

Teneo Insights Webinar: A Conversation with Julia Gillard, 27th Prime Minister of Australia

Teneo Insights / July 16, 2021



Alexandra Lager (AL): Good day and thank you for joining today's Teneo Insights webinar. A recording and podcast of this call will be available on Teneo's website. Now, I would like to hand it over to our host, Kevin Kajiwar.

Kevin Kajiwar (KK): Well, thank you very much, Alex. Good day everyone. Welcome and thank you for joining today's edition of Teneo Insights. I'm Kevin Kajiwar, Co-President of Teneo Political Risk Advisory in New York City. Julia Gillard was the 27th Prime Minister of Australia and leader of the Labor Party. To date she is the only woman to have been Australia's head of government. Among her

Julia Gillard
27th Prime Minister of
Australia

Kevin Kajiwar
Co-President,
Political Risk Advisory
kevin.kajiwar@teneo.com

earlier positions, three portfolios really stand out as highly relevant to today's conversation. She served as Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, and Minister for Social Inclusion. Today she holds enough positions to make me wonder why I feel so busy, but among her current roles, she is the Chairman of the Wellcome Trust, which is £29 billion global health foundation. She is the Chairman of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at Kings College, London.

She's the Chair of the Global Partnership for Education, and a side note here, Rihanna is the partnership's global ambassador. And she's a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution Center for Universal Education. You can see a trend here, obviously. I am pleased to welcome the Honorable Julia Gillard who joins us today from London. A special thanks to our mutual colleague, Betsy Cohen, who facilitated today's call. Julia, I wanted to start by, obviously we're going through a very, very unique unprecedented moment right now, as the world, in a very uneven way, tries to reemerge from the pandemic economically, while also dealing with it from a healthcare perspective. While that is unprecedented, it is the second time in 12 years that we have had a global downturn very fast in the economy and the need to put things back together. You were in office, I believe as deputy prime minister, at the time of the global financial crisis and then prime minister in the aftermath of it. I'm interested to know what your key takeaways were from that crisis. And as you look now at global policy makers, whether those lessons are being well applied, if you will. On the surface it does seem like there's more burden sharing between fiscal authorities and not simply reliant on monetary policy authority as the way perhaps it was after 2008. And we're not relying on China to the

same degree, to float the global boat. But at the same time, certain leaders out there are taking an opportunity to rebuild their economies in a different way. What are your observations on what's happening now?

Julia Gillard (JG): Thanks Kevin, and it's great to be with you and to be able to have this conversation. I suppose, observation number one is, governments learned a lot from the global financial crisis about what is necessary in terms of fiscal stimulus, and monetary policy. And on the fiscal side, we certainly learned the lessons about how timely and targeted you need to be to keep economic activity going. During this crisis, obviously many things are different and the need for income support for so many individuals and businesses has persisted for many months as lockdowns have prevented people plying their ordinary trades.

But I think a lesson that comes out of all of that was the making of the decisions to provide the stimulus, very hard decisions. The even harder decisions at the moment are about getting out or the pathway out. I think much of that still lies in front of policy makers around the world. And it's right now that we're really formulating the decisions around the world as to whether we will come out overheated, underpowered, and the aspirations to rebuild, to build in a different way, to build back better, whether they will be realized.

I guess my second observation would be that the global financial crisis was characterized by a lot of multilateral engagement. The G20 certainly came to the fore in the course of that crisis. I'd pay tribute to my predecessor, Kevin Rudd. He was right at the center of bringing the G20 together and leaders acting together to try and save the global economy. I think in this crisis whilst there was some cooperation around the world, we are not seeing the depths of it that we need to ultimately end the pandemic by vaccinating right around the world and consequently enabling business and the

global economy to get on and do what it needs to do, and rebuild. So I am quite concerned that the multilateralism this time round is very thin indeed.

KK: It's interesting because I think we've clearly learned that it is far easier to shut down a global economy and a global just-in-time supply chain than it is to restart one. As all of these discussions are going on and debates within countries and between countries, there are clouds out there, whether it is the fact that the pandemic has not been vanquished, as you suggest. Vaccine distribution is uneven either by choice or by circumstance. There is north, south divide, there's east, west divide on all of this. And then as you suggest, there's a potential of overheating. There's a spectrum of inflation, all of that. What's your biggest concern as you see these debates playing out right now?

