 variables. Based on evidence from the literature, these dimensions are expected to provide a more complete understanding of the social, emotional, psychological, ethical and moral implications of crisis stakeholder salience than traditional stakeholder analysis approaches offer. The salience characteristics are operationalised as in Table 5.5.

Mitchell *et al.* (1997) contended that the three salience attributes in the MAW salience framework (power, legitimacy and urgency) can be present to a greater or lesser degree, so as to reflect the transitory nature of stakeholder salience in organisation-stakeholder relationships. However, their salience framework does not acknowledge degree of attribute possession. Likewise, this novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience introduced in the present study does not explicitly measure the degree to which stakeholders may possess the salience characteristics, although this may be estimated as high, medium and low based on the count of occurrences of salience frames.

The three salience attributes defined by Mitchell *et al.* (1997), power, legitimacy and urgency, function across a single dimension: possession of any of the attributes indicates increased salience. Some of the salience dimensions identified for the present study appear binary insofar as, when used to analyse a crisis stakeholder's salience, they may have positive or negative implications. For example, the ethical behaviour of a crisis stakeholder may increase that stakeholder's salience. Unethical behaviour, however, may have a more significant impact than simply not increasing salience; it may result in decreasing the stakeholder's salience. The same may hold true for perceived social legitimacy of a stakeholder before a crisis, explaining why crisis management practice advocates organisations should strengthen stakeholder relationships pre-crisis, to create a bank of goodwill credit for when a crisis does occur. This study's application of the novel crisis stakeholder salience framework to the SQ006 case study provides insights into these possible positive/negative interpretations of the salience dimensions.

Table 5.5 Operationalising the crisis stakeholder salience characteristics

Salience characteristic	Sub-category types	Operational definition	Coding abb.
Power : of stakeholder	Coercive	Able to use physical resources (force, threat, restraint, governance) to punish	P-S-Co
	Utilitarian	Able to use material/financial means to reward or punish	P-S-Ut
	Normative	Able to use symbolic resources to reward or punish	P-S-No
	Political	Possession of position/formal duties/knowledge that give holder authority in specific circumstances	P-S-Po
	Social	Access to positive, complimentary or cooperative relationships	P-S-So
	Pervasive	Able to create impact that is dispersed over space and time	P-S-Pe
Legitimacy : of claim	Pragmatic	Seen as conforming to others' self-interested demands and needs	L-C-Pr
	Moral	Seen as in the interests of society; assessed as the right thing to do	L-C-Mo
	Cognitive	Seen as being in the interests of taken-for-granted cultural models	L-C-Co
	Social	Activities, products/services seen as conforming to accepted standards of being good for society (prior to crisis)	L-S-So
		Organisation/managers seen as credible, honest, trustworthy (prior to crisis)	L-S-Mo
	Ethical	Seen as not having deliberately contributed to crisis; crisis response is appropriate and acceptable	L-B-Et
Urgency : of claim	Time sensitive	Refers to temporal aspect of requiring immediate attention	U-C-Ti
	Potential to act	Refers to behavioural evidence of motivation to take action to achieve needs	U-S-Ac
Proximity : of claim	Geographic	Being or being perceived to be located geographically close	Pr-C-Ge
	Organised	Seen as being close through sharing system of rules, knowledge, beliefs or behaviour	Pr-C-Or
Severe hurt : of stakeholder	Economic	Experienced severe loss of money, property, premises	H-S-Ec
	Physical	Experienced severe physical injury; loss of life	H-S-Ph
	Mental/emotional	Experienced severe emotional or mental trauma	H-S-Me
	Reputational	Experienced severe impact on reputation or image	H-S-Re

This section has outlined how a novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience has been shaped from the extant literature around three identified themes: crisis as a multi-faceted social construct, stakeholders and an organisation-in-crisis, and news media framing of crisis. In the following section, the methodological implications for investigating the application of this crisis stakeholder salience framework to a specific crisis situation are considered. The analysis methods adopted for investigating how the salience of crisis stakeholders involved in the October 2000 Singapore Airlines' flight SQ006 accident was framed in the sampled media coverage are described and the rationale behind methodological decisions is explained.

5.2 Case study based on the SQ006 accident

The case study presented in this dissertation is exploratory in nature, aimed at examining how the news media framed the salience of stakeholders involved in a specific organisation crisis. The literature review reveals a dearth of research into how the salience of crisis stakeholders may be perceived by parties other than the managers of the focal organisation. A framework of crisis stakeholder salience has been proposed, derived from theoretical propositions in the extant literature of several academic disciplines. Chapter 6 of this dissertation details the application of this framework to examine how three selected English-language media sources (Singapore's *The Straits Times* and Taiwan's Central News Agency and *The China Post*) framed the salience of stakeholders in their coverage of the SQ006 accident.

A case study design is recommended when the research problem aims at uncovering a new theoretical approach and extending relationships among variables, since it allows the complex dynamics of particular phenomena to be examined within a specific setting (Bassey, 2000; Berg, 2004; Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Merriam, 1988; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2003). The objectives of the present study also meet Yin's (2003) key factors that indicate case study as the preferred design: the main research questions ask "how" or "why"; the research

investigates contemporary events; and the researcher has no control over the real behavioural events within their real-life contexts.

In selecting a single case study design for this research, it is acknowledged that the findings can neither be statistically generalised to a larger population not used to produce theoretical claims (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1985; Yin, 2003). However, by focusing on the unique, unusual, important or misunderstood aspects of a single case, a study can develop into the pilot phase of future research towards theory building and testing (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lammers & Hickson, 1979; Punch, 1998; Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1985; Yin, 2003). By providing a detailed description of the methods and a comprehensive set of data describing the multifaceted dimensions of media framing of crisis stakeholders' salience, this research project may offer directions for subsequent studies to progress a testable theory of crisis stakeholder salience that would also have significant applications in crisis management practice.

The crisis case selected for the present research is the October 2000 crash on take-off in Taipei of Singapore Airlines (SIA) SQ006. In identifying a crisis incorporating an accident, it was felt that this type of crisis may provide broader insights into media depictions of stakeholder salience, since accidents are recognised to generate a greater variance in perceptions about the situation and the involved constituents, often around a narrative about cause and blame. Accidents are described in the literature as a specific type of crisis (cf. Marcus & Goodman, 1991; Mitroff, 1996). Seeger *et al.* (1998) identified transportation disasters as a specific crisis type. Other crisis typologies cite accidents as examples of human-induced disasters (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993; Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1993); abrupt, sudden or exploding crises (Hwang & Lichtenthal, 2000; Linke, 1989; Rosenthal *et al.*, 1989); and technological breakdowns (Coombs, 1999; Mitroff *et al.*, 1988; Pauchant & Douville, 1993; Shrivastava, 1987b).

Crises involving accidents are considered quite a common type of crisis (Irvine & Millar, 1996). While crises may develop and escalate in different ways, they typically follow a similar lifecycle progression, involve similar, identifiable groups of affected

stakeholders, and require similar sets of response actions to manage similar sets of outcomes. So, although no assumptions are made that the findings from the current study may be generalisable to other situations, a case study of an accident-type crisis may be relatable to other accidents, to inform future studies.

The selected case also had to conform to definitions of crisis. It needed to affect a specific identifiable group of stakeholders, threaten the business of the focal organisation, and cause concern among other stakeholders and observers, who would look to the news media for information. It was also determined that the crisis needed to have readily-identifiable lifecycle phases so a clear start and end point could be identified, to keep the project within reasonable limits (Yin, 1994).

The date of the crisis was also considered. In order that digital copies of all archived media coverage would be available, the crisis had to have occurred since 1995; many media database records before that time are incomplete. A decision was taken to choose a crisis which could be considered as having ended, to be able to present the findings in the context of a holistic understanding of the entire situation. In hindsight, selecting a crisis that took place in 2000 restricted the possibility of assessing the impact of media framing on audiences, whose recall may not have been reliable after many years. It was also decided that the crisis should primarily involve an Asian organisation and affect, predominantly, Asian communities. Since qualitative content analysis relies on the researcher's understanding of the meanings of narratives, factoring in attitudes, values and motivations, it was considered important that the researcher was familiar with the cultures in and for which the analysed texts were created.

It was anticipated that the above criteria would ensure the selected crisis was comprehensively covered in the news media, for the purposes of analysis. However, a preliminary check was run through the Lexis/Nexis and Factiva databases to validate the extent and availability of media coverage of shortlisted crises. The crash of SQ006 was found to meet all identified criteria.

5.3 Mixed methods approach

Although the case study research design is traditionally considered rooted in the qualitative research discipline, it is now recognised as being able to accommodate different methodological approaches, to allow more effective insight into phenomena under investigation (Daymon & Holloway, 2002; Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2003). The analysis tool for the present study was developed with an open mind so as to determine the approach that would more completely answer the research questions.

Arguments in favour of quantitative or qualitative approaches were considered. Quantitative methodology is often said to permit value-free analysis, so enabling a more scientific and objective mode of enquiry to generate knowledge that can be extrapolated to a wider population. Studies of media agenda setting and framing have traditionally investigated the newsworthiness of topics, events and people in texts through quantitative analyses of the frequency, extent, prominence and valence of mentions. Since the present study investigates the newsworthiness of stakeholders as the first phase of examining media frames of stakeholder salience, a quantitative analysis of the sampled media stories was indicated.

However, quantitative analysis of media texts has been described as not sufficiently sensitive to identify differences in content meaning and interpretation (Stroh, 2000). Organisation crisis and stakeholder salience are concepts with multiple realities as they are constructed self-interestedly. Thus, a deeper examination of the content of sampled media texts was indicated to understand media frames of the salience of crisis stakeholders. Qualitative analysis is indicated for research that aims to explore and understand complex aspects of little-known phenomena, by interpreting how context, setting and the participants' frames of reference interact (Daymon & Holloway, 2002; Jensen, 2002; Lindlof, 1995; Marshall, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For the present study, it was determined that a qualitative analysis approach was called for to probe the latent content of the sampled media texts to reveal and interpret how and why crisis stakeholders are depicted as salient.

As the present study's research questions and conceptual framework of crisis stakeholder salience evolved, the media's apparent assessment of stakeholders' newsworthiness (based on the frequency, extent, prominence and valence of coverage about them) was found to have a pertinent relationship with how the salience of those parties was framed. Simply put, it would be unlikely that un-newsworthy parties would be framed as salient crisis stakeholders; salient stakeholders are newsworthy because of the salience of their claims. This indicated that neither quantitative nor qualitative analysis alone would fully answer the research questions. Thus, a mixed methods approach was considered an appropriate approach to provide comprehensive findings about how the SQ006 crisis stakeholders were framed as salient in the sampled news media coverage.

The mixed methods approach is often described as rooted in a pragmatic understanding of knowledge as being both constructed and based on the reality of the experienced world (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). Creswell and Plano Clark's (2007) somewhat simplistic explanation was that since people generally combine inductive and deductive thinking and use numbers and words to solve problems, mixed methods research is a more practical and useful mode of understanding the world. Although this statement has been criticised by other mixed methods scholars (cf. Bergman, 2008, 2010, 2011), it illustrates how the mixed methods approach advocates using whatever methodological tools are required to best answer the research questions under study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Marshall, 1985; Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009).

The notion of mixing research methods has been contested by quantitative and qualitative researchers, provoking significant academic debate about the ideological discord in combining incompatible philosophical approaches (Ahrens & Chapman, 2006). Mixed methods proponents have countered that the social issues or questions to be investigated are more important than ideological arguments (Caracelli & Greene, 1997). The literature also reveals contentious scholarly debate about the distinction between mixed methods and mixed methodology, and how these should be defined. Going beyond a simple combination of different analysis methods, mixed methodology has been identified as a separate research orientation with accompanying philosophical

assumptions and methods of inquiry guided by those assumptions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Defining mixed methodology thus positions it, according to scholars, as the third methodological movement and research community on a QUAL-MM-QUAN continuum (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003, 2009), the third path (Gorard & Taylor, 2004) and the third research paradigm (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The current research, while acknowledging the expansive academic debate on the epistemological and ontological implications of mixing methods, does not posit a specific position on this. Rather, it adopts what Bryman (2008: 64) noted as a “... growing preparedness to think of research methods as techniques of data collection or analysis that are not as encumbered by epistemological and ontological baggage as is sometimes supposed.” The mixed methods analysis approach was adopted for the present research as it was seen to offer the most effective way to generate comprehensive answers to the research questions.

Mixed methods analysis involves collecting, analysing and mixing quantitative and qualitative data at several stages in the research process. The data are integrated to provide a more complete understanding of research questions than may have been provided by a quantitative or qualitative analysis alone. It has been claimed that mixed methods approaches, by triangulating analysis findings, can offset the limitations of a solely quantitative or qualitative research approach and so enhance the credibility and validity of results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Hanson *et al.*, 2005; Hoyles, Kuchemann, Healy & Yang, 2005; Jick, 1979; King, Keohane & Verba, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Critics have countered that qualitative and quantitative methods cannot be integrated as a form of triangulation because of their incompatible philosophical assumptions, making it unlikely that they would reflect the same empirical interpretations (cf. Ahrens & Chapman, 2006; Bergman, 2008, 2010, 2011).

But justification for mixing methods goes beyond an attempt to triangulate or corroborate findings. A mixed methods may allow researchers to explore different parts of a situation, answer different research questions, answer the same research question in

different ways or from different angles, or analyse something in more depth or breadth (Mason, 2002). Data acquired from integrating quantitative and qualitative research streams may, then, provide: elaboration (the qualitative data illustrate how the quantitative findings apply in particular cases); complementarity (the qualitative and quantitative findings differ, but together generate insights); development (one method is used to inform the other); divergence (the qualitative and quantitative findings conflict but lead to new insights to be explored); and expansion (different methods are used to investigate different research questions) (Bergman, 2008, 2010, 2011; Brannen, 2008; Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989; Hammersley, 1996).

The current research into the media framing of crisis stakeholder salience has two research streams: a quantitative determination of the newsworthiness of each stakeholder based on the frequency, extent, prominence and manifest valence of mentions in the sampled news reports; and a qualitative examination of the media frames used to depict stakeholders as salient. A monostrand conversion mixed methods design (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) is adopted, in which one type of data – in this case, qualitative – was initially generated and then converted into quantitative through unit counts. The design is developmental and sequential as the quantitative analysis informs the qualitative by determining which stakeholders are portrayed in the sampled media texts as newsworthy in the crisis context. This helped identify the focus of the qualitative stream of analysis. The qualitative component is considered primary in that the concept under investigation, namely the salience of crisis stakeholders, is primarily examined through the qualitative analysis. Thus, this study may be described as quan-QUAL (Hesse-Biber, 2010). The strength of this design is that the two sets of findings generated together extend understanding of the media framing of crisis stakeholder salience.

5.4 Content analysis methods

During the planning for this study into the salience of crisis stakeholders, consideration was given to acquiring data directly from individuals and groups who had been involved

in the SQ006 crisis. Preliminary discussions were held with members of SQ006 victims' groups, emergency services and Singapore Airlines. However, it became apparent that the retrospective recall data that would have been gathered from such sources, although valuable in their own right, may have been biased by subsequent events and the passing of time. Furthermore, only a few people who had been directly involved in the situation could be located, which would have limited the scope for the analysis.

Media systems dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach, 1973, 1985; Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976; DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1982) holds that when people experience high levels of ambiguity in their social environment and have little direct contact with events that cause them anxiety, they become dependent on the media for information and explanation of the situation (An & Gower, 2009; Baran & Davis, 2009; Cobb, 2005; Coombs, 2007a; Graber, 1980; Seeger *et al.*, 2002; Wenger *et al.*, 1985). Indeed, the public's media use can increase significantly when a crisis occurs (Andersen & Spitzberg, 2010; Kim *et al.*, 2004; Ledingham & Maseh-Walters, 1985; Lowrey, 2004). Therefore, this study by examines media frames of the salience of SQ006 crisis stakeholders through content analysis of selected news media coverage.

Content analysis is a predominant research method in communication and media studies to examine the content of texts. The principle behind analysing the content of news media outputs is rooted in the conviction that the media reflect social and economic institutional arrangements in society and mould public opinion (Krippendorff, 1980). Some scholars have contended that examining media content may reveal the intentions, attitudes and emotions of the communicator as well as lines of propaganda, inequality and power (Grbich, 2009; Krippendorff, 1980; Zito, 1975). A counter-argument holds that content analysis cannot provide direct data about the nature of the communicator or audience and so cannot serve as the sole basis for claims about media effects (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994; Wright, 1986). Although evidence is inconclusive regarding the extent of media effects on audiences, this thesis accepts the premise that the media do influence audiences' perceptions of reported events, topics and people. It is from this perspective that the media framing of crisis stakeholder salience is analysed in this study.

Content analysis uses a set of systematic procedures to study the content of recorded information and make valid and replicable inferences from texts to the contexts of their use (Gunter, 2000; Krippendorff, 2004; Weber, 1990). Early content analysis studies employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques. A residual effect of this heritage is a plethora of definitions in the literature of content analysis from quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods perspectives. Some researchers have claimed the lack of an accepted definition of content analysis and recognised analysis protocols has affected the methodological rigour of the approach (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002; Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005; Stryker, Wray, Hornik & Yanovitzky, 2006; Tesch, 1990).

Quantitative content analysis traditionally had a stronger tradition. From this standpoint, Berelson (1952) defined content analysis as a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. Neuendorf (2002: 10) elaborated, describing the technique as

... a summarising, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity, intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalisability, replicability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented.

Positivist approaches to content analysis have been challenged on several accounts. In particular, scholars have suggested it is not possible to create coding schemes that exclude interpretation decisions by the coders based on their understanding of the cultural context (Cicourel, 1964). Furthermore, as quantitative content analysis techniques focus on word counts, they are seen as insufficiently sensitive to identify syntactical and semantic information and covert meanings embedded in texts, resulting in information being decontextualised (Grbich, 2009; Merten, 1996; Weber, 1990; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). By not acknowledging the significance of latent meanings in a text, it is implied that the link between an external object being referred to and the reference to it in the text is clear and unambiguous (Krippendorff, 2004; McQuail, 2005).

Holsti (1969) defined content analysis as any technique that infers meaning by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages and contended that latent content should be analysed to account for how a message sender's ideas and attitudes are reflected beyond word frequencies. Countering that Holsti's (1969) definition did not go far enough in acknowledging the researcher's interpretive contribution to the meaning of the text, Krippendorff (1969) emphasised that reading is fundamentally a qualitative process, even when it generates numerical data. He (Krippendorff, 1969: 103) consequently defined content analysis as "... the use of replicable and valid methods for making specific inferences from text to other states or properties of its source." Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1278) specified that content analysis allowed for "... the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns."

Some scholars have advocated that quantitative and qualitative content analysis may be complementary, producing different analytical versions of reality, leading to depth and breadth of findings (Krippendorff, 2004; Weber, 1990). The present study employs a mixed methods content analysis design to explore the media framing of crisis stakeholders' salience. The quantitative first phase generates a descriptive statistical account of the trends and patterns in the texts' depiction of stakeholders' newsworthiness based on the agenda setting measures of frequency, extent, prominence and valence of mentions. The findings hint at some reasons why particular stakeholders are projected as newsworthy. By distinguishing newsworthy villains from newsworthy crisis stakeholders through the measure of manifest valence, a focus is identified for the subsequent qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis thus informs the subsequent qualitative analysis.

Qualitative content analysis explores the characteristics of language that give the text meaning within its communication context (Altheide, 1996; Budd, Thorp & Donohew, 1967; Mayring, 2000; Meyers, 1997; Tesch, 1990), to allow the emergence of themes that would not have been identified by a strictly quantitative approach. The second stage of analysis in the current study employs Altheide's (1996) qualitative ethnographic content analysis (ECA) to explore and interpret how and why specific stakeholders as

framed as salient. The novel conceptual framework of crisis stakeholder salience introduced in this dissertation is employed to inspect the sampled media texts to identify how they are employed in the texts.

The ECA approach was indicated because it allows preliminary coding categories to be derived deductively through existing theory or previous related studies, to guide early data collection and the drafting of a coding protocol (Altheide, 1996). Thus, the preliminary codes for this study's qualitative analysis are the crisis stakeholder salience dimensions drawn from the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) model of stakeholder salience, situational crisis communication theory, and media frames of crisis.

5.4.1 Data collection and sampling

The SQ006 accident generated print, electronic and online media coverage worldwide. In countries that had a large number of nationals on the aircraft, notably Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, India, Hong Kong and the US, the story remained in the news headlines for several weeks. The case thus provided a vast amount of media data, requiring decisions concerning sampling.

A key decision addressed the texts' point of origin. News media stories may be seen as manufactured (Cohen & Young, 1973) rather than simply reported. They are produced to be used by identified audiences within a particular social context and are based on interpretations of life within the cultures in which they were produced (Daymon & Holloway, 2002; Lacy & Riffe, 1996; Riffe *et al.*, 2005). The content and style of news media coverage are seen to be also influenced by the media outlet's ownership; culture and political leanings; editorial policies; and subjective decisions about style, structure and emphasis made by journalists and editors. To this last point, however, Altheide (1996), interestingly, argued that a reporter's personal bias plays a relatively minor role in shaping news, contrary to popular belief.

Accepting that news media content is produced for specific audiences in specific cultural contexts, it follows that analysis of media texts, particularly qualitative enquiry, should take into account the contexts in which the texts were created to be used, so as to understand nuances in the content. This indicated the researcher should be familiar with the culture in the country of the media source, leading to a decision to sample from Singapore and Taiwan, given that these countries also were deeply involved in the SQ006 crisis situation. Considerations of language were then addressed by deciding to use English-language media coverage of the SQ006 accident, as the researcher was insufficiently fluent in interpreting nuances of meaning in different Chinese dialects used in Singapore and Taiwan.

The decision to analyse coverage from traditional news media platforms rather than television or Internet-based media, was taken for several reasons. Newspapers continue to be seen as one of the most prominent discursive sites for researchers to examine media framing and its underlying mechanism (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2009). However, the growing influence of online news media and the decline in readership of newspapers in some countries was considered. Over the past decade, the proliferation of online and social media platforms has significantly changed crisis management practice and altered people's perceptions of organisation crises (Howell & Miller, 2010; Kimmel, 2004; Olsson, 2014). As was highlighted previously, the credibility of crisis information on social media platforms is now increasingly being questioned and studies have shown that observers of organisation crises are reverting to traditional media outlets, perceived as more credible, for information on crises (Nijkraak *et al.*, 2015; Utz *et al.*, 2013). This supports the contention that newspapers, in particular, will continue to influence public understanding of crisis situations (Jin, Liu & Austin, 2011; Liu *et al.*, 2011).

Although competition from online news providers has affected newspaper circulation in Asian countries in recent years, newspapers remain powerful media actors, particularly in providing in-depth coverage and analysis of local and regional news. The Nielsen 2015 Media Index Report, based on a survey of Singaporeans aged 15 and above, found that more than nine in 10 adults (92.7 per cent) read printed newspapers and watched

television broadcasts weekly (*Today*, 2015). Some 54.6 per cent of respondents reported reading print newspapers daily (*Today*, 2015).

The selection of the media source also considered audience demographics, the media outlets' distribution and influence in the local media scene, as well as potential bias from editorial policy. Finally, it was decided that the media texts for the present study would be drawn from Singapore's *The Straits Times* daily newspaper, Taiwan's national Central News Agency newswire service, and Taiwan's major English-language daily, *The China Post*. Established in 1845, *The Straits Times* is the dominant English-language broadsheet newspaper in Singapore and is considered a newspaper of international standing (Turnbull, 1995). It has the largest circulation and readership among daily newspapers; reported 2015 daily circulation of 304,300 print and 177,400 digital copies (Singapore Press Holdings, 2015), representing a total 33.3 per cent of the Singapore adult population (Zaccheus, 2015). The newspaper has been described as pro-government and pro-establishment (Kuo & Ang, 2000); thus, it was recognised that the coverage of a crisis affecting the Singapore community or local organisations may reflect a bias towards the government's nation-building efforts.

Central News Agency (CNA) is Taiwan's national news agency and is seen as one of the most influential Taiwan-based news providers. Founded in 1944, it has been in operation longer than any other media outlet in the country and is publicly owned and independently run. It is also one of the largest news outlets in Taiwan and provides 24-hour coverage of local and international news, transmitting over 1,600 news items daily in Chinese, English, Spanish and Japanese (Central News Agency, 2015). CNA's stories are distributed to the public via its websites, and also direct to subscribers that include most of Taiwan's newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations, Internet service providers and mobile phone operators, as well as airline inflight entertainment services, government agencies, academic institutions and private corporations. CNA also partners with news agencies in numerous countries to distribute Taiwan news stories worldwide.

The China Post, founded in 1952, is widely recognised as Taiwan's leading English-language newspaper. It claims a daily readership of more than 400,000 readers through

print and online versions; readers typically are those in the higher education and income brackets (*The China Post*, 2013). *The China Post* is considered to be pro-Kuomintang (Chinese National People's Party), one of Taiwan's main political parties, which is committed to the "one China" stance.

