

THE NUCLEAR CONFIDENCE PROJECT

NUCLEAR: WHAT WOMEN WANT

*A Briefing on the Gender Gap in Support
for Nuclear Energy*

SEPTEMBER 2026



The Nuclear Confidence Project is the most comprehensive study to date of global public sentiment toward nuclear energy: what drives support for it, the misconceptions that hold it back, and where public support outpaces the policies enacted in its name.



RADIANT
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Foreword

In 2024, Radiant Energy Group published an international study on the gender gap in nuclear support in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We found three main results: the nuclear gender gap is larger than every other gender gap in clean energy; both men and women assess nuclear based upon safety; and women's assessments of nuclear are less likely to correlate with their political identities than men's are.

Our latest study expands the size and scope of the previous study significantly. It includes nationally-representative samples from 34 countries, home to roughly 65% of the world's population. It also covers areas of research that the first did not, including: how men and women perceive the reliability, emissions and cost of nuclear energy; how each gender's level of knowledge on nuclear relates to the size of the gap; and which factors would need to change to narrow the gap, organized by the type of gap rather than just its size.

The main takeaway of this report is that the gender gap, while remaining a challenge, is not static. In total, the gap in net support decreased from 24.7 points to 17.7. It narrowed in 20 of these 28 countries, and in six cases the decline was too large to be explained by sampling variation alone. In six countries – China, Ghana, Turkey, Brazil, Mexico and Thailand – women's net support for nuclear now matches or exceeds men's. The existence of this shift across such a broad range of countries is unlikely to be attributable to noise. Therefore, it is likely possible to reduce the gap by deliberate action.

The data also provides clarity on what makes up the gap. What most separates women from men is neither the set of reasons for opposing nuclear nor their rate of opposition, which differs by only 2.8 points. Instead, it's that women are far less likely than men to support nuclear or hold an opinion on the subject at all. Men were twice as likely as women to strongly support nuclear, and women were more than twice as likely as men to state that they do not know if they would support nuclear or not.

Women who have already formed an opinion on nuclear express greater concern than men about its safety and are less likely to see it as reliable, affordable or low-carbon. Most women who have not already formed an opinion responded "don't know" to nearly every other question. Where they did answer, on safety, they leaned the same way as the group of decided women.

For those who want to narrow the gender gap in nuclear, each group sets a different task. Women who already hold an opinion on nuclear need their concerns addressed. Women who haven't made up their minds need to be reached first. This report provides the country and regional evidence needed for the existence of both challenges.

Madison Hilly, Managing Director, Radiant Energy Group

Executive Summary

Globally, men's net support for nuclear energy (total support minus total opposition) stands at +21.0 points and women's at +5.0, a gender gap of 16.0 points. Women are both less likely to support nuclear (34.9% against 48.1%) and slightly more likely to oppose it (29.9% against 27.1%). This is the biggest gender gap for any type of clean energy, and is second only to political alignment as the largest of all other demographics. However, over the last two years, and across the twenty-eight countries included in both 2024 and 2025, this gap has decreased by an average of 7.0 points. Across the 28 countries, women's net support rose by an average of 4.7 points, from +1.3 to +6.0, while men's fell by 2.3 points, from +26.0 to +23.7.

Three major findings form the basis for the report's recommended strategy for those seeking to narrow this gap.

First, the gap is not a result of women being more opposed to nuclear than men. Women oppose nuclear nearly at the same rate as men (2.8 point difference). The biggest single difference between men and women is strong support (12.7% of women compared to 24.1% of men). Women were also more than twice as likely as men to answer "don't know" when asked whether they support nuclear energy (11.0% against 4.6%), meaning many more women than men are neutral or unsure.

Second, while both genders have concerns about safety, the larger differences between men and women are in their perceptions of nuclear's other attributes. Specifically, women are markedly less likely to see nuclear as reliable, affordable or low-carbon.

