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EMOTIONAL COMMUNICATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS: FILOMENA CASE

Review Article

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Abstract

The Filomena snow storm, which occurred between January 8 and 10 of 2021 in Spain, was an essay on how communication should be approached to facing an environmental disaster. The storm hit Madrid with special fury. The city was collapsed for 15 days. For two weeks prolonging the long confinement imposed as a result of Covid 19. Two crisis overlapped: the healthy and the produced by an atmospheric agent. However those circumstances did not lead on a political crisis. The alliance between local authorities and media favored a type of communication that empathized with the citizens. The main objective of this article has been to analyze the causes that have made Filomena an atypical crisis that has prevented the fall of the local government. The methodology applied has focused on studying how the media transmitted to citizens the narrative designed by the local government, based on messages, especially images, that generated empathy with the population. The main conclusion is that an empathetic communication campaign, based on visual resources, reduces social unrest and the risk of political crisis.

Keywords: communication, crisis, emotional, empathetic, environmental disaster

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Introduction

One of the first crisis manifestations is the increasing of information. The media increases the space dedicated to the treatment of the issue in question, but at the same time, the demand for information grows exponentially (Seeger, Sellnow and Ulmer, 2003). The crisis caused by Covid 19 has left abundant bibliography on the matter. Previous health crises such as avian flu or Ebola, served as a test to experiment and measure information demand (Thompson et al., 2017). But all magnitudes overflowed with the first global pandemic in history (Hollowood, Mostrous, 2020). The Covid19 health crisis has served to analyze an extreme case of crisis communication and has alerted governments about what is emerging as another pandemic with equal or greater consequences: information overload with its derivative of infointoxication.

In times of crisis population demands information, and the increase of consumption feeds back into and state of anxiety (Thompson et al., 2017). This compulsion favors digital media since the content is constantly refreshed (PEW, 2014) as well as television. In fact, studies carried out in the first wave of Covid 19 showed that TV and digital had been the preferred media in terms of citizen trust (Casero-Ripollés, 2020). But apart from these professionalized channels, people seek direct and participatory experiences. Social networks, especially Twitter, (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2017) meet the expectations of immediacy, personalization and participation. All of this coincides with a great disbelief in the media and institutions (Newman et al., 2020).

Covid 19 has brought to the fore the concept of emotion, an element that will need to be analyzed in more detail in the future. Although there is literature that supports its specific weight in the perception of crises. Álvarez (2009) encouraged audiences to listen to what they felt and take it into account when acting and communicating. Coombs (2007) takes this same line when he states that crises are what the public thinks about them and not so much the events themselves.

The leadership model affects people's emotions. It can attract them to collaborate with the instructions or orders requested of them or incite them to transgress them (Boin, 2007). In crisis situations, where the most common emotions arise: Fear and Sadness

(Díaz, Fernández and Rojano,2020), citizens need to feel that the leader actively participates in their situation (Desconfianza,2018). This kind of empathy translates into communication and determines the degree of acceptance or rejection of authority (Maggi,2012).

Emotional communication in Filomena

The crisis caused by the Filomena squall at the beginning of 2021 took place within another crisis whose proportions had not been seen throughout history. The heavy snowfall that fell over Spain between January 8 and 10 was mainly focused on Madrid. On January 9, the capital dawned white and collapsed. No one could leave the house without the risk of slipping on the snow, surface transport was impossible and the only way to move around was underground. The snowfall, initially greeted with rejoicing by the population, threatened to turn into a major political crisis as snow was still blocking the streets two weeks later.

Citizens, who had suffered successive confinements due to Covid 19 had not yet recovered from the restrictions. In this context, a snowfall, also historic, planned as a new lockdown in the mood of the citizens. However, the reaction of the population, at least in the first few days, was contrary to expectations. In fact, people welcomed the novelty of the snow with surprise and happiness. The white blanket brought images of freedom and childhood. This subjective component makes perceptions different (Coombs, 2007).

The local government adopted communication as a strategic tool to strengthen its leadership. If the buses were cornered on the sidewalks, the fire engines did not have enough chains, if the salt stockpile was scarce for the amount of snowfall, the local government opted for communication as a lifesaver to gain time and for the temperatures to melt the snow.

The reasons why the heavy snowfall did not lead to a political crisis, as usual, (Castells, 2016) that would have hit the local government, can be attributed to emotional motives. Emotional elements predominated over rational ones (Slovic and Burns 2012).