Collection of the articles was accomplished through searches in the Nexis and Factiva media databases, and from the archives of *The Straits Times*, *The China Post* and Central News Agency. Articles were located by keyword searching using the terms "Singapore Airlines" and "SIA". Additionally, a timeframe of interest was specified, based on Fink's (1986) crisis lifecycle model; texts selected for analysis were published within the identified acute and chronic crisis phases, which are the periods when crises generally generate the most media interest. Other key words were considered, but were unnecessary because the defined timeframe served as an effective filter. The search retrieved 110 articles from *The Straits Times*, 48 from Central News Agency and 17 from *The China Post*. Since multiple sources were used, the retrieved articles were compared and duplicates were excluded.

Newspaper reports from any individual media source usually build on their own previous coverage of the topic; this is particularly evident in coverage of a dynamic story such as an organisation crisis. In considering sampling procedures, it was considered important that the framing of the media coverage to be analysed was not distorted. Since a specific timeframe of interest had been identified, the number of texts retrieved was assessed to be manageable for analysis, so a decision was made to include the census of stories retrieved. This is recognised as an appropriate population for research that examines a particular event or series of events (Krippendorff, 2004; Riffe *et al.*, 2005). Random sampling of texts could have distorted the analysis by not taking into account the building of the media discourse in ongoing daily coverage of the crisis. Photographs and illustrations were excluded from the study.

5.4.2 **Coding and analysis procedures**

Quantitative content analysis typically uses physical linguistic units such as the word, sentence or paragraph to unitise messages for coding. The present study's quantitative analysis stream examines the frequency, extent, prominence and manifest valence of mentions of crisis stakeholders. Since the meaning carried by a specific "mention" can extend for a phrase, sentence or even paragraph – journalistic writing style freely uses single-sentence paragraphs – and would also be coded by the extent of the mention, it was decided not to use syntactical units or grammatical structures as the unit of analysis for measurement.

Therefore, the quantitative and qualitative analyses both use the individual theme as the unit of analysis, an approach more usually associated with qualitative research. The thematic unit (Krippendorff, 1980), also known as a thought unit (Lewicki & Gray, 2003) or a unit of meaning or expression of an idea (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell & Alexander, 1990), represents a single assertion about some subject (Berelson, 1952; Holsti, 1969). A theme can be carried in a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph or the entire text (Berg, 2004; Lewicki & Gray, 2003), and the corresponding block of text is coded accordingly. Clearly-defined thematic units are seen by many researchers as particularly useful in content analysis, because they provide a systematic way of exploring both the manifest references and the underlying meanings and frames in texts (Holsti, 1969; Krippendorff, 1980; Strijbos, Martens, Prins & Jochems, 2006).

The coding protocol (see Appendix C) details the process of examining the concepts and variables operationalised; this protocol formed the basis of the coder training and intercoder reliability assessment. Coding and analysis were assisted by the use of QDA Miner and WordStat software, selected because, together, they provide for quantitative and qualitative content analysis, including the calculation of coder reliability statistics. Specifically, the software was used to support manual coding, store the coded texts for retrieval and review, and provide descriptive statistics of the findings. The software facilitated the consistent replication of coding techniques and allowed for more efficient

and thorough definition, searching, merging and recoding of codes than may have been achieved with manual analysis alone.

Analysis software packages, however, cannot replace the human capabilities of reading, transcribing and making sense of qualitative data, which require the researcher's constant involvement and judgement (Krippendorff, 2004; Lewins & Silver, 2008; Morison & Moir, 1998). Thus, automated coding based on the predetermined coding scheme and dictionaries created from the operationalisation of key terms was used only to verify the location of references to salience characteristics; all coding was checked manually.

Prior to coding, the sampled articles were tagged by the following descriptive attributes.

Table 5.6 Identification attributes of sampled texts

Attributes	Summary of values
Type	Document
Sample	<i>The Straits Times</i> / Central News Agency / <i>The China Post</i>
Text no	TST1 - TST110 / CNA1 - CNA48 / TCP1 - TCP17
File ID	<i>Title of article</i>
Publication date	DD/MM/YYYY
Article genre	Hard news / Editorial or column / Feature / Interview / Profile / Correspondence / Other
Position	Front page / Inside prime / Forum / Run
Length	Under 500 words / 501-900 / 901-2,000 / 2,001 and more
Date period	Week 1, Week 2 etc - Week 8

5.4.2.1 *Quantitative analysis*

The quantitative analysis is guided by the approach of Riffe *et al.* (2005) to gather and analyse descriptive data about the media framing of the newsworthiness of stakeholders. To answer RQ1, the frequency, extent, prominence and manifest valence of mentions of individual stakeholders are measured, based on the defined coding scheme (see Table 5.7).

After the data sample was sorted chronologically and tagged with the identification attributes (Table 5.6), each text was read and searched for mentions of stakeholders. Key stakeholders were identified based on the conceptual definition of crisis stakeholders as being groups or individuals with whom the organisation has an interaction due to the crisis, who may or may not have a vested interest in the organisation, but who assume some degree of voluntary or involuntary risk as a result of their relationship with the organisation (Clarkson, 1995; Hayibor, 2005; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Phillips, 1999). The coding protocol was created to allow for the possibility that more than one stakeholder may be mentioned in any analysed section of the text.

A limitation in the stakeholder model is that when the term “stakeholder” is defined too narrowly, almost every individual could be identified as a unique stakeholder. The present study thus uses Freeman’s (1984) broad definition of stakeholder as any group or individual who can positively or negatively affect, or is positively or negatively affected by the activities of an organisation. However, some stakeholders were grouped functionally, based on their role in the crisis; for example, while a number of officials from various Singapore government agencies were referred to in the texts, they were considered in the stakeholder category of “Singapore government”. After the first reading of the texts, 14 key stakeholders were identified for the coding procedures (see Table 5.7 and Legend on p. 238).

Table 5.7 Summary of variables coded in quantitative analysis

Variables	Summary of values
Frequency	Each mention of predetermined stakeholders: SIA / On board/ *Crew/ Pilots/ Families/ EMS/ ROC air/ ROC govt/ Pilots ass/ S’pore govt/ S’pore pres/ S’pore public/ ROC pres/ ROC public
Extent	Coded for entire length of thematic unit
Valence	Positive / Negative / Neutral
Prominence	Headline / Sub-head / Lead / Pull quote / Boxed item / Call for action / Other or none

The texts were re-read for coding to take place. To obtain frequency counts and extent measurement, each thematic unit was tagged for mentions of stakeholders. To code prominence, following the approach of Tankard *et al.* (1991), a list of syntactical framing mechanisms was identified: headline, sub-head, lead, pull quote, boxed item, call for action or other/none. To code valence, each thematic unit was categorised as being positive, negative or neutral in tone, determined by the presence of specific words such as honest/dishonest, valuable/ pointless, successful/failed or deserved/ unwarranted. Thematic units that contained only factual content were classified as neutral.

5.4.2.2 *Qualitative analysis*

To answer RQ2, the qualitative thematic analysis was conducted on the same census of texts. The novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience introduced previously in this chapter was applied to explore themes and concepts contained within the texts, to drill more deeply into the media framing of stakeholders' salience. The framing of stakeholder salience uncovered in the texts from the three media sources was compared and contrasted.

The specific approach employed is based on Altheide's (1996) approach of ethnographic content analysis (ECA). ECA allows preliminary coding categories to be derived deductively through existing theory or previous studies, an approach usually linked to the quantitative tradition, to guide early data collection and the drafting of a coding protocol (Altheide, 1996). The use of pre-designed coding categories has been criticised by some researchers as a challenge to the theoretical basis of qualitative content analysis, since pre-coding creates a powerful conceptual grid that allows the researcher to impose a meaning-system rather than discovering it in the content (McQuail, 2005; Silverman, 2006). However, Altheide (1996) countered that the distinctive characteristic of ECA is the reflexive and interactive nature of the investigator, concepts, data collection and analysis that allows constant discovery and comparison of relevant situations, styles and meanings. Thus, the approach is systematic and analytic, but not rigid; while predetermined categories and variables may initially guide the study, others are allowed to emerge (Altheide, 1996).

The dependent variable of interest is the media framing of crisis stakeholders' salience, defined following a stakeholder theory approach as the degree to which managers should identify and manage stakeholders' claims. Following the ECA approach, predetermined coding categories were identified, in this case the crisis stakeholder salience dimensions drawn from the extant literature, which formed the novel crisis stakeholder salience framework introduced at the start of this chapter. These salience characteristics were defined and operationalised (see Table 5.5) with reference to the literature. The categories were allowed to evolve as necessary during analysis, in accordance with the ECA approach.

Each thematic unit that mentioned one or more stakeholders, as identified in the quantitative analysis, was re-examined for occurrences of salience frames, identified by the presence or absence of factors including keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, and sources of information. Each coded unit was also tagged to indicate the specific framing devices employed, such as a personal story, metaphor, emotive vocabulary, exemplar, catchphrase or synecdoche.

Qualitative content analysis coding may be defined to generate both numeric and narrative data, so as to provide different perspectives in the analysis. In this study, the qualitative analysis generated numeric data and narrative descriptions, which are reported in Chapter 6.

5.4.3 Intercoder reliability assessment

The question of researcher bias in content analysis methods is frequently raised, with claims that objectivity cannot be achieved because researchers exercise subjective choice in the specification of the unit of analysis and precise make-up and definition of relevant categories (Riffe *et al.*, 2005; Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). However, McQuail (2005) argued that quantitative and qualitative content analysis can both claim a measure of scientific reliability for several reasons: they use methods which can, in principle, be

replicated by other researchers; and they are designed to manage regularity and recurrence in data rather than the unique and non-producible. Berelson (1952) specified that to make valid inferences from the text, the classification procedures must be reliable in the sense of being consistent, and must be sufficiently precise to enable different coders to arrive at the same results when the same body of material is examined.

Reliability in this study's quantitative and qualitative coding procedures was achieved through standard testing using a second coder to demonstrate reproducibility. The second coder was a graduate student who had previously undertaken content analysis research and support coding activities, and had been comprehensively briefed on this research. The coding protocol was used to train the second coder.

For the intercoder reliability assessment, the researcher and second coder independently reviewed the first 10% of each of the three sets of texts (n=11 for *The Straits Times*; n=5 for Central News Agency; n=2 for *The China Post*). While random selection is recommended by some writers (e.g. Riffe *et al.*, 2005) for intercoder assessment, it was decided to select the texts in chronological order in order to maintain the progression of the storyline in the coverage, as this was how the coding and analysis would be carried out. The texts were coded for all the quantitative (Table 5.7) and qualitative (Table 5.5) variables.

The data were subjected to Scott's *pi* reliability assessment. Using this formula, it is generally accepted that intercoder agreement of .90 or greater is acceptable for all research and .80 or greater is acceptable in most studies. The first assessment resulted in unsatisfactory intercoder agreement. The researcher and second coder reviewed sections of texts that had been coded differently and discussed specific problems concerning category definitions, coding rules and categorisation of analysis units. Some coding categories were redefined. When consensus was reached, coding resumed.

Table 5.8 Intercoder reliability assessments

Coding variable	Analysis	Intercoder reliability (Scott's <i>pi</i>)
Frequency	Quantitative	.88
Extent	Quantitative	.86
Prominence	Quantitative	.92
Valence	Quantitative	.87
Power of stakeholder, coercive	Qualitative	.88
Power of stakeholder utilitarian	Qualitative	.84
Power of stakeholder, normative	Qualitative	.94
Power of stakeholder, political	Qualitative	.91
Power of stakeholder, social	Qualitative	.94
Power of stakeholder, pervasive	Qualitative	.98
Legitimacy of claim, pragmatic	Qualitative	.93
Legitimacy of claim, moral	Qualitative	.85
Legitimacy of claim, cognitive	Qualitative	.86
Legitimacy of stakeholder, social	Qualitative	.95
Legitimacy of stakeholder, moral	Qualitative	.94
Legitimacy of behaviour, ethical	Qualitative	.80
Urgency of claim, time sensitive	Qualitative	.89
Urgency of stakeholder, potential to act	Qualitative	.94
Proximity of claim, geographic	Qualitative	1.0
Proximity of claim, organised	Qualitative	.85
Hurt of stakeholder, economic	Qualitative	.98
Hurt of stakeholder, physical	Qualitative	.98
Hurt of stakeholder, mental/emotional	Qualitative	.88
Hurt of stakeholder, reputational	Qualitative	.96

Using the revised criteria, the researcher and second coder independently coded the next 10% of the texts. The results (Table 5.8) indicated that the reliability value of each variable varied from 0.80 to 1.0, above an acceptance level of 0.80 (Riffe *et al.*, 2005). Any remaining coding ambiguities or inconsistencies were resolved through discussion and the coding protocol revised accordingly. Coding then proceeded to completion.

5.4.4 **Inference quality**

The generalisability of case study research design and the reliability of content analysis methods have been discussed previously. This section reviews further considerations regarding inference quality that were identified in developing the research approach for this study, and summarises the steps taken to protect inference quality.

The value of research findings depends on their trustworthiness, conventionally measured by construct validity, internal validity, external validity or generalisability, and reliability. However, some researchers consider these measures, often seen as more positivist, are not appropriate in the context of the different basic assumptions of qualitative research (Mason, 2002; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Guidelines for assessing the inference quality of mixed methods research have mostly focused on the correctness of design procedures rather than whether the research findings were valid.

Consequently, some mixed methods researchers (cf. Hesse-Biber, 2010; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) have suggested that mixed methods studies may require a mixed process of qualitative and quantitative approaches to validation, depending on the emphasis and balance between quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study.

However, as Mason (2002) contended, the broad ideas behind the principles of validity and reliability are not necessarily problematic when applied to qualitative research. Therefore, it was decided the conventional measures of research trustworthiness (construct validity, internal validity, external validity or generalisability, and reliability) were appropriate to assess the quality of this study's findings.

Construct validity is a particular concern in content analysis because of the potential for subjective interpretation of data. The quantitative and qualitative streams of analysis in this study used a second coder and the chain of evidence was rigorously maintained in order to ensure construct validity.

Internal validity is seen as potentially problematic in studies of media effects because it cannot be proven that specific effects resulted from media exposure alone (Hoyle, Stephenson, Palmgreen, Lorch & Donohew, 2002). The notion that media frames may influence audiences' perceptions of the issues or people written about in media coverage is widely accepted, as has been discussed with reference to the extant literature in Chapter 5. While accepting the principle of media framing and acknowledging the existence of media bias, the present study makes no claims about the specific effects or degree of those effects that media frames identified in the sampled texts had on audiences. This is acknowledged as a limitation of this thesis that could be addressed by further studies.

External validity or generalisability appears to be the most contentious concept linked to research validity. The current study analysed news coverage of one crisis that appeared over a period of eight weeks in three media sources. As mentioned previously in this chapter, it is acknowledged that findings from this study cannot be generalised beyond the immediate case to other sites and settings. However, the findings may have external validity through analytical generalisation and relatability to other crisis situations and future research.

To be considered reliable, research must be able to achieve consistent findings if the inquiry were to be replicated with the same or similar subjects in the same or similar context. The concept of reliability presents a specific problem in qualitative research because the interpretive approach favours alternative perspectives over uniformity. Thus reliability of qualitative research is often considered less salient than validity (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). Reliability in this study was achieved by using an independent second coder for both the quantitative and qualitative analysis streams, so as to compare the interpretive perspectives of two different coders. The coding was subjected to an intercoder reliability assessment. Additionally, an audit trail was maintained to record the data, methods and decisions made during the study and provide all information other researchers would require in order to follow the same analysis process.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the conceptual and methodological frameworks developed to examine the media framing of crisis stakeholder salience in the coverage drawn from three media sources about the SQ006 accident. The chapter has first discussed how the term “salience” is defined in this thesis, distinguishing it from media perceptions of “newsworthiness”. Subsequently, a novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience, drawn from concepts identified in the extant literature, has been introduced with an explanation of how the crisis salience dimensions were identified and synthesised from stakeholder theory, crisis communication theory and media framing theory.

The chapter has then reviewed key methodological issues faced and the rationale behind why certain decisions were taken in developing the methodological approach: a single case study design using mixed methods content analysis. A detailed account was given of the analysis procedures, to provide assurance that appropriate procedures were followed, and allow for replication in future research.

The research instrument measures the media effects dimensions of frequency, extent, prominence and manifest valence in the quantitative analysis, and then applies the dimensions of crisis stakeholder salience identified from the literature to explore media framing in the latent content. This is a suitable methodology to capture quantitative and qualitative data for comprehensive analysis of the media texts, to answer the research questions and achieve the stated objectives of this thesis.

Having devised an appropriate methodological framework with which to research the media framing of the salience of crisis stakeholders, the next chapter details the Singapore Airlines SQ006 case study, summarising the crisis and presenting the analysis findings. The significance of the case study findings is discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6: Case study of the Singapore Airlines SQ006 accident

The previous chapters of this dissertation have identified three broad and intertwined analytical themes that shaped the formation of this study's research problem and objectives: the conceptual challenge in understanding the multi-faceted social construct that is a crisis; stakeholders and the organisation-in-crisis; and news framing in the media coverage of an organisation crisis (Chapter 1). By way of a literature review, these themes have been located and further examined within the scholarly literature (Chapters 2, 3 and 4). Chapter 5 has explained the conceptual and methodological rationale for the choice of research design and analysis approach to investigate the media framing of crisis stakeholder salience and detailed the methods employed in this study. This chapter continues with the SQ006 case study.

The Singapore Airlines SQ006 accident occurred at 11:37pm local time on October 31, 2000, as the aircraft was taking off from the Chiang Kai-shek International Airport in Taipei, Taiwan, on route to Los Angeles. The first print media coverage in Singapore and Taiwan appeared early morning, November 1. Media coverage in both countries continued for several weeks during the acute and chronic crisis phases, and reported on the search and rescue, repatriation of injured passengers, return of the bodies of the deceased, medical updates on survivors, the grief of the bereaved, debates concerning causes of the accident, and the detention and release of the flight crew. In the third week of December 2000, the Taiwan authorities allowed the flight crew members to return to Singapore; by this time, most of the injured passengers had been discharged from hospital. At that point, SIA could be said to have moved into the learning phase of the

crisis. Investigations continued for some 18 months after the crash, with the final accident reports issued in April 2002. Even after this, the causal findings continued to be debated in conjunction with legal claims for compensation; the final compensation claims were settled in late 2006.

This chapter narrates the events surrounding the accident and its aftermath; a timeline of events can be found in Appendix D. Subsequently, the results of the content analyses of the media coverage to reveal the media framing of crisis stakeholder salience are reported. The final section of this chapter summarises and interprets the key findings, which are discussed in Chapter 6.

6.1 The SQ006 accident

The SQ006 crash was the first fatal accident for (brand) Singapore Airlines, a Singapore icon, in its 28-year history. However, SIA's subsidiary regional airline, SilkAir, had experienced a major accident in December 1997, when flight MI185, a scheduled passenger flight from Jakarta to Singapore, crashed into the Musi River near Palembang, Indonesia, killing all 104 people on board. The cause of that accident has never been officially stated.

The October 31, 2000 crash of flight SQ006, a Boeing 747-400 aircraft, occurred at 11:37pm Taipei local time as the aircraft was taking off from the city's Chiang Kai-shek (CKS) International Airport (since 2006 renamed as Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport), on a scheduled passenger flight to Los Angeles International Airport in the United States. At the time of the accident, the airport was experiencing heavy rain and strong winds from the approaching typhoon *Xangsane*. Of the 179 passengers and crew on board, 79 passengers and four crew members were killed in the accident; 39 other passengers and crew members were seriously injured.

Early investigations showed the aircraft had mistakenly been positioned for take-off on the airport's 05R runway that was partially closed for construction work, and was functioning only as a taxiway. The flight had actually been cleared for take-off on the parallel 05L runway. As the aircraft began to leave the ground at the end of its take-off run, its wing hit heavy construction equipment and concrete barriers, causing the aircraft to fall back onto the runway. The fuselage split into three sections and burst into flames, resulting in severe damage.

Due to a miscommunication among Singapore Airlines' staff (Clements, pers. comm., 2009) the first statement made by the airline's spokesperson in Los Angeles, the flight's intended destination, stated the crash caused no fatalities (Reuters, October 31, 2000) – despite television coverage showing the aircraft engulfed in flames on the runway. The early television coverage also showed extensive footage of the stormy weather conditions around the airport at the time of the accident. The immediate reaction of family members of those on board SQ006 questioned Singapore Airlines' decision not to cancel the flight due to the strong winds and heavy rain from the approaching typhoon. The argument was fuelled by reports that two other airlines, Cathay Pacific Airways and EVA Airways, which both had several flights due to take off from or land at CKS Airport at about the same time SQ006 tried to leave, had cancelled the flights because of the weather conditions (Blatt & Lloyd-Smith, 2000). Although visibility was not good, it was reportedly over 900 metres, which is almost three times the required visibility for landing, which is considered more hazardous than taking off (Boser, 2005). Consequently, some independent experts argued, the weather conditions were not so bad as to necessitate suspension of all flights.

SIA received further early criticism from some family members of SQ006 passengers, claiming they were not given prompt information about the status and location of their loved ones, even while the passenger list was released to journalists. Distraught, angry relatives of those on board interrupted media conferences in Taipei and Singapore to demand immediate answers to their questions. At Singapore's Changi Airport, a grieving man whose brother had died in the crash interrupted a news conference saying, "Tell the press the true story. Don't hide anymore ... Are people's lives more important

or SIA's reputation?" (Tan, 2000). SIA's chief executive officer and deputy chairman, Cheong, later commented, "The need for information and the need for accuracy and also the need to be considerate to the feelings of the people concerned ... we were in a difficult position" (Tan, 2000).

SIA quickly sent teams of trained "Buddy" staff to Taipei, to help meet the immediate needs of the families of SQ006 passengers, as well as surviving passengers and crew. The airline also arranged for Singapore-based relatives to travel to Taipei late on November 1, to locate and identify their family members who were either in hospital or, in many cases, in the makeshift morgue. Since the bodies of many of the deceased had been burned beyond recognition, some family members had to provide DNA to aid identification of some bodies.

The preliminary on-scene investigation was completed by mid-November 2000. Two months later, a meeting was convened in Taipei for all the relevant authorities to review the findings. Taiwan's Aviation Safety Council (ASC), the Cabinet-level crash investigation body, published the official accident report in late April 2002. It blamed pilot error and bad weather as the probable main causes, stating the SQ006 crew did not make full use of information such as the airport navigation charts, aircraft heading references, runway and taxiway signs and markings.

The report acknowledged the airport's taxiway and runway lighting and signage failed to conform to international standards at the time of the accident, and that confusing runway markers and broken taxiway lights could have created a hazard for the SIA pilots. However, it claimed the pilots were aware of these factors which, furthermore, did not play a key causal role in the accident. The report contended that, despite warnings about the closed runway and opportunities to correct the aircraft's position if navigation equipment had been properly used, "... the flight crew lost situational awareness and commenced takeoff on the wrong runway" (Aviation Safety Council, 2002: vii). The absence of international-standard signage and lighting "... was not deemed sufficient to have caused the loss of situational awareness of the flight crew" (Aviation Safety Council, 2002: vii).

The conclusions of Taiwan's ASC report contrasted with the findings of a separate investigation by officials appointed by Singapore's Ministry of Transport (MoT), details of which were released the same day as the ASC report. The MoT claimed that it had been excluded from the analysis phase of the ASC's investigation, contrary to international practice, and its input to the ASC had not been properly incorporated in the ASC's analysis and report. Thus, claimed Singapore's MoT, it was obliged to conduct its own parallel investigation and separately announce the findings of its analysis, to explain why the accident occurred and to address the lessons learned to prevent similar accidents in future. While recognising the SQ006 pilots attempted take-off from the wrong runway, the MoT's report stated it did not accept pilot error as the main cause of the accident. It argued that, even after the crash, the flight crew firmly believed they were on the correct runway, because the airport lacked crucial precautionary measures that could have prevented the pilots from entering the wrong runway, or alerted them of their error. These deficiencies were major contributing factors to the accident, Singapore's MoT said.

Therefore, claimed the MoT, the ASC report was incomplete because it did not present a full account of the accident and downplayed significant systemic factors such as deficiencies at CKS Airport and its non-conformance with International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices that could have prevented the accident. Specifically, the ASC report was faulted for insufficiently acknowledging important key causal factors: the airport's runway and taxiway lighting, signage and markings did not conform to international standards; critical taxiway guidance lights and markings leading to the correct take-off runway were either missing or unserviceable; and the closed 05R runway was prominently lit and marked as if it were an operational runway and, contrary to international practice, lacked any physical barriers at its entrance. The MoT report concluded that these factors suggested that what had happened to the flight crew of SQ006 could have happened to any other flight crew. To support this assertion, the MoT report added that its investigators had recorded testimonies from two other pilots who had also nearly turned onto the wrong runway, one of them as recently as the day before the SQ006 accident. Furthermore, said the MoT report, the fact that the airport management rectified some of these deficiencies

immediately after the accident showed they acknowledged these as significant factors contributing to the SQ006 accident.

