WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS

CSO   Civil society organization

DRG   Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance

EMB   Electoral management body

FGD   Focus group discussion

KII   Key informant interview

PEA   Political economy analysis

WPPL   Women's political participation and leadership

LETTER FROM ADMINISTRATOR POWER

Empowering women to participate fully in political life is not merely a matter of fairness—it is essential to the realization of effective, sustainable development. Research shows that countries that provide a safe and enabling environment for women to participate equitably in politics and public life have more inclusive and effective policy outcomes, are more peaceful and stable, and have higher economic growth than in those countries where women are denied such opportunities.

As we all know, barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment remain persistent—and in some places, have even increased in recent years. Women face hurdles in registering and turning out to vote, from lack of identification or documentation to social and gender norms that discourage women from voting. They are disproportionately targeted for political violence when seeking to participate in peaceful demonstrations. And they constitute only a small share of elected and appointed government representatives worldwide: as of 2024, women comprise just 25 percent of national legislators, globally.

To overcome these barriers, it is essential to understand the sociocultural, institutional, and individual factors that influence and limit women's access and power.

The USAID Women's Political Participation and Leadership (WPPL) Assessment Framework helps USAID Missions and partners gain this understanding. It outlines how a country's political system supports or undermines women's political engagement, provides tools to understand these barriers in context, and helps USAID Missions in developing tailored approaches for taking down these barriers and encouraging women's voices and participation. Rooted in cutting-edge applied fieldwork, the Framework's practical tools and guidance will guide USAID's work to help more women around the world exercise their political rights to the fullest extent possible.

We hope this WPPL Framework will contribute to supporting more inclusive, democratic cultures that benefit all people. USAID is committed to its role as a leading investor, partner, and advocate for the achievement of gender equality, and to advancing gender equality as a fundamental right that is foundational to just societies everywhere.

Samantha Power

USAID Administrator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment is a core pillar of USAID's approach to advancing democracy around the globe. The [National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#), introduced by the Biden-Harris administration in 2021, identifies women's political participation and leadership (WPPL) as one of ten strategic priorities. It states that "full participation of people of all genders is critical both to the functioning of democracies and to the success of democratic movements across the globe," because "countries that provide a safe and enabling environment for women to participate equitably in politics and public life produce more inclusive and effective policy outcomes, are more peaceful, have higher economic growth, and are more stable as societies."

Despite the intrinsic importance and benefits of WPPL, women do not enjoy full and equal access to political life around the world. Their mere entry does not guarantee that they can exercise political agency and influence. Since 2011, USAID has taken concrete steps to better integrate gender analysis into its work.[1] The agency understands gender to be socially constructed, rather than biologically determined, and an important means for structuring relationships of power. From this perspective, gendered norms and practices are not fixed and can be transformed in more egalitarian directions.

To encourage gender-inclusive programming in the Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) sector, USAID developed a toolkit for DRG staff to integrate gender into programming and advance gender equality in civil society and government institutions.[2] To advance WPPL, USAID carried out the Women in Power project. It analyzed barriers to women's political empowerment, explored how USAID and its partners can most effectively increase the supply of and demand for women leaders, and developed a new measure of women's political leadership in the public sector.[3]

To further assist with the diagnostic side of these efforts, the DRG Center (now Bureau) commissioned the development of a WPPL Assessment Framework, with an accompanying set of assessment tools. The Assessment Framework consists of three parts, which together seek to guide research teams in 1) mapping the current situation regarding WPPL, 2) identifying barriers to and opportunities for WPPL, and 3) formulating country-specific recommendations to advance WPPL. The accompanying workbook includes methodological guidance, questionnaires, and training tools to support USAID Missions and research teams in conducting a WPPL assessment.

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[1] See, for example, USAID (2012), *Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy*, and USAID (2015), *Gender at USAID*, Presentation from the Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

[2] USAID (2016). *Gender Integration in Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance*. Washington, DC: USAID. https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2496/Gender%20Toolkit.pdf

[3] Melanie M. Hughes, Darcy Ashman, and Milad Pournik (2016). *Women in Power Project Summary Report*. Washington, DC. Prepared by Management Systems International under contract to USAID. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/USAID-WiP-summary-report_FINAL.pdf

DEFINING AND MEASURING WPPL

Global indicators of WPPL largely focus on the number of women in elected and appointed political positions. This Assessment Framework expands the definition of WPPL in two key ways. First, it divides this concept into two interrelated, yet distinct, components: political participation, referring to activities women can engage in as citizens, and political leadership, referring to activities women can engage in as elected and non-elected political representatives. Second, it recognizes that simply being granted political rights is not the same as exercising those rights to the fullest extent. A complete assessment of WPPL must look at both access (women's ability to take part in political process) and power (women's voice and agency as political actors). Table 1 below illustrates these dimensions using sample questions from the assessment.

Table 1: WPPL Analysis Matrix

	ACCESS	POWER
Participation	Are women politically engaged as citizens in any of a wide range of possible political roles? Sample questions: • Are women registered to vote at the same rates as men? • Are women a visible contingent during protests?	Do women exercise political agency and influence as citizens? Sample questions: • Are women able to exercise their right to vote without interference from family members or other actors? • Are there opportunities for women in civil society to inform government policy?
Leadership	Do women serve as political leaders, whether in elected or non-elected roles? Sample questions: • What is the share of women among political candidates? • Do women serve as leaders of civil society organizations (CSOs)?	Do women exercise political agency and influence as political leaders? Sample questions: • Which portfolios do women cabinet ministers hold? Are these portfolios considered prestigious or important? • Have women leaders in civil society had an impact on politics or public policy?

EXPLORING THE ECOSYSTEM OF WPPL

Three interacting sets of factors shape opportunities for women to participate substantively in every aspect of political life:

- **Socio-cultural factors** involve assumptions about appropriate norms and practices, shaping social expectations, personal attitudes and behaviors. They include gender stereotypes, prevailing views on gender roles, and cultural ideas about gender equality.

- **Institutional factors** structure the political environment, establishing the formal and informal rules and systems in which political actors operate. They include the electoral system, the political party system, and the broader political and legal context.

- **Individual factors** refer to considerations shaping individual women's decisions and abilities to participate in politics. These include levels of political ambition, as well as resources and support for their political engagement.

Understanding these factors as an "ecosystem" emphasizes how they work together and inform one another to create environments supporting or undermining WPPL. By considering numerous factors and their interplay, the research has the potential to unearth holistic strategies, combining a focus on norm change, institutional reforms, and individual shifts in thinking and behavior. The assessment methodology models inclusion and engages stakeholders who are active across the ecosystem – women and men in political parties, elected and appointed offices, civil society, academia, and the media.

CONDUCTING A WPPL ASSESSMENT

The assessment consists of three parts:

PART I: MAPPING THE CURRENT STATE OF WPPL

Part I of the assessment involves determining the contracting method, onboarding a research team and mapping the current state of WPPL in the country. Drawing on a desk review incorporating research and source materials such as legal texts, the research team will develop a strategy report to guide the scope of the research. The research design will identify problems hindering WPPL, barriers to women's participation, and opportunities for advancing WPPL. The Mission will use this data to inform a utilization briefing, where broad goals of the research and how it can be used to inform diplomatic and programmatic design will be considered. This will help focus the research where applicable for further review and planning once the research is complete and recommendations have been delivered by the researchers.

PART II: COLLECTING AND ANALYZING THE DATA

Part II of the assessment involves connecting the country patterns uncovered in Part I to barriers and opportunities to advance WPPL. In most parts of the world, having power over political, economic and social affairs is associated with masculinity. While women have been gaining representation, authority is still predominantly male. Therefore, the assessment team will engage men, women and gender-diverse individuals in a series of key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) across priority constituencies and geographies. The second step of the analysis is to connect

the factors identified in the first step to specific advocates and opponents of efforts to advance WPPL in the country.

PART III: UTILIZING THE DATA

Part III of the assessment involves the research team preparing final deliverables, including a recommendations report, presentation, and two-pager to support dissemination and application of learning. These deliverables should be prepared in both English and local languages to support dissemination. In this part, the Mission will also organize a utilization workshop to consider practical steps to apply the research to address priorities identified in the Part 1 utilization briefing, such as socializing findings across the Mission portfolio, informing program design, partner knowledge-sharing, and coordinating diplomatic efforts.

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment is a core pillar of USAID's approach to advancing democracy around the globe. The National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality, introduced by the Biden-Harris administration in 2021, identifies WPPL as one of ten strategic priorities. It states that "full participation of people of all genders is critical both to the functioning of democracies and to the success of democratic movements across the globe," because "countries that provide a safe and enabling environment for women to participate equitably in politics and public life produce more inclusive and effective policy outcomes, are more peaceful, have higher economic growth, and are more stable as societies."

Democracy opens up important opportunities for WPPL, allowing women to exercise their rights to vote, form associations, and run for and be appointed to political office. These legal rights are now nearly universal, with 85% of constitutions around the world guaranteeing equal rights or prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex or gender. Equal rights for women appear in every constitution written since 2000.[4] However, in many places around the world, these rights are not fully translated into practice. Women continue to face barriers in registering and turning out to vote. They are targeted for political violence when seeking to participate in peaceful demonstrations. They constitute only a small share of elected and appointed representatives in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. Even when they enter political spaces in greater numbers, they are often restricted in their ability to influence political debates due to discrimination and exclusion. Political power and authority remains largely held by men, driven by patriarchal beliefs and norms which inform institutions and individuals' ability to engage in politics.

Advancing WPPL benefits not only women but also democracy itself. Adopting measures to support women's voter participation enhances the integrity of elections. Supporting women's organizations in civil society to create channels for communicating with government actors empowers women to

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[4] Sprague, A., J. Heymann, and A. Raub. 2022. "The Equal Rights Amendment in Global Context: Gender Equality in Constitutions Worldwide and the Potential of More Comprehensive Approaches." *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, 38–57.

mobilize for policy changes to improve society. Measures like quotas for women candidates help elect qualified and diligent legislators, bringing important skills and insights to the policy process. In all these roles, women bring new perspectives to the political arena, raising topics that might not otherwise be addressed, highlighting gaps in existing policies and programs, and proposing new solutions to enduring problems. Therefore, advancing democracy requires furthering women's access to political spaces and elevating their agency and influence in political life. In part, this requires engaging current power-holders, who are predominantly men, to transform the beliefs that drive norms and behaviors across formal and informal institutions.

Since 2011, USAID has taken concrete steps to integrate gender analysis into its work. The agency understands gender to be socially constructed, rather than biologically determined, and an important means for structuring relationships of power. From this perspective, gendered norms and practices are not fixed and can be transformed toward more egalitarian directions.

To encourage gender-inclusive programming in the DRG sector, USAID developed a toolkit for DRG staff to integrate gender into programming and advance gender equality in civil society and government institutions. Adapting the DRG Strategic Assessment Framework from 2014, which identifies key sectors for DRG work, the toolkit focuses on how to bring a gender lens to programming on human rights, civil society, the rule of law, legislative strengthening, local governance and devolution, political party development, electoral processes, transitional justice, and media and other communication technologies, among other sectors. To support work on WPPL, USAID carried out the Women in Power project, which analyzed barriers to women's political empowerment, explored how USAID and its partners can most effectively increase the supply of and demand for women leaders, and developed and piloted a new measure of women's political leadership in the public sector.

This WPPL Assessment Framework builds on these prior efforts. It consists of three parts, which together seek to support Missions to oversee the process, with support from the DRG Bureau, and guide research teams with research background and sample questions for 1) mapping the current situation regarding WPPL, 2) collecting and analyzing data on opportunities and barriers to WPPL, and 3) formulating country-specific recommendations to advance WPPL through diplomatic and programmatic means. The Workbook provides tools as well as practical guidance to Missions and research teams for carrying out the research and strategic considerations for the application of the findings. The Workbook also includes insights on tool design and approaching stakeholders, to be adapted to the country context.

DEFINING AND MEASURING WPPL

As a concept, WPPL consists of two interrelated yet distinct components: political participation, referring to activities women can engage in as citizens, and political leadership, referring to activities

women can engage in as elected and non-elected political representatives to influence political decision-making and hold government officials and institutions accountable.

However, simply being granted political rights is not the same as exercising those rights to the fullest extent. A complete assessment of WPPL must therefore take two dimensions into account:

1. Access: Women's ability to take part in political processes.

2. Power: Women's voices and agency as political actors.

Gender gaps in political participation and leadership are observed to varying degrees around the world. They are not explained by innate biological differences between women and men, but rather by social constructions of masculinity and femininity, framing politics as a "man's world."[5] Applying a gender lens, however, does not mean that women and men should be understood as homogeneous groups. Gender may interact with several other socially relevant identities like age, class or caste, sexuality, gender expression, nationality, ability, ethnicity, tribal identity, and race, among other possibilities. Therefore, gender analysis should be intersectional. The roles that women in all their diversity play in politics can be complex and widely vary.[6]

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation refers to a wide array of activities citizens can engage in to influence political decision-making or solve collective problems.[7] These can encompass both conventional and unconventional forms of participation, as well as actions taken individually or collectively in civil society. Common forms of political participation include:

- Voting.

