Basic humanism
The Moderate Party gender equality policy 2002-2014
Abstract
This paper investigates the Moderate Party’s apparent inability to attract female voters between the elections of 2002 and 2014. Using the methodological approach of political idea analysis, it will ultimately seek to examine if the Moderate Party drifted towards the left of the political spectrum in relation to its gender equality policy. Specifically we will look at how the Moderate Party has changed in terms of gender equality by examining themes of collectivism and individualism, legislation, patriarchal structures and the political importance of the private sphere.

The findings of this paper concludes that the Moderate Party has was unsuccessful to shift towards the left of the political spectrum in terms of the party’s perceived gender equality policy between 2002 and 2014.
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1. Introduction

The Moderate Party is the largest liberal-conservative party in Sweden. In the elections of 2002 the party received record-low figures, hence paving the way for a remarkable party reconstruction during the following election campaign. Towards the election of 2006, the Moderate Party actively re-branded itself as a “worker friendly party” under the banner “the new Moderate Party”, thus arguably drifting towards the left of the political spectrum. The Moderate Party has since 2006 abandoned parts of its original ideology in order to pursue and attract a new array of voters. During the Reinfeldt administration, the Moderate Party successfully increased the number of votes received by 44% between 2002 and 2014.

Table 1 depicts how the electorate’s preference for the Moderate Party has changed between 2002 and 2014, divided by gender. The table indicates an inherent inability to appeal to female voters to the same extent as male, even as the party rearranged outwards communications in 2006. Yet, the table also indicates an overall increase in female likings towards the Moderate Party between 2002-2014.

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1 Nya Moderaterna Historia, Official party history, published on moderat.se
2 Ibid
3 Some researchers refer to a drift towards the centre/middle of the political spectrum. However, I will in this paper refer to the same phenomenon as a drift towards the left.
4 Öhrvall (2008)
5 Swedish Statistics, Riksdagsval – antal röster efter parti mm och valår
6 Table 1 is based on data from the semi-annual Party Sympathy Evaluation (Partisympatiundersökningen, PSU) between 2002-2014. It is important to acknowledge that the table is not based on actual election results, but rather on a large number of interviews with selected subjects from all over Sweden. The evaluation is conducted in May and November each year, the data above only contains data from evaluations conducted in May. The evaluations are conducted at a 95% confidence interval, thus constructing an interval depicting the actual value with 95% certainty. All the data has been downloaded from Swedish Statistics official webpage (statistikdatabasen.scb.se).
The concept of a gender-gap within the electorate refers to the assumption that women today in general vote to the left of their male counterparts in advanced democracies. Meaning that women in aggregate prefer a political agenda attuned to the left, rather than the right. As the Moderate Party drifted towards the left in numerous fields of social policy, we should expect the party to increase the amount of votes received from women, which is also indicated by the increase in party likings. Yet, the party still inhabits stronger from men than women, even as the party drifted towards the left. This raises the question whether the Moderate Party also shifted party policy related to gender equality, while successfully shifting in other topics of social policy.

Hence, I will in this paper seek to analyse the Moderate Party’s political messages related to gender equality during the election campaigns of 2002 and 2014.

1.1 Background
The Moderate Party is historically based on conservative ideology, yet of late liberal leanings have played a substantial role in the party’s identity. The party exists in a political context previously dominated by a rigorous welfare state and socialism. Today, the Moderate Party accepts the existence of a welfare state and pronounces a less “radical” style of conservatism, inhabiting large chunks of liberal aspects. The party’s concept of liberal conservatism openly embraces liberal and free-market principles and is clearly distinguishable from nationalist-conservatism and populist-conservatism. Individualism is an essential part of the party’s liberal-conservative foundation, relating to the notion that society rotates around free-market entities and the rights and responsibilities of the individual.

