LAND MARKER AND WOMEN IN COLOMBIA: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE CARE ECONOMY

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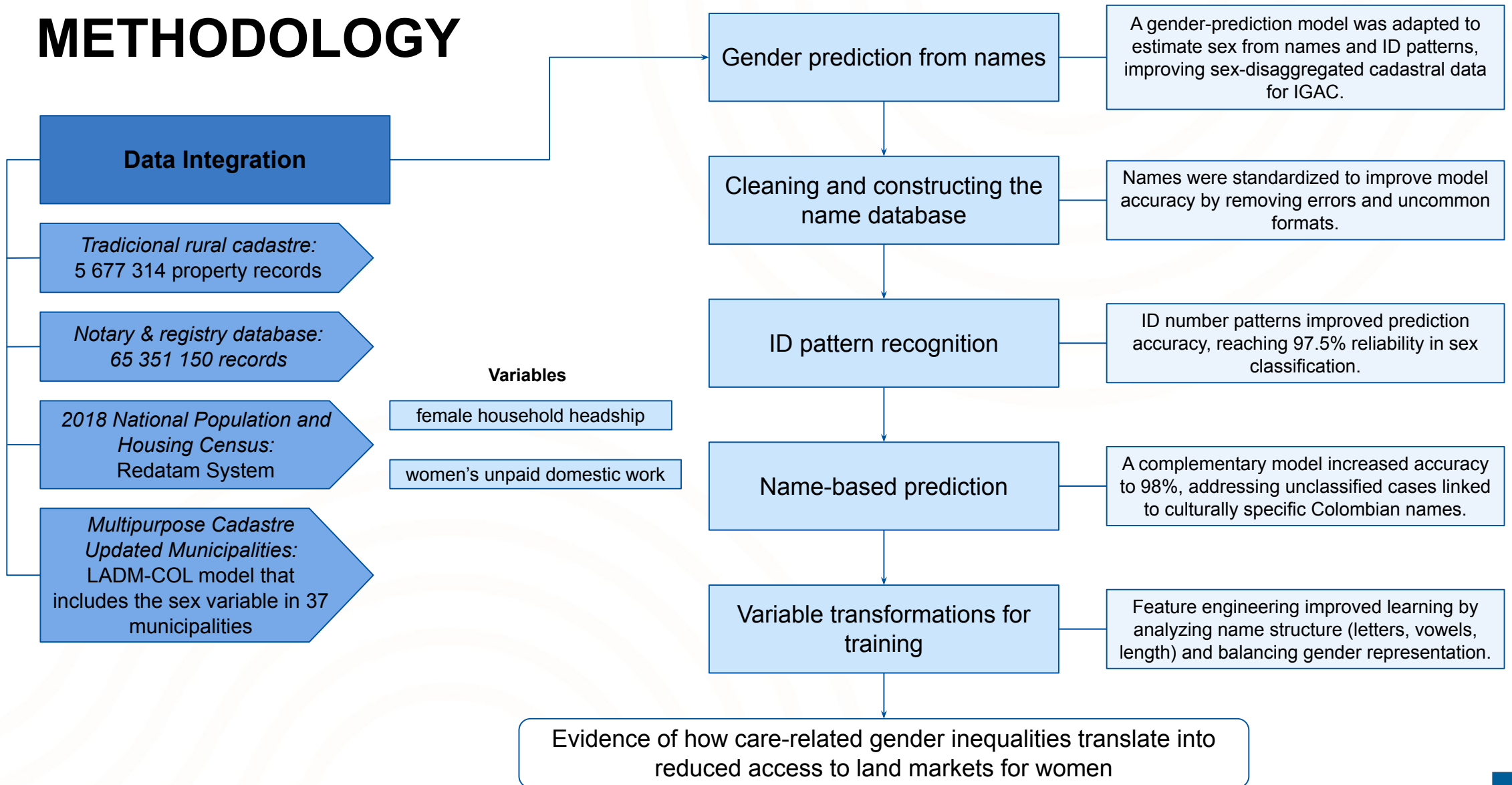
1. OBJECTIVE AND CONTEXT

The study analyzes how unpaid caregiving responsibilities, mostly assumed by women, affect their access to, control over, and use of land in Colombia. It recognizes that the unequal distribution of time and the lack of remuneration for caregiving limit women's purchasing power and participation in the real estate market. Moreover, cultural biases that undervalue this work reinforce male predominance in inheritance and household leadership, perpetuating gender gaps in land ownership.