- Engaging in political discussions.

- Contacting elected officials.

- Attending a political rally or campaign event.

- Signing petitions.

- Protesting.

- Joining political parties.

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[5] Elshtain, Jean Bethke (1981). *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought.* Princeton: Princeton University Press; Paxton, Pamela, Sheri Kunovich, and Melanie M. Hughes (2007). "Gender in Politics." *Annual Review of Sociology* 33: 263–284. [6] Verba, S.,

[6] "This statement is used to underscore that, where women and girls, men and boys, and gender-diverse individuals are mentioned, this includes the full range of gender identity and/or gender expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, and other intersectional characteristics such as age, caste, disability, race or ethnic origin, religion, or belief. Use of this term affirms the commitment to leave no one behind and achieve gender equality for everyone." USAID ADS Chapter 205: Integrating Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle. April 26, 2023. Accessed April 16, 2024 https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/205_1.pdf

[7] Schlozman, K. L. and Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Given women's long-standing exclusion from and underrepresentation in more formal political roles, civil society—where citizens can have a voice on political issues despite not holding political office—has long been an important space for women's political engagement. Such activities may include membership in more formal CSOs, operating at the grassroots to national levels, or less structured participation in more informally constituted social movements.[8]

WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Political leadership refers to activities women can engage in as elected and non-elected political representatives. This can entail:

- Running for and occupying elective and appointed offices at various levels in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.
- Serving in leadership positions in political parties.
- Serving in leadership positions in CSOs and social movements.

In many parts of the world, women were largely absent from political leadership until recently. Since 1995, however, major shifts have occurred worldwide and nearly all countries have seen improvements in the share of women running for and holding political office.[9] Although there is little systematic data, women are also increasingly visible as party and civil society leaders. A key catalyst for these changes was the goal of gender-balanced decision-making included in the Beijing Platform for Action signed by all governments at the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women In 2021, the UN Commission on the Status of Women explicitly committed to the goal of 50-50 gender parity to accelerate progress to reaching gender balance in elected and appointed offices globally.[10] Even so, global threats to democracy over the past decade contribute to backsliding on gender equality, as anti-democratic nationalist and authoritarian movements foment anti-gender sentiment to mobilize public support. Therefore, a holistic approach to identifying barriers is essential.

ACCESS VS. POWER WPPL

Global indicators of WPPL largely focus on the number of women in elected and appointed political positions. The political empowerment pillar of the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, for example, measures the percentage of women in parliament and ministerial positions, as well as the number of years with a woman head of state.[11] While the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals define WPPL more broadly to include participation and leadership "at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life," their indicators are similarly numerical: the

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[8] This definition excludes other forms of civic participation that women might be engaged in as journalists and trade union activists, for example. Although these forms of engagement also have an impact on the level of gender inclusivity in democratic societies, they are further away from political decision-making than these other activities.

[9] Inter-Parliamentary Union (2015), Women in Parliament: 20 Years in Review. Geneva: IPU.

[10] United Nations Economic and Social Council (2021), 65th Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions. New York: UN.

[11] World Economic Forum (2022), Global Gender Gap Report 2022. Geneva: WEF.

proportion of seats held by women in national and local governments and the proportion of women in managerial positions.[12] This approach reflects a numerical approach to measuring WPPL, focusing on the degree to which women have been able to access high-level political positions.

In contrast, a deeper understanding of WPPL seeks to go beyond numbers to understand the extent to which women exercise political agency and influence. This approach recognizes that increased access is not enough; women must also have a voice and power inside political spaces. Similarly, increased voice and power for elite women alone without real access for all women is not enough. In the case of participation, access would include formal rights to vote and associate, while power would entail being able to exercise those rights freely in ways that have an impact on political outcomes. For leadership, access might be measured in terms of the number of women elected, while power would capture the degree to which women are able to inform and steer political debates, among other possibilities.

Measuring access might include mapping women's formal rights and collecting statistics on women's equal use of these rights. Power might be measured quantitatively; for example, by mapping the leadership (versus rank-and-file) positions occupied by women in various branches of government and in civil society. However, more nuanced insights are likely to be qualitative, requiring deeper analysis of women's agency in political spaces informed by insider information from both WPPL supporters and opponents. An example is violence against women in politics, which remains largely hidden as a barrier to WPPL despite growing evidence of violence, intimidation, and harassment of politically active women worldwide. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative insights are needed to gain a fuller appreciation of barriers to and opportunities for WPPL in particular contexts.

THE WPPL MATRIX

Put together, these four concepts form the WPPL Matrix, illustrated in Table 2. A holistic assessment of WPPL requires attending to questions about women's access to, as well as their power in, both political participation and political leadership. The research questions in this assessment seek to capture and measure these dimensions. The assessment also encourages the research team to consider how access and power, and participation and leadership, are potentially linked. In most cases, for example, access does not guarantee power, but power is unlikely without access.

Table 2: WPPL Matrix

	ACCESS	POWER
Participation	Are women politically engaged as citizens?	Do women exercise political agency and influence as citizens?

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[12] United Nations (2015), Global Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York: UN.

Leadership	Do women serve as political leaders, whether in elected or non-elected roles?	Do women exercise political agency and influence as political leaders?

EXPLORING THE ECOSYSTEM OF WPPL

Research on WPPL highlights three interacting sets of factors shaping opportunities for women to participate substantively in every aspect of political life, whether this entails advocating on matters of policy, running for office, getting elected, or governing effectively.

- **Socio-cultural** factors involve assumptions about appropriate norms and practices, shaping social expectations and personal attitudes and behaviors. They include gender stereotypes, prevailing views on gender roles, and cultural ideas about gender equality.

- **Institutional** factors structure the political environment, establishing the formal and informal rules and systems in which political actors operate. They include the electoral system, the political party system, and the broader political and legal context.

- **Individual** factors refer to the calculations of individual women to participate (or not) in politics. These include levels of political ambition, as well as resources and support for their political engagement.

Understanding these factors as an "ecosystem" emphasizes how they work together and inform one another to create environments supporting or undermining WPPL (see Figure 1). Focusing only on one set of factors to the exclusion of the others may lead to misinterpretations of the current situation and the adoption of only partially effective solutions to expand WPPL. In contrast, an ecosystem approach suggests the need to consider more holistic strategies, combining a focus on norm change, institutional reforms, and individual shifts in thinking.

Figure 1: The WPPL Ecosystem

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS
- Gender stereotypes
- Gender roles
- Cultural views

THE WPPL ECOSYSTEM

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS
- Electoral systems
- Political parties
- Political context

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS
- Capacity
- Resources
- Support
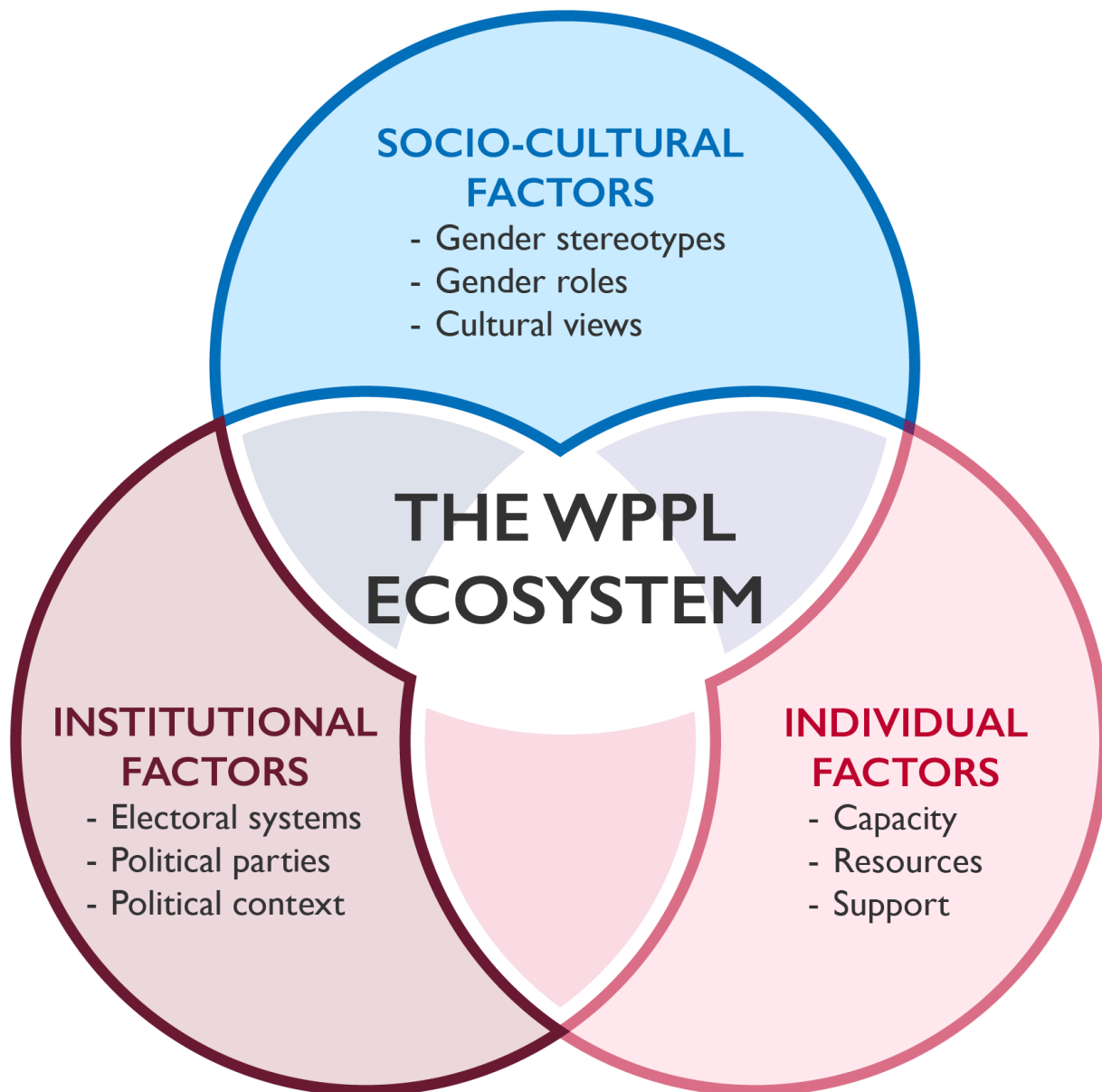
SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

Socio-cultural factors embody assumptions about appropriate norms and practices, shaping social expectations,personal attitudes and behaviors. In the case of WPPL, these factors reinforce an association between political power and men and masculinity, making it difficult for women to be seen and accepted as legitimate political actors.

Socio-cultural norms are rooted in what gender scholars call the "public and private divide." Across many different contexts, men tend to be associated with the public sphere of politics and the economy, while women are often assigned to the private sphere of the home and the family. This

divide gives rise to ideas about how women and men are and should be. According to social role theory, men are framed as "agentic" and assertive, controlling, and confident. In contrast, women are portrayed as "communal",primarily concerned with the welfare of others, gentle, nurturing, and kind.[13]

Because leadership is seen to require agentic qualities, women leaders often face a perceived conflict between the qualities connected to being a "good woman" and those connected to being a "good leader." In comparison, no such conflict exists for men, as gender stereotypes and qualities associated with leadership coincide.[14] These stereotypes also have practical implications: if women are expected to play a greater role in caregiving, they are far more likely than men to face challenges of work-life balance, which may lead them to opt out of political work entirely. The exception is when organizations—like political parties and elected bodies—adopt gender-sensitive measures like providing child care and scheduling meetings at family-friendly times.[15]

In governing expectations about what spaces women are or are not expected to enter, socio-cultural norms, rooted in patriarchal systems, also shape ideas about acceptable behavior toward women in the public sphere, including hostility toward and punishment of women who are seen as violating widely held socio-cultural norms. These dynamics help explain why the widespread problem of violence against women in politics has remained largely invisible until recently—and why this problem continues to be minimized as simply the "cost of doing politics" for women.[16] Therefore, designing effective interventions requires working not only with women but also with men to undercut the gender stereotypes and highly normalized forms of gender-based violence detrimental to WPPL.

Scholars have used various measures to capture socio-cultural norms. Early research on Western Europe highlighted the importance of women's educational opportunities, uncovering strong correlations between levels of women's parliamentary representation and the share of women university graduates.[17] Later studies found, however, that women's overall levels of education play little or no role in explaining WPPL in developing countries.[18] Regardless, it is worth noting that while average levels of women's education may not be statistically important in global studies, work on the impact of affirmative measures finds that elected women often have far higher levels of education than

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[13] Eagly, A. H., & Kite, M. E. (1987). Are stereotypes of nationalities applied to both women and men?. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *53*(3), 451–462.

[14] Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological review*, *109*(3), 573.

