

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership

2024

Measuring society's perceptions
of equality for women and men
in leadership since 2018

Foreword

It was at the Reykjavík Global Forum in November 2023 in Iceland that we shared the early headlines from our 2024 Reykjavík Index for Leadership.



Dr Michelle Harrison
Global Chief
Executive Officer,
Verian



**Hanna Birna
Kristjánsdóttir**
Chair of the Board of
The Reykjavík Global
Forum, Iceland

The collective response from the many global leaders from across politics, business, NGOs, and academia, was one of frustration and dismay – that after six years of measuring perceptions of women’s suitability for leadership, there is no discernible progress as a global society on viewing women and men as equally suitable to lead.

When The Reykjavík Index was launched in 2018, we acknowledged that progress in equality for women was far from guaranteed. Nevertheless, we fully hoped to witness improvements in

perceptions in the years to come, with countries and sectors approaching the target score of 100, meaning an absence of prejudice.

We are now six years on, and our 2024 data shows us that in some areas, rather than progress, we are starting to see a regression in the perception of women and men being equally suitable for leadership. Across the G7 countries, the data shows that at best we are in a time of stasis. Alternatively, we are starting to see the reversal of 30 years of progress around gender equality.

Now is the time to act. The drivers of this reversal in the perceptions of gender equality will come from a coalition of forces: economic inequality; populist politics; reactions to the evolution of the corporate workplace and the impact and proliferation of toxic content across social media channels. We also recognise that there is no silver bullet in public policy. We need a collective effort to work against this reversal on all fronts.

We also know that discrimination against women rarely exists in isolation. Societies either view their citizens as equal, or they don't. Where we see gender prejudice, we recognise too the many other aspects of discrimination, including those held on the

basis of ethnicity, sexual identity, disability and age. As we pursue gender equality across all aspects of society, we do so with the acknowledgment that we are concerned with equality for all.

However, the data also indicates that there is some hope to be found. For the first time the Index has included all the Nordic countries and The Netherlands. These countries appear to be showing greater resilience to the reversal we are seeing across the G7. When we start to observe downward trends, we look to those who are bucking the trend to understand and learn from what they are doing differently.

Michelle and Hanna Birna

As we pursue gender equality across all aspects of society, we do so with the acknowledgement that we are concerned with equality for all.

Background and Context

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership measures the extent to which men and women are viewed equally in terms of their suitability for positions of leadership.

The Index runs from 0 to 100; a score of 100 means that across society, there is common understanding that men and women are equally suited to leadership, in all sectors.

Our explicit goal is a world in which The Reykjavík Index score of 100 is the norm; this would be a world where men and women are viewed as equally suitable to lead

The Index has been constructed based on research exploring the question: **“For each of the following sectors or industries, do you think men or women are better suited to leadership positions?”** This question allows responses of ‘men’, ‘women’ or ‘both equally’ for 23 different sectors. Aligned with our goal, a response of ‘both equally’ scores a point while a response of ‘men’ or of ‘women’ scores zero points¹.

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership was launched in 2018 for the G7 countries and

repeated every year since. As well as covering the G7 as a consistent cohort, we have also been able to extend the reach of the Index so that over the past six years we have covered more than 30 countries across all regions.

For the 2024 edition, we have for the first time included all Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as well as the Netherlands and the G7. Across these 11 countries we have a view of the extent to which society holds perceptions of prejudice on whether women are seen as equally suitable as men to lead. We also ask a number of additional questions which explore how comfortable respondents feel with having a woman as CEO of a large company or as Head of Government.

This year, building on the initial collaboration between Verian (formerly Kantar Public) and the Reykjavík Global Forum, we worked in partnership with the Government of Iceland and the Nordic Council of Ministers to develop a view across the whole Nordic region – building on the insights from running the Index in Iceland for the previous two years. We aim to use this year’s Index for the Nordics, as a baseline to measure progress over time in these five countries – building on the existing time series for the G7 countries.

¹ To ensure that there is comparison over time, the questions asked have remained the same, meaning that these questions continue to be posed in binary terms. As such we cannot draw any conclusions around the perceptions of transgender leadership. However, in this year’s research, we included a separate question, not linked to the Reykjavík Index itself, around attitudes to transgender leadership in politics and business. The findings are not included here, but will be presented separately.

A six-year view across the G7 countries

Is 2024 the start of a downward trend?

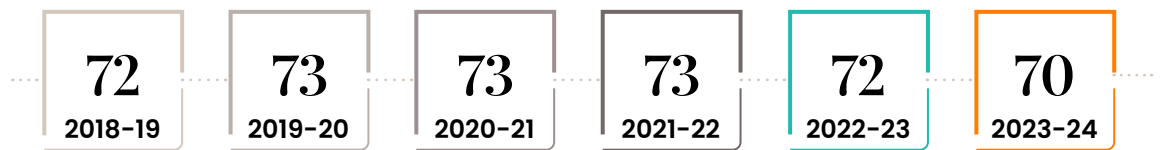
First, let's start with the six-year view of the total aggregated Index score for the G7 countries: Canada; France; Germany; Italy; Japan; the United Kingdom and the United States.

A look at the average Index score for the G7 countries, which we can now track across six years, shows that no progress has now turned into a reversal of progress. After showing no overall progress since 2018-2022, this year's G7 index score is down by two points to 70.

The gap between an overall index score of 70 and total equality measuring 100, can be regarded as the gap between the 'birthright' of equality for men and the everyday reality of women's experiences with inequality across the world.

This regression is alarming and requires us to understand the combination of factors that are behind the data. Importantly, it is also a time to move from research to action and to focus on what action can, and should be taken, to reverse this downward trend.

Average yearly Index scores for the G7 countries 2018-2024

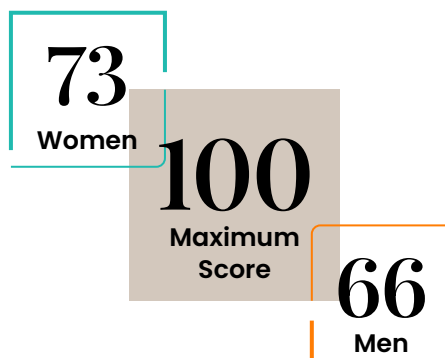


It is clear that complacency and a reliance on 'the passing of time' is not an effective strategy to address deep seated prejudices that exist within our societies, systems and institutions. We can also see the results of the Reykjavík Index for Leadership, despite it being a study of women in leadership specifically, mirrored in other indicators of women and equality more broadly, and

as a proxy for a range of discriminatory factors you tend to see across society. The data gives us serious pause for thought as we are now no longer in a period of progression – in fact – the opposite.

If we split the G7 Index score to look at the results for women and men separately, we can see that Index score for responses from women is only slightly higher at 73, than the Index scores from men at 66. Therefore, women are only marginally less prejudiced than men in terms of their views on the suitability of women for leadership. It can be easy to assume that the primary issue to address is the extent to whether men perceive women as equally suitable to lead, but the reality is that this needs to be addressed by both genders, and is a wider societal issue.

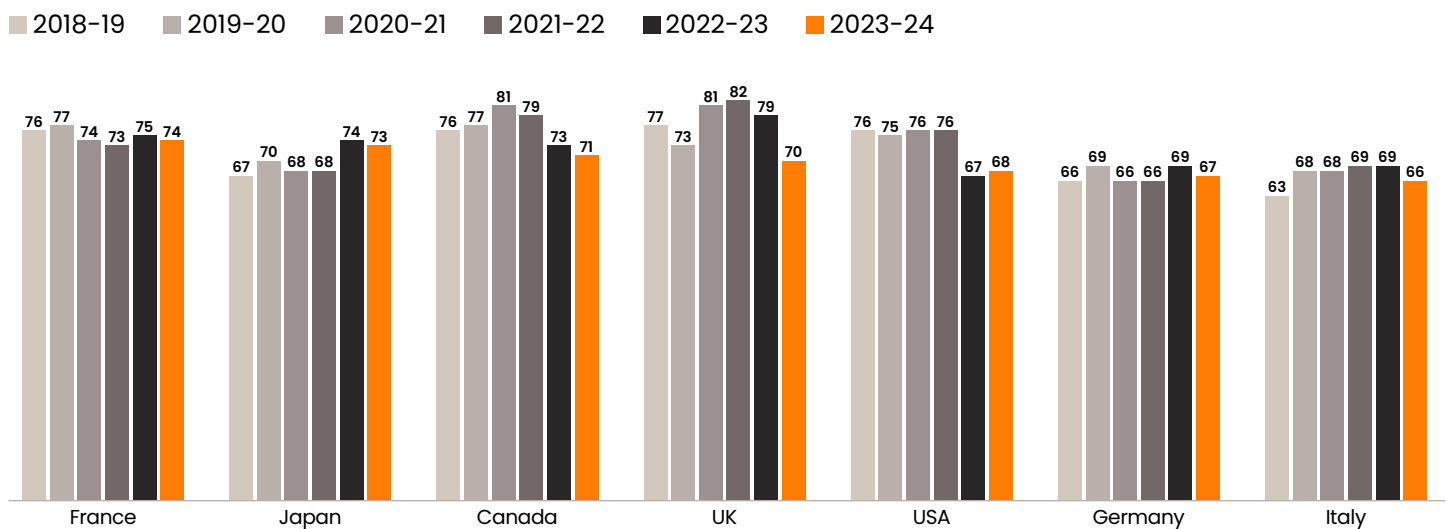
2024 Index score for the G7 countries Split by gender



