

## State of play of women's participation in urban governance in greater Lomé, Togo

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**Abstract:** Women's participation in urban governance depends on a certain number of factors, including the organization of the territory, the distribution of tasks, the sharing of power and the control of resources. Although women are more involved in urban governance elsewhere, their presence in the sphere of urban power in Greater Lomé is still limited. Hence the problem of the low participation of women in the urban governance of Greater Lomé, both in terms of quantity and quality. This study analyzes the presence of women in urban governance of Greater Lomé. To achieve this, the methodology consisted of carrying out a literature review, followed by semi-structured individual interviews. By sorting the objective variables of the target population (ranging from the level of education to monthly income, including marital status and involvement in municipal governance), 384 respondents were selected including actors of sexes, of different ages and professions. The data was collected from June 2022 to November 2023 on 222 women and 162 men spread across the municipalities of Greater Lomé. This population was made up of municipal councilors of both sexes, municipal secretaries, administrative and technical staff as well as resource people. The interview guide included questions about motivations, barriers, financial resources, and school education. The research results show that the current model of urban governance allows the full participation of women, even if their presence remains marginal due to the challenges, they are not able to meet.

**Keywords:** Greater Lomé (West Africa), Urban governance, Women's participation.

### 1. Introduction

Decentralization is now an integral part of the standard recipe for good governance supported and promoted by Breton Woods institutions. The main idea behind this adoption is that decentralization promotes participatory democracy by introducing a more responsive service delivery system and advancing citizens' rights [1] [2]. It introduces local governance, including urban governance. It is also believed that this mode of governance will promote gender equality and therefore benefit women [3]. Indeed, urban governance plays a crucial role in reducing gender inequalities. In the field of urban studies, governance defines a process by which a progressive rebalancing in the exercise of urban power is put in place, a priori, to the detriment of States and urban institutions (elected officials and local technocracies) and for the benefit of civil society actors [4].

Later, it was "good governance" which established itself as a norm with constitutional value, a true barometer of development. In good urban governance, citizens are placed at the heart of public action and

are involved in a clearly defined manner in public life at the local level. All men and women have the right to make their voice heard in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate bodies representing their interests. This concept of participation, which involves all citizens, is based on the freedoms of expression, assembly and association. All voices, including those of the poorest and most vulnerable, are heard and taken into account in decisions, including those concerning the allocation of resources. In other words, both men and women participate in the decision-making process. Therefore, the exclusion of women from decision-making can contribute to perpetuating existing inequalities, particularly in access to resources and opportunities.

Gender gaps in political leadership are significant and persist in Africa and particularly in Togo. Although the number of women in political decision-making positions has increased around the world, gender parity remains a distant goal and disparities are significant. As of December 31, 2022, approximately 27.9% of the world's population, or 2.12 billion people, lived in countries where a woman is head of state. Another recent positive trend is observed for the share of women in parliaments. According to [5], in 2013, only 18.7% of members of parliaments worldwide were women among the 76 countries with consistent data. By 2022, this number had increased steadily to 22.9%. Significant progress has also been made in terms of women's representation in local governments globally. Of the 117 countries for which data is available since 2017, 18 countries, including Bolivia (50.4%), India (44.4%) and France (42.3%), have achieved representation of women make up more than 40% in local governance.

An examination of the academic literature on the issue of urban governance reveals two opposing interpretations [4]. On the one hand, there is a vision anchored in Max Weber, who sees in this process a dynamic that emancipates cities and local societies from state control [6]. On the other hand, there is a more critical view, rooted in neo-Marxism, which links this same process to the erosion of the Keynesian state, the welfare state and its gradual replacement by the imposition of neoliberal ideology (Brenner and Theodore, 2003). As a result, governance has gradually established itself in the discourse and practice of political decision-makers in the field of urban policies as a new instrument of public action [7].

Theoretical approaches also suggest that researchers such as [8] have influenced the field of urban governance and gender equality, broadening the debate beyond women's political and economic participation to include planning considerations and urban development. However, "generated" urban governance is an outgrowth of stakeholder theory [9], meaning that the management of the municipality requires the participation of all its members. This involves an approach based on the elimination of stereotypes and the implementation of positive discrimination based on gender.

Political participation is the set of activities, individual or collective, likely to give the governed an influence on the functioning of the political system [10]. The "sacredness of the citizen" [11] is the historical recognition of an individual right to participation, which becomes an operating principle of the political system [12].

Women's participation in urban governance in Africa is a key topic, but research indicates underrepresentation and persistent challenges. In Burkina Faso, [13] show that despite efforts, women are limited in local governments due to various cultural, educational and political barriers. In Niger, a study also highlights a low female presence (4%) among mayors, attributed to lack of access to education and resources, as well as a patriarchal culture. In her writings on the representation of women in political bodies in Benin, [14] notes that women in Benin are underrepresented in all respects, particularly in local bodies. Of the 500 women registered in the local elections of December 2002 (8% of the total registered), only 48 women were elected councilors (3.8%), including 2 mayors out of a total of 1119 councilors and advisors for all 77 municipalities in Benin. The work of [15] on the place of Beninese women in political decision-making bodies reveals a low level of female representation in the cited bodies. It shows that between 1990 and 2011, the proportion of women in the Municipal Council was less than 5%.

If the literature on the political participation of women in Togo is abundant, that on urban governance itself is not sufficiently extensive. Authors like [16] have concluded that Togolese women have not really been involved in the exercise of power. Researchers such as [17] have reached the same

conclusion: there are few women in political and administrative positions because there are obstacles to their full participation in political and public life.

Equity and equality between men and women are fundamental human rights. It is a question of social justice to which all States try to respond by taking national measures to reduce the disparities observed. In the context of this study, the theory of social justice [18] [19] therefore complements that of urban governance.

Urban policies have a direct impact on the daily lives of men and women. Therefore, the underrepresentation of women can lead to a lack of respect for issues such as access to reproductive health, women's safety in public spaces, girls' education, etc. While women represent 35.5% of elected members of local authority decision-making bodies worldwide, in sub-Saharan Africa they represent only 27% (UN Women, 2024). Urban women are recognized for their many productive, domestic and community tasks, but they are still relatively excluded from the world of decision-makers, managers and urban administrators. They play specific roles that are useful as female roles, but not yet as partners alongside men working for a common cause [20]. In Togo, this rate halved to reach only 14.55% according to the results of the 2019 local elections, while the Afrobarometer survey [21] [22] shows that among the countries studied, Togo is relatively at the forefront of support for women's unhindered access to political office, with 84% supporting equal eligibility. In Greater Lomé in particular, the trend is relatively strong compared to the national level, with 18% of women elected. This situation raises the problem of the low participation of women in the urban governance of Greater Lomé, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

This study aims to establish the current state of women's participation in urban governance in Greater Lomé. In this sense, she first wants to (i) know the state of urban governance itself in Greater Lomé, then (ii) understand how the participation of women in urban governance in Greater Lomé has been it has evolved until now.

The study starts from the central hypothesis according to which urban governance in Greater Lomé is marked by a low level of participation of women in all sectors of urban management. The operational hypotheses postulate that the state of urban governance in Greater Lomé is favorable to the full participation of women in municipal management; that the evolution of women's participation in urban governance in Greater Lomé is marked by a diversity of levels of commitment although in the current state of affairs, the application of urban governance in Greater Lomé does not yet favor the full participation of women in decision-making bodies due to the challenges they face.