[15] Teele, D. L., Kalla, J., & Rosenbluth, F. (2018). The ties that double bind: social roles and women's underrepresentation in politics. *American Political Science Review*, *112*(3), 525–541.

[16] Krook, M. L. (2020). *Violence against Women in Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[17] Rule, W. (1987). Electoral systems, contextual factors, and women's opportunity for election to parliament in twenty-three democracies. *Western Political Quarterly*, *40*(3), 477–498.

[18] Matland, R. E. (1998). Women's representation in national legislatures: Developed and developing countries. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 109–125; Yoon, M. Y. (2004). Explaining Women's Legislative Representation in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *29*(3), 447–468.

their male counterparts.[19] This suggests that women's opportunities to pursue higher education may still be important for women to reach the highest political positions and exercise power and influence in these roles.

Other researchers focus on economic variables like national development and rates of women's labor force participation. Scholars theorize that levels of development are important because modernization can lead to changes in societal values, including greater acceptance of gender equality.[20] However, as research on WPPL became more global and included more Global South country cases, this hypothesized relationship was increasingly challenged by other researchers.[21] A driving factor has been the widespread adoption of gender quotas around the world, overwhelmingly in countries across the Global South, suggesting that institutional changes can instigate rather than reflect prevailing socio-cultural norms.[22] As a result of these reforms, many of the top-performing countries in terms of the share of women in parliament are located not in Western Europe or in North America, but in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.[23]

Similarly, early work on women's labor force participation argued that growing levels of women's employment would have political consequences as women gained the skills and confidence to participate more actively in politics.[24] Other studies proposed, however, that aggregate levels of participation may be less important than the specific professions that women entered, as politicians around the world tend to come from a limited range of professions—primarily law, education, business, and activism.[25] Yet other scholars attribute advances in WPPL to growth in public sector jobs, which disproportionately employ women and thus may change the political interests of working women, spurring parties to nominate more women candidates as a way to attract greater electoral support from women.[26]

A third approach involves developing cultural indicators of openness to WPPL. Some scholars measure this with reference to the dominant religion of a given country. Early research in this vein, focused primarily on the West, found that Protestant states tended to have more women in legislative

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[19] Franceschet, S., & Piscopo, J. M. (2012). Gender and political backgrounds in Argentina. In *The impact of gender quotas*, ed. Franceschet, S., Krook, M. L., & Piscopo, J. M. New York: Oxford University Press, 43–56l Sater, J. N. (2007). Changing politics from below? Women parliamentarians in Morocco. *Democratization*, *14*(4), 723–742.

[20] Inglehart, R. & Norris, P. (2003). *Rising tide: Gender equality and cultural change around the world*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[21] Matland, R. E. (1998). Women's representation in national legislatures: Developed and developing countries. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 109–125; Yoon, M. Y. (2004). Explaining Women's Legislative Representation in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *29*(3), 447–468.

[22] Bush, S. S. (2011). International politics and the spread of quotas for women in legislatures. *International Organization*, *65*(1), 103–137.

[23] The IPU's monthly ranking of women in national parliaments can be found here: https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=7&year=2022.

[24] Togeby, L. (1994). Political implications of increasing numbers of women in the labor force. *Comparative Political Studies*, *27*(2), 211–240.

[25] Lawless, J. L., & Fox, R. L. (2005). *It takes a candidate: Why women don't run for office*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Kenworthy, L., & Malami, M. (1999). Gender inequality in political representation: A worldwide comparative analysis. *Social Forces*, *78*(1), 235–268.

[26] Rosenbluth, F., Salmond, R., & Thies, M. F. (2006). Welfare works: Explaining female legislative representation. *Politics & Gender*, *2*(2), 165–192.

and executive leadership positions than countries with other dominant religions.[27] Later debates on Islam and women's representation suggested, but ultimately refuted, the notion that Muslim states were less likely than other countries to elect and promote women to political positions. Again, this is largely due to the widespread introduction of gender quotas, which have contributed to increases in WPPL in Muslim- and non-Muslim majority countries alike.[28] However, Islamist parties in these countries also often had higher levels of women's representation than non-Islamist parties prior to quota adoption, due to their links to social welfare movements where women often have a strong presence.[29]

A second way to measure "culture" focuses on attitudes toward gender equality, with higher levels of WPPL expected in countries where citizens are more open to women in leadership positions.[30] One study draws on the World Values Survey to aggregate individual-level responses in 46 countries regarding women's place in politics, education, and the labor force to devise a measure of "climate" toward women's political engagement. In contrast to work using religion as a proxy for culture, the authors uncover a strong relation between this more precise measure of cultural attitudes toward gender equality and WPPL.[31]

Table 3 summarizes the barriers posed by socio-cultural factors to WPPL. To consider how knowledge of these factors might translate into entry points for Mission-led efforts, the table also identifies how these barriers might be transformed into opportunities to advance WPPL.

Table 3: Socio-Cultural Barriers and Opportunities

FACTORS	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES
Gender Stereotypes	• Views that women are communal and men are individualistic, status-driven.	• Demonstrate that communal traits are a strength in politics.
Gender Roles	• Views that politics is a "man's world" and a woman's place is at home.	• Emphasize the benefits of having more women in public life.
Cultural Views	• Cultural attitudes against gender equality in society, religion, etc.	• Foster cultural attitudes more accepting of gender equality.

[27] Reynolds, A. (1999). Women in the legislatures and executives of the world: Knocking at the highest glass ceiling. *World Politics*, *51*(4), 547– 572.

[28] Kang, A. (2009). Studying oil, Islam, and women as if political institutions mattered. *Politics & Gender*, *5*(4), 560–568.

[29] Clark, J. A., & Schwedler, J. (2003). Who Opened the Window? Women's Activism in Islamist Parties. Comparative Politics, 35(3), 293–312.

[30] Inglehart, R. & Norris, P. (2003). *Rising tide: Gender equality and cultural change around the world*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[31] Paxton, P., & Kunovich, S. (2003). Women's political representation: The importance of ideology. *Social forces*, *82*(1), 87–113.

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

Institutional factors structure the political environment, establishing the rules and systems in which political actors operate and the formal and informal dynamics of political life. These factors interact with socio-cultural norms and individual-level characteristics and decisions to shape opportunities for women and men to become politically engaged and exercise political influence. Institutional factors shaping WPPL include features of the electoral system, the political party system, and the broader political and legal context. Elite behaviors in the face of these opportunities and constraints can also be considered institutional factors, with elites serving as gatekeepers to women's entry and exclusion from political institutions and political voice.

Electoral systems fall into three main categories: majoritarian, proportional, or mixed. Each system creates different structural opportunities for higher and lower levels of WPPL. Majoritarian, or plurality, systems are organized around single-member districts, where candidates run against each other and only one candidate can win. Given the high stakes of these contests, parties tend to adopt a conservative approach regarding the types of candidates they select, believing that men will be the most "safe" or "attractive" candidates and, due to broader patterns of gender inequality, will have greater access to the resources needed to win elections.

In proportional systems organized around party lists, selection dynamics are generally different. Parties compete for a number of seats in each district and have incentives to put forward more diverse lists of candidates to appeal to different segments of the voting population.[32] In closed list systems, parties retain complete control over the ordering of the list of candidates. In open list systems, voters cast their ballots for individual candidates, wherever they appear on the list. When parties prioritize the selection of women candidates to top list positions, closed lists can be more beneficial to WPPL; when voters are less biased than party officials, open lists can be better for WPPL.[33] Mixed systems offer various combinations of majoritarian and proportional elements, but generally, the share of women elected tends to be higher in the proportional component.[34]

The rapid diffusion of electoral gender quotas around the world in recent decades has widened some of these electoral system differences. These affirmative measures take three main forms: reserved seats, which set aside seats for women in political assemblies; party quotas, which involve voluntary pledges by individual parties to include a share of women among their candidates; and legislative quotas, which require all parties to nominate a certain percentage of women.[35] In some countries,

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[32] Tremblay, M. (Ed.). (2012). *Women and legislative representation: Electoral systems, political parties, and sex quotas*. New York: Palgrave.

[33] Schmidt, G. D. (2009). The election of women in list PR systems: Testing the conventional wisdom. *Electoral studies*, *28*(2), 190–203.

[34] Vengroff, R., Creevey, L., & Krisch, H. (2000). Electoral system effects on gender representation: The case of mixed systems. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, *1*(2), 197–227.

[35] Krook, M. L. (2009), Quotas for Women in Politics. New York: Oxford University Press.

quotas apply to both elected and appointed positions, requiring that a certain share of women be nominated as cabinet ministers or as members of high courts.[36]

Electoral quotas tend to be easier to apply in proportional systems where the existence of multiple seats makes it possible to decree that a certain share of list positions be allocated to women. They can be particularly effective in closed list systems if the law also mandates list placement requirements (e.g., that every third list position be occupied by a person of the opposite sex) and stipulates the rejection of lists that do not comply. The impact of quotas in open list systems is less predictable, as an increase in the share of women on the lists may or may not be matched by the number of votes cast for women candidates.[37] However, quotas may also work in majoritarian systems, especially if they take the form of reserved seats where only women are allowed to run for election in certain districts.[38] Party and legislative quotas can also be effective if there are strong rules (or political will) ensuring that women are nominated in winnable districts.[39]

In addition to electoral regulations, political party systems play a role in shaping women's opportunities for political engagement. The number of parties can be important in several ways. In one-party regimes, governing parties often take public steps to demonstrate their inclusiveness in response to domestic and international pressures, leading to the introduction of quotas for women and other groups.[40] In multi-party contexts, innovations by one party related to WPPL may spur imitation by other parties.[41] Where very large numbers of parties exist, however, party proliferation may be counterproductive to women's electoral opportunities, as fewer seats become available for each party to fill with their candidates and men dominate as the heads of electoral lists.[42] The ideologies of dominant or major parties can also have an impact, as left-wing parties tend to be more open to the inclusion of diverse candidates, although more conservative parties may also nominate women as a means to attract women voters. Furthermore, leftist parties are more likely to adopt party quotas—and implement legislative quotas mandated by the state—due to their greater willingness to employ affirmative action strategies.[43]

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[36] Piscopo, J. M. (2015). States as gender equality activists: The evolution of quota laws in Latin America. Latin American Politics and Society, 57(3), 27–49.

[37] Jankowski, M., & Marcinkiewicz, K. (2019). Ineffective and counterproductive? The impact of gender quotas in open-list proportional representation systems. Politics & Gender, 15(1), 1–33; Miguel, L. F. (2008). Political representation and gender in Brazil: quotas for women and their impact. Bulletin of Latin American Research, 27(2), 197–214.

[38] Bhavnani, R. R. (2009). Do electoral quotas work after they are withdrawn? Evidence from a natural experiment in India. American Political Science Review, 103(1), 23–35; Yoon, M. Y. (2013). Special seats for women in parliament and democratization: The case of Tanzania. Women's Studies International Forum, 41, 143–149.

[39] Krook, M. L. (2009), Quotas for Women in Politics. New York: Oxford University Press.

[40] Bush, S. S., & Zetterberg, P. (2021). Gender quotas and international reputation. American Journal of Political Science, 65(2), 326–341.

[41] Caul, M. (2001). Political parties and the adoption of candidate gender quotas: A cross-national analysis. The Journal of Politics, 63(4), 1214–1229.

[42] Belschner, J. (2022). Electoral Engineering in New Democracies: Strong Quotas and Weak Parties in Tunisia. Government and Opposition, 57(1), 108–125.

[43] Krook, M. L., Lovenduski, J., & Squires, J. (2009). Gender quotas and models of political citizenship. British Journal of Political Science, 39(4), 781–803.

At the individual party level, a host of formal and informal rules shape women's opportunities to access and have a voice in political debates. In addition to gender quotas for party candidates, some parties have women's sections, which create a specific channel for women to join political parties and influence party policies. Party constitutions might provide another point of support for WPPL; formalizing procedures, for example, for including women on party national executive committees. Party statutes and electoral platforms can also serve as an entry point to formalizing party commitments to gender equality, whether as part of the party structure or among its priorities in public policy-making. In respect to all these factors, the overall level of party institutionalization is important: parties that are strong organizations with well-established rules and structures are more likely to support advances in WPPL, compared to weak organizations created as vehicles for individual politicians.[44]

In most countries, party leaders play a central role in selecting candidates and, thus, in determining whether women are likely or unlikely to win elections. This is true even in cases where party primaries determine which candidates are nominated. While such rules empower ordinary party members to have a say in candidate selection, leaders may exert a strong influence on the outcomes. Most academic studies on this topic conclude that elite bias against women plays a vital role in reducing women's chances of being nominated. While elites often stress that their decisions are based on merit, research shows they often employ information shortcuts relying on background characteristics as a proxy measure for candidate quality.[45] These evaluations rely not only on gender stereotypes but also the personal preferences and opinions of political gatekeepers who, more often than not, embrace patriarchal values sustaining men's domination and women's subordination. For example, a study in the U.S. found that men party chairs expressed a consistent preference for traits associated stereotypically with men and traits that they also recognized in themselves.[46]

Men-dominated political networks also play a role, creating connections and relationships of trust among older and younger men that contribute to the continued over-representation of men in political life, especially in contexts where patronage and clientelism are integral aspects of political recruitment. Although "informal" in many cases, these networks are an integral aspect of the established systems shaping women's and men's participation. The converse is also true to some extent; the percentage of women in party delegations to parliaments across Western Europe is higher in parties where there are more women in the party's leadership.[47] Similarly, political networks of women offer mentorship and camaraderie and can be a strong source of support in forming alliances

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[44] Bjarnegård, E., & Zetterberg, P. (2011). Removing quotas, maintaining representation: Overcoming gender inequalities in political party recruitment. *Representation*, 47(2), 187–199.