Across the G7 we see concerning declines in Index scores

Reykjavík Index Scores for the G7 countries

By country over time



This year, all G7 countries (apart from the USA), return a lower Index score, compared to their Index scores in 2022-23. And in comparison with the starting Index scores back in 2018-19, only Germany and Italy return higher Index scores in 2024.

France

This year, France ranks highest out of all the G7 countries on the Index. However, this is not an indication of progress, as the overall Index score for France has dropped from 76 in 2018-19, to 74 in 2023-24. When we consider the responses for France, particularly by gender and age, we see some interesting dynamics at play, which may account for the overall lack of progress in the perception of women's equal suitability for leadership as men.

Japan

Japan is the stand-out within the G7 countries having made solid progress from an initial Index score of 67 back in 2018-19, rising to a high of 74 in 2022-23. But we should also note that Japan's score in 2023-24 is lower than last year, down to 73. However, despite this slight drop, this year Japan still ranks second on the Index amongst the G7 countries.. This is a marked improvement from where they started in 2018, where they ranked fifth and where they also fell below the G7 average.

Overall, Japan has made steady progress over the last six years and it will be interesting to see whether they can sustain this upward trend, against the downward trend we are starting to see across many of the other G7 countries.

Canada

Canada has moved up one place in the ranking of the G7 nations from fourth to third, but this is with a five-point drop on their overall Index score from 76 in 2018-19 to 71 in 2023-24.

This further cements the downward trend we have observed since 2020. It's impossible not to draw parallels with their North American cousins, the USA, when considering what might be behind this drop. But what we do know is that it is unlikely to be a single driver, more a complex set of interconnecting influences and circumstances.

The United Kingdom

The biggest shift among the G7 countries is in the UK. Amongst the G7 nations, the UK scored the highest on the Index on several occasions, until this year with a dramatic drop from 79 last year to 70 this year. This drops the UK from first to fourth in the overall ranking of the G7 countries.

The specific issue in the UK, as with the USA, is the reduction in the Index scores for the younger generation – those aged between 18-34. This is a standout and exceptional feature which is strongest in these two countries and signals an extremely important public policy issue, and even more than that, signals very significant generational challenges ahead.

The United States of America

The overall Index score for the USA has recovered one point from 67 last year to 68 this year. However, they are still down 8 points on the Index from their original high of 76 points in 2018-19.

Unsurprisingly, the data for the USA, was one of the biggest topics of discussion at the Reykjavík Global Forum in November 2022, as speakers and attendees alike, debated the many factors which may have led to their significant drop. Given the influence of the USA around the world – whether through politics, the economy, the media, consumer trends or technology innovations – the onus is on all of us to understand what is at play from a societal perspective and what we can learn from the dynamics driving the results we see in the data.

Germany

Back in 2018-19 Germany started with a fairly low Index score of 66. However, over the subsequent years we started to see marginal improvements until they reached a high of 69 on the Index in 2022-23. However, this year they have dropped back 2 points on the Index and are now almost back to where they started with 67 points. Their overall ranking amongst the G7 countries is also static in sixth place.

More analysis is required to understand why there has not been greater progress in Germany over the last six years and the drivers behind this.

Italy

This year, Italy also shows a decline, from 69 in 2022-23, to 66 this year, after showing progression over the previous five year period. This decline moves them back to last place in the rankings.

The issue in the UK is the reduction in the Index scores for the younger generation

What we can learn from the Nordics

When we look across all 11 countries included in the 2024 Reykjavík Index for Leadership, there is a significant gap between those countries with the lowest Index scores (Italy, Germany, USA) and those with the highest scores (Iceland, and the rest of the Nordics and the Netherlands).

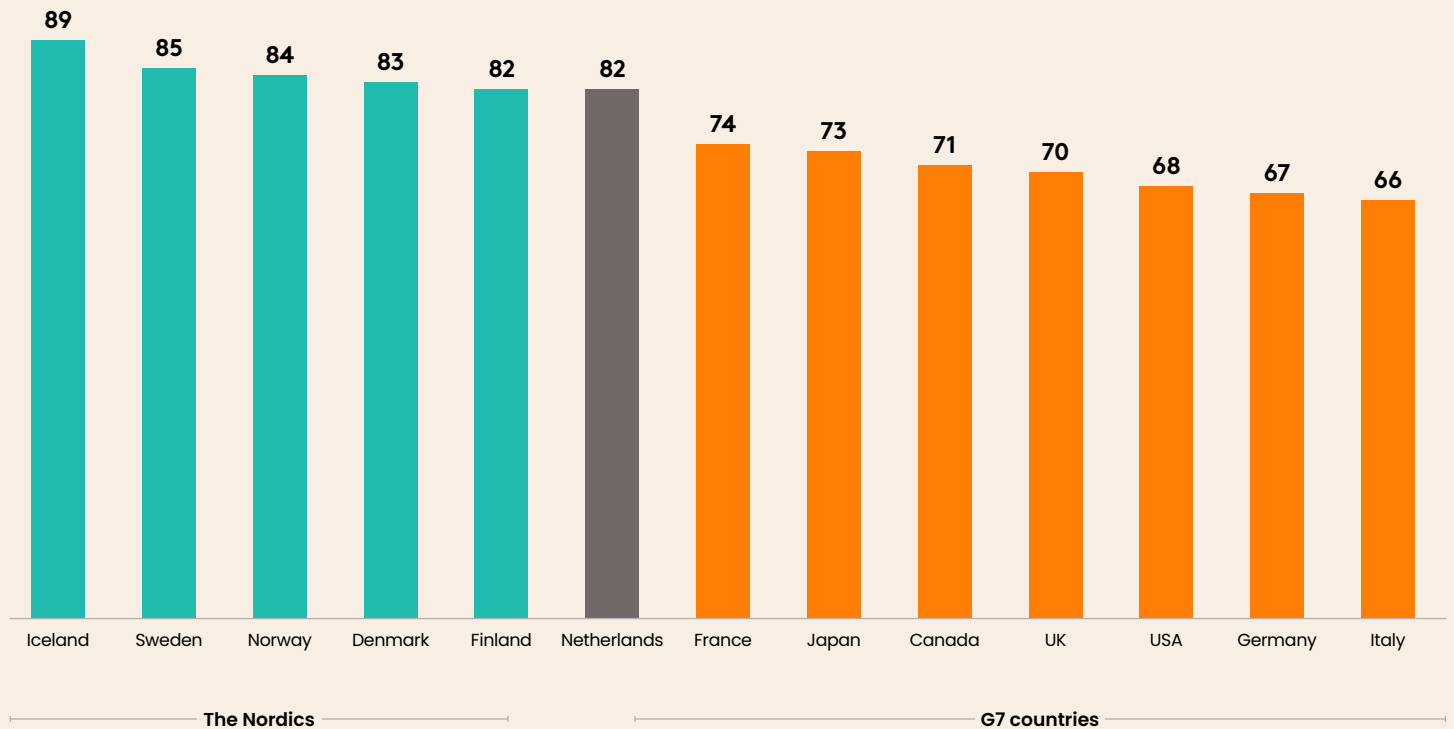
For the third year running, Iceland has topped the Index. Iceland remains the most progressive country of all those surveyed,

as it has been every year since it was first included in the Index in 2021-22. The Nordic countries are all more progressive in their attitudes than any of the G7 countries. The scores for the Netherlands are also more in step with the Nordic countries – and are on a par with Finland, which was the lowest scoring Nordic country.

