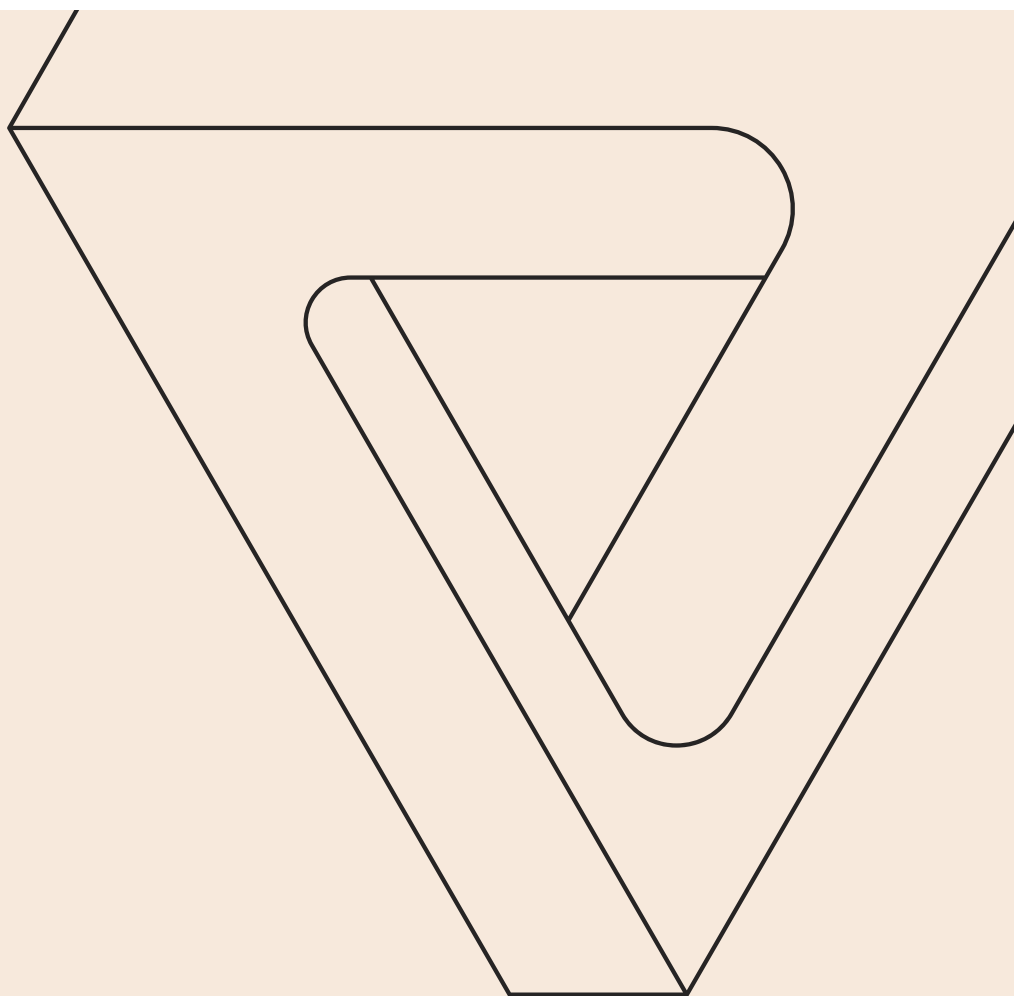




# The Reykjavík Index for Leadership

2025

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

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# Foreword

We shared early headlines from our 2024-2025 Reykjavík Index for Leadership in November 2024 at the Reykjavík Global Forum.



**Dr Michelle Harrison**  
Global Chief Executive  
Officer, Verian



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

**When we set out to measure perceptions of women's suitability for leadership, we knew that progress would not be linear. It rarely is. 2025's index scores in the G7 show that the increase in prejudice seen over the last two years has continued. This decline is driven by polarisation in society, between young people and previous generations, and between men and women.**

At a sector level, our research continues to demonstrate prejudice against men and women, particularly in professions associated with 'caring' such as healthcare and wellbeing, childcare, and education.

Similarly, women are seen as less suitable for leadership than men in traditionally 'masculine' sectors such as defence and police, engineering and aerospace.

With regression, there is also resilience. As we presented the findings of The Reykjavík Index at Reykjavík Global Forum in November 2024, we saw shining examples of resilience within communities and stories emerging that will help to drive positive change.

There is clearly more work to be done. We hope that these findings will enable policymakers across the world to continue efforts to create a world where gender is not perceived as a limiting factor in leadership.

**Michelle and Hanna**

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# Background

The Reykjavík Index for Leadership is the measure of perceptions of equality for men and women in 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. Any score of less than 100 is an indication of prejudice in society.

Launched in 2018, the Index measures perceptions of women and men as leaders across the G7 and Iceland.

The Index has been constructed based on research exploring the question “For each of the following sector or industries, do you think men or women, or neither, are better suited to leadership positions?”

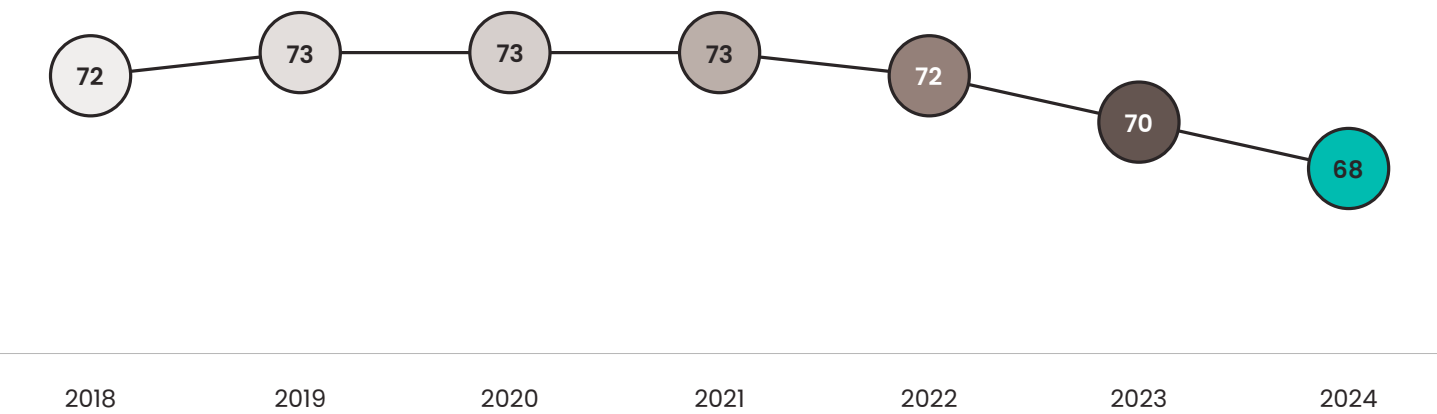
This year, thanks to the support of the Gates Foundation, our work extended to understanding perceptions of women in leadership in Kenya and Nigeria. For the first time, Verian also conducted this research in New Zealand. We also continued research in The Netherlands, marking our second year of index scores for this country.



# Seven years of The Reykjavík Index in the G7

This year's score, an average of **68** across the G7 countries, marks the lowest result since our research began in 2018. At best this indicates an era of stasis and at worse points to continued regression on attitudes to gender equality in leadership.