## 2. Research Methodological Frameworks

### 2.1. The Study Environment

Togo is a sub-Saharan country in West Africa located on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. It is limited to the east by Benin, to the west by Ghana, to the north by Burkina Faso and to the south by the Gulf of Guinea in the Ocean. With an area of 56,600 km<sup>2</sup>, the country has the shape of a rectangle divided into 5 large regions from North to South: the Savanes Region, the Kara Region, the Central Region, the Plateaux Region and the Maritime Region. Located at 6°13' and 6°8' North latitude, and 1°12' and 1°21' East longitude, in the extreme southwest of Togo, in the Maritime Region, along the Gulf coast of Guinea, Lomé, the Capital, is bounded by the marshy valley of the Zio River to the North-East, the Atlantic Ocean to the South and the Togo-Ghana Border to the West [23]. Since Law No. 2019-006 of June 26, 2019 relating to decentralization [24], the city of Lomé has become the Autonomous District of Greater Lomé, a territorial collectivity with a special status bringing together two prefectures: the Gulf prefecture and the prefecture of Agoè-Nyivé. The Gulf prefecture has 7 municipalities (Gulf 1 to 7) and that of Agoè-Nyivé, 6 municipalities (Agoè-Nyivé 1 to 6). Greater Lomé thus brings together 13 municipalities over an area of 425.6 km<sup>2</sup>. From 375,000 inhabitants in 1981, the population of Lomé increased to 800,000 in 2000 [25] and will have a population of 2,078,182 inhabitants in 2022 [26], or 24% of the national population, against 1,571,508 in 2010 [27]. This strong demographic pressure has led to spatial expansion which has blurred the boundary between urban and peri-urban areas. The

agglomeration covers an area of 333 km<sup>2</sup> including 30 km<sup>2</sup> in the lagoon zone and extends to the border with Ghana, located a few meters from the city center Figure 1.

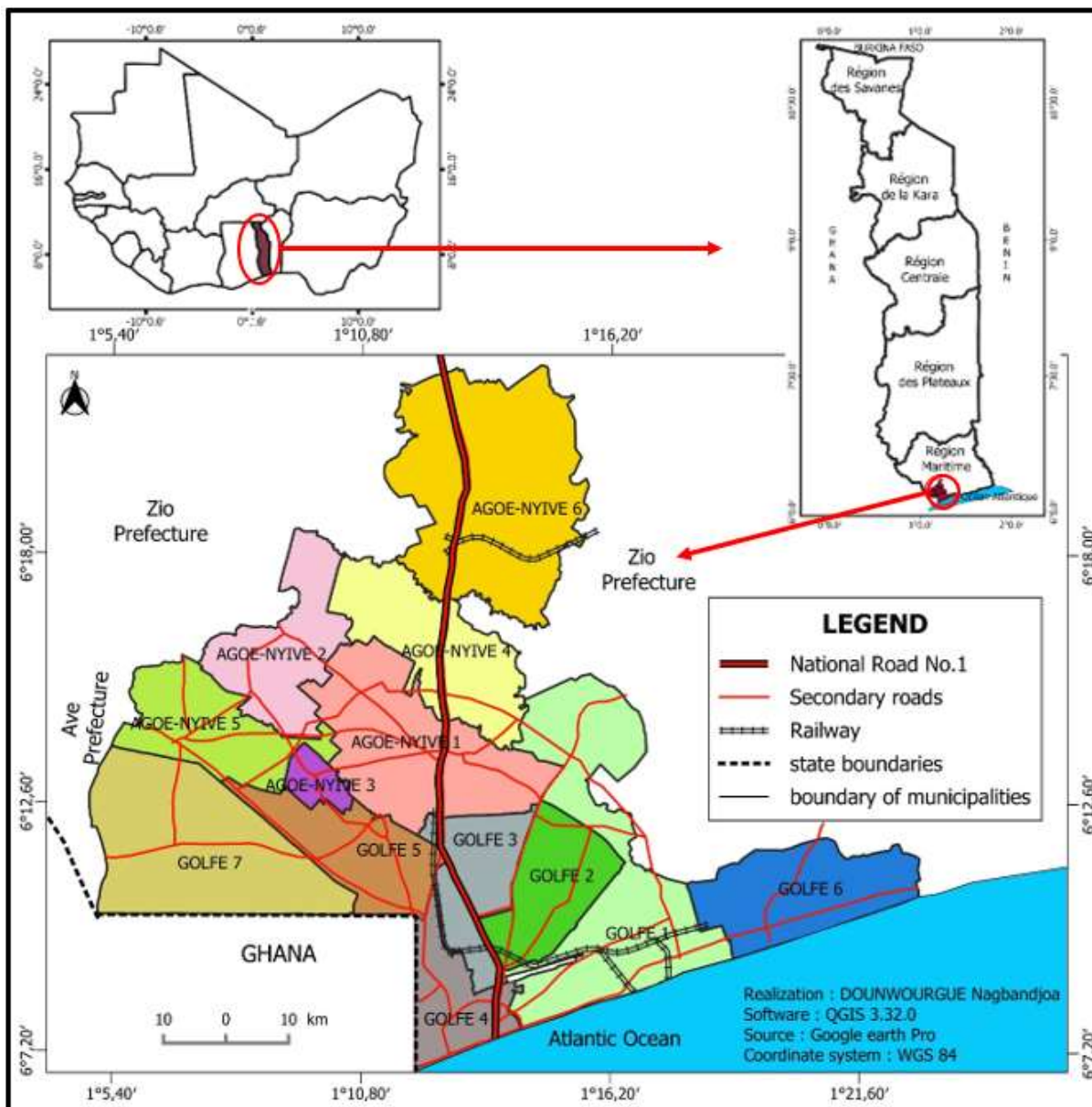


Figure 1. Geographical location of greater Lomé.

## 2.2. Collection of Data

Three data collection techniques were used to analyze the state of women's participation in urban governance in Greater Lomé. Quantitative and qualitative methods were chosen for this study, following a documentary search. The study is also intended to be diachronic.