Third, left-right political alignment appears to be a weaker predictor of women’s attitudes towards nuclear than it is for men. This report does not assert why this is the case, nor does it tackle whether women’s views are easier to change as a result of this fact. It does suggest that women’s attitudes towards nuclear power are better understood in the context of their nuclear-specific knowledge and perceptions than of their political views.

These results suggest a two-stage strategy: reach undecided women first, and then address the specific perception gaps – reliability, cost and emissions – where the difference between women and men is largest.

Table 1 – Summary of changes in the support gap, 2024-2025

MEASURE	VALUE
Global gap in net support, 2025 (34 markets)	+16.0pp (M +21.0% / F +5.0%)
Global gap in net support, 2024 (28 markets)	+24.7pp
Global gap, 2025 (same 28 markets)	+17.7pp
Markets where the gap narrowed	20 of 28
Markets where the gap widened	8 of 28 (India, Egypt, Italy, Israel, UAE, USA, Brazil, Canada)
Markets at parity or reversed	6 (China, Turkey, Thailand, Ghana, Brazil, Mexico)

1. The Gap Over Time

With both survey waves based on identical definitions, we measured the change over time directly. In the 28 countries that overlap across both surveys, the gap narrowed in 20. Of these, Poland, China, Spain, and the Netherlands had the largest decreases. In eight countries, the gap increased, though each of these increases was relatively modest.

There is sufficient consistency with the data to interpret this as real trends vs. sampling variation. However, the majority of the movement globally occurs within four countries. Therefore, it is important when interpreting the global results to recognize that the closing of gaps is primarily due to large individual country movements.

Table 2 – Largest changes in the gender gap, 2024 to 2025

MARKET	2024 GAP	2025 GAP	CHANGE
Poland	+52.0pp	+13.7pp	-38.3pp
China	+11.8pp	-18.9pp	-30.7pp
Spain	+28.0pp	+4.7pp	-23.3pp
Netherlands	+43.6pp	+21.6pp	-22.0pp
Norway	+49.4pp	+32.2pp	-17.2pp
Ukraine	+45.0pp	+31.1pp	-13.8pp
Germany	+14.4pp	+1.4pp	-12.9pp
Egypt	+24.2pp	+30.2pp	+6.1pp
India	-1.2pp	+6.5pp	+7.7pp

* Net support = (tend + strongly support) – (tend + strongly oppose); base includes “don’t know.” Gender gap = men’s net support minus women’s. Negative change = gap narrowed. 28 overlapping markets, weighted. Full 34-market table in the annex.

2. A Nuclear-Specific Gap

In every year that we have conducted this research, nuclear has the largest gender gap of any clean-energy source. In our most recent study, the male-female gap sits at 16 points. For every other source the gap is zero or runs the other way: women are marginally more net-supportive than men of solar, onshore wind and gas with carbon capture and storage (CCS), and more clearly so of biomass. Nuclear is the only energy source surveyed on which men lead, which confirms it is specific to nuclear rather than a general gender difference in energy attitudes.

Solar’s near-parity is instructive. Men and women support solar almost equally, and name it as their preferred national energy focus at identical rates (30.4% each). Whatever drives the nuclear gap does not operate on solar, which suggests the gap is tied to something specific about how nuclear is perceived, not to a general female preference against energy infrastructure.