Filomena did not entail attrition for the mayor of Madrid, José Luis Martínez Almeida, member of conservative party (PP). On the contrary,

it reinforced his leadership. The way the mayor approached the situation with a committed and empathetic gesture facilitated the cooperation and patience of the population, according to Choi and Lin (2017), Kim and Cameron (2011) and Van der Meer et al. (2014).

It should be noted that two circumstances contributed to this positive balance of the local government: there was not a single death directly related to the snowfall and that the crisis was short in time, especially compared to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Citizens appreciated being taken into account in times of suffering. Feeling like protagonists or an active part in the experience (Wendling, 2013) Mayor José Luis Martínez- Almeida's attitude of touring the neighborhoods, stepping in the snow, and personally supervising how the city was doing, contributed decisively to generate this feeling of empathy.

The mayor's trips to the neighborhoods were followed live by a legion of reporters and television cameras that broadcast the mayor's movements. As happened to so many neighbors, his car was trapped by the snow and the event produced one of the most iconic images of those days: the mayor pushing the car while snowflakes fell on his face. A behavior that deserved the recognition of the media, as published by the newspaper .

Although, in general, the media aired this empathetic facet of the mayor, there was no lack of criticism. The economic newspaper *Cinco Días* criticized the fact that the mobile application (*Avisos Madrid*) had not been used to warn the population of the forecast of the heavy snowfall.

Objectives

The general objective of this article is to unravel how the most important snowfall of the century, which collapsed the city for several weeks, avoided the risk of becoming a political crisis, seriously damaging the prestige of the local government. The study opens the door to future research on crisis management and communication.

As specific objectives, we address the following: To find out how the communication strategy for the Filomena storm was addressed; To determine which elements of institutional communication contributed to the fact that the social perception of the collapse caused by the snowfall did not

have a response of disaffection towards the local government. Also analyze the degree of acceptance and dissemination by the media of official messages

Methodology

The study we are bringing is based on a triple hypothesis. On the one hand, we start from the premise that the social perception of a crisis determines the response of population to the measures adopted by the authorities. Likewise, we consider that the type of communication adopted by the authorities contributes to the population feeling cared for or forgotten. Finally, we assume that in times of crisis communication must be fast and visual. To do this, it is essential to produce striking images.

We have chosen a case study as our methodology. This is a research method that has a long history in the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, history, and psychology. The main purpose of undertaking a case study is to investigate the particularity, the uniqueness, of the singular case (Jiménez Chaves 2012). Storm Filomena is presented here as a case study of how a persuasive and empathetic media campaign favorably influences the social perception of a government's management and avoids the risk of political crisis.

The case study allows us to analyze a phenomenon in its context, using quantitative and qualitative sources (Yin, 1981). However, it has limitations because it involves subjective information and it is difficult to reach a statistical inference. Limitations reinforced by fact we are facing with feelings and emotions.

Firstly, a bibliographic review has been carried out about the importance of subjective perceptions and emotions in the way in which the population faces a crisis. Although there are notable contributions in this regard (Ulmer, Sellnow, Seeger, 2017), their incorporation into the sociological metrics that measure their impact and consequences in the development and application of communication strategies in exceptional situations seems insufficient.

It is necessary to highlight the circumstances that the city experienced in the so-called “snowfall of the century”, within a context of a global

pandemic, where the huge demand for information contributes to the risk of misinformation. Given that social perception is built based on published opinion (Stephens and Malone 2012), the research focuses on the receptivity of the media to the communication strategy carried out by the local government.

A quantitative and qualitative analysis has also been carried out of the information provided by the City Council during the worst days of the storm. The sources used were press releases, press conference calls, official statements and graphic material, daily distributed by the Communications Department to press, radio and television.

The information flow analyzed operates in two directions. On the one hand, the information sent from the local government to the media and how these messages were received and reported in the written press.

Results

The epicenter of the Communication strategy pivoted on the mayor's over-exposure to the media. The government opted for direct and immediate communication. The closest thing to a live in broadcast of the mayor's actions. The priority resource was the call of the media to accompany the mayor at the crucial points of action: on his tour of the neighborhoods to check the consequences of the snowfall and visits to emergency centers.