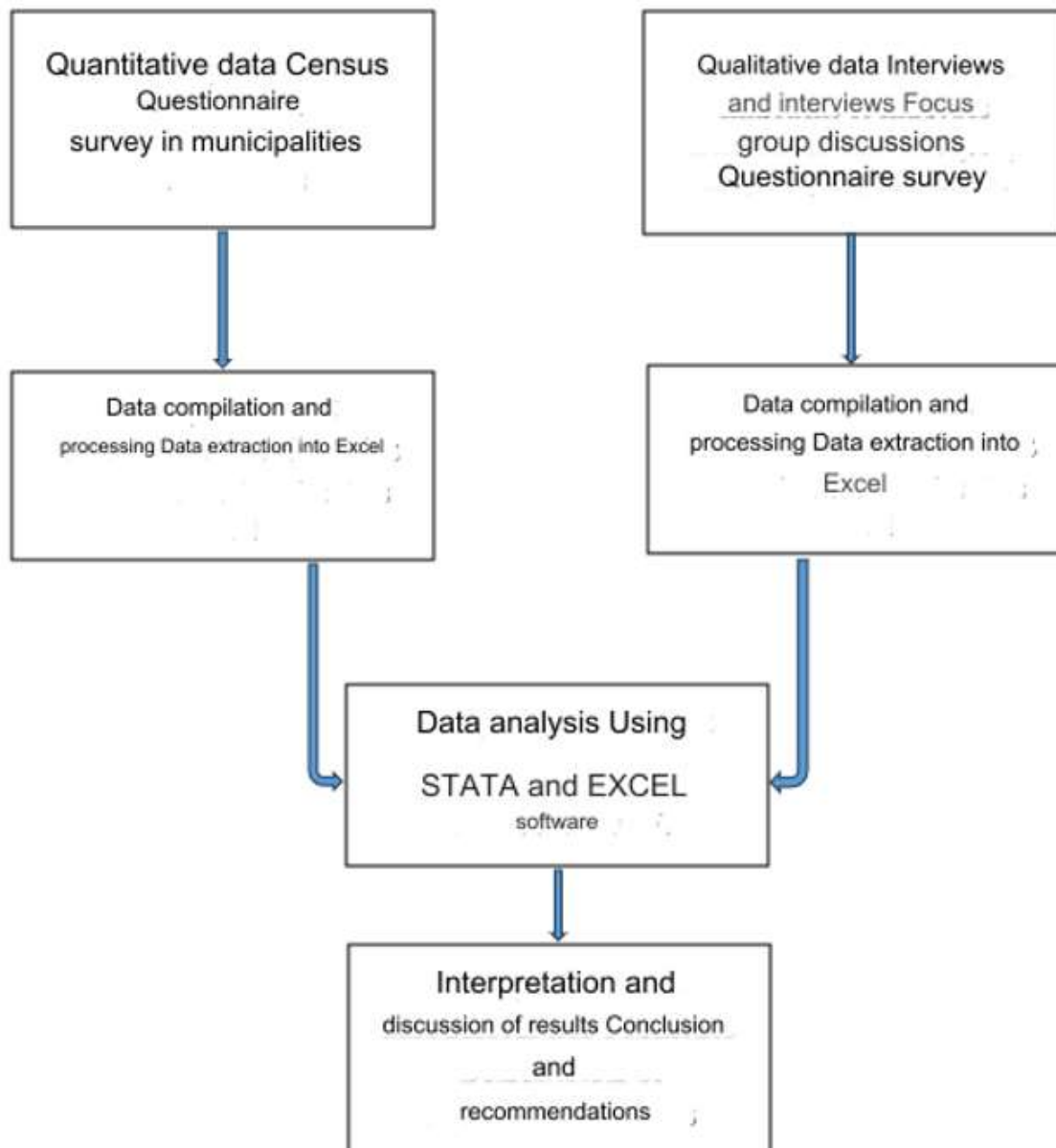
First of all, there was documentary research, which made it possible to define the problem and the geographical framework of the research. This made it possible to draw up a theoretical inventory of the results of the different analyzes of women's participation in politics, in particular their presence in the

urban governance of Greater Lomé. This review thus made it possible to redefine the contours of the present study, but also to construct it by giving it a precise scientific orientation. Indeed, by specifying the thematic framework, it was possible to determine the target population in this geographical area of Greater Lomé.

The qualitative method made it possible to identify the contours of women's participation in the urban governance of Greater Lomé, as well as the forms of women's participation, through individual interviews with local elected officials of both sexes, the general secretaries of resources of municipalities and individuals.

The quantitative method made it possible to constitute a representative sample of the population of Greater Lomé. By sorting the objective variables of the target population (ranging from education level to monthly income, including marital status), 384 respondents were selected comprising actors of different genders, ages and professions. The data was collected from June 2022 to November 2023.

The interview guide developed for this purpose included questions relating to the place of women in urban governance (personal definitions of what it means to be a leader, their role and mandate, the qualities and roles of women in urban governance and management. The contextual variables are governance and the positions occupied by women. The adoption of semi-structured interviews is justified by the fact that the objective is not to ask questions. closed to the interlocutors to obtain precise answers or professed theories [28] but, on the contrary, to understand the practices, behaviors and perceptions of individuals in relation to the research question [29] . The best answers retained are therefore those of theoretical saturation [30] . The following figure 2 is a summary of the methodological model which was adopted for the collection, extraction and analysis of the data.



**Figure 2.**  
Methodological model for data collection and processing.

### 2.3. Data Processing and Analysis

All data collected using KoboCollect software was extracted and exported to Excel 2023 software (Microsoft Office 365). STATA 14 statistical software was subsequently used for formatting and analyzing the data. Descriptive statistics of sociodemographic parameters (education level, monthly income, dependents, age and gender) and hierarchical classification were used to group respondents on a similar perception of female leadership in urban governance. Proportions were compared using Pearson's chi-square test or Fisher's exact test, a univariate regression analysis to identify factors associated with good knowledge.

#### 2.4. Sampling

The target population is made up of residents of the 13 municipalities of the Autonomous District of Greater Lomé. The survey unit chosen being the municipality, all the direct and indirect actors of urban governance then constitute the target population of the study. These are elected officials, administrative and technical staff, leaders of associations and NGOs interacting with municipalities, resource people and ordinary people residing in Greater Lomé. The study population being small, the study sample based on this entire population was established at 384 individuals. Such a methodology makes it possible to avoid sampling errors.

$$n = z^2 \frac{P(1-P)}{m^2}$$

Daniel Schwartz's sampling formula was used by considering the mother population of Greater Lomé distributed among the 13 communes.

We determined the sample size  $n$  (384) at risk of error ( $i$ ) of 0.05% for a reduced deviation ( $z$ ) of 1.96 at a proportion ( $p$ ) of 50%. On the other hand, for the target of local elected officials of smaller size (not very representative), we chose to reach 63% (142) during our survey. The following table 1 indicates the size of the population by commune in Greater Lomé.

**Table 1.**  
Population size by municipality of Greater Lomé.

Gulf	Effective	Frequency	Agoè-Nyivé	Effective	Frequency
Gulf 1	351 550	27%	Agoè-Nyivé 1	317 255	36%
Gulf 2	136 153	10%	Agoè-Nyivé 2	128 164	15%
Gulf 3	52,769	4%	Agoè-Nyivé 3	47,554	5%
Gulf 4	155,842	12%	Agoè-Nyivé 4	154,431	17%
Gulf 5	169,993	13%	Agoè-Nyivé 5	125,097	14%
Gulf 6	181,561	14%	Agoè-Nyivé 6	110 194	13%
Gulf 7	257,813	20%			
Total	1,305,681	100%	Total	882,695	100%

Source: Author, 2022

The following table 2 presents the proportions of local elected officials by municipality in the two prefectures of Greater Lomé.

**Table 2.**  
Proportions of local elected officials by Gulf municipality.

Gulf	Effective	Frequency	Cumulative
Gulf 1	23	16%	16%
Gulf 4	23	16%	32%
Gulf 5	23	16%	48%
Gulf 2	19	13%	61%
Total	88	100%	
Agoè-nyivé	Effective	Frequency	Cumulative
Agoè-Nyivé 1	23	29%	29%
Agoè-Nyivé 5	13	16%	45%
Agoè-Nyivé 2	11	14%	59%
Agoè-Nyivé 3	11	14%	73%
Total	58	100%	

**Table 3.**

Sampling summary.

	Residents	Locally elected
Population size	2,188,376	225
Sample to investigate	242	142

**Table 4.**

Proportions of elected officials to be surveyed by prefecture.

	Target local elected officials		
	Agoè-Nyivé	Gulf	Total
Proportion	37%	63%	100%
Target	53	89	142

Source: Author, 2022

**Table 5.**

Workforce according to the different targets.