Bo Lundgren led The Moderate Party towards the election of 2002. The election results was overall disappointing with the Moderate Party only receiving 15% of the total votes, meaning that the party lost around 7% in comparison to the previous election of 1998. Following the election of 2002, the Moderate Party rearranged political strategy. In 2005s party conference, the newly elected party leader Fredrik Reinfeldt started his speech at the annual party conference by greeting everyone “Welcome to the New Moderate Party”. In the speech that followed, Reinfeldt stated that the

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8 Öhrvall (2008)  
9 Party history, Moderaterna.se, Ideology and History  
10 Nya Moderaterna Historia, Official party history, published on moderat.se  
11 Election Department, Valmyndigheten, valresultat allmänna val 2002  
12 Party conference, Örebro, Fredrik Reinfeldt, 06-08-2005
party from now on was going to renew party politics within a number of spheres. The subsequent period was thus dominated by strategic rearrangement of the party’s outward communication in relation to a number of political issues. Towards the election of 2006, the Moderate Party formed a coalition, Alliansen, together with the Liberal Party, the Centre Party and the Christian Democrats. The Moderate Party now actively referred to itself as “Swedens New Labour Party”, while also rebranding itself as the New Moderate Party. The party openly repositioned previous party attitudes regarding e.g. fiscal policy, the welfare state and social insurance. Together, the coalition managed to win the elections of 2006 and 2010, in which the Moderate Party exhibited massive success in terms of attracting new voters.

Between the elections of 2002 and 2014, the Moderate Party successfully increased the voter pool by 44%. However, the party displays a clear divide in the number of men compared to women lending their liking to the Moderate Party. Thus depicting an inability to appeal to female voters as successfully as it appeals male voters. Under the assumption of a “gender-gap” within the electorate, women tend to cast their votes to the left of their male counterparts. As the Moderate Party during the Reinfeldt administration embarked on a mission of voter maximization, we should expect the Moderate Party to want to close such a divide. In the light of the political issue of gender equality traditionally being a high priority for women, we should also expect that the party would drift to the left in terms of gender equality.

Towards this background, I will in this paper seek to analyse the Moderate Party’s political messages and ideas related to gender equality in the periods leading up to the elections of 2002 and 2014. The two periods will then be placed within a chart with two opposing ideal types in order to examine potential changes in the party’s communication related to gender equality. This will in turn allow me to answer the formulated research question below.

1.2 Purpose and research question

The Moderate Party has during the 21th century increased the received share of the electorate extensively, which is commonly credited to the party’s observed shift towards the left under the Reinfeldt administration. However, the party displays an inherent

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13 Ibid
14 Nya Moderaterna Historia, Official party history, published on moderat.se
15 “Sveriges Nya Arbetaparti”
16 Stiernstedt & Wijnbladh (2011), Dagens Nyheter – Moderaterna Ideologi och Historia
17 Swedish Statistics, Riksdagsval – antal röster efter parti mm och valår
inability to appeal to female voters to the same extent as male voters during this period. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine if the Moderate Party has drifted towards the left on issues related to the equality of sexes between 2002 and 2014.\footnote{For furhter elaboration on the chosen time periods, see 3.2 Material} The paper will seek to discern if the Moderate Party has shifted in terms of its gender equality policy by utilizing the analysis of political ideas and messages as described by Ludvig Beckman (2005). The paper will produce both scientific and societal relevance as it will analyze and further the understanding of 21th century politics in Sweden. Hence, the following research questions has been formulated:

- Did the Moderate Party shift towards the left of the political spectrum in terms of gender equality policy between 2002 and 2014?

1.3 Previous Research

This paper will in its construction process themes related to changes in party ideology and voter maximization. In terms of previous research there is a rather extensive array studies on the topic of voter maximization and party change. Furthermore, the Moderate Party is arguably one of the most influential political parties in Swedish history and has thus been the subject of extensive research and attention. In relation to conservative party voter maximization, Berglund & Lindström (1982) writes:

“Party leaders rarely admit publicly to changing party policy in order to attract additional voters. It is a well-known fact, however, that pursuing a strategy of vote maximization jeopardizes the political parties’ ideological commitments.”\footnote{Berglund & Lindström (1982) p. 69}