The Index scores for the Nordics are most likely linked to a well-established and sustained public policy agenda focused

The Reykjavík Index Scores for all countries in 2024

The G7, The Nordics and The Netherlands



on gender equality which includes measures to support equal pay, board representation and parental leave. As a result, the Nordic countries also lead the OECD rankings for gender equality.

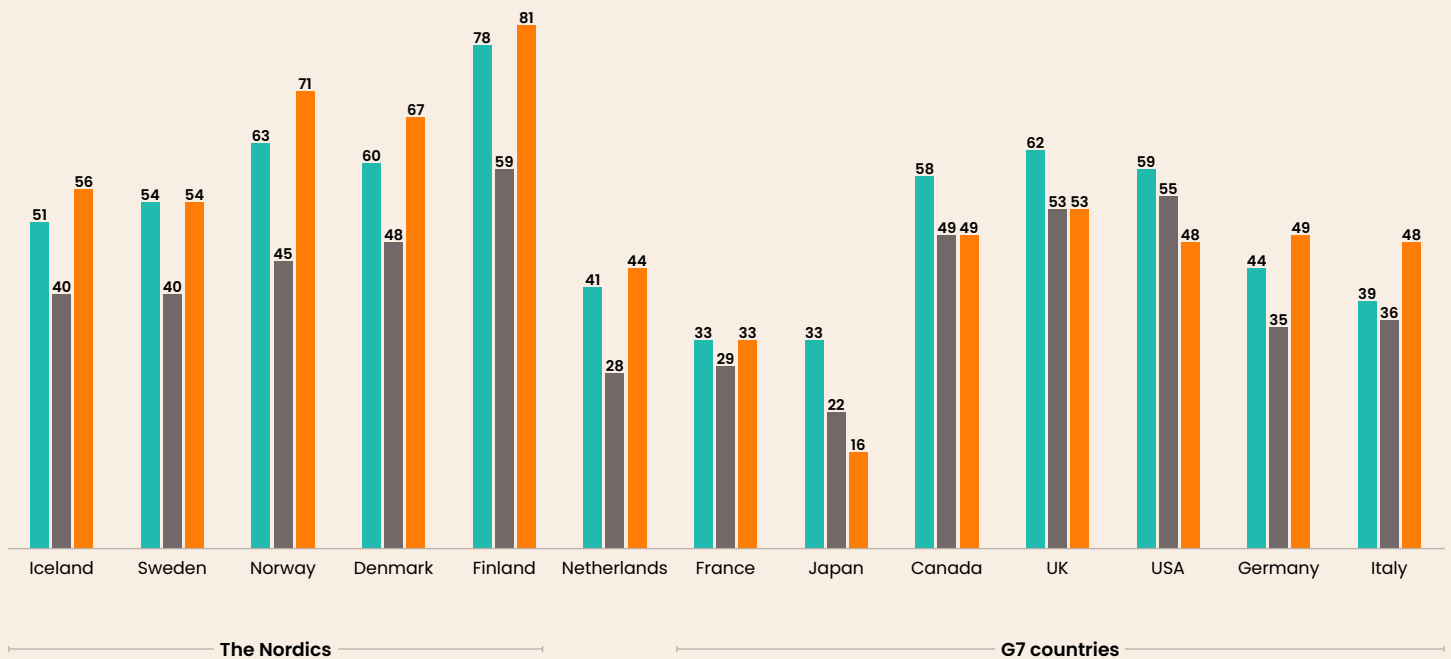
However, despite these impressive results, the data also shows that citizens in the Nordics are not complacent and do not think that gender equality has been achieved in their countries.

For example, when we look at Iceland, which has had the highest Index scores for any country we have monitored, they score consistently lower when asked whether they feel that gender equality has been achieved in their country.

This reflects a relentless determination in Iceland, that they will not settle for anything less than true gender equality.

Share of respondents that thinks gender equality has been achieved...*

■ At work ■ In leadership positions in companies/organisations ■ In politics



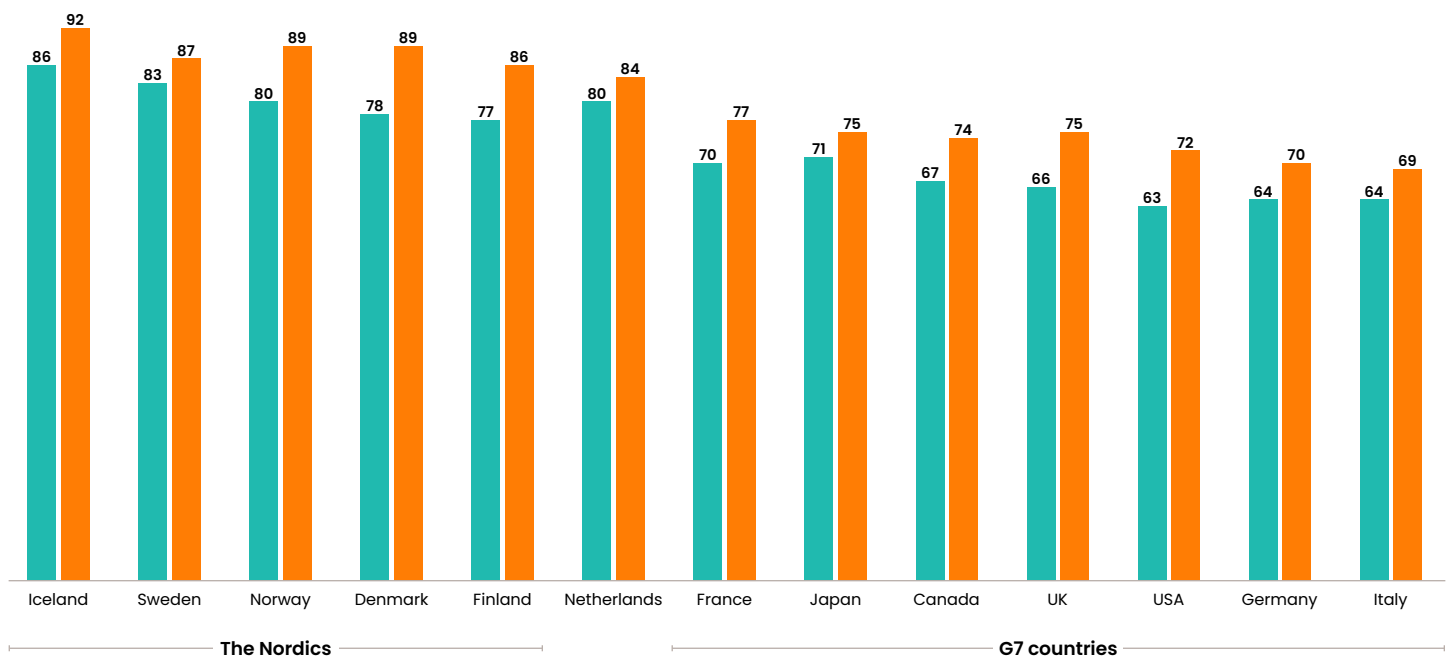
*Answered "Yes definitely" or "Yes, to some extent" on the question "Do you think gender equality has been achieved in (COUNTRY)...?"

