

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN EXPECTING EQUALITY

— A REPORT ON GENDER POLICY IN POLITICAL PARTIES

NO DEMOCRACY WITHOUT DEMOCRATS

SILC is a liberal foundation that promotes democracy. Our main goal is to strengthen organizations and individuals in their struggle for democracy and human rights.

© Swedish International Liberal Centre 2016 What to expect when expecting equality published by Silc, with support from SIDA. The donor does not necessarily share the views expressed.

Author: Holly Dunham-Dye.

"No party offers comprehensive policy towards securing full gender equality. This is not a problem of one political ideology, but a limitation of parties from across the political spectrum."

"In a world of sanctioned misogyny, violence, fear, and social rollbacks, it appears the democratic promise for all citizens is under threat. Fascism and sexism go hand in hand. As gatekeepers of both legislative and social change, it is therefore vital that democratic parties from the left and the right define and undertake the policy work crucial to securing gender equality."

"Revealingly, parties who marginalise the topic of abortion, prioritise the health of women who intend to bring their pregnancies to term, demonstrating that healthcare for women is anything but equal. Ensuring that women produce healthy children is a given for all parties, and yet a medical procedure, that allows women to retain autonomy over their bodies, continues to be a politicized and criminalized domain of dispute."

1 INNEHÅLL

2	Introduction	4
3	Gender Inequality	4
4	Gender Policy	4
5	Political Ideologies	5
5.1	Liberalism	5
5.2	Socialism	6
5.3	Conservatism.....	6
6	Countries of Inquiry	7
6.1	Canada	7
6.2	The Republic of Ireland	8
6.3	The Republic of South Africa.....	9
6.4	Sweden.....	10
7	Gender Policy Analysis	12
7.1	Political Empowerment.....	12
7.2	Education & Employment	16
7.3	Healthcare.....	22
7.4	Parenthood	27
7.5	Violence Against Women.....	32
7.6	Sexual Violence	38
8	Concluding Thoughts	42
9	Appendix One: Bibliography	44
10	External Resources.....	46
11	Appendix Two: Policy Tables.....	49

2 INTRODUCTION

This paper offers a comparative analysis of gender policies proposed by liberal, conservative and social democratic parties. Parties in Ireland, South Africa, Canada, and Sweden have been selected. The aim is not to rank the policies, but to illustrate how distinct parties and ideologies approach the same task - achieving gender equality - differently. The paper does not examine whether the promised policies have been enacted. Instead, it focuses on the language employed, the values reflected, the areas of concern, and the domains that have been 'invisibilised' or ignored. Whilst great progress has been made, full gender equality has yet to be realised. Recognising that gender equality is fundamentally a human rights issue, there can be no rest until it is achieved. In a world of sanctioned misogyny, violence, fear, and social rollbacks, it appears the democratic promise for all citizens is under threat. Fascism and sexism go hand in hand. As gatekeepers of both legislative and social change, it is therefore vital that democratic parties from the left and the right define and undertake the policy work crucial to securing gender equality.

3 GENDER INEQUALITY

Gender inequality refers to the unequal opportunities afforded to individuals based on their gender. It is, however, important to note that inequality is interdependent, and intertwined with other categories of exclusion, e.g. race and class. Despite the strides taken to eradicate gender inequality, the fact is that it persists (Jackson, 2016). The current structures of patriarchy continue to marginalise women, women whose individual autonomy, safety, economic security, political engagement and freedom of movement face restrictions. Gender equality is not a niche issue, to be resolved by women specific government bodies and CSO's, it is the responsibility of every ministry, institution and industry. Inequality is present *everywhere* in the world and in *every* sphere of society.

4 GENDER POLICY

Policy, in a political party, is a system of assertions about reality and principles to guide decisions, coupled with specific challenges to be addressed and suggestions on actions to be taken in legislation and in executive decisions at different levels. A serious political party is expected to have an economic policy, a policy on education, health care and on energy and environmental sustainability. A serious political party is also expected to have a policy on gender equality.

Gender policy generally works to ensure that everyone, regardless of gender, is free from discrimination and has equality of opportunity. It is policy that both directly and indirectly affects women's status, agency, resources and rights. 'Direct' gender policy prioritises gender in its foundation, e.g. combatting violence against women, and 'indirect' gender policy proportionally affects women more - e.g. parental leave (in countries where leave is mostly used by women). Analysing gender impacts, consulting with relevant stakeholders (e.g. women's CSO's), reviewing institutions (practices, inclusivity, demographics), and undertaking awareness raising measures, are all key to securing gender sensitive policies. This process is known as gender mainstreaming, and involves the integration of a "gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation,

monitoring and evaluation of policies, (...) with a view to promoting equality between women and men” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016).

By utilising written party policy, made available via party websites, this paper examines the approaches parties employ in the key areas of political empowerment, education, employment, healthcare, parenthood, and sexual violence/violence against women. Although many of the parties scrutinized here have established women’s networks to address gender equality, through policy writing and lobbying efforts, their mandates are independent from the party, meaning their policy directives often differ from the official party line. Women’s networks are a separate structure, operating autonomously from the party. For this reason they will be referred to but not analysed. The analysis instead utilises party programmes, and/or foundational documents (depending on the availability of resources). This paper does not purport to offer an exhaustive account of each and every policy statement or press release regarding an issue. If initiatives were not adopted into official policy documents, they will not be included. For a complete list of the party documents analysed please refer to the Bibliography (5.1).

5 POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES

Political ideologies are a “set of beliefs about the proper order of society and how it can be achieved” (Erikson & Tedin, 2014). All political parties, whilst flexible, are in large part built on an ideology, such as liberalism, socialism or conservatism. In other words, parties adhere to a belief system that guides their work and ensures they remain recognisable to their voter base. Ideologies tend to identify themselves by their position on the political spectrum, i.e. the liberal left vs. the conservative right. This however, is a reductionist view that fails to recognise the complexity of politics. Ultimately, an ideology works as a compass, it offers both: ideals to societally strive for; and a decision criteria for determining the best routes of action.

“Ideologies endeavour to describe or interpret the world as it is—by making assertions or assumptions about human nature, historical events, present realities, and future possibilities—and to envision the world as it should be, specifying acceptable means of attaining social, economic, and political ideals” (Jost et al., 2009).

It is important to note, that only democratic parties will be examined in this paper. Unlike undemocratic states, democratic governments are held accountable, by citizens, independent CSOs and media institutions. Their promissory policies are therefore crucial to both; electoral success and how ‘successfully’ they govern.

5.1 LIBERALISM

Liberalism views society as a social contract which individuals legitimate - in the common interest of themselves and others - to ensure that rights are enjoyed, and protected via essential forms of governance. Unlike opposing ideologies, the focus of liberalism remains the individual, and their individual freedoms and liberties, i.e. civil and political rights (Swedish International Liberal Centre, 2015). The protection and fulfilment of these rights are paramount to securing democracy. This means that people have intrinsic rights such as freedom of speech that cannot be impeded by what the majority believe or demand. This is not to excuse hate speech - your rights cannot infringe on others’ individual rights - but to promote tolerance and acceptance towards people whose lifestyles differ from your own. For the most part, liberals maintain that gender inequality originates from historical traditions and practices that have suppressed the advancement of women. Liberalism like

all ideologies is a continuum, and no liberal party looks the same. Whilst some parties move towards libertarianism and a rejection of state regulation, others believe that a welfare state is necessary to ensure every individual is able to enjoy their rights and freedoms (SILC, 2015).

5.2 SOCIALISM

Socialism views society as a hierarchy of classes, resulting from unequal systems of production. This society is not and cannot be harmonious, because the interests of the classes are in continuous conflict. The continuing subjugation of the lower classes - the 'have nots' - is imperative in sustaining the hegemonic power of the 'haves'. A classless society is therefore central to their vision. Socialists believe this society can be realised by empowering the 'have nots' via equality measures and systemic reform (Swedish International Liberal Centre, 2015). Social and economic rights are therefore crucial to ensuring a society, where those at the bottom are not so far from those at the top. State-owned assets, regulated markets, social reform measures and close ties to trade unions are all common features of a social democratic government. Social democratic parties that adhere to a 'reformist' socialist agenda have been included in this analysis, whereas 'revolutionary' socialist parties that espouse a 'dictatorship of the people' have been excluded, as they are undemocratic.

5.3 CONSERVATISM

Conservatism views society as something that has been bestowed upon the people. Consequently, society needs honouring, respecting and protecting. The traditions, customs and cultural values of society are seen as important, and rapid or fundamental change is to be heeded with caution. Unlike liberalism, which embraces the individual, or socialism, which embraces the state, conservatism traditionally embraces institutions – the king, the church, and the family household – that produce social norms and values. Ways of life that fit outside the boundaries of 'normal' are not immediately embraced, but can be gradually accepted as a 'new normal.' Conservative parties are often reformist, in that they want to safeguard the 'good' aspects of society by allowing 'cautious' changes to take place, in order to maintain social harmony and avoid violent conflict (Swedish International Liberal Centre, 2015). Thus, to reform, is also to preserve and safeguard. In contrast to this positioning, conservative parties can also be 'reactionary,' in that they want society to deviate from its current path in the aims of recreating a former 'glorious history.' If this view is taken to the extreme, it can result in a party that is bereft of any democratic values.

6 COUNTRIES OF INQUIRY

Political parties from Canada, Ireland, South Africa and Sweden are the focus of this paper. Sweden is a familiar base for the readership, and sits in contrast to three countries shaped by British imperialism. Canada, Ireland, and South Africa's common ancestry - British rule and colonialism - has informed their current structures of government, and their measures for attaining gender equality. All four countries are however, politically, culturally and socially diverse, thus offering a global snapshot of the varied tactics employed in the work towards equality.

6.1 CANADA

Canada's government is a federal parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. Queen Elizabeth II is the head of state, there are both provincial and federal governments, and the Prime Minister holds executive power – leading the elected federal government. General elections take place every 4 years, utilizing the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) voting system. In contrast to the Proportional Representation (PR) system, the FPTP procedure solely awards constituencies to the single candidate who gains the most votes. Thus, all other votes are disregarded and hold no electoral consequence. Therefore, smaller parties are marginalised. Since 2015 Canada has been led by a Liberal Party majority government. Women currently hold 26% (88) of 338 parliamentary seats (International IDEA et al., 2015). The United Nations Development Programme (2015) characterise Canada as having 'Very High Human Development' with the country currently ranked 9th on the Human Development Index (HDI). Canada however, are only ranked 25th on the UNDP's accompanying Gender Inequality Index.

6.1.1 Liberal - The Liberal Party of Canada

The Liberal Party of Canada is the oldest federal political party in Canada, having formed in 1867. The party is often referred to as Canada's "natural governing party" (Carty, 2015) due to its 69 years in power during the 20th century – a record in the developed world. The Liberal Party espouse liberal values: individual, political and religious freedoms; human dignity and cultural diversity; and a just and equal society. "The Liberal Party of Canada is committed to the view that the dignity of each individual person is the cardinal principle of democratic society and the primary purpose of all political organisation and activity in such a society" (Liberal Party of Canada, 2016a). The Liberal Party is currently the largest party in parliament, governing with 184 of 338 seats. Cabinet is gender equal with 15 women and 15 men. The Liberal Party have a women's network.

6.1.2 Conservative - The Conservative Party of Canada

The Conservative Party of Canada was formed in 2003, the successor to various right-wing parties, namely the Canadian Alliance and Progressive Conservatives. Having led for almost 10 years, the party lost to the Liberal Party in 2015 and remains its ardent opposition. The party currently holds 99 of 338 seats. The party employs a conservative stance in both social and economic policy, failing to mention gender parity or LGBT+ rights in their constitution, in addition to embracing smaller government, and lower taxes. "Canadian conservatives stand for sovereignty and a strong national defence; open federalism and national unity; free enterprise and individual achievement; and the opportunity for all Canadians, regardless of background, to achieve their dreams in a safe, healthy, and prosperous country. In short, we stand for a Canada that is strong, united, independent, and free" (The Conservative Party of Canada, n.d.). The party does not have a women's network.

6.1.3 Social Democratic - New Democratic Party of Canada

The New Democratic Party (NDP) was formed in 1961, and has historically been Canada's third largest party in Parliament, often aligning with the Liberal Party. The NDP distance themselves from any negative 'socialist' labelling instead choosing to embrace a "social democratic" orientation (New Democratic Party of Canada, 2013). The party argue that working for the "common good" is their fundamental purpose as a movement and as a party (New Democratic Party of Canada, 2013). The NDP have a history of activism, associating closely with labour unions, cooperatives and feminism. The party currently holds 44 of 338 seats in parliament. The NDP have a women's network - Canada's New Democrats Women's Council.

6.2 THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Ireland's government is a parliamentary democracy, with the President Head of state, and the Prime Minister (Taoiseach) Head of government. The National Parliament (Oireachtas) is made up of two houses; A House of Representatives (Dáil Éireann) and a Senate (Seanad Éireann). Dáil Éireann is the lower house, and the most dominant branch of Parliament, with the power to pass laws and nominate the PM. Members are directly elected at least once every five years under the system of Proportional Representation (PR) by means of the Single Transferable Vote (STV). Following the results of the 2016 election, no party held a majority and minority government was formed. A coalition is currently led by Fine Gael with the support of nine independents. Currently 22% (35) of the 158 seats in the lower house are held by women (International IDEA et al., 2015). The United Nations Development Programme (2015) characterise Ireland as having 'Very High Human Development' with the country currently ranked 6th on the HDI. The country however, place in the 21st spot on the UNDP's accompanying Gender Inequality Index.

6.2.1 Liberal - Fianna Fáil

Fianna Fáil, founded in 1926, is a member of The Alliance of Liberals & Democrats for Europe (ALDE) and Ireland's leading liberal party. Fianna Fáil, also known as the Republican Party, is currently the third largest party in parliament. This however is a recent development; from 1932 until 2011 they continuously held the most seats out of any party. At present Fianna Fáil hold 43 seats in the lower house. The party have four key priorities: create decent jobs and support enterprise; cut family costs and improve the services they rely on; tackle crime and develop community services; secure homeownership and tackle homelessness (Fianna Fáil, 2016a). Although Fianna Fáil self-identify as liberal, they share many similarities with their conservative opposition; Fine Gael, and observers point to their 'catch all' populist policies (Galligan, 2011). However, unlike Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil have a women's network - Fianna Fáil Women's Network.

6.2.2 Conservative - Fine Gael

Fine Gael, founded in 1933 is currently Ireland's major political party with 50 seats in the Dáil. Self-described as a 'party of the progressive centre', Fine Gael can be defined by their conservative values, which embrace law and order, and family. In 2015 the party introduced and supported a successful referendum to extend full marriage rights to same-sex couples, evincing the ways in which conservative parties can evolve their policy to reflect changing norms. Revealingly, Fine Gael is the only party to explicitly distance itself from a concrete belief system arguing that they "act in a way that is right for Ireland, regardless of dogma or ideology" (Fine Gael, n.d.). Fine Gael do not have a women's network.

6.2.3 Social Democratic- The Labour Party

The Labour Party, founded in 1912 as the political wing of the Irish Trade Union Congress, is Ireland's premier democratic socialist party. Although Labour is currently the fourth largest party in the Dáil, with only 7 seats - following the loss of 26 in this year's election - it has historically and until recently held huge influence. Following Fianna Fáil, Labour have spent the longest total time in government – 19 non-succession years in varying coalitions. Labour aspire to a decent society in which families are healthy and happy, communities are safe and prosperous, and there is tolerance and acceptance for all of Ireland's citizens (Labour, 2016). Building a decent society is a recurrent theme in Labour's policy documents, and is evidently key to their vision. The party have a women's network - Labour Women.

