

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung New York (FES) commissioned YouGov to field a survey of twelve countries, including approximately 1,000 respondents apiece from Brazil, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, and The United States. The survey included several items measuring public opinion toward former President Donald Trump and incoming President Joe Biden. This memo briefly summarizes the results.

Executive summary

-Countries around the world give Joe Biden high net approval ratings. This includes 89 percent approval in Kenya, 73 percent in Germany, 69 percent in South Africa, 66 percent in Indonesia, 66 percent in Mexico, 65 percent in India, 62 percent in France, 60 percent in Brazil, 52 percent in Japan, and 40 percent in Turkey

-In our sample, Russia was the most conspicuous exception, with 23 percent approving of Joe Biden and 37 percent disapproving of Joe Biden

-Within the US, approval for Joe Biden was driven by partisanship, leading to one of the narrowest approval splits in the sample, driven by party identification. In the US, approval of Joe Biden currently sits at 50 percent approval and 45 percent disapproval

-The world currently does not perceive the US to be showing a great deal of leadership on any of the major issues the world currently faces, from COVID-19 to climate change

-Majorities of respondents in US allied countries such as France, Germany, Mexico, and Japan believe the US has overall failed to show leadership on climate change, COVID-19, protecting human rights, and protecting the vulnerable. More respondents in those countries disagree than agree that the US has shown leadership on the global economy or keeping the world safe from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

-The world has high hopes that Joe Biden will exert more leadership on these issues than his predecessor

-By a 62 percent to 22 percent margin, respondents around the world think Joe Biden will show more leadership than Donald Trump on combating the COVID-19 pandemic. By a 57 to 19 percent margin, they believe Joe Biden will show more leadership on climate change. By a 57 to 22 percent margin, they believe Joe Biden will show more leadership on the global economy than Donald Trump

-Though the world believes Joe Biden will generally show more leadership on global issues than did Donald Trump, they are skeptical that he will take the concrete steps necessary to fully restore US leadership on the global stage

-On average, about 5-10 percent fewer respondents in each country thought Biden *would* rejoin the Paris Climate Accord and Iran Nuclear Deal than *should* rejoin them

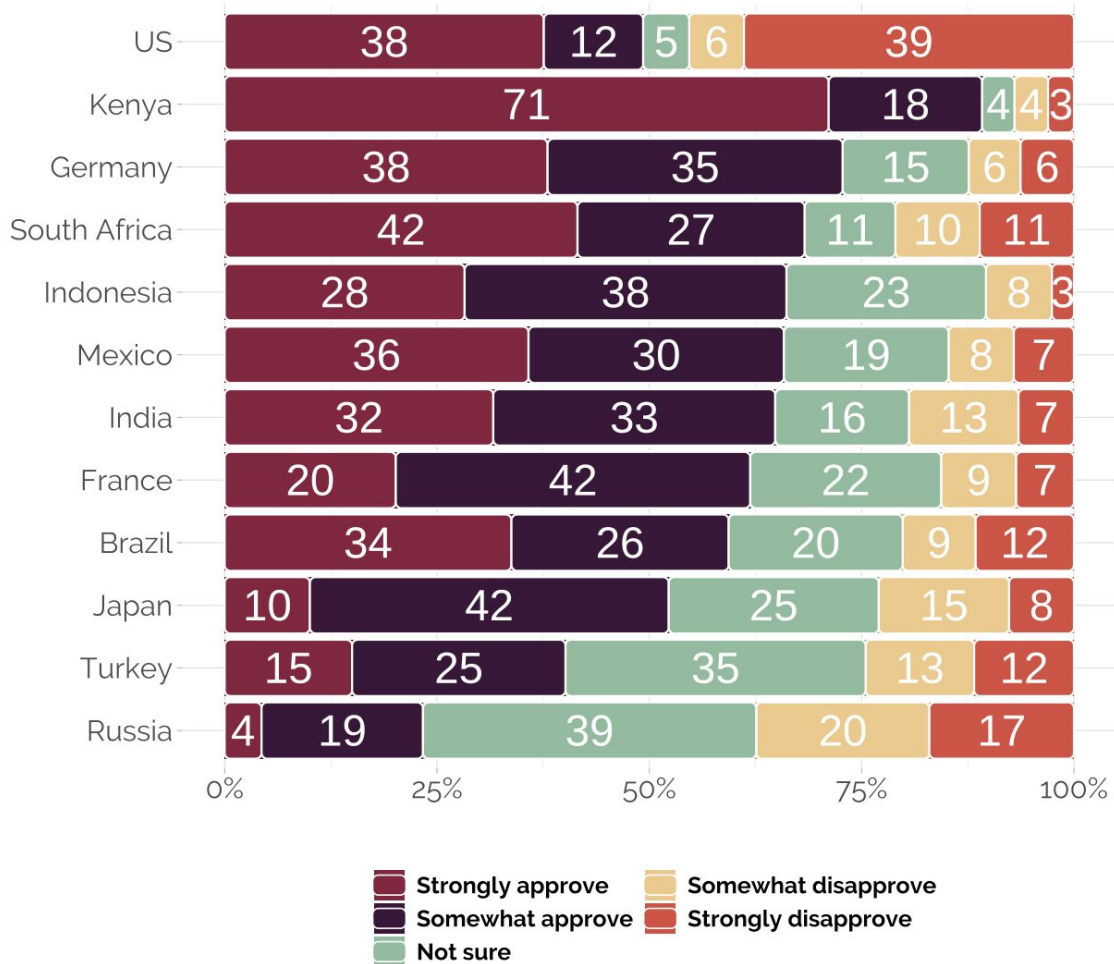
-Outside the US, about 57 percent of respondents thought the US *would* rejoin the Paris Climate Accord compared to about 64 percent who thought they *should*