Women are prejudiced – but men are more so

The Reykjavík Index scores for all countries in 2024

By country and gender

Men Women



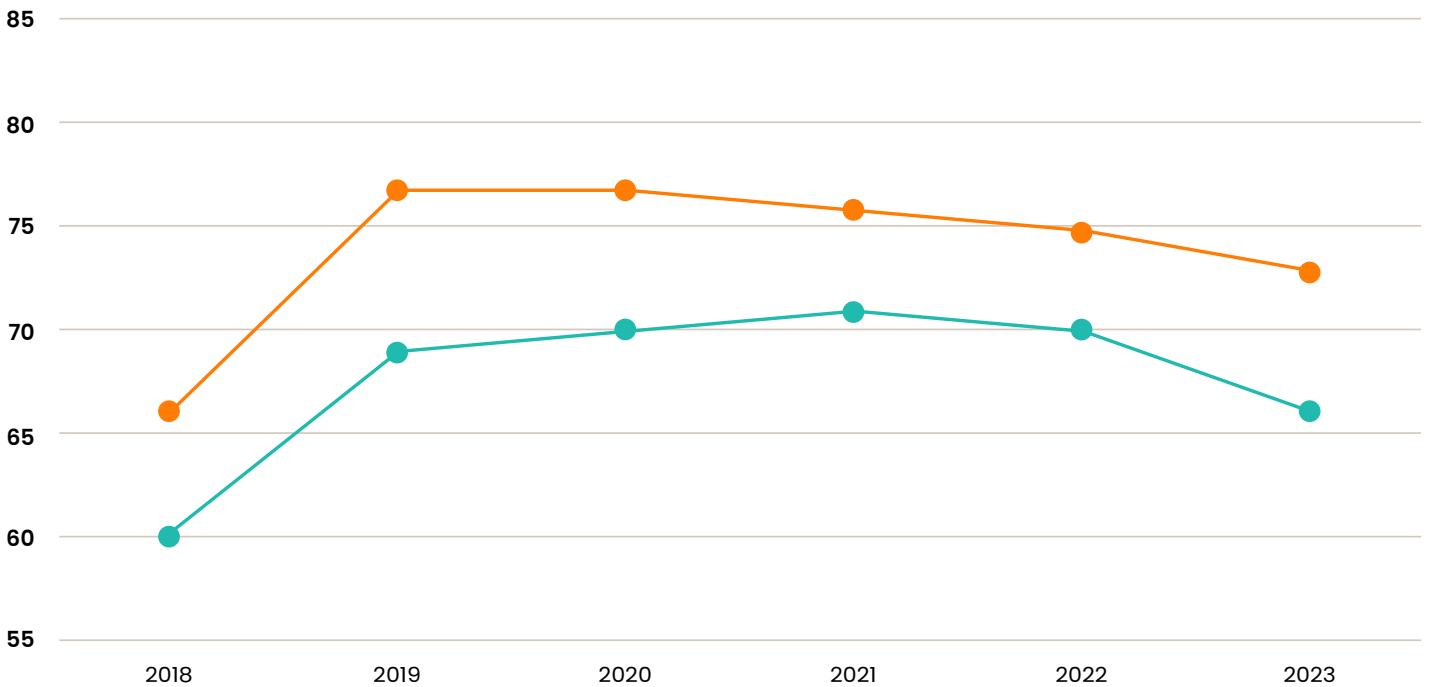
It can sometimes be assumed that prejudice against women's suitability for positions of leadership is only something that affects men. But this is not the case as women also show significant prejudice against women being equally suitable as men for positions of leadership. This is also the case for the Nordic countries and

the Netherlands. Even in these markets we see stark differences between men and women, with the gender gaps in Denmark and Finland for example similar to the ones for the UK and the USA. There is less dissonance between men and women in Sweden, the Netherlands, and Japan.

The Reykjavík Index 2024 scores for the G7 countries

By gender

Men Women



The fact that both women and men hold perceptions which are prejudiced against women's suitability for leadership or positions of power, means that this is not about 'fixing' women or men. It is about how we tackle these prejudices across society as a whole. In fact, the G7 data shows not only a widening gender gap, but also a regression in the attitudes of women.

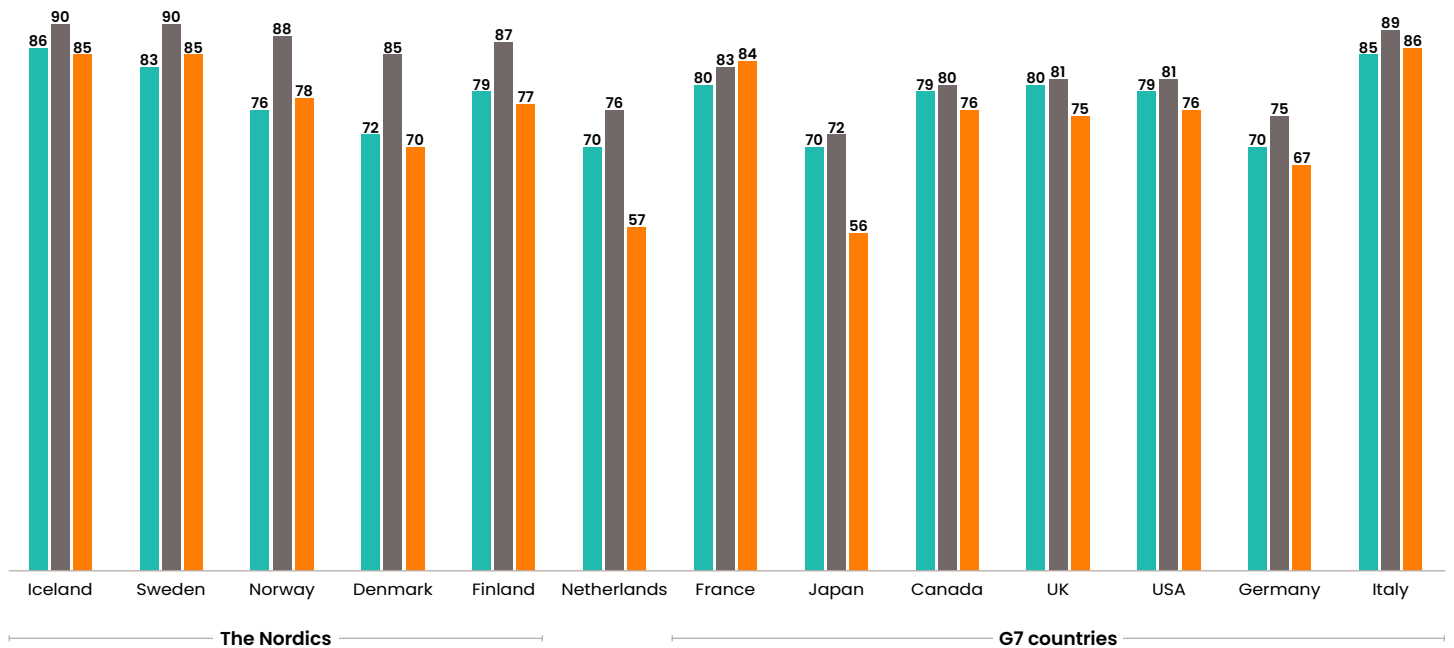
When we start to explore other factors at work here, it is interesting to look at responses to one of our other questions: **'In your view, how important is gender equality for our society?'** Across the Nordics there is a consistently high proportion of respondents who agree with the statement that 'gender equality is important to ensure a fair and democratic society'.

We also see this perspective reflected in some of the G7 countries, including: France, Canada, the UK, the USA and Italy. However, there is typically a lower percentage of

respondents across all markets, who agree with the accompanying statements that gender equality is important for either 'companies and the economy' or 'for me personally'. This may be one of the drivers behind why there is still a level of prejudice when respondents are asked to state whether women and men are equally suitable for positions of leadership across 23 sectors, as this would tie more closely to their relative views of the importance of gender equality in relation to work and the economy.

Percentage of respondents who agree* that promoting gender equality is important...