❖ Colombia has a long-standing structural inequality in land distribution, intensified by conflict and rural exclusion.

❖ Gender roles in unpaid care work reduce women's economic autonomy and their ability to participate in land markets.

❖ Patriarchal norms and cultural biases favor men in inheritance and formal land ownership.

❖ Lack of sex-disaggregated cadastral and registry data has historically obscured gender gaps in land tenure.

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METHODOLOGY

Data Integration

Tradicional rural cadastre: 5 677 314 property records

Notary & registry database: 65 351 150 records

2018 National Population and Housing Census: Redatam System

Multipurpose Cadastre Updated Municipalities: LADM-COL model that includes the sex variable in 37 municipalities

Variables

female household headship

women's unpaid domestic work

Gender prediction from names — A gender-prediction model was adapted to estimate sex from names and ID patterns, improving sex-disaggregated cadastral data for IGAC.

Cleaning and constructing the name database — Names were standardized to improve model accuracy by removing errors and uncommon formats.

ID pattern recognition — ID number patterns improved prediction accuracy, reaching 97.5% reliability in sex classification.

Name-based prediction — A complementary model increased accuracy to 98%, addressing unclassified cases linked to culturally specific Colombian names.

Variable transformations for training — Feature engineering improved learning by analyzing name structure (letters, vowels, length) and balancing gender representation.

Evidence of how care-related gender inequalities translate into reduced access to land markets for women

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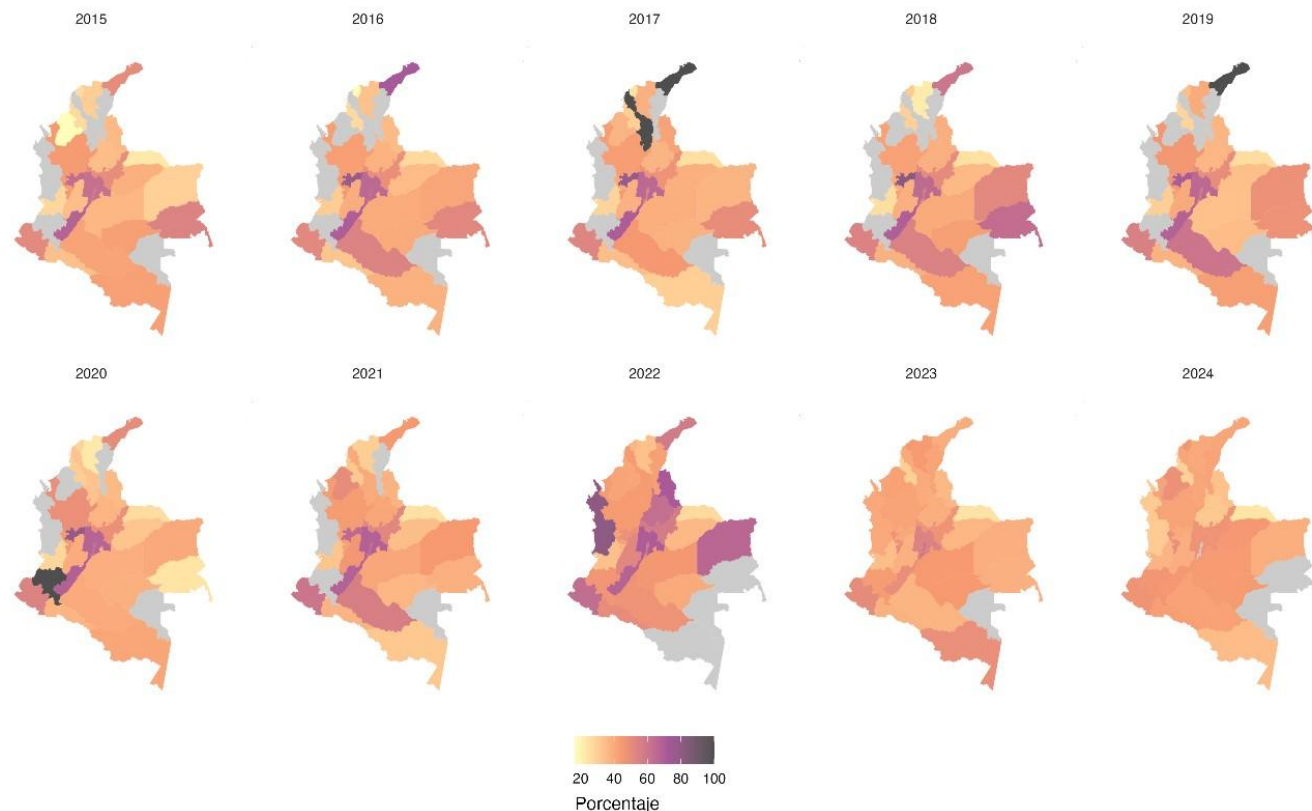INSTITUTO GEOGRÁFICO
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RESULTS