JG: Well, I would start with two underlying conditions, concerns, and then come to the economy. I mean, number one, my deepest concern is that we are not doing enough to end the pandemic globally. The scientists tell us and tell us very clearly that we will not have defeated this pandemic until vaccinations are available right around the world. If we continue to be in a world where there are large numbers of unvaccinated people, then that is begging for the virus to mutate, and mutations, as we've seen with the Delta virus, can be more contagious. But obviously the real fear is that one will generate that's capable of vaccine escape, and then we'll be back to square one. And so that is deeply concerning.

Whilst it was good to see G7 leaders gather here in the United Kingdom, in Cornwall at the coast, and to talk about vaccine and vaccine distribution, actually, what was agreed was a very slow start on the task of vaccinating the world. When you dig down, most of the distribution of the vaccines will be next year,

not this year. And so we need to be doing better than that. And then with my hat on, as Chair of the Global Partnership for Education, I'm obviously concerned that a health crisis has alongside it an education crisis. We all know what school closures look and feel like in the U.S., in Australia, in the UK. But we are at least in circumstances where we can use all of this technology to maintain educational continuity, and we can help children make successful returns to school.

That's not the circumstance in the developing world, and we know from earlier health crises that when schools close the most marginalized kids, particularly the girls, never make it back. So I'm worried that we not only have the continuing pandemic, but the education crisis alongside it is going to blight other pathways that we want to see to peace and prosperity in many developing countries. It's going to set us back.

And so both of those things in a profound sense, then feed into the global economic outlook. If the world is going to divide into vaccinated and unvaccinated zones, that's got economic consequences, every, which way that you look at it, and will be a real constraint on global growth. If we look at the medium to longer term, if we're holding countries back from the journey of education and skills development, then that's going to spell longer periods of poverty, under development, thin economies. And we all want to break out of that cycle and have a much more cohesive globe where nations are making their way.

KK: This is all a perfect segue and the perfect setup for, I think, what we really want the heart of this conversation to be about. Because clearly, and you've suggested this just now, different groups had very different experiences throughout the pandemic. We could look at every one of these subgroups all day long here, but I want to focus and hone in on one group,

that's been a particular focus of your professional life since leaving government, and that is women. Here a lot has been made of how disproportionately impacted women in our economy have been as we went into lockdown because of the nature of many of the jobs that they held, parenting responsibilities, homeschooling issues, all of those things. And now for many of those exact same reasons, disproportionately being affected as we come out of the pandemic and out of the lockdowns. What are your observations here? Is this what we're talking about in the U.S. and perhaps much of the developed world, is that true globally? Is it exacerbated in the developing world? What can we do to smooth out that process? The organizations you're associated with, how are your efforts helping on that front?

JG: Yeah, sure. Look, I'm happy to talk about all of that. I think we've got to remember that absolutely at the center, this is a virus that tends to kill more men than women. So we should never forget that. But as we look at the ripple effects of the virus and the health crisis, I mean, the first ripple effect is that there are huge strains on health services and that health and caring workforce at the patient contact level is disproportionately female. And so the people who've been in the absolute midst of the storm, taking the personal risks, are disproportionately women. I think it's one thing for us to stand on our doorsteps clapping for carers to show our appreciation, which happened very regularly in the United Kingdom, for example. It's another thing to come out of this crisis, asking ourselves a set of profound questions about how we undervalue caring work, undervalue women's work.

And then when you get to the next bit of it, the various lockdowns, people working from home, domestic labor, domestic violence, we do know that it's been women that have stepped up particularly to those burdens.

My favorite statistic on this, is a study in the United Kingdom which showed that in male-female couples, where both work full time, where she is the higher income earner, even in those male-female couples, it's the woman who's stepped up more to the extra domestic labor caused by homeschooling and lockdown. The analysis that people like to put on this stuff, which is, many families, the male partner would be the bigger income earner, so if someone's working hours have to give way, it makes economic sense for it to be the female partner. That's not what's happening here. This is just the gender divide, pure and simple.

And then I would say the next rung of this is, which jobs have been lost. And we know that the lockdown impacts have disproportionately affected feminized industries, retail, hospitality, travel services, and the like. That does mean when we're talking about fiscal policy, that we've got to be a bit more creative in getting out the traditional toolkit, because the traditional toolkit is all about infrastructure, construction projects and the like. This is a different time. What I'm hoping though is that there is an upside and the upside is that for those occupations where it is possible to do virtual and remote work, that we take the best of what we're doing now with us, in an incredibly thoughtful way, which enables us to diversify working styles, which gives us the prospect of a better home-life balance, a better way of working, which will be better for everyone, but given disproportionate domestic burdens, it will be particularly better for women.