6.3 THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's government is a parliamentary representative democratic republic. However, the President of South Africa serves as both head of state and head of government. The President is elected every five years by the National Assembly – the lower house of Parliament – after the National Assembly has been elected via a Proportional Representation (PR) system. The National Council of Provinces is South Africa's upper house, charged with representing the governments of all nine provinces. South Africa has no legally defined capital, as such, the administrative, judicial and legislative branches of government are split between three cities. Since the formal end of apartheid in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) has dominated national politics, governing with a majority for the last 22 years, despite extensive criticism and public protest. Women hold 41% (163) of 400 parliamentary seats (International IDEA et al., 2015). South Africa is a starkly polarized country, where both extreme wealth and poverty exist. As such, it is characterised as having 'Medium Human Development' by the UNDP. Compared to the other three countries in this paper who are ranked amongst the top 15, South Africa is placed 116th on the HDI (United Nations Development Programme, 2015). Unlike Canada and Ireland whose Gender Inequality Index (GII) ranking performs poorly in relation to their Human Development Index Ranking, South Africa ranks 83rd on the GII (United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

6.3.1 Liberal - The Democratic Alliance

The Democratic Alliance (DA) officially adopted its party name in 2000, but its origins can be traced back to 1959 and the founding of the largely white, anti-apartheid, Progressive Party. Often identified as a centrist party, the DA's policies are largely informed by liberal principles. The DA promote an 'Open Opportunity Society for all' in which freedom, dignity, equality and democracy are paramount (Democratic Alliance, 2015). The DA is the second largest party in parliament and the official opposition of the ANC. Furthermore, they are the only party to have continually increased their share of the parliamentary vote, since 1994. The DA currently hold 89 of the 400 National Assembly seats. The party govern Western Cape, one of the 9 provinces, with all remaining provinces governed by the ANC. The party have a women's network - The Democratic Alliance Women's Network (DAWN).

6.3.2 Conservative – African Christian Democratic Party

The African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP) was established in 1993, and is grounded in social conservatism. Informed by biblical standards, and strict 'moral' values the party touts tolerance, compassion, and peace, whilst simultaneously denouncing abortion and LGBT rights. The party voted against clauses of the South African Constitution which afforded reproductive rights to women, and "special rights to LGBTI groups that are not afforded to other citizens" (African Christian Democratic Party, n.d.). The ACDP currently hold three of the 400 National Assembly seats. The party makes no

mention of women, gender or equality in their most recent Manifesto, but they do have a women's group - Women of Destiny. In contrast to the previously mentioned networks of other parties, the Women of Destiny do not produce or analyse relevant policy, but implement community development projects, such as 'Love thy Neighbour.'

6.3.3 Social Democratic - African National Congress

The African National Congress (ANC) was founded in 1912, with its primary mission to end apartheid, and award voting rights to black and mixed race Africans. The party initially employed nonviolent tactics, but following their ban by the government in 1960, the ANC reorganized as the Spear of the Nation and utilized guerrilla warfare and sabotage. In 1990 their ban was lifted, in 1992 apartheid was removed via referendum, and in 1994 ANC won the first 'free' South African election. The ANC's work aspires to rectify socio-economic disparities in South Africa; the relics of colonial and apartheid era policies. The party's "key objective is the creation of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. This means the liberation of Africans in particular and black people in general from political and economic bondage" (African National Congress, n.d.). The party has governed since 1994 – amid widespread corruption charges - and currently hold 249 of 400 seats in the National Assembly. The party have a women's network - the ANC's Women's League.

6.4 SWEDEN

Sweden's government is a parliamentary democratic monarchy. The King is the Head of State, but only with regards to ceremonial functions. It is the Regeringen (government) that steers the state and is held to account by the Riksdagen (Parliament). Since the Great Depression, Swedish politics have been largely dominated by the Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti (Social Democrats). However, the tides appear to be shifting. With only 39.5% of parliamentary seats secured in the last election, the Social Democrats currently govern one of the weakest minority governments in national history. Women hold 44% (152) of 349 parliamentary seats (International IDEA et al., 2015). The United Nations Development Programme (2015) characterise Sweden as having 'Very High Human Development' with the country currently ranked 14th on the HDI. Comparatively Sweden have the highest ranking of all four countries in regards to gender equality, ranking 6th on the global Gender Inequality Index.

6.4.1 Liberal - Liberalerna

Liberalerna (The Liberal Party of Sweden) founded in 1902, are a social-liberal party, with a strong commitment to fostering a diverse and free economy that can support comprehensive welfare programmes. The Liberal's emerged amid the struggle for equal voting rights, demonstrating that gender equality has always been a significant focus for the party. The party's policies are grounded in the belief that as individuals, every human has the right to develop on their own terms, and must take responsibility for both themselves and their fellow citizen (Liberalerna, n.d.). The Liberals currently hold 19 seats and are the seventh largest party in parliament. The Liberals identify as a feminist party and have a women's network - Liberala Kvinnor.

6.4.2 Conservative - Moderaterna

Moderaterna (Moderate Party), founded in 1904, are the largest non-socialist party in Sweden, and the second largest party in parliament. The Moderates are reformist conservative, and tend to embrace a more conventionally liberal social agenda whilst gravitating towards conservative economic policy. According to the Moderates, indeed with the perspective of currently being in opposition, Sweden is heading in the wrong direction, with 1 in 7 people of working age living in exclusion (Moderaterna, n.d.). By introducing reform measures to combat long term unemployment,

the Moderates will ensure more people can make themselves self-reliant (Moderaterna, n.d.). The party currently holds 84 seats in parliament, after losing a dramatic 23 seats in the 2014 election. The party have a women's network- Moderatkvinnorna.

6.4.3 Social Democratic – Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti

Socialdemokraterna was founded in 1897 as a class-based Labour Party, but now share in the support of the middle class, white-collar electorate. The party expresses three paramount values; freedom, equality, and solidarity, all of which are integral to achieving their societal vision. They wish to ensure “that each human being, as a citizen, a worker and a consumer, will have the right and the opportunity to influence the direction and distribution of production, the organisation of working life and working conditions” (Socialdemokraterna, 2013). The party currently govern with 113 seats, in coalition with the Green Party who have 25 seats. The cabinet is made up of 12 women and 12 men. The Social Democrats identify as a feminist party and have a women's network - S-Kvinnor.

7 GENDER POLICY ANALYSIS

The following areas of gender policy will be analysed; Political Empowerment, Education, Employment, Healthcare, Parenthood, Violence against Women, and Sexual Violence. These areas have been chosen because addressing and improving upon the entrenched disparities and discrimination that continue to prevail in these domains is fundamental to the ongoing efforts towards absolute gender equality. If parties fail to address the gendered dimensions of these policy areas, they are in effect, legitimating the marginalisation of 50% of the population. The marginalisation of this majority will beget the marginalisation of minorities, i.e. if policy fails to account for the effects it has on women, it will invariably fail to account for the effects it has on other groups, like LGBT+ persons. To ensure that inequality is not marginalised, parties must recognise and embrace the ultimate reality that every policy affects men and women differently.

7.1 POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

“As is widely acknowledged, the failure to include women and their perspectives in political decision making weakens the legitimacy of democratically elected institutions and deprives women—half of the population of any given country—of their right to participate effectively in the governance of their societies” (International IDEA, 2016).

Women and girls account for over half the global population, and yet worldwide, women only hold 23% of parliamentary seats (World Bank, 2016). Equal representation is not only just, but it is also imperative in securing gender sensitive policy. If women are not equally represented, policies will not be equally weighted, i.e. a cohort of men are unable to produce policy that comprehensively accounts for the effects it will have on women, just as a cohort of women are unable to produce policy that comprehensively accounts for the effects it will have on men. Ultimately, a true democracy cannot be realised until political parties, parliaments and governments are 100% gender equal.

7.1.1 Canada

The Conservative Party of Canada fail to address women’s political empowerment in any of their policy documents.

Opposing this, the NDP (Social Democratic) approach political empowerment with reform at the forefront of their agenda. The NDP argue that they will eliminate “obstacles to women’s political participation by reforming the electoral system” (New Democratic Party of Canada, 2016). This promissory action is not elaborated upon, but one can assume that it entails the removal of the current First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system which disproportionately disadvantages female candidates. UK Engage (2013) argue that because the “FPTP restricts a constituency’s choice of candidates, the representation of minorities and women suffers, as the ‘safest’ looking candidate is the one most likely to be offered the chance to stand for election.” In addition to this measure, the NDP will further increase the powers of the state, by establishing the Ministry of Women as a “full ministry responsible for advancing women’s rights” (New Democratic Party of Canada, 2016). Moreover, the party believe in “re-establishing the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women to (...) promote women’s equality rights” (New Democratic Party, 2016). These initiatives underscore the party’s ideological standing, in which state bodies are vital to engendering an inclusive and gender equal political system.

In comparison, the Liberal Party of Canada (2016b) argue that in conjunction to a gender equal Cabinet, they will:

“Adopt a new government-wide open and merit-based appointments process, which will ensure gender parity, and that more Indigenous Peoples and minority groups are reflected in positions of leadership.”

This approach exemplifies the liberal’s concern for empowering the individual. However, they also recognise that to enable the ‘best individual,’ it is crucial to secure an open and non-discriminatory environment that promotes strong leaders who are so often marginalised

In addition to consulting women’s NGOs on policy development, both the Liberal Party and the NDP will ensure all public policy undergoes gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, the Liberal’s will ensure that federal departments conduct “the gender-based impact analyses that have been required of them for the past 20 years” (Liberal Party of Canada, 2016b). Both parties are evidently concerned with guaranteeing that gender sensitive policies are created and that a gender sensitive society is fostered.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Guarantee the equal representation of both genders in Cabinet, introduce open and inclusive appointments for leadership positions and ensure that gender-based impact analyses take place.*
- *Conservative Approach (Conservative Party) – No explicit mention of women’s political empowerment in any of the available documents*
- *Social Democratic Approach (New Democratic Party) – Reform the electoral system, establish the Ministry of Women as a full ministry, reintroduce the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and apply gender-based analysis to public policy.*

7.1.2 Ireland

In 1997 both Fine Gael (Conservative) and Labour (Social Democratic) introduced the “State Funding of Political Parties and Gender Balance of the Electoral Act”, a gender quota stipulating that parties lose 50% of their state funding if they have less than 30% of female/male electoral candidates (International IDEA et al., 2015).

In addition to fulfilling this requirement, Fine Gael “will ensure that at least 40% of all new appointments to state boards are women.” Moreover, Fine Gael will ask the national parliament to “consider family friendly hours for the Dáil” (Fine Gael, 2016). This directive exemplifies Fine Gael’s concern for the ‘family.’ Whilst women are no longer restricted to motherhood, Fine Gael, nevertheless, recognise that many women inhabit the dual roles of both ‘carer’ and ‘professional’. The party will therefore protect the continuation of this traditional life trajectory, by securing a political environment that promotes both.

In support of the legislated gender quotas, the Labour party, will similarly require that 45% of state board positions be filled by either gender. Moreover, Labour will not allow women to be sidelined to conventionally ‘female’ sectors, arguing that “enterprise, agriculture and finance areas need the input of women just as much as education, childcare and health areas” (Labour, 2016). These policies highlight Labour’s ideological underpinnings, in which the state is ultimately responsibility for both: monitoring the internal representation of political parties; and reprimanding those who fail to comply.

In contrast to both Labour and Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil (Liberal) do not address the gender quota, nor do they offer any policy measures directed at women’s political empowerment. They do however attest to the importance of gender equality, by arguing that gender policy is not a niche sectoral issue, but a responsibility of the entire party. “All units must play their part in securing greater equality and not leave it to the Women’s Network” (Fianna Fáil, n.d.).

- *Liberal Approach (Fianna Fáil) – No explicit mention of women’s political empowerment in any of the available documents.*
- *Conservative Approach (Fine Gael) – Introduce ‘family friendly’ hours for Parliament and require 40% of state board appointments be women.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (Labour) – Require 45% of state board appointments be either gender and ensure women ministers are not side-lined to traditionally ‘female ministries.’*

7.1.3 South Africa

At the sub-national level there are both legislated and voluntary quotas in South Africa. “In the elections for local councils, parties must seek to ensure that 50% of the candidates on the party list are women” (International IDEA et al., 2015). In 2006 the ANC (Social Democratic) additionally “adopted a 50% gender quota in local elections. The quota was extended to national elections as well in 2009” (International IDEA et al., 2015). As the major political party, the ramifications of this quota are reflected in the demographics of both parliament and government, whereby women hold 41% of parliamentary seats. In addition to their voluntary quota, the ANC will strengthen existing state bodies, by appointing more women in every ministry.

‘Transformation’ is a common theme throughout the ANC’s gender policy, an ironic motif considering the party has been governing the country for the last 22 years. Employing transitory language allows the ANC to frame their work in a process of continuous improvement, regardless of the realities. Indeed, South Africa is the product of tumultuous transformation, from a society where racial apartheid was embraced, to one where its loudest opponents were elected into office. According to the ANC the ongoing transformation of the state necessitates the “engendering of new doctrines, culture and practices as well as ensuring that state institutions reflect the demographics of the country, including appropriate representation of women and people with disability” (African National Congress, 2012). Thus, the ANC will promote political gender parity by working against the behavioural manifestations of sexism. This approach illustrates the socialist grounding of the party, in which the state is not only there to govern, but is also paramount in shaping and transforming public consciousness.

Comparatively in a rejection of the current government, the DA (Liberal) argue that as the Ministry of Women in the Presidency is incompetent, costly, and failing to produce tangible change for women, it will be eliminated. The party will additionally “scrap the inefficient Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities and mainstream the interests of marginalised groups in relevant government departments” (Democratic Alliance, 2013a). Both initiatives feature in the party’s 2029 vision “Maximising Service Delivery by Minimising Cabinet” (Democratic Alliance, 2016). As a liberal party the DA do not assume that government bodies are by default effective. State organs, overwhelmed by mismanagement and bureaucracy that neglect to fulfil the rights of the individual are defunct. For liberals, less government, can often mean better government.

The ACDP (Conservative) do not address the political empowerment of women in any of their policies.

- *Liberal Approach (DA) – Eliminate the Ministry of Women in the Presidency, and the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities in lieu of more efficient measures.*
- *Conservative Approach (ACDP) – No explicit mention of women’s political empowerment in any of the available documents.*

- *Social Democratic Approach (ANC) – Continue to work towards gender quotas, and develop new doctrines that work against sexist attitudes restricting women’s political power.*

7.1.4 Sweden

In Sweden, working towards the equal representation of women and men in politics is in large part a given, and yet detailed policy initiatives for ensuring this are not included in any of the available documents. Instead, both the Liberal and Social Democratic party espouse rhetorical support, whilst leaving out definitive measures. The Moderates (Conservative) do not address political empowerment explicitly.

The Liberals overarching mission is to liberate the individual from the limitations imposed by inequality. “Equality is created where ordinary decisions are made, resources distributed and norms created. A perspective on equality will be a part of all official decisions of relevance. Women and men will have the same ability to get an education, work, make a career and shape society. This requires equal conditions in all areas of life, from the political, cultural, social and economic” (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). The language employed by the party indicates that they are in full support of women’s equal political engagement, however, they do not include accompanying actions for realising this vision. In conjunction with internal gender parity, the Liberal party will also ensure that an even gender division within all EU institutions is achieved (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013).

The Social Democrats by comparison argue that gender equality cannot be realised in a society when the enduring subordination and exploitation of people is required to sustain a society. Moreover “when women are denied their right to participate in society, on equal terms with men, it is not only women who are oppressed, but the entire society which is held back” (Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna, 2013). This view of inequality is a clear demonstration of the Social Democrat’s predominant focus - creating an equal society. In contrast to the Liberal’s prioritising of the individual, the Social Democrats give precedence to society and the ‘common good.’

