Windows of Opportunity and Discursive Formations: A Comparative Analysis of Policy Responses to the 2022 Wildfires and the 2023 Floods in Slovenia

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Abstract: This paper explores how Slovenia's policy responses to two recent environmental crises—the 2022 wildfires and the 2023 floods—were influenced by the interaction of the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) and discursive formations. The analysis reveals that crises do not automatically lead to policy change; rather, political action occurs when the problem, policy, and politics streams converge within a window of opportunity. Discursive formations help explain how public, media, and institutional narratives shape the interpretation of a crisis, influence perceived urgency, and determine legitimate solutions.

The 2022 wildfires were primarily portrayed as an environmental and operational challenge, highlighting the strain on firefighting resources and climate-related dangers. Despite extensive media coverage, political responses remained scattered and failed to produce systemic reform. In contrast, the 2023 floods sparked a strong, emotionally intense, and united discourse that connected humanitarian, infrastructural, and economic issues. This coherence in discourse helped achieve widespread political agreement and quick resource mobilization.

The comparison demonstrates that the magnitude of damage alone does not determine policy outcomes; discursive dynamics strongly influence how windows of opportunity open and close. The findings emphasize the significance of narrative alignment in influencing government decisions. responsiveness during environmental emergencies.

Keywords: Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), discursive formations, environmental crisis, policy responses, crisis framing.