



# Pariahs: Hubris, Reputation and Organisational Crises

*Matt Nixon*

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In the last few years repeated scandals have rocked their worlds of many industries. Stories which have hit the headlines recently have included news of •Deliberate cheating by car makers to evade emissions tests •LIBOR and FX manipulation by bankers •Falsification of drug testing results plus allegations of bribery and corruption in major pharmaceutical corporations •Unlawful tapping of phones of the famous by newspapers •Cover-ups over high death rates in hospitals. The list of wrongdoing, incompetence and failure of governance and oversight can seem never-ending. While it is not always obvious what has gone wrong, there is no disguising the widespread impact on many stakeholders, and the catastrophic loss of trust and sense of betrayal that results. Matt Nixon has had a privileged insider seat in several of the organisations which came to suffer major crises, crises which inspired deep emotional responses. The organisations involved often became so disliked that they were treated by some as Pariahs, to be publicly despised and berated. But Nixon's analyses, which included assessment of the strategic challenges at board level, the practical workings of complex global organisations, the decision making and personalities of senior executives, the political and policy issues of national and international governance and oversight, and the views of NGOs and protest groups opposed to the status quo, led him to conclude that the picture of widespread criminality, immorality and incompetence often painted in the public narrative was at odds with the day-to-day reality of life in these businesses. 'Pariahs: Hubris, reputation and organisational crises' explores:•Why some organisations seem to become "Pariahs" and lose their trusted reputations•How we can stop organisations becoming Pariahs and what leaders and those who govern or regulate at-risk organisations can do to lower the risks of 'Pariah' stigmatization.•How organisations which have become Pariahs can regain reputation and become acceptable again to the majority of stakeholders. •How people working inside 'Pariah' organisations can cope with the challenges from others who may question their choices.The first section of the book introduces the 'Pariah' concept, and suggests both why the number of Pariahs are on the increase and why this increase is a real problem for a society struggling with the issues of trust. The core of the book is devoted to a detailed examination of the Pariah Lifecycle, explaining the conditions necessary for organisations with such challenged reputations to form and thrive; the hubris of their cultures and leadership; the different forms of crisis that recur, and the terrible nemesis they create for themselves. The final section examines what can be done to change after such crises, and also suggests that it is inevitable that there will be further Pariahs if we continue with the trends described. It explores the vital role that the employees can play in both causing and stopping Pariahs forming. 'Pariahs: Hubris, reputation and organisational crises' draws attention to these issues, and aims to start dialogue among practitioners and leaders about taking the necessary actions.

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