■ for companies and for the economy ■ to ensure a fair and democratic society ■ for me personally



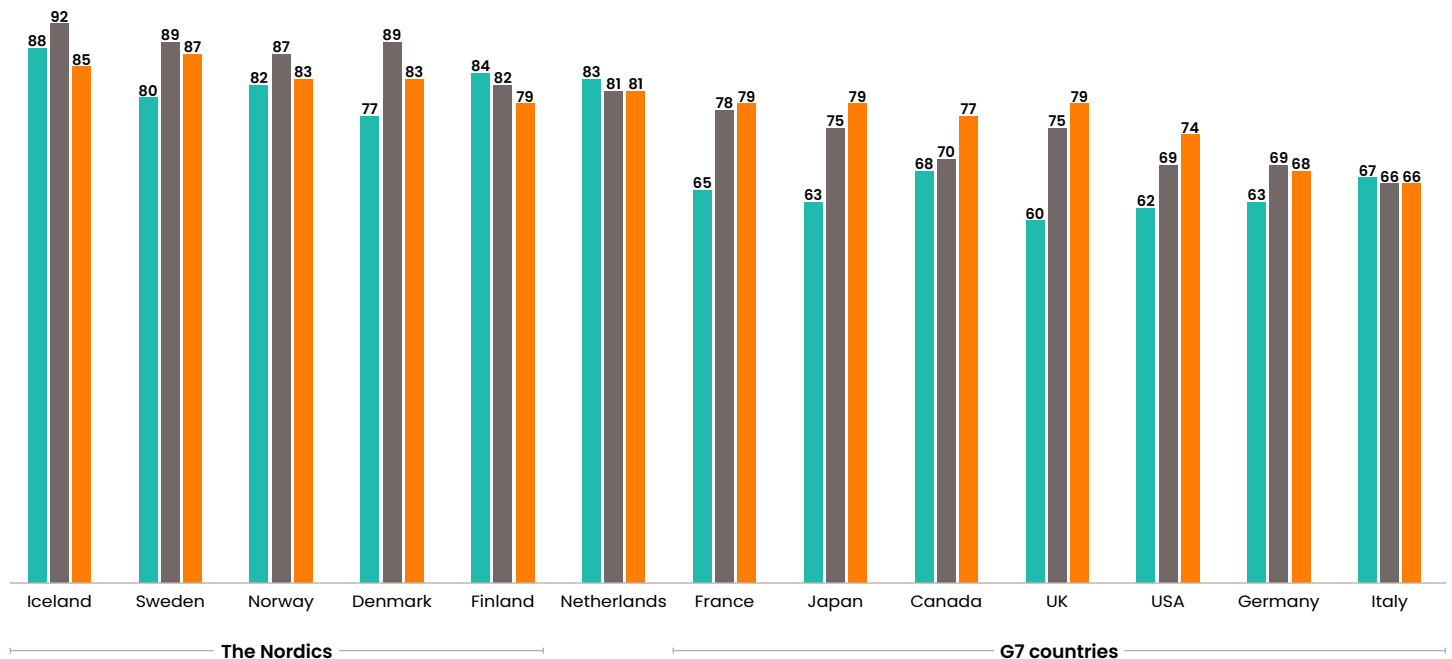
*Answered "Completely agree" or "Partly agree" on the question "To what extent do you agree with the following statements?"

A worrying trend is continuing: Young people are more prejudiced than their parents

The Reykjavík Index 2024 scores for the G7 countries, the Nordics and the Netherlands

By country and age

■ 18-34 ■ 35-54 ■ 55-65



This is one of the most surprising and worrying data points from our research, and the one that most people find hard to reconcile with their immediate experiences of the young people they know. But this is where we need to pause and understand that the research is designed to provide a majority view from across the whole spectrum of society. Therefore, when we look at the whole cohort of 18-34 year olds, the data won't reflect the most progressive

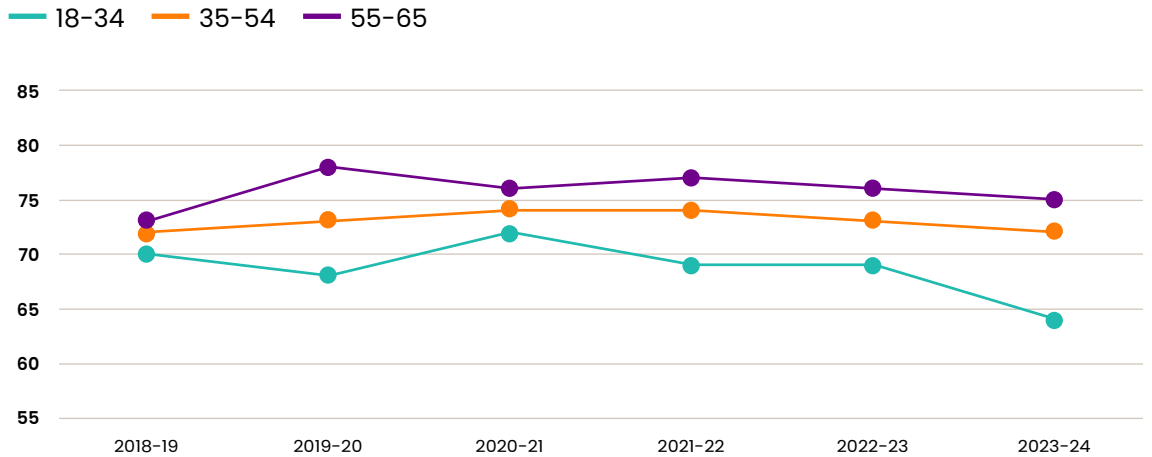
and open-minded young people who don't see divisions by gender, ethnicity, sexuality or social class. Rather it reflects the majority view of those between the ages of 18-34 within the countries where we conducted our research.

The data is also the same in the Nordics, apart from in Finland, and in the Netherlands where we can see that the younger generation hold more progressive views than their parents.

However, this isn't a new trend, rather one which we first observed back in 2018. But the dissonance between the younger generation and those aged 35 and older, is getting more pronounced and seems to be increasing for each year we measure attitudes.

The Reykjavík Index average scores for the G7 countries

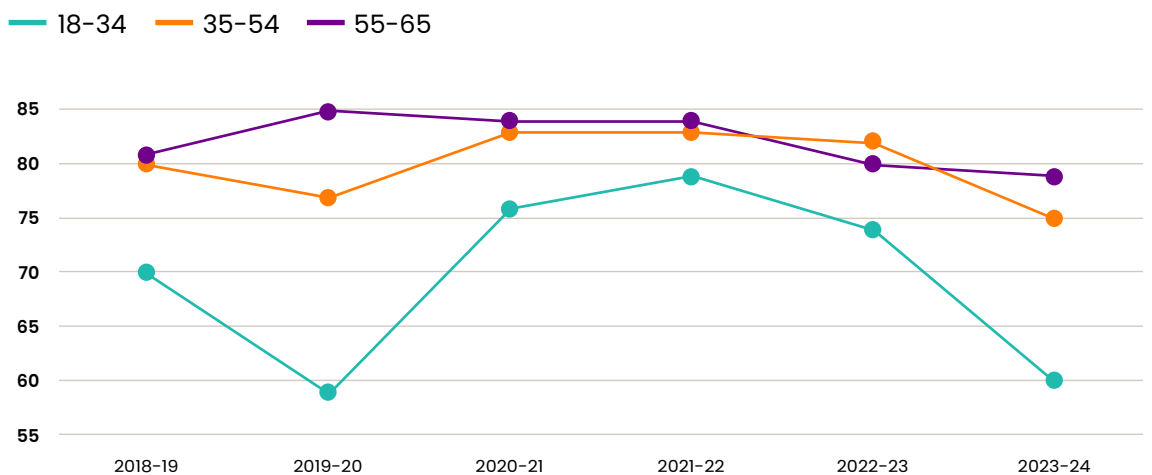
By age and over time



When looking at the UK, where there was a dramatic 9-point drop in the index score, we can see that this was mostly driven by the younger age cohort.

The Reykjavík Index scores for the UK

By age and over time



When we look at the data for the Nordics more specifically, we can see that it is not only younger men who are less progressive in their attitudes, but also younger women, although to a lesser degree. It is only Finland, where we can see that younger men are on a par with their elders and young women are more progressive than their older cohorts.