In response to the publication of the ASC and MoT reports, Singapore Airlines' management said it generally accepted the factual findings in both reports. The airline noted that, when read together, the reports provided a comprehensive analysis of the accident, showing how several causal factors involving the flight crew, the air traffic controllers and the airport, as well as the weather conditions, contributed to the accident. SIA acknowledged that the SQ006 pilots attempted take-off from the wrong runway, but criticised the ASC report for not giving due weight to deficiencies at CKS Airport that misled the SQ006 pilots. In particular, SIA noted that air traffic controllers had cleared the flight for take-off at the critical moment that it was taxiing towards the incorrect 05R runway, so reinforcing the pilots' belief that they were entering the correct runway. Since visibility at the airport had been low at the time because of the weather conditions, standard procedures required the air traffic controllers to determine the position of the aircraft before issuing take-off clearances. They failed to do so, noted SIA.

Taiwan's ASC subsequently rebutted the comments made by Singapore's MoT and criticised the Singapore ministry for releasing its own accident report, when the MoT's input had already been included in an annex to the official ASC report, in accordance with ICAO guidelines. The ASC rejected the MoT's claim that it was improperly excluded from the analysis phase of the investigation. It also denied suggestions of prejudice, noting the numerous recommendations in its report addressed all involved parties: the Taiwan Civil Aeronautics Administration, Taiwan's Transport Ministry, SIA, Singapore's Civil Aviation Authority, the Singapore government, ICAO, Boeing, the International Air Transport Association and the US Federal Aviation Administration.

At the time of the crash, SIA offered US\$20,000 compensation to each survivor and US\$400,000 to the families of the deceased. Many rejected the offer and took legal action against SIA. Forty lawsuits (26 on behalf of passengers and 14 on behalf of crew members) were filed in Singapore; more than 60 more lawsuits were filed in the US on behalf of passengers. The legal proceedings continued for several years, but few details

were reported in the media. All compensation claims were settled out of court by October 2006.

SIA publicly stated that the surviving cabin crew members would have leave on full pay until they were ready to return to work; however, some months later, the crew members were, reportedly, given an ultimatum to either return to work or take no-paid leave. Some crew members were subsequently quoted in the media as saying that other compensation previously promised by SIA had been withdrawn. In July 2002, SIA terminated the contracts of two of the flight crew, despite the company's earlier public statements supporting the pilots.

The SQ006 crash had a relatively mild, short-term impact on SIA's business. The following weeks saw a slight drop of less than 10 percent (Clements, pers. comm., 2008) in passenger loads due to booking cancellations. However, this trend lasted less than three months (Clements, pers. comm., 2008). The airline's reputation was virtually unscathed; in 2001, it was reported to be the second most-profitable airline in the world and has continued to win performance awards.

6.2 Content analysis results

In this section, the findings from the content analysis of the sampled media coverage of the SQ006 accident are presented. The sampled texts are taken from three media sources (Singapore's *The Straits Times* and Taiwan's Central News Agency and *The China Post*), and were published during the acute and chronic phases of the crisis, defined as from the day of the crash, October 31, 2000 to December 23, 2000.

Prior to analysis, a further search was conducted in coverage published in the three media sources during the 18-month period prior to October 31, 2000 and the 18-month period after December 23, 2000, for any mentions of the identified SQ006 crisis stakeholders. This was to acknowledge any pre-existing biases that the three media

outlets may have had towards any of the stakeholders, which could have influenced the analysis findings.

In all three media outlets, coverage of Singapore Airlines (SIA) was assessed overall as neutral to positive, reflecting the airline's good reputation in Asia. While *The Straits Times* had the most extensive and positive coverage of the airline, it also carried negative reports on certain topics, for example labour issues within SIA. Stories on the Taiwan air authorities (CAA) were neutral to slightly negative across all three media platforms. The CAA were criticised in both Taiwan media sources for previous lapses in safety and security that led to past accidents. However, the coverage did not appear to be overly negative in the contexts of the stories. The most significant contrast in reporting tone was between the two Taiwan media sources' reporting of the local political scene. Central News Agency receives government funding as Taiwan's official news agency; it is considered politically neutral. *The China Post* is considered pro-Kuomintang (Chinese National People's Party), the long-time ruling party of Taiwan that had, some months before the SQ006 accident, been defeated in an election by the Democratic Progressive Party. Media bias was evident in comparing *The China Post*'s reporting of political topics to that of Central News Agency before and after the SQ006 accident. In accepting the concept of media framing, this study acknowledges the influence of media bias.

For the case study analysis, each media outlet's census of coverage on the SQ006 accident from within the identified time period is analysed. The final sample consists of 175 news articles: 110 articles (62.85%) from *The Straits Times* (TST), 48 articles (27.4%) from Central News Agency (CNA), and 17 articles (9.7%) from *The China Post* (TCP). All the sampled texts were published in the news section of their respective media source. The average length of sample articles is 569 words, with the longest story containing 1,309 words and the shortest, 119 words. As Table 6.1 shows, most of the sampled texts were published in Week 1 after the crash; the amount of coverage subsequently decreased steadily.

Table 6.1 Frequency of articles by week

Week	Date	TST articles (count)	% of TST articles	CNA articles (count)	% of CNA articles	TCP articles (count)	% of TCP articles	Total articles (count)
1	Nov 1-7	53	48.2	33	68.8	14	82.4	100
2	Nov 8-14	22	20	3	6.3	1	5.9	26
3	Nov 15-21	7	6.4	4	8.3	0	0	11
4	Nov 22-28	5	4.5	1	2.1	0	0	6
5	Nov 29-Dec 5	7	6.4	0	0	0	0	7
6	Dec 6-12	6	5.5	2	4.2	1	5.9	9
7	Dec 13-19	3	2.7	1	2.1	1	5.9	5
8	Dec 20-23	7	6.4	4	8.3	0	0	11
Total		110		48		17		175

The content of the sampled texts from all three media sources broadly follow a pattern typical of news reporting of organisation crises. Immediately after the accident, coverage describes what had happened and who was involved. The SQ006 accident occurred in an easily-accessible location and facts became known quickly. So, within days, the coverage starts focusing on the causal investigation, and includes more quotes from survivors and witnesses to the accident, as well as individuals identified as subject matter experts. Concurrently, reports continue to detail, often at length, the personal stories of those portrayed as victims, that is, the SQ006 passengers and cabin crew and their families. As the situation stabilises following the completion of search and rescue operations, media reporting focuses more on who is to blame and how they should be held responsible. As *The Straits Times* (November 8, 2000) notes, “It’s eight days now, since Flight SQ 006 burst into flames ... and, for the media, the focus is moving away from the human tragedy towards drier, harder issues of liability and compensation.”

Analysis of the sampled texts has two stages. First, quantitative content analysis investigates the manifest content using the agenda-setting dimensions of frequency, extent, prominence and valence, to answer:

RQ1: What does the manifest content of the media coverage reveal about the three media sources’ depiction of the newsworthiness of each crisis stakeholder?

- (a) What is the extent, frequency, prominence and valence of mentions of each stakeholder?
- (b) Is the newsworthiness of each stakeholder depicted differently in the different media platforms?

Subsequently, the qualitative analysis applies the crisis stakeholder salience framework derived from the literature, as introduced in Chapter 5, to examine media framing in the latent content, to answer.

RQ2: How does the coverage of the crisis in the three media sources frame each stakeholder as salient?

- a) To what extent is each stakeholder framed as possessing the identified crisis stakeholder salience characteristics?
- (b) What framing devices are employed by the media sources to depict stakeholder salience?
- (c) How does the salience framing of each stakeholder differ across the three media platforms?

6.2.1 Quantitative examination of stakeholder newsworthiness

As identified in Chapter 5 (Table 5.7), 14 key stakeholders were identified: (1) “SIA” – Singapore Airlines, managers and staff; (2) “On board” – SQ006 passengers (including cabin crew, see below); (3) “*Crew” – SQ006 cabin crew (see below); (4) “Pilots” – SQ006 pilots/cockpit crew; (5) “Families” – families of those “On board”; (6) “EMS” – Taiwan emergency services personnel; (7) “CAA” – management of Taiwan’s airport and aviation authorities; (8) “ROC govt” – Taiwan government officials; (9) “Pilots ass” – representatives of the Federation of Airline Pilots; (10) “S’pore govt” – Singapore government officials; (11) “S’pore Pres” – then president of Singapore, S.R. Nathan; (12) “S’pore public” – Singapore public not directly involved in the crisis; (13) “ROC

Pres” – then president of Taiwan, Chen Sui-bian; and (14) “ROC public” – Taiwan public not directly involved in the crisis.

A special case is made for identifying passengers and cabin crew. Much of the earlier media coverage of the accident does not differentiate passengers from cabin crew, referring broadly to people on the flight. Thus, the category “On board” is defined as accounting primarily for SQ006 passengers, but acknowledging that references to this group may also include cabin crew personnel. There are more specific references to cabin crew members in later stories. These are coded as “*Crew”; the asterisk highlighting that such mentions constitute only part of the assumed total references to cabin crew.

The quantitative analysis investigates what the manifest content reveals about the apparent newsworthiness of each stakeholder, as suggested by the frequency, extent and prominence of mentions about them. Frequency and extent are measured by, respectively, the number of articles in which the stakeholder is mentioned, and the word count used in reporting about that stakeholder. Prominence is measured by the number of times the stakeholder is mentioned with editorial emphasis markers (e.g. headlines, lead paragraphs, pull quotes or boxed items). Valence is identified by the presence of words or phrases denoting a favourable or unfavourable attitude towards the stakeholder and is measured as a percentage of the total coverage of that stakeholder.

The results of the quantitative analysis are shown in the tables on page 196. The following sections summarise the findings.

6.2.1.1 *Findings of stakeholder newsworthiness*

Stakeholder newsworthiness is examined through the agenda setting dimensions of frequency, extent and prominence of mentions of specific stakeholders. These measures reveal that, based on the frequency, extent and prominence of their respective coverage of specific stakeholders, all three media sources position Singapore Airlines (SIA), the SQ006 pilots and the SQ006 passengers as the most newsworthy stakeholders. This

finding is not surprising: it is likely that Singapore Airlines, as the organisation most affected, would have been perceived by many observers as being at the centre of the crisis; the passengers were the group most directly and severely affected; and the pilots were front and centre in investigations into the accident's causes.

SIA, the SQ006 pilots and the passengers are featured in the sampled media texts throughout the eight-week time frame of the study. In *The Straits Times*, SIA is the second most frequently mentioned and the third most extensively covered stakeholder; many of the mentions are given editorial prominence (headlines, sub-heads, story leads and pull quotes). SIA is the second most frequently and fourth most extensively covered stakeholder in the Central News Agency coverage; and the third most frequently and fifth most extensively covered stakeholder in *The China Post*.

The pilots are the fourth most frequently mentioned, fourth most extensively covered and third most prominently featured stakeholder in *The Straits Times*' articles. In the Central News Agency articles, they are the third most frequently mentioned, the fourth most extensively covered and the fourth most prominently featured stakeholder. In *The China Post*, the pilots are the most frequently mentioned, third most extensively covered stakeholder, and appear more often in story headlines than any other stakeholder.

The SQ006 passengers are also widely reported on by all three publications. In *The Straits Times*, this stakeholder is written about more extensively than any other, is second only to SIA in terms of frequency of mentions, and has more mentions with editorial prominence (mostly headlines, story leads and boxed content) than any other stakeholder. In the Central News Agency's coverage, the passengers represent the group most frequently and extensively covered, and are second only to the Taiwan government in terms of editorial prominence (headlines and story leads) of their mentions. In *The China Post*, the families are the fourth most frequently mentioned and the most extensively covered stakeholder.

While the analysis suggests that the three media sources project SIA, the SQ006 passengers and the pilots as the most newsworthy stakeholders, the findings reflect that

the apparent newsworthiness of other stakeholders varies across the publications. Recognising that media outlets' reporting typically contains a degree of subjective bias, this finding is not unexpected. For example, it may be expected that the three publications would write more about their respective governments' role in the crisis. However, the different projections of stakeholders' newsworthiness are considered significant as they may reflect how the publications project different perceptions of the crisis overall.

The cross-source variation in the frequency, extent and prominence of coverage of the families of those on board SQ006 is an unexpected finding. *The Straits Times* reports often and in detail about the families; they are the third most frequently covered, second most extensively covered, and second most prominently featured stakeholder in this media source. However, the families are not covered as frequently and extensively as other stakeholders by the two Taiwan media sources. This is unexpected considering how many families would have been affected by the crisis; Taiwan was one of the countries that had the most number of its nationals on board SQ006.

In the two Taiwan media sources, the Taiwan government and the Taiwan air authorities (CAA) appear extensively and prominently in the articles. In the Central News Agency coverage, the Taiwan government is the second most frequently mentioned, second most extensively covered, and the most prominently featured stakeholder. In *The China Post*, this stakeholder is the most frequently mentioned and the third most extensively covered. Based on the frequency, extent and prominence of mentions, the findings suggest that *The Straits Times*, however, projected the Taiwan government as less newsworthy than its Singapore counterpart; in contrast, the two Taiwan media sources contain limited coverage of the Singapore government. The Taiwan air authorities represent the fifth most frequently covered and third most extensively covered stakeholder group in the Central News Agency coverage; while in *The China Post*, this stakeholder is the fourth most frequently covered but the second most extensively covered. Coverage of the CAA in *The Straits Times* is not as frequent, extensive or prominent as several other stakeholders.

The remaining stakeholders included in the analysis are reported on significantly less frequently, extensively and prominently across the three media sources: the SQ006 cabin crew, Taiwan emergency services, the federation of airline pilots, then Singapore President, S.R. Nathan, then Taiwan President, Chen Shui-bian, and the Taiwan public. The Singapore public is mentioned only in *The Straits Times*, but is covered more frequently and extensively in this publication than several other stakeholders.

6.2.1.2 *Findings of valence of stakeholder mentions*

The quantitative analysis of the valence of stakeholder mentions reveals that most of the coverage of all stakeholders is overtly neutral. However, the positive and negative mentions of some stakeholders extend the findings of frequency, extent and prominence of mentions by appearing to intimate why certain stakeholders are depicted as more newsworthy than others. It is not unusual for media coverage of organisation crises to feature perceived villains as frequently, extensively and prominently as perceived victims; the valence of mentions suggests that certain SQ006 stakeholders were depicted as victims or villains by a specific media source.

The findings show that some stakeholders are reported on more positively in one or more of the media sources and more negatively in others. For example, mentions of the Taiwan government are relatively balanced in *The Straits Times* (positive 9.8%, negative 13.1%), more positive in Central News Agency (positive 13.8% , negative 3.4%) and more negative in *The China Post* (positive 4.8% , negative 19%), in which this stakeholder has the second highest amount of negative coverage after SIA.

Furthermore, coverage of some stakeholders within a single media source contains both overtly positive and overtly negative mentions. This is evident in *The Straits Times*' coverage of the SQ006 pilots (positive 12.7%, negative 8.9%), and the Taiwan government (positive 9.8%, negative 13.1%), as well as *The China Post*'s coverage of SIA (positive 25%, negative 30.5%), and the SQ006 pilots (positive 6.5%, negative 12.5%). In some cases, the in-source positive and negative mentions of the same stakeholder occur in different days' stories as the crisis evolves, suggesting a transition

in how the media source depicts the specific stakeholder in light of changing events. However, since most of the analysed media texts are from Week 1 of the crisis, this explanation does not account for all such occurrences of contrasting in-source valence. Further understanding of this finding would be sought in the subsequent qualitative analysis of stakeholder salience frames.

In the three media sources, SIA is the stakeholder group with the highest percentage of overt positive coverage: 42.5% in *The Straits Times*, 32% in Central News Agency, and 25% in *The China Post*. However, all media sources also have negative mentions of SIA: 9% in *The Straits Times*, 4.8% in Central News Agency, and 30.5% in *The China Post* articles, where SIA has more negative coverage than any other stakeholder.

Coverage of the SQ006 pilots is relatively balanced in *The Straits Times* (positive 12.7%, negative 8.9%), slightly more negative in *The China Post* (6.5% positive, 12.5% negative), and significantly more negative in Central News Agency reports (3.1% positive, 20.4% negative), in which they are covered more negatively than any other stakeholder. Coverage of the Taiwan air authorities (CAA) is significantly negative in *The Straits Times* articles (positive 1.9%, negative 21.5%), in which this stakeholder has more overtly negative coverage than any other. Mentions of Taiwan's CAA are also more negative in the Central News Agency (positive 1.9%, negative 13.5%), but more balanced in *The China Post* (positive 0%, negative 3.8%).

Coverage of the SQ006 passengers is 38.8% positive in *The Straits Times*, 8.2% positive in Central News Agency and 12% positive in *The China Post*. None of the coverage of the passengers in any of the media sources is overtly negative. Mentions of the families in *The Straits Times* are 32% positive, but neutral in the two Taiwan media sources. None of the coverage of the families is overtly negative.

In *The Straits Times*, coverage of several more minor stakeholders is significantly positive: SQ006 crew (34.6%), Taiwan emergency services (26%), Singapore government (18.6%) and Singapore public (33.3%). In contrast, a significant number of mentions of the airline pilots' association are overtly negative (19.3%). Central News

Agency's articles carry a notable amount of positive mentions of the Taiwan emergency services (22.2%) and the Taiwan President (16.8%). *The China Post*'s articles contain a significant amount of negative coverage of the Singapore government (16.7%), although, significantly, this is still less than this publication's negative mentions of the Taiwan government (19%). There is no manifest negative coverage of the Singapore President and Taiwan public in any publication.

6.2.1.3 *Summary of the quantitative findings*

The quantitative analysis findings identify Singapore Airlines (SIA), the SQ006 pilots and the SQ006 passengers as the most frequently, extensively and prominently covered stakeholders in the sampled texts from all three media sources, suggesting they may have been seen by the publications as the most newsworthy crisis constituents. The valence findings of mentions of two of these stakeholders, however, hint at the publications' differing reasons to portray them as newsworthy. Valence of mentions of SIA are significantly positive in *The Straits Times* and Central News Agency, while *The China Post* carries a significant amount of positive and negative coverage. Mentions of the SQ006 pilots vary from being significantly negative in Central News Agency stories, to more positive than negative in *The Straits Times*, and more negative than positive in *The China Post*.

Several other stakeholders involved in the situation, although not among the most frequently, extensively and prominently covered parties in all three publications, still receive varying amounts of manifestly positive or negative mentions. Thus, the findings highlight notable in-source as well as across-source differences in the depicted newsworthiness and manifest valence of stakeholder mentions. Crisis stakeholders may be portrayed by the media as newsworthy for different reasons; media coverage often focuses on both the victims and the villains of the situation. The analysis thus turns to examination of the latent content of the sampled media texts to explore how and why the stakeholders are framed as salient in the crisis.

Table 6.2 Findings of newsworthiness and valence in *The Straits Times*' coverage (110 articles)

Newsworthiness attributes	SIA	On board	*Crew	Pilots	Families	EMS	CAA	ROC govt	Pilots ass	S'pore govt	S'pore Pres	S'pore public	ROC Pres
Freq (n articles)	91	89	28	53	75	12	36	43	8	52	1	17	2
Extent (word count)	13.5k	16.9k	6.1k	11.9k	14.9k	1.1k	5.72k	5.87k	0.9k	5.5k	0.1k	4.0k	0.45k
Prom (count)	22	47	10	30	33	4	12	14	0	8	1	1	1
Val pos / neg %	42.5 / 9	38.8 / 0	34.6 / 0	12.7 / 8.9	32 / 0	26 / 5	1.9 / 21.5	9.8 / 13.1	0 / 19.3	18.6 / 1.8	0 / 0	33.3 / 0	0 / 0

ROC public was not mentioned in articles

Table 6.3 Findings of newsworthiness and valence in Central News Agency's coverage (48 articles)

Newsworthiness attributes	SIA	On board	*Crew	Pilots	Families	EMS	CAA	ROC govt	Pilots ass	S'pore govt	ROC Pres	ROC public
Freq (n articles)	36	39	17	32	14	9	29	36	5	10	6	1
Extent (word count)	2.7k	4k	0.7k	3.15k	1.3k	0.4k	3.7k	3.9k	0.8k	0.5k	0.6k	0.04k
Prom (count)	6	16	1	12	4	0	13	17	2	1	4	1
Val pos / neg %	32 / 4.8	8.2 / 0	0 / 0	3.1 / 20.4	0 / 0	22.2 / 0	1.9 / 13.5	13.8 / 3.4	0 / 8	0 / 0	16.8 / 8	0 / 0

S'pore Pres, S'pore Public were not mentioned in articles

Table 6.4 Findings of newsworthiness and valence in *The China Post*'s coverage (17 articles)

Newsworthiness attributes	SIA	On board	*Crew	Pilots	Families	EMS	CAA	ROC govt	Pilots ass	S'pore govt	ROC Pres
Freq (n articles)	13	10	3	14	6	2	12	15	2	3	1
Extent (word count)	1.17k	2.68k	0.07k	2.2k	0.95k	0.13k	2.55k	2.41k	0.42k	0.3k	0.04k
Prom (count)	4	3	0	5	1	0	4	1	1	0	0
Val pos / neg %	25 / 30.5	12 / 0	0 / 0	6.5 / 12.5	0 / 0	8.3 / 0	0 / 3.8	4.8 / 19	0 / 5	0 / 16.7	0 / 0

S'pore Pres, S'pore public, ROC public were not mentioned in articles

6.2.2 Qualitative examination of stakeholder salience

This research uses a developmental and sequential mixed methods design; the two sets of findings are complementary and together extend understanding of the media framing of crisis stakeholder salience. The quantitative analysis informs the qualitative stream by identifying which stakeholders are portrayed in the sampled media texts as more newsworthy in the crisis context, based on the frequency, extent and prominence of mentions, and the extent to which this portrayal displays overt positive or negative valence.

By applying the crisis stakeholder salience framework derived from the literature, as introduced in Chapter 5, the qualitative content analysis investigates how and why the stakeholders are framed as salient. Stakeholder salience framing in *The Straits Times*, Central News Agency and *The China Post* articles is compared to explicate the different emphases placed on stakeholders' possession of salience attributes. As the crisis stakeholder salience dimensions recognise the possibility of negative possession, (e.g. a stakeholder may be assessed to have a morally legitimate or illegitimate claim), the framing of crisis victims and villains may be identified. Negative interpretations of frames are shown in italics with a minus (-) sign in the tables of findings.

This section first presents the findings of the qualitative analysis of salience framing of stakeholders in the sampled media texts, interpreted in the context of the crisis and the different media sources. These findings are summarised by stakeholder according to the five crisis stakeholder salience characteristics drawn from the literature (power, legitimacy, urgency, proximity and severe hurt). Reference is also made to how the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) salience model would categorise each stakeholder according to their depiction in each media source, in order to highlight the significance of the inclusion of extended categories of salience characteristics specific to crisis stakeholders. This is discussed in Chapter 7. The count of total identified occurrences of salience frames in the articles is shown in the tables on pages 235-237.

Since many excerpts cited from the analysed texts contain quotations, for the purpose of clarity the excerpted passages appear in italics rather than inverted commas. The names

of the media sources are abbreviated in the citations: *The Straits Times* – TST; Central News Agency – CNA; *The China Post* – TCP. Excerpts from the two Taiwan media sources contain a number of grammar errors inherent in the original texts.

6.2.2.1 Singapore Airlines (SIA)

Singapore Airlines (SIA) was one of several organisations involved in the SQ006 accident, but it was the organisation generally seen as most affected: its customers and employees were killed and injured, its aircraft was destroyed, and its reputation and future business success were threatened. It was to be expected that SIA would be among the stakeholders most frequently, extensively and prominently reported on by the news media in covering the crisis; the quantitative findings show this to be the case.

Table 6.5 Summary of salience framing (SIA)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
<i>The Straits Times</i>	Moderate	High - Moderate	Low	0	Low	Definitive
Central News Agency	0	High -Low	Low	0	0	Dependent
<i>The China Post</i>	0	Moderate - Moderate	0	0	Low	Discretionary

The qualitative analysis reveals that all three media sources frame SIA extensively through the legitimacy frame. By distinguishing the social and moral legitimacy of SIA as a stakeholder entity (L-S-So/ L-S-Mo) from the ethical legitimacy of SIA's crisis behaviour (L-B-Et), these findings may explain the contrasting manifest positive and negative coverage, as uncovered in the quantitative analysis.

SIA is framed as having pre-crisis social and moral legitimacy through oft-repeated, sometimes effusively-worded references to the airline's corporate and management values, safety record and awards, carried in reporters' commentaries and quotes from various sources. *The China Post* refers to SIA's *unblemished* (TCP, November 2, 2000) and *nearly perfect* (TCP, November 1, 2000) safety record. *The Straits Times* calls SIA *one of the most reliable [airlines] in the world* (TST, November 3, 6, 2000) and a Singapore minister is quoted saying that *in spite of the disaster ... SIA is still the best airline in the world* (TST, November 6, 2000). *The Straits Times* coverage uses one

negative pre-crisis moral legitimacy frame (L-S-Mo negative) in discussing the airline's decision to let SQ006 take off: *Several pilots ... say that in SIA, captains of flights delayed by even a few minutes have to file reports explaining the decision. This may create pressure for pilots to stick to timetables* (TST, November 16, 2000).