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Women’s ability to shape society, requires equal conditions in all areas of life, including politics, will ensure EU institutions are gender equal.*
- *Conservative Approach (Moderate Party) – No explicit mention of women’s political empowerment in any of the available documents*
- *Social Democratic Approach (Social Democratic Party) – Women must be politically empowered to ensure that societal progress is not restricted*

7.1.5 Conclusion

Fundamental steps to ensuring gender parity at every level of the political system are highlighted in the work of both International IDEA (2016) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (2014). They argue that political parties should conduct regular gender audits, develop policy that reflects the results of these audits, secure a women-friendly candidate procedure, and ensure women have the means to campaign. Ireland’s Fine Gael (Conservative) tentatively demonstrate their work in this realm, by urging for ‘parent’-friendly parliamentary hours. It is important to note, that Fine Gael is the only conservative party to address women’s political empowerment.

Conversely, both the Canadian Liberal Party and the NDP (Social Democratic) will ensure all policies and federal departments undergo gender-based impact analyses, a clear example of the auditing process. The Canadian Liberal’s additionally build upon these measures, by recognising the need to

make candidate selection processes open, fair and women-friendly. As previously mentioned, equal representation engenders equal policy. Whilst many parties work towards the appointment of more women (e.g. by fulfilling gender quotas in Ireland and South Africa) their means for doing so are in large part excluded from publicly available policy. Thus, internally approved measures for recruiting female members, ensuring they are equally represented in decision making positions, and retaining them are not available for analysis.

7.2 EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

“Challenging gender prejudices and stereotypes throughout the education cycle, from primary school to lifelong learning, can reduce gender imbalances in other spheres of life. For example, gender segregation in the labour market as a result of different educational and professional choices in schools and universities, both for pupils and teachers, is widespread” ((European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016).

All parties employ the language of equality in regards to education policy, and yet only half of the group concretely address gender as a component of this equality. Education is a human right in itself, but like all rights, its fulfilment is conducive to the protection and enjoyment of other rights, e.g. accessing one’s right to an education, also promotes one’s right to work, as these rights are indivisible (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). The interdependence of rights is similarly illustrated in terms of gender – gender equality in education positively affects economic gender equality, i.e. women are afforded the same opportunities, are equally represented at all levels of industry, and have greater autonomy over their livelihoods. And yet inequities persist. Women’s extensive academic achievements are underrepresented in employment stats (UK Commission for Employment & Skills, 2015). Evidently, whilst women are obtaining higher levels of education - their grades and qualifications often exceed their male counterparts (a gender issue in itself) - they are yet to obtain the corresponding jobs.

7.2.1 Canada

The Canadian Liberal Party evoke ideals of equality in education, evinced by the titles of the following policy documents; Opportunities for Young Canadians, First Nations Education, and Training for Veterans (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015). Yet there is no definitive identification of gender. The NDP (Social Democratic) argue that education is a key component of their “comprehensive effort to safeguard the jobs of today and create the jobs of tomorrow” (New Democratic Party, 2016). But similarly there is no explicit delineation of gender. Conversely, the Conservative Party will ensure “greater accessibility to education by eliminating as many barriers to postsecondary education as possible” (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016). Once again the gendered dimensions of education are omitted.

All three parties, however, expand upon gender in their employment policy. The NDP will promote women’s economic equality by ensuring pay equity, encouraging unionization, improving access to employment insurance, and setting a minimum salary for employees under federal jurisdiction (New Democratic Party, 2016). Thus reflecting their belief system, in which the movement and cooperation of workers will engender the greatest social change.

In contrast, the Liberal party will rectify one of the obstacles that continue to deter women from working; inflexible conditions. “We will amend the Canada Labour Code to provide every federally regulated worker with the legal right to make a formal request to their employer – without fear of

reprisal – for more flexible working conditions, such as flexible start and finish times, or the ability to work from home” (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015). The change will allow individual parents - who will largely be women - to decide when and how they work. In other words, the Liberals will support individuals, usually sidelined by standard labour laws which favour a particular heteronormative livelihood, by offering flexible employment solutions. Similarly, the Liberal Party seeks to redress the marginalization of another group; seniors. By increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement for single-low income seniors by 10%, the most vulnerable seniors, who are usually women, will receive more financial support (Liberal Party of Canada). The party clearly understands that age and gender are intersectional, and that the ramifications of one cannot be understood without considering the other.

The Conservative Party offer their explicit support for women, arguing that the Canadian workforce has “evolved to include more women than ever. We believe all Canadians have the right to freedom from discrimination in the workplace and equality of opportunity” (2016). In their approach to workplace discrimination, the party argue that candidates and employees be solely “judged on skills, qualifications and merits” (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016). This approach seeks to highlight the value of people, regardless of their gender, sexuality, race and or class. Nevertheless, the Conservatives do not address how a true meritocracy - that is inclusive and equal - will be secured.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – No explicit mention of gender equality in education policy. Will amend Labour Code to ensure flexible working conditions are made available and increase the pension supplement for single low-income seniors.*
- *Conservative Approach (Conservative Party) – No explicit mention of gender equality in education policy. Will ensure meritocratic employment practices.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (NDP) – No explicit mention of gender equality in education policy. Will encourage unionization, improve employment benefits, and ensure equal pay for equal work.*

7.2.2 Ireland

A significant theme recurrent in the education policies of each Irish party is gender equality in the sporting and scientific field. Labour (Social Democratic) “will legislate to require colleges to give proportionate scholarship funding to women and men, in order to increase the number of women in receipt of sporting and scientific scholarships” (Labour, 2016).

Comparatively, Fine Gael (Conservative), will transform Ireland into a European ‘Innovation Leader’ by continuing to improve upon “the take up of STEM disciplines, particularly among women” (Fine Gael, 2016). In addition, the party will establish a sports fund, that can be accessed by voluntary organisations and sporting bodies, who demonstrate that their programmes will increase “participation amongst women and in disadvantaged communities” (Fine Gael, 2016).

Juxtaposing these measures, Fianna Fáil (Liberal) will tackle the declining participation of girls in sports classes, by shifting the focus to the individual. The party argue that traditional P.E classes do not presently address individual needs and interests. In a display of their liberal values, Fianna Fáil will introduce classes composed of “more varied individual and niche sports or physical activities (such as dancing)” thus “expanding the choice of physical pursuits in schools beyond the traditional team sports environments which, according to the Irish Sports Monitor, are not as attractive to females in this age group” (Fianna Fáil, 2016).

In the area of employment, all three parties address the prevailing wage gap between men and women. As well as earning less than men for the same work, Labour argue that in Ireland ⅓ of low-paid workers are women, a figure which is exacerbated by a society which continues to underinvest in childcare. Labour offer a characteristically socialist solution; job creation. The party will create more jobs, for everyone that wants one, with a special focus on women, and women with children. According to Labour this is to secure the livelihood of not only the individuals, but society itself. Labour “will ensure the social welfare system gives them (women) the right support and incentives to reenter the world of work so that they can build a better standard of living (Labour, 2016).” Labour’s focus exemplifies the party’s valuation of welfare, and the corresponding benefits it can provide.

In contrast to Labour, Fine Gael, will increase wage transparency by “requiring companies of 50 and more employees to participate in pay surveys, to strengthen the principle of equal pay for equal work” (Fine Gael, 2016). This gives precedence to ‘naming and shaming,’ whereby the public outing will discredit employers, and at the very least portray them as socially reprehensible. In other words, Fine Gael will ensure pay equity by publicly repudiating the immoral actions of companies. This approach highlights their own valuation of morality, and regard for what is ‘right.’ Furthermore, the party will “fund locally delivered courses for women which will comprise a series of training opportunities on self-development and work related skills to assist a return to the labour market and promote entrepreneurship” (Fine Gael, 2016). Clearly, for Fine Gael, participation in the free market is integral to ensuring gender equality.

Comparatively, Fianna Fáil argue that “it is no coincidence that gender inequality has widened under this government, as the cost of childcare has become increasingly less affordable for parents of young children” (Fianna Fáil, 2015). In response to the increasing wage gap, Fianna Fáil, like Fine Gael, prioritise female entrepreneurship. The party outline specific recommendations in their endorsed policy paper “Promoting Women Entrepreneurs in Ireland” (Fianna Fáil, 2013).

“The lack of female entrepreneurs in Ireland is not a ‘women’s’ problem, to be solved for the benefit of women and to address issues of equality. It is a national problem that affects the economic growth and development of our country. In fostering women entrepreneurs it is important to apply a holistic approach and work on a number of key supporting factors simultaneously, for example, providing better access to finance, targeted entrepreneurship and training and the development of networks of entrepreneurs. It is also necessary to create a favourable environment by fighting stereotypes and changing perceptions and enabling a better work-life balance for women entrepreneurs” (Fianna Fáil, 2013).

Fianna Fáil clearly view women’s economic equality as a societal concern, one that cannot be relegated to ‘women’ spaces. In stimulating the economic and social inclusion of women the party will: create a leadership program that selects ‘high potential’ women entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and mentor less experienced women; focus on sidelined groups (e.g. seniors), ensure ‘women-friendly’ sources of funding, and establish a separate ‘National Office for Women in Enterprise’ to promote women entrepreneurs, and provide training, assistance and incentives (Fianna Fáil, 2013).

Moreover, Fianna Fáil are the only party to acknowledge the lack of women in ‘decision-making’ positions. “While the majority of public sector workers are female the majority of senior positions are held by males. This needs to be addressed so that the senior positions in public service reflect the gender balance in society” (Fianna Fáil, 2016).

- *Liberal Approach (Fianna Fáil) – Offer a wide array of individual sports to increase female participation in sports education, establish entrepreneurial leadership programs, focus on women sidelined from business, secure accessible funding for businesswomen, establish a National Office tasked with providing training and assistance, and ensure that there is gender balance in senior employment positions.*
- *Conservative Approach (Fine Gael) – Improve gender balance in the uptake of ‘innovation’ disciplines, establish a fund for organisations who demonstrate increased female participation, require pay surveys, and strengthen women’s access to training and entrepreneurial schemes.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (Labour) – Increase the number of women in receipt of sporting and scientific scholarships through proportionate scholarship funding, and create more jobs for women.*

7.2.3 South Africa

All three South African parties’ policy documents address the prevalence of educational inequality, yet like the Canadian parties they fail to include the relevance of gender in these initiatives.

As of February 2017, the unemployment rate in South Africa was 27.1%, the highest it has been since 2004 (Trading Economics, n.d.). Employment policy is consequently a significant concern for all three parties. The ACDP (Conservative) however fail to mention gender equality in the workforce, instead placing their focus on ensuring women remain in the roles of ‘caregiver’ and ‘homemaker’ (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). In contrast, both the DA (Liberal) and the ANC (Social Democratic) prioritise the economic mobilisation of women, specifically women who face the most explicit disadvantage.

The DA’s ‘rights approach’ focuses on women who are often marginalized from labour rights protection - domestic workers. There are currently around 1,000,000 women - mostly black and mixed race - employed as domestic workers in South Africa. “In South Africa, domestic work isn’t just a job. It is emblematic of the country’s massive social inequality which is rooted in its racially segregated past” (Mnthali, 2015). To rectify this deeply entrenched inequality the DA will: expand the Compensation Fund scheme to include domestic workers, disseminate a national information campaign to inform domestic workers and their employers of workers’ rights, effectively regulate labour brokers in the domestic work sector to prevent the exploitation of workers, and form effective partnerships between the government and CSOs for capacity building projects to develop the skills of domestic workers (Democratic Alliance, 2013b). The DA approach employment inequality with a regard for those at the very bottom. The party aim to not only support domestic workers via financial initiatives, but to equip them with a comprehensive knowledge of their rights, and new skills. The DA will thus embolden the collective, by emboldening the individual.

Comparatively, the ANC will economically empower women by establishing cooperatives, where women can provide “affordable, nutritious food to children while earning a decent living for themselves” (African National Congress, 2014). Unlike the DA, who focus on private sector employment, the ANC emphasise the importance of state institutions as employers, e.g. schools. Similarly, the party employ a characteristically socialist measure for strengthening economic equality - cooperatives. Furthermore, the ANC, postulate that ‘free’ market-based systems deepen inequality, resulting in “the vicious exploitation of female labour, trafficking in women and children and poor representation of women in global positions of authority” (African National Congress, 2012).

Evidently, for the ANC, state regulated market-systems are crucial in remedying the gendered dimensions of economic inequality. The ANC additionally recognise that as workers:

“Women bear the greatest burden of super-exploitation and poverty. As survivalist micro entrepreneurs, they are called upon to provide use-values to working class communities under unbearable conditions. As middle strata and businesspersons, they are compelled to hew their way through the jungle of male-dominated professions and environments. In the home, they carry the burden of nurturing families and are forced to reproduce relations of patriarchy” (African National Congress, 2012).

The ANC recognise that women from all social strata face disadvantage and discrimination. However, they also understand, that many South African women experience ‘triple oppression’ - a term popularised by African-American socialists – in which they live through classism, racism and sexism. In other words, poor, black women experience the most debilitating effects of patriarchy and capitalism.

- *Liberal Approach (DA) – No explicit mention of gender specific educational inequality. Will increase support for domestic workers, publicize their labour rights, and establish career development initiatives.*
- *Conservative Approach (ACDP) – No explicit mention of gender equality in the area of education or employment.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (ANC) – No explicit mention of gender specific educational inequality. Will establish school lunch cooperatives for women to run.*

7.2.4 Sweden

Working against restrictive gender norms found in the Swedish education system is a priority of all three parties. The Moderate Party (Conservative) argue that “it is important that boys and girls are given the same opportunities to develop in school, and that they are not influenced by gender stereotyped educational choices.” (Moderaterna, 2013).

The Social Democrats correspondingly share this view, arguing that:

“It is an important challenge for the school to break gender standards. If gender equality in schools and in education in general is to be effective, it must be operated continuously under the principle of gender mainstreaming” (Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna, 2013).

Similarly, the Liberal Party will empower both girls and boys by actively working with the topic of gender. This initiative includes educating not only the students but the teachers. The Liberal’s “will work towards equality by ensuring all teachers and career counsellors are also taught gender studies” (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). Evidently, the Liberals wish to secure both: children, free from the limitations of gender stereotypes, and a gender sensitive workforce.

The language employed by all three parties demonstrates their comprehensive understanding of how socially constructed gender norms and roles can negatively affect a child’s future experiences, prospects, and expectations. Gender inequality shapes the educational opportunities afforded to children, therefore dismantling debilitating gender norms is of paramount importance. All three parties aim to achieve full equality by focusing on the domain where stereotypes and inequality are first publicly enacted and reinforced - school.

According to the Moderate party, gender norms must be challenged in not only education, but in employment, as Sweden's labour market is one of Europe's most gender segregated (Moderaterna, 2013). This is the extent of the conservative party's policy on women's employment.

Comparatively, the Liberal party will: increase female entrepreneurship; establish career development and recruitment schemes in publicly owned companies; introduce flexible and individually determined working times; and enhance opportunities for professional development in 'women industries' such as nursing and teaching (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). This diversity reflects the liberal motivation to improve the individual outlook for women, an outlook which can be unified in its vision but not homogenous in its approach. The targeting of 'women dominated industries' is a common theme in the policies of both the Liberal's and the Social Democrat's. E.g. In response to the increasing feminisation of child educators comparative to the continuing masculinisation of tertiary professors, the Liberal's wish to transform the lowly paid, women dominated fields - early childhood, primary, and secondary school education - into career professions. This will facilitate the attainment of high level positions for women, and ensure gender balance throughout Swedish institutions and industry (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013).

Comparatively, the Social Democrats aim to increase women's employment rates 'overall', in a labour market that is currently "anything but equal" (Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna, 2016). The employment rate for women is significantly lower than the employment rate for men, women garner considerably lower wages, and the pay gap is almost stationary. "Women also have fewer opportunities to develop in their profession and have a career. Almost two-thirds of all managers in Sweden are men" (Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna, 2013). In a display of their ideological grounding, the party argue that "the issue should be resolved through negotiation and collective agreements" (Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna, 2013). This approach exemplifies the party's esteem for 'the worker,' and the fundamental role the worker plays in achieving the full and equal participation of women.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Break down gender norms prevalent in the education system, ensure career development in 'women professions' and flexible working hours.*
- *Conservative Approach (Moderate Party) – Break down gender norms prevalent in the fields of both education and employment.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (Social Democratic Party) – Break down gender norms prevalent in the education system and resolve economic inequality through collective agreements.*

7.2.5 Conclusion

The prevalence of gender inequality in education policy is revealingly excluded by all Canadian and South African parties. In contrast to these omissions, each Irish and Swedish party outline distinct measures for combating discriminatory practices and beliefs. The Irish parties are concerned with increasing the presence of women in male dominated fields, and the Swedish parties are comparatively concerned with working against the gender stereotyping of any field.