KK: You've talked a lot about the fiscal impact here, and I'm wondering, do you think too much has made—we've seen this in a number of countries and certainly here in the United States—that enhanced unemployment benefits are a disincentive for people to go back to work. But it seems to me that even we've seen examples in Australia as an example, and I think earlier in 2020 in the U.S. when the first round of

enhanced unemployment benefits came off, that there wasn't actually a rush back to work, precisely for a lot of the reasons you were talking about. There are other elements, whether it's the pandemic, fear of the disease, homeschooling kids, and so on, that were actually impediments to going back to work, not just that there was government largess disincenting.

JG: Yeah, look I think it would be a bit simplistic to just say government payments are creating disincentives, particularly at this stage of where we are in recovery in some nations, as we've discussed, not all nations from the pandemic. What I would say is firstly, I think we've got to be pretty analytical about what still holding people back. Even if people think to themselves that being at work, perhaps working in a hospitality service, a restaurant or coffee shop or whatever that they can imagine going and doing that. For many the need to take public transport potentially over quite long distances I think still looms very big in people's minds as a fear during the pandemic. I think we've got to be realistic about that.

We've also got to be realistic about the quick way in which school arrangements can be disrupted. This is true in many parts of the world that there's frequent testing of school children, and if your school suddenly has a case or a cluster of cases, then home the kids go. And if you're living with not knowing whether your kids can go to school tomorrow, then resuming work in the normal pattern is obviously a very difficult thing to do. And then when we're talking about taper out of government support payments, often governments have layered in disincentives, which aren't apparent to the eye at first glance. You think, okay, well a government payment falls away and then you're back income earning, but there can be tax and benefit transfer problems in that journey from government payments into work, which can actually mean that the value that is got from

working is a lot less than it might look on the surface. There's always the need for quite sophisticated policy making about how transfer payments and other forms of government support relate to what we in Australia would historically refer to as the welfare to work journey.

KK: Right. So a lot of focus now is on going back to work, and what that's going to look like going forward, whether everybody's going back full time, whether there's going to be some sort of hybrid model that prevails, but just picking up on what you're talking about, it seems to me that the hybrid model to a certain degree is a double-edged sword. It is positive in the one sense that it can give employees a lot more flexibility to meet those responsibilities and challenges that you've just been talking about. But at the same time, if you've got a scenario where well, all the men can go back to the office and women avail themselves of the hybrid model in a sense, that men enjoy the privileges of being in the office, the proverbial water cooler conversations, and so on that lead to new opportunities and career advancement and so on. How are you working with corporations and employers and others to kind of ensure that there's that equitable distribution of opportunity then within companies?

JG: Yeah, it seems to me that almost everybody in the world is trying to figure this out right now, and it's a pretty complicated problem. At the Global Institute for Women's Leadership we are working with a range of businesses and learning from them as well as pointing to our research work about what would best enable the design of work systems that put gender at the center as we diversify working styles. I mean message number one would simply be, you've got to be incredibly intentional about it. Otherwise, exactly what you're saying will happen. We'll have a new form of presenteeism, men will disproportionately

going to work, they will be the one who's at the boss's elbow, there for the urgent meetings, very visible and consequently, the ones who are rewarded come promotion time or red hot training opportunity time or mentorship opportunity time. So you've got to be incredibly thoughtful about how you're going to do it.

That requires businesses to think deeply about what is merit in our context? Not a de facto measure of "oh, he's always here, he seems to be busy," but what really is merit in a way that can be measurable and comparable across presenteeism and working from home or working remotely. Second, I think we've got to ask ourselves a set of questions about what is the office for now? I can't imagine that we're going to go back to working styles where large numbers of people flood into cities on crowded public transport to sit in corrals going like that on their own machine, they might as well do that at home. And so offices I think will become more hubs, more collaboration spaces, and how do you make the promise of that really come true? And then there's sort of working cultures and they do have to be set from the top. If the, big people, the C-suite people are there working from the office the whole time, then the message is received that's the best working style. If the C-suite is using the options, then I think that gives permission to others.

So we're still thinking all of this through, but what we know from earliest studies, pre-pandemic studies on flexible work, that the time from the top, the objectivity around definitions of merit, the sort of cultural predispositions that you don't allow a shirking from home kind of culture or dismissive culture towards those who aren't in the office. Making sure that opportunities that can be realized in person can also be realized online such as mentorship opportunities, all of these things need to be very deliberately thought through. Though for employers I think this is big businesses, small businesses, everybody, I think this is a time to

get creative, but it's also a time of opportunity. I mean, this is going to bust open many talent markets for people. Where you can recruit your best staff from is no longer reliant on those who live within a reasonable transport journey of your office. You can think more flexibly about the recruitment and retention of talent and in this world, or maybe not this world right now, but generally in our world where the war for talent is so important, I think that brings in all sorts of new ways of thinking and working.