In contrast, SIA's crisis response behaviour immediately after the accident is portrayed, particularly in *The Straits Times* and *The China Post*, through the negative ethical legitimacy (L-B-Et negative) frame. In *The Straits Times*, this frame typically occurs in reports about the family members of SQ006 passengers. The airline's failure to inform families of the identities of SQ006 passengers before the media published the names is reported with vivid and emotive descriptions of relatives' anguish: *A distraught brother of a passenger ... barged into a media briefing yesterday morning and begged ... for "the truth"* (TST, November 3, 2000). The SIA CEO's response to this is to redirect the blame, a response interpreted as unethical: *Dr Cheong ... criticised some media for releasing the names of the deceased too quickly, before the next-of-kin was informed* (TST, November 3, 2000).

The China Post similarly details families' criticisms of SIA through the negative ethical legitimacy (L-B-Et negative) frame, typically through the use of dramatic words. SIA is reported to have *faced a storm of criticism* (TCP, November 3, 2000) as *grieving relatives in both Taipei and Singapore directed their wrath toward Singapore Airlines... condemning the flagship carrier for keeping them in the dark for hours over the fate of their loved ones* (TCP, November 3, 2000). *The China Post* frames SIA's behaviour as unethical (L-B-Et negative) in its conflict with the Taiwan air authorities (CAA), through emotive word choices: *Singapore Airlines' insinuation that the CKS International Airport was unsafe on the night of the crash yesterday infuriated officials ... and prompted ... CAA's director general, to charge that the carrier was attempting to dodge responsibility for last week's fatal plane crash* (TCP, November 7, 2000).

Later coverage in all three media sources reflects more use of the (positive) ethical behaviour frame (L-B-Et) in detailing SIA's crisis response actions, typically through quotes from third parties. *The Straits Times* uses a pull quote to emphasise how *the airline is getting good marks from airline-industry analysts and executives as well as public-relations professionals for the way it has been handling the tragedy* (TST,

November 7, 2000). When a family member disrupts a media briefing, a reporter comments that the SIA spokesperson's *arm around an aggrieved relative showed an empathy and understanding that went beyond words* (TST, November 3, 2000). After investigations confirm SQ006 had been on the wrong runway, *The Straits Times* emphasises SIA's apology more than the attribution of responsibility. The apology is said to have *touched even the most sorrowful and bewildered hearts* (TST, November 30, 2000). An IATA official is quoted: "*Admitting what happened and taking full responsibility just owns up to that high level of integrity*" (TST, November 7, 2000). Articles in China News Agency also frame SIA's crisis response behaviour as ethically legitimate (L-B-Et), noting the airline *will continue to cooperate fully with the Taiwan authorities* (CNA, November 3, 2000) and highlighting the compassion of SIA managers by quoting them: "*This is a very sad situation and the SIA hopes to help families through this terrible period by offering compensation without delay*" (CNA, November 4, 2000).

Thus, SIA's salience as a crisis stakeholder is framed significantly through the legitimacy of its pre-crisis reputation and its crisis behaviour (L-S-Mo, L-S-So, L-B-Et). Without doubt, the airline had crisis responsibilities to address the urgent needs of other involved stakeholders; as such, SIA's own claims as a crisis stakeholder could be interpreted as having legitimacy and urgency. Analysis of the sampled texts reveals some evidence of this framing. *The Straits Times* frames SIA's claims as having time-sensitive urgency (U-C-Ti), describing how the airline *lost no time in setting up a crisis-management centre ... to handle grief-stricken and anxious relatives of the passengers* (TST, November 2, 2000). SIA is also described as facing *critical moments ... when people began storming SIA offices to get information on the fate of their family members* (TST, November 7, 2000). One Central News Agency story frames SIA as possessing the urgency (likelihood to act) salience dimension (U-S-Ac) in the context of the accident investigation: *A Singapore Airlines spokesperson accepted the initial findings ... but he added that they would look into the causes of the error and also whether the safety features at the airport are adequate* (CNA, November 4, 2000).

Several articles in *The Straits Times* frame SIA as having social power (P-S-So) through the support of customers, the Singapore government, the Singapore public, and the Singapore and Malaysian media. In response to the families' criticisms of the airline's initial crisis response, a Malaysian newspaper is quoted reporting how *SIA ran*

everything smoothly, as if it had long prepared to handle such a situation (TST, November 7, 2000) and suggested that any criticisms reported in the media should *not be viewed as a reflection of SIA's failure to act* (TST, November 7, 2000). Unexpectedly, the power frame (P-S-So) is not employed in describing the vocal public support that SIA received from the Singapore public when it challenged the detention of the pilots, although this support was widely perceived at the time to have influenced the Taiwan authorities' decision to release the pilots.

SIA is also framed as having suffered mental hurt (H-S-Me). In *The Straits Times*, its senior executives are described as having *aged eight years in eight days* (TST, November 8, 2000). Other articles describe how SIA employees require professional counselling to help them *to come to grips with the death and injuries of their colleagues* (TST, November 8, 2000) and describe how the faces of some SIA staff involved in response efforts reflect *extreme distress* (TCP, November 9, 2000).

6.2.2.2 SQ006 passengers (On board)

The SQ006 passengers were the stakeholders most severely affected by the accident, that is, the group seen as primary victims. Following major accidents, news coverage frequently focuses on the human tragedy of those harmed, so it is not surprising that the passengers are reported on frequently, extensively and prominently.

Because of the hurt and suffering they experience, victims of organisation crises are often seen to have legitimate and urgent claims on focal organisations; this is reflected in crisis management practice that prioritises the needs of victims. Furthermore, the hurt experienced by victims often attracts advocate support from other, more powerful, stakeholders to ensure victims' needs are promptly addressed. These aspects are reflected in the analysis findings. In all three media sources, the dominant salience themes uncovered about the passengers are severe physical hurt (H-S-Ph), legitimacy of the claim (moral) (L-C-Mo) and time-sensitive urgency (U-C-Ti).

Table 6.6 Summary of salience framing (On board)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
The Straits Times	Moderate	High	High	0	High	Definitive
Central News Agency	Moderate	High	High	0	High	Definitive
The China Post	Low	Moderate	Low	0	High	Definitive

In *The Straits Times*, the severe hurt frame (H-S-Ph) is typically interpreted from quotes of survivors' vivid and dramatic words in describing the accident: *"Flames shot up right next to me and some poor fellow not very far from me got jet fuel splashed on him, because he just lit up like a torch ... One gentleman ... was severely, severely, severely burned. There were a lot of burns because there was jet fuel all over the place"* (TST, November 1, 2000). Survivors' ongoing medical conditions are detailed almost daily, to the extent of appearing intrusive: *Kevin Rice is recovering from skin-graft surgery for 35 per cent burns ... He could not hold the cellular phone as his hands, arms and ears were burnt. He also has burns on his face and back and an injury on his legs after part of his trousers melted* (TST, November 13, 2000). The Taiwan media sources adopt a more factual tone in framing the extent of passengers' hurt. A survivor is reported describing how *passengers seated in the front part of the plane, where the explosion took place, might have suffered serious casualties because of the high temperature after the explosion* (CNA, November 1, 2000).

While use of the severe hurt frame mostly relates to physical hurt (H-S-Ph), the publications also frame passengers' suffering as mental (H-S-Me), typically quoting dramatic words used by survivors in recounting their experiences: *Some passengers sitting on the right of the plane fly across the cabin. Others hang by their seat belts, "like bats", said one survivor. The plane breaks into three pieces. Fireballs of flaming jet fuel shoot down the plane* (TST, November 10, 2000). And: *"Bursts of flames flew at us from the front part of the plane. I was so scared ... I thought we were going to die"* (TCP, November 1, 2000).

The time-sensitive urgency of passengers' claims (U-C-Ti) is referred to directly through specific word choices in numerous early reports that speak of their *urgent needs* (TCP, November 1, 2000; CNA, November 4, 2000), and the *rush* to provide *immediate*

emergency assistance and support to *helpless* survivors (TST, November 2, 2000; CNA, November 1, 2000; TCP, November 2, 2000). The urgency (U-C-Ti) frame is also interpreted from reports detailing how involved organisations focus on passengers' needs in their crisis response. *The Straits Times* reports how the SIA chairman's first statement after the accident emphasises the *immediate priority was to take care of all passengers and crew, and their respective families. "SIA will spare no efforts to assist every one of them"* (TST, November 2, 2000). As the crisis progresses, the urgency frame is employed less often in describing passengers' (mostly survivors') needs; this is interpreted as indicating medical and legal processes were underway and were being given time to take their due course.

The moral legitimacy of passengers' claims (L-C-Mo) is referred to directly in several numerous stories that speak of their *rights* and the *responsibilities* owed to them (TCP, November 1, 2000; CNA, November 4, 2000). This legitimacy (L-C-Mo) frame is also employed in reports detailing the actions of other crisis constituents, in many cases coinciding with a frame of social power (P-S-So) as these parties advocate for passengers' needs to be met. *The Straits Times* quotes the Singapore President: "*I think it is up to all of us to give them the support and comfort to get over the pains of this event,*" *he told reporters* (TST, November 5, 2000). Central News Agency details how SIA immediately offered *US\$400,000 in compensation to relatives of each of the dead, and will meet medical expenses of those injured ... The compensation for deceased victims is on top of US\$25,000 given in immediate aid* (CNA, November 1, 2000). The Taiwan President is reported to have *visited Chiang Kai-shek (CKS) International Airport Wednesday to pay respects for those who were killed ... [he] also visited a hospital in Taoyuan, some 35 kilometers south of Taipei, to express his concern for those who were injured* (CNA, November 1, 2000). *The China Post* reports how *representatives of the opposition parties concluded that they would ensure victims of the Singapore Airline plane crash ... received full compensation* (TCP, November 2, 2000). A minor frame of the passengers' ethical legitimacy of behaviour (L-B-Et) is interpreted from *The Straits Times*' coverage of survivors' understanding attitude towards SIA. One survivor is quoted: "*What happened was a horrible mistake, a terrible tragedy ... We feel very, very sad about what happened ... We don't want any lawsuit to add to an already difficult situation*" (TST, November 13, 2000). Reports detail how another survivor tries to make good from the accident; he had *started talking to the Red Cross ...*

to get airports, especially international hubs, to prepare ground staff so they know basic first-aid, and emergency medical and burn care (TST, November 13, 2000). Another minor frame in *The Straits Times*' articles is the survivors' willingness to take action (U-S-Ac) to get their needs addressed, as indicated in reports of their legal claims: *But one American survivor has already filed a suit in Los Angeles, prompting speculation that the airline can expect a flood of lawsuits, especially in the US* (TST, November 13, 2000).

6.2.2.3 Cabin crew

Most early coverage of the SQ006 accident does not differentiate passengers from cabin crew in describing the impact of the accident of those on board. In later stories in which the cabin crew is specifically mentioned, they are framed as possessing similar salience dimensions as the SQ006 passengers, and often mentioned together with the passengers.

Table 6.7 Summary of salience framing (Cabin crew)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
<i>The Straits Times</i>	Moderate	High	Low	0	Moderate	Definitive
Central News Agency	0	Moderate	Moderate	0	High	Dependent
<i>The China Post</i>	0	0	0	0	Low	N/A

The media sources all depict the crew as having suffered severe physical hurt (H-S-Ph). This salience frame is employed in *The Straits Times* through the use of dramatic descriptions. A report details how a crew member was *rushed back to hospital in acute pain ... "Some of the dressing on her wounds started to come apart, and fluid and pus were oozing from the wounds,"* [her father] *said* (TST, December 21, 2000). The Taiwan media sources use a more a more factual reporting tone: *The crash has claimed the life of one more victim, a crewman who was on duty and was burned over her whole body when the plane exploded* (TCP, November 2, 2000). Crew members' mental hurt (H-S-Me) is poignantly detailed in *The Straits Times*; at a colleagues' funeral, the *mental strain of the accident became clear when, as Mr Amir ... broke down and sobbed* (TST, November 9, 2000). The surviving crew *turned to each other for support... They have*

spent much time reliving the hours after the disaster struck, wondering how and why they had made it out alive (TST, November 30, 2000).

The time-sensitive urgency (U-C-Ti) of crew members' needs is interpreted through word choices detailing how individuals are *rushed* to hospital, *transferred to intensive care* or described as *fighting for her life* (e.g. TST, November 4, 5, 2000; CNA, November 4, 2000). The moral legitimacy (L-C-Mo) of crew members' claims is framed through the actions and words of involved organisations, and in many cases coincide with the social power (P-S-So) frame, as these parties advocate for the crews' needs to be met: *A SIA official said that the airline will also meet the medical expenses of injured passengers and crew members and will discuss compensation with each of them* (CNA, November 4, 2000).

The Straits Times portrays crew members as decent, hard-working people, committed to their jobs, and doing everything they can to help when the accident happened. Such mentions are interpreted as framing the crew as having moral legitimacy (L-S-Mo) and behaving ethically (L-B-Et). The frames are typically interpreted from poignant personal tributes written using emotive words and phrases. A crew member is described as *having a strong sense of duty towards the people she served. And, on the night that SQ 006 went down, she went beyond the call of duty* (TST, November 4, 2000). Another crew member describes how a colleague helped passengers out of the aircraft: *"On the runway Mark used his hand to hold in one passenger's dangling flesh until he was taken away on a stretcher"* (TST, November 10, 2000). The word "sacrifice" occurs in several articles. The sister of a deceased crew member says: *"Irene managed to escape, but she went back inside the plane to try and help the trapped passengers ... She sacrificed her life"* (TST, November 4, 2000). A reader's email to the editor is cited: *Cabin crew who had sacrificed their lives for passengers should be honoured with medals* (TST, November 12, 2000).

6.2.2.4 Pilots

Crisis stakeholders generally understand the situation from their own perspectives, which can lead to conflicts over what actions they believe need to be taken. Despite the severity of the SQ006 accident, the sampled media texts suggest that most conflicts

among stakeholders were addressed quickly; one reason for this was the speed with which the rescue, recovery and initial investigation processes were completed. The SQ006 pilots were at the centre of one such conflict, when the Taiwan authorities detained them to assist with the investigation, despite pleas from the Singapore government and an international pilots association.

Table 6.8 Summary of salience framing (Pilots)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
<i>The Straits Times</i>	High	High -High	Low	0	Moderate	Definitive
Central News Agency	High	Moderate -High	0	0	Low	Dominant
<i>The China Post</i>	High	Moderate -High	0	0	Low	Dominant

As the operators of the crashed aircraft, it was to be expected that coverage of the pilots would be extensive and this was corroborated by the quantitative analysis. It was also anticipated that some coverage of the pilots would be negative, depicting them as having some responsibility for the accident. The quantitative findings, however, also reflect an unexpected amount of overtly positive mentions of the pilots, which may be explained by the qualitative findings.

The strongest frames employed in reports about the pilots are negative legitimate crisis behaviour (L-B-Et negative) relating to their responsibility for the accident, and (positive) social power (P-S-So). In all three publications, framing of the pilots' unethical crisis behaviour (L-B-Et negative) is conveyed through quotes from surviving SQ006 passengers and family members about the decision to take off in inclement weather. *An unnamed foreign passenger who survived the crash blamed the Singapore Airlines flight crew for deciding to fly in bad weather, saying that China Airlines and other airline companies canceled their flights* (CNA, November 1, 2000). A bereaved family member said, in his sorrow: *"I am glad the pilot survived, so he can pay"* (TST, November 5, 2000). *The Straits Times* is the only media source to reference the pilots following correct procedures on the night of the crash; these are interpreted as legitimate behaviour (L-B-Et): *Capt Foong, with more than 10,000 flying hours behind him, assessed the situation himself and decided it was safe to move* (TST, November 2, 2000).

In the Taiwan publications, the unethical behaviour (L-B-Et negative) frame is interpreted in quotes from various officials and also in media commentaries. A representative of the airport management *stressed it was clear that human error led to the disaster. “The three pilots must shoulder all responsibility,” he said* (CNA, November 5, 2000) and *The SIA pilots should be held responsible and be made aware of the mistake that they had made, said the CAA* (TCP, November 2, 2000). A columnist reports *it is now crystal clear that the cockpit crew of the crashed jet were solely responsible for the tragic event* (TCP, November 2, 2000) because *the pilots had all been clearly informed of the airstrip’s repair work during their flight debriefing, hence there is no other justification at all for the cockpit crew using the wrong runway* (TCP, November 2, 2000).

However, the pilots are also framed as possessing moral and social legitimacy (L-S-Mo, L-S-So) in being responsible, well-trained and experienced professionals with a sound track record and responsible judgement. Numerous stories in the three publications describe the pilots as *experienced* (TST, November 9, 2000; TCP, November 4, 2000). *The Straits Times* employs the legitimacy (L-S-Mo) frame through quotes from other parties: *Colleagues have described him as “level-headed” ... [and] could not believe that Capt Foong could have made such a mistake. One said: “He’s the steady type, not gung-ho, not the type to take risks”* (TST, November 9, 2000).

The three publications frame the pilots as having social power (P-S-So) when their detention leads to an outpouring of support and demands for fair treatment. This frame is interpreted typically in quotes from third parties and often coincides with a frame of moral legitimacy of the pilots’ claims (L-C-Mo). In Singapore, local people *came to the defence of the three SQ 006 pilots, urging public support and understanding at this difficult time* (TST, December 20, 2000). Some reports in *The Straits Times* about public support for the pilots portray them almost as heroes, although SIA was reportedly displeased by this media framing, according to SIA’s then spokesperson, Rick Clements (pers. comm., 2011).

The strong support, interpreted as social power (P-S-So), for the pilots from local and international pilots’ associations is widely reported. Both Taiwan media sources detail how the local pilots’ association *has received not only letters from IFALPA, but also*

from ALPA in the United States and Singapore respectively after hearing the news that the pilots could face criminal prosecution in Taiwan (TCP, November 3, 2000). China News Agency reports: If the three pilots are not allowed to leave Taiwan before Christmas ... the England-based International Federation of Airline Pilots Associations might boycott flights to Taiwan, said its president (CNA, December 15, 2000). The pilots also receive support from some CAA officials: Yong also urged local prosecutors to consider carefully any decision to charge the SIA cockpit crew for manslaughter based solely upon Taiwan law practices (TCP, November 3, 2000). After the pilots are released, The Straits Times reports a Taiwan government official said the move to let the pilots go was the result of international pressure (TST, December 9, 2000), although China News Agency reports that prosecutors also denied that they decided to release the SIA pilots because of pressure from abroad (CNA, December 8, 2000).

The analysis uncovered a minor frame of the pilots' mental hurt (H-S-Me). This frame is employed most in *The Straits Times*, carried in media commentaries: *Reports that the lives of the three pilots are in danger have been circulating ... with some suggesting that death threats had been made against them (TST, November 9, 2000). Another article notes the three are under intense pressure. Long hours of questioning by investigators have not helped, nor have rumours that they had fled the crash site without helping to rescue passengers (TST, November 9, 2000).*

6.2.2.5 Families

Family members and close friends of crisis victims are themselves often seen as victims (Taylor & Fraser, 1982). Given that many Taiwan families were affected by having relatives involved in the SQ006 accident, the limited amount of coverage of the families in the Taiwan publications is an unexpected finding in the quantitative analysis. However, all three media sources frame the families as salient through severe mental hurt (H-S-Me), and having urgent (L-C-Ti) and morally legitimate (M-C-Mo) demands that draw powerful support (P-S-So) from other stakeholders.

In framing the families' hurt (H-S-Me), stories in *The Straits Times* detail their responses to hearing about the accident, describing their emotions and their memories of their

Table 6.9 Summary of salience framing (Families)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
The Straits Times	High	High	High	0	High	Definitive
Central News Agency	0	High	High	0	High	Dependent
The China Post	Low	High	High	0	High	Definitive

relatives. The severe hurt (H-S-Me) frame is carried in dramatic descriptions using vivid and emotive words and phrases, often quoting family members. *For the families ... it's been an interminable time, with days blurring into nights even as tears blur the eyes and anguish rends the soul* (TST, November 8, 2000). Stories sketch poignant scenes of the families' wait for news: *Some had clung to the thin thread of hope ... Their pent-up frustrations and anxieties, bottled up as they travelled in virtual silence on the flight to Taipei, gave way to open outpouring of sorrow and anguish* (TST, November 3, 2000). The families' identification of their loved ones' remains is detailed: *It is a chore worse than death for some ... the need to look at every crushed or burnt corpse to find some identifying clue is agonising and painful* (TST, November 11, 2000). The families are called *people with hearts as broken as some of the bodies they are viewing* (TST, November 11, 2000) as they arrive at the makeshift morgue; some *recoiled in horror when they saw the photographs* (TST, November 2, 2000) of the corpses. A woman *falls to her knees as she walks towards the entrance and wails: "Please, don't force me in. My husband can't be in there. He has to be alive... he has to be"* (TST, November 11, 2000). Several headlines and subheads frame the families' hurt using stylistic parallelism for dramatic rhetoric effect: *Despair. Sorrow. Hysteria* (TST, November 3, 2000); *Wait. Watch. Weep* (TST, November 3, 2000); *Worry. Fear. Frustration ... Sympathy* (TST, November 3, 2000).

Some reports in *The China Post* also use vivid description and emotive quotes to carry the severe mental hurt frame (H-S-Me): *An 80-year-old man surnamed Wu arrived at the airport shortly after the accident begging airline staff for the seat information on his daughter ... "Tell me where she sat for God's sake. So I can know whether she is alive or not"* (TCP, November 2, 2000). In Central News Agency stories, this frame (H-S-Me) is employed in a more factual reporting tone: *Some 400 grief-stricken family*

members of the victims from 18 countries gathered for the memorial service ... to mourn and pray for their beloved (CNA, November 18, 2000).

In the three publications, the families are depicted as having morally legitimate claims (L-C-Mo), typically interpreted from the actions of other stakeholders including SIA, the media, the Singapore and Taiwan governments, a victims' support group, and the Singapore public. Consequently, this legitimacy (L-C-Mo) frame often coincides with the frame of social power (P-S-So) as the families gain power from the advocacy of these other parties. Several articles refer to the *rights* of the families, particularly regarding compensation: *Some families will sue ... That is their right* (TST, November 8, 2000). Taiwan's President *told the grieving families that he has ordered all relevant government agencies to assist them in handling related affairs* (CNA, November 1, 2000), while the Taiwan Cabinet *has also established a joint service center, staffed by ROC officials and SIA employees, to offer all necessary counseling and assistance to the families of the crash victims* (TCP, November 3, 2000). The Singapore Prime Minister, *expressing shock and grief over the crash ... instructed airline officials and relevant Singapore government officials to render all possible assistance to the families* (CNA, November 1, 2000).

The urgency (time sensitive) (U-C-Ti) frame is interpreted from the use of such words as *immediate*, *priority* and *urgent*, often quoting representatives of involved organisations. The SIA chairman *said that the top priority will be to give every assistance needed to the families of the affected passengers* (CNA, November 1, 2000). The families are also framed as possessing urgency (U-S-Ac) in their willingness to take action. Stories in all three publications detail how families gate-crash media conferences. An article headlined: *Families of jetliner crash victims turn anger on SIA* (TCP, November 3, 2000) reports: *Grieving relatives in both Taipei and Singapore directed their wrath toward Singapore Airlines yesterday, condemning the flagship carrier for keeping them in the dark for hours over the fate of their loved ones* (TCP, November 3, 2000). In Taipei, a relative *demand[ed] to know why SIA had been slow in releasing information about the crash to families of the victims* (TST, November 3, 2000). Later stories report: *Some families will sue for millions more if the airline is found guilty of wilful misconduct* (TST, November 8, 2000). One relative is described as *seeking compensation for the unborn child of his sister-in-law ... He said that if SIA refused such compensation, he*

would seek the help of consumers associations as well as legislators (TST, November 8, 2000).

6.2.2.6 Taiwan emergency services (EMS)

Case studies of some past crises involving accidents have shown how the needs of survivors and the bereaved can conflict with the priorities of emergency and regulatory agencies (Davis & Scraton 1999; Dix, 1998), as illustrated in accounts of the 1988 Pan Am crash in Lockerbie. Due to the accessible location of the SQ006 accident, the Taiwan emergency services completed search and rescue work within several days, which may account for the limited coverage of this stakeholder. Furthermore, the sampled media texts suggest they faced no resistance to their work from other stakeholders. This lack of conflict may help to explain why the coverage employs few salience frames.

Table 6.10 Summary of salience findings (EMS)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
<i>The Straits Times</i>	Low	Moderate -Low	Low	0	0	Definitive
<i>Central News Agency</i>	0	Moderate	0	0	0	Demanding
<i>The China Post</i>	0	Low	0	0	0	Demanding

Because of their official status and role, the emergency services may be assumed to have power and legitimacy, and their claims to have legitimacy and urgency. However, possession of these salience dimensions appear to have been taken as understood in the media stories. The only frames of power (political) and urgency (time sensitivity) identified in the analysis are references to the EMS having been *instructed* by the Taiwan government (CNA, November 1, 2000) and *rushing* to the site of the crash (CNA, November 1, 2000).