<b>Total sample size</b>	<b>384</b>
Locally elected	142
CSOs, PATs, resource people, residents of municipalities	242

#### 2.4. Justification of the Municipalities' Choices and Study Sample

Even if the coastal municipalities share the same territorial and socio-demographic realities, as do the municipalities of Agoè-Nyivé which are in the suburbs, this study has chosen to cover all thirteen municipalities. This was justified by the desire to stay as close as possible to the reality of the municipalities by obtaining everyone's perceptions.

The study sample is made up of municipal councilors, municipal secretaries, resource persons, heads of civil society organizations working in governance and the promotion of female leadership, administrative and technical staff. municipalities. The sampling of municipalities for the collection around local elected officials (Table 6) is carried out by stratum. The municipalities representing 45% of the targets in the Agoè-Nyivé prefecture and 61% in the Gulf prefecture were selected. With the application of the ratio of the sample size to the total number of selected municipalities (the ratio) to the number of elected officials in these municipalities, an estimate was obtained of the number of elected officials to be reached over the course of the study. The following table 6 presents the distribution of local elected officials surveyed by municipality.

**Table 6.**

Distribution of local elected officials surveyed by municipality.

Prefecture	Municipality	Effective	Ratio	Sample
Gulf	Gulf 1	23	0.97	22
	Gulf 4	23	0.97	22
	Gulf 5	23	0.97	22
	Gulf 2	19	0.97	18
Agoè-nyivé	Agoè-Nyivé 1	23	0.97	22
	Agoè-Nyivé 5	13	0.97	13
	Agoè-Nyivé 2	11	0.97	11
	Agoè-Nyivé 3	11	0.97	11
Total		146	0.97	141

The other respondents (general secretaries, heads of civil society organizations, administrative and technical staff of town halls, resource people and residents) were distributed equitably among the



municipalities. As for traditional chiefs, they were taken into account on the basis of their presence in the environment. The following table 7 presents the distribution of respondents according to their position in the municipalities.

**Table 7.**  
Distribution of other respondents by municipality.

Municipalities	General secretaries of municipalities	Contacts	CSO	PAT	Residents	Traditional chiefdom
Gulf 1	1	2	1	5	12	0
Gulf 2	1	2	1	5	12	0
Gulf 3	1	2	1	5	12	0
Gulf 4	1	2	1	5	12	0
Gulf 5	1	2	1	5	12	1
Gulf 6	1	2	1	5	12	0
Gulf 7	1	2	1	5	12	0
Agoè-Nyivé 1	1	2	1	5	12	1
Agoè-Nyivé 2	1	2	1	5	12	0
Agoè-Nyivé 3	1	2	1	5	12	0
Agoè-Nyivé 4	1	2	1	5	12	0
Agoè-Nyivé 5	1	2	1	5	12	0
Agoè-Nyivé 6	1	2	1	5	12	0
Total	13	26	13	65	156	2

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Sociodemographic Characteristics

In total, 384 targets of our objectives were achieved in the greater Lomé region, affecting almost all its communes. There were 162 (42.11%) respondents for the Gulf prefecture and 222 respondents (representing 57.89%) for the Agoè-Nyivé prefecture (Table 8).

**Table 8.**  
Distribution of respondents by gender and by prefecture and municipality.

	Male (%)	Feminine (%)	Total
<b>Gulf</b>	<b>76 (47)</b>	<b>86 (39)</b>	<b>162</b>
Gulf 1	5 (3)	0 (0)	5
Gulf 2	20 (13)	35 (16)	56
Gulf 3	10 (6)	0 (0)	10
Gulf 4	15 (9)	10 (5)	25
Gulf 5	15 (9)	35 (16)	51
Gulf 6	5 (2)	5 (2)	10
Gulf 7	5 (2)	0 (0)	5
<b>Agoè-Nyivé</b>	<b>86 (53)</b>	<b>136 (61)</b>	<b>222</b>
Agoè-Nyivé 1	25 (16)	25 (11)	51
Agoè-Nyivé 2	10 (6)	10 (5)	20
Agoè-Nyivé 3	25 (16)	56 (25)	81
Agoè-Nyivé 4	10 (6)	5 (2)	15
Agoè-Nyivé 5	15 (9)	40 (18)	56
Agoè-Nyivé 6	0 (0)	0 (0)	0

More than half of the respondents were female (57.89%) and had a university level of education (84.21% of respondents). They were mainly in the age group between 18 and 40 years old (82.9% of the total workforce). Five (5) respondents out of ten (10) were single (Tables 9).

**Table 9.**  
Distribution by sex, age, level of education and marital status of respondents.

	Effective	Frequency (%)
Sex		
Male	162	42.11
Feminine	222	57.89
Age		
18 years to 30 years	162	42.11
31 years to 40 years	157	40.79
41 years to 50 years	51	13.16
51 years to 60 years	15	3.95
Educational level		0
Primary	20	5.26
High school	40	10.53
Superior	323	84.21
Marital status		
Bachelor	192	50.00
Bride	131	34.21
Common-law partner	45	11.84
Divorcee	5	1.32
Widow ( fe )	10	2.63

We also note that 3/10th were state civil servants, more than 3/5th had dependents and an income higher than the guaranteed domestic minimum wage (Table 10). Also, respondents with 2 and more than 3 dependents represented the vast majority (62%), while more than half (54%) pay residential rent and 75% have insufficient income to meet their needs.

**Table 10.**  
Distribution based on sociodemographic characteristics of respondents.

	Effective	Frequency (%)
<b>Branch of activity</b>		
Civil servant	111	29%
Contractual	40	10%
Private employee	91	24%
Independent/informal (traders, drivers, housewives)	40	10%
Craftsmen/informal (carpenters, tailors, mechanics, etc.)	15	4%
Unemployed/Unemployed	91	24%
Student	15	4%
Have dependents		
Yes	258	67%
No	126	33%
Number of dependents		
A person	56	22%
Two people	81	31%
Three people	40	16%

More than three people	81	31%
Pay residential rent		
Yes	207	54%
No	177	46%
Income bracket		
Below the minimum wage	126	33%
Equal to the SMIG	20	5%
Above the minimum wage	237	62%
Sufficiency of income to meet family needs		
Yes	96	25%
No	288	75%

On the other hand (Table 11), to illustrate their knowledge of urban governance we note that 80.26% of respondents have voted at least once in a local election; 59.21% have heard of urban governance at least once; 94.74% have no problem with female governance, the integration of men and women and the most frequent definition of inclusive urban governance among respondents; one in two people knows the different actors in local governance; but less than 3 tenths know the number of locally elected women within their municipalities and all think that this number is not representative; and the most frequent reasons are the lack of training, support, information and courage (70% on average), the training of women was the solution most adopted by all our respondents (95%). Then we note that a large part of our respondents are not aware of any laws and measures that promote or encourage the participation of women in urban governance (respectively 59.21% and 76.32%).

