

Political Crisis Communication: Navigating Polycrisis and Post-Pandemic Transformations

OVERVIEW

Contemporary political communication is situated within a structurally unstable environment, defined by the acceleration of media cycles and audience fragmentation. In this context of global “polycrisis” – marked by interwoven instabilities and diluted responsibilities (Bencherif, 2025; Zaki et al., 2024; Manfredi-Sánchez & Smith, 2023) – crisis management is no longer an exception but an ordinary pillar of democratic governance (Scammell, 2004; Chen, 2012). The past decade, shaped by terrorist attacks, the COVID-19 pandemic (Hu & Zhong, 2023; Boin et al., 2021), geopolitical crises (Ciot & Ghidui, 2020), and climate disruptions (Denisova, 2025; Uldam & Askanus, 2022), has highlighted the crucial role of political crisis communication in articulating technical expertise, political authority, and public engagement – especially considering the increasingly central role of emotional and performative registers in times of crisis (Chaussinand, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, has served as a privileged laboratory, exposing diverse models of crisis leadership (Dacheux & Goujon, 2021; Lilleker et al., 2021; Kahn, 2020) and communication strategies oscillating between personalised power and technocratic decision-making, which in turn underscore the critical positioning of leaders facing ongoing contingencies (Premat, 2024). Moreover, the analysis of political scandals reveals a shift in forms of political vulnerability within a context of hyper-mediated exposure (Gorissen, 2025; Berndt Rasmussen & Olsson Yaouzis, 2020; Chandra & Erlingsdóttir, 2020).

Political crisis communication – understood as the set of discursive and symbolic practices enacted by political leaders in the face of urgent, unpredictable, and highly mediatized situations (Hinck & Cooley, 2023) – must now navigate conflicting imperatives: institutional transparency (Fernández-Torres & Chamizo-Sánchez, 2025), narrative coherence (Mahé & Martel, 2023; Manfredi-Sánchez & Smith, 2023), prompt responsiveness (Voinea & Stoica, 2023), and adaptation for multiple audiences (Haller & Michael, 2024), particularly in digital spheres.

Recent research indicates that the regime of immediacy and virality imposed by digital media negatively impacts the crisis management strategies employed by political actors (Lorenz-Spreen, 2023; Prince & Giasson, 2019). Scholars note increasing polarization, declining trust in democratic institutions and the media, and the rising spread of disinformation (Sato & Wiebrecht, 2024; McCoy et al., 2018).

This special issue invites contributions exploring several dimensions of political crisis communication:

- Temporalities and Rhythms: navigating accelerated media, risk culture, and “institutional resilience” (Mahé & Martel, 2023; Bourbeau, 2018).
- Digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence, and Post-Truth: transformation of balances between information, online affectivity, and political distrust, including the impact of artificial intelligence tools on the production, dissemination and reception of crisis messages (Borowski, 2025; Surjatmodjo et al., 2024; Monnier, 2020).
- Political Crisis Leadership Models: gendered, cultural, and ideological specificities, including populist actors’ responses to crises (Järvinen, 2024; Voinea & Stoica, 2023; Deswert, 2021).
- Globalisation of Audiences and Transnational Communicational Arenas: the emergence of globalised public spheres during crises, requiring communication strategies adapted to both local specificities and transnational dynamics of public opinion (Landqvist & Blåsjö, 2024; Nocheva, 2024).
- Regime Crises and Democratic Resilience: between security firmness and the recognition of citizens’ claims (Febvre-Issaly, 2024; Gillies et al., 2023; Djuve et al., 2020).

We welcome interdisciplinary, bilingual submissions (in French or English) aimed at enriching the understanding of current communication practices and strategies. Proposals may adopt theoretical, empirical, or comparative approaches.

SUBMISSION AND PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Abstract should include :

- In a separate file: name, professional or academic status, institutional affiliation, contact details of the author(s) (e-mail and postal addresses).
- The title of the paper (maximum 180 characters including spaces).
- A 500-word abstract (excluding references) highlighting the interest of the contribution and including an overview of the problematic.
- Proposals for papers may be presented either as reflective analyses based on recent and completed empirical research, or as analyses of professional communication practises.

Proposals (in Word format) must include :

- In a separate file: the name, professional or academic status, institutional affiliation, and contact details of the author(s) (email and postal addresses).
- The article must not exceed 30,000 characters (including notes, spaces, and references).
- Title of the article (maximum 180 characters including spaces): Times New Roman, size 12, bold, and centered on the page.
- The author's name should be in regular weight, centered on the page, and followed by a footnote reference. The footnote should provide a 2–3 line biographical note about the author.
- The text (including headings) must be entirely in Times New Roman, size 12, justified, and without paragraph indentation.
- Please refrain from using any stylistic effects: no page breaks, section breaks, or double line breaks...
- Line spacing: 1.5.
- Margins: 2.5 cm on all sides. Standard page layout.
- Document structure: two levels of headings.
- Do not number headings or subheadings.
- Main section titles: bold, upright, and left-aligned.
- Subsection titles: regular weight, italicized, and left-aligned.
- Always specify acronyms when first used.
- Remove all bullet points: please use complete sentences instead.
- Use synonyms as often as possible.
- Minimize the number of footnotes.

- Remove double (or triple) spaces between words.
- Ensure the correct use of non-breaking spaces before (and after) the following punctuation marks: ? ! ; « »
- Verify all quotations in the article, as well as the spelling of proper names.
- Numbers up to twelve should be written in full; numbers beyond twelve should be in digits.
- Centuries should be indicated as follows: 18th century, 19th century...
- Quotations of fewer than four lines should be placed within quotation marks and remain in the body of the text.
- Quotations longer than four lines should be set off from the main text, indented, and enclosed in quotation marks. They should remain in Times New Roman, size 12.
- Bibliographic references should follow the French APA standards (7th edition, 2019), both in the general bibliography and within the text.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION & REVIEW SCHEDULE

Abstracts must be submitted no later than Sunday, **November 9, 2025**.

The scientific committee will review the abstracts and provide its evaluation by November 17, 2025.

Final proposals are expected by **February 1, 2026**. They will undergo a double-blind peer review by members of our scientific committee, with feedback provided by March 2, 2026.

If revisions are required, the modified proposals must be submitted by **April 12, 2026** at the latest.

The publication of the Cahier is scheduled for **June 2026**.

Abstracts and final proposals should be sent to baptiste.buidin@galilee.be.

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