Additionally, conservative political parties who act in systems of proportional representation are often found in an extreme end of the political spectrum.\footnote{Berglund & Lindström (1982) p. 69} Thus, when fishing for new voters, conservative parties often do so at the expense of right-wing, conservative ideology. However, the system of proportional representation forces conservative parties to keep a constant eye to their right wing as they slowly slide towards the middle. Meaning that if a conservative political party drifts to far to the centre, it will create incentives for the right end to break off and form a new, more radical conservative party. In nations without proportional representation, e.g. Great
Britain, conservative parties can move more freely to “please the centre” without fear of being split in two. Hence, Berglund & Lindström (1982) argue that the Moderate Party is the subject of a dilemma. It must appeal to the far right-wing, while also attracting centre or even left-wing voters in order to be a serious contender for political power. This dilemma forces the Moderate Party to choose between voter maximisation and political ideology. Voter maximisation will have to be made on the expense of ideology, while emphasis on ideology will undermine a wide voter appeal. Furthermore, conservatism in Sweden has been formulated in a political landscape mainly dominated by socialism. If a conservative party is to achieve political influence, it must compromise to avoid being completely out of tune with the political context in which it exists. For example, the Moderate Party now accepts the existence of a basic welfare state, which it historically viewed with outspoken scepticism. In addition, the Moderate Party has to some extent accepted hard political reality of Swedish politics. Also, the Moderate Party has time and again shown that it prefers political influence rather than inability and that it is willing to pay the price in ideology.21

In connection with the Moderate Party’s perceived shift towards the left of the political spectrum, Helena Örhvall’s (2008) report examines if the Moderate Party rearranged social policy between 1999 and 2007. The report compares party rhetoric and political practices before and after the birth of the “new Moderate Party” in order to examine if the party actually shifted in perceived ideology during this period. Örhvall concludes that the Moderate Party to some extent changed in terms of ideology and political practices as the party started to refer to itself as the new Moderate Party. Örhvall also underlines that the new Moderate Party supports a more generous social policy than previously and has to a limited extent drifted towards the left of the political spectrum. Örhvall’s study is highly relevant to the topic of this paper as it underlines that the Moderate Party rearranged political ideas and outwards communications in relation to social policy. This also indicates that the party is capable of adapting party politics.

In the book “In The Nations Interest”, Marie Demker outlines ways in which party ideology change. Changes in party ideology could be explained by both internal and external factors. Internal factors revolve around changes in party organization and leadership. External factors are connected to the changes in the political context in which the party exists, mainly relating to the competitiveness of political opponents and fluctuations in the demands form the electorate. Ideology is the fundamental definition

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21 Berglund & Lindström (1982) p. 69
of a political party. Yet, the will to cease governmental power will drive parties to change and adapt party ideology to appeal to more voters. Finally, Demker outlines that a party’s ability to attract voters essentially decides if the party’s ideology will change.\textsuperscript{22}

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Theoretical outset

This paper will build upon the assumption of a gender gap within the electorate as described by Iversen and Rosenbluth (2006) and Inglehart and Norris (2000). The concept of a gendered voting gap is extensively described within the existing literature. The term revolves around the notion that men and women in general inhabit diverging political preferences and thus cast their votes towards different ends of the political spectrum. Inglehart and Norris outline the existence of a “traditional gender gap” and a “modern gender gap”. Previously, differences in voting preferences between men and women were relatively modest. Yet, women were to some extent often found to lean support towards center-right wing parties in western Europe and in the United States, this is what Inglehart and Norries coined as the “traditional gender gap” relating to the notion of “women’s conservatism”.\textsuperscript{23} Furthermore, Inglehart (1970) outlined that women in Western Europe generally preferred conservative parties based on Christian values.\textsuperscript{24}

The traditional gender gap is to some extent explained by structural differences between the sexes, for example in terms of labor force participation, in which women were underrepresented. Women were traditionally expected to adapt a more conservative understanding of politics, which created an “ideological gap underpinning their party preferences”.\textsuperscript{25} Meaning that women tended to cast their votes further to the right than their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{26} Still, gender was not considered a typical decisive electoral variable, like e.g. class, religion or geography.\textsuperscript{27}

However, Ingleheart and Norris (2000) research concluded a shift in the 1990s, after which women no longer voted more conservatively than men, thus marking the beginning of a “modern gender gap”. Oskarson (1995) particularly highlights that women in Nordic societies leaned towards the left even during the 1980s.\textsuperscript{28} In many

\textsuperscript{22} Demker (1993), p. 80-81
\textsuperscript{23} Inglehart and Norris (2000), p. 443
\textsuperscript{24} Inglehart (1970), p. 229
\textsuperscript{25} Inglehart and Norris (2000), p 443
\textsuperscript{26} Inglehart and Norris (2000), p. 441
\textsuperscript{27} Inglehart and Norris (2000), p. 444
\textsuperscript{28} Oskarson (1995)
postindustrial and modern democracies, women shifted leftwards during the 1990s and are now generally casting their votes further to the left than their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{29} Why such “gender realignment” has occurred revolves around the assumption that traditional, pre-industrial societies inhabit gender roles in which women are discouraged from engaging in paid employment outside the household. Almost all such societies uphold the ideal that women’s foremost functions relate to childbearing, childcare and household responsibilities.\textsuperscript{30} In contrast to the functions of preindustrial societies Inglehart and Norris (2000) states that:

“In postindustrial societies gender roles have increasingly converged due to a structural revolution in the paid labor force, in educational opportunities for women, and in the characteristics of modern families. These major changes in sex roles can be expected to influence women’s and men’s political behavior.”\textsuperscript{31}

Moreover, Inglehart and Norris underline that it is in the interest of women to vote in support of a more generous welfare state traditionally represented by the left, as it could free them for some of the burdens that traditionally fall under female responsibility. E.g. women would benefit from a more generous day care system for children, as it would allow them to engage more fully in the labor force as they would not need to offset as much time for childcare.\textsuperscript{32} Furthermore, women are often overrepresented within lower-paid sectors of the labor force and women often experience unequal wage levels in comparison to men. Such factors are also at play in driving women towards the left in terms of political behavior.\textsuperscript{33} In addition, the left-leaning voting pattern observed is the most apparent among the young voters, meaning that such tendencies will thus consolidate over time, as the young will replace the old.\textsuperscript{34}

Additionally, building on Ingleharts and Norris notion of a “modern gender gap”, Iversen and Rosenbluth observe that women in the United States and Scandinavian nations displayed a tendency of left-wing leanings as early as the 1970s. Iversen and Rosenbluth describes that women living in advanced democracies today, are in general expected to vote to the left of the men in aggregate.\textsuperscript{35} In addition, Iversen and

\textsuperscript{29} Inglehart and Norris (2000), p 458
\textsuperscript{30} Inglehart and Norris (2000), p. 446
\textsuperscript{31} Inglehart and Norris (2000), p. 446
\textsuperscript{32} Inglehart and Norris (2000)
\textsuperscript{33} Inglehart and Norris (2000), p.446
\textsuperscript{34} Inglehart and Norris (2000), p 459
\textsuperscript{35} Iversen and Rosenbluth (2006) p 12
Rosenbluth highlight the level of female work force participation. In general, women who are engaged in the work force are more likely to show political support for the left than women who are not. This is highly relevant in the case of Sweden, as the amount of women engaged in the labor force was as high as 80.8% in 2002 and 83.2% in 2014.\footnote{Swedish Statistics webpage, Jämställdhetsstatistik, Fördjupningar – i och utanför arbetskraften} Which in theory would indicate that women living in Sweden would prefer to lend their votes towards the left in aggregate. Furthermore, in the elections of 2014, 54% of women voted to the left (The Social Democrats, The Left Party, Swedish Green Party, Feminist Initiative) while 45% voted to the right (The Moderate Party, The Liberal Party, The Christian Democrats, The Center Party, The Swedish Democrats).\footnote{Swedish Radio, ”Så röstade kvinnor och män”, Svt vallokalundersökning} Such tendencies indicate the relevance of the theoretical outset presented above, as it is coherent with most of the arguments dictated by the authors above, especially Inglehart and Norris (2000). We should thus expect that this papers theoretical outset is relevant to the understanding of how the Swedish electorate operates in terms of the political preferences of men and women.

\subsection*{2.2 Analytical framework}
This paper will examine if the Moderate Party’s political conceptualization of gender equality was unable to change between 1998-2002 and 2010-2014 in comparison. This calls for a robust analytical framework capable of classifying political messages and ideas within a continuum in order to observe if the Moderate Party’s gender equality policies have changed over time. The chosen empiric material will be analyzed, discussed and finally placed in accordance to two opposing ideal types, the opposing ends will be defined by “right-wing feminism” on one end, and “left-wing feminism” on the other. The description of the theoretical concept inhabiting the two ends will build upon some of the more influential scholars within each field. The formulation of both “Right-wing feminism” and “Left-wing feminism” has in turn been derived by the conceptual descriptions of Axford & Browning et al (2002). The conceptualization of left and right wing feminism involves a certain level of generalization of highly complex schools of though. Yet such generalization is paramount to the creation of interesting analysis towards the purpose of this paper.