**Table 11.**  
Distribution based on sociodemographic characteristics (continued) of respondents.

	Effective	Frequency (%)
Knowledge of a local elected woman		
Yes	232	60.53
No	147	38.16
Without answer	5	1.32
Knowledge of the number of locally elected women within the municipality		
Yes	101	26.32
No	283	73.68
Representativeness of the number		
No	101	100
Justification of under-representativeness		
Lack of training	71	70
Lack of courage	66	65
Lack of means	45	45
Lack of will	51	50
Lack of support	71	70
Lack of information	76	75
No idea	1	5
Levers for improvement		
Train women	96	95
Establish quotas	76	75
Establish compulsory parity	76	75
Other (s) to be specified	10	10
Funding women	5	1.96

Awareness meetings	5	1.96
Knowledge of measures taken to encourage women's participation		
Yes	91	23.68
No	293	76.32
Knowledge of the provisions favoring the election of women in municipal councils		
Yes	157	40.79
No	227	59.21
Knowledge of the different actors of local governance		
Yes	197	51.32
No	187	48.68
Voting during a local election		
Yes	308	80.26
No	71	18.42
Information on urban governance		
Yes	227	59.21
No	157	40.79
Discomfort of female governance		
Yes	15	3.95
No	364	94.74
Without answer	5	1.32
Idea of inclusive urban governance		
Integration of women	20	5.26
Integration of men and women	364	94.74

### 3.2. *The State of Urban Governance in Greater Lomé*

In recent years, faced with territorial imbalances, social injustices and unequal access to urban services, the Togolese authorities have embarked on a process of decentralization [25]. Decentralization and modernization of urban management have led to new forms of collective decision-making in urban administration. This trend is the result of the conjunction of two factors: globalization and political and economic decentralization [31]. These two factors have called into question the role of the State, once again raising the question of relations between the State and cities, and not only on an institutional level [31].

### 3.4. *The Normative Organization of Urban Governance*

In accordance with the provisions of article 85 of the Constitution of the 5th Republic, the local authorities are the region and the commune. They are organized into local authorities based on the principle of decentralization. These administrative zones, which constitute the scope of the development of State public policies, were enshrined by Law No. 2019-006 of June 26, 2019, amending Law No. 2007-011 of March 13, 2007, relating to decentralization and local freedoms, as amended by Law No. 2018-003 of January 31, 2018 [32].

From this point of view, urban governance in Greater Lomé is mainly governed by the 2019 law relating to decentralization and local freedoms. To this general text is added the law of November 13, 2019 creating the Autonomous District of Greater Lomé (DAGL), which makes it a special territorial entity with legal personality and financial autonomy. It is the local authority representing the city of Lomé as a whole [33].

### 3.5. *The Institutional Organization of Governance*

At the institutional level, urban governance is semi-decentralized. In fact, there is a duality of governance because of the DAGL entity, which is the emanation of another decentralized entity which overlaps with the municipalities. Urban governance in Greater Lomé requires close coordination between the State and local authorities.

### 3.6. *From an Organizational Point of View*

The DAGL is partly made up of representatives of the municipalities. Its governor, who enjoys considerable prerogatives, is in reality a “super mayor” of the three municipalities. Thus, municipal authorities, like councilors, are responsible for town planning, approval of building permits, management of local public services, etc., while the district manages the main arteries, large commercial buildings, sanitation, etc. This poses perceptible difficulties in terms of the room for maneuver available to municipalities in terms of land use planning. However, each municipality is responsible for its own urban planning and develops a medium or long-term development master plan.

While all municipal councilors are elected to manage the municipalities, 26 of the 52 members of the DAGL Council are municipal councilors appointed by their respective municipalities. The other 26 members are appointed by the President of the Republic.

At the municipal level, there are three types of actors involved in urban governance. First there are the elected officials, led by the executive, which is made up of the mayor and deputy mayors. In addition to the executive, there are the other elected officials, the advisors. There is also the technical team, which provides administrative services and is responsible for implementing the vision and mission of elected officials. Then there are the prefects of Gulf and Agoè -Nyivé, who are responsible for controlling the legality of municipal decisions, such as the budget. Finally, there is the third order of actors, made up of civil society organizations which monitor and exercise citizen control of public action. All these actors are involved in the urban governance of Greater Lomé, often in conjunction with the central government.

### 3.7. *Relations Between the State and the Greater Lomé Conurbation*

Relations between the central government and the urban communes of Greater Lomé are quite close. The central government exercises partial control over resources and shares no less important prerogatives over the Greater Lomé conurbation. This is firstly reflected in the fact that the prefect, designated representative of central power, exercises exclusive control over the legality of all acts emanating from municipal authorities. Second, at the operational level, the DAGL governor, who chairs the district council, is placed under the authority of the ministry responsible for territorial administration. De facto, the municipal authorities, which are deprived of their operating powers by the district governor, seem to come under the authority of the central government, represented here by the minister responsible for territorial administration, the prefect and the governor of "borough. What is also important to remember is that this form of regency only applies within the jurisdiction of the DAGL. The other municipalities in the country are only subject to legality control exercised by the prefect.

Note that before 2019, this form of organization of relations between the State and the municipalities of Greater Lomé did not exist. The president of the special delegation of the commune of Lomé was the sole master on board and governed the commune with all his prerogatives.

After exploring the current state of urban governance in Greater Lomé, it is important to focus our attention on the history of women's participation in this dynamic, in order to understand the evolution of their role and their impact on the Urban fabric.

#### 3.7.1. *The Multifaceted Historical presence of Women in the urban governance of Greater Lomé*

##### 3.7.1.1. *Brief History of Women's Participation in Urban Governance in Greater Lomé*

In her thesis entitled "The political participation of women in Togo from 1946 to 2013", [16] examines the political participation of women in Togo from 1946 to 2013. She tells how, from 1946,

with the granting of the right to vote and eligibility for women and the creation of political parties, Togolese women became involved in political life, taking an active part in the fight against the colonial system. Whether they were nationalists or progressives depended on their interests and beliefs. Their political activities within these parties included organizing, leading and participating in meetings, providing financial support, voting, broadcasting and disseminating ideas through information from "door-to-door", "word of mouth" and ditties.

However, due to their lack of education and socio-cultural constraints, Togolese women were not really involved in the exercise of power in the period immediately following decolonization. Until 1961, all key decision-makers (ministers and deputies) were men. As a result, very few women have managed to get involved in the management of the state by taking part in the political process by being entrusted with political positions. Between 1961 and 1972, only five women, including one under Sylvanus Olympio, two under Nicolas Grunitzky and two under Etienne Eyadema, were involved in the leadership of the Togolese state. Regarding the governance of the city of Lomé, Marie Sivomey was the only female mayor from 1967, before being joined by Patience Sanvée and Geneviève Amegnizin, elected municipal councilors from 1965 to 1967.

In 2013, the Togolese National Assembly amended and adopted Law No. 2012-002 of May 29, 2012 on the Electoral Code. Of the 15 articles of this code which were modified and adopted, two aimed to promote the establishment of parity between men and women in elective functions. These are articles 220 and 225. The first requires political parties to respect parity in the constitution of electoral lists, under penalty of inadmissibility; and the second reduces by half the amount of the electoral deposit for candidates. This parity, although still a legal text, reflects, as said [34], the political will to apply equality in certain political decision-making bodies which would not forget that there are men and women. From then on, women made a more marked appearance in urban governance, particularly in Greater Lomé where they made up 33 out of 225 elected officials.

Women have always been involved in local administration in Lomé. However, their level of participation remains relatively low. According to Togo's 2019 National Human Development Report, women represent around 26% of municipal elected officials in Lomé, compared to a national average of 6.25%. This figure clearly shows that there is still a long way to go to achieve true gender parity in local decision-making in Greater Lomé. There is still a long way to go before women are fairly represented in community decision-making bodies.

This historic presence of women in the urban governance of Greater Lomé is materialized in many ways.

### 3.7.1.2. *Women's Participation in Urban Governance in Greater Lomé*

Women's participation means first of all taking part in elections. As voters, their vote is crucial in choosing the representatives who will defend their interests. They presented themselves as candidates in the municipal elections. In other words, in the communes of Greater Lomé, women actively participate in urban governance as voters, elected or appointed to administrative positions, thus contributing to debates, decisions and municipal planning.

