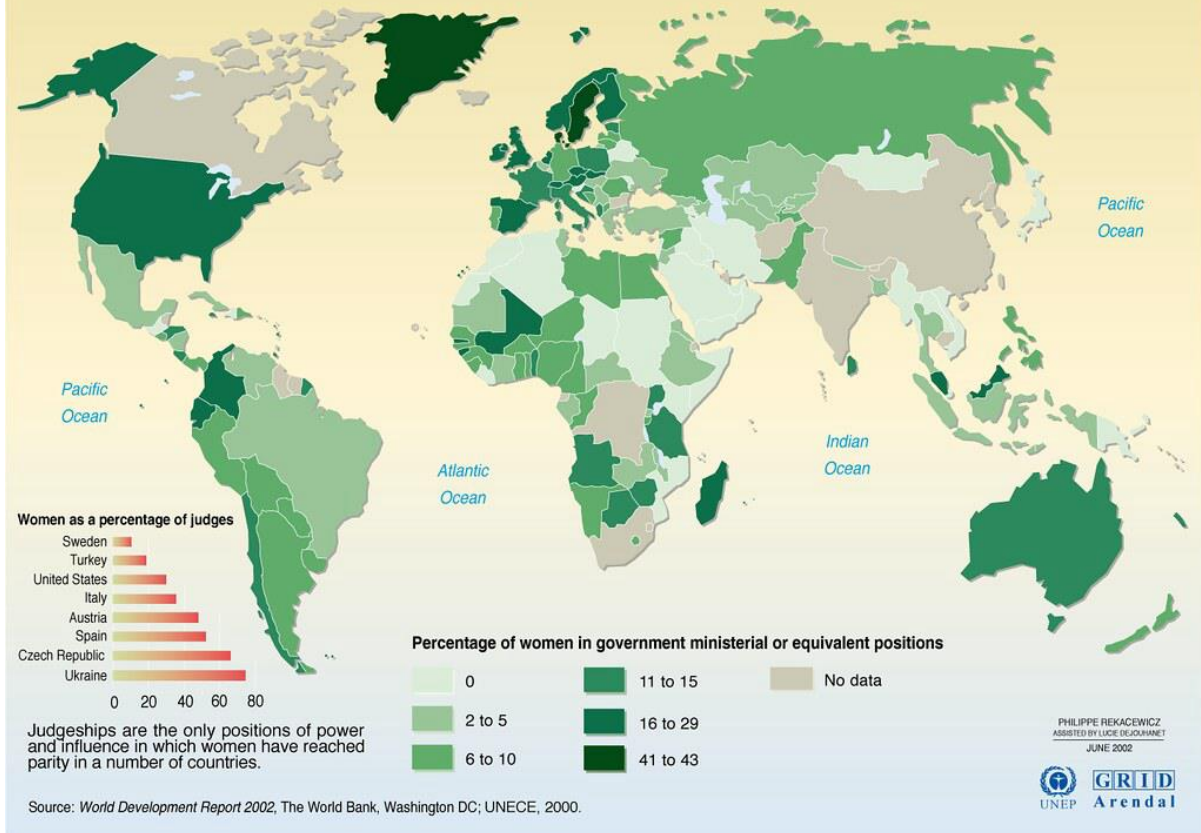


Women in politics

1907 was the first time in Austria people could vote or be voted, but only as a man. Many women disagreed with this, and formed clubs as a sign of demonstration, and fought for their right to vote. In 1918 everyone was able to vote, and in 1919 the first women voted or got voted. The last country, which let women vote, was Switzerland in the late 20th century. Seven Social Democrats, and one Christian Socialist got into the national council. Until 1986 the percentage of women in politics was only 10 percent. The higher positions were usually men, which changed in the Second Republic. The exceptions in Austria were Hella Postranecky, who was a secretary, and Grete Rehor, who was a minister. In 1990 the United Nations Women's Status Commission decided to increase the proportion of woman in the government to at least 30 percent by 1995, which was introduced as "Women in Positions of Power and Decision-making" as one of the twelve goals of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The percentage of men, and women in the Austrian government is equal. To get more women in politics in Austria, there has been a financial bonus for female politicians since 2019.

In *Sexual Politics* Kate Millett wrote "Yet it is never made clear what it is about men which makes them into oppressors nor, more importantly, what characteristics of particular forms of society place men in positions of power over men". In my opinion the quote fits the oppression of women well, because how did it happen that men became the oppressors, and that this problem is still going on in the 21st century. If it was that men were more qualified than women, then I would understand why this issue would exist. But it is not like that. Yes, there are men that are more qualified than women, but it can also be the other way around. It is different from person to person. We should stop looking at someone's gender and start looking at someone's qualities.

WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS IN 1998



How does it make you feel to see this?

Think about it. Think about how it is possible that there are almost no countries who have 50% women in their government. Most of the time there are only 6-10% of all politicians female. To me, this is fatal. How is this still possible in the 21st century? The chance of there being any women in the government, where there is no data, is low. I am not saying that there should only be women ruling the world, what I am saying is that the numbers are way too low. Is it that people do not vote for women? Is it that women do not want to be politicians? Is it that women are scared of what people think, when they say they want to work as a politician? Is it that women did not have enough time to get voted and now see no point in it? Is it that women are not qualified enough? These are the things I am asking myself, when I see statistics like this one. And I cannot seem to find the right answers to all of my questions.

Important women in the history of politics:

- Vigdís Finnbogadóttir
- Angela Merkel
- Michelle Obama
- Jeanette Rankin
- Maria Theresia

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was the first female democratic president ever. She ruled from 1980 to 1996 in Iceland, and still fights for women's rights.

- “It’s not enough for a woman to be intelligent. Intelligence has to have a modern coiffure.”

Angela Merkel was the first chancellor in Germany and stayed in that position for 16 years (2005-2021). She was part of the CDU, and retired, because she has outgrown out of this role.

- “When it comes to human dignity, we cannot make compromises.”

Michelle Obama is Barack Obama’s wife, who was the first black president in the USA. She had been the first lady from 2009 to 2017, when Donald Trump got more votes than her husband.

- “Success is only meaningful and enjoyable if it feels like your own.”

Jeanette Rankin was the first woman ever elected to join a Congress in 1919. She was 39 at that time and died at the age of 93 in the USA.

- “Men and women are like right and left hands; it doesn’t make sense not to use both.”

Last but not least **Maria Theresia**, who was the archduchess of Austria and the queen of Hungary and Bohemia, is so important for the political history of women because she brought the compulsory school attendance.

- “If I could wish for immortality on earth, it would only be for the power of relieving the distressed.