In regards to employment, the liberal parties frame flexible working conditions as an important means of combating discrimination and ensuring individual rights remain supreme. The parties also focus on measures to ensure that the most vulnerable groups are afforded necessary protections, such as Canada's female seniors, and South Africa's female domestic workers. Conversely, the liberal parties of Sweden and Ireland seek to economically empower women through entrepreneurial schemes, an illustration of how liberal parties will embrace both the welfare system, and the free market in supporting marginalised people. Juxtaposing these measures, the social democratic parties

focus on the mechanisms of employment by jointly encouraging; unionisation, collective agreements and cooperatives. In contrast, the conservative parties offer no unifying themes. Not one policy reads the same, due in part to the ways in which conservative parties are uniquely shaped by external norms and conditions. As such, Canadian conservatives promise a meritocracy, Irish conservatives offer female funding and training programmes, South African conservatives remain revealingly silent, and Swedish conservatives intend to dismantle prevailing gender norms in both education and employment. All four parties value traditional institutions, and yet in these varied geopolitical spaces, the purpose of these institutions are vastly different.

7.3 HEALTHCARE

“Gender plays a specific role both in the incidence and the prevalence of specific pathologies, as well as in their treatment and impact in terms of well-being and recovery. This is due to the interrelations between sex-related biological differences and socio-economic and cultural factors that affect the behaviour of women and men and their access to health services” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016).

A comprehensive health policy will take the following considerations into account; gender differences in health status and corresponding behaviours, barriers to accessing services, sexual and reproductive health, gender segregation in the healthcare workforce and gender sensitive training for healthcare professionals (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016). Adequately accounting for these concerns necessitates the protection and fulfilment of reproductive rights for women. If health care policy fails to secure a woman’s right to access a safe and legal abortion, it ultimately disregards a woman’s right to life. Healthy policy that fails to protect a woman’s life, cannot be held up as ‘adequate’ policy in any capacity. Obstructing the realisation of reproductive rights results in millions of women’s deaths, deaths that are completely avoidable. Abortion is not just a health issue, it is an issue of liberty, and is emblematic of a woman’s right to choose what happens to her body.

7.3.1 Canada

Canada legalised abortion in 1988 and all three parties support a woman’s right to an abortion. However, the Conservative Party do have to explicitly verify their position, arguing that they will not “support any legislation to regulate abortion” (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016).

Unlike the Conservatives, the Liberal Party and the NDP do not single out their position on the issue, as their support is clearly a given. The NDP further elaborate on the topic by arguing that they will strengthen existing services to ensure that abortion is “a fully funded, universally accessible medical procedure” (New Democratic Party, 2016). Their concern, however, is not only for the patient, it also extends to the abortion clinic personnel, who the NDP will safeguard against physical threats and/or harassment.

Comparatively, the Conservatives give precedence to women who intend on bringing the pregnancy to term. The party will develop:

“Maternal and child health care initiatives designed to improve and protect women's and children's health and to reduce maternal death during pregnancy and delivery. The focus will be to ensure provision of the necessities of life - clean water, appropriate nutrition, inoculations, basic medical care, and training of health care workers to care for women and to deliver babies” (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016).

The protection, strengthening and support of families is paramount to the Conservatives value system, in which the preservation of healthy families takes centre stage.

The Liberals in part share this approach, but extend their vision to the wider world, in what they deem the 'world's poor.' The Liberal party claim that their Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) aid initiative will be "driven by evidence and outcomes, not ideology" (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015). This language seeks to repudiate pro-life/anti-choice opposition claiming a 'moral' high ground. "Closing existing gaps in reproductive rights and health care can and will save lives. We will cover the full range of reproductive health services as part of MNCH initiatives" (Liberal Party of Canada, 2016). Once again, protecting the rights of marginalised groups, in this case; impoverished women and girls, is at the crux of liberal policy.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Secure reproductive rights and healthcare for the world's poor.*
- *Conservative Approach (Conservative Party) – Will not support any legislation to control abortion, and will establish maternal and child health care initiatives ensuring the provision of basic necessities are administered.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (NDP) – Strengthen existing domestic abortion services and protect all relevant personnel.*

7.3.2 Ireland

Healthcare is an extensive policy area for both Fianna Fáil (Liberal) and the Labour Party (Social Democratic), in which maternal health takes the fore. Fianna Fáil will strengthen existing services, recruit more midwives and obstetricians, create bereavement specialist teams and widen the availability of these services, so that they can be accessed country wide. "The provision of accessible, safe and high quality obstetrician-led maternity services to all mothers and babies, regardless of where they live must be a core objective of public health policy" (Fianna Fáil, 2016). Fianna Fáil evidently recognise the prevailing gaps in maternity services, and yet they fail to make any mention of abortion. The non-acknowledgment of a woman's right to an abortion, by a 'liberal' party, illustrates the deeply entrenched culture of religious conservatism in Ireland. This exclusion of abortion sits in polarizing opposition to Canada and Sweden where the conservatives surpass the 'liberal' Irish.

In contrast to Fianna Fáil, the Labour party demonstrate a concern for both maternal health *and* a women's right to abortion. Labour will hold a referendum to remove Article 40.3.3 (the 8th Amendment) from the constitution. Introduced in 1983, the article reads:

"The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right" (Department of the Taoiseach, 2015).

In other words, sustaining the pregnancy, is as important as protecting the life of the woman. Consequently, women are continuously put at fatal risk by healthcare providers who refuse to perform abortions under fear of reprisal. If the referendum proved successful, Labour will "ensure that comprehensive legislation is put to the Houses of the Oireachtas (Parliament) to sufficiently protect the rights of women in pregnancy; in particular their right to life and to health" (Labour, 2016). Labour promote legal reform and yet, the party remain constrained by the country's ubiquitous conservatism. Labour indicate that in any future legislation they are:

“Committed to recognising the **importance of sustaining embryonic and foetal life in pregnancy while allowing termination under strict conditions** in the event of: fatal foetal abnormalities; real and substantial risk to the health of the woman (physical or mental) in the early stages of pregnancy; risk of severe or disabling damage to the woman’s health in the later stages of pregnancy; and where the effect of a pregnancy arising out of rape, incest or serious sexual assault has been to create a risk to the physical or mental health of the woman” (Labour, 2016).

This isn’t legalised abortion, but more, a recognition that women cannot be denied their basic right to life.

Comparatively, Fine Gael (Conservative) address abortion, but omit the word itself. The terms ‘abortion’ and ‘termination’ are both excluded, with the issue implicitly addressed under the policy title ‘The 8th Amendment.’ The party argue that they will:

“Establish a new Citizens’ Assembly. This Assembly will provide an open and inclusive process to examine these issues in detail, and to establish if a broad consensus can be reached on future change. Any proposals emerging from the Citizens’ Assembly would then be examined in detail by the Oireachtas (Parliament), through an all-party committee with access to the appropriate medical and legal expertise. This responsible approach will facilitate a respectful and rational debate on these highly sensitive, and often, very emotive issues” (Fine Gael, 2016).

Fine Gael isn’t supporting radical change but deliberated reform, under the conditions that it is supported by a majority. This approach is indicative of their conservative agenda, whereby progress can and will happen, but only at a rate that reflects the changing beliefs of a modern society. In stark contrast to their inadequate abortion policies, all three parties offer far-reaching initiatives to strengthen maternal health, e.g. hiring additional health care professionals for their overwhelmed maternity services.

Furthermore, Labour - the only party to address birth control - will cap the cost of the morning after pill. Conversely, Fine Gael will extend “mandatory breast screenings to all women aged 65-69” (Fine Gael, 2016). The two policy initiatives are evidently distinct, and yet they both demonstrate a concern for preventative measures that ensure women retain at least some control over their physical bodies.

- *Liberal Approach (Fianna Fáil) – Strengthen maternity services, hire additional staff, ensure rural populations have access to the same level of care.*
- *Conservative Approach (Fine Gael) – Establish an assembly to discuss Amendment 8, strengthen maternity services, and extend mandatory breast screenings.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (Labour) – Hold a referendum to repeal Amendment 8, strengthen maternity services, and cap the cost of the morning after pill.*

7.3.3 South Africa

The DA (Liberal) and the ANC (Social Democratic), similarly reflect upon the high rates of maternal mortality, but neglect to offer tangible measures towards rectifying these rates. “The ANC government will strive massively to reduce cases of TB, diabetes, malnutrition, maternal deaths and malaria, as well as violent crime and road accidents” (African National Congress, 2012). For the ANC, a women specific issue - maternal death - evidently belongs to a simple collective of societal ills. The issue is subsequently excluded from further discussion, as are all gender related health issues.

In stark contrast to the ANC and the DA, the ACDP (Conservative) make explicit reference to abortion, judging it a “ready birth control method” (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). The socially conservative party conversely plan on amending laws and policies that “undermine family values, such as access to contraceptives and abortion by children without parental consent.” Evidently, the ACDP do not regard underage females as autonomous individuals with the right to choose what happens to their bodies, but the property of their parents. Moreover, the party consider the “current legislation to be a license for promiscuity” (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). It would appear that the ACDP disapprove of both women, who are in control of when, or if they reproduce, and women who are sexually active (if not for reproductive means). In a further display of their conservative values, the party employ the term ‘unborn child’ when referring to the foetus. According to the ACDP the “constitutional right to life should also protect the unborn child. (It has now been scientifically and medically proven that life begins at conception)” (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). In actuality, there is no scientific consensus about when life begins (Zhang, 2015). The ACDP’s statement however exemplifies a troubling political trend, increasingly prevalent all over the world, whereby opinions masquerading as ‘facts’ e.g. ‘it has been scientifically and medically proven that life begins at conception,’ circulate largely unchallenged. These ‘facts’ are then embedded into a deeply political narrative, repeated by people in positions of influence, and consequently validated as ‘truths.’

The following policy clearly demonstrates the value (or lack thereof) that the ACDP place on women. The party argues that because women form a substantial proportion of the workforce, their good health will contribute to the establishment of a healthy economy, and as major caregivers in society, healthy women caring for the sick and vulnerable will ensure state welfare is not burdened (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). Employing language that renders women’s good health nothing more than an effective business model, the African Christian Democratic Party argue that “the health of women is vital for economic development” (2015). Whilst the statement is true, it is offered in isolation as the only benefit of women’s health. Ensuring women are healthy is not an end in itself but a means of maintaining a functioning society, where women remain confined to traditional gender roles e.g. the ‘caregiver’. In addition to both: eliminating a woman’s right to reproductive freedom; and safeguarding women’s health for the ‘good’ of society, the ACDP are a vocal advocate for the eradication of HIV/AIDS. The party provide support for individuals who are HIV positive, whilst paradoxically condemning safe sex practices. In 2000, the party proclaimed to support abstinence only policy, a view that they hold till this day. In regards to HIV/AIDS “the ACDP feel strongly that the condom campaign must be abandoned and that abstinence and faithfulness in marriage must be promoted” (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). Over the last 30 years extensive worldwide research has shown that abstinence-only programmes are largely ineffective in reducing the transmission of HIV/AIDS, and instead many studies urge for a proven ‘safer-sex’ approach to be employed in HIV/AIDS work (Jemmott et al., 1998). And yet, once again, the ACDP’s puritanical values remain their priority, regardless of the ‘real world’ consequences.

- *Liberal Approach (DA) – No explicit mention of healthcare initiatives for women.*
- *Conservative Approach (ACDP) – Ban abortion, ensure women are healthy so that they can preserve a healthy household, and promote abstinence.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (ANC) – No explicit mention of healthcare initiatives for women.*

7.3.4 Sweden

Whilst all Swedish parties concede that healthcare must be equal, regardless of gender, the Liberals further this initiative by proposing that all care-related statistics be analysed from a gender

perspective. “Knowledge about the differences between women and men’s disease profile has to be improved as well as the enforcement of LGBTQ competencies” (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). Demonstrating their liberal values, the party also argue that healthcare must always be organised around individual needs (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013).

Sweden currently spends approximately 1.14% of its Gross National Income (GNI) on foreign aid – the highest in the world (World Economic Forum, 2015). Naturally, all three parties therefore prioritise development aid in their healthcare policies.

According to the Liberal Party, aid should serve to build and promote democracy. Ensuring that sexual health and reproductive rights are protected and upheld, is clearly instrumental to this endeavour. “Aid to democratising forces, the building of institutions, corruption fighting and rule of law structures, as well as equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights are prioritised” (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). Evidently, the liberal mission - democracy – can only be secured when gender equality is secured.

The domain of international aid is not however limited to the Liberal party. The Moderates (Conservative) argue that until women have completely equal access to healthcare a country cannot be considered ‘developed’. The Moderates do not demarcate provisions for sexual health and reproductive rights in this initiative, but instead, employ the language of equality, whereby women must have the same access to healthcare as men (Moderaterna, 2013). Conversely, the Social Democrats argue that Sweden must be a leading country in international efforts for women’s rights, especially in the realm of sexual health and reproductive rights, an area where Sweden is not only capable, but responsible for taking action (Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna, 2013). Positioning the Swedish government as the responsible party, tasked with ensuring women’s rights are protected and upheld, reflects both, the party’s esteem for the powers of the state, and the continuing prevalence of the aid movement which emerged following WWII. The establishment of a multinational organisation, like the UN, represented the political will at the time, of nations who collectively vowed to prevent further atrocities. Atrocities that were to now be understood as human rights violations. Women’s rights eventually became synonymous with human rights, subsequently providing women with a new framework for demanding, affecting and ensuring change. The establishment of international bodies like the U.N additionally engendered a discourse of responsibility, whereby the ‘developed’ nations, e.g. Canada and Sweden, were obligated to help the ‘developing’ nations transcend poverty. The aid agenda, is in continual flux, and yet it remains concerned with protecting the ‘neediest’ of the ‘needy,’ to which women, girls and their right to health care, figure as the lead protagonists.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Secure sexual health and reproductive rights worldwide, apply a gender perspective to healthcare, and organise all care around individual needs.*
- *Conservative Approach (Moderate Party) – Secure equal healthcare for women worldwide.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (Social Democratic Party) – Secure sexual health and reproductive rights worldwide.*

7.3.5 Conclusion

Policies directed at ‘securing’ women’s health are deeply contentious. Whilst all parties support healthcare initiatives that improve equality and accessibility, their focus on women’s health reveals entrenched divisions. Two of the conservative parties – from Canada and Sweden - fully support a woman’s right to self-determination, i.e. they support safe, accessible and legal abortion. Whereas South Africa’s ACDP (Conservative) want to ban the provision of abortion services entirely, Ireland’s

Fine Gale (conservative) are open to potentially allowing women to have an abortion in life threatening circumstances. Evidently, there is no unifying position on the issue. However, it is not only the conservatives who propose conflicting initiatives on abortion policy. Ireland's Fianna Fáil do not address the issue in any capacity - an alarming omission considering they are Ireland's major 'liberal' party. Ireland's Labour (Social Democratic) party similarly hold reservations and cautiously approach the issue, promising to hold a referendum to repeal restrictive laws that are currently killing women. Ireland's restrictive abortion policies are reflective of the entrenched catholic conservatism of Ireland, illustrating how women's rights can be trumped by religious doctrine. Evidently, a woman's right to decide over her own body can be sidelined by the church's 'right' to define what is 'alive' and what is 'right.' Religious extremism never serves equality. The remaining liberal and social democratic parties offer either their implicit or explicit support for the provision of abortion services. Revealingly, parties who marginalise the topic of abortion, prioritise the health of women who intend to bring their pregnancies to term, demonstrating that healthcare for women is anything but equal. Ensuring that women produce healthy children is a given for all parties, and yet a medical procedure, that allows women to retain autonomy over their bodies, continues to be a politicized and criminalized domain of dispute.