Women are also involved in civil society organizations that work on municipal issues, participate in policy development, monitoring of public services and awareness campaigns modeled on the Women, Democracy and Development think tank (GF2D) and Women Law and Development West Africa (WILDAF-OA). This is how civil society organizations and local authorities work together to strengthen the participation of women and increase their presence in local decision-making bodies.

In addition to these forms of participation, women also engage in advocacy and mobilization activities to promote their interests in municipal management. These include awareness campaigns and meetings with municipal officials. This activity is carried out by local elected women who have decided to fight for their rights through negotiations. As a group of local elected officials from a commune in Greater Lomé told us:

*"Every time we see a situation that disadvantages a woman when she should not be, we take it upon ourselves to meet with the mayor to discuss it and make him understand that things could be different"*

*and that all community would benefit.”* (Comments by the spokesperson for a group of local elected officials).

Second, women are present at almost all levels of urban governance in Greater Lomé. First of all, they are represented in the municipal council and the executive as mayors or deputies. At the municipal executive level of Greater Lomé, one woman is mayor (in the commune of Agoè-Nyivé 5) and 4 are deputy mayors in the communes of Golfe 1, Golfe 2 and Golfe 4. These positions are filled by election. However, the law allows the mayor to entrust part of his functions to his agents if he wishes. In the commune of Golfe 3, for example, the third deputy mayor is a woman to whom the mayor has entrusted the portfolio of social actions, notably education, civil society and organizations working with women.

*“Indeed, as deputy mayor, she celebrates marriages, signs deeds and legalizations. The mayor has entrusted some of his responsibilities to other members of the council (...) there are four women in the executive and three women on the council. One of them is chair of the Standing Committee on Finance. She organizes her team (...) and works with other leaders. She carries out activities based on the themes selected at the start of the year. The commission's rapporteur is also a woman. She plays an important role within this commission because, each year, the local authorities lead the orientation debate which gives rise to discussions on the budget. She is also responsible for administrative and management accounting, as well as all other budget and financial activities. This is how women get involved with elected officials.”* (Extract from an interview with the Secretary General of a commune in Greater Lomé).

On the technical and administrative level, in Greater Lomé, five of the thirteen general secretaries are women, which represents a proportion of 38.46%. However, only one woman is mayor, and there are gaps. Indeed, many have noted gaps in quality, often forcing it to be represented at events. But this can also be seen as a desire on the part of the mayor to give his successors the opportunity to govern. This is indeed the case in the commune of Golfe 4, where the mayor is not often present at the workshops. He is almost always replaced by one of his deputies.

Note also that even when they are present, women do not often occupy strategic positions and do not enjoy real decision-making autonomy. This could be due to a number of factors. A municipal councilor formulated the problem in these terms:

*“I noticed, for example, that when a woman speaks, a man can cut her off or say no, no, no, no. But she doesn't leave time. But she does not leave time, she reacts to return to it by asking if they are not prevented from expressing themselves? This supposes that somewhere it exists because it is our African education which wants women to be relegated to the background, that they do not take center stage and that they exist, even if it is not as pronounced as that, it still exists in a form that does not say its name.”* (Extract from the proposals of a local elected official, president of a municipal commission).

Women have therefore always been present in the urban governance bodies of Greater Lomé, but not significantly. Their low representation is linked to persistent challenges.

The table below (Table 12) illustrates the perspective of respondents, all categories combined, on the state of play of women's participation in urban governance. The majority found the governance of their municipalities less good (32%) and also 3 respondents out of 10 preferred not to intervene on the issue. Thus, 75% of respondents think that governance is not equitably shared between men and women. For some, this is due to the fact that women do not want to participate in this governance (21%), at the same time very few think that this under-representation is due to the fact that women are not competent to impose themselves (2 %). For almost 2 thirds of respondents (65%), this inequity results in the under-representation of women, while almost 4 out of 5 respondents find that they encounter no difficulty in carrying out their duties depending on whether they be men or women. There are also more than 7 respondents out of 10 on average who do not know of any institution implementing policies for the advancement of women or of any project aimed at the political participation of women in decision-making bodies. Also, according to the women involved in the governance of their municipality (around half, 57%), their opinions are taken into account and 4 out of 5 find that men support women's ideas or projects during municipal council meetings and also that men have a good attitude towards women.

**Table 12.**

Respondents' perspective on the state of play of women's participation in urban governance.

	Effective	Frequency (%)
Assessment of the governance of the municipality		
Very good	5	1
Good	96	25
Less good	121	32
Bad	51	13
I don't know	111	29
Equitable governance between men and women		
Yes	96	25%
No	288	75%
The reasons		
Women don't want	61	21%
Men don't want	55	19%
Women are not competent to impose themselves	10	2%
Materialization		
They are excluded from decision-making positions	61	19%
They are underrepresented	187	65%
They have no voice	56	19%
Support for women's ideas and projects		
Yes	56	79
No	10	14
Attitude of men towards women		
Very good	36	50
Good	20	29
Not good at all	10	14
Difficulties in performing duties		
Yes	86	22
No	298	78
Involvement in municipal governance		
Yes	71	18
No	313	82
Taking opinions into account		
Yes	41	57
No	30	43
Knowledge of an institution implementing policies for the advancement of women		
Yes	136	35
No	248	65
Knowledge of a project aimed at the political participation of women in decision-making bodies		
Yes	76	20
No	308	80

Source: Author

On the other hand (Table 13), for elected representatives of the fairer sex, they all regularly participate in municipal council meetings in order to achieve their objectives (66.4%) and for others because they are ex officio members. Also, among them, 33% participate strongly in the urban management of their municipality and 17% weakly. Four (4) out of 5 respondents have a particular



ambition for the involvement of women in the urban management of their municipalities and believe they can bring about changes within their municipality.

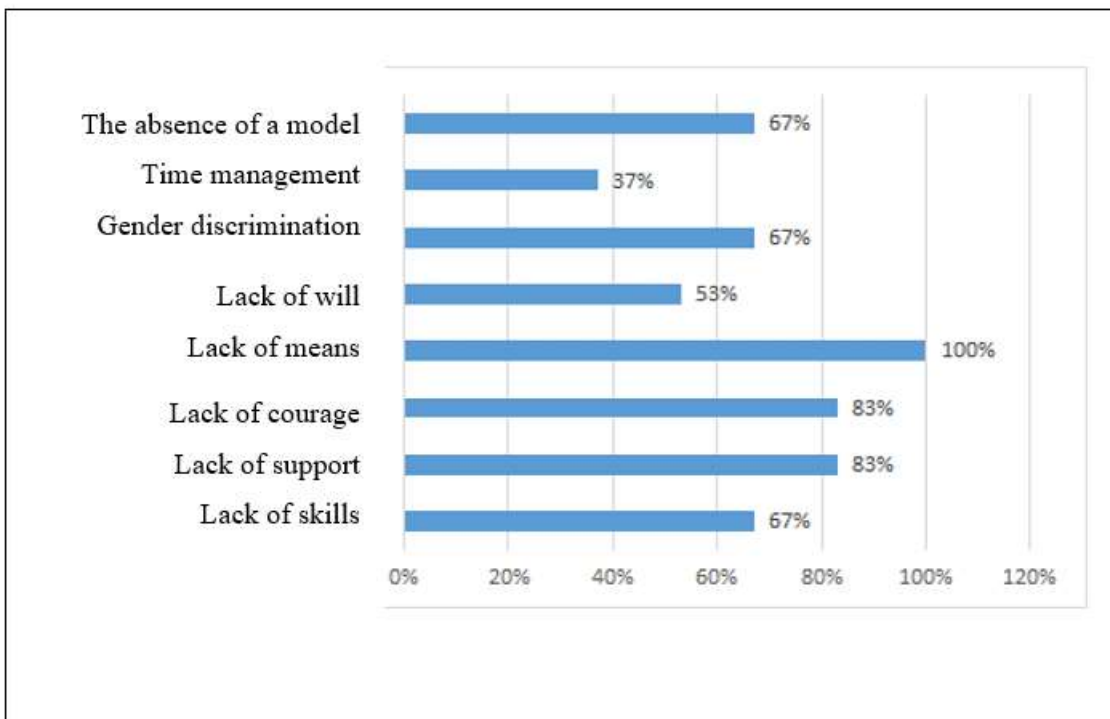
**Table 13.**

The perspective of our locally elected female representatives of all categories on the state of play of women's participation in urban governance (Continued).