-About 47 percent of respondents outside the US thought the US *would* rejoin the Iran Nuclear Deal compared to about 51 percent who thought they *should*

The world strongly approves of Joe Biden - Russia an exception

In most of the countries in our sample, incoming President Joe Biden enjoys high net approval levels. This includes a high of 89 percent approval versus 7 percent disapproval in Kenya (or net +82 approval), to a low 23 percent approval versus 37 percent disapproval in Russia (or net -14 approval). Incoming President Biden enjoys positive public opinion in most of the countries in our sample, including in the US, where 50 percent of voters approve of him as President and 45 percent disapprove. The following chart summarizes the approval of President Biden by country.

Joe Biden approval



Recently, the United States elected a new president, Joe Biden, who will take office in January of 2021. Generally speaking, would you say you (approve or disapprove) of the next United States President, Joe Biden?

In the United States, attitudes toward Joe Biden are driven by political partisanship. Democrats overwhelmingly approve of Biden (88 percent approve versus 8 percent disapprove), Republicans overwhelmingly disapprove of Biden (89 percent disapprove versus 7 percent approve), and Independents are split (44 percent approve and 46 percent disapprove). In total, the US result (50 percent approval, 45 percent disapproval) is the most polarized in the sample. Even among respondents from Russia, who on net disapprove of Biden, a larger share simply

has no opinion (39 percent) than approve (23 percent) or disapprove (37 percent) of him. The United States is the most polarized case on this issue in the sample.¹

The US is no longer viewed as a global leader on most issues

We also asked respondents a variety of items about US politics and the incoming Biden Administration. We asked respondents about US leadership on a variety of issues:

And when it comes to the following areas, would you say the United States is more of a leader or is not showing any leadership?

<1> Protecting human rights around the world

<2> Dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic

<3> Expanding economic prosperity around the world

<4> Keeping the world safe from terrorism or rogue nations

<5> Protecting democratic freedoms around the world

<6> Combating climate change

<7> Protecting the rights of minorities and vulnerable populations

<8> Preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

<9> Helping the world with changes caused by new technology like artificial intelligence

On each issue, across the sample, the US received mixed results. Overall, more respondents in the sample said the US was “not showing leadership” than said the US was “showing a great deal of leadership.” On each of these issues, more respondents said the US was showing no leadership than was showing a great deal of leadership.