\footnote{1\% voted for other, smaller parties than those listed.}
2.2.1 Right-wing feminism

Right-wing feminism revolves around notions of liberalism and individualism; it mainly advocates the reform of existing liberal structures in present western societies rather than a more revolutionary approach. Feminism advocated by conservative political parties often surround the works presented by scholars like Mary Wollstonecraft, J. S. Mill and Betty Friedan. Wollstonecraft underlines that women’s rational capabilities were bypassed due to the perception of women as ultimately “emotional creatures”. Wollstonecraft emphasized the need of educational reform, female representation and equal marriages, yet still accepted some fundamental distinctions between the lifestyles than men and women can lead. Only a minority of women should strive towards professional careers, while the majority would be content in engaging in domestic household duties and childbirth. Moreover, J.S. Mill underlined the fundamental equality of men and women, as their shared history sprung from a shared rationality. Mill argued that society was making a terrible mistake as it fails to utilize the rational qualities of both women and men. Mill highlighted the benefits of more equal marriages for men as well as women. Yet, Mill agreed with Wollstonecraft that the majority of women should be able to lead pleasing domestic lives in compassionate marriages. Betty Friedan agrees with Wollstonecraft and Mill to such extent that she does not argue for the revolutionary measures and the overturn of contemporary liberal structures in western societies. Friedan argues that women should be included in the liberal concepts of individual freedoms and autonomy. She underlines the need for helpful tools, such as daycare centers, in order to help women seek professional careers while also attending to the need of the domestic household. However, Friedan underlines the suitability of the “core family” and does not seek to tear down conceptual terms of gender as she accepts existing structures of relationships between the sexes.\(^{39}\)

In order to identify and analyze the presence of right-wing feminism, three core concepts of focus has been chosen in the construction of right-wing feminism as an ideal type: (1) Individualism rather than collectivism, (2) Differing preferences between sexes rather than patriarchal structures and the (3) Private sphere is private rather than political. Individualism lies at the core of right-wing feminism, the concept of the individual as a capable creature qualified to make rational decisions inline with personal preferences is fundamental to the perception of right-wing equality discourse. Differing preferences rather than patriarchal structures revolves around the notion that men and women to

some extent inhabit different preferences. Men and women chose to make rational individual choices inline with their preferences, which for example is lies at the hearth of why men and women are found pursuing different types of careers and lifestyles in aggregate. The private sphere is private relates heavily to the notion of individualism, any government should not attempt to meddle with how an individual household dictates its terms. The private sphere is beyond the scope of politics and should not be politicized.

2.2.2 Left-wing feminism

Left wing feminism builds upon socialist feminism, and does in contrast to more liberal right-wing feminist theory reject the notion of individualism. It seeks to reach fundamental gender equality through the collective cooperation of all spheres in society. Left-wing feminism emphasizes the existence of patriarchal structures that ensures a male supremacy within society as a whole. Hence, the key agenda for left-wing feminism is to overturn such structures in order to overcome the oppression of women within society. Simone de Beauvoir’s book “The Second Sex” holds several left-wing feminist notions. de Beauvoir underlines that women holds the independent status of the second sex in comparison to men, she argues that women are in all defined as the clear opposite of men. Women must thus redefine their identity in order to change their lifestyles so that a transformation of the social and cultural reference points of women can occur. In “The Female Eunuch”, Germaine Greer confronts the idea of women as passive and sexless beings, and calls for women to uphold self-assertive needs in terms of sexuality and to be the author of their own fate. Furthermore, Kate Millett depicts society as a set of patriarchal structures hostile to women, which ultimately assures male supremacy. Millett describes the “core family” as the root of such patriarchal structures, as it forces women to answer to the demands of a husband and children. According to Millett, the only way women are to break free from such oppression is to destroy the concept of the “core family”.40

In the construction of left-wing feminism as an ideal type, three main concepts of focus have been formulated: (1) Collectivism rather than individualism, (2) Patriarchal structures rather than differing preferences and (3) Private sphere is political rather than private. Women are collectively trapped in and oppressed by patriarchal structures rather than individuals capable of making rational decisions in line with personal preferences.

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The private sphere is ultimately political in nature and lies within the political range of legislation and regulation.