Average Reykjavík Index scores across the G7



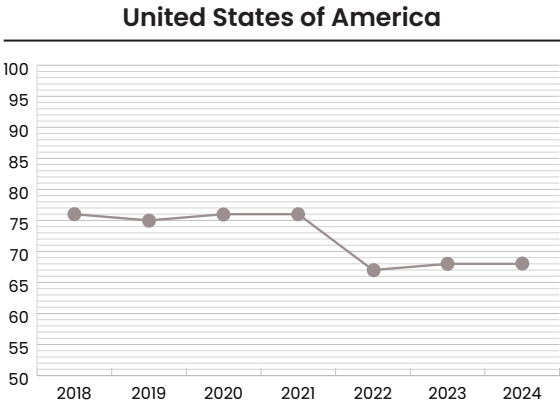
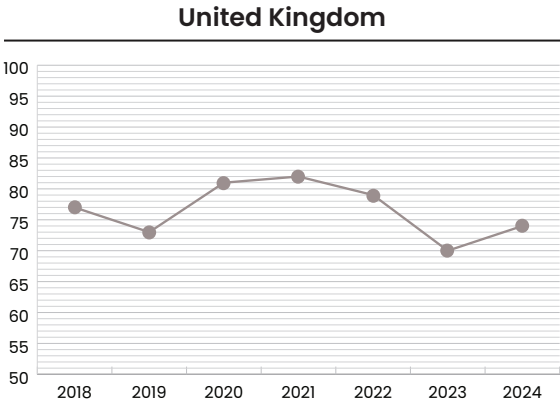
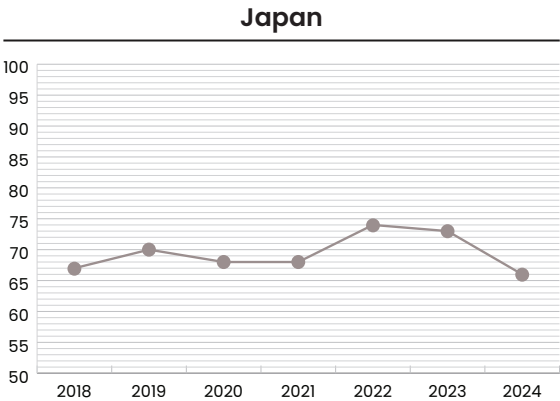
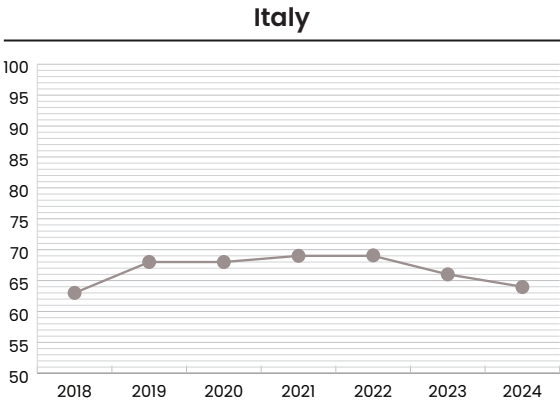
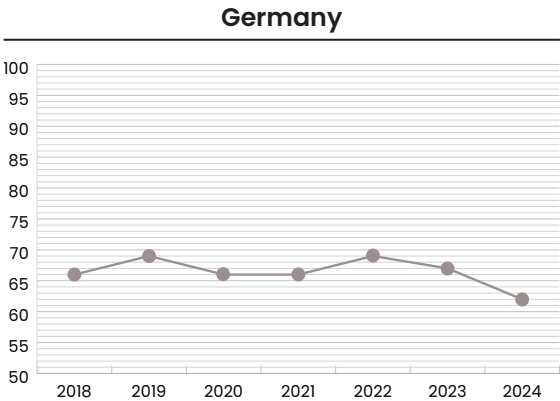
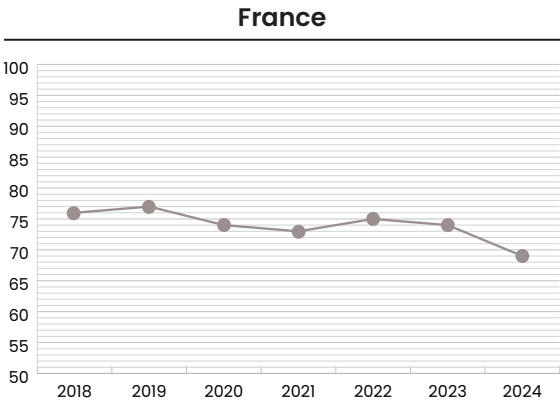
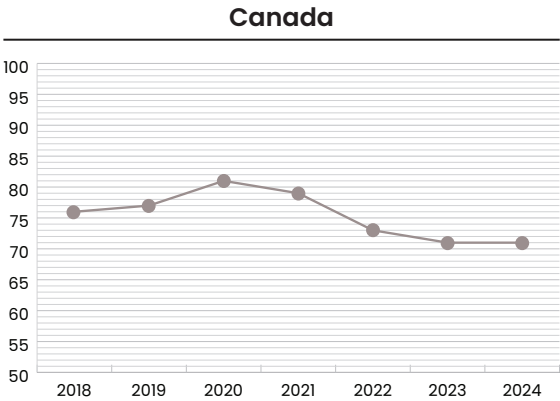
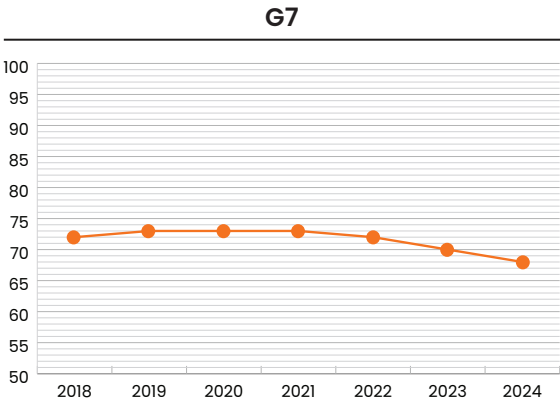
Reykjavík Index for leadership score by country over the last 7 years (change from previous year)

| Country        | 2024    | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|----------------|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| United Kingdom | 74 (+4) | 70   | 79   | 82   | 81   | 73   | 77   |
| Canada         | 71 (nc) | 71   | 73   | 79   | 81   | 77   | 76   |
| France         | 69 (-5) | 74   | 75   | 73   | 74   | 77   | 76   |
| United States  | 68 (nc) | 68   | 67   | 76   | 76   | 75   | 76   |
| Japan          | 66 (-7) | 73   | 74   | 68   | 68   | 70   | 67   |
| Italy          | 64 (-2) | 66   | 69   | 69   | 68   | 68   | 63   |
| German         | 62 (-5) | 67   | 69   | 66   | 66   | 69   | 66   |

While overall scores have declined since last year, there is nuance and even some positive change within the G7. For example, there has been a positive shift in the United Kingdom since 2023 which now regains its position as highest ranking among the G7 countries.

The greatest regression in attitudes since last year can be seen in Japan (-7 points), Germany (-5) and France (-5). There is no change in North America, with Canada and the United States both remaining the same as 2023.

Seven years of Index scores for the G7: Reykjavik Index by country and over time, 2018 - 2024





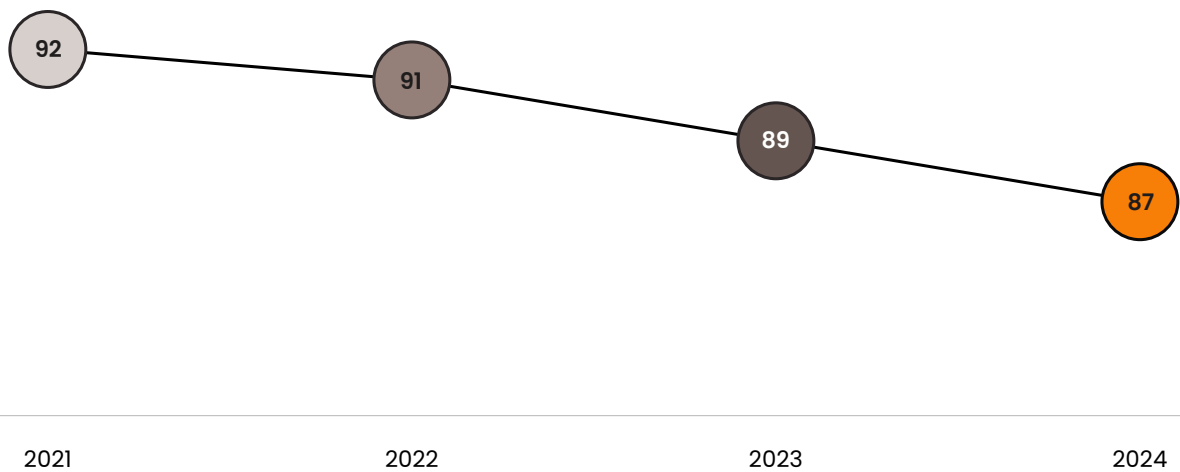


## Decline continues, even in Iceland

Iceland still has the highest index scores of any country we have monitored in the Reykjavík Index.

While Iceland continues to lead the way on perceptions of gender equality in leadership, they are not immune to global forces driving the regression of attitudes.

For the second year in a row, we see a 2-point decline in Iceland's scores. In 2024, they are still 13 points ahead of the highest scoring country in the G7.

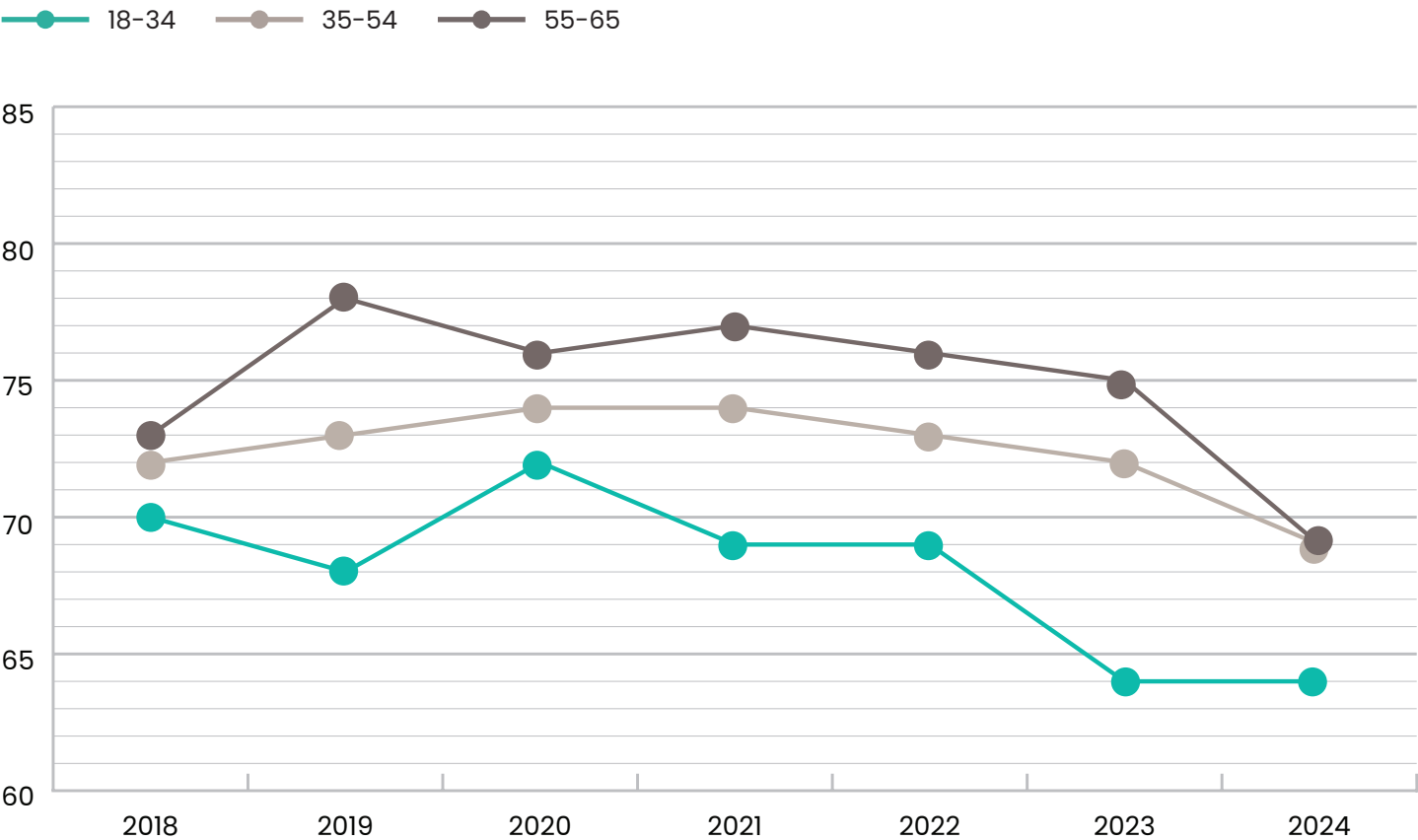


# By age – polarisation between generations

In the last two studies, the data has shown that overall, young people have a lower Reykjavík Index score than their parents, illustrating that some groups of young people now have more gender prejudice than their parents' generation.

