
Title: Adaptation to Climate Change in Disadvantaged Neighborhoods (ADIS)

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Área: Social services, care & wellbeing, social investment, policy assessment

What?

The project proposes to investigate the relationship between urban socio-spatial segregation and climate change adaptation in large metropolitan areas. It places special emphasis on socially innovative responses that emerge in the most vulnerable neighbourhoods.

The study focuses on two main climate risks in the Iberian Peninsula: heatwaves and floods. The territorial scope of analysis comprises the four main metropolitan areas in Spain: Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, and Seville. Collectively, these areas represent 11.9 million people, 25% of the Spanish population.

Who?

Led by Marc Parés, the project team is multidisciplinary, with experts in Urban and Environmental Sociology, Geography, Environmental Sciences, Political Science, and Anthropology. It includes researchers from IGOP, Institut Metròpoli, the Autonomous University of Madrid, Pablo de Olavide University, and the University of Valencia.

Why?

The ADIS project is particularly relevant due to its focus on climate justice and the conceptual and geographic novelty it brings to research.

It addresses an urgent social issue: how socioeconomic vulnerabilities amplify the impacts of climate stressors (heatwaves and floods) in disadvantaged neighbourhoods where resources are limited. The project analyses the potential adverse effects of climate policies designed for less vulnerable areas, such as green gentrification or poverty induced by urban renewal. It conceptualizes climate adaptation through the lens of socio-spatial segregation and differs from existing literature by focusing on citizens' individual and collective perceptions and responses, rather than solely on institutions.

Furthermore, it fills a significant geographic gap, as most comparable studies have been carried out in regions other than Spain, while this project focuses on Spain's four main metropolitan areas.

Its contribution and practical impact stem from its applied research nature. Through a population survey —comparing vulnerable and non-vulnerable neighbourhoods—, multivariate analysis and in-depth case studies in eight neighbourhoods, ADIS aims to identify the most significant determinants of urban vulnerability and the specific weight of physical exposure to climate risks.

Empirically, one of its most relevant impacts is the exportation of methodological tools (such as neighbourhood delimitation and the calculation of urban vulnerability indicators) already implemented in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area to Madrid, Valencia, and Seville —tasks that do not currently exist in these latter areas.

Finally, the general objective of the project is to disseminate the results and produce a report with recommendations and best practices aimed at regional and local governments and social organizations. This will help improve existing urban and climate policies so that they become more equitable and effective in the neighbourhoods with the highest socio-environmental vulnerability.

How?

The research relies on two main methodological tools:

1. Survey and Multivariate Analysis: A stratified public survey will be conducted in the four metropolitan areas. A sample of 2,315 interviews is planned (715 in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and 1,600 in other neighbourhoods). The aim is to compare adaptability patterns and relate them to various urban and environmental vulnerability factors.

2. Comparative Case Study: An in-depth study will be conducted in eight vulnerable neighbourhoods (two per metropolitan area), analysing a total of 16 social innovation experiences (one to three per neighbourhood). This component will use techniques such as document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups.

When?

The project, launched in September 2025, is expected to last 36 months.