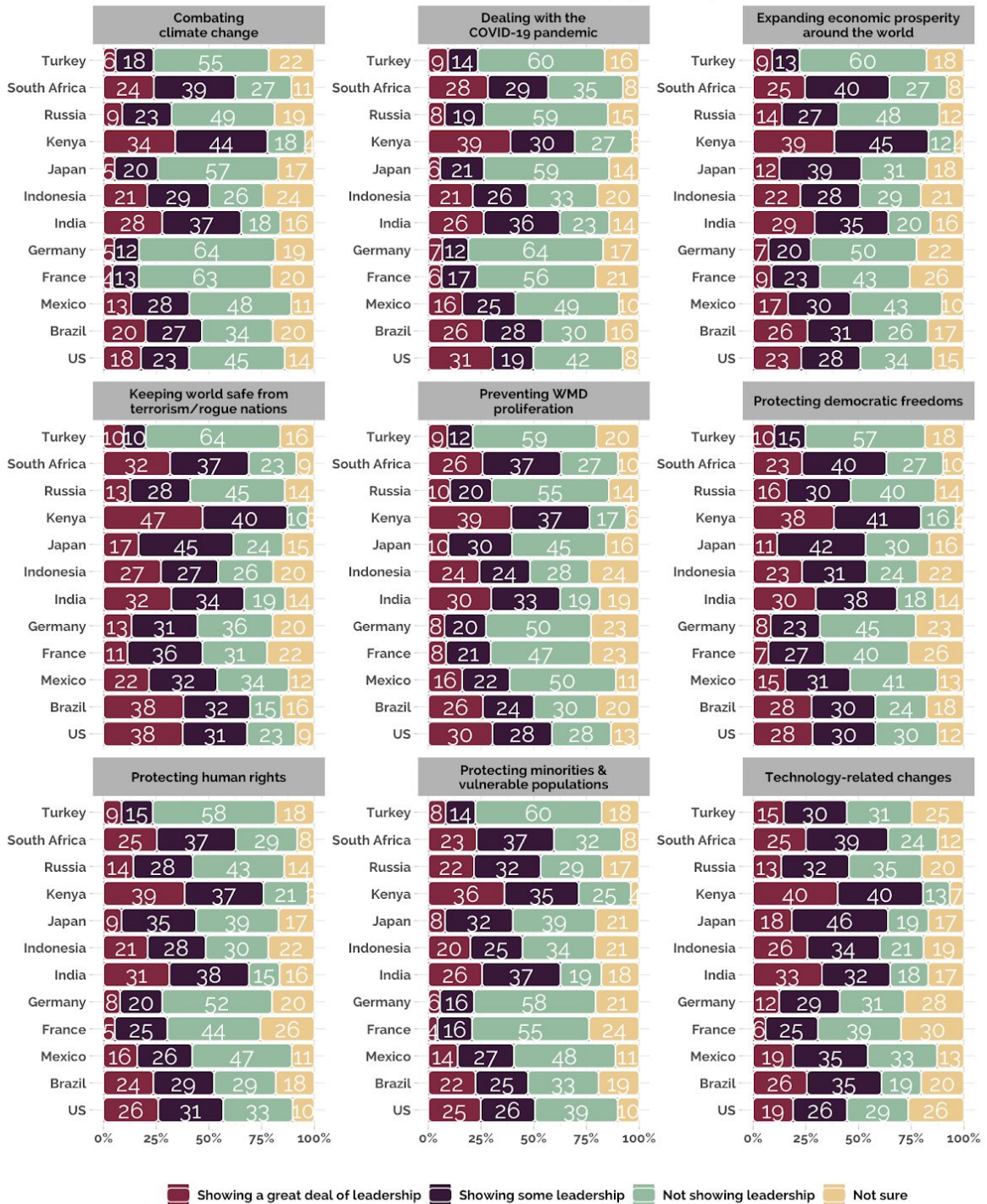
Notably, US respondents themselves held mixed views about US leadership on these issues. Indeed, controlling for other factors, US respondents only felt the US was showing more leadership on “dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic” (31 percent in the US compared to 19 percent overall).

While it is probably not surprising to find that respondents from Russia were more pessimistic about US leadership to a statistically detectable degree, we also find that respondents from France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, and Turkey tended to be more pessimistic about US leadership than those from India, Indonesia, Kenya, South Africa, or from the US itself. Indeed, on the item “keeping the world safe from terrorism,” about as many respondents from France (11 percent) and Germany (13 percent) thought the US showed “a great deal of leadership” as did those from Russia (13 percent).

¹ Notably, in past polling, YouGov has found the opposite to be the case, with Republicans much more pessimistic about US leadership when the President is a Democrat. See, for example, <https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2012/08/07/question-day-findings-does-us-have-le-ss-or-more-in> .

In other words, evaluations of US leadership in various areas do not necessarily depend on whether respondents come from a country that has generally adversarial relations with the United States. Our data suggest that both allies and adversaries perceive a leadership deficit from the United States on a host of issues the world is facing.