However, this stakeholder is prominently framed in all three publications as possessing legitimacy through their ethical behaviour (L-B-Et). Descriptions of their activities depict rescue workers going beyond the call of duty, almost portraying them as heroes: *With perspiration pouring from their bodies while unbearable heat burned their hands,*

more than 1,500 Taiwanese rescuers had raced against time as they sifted through red-hot debris ... Not even blasting winds and pouring rain brought by typhoon Xangsane could deter them (TST, November 3, 2000). Their dedication is publicly praised by the Taiwan President and a Singapore minister who *expressed his special appreciation of the devotion of hundreds of ROC military servicemen and firemen who had braved strong winds and torrential rains ... to participate in rescue and search missions* CNA, November 1, 2000). One occurrence of the frame of unethical behaviour (L-S-Et negative) is interpreted in a report in *The Straits Times* that quotes injured passengers about failings in the rescue response: “*The emergency-vehicle driver was a maniac. He was driving like a fool*” (TST, November 1, 2000).

6.2.2.7 Taiwan air authorities (CAA)

Taiwan’s Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) is under the country’s Ministry of Transportation and Communications. It is identified as a separate stakeholder in this research because of the specific role it played in the SQ006 crisis, bringing it into conflict with other branches of the Taiwan government, as well as with the Singapore government and SIA. In particular, the CAA is shown to be at odds with the Prosecutor’s Office; the two bodies had overlapping responsibilities in investigating the accident and this put them in conflict. The findings from the qualitative analysis suggest this conflict influenced the salience framing of the CAA and the Taiwan government overall.

Table 6.11 Summary of salience framing (CAA)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
<i>The Straits Times</i>	Low	7 ???? (-40)????	0	0	0	Dominant
Central News Agency	Moderate	Moderate -High	Low	0	0	Definitive
<i>The China Post</i>	0	High -Moderate	Low	0	0	Dependent

A dominant frame in coverage of the CAA is negative legitimacy of its crisis behaviour (L-B-Et negative). The three media sources detail the investigation into the role that CAA personnel and their procedures may have played in causing the crash. Coverage in *The Straits Times* highlights the *unsafe* [airport] *conditions on the night of the crash*

(TST, December 20, 2000) and emphasises that *the airport control tower had assessed the situation as operationally safe for Flight SQ 006 to go ahead* (TST, November 2, 2000). *The Straits Times* also uses quotes from subject experts to carry the unethical behaviour frame (L-B-Et negative): *British aviation analyst Andrew Brookes ... was quoted on television as saying that it would have been “disgraceful” to switch on the marker lights on the closed runway ... adding that having a runway “half-open and half-closed” was simply a set-up for a disaster* (TST, November 6, 2000). The CAA is ridiculed for its request to *probe SIA’s safety systems* (TST, November 21, 2000), seen as an attempt to shift blame; a letter to the editor asks: *“From what high moral point do you think you are coming to Singapore to audit the airline and CAAS?”* (TST, November 27, 2000).

The Taiwan publications employ the L-B-Et negative frame in reporting the progress of the investigation. The investigators are said to be *still probing whether there were adequate safety measures* (CNA, November 5, 2000) and *focusing their probe on whether the green center lights of the runway under construction were switched on the night of the accident, leading the cockpit crew to mistaken the airstrip as its designated runway for departure* (TCP, November 5, 2000). Another article comments: *In an apparent attempt to disclaim responsibility for the crash, CAA Deputy Director-General said ... the missing lights would not have affected take-offs or landings* (CNA, November 6, 2000) – the opening phrase is interpreted as derisive, portraying the CAA as defensive.

The (positive) ethically legitimate behaviour frame (L-B-Et) is also employed by all three publications in coverage of the CAA’s investigation; the frame is typically interpreted from descriptions of the painstaking efforts to ensure objectivity and fairness. Central News Agency reports how the *special investigation task force has already invited Singaporean, U.S., and domestic pilots as well as physicians and psychiatrists to join the task force* (CNA, November 7, 2000). One official is described as having an *open manner* in talking with international media representatives (TST, November 3, 2000), although he maintained professionalism, *steadfastly declining to draw conclusions* (TST, November 3, 2000).

The conflict between the air authorities and other government bodies, notably the prosecutor's office, is detailed in several stories in the two Taiwan publications. In narrating the disagreement, the coverage variously employs the frames of ethical/unethical legitimacy of behaviour (L-B-Et positive/negative) and cognitive legitimacy/illegitimacy of the claim (L-C-Co positive/negative) in coverage of the two organisations. In reporting the disagreement over proposed legal action against the SQ006 pilots, Central News Agency uses parentheses to cite specific terms used by the air authorities' representatives who *complained that the Taoyuan prosecutors have been the main cause of "difficulties" during the ASC investigation, arising from ... "obvious conflicts"* (CNA, November 5, 2000). In the same story, the response from the prosecutors' office is reported in a more factual tone: *The Taoyuan Prosecutor's Office, however, said Chang's remarks only represented the CAA's views. It stressed that only the chief prosecutor responsible for handling the case can decide whether the three SIA pilots ... should be indicted on any criminal charges* (CNA, November 5, 2000).

The different style and tone in these Central News Agency reports is interpreted as questioning the validity of the CAA's criticisms while upholding the explanation of the government's prosecutors. In contrast, *The China Post* reports that the air authorities' investigation *has been hampered by the prosecutors' investigation* (TCP, November 7, 2000) but does not immediately report the prosecutors' response; this is interpreted as favouring the CAA's perspective on the situation. The fact that the Central News Agency is government funded, while *The China Post* is considered pro-opposition may be relevant in accounting for the different framing emphases between the two media sources.

By highlighting the statistics of Taiwan's past air accident record, *The Straits Times* frames the CAA as lacking social legitimacy (L-S-So negative): *In the past five years, there have been 16 accidents in Taiwan, including the SIA crash, with the loss of 597 lives. This is one of the world's highest accident rates* (TST, November 7, 2000). Use of this theme in *The Straits Times* increases after the preliminary investigation report cites pilot error as the cause; the frame is carried in quotes from numerous third parties underlining concerns about Taiwan's aviation safety. One reader is quoted: *"Despite the accident, I will still fly with SIA ... But I will not visit Taipei until the authorities have the ground radar and other safety measures in place"* (TST, November 8, 2000).

As a government body charged with specific responsibilities in the event of an aviation accident, the CAA may be assumed to have power and its claims to have legitimacy and urgency. However, these frames are not prominent in the sampled texts. The CAA's political power (P-S-Po) is referenced in a few stories, typically carried in comments from other parties that they would *respect the findings of the investigation* (CNA, November 4, 2000).

6.2.2.8 Taiwan government (ROC govt)

At the time of the SQ006 crash, the Taiwan government was in transition; analysis of the sampled media texts suggests political friction and infighting were played out in management of the SQ006 crisis: *There have been suggestions here that "inter-agency rivalry" may have led to the Justice Ministry's refusal to give up its right to investigate the crash or to prosecute the pilots* (TST, December 8, 2000). One official called for all factions to *temporarily suspend all meaningless conflicts* (TST, November 3, 2000).

Table 6.12 Summary of salience framing (ROC govt)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
<i>The Straits Times</i>	High	6???? (-8) ????	Low	0	0	Definitive
<i>Central News Agency</i>	High	High -Moderate	0	0	0	Dominant
<i>The China Post</i>	High	High -Moderate	0	0	0	Dominant

The friction within the government, as well as with some other crisis stakeholders, is reflected in strongly-worded statements from government officials, quoted in all three media sources and interpreted as employing a frame of power. Thus, the dominant frame interpreted in coverage of the Taiwan government is power (coercive and political) (P-S-Co, P-S-Po). This contrasts with salience framing in coverage of the Taiwan air authorities and the Singapore government, who may be assumed to have political power but are not framed as such in the sampled texts. In this manner, the texts suggest an imbalance of power between these three organisations. Certainly, the Taiwan government's political and coercive power became evident in reports of the conflict over detention of the SQ006 pilots.

In all three publications, the government's political power (P-S-Po) frame is carried through quotes from officials invoking the country's judicial system: *The Justice Minister says that under Taiwan's criminal law, the island has the right to pursue the case should it find the pilots negligent* (TST, November 9, 2000). Central News Agency reports: *The prosecutors added that the Republic of China is a sovereign state and judicial rights are part of its sovereignty. "The prosecutors' judicial rights are by no means to be interfered with by any other force"* (CNA, December 8, 2000). Officials' harsh reaction to challenges to the government's authority is also detailed: *Taiwan's Justice Minister yesterday slammed the global federation of airline pilots' associations, calling its threat to boycott the island's airspace "a very inappropriate" interference in Taiwan's judicial system* (TST, December 8, 2000).

During the negotiations between Taiwan government officials and their Singapore counterparts over the release of the pilots, a Taiwan prosecutor is quoted: *"I understand that they [the Singapore authorities] need to discuss this internally, and I'll give them a reasonable time to do so. I hope they will give me an answer in the next few days ... We cannot wait indefinitely for an answer"* (TST, December 20, 2000). This quote is also interpreted as employing a frame of urgency (likely to act) (U-S-Ac) and a suggestion of coercive power (P-S-Co) in the veiled threat. All three publications frame the Taiwan government as having coercive power in how they detain and threaten action against the SQ006 pilots: *Taoyuan County prosecutors ... have already barred the three crew members from leaving the country and are reportedly ready to bring charges against them* (CNA, November 6, 2000). *The China Post* reports: *The three cockpit crew survived the fiery crash but have been barred from leaving Taiwan ... Taiwan prosecutors have indicated the three could be charged for professional negligence as evidence showed that the plane made a wrong turn* (TCP, December 16, 2000).

The second prominent theme that emerges in coverage of the Taiwan government is legitimacy. Frames of positive and negative legitimacy are identified. The government is framed as having ethical legitimacy (L-B-Et) in its management of the crisis; the frame is employed in describing its actions: *Thirty minutes after the crash took place the government had set up an emergency control centre ... The government yesterday also activated a cross-department service centre to offer DNA examination as well as legal, medical, visa and other services to help the bereaved families* (TST, November 3, 2000).

The prime minister *went to the airport to understand the rescue efforts* (CNA, November 1, 2000) and, *since many of injured passengers are foreign nationals, Premier Chang Chun-hsiung have ordered relevant government agencies to offer all necessary assistance to them and their families* (CNA, November 1, 2000). The frame is also carried in quotes from other parties praising the government's crisis response: *Singapore Minister ... extended grateful thanks to the government for its efficient and compassionate handling of the rescue work* (CNA, November 4, 2000).

The frame of unethical behaviour (L-B-Et negative) is interpreted in *The Straits Times* from specific words used in reports describing how the government *again reversed its decision* and *went back on its word* regarding the pilots (TST, December 16, 21, 2000). In reporting new developments, stories emphasise the frequent policy twists and turns, noting how *prosecutors investigating the crash added more conditions for lifting a ban on their departure* (TST, December 16, 2000). Additionally, the Taiwan government is depicted as biased against SIA and the SQ006 pilots. One story cites a reader questioning why the pilots were detained while *none of the Taiwanese airport personnel who may be implicated have been stopped from leaving Taiwan* (TST, December 22, 2000). *The China Post* quotes a representative from the air authorities complaining that, contrary to international regulations, *prosecutors also refused to allow the ASC and foreign experts to examine the dead passengers* (TCP, November 7, 2000).

The Straits Times contrasts the government's handling of the SQ006 accident to alleged shortcomings in its handling of past disasters. This is interpreted as negative legitimacy of the stakeholder entity (L-S-Mo negative): *Taiwan's government moved fast this time to save the survivors* (TST, November 3, 2000).

The cognitive legitimacy/illegitimacy (L-C-Co) frame of the government's crisis claims is employed, particularly in the two Taiwan publications, in detailing the conflict with the air authorities. The Prosecutor's Office *stressed that only the chief prosecutor responsible for handling the case can decide whether the three SIA pilots aboard the ill-fated plane should be indicted* (CNA, November 5, 2000). This point is later reiterated by the Justice Minister who is quoted saying that *it is within the local prosecutors' jurisdiction and rights to bring charges against the three pilots* (TCP, November 7, 2000).

6.2.2.9 Federation of pilots' associations (Pilots ass)

None of the three media sources report in detail on the federation of pilots' associations and there is only limited salience framing of this stakeholder. However, it is framed as possessing coercive power (P-S-Co) and urgency through the likelihood of taking action (U-S-Ac). These frames are carried in reports that quote association officials setting deadlines for their claims to be addressed and threatening boycotts: *If the three pilots are not allowed to leave Taiwan before Christmas and the New Year, the England-based International Federation of Airline Pilots Associations might boycott flights to Taiwan, said its president* (CNA, December 7, 2000). This stakeholder is also framed as behaving unethically in the crisis (L-B-Et negative), in quotes from Taiwan government officials responding to its threats: *Taiwan's Justice Minister yesterday slammed the global federation of airline pilots' associations, calling its threat to boycott the island's airspace "a very inappropriate" interference in Taiwan's judicial system* (TST, December 8, 2000).

Table 6.13 Summary of salience framing (Pilots ass)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
The Straits Times	Low	0 -Low	Low	0	0	Dangerous
Central News Agency	Low	0	Low	0	0	Dangerous
The China Post	0	0	0	0	0	N/A

6.2.2.10 Singapore government (Spore govt)

As may have been expected, *The Straits Times* includes more coverage of the Singapore government's role in the SQ006 crisis than do the Taiwan media sources. What is common across all three media platforms is the factual manner in which the Singapore government is reported, revealing few salience frames, in contrast to how its Taiwan counterpart is depicted.

The most prominent frame identified is ethical legitimacy of behaviour (L-B-Et), typically conveyed in accounts of the government's crisis response activities and quoting praise from other constituents. A relative of a survivor is quoted: *"I've never felt so proud to be a Singaporean – it was impressive to see the speed with which the*

authorities reacted” (TST, November 7, 2000). Central News Agency details how a Singapore minister *immediately visited a makeshift funeral hall at the CKS Airport’s domestic lines terminal, where the remains of the deceased were kept, and several hospitals where the injured passengers were receiving medical treatment* (CNA, November 1, 2000). A report in *The Straits Times* quotes Taiwan’s chief investigator: *“The Singapore side has been very cooperative. Whatever material we wanted, they would give to us, and whatever interviews we wanted to conduct, they would cooperate with us”* (TST, November 7, 2000).

Table 6.14 Summary of salience framing (Spore govt)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
<i>The Straits Times</i>	Low -Low	Moderate	0	0	0	Dominant
Central News Agency	0 -Low	Low	Low	0	0	Dependent
<i>The China Post</i>	0 -Low	Low	0	0	0	Discretionary

Although the Singapore government may be assumed to have political power (P-S-Po), this frame is not evident from the analysis. However, the analysis reveals that the Singapore government is framed as lacking power (P-S-Po negative) within Taiwan, notably in its attempts to secure the release of the pilots. The imbalance of power between the two governments is interpreted from quotes by Singapore officials that position the Taiwan body as controlling the situation: *“On Singapore’s part, we have strived to find an arrangement that will secure the early release of the pilots. We understand that the Taiwanese authorities are giving serious consideration to the matter. We are waiting to hear from them”* (TST, December 16, 2000). A later article reports: *Taiwan has turned down a request from Singapore to send back the three pilots ... a Singapore government official said Tuesday* (CNA, November 28, 2000).

6.2.2.11 Singapore president, S.R. Nathan (Spore Pres)

This stakeholder is only mentioned in *The Straits Times*; no frames are identified.

6.2.2.12 Singapore public (Spore public)

The Singapore public is mentioned only in a few texts from *The Straits Times*. The coverage plays up the public's emotional hurt (H-S-Me) resulting from the accident, often using a dramatic tone and emotive vocabulary: *They were people who had been total strangers until disaster transformed them into steadfast friends ... Your tragedy is theirs. Your tragedy is ours. We share their grief* (TST, November 18, 2000). One article reports how memorial websites attracted hundreds of messages, such as: *"Just know that thousands all over Singapore and in many parts of the world have shed tears for all of you"* (TST, November 3, 2000). The public's behaviour in the crisis is framed as ethically legitimate (L-B-Et) in rallying to help those affected by the accident. Reports detail how so many people turned up to donate blood that *makeshift counters had to be set up in the centre's lobby* (TST, November 12, 2000). Hundreds of Singaporeans attended *the funerals of cabin crew and passengers ... Some well-wishers even offered the family money to tide them over the crisis* (TST, November 12, 2000).

Table 6.15 Summary of salience framing (Spore public)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
<i>The Straits Times</i>	0	Moderate	0	0	Low	Discretionary

The analysis of mentions of the Singapore public, however, was inconclusive as to the extent to which the identified attributes contributed to making the Singapore public a salient stakeholder. Certainly, the coverage depicts many Singaporeans as perceiving themselves to have been affected by the crisis; this would qualify them to be considered a stakeholder based on some definitions of the term. However, it was unclear if the Singapore public perceived itself as having a specific stake or need in the crisis. The coverage suggests their main role was in supporting and so contributing social power (P-S-So) particularly to SIA and the SQ006 pilots over the detention of the latter.

6.2.2.13 Taiwan president, Chen Shui-bian (ROC Pres)

Central News Agency was the only media source to frame coverage of the Taiwan President. He is framed as having political power (P-S-Po) in his crisis management

leadership: *Chen Shui-bian instructed relevant government agencies to make all-out rescue efforts* (CNA, November 1, 2000). He also ordered the military to provide all necessary assistance for the rescue efforts. The president told the grieving families that he has ordered all relevant government agencies to assist them in handling related affairs (CNA, November 1, 2000). The legitimacy frame is also employed in reporting the President's behaviour during the crisis; much is made of his empathy and compassion through detailed descriptions of his actions: *The president then visited the crash site to express his regards and respects for all those who have braved strong winds and torrential rains ... to rescue passengers* (CNA, November 2, 2000). Also: *Chen also visited a hospital in Taoyuan, some 35 kilometers south of Taipei, to express his concern for those who were injured in the flight mishap* (CNA, November 2, 2000).

Table 6.16 Summary of salience framing (ROC Pres)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
<i>The Straits Times</i>	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Central News Agency	Low	Moderate	0	0	0	Dominant
<i>The China Post</i>	0	0	0	0	0	N/A

6.2.2.14 Taiwan public (ROC public)

Although the Taiwan public is mentioned only briefly in one Central News Agency article, the mention is significant in terms of framing this stakeholder as having urgent claims. A story headlined: *'Respect experts investigation,' urges Transport Minister* (CNA, November 4, 2000) calls on the Taiwan people *to respect the judgment of the experts in determining the causes of the crash of Singapore Airlines (SIA) flight SQ-006*, (CNA, November 4, 2000) suggests the Taiwan public were seen as not behaving quite ethically and were likely to take action.

It has been contended that media frames do not necessarily need to be repeated many times to have a strong impact (Hertog & McLeod, 2001). However, media coverage of a crisis typically follows a format of new stories building on previous coverage in the same publication, often reiterating key information to ensure audiences retain the story thread. In this way, significant media frames may be expected to recur in subsequent coverage,

which is not the case for the salience framing of the Taiwan public. However, the fact that CNA, the country's official news agency, employs such a frame about the Taiwan public suggests the frame may be stronger than its single use suggests.

Table 6.17 Summary of salience framing (ROC public)

	Power	Legitimacy	Urgency	Proximity	Severe hurt	Stakeholder type (MAW)
Central News Agency	0	0 -Low	Low	0	0	Demanding

6.2.2.15 Summary of the qualitative findings

The qualitative analysis elaborates some of the quantitative findings insofar as how constituents are framed as salient crisis stakeholders may partly explain their apparent newsworthiness and the valence of coverage about them. The qualitative analysis identified numerous occurrences of the crisis stakeholder salience frames, as introduced in Chapter 5, in the sampled texts. Overall, however, much of the news coverage, besides being reported in a neutral tone as the quantitative analysis found, also contains no evidence of the use of stakeholder salience frames. This is particularly observable in the stories from the two Taiwan publications, Central News Agency and *The China Post*, which generally employ a more factual tone of reporting and use fewer frame-containing quotes from parties involved in or observing the crisis.

Three possible explanations are suggested to explain the limited use of salience frames; in all likelihood, each of these factors had a role to play. Firstly, factual, frame-free coverage may reflect reporters' and editors' preference to adhere to journalistic principles of unbiased and objective reporting. If this is the case, then it may be surmised that at least some of the occurrences of stakeholder salience frames may be unintentional. Secondly, a publication's editorial policies may dictate a specific type of content and reporting style to be used in news stories; that is, factual reports with no content that may be seen as sensationalist reporting.

A third explanation for the conservative use of stakeholder salience frames in the sampled texts may be the lack of significant stakeholder conflicts and disagreements that

occurred during the studied phases of the SQ006 crisis. The accident took place in an accessible location, rescue and recovery operations were completed quickly, and the initial investigation was concluded promptly. Consequently, any friction that occurred between stakeholders was resolved quickly. This is not typical of all organisation crises; the academic literature contains ample evidence of situations that involve complex, volatile and longterm misunderstanding and distrust among involved parties. It may be that news coverage of such situations may employ more media frames of stakeholder salience.

Analysis of the sampled texts found evidence of four of the five salience characteristics occurring as stakeholder frames: power, legitimacy, urgency and severe hurt. There was insufficient evidence of proximity being used as a stakeholder salience frame; this is discussed further in Chapter 7. The findings also identified the occurrence of most of the identified sub-categories of salience frames, suggesting their pertinence in determining crisis stakeholder salience.

Many of the identified salience frames in all three media sources occur in third party quotations incorporated into news stories. It may be assumed that reporters and editors make decisions about whose quotes to include in a story based on the perceived news value. This type of content selection constitutes media framing. However, the reasons behind the choice of specific quotes can only be surmised: did reporters try to include a balance of different perspectives or did they unintentionally or deliberately choose quotes that favour one specific interpretation of the piece of news being reported? Besides third party quotes, some stakeholder salience frames are employed in media commentaries, typically through the use of dramatic or emotive words and phrases, such as harrowing descriptions of the suffering of SQ006 survivors or family members. Frames carried in this type of reporting are identified predominantly in stories in *The Straits Times*.

Nearly all the identified SQ006 stakeholders are framed in the sampled texts as possessing some of the crisis stakeholder salience characteristics. According to the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) salience model, stakeholder salience is measured by a simple count of the number of salience attributes (power, legitimacy and urgency) a stakeholder possesses. By this assessment, many of the SQ006 stakeholders appear to be

framed as having the highest level of salience, that of definitive stakeholder, in at least one of the media sources. Given the extensive use of third party quotes in the texts to reference different angles of the same piece of news, this is not unexpected. However, an identified limitation of the MAW model is its inability to account for degrees of attribute possession, which may provide a more accurate representation of total stakeholder salience.

Furthermore, while the MAW model's salience attributes are defined as functioning across a single dimension (possession indicates increased salience), the current study recognises that the crisis stakeholder salience dimensions may function bi-directionally, with positive or negative implications in determining salience. The findings reflect how some stakeholders are framed through negative interpretations of, specifically: stakeholder's political power (P-S-Po negative) (Singapore government); cognitive legitimacy of the claim (L-C-Co negative) (Taiwan government); ethical legitimacy of behaviour (L-B-Et negative) (several stakeholders but particularly the SQ006 pilots); and stakeholder's moral pre-crisis legitimacy (L-S-Mo negative) (SIA and the Taiwan government).

Thus, while this study's qualitative findings are presented below as a total count of frame occurrences, it is suggested that a more revealing assessment of stakeholders' overall salience may be provided by categorising the findings as indicating low, medium or high salience in comparison to the depiction of other stakeholders' salience in the same publication. Thus, the high/medium/low categorisations are included in the above descriptions of the salience findings for each stakeholder, noting that these refer to the strength of the framing based on a count of occurrences.

By assessing the level of each stakeholder's possession of the salience attributes and taking into account the possible effect of negative interpretations of some salience dimensions, the findings suggest that the SQ006 passengers and families are framed as having considerably more salience than other stakeholders. This supports crisis management best practice that the priority stakeholders in a crisis are those who have been most harmed by the situation. Although the occurrence of salience frames differs slightly across the three publications, the source of the passengers' and families' enhanced salience may be summarised as linked to their social power (P-S-So), moral

legitimacy of their claims (L-C-Mo), urgency of their claims (U-C-Ti) and their severe hurt (H-S-Ph in the case of the passengers, H-S-Me for the families). This would appear to support, in particular, the significance of severe hurt and social power as crisis stakeholder salience dimensions.

The findings also reflect how some stakeholders are framed differently across the three publications. This is not surprising given how media reporting of a crisis typically builds stories around commentaries from parties involved in or observing the situation. Such constituents' observations – or at least those observations they make which may be considered newsworthy – typically go beyond reporting known facts to include subjective interpretations of the situation. In quoting individuals' opinions and personal narratives, the resulting news stories can encompass different depictions of involved stakeholders, complete with contrasting salience frames.