KK: And this typically though is, I mean, and listen, we have this discussion, my colleagues and I all the time on our own behalf, as well as when we're thinking about our clients, but you know, this is all great for office professionals, but not so great for support staff. Oftentimes disproportionately women as well, right, I mean receptionists basically must be in the office. A lot of executive assistants maybe have multiple bosses and given who's in the office on any given day, they wind up there five days a week or needing to be there five days a week. And this is not even to mention frontline workers, service workers, people working in manufacturing and so on. Talk about the deliberate, you were talking about a deliberate intent here on the part of employers thinking through this. How about for those who really don't have that same level of optionality in terms of where they conduct their work each day?

JG: I think that's absolutely right, and there are jobs that definitely need to be done in-person or where even if it's not a mandatory requirement, there will be aspects of the performance of the work that are done better if you're routinely in the office. My sense is that people will still, in so far as possible, be looking for new flexibilities compared with what was before the pandemic. There might be flexibilities about start and finish times, there might be flexibilities about core days in the office and that sense of non-core days when people can optionalize at home.

Yes, of course there will be jobs where it's going to be fixed hours and people need to be there personally attending. We're never going to get rid of that, but I think employers are going to see employees of all sorts of occupational grades really valuing flexibility now and being prepared to move employer to get the kind of arrangements they want. So a deep dialogue around all of this, not dismissing the outer limits of what's possible I think is really what's required. And one thing that I think should strike us all through this period is some things that we never thought could be done virtually are now being done virtually every day. I have friends who work in the city as they would say in London, by which they mean the financial industry, including a friend of mine who works on very big deals and the ethos was always these deals cannot be done unless everybody's in the office working continuously, eating pizza, getting a nap on the couch for 20 minutes and then getting back up and chugging down 10 cups of coffee and still doing another full day's work. And you know what, they've still done those big deals working like this. So there are different options and possibilities.

KK: Sure. I want to talk about women in leadership, but I want to start though by looking at a critical component of that, which is the pipeline. And you alluded to this earlier, which is that students frankly of all ages from pre-K through university have had to cope with the dislocations of the pandemic and wealth inequality and the digital divide impacts have been quite clear and evident, but what about the impact on girls and young women? We know the importance of those formative years, pre-K, K, first and second grade, in terms of setting the stage, so much can be predicted over how well children do at those ages. What are you seeing on that front and how are we ameliorating that heavier hitch to girls and women worldwide?

JG: This is a pressing set of questions too. In the developing country context, so the sort of thing that I see through the work of the Global Partnership for Education, what we know from Ebola for example is that marginalized girls didn't return to school. That was more in the adolescent age range, where they were at risk of early marriage or being put into a child labor. And by that I mean, particularly labor that is generating income for the family units. So perhaps undertaking domestic duties to free up an adult to go and do an income earning activity, perhaps subsistence agriculture. We are very conscious, and the statistics tell us that if we just see the same trends we saw out of Ebola, but upscale them, given the size of this crisis, that between 10 and 14 million girls could be lost to education because of child marriage, for example.

Right now the global partnership for education has been mobilizing as have others, we've to date done the biggest response to try and support educational continuity and get schools in a position where they can contact and bring back every child who was in the school before the pandemic struck. Now the outcomes of that, I can't tell you yet, but that is what we're trying to do. In other contexts, including Australia, the U.S., The UK, and the like, I think that there is going to have to be a lot of thinking done about educational deficits, certainly the research here in the UK is very clear that the biggest educational losses track preexisting patterns of inequality. So low-income children, children from ethnic minority households are more likely to have lost months of learning compared with other children unless special efforts are made to reorient that, then that education deficit is likely to live with that child for the rest of their schooling and potentially the rest of their labor market experience.

We know from earlier downturns that people who come of age and by that, I mean enter the workforce or seek to enter the workforce during a downturn, whether that's as a young

apprentice or as a university graduate, that they're kind of missing that first step on the labor market ladder. That disadvantage can show 10, 12 years later in labor market outcomes. I'm not an expert in this, but I do worry about mental health for children generally, but I particularly wonder whether we'll be able to see the imprint on younger children who have missed some of those critical interactions, which are about the early socialization, the movement beyond family, into mixing with other children your own age, more generally the sorts of things that childcare and early learning provide, but haven't been able to be provided in this pandemic. And you're only three years old once, four years old once, five years old once. So if you miss it because of long lock downs, what's the long-term impact of that, I think the question's still out there for us to answer.