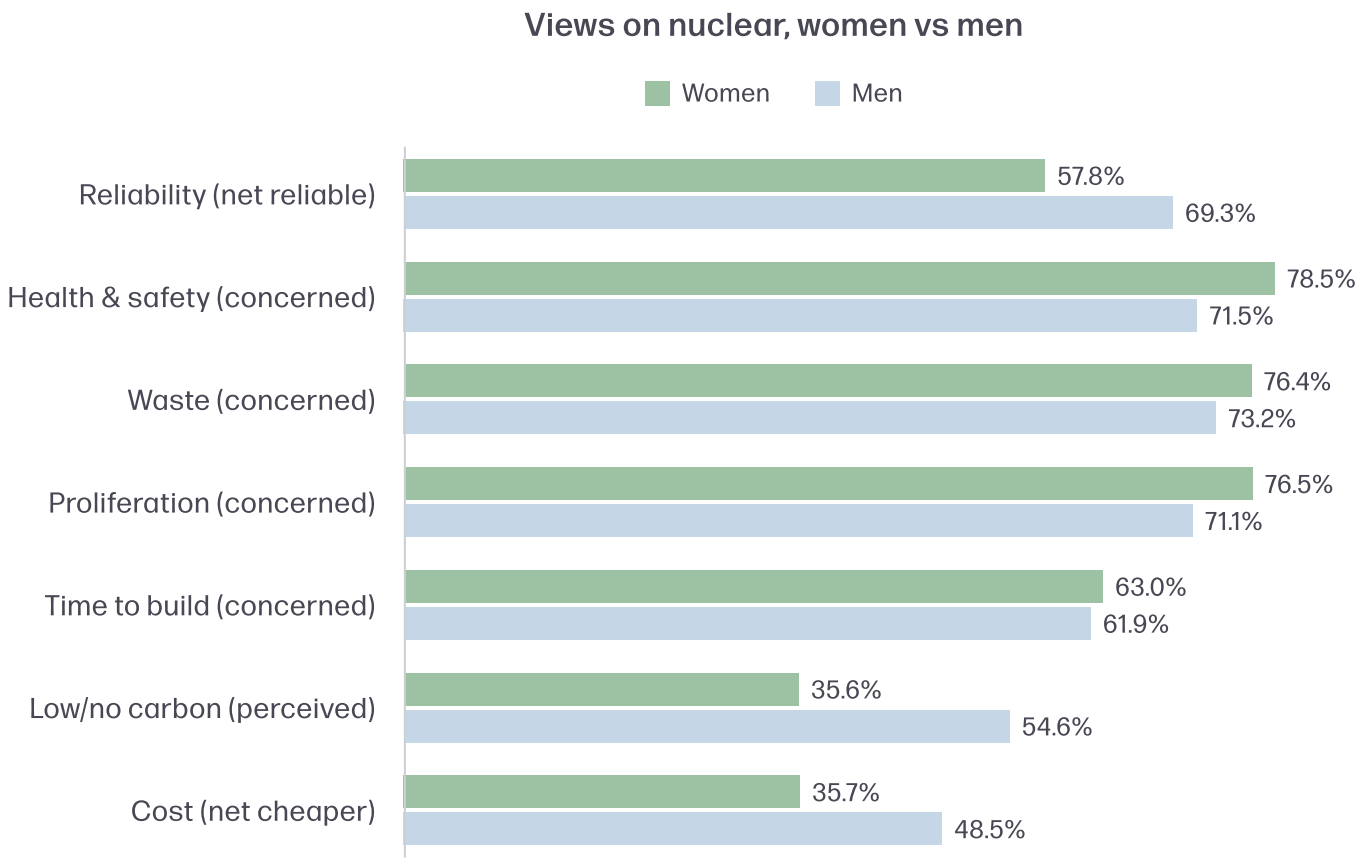
Table 3 – Gender gap (men minus women) in net support by source, weighted

ENERGY SOURCE	2024 GAP	2025 SAME 28 COUNTRIES	2025 FULL (34 COUNTRIES)
Nuclear	+24.7pp	+16.9pp	+16.0pp
Onshore wind	+0.2pp	–0.5pp	–0.7pp
Solar	–0.9pp	+0.3pp	–0.1pp
Gas with CCS	–0.2pp	+4.7pp	–0.5pp
Biomass	–8.4pp	+0.3pp	–5.2pp

Gender gap (men minus women) in net support by source, weighted. Net support = support minus opposition.