7.4 PARENTHOOD

Examining policy that addresses parenthood is critical to understanding the unequal socio-economic realities facing women. Irrespective of whether a woman has or will have children, she is still affected by policies related to parental leave. Women are discriminated against, because they *might* have children. Enduring conceptions of 'mother as sole/primary caregiver' therefore disadvantage women, because the employer or prospective employer consider women to be a costly liability. Gender equality cannot be realised until employers understand that fathers can and will - via legislative measures and changing perceptions of parenthood - embrace the role of caregiver. Creating an equal household, free from the enshrined power dynamics that currently ordain the roles and behaviours of mother/father, are crucial in securing an equal future.

"It has been widely shown that women on average suffer a "wage penalty" after giving birth and a significant rise in their household work, whereas men enjoy a "wage premium" and only a small uptick in their work in the home" (Killewald as cited in Laidler, 2016).

7.4.1 Canada

In Canada "parental benefits can be paid for a maximum period of 35 weeks and must end 52 weeks after your child was born or placed with you for adoption" (Government of Canada, 2016). To secure an equal and free society, the Canadian Liberal Party believe that parental benefits must be utilized as the individual parents see fit.

"Every family's needs are different. Canadian parents deserve a parental benefits plan that is flexible and able to adjust to their unique family and work circumstances. We will introduce more flexible parental benefits that will: allow parents to receive benefits in smaller blocks of time over a period of up to 18 months; and make it possible for parents to take a longer leave – up to 18 months when combined with maternity benefits – at a lower benefit level" (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015).

This policy exemplifies the party's ideological concern for the individual. Similarly, the Conservative Party argues that parents should be able to decide the care needs of their children, and correspondingly raise them in an environment that does not discriminate against their social,

linguistic or religious values (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016). This is not only an embrace of individual choice, but of religious and cultural institutions that the Conservative's wish to safeguard.

The NDP (Social Democratic) similarly prioritise parental leave in their policy. The party argue that they will improve parental benefits, by expanding access to leave, and by ensuring that parents who take leave are not penalized when they return to work (New Democratic Party, 2016). Additionally, the NDP will introduce legislation- the 'Early Childhood Learning and Care Act - that secures long term funding for early childhood education and care, thus ensuring that childcare services are protected for all (New Democratic Party, 2016). Legislative measures are at the crux of the NDP's belief system, in which it is the state, not the family, who is responsible for safeguarding the collective youth.

The Liberals will additionally replace the current child care system, a relic of the Conservative Government. This measure is a part of their broader effort to cancel tax breaks that disproportionately benefit the wealthy, such as the 'Universal Child Care Benefit (Liberal Party of Canada, 2016). The party will instead introduce the 'Canada Child Benefit' which will give more money to the families who need it the most – the impoverished. The Liberal Party argue that "because the Canada Child Benefit is tax-free and tied to income, it also provides greater support to those who need help the most: single-parent families and low-income families" (Liberal Party of Canada, 2016). The measure will therefore lift 315,000 children out of poverty by ending the unfair giveaway of child support payments to millionaires (Liberal Party of Canada, 2016). This initiative reinforces the party's concern for the individuals who continue to be marginalised by current legislation which does not take the complexities of livelihoods and lifestyles into account. This is not simply helping those who need the most help, but a demonstration of the liberal ideology in which individual needs and freedoms take precedence.

In contrast, the Conservative Party will maintain their 'all purpose' benefit that provides "an equal level of assistance to parents, regardless of residential area, work schedule or choice of childcare format" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016). Although the party recognise that families' needs are unique, they simultaneously frame families as homogenous entities, whereby the wealthiest are entitled to the same level of financial support as the poorest. In a further display of their conservative beliefs, the party will eliminate tax disadvantages to families who care for children at home - an ideological embrace of the 'stay at home parent.' These tax breaks recognise the "economic value of stay at home parents" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016) and yet, they fail to acknowledge that women - due to existing gender norms - will predominantly fill this role. The initiative, thus motivates mothers to stay in the home and out of the workplace. Furthermore, the Conservative Party's focus on the 'Divorce Act' highlights their traditional view of society and the enduring 'nuclear' family. In regards to this Act, the party stipulates that in the case of divorce, both parents and grandparents will retain their right to custody and visitation – pertaining that it is in the best interests of the child. This policy consequently marginalises unmarried parents, whose rights as parents are not explicitly protected.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Introduce a flexible parental benefits plan, that is adjustable to the individual needs of each family and end current tax breaks that disproportionately benefit the wealthy.*
- *Conservative Approach (Conservative Party) – Parents, without fear of discrimination are charged with deciding how their children are cared for and raised, implement a universal benefit that distributes equal assistance for all, and introduce tax breaks for stay at home parents.*

- *Socialist Approach (NDP) – Improve parental benefits by expanding leave and preventing discrimination/stigmatization for those that do take leave, and secure the protection of childcare by way of the Early Childhood Learning and Care Act.*

7.4.2 Ireland

Ireland has some of the most expensive childcare in the world, and yet the predominantly female workforce are among the worst paid (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2016). These dual negatives represent large scale policy failure. The average family with two children spends 40% of its income on childcare in contrast to the OECD average of 12% (OECD, 2014). According to Fianna Fáil (Liberal) “Childcare costs can exceed mortgage payments as the largest monthly bill for families with young children. This increased strain means thousands of working parents, particularly mothers, face a stark choice of quitting work because of the high cost of childcare, or continuing their careers while losing money” (Fianna Fáil, 2015). This demonstrates that the party possesses a clear understanding of how childcare costs exacerbate gender inequality.

“Unaffordable services can particularly deter single parents and secondary earners – both typically female – from taking up paid employment. This has the potential to seriously undermine their economic security, as lengthy periods outside paid employment impact on future earnings and benefits, such as pensions” (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2016).

Improving quality and reducing childcare costs, therefore figure predominantly in the policy of all parties. Labour (Social Democratic) “will move immediately to cap the cost of childcare for all children under the age of 12 to €4.25 per hour for up to 40 hours of childcare a week. By 2021, the cost will be reduced to €2 per hour, or a maximum cost of €80 per week” (Labour, 2016). The state will fund the balance. Revealingly, this initiative is a key recommendation from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (2016). This crossover is emblematic of the history that social democratic political parties and trade unions share with one another. The two organisations’ ideologies are shaped and informed by their enduring relationship and collective vision.

Labour’s approach demonstrates their valuation of the state, and their belief that the state is responsible in reaching societal goals. Unlike Labour, who will fund the majority of childcare costs, both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael (Conservative) will decrease costs by providing an annual €2000 tax credit for parents. Comparable to their Canadian counterpart, the conservative Fine Gael will ensure that the blanket subsidy is available to all working parents with young children, regardless of income.

In contrast, Fianna Fáil will instead offer a progressive tax credit, allowing low income households to receive up to a €5000 tax break. Fianna Fáil also plan on protecting disadvantaged groups - single parents - by increasing the maximum age of the child from 7 to 12 years for the One Parent Income Scheme, which they argue will put “€23m back into the hands of hard pressed, lone parents” (Fianna Fáil, 2016).

“Childcare costs are crippling working families and preventing many parents from taking up employment. In particular, the burden of childcare costs mostly affects women who continue to bear the bulk of responsibility of childcare” (Fianna Fáil, 2016).

Fianna Fáil’s approach seeks to financially safeguard and empower the most vulnerable individuals, whereas Fine Gael’s approach seeks to incentivize parents back into the workforce, regardless of their socio-economic position. Additionally, whilst Fine Gael acknowledge that childcare options must be diverse, they simultaneously insist that children should remain in the sole care of a parent for the first 12 months of their life. Fine Gael will encourage parents to take up this traditional

approach, by increasing both: the Home Carer's Credit to €1,650; and the tax income exemption for the home carer to €10,500 (Fine Gael, 2016). Comparable to their Canadian equivalent, Fine Gael are reinforcing gender roles that can hinder equality. Similarly both Labour and Fianna Fáil share Fine Gael's belief that the child should remain in the care of a parent for the first year, with Fianna Fáil arguing that they will increase the Home Carer's Credit to €2,000. However, in a display of their liberal underpinnings, Fianna Fáil, urge that leave is shared evenly between both 'guardians' to ensure that women's choices and careers are safeguarded.

"For many parents working full-time it will be more manageable to share leave from their career, rather than necessitating one parent (the mother) to take the full period of paid leave to avail of the benefit. – Whilst Fianna Fail also aims to keep the child in the care of a parent for the first year they recognise that this currently means mothers, and therefore offers initiatives for ensuring that fathers are also included" (Fianna Fáil, 2015).

Ultimately, Fianna Fáil will ensure the choice remains in the hands of the informed individual. The party argue that "Childcare supports must reflect the diverse and unique circumstances of each family rather than a crude one size fits all approach. Parents are in the best place to know what is right for their family and the state must support that by giving them real choice and flexibility. This means choosing what is best for their child whether looked after in a home or centre-based setting" (Fianna Fáil, 2016).

Evidently, the liberal party wish to engender an environment that is flexibly suited to fulfil the needs of each and every individual rather than impose an environment that is informed by traditionally held beliefs around child rearing. All three parties do however share a commonality – the extension of parental leave. Mothers currently receive 26 weeks, and fathers receive two. Fine Gael, will commit an additional eight weeks paid leave to be availed of by either parent within the first year of a child's birth. The party argue that their approach recognises the "changing needs of modern families" (Fine Gael, 2016). This framing of progress exemplifies Fine Gael's values, whereby change – fathers taking parental leave - can be embraced once it has become the new 'normal'.

Labour, which introduced the aforementioned two weeks paternity leave, will provide an additional two weeks paternity leave as well as three additional months parental leave, with at least one month reserved for each parent (Labour, 2016). This approach largely removes individual choice, instead vesting power in the state. And yet, by requiring that fathers take more leave, rather than solely showing rhetorical support, it guarantees that change will take place. Evidently, for Labour, equality cannot be engendered through individual will alone, but must be secured by the state itself.

- *Liberal Approach (Fianna Fáil) – Offer progressive tax subsidy for working parents, increase parental leave and ensure parents can share leave evenly.*
- *Conservative Approach (Fine Gael) – Offer universal tax subsidy for working parents, offer tax incentives for stay at home parents, and increase parental leave that can be used by either parent in the first 12 months.*
- *Socialist Approach (Labour) – Encourage parents to stay at home for the first 12 months, cap childcare costs, and increase parental leave with at least 2 months earmarked for fathers.*

7.4.3 South Africa

Women are currently entitled to four consecutive months of unpaid maternity leave, and fathers are entitled to none. If employers do not offer paid maternity leave, women can claim up to 58% of their ordinary wage from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (My Wage, 2017). Comparatively, men

accrue three days annual leave for family responsibilities which can be utilized upon the birth of a child (My Wage, 2017). Both the ANC (Social Democratic) and the DA (Liberal) fail to address parental leave in any capacity.

In contrast to this glaring omission, the ACDP (Conservative) believe that government should not be shouldering the responsibility of welfare. “This is a function that churches, NGO’s and civil society should fulfil, in the form of assistance towards sufficiency and not handouts” (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). Diverting responsibility from the state and towards external networks, in what they deem an esteem for social and cultural institutions, reflects the party’s conservative grounding. Akin to their conservative counterparts, the ACDP value ‘stay at home parent’s’. However, they expand upon this belief, by explicitly arguing that mothers should be the primary caregiver (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). Unlike, the majority of parties, who focus on ensuring mothers are able to get back into the workforce, the ACDP focus on keeping mothers firmly within the household. In their commitment to restoring the traditional family, the ACDP will eliminate the societal pressures placed on mothers to work outside their homes, thus guaranteeing that mothers “regain their role in child rearing” (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). In addition to ensuring women remain primary caregivers, the party will also work towards ensuring that women remain married. “The ACDP believes that the growing divorce rate is detrimental to the family and should therefore be discouraged” (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015) In addition to promoting marital counselling, reconciliation, and marriage classes in schools, the party will reform laws to ensure that divorce is less convenient and accessible. In their efforts to safeguard the traditional concept of ‘family’, the party will effectively restrict women’s freedoms and mobility, by eliminating crucial laws that promote one’s right to self-determination.

- Liberal Approach (DA) – No explicit mention of parental leave, or the gendered dimensions of parenthood.
- Conservative Approach (ACDP) – Shift welfare focus from state responsibility to responsibility of community orgs and institutions, ensure women remain the primary caregiver, and legislate against divorce.
- Social Democratic Approach (ANC) – No explicit mention of parental leave, or the gendered dimensions of parenthood.

7.4.4 Sweden

Parents are currently entitled to 480 days of paid parental leave, of which 90 are reserved for the father. In 2014 fathers took 25% of the total parental leave (Official Site of Sweden, 2016). The Moderate Party (Conservative) employ a correspondingly liberal stance on parenthood, indicative of the social and political climate in Sweden, a country that has taken historic strides towards achieving gender equality. Parents, the Moderates argue, are best suited to making decisions about their child’s care. The party believe that childcare must be accessible, diverse, and of the highest standard (Moderaterna, 2016). Ultimately, the Moderates want “to create the conditions for families to have time together and encourage greater equality within the family” (Moderaterna, 2016). This means that men must be valued as highly as women in their role as parent and carer. Moreover, the party encourage the equal splitting of parental leave, and will strengthen current trends towards equality via potential reform measures (Moderaterna, 2016). The Moderates framing of parental equality is indicative of their conservative beliefs in which ensuring a ‘quality’ family space is created reigns supreme.

The Social Democrats agree; parental leave must be shared equally. Whilst the party support the claim that shared leave is important for the child, they place greater emphasis on the improvements it will engender in the labour market. Gender equality will be enhanced if “employers know that both parents are at home when the children are small” (Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna, 2013). For the Social Democrats parenthood and employment are interdependent, meaning women will continue to be discriminated against if they remain the primary caregivers. The party argue that women’s wages fall short, due to not only taking out the majority of parental leave, but because they “still do most of the unpaid housework” (Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna, 2013). Existing gender norms must therefore be rejected and transformed to ensure change.

Unlike the Social Democrats who will legislate to ensure leave is shared 50/50, the Liberals will instead motivate “caregivers to share parental leave by offering an equality bonus” (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). The party will additionally earmark an extra month of leave for each parent. Although this approach incorporates legislative requirements and incentivization, the emphasis remains individual choice, whereby parents are encouraged to share leave evenly, but are not forced to do so.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Increase parental leave by 2 months (1 month for each parent) and encourage parents to share leave by offering an equality bonus.*
- *Conservative Approach (Moderate Party) – Potentially reform the current system to ensure that leave is split evenly, but also promote parental autonomy over childcare decisions.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (Social Democratic Party) – Ensure parental leave is split evenly to engender employment equality.*

7.4.5 Conclusion

Parenthood is an important policy concern for the majority of parties worldwide, in part because it is a domain that affects not only the livelihoods of parents - chiefly women - but the well-being of children. Whereas the liberals trend towards subsidies that will better support single and low-income parents, the conservatives gravitate towards universal subsidies that provide the same level of financial support for every family, regardless of wealth or disadvantage. Excluding South Africa’s ANC, who offer no comment, the Social Democratic parties are unified in their approach; they will expand leave, ensure leave is equally shared, improve benefits, and strengthen current models of childcare. Comparatively the Liberal parties – bar South Africa’s DA - are predominantly focused on: increasing parental benefits (especially for the most vulnerable); and encouraging more fathers to equally share in both leave and household responsibilities. Opposing the language of the social democratic parties, the liberals ground these decisions in the individual and their right to autonomy. Juxtaposing this, all conservative parties - excluding the Swedish Moderate Party - offer incentives to ensure children remain in the home under the care of a parent. Whilst Canada’s Conservative party and Ireland’s Fine Gael fail to acknowledge that this stay at home parent will primarily be the mother, South Africa’s ACDP conversely express their belief that it *should* be the mother. These contrasting views portray the ways in which conservative parties’ values, although rooted in the preservation of family, will adapt to the changing conditions and cultures of any given society.