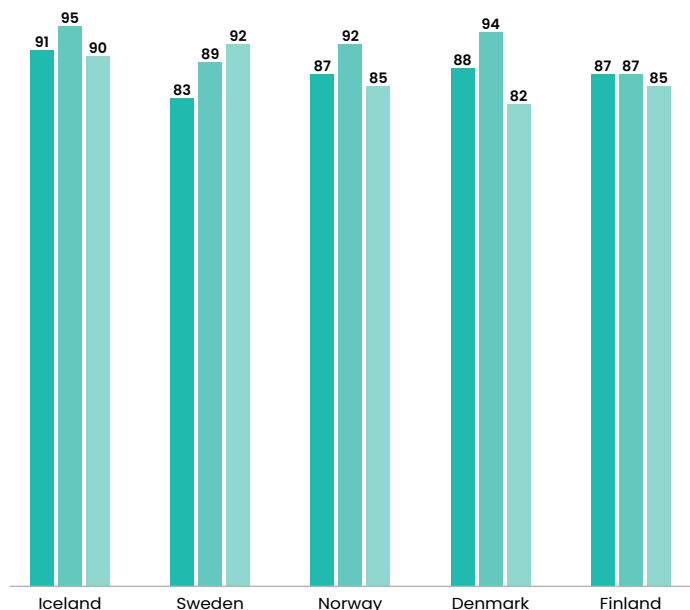
The Nordics Reykjavík Index 2023-2024

By country, gender and age

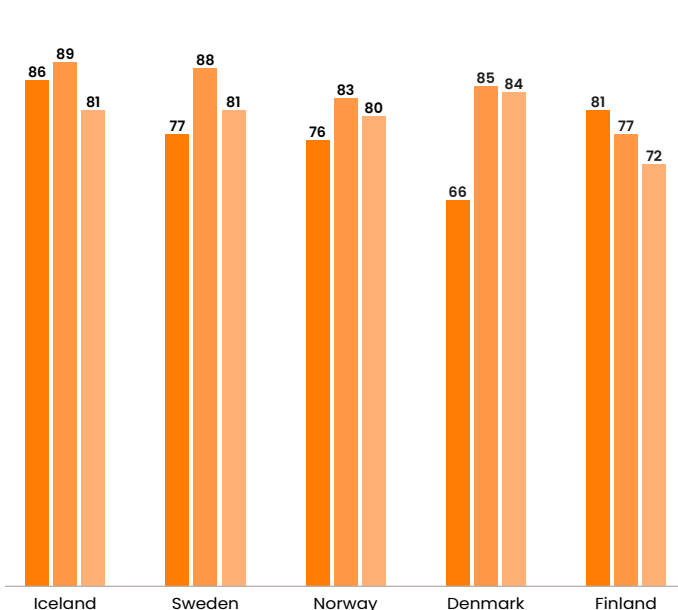
■ 18-34 ■ 35-54 ■ 55-65

■ 18-34 ■ 35-54 ■ 55-65

Women



Men



Given that this particular cut of the data can feel challenging to more liberal norms, it is worth considering some of the factors that might be at play here. These potential factors surfaced through discussions at The Reykjavík Global Forum and there are three perspectives which may be important to consider.

This data arrives at the same time as we are seeing an increasing global public debate and awareness about the online targeting of young people with misogynistic material online.

We also know that disinformation is a challenge, and that younger people are less able to identify malicious information. The fragmentation of traditional media and the fact that a large majority of young people are seeking information from non-traditional sources, could also be a factor to consider.

This is also the first generation to come through which has had access from a very young age to pornography and to social media and all the stereotyping that goes with it – it is not too great a stretch to understand that this is perhaps influencing the view of women’s suitability for leadership.

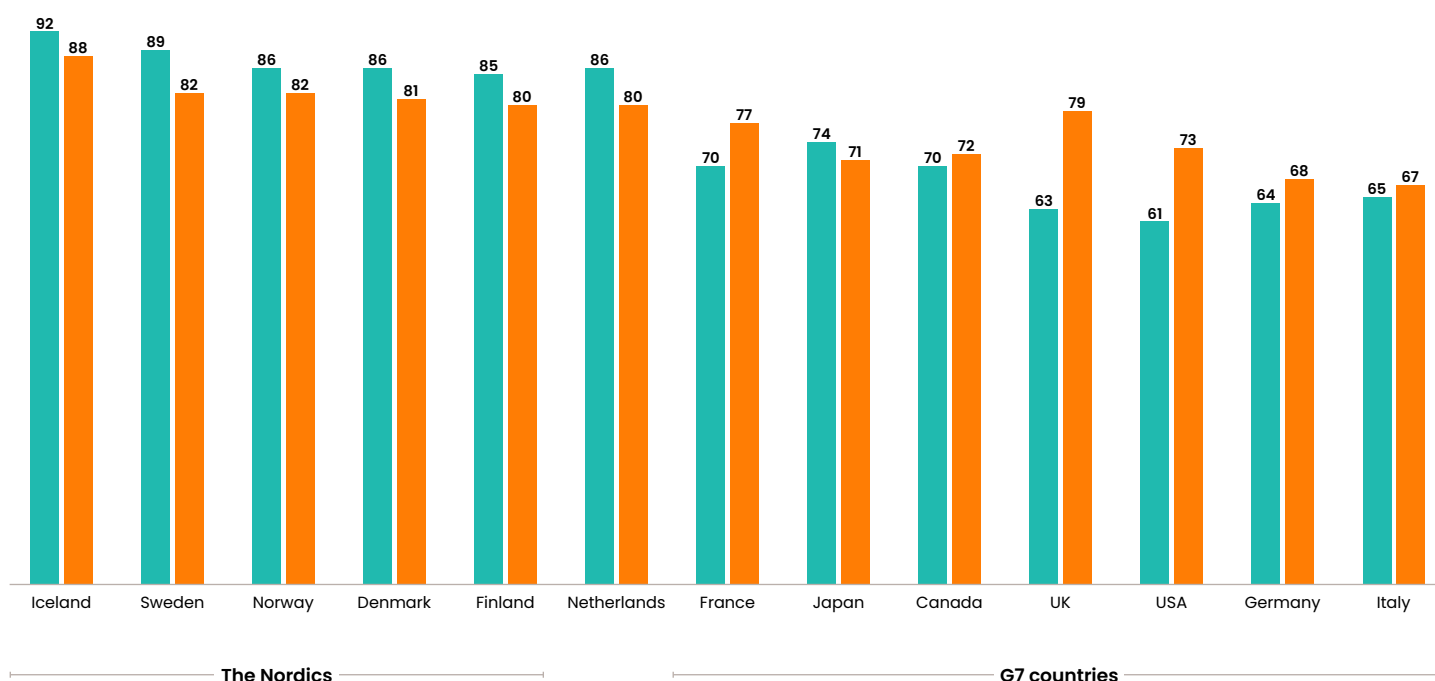
If younger generations carry more prejudice and less positive attitudes towards gender equality than older generations, we potentially find ourselves in a situation where a reversal in progress towards gender equality becomes sustained.

What is the impact of education and trust in public institutions?

The Reykjavík Index scores for 2024

By country and education

■ University/Graduate degree ■ No University/Graduate degree



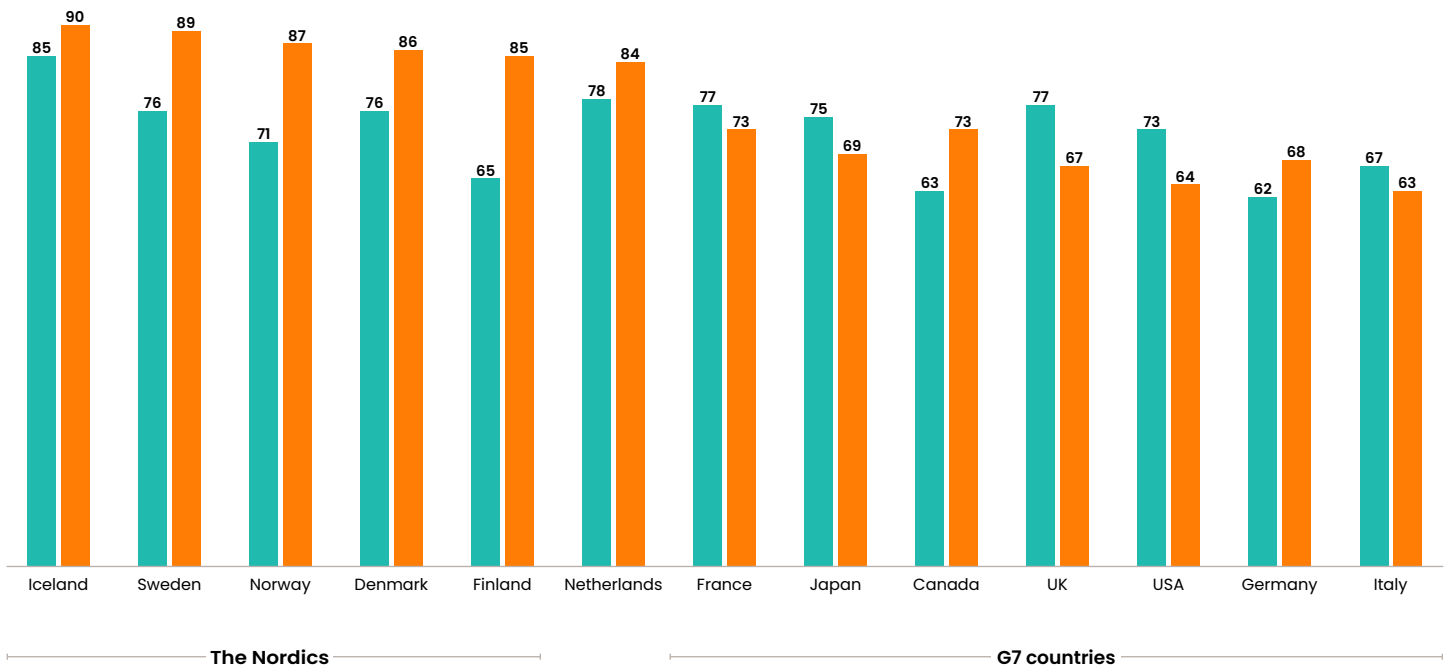
This year we wanted to extend our understanding of what could be driving some of the trends that were starting to emerge from last year's Index. Therefore, we included additional questions around educational levels and the extent to which respondents trusted public institutions. Both of these aspects have been linked in other studies to attitudes to gender.