The analysis findings thus identify patterns in how the SQ006 stakeholders are framed as salient in the sampled media texts, and attest to the significance of the crisis stakeholder salience characteristics identified in Chapter 5. Furthermore, interpretation of this study's divergent findings within the specific context of the SQ006 crisis offers insights into how stakeholder relationships and expectations may be understood by parties observing the situation. Such insights may aid managers of an organisation-in-crisis in prioritising stakeholders' claims so as to determine crisis response strategies that are not viewed as favouring the interests of solely the organisation. These findings are discussed in Chapter 7.

Table 6.18 Summary of salience findings in *The Straits Times*' coverage (N = 110 articles)

Salience frames (count)	SIA	On board	*Crew	Pilots	Families	EMS	CAA	ROC govt	Pilots ass	Spore govt	Spore Pres	Spore public	ROC Pres
P-S-Co	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	2	0	0	0	0
P-S-Ut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
P-S-No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P-S-Po	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	8	0	1 (-2)	0	0	0
P-S-So	6	12	4	34	22	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P-S-Pe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-C-Pr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-C-Mo	1	26	4	2	41	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-C-Co	0	0	0	0	0	0	3 (-2)	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-S-So	18	0	0	6	0	0	0 (-9)	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-S-Mo	0 (-1)	0	4	2	0	0	0	0 (-1)	0	0	0	0	0
L-B-Et	29 (-8)	3	6	8 (-21)	0	4 (-1)	4 (-29)	3 (-6)	0 (-1)	4	0	9	0
U-C-Ti	2	22	3	1	37	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
U-S-Ac	0	7	0	0	14	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Pr-C-Ge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pr-C-Or	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Ec	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Ph	0	70	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Me	3	11	8	7	57	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	0
H-S-Re	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

ROC public was not mentioned in articles

Table 6.19 Summary of salience findings in Central News Agency's coverage (N = 48 articles)

Salience frames (count)	SIA	On board	*Crew	Pilots	Families	EMS	CAA	ROC govt	Pilots ass	Spore govt	ROC Pres	ROC public
P-S-Co	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	1	0	0	0
P-S-Ut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
P-S-No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P-S-Po	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	0	0 (-2)	3	0
P-S-So	0	5	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P-S-Pe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-C-Pr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-C-Mo	0	31	3	2	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-C-Co	0	0	0	1	0	0	3 (-1)	5 (-2)	0	0	0	0
L-S-So	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-S-Mo	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
L-B-Et	13 (-1)	0	0	0 (-31)	0	4	5 (-7)	13	0	2	4	0 (-1)
U-C-Ti	1	11	3	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
U-S-Ac	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	1
Pr-C-Ge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pr-C-Or	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Ec	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Ph	0	61	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Me	0	1	0	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Re	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

S'pore Pres, S'pore Public were not mentioned in articles

Table 6.20 Summary of salience findings in *The China Post's* coverage (N = 17 articles)

Salience frames (count)	SIA	On board	*Crew	Pilots	Families	EMS	CAA	ROC govt	Pilots ass	Spore govt	ROC Pres
P-S-Co	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
P-S-Ut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
P-S-No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P-S-Po	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0 (-1)	0
P-S-So	0	2	0	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
P-S-Pe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-C-Pr	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-C-Mo	0	4	0	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-C-Co	0	0	0	2	0	0	4 (-3)	4 (-1)	0	0	0
L-S-So	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
L-S-Mo	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
L-B-Et	3 (-7)	0	0	0 (-13)	0	1	10 (-3)	5 (-1)	0	2	0
U-C-Ti	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
U-S-Ac	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pr-C-Ge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pr-C-Or	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Ec	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Ph	0	11	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Me	1	2	0	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
H-S-Re	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

S'pore Pres, S'pore public, ROC public were not mentioned in articles

Table 6.21 Legend of variables*Stakeholders:*

SIA	Singapore Airlines	ROC govt	Taiwan government officials, unless individually named
On board	SQ005 passengers and cabin crew	Pilots ass	Pilots' associations
*Crew	SQ006 cabin crew	S'pore govt	Singapore government officials, unless individually named
Pilots	SQ006 pilots/cockpit crew	S'pore Pres	Then president of Singapore, S.R. Nathan
Families	Relatives and close friends of all those on board SQ006	S'pore public	Singapore public not directly involved in the crisis
EMS	Taiwan emergency services personnel	ROC Pres	Then president of Taiwan Chen Sui-bian
ROC air	Personnel of CKS Airport and Taiwan aviation authorities	ROC public	Taiwan public not directly involved in the crisis

Newsworthiness dimensions

Freq (n articles)	Frequency, measured by number of articles in which they appeared
Extent (words)	Extent, measured by number of words in thousands ('000s)
Prom (count)	Prominence, measured by count of occurrences of prominence markers
Val pos / neg %	Valence, measured by percentage of positive/negative mentions (all others being neutral) by word count for that stakeholder

Salience frames (count) – All measured by count of occurrences

P-S-Co Coercive power, s-holder	L-C-Pr Pragmatic legit, claim	U-C-Ti Time sensitive urg, claim	H-S-Me Mental hurt, s-holder
P-S-Ut Utilitarian power, s-holder	L-C-Mo Moral legit, claim	U-S-Ac Action urg, s-holder	H-S-Re Reputation hurt, s-holder
P-S-No Normative power, s-holder	L-C-Co Cognitive legit, claim	Pr-C-Ge Geog prox, claim	
P-S-Po Political power, s-holder	L-S-So Social legit, s-holder	Pr-C-Or Organised prox, claim	
P-S-So Social power, s-holder	L-S-Mo Moral legit, s-holder	H-S-Ec Econ hurt, s-holder	
P-S-Pe Pervasive power, s-holder	L-B-Et Ethical legit, s-holder	H-S-Ph Physical hurt, s-holder	

6.3 Conclusions from the SQ006 case study analysis

This chapter first reviewed the events of the SQ006 accident in October 2000. It then reported the findings of the mixed methods content analysis that explores quantitatively how the news media coverage projected the newsworthiness of organisations and individuals involved in the crisis, and qualitatively how the media texts frame the salience of key crisis stakeholders.

The stakeholder theory salience model of Mitchell *et al.* (1997) assesses stakeholder salience based on organisation managers' perceptions of stakeholders' possession of the salience attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency. In the context of an organisation crisis, the literature provides extensive evidence that managers often adopt an organisation-centric bias in assessing the salience of crisis stakeholders, typically prioritising those seen as instrumentally valuable to the firm. This can lead to conflict with other crisis constituents, who perceive the organisation as acting only in its own interests. It also contradicts crisis management best practice that recognises those most harmed by a crisis as the most salient stakeholders in that situation.

By adopting a situation-centred stakeholder analysis and examining the media-framed salience of crisis stakeholders, this research has moved away from an organisation-centred analysis of stakeholder salience. The study uses an issue arena/stakeholder network approach to provide a third-party assessment of crisis stakeholder salience. Since media coverage of a crisis typically includes views and commentaries from stakeholders and observers, depictions of stakeholder salience may be informed by a range of perspectives.

Furthermore, by applying the novel crisis stakeholder salience framework introduced in Chapter 5 to examine the sampled media texts, the analysis has considered how a broader range of salience dimensions may contribute to perceptions of stakeholder salience. The findings thus extend understanding of crisis stakeholder salience characteristics beyond the salience attributes identified by Mitchell *et al.* (1997). The

present study contends that the broader range of salience characteristics better accounts for the social, moral, ethical and emotional considerations that are seen to strongly influence crisis stakeholder relationships (Mitroff, 2005; Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992). The analysis findings provide evidence from the sampled media texts to illustrate the significance of the identified crisis stakeholder salience characteristics in understanding crisis stakeholder salience.

Having presented the finding of this study's content analysis, Chapter 7 draws together the findings to discuss their pertinence to the research questions and the theoretical and practical implications for the overall research objective of conceptualising crisis stakeholder salience.

Chapter 7: Discussion: Towards a framework of crisis stakeholder salience

This thesis has introduced a novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience derived from the academic literature, and applied it to a case study of the October 31, 2000 crash on take-off of Singapore Airlines' flight SQ006, to explore the news media framing of the salience of crisis stakeholders. The study aims to advance understanding of how the salience of crisis stakeholders and their claims may be constructed by other constituents and observers of the situation. It is hoped this work will stimulate further research towards a model of stakeholder salience specific to crisis.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation located the research problem in the academic and practitioner literature. Crises are perceived and understood subjectively by involved parties and observers. Effective crisis management calls for managers of an organisation-in-crisis to objectively identify affected stakeholders and assess how those parties understand the situation and what they expect of the organisation. Clearer understanding of stakeholders' differing perspectives of the situation and their potentially conflicting expectations may assist managers in developing crisis response strategies that are seen as appropriate and fair and make the best use of available resources. Observers of a crisis acquire much of their information about the situation from the news media. This thesis accepts the principle of media effects theories that how the news media present a story may influence audiences' understanding of that story. To answer the research questions, the study was designed around an exploration of how selected news media constructed the salience of crisis stakeholders involved in the October 2000 accident of Singapore Airlines flight SQ006.

The extant literature around three key themes was then reviewed: the conceptual challenge to understanding organisation crisis as a multi-faceted social construct (Chapter 2); stakeholders and organisations-in-crisis (Chapter 3); and the significance of news media portrayals of organisation crisis (Chapter 4). The literature underscored the paucity of prior research into the conceptualisation of crisis stakeholder salience. As far as was identified, the present study represents the first attempt to develop a framework of stakeholder salience specific to crisis situations.

Chapter 5 detailed the novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience introduced in this study. This framework draws from the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) stakeholder salience model; Coombs' (2007b, 2008, 2009, 2010) situational crisis communication theory (SCCT); and the media frames of disaster and crisis employed in the work of An and Gower (2009). The framework identifies five main salience characteristics, each of which has sub-categories for a total of 20 crisis stakeholder salience variables. The conceptual framework informed the research design and analysis approach. The methodological approach, a mixed methods content analysis of media frames in selected news coverage of the SQ006 case study, was detailed. While acknowledging the generalisability limitations of a single case study approach, the chapter explained how findings from the study may have significance for other crisis situations.

In Chapter 6, the events of the SQ006 accident were narrated and the content analysis findings were reported. The quantitative analysis interpreted stakeholders' projected newsworthiness in each media platform by assessing the frequency, extent and prominence of mentions of each stakeholder, as well as providing, through the valence measurement, an indication of why certain stakeholders may have been projected as newsworthy. The subsequent qualitative analysis examined how stakeholders were framed as salient in the sampled texts. The findings provide a rich narrative about crisis stakeholder salience, reflecting patterns and contrasts in how the SQ006 stakeholders were framed as salient in the media coverage.

This chapter draws together the findings from the case study and discusses their implications for the research questions and the overall aim of progressing a framework

of crisis stakeholder salience. Limitations of this research are identified. Implications of the study for future research and applications for crisis management practice are considered.

7.1 Stakeholder salience through media frames

Analysis of an organisation's stakeholders is typically carried out by its managers and may reflect organisation-centred biases. This becomes a significant concern in times of crisis, when quick and appropriate responses are expected of involved organisations. Subjective assessments of affected stakeholders' expectations may point managers towards defensive, organisation-centred response strategies that prioritise the claims of stakeholders seen as critical to the firm's future over the needs of stakeholders most affected by the crisis.

The Mitchell *et al.* (1997) stakeholder salience model was developed to assist managers in objectively identifying, assessing and prioritising stakeholders' claims. But the model relies on managers' perceptions of the presence of salience attributes, meaning the possibility of organisation bias remains. This research project has offered an alternative to the organisation-centred perspective by investigating how media frames in news coverage of the SQ006 crisis depicted the salience of the crisis stakeholders. While acknowledging the possibility of media bias, this thesis contends that analysis of media coverage shifts the focus away from managers' perspectives towards a more situation-centred stakeholder network perspective of stakeholder salience. The sampled media coverage provided a broad picture of how the salience of crisis stakeholders may have been understood, as the stories included commentary from numerous parties involved in and observing the situation. Analysis of the media coverage of a crisis may offer insights to guide managers towards a more objective prioritisation of stakeholders' needs, leading to better decision making around appropriate response strategies.

There are several important implications to examining news frames in media coverage to facilitate a broader understanding of perceptions of crisis stakeholder salience. This section discusses what has been learned from the SQ006 case study. The study was designed to explore a concept, crisis stakeholder salience, which has not been widely examined in the scholarly literature. It is acknowledged that the findings from this single case study cannot be generalised; however, they suggest valid directions for future research.

7.1.1 Newsworthiness and salience: convergence and divergence

This study adopted mixed methods content analysis to examine the sampled media coverage for how stakeholders were projected as newsworthy (quantitative analysis using agenda setting measures) and how they were framed as salient (qualitative analysis of latent content). It is contended that the two sets of findings together extend understanding of the media depiction of crisis stakeholder salience.

The analysis revealed convergences and divergences in the data sets. Based on principles of media effects theories and from an understanding of how the news media function, it was suggested that parties perceived as salient stakeholders in the crisis may also be considered newsworthy because of their role in the situation; consequently, they would be reported on frequently, extensively and prominently. The analysis findings appear to support this assumption; the SQ006 stakeholders framed most frequently as salient in the crisis were also reported on frequently and extensively, so suggesting they were seen as newsworthy (e.g. SIA, the SQ006 passengers, cabin crew, pilots, families, Taiwan air authorities and Taiwan government).

Conversely, since media coverage of a crisis often focuses on the villains, victim and heroes of a crisis, it was suggested that stakeholders projected as newsworthy may or may not be seen as salient stakeholders in the crisis. Considering this perspective, the quantitative measure of manifest valence provided some explanation for why certain stakeholders were depicted as newsworthy.

Findings from the analysis of valence showed that most mentions of the stakeholders in the sampled texts were neutral in tone. Consequently, stakeholders that received a significant amount of positive or negative coverage stood out. The extensive coverage of the SQ006 passengers and families was significantly positive; it may be surmised they were considered newsworthy because they were seen as the victims of the crisis. Coverage of the SQ006 pilots was significantly negative, particularly in the Taiwan media sources; they may have been depicted as newsworthy because the viewpoints gathered by journalists for the stories suggested they should be considered partly responsible for the accident. Some other stakeholders that were extensively reported on in the sampled media texts, notably SIA, the Taiwan air authorities and the Taiwan government, received contrasting positive and negative coverage across the sampled texts, suggesting they were cast variously as heroes or villains.

The qualitative analysis elaborated on these findings. Since the conceptual framework of crisis stakeholder salience introduced in this study allowed for the interpretation of negative as well as positive salience characteristics, the findings allowed a wider interpretation of the reasons why stakeholders received positive and/or negative coverage. For example, analysis of the use of salience frames about SIA explicated why the airline was depicted as salient and why coverage of this stakeholder included positive and negative mentions.

However, media framing theory holds that media frames do not necessarily have to be repeated often to be powerful. This may not hold true for ongoing media coverage of organisation crises, which typically builds on the story day after day. It may be the case that single occurrence of a media frame that is not repeated in subsequent days' coverage may not have a strong effect on audiences. However, the context in which the frame is presented could be a critical factor in determining its effects on an audience. The analysis findings revealed only one occurrence in one media source (Central News Agency) of the Taiwan public being framed as salient; since this frame did not occur in subsequent stories, there may be a case for arguing that the frame was likely not powerful. However, CNA is Taiwan's official news agency and is government funded; its reporting is typically factual. Thus, its use of a frame about the Taiwan population

may be more powerful than the single occurrence suggests. As this study did not measure the effects of the salience framing on audiences, it is not possible to draw conclusions on this point. But this highlights the importance for future research to consider the effects of media frames of crisis stakeholder salience on audiences.

The two data sets resulting from the mixed methods analysis approach thus revealed converging and diverging findings about stakeholder newsworthiness and salience. Taken together, they provided complementary insights into how the SQ006 stakeholders were depicted as salient in the sampled media coverage.

7.1.2 Assessing stakeholders' overall salience

Nearly all the SQ006 stakeholders were framed in the sampled texts as possessing some of the crisis stakeholder salience characteristics. Seeing this study's analysis of the salience framing of stakeholders through the lens of the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) salience model, many of the stakeholders were depicted as definitive stakeholders, that is, having the highest level of salience, in at least one of the publications. While analysis of the frames provided a comprehensive picture of the reasons why stakeholders were framed as salient, it also presented some problems in linking the identified presence of frames to an overall assessment of stakeholders' depicted salience.

As described in the previous chapter, the analysis showed that many of the identified salience frames occurred in quotes and commentaries from various parties that were used by reporters in building up the stories. News coverage of organisation crises typically builds stories around such commentaries and viewpoints that provide different perspectives on the situation. So, it was not unexpected that the analysis showed many of the stakeholders were depicted through contrasting frames, even within the same publication, as well as across the media sources. For example, SIA was praised and criticised in a single day's coverage in *The Straits Times* for its actions immediately after the accident occurred. This highlighted a limitation of the study in that it did not

examine the effects of the media framing on audiences, which would have shed light on which media frames may have been the most powerful.

This research also underscored the importance for stakeholder salience analysis to include a way to measure degrees of attribute possession, to acknowledge that simple presence of absence of a salience characteristic may not accurately determine a stakeholder's overall salience. The Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) stakeholder salience approach determines overall salience by totalling the number of salience attributes (power, legitimacy and urgency) possessed. However, the model has been identified as limited in its inability to account for degrees of salience attribute possession, seen to provide a more accurate representation of total stakeholder salience (Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Neville & Menguc, 2006; Neville *et al.*, 2004, 2011).

The present study noted the level of salience depiction (low, medium, high) according to a count of occurrences of specific frames. However, repeated use of the same salience frames in coverage of a specific stakeholder cannot be assumed to indicate stronger framing of that stakeholder as having overall salience. It could be that repeated use of some frames reflected the angle the media chose to take in covering aspects of the story.

Furthermore, the MAW model's salience attributes were defined as functioning across a single dimension (possession indicates increased salience), while the current study recognises that the crisis stakeholder salience dimensions may function bi-directionally, with positive or negative implications in determining salience. The findings appear to support the pertinence of negative interpretations of salience frames when assessing crisis stakeholder salience. There were occurrences of negative interpretations of: stakeholder's political power (P-S-Po) (Singapore government); cognitive legitimacy of the claim (L-C-Co) (Taiwan government); ethical legitimacy of behaviour (L-B-Et) (several stakeholders but particularly the SQ006 pilots); and stakeholder's moral pre-crisis legitimacy (L-S-Mo) (SIA and the Taiwan government).

The negative interpretation of the ethical legitimacy of crisis behaviour (L-B-Et negative) frame appeared particularly significant in relation to several stakeholders.

Crisis theory and practice holds that the extent to which an organisation can recover from a crisis depends significantly on how appropriately and ethically it is seen to respond to the situation. This would appear to be relevant to most types of organisation crisis and may reflect the significance of ethical crisis behaviour as a determinant of crisis stakeholder salience. The negative interpretations of other salience characteristics may come to the fore in analysing other types of crisis, particularly those which involve significant conflict among stakeholders. Therefore, in considering the need for stakeholder salience analysis to measure degrees of possession of salience attributes, it would appear important to include assessment of the impact of negative interpretations of salience characteristics.

The recognition of degrees of salience characteristic possession, including possible negative possession, appears to preclude an assessment of how the sampled texts depicted stakeholders' overall salience following the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) model, by totalling the number of salience attributes possessed. Another factor than should be taken into account for future research is that, in the context of crisis, certain salience characteristics may have more weightage than others. The case for the significance of ethical legitimacy of behaviour has been suggested. Legitimacy as a whole and urgency, which several researchers have identified as not a strong salience attribute in the MAW model, may take on more significance in the context of crisis. This is discussed further in the following section.

7.2 Revisiting the crisis stakeholder salience characteristics

Effective crisis management requires an objective analysis of the expectations and claims of stakeholders involved in a crisis. However, the crisis literature provides little theoretical insight into how managers may prioritise the claims of crisis stakeholders, especially when those claims conflict. Most studies that have examined crisis stakeholder salience have used the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) model of stakeholder salience, considered one of the most influential frameworks in the literature (Gifford,

2010). The MAW model assesses stakeholders' possession of the salience attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency, as determined by managers of the focal organisation. In the previous section, the possible bias of managerial assessments of stakeholder salience was referenced in explaining the approach of this thesis to examine media framing of stakeholder salience.

Mitchell *et al.* (1997) contended their conceptualisation of stakeholder salience was an appropriate organising concept because it distinguishes publics with a legal, moral or presumed claim on an organisation from those with an ability to influence the firm's behaviour, direction, process or outcomes. However, in the context of crisis situations, the MAW model's operationalisation of the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency may not adequately account for the relational aspects of a crisis, that is, the emotions, values and attitudes that are so visible during times of crisis.

To address this concern, the current research has introduced a novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience drawn from the literature that extends the MAW model by including broader sub-category dimensions of power, legitimacy and urgency, as well as adding two further salience characteristics. Thus, five salience characteristics of power, legitimacy, urgency, proximity and severe hurt are included in the conceptual framework; each of these were defined with sub-categories, including some that were not identified in the MAW model.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings from this SQ006 case study validated, to a large extent, the relevance of the salience determinants identified in the framework of crisis stakeholder salience as introduced in Chapter 5 and revealed how these characteristics functioned in framing crisis stakeholder salience in the sampled media texts. The findings suggest support, with modification, for the power, legitimacy and urgency salience attributes identified by Mitchell *et al.* (1997), but reinforce the contention of this thesis that the attributes as defined in the MAW model draw attention to the rational and operational aspects of a crisis and may not adequately account for the relational and reputational considerations.

In summary, the attributes from the MAW model framework most supported by the findings from the SQ006 case study analysis are coercive power (P-S-Co), moral and cognitive legitimacy of the claim (L-C-Mo, L-C-Co), and urgency of the claim from the aspect of time-sensitivity (U-C-Ti). Of the additional salience characteristics identified for the novel framework introduced in this dissertation, those most supported by the SQ006 findings are social power (P-S-So), social and moral legitimacy (pre-crisis) of the stakeholder entity (L-S-So, L-S-Mo), ethical legitimacy of stakeholder behaviour (L-B-Et), and physical and mental hurt (H-S-Ph, H-S-Me).

The MAW attributes that found no support in the data from the SQ006 analysis are normative power (P-S-No) and pragmatic legitimacy (L-C-Pr). This raised questions, to be answered in future research, about their role in determining crisis stakeholder salience. Among the additional salience characteristics included for this study, no evidence was found of frames of pervasive power (P-S-Pe) or proximity (P-C-Ge, P-C-Or). The absence of the pervasive power frame may be explained by the choice of the crisis case. However, the analysis highlighted that the operationalisation of proximity as a crisis stakeholder salience characteristic was problematic; this salience dimension should be further explored in future studies. The contribution all these characteristics make to the salience of crisis stakeholders invites further investigation in future research.

7.2.1 **Power**

Mitchell *et al.* (1997) suggested power was probably the most critical attribute in assessing stakeholder salience. However, this was not supported by the findings from the SQ006 analysis, which suggested that power was not employed as the dominant frame of stakeholder salience in the sampled texts. This finding was somewhat unexpected.

Organisation crises often involve numerous parties, each with their own priority needs in the situation. Past crises have shown how stakeholders' perceived power may determine whose claims are addressed first. One explanation for the limited use of the power frame

could be that the government agencies involved in the SQ006 situation were all assumed to have power and so, in the cultural context in which the media texts were created, the media sources choose not to frame them as such. However, perhaps a more likely explanation could be that few conflicts between stakeholders occurred during the studied time period of the SQ006 crisis, so constituents' power did not come into play.

The analysis findings showed the source of power as a crisis stakeholder salience characteristic was framed mostly as social and coercive. The strongest evidence emerged for social power (P-S-So). From a stakeholder network perspective, social power may be compared to stakeholder centrality and density of connections; power is gained or lost through the formation or dissolution of alliances with other stakeholders. The findings supported the contention of this thesis that social power would appear potentially significant during times of organisation crisis. The SQ006 case study showed the passengers and pilots were framed in all three publications as having social power through the support of third parties who were prepared to take action on their behalf. The changing salience of the SQ006 pilots was striking as they were framed as gaining power from the support of pilots' associations and the Singapore public, who were depicted as ready to exert pressure if required to ensure the pilots' release from detention. Despite the Taiwan government's denial of such, the pilots' social power was widely seen at the time to be instrumental in securing their release.

Mitchell *et al.* (1997) defined power as functioning in a single dimension: stakeholders with power are more salient than those without. The present study, however, recognises that power may have a negative interpretation. The Singapore government was depicted through the negative political power (P-S-Po negative) frame in its disagreement with the Taiwan government over the detention of the SQ006 pilots. At the same time, the Taiwan government was framed strongly as possessing, particularly, coercive power (P-S-Co). Thus, it was significant that, despite its apparent intention to use its power to ensure its demands were met, the Taiwan government reversed its stance in the face of the Singapore government's social power.