[45] Norris, P., & Lovenduski, J. (1995). *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [45] Niven, D. (1998). Party elites and women candidates: The shape of bias. *Women & Politics*, *19*(2), 57–80.

[46] Bjarnegård, E. (2013). *Gender, informal institutions and political recruitment: Explaining male dominance in parliamentary representation*. New York: Palgrave.

[47] Kittilson, M. C. (2006). *Challenging parties, changing parliaments: Women and elected office in contemporary Western Europe*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

to advance women's careers and political agendas.[48] However, these groups are often less established and powerful than more long-standing men-dominated political networks, which remain largely inaccessible for women due to when (late at night) and where (bars, golf courses, gym locker rooms) members typically connect.

Finally, the broader political context is important in setting the stage for WPPL. These contextual factors are "institutional" to the extent that they structure the formal and informal dynamics of political life. Conflict, genocide, apartheid, foreign domination, military involvement in politics, and political instability, for instance, can have a profound influence on contemporary politics. Political instability and political transitions may foreclose chances for women to participate and have a voice in politics, both in civil society as well as government. However, these factors may also create unexpected opportunities for increasing WPPL, especially in countries emerging from periods of conflict where the focus is on writing new constitutions and electoral laws.[49] The introduction of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 has been vital in highlighting the need to include women and a gender perspective in post-conflict reconstruction. Similarly, experiences with apartheid and genocide, while devastating society, may raise greater awareness of the need to overcome systemic inequalities. This may inspire efforts to highlight cross-cutting identities like gender over ethnic divisions.[50]

In contrast, a political system dominated by the military may foreclose channels for women to participate.[51] Additionally, where former authoritarian regimes employed gender quotas, such measures may be discredited as a tool for empowering women in politics.[52] In conflict-affected settings, citizens may feel physically unsafe participating in political activities, with women voters and candidates being particularly vulnerable.[53] Conflict can heighten social divisions based on class or caste, ethnicity, tribal identity, race, religion, or ideology, which can divide women and render a focus on gender and politics less salient.[54] The rise of religious fundamentalism and anti-gender movements may also block or reverse progress on women's rights and WPPL in favor of more conservative gender roles.

For women in civil society and opposition parties, closing and closed civic and political space can restrict WPPL. Authoritarian and backsliding regimes reduce the exercise of civic and political rights

[48] Childs, S. (2013). Negotiating gendered institutions: Women's parliamentary friendships. *Politics & Gender*, *9*(2), 127–151; Di Meco, L. (2017), Women's Political Networks: Defining Leadership, Breaking Barriers, and Fostering Change. Washington, DC: Wilson Center.

[49] Tripp, A. M. (2015). *Women and power in post-conflict Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[50] Bauer, G. (2008). Fifty/fifty by 2020: Electoral gender quotas for parliament in east and southern Africa. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *10*(3), 348–368.

[51] Bauer, G. (2018). "Did You See What Happened to the Market Women?": Legacies of Military Rule for Women's Political Leadership in Ghana? *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, *5*(1).

[52] Matland, R. E., & Montgomery, K. A. (Eds.). (2003). *Women's access to political power in post-communist Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press; Tadros, M. (2014). The politics of mobilising for gender justice in Egypt from Mubarak to Morsi and beyond. *IDS Working Papers*, *2014*(442), 1–35.

[53] Krook, M. L. (2020), Violence against women in politics. New York: Oxford University Press.

[54] Krook, M. L., & O'Brien, D. Z. (2010). The politics of group representation: Quotas for women and minorities worldwide. *Comparative Politics*, *42*(3), 253–272.

like freedom of expression by imposing restrictions on organizing, demonstrating, and protesting, as well as by clamping down on reporting from independent media outlets.[55] Shrinking civic and political freedoms can also be accompanied by a backlash against women's rights and contribute to growing violence against women human rights defenders in particular.[56] These contexts of repression rarely eliminate women's activism, however; they instead drive it to assume less visible forms.

Table 4 provides examples of some of the barriers posed by institutional factors to WPPL. To consider how knowledge of these factors might translate into entry points for programming, the table also identifies how these particular barriers might be transformed into opportunities to advance WPPL.

Table 4: Institutional Barriers and Opportunities

FACTORS	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES
Electoral Systems	• Rules that create incentives for inequality, favoring men.	• Create rules that incentivize practices of gender equality.
Political Parties	• Recruitment practices that privilege men over women. • Party rules and structures that exclude women members.	• Institute practices that foster equal opportunities for women and men. • Create party rules and structures to include and amplify women's voices.
Political Context	• Contexts of political instability, leading to women's exclusion. • Practices undermining the safety of politically active women.	• Leverage moments of change to open political opportunities. • Develop mechanisms of support against violence.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

The third component of the political ecosystem focuses on decisions made at the individual level by women, which block or support women's access and voice as a group in political spaces. Informed by socio-cultural norms and political institutions, these individual decisions fundamentally shape who participates and has a voice in politics, and thus overall levels of WPPL.

Research on political recruitment proposes a four-stage pathway to elected office, proceeding from the wide pool of citizens who are eligible to run for office to the smaller group of aspirants who come forward as potential candidates, to those actually selected as candidates, to those who ultimately gain elected office. This model thus identifies three key transition points:

1. The move from eligible to aspirant (the supply of potential candidates).

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[55] Roggeband, C., & Krizsán, A. (2020). Democratic backsliding and the backlash against women's rights: Understanding the current challenges for feminist politics. New York: UN Women.

2. The move from aspirant to candidate (the demand for candidates with certain profiles).

3. The move from candidate to elected (the election process itself).[56]

Gender scholars have been particularly interested in identifying which of these transition points is most responsible for women's under-representation. Arguments fall into three primary categories:

1. The political ambition argument: There is a small supply of women willing to stand as candidates.

2. The elite bias argument: There is a lack of demand for women candidates on the part of candidate selection committees.

3. The voter bias argument: Voters have an aversion to voting for women candidates.

Most studies of women's political representation point to elite bias as the main explanation, highlighting deeply entrenched patriarchal beliefs among political gatekeepers as the key factor preventing women's access and power in political life. Nonetheless, most scholars also recognize that, contrary to the linear nature of the political recruitment model (and in line with the economic model of supply and demand), these three stages also interact with one another. Elite bias, for example, can affect the supply of women willing to come forward: if women do not see other women nominated as candidates, they may dismiss the possibility of a political career and opt out of politics altogether. Elite bias can also shape perceptions of voter bias. By not nominating women, or by placing women candidates largely in losing districts or unfavorable list positions, elites may point to the lack of votes received by women to disguise their role in engineering women's electoral losses.

Individual-level factors shape the supply of potential candidates to political office and, more broadly, the share of women willing to be active in other political roles like voting and activism. Research on political ambition highlights its strongly gendered nature. The Citizen Ambition Study surveyed nearly 3,800 eligible candidates in the United States, divided equally among women and men in the four professions that most often precede a career in American politics: law, business, education, and political activism. Despite similar levels of political activism and interest, eligible women candidates were much less likely than men of comparable socio-economic and professional backgrounds to consider running for office and launching an actual candidacy. The likely reason is that, although they were similarly qualified to run for office, the women were more than twice as likely as the men to assert they were "not at all qualified" to run for office and only half as likely to think that they would actually win.[57]

The supply of potential candidates is not limited to ambition. Resources like time, money, and political experience also shape the calculations of aspirants, determining their views on whether or not they

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[56] Amnesty International (2019). *Challenging Power, Fighting Discrimination: A Call to Action to Recognise and Protect Women Human Rights Defenders.* London: Amnesty International. There is also rising violence against women journalists, but this is not the focus of this assessment framework.

[57] Norris, P., & Lovenduski, J. (1995). *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

feel they are equipped to run for office.[58] Without resources, women cannot realize their political ambitions. Indeed, some evidence suggests that women may need even greater resources than men to sustain a successful political campaign. Women face an uphill battle due to gender stereotypes, which may lead voters to draw inaccurate inferences regarding their personality traits, ideological stances, and policy priorities.[59] Citizens holding more traditional views are also more likely to say that a woman's place is in the home and that women are too "soft" to be successful at governing.[60] Perceptions that women are weaker candidates may explain why incumbent women office-holders are more likely than male incumbents to face opponents at both the primary and election stages,[61] even though they often outperform their male counterparts while in office.[62]

Offering support to women candidates can be crucial to bridging gaps between ambitions and resources. When party leaders encourage individuals to put themselves forward, they tend to focus their efforts on recruiting men rather than women.[63] This matters for representation because women are more reliant than men on the existence of organizational and party support for their candidacies.[64] In addition to encouragement, fundraising support can increase the resources available to women to launch and win political campaigns. Training programs can enhance women's self-confidence and improve their campaign skills, enabling them to showcase their qualifications more effectively. Addressing violence against women in politics, both in-person and online, can further help protect women seeking to exercise their political rights, reducing the perceived costs of pursuing a political career and political activity more broadly.[65]

Finally, it is important to note that, while voters do hold gendered stereotypes about the competence and characteristics of candidates, these views rarely translate into voting behavior. Rather, party affiliation often plays a much greater role in voter choice, with citizens casting their votes for their preferred parties regardless of the candidate's gender.[66] To the degree that gender does matter, the evidence suggests it operates largely in favor of women. In Ireland, for example, which uses a single

[58] Lawless, J. L., & Fox, R. L. (2005). *It takes a candidate: Why women don't run for office*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[59] Norris, P., & Lovenduski, J. (1995). *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[60] McDermott, M. L. (1997). Voting cues in low-information elections: Candidate gender as a social information variable in contemporary United States elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 270–283.

[61] Dolan, K., & Sanbonmatsu, K. (2009). Gender stereotypes and attitudes toward gender balance in government. *American Politics Research*, *37*(3), 409–428.

[62] Lawless, J. L., & Pearson, K. (2008). The primary reason for women's underrepresentation? Reevaluating the conventional wisdom. *The Journal of Politics*, *70*(1), 67–82.

[63] Anzia, S. F., & Berry, C. R. (2011). The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson effect: why do congresswomen outperform congressmen? *American Journal of Political Science*, *55*(3), 478–493; Lazarus, J., & Steigerwalt, A. (2018). *Gendered vulnerability: How women work harder to stay in office*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

[64] Lawless, J. L., & Fox, R. L. (2005). *It takes a candidate: Why women don't run for office*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[65] Carroll, S. J., & Sanbonmatsu, K. (2013). *More women can run: Gender and pathways to the state legislatures*. New York: Oxford University Press. [66] Krook, M. L. (2020), *Violence against women in politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[66] Dolan, K. (2014). Gender stereotypes, candidate evaluations, and voting for women candidates: what really matters?. *Political Research Quarterly*, *67*(1), 96–107; Matland, R. E., & Tezcür, G. M. (2011). Women as candidates: An experimental study in Turkey. *Politics & Gender*, *7*(3), 365–390.

nontransferable vote electoral system,[67] voters do not discriminate against women, even when they have the opportunity to choose between men and women candidates of the same party.[68] Similar findings emerge in hypothetical experiments as well as in real-world electoral contests.[69]

Table 5 summarizes the barriers posed by individual factors to WPPL. To consider how knowledge of these factors might translate into entry points for programming, the table also identifies how these barriers might be transformed into opportunities to advance WPPL.

Table 5: Individual Barriers and Opportunities

FACTORS	BARRIERS	OPPORTUNITIES
Capacity	• Limited skills and experience in political leadership roles.	• Provide training and development programs focused on political leadership and governance.
Resources	• Lack of financial and other resources to sustain participation.	• Increase women's access to resources, including in the areas of fundraising and political networking.
Support	• Lack of encouragement for women to participate and lead in politics.	• Encourage women to participate and lead. • Build women's self-confidence.

CONDUCTING A WPPL ASSESSMENT

A WPPL Assessment seeks to answer the four questions in the WPPL Matrix (see Table 2):

- Are women politically engaged as citizens, in any of a wide range of possible political roles?
- Do women exercise political agency and influence as citizens?
- Do women serve as political leaders, whether in elected or non-elected roles?
- Do women exercise political agency and influence as political leaders?