KK: Yeah. Based on what you just said, it occurs to me that that answer is going to present itself over the course of the next few decades, not in the immediate future. So I want to maybe pull back a little bit from the peculiarities of the pandemic and the immediate economic fallout from all of that and just look again at the bigger picture. Because I know your focus, particularly with your role at Kings College on women in leadership, and I think perhaps many in our audience are not necessarily familiar with the particular institute you're associated with there. Maybe you could tell us about your work there, but also sort of the trends in general, irrespective of the interruptions of the pandemic, but the trends that you're seeing on this front.

JG: Sure. Very happy to talk about that. The Global Institute for Women's Leadership is a research institute. Our mission is to look at the evidence and generate new evidence, new research about how to clear out of the way other barriers to women's leadership. We are very outward focused. Our job is to

get the evidence into the hands of people who can use it for change. I'm very pleased that we have a sister institute coming on stream at the Australian National University, and we are seeking to work with partners around the world. I think when we're talking about women's leadership, we can get a bit beguiled by the stock and forget about the flow. People are probably thinking to themselves, "Oh, but I've seen lots of women lead us during the pandemic, and they've done really well." Jacinda Ardern and so many leaders have done so wonderfully, and that is undoubtedly true.

When we pull back from those visible examples and look at the statistics, we are in a situation where fully 70% of countries on earth have never been led by a woman. Only two has been led by three women. Iceland's one and New Zealand's the other. In terms of the rate of change, how many more women are we seeing come up into leadership? Well, it's got better, but not by much. The global statistics will often now have a set sort of 16, 17 women leading nations that used to be more like 10, 11, 12. It's not like it's a galloping rate of change that would suggest to us that political empowerment is going to be equalized anytime soon. In fact, the World Economic Forum tells us that with current rates of change, that it will be about one hundred years. Then if we look at the corporate sector, if you pull up any of the major stock exchanges and look at the top 100 companies, then you're likely to see the number of female CEOs at around about 5 or 6%, that's the kind of standard number. Once again, we are not seeing fast rates of change in that. The message is we've got a lot more to do if we are to realize, I think the moral promise, as well as the economic promise and leadership promise of gender equality, when the World Economic Forum comes out each year with its status report and it's still measuring things in centuries before we get there, rather than in numbers of years, then we know that we've really got to get a move on here.

KK: Can you unpack that just a little bit? I think by the way, the last most recent data I saw for the Fortune 500 in the U.S. is 8%. Every conversation on so many elements of corporate policy making right now, comes under the aegis of ESG and its subset, or some would argue it is completely separate, but DE&I. Certainly, we've kind of gone from, we are making progress on disclosure on transparency and stated commitment on the part of companies. We're now truly, as you're sort of suggesting, we're at the real action point, right? How do we move from, and I'm not saying we shouldn't have these metrics. I mean, metrics are critical to having the data to support your arguments and put that evidence out there as you suggest. How do we move from a lot of box checking to really getting where we need to go? I mean, you can make all the policies that you want, but what you're really suggesting is a change in the ethos, right? There's a change in the thinking that goes all the way back to early childhood development, to creating opportunities and mentorship and just being open to it. Look, and I acknowledge, you're talking about 8% of Fortune 500 companies are led by women. Leadership is much broader than simply the CEO position. I get that, but what are your thoughts here?

JG: Yeah, my sense here is, I mean, most global businesses, big businesses have done the low hanging fruit. I don't want to be dismissive about what's been done. It's been big and important and necessary, but I think we've got to acknowledge now that it was the low hanging fruit. When I got my law degree 100 years ago, when I was young, it would have been very common for young female law graduates to go for an interview for their first job and be met by a panel of five male partners doing the interview. Now, that wouldn't happen anymore. We've dealt with those things.

We're in this deeper dives, stickier, harder, more bespoke, more cultural bit of it where it's very difficult to unpack and to get to the solutions.

What I would say is we've got to think about it through two lenses. There are structural barriers, usually, that prevent women coming through, particularly given the domestic load. We still have to do much, much more to change that. Changing that is at this stage, I think about changing both how men and women approach work and family life flexibilities. The research is crystal clear that if you offer work-family flexibilities, and only the women take them, then the women will suffer a career deficit from that, they'll be on the mommy track. Whereas, if you offer those flexibilities and men and women take them, then no one actually suffers a career deficit. From government policy, for example, Norway and other places, we know when governments step in and do parental leave arrangements, if they do it on the basis that both parents can have a period of leave, but the male partner can't put his period of leave over the female partner, either he takes it or he loses it, men do take it. The research is showing that that affects gender relations within the family. It affects the bonding and care dynamic between the father and the child. Those impacts actually show years later in the life of the child and in the life of the family, and who's doing domestic work in the family. I think there's a whole set of structural things to think about there. Then there's the set of stereotyping issues where, because we've always lived and worked in a cultural milieu that has gender stereotyping baked in, it's very hard for us to stand back and see it. It's just the air that we breathe, the places that we go, the people that we meet, but the research time and time again, shows us that we are all suckers for falling for charismatic, confident men.

