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Paper Title: **Gender in New Zealand Today: Substantial Political Achievements By Women Fail to Reflect Persistent Gender Inequalities**

Abstract:

New Zealand was the first self-governing country to grant universal female suffrage in 1893, and it has the distinction of being the only country in the world where women have held all of the top political offices at the same time. The early success of women in securing the right to vote and, subsequently, in filling political positions, were unquestionably significant steps towards equality for women in New Zealand. Such success has carried on throughout the years, with women now holding over one-third of the seats in the country's Parliament.

The accomplishments of New Zealand women in the public sphere are ostensibly quite impressive. However, our research indicates that these achievements do not signify a utopian state of gender equality. Women in New Zealand, even those in high-powered political positions, continue to struggle with a plethora of gender-based issues. They are still subjected to gender stereotypes and cast into so-called "feminine" roles. Politically, women are often put in charge of "soft issues" (i.e., social, community and domestic issues), while being excluded from traditional "masculine" issues like economics and foreign policy.

Furthermore, political success has not completely transcended into other aspects of society. While women have been able to achieve the highest government ranks, it is extremely difficult for women to break the glass ceiling in the corporate and business world. This pattern is especially true in the corporate law firm structure. Moreover, the current social structure illustrates that the traditional "machismo" sentiment in New Zealand continues to stifle the progression of women. However, there is evidence to suggest that, in some areas, female politicians have succeeded in empowering members of their gender—so much so, in fact, that males are now being shortchanged in key areas, most notably in the education and family court systems. We argue, therefore, that both sexes face gender-based discrimination in certain aspects of life, and that such uneven treatment can only foster unpleasant outcomes. The role of those in politics therefore, should be to acknowledge this, and politicians of both genders should continue to strive for equality in all aspects of life.