An ecosystem approach suggests that these questions must be answered holistically, exploring the combined roles of socio-cultural, institutional, and individual factors in creating barriers and opportunities that shape patterns of WPPL. Capturing these dynamics accurately requires a multi-dimensional research strategy, using different research methods to gain insights from a wide variety of stakeholders.

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[67] Each voter casts one vote for one candidate in a multi-candidate race for multiple offices.

[68] McElroy, G., & Marsh, M. (2010). Candidate gender and voter choice: Analysis from a multimember preferential voting system. *Political Research Quarterly*, *63*(4), 822–833.

[69] Aguilar, R., Cunow, S., & Desposato, S. (2015). Choice sets, gender, and candidate choice in Brazil. *Electoral Studies*, *39*, 230–242; Murray, R., Krook, M. L., & Opello, K. A. (2012). Why are gender quotas adopted? Party pragmatism and parity in France. *Political Research Quarterly*, *65*(3), 529–543.

This section explains the structure of the assessment, provides practical information for designing and conducting the research, and introduces the qualitative tools developed to support the assessment.

ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

The purpose of the assessment is to better understand the current state of WPPL and pinpoint challenges and barriers (beliefs, behaviors, actors) as a foundation for recommendations to expand opportunities and advance WPPL in a particular country. The final report, presentation and two-pager will be used by the Mission supporting the research to contribute to the public good, identifying priority areas where its diplomatic and programmatic investments are likely to have the greatest impact.

The assessment has three parts, explained below.

PART I: MAPPING THE CURRENT STATE OF WPPL

Part I of the Assessment involves onboarding a research team and mapping the current state of WPPL in the country. Using qualitative research tools, the research team should distill trends related to the four components of the WPPL Matrix: access to participation, power in participation, access to leadership, and power in leadership.

Step1: Research team recruitment. A Mission can commission the research directly or utilize a central DRG mechanism. In the case that the Mission commissions the research directly, they will recruit an assessment team. If using a central mechanism, DRG staff will support contracting and recruitment, with Mission input. Each assessment team will be led by an expert in gender and politics with relevant country experience (if a local expert is unavailable), assisted by one or two other experts in gender and politics in the country, a logistician, and possibly a member of Mission staff. If resources allow, the assessment team should be supported by a gender and politics advisor to support quality control on design, field work and analysis. Direct experience working in political development contexts across political parties is desired for at least one member of the team. This contextual understanding and existing networks of contacts strengthen the research and recommendation drafting process.

Step 2: Conduct desk review. The WPPL assessment starts with a thorough desk review of existing data and research on the country in question to inform the strategy report, research implementation, and utilization of the data (see Workbook). In addition to donor and academic materials, the desk review should also include relevant legal and institutional texts such as elections and violence against women in politics laws, party bylaws, etc. The desk review will identify trends, gaps and questions to inform the research design. The desk review is not a specific deliverable, but informs the strategy report and serves as the political economy analysis (PEA) to frame the final report.

Step 3: Develop strategy report. The research team will prepare a strategy report, drawing on key questions identified in the desk review, for Mission review and comment. The report will include an overview of the methodology, as well as a proposed intersectional lens for analysis such as geography, sector, class, etc. Through a meeting or comments, all key Mission and Embassy staff will weigh in on proposed areas of focus for the research.

Step 4: Conduct [utilization briefing](#). Once in receipt of the strategy report, the Mission will organize a design briefing to consider the range of possible applications of the research findings and prioritize. Factors a Mission may consider include timing of upcoming elections or other political windows of opportunity, program design cycles, or interest amongst the diplomatic community.

PART II: COLLECTING AND ANALYZING THE DATA

Part II of the assessment involves connecting the country patterns uncovered in Part I to barriers and opportunities for advancing WPPL.

Step 1: Conduct KIIs and FGDs. The Workbook provides data analysis guidance to assist the research team in interpreting the data gathered using the two research methods.

Step 2: Analyze data. In the first step of the analysis, the research team should identify the socio-cultural, institutional, and individual factors shaping women's exclusion and inclusion as political actors in the country. The Stakeholder Analysis Worksheet for breaking down barriers and opportunities. The second step of the analysis is to connect the factors identified in the first step to specific advocates and opponents of efforts to advance WPPL. These stakeholders might include actors in state institutions, political parties, civil society, and the international community. Organized by sector, it asks the research team to summarize barriers and opportunities and, in each case, note which specific actors are primarily responsible, whether for keeping the barrier in place or for potentially creating opportunities for action.

PART III: UTILIZING THE DATA

Part III of the assessment is to write the final report, pulling together and organizing the materials collected and analyzed in Parts I and II. The workbook provides a report template, outlining which sections should be included in the final report and what each section should contain.

Step 1: Prepare final deliverables. Using templates provided in the workbook, the research team will prepare a final report outlining opportunities, barriers, and recommendations. Additionally, the team will develop a presentation and two-pager based on the final report. These resources will be provided in English and relevant local languages.

Step 2: Utilization workshop. The assessment deliverables will contribute to a public good, deepening understanding on WPPL that different stakeholders can use to collaborate and coordinate to advance WPPL. The Mission will use the final deliverables as a foundation for a utilization workshop

to review the recommendations, prioritize which are actionable, and develop an action plan for dissemination and diplomatic and programmatic responses.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The assessment employs three research tools: a desk review, KIIs, and FGDs. These tools provide qualitative sources of evidence to better understand the current situation as well as barriers to and opportunities for advancing WPPL, engaging a wide range of stakeholders and diverse groups of women.

In this assessment, the desk review will use existing quantitative and qualitative data to generate a detailed background picture of WPPL dynamics in a given country. The other two tools developed in association with this framework seek to create new data. The KIIs and FGDs use questions to gain individual- and group-level insights into dynamics of WPPL. They differ in that KIIs aim to gather the views of single respondents—in this case key informants with specialized knowledge on WPPL in the country. In contrast, the FGDsuse small group discussions with various types of stakeholders to reveal diverse views and potential disagreements on key questions.

Each of the tools is discussed in greater detail below, with sample topics and questions outlined in the desk review guidance, KIIs, and FGDs in the Workbook. There are also sample templates that the assessment team will adapt depending on the intended stakeholders, leveraging their particular areas of expertise. The Workbook also includes guidance for translating the insights gained from these tools into answers to the questions posed in the WPPL Assessment Framework.

DESK REVIEW

The desk review is the starting point of the assessment, with a considerable investment of time and resources to ensure that it is as complete and accurate as possible. A thorough desk review will help inform the assessment in valuable ways by helping the team to ask relevant questions, understand the data, and avoid collecting data that already widely exists. Desk Review Guidance in the Workbook lists specific resources for locating data on the current state of WPPL, socio-cultural factors, and institutional factors. Questions that cannot be answered in the desk review should be prioritized in data collection using the other tools.

As the Mission is commissioning the assessment, staff should begin compiling relevant data to include in the desk review. To ensure that the desk review is informed by the past work of the Mission supporting the research, the team should request background materials from the Mission and from other donors and partners operating in the country. For example, the team should include USAID materials related to WPPL, including DRG assessments, political economy analyses, and conflict assessments and electoral assessments. The team should also review the USAID Country Development and Cooperation Strategy and program portfolio in the country to understand past,

current, and future WPPL-related programming. They should search for any evaluation materials that might provide insight into achievements and challenges identified by USAID and its partners.

In addition, the team should also consult a wide array of both local and international primary and secondary sources. These sources might include academic studies, gray literature, gender equality databases, election and government data, public opinion surveys, civil society reports, and assessments authored by other international donors and implementing partners on gender equality, democracy, elections, political parties, political transitions, and human rights. The focus should be on gathering information about the country, including demographics, information regarding relevant political institutions and history, democratic trajectory, domestic legislation and constitutional guarantees related to WPPL, party statutes and codes of conduct related to WPPL, and the international and regional conventions on gender equality signed or not signed by the country.

As part of the desk review, the assessment team will develop a PEA, identifying prevailing processes, institutions and actors, and how power is distributed and contested. The PEA will reveal or pose questions to be addressed in the research on positions, interests and incentives and institutions that enable or frustrate change. Barriers identified as part of the PEA should be tested in the KIIs and FGDs then linked to opportunities and recommendations in the final report.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The KIIs seek to engage with knowledgeable insiders to gain insights into the barriers to WPPL, and then probe on opportunities for enhancing WPPL. The Workbook contains seven interview guides, with questions tailored to the expertise and insights of different stakeholders. The assessment team should review these guides and propose adaptations to the local context in the strategy report for Mission review and feedback.

The anticipated length of the interviews is 45–60 minutes, with longer interviews proposed for women politicians and WPPL experts, including women in civil society. However, in the event of delays or time restrictions imposed by the interviewees, the interview templates also include sample priority questions, indicated in bold, should the research team need to limit the number of questions posed. The research team should consult closely with Mission staff to develop their lists of interviewees, and the Mission should facilitate research contacts wherever possible, including making introductions and providing contact details.

In terms of specific questions, the Woman Politician Guide is for interviews with women who have run for political office (both successfully and unsuccessfully) or have served as political leaders. To make the best use of time, the team should start with women politicians who have been especially active in promoting WPPL, as they are likely to have the most expertise and insight into the questions being asked. The Man Politician Guide is for interviews with men who have run for political office or are party members, whether elected or unelected. To make the best use of time, the team should start with male party members from the main political parties, such as those represented in or with

party caucuses in parliament and leading opposition parties (if not in parliament). The sample should ideally include any men who have been especially active in promoting or opposing WPPL, in order to include and interpret the broadest range of these gatekeepers' perspectives.

The Party Leader Guide is for interviews with men and women party leaders. The team should focus on approaching stakeholders from all the major political parties, focusing on top leaders as well as members of party national executive committees. The Electoral Official Guide is for interviews with members of electoral management bodies (EMBs), as well as ordinary citizens serving as poll workers; it can also serve as the basis for interviews with election observers. The team should focus on accessing stakeholders involved in implementing election policy, as well as those tasked with focusing specifically on gender and elections, including through election observation.

The WPPL Expert Guide is for interviews with experts on WPPL in the country. These experts might include academics, government officials, journalists or other media experts, and representatives of women's groups and other CSOs. The Donor and Implementing Partners Guide is for interviews with donors and partners who have funded or implemented programs to advance WPPL in the country. The USAID Staff Guide is for interviews with current (and possibly past) Mission and Embassy staff.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The FGDs seek to learn more about barriers to WPPL and linked opportunities through facilitated conversations among small groups of stakeholders. Distinct from the KIIs, the aim of the FGDs is to engage rank-and-file members of civil society, political parties, and related sectors. The Workbook includes five templates for FGDs, with questions tailored to the expertise and insights of different stakeholders. The assessment team should review these guides and propose adaptations to the local context in the strategy report for Mission review and feedback.

The anticipated length of the FGD is 60–90 minutes. The research team should consider organizing multiple focus groups for women in civil society and women in political parties in various geographies. Fewer focus groups may be possible—and approaching stakeholders may be more difficult—for locally elected women and men in civil society or political parties. Organizing male-only discussions is essential to explore their ideas about gender, social expectations and personal attitudes, which directly influence women's ability to access and participate in politics. The intent of these discussions is not to use them to ground-truth what women say is occurring. The assessment is designed on the premise that we believe women. However, because men are equally if not more important when it comes to breaking down the barriers for women's political participation, it is critical to gain a deep, broader understanding of their views and attitudes towards women as well as gender inclusive democracy. These discussions, when triangulated with the findings from the desktop and discussions with women, can also illuminate conflict between what men say and what men actually do. To the extent possible, the team should try to organize several focus groups with young women and young men to capture potential generational differences with older women and men.

For each sector, the research team should recruit six to eight participants per FGD. A smaller number of participants might make group discussions less productive, while larger numbers might not afford sufficient opportunities for all group members to speak. In both instances, the research team should take care to avoid one or two people dominating the conversation, actively finding ways of drawing more quiet members into the group conversation. To encourage discussion, the moderator should share a set of ground rules prior to posing the first question. The research team should split participants into all-men and all-women groups, but aim to diversify the participants in terms of age, seniority, and demographic backgrounds. Organizers should also divide groups by party affiliation, with women from the same party taking part in the same focus group. These focus groups might be recorded for the purposes of accurate note-taking, but the moderator should gain the consent of all participants before starting. Either way, the assistant should take written notes capturing the main themes.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

RECRUITING A RESEARCH TEAM

Putting together a capable research team is vital to the success of the WPPL assessment. Although the exact balance of skills across the team members might vary, the Mission supporting the research should aim to recruit a research team that combines topical expertise and local knowledge. Expertise in gender and politics, as well as familiarity with the country's political dynamics, are essential for ensuring that the data collection and analysis are well-informed and draw accurate conclusions. If resources allow, a gender and politics advisor with global knowledge and expertise should also be recruited to ensure quality and alignment with global DRG and gender framing. In most instances, recruiting the optimal team will require advertising the positions internationally and locally to attract the largest pool of applicants, although this may not always be practical due to time constraints.