This direct communication, paying special attention to gestures, led to the dissemination of iconic images of the mayor pushing a car while snowflakes fell on his face (Image 1) or avoiding blocks of snow turned into ice on the street (Image 2). Both summarize and exemplify the type of communication that was desired to be offered.



Image 1: The mayor of Madrid, José Luis Martínez Almeida, during storm Filomena. Source: https://www.eldiario.es/politicalfotos-visitas-institucionales-resaca-filomena_1_6745505.html



Image 2: The mayor of Madrid, José Luis Martínez Almeida, during storm Filomena. Source: Victor Lerenal/EFE

Analysis of the information offered by the Madrid City Council through the Press Office (Table 1) reveals three basic axes: 1st Prevention (basic information on how to act during snowfall, availability of salt, care services for the homeless), 2nd Supervision of the situation in the streets (effects of Filomena on mobility, trees and maintenance of basic services), 3rd Declaration of catastrophic zone.

Table 1. Official communications sent to the media by the Communication Department

Day	Official Press release
08/01/2021	The City Council launches a shock plan in Cañada Real in the face of the cold wave. The City Council requests neighborhood collaboration to avoid the abandonment of waste in the area of containers El Retiro and 8 other parks closed this afternoon due to the snow forecast
09/01/2021	Practical guide to improve the situation of buildings and homes after the snowfall in Madrid The City Council enables 157 new places to accommodate homeless people during Storm Filomena
10/01/2021	The EMT launches 28 lines, 17 of them with links to hospitals and one to Mercamadrid Almeida appreciates the work of the municipal emergency services and insists on the need to stay at home
11/01/2021	The City Council suspends access to all parks in Madrid due to the risk of trees falling. Villacis begins an inspection campaign to evaluate the structural damage to buildings after the snowfall
12/01/2021	The mayor checks the work of firefighters in removing damaged trees and fallen branches The City Councils of Madrid and Rivas will request a meeting of the members of the Pact for the Cañada Real to promote the relocation of residents
13/01/2021	Almeida thanks the EMT workers: 110,000 people were able to return to their homes despite the heavy snowfall A total of 33 sports facilities in Madrid are affected by Storm Filomena Villacis describes Social Services' attention to the elderly during the storm as a success Andrea Levy visits the Rastro area to learn about the situation of the merchants
14/01/2021	The emergency contract for the trees adds 1,100 more workers for the review, pruning and felling of the specimens damaged by the storm The City Council requests the declaration of Madrid as a catastrophic area Álvaro González visits the cleaning and maintenance work that the Municipal Housing Company is carrying out in its developments after the snowfall

15/01/2021	<p>Villacís describes the losses of the Madrid economic sector as “catastrophic and shocking” Almeida assures that most of the Retiro trees will be preserved and the buildings have not suffered serious damage.</p> <p>The capital’s tunnels that were closed by the storm are operational again</p> <p>Villacís promotes a plan to speed up the cleaning of accesses to facilities of municipal schools and nursery schools</p> <p>The capital’s tunnels that were closed by the storm are operational again</p> <p>Villacís promotes a plan to speed up the cleaning of accesses to facilities of municipal schools and nursery schools</p>
16/01/2021	This Sunday, maximum speed limitations of 70 km on the M-30 and access roads
17/01/2021	<p>Traveling on the EMT from Monday to Wednesday will be free to guarantee traffic flow</p> <p>The maximum speed limit is maintained at 70 km on the M-30 and access roads on Monday</p>
18/01/2021	<p>Madrid launches an urgent cleaning plan for scuppers and sewers Almeida advocates the reactivation of tourism as soon as possible</p> <p>A total of 273 public schools have been inspected with the express cleaning contract</p> <p>Almeida is committed to major sporting events to “glimpse the normality that we miss so much”</p>
19/01/2021	<p>The Pollution Protocol is deactivated for tomorrow, Wednesday</p> <p>The City Council deploys an action plan in urban tunnels in view of the forecast of rain and thaw in the coming days</p>
21/01/2021	<p>The City Council opens an information line to help the self-employed in managing compensation for the storm</p> <p>Almeida demands the active participation of cities in the European Recovery Funds</p> <p>Madrid Salud, Gold Medal for the Order of Merit of the National Plan on Drugs for its work during the pandemic</p> <p>The Cold Campaign welcomes a daily average of 600 people during the storm</p>
22/01/2021	<p>The Municipal Sports Games resume the competition after the passing of Filomena</p> <p>The City Council asks for extreme caution with trees due to the strong gusts of wind</p> <p>New school in Cañaveral</p>
23/01/2021	<p>Villacís supervises the work to remove fallen trees and branches in Aluche</p> <p>Madrid resumes the Regulated Parking Service this Monday</p>

