



# THE TRUST CRISIS FACING WOMEN LEADERS

TRUST IN WOMEN LEADERS IS FALLING EVEN AS  
THEIR NUMBERS IN HIGH-RANKING POSITIONS ARE  
RISING

The Reykjavik Index for Leadership showed trust in women leaders  
has fallen markedly throughout the past year

C7 nations

47%

were "very comfortable" having a woman as CEO of a  
major company in their country, down from 54% a year  
earlier



1 IN 10

men explicitly not be comfortable with a female CEO

## WHY ?



### TRADITIONAL STATUS QUO

- Institutional misogyny and gender bias has been supercharged by both the recent political landscape and the pandemic
- Jarring to see women in power when they haven't traditionally been at the head of the table
- Public figure behaviour that normalise sexism



### MERE-EXPOSURE EFFECT

- humans' natural tendency to demonstrate a preference for the familiar
- may become more pronounced during times of crisis or uncertainty



### GLASS CLIFF PHENOMENON

- women are more likely to be picked for top corporate roles when a company is in turmoil or when the risk of failure is particularly high
- When a high-profile woman is perceived to have failed, she is frequently pointed to as a reason why women shouldn't be in leadership positions



### SOCIAL MEDIA

- responsible for spreading misinformation about women's ability to meet physical standards for combat arms roles as well as the negative impact women were having on these units' effectiveness.
- violent misogyny appearing online has soared over the past five years.
- news stories are much more likely to blame a female CEO as the source of the problem than if a male CEO's company is in trouble



### PART OF CULTURE

- Anti-feminism
  - young men who feel emasculated in an age of changing social norms

1 IN 3

American males believe that the gains women have made towards society becoming more gender-equal have come at the expense of men

## FEW REASONS FOR OPTIMISM

fixing the trust gap is critical to eradicating bias  
that permeates every level of companies and  
institutions



"This is not about fixing women and it's not  
about fixing men, but about changing  
deep-seated norms within our society. And  
right now, those aren't moving."