The research team should include a leader, one or two additional members, and a logistician. The team leader should have deep expertise in gender and politics, be familiar with qualitative methods, and have strong analysis and writing skills in English to clearly present barriers, and frame recommendations to respond. Team members should bring expertise in gender and politics in the particular country in focus and have prior experience in using quantitative or qualitative research methods. At least one team member should have experience conducting focus groups. The logistician should have a deep understanding of what is required to arrange and carry out research in the country, including scheduling appointments and arranging transportation. For these reasons, he or she should be recruited nationally and fluent in one or more local languages.

In most cases, they should be recruited nationally and fluent in one or more local languages. However, in some cases, recruiting international experts to complement the team is advisable. This is particularly relevant where cross-cutting expertise is limited in the country context or the local team is less familiar with USAID frameworks.

The Workbook includes more detailed research team recruitment guidance, including sample terms of reference for each category of team member. It also discusses the role of the Mission commissioning the research, which should work closely with the research team to access key stakeholders, offer advice and feedback on the data collection and analysis when appropriate, and lead efforts to liaise with international and local partners on potential recommendations. For these purposes, the Mission commissioning the research should consider including a member of their own staff on the research team.

ORGANIZING THE RESEARCH

As noted above, Missions can commission the research directly, or engage an external contractor to coordinate the research, using the LER II mechanism. In the case an external contractor is engaged, the Mission should establish desired communications protocols and cadence. The contractor can coordinate recruitment of the assessment team, research design, and support the assessment team logistically during research and analysis.

After the research team has been hired, its most urgent task is to organize a series of meetings to plan the research strategy. In addition to becoming acquainted with one another, members should arrange a call or in-person meeting with Mission staff to begin developing a list of contacts. They should decide who will be primarily responsible for which tasks; for example, collecting sources for the desk review, conducting the KIIs, and running the FGDs. They should discuss whether the tools need any revising or updating in terms of their scope or content. They should also make a plan for storing and accessing the research materials.

As part of these conversations, the research team should discuss the best ways of sequencing the data collection and analysis. They should start with the desk review, which will place the country in context, facilitate data collection, and aid in identifying potential research contacts. While the desk review is underway, the logistician should start reaching out to potential stakeholders, adding names, times, and locations to a master schedule available to all members of the research team. At this early stage, the research team might consider prioritizing interviews with WPPL experts and donors and implementing partners who will be well-placed to brief the team on country dynamics, and suggest names and contact details for other potential interviewees.

The team should then begin arranging the KIIs and FGDs. To ensure ample participation, the Mission supporting the research should assist the team with outreach to key stakeholders. In some instances, this may entail connecting them to an implementing partner with the relationships who will then make direct introductions. In others, the Mission itself may have the relationships and be able to make the connections. The team should consider the best ordering of these tools and analyze each set of data on its own and then triangulate these findings with the insights provided by the other sources.

For the sake of efficiency, the research team should decide on the best division of labor, with different team members leading each of the tools and other members assisting in their implementation when

necessary. Throughout the data collection stage, the research team should meet on a regular basis, whether virtually or in person, to discuss how the work is progressing. In addition to meeting with the Mission at the outset of the research, the team should aim to reconvene with Mission staff midway through and at the end of the research when the final report is being drafted. Once written, the report and other final deliverables should be circulated to team members as well as the Mission for feedback before it is finalized.

For more specific guidance, including storage of the data and materials, see the WPPL workbook.

ACCESSING KEY WPPL STAKEHOLDERS

The WPPL assessment tools require the research team to approach a variety of research informants. To make the best use of resources, the team should focus on actors who are knowledgeable about some dimension of WPPL, stemming from their work as politicians, activists, party members, election officials, academics, implementers, donors etc. To ensure that research with human subjects is conducted ethically, the WPPL Workbook section, *Accessing Key WPPL Stakeholders,* provides procedures and sample text for gaining informed consent from potential participants.

This section also offers guidance on the types of WPPL stakeholders who should be approached for the assessment, with different research populations targeted for the KIIs and the FGDs. In each case, the research team should leverage Mission contacts, make use of their own personal networks, and apply snowball techniques whereby stakeholders who have agreed suggest others who may be willing to participate. Among each group of stakeholders, the team should include both women and men and aim for diversity across respondents in terms of demographic characteristics and party affiliations. Table 6 summarizes the categories of stakeholders who should be approached for each research tool.

In order to shape recommendations to shift norms, attitudes and political organizations, the assessment team needs to engage with those who currently hold power in the ecosystem. To unpack patriarchal gender norms that underpin political institutions in a political ecosystem, engaging men in the research is essential. Men, especially leaders, both benefit from and propagate harmful gender norms. The research team should take a skeptical view of their responses, and identify opportunities for behavioral change. At the same time, given power distribution across stakeholders, researchers should consider what is and *is not* said by respondents, interpreting the extent to which responses are informed and accurate.

Table 6: Summary of Tools and Stakeholders

RESEARCH TOOL	STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES
KIIs	• Women politicians. • Men politicians. • Party leaders. • Electoral officials. • WPPL experts (academics, current and former government officials, journalists, and representatives of women's and youth civil society groups and election observer groups). • Donors and implementing partners. • USAID and Embassy staff.
FGDs	• Women in civil society (including separately with youth). • Women in political parties (including separately with youth). • Locally elected women. • Women media workers. • Men in civil society (including separately with youth).

SUMMARY TIMELINE

The WPPL assessment will require approximately three to four months to complete.[70] The first month should be dedicated to conducting the desk review, including an overview of existing survey data on WPPL, and planning the research. The next month should focus on soliciting and carrying out KIIs and FGDs. The following month should be dedicated to the analysis and write-up of the final report, while the final month should be set aside for one round of Mission review and revision by the research team. Please note that the soliciting and scheduling of the KIIs and FGDs can be the most time consuming and difficult parts of the assessment. As such, the research teams should take this into consideration in their planning process.

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[70] This is for the assessment itself starting from the kick-off meeting to the submission of the first draft of the report. It can take up to one month for the contractor to onboard the assessment team members and for the Mission to gather materials.

	MONTH	MISSION	CONTRACTOR/ASSESSMENT TEAM
PART I: MAPPING THE CURRENT STATE OF WPPL	1	Review WPPL Framework Commission WPPL Assessment and Select Contractor	Recruit and Onboard Assessment Team
	2		Conduct Desk Review and Develop Strategy Report
	3	Conduct Utilization Briefing Kick-Off Meeting	Kick-Off Meeting, Prepare for Data Collection
PART II: COLLECTING AND ANALYZING THE DATA	4	Participate in Outbrief Presentation	Conduct KIIs & FGDs
PART III: UTILIZING THE DATA	5	Comment on Report	Data Analysis and Deliverables Development and Revision
	6	Utilization Workshop and Action Plan Finalization	

ASSESSMENT PART I: MAPPING THE STATE OF WPPL

Part I of the assessment is to map the current state of WPPL in the country. Using the tools outlined in the previous section, the research team should seek to answer the questions below, focusing on trends in women's political participation and political leadership as well as both access and power dimensions of WPPL. Addressing broad lines of inquiry, these questions do not appear across all the tools, nor are questions in the tools necessarily phrased in the exact same way.

UTILIZATION BRIEFING

While the assessment team is conducting desk research and developing the strategy report, the Mission team should prepare and conduct an internal utilization briefing. The briefing aims to promote

a "utilization mindset," resulting in a clear articulation of the use, and build a shared understanding of the utilization promotion process.

While some thoughts and guidance are provided below on the utilization briefing, the structure and content of these are expected to vary based on the audience. As such, the guiding principle for teams should be: **What will work best to ensure that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations are translated into concrete actions?**

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION MAPPING

Political participation refers to a wide array of activities citizens can engage in to influence political decision-making or solve collective problems. Table 7 lists broad questions related to women's political participation, illustrating how the access and power questions connect. The assessment team should consider which questions are most relevant to the country context and refine the priority questions with Mission staff during the kick-off call and in the strategy report.

ACCESS WPPL

Access questions seek to assess women's access to political participation, focusing on numerical indicators related to women as voters, activists, party members, and election officials.

POWER WPPL

Power questions seek to assess women's voice and agency in political participation, focusing on the political empowerment of women as voters, activists, party members, and election officials.

Table 7: Mapping Women's Participation

ACCESS	POWER
Are women registered to vote at the same rate as men? Are there any differences across sub-groups of women?	Are women able to exercise their right to vote, without interference from family members or other actors? Are certain groups of women more targeted than others?
What is the voter turnout of men versus women? Are there parts of the country, or certain communities, where women's voter turnout is particularly high or low? Do turnout rates vary across different groups of women?	
Are there autonomous women's groups in civil society? How representative are they of the diversity of women in the population?	If there are autonomous women's organizations in civil society, how strong are they? Are they active and effective in getting women's voices

ACCESS	POWER
	heard?
Do women participate in other political activities, like signing petitions or attending demonstrations, at the same rates as men? Are there any differences across sub-groups of women?	Are women able to participate in political activities, without interference from family members or other actors? Does this vary across different subgroups of women?
Are women a visible contingent during protests or social movements? Are there any protests or movements that are particularly dominated by women? What is the nature of these protests or movements?	Are there opportunities for women in civil society to inform government decision-making? If there is a state bureaucracy for women, (for example, a ministry of gender equality), are there specific channels for communicating with and influencing the work of the agency?
Are women active in CSOs that are not specifically focused on gender issues? Which kinds of organizations?	
Are there official women's organizations connected to the government or ruling party in one-party regimes?	If there are official women's organizations, how strong are they? Do they simply toe the party line? Are they active and effective in getting women's voices heard?
In conflict-affected contexts: Are women citizens involved in the peace process in any way? To what extent are women represented in transition processes and institutions?	In conflict-affected contexts: Do women citizens have any voice or influence in the peace process or political transition?
What is the share of women among party members? Are women more present in some parties compared to others?	How and to what extent do women party members contribute to the development of party procedures and policies?
Is gender addressed in party statutes, regulations, or platforms?	How central is gender equality to the party's policy and political goals? Do parties promote fair, equitable, and positive images of women politicians when developing messages to the media and selecting party spokespeople?

ACCESS	POWER
Do political parties have women's wings? If so, which political parties?	To what extent do women's wings help determine or give input on candidate selection? How and to what extent do women's wings contribute to the development of party procedures and policies?
Do women serve in the EMB in equal numbers? What percentage of poll workers are women?	What roles do women in the EMB play? Do they have a voice in EMB policies and decisions? Do they serve as presidents or supervisors of polling stations, voting centers, or tabulation centers?
Does the EMB have a policy on gender inclusion?	If so, what does this policy consist of, and is it effective in achieving its goals?
Does the EMB have a gender unit or directorate?	If so, does this department have an adequate budget and staff allocated to it? What formal and informal powers does it wield?
What are the percentages of women election observers and party agents? To what extent are diverse groups of women represented as domestic election observers?	Are women serving as election observers able to observe all aspects of the electoral process? Do observation methodologies include an explicit focus on barriers to women's participation and leadership during all phases of the electoral process? Is analysis of the threat and occurrence of violence against women in politics and public life— - in its online and offline forms— - a key component of overall assessments of electoral integrity?

WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Political leadership refers to activities women can engage in as elected and non-elected political representatives.

Table 8 lists questions related to women's political leadership, illustrating how the access and power questions connect to one another.

ACCESS WPPL

Access questions seek to assess women's access to political leadership, focusing on numerical indicators related to women as candidates, elected and appointed officials, and party and civil society leaders.

POWER WPPL

Power questions seek to assess women's voice and agency in political leadership, focusing on political empowerment of women as candidates, elected and appointed officials, and party and civil society leaders.

Table 8: Mapping Women's Leadership

ACCESS	POWER
What is the share of women among political candidates at the national level? Are women candidates placed in electable positions or winnable seats to the same degree as men? Are there differences across parties in terms of the nomination of women candidates? How diverse are women candidates in terms of their demographic backgrounds? If data is available: What is the share of women among candidates at the sub-national level?	Are women able to assume the positions to which they have been elected or appointed? Is this the same for all groups of women?
What is the share of women in the national parliament? Are women equally represented across the different political parties? How diverse are women representatives in terms of their demographic backgrounds? If data is available: What is the share of women in sub-national governments?	What committee assignments do women receive in parliament? Are women over-represented in some committees and under-represented in others? If so, which ones? Do these assignments mirror traditional ideas about gender roles, with women mainly assigned to "feminine" issue areas? Are women and men equally assigned to committees considered prestigious or important?
	Does the share of women in parliamentary leadership or committee assignments and committee leadership mirror their percentage in parliament? Where are the largest gaps?
	Do elected women remain in office, or are they quick to lose their positions or resign from office? Is this the same for all groups of women?
Is there a women's caucus in parliament?	If so, is it formal or informal? What resources does it enjoy, if any? Is the women's caucus seen as a key or marginal player within parliament? Are women from different parties equally engaged in their work?
What is the share of women in the national cabinet? How diverse are women ministers in terms of their demographic backgrounds?	Which portfolios do women cabinet ministers hold? Are these portfolios considered prestigious or important? Are women in the cabinet largely responsible for "feminine" portfolios, like children, culture, or education, or are they evenly distributed across policy domains?