Source: Press releases sent to the media from the Communication Department of the Madrid City Council. Own elaboration
This information policy was reflected in the media (table 2), as can be seen from the press summaries prepared daily within the Communication Directorate of the Madrid

City Council by virtue of what was published in the Madrid online and offline media. In the following The table outlines the headlines of the news that appeared on the front pages of the sections of the local press about Filomena.

Table 2. News Published in the Madrid Press about Storm Filomena

Fecha	Media	News
9/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia	The snowfall puts Madrid in check The snowfall of the century blocks Madrid The snow storm paralyzes traffic in Madrid An exceptional snowfall collapses Madrid Filomena plunges Madrid into collapse
10/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia	The worst storm in 50 years Filomena causes chaos and isolates Madrid The 30 most intense hours of the mayor of Madrid A historic snowfall paralyzes Madrid Filomena isolates Madrid
11/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	Madrid hopes to recover mobility and supplies Madrid isolated. Only the subway works Madrid's battle against the ice sheets Madrid regains its pulse, but fears the cold
12/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	Moncloa avoids a clash with Almeida due to the catastrophic zone Meteorologists "nailed" the arrival and impact of Filomena Positive balance of the management, highlights the role of Almeida The storm revives the political clash between Madrid and the Executive Government and PP clash over storm management New shock due to the declaration of a catastrophic area
13/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País	The Psoe will boycott Moncloa's "no" to declaring a catastrophic zone Political storm after the passage of Filomena. Sánchez faces his own Podemos disappears in the management of the crisis due to the storm
	La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	The notice to the population was lukewarm and the orders late The cold makes it difficult to return to normality after the snowfall

14/01/2021	Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	Madrid requests to be a catastrophic zone The PP accuses Iglesias of disappearing and not showing his face in the midst of an emergency 24 hours with Almeida How infrastructure failed Four out of ten emergencies in Madrid are due to falls due to ice PSOE mayors join Almeida and request the declaration of catastrophe
15/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	Socialist municipalities join the catastrophic zone Collapse in garbage collection. The mayor celebrates what has already been cleaned The CAM supports the City Council for the emergency zone Madrid announces losses of 1,400 million and requests a catastrophic zone The UME in the street. Bus lines running and streets open
16/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	The post-Filomena effect 1.4 billion damages in the capital Against the clock to return to "normality" Schools and open streets Filomena's anonymous heroes Madrid, a week buried in snow
17/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	Three days of free buses and without a SER zone to avoid collapses The EMT will be free for three days to facilitate the cleaning of Madrid Free buses through Filomena EMT buses will be free until Wednesday "We do everything possible and impossible to reach all the streets as soon as possible" (Almeida)
18/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País	Filomena leaves and the thaw and floods arrive Objective: clear the sewers of snow and branches due to a rain alert And now "Operation Sewers" The capital prepares a flood risk map
	La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	And now, anti-flood operation

19/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	<p>Moncloa declares Madrid a catastrophic zone, but sees the bill inflated</p> <p>Moncloa declares a catastrophic zone, but sees the bill sent by Madrid as excessive</p> <p>The catastrophic zone arrives with reproaches</p> <p>The Government declares a catastrophic area, but reduces Madrid's requests.</p> <p>43% of the streets are still dirty ten days later The thaw threatens to collapse Madrid again</p> <p>The Government declares a catastrophic area, but rejects Madrid's calculation</p>
20/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	Snow limits the return to school, while more storms arrive
21/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	
22/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	The firefighters lacked cars to fight Filomena. Nine unused snow plows
23/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo	The SER is operational again after removing the snow
	El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	
24/01/2021	La Razón ABC El Mundo El País La Vanguardia 20 Minutos	

25/01/2021	La Razón ABC	Filomena damaged almost 16% of the trees in regional parks
	El Mundo El País	Statements by the Environment delegate: About 8,000 trees must be cut down
	La Vanguardia	
	20 Minutos	
26/01/2021	La Razón ABC	Almeida defends himself: He acted according to what was said by the State Meteorological Agency (AEMET)
	El Mundo El País	Almeida asks for European funds for Filomena and announces that he will renew the trees
	La Vanguardia	
	20 Minutos	

Source: Press summaries of the General Directorate of Communication of the Madrid City Council. Own elaboration

Note: The dates and media to which headlines have not been attributed are due to the fact that the media did not publish anything about Filomena or if they did, it was not unrelated to Madrid.