The analysis did not uncover evidence of the normative and pervasive power frames. However, both types of power may have relevance in different crisis situations. Pervasive power has been suggested as important in acknowledging the natural environment as a crisis stakeholder and it could be particularly germane in assessing stakeholder salience in crises that threaten the environment such as the 1989 Exxon *Valdez* or 2010 Deepwater Horizon crises. In the SQ006 crisis, the Singapore president may have been assumed to have normative power, because of the prestige and esteem of his position; however, there was no evidence of this frame occurring in the sampled coverage.

Mitchell *et al.* (1997) contended that stakeholder salience may be influenced by the interaction of the salience attributes, although their salience model does not elaborate how this interaction occurs or how it may affect perceptions of stakeholder salience. Although the findings of the present study are inconclusive, they highlight possible interplay between different types of power, including, perhaps, a hierarchy of power types. This might explain the interaction between the Singapore government's social power and the Taiwan government's coercive power.

7.2.2 Legitimacy

Based on evidence from the literature, this study extended the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) definition of legitimacy, to recognise more bases and locations of this salience characteristic. Legitimacy of crisis stakeholder salience was thus identified as residing in three locations: the stakeholder entity (pre-crisis), the stakeholder's claim (situation-specific) and the stakeholder's behaviour (situation-specific).

The SQ006 case study analysis showed legitimacy to be the dominant frame of stakeholder salience employed by all the media sources. Five of the six identified legitimacy sub-categories occurred as frames, suggesting validation of their relevance as possible indicators of crisis stakeholder salience. The sub-category of pragmatic legitimacy of the claim (L-C-Pr) was not identified in the sampled texts. This was an

interesting finding since it may be surmised this type of legitimacy would be significant in managerial assessments of stakeholder salience. The analysis also uncovered more negative interpretations of legitimacy than of any other salience characteristic: cognitive legitimacy of the claim (L-C-Co) (Taiwan government); ethical legitimacy of behaviour (L-B-Et) (several stakeholders but particularly the SQ006 pilots); and stakeholder's moral pre-crisis legitimacy (L-S-Mo) (SIA and the Taiwan government).

The MAW model recognises legitimacy as residing only in the stakeholder claims. Considering this aspect of legitimacy, analysis of the SQ006 case did not identify any frames of pragmatic legitimacy of the claim (L-C-Pr). However, coverage of the SQ006 passengers and their families contained many occurrences of frames depicting their claims as having moral and cognitive legitimacy (L-C-Mo, L-C-Co). This is not a surprising finding as these two stakeholders would likely have been perceived as the victims of the crisis. The analysis also identified an interaction between legitimacy of stakeholders' claims and social power, insofar as the two frames were often identified within the same thematic unit. This appears to support the contention in the literature that highly-legitimate stakeholder claims attract support from other stakeholders (Jones, 1995; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997).

Considering legitimacy of the stakeholder entity, the frames of moral (L-S-Mo) and social legitimacy (L-S-So) were interpreted respectively as relating to pre-crisis behaviour and relationships, and reputation and crisis history. Singapore Airlines was framed positively on both counts. Crisis management practice holds that a strong pre-crisis reputation can help organisations recover more quickly and completely from a crisis. Therefore, it is significant that, despite the severity of the SQ006 accident, SIA's reputation and business were only briefly and mildly affected and the airline quickly returned to full passenger loads and award nominations, suggesting its pre-crisis legitimacy may have protected it from more severe impact of the crisis.

Overall, the strongest evidence emerged for legitimacy located in stakeholder behaviour, i.e. the sub-category of ethical legitimacy of behaviour (L-B-Et). Numerous positive (SIA, the Taiwan government and the Taiwan air authorities) and negative (SQ006

pilots, SIA and the air authorities) interpretations of this frame were identified in the sampled texts, indicating that stakeholders' behaviour during the crisis was an important theme in the media stories. Crisis theory and practice holds that the extent to which an organisation can recover from a crisis depends significantly on how appropriately and ethically it is seen to respond to the situation. It may be surmised that ethical behaviour during a crisis would appear a significant factor in all organisation crises. Consequently, this aspect of legitimacy may be particularly germane to a framework of crisis stakeholder salience.

It was interesting that the findings also uncovered important interaction between the frames of ethical (legitimate) behaviour (L-B-Et) and social power (P-S-So), as the two frames often occurred in the same thematic unit. This appears to extend the aforementioned contention that highly-legitimate stakeholder claims attract support from other powerful stakeholders – noting that, in the MAW model, legitimacy referred only to legitimacy of the claim. It may be surmised that as ethical crisis behaviour may attract the support and advocacy of other constituents, a stakeholder's unethical behaviour might result in diminished network support and social power.

7.2.3 Urgency

In this thesis, urgency was modified to include the aspect of stakeholder's likelihood to act (U-S-Ac) with the aspect of time-sensitive (U-C-Ti) that Mitchell *et al.* (1997) identified. Findings from the case study analysis indicated that both sub-categories functioned uni-dimensionally: stakeholders' salience increases if they are perceived as possessing either of the urgency sub-categories. No occurrences of negative interpretations of the urgency frame were identified.

The stakeholder literature typically identifies urgency as a weak salience attribute, relevant as a secondary attribute but insufficiently strong alone to determine stakeholder salience (Jones *et al.*, 2006; Mitchell *et al.*, 1997; Rawlins, 2006). The findings of the SQ006 case, however, would appear to contest this perspective in the context of crisis

situations, when time-sensitive stakeholder claims may be perceived to have high salience. Coverage of the SQ006 passengers and the families, that is, the two stakeholders that would likely have been perceived as the crisis victims, was revealed to contain numerous occurrences of the time-sensitive urgency (U-C-Ti) frame.

Time pressure and limited time for response are identified in the literature as defining characteristics of crisis. Furthermore, best practice crisis management emphasises the critical need for prompt response actions. From this perspective, time sensitivity would appear a particularly significant consideration in times of organisation crisis, so perhaps endorsing this aspect of urgency as an important measure of the salience of crisis stakeholders' claims.

Occurrences of the other urgency subcategory, stakeholder's likelihood to act (U-S-Ac), were identified mostly in mentions of the families and often co-occurred with the frame of social power (P-S-So). This raised an interesting question for future research about whether stakeholders without power may be motivated to act when and because social support is forthcoming from within the stakeholder environment, or whether their willingness to act to secure attention to their claims attracted network support and social power. However, the findings identified both sub-categories of the urgency frame as frequently co-occurring in thematic units with the frames of social power (P-S-So) and legitimacy of the claim (L-C-Mo, L-C-So). Although the evidence was inconclusive as the media coverage typically did not explain the connections, this co-occurrence of frames may indicate a significant interaction in the context of organisation crisis, between the urgency of stakeholders' claims, perceived legitimacy of their claims, and network support.

7.2.4 Proximity

Researchers have criticised the MAW model for being unable to accounting for “distant” stakeholders such as future generations, “absent” stakeholders or potential victims (cf. Branco & Rodrigues, 2007; Buchholz, 1993; Driscoll & Starik, 2004; Starik, 1995).

Certain types of organisation crisis may affect such constituents. For example, the 1986 Chernobyl accident has continued to have an impact on the environment and humans born years later.

This thesis included the concept of proximity as a crisis stakeholder salience characteristic, identified with sub-categories of geographic (P-C-Ge) and organised (P-C-Or) proximity, to address this shortcoming. It was contended that both these aspects of proximity may have relevance to perceptions of crisis stakeholder salience. Past crises have illustrated how organisation managers' assessments of stakeholder salience may identify stakeholders in nearby communities as more salient because the potential for direct contact suggests more influence to affect the organisation. Furthermore, case study evidence has shown that managers may prioritise the claims of internal stakeholders or parties within the same industry over external stakeholders because they are seen to share a set of rules, knowledge, beliefs or behaviour.

The analysis, however, did not identify any occurrences of geographic or organised proximity as a crisis salience frame. Although some of the SQ006 families were located across the globe, there was no indication of framing in the sampled media texts to suggest they were seen as more or less salient due to geographic distance.

Considering the sub-category of organised salience, the analysis uncovered possible references to this as a salience frame in coverage describing advocacy support of the pilots' associations for the SQ006 pilots. However, the identified frames also appeared to overlap interpretations of a frame of legitimacy of the claim (L-C-Co). Thus, it was unclear from the media frames whether the pilots' associations supported the SQ006 pilots because of a shared value of rules, knowledge, beliefs or behaviour or because the pilots' claims were seen as being in the interests of taken-for-granted cultural models. After consideration, the segments of text in question were coded for legitimacy (cognitive) of their claims.

Since the lack of occurrences of the proximity salience frame may result from the nature of the crisis studied, the characteristic should be retained and its effect on stakeholder

salience further assessed. However, the analysis suggests that the operationalisation of proximity as a salience characteristic was problematic. It is contended that proximity may have relevance for crisis situations, but needs to be reassessed as a characteristic with sub-categories of temporal and geographic proximity, to be more relevant to assess the salience of stakeholders in such crises as Chernobyl. The sub-category of organised proximity appears to be insufficiently distinguishable from aspects of legitimacy, although this also suggests a possible consideration for future research.

7.2.5 Severe hurt

The salience characteristic of severe hurt was identified not from stakeholder theory and the MAW model of stakeholder salience, but from the crisis and media effects literatures, specifically situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) and media framing of crises. The frame is seen to be unique and highly significant to account for the relational aspects of crisis, justifying its inclusion as a separate characteristic rather than a sub-category of legitimacy. Four sub-categories of hurt were identified from the literature. However, the analysis found evidence of only two used as salience frames in the analysis of the sampled SQ006 coverage, physical and emotional hurt (H-S-Ph, H-S-Me). As may have been expected from a crisis involving an accident, analysis of the media frames found that the coverage depicted physical hurt (H-S-Ph) as the defining salience characteristic of the SQ006 passengers. Analysis of the coverage of families showed that they were strongly framed as having salience through the mental suffering (H-S-Me) they experienced as a result of the crisis.

In mentions of both the passengers and families, the severe hurt frames (H-S-Ph, H-S-Me) often co-occurred in thematic units with the frames of social power (P-S-So), legitimacy of the claim (L-C-Mo, L-C-So), and time-sensitivity of the claim (U-C-Ti). This suggested an interaction between these salience characteristics: the stakeholders gained power from network support because of the legitimacy and urgency of their claims as stakeholder who had been severely hurt by the crisis.

The economic and reputational hurt frames were not identified in the sampled media texts. This may be explained by the nature of the SQ006 crisis. Research into media framing of crises holds that, following a serious accident which has created many casualties, the primary focus of involved stakeholders and observers typically is on the victims and identifying the causes. Subsequent media coverage of the SQ006 accident, after the time period studied for this research, did contain occurrences of the economic and reputation hurt (H-S-Ec, H-S-Re) frames. For example, articles in *The Straits Times* reported on the financial and reputational impact on SIA, which was typically described in the coverage as being relatively slight. In contrast, the Central News Agency reported on the substantial financial cost to the Taiwan government of the crisis response. It is contended that these frames may be more significant in framing the salience of crisis stakeholders in other types of crisis.

7.3 Limitations of the study

As the research project progressed, certain decisions regarding the design and methodology were taken that affected the nature of the analysis findings. Consequently, the study was not without limitations, which are discussed here. While it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research stemming both from the characteristics of the data and the method, it is contended that the identified limitations do not detract from the significance of the findings, but suggest possible directions for further research.

The research examines news media outputs for evidence of frames of stakeholders' salience; it makes no claims about possible framing effects on media audiences. This represents a limitation considering that the media effects literature defines framing as a dynamic process involving both the media and media users (Scheufele, 1999).

Consideration may have been given to applying the conceptual framework of crisis stakeholder salience introduced in this study in two stages, firstly to identify media framing of stakeholder salience and then to assess media users' perceptions of stakeholder salience. In this way, the interaction between media frames and audience

(individual) frames could have been examined. Although this was beyond the scope of this research project, it suggests a possible direction for further research.

Second, the data for the present study came from a single case study of one type of crisis; this design limits the generalisability of the findings. However, the SQ006 case study analysis provided insights into a specific under-researched phenomenon and so may form the basis for future work to develop and test a theoretical conceptualisation of crisis stakeholder salience in other crisis situations. In this respect, the findings may have relatability to other crisis situations.

A third limitation is the limited sample size. While the choice of media types and specific sources was determined for specific reasons, the framing of crisis stakeholder salience in other media sources must be considered. The sampled media texts were published over eight weeks of the SQ006 crisis., but the media continued to report, albeit less frequently and extensively, on subsequent developments in the crisis. However, the findings from the sampled media coverage during the timeframe are valid to identify prominent media frames of crisis stakeholder salience. To establish a more comprehensive understanding of crisis stakeholder salience, future research should investigate a diversity of news media and include a larger sample size from the wider timeframe of the crisis lifecycle. Replication of this study using different media sources would enrich the understanding of crisis stakeholder salience acquired from the present study.

7.4 Contribution and implications

As far as the researcher identified from the existing literature, this thesis represents the first attempt at a framework of crisis stakeholder salience. Empirical studies of crisis stakeholder salience have mostly used the Mitchell *et al.* (1997) (MAW) salience model and its attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency without modification. This research project has introduced an heuristic framework to assess the salience of crisis

stakeholders. The framework is based on the solid theoretical foundation of the MAW model and supports, with some modifications, the principles of the MAW model approach in recognising power, legitimacy and urgency as important drivers of stakeholder salience. In the context of crisis, some modifications were made in the types of power, legitimacy and urgency examined. To further account for the relational factors of crisis situations, aspects of situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) and media framing of crises were incorporated. Thus, five characteristics of crisis stakeholder salience were recognised: power, legitimacy, urgency, proximity and severe hurt, each of which was defined as including sub-categories.

The case study analysis of media framing of the salience of stakeholders involved in the SQ006 accident has provided evidence of the contribution of these salience characteristics in assessing the salience of crisis stakeholders. The findings from the study have suggested a number of areas for further exploration through future research.

Overall, the crisis stakeholder salience framework introduced requires further theoretical exploration towards a testable model. There also exist opportunities for research to better understand how salience characteristics function to indicate overall stakeholder salience, as well as in specific aspects of the salience framework. These have been touched on earlier in this chapter in reviewing the performance of the characteristics of crisis stakeholder salience in the SQ006 case study analysis.

First, the data sets do not permit inferences about media effects. However, the thesis recognises that the public typically acquire much of their information about organisation crises from the media; furthermore, it accepts the principle of media framing. Consequently, it is suggested that further research should investigate the impact of media frames about crisis stakeholder salience on audiences observing the crisis through the media coverage.

Second, stakeholder salience analysis lacks a way to account for degrees of possession of salience attributes; this has long been identified as a limitation of the MAW salience model, even though Mitchell *et al.* (1997) noted that overall stakeholder salience is

dependent on the degree of possession. The findings of the SQ006 analysis identified degrees of the strength of media framing of salience based on a count of the occurrences of salience frames, and also noted occurrences of negative interpretations of salience frames, in contrast to the uni-directional (possession suggests increased salience) nature of the salience attributes defined in the MAW model. It is crucial for stakeholder analysis models to be able to assess the degree of positive and negative possession of salience characteristics and how this contributes to perceptions of overall salience. This may represent a priority for future research.

Third, discussion of the findings identified interaction among the salience characteristics, suggesting support for Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997) contention that the total salience of a stakeholder may depend on such interaction, even though the MAW model did not provide a way to measure and assess this phenomenon. The SQ006 case study analysis identified, in the media framing, an apparent interaction between social power and several other salience characteristics. It is acknowledged that such interaction between characteristics may be complex and dependent on numerous interlinked factors; however, it should be further explored in future studies. The relationship between social power and other dimensions of stakeholder salience identified in this study may provide a starting point.

A fourth area for future research was identified in the salience characteristics themselves. Based on the media coverage, the characteristics that contributed most to the framed salience of the SQ006 stakeholders were coercive power, social power, moral and cognitive legitimacy of the claim, ethical legitimacy of stakeholder behaviour, and severe physical and mental hurt. No evidence was uncovered in the analysis of media frames to support the salience dimensions of normative and pervasive power, pragmatic legitimacy and proximity. Possible explanations for this have been suggested previously in this chapter. It is acknowledged that the use of specific salience variables as media frames is situation specific, to the extent that the different characteristics may be more or less significant in media framing of other types of crisis. The contribution that all these characteristics make to the salience of crisis stakeholders invites further investigation in

future research, through application of the salience characteristics to different types of organisation crises in different contextual settings.

The findings from this study have practical implications for crisis management. The need for crisis stakeholder analysis is well established in the academic and practitioner literatures. It is seen as imperative for managers of an organisation-in-crisis to be able to objectively assess the salience of affected stakeholders and their often-competing claims, so as to develop crisis response strategies that will be perceived as appropriate and fair, make the best use of available resources, and protect the organisation and its stakeholders from being further harmed by the crisis.

To achieve this, crisis management practice needs a valid, dynamic model that can facilitate the analysis of the crisis stakeholder salience. Further research is invited to assess the potential of the novel framework introduced in this thesis to fulfill this need.

The findings from this study suggest an interesting application of media frame analysis to provide managers with a broader understanding of how crisis stakeholder salience may be constructed by other stakeholders and observers of the crisis. Such knowledge may improve managerial focus on more objective considerations of stakeholders' needs, help them identify warning signal of a possible escalation in the crisis, and prioritise crisis response actions towards various stakeholders.

Thus, this research project contributes to crisis management theory and practice by introducing a novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience. In using the framework to analyse a case study of an organisation crisis through frames in news media coverage, the study offers new insights, critiques and directions towards a theoretical conceptualisation of crisis stakeholder salience that can account for the relevant technical/operational and relational/reputational aspects of organisation crisis. This research thus contributes to existing knowledge by asking research questions that are justified by an *a priori* reason to study them and goes beyond previous research to provide new insights, critiques or directions that may lead to a testable model of crisis stakeholder salience (Feldman, 2004).

7.5 Concluding reflections

Organisations have stakeholders and have responsibilities to those stakeholders, especially when things go wrong. The literature is replete with evidence of the importance of objectively assessing the expectations of crisis stakeholders so they can be appropriately and effectively addressed. Examples abound in the scholarly and practitioner literatures of what happens when managers get it wrong. However, the literatures offer little to explain how the competing needs of crisis stakeholders may be analysed and prioritised.

To address this gap, this thesis has drawn from research in several disciplines to introduce a novel framework of crisis stakeholder salience that may provide means to a more objective assessment of crisis stakeholder s' claims. The analysis of the SQ006 case study has provided evidence to support the relevance of various aspects of power, legitimacy, urgency and severe hurt as determinants of crisis stakeholder salience.

This chapter has discussed the findings of the SQ006 case study in the context of the main themes that guided this study and the implications for the overall research objective of conceptualising crisis stakeholder salience. The study has limitations, as have been identified. However, it progresses understanding of a phenomenon that has not been extensively considered in the academic literature. In reflecting on where the present study concludes and its limitations, this chapter has signalled certain directions that further research could take towards a testable model of crisis stakeholder salience specifically for organisation crisis situations.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In the modern business environment, an organisation that experiences a crisis is expected to respond promptly, appropriately and effectively to address the needs of affected stakeholders. Past crises provide evidence that the key determinant of how much damage an organisation-in-crisis sustains to its reputation, image, legitimacy and future viability is how fairly and empathetically it is judged to have addressed the needs of the stakeholders most affected. However, crisis stakeholders often have competing and even conflicting claims on an organisation-in-crisis, presenting managers with a challenge of how to prioritise stakeholders' expectations. The crisis management literature provides little guidance in the objective assessment of crisis stakeholder salience, leaving managers to make crisis response decisions based on their own subjective understanding of the situation.

This study aims to further academic discussion in an area in which there has been limited research to date. It draws from various research disciplines to facilitate insight into the overarching research purpose: (1) To develop a conceptual framework that can be used to examine how and why crisis stakeholders are framed as salient by the news media. (2) To explore how and why crisis stakeholders are depicted as salient in the sampled media coverage from Singapore and Taiwan media sources of the October 2000 crash in Taiwan of Singapore Airlines' flight SQ006.

A novel conceptual framework of crisis stakeholder salience was introduced, drawing from the academic literature to propose power, legitimacy, urgency, proximity and severe hurt as characteristics that may determine overall salience of crisis stakeholders. The SQ006 case study empirically demonstrated application of the framework to

examine the media framing of stakeholders involved in an organisation crisis. While acknowledging the existence of media bias, this thesis contends that analysis of media depictions of crisis stakeholder salience offer a broader perspective of the salience of crisis stakeholders, shifting the focus away from managerial perspectives towards a more situation-centred stakeholder network perspective.

Data for the study were collected from media sources and analysed with a mixed methods content analysis approach. The findings provide evidence to support the contention of this thesis that aspects of the salience dimensions of power, legitimacy, urgency and severe hurt were used to frame the SQ006 stakeholders as salient. In particular, the dominant use in the sampled media texts of frames of ethical legitimacy of stakeholder behaviour and severe stakeholder hurt represent considerations that were not recognised in existing stakeholder salience models. These characteristics appear unique to the salience of crisis stakeholders.

The findings thus provide interesting input to the evidence already existing in the literature that the salience of crisis stakeholders may be determined by a unique combination of operational, technological, legal, financial, social, relational and reputational factors. This underlines the notion that traditional stakeholder assessment approaches may be inadequate to account for the unique aspect of crisis situations. The analysis thus contributes to understanding how crisis stakeholder salience is constructed and provides insights into how the sources of this salience differ from stakeholder salience in other contexts. Further research is required to more precisely define the salience characteristics and measure the extent to which they play a role in determining the overall salience of crisis stakeholders. Thus, this study opens several avenues for future research into crisis stakeholder salience, towards a theoretical model that can benefit crisis management practice.

