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Intersectional Analysis on PNACC: Addressing Gendered Climate Vulnerabilities and Regional Disparities in Italy

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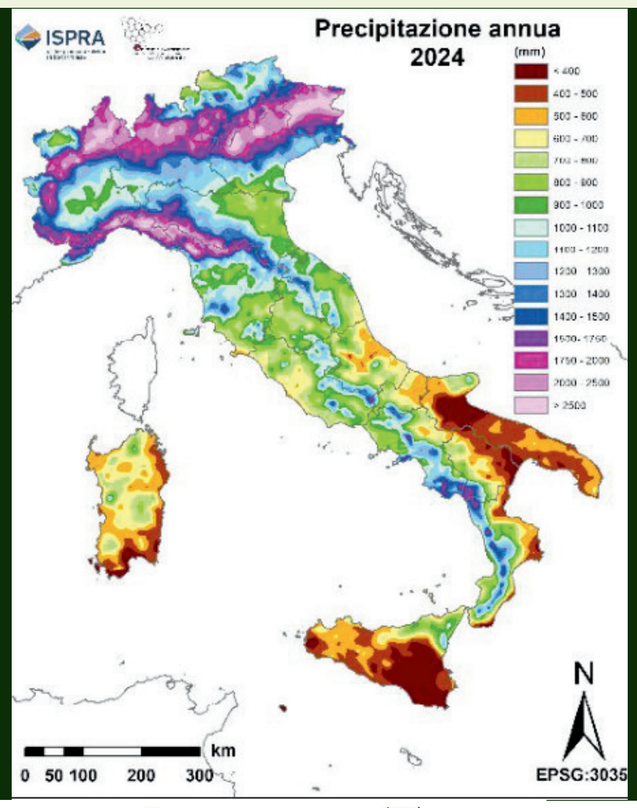
Introduction

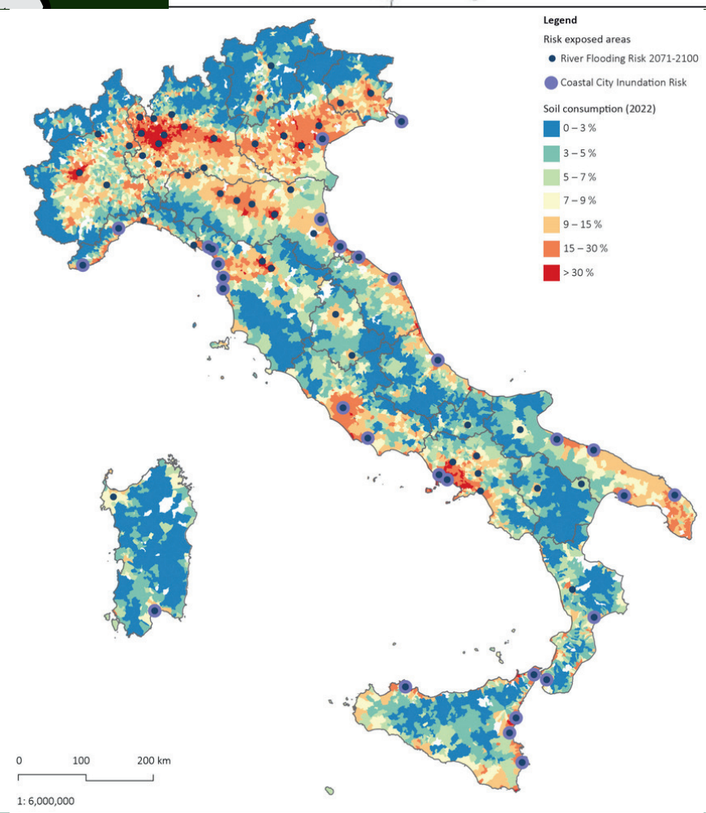
Climate adaptation is unevenly gender-neutral. In Italy, the National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change (PNACC) recognizes social vulnerability but overlooks how gender, income, and region intersect to shape climate risks. As floods, heatwaves, and droughts intensify, women in precarious or care-based roles face compounded burdens. Northern regions like Bologna translate adaptation into governance, while the South still negotiates it through everyday survival. This divide reveals that adaptation is not just about resilience—it is also about who gets to adapt, how, and with what power.

Research Aims

This research explores how Italy's PNACC and local adaptation plans engage with gendered and intersectional vulnerabilities.
It asks:
(RQ1) How do national and municipal policies operationalize gender equity in adaptation?
(RQ2) How do governance capacity and socio-economic context shape these outcomes?
Why does this matter?
Because adaptation is not only a technical process—it defines whose risks are recognized, whose voices are heard, and whose knowledge counts. Integrating gender and intersectionality turns adaptation from a reactive policy into a transformative practice of climate justice.