Across the G7, this continues to be the case overall, although in 2024 the older generations have also seen a decline in scores.

**In the G7, younger people are less progressive than older generations when it comes to perceptions of gender equality in leadership**



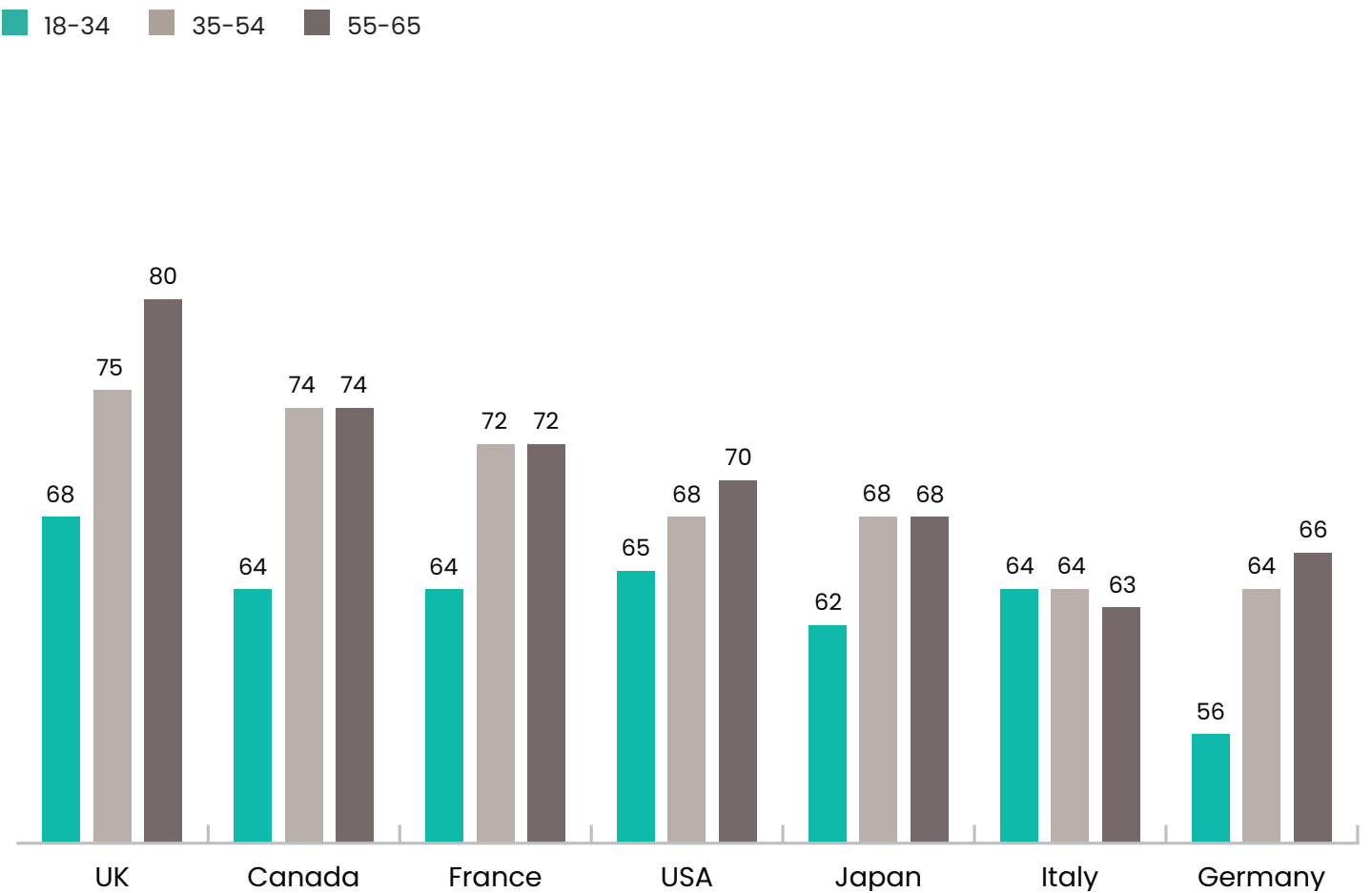
Average Reykjavík Index score by age group, 2018 – 2024



At country level, younger people are more prejudiced, apart from Italy where the index scores do not vary significantly by age.

Canada and Germany show the greatest polarisation of opinion between age groups, with ten percentage points separating 18–34-year-olds from those aged 55–65.

This trend is seen at country level within the G7, with the exception of Italy



Average Reykjavik Index score by age group and country, 2018 - 2024



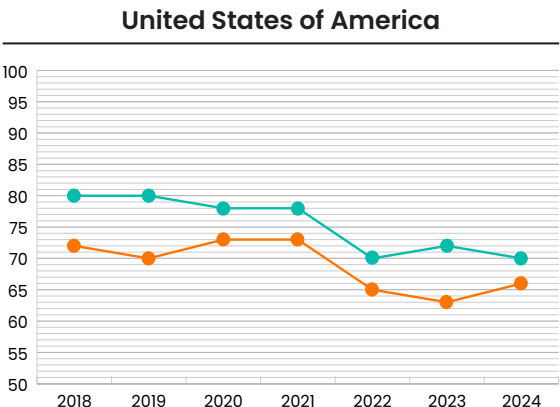
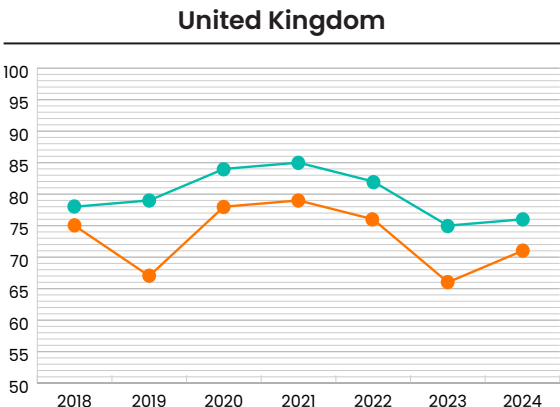
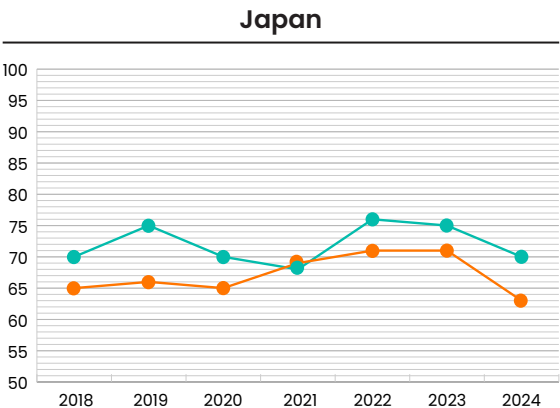
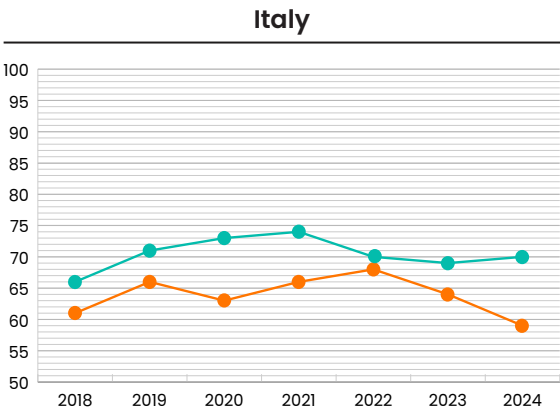
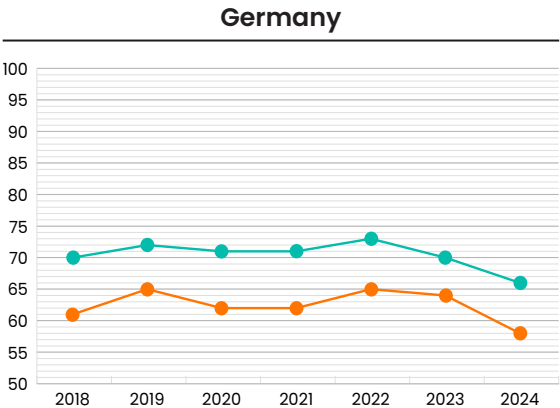
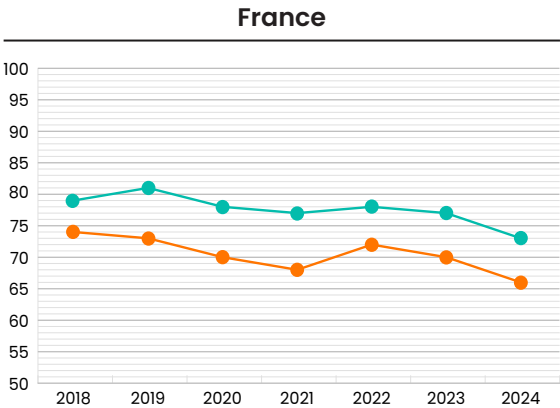
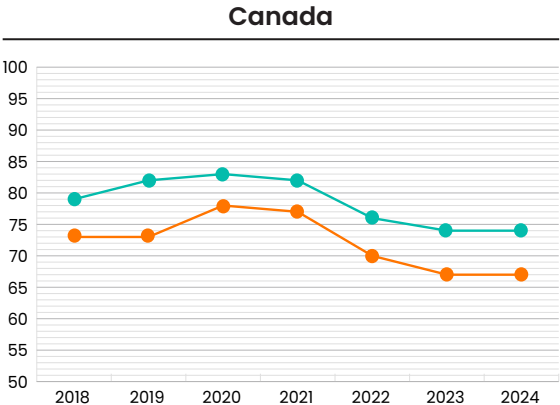
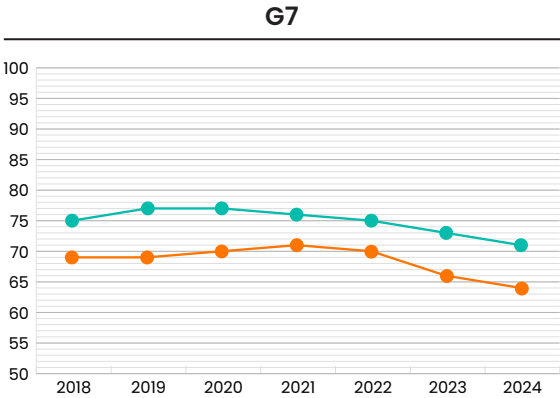
## By gender – overall across the G7, there is a divide between women’s and men’s views on gender equality in leadership

If we look at the index scores by gender of respondent across all age groups, overall women are less prejudiced than men when it comes to perceptions of gender equality in leadership.