	Effective	Frequency (%)
Participation in municipal council meetings		
Yes	30	100
Participation frequency		
Regularly	30	100
Reason for this participation		
I have a goal to achieve	20	66.4
Other (I am a legal member)	10	24.6
Intensity that women participate in the urban management of your municipality		
Weakly	5	17
Moderately	10	33
Enough	5	17
Strongly	10	33
Major obstacle to women's participation		
Lack of skills	20	67
Lack of support	25	83
Lack of courage	25	83
Lack of means	30	100
Lack of will	16	53
Gender discrimination	20	67
Time management	11	37
The absence of a model	20	67
Existence of a particular ambition for the involvement of women in the management of the municipality		
Yes	25	83
No	5	17
Ability to make changes within the municipality		
Yes	25	83
Without answer	5	17

Source: Author

Regarding the major obstacles notified by elected female respondents, after the lack of means (100%) and the lack of support and courage (83%), the absence of a role model, sexism and lack skills (67%) are what prevent women from fully participating in the governance of their municipalities. The following graph 3 presents all the obstacles identified by local elected women.



**Figure 3.**  
The major obstacles identified by elected women.

### 3.7.1.3. Urban Governance that Hinders the Full Participation of Women

The DAGL has 223 municipal councilors elected for 13 municipalities. There are 13 mayors in the district, including only one woman in the commune of Agoè-Nyivé 5. There are 4 women deputy mayors out of 33- and 5-women general secretaries out of 13. These figures clearly show that the participation of women There are still many challenges to the governance of Greater Lomé. These challenges include gender stereotypes, socio-economic barriers, discrimination and cultural barriers. Women's access to elected office is often hampered by a number of obstacles, which vary according to sociocultural and political contexts.

Traditional stereotypes according to which women are considered less competent or less capable of exercising political responsibilities persist (100% of those surveyed are in favor). These stereotypes exert a negative influence on perceptions and attitudes towards female candidates, limiting their chances of accessing community leadership positions. In the commune of Golfe 2, for example, an elected woman explained that it was thanks to a combination of circumstances that she was elected deputy mayor, while men wanted to monopolize all decision-making positions. The situation is almost similar to that of the commune of Agoè-Nyivé 5, where a woman was elected mayor following dissensions between rival groups.

According to the survey results, this situation is due to the fact that women do not enjoy people's trust. In fact, a secretary general of the commune said that:

*“Actually, people don't have much confidence in women. And in reality, in our societies, women work. I would even say that they work three times as hard as men. At an equal level for men and women, the responsibility is equal. To take themselves seriously, women have to work more than men. I think it's a question of education, a question of mentality. And this also holds women back. Because when we don't have the courage, we don't have the determination to prove what we are capable of. You are quickly*

*slowed down in your desire to do well.*" (Comment from the Secretary General of a commune in Greater Lomé).

Institutional discrimination constitutes another obstacle to women's participation. Political institutions are dominated by norms and structures that emphasize male participation. Discriminatory practices, such as partisan selection processes or male power networks, limit women's opportunities to run for office and play an active role in local government. Women are often involved just to make numbers or so the public doesn't say a list is too masculine.

Women face socio-economic barriers such as lack of access to financial resources to finance their electoral campaigns, lack of time due to family and domestic responsibilities, and constraints related to mobility and education. These barriers limit their ability to fully engage in local government.

Women involved in politics are very often confronted with verbal, physical or psychological violence aimed at discouraging them and dissuading them from continuing their involvement. These acts of gender-based political intimidation hinder women's participation and create a hostile environment for their political engagement. They produce political opponents from other parties, internal competitors, unhappy or jealous spouses, etc.

The underrepresentation of women in municipal leadership positions and the lack of role models are factors that discourage some women from getting involved in politics, because they feel marginalized or unsupported. Likewise, the lack of inspiring female role models and mentors also limits women's political aspirations.

One of the major challenges to women's participation in the management of their local communities is the existence of cultural and traditional norms that are often unsuitable for the new realities of global change, and which contribute to restricting the role of women in the public sphere and to perpetuate the expectations linked to their domestic and family roles. These norms hinder their political participation by creating social pressures and limiting their freedom of expression and political engagement. Raising children and fear of their husbands or their social environment are obstacles to political engagement. As an elected official from Greater Lomé said:

*"Political meetings often take place at times that are inconvenient for women due to their marital responsibilities. Women who enter politics face this harsh reality. Those who succeed put their married life on the back burner and don't care. Those who are very lucky find husbands who support them. But in general, the overwhelming majority of women who occupy important positions in political or administrative life in Africa and elsewhere in the world reveal that they are often single, divorced or widowed and rarely in a marital home.* (Extracts from an interview with the Secretary General of a commune in Greater Lomé).

This text summarizes the manifestation of cultural stereotypes and their implications as they present themselves in Greater Lomé. These ideas are also confirmed by the association measures taken from the survey results. Indeed, in the table below (Table 14), no significant association at the 5% threshold is observed between gender and the variables cited: equitable governance, involvement in governance, opinion taken into account, support from men, attitude of men towards women, difficulty according to gender... On the other hand, according to table 15, we observe an added value of 0.007. This means that there is a significant association between gender, having a dependent (Table 16) and participation in urban governance. It should also be noted that 80% of women and 60% of men find that local governance is not equitable. 18% of women are involved in the governance of their municipality (affirmed by 90% of men and 75% of women) and 57% have their opinions which are not taken into account. Nevertheless, 79% believe they get support from men and find their attitude towards them good.

**Table 14.**

Distribution by sex of possible problems linked to their participation of women identified by the survey.

	Male (%)	Feminine (%)	Capital gain
Sharing of governance between men and women			0.283
Yes	51 (31)	45 (20)	
No	111 (69)	177 (80)	
Involvement of women in municipal governance			0.083
Yes	15 (9)	55 (25)	
No	147 (90)	167 (75)	
Taking women's opinions into account			0.707
Yes	10 (67)	31 (55)	
No	5 (33)	25 (55)	
Support women's ideas and projects during council meetings			0.4
Yes	15 (100)	41 (73)	
No	0 (0)	10 (18)	
Without answer	0 (0)	5 (9)	
Perception of men's attitude towards women			0.695
Very good	10 (67)	26 (46)	
Good	5 (33)	15 (27)	
Not good at all	0 (0)	10 (18)	
Difficulties in performing duties according to gender			0.078
Yes	20 (12)	65 (30)	
No	142 (88)	157 (70)	

**Table 15.**

Distribution by sex of possible problems linked to their participation of women identified by the survey.