Our hypothesis was confirmed in the Nordics but presented more complicated results among the G7 that merit further attention and research. For example, in all G7 countries, bar Japan, men and women **without** university degrees return higher index scores than university graduates, and are thus more inclined to think that a woman or a man are equally suitable to lead. The opposite is the case in every Nordic country and the Netherlands.

Reykjavík Index 2023-2024

By country and trust in public institutions

■ Low trust in public institutions ■ High trust in public institutions



Similarly, for the Nordics and the Netherlands, high trust in public institutions seems to be correlated to a higher index score, but the picture is more complicated for the G7². We are planning to look further into this, but one hypothesis is that the

spread of populist governments in some of the G7 countries may lead to less trust in public institutions, especially among those who hold more progressive views around gender equality.

² Low trust = Answered 0-3 on the question "In general, how much do you trust public institutions in, on a scale from 0 to 10?" 0=Not at all, 10=Completely; **High trust = Answered 7-10 on the question "In general, how much do you trust public institutions in, on a scale from 0 to 10?" 0=Not at all, 10=Completely

Views on women's suitability for leadership in government and business is still fluctuating

After the sharp declines that we saw in 2022-23, for the percentage of respondents who were 'very comfortable with a woman being either CEO of a major company or head of government', the good news is that in 2024 we have seen small improvements across all G7 countries. However, we are not yet back to the levels we recorded in either 2020 or 2021.

Overall, in the G7, there are four countries (France, Germany, Italy and Japan) who, since we started asking these questions, have consistently had less than 50% of respondents in their markets saying they felt 'very comfortable' with a woman being either CEO of a major company or as head of government.

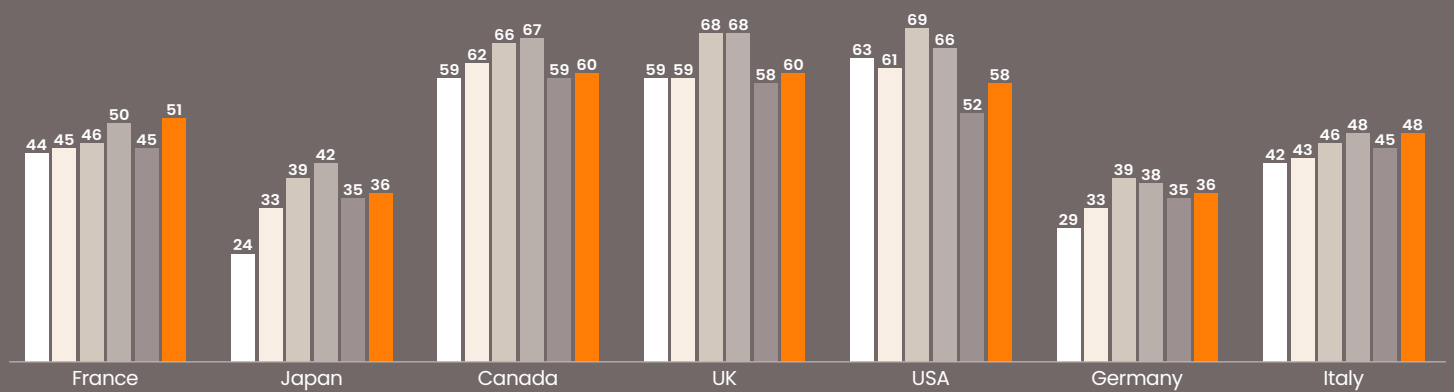
And for the remaining three countries, Canada, UK and the USA, (apart from the last two years) we have typically seen percentage scores of between 50-69%

However, it should be noted that none of these countries are yet to break through the 70% barrier. Meaning that for all G7 countries there is still a remarkable level of prejudice across society (men and women, although there is a consistently lower percentage of men who are 'very comfortable' across both questions), when considering whether a woman is suitable for significant leadership positions in either government or business.

For all G7 countries there is still a remarkable level of prejudice evident across society... when considering whether a woman is suitable for significant leadership positions in either government or business

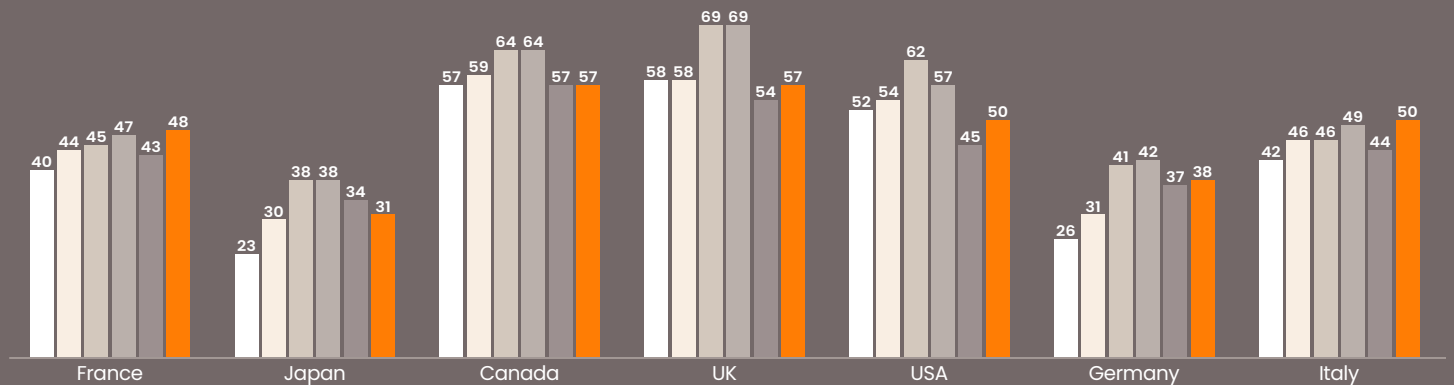
Percentage of respondents across the G7 countries who are very comfortable with a woman as CEO of a major company

■ 2018-19 ■ 2019-20 ■ 2020-21 ■ 2021-22 ■ 2022-23 ■ 2023-24



Percentage of respondents across the G7 countries who are very comfortable with a woman as head of government

■ 2018-19 ■ 2019-20 ■ 2020-21 ■ 2021-22 ■ 2022-23 ■ 2023-24



Conclusion

The data from the 2024 Reykjavík Index should make us concerned. Societies either tend to take a view that citizens are entitled to equality, and are equal, or are not. When you are looking at perceptions of women and equality, it's also a proxy for a number of other things. And where discrimination and prejudice against one section of society exists, we know that discrimination along other lines will also be present.

Through 2024, The Reykjavík Global Forum, and their Global Advisory Board Members, will continue to commit to tackle the underlying causes of gender-based prejudice, to support women attain and retain power, and to work towards a more equal world in all aspects of society.

Time to act

1.

The biggest concern is the increase in prejudice we are seeing in younger people towards women being seen as equally suitable to hold positions of leadership as men. If this continues, we are potentially seeing a regression of the progress in gender equality which has been achieved over the last 30 years. Policy makers, business leaders, the media and academic institutions need to work together to understand the complex issues at play and design and implement the interventions which can make a tangible and sustained impact.

2.