However, the gender divide is not increasing; rather the scores for women and men alike are declining across the G7, with some minor exceptions in the UK (for both women and men), Italy (for women) and the US (for men).

Across the G7, data reveals a gap between perceptions of male and female respondents

Men Women



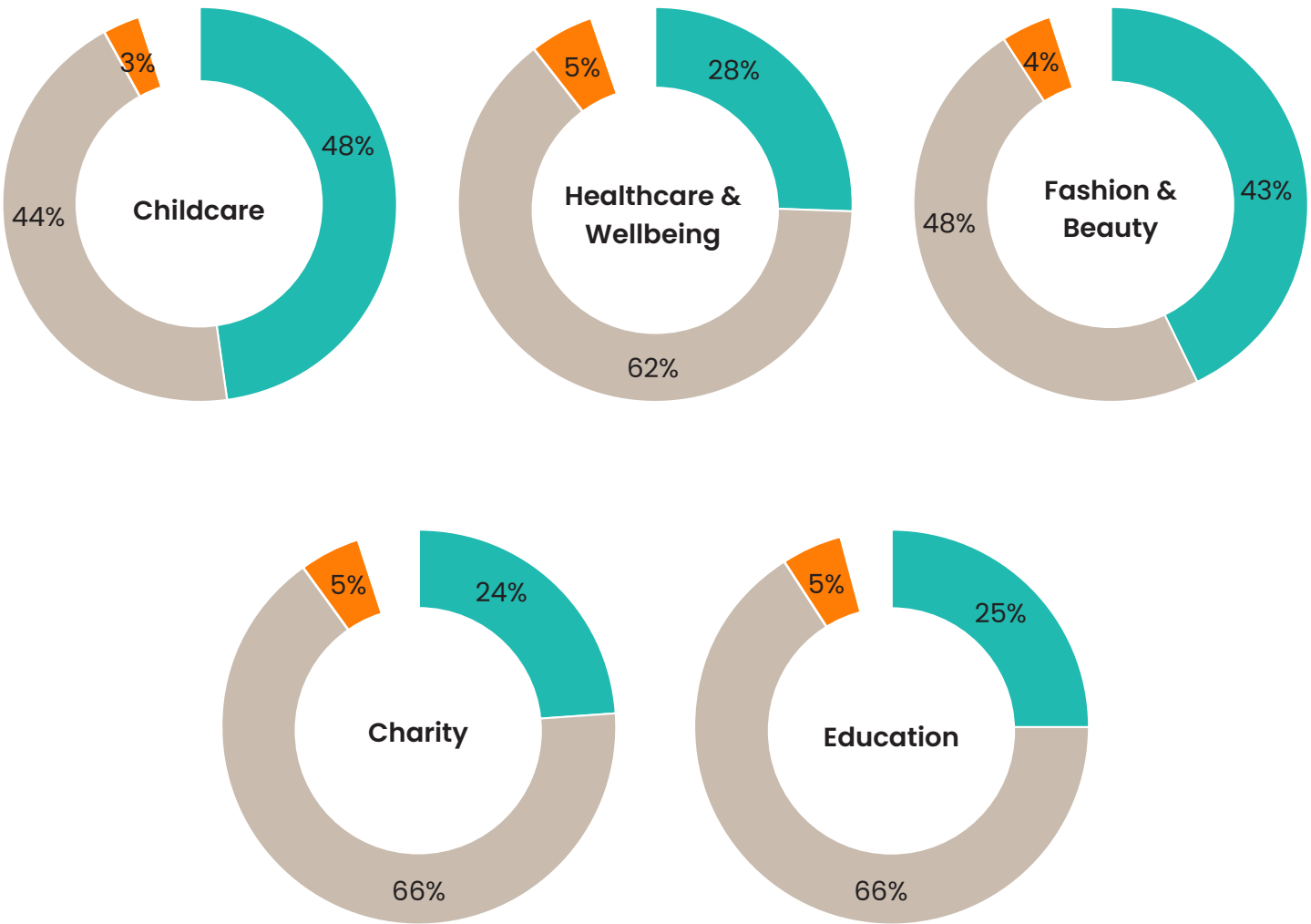
# By sector– a ‘re-gendering’ of roles is emerging, with women seen as more suitable for leadership in ‘caring’ professions than men

We also asked respondents for their view on different industries: “for each of the following sectors or industries, do you think men or women are better suited to leadership positions?”

In our latest research, we see evidence of a ‘re-traditionalization’ that reveals prejudice against both men and women in leadership, but depending on the sector.

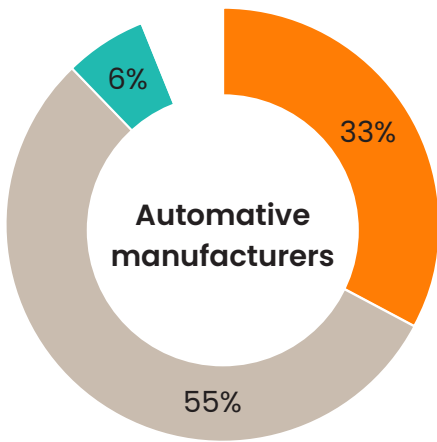
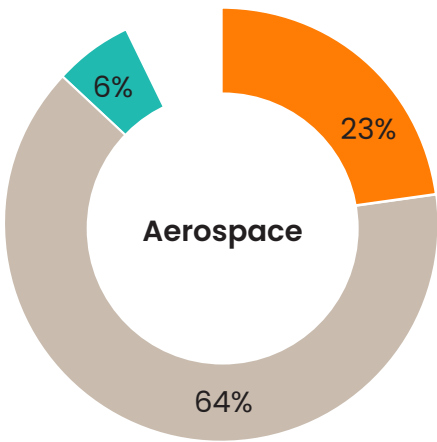
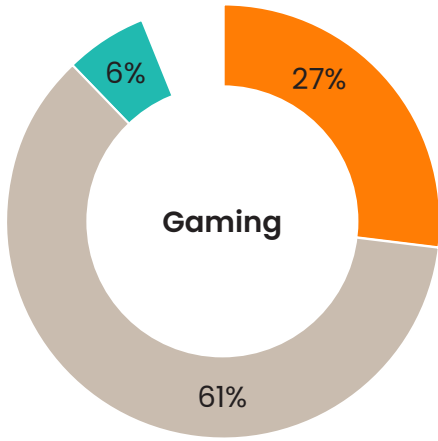
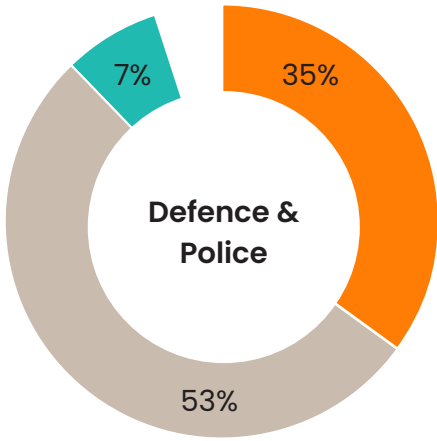
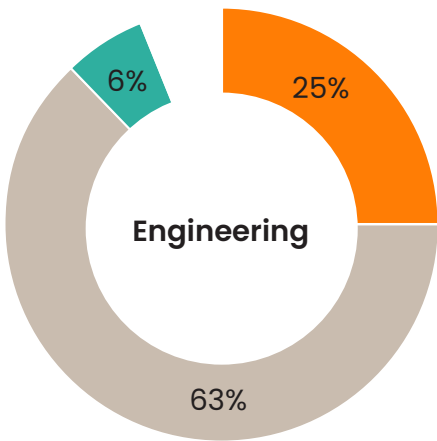
Men are seen as less suited to lead than women in ‘caring’ sectors such as childcare, healthcare and wellbeing and education.

■ Women ■ Men ■ Both equally suited \* Gap represents “don’t know” answers



Similarly, there is prejudice against women in leadership in defence and police, automotive manufacturing and engineering.

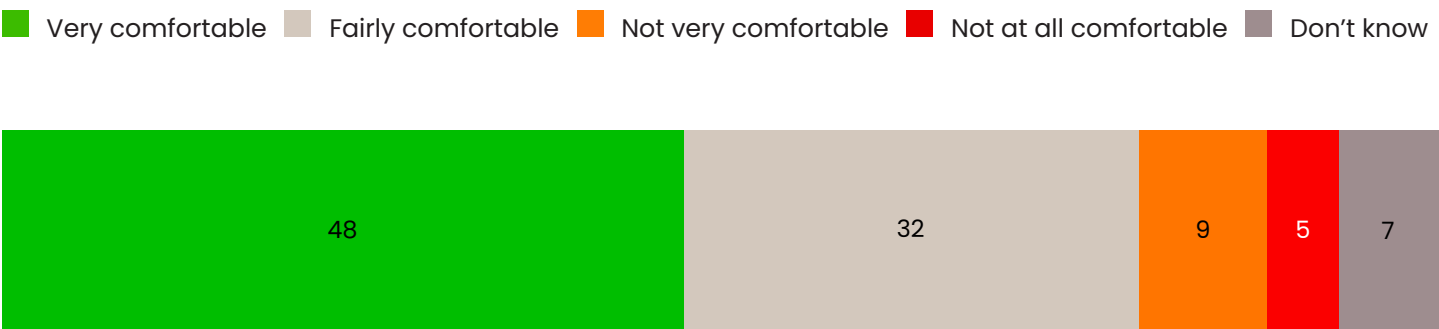
Women Men Both equally suited \* Gap represents "don't know" answers



# Perceptions of women’s suitability for leadership in 2024

In a year of elections, perceptions of women as head of government are prescient. As part of our research, we also asked respondents ‘How comfortable do you or would you personally feel about having a woman as head of government’.