As reflected in table 1, the official information from the City Council was aimed at highlighting the role of the mayor in directing operations in crisis management, in neuralgic points such as the Emergency Center, cleaning cantons, Police and Firefighters groups. At the same time, their presence in the neighborhoods was constantly reported to check the consequences of the storm, fallen trees, blocked vehicles, buses stuck in the snow.

This omnipresence of the mayor served to dampen criticism about the management of the crisis for a time, but on January 17, nine days after the storm, fatigue began to show. The city was still dirty, “85% of the 9,000 tons of garbage that accumulated on public roads remain uncollected” (El País, 2021). Photos of neighbors multiplied on Twitter showing pedestrians walking between blocks of ice and mountains of garbage, becoming less and less patient and it was beginning to spread that and measures were taken on the fly. The criticism was led by El País and Cinco Días. They criticized the late response of the municipal authorities, despite the exact forecasts of the State Meteorological Agency and the lack of resources.

However, most of the information has been uncritical of municipal management (Table 2). In fact, it is remarkable that newspapers such as El Mundo published twice in the little more than two weeks of the crisis two reports dedicated to the mayor’s marathon days dedicated to touring the city supervising the cleaning work, visits to neighborhoods and contact with neighbors.

The communication strategy, based fundamentally on the visual expression of the mayor's actions, had an immediate effect. The photographs of the first mayor, pushing a vehicle in the middle of the snow, jumping through the ice and talking to police, firefighters and cleaning personnel, fulfilled the empathetic and supportive function of the population, according to Wendling's studies (2013) and Stephens and Malone (2012). The people of Madrid felt that their problems were shared and that the listening work they expected had been carried out, as proclaimed by Álvarez (2009). That attitude mitigated what could have become a political crisis of attrition for the local government. The only friction occurred with the central government due to the declaration of a catastrophic area, which only reinforced the mayor's leadership.

The strategy was proposed as a visual communication and very close to the terrain. The abundance of photographs (in this article the two most iconic photos of the mayor have been included), and the constant calls to the media to document the actions of the local government, especially the mayor's movements, were due to the interest in showing clearly palpably forms a type of leadership linked to action. It can be said that it was a crisis followed live by the cameras.

The defining feature consisted of personalizing the mayor's actions. The striking photos of Martínez Almeida pushing a stuck vehicle or jumping through the snow explained the leadership model that was wanted to be transmitted. A leadership attached to the street, to the neighborhood. For two weeks, the snowfall was omnipresent in the Madrid media, most of which are generalists so they expanded the echo beyond regional limits. The figure of José Luis Martínez Almeida as an involved mayor who felt the cold and fatigue gained national relevance. Citizens perceived this level of commitment, which fostered positive emotions that explain why the crisis, despite the unpredictability and failures made by the local government, was resolved without further political wear and tear.

Although, in general terms, the media aired this empathetic facet of the mayor, there was no shortage of criticism. The economic newspaper *Cinco Días* criticized the fact that the mobile application (*Avisos Madrid*) had not been used to notify the population of the forecast of heavy snowfall. "It is difficult to understand that the politicians of Madrid have been so clumsy in communicating specific instructions before everything exploded

and yet they have run so much to take photos with shovels, snow blowers and any other seasonal props.” Five Days (2021)

Discussion

The ruler’s results and that interpretation can focus his behavior (Van der Meer et al., 2014). The people of Madrid saw in the mayor’s actions emotional support for the situation they were experiencing and this message was valued above any other rational information. A circumstance that coincides with the most recent research (Losada, 2018) according to which citizens put their sensations and feelings before other considerations when assessing responsibility for crises.

The weight of emotions, highlighted by authors such as Van der Meer et al. (2014), Choi and Lin (2017) define the perception of a crisis situation as something sad or fearful. These were the outstanding emotions in the first phase of the pandemic (Díaz, Fernández and Rojano, 2020).