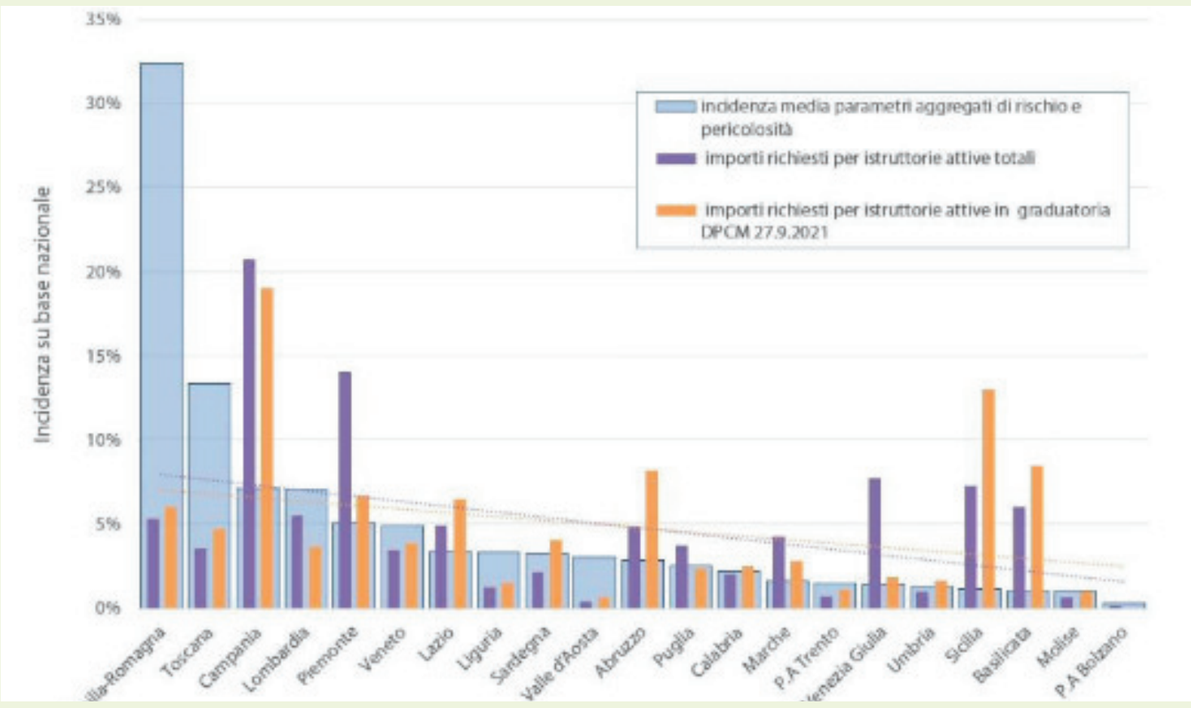
Parameter	Categories	Description
Gender	F	Gender of the victims (based on ISTAT (2011) dataset); feminine and masculine
	M	
Age	≤ 14	Age of the victims (based on ISTAT (2011) dataset); categorical variable
	15–29	
	30–49	
	50–64	
	65–74	
	≥ 75	
Place	Bridge	Bridge: The victims were found on a bridge that collapsed
	Building	Building: The victims were found inside a generic building (house, cellar, shop, etc.)
	Campsite	Campsite: The victims were found in a camping area.
	Outdoor	Outdoor: The victims were found outdoors, whether in a vehicle, or on foot.
	River	River: The victims were found near the embankments (in a 1 m distance from the river) or inside the river.
Morphological zone	Mountain	Indicates the morphological zone corresponding to the location of the fatality event; categorical variable
	Plain	
Hazard Scenario	H	Describing the probability of flood scenario based on the maps produced within FRMP.
	M	H: frequent floods, return period 30–50 years
	L	M: floods with medium frequency, return period 100–200 years
	Outside	L: rare floods, return period up to 500 years
Corine Land Cover	15 possible categories	Categorical variable
Distance from the river	All	Distance of the fatality location from the river causing the flood event, continuous variable
Density of the buildings	All	Density of the buildings with respect to the municipal area; continuous variable
Return period	15 possible categories	Return period of the max 24-hr precipitation; categorical variable
Solid transport	Yes	Indicating the presence of solid material; categorical variable
	No	



Methodology

A qualitative-comparative approach integrates:

- Policy and legislative analysis of PNACC and local adaptation plans.
- Socio-economic data mapping of adaptive capacity.
- Case studies in Bologna (institutionally strong North) and Napoli (economically fragile South).
- Framed by feminist political ecology and procedural justice, the research highlights how institutional design, local agency, and invisible labor intersect in the making of adaptation policy.



Preliminary Conclusions

Italy's PNACC recognizes gender as a cross-cutting issue and analyses flood risk mainly through gender, age, and place. Yet other vulnerabilities—such as disability, migration status, and care responsibility—remain unevenly addressed. In Bologna, gender equity is mostly symbolic, while in Naples, adaptation depends on informal community networks compensating for weaker institutions. These contrasts show that outcomes hinge on local governance and everyday resilience, not only national frameworks. Achieving gender-responsive adaptation requires moving from symbolic inclusion to accountability, fair resources, and participation, bridging the gap between policy and lived reality.

for more information