Views about US leadership, by country



The world believes Joe Biden will be a better leader than Donald Trump

We then showed respondents a battery of global issues and asked them whether they thought Joe Biden would show more leadership on a given issue, or less. We asked whether respondents thought Joe Biden would show more leadership or less leadership on the issues of

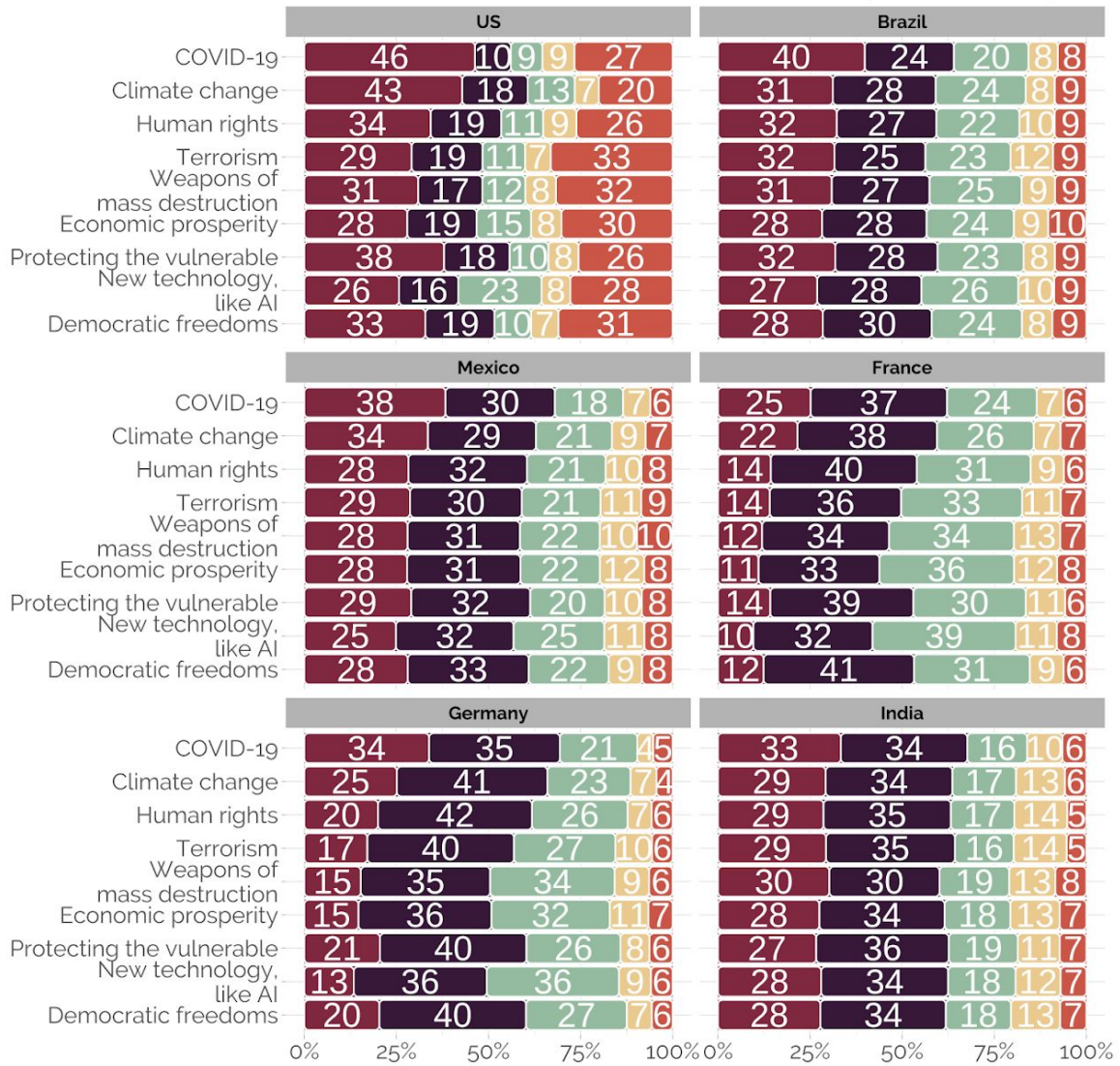
- Protecting human rights around the world*
- Dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic*
- Expanding economic prosperity around the world*
- Keeping the world safe from terrorism or rogue nations*
- Protecting democratic freedoms around the world*
- Combating climate change*
- Protecting the rights of minorities and vulnerable populations*
- Preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction*
- Helping the world with changes caused by new technology like artificial intelligence*

The following charts summarize the results for each country. Across these countries, respondents overwhelmingly believe Joe Biden will show more leadership than did Donald Trump. The most divided country in our sample was the United States, where partisanship cleanly divided respondents between whether they thought Joe Biden would show more or less leadership than Donald Trump.