We think to ourselves, “Gee, he looks like a leader,” even though the research tells us that overconfidence and charisma are not correlated with great leadership outcomes. We put differential burdens on the shoulders of women. We say, “Look, a strong man, he looks like he’d be a good leader.” Whereas of women, we only respond positively to them, if they come across as both strong and kind and nurturing and empathetic all at the same time. Research shows very clearly that if you set about a five-person team, you tell them to go and solve a problem. It is not until the team is composed of four women and one man that the women will get a fair share of talking time. Or put another way, if there’s more than one man, the men will disproportionately take the talking time. The other way of fixing that is to tell the team that it’s got to make a decision by consensus rather than sort of simply who’s the loudest. These things are in our very essence about how we see merit and who is doing well, who deserves promotion. It affects politics. It affects business, the law, and the list goes on, the media and we need to be grappling with real depths now in organizations. Where the choke points are, what is the most pressing thing in an organization will be different from workplace to workplace and industry to industry, but that deep research is what is required.

KK: Do you think ... I want to go back to, since we’re talking about stereotypes, let’s talk about stereotypes here for a moment, right? There were many suggestions over the course of the pandemic that countries that were led by women did better in general than others. You mentioned Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand, the President of Taiwan is another example, Prime Minister of Norway. It also occurs to me that many of these are very small countries, islands in many cases, and one where the jury is kind of out. There were positive developments at one point, and then apparently not doing as well at other times as the biggest of them all, which was Germany under Angela Merkel,

who was doing her valedictory trip through Washington meeting with Biden this week. Do you think that there’s something about the quality of female leadership at the national level that is different?

JG: Well, at the moment we have sort of competing academic studies on this. Everybody’s trying to get to the bottom of it. Some early research did suggest that even comparing like countries to like countries, so you were controlling for the factors that you’ve gone to small islands, that kind of thing. That even doing that, countries led by women were doing better during the pandemic. There’s been some later research, which has cast some doubt on those findings. I don’t think we quite know yet. I guess I would start the debate at a different point, which is, I think we’ve got to be very careful about saying there is inherently a thing that is a male leadership style and a female leadership style. I mean, this was fashionable a number of years ago. Men are from Mars, women are from Venus. Apparently our brains are different. And neuroscience, modern neuroscience tells us that whilst there’s still much more to learn about the brain, most of what he said in this analysis is really nonsense.

I think to the extent that we can look at our societies and say male leadership and female leadership, what we’re actually seeing is the product of socialization and the fact that because men and women, boys and girls socialize differently, because we give more permission to men to be self-seeking, to be confident, to be ambitious for self. Whereas we only give permission to women if we think that they’re kind and empathetic, put the team first, then we’re seeing that on display. Where I think that comes down in the pandemic was the female leaders who get to the top and do well, are leaders who have managed to combine this sense of strengths and empathy. People think that they got what it takes to get through the tough times, but they also see in them kindness. I think they’re exactly the traits

that have been most valued at this time. We've all wanted to say to ourselves, "My leader's got this. My leader's going to get my nation through. We're going to deal with this pandemic and deal with it well," but I think many women have brought that extra empathy. And so, people have also responded to the fact that she understands I'm really scared. She understands I'm really worried about my family. I really don't like this. I'd hate it when the world is in this level of uncertainty. This is really taking its toll on me. Then she gets this, and Jacinda Ardern was wonderful at showing that. Erna Solberg in Norway, the dialogue she had with school kids, they showed that they understood that anxiety.

I do hope we come out of this having some great dialogue about what is the kind of leadership we truly want. If it is strength and empathy, then let's ask everyone to show it. Not just women. On the flip side of the coin, what I think we can certainly say is that the ultra-stereotypically masculine style of leadership, the swagger, the bluster. President Trump, certainly President Bolsonaro, that is the style of leadership that has least worked, because the virus isn't interested in your macho. The virus is just going to get on, do what it does. If you don't respond well, because you're too busy swaggering, then it will get on and infect more people.