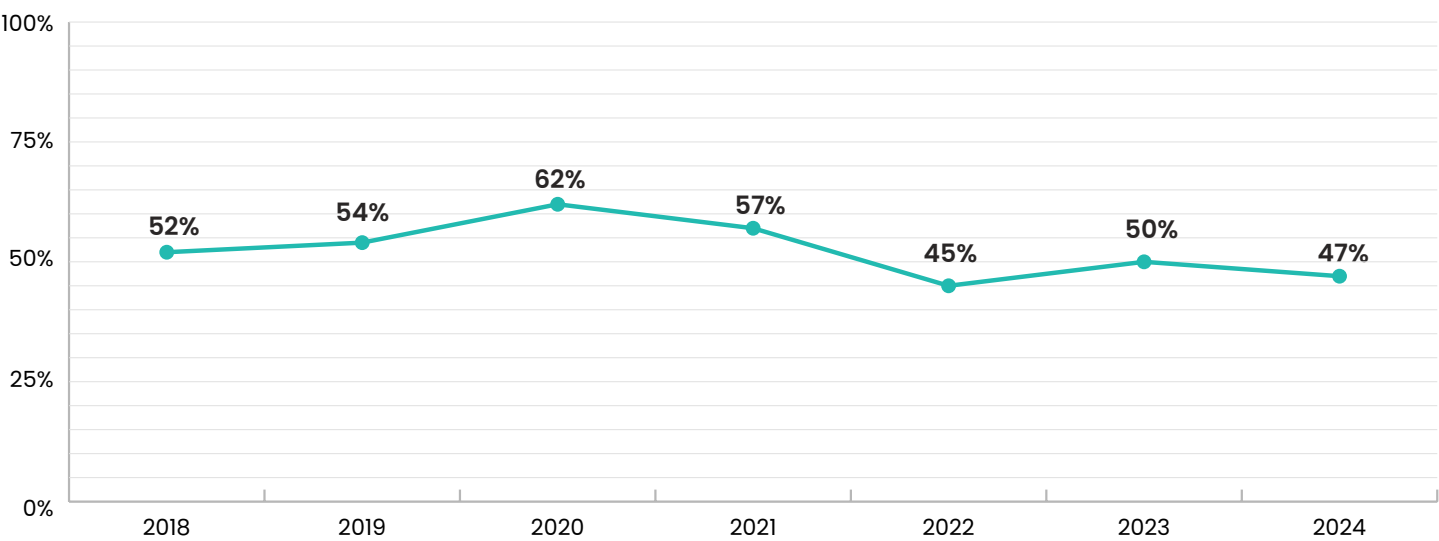
“How comfortable do you or would you personally feel about having a woman as The head of government”



In the United States of America, Verian’s research was undertaken in the months leading up to the US presidential election (research conducted in September and October 2024).

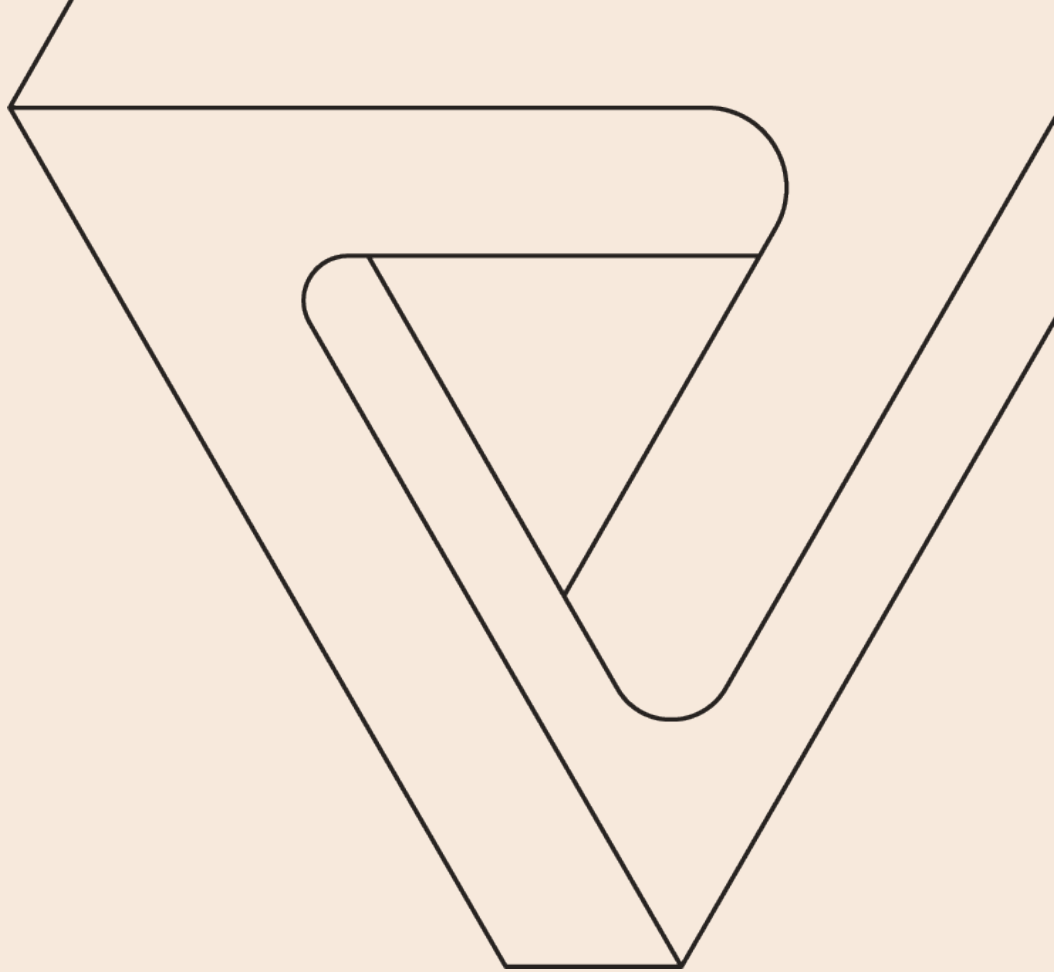
Less than half of people felt ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as head of government. This has decreased significantly since the previous presidential election, as 62% of the population were ‘very comfortable’ in 2020.

## Comfort level with having a woman as head of government in the United States



Source: Shares who said ‘very comfortable’ in % over time, United States of America





# Conclusion and Next steps

The Reykjavík Index serves to provide evidence to support the quality of debate on gender equality in society. It helps us understand the nature of prejudice that women, and men, experience in their journey to leadership.

Over the last seven years the data has shown us that equality will not arrive simply through time. Indeed, current trends are driving towards higher levels of discrimination.

We will continue the work to uncover what's driving these rapid changes in society.

To develop public policy, we need to work with the nuances, the polarisation, and the speed of change that we see in society which the data demonstrates.

**Over the following months we will explore themes, from this report in more detail.**

## Subscribe

To hear about our international events and activities regarding The Reykjavík Index for Leadership.

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# Results by country



# Canada

- In 2024, Canada has an **index score of 71**, which is higher than the G7 average.
- Overall, Canada’s index score has declined 5-points since first measured in 2018, suggesting an increase in gender prejudice in leadership. Younger people in Canada (age 18–34) are more prejudiced than older people when it comes to perceptions of gender equality in leadership.
- Young men (18–34) have the lowest score measured in Canada, with an index score of 62.
- Young women (18–34) have an index score of 66 which is 11-points lower than women age 35–54 and 13-points lower than women age 55–65.

Perceptions of gender equality in leadership also differ by gender of respondent, with male respondents indicating higher levels of prejudice.

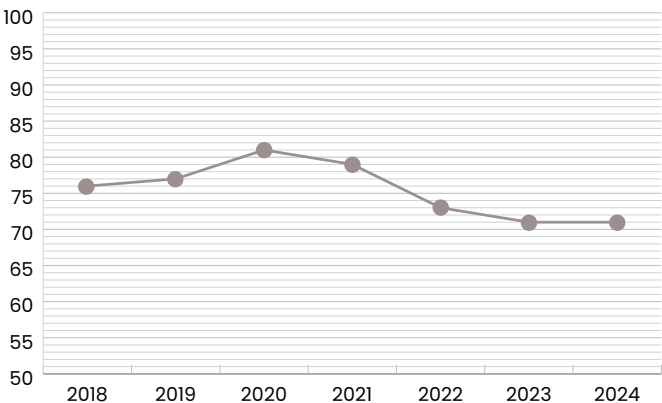
60%

of respondents in Canada said they were ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as the CEO of a major company.

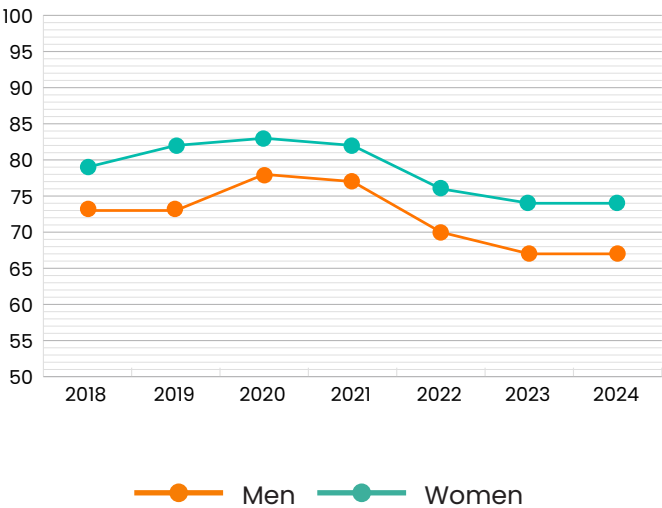
55%

of respondents in Canada said they were ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as head of government.