Optimism about Joe Biden's leadership was highest among American allied countries like France and Germany. Among French and German respondents, no more than 20 percent thought Biden would show less leadership than Trump on any issue. Respondents in Brazil and Japan also overwhelmingly believe Biden will show more leadership than Trump on every issue we polled.

Russia and Turkey were the most pessimistic about Biden's potential leadership compared to Trump's across the board. On several issues -- terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, economic prosperity, and dealing with new technologies like artificial intelligence -- respondents from Russia on net believed Biden would fall short of Trump. On the issues of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, respondents from Turkey agreed, and were split on the other issues.

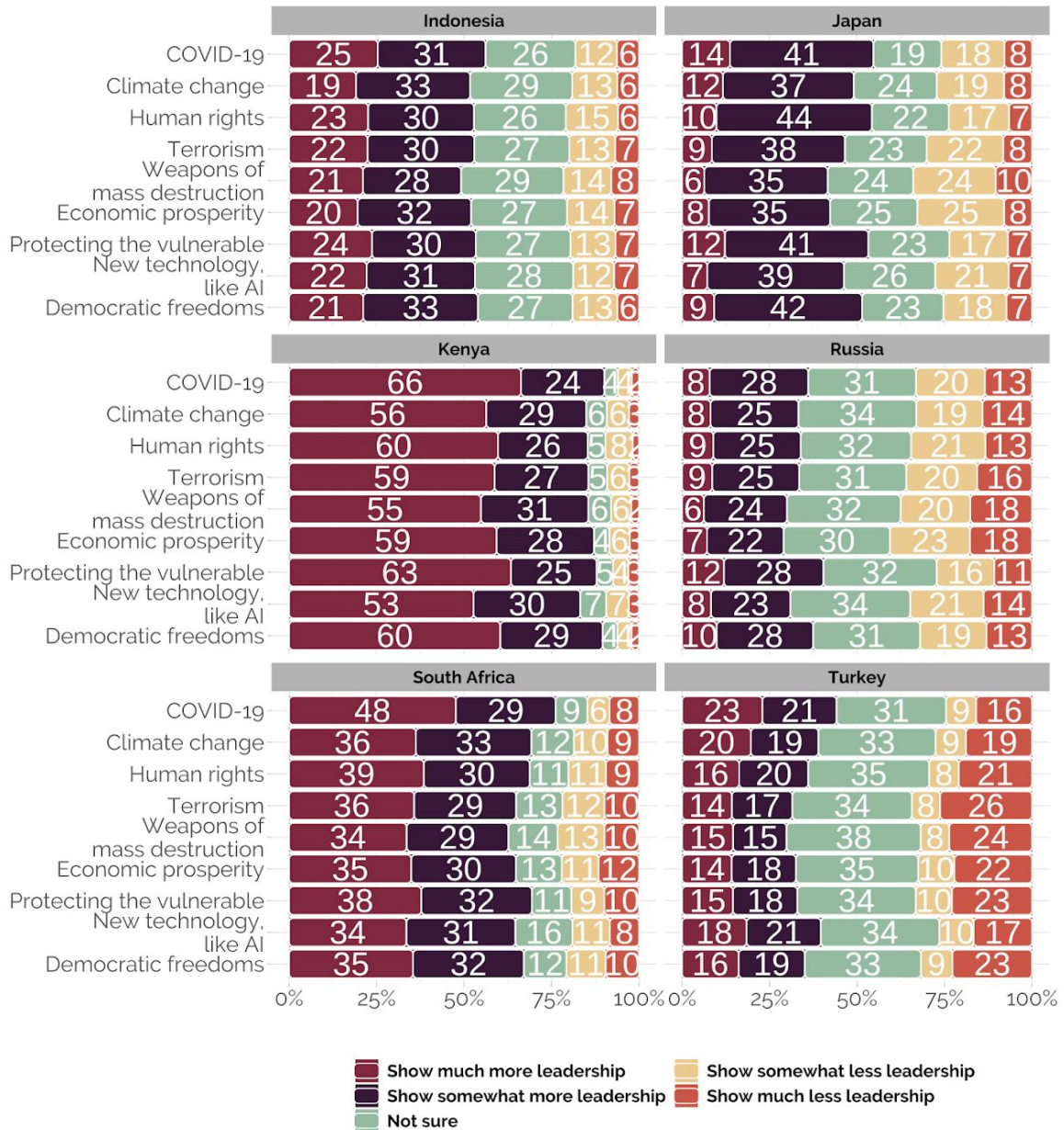
Will Biden show more/less leadership than Trump



Show much more leadership
 Show somewhat less leadership
 Show somewhat more leadership
 Show much less leadership
 Not sure

Now, think about incoming President Joe Biden, when it comes to those same issues, when the United States has a new President, do you think it will show [more leadership or less leadership] on that issue than it did under current President Donald Trump?