KK: Let me be a little provocative here for one moment. You're quite right about the effectiveness there, but do you think, are you open-minded to the notion? I mean, here we are, we're in a world where there are fewer democracies today than there were at the beginning of the century. Even within democracies there's been a deterioration of democratic institutions. Is it just too small of a sample size at this point, or are you open to the idea that there could be authoritarian women leaders out there or even veering toward dictatorship?

JG: Oh, certainly, and it comes back to my analysis that I don't think there are inherent male or female leadership styles. I think this is taking us to a really important and perhaps in some ways uncomfortable space. There is a sort of a "shero" or female hero version of feminism. And we see it increasingly on display in popular culture and all the rest of it, which is asking us to venerate women leaders. And of course, the great female figures of history, many of them, their stories are under told. I want that history told. I want people to learn it. But we have to be really careful that we're not setting up some false construct here, which is we put female leaders on pedestals, and then when they do, not even something bad, just something human, man, that's a long way to fall. And then, we shatter the image of female leadership because we've asked for too much. Equality is not saying, "I'll vote for a bloke who looks vaguely like he could do it, but I'm only going to vote for a woman if she's amazing." That's not equality because, guess what? Foibles are equally distributed between the sexes, and the percentage of women who are amazing is always going to be a relatively small one, just as it is for men.

So I don't think we should stereotype and say it is only men who feel the siren song of autocratic impulses and projecting their will on others. I think human beings can all feel that siren song. We've given less permission to women to feel it across history because of the socialization, because of our culture, because of our structures. But I don't think we should wander around thinking to ourselves, men are natural dictators and women are natural democrats. But we should be valuing the skills and attributes that are really what we need to see. And if in democracies, we're now saying, those skills and attributes are about listening, learning, team building, being open to the possibility that you called it wrong and correcting course, and they're less about bluster, always needing to be seen to be right, being stubborn, even in the face of evidence

that you did call it wrong, relying on your own judgment instead of deferring to, or at least nurturing and being advised by a team. If we want that first set of traits, we might say at the moment they are disproportionately held by women, but they're traits that can obviously be held by everyone, and we should value in everyone.

KK: Sticking with this authoritarian versus democracy divide, clearly President Biden has focused on this as the issue of our time, and that the solutions to the big transnational issues from climate change to society's relationship with technological disruption, et cetera, all kind of come under this umbrella, most evidenced by the nature of the relationship between the United States and China, the most important bilateral relationship of the 21st century.

Do you think that that's the right way to pose the issue that's out there right now, number one? And number two, if it is, are you concerned at all? And it's certainly a concern we have in this country, but I think it's true in a lot of other countries as well, that a lot of our A-list talent, men, women, and everything, in a world of social media, of taking down people, of the wealth divide between the private sector and public service today, and all of that, our A-list is not being sent into government. It's not the noble venture that it used to be. Whereas China is definitely sending its A-list into Beijing. And so from a competitive perspective, how concerned are you on? And do you agree with the president's posing of the issue?

JG: Well, I can start with the second question first and then come back. On the A talent going into government, maybe this is too optimistic of me, but this is an era where you've got to find the optimism where you can. Maybe this is too optimistic of me, but I would hope that one of the legacies of the pandemic has been the

penny dropping with all of us just how important government is. So I've had the privilege of traveling extensively in the U.S. I've met wonderful people, including many wonderful young people. Obviously the young people I'm exposed to tend to be the ones who are a little bit interested in politics, but I would frequently have had conversations where young people, a little bit interested in politics in the U.S. have said to me, "I don't want to go into politics. The best way I can have an impact is, through a not-for-profit or I could involve myself in Teach for America, or I could be an entrepreneur who comes up with something that really changes the world and is there for social impact and social good, as well as for profitability." Those conversations were so incredibly frequent before the pandemic. I used to go home to Australia a little distressed about it, and I used to try and put the other case and often see that I wasn't being very persuasive.

I would hope that this era has said to those young people, all of those things are worthy and good use of your life's time, and many, many people should go into them. But if this thing in the middle that we call government isn't working, when push comes to shove, that is the difference between people living and dying. And who wouldn't want to use the best of their talents to be involved in making this thing that matters so much to all of us, stronger and more effective than it is now. And I wanted to say that first, because it then brings me to the question, you know, President Biden's framework and is the world divided into a contest between democracy and countries that are pursuing other paths, and then in reduction it comes down to the U.S. versus China. I guess I would say before we color the world like that and start lecturing the people on the other side of the divide, part of the onus here is for us all to be absolute poster children for democracy. And a dynamic that is clearly going on in this exchange between China and the U.S. is the U.S. standing up for values that it holds dear and that's fantastic to see. But obviously China

has got an easy set of retorts based on the Trump era, based on the ridiculous claims that the election was stolen, Stop the Steal, insurrection in the Capitol. I mean, all of these things, 'grist to the mill' for those who want to say democracies are messy, divisive, hyper-partisan. At the end of the day, they don't get things done. So why would you want a system of government like that. So, the U.S. being the strongest democracy it can, is as much a rejoinder as any analysis pursued in whatever method of China or indeed any other nation that is not democratic.