	Male (%)	Feminine (%)	Capital gain
<b>Dependents</b>			0.007
Yes	81 (50)	177 (80)	
No	81 (50)	45 (20)	

**Table 16.**

Number of respondents with at least one dependent

	Univariate analysis				
	NOT	%	ORc	95% CI	p-value
Dependents					<b>0.008</b>
Yes	258	67.11	-	-	
No	126	32.89	0.25	[0.093 - 0.7]	

After having presented these different findings, it is appropriate to discuss them in the context of our theoretical framework, which combines the theory of “stakeholders” derived from concepts of governance and the sociological theory of “social justice”.

#### 4. Discussion

In three decades of experimentation with local governance in Togo, the paradigms of urban development have evolved considerably, moving from a managerial conception of the city centered on operators, whether public or private, to an urban governance perspective based on a decision-making process announced as broad and participatory. This interest is based on the idea that decentralization will foster participatory democracy, introduce a more responsive service delivery system, advance citizens'

rights and promote gender equality, which will benefit women. However, the experience is beginning to show its limits. Social transformation does not necessarily follow the decentralization process, and the increased autonomy enjoyed by local authorities can even lead to certain regressions [3]. Indeed, participatory governance emphasizes the multiplicity and diversity of actors involved in the management of public affairs. The crisis of governability calls on governments to turn to interlocutors able to find solutions to the collective problems facing society [35]. This is the logic of participation. In the same vein, the gender approach involves a participatory resolution process, creating the best conditions for real participation of women in governance [36]. Still on the subject of gender, [37] asserted that “development seen in masculine terms leads to underdevelopment”. Regarding the present study, decentralization with the participation of women is important in the context of integral urban development.

According to the work of [36], the cause of the low participation of women in decision-making bodies lies in the lack of involvement of girls in learning the role of leader or decision-maker. These authors believe that, faced with the challenges of occupying positions of responsibility and decision-making, it is women who must mobilize resources to overcome the constraints and obstacles they face. [38] confirms the results of this study. In a study carried out by this researcher, he states that several studies have confirmed the fact that the low proportion of women in decision-making bodies is due to certain natural constraints, such as married life and motherhood, which deprive women of time necessary for the exercise of certain political and administrative functions.

Governance involves participation, negotiation and coordination. A large place must be given to the public space, the one where the different components of society assert their existence, enter into communication with each other and debate by exercising their power of expression and criticism [39]. It is in fact a public-private partnership for sustainable urban development [40]. This is why the presence of civil society alongside public actors is essential to good urban governance.

Sustainability is embodied in a form of governance which aims to prevent undesirable effects through democratic decision-making on collective choices. This approach is based on the standard and the bodies responsible for applying it, because in its normative sense, governance mainly designates a standard or an instrument of public management. Urban governance manifests itself through the mechanisms of decentralization, a means by which the state delegates more power to citizens for their development as sovereign environments in the areas provided by law. In this regard, Togo has made significant progress in decentralization, and this progress is encouraging.

To meet the expectations of their voters, democratic governments must be truly representative. Women must play an equal role as partners in the process of democratic development, as activists, as elected officials and as voters. Their contributions are essential to building a strong and dynamic society.

In Togo, no less than 73 laws and public policies are in force with the sole aim of promoting the participation of women in decision-making. The country has modernized several of these laws in recent years and taken various initiatives to promote gender equality. This progress ranges from the adoption of a new, fairer penal code to a new land code removing the ambiguity of customary and modern texts which penalized women. A national strategy for integrating gender into development policies and programs has been put in place, as well as a revised strategy to combat gender-based violence. In 2012, a law introduced a 30% quota for women on electoral lists for local elections, guaranteeing a minimum representation of women in local governance bodies.

However, despite the existence of this legislative framework, challenges persist regarding the effective implementation of these quotas. To facilitate women's access to elections, the Togolese government has halved the deposit for candidates, from 20,000 CFA francs to 10,000 CFA francs. This measure aims to encourage political parties and civil society organizations to promote female candidates in municipal elections. In addition, an important condition for being eligible for the list of candidates is the ability to read, write and express oneself in one of the three official languages of Togo (French, Éwé and Kabyè), thus paving the way for the participation of all, including women who have not been educated in French.

At the national level, efforts are focused on adapting legislation, strengthening women's capacities and raising public awareness to ensure greater acceptance of women as leaders, with clear political will at the highest levels. government level. The revision of texts such as the law on parity between men and women and the reduction in the prudence of female candidates demonstrate a concrete commitment to inclusion. Furthermore, for the appointment of members of the National Decentralization Monitoring Council, three of the five resource persons appointed by the President of the Republic are women. These actions have facilitated the application of the principle of inclusion, consolidating the place of women in decision-making positions.

With the adoption of the concept of gender, we moved from the “women and development” (WID) approach to the “gender and development” (GAD) approach, we began to study the concrete manifestations of gender inequalities [41]. It is easy to assert that the low presence of women in urban governance often reflects a general under-representation of women in decision-making bodies. This leads to policies and practices that do not take into account the specific perspectives, needs and experiences of women. This shows that urban governance need a diversity of perspectives to adequately address the complex and varied challenges that cities face in order to restore the social justice so strongly advocated by Rawls [19]. Women can bring different ideas and approaches, contributing to more inclusive and balanced decision-making. Excluding women from urban governance means losing the opportunity to benefit from the unique talents, skills and experiences they can bring. This can harm the sustainable development and economic growth of cities. Thus, the presence of women in leadership roles within urban governance can serve as models of inspiration for future generations, encouraging more women to engage in the political sphere and pursue careers in related fields to urban governance, as argued by [42]. Ultimately, the approach this study recommends to redress the balance is education at the local level. Training programs and professional and managerial capacity building programs specially designed for women play a key role in their involvement in municipal management. But there is no education program for children to instill these values in boys and girls. It is important to design and implement programs to prepare and support primary school children, especially girls, for positions of responsibility.

## 5. Conclusion

The participation of women in the management of municipalities in Togo is of crucial importance for the establishment of an inclusive local democracy. Various measures, such as the establishment of representation quotas, awareness-raising, training and the creation of networks of elected women, have been implemented to strengthen their involvement. Despite these initiatives, persistent barriers stand in the way of equitable participation.

Women's political participation brings concrete benefits to democracy, including cumulative response to citizens' needs, increased cooperation between parties across ethnic boundaries, contribution to more lasting peace, and other benefits. As more women occupy leadership positions in political parties and are elected in large numbers to legislative assemblies, these institutions tend to pay greater attention to crucial issues such as health, education and economy, which have a direct impact on the daily lives of citizens.

Integrating a gender approach into policies is essential, even if its practical implementation sometimes encounters reluctance on the part of stakeholders. Non-governmental organizations seem to be more successful in mobilizing support than public initiatives. Despite this, new policies should harmonize international standards with contextual adjustments. Legislation should promote gender equality and actively encourage women's participation. This involves putting in place measures to promote balanced representation between sexes in local governance bodies. Awareness and training are also essential to overcome gender stereotypes and develop women's leadership skills from a young age. Concrete actions, such as creating support structures for female candidates and ensuring fair electoral financing, are essential to overcoming practical barriers to women's access to local political office.

In conclusion, for a truly inclusive democracy, it is imperative to adopt favorable legislation and put it into practice, while working collectively to promote gender equality and encourage the active participation of women at all levels of governance.

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