Will Biden show more/less leadership than Trump



Now, think about incoming President Joe Biden, when it comes to those same issues, when the United States has a new President, do you think it will show [more leadership or less leadership] on that issue than it did under current President Donald Trump?

But the world remains skeptical Joe Biden will take major, concrete action

Yet at the same time, respondents were skeptical that Joe Biden would take the kinds of concrete steps they believe he should. For example, we asked respondents both if they thought Joe Biden **should** rejoin the Paris Climate Accord and also if he **would** rejoin the Accord.

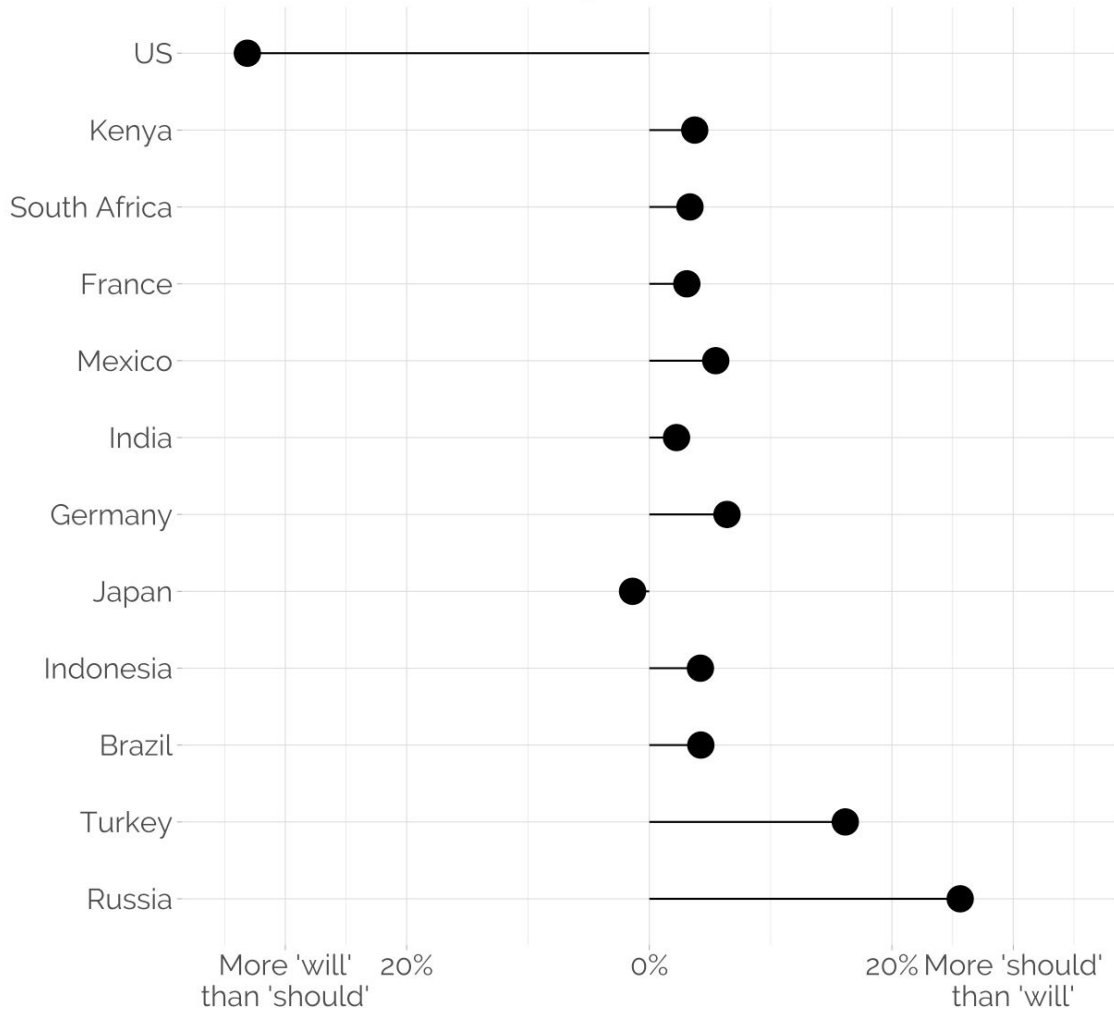
In every country in the sample, respondents thought Biden **should** do so -- by a +16 margin in the US, a +73 margin in Kenya, +64 in South Africa, +61 in France, +60 in Mexico, +59 in Germany, +53 in Brazil, +53 in India, +44 in Japan, +43 in Indonesia, +32 in Turkey, and +10 in Russia.