KK: Right. So we have a few minutes left and I cannot have you on here without letting you go without asking about Australia in the context of all of this, because obviously Australia occupies a very unique position in the world. It is one of the key Western allies and an established democracy, but it happens to sit in a very different neighborhood than most of the allies do. It seems to me a challenging time for Australia. I'm wondering how you see things playing out now. On the one hand, I imagine in Australia, Australia's leadership, as with much of the democratic world, there was a sigh of relief of a return to sort of normal international behavior on the part of the United States. On the other hand, in the back of your mind has got to be this question of a country that could vote for Trump or Trumpism, or even just for the concept of a more nationalistic, more isolationist view, which we have seen out of the United States in decades past, could do that again, in a world that's very rapidly changing. And by the way, the real estate that you occupy is not going to change and the neighborhood is not going to change. And you're trying to thread the needle over an increasingly assertive China and one that's putting forward a different narrative to the one that you're talking about of the championing democracy, as an example.

So it's a tough time for Australia in some ways, but is it? Or is it actually quite clear how Australia has to play this?

JG: I still think there's a bit of, I'm going to say, scar tissue. That might not be the world's best terminology, but a bit of a sore spot from what happened in the Trump era. And this came as a very big surprise to Australians. I mean, Australians follow American politics, lots of people follow American politics. Hillary Clinton was very popular in Australia. She visited when I was prime minister. We went through for a walk in Melbourne. It wasn't announced that we were going for a walk, so there were just ordinary Melbourne people on the streets going about their Sunday business. And to a person, they stopped and applauded Hillary Clinton as she walked by. Let me assure you, they weren't applauding me, their prime minister. They were applauding Hillary Clinton.

When the results were coming through for the election in 2016, I mistimed a flight and I unfortunately was on a plane as the critical results were coming through. As the plane landed in Sydney, I put my phone on and it was increasingly apparent Hillary was going to lose. I'm on a plane, a commercial plane, and people are leaning out of their seats, all looking at their phones to call out at me, "Julia, Julia what's going on? What? She's going to lose?" Mostly people can't wait to get off planes. They're bashing each other with their carry-on luggage to make it out the door. I was literally holding a political seminar on a parked jet because people wanted to try and understand what was happening.

So against that kind of background, the shock, the concern was deep. We're a great American ally. Whoever leads the United States, we're in for the journey. And so we made the best of it. But of course, people are relieved to see sort of normal transmission resumed and American leadership where you can think through these strategic settings and respond to them.

But that does not mean that the memory has completely fallen away or that as we war game the future of Australia, that policy analysts, the pundits who are trying to war game and read the future would put at zero the risk that that kind of hyper partisanship comes back. We think about the midterms and the potential for Republican victories in that, obviously related to voting measures, redistricting as much as anything else. When we look at who's shaping up for the Republican party for next time round, a lot of fighting going on to be the holder of the "I'm the new Trump ticket." That obviously deeply concerns Australians and makes us worry. We can work with whoever, but we also need strategic certainty as we calibrate day by day in a region of the world where what the U.S. thinks and what China thinks is not an academic debate. It's our lived reality.

KK: Absolutely. Julia Gillard is the 27th Prime Minister of Australia. I want to thank you for your time today. We very much appreciate it and would love to have you back. There's so many more issues to unpack that we barely scratched the surface on. I want to thank everybody else for joining us today as well. We will be back for our next show on August the 5th. The topic will be China in the wake of the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party and Xi Jinping's assertions at that event. So until then, be well, have a great weekend, and Julia, thank you again for joining us today.

JG: Thank you very much.



Teneo is the global CEO advisory firm.

Teneo is the global CEO advisory firm. Working exclusively with the CEOs and senior executives of the world's leading companies, Teneo provides strategic counsel across their full range of key objectives and issues.

Teneo's clients include a significant number of the Fortune 100 and FTSE 100, as well as other corporations, financial institutions and organizations. Integrating the disciplines of strategic communications, investor relations, restructuring, management consulting, physical & cyber risk, financial advisory, corporate governance advisory, ESG, DE&I, political & policy risk, and talent advisory. Teneo solves for the most complex business challenges and opportunities.

teneo.com