Land sales

Women's participation in rural land sales has increased from **34.96%** in 2015 to **42.52%** in 2023, yet men still dominate most transactions. For example, in 2022 women accounted for only **38.02%** of rural land sales in Antioquia, while men reached **61.98%**. Boyacá is an exception, with women leading **55.28%** of market participation.
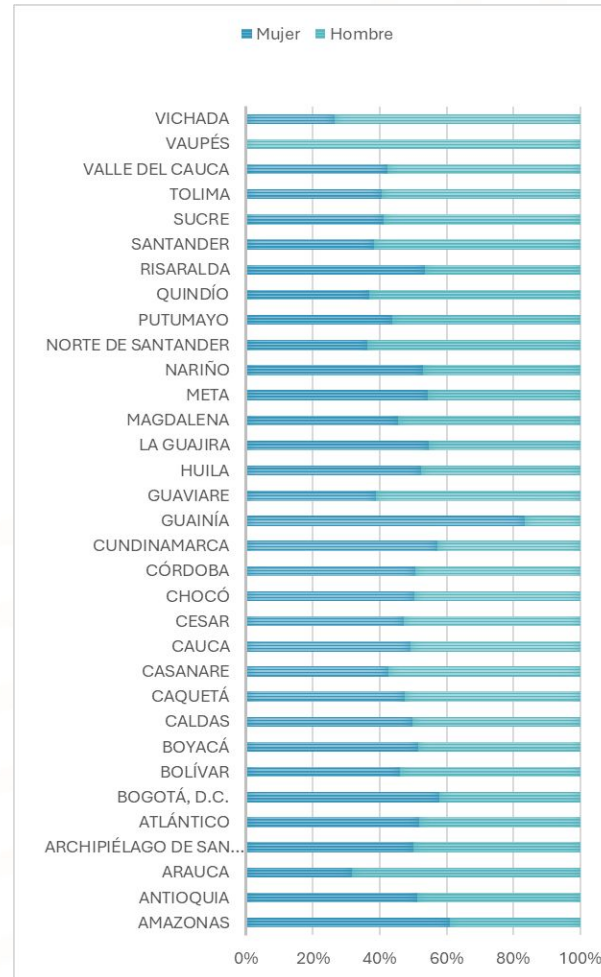

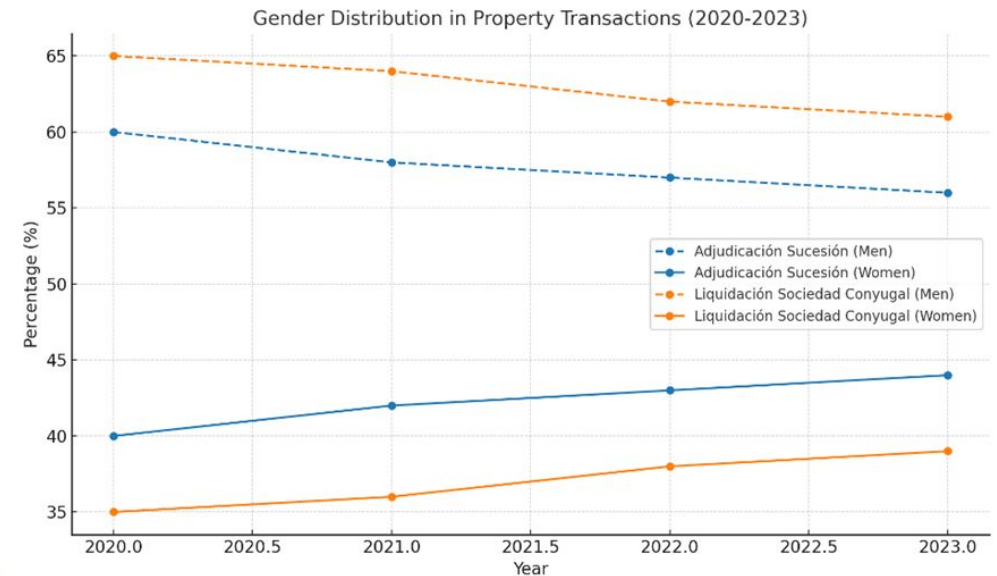**COMPRAVENTA**
Porcentaje en clase: RURAL y sexo: Mujer.