ACCESS	POWER
	Do women in government remain in office, or are they quick to lose their positions or resign from office? Is this the same for all groups of women?
How many women hold positions in the judicial branch of government? Are these positions elected or appointed? Do women in leadership reflect the diversity of women in the population?	What leadership positions, if any, do women occupy in the judicial branch? Are these positions considered prestigious or powerful?
	Do women in judicial leadership remain in office, or are they quick to lose their positions or resign? Is this the same for all groups of women?
In conflict-affected contexts: Are women involved in leadership roles in the peace process or political transition institutions and processes?	In conflict-affected contexts: Do women leaders have a voice or influence in the peace process or political transition? Are they able to influence the degree to which resulting agreements and institutions are gender- sensitive and gender-transformative?
In addition to leading women's organizations in civil society, do women serve as leaders of CSOss that are not specifically focused on gender issues? If so, what types of organizations do they lead?	Have women leaders in civil society had an impact on politics or public policy? What is the nature of this impact?
Do women serve in leadership positions in election observation groups?	Are women leaders within observer groups able to influence the scope and focus of post-election advocacy efforts to ensure that priority reforms put forward by citizen observer groups are gender-sensitive and transformative?
Do women serve as leaders within the EMB?	Are women serving in the EMB able to influence any aspects of the electoral process? In particular, are they involved in protecting the political rights of women through their work?

ASSESSMENT PART II: ANALYZING BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Part II of the assessment involves connecting the country patterns uncovered in Part I to barriers and opportunities to advance WPPL. In the first step of the analysis, the research team should identify the socio-cultural, institutional, and individual factors shaping women's exclusion and inclusion as political actors in the country. The second step of the analysis is to connect the factors identified in step one to specific advocates and opponents of efforts to advance WPPL in the country. These stakeholders might include actors in state institutions, political parties, civil society, and the international community.

The Analyzing WPPL Worksheet breaks down barriers and opportunities to WPPL in the country. When considering the questions listed below, the team should consider how specific socio-cultural, institutional, and individual factors shape the patterns discovered in Part I. This worksheet notes which tools might best provide these answers.

TheStakeholder Analysis Worksheet, organized by sector, provides space for the research team to summarize barriers and opportunities and, in each case, note which actors are primarily responsible for keeping the barrier in place—or might be tapped for potentially creating opportunities for action.

As in Part I, the research team should focus on trends in women's political participation and political leadership, as well as both access and power dimensions of WPPL. Addressing broad lines of inquiry, the questions below do not appear across all the tools, nor are questions in the tools necessarily phrased in the exact same way.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Table 9 provides a template for analyzing drivers of women's political participation, focusing on the ecosystem of socio-cultural, institutional, and individual factors shaping women's access and power.

ACCESS WPPL

Access questions seek to assess barriers and opportunities to women's access to political participation as voters, activists, party members, and election officials.

POWER WPPL

Power questions seek to assess barriers and opportunities to women's voice and agency in political participation as voters, activists, party members, and election officials.

Table 9: Analyzing Drivers of Women's Participation

ACCESS	POWER
Socio Cultural Factors	
• Is the public supportive of women's political participation as voters, activists, party members, or election officials? Do prevailing gender stereotypes shape women's opportunities to participate in these political roles? • Are there any actors that actively seek to advance women's civic and political rights? How vocal and effective are they? How do they justify including women as voters, activists, party members, or election officials? • Are there any actors that actively seek to repress women's civic and political rights? How vocal and effective are they? How do they justify excluding women as voters, activists, party members, or election officials?	• Is gendered violence or intimidation used as a way to deter the participation of women as voters, activists, party members, or election officials during elections? Are some subgroups of women more targeted than others for violence? • Is this violence mainly online, offline, or both? Who are the main perpetrators of this violence? How accepted or normalized is this violence by the larger public and other political actors, especially when it targets women? • Are there any CSOs or non-state actors that actively seek to amplify women's political voice and agency? How vocal and effective are they? • Are there any CSOs or non-state actors that actively seek to repress women's political voice and agency? How vocal and effective are they?
Institutional Factors	

ACCESS	POWER
• Has the country signed international or regional conventions with provisions on WPPL, focused on women's participation as voters, activists, party members, or election officials?	• If the country has signed international and regional conventions with provisions on WPPL, are these provisions applied or implemented in national legislation?
• Does the constitution or electoral framework provide clear provisions on the rights of women to vote and organize? Does it specifically prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender?	• Is there a law on violence against women in politics, or any other legal instrument (electoral laws, party laws, Women, Peace and Security action plans, among other possibilities), that addresses violence against women as voters, activists, or election officials?
• Are there any other potential legal impediments to the exercise of women's political rights—for example, related to the age of marriage, citizenship, land tenure, family status, divorce, or guardianship?	• If so, does the state have the capacity and political will to monitor and respond to incidents? Are incidents of violence against women in politics integrated into early warning and early response monitoring efforts by local or regional CSOs?
• Do state policies positively or negatively contribute to gender differences in voter registration? Do these policies affect any subgroups of women more than others?	• If there are official women's organizations connected to the government or ruling party, do these organizations receive any state or party support (for example, in terms of funding)? Are there rules guaranteeing their representation on any state or party bodies? What channels, if any, exist for women to influence government policy?
• Are polling places safe to get to and accessible to women? Do state policies seek to encourage the voter turnout of women in any way (for example, by creating women-only polling stations or hiring women election personnel)? How do these factors vary for different groups of women?	• If political parties have women's wings, do parties provide any financial support for section activities? Are there rules guaranteeing women's wing representation on the party's executive committee? What channels, if any, exist for women to influence party policy?
• Do state policies contribute to gender differences in political participation outside of voting – (for example, in signing petitions, joining political parties, or attending demonstrations)? Do these policies affect any subgroups of women more than others?	• Do political parties provide any type of training to members or candidates on women's issues and gender sensitivity? What kinds of parties promote negative vs.
• Are party meetings held in locations that are both safe and formally and informally	

ACCESS	POWER
accessible for all members? Are meetings scheduled for times that generally do not interfere with family obligations such as caretaking, and meal preparation? Is childcare provided? • Are there any features of the political context that undermine or promote women's access to political participation, (for example, ongoing conflict or closing civil and political space)? Is the country in a period of political instability or political transition?	positive images of women in their media messages? • Are there any party policies or initiatives to combat violence against women in politics? Do parties have the capacity and political will to monitor and respond to incidents of violence against women in their ranks? Do parties adhere to codes of conduct with provisions on gender-based violence in the lead- up to elections? • Are there any features of the political context that undermine or promote women's political voice or agency?
Individual Factors	
• Do women express similar levels of political interest as men? • Do women seek to participate in politics, even if this right is denied or blocked? • Do women have the same resources as men to participate in politics as voters, activists, party members, or election officials? What resources do they lack, if any?	• If there are autonomous women's organizations in civil society, what affects their ability to get women's voices heard? • Do any actors offer funding to women- led CSOs? Is this equal to the support granted to CSOs led by men?
• Do any actors actively promote women's participation as voters, activists, party members, or election officials? How do they promote women's participation? • Do any actors seek to suppress the efforts of women to participate as voters, activists, party members, or election officials?	• If women face violence as voters, activists, party members, or election officials, who perpetrates this violence? • Does this violence affect women's political behavior in any way? • Do acts of violence against women as voters, activists, party members, and election officials leverage their lack of resources to undermine their political voice and agency? • Do any actors provide gender-sensitive

ACCESS	POWER
	security training, including digital security training, for women as voters, activists, or election officials?

WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Table 10 provides a template for analyzing drivers of women's political leadership, focusing on the ecosystem of socio-cultural, institutional, and individual factors shaping women's access and power.

ACCESS WPPL

Access questions seek to assess barriers and opportunities to women's access to political leadership as candidates, elected and appointed officials, and civil society leaders.

POWER WPPL

Power questions seek to assess barriers and opportunities to women's voice and agency in political leadership as candidates, elected and appointed officials, and civil society leaders.

Table 10: Analyzing Drivers of Women's Leadership

ACCESS	POWER
Socio Cultural Factors	
• Are public attitudes, as measured by public opinion surveys, supportive of women in political leadership positions? Do prevailing gender stereotypes have an impact on women's opportunities to pursue political leadership roles? • Do political elites perceive that the public is not supportive of women in leadership positions (for example, due to gender stereotypes)? Are these patterns similar among men and women politicians? • Are there any CSOs or non-state actors that actively seek to advance women's political leadership? How vocal and effective are they? How do they justify including women as candidates, elected/appointed officials, and civil society leaders? • Are there any CSOs or non-state actors that actively seek to repress women's political leadership? How vocal and effective are they? How do they justify excluding women as candidates, elected and appointed officials, and civil society leaders? • Is gendered violence or intimidation used as a way to deter women from running for positions of political leadership? Are some subgroups of women more targeted than others for violence?	• Is violence or intimidation used as a way to prevent women from exercising power or influence as political leaders, whether elected or non-elected? Are certain types of women particularly targeted for political violence? • Is this violence or intimidation mainly online, offline, or both? Who are the main perpetrators of this violence? How accepted or normalized is this violence by the larger public and other political actors, especially when it targets women? • To what extent is there disinformation, hate speech, perpetuation of negative stereotypes, or violence against women candidates, elected/appointed officials, and civil society leaders in traditional media and on social media platforms? To what extent does the media cover instances of violence against women in politics? If so, how is it typically covered? • How does the media generally portray women and their role in politics and leadership? How does this vary across different groups of women? Does election coverage typically fairly portray women candidates? To what extent does the media cover instances of violence against women leaders? If so, how is it typically covered?
Institutional Factors	
• Has the country signed international or regional conventions with provisions on WPPL focused on women's political leadership as candidates, elected and appointed officials, or civil society leaders? Which specific conventions?	• If the country has signed international and regional conventions with provisions on WPPL focused on women's political leadership, are these provisions applied or implemented in national legislation?

ACCESS	POWER
• What type of electoral system is used: majoritarian, proportional, or mixed? If the system is proportional, are lists open or closed? How does the electoral system shape women's opportunities to run and be elected as candidates?	• Are there any features of the political context that undermine or promote women's voice and agency in political leadership, (for example, ongoing conflict or closing civil and political space)? Is the country in a period of political instability or political transition? Is religious fundamentalism on the rise?
• Does the electoral legal framework provide clear provisions on women's rights to be elected and hold political office? Are there quotas or other affirmative action measures to encourage the selection of women candidates or the election of women to political office? If so, are these policies embedded in national legislation or party constitutions? How effective are these measures? In countries with reserved seats, how many women win quota versus open-seat contests?	• Is there a law on violence against women in politics, or any other legal instrument (electoral laws, party laws, Women, Peace and Security action plans, among other possibilities), that addresses violence against women as political leaders? Does the state have the capacity and political will to monitor and respond to incidents of violence against women in leadership roles?
• Are there quotas or other affirmative action measures for women in the judicial or executive branches of government? If so, what are the details of these policies? How effective are these measures in promoting women's access to elected and appointed positions?	• Is there a sexual harassment policy in place in the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of government? Are gender-based considerations integrated into any existing codes of conduct? Are these measures enforced?
• Are there any aspects of the election law, political party law, or other election-related legislation and regulations that indirectly or directly disadvantage women or create barriers to leadership for them? How, if at all, does this vary across different groups of women?	• Are there any party policies or initiatives to combat violence against women in politics? For example, are there private, secure mechanisms for filing complaints against sexual harassment or other forms of gender based violence? Do parties have the capacity and political will to monitor and respond to incidents of violence against women in their ranks?
• Are there any policies on free media time in state-run media outlets? How equitably are these policies implemented across men and women candidates?	• Do any actors provide gender-sensitive security training, including digital safety training, for women as candidates, elected officials, or civil society leaders?
• Are there any other potential legal impediments to women becoming political leaders, (for example, related to the age of marriage, citizenship, land tenure, family status, divorce, or guardianship)?	• If there is a women's caucus in parliament, does it receive any resources from parliament, (for example, funding, office space, or staff support)?
	• Are there formal or informal practices or

ACCESS	POWER
• How many parties compete in elections? What are the ideologies of dominant or major parties? How do parties create or block opportunities for women to become leaders?	policies in parliament that negatively impact women's ability to serve, (for example, schedules, allocation of resources, speaking times, or voting rules)?
• What formal and informal criteria do party elites apply when selecting candidates and appointees? To what extent are these criteria gendered?	• Are there any parliamentary rules in place to enable women to fully exercise their roles, (for example, proxy voting if a member cannot be physically present, provisions for parental leave and child care, or permission to bring children onto the floor of parliament during a debate or vote)?
• Do any parties offer targeted support to women candidates, (for example, training or financial resources)? How does this support compare to that provided to men candidates?	• In terms of women's committee assignments in parliament, on what formal or informal bases are these positions assigned?
• Do any parties promote women's party leadership or have formal rules to ensure gender equality in party leadership? Are there leadership training opportunities for women party members?	• What sort of training, if any, do newly elected members of parliament MPs—men and women—receive? Do members of parliament MPs receive any training on gender analysis, gender-responsive budgeting, or gender equity issues?
• Are there any actors that openly encourage or discourage women's political leadership in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government? How vocal and effective are they in supporting or preventing women's access to political leadership?	• If parties feature gender equality or other issues of priority to women on their platforms or legislative agendas, what roles do women candidates and elected officials play in getting women's issues on the agenda?
• Are there any features of the political context that undermine or promote women's access to leadership, (for example, ongoing conflict or closing civil and political space)? Is the country in a period of political instability or political transition? Is religious fundamentalism on the rise?	
Individual Factors	
• Do women express similar levels of political interest and ambition as men, as measured by public opinion surveys? • Do women view themselves as less qualified to hold political office?	• Do women candidates face gendered violence or intimidation on the campaign trail? If women leaders face violence or intimidation, who perpetrates it? Are certain groups of women more vulnerable than others?

