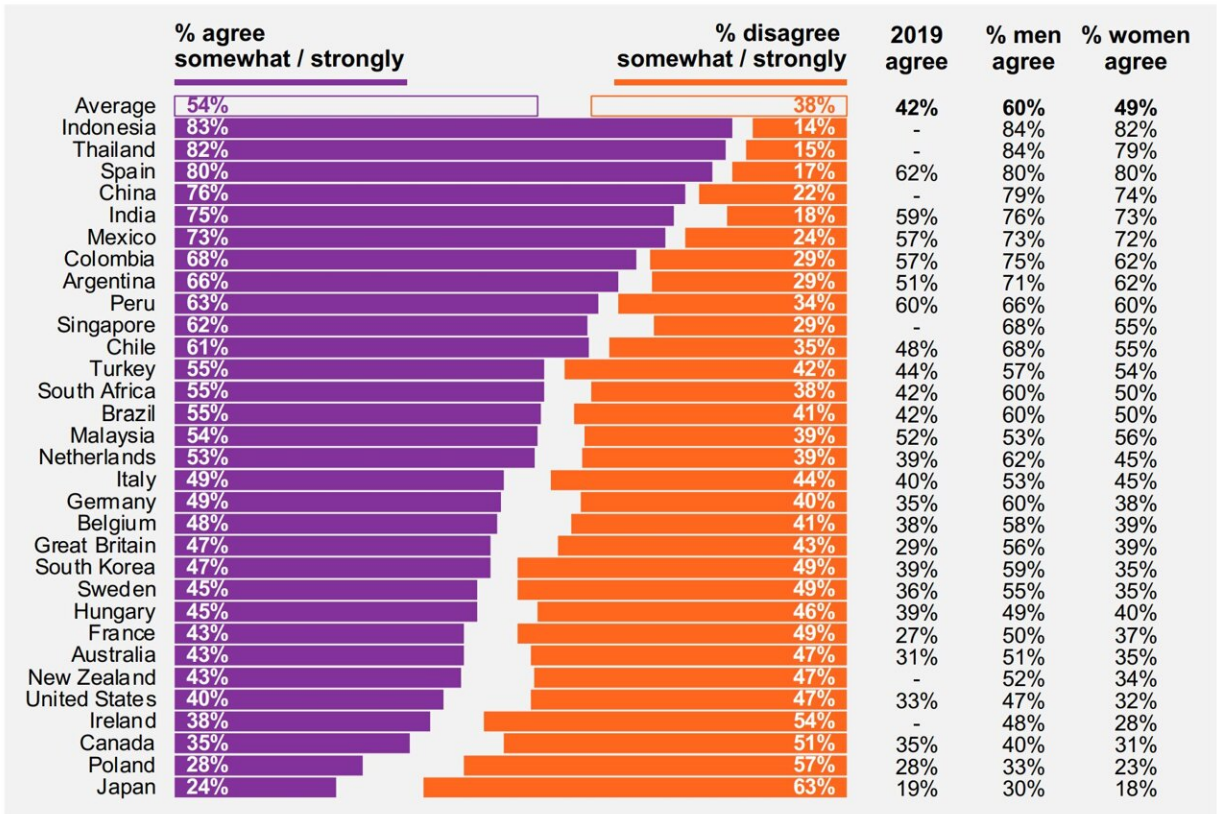


Nearly half of Britons say women's equality has gone far enough

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"When it comes to giving women equal rights with men, things have gone far enough in my country." Credit: *Global Attitudes Towards Women's Leadership* (2024)

Nearly one in two Britons (47%) say that when it comes to giving

women equal rights with men, things have gone far enough in Great Britain—compared to 38% who said the same last year. And for the first time in this data series, a majority (56%) of men now hold this view—up 12ppts from 2023—while the equivalent figure for women is 39%, an increase from 34% last year.

While the public is divided about how men and women are treated by various institutions within Britain, the largest minority share of the public perceives most institutions as treating women the same as men.

Exceptions to this include social media (37% say they think women are treated worse than men, compared to 32% who think they're treated equally and 17% who think women are treated better) and [political parties](#) (36% say women are treated worse, vs. 33% who say women are treated equally and 16% who say women are treated better).

Similarly, around half (47%) agree that we have gone so far in promoting women's [equality](#) that we are discriminating against men, rising to 59% of men (vs. 35% of women). However, an almost equal share (43%) disagree that things have gone far enough and that we have gone so far in promoting women's equality that we are discriminating against men (44%), underscoring the continued polarization of attitudes regarding gender equality in Britain.