7.5 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

“Gender-based violence is rooted in and reinforces gender inequalities and it cannot be understood outside the social structures, gender norms and roles that support and justify it. Gender-based

violence harms women, families, communities and societies. It is a human rights violation and one of the most pervasive forms of gender-based inequality” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016).

Not only is violence against women the most pervasive form of inequality, but it is also the most prevalent human rights violation. Violence is not only a physical and/or psychological assault, but an attack on a woman’s freedom, security and health.

“Violence is a profound health problem, sapping women’s energy, compromising their physical health, and eroding their self-esteem. In addition to causing injury, violence increases women’s long-term risk of a number of other health problems, including chronic pain, physical disability, drug and alcohol abuse and depression. Women with a history of physical or sexual abuse are also at increased risk for unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and adverse pregnancy outcomes” (Heise et al., 2002).

One of the most troubling aspects of gender-based violence is that it is largely enacted by a partner, or family member (Heise et al., 2002). For the most part, attacks on women and girls are not random acts of violence perpetrated by a stranger, but are instead the ‘everyday’ acts of someone close. Violence against women is emblematic of the insidious power structures that continue to uphold the patriarchy and rob women of their agency, i.e. male dominance and ownership are corporeally inflicted upon the bodies of women. Preventative measures are therefore paramount to ensuring that less men become abusers, and that less women are abused.

Moreover, measures to combat violence against women cannot be limited to adulthood. “The scientific evidence strongly indicates that violence against children, both girls and boys, and violence against women are inextricably related. Ultimately the prevention of each of these two interrelated aspects of violence hinges, in substantial ways, on the prevention of the other” (Mercy et al., 2016). Given the key role that unequal gender norms play in the enacting of violence against children and women, strategies must be multidimensional, in that they target both; the causes and consequences of violence, and the powerful institutions which produce gender norms (Mercy et al., 2016). This necessitates the creation of programmes that also engage men and boys, as agents of positive, equitable, pro-social change.

7.5.1 Canada

Working in tandem with experts and advocates, the Liberal Party will develop a comprehensive gender-based violence action plan, thus highlighting their commitment to and understanding of gender mainstreaming (Defined in section 1.2). In conjunction to developing a gender-based violence strategy, the party will also “review current gender- and culturally-sensitive training policies for federal front-line law enforcement officers to ensure that they are strong and effective” (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015). This initiative recognises the significance of ill equipped front-line personnel, who by deterring women from coming forward (directly or indirectly), or failing to proceed with a charge, can exacerbate the effects of gender-based violence. Moreover, the party will ensure that strict punitive measures are taken against repeat offenders of domestic violence. “We will amend the Criminal Code to reverse onus on bail for those with previous convictions of intimate partner violence. We will also specify that intimate partner violence be considered an aggravating factor at sentencing, and increase the maximum sentence for repeat offenders” (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015). If violence occurs repeatedly, measures for limiting the perpetrator’s freedom are therefore fundamental to securing the victim’s freedom. An immediate initiative of the Liberal Party is the

strengthening of support services. In order to protect the most vulnerable, the Liberals will increase investments in growing and maintaining Canada's network of shelters and transition houses (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015). This approach belongs to the party's broader investment in social infrastructure, which according to the Liberals will redress the effects of a decade long Conservative government (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015).

The NDP (Social Democratic) are similarly concerned with improving and growing services. The party argue that they will provide "adequate, sustained and multi-year funding to expand access to shelters and transition houses to support women fleeing violence" (New Democratic Party, 2016). Moreover, the party will protect victims' rights, and improve their access to justice by investing in prevention, education, and counselling initiatives (New Democratic Party, 2016). This multi-dimensional approach underscores the party's social democratic ideology, an ideology which holds the state responsible in ensuring cultures of violence are further prevented and redressed.

In contrast to the approaches of the Liberal Party and the NDP, the Conservatives position society as the ultimate victim. The party "supports reorienting the approach to criminal justice and the policing system to give the highest priority to the protection of society through the prevention of crime" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016). Whilst the Conservative Party do explicitly support the needs and rights of victims, the language employed continues to place society at the forefront.

"The Conservative Party believe the consequences of family violence are harmful to all of society. We support sentences for crimes of family violence that reflect our belief in the serious nature of violent criminal activity, its effect on individuals, on families and on communities. The protection of children and spouses in family violence situations is paramount" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016).

Evidently, violence against women is ultimately an attack on a domain that the Conservatives hold in high regard - the family. Demonstrating their concern for the family, the party refer to domestic violence as 'family violence'. This valuation is further exemplified by policy stating that "the Conservative Party supports legislation to ensure that individuals who commit violence against a pregnant woman would face additional charges if her unborn child was killed or injured during the commission of a crime against the mother" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016). The explicit identification of this tragic form of violence, illustrates the Conservatives belief that it is not only an attack on two individuals, but an attack on the sanctity of an unborn future, and on an individual who reproduces the 'family' space.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Develop a gender violence strategy and action plan, introduce gender sensitive training for front-line officers, increase investments in refuge shelters, and increase the maximum sentence for repeat offenders of domestic violence.*
- *Conservative Approach (Conservative Party) – Support harsher sentencing for crimes of family violence, and protect families and safeguard society in instances of violence.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (NDP) – Increase funding and access to shelters for women fleeing violence, improve services and access to justice, and invest in prevention, education and counselling.*

7.5.2 Ireland

Fianna Fáil (Liberal) implicitly address violence against women in relation to protecting vulnerable children. The party will increase funding "to address deficits in child protection and welfare services as well as community programmes, such as domestic abuse services and early intervention

programmes” (Fianna Fáil, 2016). This is the only policy initiative Fianna Fáil produce relevant to gender-based violence.

Diverging from this revealing exclusion, both Labour (Social Democratic) and Fine Gael (Conservative) explicitly state that they will carry out the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention “Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence” (Council of Europe, 2011). In conjunction with implementing the convention’s recommendations, Fine Gael will “streamline the governance, funding and implementation of all policies and services on domestic violence to ensure a single, coordinated approach” (Fine Gael, 2016). This fine tuning of services reflects the party’s distaste for big government. Undoubtedly, the state has a responsibility to provide protections and ensure action, but it is a conservative government, trimmed of unnecessary fat.

In response to the Istanbul Convention, Labour has developed an Action Plan, outlining provisions for: preventative education; training of relevant public sector staff and legal professionals; and the integration of a national helpline (Labour, 2016). Labour will additionally improve the court systems and enact a new Domestic Violence Bill to “improve the protections available to victims of domestic violence, most critically for those victims in crisis situations” (Labour, 2016). This policy illustrates that Labour understand that re-traumatisation can occur in courts when a victim-centric approach is not prioritised. According to research by Temkin & Krahe (2008) when survivors of physical and sexual violence experience adversarial criminal justice courts, secondary victimisation occurs, thus dissuading other women from coming forward. The party will therefore:

“Include measures to reduce potential intimidation, limit the requirement for victims to give evidence before large numbers of strangers, bar electronic communications by perpetrators of domestic violence and allow for interim barring orders in emergency or crisis situations” (Labour, 2016).

Labour’s approach clearly centers on the state’s social and judicial institutions, ultimately holding these bodies and their corresponding staff to account.

- *Liberal Approach (Fianna Fáil) – Combat inefficiencies that adversely affect children and are found in domestic abuse services.*
- *Conservative Approach (Fine Gael) – Implement the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention, and streamline all policies into one coordinated approach.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (Labour) – Implement the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention, implement an Action Plan targeting education, training, and infrastructure, enact a Domestic Violence Bill, and improve court systems.*

7.5.3 South Africa

Comparable to Ireland’s Labour Party, the DA (Liberal) will also reform the criminal courts. According to the DA, establishing ‘Specialised Domestic Violence Courts’ is an essential step in transforming the current outlook for South African women (Democratic Alliance, 2013c). The party argues that “this measure will: increase victim safety by expediting cases; strengthen the expertise of personnel; limit the trauma of victims by ensuring that they do not have to repeatedly testify before different courts; and promote justice by increasing conviction rates” (Democratic Alliance, 2013c). Evidently, the party recognises that courts can beget trauma when they don’t place victim support and justice at the forefront. The introduction of specialised courts further demonstrates their concern for a system that has long been run by the same people - the ANC. The DA will overhaul and improve the current

system, a system that is overwrought with inefficiencies (Democratic Alliance, 2013c). For the DA violence against women, is a failing of the state. Not only are the courts ill equipped to administer justice for the victim, but the police are ill equipped to appropriately respond and protect the victim. The DA will therefore regularly monitor police stations compliance with the Domestic Violence Act (Democratic Alliance, 2013c). The Act requires that all police stations keep comprehensive records of domestic violence incidents, and that all officers are trained in responding to a domestic violence call. The DA acknowledge that whilst the laws for protection are in place, they are not being respected, upheld or implemented.

“Every year, a random sample of 100 police stations must be selected for an audit of their compliance with domestic violence legislation, and specific steps, including disciplinary action, must be taken against non-compliant station commanders” Democratic Alliance, 2013c).

In addition, the DA will establish an electronic system for monitoring domestic violence registers, further strengthening policing. This would “enable the police to track repeat offenders and complainants between stations and provinces” (Democratic Alliance, 2013c). In conjunction with these steps, the DA will immediately redress existing threats to women’s safety and freedom of movement by providing women only buses during high load peak hours. The necessity of this measure illustrates the alarming prevalence of everyday violence against women in South Africa.

In contrast to the DA’s concrete measures, the ANC (Social Democratic) fail to provide policy initiatives, instead offering their rhetorical support for ending gender-based violence. The party promise to work “with all sectors to end violence against women and children” (African National Congress, 2012). Furthermore, they recognise that this violence “reflects and reinforces inequalities between men and women, and compromises the health, dignity, security, and autonomy of its victims and survivors” (African National Congress, 2012). Except for a brief assertion that the criminal justice system must be more proactive, the party’s policy remains revealingly empty. The ANC clearly possess a macro understanding of how violence against women is implicitly accepted and sustained, and yet their grand proclamations are ultimately bereft of action.

Comparable to the views of the DA, the ACDP (Conservative) argue that the present government has failed to protect society and its citizens from violence. Resembling their Canadian counterpart, the party’s language positions society as the ultimate victim of crime. Similarly, the ACDP view domestic violence as a direct assault on the purity of family. Side-lining the individual in the wake of preserving the health of traditional spaces, e.g. the family, exemplifies the party’s conservative agenda. “The violation of a family member’s right to security and human dignity should be seen as an assault against the sanctity of family life” (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). The ACDP do not however omit individual victims from their policy entirely. The party will ensure that police services better respond to a victim’s request for help in an abusive situation, where delays in applying for restraining measures can be catastrophic (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015). Reinforcing their prioritising of ‘traditional’ groups, the party argue that the community is also responsible for protecting the victim, e.g. the community should assist the victim in applying for a restraining order.

- *Liberal Approach (DA) – Reform the current court systems by introducing specialised courts, audit police stations to ensure compliance, and establish women only coaches during rush hour.*
- *Conservative Approach (ACDP) –. Protect society and the sanctity of family life by ensuring that police services are strengthened to more effectively respond to domestic violence, and encourage communities to protect their members.*

- *Social Democratic Approach (ANC) – No explicit mention of concrete measures, but will work with all sectors to end violence against women*

7.5.4 Sweden

The Moderate Party (Conservative) argue that until women are protected against abuse, a country cannot be fully ‘developed’ (Moderaterna, 2013). This is the extent of the party’s policy discussion on physical violence. The Social Democrat’s similarly fail to expand upon gender-based violence, with their policy limited to a rhetorical rejection of all forms of gender inequality and subordination.

Contrasting this, the Liberal Party provide various initiatives for combating gender-based violence. Preventing and punishing acts of ‘honour’ related violence are primary concerns raised in the party’s policy booklet (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). The Liberal’s argue that this form of violent oppression poses a serious threat to the individual’s autonomy, whereby women and girls lose the right to decide how they live their lives, if they get to live their lives at all. Combating ‘honour’ related violence is therefore “about standing up for basic human rights and freedoms” (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). This policy is grounded in liberal language, i.e. violence is not only a physical crime, but a crime against one’s right to liberty. The Liberal’s additionally argue that criminal investigations need to be of the highest caliber, and that the corresponding penalties must reflect the seriousness of the crimes committed (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). Evidently, gender-based violence, cannot be tolerated in any capacity, nor can it be marginalised by ‘more criminal’ concerns. In conjunction with these judicial and punitive measures, the Liberals argue that the comprehensive support of victims must also be prioritised by the social services (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). One example is to establish and maintain crisis hotlines. Ultimately, the party recognise that:

“The violence and repression of men towards women is the most extreme expression of female vulnerability and is built on the perception of gender, power and sexuality. All forms of violence in relationships and gendered violence will be prevented” (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013).

The Liberal party clearly possess a comprehensive understanding of gender-based violence, an understanding that has been shaped by their feminist roots and beliefs.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Prevent and punish acts of ‘honour’ violence, strengthen the judicial system and support of victims.*
- *Conservative Approach (Moderate Party) – Recognition that women must be protected against abuse.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (Social Democratic Party) –No explicit mention of violence against women.*

7.5.5 Conclusion

The aforementioned approaches for ending violence against women are not united in their political ideology. Rather, several common strategies emerge throughout: developing an action plan to tackle gender based violence, reforming the judicial courts; strengthening and monitoring policing; increasing funding and access to shelters; and introducing harsher sentencing for domestic violence offences. Collectively the parties offer measures that are focused on protecting the victims, and punishing the perpetrators.

Employing a family-centric approach is a recurrent theme in conservative policy, even in the case of gender-based violence. For the most part, conservatives do not view violence against women as a product of inequality, but as an assault on the family and society. Whilst social democratic parties –

Canada's NDP and Ireland's Labour – offer comprehensive policy directives for combating violence against women, directives that are focused on state protections, services and infrastructure, they are the only two social democratic parties to do so. Comparatively the liberal parties – excluding Ireland's Fianna Fáil – produce the most extensive policy initiatives for combating violence against women and girls, understanding the various symptoms of gender-based violence and the corresponding actions to take. This is not a fight against violence, but a treatment of the systemic causes that create, legitimise and safeguard the continuation of violence. Remarkably, the Swedish Liberal Party, the Canadian NDP (Social Democratic) and the Irish Labour party (Social Democratic) are the only parties to make reference to preventing violence, and they are brief acknowledgments at that. The failure of parties to offer prevention measures is a startling omission, considering the crucial role prevention plays in ensuring gender-based violence is eradicated in the long term. Evidently, there is urgent work to be done everywhere.

7.6 SEXUAL VIOLENCE

“Sexual coercion and abuse emerge as defining features of the female experience for many women and girls. Forced sexual contact can take place at any time in a woman's life and includes a range of behaviours, from forcible rape to nonphysical forms of pressure that compel girls and women to engage in sex against their will. The touchstone of coercion is that a woman lacks choice and faces severe physical or social consequences if she resists sexual advances” (Heise et al., 2002).

Sexual assault of any kind cannot be reduced to a ‘sexual act.’ It is a form of violence that perpetuates existing inequality, and restricts the freedoms, and independence of women and girls. Moreover, incidences of sexual violence - sexual assault, marital rape, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, and sexual abuse of girls are not horrific acts that take place ‘somewhere else’. Sexual violence prevails in every society, and in every social strata.

“Sexual violence affects women and girls in all countries and in all classes. Recent global prevalence figures indicate that 35% of women worldwide have experienced either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime” (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016).