ACCESS	POWER
• Do women seek to stand as candidates, political party leaders, and civil society leaders, even if there are attempts by others to deny or block these rights? • Do political parties actively encourage women to run for office? If so, are these formal or informal policies? Are specific groups of women targeted more than others? • Do they encounter any informal strategies to discourage them from running or winning, including discouragement from family, traditional leaders, or party officials?	• Are women able to assume the positions to which they have been elected or appointed without fear or threat of violence? Do women in elected and appointed positions become less effective or leave office due to fear or threat of violence? • Do women leaders in civil society reduce their scope of political work, due to fear or threat of violence? Are certain groups of women or organizations more targeted than others?
• How important are political networks to candidate selection opportunities? What kinds of individuals are in these networks? Are there networks of current and former women elected and appointed officials? If so, how influential are these networks? • Do women candidates have equal access to political funding, either public or private? Are there formal or informal factors that disadvantage women in seeking and acquiring private campaign funding?	• What resources are available to elected officials (for example, staff, training, or researchers)? How are these resources formally allocated? Is the allocation gender equitable? • Do women have adequate information and resources (time, money, transportation, access to legal counsel, etc.) to bring election disputes and complaints to the correct bodies? Do they receive an impartial hearing and any redress through electoral dispute resolution processes? • Do election observer reports and statements include a specific focus on the experience of women candidates, party leaders, and elections officials, including incidences of violence against women in politics?

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

After using the Analyzing WPPL Worksheet to provide a summary analysis of barriers and opportunities to WPPL in the country, the research team should then turn to the Stakeholder Analysis Worksheet to link these dynamics to specific advocates and opponents of efforts to advance WPPL. The team should fill out four worksheets, corresponding to the four boxes of the WPPL Matrix.

The worksheet identifies four primary categories of stakeholders: state actors, political parties, civil society, and the international community. Going sector by sector, the team should note which specific actors in each category create barriers and opportunities for WPPL, including keeping the barrier in place or potentially creating opportunities for action. Answers to these questions should be drawn from data gathered using the four assessment tools, as appropriate.

The sections below discuss each set of stakeholders to provide background for the research team in terms of how actors in each sector might be gatekeepers or change agents for WPPL. Patterns of opposition and support may not be the same across countries, so the team should keep an open mind when putting together this analysis. In addition to mapping stakeholder positions on WPPL, the team should be attentive to the interests and resources of these actors to consider both 1) how their interests might be aligned to harness their potential for change and 2) how opposition by certain actors might be overcome.

STATE ACTORS

State actors include actors in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, including the security sector. A substantial literature on gender and politics explores the phenomenon of "state feminism," where governments and bureaucrats adopt structures and policies to advance women's rights.[71] In some contexts, these initiatives emerge from partnerships between women in civil society and women in the state.[72] In others, they stem from growing international pressures for gender mainstreaming, combined with mobilization by local women's groups.[73] Yet in other cases, autocratic men leaders push forward gender equality reforms to bolster the reputation of their regimes.[74]

Parliaments may also take several concrete steps to advance WPPL. Work on "gender-sensitive parliaments" arguments for conceptualizing parliament as a workplace and thinking about how to create a more welcoming work environment for women. Such efforts may entail revising the hours of parliamentary sittings to make them more family-friendly, introducing policies prohibiting sexual harassment, and even building more inclusive facilities for women—for example, women's bathrooms close to plenary chambers and meeting rooms.[75] Gender-sensitive changes have been instigated by international organizations sharing best practices, as well as by the entry of growing numbers of women into previously male-dominated political spaces.

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[71] Stetson, D. M., & Mazur, A. (1995). *Comparative state feminism*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

[72] Holli, A. M. (2008). Feminist triangles: A conceptual analysis. *Representation*, *44*(2), 169–185.

[73] True, J., & Mintrom, M. (2001). Transnational networks and policy diffusion: The case of gender mainstreaming. *International studies quarterly*, *45*(1), 27–57.

[74] Bjarnegård, E., & Zetterberg, P. (2022). How Autocrats Weaponize Women's Rights. *Journal of Democracy*, *33*(2), 60–75; Bush, S. S., & Zetterberg, P. (2021). Gender quotas and international reputation. *American Journal of Political Science*, *65*(2), 326–341

[75] Palmieri, S. (2011). *Gender-sensitive parliaments: a global review of good practice*. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union.

POLITICAL PARTIES

In many countries, political parties are the main gatekeepers to gender equality in politics. In terms of women's political participation, they provide direct contact with elections and the political process for ordinary citizens, recruiting them as members who are mobilized as voters for the party. Men tend to dominate leadership positions and wield formal and informal power over parties' structures and procedures. Patriarchal norms also influence party norms and behaviors, marginalizing women and gender diverse members. Party women's wings, however, may be a double-edged sword. Although women's sections may provide a platform for women to influence and advance within the party, women's wings may also serve as a way to "ghettoize" party women, channeling them away from the main locations of power within the party.[76] In most countries, parties also select candidates for political office. Therefore, party support is often crucial for women to gain office and advance as leaders at all levels of politics.[77]

The size and number of political parties vary across countries, creating different opportunities for advocates to advance WPPL. However, studies on women and politics find that parties tend to be most responsive to such demands when they believe that taking action on this issue may bring them electoral benefits. Parties that have recently lost support, or who seek to hold onto power, tend to be the most amenable to demands to increase WPPL. Party ideology can also be a factor. Parties on the left side of the political spectrum tend to be more open to demands for equality and affirmative action, while parties on the right tend to hold onto more traditional views of gender roles.[78] Single-party regimes, whatever their ideology, may also perceive pressures from both international and domestic audiences to legitimize their rule by showcasing their inclusion of different sectors of society, including women.[79]

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[76] Childs, S. L., & Kittilson, M. C. (2016). Feminizing political parties: Women's party member organizations within European parliamentary parties. *Party Politics*, 22(5), 598–608.

[77] Lovenduski, J., & Norris, P. (1993). *Gender and party politics.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

[78] Kittilson, M. C. (2006). *Challenging parties, changing parliaments: Women and elected office in contemporary Western Europe*. Ohio State University Press; Lovenduski, J., & Norris, P. (1993). *Gender and party politics*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

[79] Chenoweth, E., & Marks, Z. (2022). Revenge of the Patriarchs: Why Autocrats Fear Women. Foreign Affairs 101, 103.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The vibrancy of civil society is a key indicator of democracy and a major site of women's political activity. Participation in non-violent social movements—like labor unions, environmental activism, or peacebuilding, for example—can inspire women to create their own organizations, including those on gender issues. These groups can help give women a voice in public life, creating pressures for political reforms and policy change. Activism of all types can also serve as a political training ground for women leaders, cultivating useful political skills like public speaking and making connections that may be important for a successful political career. However, growing authoritarianism around the world also means that civil society engagement may not be a viable channel for participation or voice due to closing civic and political space.[80] Even in more democratic contexts, not all movements may be gender transformative or aware.

CSOs and women's rights groups tend to be at the heart of efforts to enhance WPPL, along both its access and power dimensions. Their motivations for mobilizing on this issue tend to derive from their political principles, focused on promoting equality and women's rights. In most contexts, they are responsible for initiating debates on WPPL, pressuring parties to adopt reforms, and lobbying parliaments, transitional assemblies, and governments to institute gender quotas and create more gender-sensitive political institutions.[81] At the same time, however, other groups in civil society may also cultivate opposition to WPPL, including religious fundamentalist organizations that may employ violence as a strategy to eliminate women from the public sphere. The private sector can play both roles, supporting or undermining women's advancement as they rally around certain parties or candidates and providing votes and potential financial support.

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[80] Krook, M. L. (2009). *Quotas for women in politics*. New York: Oxford University Press; Lovenduski, J., & Norris, P. (1993). *Gender and party politics*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

[81] Krook, M. L. (2020), *Violence against women in politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Over the last few decades, international organizations and donor agencies have become increasingly supportive of efforts to promote WPPL, including through commitments to adopting a feminist foreign policy. Through declarations, resolutions, and programming around the world, the international community has established a norm of "gender-balanced decision-making" that has provided crucial support for local efforts to institute quotas and other measures to increase WPPL.[82] In contexts where resources are scarce, funding from international actors has been vital to placing this issue on the agenda and ensuring support for programs on the ground to bolster women in politics.[83]

> **Overarching questions:** What role has the international community played in country-level debates on advancing WPPL? What forms of support, if any, have they offered to promote WPPL? What are their motivations? What types of arguments do they use?

ASSESSMENT PART III: UTILIZING THE DATA

Part III of the assessment is when the research team produces the final deliverables (findings report, presentation, and two-pager) in English and relevant local languages and the Mission organizes a utilization workshop to review how the research can enhance the public good, including diplomatic and programmatic efforts to shape opportunities for collaboration and coordination to advance WPPL. FINAL DELIVERABLES

The final report is the primary deliverable, with a presentation, two-pager, or other shorter products based on the final report. The report template includes guidance on each section:

- **Executive Summary**—This section should provide a succinct summary of the research conducted by the assessment team with subsections on Country Background, the Current State of WPPL, Barriers to and Opportunities for WPPL, and Recommendations for Action. It should be no longer than one to three pages.

- **Country Background**—This section should present a brief overview of the country's WPPL ecosystem, focusing on Socio-Cultural Factors, Institutional Factors, and Individual Factors. The desk review should be the main source of material, either following the categories outlined in the Desk Review Guidance or the Background Questions listed in Part II. This section should also be relatively short, as the barriers and opportunities section will go into these factors in greater-depth.

- **Current State of WPPL**—This section should report the current state of WPPL in the country, responding to the four questions in the WPPL Matrix related to Access to

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[82] Krook, M. L., & True, J. (2012). Rethinking the life cycles of international norms: The United Nations and the global promotion of gender equality. *European journal of international relations*, *18*(1), 103–127.

[83] Bush, S. S. (2011). International politics and the spread of quotas for women in legislatures. *International Organization*, *65*(1), 103–137.

Participation, Power in Participation, Access to Leadership, and Power in Leadership. Each subsection should provide answers to the questions posed in Part I. The desk review is likely to be the primary source of material, but the other assessment tools will also be needed to ensure a comprehensive overview.

- **Barriers to and Opportunities for WPPL**—This section represents the heart of the WPPL assessment. Addressing the four questions in the WPPL Matrix—access to participation, power in participation, access to leadership, and power in leadership—it should bring together answers from the two steps of Part II. The team should first answer the questions in the barriers and opportunities portion and then move to the stakeholder analysis. The reader should finish this section with a clear understanding of the dynamics at work in the country with regard to WPPL, along with some sense of what might be some potential solutions for improvement.

- **Recommendations for Action—**This section should contain some recommendations for action stemming from the analyses in the previous sections and taking into account suggestions presented by women themselves in the course of the research. The team should consult Mission staff about their preferences regarding the nature of these recommendations, both in terms of content and specificity. These recommendations should address all four questions in the WPPL Matrix and identify both tactics to pursue and the specific actors who might carry them out.

- **Annexes—**The final part of the report should include eight annexes, corresponding to the four assessment tools: Desk Review Sources, Desk Review Findings, Key Informant Interview Texts, Key Informant Interview Findings, Focus Group Discussion Texts, and Focus Group Discussion Findings. Transparency in sources and analyses will enhance confidence in the final report and permit future assessment teams to build on existing research and findings.

UTILIZATION WORKSHOP

While the assessment team is conducting the research, the Mission team should review the utilization action plan template and begin drafting objectives and provisional timelines based on contextual factors such as upcoming political milestones and internal Mission planning timelines.

Following receipt of the assessment report and final presentation by the assessment team, the Mission team should lead a utilization workshop to review the findings and draft the action plan, make refinements, and determine next steps to using the utilization action plan.