But those numbers were lower almost across the board for whether respondents believed Biden **would** rejoin the Paris Climate Accord - about 2 points lower in India; about 4 points lower in Kenya, South Africa, and France; about 5 points lower in Indonesia and Brazil; about 6 points lower in Mexico; about 7 points lower in Germany; fully 17 points higher in Turkey; and fully 26 points higher in Russia. Japan was roughly even. In other words, by a net +26 percentage point margin, more Russian respondents think Biden **should** rejoin the Paris Climate Accord than **will** rejoin the Paris Climate Accord. Relatively large shares of respondents in Russia and Turkey do not believe Joe Biden will do what they perceive to be the right thing.

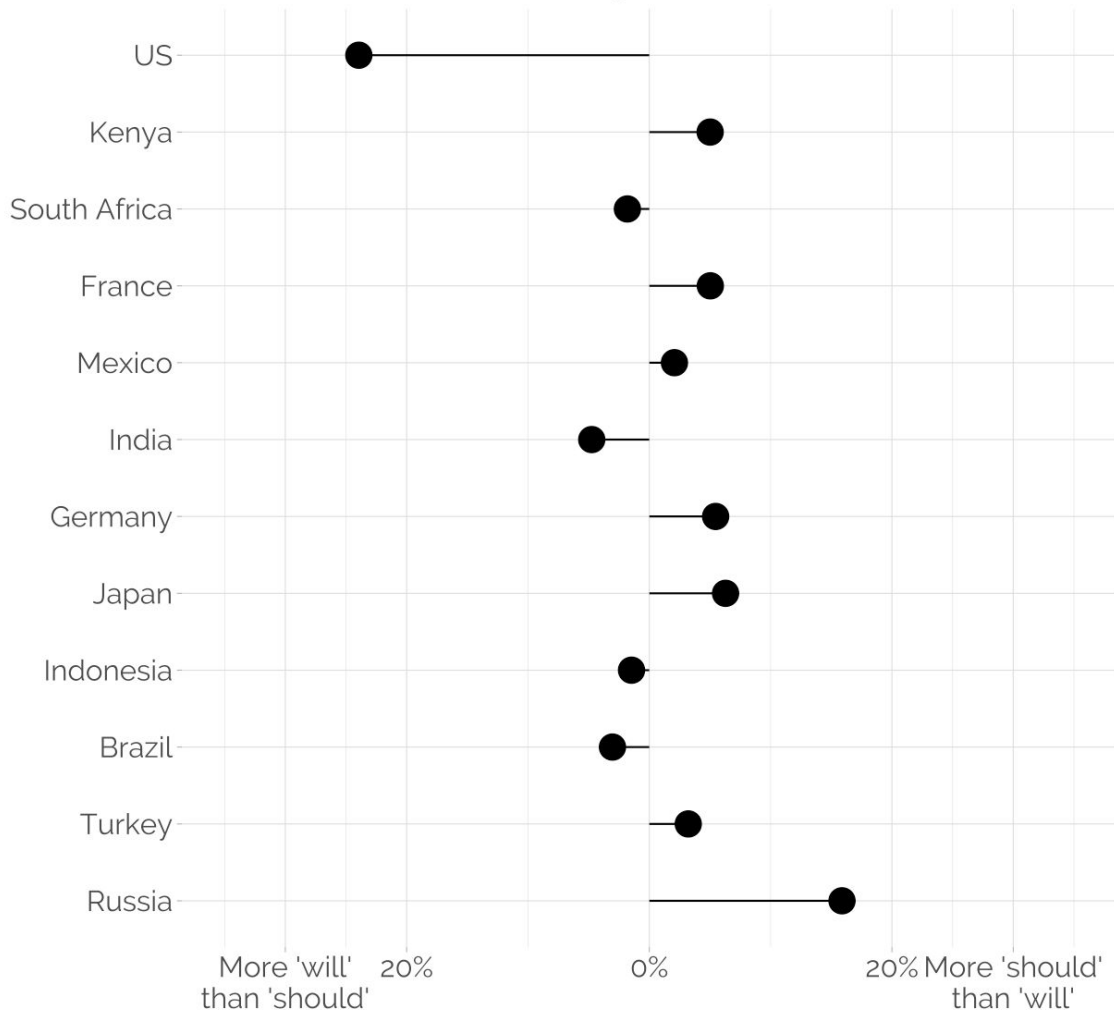
Respondents in the US overall remain the *most* apparently skeptical of Biden, but this is driven by the large share of Republican respondents who believe Joe Biden should not, but will rejoin the Paris Climate Accord.