7.6.1 Canada

The Liberal Party's policy on gender violence is inclusive of both sexual and domestic violence. One explicit addition is the inclusion of sexual harassment in the workplace. The Liberal party argues that in partnership with provinces and territories, they will run public awareness campaigns, and take action to ensure that workplaces are free from sexual harassment (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015).

As previously mentioned, the NDP (Social Democratic), will implement various policies to combat violence against women. The party however, neglect to address sexual violence, and refer only to prostitution. The NDP will safeguard “the health and safety of sex-trade workers” (New Democratic Party, 2016). Opposing this view, the Conservative Party rejects the concept of legalizing the purchase of sex.

“We declare that human beings are not objects to be enslaved, bought or sold. We shall develop a Canada-specific plan to target the purchasers of sex and human trafficking markets through criminalizing the purchase of sex as well as the acts of any third party attempting to profit from the purchase of sex” (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016).

Whilst both the NDP and the Conservative Party undoubtedly seek to protect at-risk women, the language they employ demonstrates their distinct approaches for doing so. The NDP frame prostitution as a trade, where women choose to sell a product - their bodies, versus the Conservative Party, who frame prostitution as an unequal exchange, where women are objects - *forced* to sell their bodies.

In addition to criminalizing the purchase of sex, the Conservatives will create a sex offenders' registry, providing mandatory DNA sampling that will allow police and parole services to track registrants (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016). Furthermore, the Conservatives hold the government responsible for protecting children against online predators. The party, will:

"Fight the cyber-stalking of children, by allocating more resources for Internet monitoring, by increasing the penalty for cyber-stalkers, and by taking measures to raise awareness among all Canadians (particularly young Canadians) about the importance of protecting your privacy online" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016).

Protecting the vulnerable public against online 'degenerates' is a recurrent theme found in conservative policy. The Conservative Party does not recognise sexual violence as a symptom and condition of gender inequality, but instead frame it as the evils of a particular few. The party remains focused on the abuse of minors by preying paedophiles. The Conservative party will introduce mandatory minimum sentences for those convicted of sexually assaulting a minor and will eliminate "all defences that are used to justify the possession of child pornography" (Conservative Party of Canada, 2016). In addition, the Conservative party "will oppose any effort to lower the age of protection below 16 years of age". At the crux of the party's justice policy is the Conservative concern for the protection of families and children, a concern that whilst necessary, in this case fails to recognise that sexual violence is not simply a 'perverse' condition of a select few, but a manifestation of gender inequality.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Develop a gender violence strategy and action plan - inclusive of sexual violence - and work against sexual harassment in the workplace.*
- *Conservative Approach (Conservative Party) – Criminalize prostitution, create a sex offenders' registry, allocate more resources to online monitoring, increase penalty for cyber-stalkers, develop public awareness campaigns about online dangers, introduce mandatory minimum sentences for repeat offenders and for those convicted of sexually assaulting a minor, oppose any moves to lower the age of consent to below 16, and ensure that people possessing child pornography are unable to use any defence.*
- *Socialist Approach (NDP) – Protect sex-trade workers, but no explicit mention of sexual violence.*

7.6.2 Ireland

Yet again, Fianna Fáil (Liberal) omit a discussion of gender-based violence, failing to address the prevention of sexual violence, punitive action, or the protection of victims, in any of their policy directives. The only relevant comment made by the party is the "need to address the gang-run sex trafficking rings of Ireland" (Fianna Fáil, 2016).

Comparatively, Labour (Social Democratic) will introduce training schemes and educational programmes to ensure that sexual violence is reported, appropriately dealt with, and victims are supported (Labour, 2016). For example, the party will guarantee that police are "fully equipped and trained to deal with incidences and reports of sexual violence" (Labour, 2016).

Juxtaposing Labour's focus on the victim, Fine Gael (Conservative) focus on the offender. Fine Gael, will provide "electronic tagging for high risk sex offenders on their release from prison to reduce the risk of reoffending" (Fine Gael, 2016). Moreover, the party will "enact legislation to strengthen the post-release supervision of sex offenders and provide for disclosure by Gardaí (Police) of details on sex offenders where they believe public safety concerns exist" (Fine Gael, 2016). Through punishing the offender, this policy exemplifies the party's primary concern for protecting the public. The public safety focus is further demonstrated by Fine Gael's introduction of a Sexual Offences Bill which will work against online grooming and exploitation. These policies mirror the work of Fine Gael's Canadian counterpart, illustrating that the conservative value system is predicated on safeguarding families against societal ills and immorality.

- *Liberal Approach (Fianna Fáil) – Address sex trafficking, without any explicit mention of policy.*
- *Conservative Approach (Fine Gael) – Introduce electronic tagging for high risk offenders, strengthen the post-release supervision of sex offenders, and enact the Sexual Offences Bill to work against online grooming.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (Labour) – Introduce mandatory sexual violence education and training of police.*

7.6.3 South Africa

In response to the existing gaps in service provision, the DA (Liberal) will develop new support networks to provide instant and effective assistance for women, regardless of time or place.

"The DA will establish a 7-day-a-week, 24-hour VictimLink service. By calling a specific number, women who have been raped or assaulted would be able to get immediate crisis support and police assistance, they would be able to discuss safety measures with a trained counsellor, and even be given help with practical interventions such as a cell phone for high risk victims" (Democratic Alliance, 2013c).

Moreover, the DA will train community members to provide victim support. This means that ordinary citizens will be able to obtain training in providing practical and psychological support to victims of domestic and sexual violence - a cost effective measure that also promotes stigma reduction. In addition to the training of personnel, the DA will ensure that rape kits (including HIV prophylaxis) are available at all police stations (Democratic Alliance, 2013c). "Every victim of rape should immediately be taken to a medical professional to collect samples and to receive assistance regarding the correct use of antiretrovirals" (Democratic Alliance, 2013c). Akin to their gender-based violence strategy, the DA, will also establish 'Specialized Sexual Offences Courts'. The courts will be run in conjunction with Care Centres offering immediate and integrated support to victims of violent sexual acts (Democratic Alliance, 2013c). These measures seek to redress what the DA view as the failings of the ANC government and their ineffectual implementation of crucial legislation. "Although we have the Sexual Offences Act and the Domestic Violence Act in place, there are few indications that this problem is in fact taken seriously on the ground, or that women are given the protection they need" (Democratic Alliance, 2013c).

Once again, the ANC (Social Democratic) fail to propose any practical measures, whilst the ACDP (Conservative) offer only one measure: deny bail for rape offenders (African Christian Democratic Party, 2015).

- *Liberal Approach (DA) – Establish a 24-hour , national helpline, staffed by trained counsellors and in direct contact with police, train community volunteers, ensure that rape kits are universally available, and introduce Specialized Sexual Offences Courts.*
- *Conservative Approach (ACDP) – Deny bail in instances of rape.*
- *Social Democratic Approach (ANC) – No explicit mention of concrete measures.*

7.6.4 Sweden

The Liberal party will strengthen existing legislation by developing a separate penalty code to complement the Sexual Offences Act. This code will focus on sexual acts that are performed without consent, even in cases of redacted consent (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013). This approach exemplifies the evolving perceptions of sexual violence, whereby the discourse of consent - and how that is constituted and given - has become prevalent in liberal consciousness. Comparable to the Canadian Conservative's, the Liberal party will forbid the purchasing of sexual acts. "Prostitution today is often a part of organised borderless human trafficking. The most important effort is to remove the demand. Prostitutes will be protected and supported as they move on" (Folkpartiet Liberalerna, 2013).

Conversely, the Moderates (Conservative) will work abroad, on initiatives that eradicate violent, sexist practices rooted in 'tradition'.

"The struggle for greater gender equality is one of today's most important democratic challenges. Traditions and laws are used to restrict women's freedom in many places in the world. Women and girls are subjected to forced marriages, genital mutilation, trafficking and sexual violations" (Moderaterna, 2013).

This policy underscores the polarisation of conservative parties, who worldwide, possess vastly different understandings of what constitutes as 'tradition.' The mainstream Swedish conservative party are socially 'progressive,' recognising that the word 'tradition' is often used to legitimate harmful gender-based practices. Therefore, the party will work against 'traditions' that continue to disadvantage, disempower and kill women and girls, regardless of whether opposing conservatives postulate that these 'cultural' practices are outside the limits of law, rights and equality.

The Social Democrats similarly cast their gaze outwardly. The party "want to vigorously enforce UN resolutions that condemn rape and sexual violence in conflict" (Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna, 2013). Revealingly, both the Moderates and the Social Democrats fail to provide a national strategy, omitting a domestic discussion of sexual violence, in the wake of an international focus.

- *Liberal Approach (Liberal Party) – Introduce a penalty code regarding 'consent' to complement the Sexual Offences Act, and forbid the purchasing of sex.*
- *Conservative Approach (Moderate Party) – Work against international practices that restricts women's freedoms.*
- *Socialist Approach (Social Democratic Party) – Enforce UN resolutions that condemn acts of sexual violence during wartime and conflict.*

7.6.5 Conclusion

Once again, the conservative parties of Canada and Ireland share a mutual concern for the family in regards to sexual violence. Both will work against online predators and introduce a sex offender database/registry to assist police. Their society-centric approach works towards safeguarding at-risk young persons from outside deviants. Comparatively, both liberal and social democratic parties

focus on training measures to ensure that relevant personnel are equipped to adequately respond to sexual violence. Revealingly, parties from all three political ideologies prioritise sex trafficking and prostitution - both domestically and internationally - in their policy. The trafficking of humans has continued unabated into the 21st century, a form of modern-day slavery. “The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that worldwide, at any one time there are some 2.5 million people who have been trafficked and are being subjected to sexual or labour exploitation” (Anti-Slavery, n.d.). This form of violent repression goes largely unnoticed by the general population. Human trafficking may be hidden, but it is everywhere. It is illegal, and therefore it is hidden. Whilst both women and men are trafficked, it is sex trafficking that disproportionately enslaves women and children. This form of violence predominates in the policy of all four liberal parties, a clear demonstration of their value system, in which an individual’s freedom reigns supreme.

8 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This paper has sought to provide a general overview of how distinct political parties and ideologies understand and approach gender equality differently. Whilst no political party or policy looks the same, there are marked ideological themes and keywords that emerge in each area.

For example, in the area of women’s political empowerment liberal policy is largely concerned with: securing equal representation in all realms of political life; ensuring inclusive and transparent appointment practices are in place to increase the representation of marginalised individuals; employing gender-based impact analyses; and dissolving inefficient ministries. Similarly, social democratic policy also raises the importance of applying gender-based impact analysis to public policy. However, in contrast to the liberals, the social democrats additionally prioritise: enforcing quota systems; implementing reform measures; engendering doctrines that work against sexist behaviour and rhetoric; and strengthening ministries focused on the rights and protections of women. In stark contrast to these initiatives, all but one of the conservative parties omit a discussion of women’s political empowerment. Fine Gael, the one party to address this area of gender equality, argues that they will introduce family-friendly parliamentary hours and ensure more women fill state board seats.

Although, this represents just one view of the themes recurrent in policy related to women’s political empowerment, the examples nevertheless underscore the focal point of each ideology. Liberal parties espouse their concern for women as the ‘individual’ by ensuring equality of opportunity for each and every individual in a society that rejects incompetent and unproductive state bodies. Whereas, social democratic parties are concerned with safeguarding women, and therefore society by strengthening the state apparatus. Conversely, regardless of being limited to only one party, the policy of Fine Gael similarly highlights a realm fundamental to conservatives - the family. Evidently the protection and support of the ‘family’ is at the forefront of their agenda.

Nevertheless, this paper invites the reader to draw his or her own conclusions. Although it has been published by a liberal foundation that is eager to issue policy judgements in other arenas, the purpose of this paper is different. It does not seek to propose a universally ‘correct’ way of achieving gender equality, but rather it prompts the reader to reflect upon existing gender policies found across the political spectrum. As the overview demonstrates, gender equality is a commonly shared goal of political parties, with not one, but multiple ways of securing its realisation.

An international snapshot has been offered, showcasing the various policies employed by distinct political parties in initiatives that directly and indirectly affect gender equality. Through an analysis of policies related to women's political empowerment, education, employment, health, parenthood, violence against women, and sexual violence, an overview of what constitutes liberal, conservative and social democratic gender policy, in four heterogeneous nations has emerged.

It is important to remember that these parties and their belief systems manifest and operate in entirely distinct religious, political and cultural contexts. Therefore whilst assessing a party's proposed gender policy, it is imperative that the context in which that policy has emerged is also taken into account. This is not to excuse a lack of political will or action, but to explain the work of parties which, despite sharing an ideological base, may produce vastly different policies.

Moreover, the paper is clearly concerned with women in the traditional sense, as it does not account for the ways in which gender policy also affects men and trans-persons. For the purposes of this paper, 'women' are to be understood in the gender normative tradition, and 'gender policy' is to be understood as promissory notes that in some way influence a woman's autonomy, empowerment, mobility and equality of opportunity. This is not to sideline the experiences of trans-persons who are similarly oppressed by patriarchal structures which continue to produce and reinforce inequality, nor is it to sideline the ways in which men are also affected by gender policy. Rather it is a reflection of the continuing pertinence of women's inequality. Inequality that whilst intersectional, must be examined in its own right - considering it affects over half of the world's population. Despite great strides of progress, women continue to experience insurmountable inequality, inequality that is exacted on their livelihoods, their freedom of movement, and their bodies.

This paper is concerned with the written content of any given policy – the language employed, the embedded values, the areas of focus, the areas ignored and purposefully excludes any consideration for if and how these initiatives have been implemented. It remains to be seen whether the above policies have, or will be introduced, a task which could further our understanding of the lived experience: of how policies are enacted and their corresponding consequences. Undertaking this task would serve well in creating a detailed image of the realities and ramifications of gender policy, and could be a useful tool in holding governments accountable.

There is still crucial work to be done. No party offers comprehensive policy towards securing full gender equality. This is not a problem of one political ideology, but a limitation of parties from across the political spectrum. Whilst both liberal and social democratic ideologies display an operational overlap, in that they often produce similar policy approaches, not one party can be charged with doing enough or promising enough.

Ultimately, this paper serves as a starting point, by laying the foundation for further work on gender policy; be it as a checklist for assessing a party's work towards gender equality or as a template for what comprehensive gender sensitive policy can begin to look like.

9 APPENDIX ONE: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please refer to 5.1 for individual party policy documents and 5.2 for external resources (academic, editorial, institutional etc.).