3. Safety, Reliability, Emissions and Cost by Gender

Concerns about nuclear waste, proliferation, and the risk to health and safety are widespread among men and women. While women are more concerned than men across all of these dimensions, the differences are modest. The larger gaps are in how nuclear is perceived. Women view nuclear energy as less reliable and more costly, and are more likely to believe, incorrectly, that nuclear is not low-carbon. In contrast, men tend to view nuclear energy as more reliable, lower-cost, and cleaner than women do.



Q6 reliability, Q12 concern, Q5b emissions, Q7 cost, by gender, pooled weighted. Net concerned = fairly + very concerned; net reliable = fairly + very reliable; net cheaper = much + slightly cheaper.

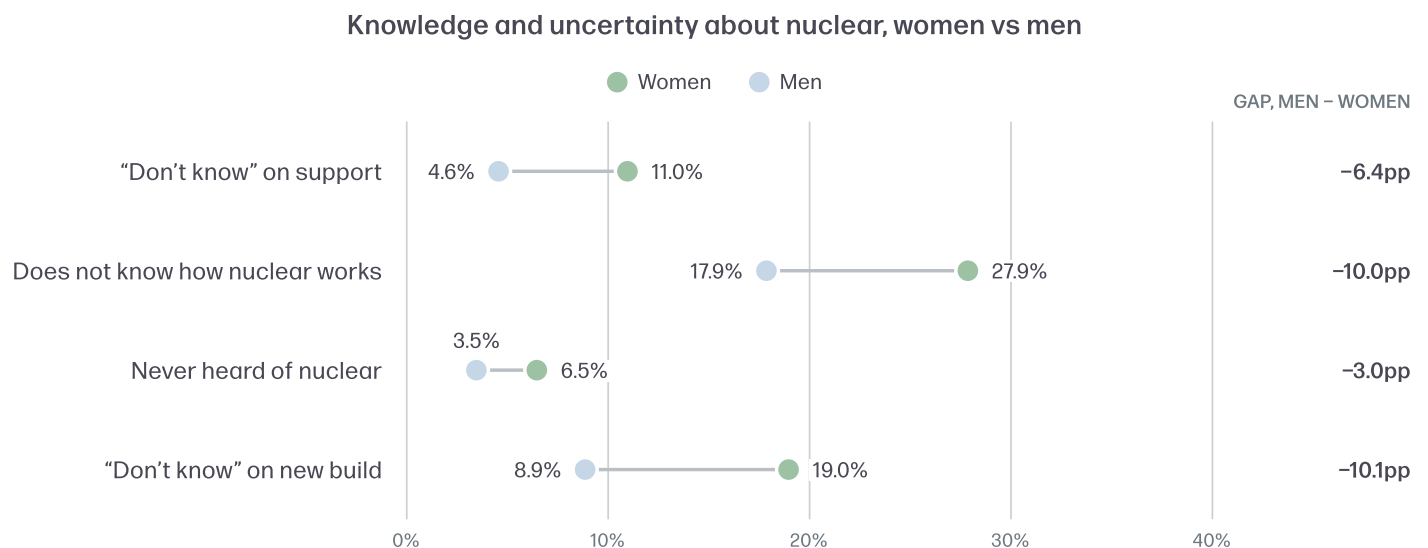
The largest difference in perceptions among all dimensions measured is related to low-carbon beliefs.

Two implications follow. Three in four people of either gender hold concerns about safety and risk, and safety is women's top energy priority. Thus there is value in addressing these concerns. Second, and more importantly, establishing that nuclear is low-carbon and reliable would be particularly beneficial in messaging to women, who are more likely to hold serious misperceptions on these points.

4. Knowledge and Non-Response

Uncertainty adds another dimension to the gender gap; aside from differences in net support, women are more likely not to have formed an opinion about nuclear at all. More than twice as many women reply “I don’t know” when asked about their support for nuclear energy (11.0% vs. 4.6%). Additionally, fewer women claim to understand how nuclear energy works (60.7% vs. 75.6% men), and nearly twice as many have never heard of it (6.5% vs. 3.5% men).