Canada: Reykjavík Index over time 2018–2024



Canada: Reykjavík Index by gender of respondent





# France

- This year France has an **index score of 69**, which is one point above the G7 average.
- France’s index score has declined 5-points since 2023, and 6-points since it was first measured in 2018, suggesting an increase in gender prejudice in leadership.
- The results also show a noticeable gap between the views of women and men. Women in France have an index score of 73, compared to men who have a score of 66.
- Younger people in France (18-34) are more prejudiced than older people when it comes to perceptions of gender equality in leadership.
- Looking at age and gender combined, we can see that the main difference is between women aged 18-34 and aged 35-54 and men of the same age groups.
- Women ages 34-54 have an index score of 77, whereas men of the same age group have a score of 67.

Young men (18-34) have the lowest score measured in France, with an index score of 60. Young women (18-34) have an index score of 69.

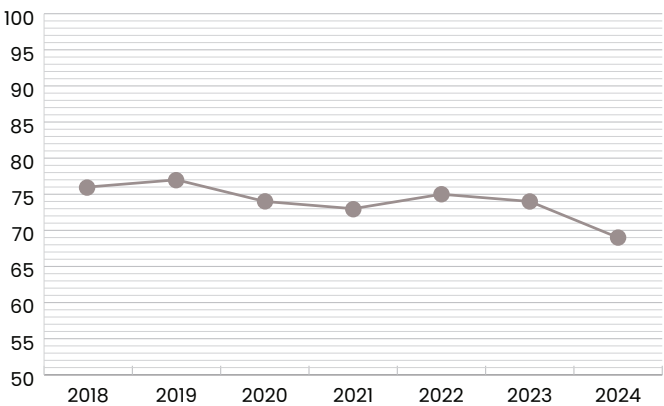
44%

of respondents in France said they were ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as head of government.

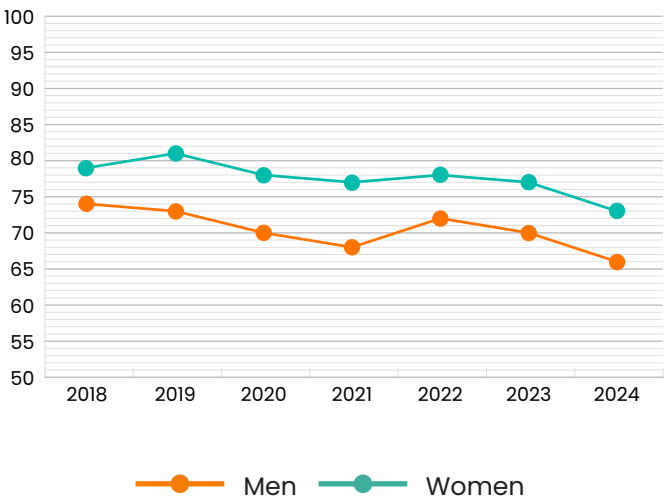
47%

of respondents in France said they were ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as the CEO of a major company.

France: Reykjavík Index over time 2018-2024



France: Reykjavík Index by gender of respondent



# Germany

- In 2024, Germany has an **index score of 62**, which is lower than the G7 average of 68.
- Overall, Germany's index score has declined by 4-points since it was first measured in 2018, suggesting an increase in gender prejudice in leadership.
- Younger people in Germany (age 18-34) are more prejudiced than older people when it comes to perceptions of gender equality in leadership.
- Perceptions of gender equality in leadership also differ by gender of respondent, with male respondents indicating higher levels of prejudice.
- Young men (18-34) have the lowest score measured in Germany, with an index score of 53. Young women (18-34) have an index score of 59 which is 11-points lower than women age 55-56.

Germany is the only country in the G7 where people feel more comfortable with having a woman as head of government than as the CEO of a major company.

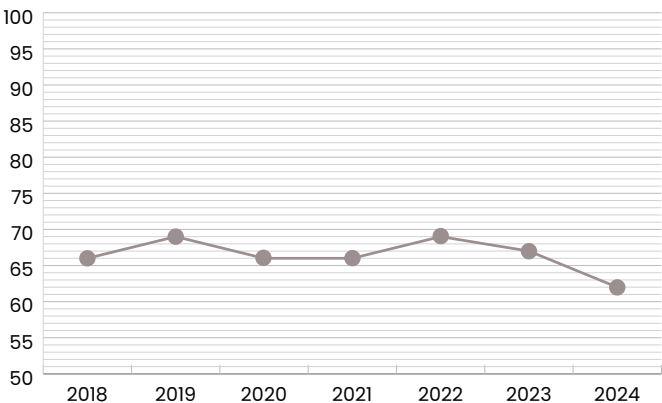
44%

of respondents in Germany said they were 'very comfortable' with having a woman as head of government.

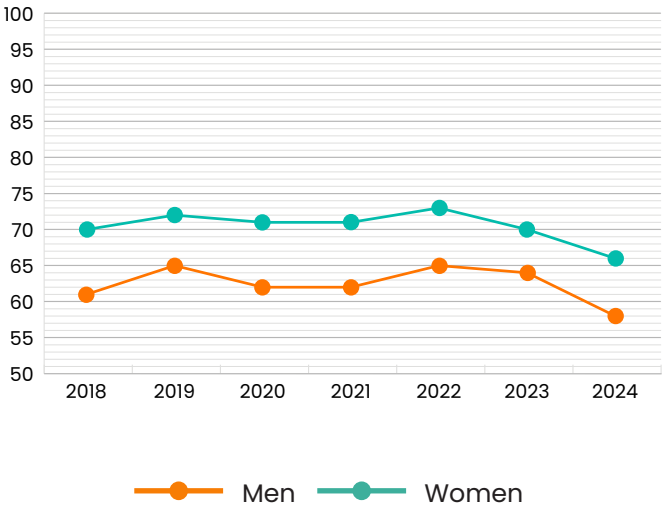
41%

of respondents in Germany said they were 'very comfortable' with having a woman as the CEO of a major company.

Germany: Reykjavík Index over time 2018-2024



Germany: Reykjavík Index by gender of respondent



# Italy

- In 2024, Italy an has **index score of 64**, which is lower than the G7 average.
- Overall, Italy’s score has decreased since 2023, decreasing by a further 2-points this year.
- Men indicated higher levels of prejudice, with an 11-point difference in index score between male and female respondents. This is the biggest gap between the respondents within the G7.
- Men age 35-54 have the lowest score measured in Italy, with an index score of 58. This is 13-points lower than their women age 34-54, with a score of 71.

Perceptions of gender equality in leadership differ by gender of respondent, with male respondents indicating higher levels of prejudice than women across every age group.

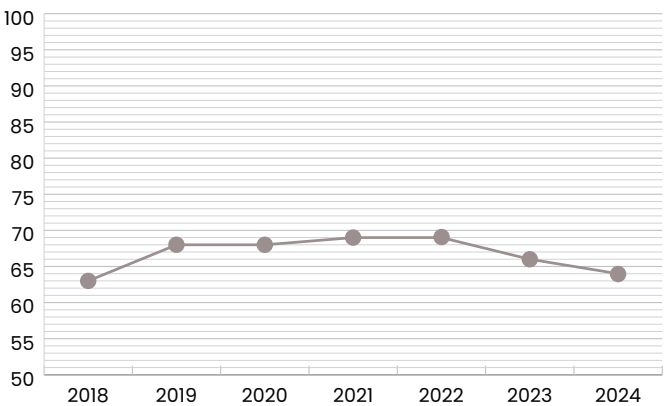
49%

of respondents in Italy said they were ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as head of government.

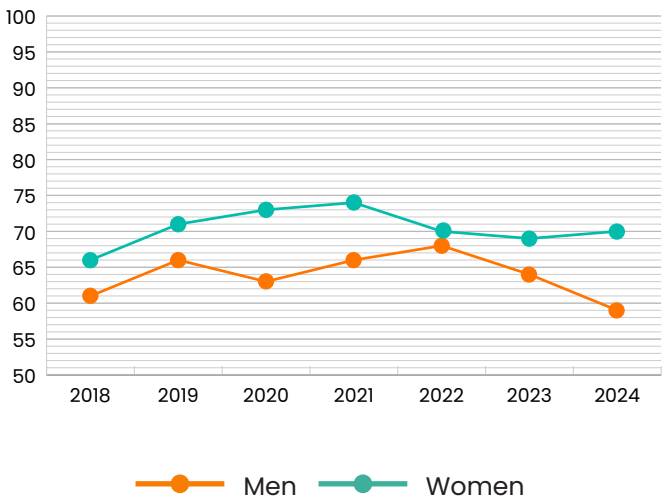
50%

of respondents in Italy said they were ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as the CEO of a major company.

Italy: Reykjavík Index over time 2018-2024



Italy: Reykjavík Index by gender of respondent



# Japan

- In 2024, Japan has an **index score of 66**, which is slightly lower than the G7 average.
- Japan's index score has decreased by 7-points since 2023, suggesting an increase in prejudice when it comes to women and men's suitability for leadership.
- Perceptions of gender equality in leadership differ by gender of respondent, with male respondents indicating higher levels of prejudice than women across every age group.
- Young women (age 18-34) are more gender prejudiced than older women in Japan, with index scores of:
  - 63 (women age 18 – 34)
  - 75 (women age 35-54)
  - 70 (women age 55-65)

People in Japan have the lowest levels of comfort in the G7 with a woman as head of government or the CEO of a major company.

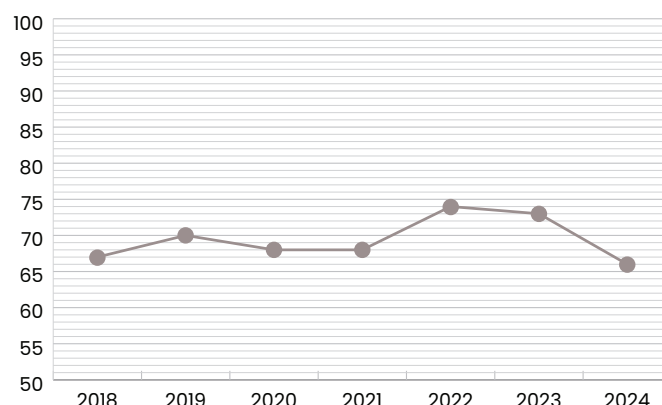
35%

of respondents in Japan said they were 'very comfortable' with having a woman as head of government.