We need to keep going. The more that we can create workplaces where people are rewarded fairly with as much inclusivity as possible, the better for all of us.

We recognise that our data paints a dismal picture, but there are areas where progress is taking hold and the more we can understand what is working and why, the better we can apply these learnings elsewhere.

3.

Stop thinking that needing to 'fix' women is the answer. Many organisations have good intentions and run programmes which are focused on training women to become 'better leaders'. Women aren't the problem, and we don't need to fix them. The issues are about the way organisations, companies and societies work.

4.

We need to take a much stronger view about the actions, behaviours and micro-aggressions that women and other groups experience everyday in the workplace. The onus to take corrective behaviour needs to sit with those responsible for the actions, not on the people who we might have trained previously to better manage being on the receiving end.



Next steps

We welcome thoughts from all those working to support progress towards gender equality and equity.

Please contact us directly at globalmarketing@veriangroup.com if you would like to discuss the data and potentially partner on solutions designed to make a sustainable and positive impact for societies around the world.

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership was launched in 2018, covering the G7 countries and 20 sectors of the economy. It was then repeated in 2019 and extended to cover the BRIC countries and two additional sectors. In 2020, the Reykjavík Index for Leadership was repeated, covering the G7 countries plus India, Kenya and Nigeria, and extended to cover 23 sectors. In 2021, The Reykjavík Index undertook its biggest ever country scope, covering all G20 countries (including the G7), as well as Iceland, Poland and Spain. In 2022–2023, the research for The Reykjavík Index for Leadership covered all G7 countries – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America), plus Australia, Iceland, Indonesia, Poland, Singapore, Spain and Thailand.

In 2023–24, our research includes the G7, the Nordics and the Netherlands.

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership has been constructed based on research exploring the question:

“For each of the following sectors or industries, do you think men or women are better suited to leadership positions?”.

This question allows responses of ‘men’, ‘women’, ‘both equally’ and ‘don’t know’ for 23 different economic and professional sectors. Aligned with our goal, a response of ‘both equally’ results in a point for that country within the Index, while a response of ‘men better suited’, ‘women better suited’ does not. ‘Don’t know’ are excluded from the Index score.

A country’s Reykjavík Index for Leadership is equal to the average proportion of people selecting ‘both equally’ across the 23 economic sectors. This is a measure of the extent to which, across society, men and women are viewed to be equally suitable for leadership.

When average scores are presented (e.g., the Nordics or G7), each country’s index is weighted equally regardless of population size.

Sample, methodology, target group, and field work

The data source for the 2023–2024 is a survey of at least 1000 working age-adults (aged 18–65) collected in web panels in each country. The sections below describe the sample sizes and data collection modes per country or group of countries.

G7 countries

In the G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, US) 1000 interviews were collected in each country through Kantar Profiles’ web panels, i.e., 7000 interviews in total. The samples have been weighted so that each country’s gender, age, and education profile match the relevant population profile. The data was collected between August 22nd and September 5th.

The Nordics

In the Nordics (Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland), c. 1000 interviews were collected in each country, i.e., c. 5000 interviews in total. In Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland, the data was collected in Kantar Media’s randomly recruited web panel between August 22nd and August 31st. The samples have been weighted so that each country’s gender, age, and education profile match the relevant population profile. In Iceland, the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI), at the University of Iceland, collected c. 1000 interviews in SSRI’s probability-based online panel between September 27th and October 11th. The sample has been weighted so that gender, age, and residence reflect the composition of the Icelandic population as accurately as possible.

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, c. 1000 interviews were collected in Kantar’s randomly recruited NIPO Base Panel between the 6th and 13th of September. The samples have been weighted so that each country’s gender, age, and education profile match the relevant population profile.



For any questions on the methodology, please contact globalmarketing@veriangroup.com

Founders of the Reykjavík Index for Leadership



Dr Michelle Harrison
Global Chief
Executive Officer,
Verian

Michelle is the Global CEO of Verian, a world leading, independent research, evidence, evaluation, and communications agency, providing services to government and the public realm.

Alongside a career in public policy and social impact advisory and innovation, Michelle is a gender and diversity advocate and advisor. In partnership with the Reykjavík Global Forum, she created The Reykjavík Index for Leadership, which is the first international measure of how societies perceive the suitability of women

for leadership. Listed as 'Best of Davos' in 2018 and presented by Michelle at UNGA, the G7 and the G20, The Reykjavík Index is now a go-to reference in public debate, the media and policy development.

Previously, Michelle was the founding global CEO of WPP's Government and Public Sector practice, and the creator of WPP's Executive Education Programmes for Integrated Government Communications, now in their 11th year, at the Blavatnik School of Government at Oxford University and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore.



Hanna Birna Kristjánsdóttir
Chair of the Board of
The Reykjavík Global
Forum, Iceland

Hanna Birna is the Co-founder and Chair of the Reykjavík Global Forum, which takes place in Iceland every year and gathers 500 women leaders from around 100 countries to discuss and share ideas and solutions on how to advance society further, increase equality between women and men, and promote and positively develop the number of women in leadership positions. She is also the Senior Adviser on Women's leadership at UN Women in New York, where she for example leads the first permanent UN Women Leaders Network chaired by the Executive Director of UN Women.

Hanna was the Chair of the Executive Board of Women Political Leaders WPL from 2016–2020 and is currently a member of the WPL Board.

Hanna Birna was active in Icelandic politics for over 20 years, previously serving in the National Parliament and the City Council of Reykjavík. She is the former President of the City Council, the former Mayor of Reykjavík, the former Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Parliament of Iceland when serving as a member of Althingi, and the former Minister of the Interior in the Government of Iceland.

Hanna Birna obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Iceland in 1991 and later a Master of Science in International and European Politics from the University of Edinburgh (1993).



Silvana Koch-Mehrin
Founder and
President, Women
Political Leaders

Silvana is the President and Founder of Women Political Leaders (WPL), the worldwide network of women politicians. Silvana served as Vice-President of the European Parliament (2009–2011) and Member of the European Parliament (2004–2014). Before her time in politics, she founded and ran a public affairs consultancy in Brussels, which later merged with a larger US firm. In addition to her work for WPL, Silvana serves on the board of the Council of Women World Leaders, the network of women President and Prime Ministers. She is also a member of

the European Leadership Network (EUN), a member of the Global Advisory Network of Apolitical Academy Global and an advisory board member to PINK! She also works as a Senior Advisor to Binance, and is a Venture Partner at Conny&Co. Previously, she was a senior Special Advisor for EY.

2016–2020 Silvana represented the EU in the Executive Committee of W20, an official engagement group of the G20. In 2018 and 2019, she was ranked as one of the 100 most influential persons in gender equality by Apolitical. Silvana is a Young Global Leader Alumni of the World Economic Forum.

About Verian

Formerly Kantar Public

Verian is a world leading, independent research, evidence, evaluation, and communications agency, providing services to government and the public realm.

We work with our clients to help solve the next generation of public policy challenges. With offices across Europe, APAC and in the US, our consultants and researchers are supported by our unique global data ecosystem. We provide gold standard data on the economy and society to decision makers and engage directly with many millions of citizens each year on their behalf.

Combining expertise in human understanding with advanced technologies and data science, our work with clients creates policy interventions, designs better public services, and unlocks behaviour change.

We support the rapid development of policy thinking in moments of urgency. We implement policies on the ground. We build communications to reach diverse and complex audiences.

We bring global best practice and local expertise.

We are Verian.

Powering decisions that shape the world.

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About The Reykjavík Global Forum

Reykjavík Global is both a convening and a community. Launched in 2018 and co-hosted with the Government and Parliament of Iceland, under the heading of Power, Together, the forum convenes women leaders from all sectors, including politics, governments, business, civil society, academia, the arts and media, to share ideas and solutions on how to further advance society towards equality and to promote and positively develop the number of women in leadership positions.

Attracting hundreds of the most influential global women leaders each

year, the community's flagship event, the Reykjavik Global Forum, offers a unique lens into the best practices and proven solutions to achieve diversity and parity. Its platform is centred on the global adoption of the Reykjavik Action Items; equal representation, equal pay, equal parental leave, and ending gender-based violence.

The Reykjavik Global Forum has evolved from an annual event into an active community with year-round activities, with the aim of empowering more women to attain and retain power.

reykjavikglobal.com