

# The Reykjavik Index for Leadership - Measuring perceptions of equality for men and women in leadership

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The fourth edition of *The Reykjavik Index for Leadership* highlights entrenched prejudice towards women leaders globally. The study now includes South Africa for the first time, and local findings paint a rosy picture, with an Index score of 68, which is on par with the G20 average score. Unlike many other countries, there's very little dissonance between the views of women and men - and unlike all G7 countries, young people in SA hold more progressive views on gender parity and leadership, compared to the older generations.



Created in 2018, *The Reykjavik Index for Leadership* measures and tracks progress in society's perceptions of women and men's suitability to lead across 23 economic sectors. [Kantar Public](#), the world's leading evidence and advisory business for governments and the public sector, together with Women Political Leaders ([WPL](#)), the global network of female politicians, launched the [Reykjavik Index for Leadership 2021/2022](#) at the [Reykjavik Global Forum](#). Based on responses from over 35,000 people, the findings illustrate a continuing failure of the world's most advanced economies to dispel their societies' entrenched gender stereotypes.

The 2021 research concludes that societal attitudes have stalled in views of gender equality in leadership. Headline findings from the Index include:

- For the third successive year, the Reykjavik Index for the G7 group of countries stagnates at 73. An index value of 100 would indicate a consensus across society that women and men are equally suited for leadership.
- In comparison, the first Reykjavik Index for the G20 stands at 68, with individual country scores ranging from 47 and 82, and the three Latin American countries achieving relatively high scores: Argentina (78), Mexico (73) and Brazil (72). These countries have more progressive attitudes to female leadership than some G7 countries such as Italy, Japan and Germany.
- Iceland stands out as a uniquely progressive country compared to all others surveyed thus far. It is the most gender progressive country in the ranking with an Index value of 92, which is 10 points ahead of the next most progressive countries, Spain and the United Kingdom, both with a score of 82.
- The UK, which is one of the only two G7 countries whose Index score has increased since 2018, leads the G7 ranking – up just one point on 2020.
- Conversely, Germany with an Index value of 66, is in last place among the G7 for the second year running, and sits in

15th position out of the 22 countries covered.

## Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2021 scores for the G20+



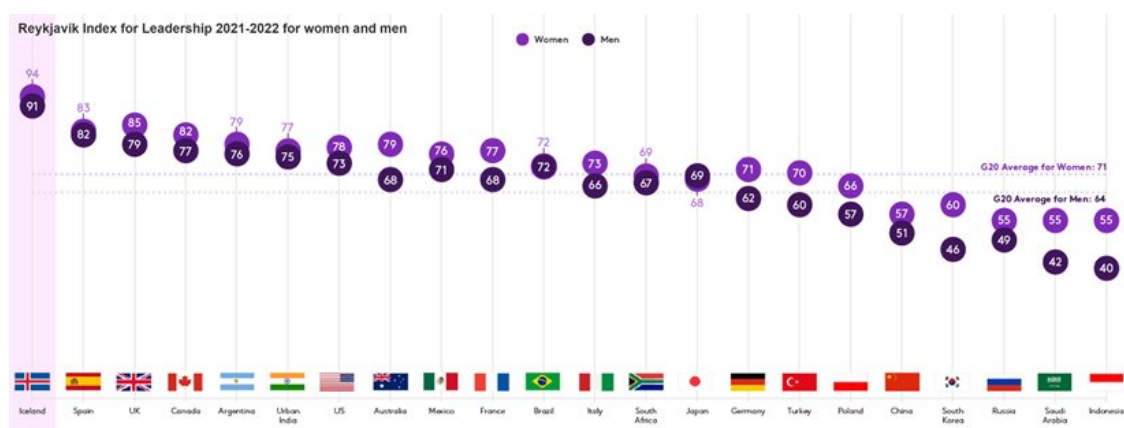
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## Women are also complicit in prejudice

Across the 22 countries, the Index finds that women and men are both complicit in prejudice about gender and leadership, although not equally. On average, there is a 7-point gap between the scores given by women (71) and men (64) in the G20, meaning that women are more likely than men, to perceive men and women as equally suitable for leadership.

Countries with the widest dissonance between the views of women and men are: Indonesia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Australia. The gap in these countries is above 10 points. Conversely, the countries where societal attitudes towards men and women's suitability to lead are closely aligned include Brazil, Spain and South Africa (with a zero to 2-point gap).