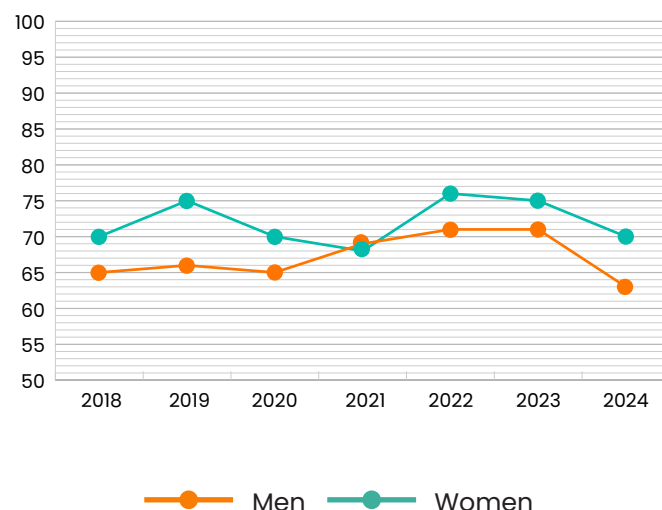
37%

of respondents in Japan said they were 'very comfortable' with having a woman as the CEO of a major company.

Japan: Reykjavík Index over time 2018-2024



Japan: Reykjavík Index by gender of respondent





# United Kingdom

- In 2024, the United Kingdom (UK) has an **index score of 74**, which is higher than the G7 average.
- Overall, the UK's index score has declined 3-points since first measured in 2018, suggesting an increase in gender prejudice in leadership.

However, the 2024 index score has increased since it was last measured in 2023.

- Younger people in the UK (age 18-34) are more prejudiced than older people when it comes to perceptions of gender equality in leadership.
- Young men (18-34) have the lowest score measured in the UK, with a score of 65.
- This is 13-points lower than men age 55-65, and 6-points lower than young women (age 18-34).

Perceptions of gender equality in leadership also differ by gender of respondent, with male respondents indicating higher levels of prejudice.

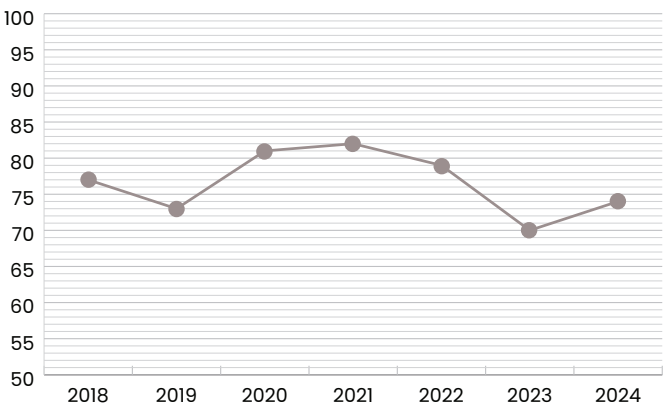
60%

of respondents in the UK said they were 'very comfortable' with having a woman as head of government. This is the highest across the G7.

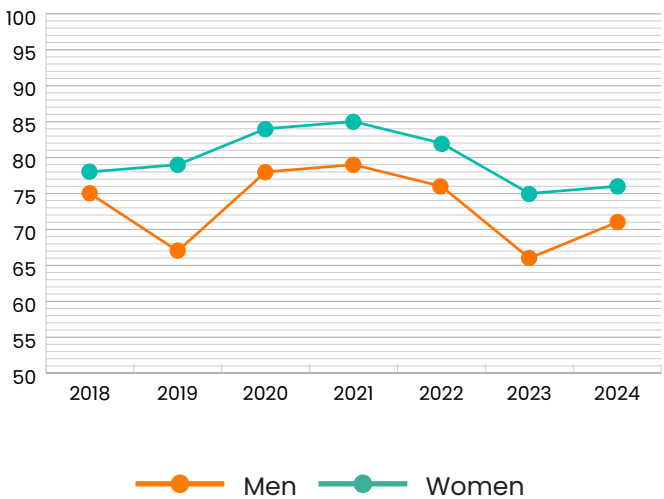
65%

of respondents in the UK said they were 'very comfortable' with having a woman as the CEO of a major company. This is also the highest across the G7.

UK: Reykjavík Index over time 2018-2024



UK: Reykjavík Index by gender of respondent



# United States of America

- In 2024, the US has an **index score of 68**, which is the same as the G7 average.
- Overall, the US index score has declined 8-points since first measured in 2018, suggesting an increase in gender prejudice in leadership.
- Younger people in the US (age 18-34) are more prejudiced than older people when it comes to perceptions of gender equality in leadership.
- Perceptions of gender equality in leadership also differ by gender of respondent, with male respondents indicating higher levels of prejudice.

Less than half of people in the US felt ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as head of government, with research conducted in the months immediately before the 2024 presidential election.

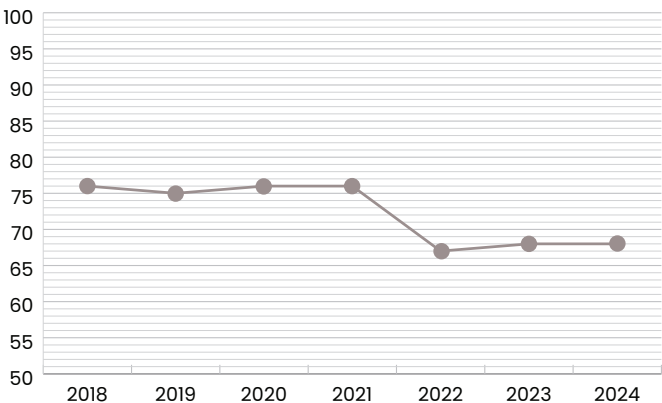
47%

of respondents in the US said they were ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as head of government. This has varied since 2018, from 52% in 2018 and a high of 62% in 2020.

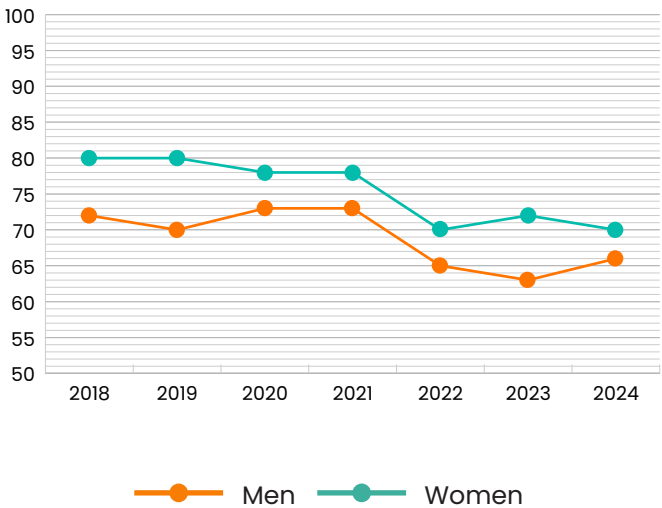
53%

of respondents in the US said they were ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as the CEO of a major company.

USA: Reykjavík Index over time 2018–2024



USA: Reykjavík Index by gender of respondent



# Iceland

- In 2024, Iceland has an **index score of 87**, which is the highest for the countries measured this year. Nevertheless, this has declined from a high of 92 in 2021, when Iceland was measured for the first time.
- The results also show a noticeable gap between the views of women and men. Women in Iceland have an index score of 90, compared to men who have a score of 84.
- In Iceland, it is the group age 35-54 that have the highest index score (90), whereas both the youngest (18-34) and oldest (55-65) age groups score 5-points lower (85).

Young men (18-34) have the lowest score measured in Iceland, with a score of 82. This is 7 points lower than young women (age 18-34).

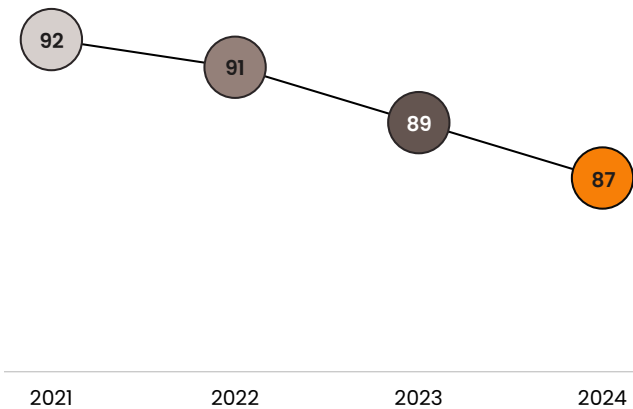
76%

of respondents in Iceland said they were ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as head of government. This is the highest of all the countries measured in 2024.

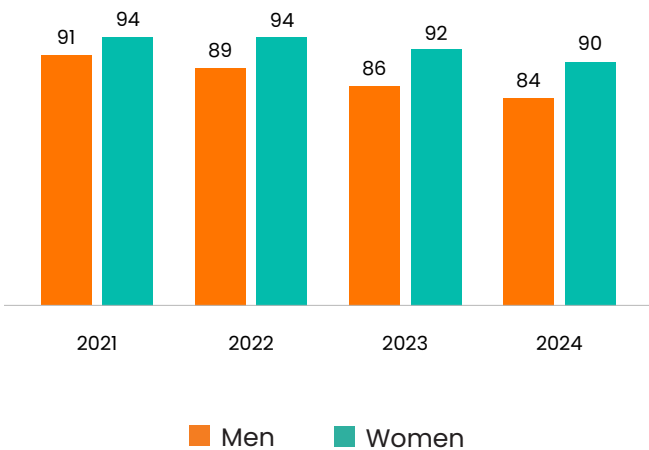
77%

of respondents in Iceland said they were ‘very comfortable’ with having a woman as the CEO of a major company. This is also the highest of all the countries measured in 2024.