Slovic and Burns (2012), Pang, Jin and Cameron (2009), reiterate this point of view when evaluating crises. The distrust associated with Twitter could be related to the channel’s own misinformation, one of the most frequently used to receive information (Serrano Puche et al., 2018; Fletcher & Nielsen et al., 2018).

The determination of responsibility in the crisis also counts (Coombs and Holladay, 1996). The SCCT model (Situational Crisis Communication Theory) affirm that citizens can have an angry attitude, even reaching the point of revolt, if they perceive that the ruler has been responsible for the crisis. The direct and immediate communication model of social networks contributes to raising spirits and creating waves of social indignation (Gil de Zúñiga et al 2017).

According to Pang, Jin and Cameron (2010), the main emotions generated in a crisis are anger, fear, anxiety and sadness and within these basic emotions, we must highlight the fear and anxiety produced by overinformation (Seeger; Sellnow; Ulmer, 2003).

The reaction of the Madrid population to Storm Filomena, reported in the printed media, reaffirms previous academic work on empathy on the part of rulers. To do this, it is essential that you be especially sensitive to the

real situation, communicating with “compassion, concern and empathy.” (Heath, 2006). This could explain why the photos of the first mayor pushing a car under the snow became so popular.

Álvarez (2009) approaches that knowledge of the emotions generated by a crisis is essential to design its management is observed in the response of the media, as evident in the press summaries in those two weeks.

Conclusions

The main conclusion drawn from this research is that an accident, whether due to natural causes or human error, is not doomed to lead to a political crisis that devastates a government. In this sense, the example of Filomena can be seen as a paradigm of this statement.

Filomena tested the value of a communication strategy based on public relations and permanent contact with the media. This caused confidence in the institutions to be transmitted. In this sense, the action of the local government in accompanying journalists on all trips around the city to check the problems suffered by the population was vital. A fundamental part of the communication strategy was to reinforce the visual resources. To promote images and situations that explained by themselves the empathy of the authorities. The images of the mayor under the snow pushing a stuck car proved iconic and made it easier for him to be perceived as a model of supportive and empathetic leadership. It can be concluded that a successful communication strategy requires an overexposure of the ruler to the media in order to make visible at all times the degree of personal involvement and commitment to the citizens. In this sense, official communication must prioritize gestural messages and visual content.

Recommendations

Among other recommendations on the crisis communication, we propose make strong leadership visible in the first moments of the crisis. To make visible a cohesive organization/government regarding the real situation that arise. To desing a Plan Communication with a predominance of image and gesture .To maintain communication at the scene of the incident.

The closest to the ground and maintain lines of communication open and constant, but brief (press conferences, statements, punctual and brief)

The present study confirms previous research by other authors on the importance of the perception factor in crises. Something that is not sufficiently incorporated into the evaluation metrics of communication strategies. For this reason, this work should give a way to future research.

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EMOCIONALNA KOMUNIKACIJA U OKOLNOSTIMA EKOLOŠKE KRIZE: SLUČAJ FILOMENA

Sažetak

Snježna oluja Filomena, koja je zahvatila Španjolsku između 8. i 10. siječnja 2021., poslužila je kao primjer kako bi komunikacija trebala biti usmjerena u suočavanju s ekološkim katastrofama. Oluja je s posebnom žestinom pogodila Madrid, paralizirajući grad na 15 dana. Time je dvotjedna izolacija uzrokovana vremenskim uvjetima dodatno produžila dugo razdoblje zatvorenosti zbog pandemije COVID-19. Iako su se preklapile dvije krize – zdravstvena i ona uzrokovana vremenskim nepogodama – ovaj događaj nije rezultirao političkom krizom. Ključnu ulogu u tome imala je suradnja lokalnih vlasti i medija, koja je omogućila komunikaciju usmjerenu na empatiju s građanima. Glavni cilj ovog rada je analizirati razloge zbog kojih je Filomena postala atipična kriza, spriječivši pad lokalne vlasti. Primijenjena metodologija fokusirala se na proučavanje načina na koji su mediji prenosili narativ oblikovan od strane lokalne uprave, oslanjajući se na poruke, osobito vizualne sadržaje, koji su stvarali osjećaj empatije među građanima. Glavni zaključak istraživanja jest da empatijska komunikacijska kampanja, temeljena na vizualnim resursima, smanjuje društvenu napetost i rizik od političke krize

Ključne riječi: ekološka katastrofa, emocije, empatija, komunikacija, kriza