## Reykjavík Index for Leadership 2021 scores for women and men in the G20+



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## Younger people (especially young men) in the G7 hold the least progressive views

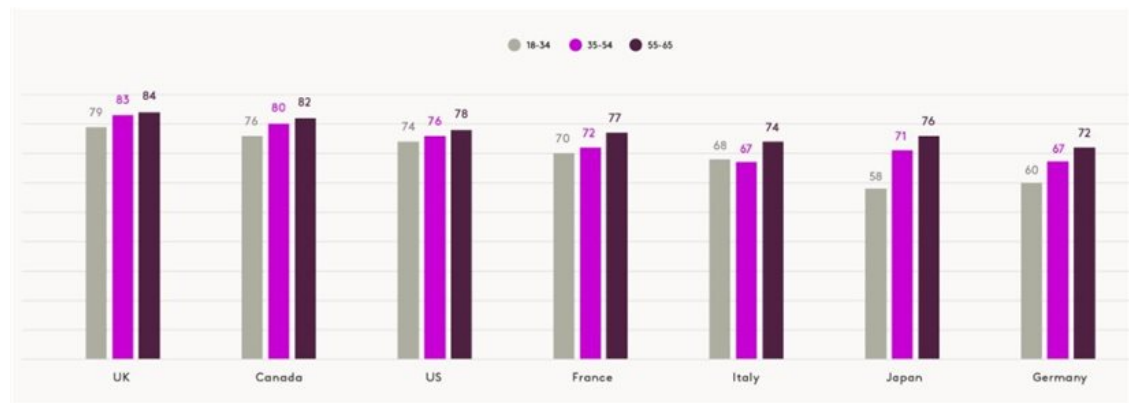
Across all G7 nations, the youngest age group (18-34) reports a lower Index score (69, which is a three-point drop vs 2020) than older generations whose Index scores reach 74 among people aged 35-54, and 77 for the older age group (55-65).

This points to a potential 're-traditionalisation' of both young women and young men across the G7. This generational gap within the G7 countries is especially pronounced in Japan and Germany, with a gap between the younger and older age groups of more than 10 points. With an Index score of only 55, young German men are one of the groups showing the

highest gender prejudice across the 22 countries (alongside young men in Indonesia, China, Poland, Russia and Saudi Arabia).

In comparison, the opposite trend can be seen in Iceland where younger people hold more progressive views than their parents – with Index scores of 97 for young women and 93 for young men.

## Reykjavík Index for Leadership by age groups in the G7 countries



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## Sectoral view

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership ranks 23 sectors for their perceived suitability for both male and female leaders. Media and entertainment remains the sector perceived to be most suitable for gender equality in leadership with an (G20) Index score of 78, compared to a (G7) score of 81. Perhaps reflective of the prominent role women played in fighting the pandemic, Pharmaceutical and medical research is positioned in fifth position in terms of perceptions of equal suitability for men and women to lead, with an index of 76.

While there has been much discussion about the successful response of female leaders to the Covid-19 crisis, Government and politics ranks only at number seven with an Index value of 75. In addition, only 52% of women and 43% of men across the G20 countries would be 'very comfortable' having a woman as Head of Government.

## Reykjavik Index for Leadership 2021: Sector scores for the G20

	80+	75 - <80	70 - <75	60 - <70	50 - <60	40 - <50
	G20 average					
	Women					
	Men					
OVERALL INDEX	68	70	64			
Media and entertainment	78	80	75			
Natural sciences	77	80	74			
Banking and finance	77	80	74			
Economic and political science	76	79	74			
Pharmaceutical, medical research	76	79	73			
Judiciary	75	77	73			
Government and politics	75	77	72			
High-tech, artificial intelligence	74	78	71			
Food and drink manufacturers	74	76	72			
International sports organisations/federations	72	75	70			
Architecture	72	75	69			
Foreign affairs and diplomacy	72	75	69			
Education	70	72	68			
Charity and other not-for-profit organisations	69	71	67			
Healthcare, well-being	69	72	66			
Engineering	68	72	64			
Aerospace	67	70	64			
Intelligence services	67	71	62			
Gaming	65	68	63			
Automotive manufacturers	59	62	56			
Defence and police	59	64	53			
Fashion and beauty	52	56	48			
Childcare	47	50	45			

NB: Iceland, China, and Saudi Arabia are excluded from the calculations

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Commenting on this year's report, Dr Michelle Harrison, Global CEO, Kantar Public said: "The continued lack of progress in reducing the equality gap between women and men should be a source of concern across government, the private sector and civil society. Moreover, evidence from this year's research demonstrates that prejudice is strongest amongst younger people in the G7 group. It's too soon to say if this is a cohort effect or not, but it points to a risk of increasing prejudice. The Reykjavík Index for Leadership provides the evidence required to better understand these inequalities and inform public policy and private sector interventions to address these prejudices for the future societies we are building."

Silvana Koch-Mehrin, founder and president of WPL added "The data yet again finds a biased perception. It continues to show sexism towards women in leadership positions across all sectors. There is an urgent need to act in order to reverse this trend. At the Reykjavík Global Forum 2021, we will focus on solutions and on strengthening the community of women leaders. A future with diverse leadership is good for all of society".

The Reykjavík Index dataset and annual report premiered at the [Reykjavík Global Forum](#) and is published at [www.kantarpublic.com/inspiration/reykjavikindex](http://www.kantarpublic.com/inspiration/reykjavikindex) and [www.reykjavikindex.com](http://www.reykjavikindex.com).

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