Iceland: Reykjavík Index over time 2021-2024



Iceland: Reykjavík Index over time 2022-2024

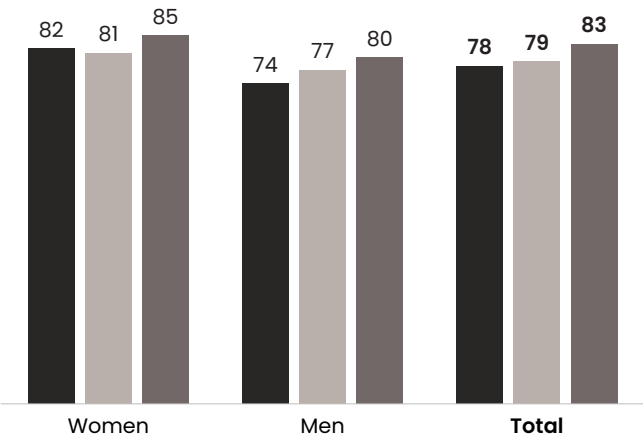


# New Zealand

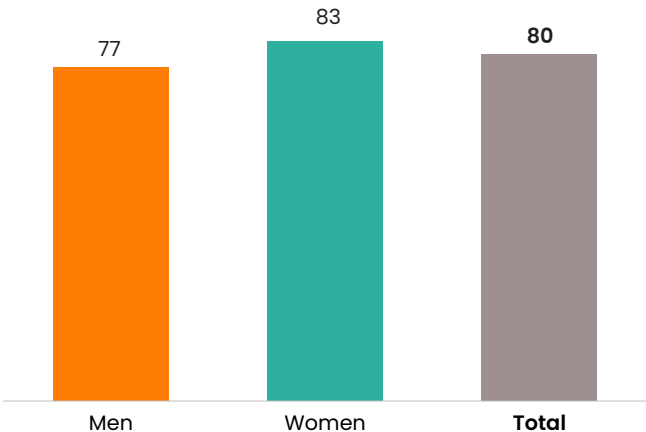
- This is our first year conducting The Reykjavík Index in New Zealand.
- Overall, there is a gap in attitudes between men and women.
- New Zealand has an index score of **80**, which is 12-points higher than the G7 average.

Young people are less progressive than people aged 55-65 when it comes to perceptions of gender equality in leadership

18-34    35-54    55-65

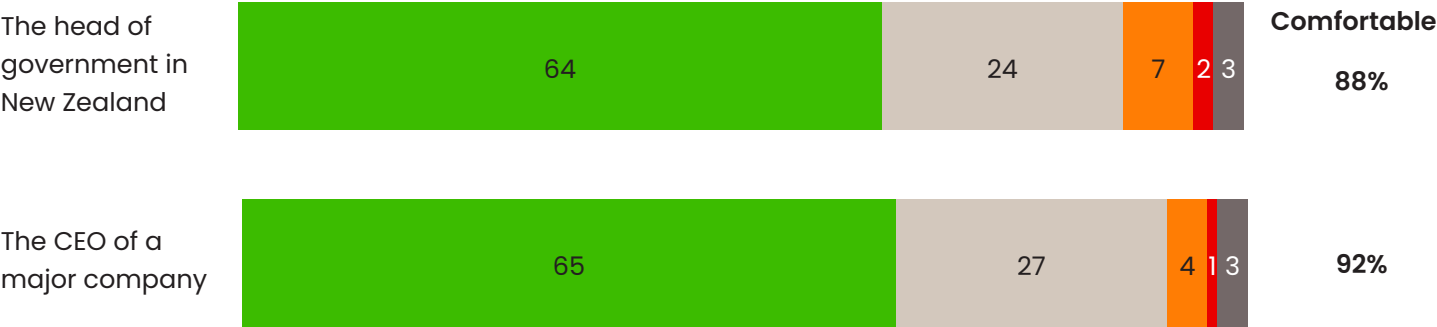


New Zealand: The Reykjavík Index 2024-2025



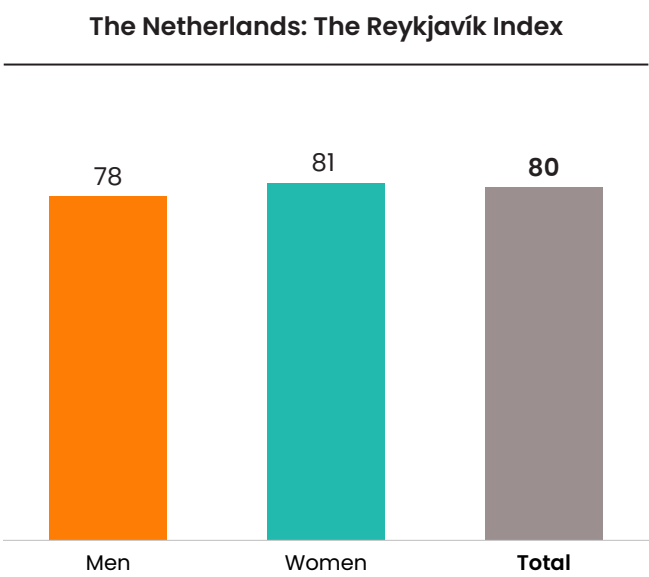
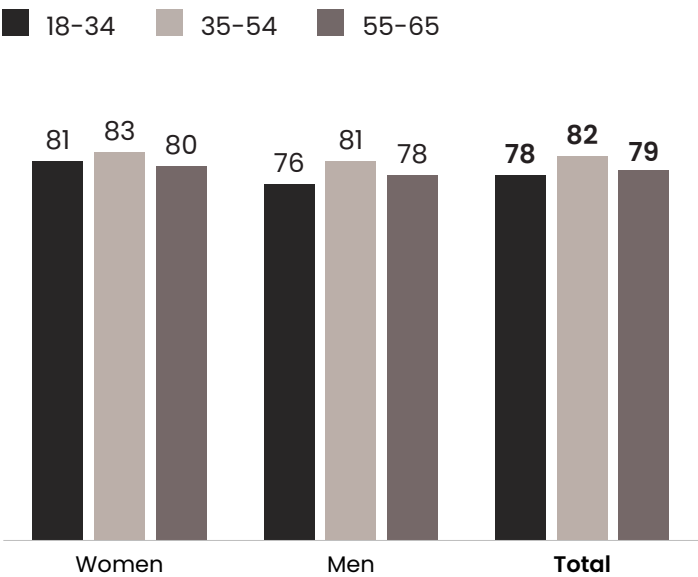
How comfortable are people in New Zealand with having a woman as head of government or CEO of a major company?

Very comfortable    Fairly comfortable    Not very comfortable    Not at all comfortable    Don't know

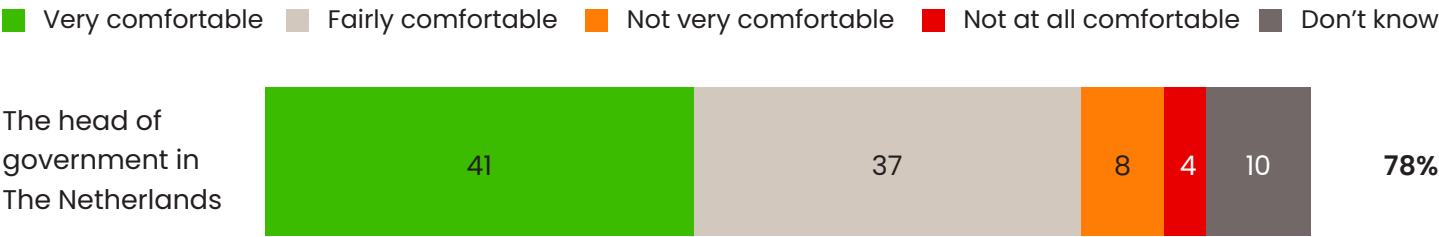


# The Netherlands

- The Index for the Netherlands is **80** in 2024. This is down 2-points from 82 in 2023, when the Netherlands was first included in the Reykjavík Index.
- The results also show only a small gap between the views of women and men. Women in the Netherlands have an index score of 81, compared to men who have a score of 78.
- In the Netherlands, it is the group aged 35-54 that have the highest index score (82), whereas both the youngest (18-34) and oldest (55-64) age groups score lower (78 vs 79).
- Young men (18-34) have the lowest score measured in the Netherlands, with a score of 76. This is 5-points lower than young women (age 18-34).
- 41% of respondents in the Netherlands said they were 'very comfortable' with having a woman as head of government.
- A similar percentage (42%) of respondents in the Netherlands said they were 'very comfortable' with having a woman as the CEO of a major company. Despite a higher index, this proportions are comparable to the ones in Germany, with an index of 62.



## How comfortable are people in The Netherlands with having a woman as head of government of a major company?



# Methodology

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., G7), each country’s index is weighted equally regardless of population size.

## G7

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- Collected through online panel providers
- Weighted by gender, age and education
- Age group: 18–65
- Sample: 1000
- Web survey
- Fieldwork period: September–October 2024

## Iceland

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- Collected through the University of Iceland’s Social Science Research Institute’s panel
- Weighted by gender, age and education
- Age group: 18–65
- Sample: 1000
- Web survey
- Field work period: September–October 2024

## The Netherlands

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- Collected through online panel providers
- Weighted by gender, age and education
- Age group: 18–65
- Sample: 1000
- Web survey
- Field work period: September–October 2024

## New Zealand

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- Collected through online panel providers
- Weighted by gender, age and education
- Age group: 18–65
- Sample: 1000
- Web survey
- Field work period: September–October 2024



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## About Verian

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.

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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.

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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 Reykjavík Global Forum, offers a unique lens into the best practices and proven solutions to achieve diversity and parity.

[reykjavikglobal.com](https://reykjavikglobal.com)

Its platform is centred on the global adoption of the Reykjavík Action Items; equal representation, equal pay, equal parental leave, and ending gender-based violence.

The Reykjavík 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.