9.1 POLICY DOCUMENTS

African Christian Democratic Party. (n.d.). *Our History*. Retrieved February 9, 2017, from <http://acdparty.org.za/?page=Our%20History>

African Christian Democratic Party. (2015). *Policies*. Retrieved from <http://acdparty.org.za/?page=Policies>

African National Congress. (n.d.). *What is the African National Congress?* Retrieved February 9, 2017, from <http://www.anc.org.za/content/what-anc>

African National Congress. (2012). *Strategy and Tactics of the ANC*. Retrieved from <http://www.anc.org.za/docs/pol/2013/strategyp.pdf>

African National Congress. (2014). *Election Manifesto*. Retrieved from <http://www.anc.org.za/docs/manifesto/2014/anc-manifesto.pdf>

Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna. (2013). *Ett Program för Förändring*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialdemokraterna.se/upload/Kongresser/Kongress2013/Ett%20program%20for%20forandring.pdf>

Conservative Party of Canada. (n.d.). *Our History*. Retrieved February 9, 2017, from <http://www.conservative.ca/our-party/our-history/>

Conservative Party of Canada. (2016). *Policy Declaration*. Retrieved from <http://www.conservative.ca/media/documents/Policy%20Declaration%20-%20June%202011%202016.pdf>

Democratic Alliance. (2013a). *DA Policy on Governance*. Retrieved from <http://www.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Governance1.pdf>

Democratic Alliance. (2013b). *DA Policy on Labour*. Retrieved from <http://www.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Labour1.pdf>

Democratic Alliance. (2013c). *DA Policy on Safety, Crime & Justice*. Retrieved from <http://www.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Safety-Justice-Correctional-Services2.pdf>

Democratic Alliance. (2015). *Federal Constitution*. Retrieved from <http://www.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/DA-Federal-Constitution-approved-by-Congress-9-May-2015.pdf>

Democratic Alliance. (2016). *Vision: 2029: Maximising Service Delivery by Minimising Cabinet*. Retrieved from <https://www.da.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Vision-2029-Maximising-Service-Delivery-by-Minimising-Cabinet-correct-version.pdf>

Fianna Fáil. (n.d.). *Women's Network*. Retrieved February 9, 2017, from <https://www.fiannafail.ie/womens-network/>

Fianna Fáil. (2013). *Accessible, Flexible, and Affordable Childcare in Ireland*. Retrieved from <https://www.fiannafail.ie/download/childcare/Fianna%20F%C3%A1il%20Accessible,%20Flexible%20and%20Affordable%20Childcare%20in%20Ireland.pdf>

Fianna Fáil. (2015). *Promoting Women Entrepreneurs in Ireland*. Retrieved from <https://www.fiannafail.ie/download/jobs/Promoting-Women-Entrepreneurs.pdf>

Fianna Fáil. (2016). *An Ireland for all: Manifesto 2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.fiannafail.ie/download/An-Ireland-for-all-Fianna-FaCC81il-Manifesto.pdf>

Fine Gael. (n.d.). *Our Values*. Retrieved February 9, 2017, from <https://www.finegael.ie/the-party/our-values/>

Fine Gael. (2016). *General Election Manifesto 2016*. Retrieved from https://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/staff/michael_gallagher/Manifestos2016/FGManifesto16.pdf

Folkpartiet Liberalerna. (2013). *Freedom in the Age of Globalization: 2013 Party Programme*. Liberalerna. Unpublished.

Government of Canada. (2016). *EI Maternity and Parental Benefits - Overview*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-maternity-parental.html>

Labour. (2016.) *Labour Manifesto: Standing up for Ireland's Future*. Retrieved from https://www.labour.ie/download/pdf/labour_manifesto_2016.pdf

Liberal Party of Canada. (2015). *Real Change: A New Plan for a Strong Middle Class*. Retrieved from <https://www.liberal.ca/files/2015/10/New-plan-for-a-strong-middle-class.pdf>

Liberal Party of Canada. (2016a). *Constitution*. Retrieved from <https://www.liberal.ca/files/2016/07/constitution-en.pdf>

Liberal Party of Canada. (2016b). *Real Change: A Fair and Open Government*. Retrieved from <https://www.liberal.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/a-fair-and-open-government.pdf>

Moderaterna. (n.d.). *About Us*. Retrieved February 9, 2017, from <http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=sv&tl=en&u=http%3a%2f%2fmoderat.se%2f>

Moderaterna. (2013). *Moderaternas Handlingsprogram*. Retrieved from http://www.moderat.se/sites/default/files/attachments/handlingsprogram_-_ett_modernt_arbetsparti_for_hela_sverige_2013_1.pdf

New Democratic Party of Canada. (2013). *Constitution of the New Democratic Party of Canada*. Retrieved from http://xfer.ndp.ca/2013/constitution/2013_CONSTITUTION_E.pdf

New Democratic Party of Canada. (2016). *NDP Policy Book*. Retrieved from http://xfer.ndp.ca/2016/documents/2016_PolicyBook_EN_WEB.pdf

Socialdemokraterna. (2013). *The Swedish Social Democratic Party: An Introduction*. Retrieved from https://www.socialdemokraterna.se/upload/Internationellt/Other%20Languages/The_Swedish_Social_Democratic_Party_an_introduction.pdf

10 EXTERNAL RESOURCES

- Carty, K. (2015). *Big Tent Politics: The Liberal Party's Long Mastery of Canada's Public Life*. Toronto, Ontario: University of British Columbia Press.
- Council of Europe. (2011). *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*. Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168046031c>
- Department of the Taoiseach. (2015). *Bunreacht na hÉireann Constitution of Ireland*. Retrieved from http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Historical_Information/The_Constitution/February_2015_-_Constitution_of_Ireland_.pdfa
- Erikson, R.S., & Tedin, K.L. (2014). *American Public Opinion: Its Origins, Content & Impact* (9th American ed.). New York, NY: Longman
- European Institute for Gender Equality. (2016). *Gender Mainstreaming*. Retrieved from <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>
- Galligan, Y. (2011). *Irish General Election 2011*. Retrieved from <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/sites/default/files/2011-Irish-General-Election.pdf>
- Heise, L., Ellsberg, M., & Gottmoeller, M. (2002). Women's Health: A Global Overview of Gender Based Violence. In D. Schneider & D. E. Lilienfeld (Eds.), *Public Health: The Development of a Discipline* (pp. 288-298). New Jersey, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- International IDEA. (2016). *A Framework for Developing Gender Policies for Political Parties*. Retrieved from <http://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/a-framework-for-developing-gender-policies-for-political-parties.pdf>
- International IDEA, Stockholm University & Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2015). *Quota Database*. Retrieved from <http://www.quotaproject.org/>
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions. (2016). *Who Cares: Report on Childcare Costs & Practices in Ireland*. Retrieved from http://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/report_on_childcare_costs_practices_congress_2016.pdf
- Jemmot, J. B., Jemmot, L. S., & Fong, G.T. (1998). Abstinence and Safer Sex HIV Risk-Reduction Interventions for African American Adolescents: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *American Medical Association*, 279(19), 1529 -1536. Retrieved from <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/187546?spnCategory=529&spnDomain=17&spnContent=23,28&spnID=9765>
- Jackson, R. M. (2016). Why is it so hard to explain gender inequality? *In Down So Long* (pp. 1-28). Retrieved from <http://www.nyu.edu/classes/jackson/causes.of.gender.inequality/Readings/DownSoLong--WhyIsItSoHard.pdf>
- Jost, J. T., Federico, C. M., & Napier, J. L. (2009). *Political Ideology: Its Structure, Functions, and Elective Affinities*. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60(1), 307-337. Retrieved from <http://www.annualreviews.org/journal/psych>

- Laidler, J. (2016, March 14). Working, with Children. *Harvard Gazette*. Retrieved from <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/03/working-with-children/>
- Mercy, J. A., Saul, J., & Hillis, S. (2016). *The Importance of Integrating Efforts to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children*. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/983/>
- Mnthali, L. (2015). South Africa's Domestic Workers Gain a Minimum Wage. *Equal Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.equaltimes.org/south-africa-s-domestic-workers?lang=en#.WIm85FUrkUK>
- My Wage. (2017). *Paternity Leave, Family Leave: South Africa*. Retrieved from <http://www.mywage.co.za/main/decent-work/family-responsibilities>
- Official Site of Sweden. (2016). *Quick Fact: Parental Leave*. Retrieved from <http://www.wordhippo.com/what-is/another-word-for/vulnerable.html>
- OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. (2014). *Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties*. Retrieved from <http://www.osce.org/odihr/120877?download=true>
- Swedish International Liberal Centre. (2015). *Political Leadership: How to Become a Good Politician [Manual]*. Stockholm, Sweden.
- The World Bank. (2016). *Databank: Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments*. Retrieved from <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>
- Temkin, J., & Krahe, B. (2008). *Sexual Assault & the Justice Gap: A Question of Attitude*. Portland, OR: Hart Publishing.
- Trading Economics. (n.d.). *South Africa Unemployment Rate*. Retrieved February, 9, 2017, from <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/unemployment-rate>
- UK Engage. (2013). *What are the Advantages and Disadvantages of Using the First-Past-The-Post Voting System?* Retrieved from <https://www.uk-engage.org/2013/06/what-are-the-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-using-the-first-past-the-post-voting-system-2/>
- UK Commission for Employment & Skills. (2015). *Opportunities & Outcomes in Education and Work: Gender Effects*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/477360/UKCES_Gender_Effects.pdf
- United Nations Development Programme. (2015). *Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development*. Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report_1.pdf
- United Nations General Assembly. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Retrieved from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf
- Zhang, S. (2015, February). Why Science Can't Say When a Baby's Life Begins. *Wired*. Retrieved from <https://www.wired.com/2015/10/science-cant-say-babys-life-begins/>

11 APPENDIX TWO: POLICY TABLES

	Political Empowerment	Education & Employment	Healthcare	Parenthood	Violence Against Women	Sexual Violence
Canada: Liberal Party of Canada	Guarantee the equal representation of both genders in Cabinet, introduce open and inclusive appointments for leadership positions and ensure that gender-based impact analyses take place.	No explicit mention of gender equality in education policy. Will amend Labour Code to ensure flexible working conditions are made available and increase the pension supplement for single low-income seniors.	Secure reproductive rights and healthcare for the world's poor.	Introduce a flexible parental benefits plan , that is adjustable to the individual needs of each family and end tax breaks that disproportionately benefit the wealthy.	Develop a gender violence strategy and action plan , introduce gender sensitive training for front-line officers, increase investments in refuge shelters, and increase the maximum sentence for repeat offenders of domestic violence.	Develop a gender violence strategy and action plan - inclusive of sexual violence - and work against sexual harassment in the workplace.
Ireland: Fianna Fáil	No explicit mention of women's political empowerment in any of the available documents.	Offer a wide array of individual sports to increase female participation in sports education, establish entrepreneurial leadership programs , focus on women sidelined from business , secure accessible funding for businesswomen , establish a National Office tasked with providing training and assistance, and ensure that there is gender balance in senior employment positions .	Strengthen maternity services , hire additional staff, ensure rural populations have access to the same level of care.	Offer progressive tax subsidy for working parents , increase parental leave and ensure parents can share leave evenly .	Combat inefficiencies that adversely affect children and are found in domestic abuse services.	Address sex trafficking , without any explicit mention of policy.
South Africa: Democratic Alliance	Eliminate the Ministry of Women in the Presidency , and the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities in lieu of more efficient measures .	No explicit mention of gender specific educational inequality. Will increase support for domestic workers , publicize their labour rights , and establish career development initiatives .	No explicit mention of healthcare initiatives for women .	No explicit mention of parental leave, or the gendered dimensions of parenthood .	Reform the current court systems by introducing specialised courts , audit police stations to ensure compliance , and establish women only coaches during rush hour.	Establish a round the clock, national helpline , staffed by trained counsellors and in direct contact with police, train community volunteers , ensure that rape kits are universally available , and introduce Specialized Sexual Offences Courts .
Sweden: Liberalerna	Women's ability to shape society, requires equal conditions in all areas of life , including politics, will ensure EU institutions are gender equal.	Break down gender norms prevalent in the education system, ensure career development in 'women professions' and flexible working hours.	Secure sexual health and reproductive rights worldwide , apply a gender perspective to healthcare , and organise all care around individual needs .	Increase parental leave by 2 months (1 month for each parent) and encourage parents to share leave by offering an equality bonus.	Prevent and punish acts of 'honour' violence , strengthen the judicial system and support of victims.	Introduce a penalty code regarding 'consent' to complement the Sexual Offences Act, and forbid the purchasing of sex .

	Political Empowerment	Education & Employment	Healthcare	Parenthood	Violence Against Women	Sexual Violence
Canada: Conservative Party of Canada	No explicit mention of women's political empowerment in any of the available documents.	No explicit mention of gender equality in education policy. Will ensure meritocratic employment practices.	Will not support any legislation to control abortion, and will establish maternal and child health care initiatives ensuring the provision of basic necessities are administered.	Parents, without fear of discrimination are charged with deciding how their children are cared for and raised, implement a universal benefit that distributes equal assistance for all, and introduce tax breaks for stay at home parents.	Support harsher sentencing for crimes of family violence, and protect families and safeguard society in instances of violence.	Criminalize prostitution, create a sex offenders' registry, allocate more resources to online monitoring, increase penalty for cyber-stalkers, develop public awareness campaigns about online dangers, introduce mandatory minimum sentences for those convicted of sexually assaulting a minor, oppose any moves to lower the age of consent to below 16, and ensure that people possessing child pornography are unable to use any defence.
Ireland: Fine Gael	Introduce 'family friendly' hours for Parliament and require 40% of state board appointments be women.	Improve gender balance in the uptake of 'innovation' disciplines, establish a fund for organisations who demonstrate increased female participation, require pay surveys, and strengthen women's access to training and entrepreneurial schemes.	Establish an assembly to discuss Amendment 8 (abortion legislation), strengthen maternity services, and extend mandatory breast screenings.	Offer universal tax subsidy for working parents, offer tax incentives for stay at home parents, and increase parental leave that can be used by either parent in the first 12 months.	Implement the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention, and streamline all policies into one coordinated approach.	Introduce electronic tagging for high risk offenders, strengthen the post-release supervision of sex offenders, and enact the Sexual Offences Bill to work against online grooming.
South Africa: African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	No explicit mention of women's political empowerment in any of the available documents	No explicit mention of gender equality in the area of education or employment.	Ban abortion, ensure women are healthy so that they can preserve a healthy household, and promote abstinence.	Shift welfare focus from state responsibility to responsibility of community orgs and institutions, ensure women remain the primary caregiver, and legislate against divorce.	Protect society and the sanctity of family life by ensuring that police services are strengthened to more effectively respond to domestic violence, and encourage communities to protect their members.	Deny bail in instances of rape.
Sweden: Moderaterna	No explicit mention of women's political empowerment in any of the available documents.	Break down gender norms prevalent in the fields of both education and employment.	Secure equal healthcare for women worldwide.	Potentially reform the current system to ensure that leave is split evenly, but also promote parental autonomy over childcare decisions.	Recognition that women must be protected against abuse.	Work against international practices that restricts women's freedoms.

	Political Empowerment	Education & Employment	Healthcare	Parenthood	Violence Against Women	Sexual Violence
Canada: New Democratic Party (NDP)	Reform the electoral system , establish the Ministry of Women as a full ministry , reintroduce the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and apply gender-based analysis to public policy .	No explicit mention of gender equality in education policy. Will encourage unionization , improve employment benefits, and ensure equal pay for equal work .	Strengthen existing domestic abortion services and protect all relevant personnel.	Improve parental benefits by expanding leave and preventing discrimination/stigmatization for those that do take leave, and secure the protection of childcare by way of the Early Childhood Learning and Care Act.	Increase funding and access to shelters for women fleeing violence, improve services and access to justice , and invest in prevention, education and counselling .	Protect sex-trade workers , but no explicit mention of sexual violence .
Ireland: Labour	Require 45% of state board appointments be either gender and ensure women ministers are not side-lined to traditionally 'female ministries.'	Increase the number of women in receipt of sporting and scientific scholarships through proportionate scholarship funding, and create more jobs for women.	Hold a referendum to repeal Amendment 8 (abortion legislation), strengthen maternity services , and cap the cost of the morning after pill .	Encourage parents to stay at home for the first 12 months , cap childcare costs , and increase parental leave with at least 2 months earmarked for fathers .	Implement the recommendations of the Istanbul Convention, implement an Action Plan targeting education, training, and infrastructure , enact a Domestic Violence Bill , and improve court systems .	Introduce mandatory sexual violence education and training of police .
South Africa: African National Congress (ANC)	Continue to work towards gender quotas , and develop new doctrines that work against sexist attitudes restricting women's political power.	No explicit mention of gender specific educational inequality. Will establish school lunch cooperatives for women to run.	No explicit mention of healthcare initiatives for women .	No explicit mention of parental leave, or the gendered dimensions of parenthood .	No explicit mention of concrete measures, but will work with all sectors to end violence against women	No explicit mention of concrete measures .
Sweden: Arbetarepartiet-Socialdemokraterna	Women must be politically empowered to ensure that societal progress is not restricted .	Break down gender norms prevalent in the fields of both education and employment.	Secure sexual health and reproductive rights worldwide.	Ensure parental leave is split evenly to engender employment equality.	No explicit mention of violence against women .	Enforce UN resolutions that condemn acts of sexual violence during wartime and conflict .