2015 2016 2017 2018 2019

2020 2021 2022 2023 2024

20 40 60 80 100
Porcentaje

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Successions

In inheritance adjudications, men continue to receive most rural land transfers. However, some territories show significant change: in Arauca, women

represented **56.92%** of inheritance adjudications in 2022, reversing the 2015 pattern where men held **69.22%** of these transactions. Despite these advances in specific regions, gender inequalities in land transmission remain widespread.

Marital Property Divisions

Gender gaps persist in marital property divisions, with men still obtaining a higher share of rural land allocations following union dissolutions. While some departments show approaches to parity, the national trend continues to reflect male predominance in the redistribution of household land assets.
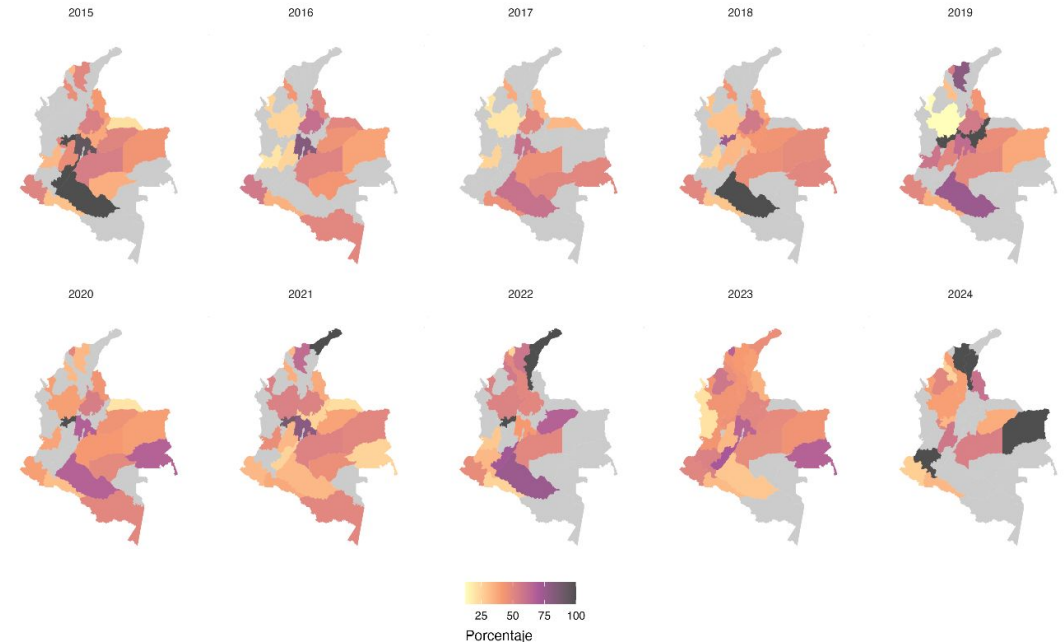
Mortgages

Women represent a minority (around **30–40%**) of rural mortgage transactions, revealing ongoing barriers in accessing credit and using land as collateral. Nonetheless, recent increases in female participation—especially in departments such as Arauca, Caquetá, and Nariño—suggest gradual improvement in financial access for women.

Allocation of State - Owned Lands

Women generally represent only **30–40%** of beneficiaries in state land adjudication processes. Although recent efforts have increased female access in areas with high vulnerability, such as Arauca and Guaviare, these advances remain insufficient to significantly close structural gender gaps.

ADJUDICACION BALDIOS
Porcentaje en clase: RURAL y sexo: Mujer.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

❖ Gender disparities in land tenure persist in Colombia, as women own, access, and control less land than men across most rural regions.

❖ Unequal caregiving responsibilities reduce women's economic autonomy, limiting their participation in land markets and formalization processes.

❖ Despite increases in women's participation in rural land sales (from **34.96%** in 2015 to **42.52%** in 2023) progress remains insufficient to achieve gender equity.

❖ Inheritance and marital property divisions continue to favor men, although isolated changes (e.g., Arauca) show potential for more equitable outcomes.

❖ Lack of sex-disaggregated data has historically concealed gender gaps, making policies less effective in addressing inequalities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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