The same pattern exists with regard to building new nuclear reactors, with the female “I don’t know” rate being ten percentage points higher than men’s (19.0% vs. 8.9%). In this respect, we see the most definitive evidence that much of the differential may be due to lack of information rather than opposition.

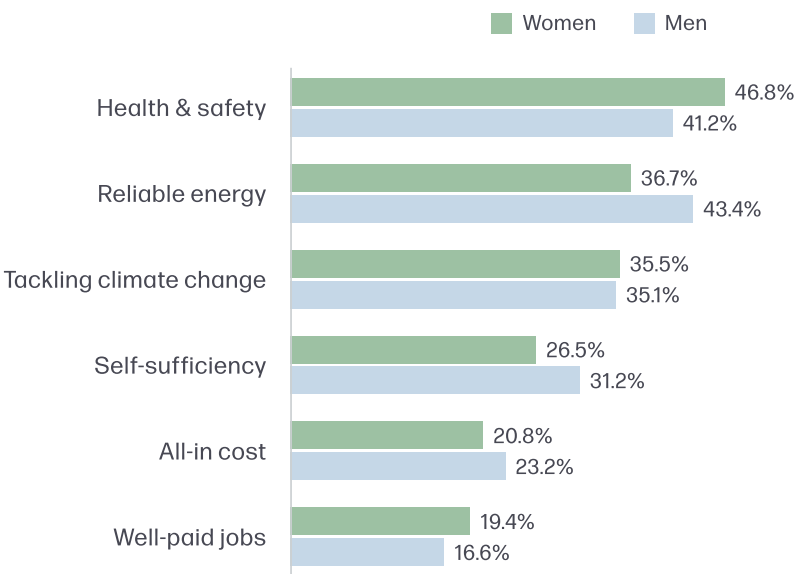


Uncertainty and concern are two different characteristics that can be present together. Research on attitude strength by Krosnick and Petty (1995) and Bassili (1996) distinguish between whether an individual holds a view at all and how strong that view is once developed. Applied here: a larger share of women than men have no view on nuclear, and among those women who do, concern runs higher than among men.

These two groups call for different responses. Undecided women need to be reached and engaged before they can be persuaded of anything. Women who already hold a view need their specific concerns addressed. And because the concerns of the second group are measurable while those of the first are not, they are the best available guide to what undecided women are likely to ask once engaged.

5. Priorities and Political Alignment

Top-three energy priorities, women vs men



Women tend to have different energy priorities than men, which is important to consider when discussing these issues. Women are more likely to prioritize health and safety (46.8% compared to 41.2% for men), and their concern for climate change is similar to men's. In contrast, men place a bit more emphasis on cost, reliability, and self-sufficiency. These priorities align with how each group perceives energy topics overall: for women, safety is the top concern.

Women's opinions about nuclear energy tend to be less closely linked to their political alignment than men's. In 21 countries with a clear left-right political party divide, the difference in net support between women who support the main left- and right-leaning parties was, on average, 23 points, compared with 33 points among men. The divergence is most apparent in the United States, where Democratic and Republican women show no discernible difference in their views on nuclear energy, whereas Republican men are 25 points more supportive than Democratic men. In Turkey, the split among men is 83 points along party lines, while that among women is only 7 points.

However, in South Africa, Canada, and Brazil, the trend is the opposite, with women who identify with the left being more supportive than those who identify with the right. Since these are comparisons between groups of voters at a particular point in time, they indicate that party alignment is a weaker predictor of women's attitudes, not that a change in politics or societal discourse would have less effect on them. A worthwhile area for further investigation is whether messaging that focuses on the practical aspects of nuclear energy is more effective at influencing women than messaging that is based on party affiliation.

6. Where the Gap Has Closed or Reversed

China has experienced an upward trend in female support for nuclear energy. Female support reached 66.4% in 2025, a high point across our research. The gender gap in net support actually reversed from an 11.8-point lead for men in 2024 to an 18.9-point lead for women in 2025.