We asked a similar item about whether Joe Biden **should** and **would** bring the United States back into the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal. Here, we received more mixed results, with several countries roughly statistically tied between believing Biden should and would bring the US back into the Iran Nuclear Deal. Here, more respondents from France, Germany, Japan, and Russia thought Biden *should* rather than *would* rejoin the Iran Nuclear Deal, while other countries' results were not statistically distinguishable from even. At this end of this memo, we include a full tabular breakdown of believe that Joe Biden **should** and **would** rejoin the Paris Climate Accord and the Iran Nuclear Deal by the countries included in the sample.

Will/should US rejoin Paris Climate Accord



Will/should US rejoin Iran Nuclear Deal



Conclusion

The world has high hopes for Joe Biden, and optimism that he will prove to be a better leader than his predecessor. But across the world, people are skeptical that Joe Biden will take the major steps necessary to show leadership on issues like climate change and protecting the world from rogue nations and terrorism. In particular, Russian and Turkish respondents were highly skeptical of the incoming Administration.

In this way, the current state of the world presents an opportunity for Joe Biden to take concrete steps to bring US leadership back to the world stage. Our polling data suggests there are ample

opportunities for him to do so. And due to present pessimism about the ability of the United States to lead, our data suggest he should take as many of those opportunities as possible.

Appendix A: Full breakdown of “**should** vs. **will**” analysis

US should minus US will rejoin the Paris Climate Accord							
Country	Agree will rejoin Paris Climate Accord	Disagree will rejoin Paris Climate Accord	(Agree - Disagree will rejoin)	Agree should rejoin Paris Climate Accord	Disagree should rejoin Paris Climate Accord	(Agree - Disagree should rejoin)	Net should - will
US	66%	18%	48%	50%	34%	15%	-33%
Brazil	60%	12%	48%	63%	11%	52%	4%
Mexico	65%	10%	55%	70%	9%	60%	5%
France	68%	10%	58%	70%	9%	61%	3%
Germany	61%	9%	52%	67%	9%	59%	6%
India	63%	12%	51%	66%	13%	53%	2%
Indonesia	52%	13%	39%	54%	11%	43%	4%
Japan	57%	12%	46%	57%	13%	44%	-1%
Kenya	77%	7%	70%	80%	6%	74%	4%
Russia	35%	21%	13%	51%	12%	39%	26%
South Africa	64%	11%	52%	68%	12%	56%	3%
Turkey	36%	21%	14%	45%	15%	31%	16%

US should minus US will rejoin the Iran Nuclear Deal							
Country	Agree will rejoin Paris Climate Accord	Disagree will rejoin Paris Climate Accord	(Agree - Disagree will rejoin)	Agree should rejoin Paris Climate Accord	Disagree should rejoin Paris Climate Accord	(Agree - Disagree should rejoin)	Net should - will
US	53%	21%	32%	44%	35%	8%	-24%
Brazil	49%	17%	32%	48%	19%	29%	-3%
Mexico	47%	18%	29%	49%	18%	31%	2%
France	46%	12%	34%	50%	11%	39%	5%
Germany	45%	10%	35%	50%	10%	40%	5%
India	60%	14%	46%	57%	17%	41%	-5%
Indonesia	45%	20%	25%	45%	22%	23%	-1%
Japan	46%	16%	30%	50%	14%	36%	6%
Kenya	67%	12%	55%	71%	11%	60%	5%
Russia	32%	26%	6%	41%	19%	22%	16%
South Afric	55%	18%	37%	56%	20%	36%	-2%
Turkey	30%	26%	4%	32%	25%	7%	3%