Appendix A: Definitions of crisis

Author	Definition
Hermann, 1963; 1972	... a situation that threatens high-priority goals of the decision-making unit, restricts the amount of time available for response before the decision is transformed, and surprises the members of the decision-making unit by its occurrence
Freund, 1976 (in Lagadec, 1993)	... a group situation characterised by contradictions and breakdowns, full of tension and discord
Billings <i>et al.</i>, 1980	... a situation that underlies a probability of potential loss for the organisation and time constraint to solve
Fink, 1986	... a situation that can potentially escalate in intensity, fall under close government or media scrutiny, jeopardise the positive public image of an organisation, or interfere with normal business operations, including damaging the bottom line
Shrivastava <i>et al.</i>, 1988	... organisationally-based disasters which cause extensive damage and social disruption, involve multiple stakeholders, and unfold through complex technological, organisational and social processes
Weick, 1988	... low probability/high consequence events that threaten the most fundamental goals of the organisation. Because of their low probability, these events defy interpretations and impose severe demands on sensemaking
Rosenthal <i>et al.</i>, 1989	... a serious threat to the basic structures or the fundamental values and norms of a social system, which, under time pressure and highly uncertain circumstances, necessitates making critical decisions
Pauchant & Mitroff, 1992	... normal events triggered by the complexity of the system itself and by faulty decisions as well as by the interrelationship between technological systems and the humans who attempt to manage them
Morin, 1992	... a progression of disorders, instabilities and hazards in which the immediate future is uncertain
Egelhoff & Sen, 1992	... may be considered a function of external or environmental threats and internal or organisational weaknesses. Crises arise when there is a major incongruence between the expectations of a corporation and what happens in the environment
Paschall, 1992	... a sudden, unexpected event that poses an institutional threat suggesting the need for rapid, high level decision-making
Lagadec, 1993	... a situation in which numerous organisations, struggling with critical problems and subjected to strong external pressure and bitter internal tension, find themselves thrust into the limelight, abruptly and for an extended period; they are also brought into conflict with one another... all in the context of a mass media society, and the event is sure to make headlines ... for a long time
Barton, 1993	... a major, unpredictable event that has potentially negative results; the event and its aftermath may significantly damage an organisation and its employees, products, services, financial condition, and reputation
Clark, 1995	... any unplanned event that can cause death or significant injuries to employees, customers or the public; shut down the business; disrupt operations; cause physical or environmental damage; or threaten the facility's financial standing or public image

Appendix A (cont): Definitions of crisis

Author	Definition
Kovoor-Misra, 1995	... events that threaten the survival or goals of the organisation
Mitroff, 1996; Mitroff <i>et al.</i>, 1996	... crisis can affect the very existence of an organisation ... can damage, perhaps severely, an organisation's financial performance ... can also harm the health and well-being of consumers, employees, the surrounding community, and the environment itself ... can destroy the public's basic trust or belief in an organisation, its reputation, and its image
Irvine & Millar, 1996	... a major business (organisation) disruption which generates intense media interest and public scrutiny
Heath, 1997	... an untimely event that can be anticipated, that may prevent managers from creating the understanding and satisfaction between the organisation and interested parties needed to negotiate mutually beneficial exchange of stakes. If unattended or poorly managed, the crisis can prevent the organisation from making satisfactory progress toward achieving its mission
Lerbinger, 1997	... an event that brings, or has the potential for bringing, an organisation into disrepute and imperils its future profitability, growth, and, possibly, its very survival
Seeger <i>et al.</i>, 1998	... a specific, unexpected, and non-routine event or series of events that create high levels of uncertainty and threaten or are perceived to threaten an organisation's high-priority goals
Forgues & Roux-Dufort, 1998	... an event that provokes or may provoke tremendous damage (material or immaterial), where multiple stakeholders are involved and that demands an immediate attention
Pearson & Clair, 1998	... a low-probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organisation and is characterised by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly
Fearn-Banks, 2001	... a major occurrence with a potentially negative outcome affecting the organisation, company, or industry, as well as its publics, products, services, or good name. A crisis interrupts normal business operations and can threaten the existence of the organisation
Arpan & Pompper, 2003	... an event that is unpredictable, major threat that can have a negative effect on the organisation, industry, or stakeholders if handled improperly ... can threaten an organisation's ability to function and maintain its legitimacy and reputation
Heath & Millar, 2004	... a predictable, critical incident, the likelihood of which can be identified but the exact time of occurrence cannot ... it can have negative consequences for one or more organisations
Smith, 2006a	... a damaging event, or series of events, that display emergent properties which exceed an organisation's abilities to cope with the task demands that it generates and has implications that can effect a considerable proportion of the organisation as well as other bodies
Boin, 2006	... a period of discontinuity, during which the core values of a system (a small group, organisation, town, society or the world) have come under threat. It is often assumed that such a threat requires the urgent reaction of leaders, who must make critical decisions under conditions of uncertainty
Coombs, 2007	... the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organisation's performance and generate negative outcomes

Appendix B Definitions of stakeholder

Author	Definition
Mason & Mitroff, 1981	... all those claimants inside and outside the firm who have a vested interest in a problem and its solution; they are the concrete entities that affect and in turn are affected by a policy
Mitroff, 1983	... all parties who either affect or who are affected by a corporation's actions, behavior, and policies
Evan & Freeman, 1983	... those groups who are vital to the survival and success of the corporation; those groups who have a stake in or claim on the firm
Freeman & Reed, 1983	... a group on which the organisation is dependent for its continued survival
Freeman, 1984	... any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives
Cornell & Shapiro, 1987	... claimants who have contracts with the firm
Bowie, 1988	... those without whose support the organisation would cease to exist
Barney, 1991	... a stakeholder must make important resources (such as labour, money, and loyalty) available to a firm
Hill & Jones, 1992	... groups of constituents who have a legitimate claim on the firm
Bryson & Crosby, 1992	... any person, group or organisation that is affected by the causes or consequences of any issue
Langtry, 1994	... groups or individuals who either are such that the firm's decisions to act, or decisions not to act, have been or will be to a significant extent causally responsible for their level of wellbeing, or else have some independently identifiable moral or legal claim on the firm which the firm's actions violate or respect
Clarkson, 1995	... groups or individuals who assume some degree of risk as a result of their relationship with the organisation; persons or groups that have, or claim, ownership, rights, or interests in a corporation and its activities, past, present, or future
Donaldson & Preston, 1995	... persons/groups with legitimate interests in aspects of the organisation's activities. These interests have intrinsic value to the organisation and merit consideration for their own sake
Hall & McArthur, 1998	... individuals, groups and organisations with an interest in a problem or issue, which are directly influenced or affected by the actions or non-actions taken by others to resolve the problem or issue
Gibson, 2000	... those groups or individuals with whom the organisation interacts or has interdependencies; ... any individual or group with power to be a threat or benefit
Post <i>et al.</i>, 2002	... individuals and constituencies that contribute, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to its wealth-creating capacity and activities, and that are therefore potential beneficiaries and/or risk bearers
Phillips, 2003a	... those groups from whom the organisation has voluntarily accepted benefits and to whom there arises a moral obligation
Mellahi & Wood, 2003	... any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives
Coombs, 2007	... any person or group that has interest, right, claim or ownership in an organisation

Appendix C Coding protocol

The purpose of this codebook is to guide coding of the news coverage selected for this study. This is a study of news media coverage of the crash of Singapore Airlines flight SQ006, examining which stakeholders are referred to in the media coverage, how frequently, extensively and prominently they are referenced, and whether they are identified as salient stakeholders based on predetermined salience characteristics.

Analysis of the texts will take place in four stages. In the first stage, descriptive attributes of the articles will be input: the publication name, text reference number, date of publication, article title, placement position, article length, and week of appearance. The second phase will involve tagging each text unit that contains a reference to any of the predetermined stakeholders, to identify the frequency, extent and prominence of stakeholder references. In the third stage, the coded segments of text will be read again and tagged for the manifest valence of the stakeholder mentions. In the final stage of coding, the identified units of text that contain references to stakeholders will be examined again to identify overt or covert references to the stakeholders possessing any of the predetermined list of salience characteristics or any other criteria which the texts appears to suggest makes that stakeholder salient..

To carry out the coding, coders will read the articles and identify words or phrases referring to the crisis stakeholders. These will be coded solely and specifically according to the protocol outlined in this codebook, which contains a list of variables used in this study, and their specific definitions as used in this study. These definitions explain how the variables will be measured during coding. Even if you know other definitions of these words, please use only the definitions provided in this codebook. The codebook also contains specific instructions for coding each variable.

Coding unit

A unit is one uninterrupted segment of text that contains a single idea or theme; this may be a phrase, sentence or paragraph. Each stakeholder who is mentioned should be coded. A new thematic unit starts when the subject stakeholder or theme changes. Each unit is coded separately.

Appendix C (cont) Coding protocol

Coding instructions

Stage 1: Attribute description

First, identify and record the following descriptive attributes of the coder and articles.

A1. CODER: Log into the QDA Miner project file according to the coder ID list: 01 cky1 02 jwml 03 sc 04 ncl

A2. TYPE: All texts coded for this project are newspaper articles, so the attribute code DOCUMENT has been pre-assigned by the researcher to all texts.

A3. CRISIS CASE: All texts coded within this case are about the SQ006 crisis, so the attribute code SIA has been pre-assigned by the researcher.

A4. TEXT NO: The numeric label (TST 1-110; CNA 1-48; TCP 1-17) of each article to be coded has been pre-assigned by the researcher.

A5. FILE ID: Enter the title of the article, as indicated by the headline.

A6. PUBLICATION DATE: Enter the date the article was published, November 1 – December 23, 2000, in the format DD/MM/YYYY. Enter 0 before any single digit months or days. For example, in the MM category, 01 = January, 02 = February, etc; in the DD category, 01 = first, 02 = second, etc. For double digit days, enter both digits; e.g. 11 = eleventh day of the month. For the year, enter 2000 for all articles.

A7. ARTICLE GENRE: Refers to the type of article. Enter one of the categories, as follows. Hard news is a fact-based article that presents new factual information on the case. Editorial or Column is the writer's personal interpretation of the facts and typically contains subjective opinions. Feature is an in-depth thematic or overview article about the case, which typically elaborates a specific angle of the facts. Interview is also a thematic or overview article written from the perspective of the person interviewed and often quoting them extensively. Profile is an article that focuses on how the events affect one individual or a small group. Correspondence refers to an article written as a letter to the editor and usually published on a specific page for such letters. Other refers to any other form of article.

A8. POSITION: Refers to where in the publication the article appeared. Enter one of the following categories: Front page refers to page 1 of the edition. Inside prime refers to the inside pages (i.e. excluding page 1). Forum refers to the readers' letters pages. Run refers to the remaining pages of any edition not included in the previous-mentioned categories.

Appendix C (cont) Coding protocol

A9. LENGTH: Refers to the number of words in the article. Enter one of the categories, as follows: Fewer than 500; Between 501 and 900; Between 901 and 2,000; or 2,000 or more.

A10. DATE PERIOD: The period of the crisis is divided into eight one-week categories: Week 1 = November 1-7; Week 2 = November 8-14; Week 3 = November 15-21; Week 4 = November 22-28; Week 5 = November 29 to December 5; Week 6 = December 6-12; Week 7 = December 13-19; Week 8 = December 20-23. Enter the number (1 to 8) which corresponds with the week in which the article was published.

Stage 2: Coding of frequency, extent and prominence of mentions of stakeholders

In the first round of coding, you will identify each unit of text in which one of the following 14 stakeholders is mentioned or referenced.

INSERT LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS TO BE CODED

Note that the stakeholders may be referred to using different terms. The SQ006 passengers may be referred to “those on board”, “the passengers”, “the victims”, “a businessman sitting near the front of the plane” or use their personal names. The SQ006 cabin crew may be referred to as “cabin crew”, “crew member”, “steward”, “stewardess” or use their personal names. The SQ006 pilots may be referred to as “pilots”, “flight crew”, “captain” or use their personal names.

Read each article twice before starting coding. In the first reading, understand the content meaning; in the second reading, take note of words, phrases and sentences that indicate the text is referring to one of the stakeholders. You may then proceed to code the identified segments in the QDA Miner project file.

Only code those units of text that contain references to crisis stakeholders. Code the full length of the specific text unit and tag it with the name(s) of the stakeholder(s) mentioned. If you are unsure which stakeholders are referred to, highlight this for later discussion using the memoing function in the programme.

For each coded unit of text, identify any editorial emphasis markers employed within that section of text. Does the text appear in a headline, sub-head, lead paragraph, pull quote, boxed item or

Appendix C (cont) Coding protocol

call to action? If so, tag the coded segment for the respective prominence marker. If a different type of prominence marker is employed, tag the coded unit with “other” and include the details in a memoed note tagged to the text unit. If no prominence markers are employed, tag the coded unit with “None”.

Continue until all the articles are coded for references to all the identified stakeholders.

Stage 3: Coding of manifest valence of mentions of stakeholders

This phase of coding will identify the manifest valence of each mention of the stakeholders.

Valence of the mention means whether the coded text includes manifest reference to the stakeholders in a positive, negative or neutral manner, as indicated by the presence of such words as “honest”, “dishonest”, “valued”, or “untrustworthy” or similar types of phrases. You do not need to “read into” the underlying meaning; only code what is obviously positive or negative.

For each article, retrieve all the text units that have been coded for mentions of any of the 14 stakeholders. Read each tagged unit of text again. Then code it as a sub-category under the respective stakeholder as a positive, negative or neutral reference to that stakeholder. If the unit of text contains both positive and negative references to the same stakeholder, code it as having neutral valence. Continue until all references to stakeholders in all the articles have been coded for manifest valence.

Stage 4: Coding of salience themes about stakeholders

In this final stage of coding, the previously-coded units of texts mentioning specific stakeholders will be coded for manifest or latent references to the predetermined salience characteristics, as defined and described below:

INSERT LIST OF SALIENCE CHARACTERISTICS WITH THEIR CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS.

The salience characteristics may be in the manifest content such as the use of specific words or phrases. For example, a stakeholder may be depicted as having power, as suggested by the presence

Appendix C (cont) Coding protocol

of such terms as “powerful”, “force” or “strength”. A stakeholder’s claims may be depicted as having urgency, as suggested by the presence of such terms as “urgent”, “critical”, “immediate”, “essential” or “compelling”. A stakeholder may be portrayed as having the support of other groups or individuals to help them press their claims, as indicated by the words or actions of those other stakeholders.

The salience characteristics may also be carried in interpretations of the content, so in this stage of the coding, you may need to interpret underlying meanings that are suggested by how the article is written. Meaning may be conveyed or suggested by word choice, a focus on specific content, omission of specific content, the use of metaphors or other types of description, use of quotes and personal stories, and so on, as described below:

INSERT LIST OF FRAMING DEVICES AND THEIR DESCRIPTIONS

For each article, retrieve all the text units that have been coded for mentions of any of the 14 stakeholders. Read each tagged unit of text again. Identify the presence or suggestion of presence of any of the 20 salience characteristics. Tag each identified characteristic as a sub-category under the stakeholder to whom the characteristic applies in this specific segment of text. Also tag the framing devices(s) used as a separate sub-category under the stakeholder. Use the memoing function if required to explain or elaborate on the interpretation.

Continue until all the articles are coded for references to all the identified stakeholders.

Intercoder reliability assessment

To check coding reliability, an intercoder assessment will be conducted on 10% of the articles from each media source (11 from *The Straits Times*, five from Central News Agency and two from *The China Post*). Coding of the remaining articles will proceed only after satisfactory intercoder reliability level has been achieved.

Appendix D Timeline of SQ006 crisis

31-10-2000	Flight SQ006 crashes on take-off from CKS Airport in Taipei
1-11-2000	All survivors rescued; all bodies retrieved
2-11-2000	Relatives begin identification of deceased
2-11-2000	Taiwan investigators say accident was pilot error as aircraft was on wrong runway and hit construction equipment on that runway
4-11-2000	SIA offers compensation package to relatives of deceased
5-11-2000	Numerous parties challenge the conclusion of pilot error
6-11-2000	Pilots are prevented from leaving Taiwan
8-11-2000	Pilots' associations denounce detention of pilots and conclusion of pilot error
8-11-2000	Funerals in Singapore of deceased cabin crew
15-11-2000	Singaporeans sign plea for pilots' release
21-11-2000	Taiwan asks to conduct check of SIA's safety procedures
27-11-2000	Singapore public protests Taiwan's request to review SIA's procedures
1-12-2000	Preliminary investigation report is released, confirming aircraft was on wrong runway, which was partially-closed for repairs; confirms pilot error
8-12-2000	Taiwan authorities say pilots would be allowed to leave
16-12-2000	Taiwan authorities say pilots would have to stay longer in Taiwan
22-12-2000	Pilots are allowed to leave Taiwan; they return to Singapore immediately
24-4-2002	Official investigation report is published by Taiwan authorities; confirms aircraft was on wrong runway; cites pilot error as main cause Singapore's Ministry of Transport issues its own report
July 2002	SIA terminates contracts of two of the flight crew
Oct 2006	All Singapore-filed law suits regarding compensation settled

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Supplementary bibliography: Articles analysed for case study

The Straits Times

- Nov 1, 2000 SIA crash: 47 bodies found
- Nov 1, 2000 SIA jet crashes at Taipei airport
- Nov 1, 2000 Jet shook and twisted before crash
- Nov 1, 2000 Bad weather may be to blame
- Nov 2, 2000 Condolences from PM Goh
- Nov 2, 2000 “Mak, don’t worry”
- Nov 2, 2000 Man at the controls may hold answers
- Nov 2, 2000 Plane drama
- Nov 2, 2000 Quick move into crisis control
- Nov 2, 2000 Relatives identify charred remains
- Nov 2, 2000 “We’re deeply sorry”
- Nov 3, 2000 “Best care for Singapore survivors”
- Nov 3, 2000 Despair. Sorrow. Hysteria
- Nov 3, 2000 Medical team in Taipei to help bring injured back
- Nov 3, 2000 Open anguish as grim task begins
- Nov 3, 2000 People still have faith in airline
- Nov 3, 2000 Pilots tested every six months
- Nov 3, 2000 Rescue teams put in sterling effort
- Nov 3, 2000 Singaporeans grieve over the Net
- Nov 3, 2000 Taipei: Debris on closed runway
- Nov 3, 2000 Taiwan’s politicians unite to deal with disaster
- Nov 3, 2000 US passengers mainly from S. California
- Nov 3, 2000 Were lights on at the closed runway?
- Nov 3, 2000 Worry. Fear. Frustration... Sympathy
- Nov 4, 2000 Access to info will help families cope
- Nov 4, 2000 Dead or alive? 4 hours of hell as man sought news of sis
- Nov 4, 2000 Devoted to her dream job, till her last breath
- Nov 4, 2000 Gov’t to leave no stone unturned
- Nov 4, 2000 Just a Singapore girl, doing her job
- Nov 4, 2000 President conveys condolence
- Nov 4, 2000 Questions, questions and more questions

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- Nov 5, 2000 A brother's 4-day ordeal
- Nov 5, 2000 Broken watch helps son identify mother
- Nov 5, 2000 Buddy support cushions the blow
- Nov 5, 2000 Farewell, our loved ones...
- Nov 5, 2000 Money not on minds of families of crash victims
- Nov 5, 2000 Newly weds home safe after bumpy flight
- Nov 5, 2000 SIA's true maturation begins
- Nov 5, 2000 Second team sent to aid families
- Nov 5, 2000 U\$400,000 offer to kin of the dead
- Nov 5, 2000 UN chief expresses shock
- Nov 6, 2000 Acid test for the national carrier
- Nov 6, 2000 Farzana is finally back home
- Nov 6, 2000 Learn from SIA tragedy; press on: SM
- Nov 6, 2000 What were the contributory factors?
- Nov 7, 2000 Bank officer continues battle in SGH
- Nov 7, 2000 Ground radar may be best defence
- Nov 7, 2000 Pilots have to remain in Taiwan
- Nov 7, 2000 SIA gets kudos from KL paper
- Nov 7, 2000 SIA's handling of crisis praised
- Nov 7, 2000 Students mourn Prof's death
- Nov 7, 2000 "Uproar" if Taiwan prosecutes 3 pilots
- Nov 7, 2000 Why? How? What now?
- Nov 8, 2000 Aftershock: SIA calling in sick
- Nov 8, 2000 Many questions on Taipei airport
- Nov 8, 2000 Runway digs made damage worse
- Nov 8, 2000 Sad irony
- Nov 8, 2000 Singapore Girl will soar again
- Nov 8, 2000 Taipei airport cameras may hold clues
- Nov 9, 2000 Bodies to be flown back to Singapore
- Nov 9, 2000 Don't blame the pilot so quickly
- Nov 9, 2000 Farewell, dear colleagues
- Nov 9, 2000 Taiwan has "judicial power" in probe
- Nov 9, 2000 Two deaths in 10 days devastate family
- Nov 10, 2000 60 minutes to Disaster
- Nov 10, 2000 Dedicated doctor, filial daughter

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- Nov 10, 2000 “Everything went black...then, screams
- Nov 10, 2000 Formal offer for Taiwan families
- Nov 10, 2000 Surviving crew give comfort
- Nov 11, 2000 Memorial service to be held in Taipei
- Nov 11, 2000 Shattered lives and broken hearts
- Nov 12, 2000 Flood of sympathy for SQ victims
- Nov 12, 2000 Khoo back in Antarctica
- Nov 13, 2000 35% burns, but he is not suing
- Nov 14, 2000 Pilots’ fate hinges on probe outcome
- Nov 15, 2000 Over 1,000 sign online plea for crash pilots
- Nov 18, 2000 Remembering SQ 006
- Nov 18, 2000 Taiwan’s president to attend memorial
- Nov 19, 2000 Pilots “free to move around”
- Nov 20, 2000 Top Taiwan lawyers for SQ 006 pilots
- Nov 21, 2000 First burns patient discharged
- Nov 21, 2000 Taiwan to probe SIA’s safety systems
- Nov 23, 2000 SQ 006 cabin crew still traumatised
- Nov 25, 2000 “No” to pilots’ requests to leave
- Nov 25, 2000 SIA crash: Misleading signs removed
- Nov 27, 2000 No reason for Taiwan to probe SIA’s safety systems
- Nov 28, 2000 Probe chief: Better if pilots go home
- Nov 30, 2000 Flames shot at us
- Nov 30, 2000 SIA’s compassion in aftermath of crash unrivalled
- Nov 30, 2000 Surviving crew give one another support
- Dec 2, 2000 Report confirms SQ 006’s wrong turn
- Dec 2, 2000 Tests to find whether runway lights were on
- Dec 3, 2000 Heart and sole
- Dec 5, 2000 Farzana’s condition worsens, now stable
- Dec 6, 2000 Several SIA flights suspended
- Dec 6, 2000 Victim’s family suffers with her
- Dec 7, 2000 Undertaker “bribed officials” to provide victims’ coffins
- Dec 8, 2000 Taiwan minister slams pilots’ threat
- Dec 9, 2000 Taiwan will let pilots come home
- Dec 11, 2000 Fighter Farzana up and about in hospital

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- Dec 16, 2000 Mystery lingers
Dec 16, 2000 SQ 006 pilots have to remain in Taiwan longer
Dec 19, 2000 Crash heroine Farzana walks out of hospital
Dec 20, 2000 Farzana taken back to hospital for more treatment
Dec 20, 2000 Flood of emotions, questions after SQ crash
Dec 20, 2000 Taiwan may set deadline on pilots
Dec 21, 2000 IA still in talks over pilots' release
Dec 22, 2000 Pilots allowed to leave Taiwan
Dec 22, 2000 Pilots back, as Taiwan lifts ban
Dec 23, 2000 Taipei: Why airport staff free to leave

Central News Agency

- Nov 1, 2000 Singapore Airlines jumbo jet crashes at CKS Airport during takeoff
Nov 1, 2000 179 people aboard ill-fated aircraft
Nov 1, 2000 Fire on crashed Singapore Airlines plane distinguished
Nov 1, 2000 ROC President, Premier order all-out rescue efforts
Nov 1, 2000 Jetliner hits object before explosion: Pilots
Nov 1, 2000 65 dead in Singapore Airlines plane accident
Nov 1, 2000 ROC Air Force assists in plane crash relief
Nov 1, 2000 Singapore Airlines sends large team to deal with aftermath of crash
Nov 1, 2000 Causes of Singapore airliner crash remain unclear
Nov 1, 2000 President Chen pays respects for SIA crash victims
Nov 1, 2000 U.S. aviation experts leave for Taiwan to help probe SIA crash
Nov 1, 2000 AFSC begins investigation into SIA plane crash
Nov 1, 2000 Singapore PM thanks ROC government for SIA crash help
Nov 1, 2000 68 dead, 12 unaccounted for in plane crash: SIA
Nov 2, 2000 Clinton expresses condolences to families of SIA crash victims
Nov 2, 2000 Singapore minister thanks ROC for crash handling
Nov 2, 2000 Pope sends condolences to victims of Singapore Airlines crash
Nov 2, 2000 Opposition parties continue to lobby for recall of ROC President
Nov 2, 2000 Relatives of SIA plane crash victims perform funeral rites
Nov 3, 2000 Respect experts investigation, urges Transport Minister
Nov 3, 2000 All runways lit normally' during Singapore Airline crash: CAA
Nov 3, 2000 No-partisan legislators undecided on presidential recall motion
Nov 3, 2000 Heads of Taiwan's three major opposition parties to meet Nov 11

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Nov 3, 2000 Data indicates SIA plane taxied on wrong runway: ASC
Nov 4, 2000 Aviation official stresses safety of Chiang Kai-Shek Airport
Nov 4, 2000 ROC gov't to hold memorial service for victims of plane crash
Nov 4, 2000 SIA offering us \$400,000 for families of crash dead
Nov 4, 2000 Two more bodies recovered from SIA plane wreckage
Nov 5, 2000 Poll finds 64 percent of ROC citizens opposed to recall of President
Nov 5, 2000 SIA crash death toll rises to 82
Nov 6, 2000 Aviation safety investigators re-enact SIA plane crash
Nov 7, 2000 Aviation safety officials begin probe into human factors in SIA crash
Nov 8, 2000 ROC pilots association urges prosecution to respect precedent
Nov 8, 2000 Bodies of SIA plane crash victims to be shipped
Nov 14, 2000 ROC Justice Ministry claims jurisdiction over SIA crash
Nov 16, 2000 ROC Premier inspects Defense Ministry
Nov 16, 2000 Public memorial service for SIA crash victims to be held Saturday
Nov 18, 2000 Public memorial service for air crash victims held
Nov 18, 2000 Taiwan's international airport to install ground radar
Nov 28, 2000 Taipei refuses to send back Singapore Airlines crash pilots
Dec 7, 2000 Pilot federation appeals to Taiwan over Singapore pilots
Dec 8, 2000 Singapore Airlines pilots to be released next week
Dec 15, 2000 Pilots absent from flight simulation
Dec 20, 2000 Taiwan to complete report on SIA air crash by mid-February
Dec 21, 2000 Singapore Airlines pilots freed
Dec 21, 2000 Pilots of crashed SIA plane leave for home
Dec 22, 2000 Top 10 ROC domestic news stories of 2000

The China Post

- Nov 2, 2000 Typhoon leaves at least 44 dead
Nov 2, 2000 SIA 'black box' analysis may take 1-2 days official
Nov 2, 2000 Survivors recall final moments aboard aircraft
Nov 2, 2000 At least 79 confirmed dead - cause of SIA crash still unclear
Nov 2, 2000 Taiwan counts cost of Xangsane's wrath
Nov 3, 2000 Families of jetliner crash victims turn anger on SIA
Nov 3, 2000 SIA pilot may have used wrong runway
Nov 3, 2000 Political showdown looms over recall

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- Nov 4, 2000 Opposition parties may back down from recall threat
- Nov 4, 2000 Main opposition parties to hold unprecedented summit
- Nov 4, 2000 SIA pilot took wrong runway, ASC confirms
- Nov 5, 2000 CAA chief denies CKS airport was unsafe
- Nov 7, 2000 ASC focuses on probe into human factors of SIA crash
- Nov 7, 2000 ASC, prosecutors clash over crash investigation
- Nov 9, 2000 Association protests bringing SIA pilots up on charges
- Nov 9, 2000 SIA pilots will be allowed to leave Taiwan before Christmas
- Nov 16, 2000 Singapore Airlines pilots to stay in Taiwan