This move in net support can be broken down into two separate movements. The largest is a 13.2-point rise in women’s support. The other is an increase in men’s opposition, which rose 8.3 points. The movements in men’s support and women’s opposition were much more modest.

Table 4 – Countries where the gender gap has reversed

COUNTRY	2024 GAP	2025 GAP	STATUS
China	+11.8pp	–18.9pp	Reversal over time
Turkey	–7.6pp	–8.8pp	Reversed in both waves
Brazil	–3.8pp	–1.2pp	At parity in both waves

Turkey and Brazil are both net opposed to nuclear, with more men and women alike opposed to nuclear than supportive of it. As we find across this study, a significant contributor to the gender gap is a difference in strong support between men and women. Turkey provides an example of the gap when that difference is missing. Conversely, in Turkey where the gap is closed, men and women report similarly low rates of strong support for nuclear (11.5% and 11.8%), and the gap in total support is substantially smaller than in other countries: providing evidence that the gap closing may not always represent a positive for the nuclear industry.

Brazil reaches gender parity by a different route. Brazilian men are more likely than women both to support nuclear (31.9% against 26.3%) and to oppose it (43.3% against 36.5%), and those two differences cancel. Brazilian women are more likely to say they are neutral or unsure.

Conclusion

The gender gap in public opinion regarding nuclear energy is real. Globally, there is a net support gap of 16 percentage points, with men at +21% and women at +5%. In comparison, there are little to no gender-based net support gaps found among other clean energy sources such as solar, wind, gas with carbon capture and biomass, meaning that women's attitudes towards nuclear are specific rather than targeted at the broader energy industry.

However, this gap is not fixed. As noted in the introduction, among the 28 countries surveyed in both 2024 and 2025, the global average of the gender gap declined by 7 points, to 17.7 percentage points in 2025, down from 24.7 in 2024. Notably, China experienced a reversal in public opinion regarding nuclear energy, going from a 12-point advantage among men to a 19-point lead among women in one year. This provides evidence that a gap of this nature can change rapidly. The conclusion drawn here is that this gap is not a permanent fixture of the social/political landscape; it is a result of the current conditions within each country, and those conditions can be altered.

The common industry view that women are far more opposed to nuclear energy than men because of safety concerns is incorrect. While women are slightly more worried than men about safety (by 7 points), the larger gaps are in perceptions of nuclear's reliability (11 points), cost (13 points) and emissions (19 points). Put simply, women were substantially less likely than men to perceive nuclear as reliable, economical and environmentally-friendly.

Furthermore, on each of these three questions, women expressed nearly double the percentage of “don’t know” responses as men: 16.0% against 6.6% on reliability, 17.6% against 7.9% on cost, and 22.4% against 11.2% on emissions. As such, a substantial portion of the gap in opinions between men and women regarding nuclear energy would appear to be attributed to differences in “knowledge” rather than differences in persuasion. That is, many women, by clicking “don’t know,” are simply admitting they don’t yet know enough to make an informed decision. The first priority suggested by this research would therefore be to focus on reaching and educating women who have no prior views on nuclear energy before attempting to alter the views of those who already hold positions (either pro- or anti-) regarding nuclear energy.

Finally, if the findings of this report are accurate – and there appears to be strong evidence supporting them – then identifying and studying those countries where the gap has decreased due to increased support among women would provide valuable insights into potential strategies for reducing similar gaps in other countries.

ABOUT RADIANT ENERGY GROUP

Radiant Energy Group is a nuclear energy research and advisory firm. Its analysis of nuclear's role in future energy systems has been cited by institutional researchers, financial analysts, policymakers, authors, and major news outlets.

The Nuclear Confidence Project is Radiant Energy Group's flagship public opinion research initiative, tracking global sentiment toward nuclear energy across dozens of countries.

Contact Us: info@radiantenergygroup.com