While 66% of people in Great Britain agree that women won't achieve equality in their country unless men take action to support women's rights too (including 65% of men and 68% of women), the term 'feminist' remains challenging for a large share of Britons, with only two in five (43%) identifying with the term—an increase of 8ppts compared to 2019. This rises to 49% among women.

Most Britons have no preference for the gender of

their bosses, political leaders

Overall people tended to think that male and [female politicians](#) are equally good/bad at delivering various objectives. Among Britons who perceive there to be a difference between male and female politicians, they are more likely to think that male politicians are better at treating men fairly and benefiting the rich.

By contrast, the public is more likely to think female politicians are better at treating women fairly, treating those with LGBT+ identities fairly, benefiting the less advantaged, being honest and ethical, treating ethnic minorities fairly, respecting the climate, and spending taxpayers' money wisely. Men are more likely than women in Great Britain to say that men are better than women at delivering on all objectives.

Similarly, in a business context, the majority of the British public tends to think that male and female business leaders are equally good or bad at delivering various objectives.

Among those who perceive there to be a difference between male and female business leaders, they are more likely to think that male business leaders are better at treating men fairly and that female business leaders are better at treating women fairly, treating those with LGBT+ identities fairly, making sure the company/organization operates in an ethical way, and treating ethnic minorities fairly.

Most Britons have no preference in the gender of their political leaders, bosses

In line with the perceived performance between male and female leaders, the majority of Britons say they have no preference whether their political leader or boss is a man or a woman.

7 in 10 (69%) say they have no preference as to the gender of their political leader, with this opinion held more so by Baby Boomers than other generations (Baby Boomer 84% vs. Gen X 74%, Millennial 59%, Gen Z 56%).

Those with a preference are more likely to say they would prefer a man (17%) than a woman (12%), with preference linked to respondents' gender. Men are four times more likely than women in Great Britain to say they would prefer their political leader to be a man (28% vs. 7%). Women are similarly more likely than men to say they would prefer a woman as their political leader (19% vs. 5%).

Similarly, in a work context, the majority of the British public have no preference for the gender of their boss (61%), with seven in 10 (69%) saying they have experience working for both men and women bosses. Men are more likely than women to prefer a male boss (28% vs. 15%) and vice versa, with women more likely to prefer a female boss than men (23% vs. 9%). Gen Z is more likely than other generations to prefer a female boss (29%, compared to 18% of Millennials, 13% of Gen X, and 9% of Baby Boomers).

Professor Rosie Campbell, Director of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London, said, "That virtually half the British population think efforts to promote women's equality have gone far enough is a huge cause for concern—particularly given the trend is going in the wrong direction, with the public seemingly becoming more, rather than less, skeptical of the need to push for further progress."

"Indeed, as recently as 2019, only three in 10 thought we'd done enough on gender equality. Following the #MeToo movement and the greater focus we've seen on women's rights since, some may have a sense that most key battles have now been won—but that couldn't be further from the truth. Despite the steps we've taken in recent years, there is still a

long way to go."

"But while it's important to highlight and address negative trends in public opinion, we should also recognize the positives—and this data also provides some cause for optimism, with a slight rise, particularly among women, in the share of the public who identify as feminists, as well as 69% who say they wouldn't mind if [political leaders](#) in Britain were a man or a woman—far above the global country average of 57% across the 32 nations included in this study."

Kelly Beaver MBE, Chief Executive of Ipsos UK and Ireland, said, "The findings of our research serve as a salutary reminder that the concept of gender equality in the workplace and its impact on our wider society is more complex than we sometimes think."

"While the boards of FTSE350 companies are now 42% female, more needs to be done to explain the practical benefits that a greater diversity of perspective can bring to business rather than taking it for granted that equality in the workplace will be universally welcomed as a good thing in itself."

"Gender equality can only become a reality if both men and women buy into the advantages of re-imagining the workplace so that it becomes more family-friendly for all, not a competition between genders, but our research found that a majority of men now believe gender equality has gone too far."

"This suggests there needs to be an ongoing national conversation about the practicalities of achieving true equality and how barriers to change can be broken down without alienating half of the population."

More information: Survey findings:
www.kcl.ac.uk/giwl/assets/iwd-2024-survey.pdf

Provided by King's College London

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