2.2.3 Ideal type chart

The following ideal type chart has been created in order to clearly display any differences in the Moderate Party’s communication related to gender equality between the two given time periods. The two periods will be examined through the analytical framework described above and then individually placed within the chart below. This will allow for an overview of any observed differences in the examined periods, ultimately capable of addressing the formulated research question.

3. Method

This paper is ultimately qualitative in nature. However, it will when applicable, draw conclusions from secondary sources of quantitative style. The fundament of this paper will surround the analysis of political ideas. When engaging in the analysis of political thought and text one is faced with the decision of choosing the most suitable research method. The method of this paper will revolve around the issue of analysing political ideas regarding gender equality communicated by the Moderate Party. Thus, by applying a political idea analysis as described by Ludvig Beckman, this paper will essentially seeks to produce a scientific analysis of political ideas. The concept of idea analysis is mainly an umbrella term for numerous combinations of purposes, research questions and analytical
approaches to the study of political messages. The term of idea analysis simply refers to the scientific study of political messages.\footnote{Beckman (2005), p. 11}

Furthermore, in order to operationalize the proposed purpose of this paper, two ideal types have been constructed. An ideal type is in short a train of thought that seeks to encapsulate the main themes of a general position and sometimes even an entire ideology. Such ideal types are more direct and evident in its description of a phenomenon than reality would allow. They can thus never be false of true, merely more or less useful.\footnote{Beckman (2005), p. 28} Moreover, I will make use of two ideal types defined in the chapter above, “Left-wing feminism” and “Right-wing feminism”. Placed on opposing ends of a spectrum, these ideal types constitute two opposing hypothetical concepts. The Moderate Party’s gender equality policy will then be analysed in regards to the two given time periods and finally placed within the constructed chart. This will allow to identify any differences between the given time periods and thus examine whether the Moderate Party failed to shift towards the left of the political spectrum in regards to gender equality. In addition, the section below will describe the theoretical fundament surrounding political idea analysis as the chosen method of this paper.

3.1 The analysis of political ideas as method

This paper will build upon the notion of political idea analysis formulated by Ludvig Beckman. As the topic of this paper seeks to examine the political ideas communicated by the Moderate Party in relation to gender equality, the approach of analysing political ideas as described by Ludvig Beckman is considered the most suitable methodological approach.

Firstly, the concept of an idea can appear as somewhat vague. To the purpose of this paper, the concept of an idea is understood as a construction of thought, which apart from more fluctuating impressions and attitudes is marked by a certain level of continuity.\footnote{Bergström & Boréus (2000), p. 140} The analysis of political ideas may present itself in a vast number of shapes and models, as it may combine an immense variation of different purposes, research questions and analytical techniques. Yet, the underlying function revolves around the analysis of political messages and ideas. However, whether or not a research paper is considered to engage in the analysis of political ideas mainly depends on what it is examining, rather than its methodological design.\footnote{Beckman (2005), p. 11} Ludvig Beckman argues that there are
three potential purposes in relation to the analysis of political ideology and ideas. One, describe and interpret the meaning of political messages, second, examine the durability of political arguments, third, explain the emergence or consequences of political ideas. The main purpose of this paper will revolve around the first purpose mentioned above, the description and interpretation of political messages. Beckman states that more extensive research might make use of a combination of these purposes. However, the main purpose of any analysis of such nature must always be easily identifiable, and that the main purpose should be limited to only one of the three. In addition, Beckman outlines two ways of approaching analysis of political ideas, actor-centred studies and idea-centred studies. Actor-centred studies emphasize the actor communicating political messages, whereas idea-centred studies revolve around the stated arguments rather than the actor communicating them. I will make use of an idea-centred approach in the process of constructing this paper.

Beckman outlines several approaches to the analysis of political messages and ideas, one of them being of a more descriptive nature. Descriptive studies do not seek the answer of why a phenomenon occurs, but describes what phenomenon’s actually consists of. This paper will strive to examine if the Moderate Party has failed to shift in gender equality policy by first examining the party’s gender equality policies during two different time periods. It will then compare these periods in order to identify any differences between the two periods. Thus answering if the party has shifted towards the left in terms of gender equality. Therefore, a descriptive approach to the analysis of political ideas is deemed the most suitable to the purpose of this paper. Furthermore, descriptive analysis within social science is occasionally argued as the mere first step towards meaningful research. However, I argue together with Beckman that descriptive analysis is an equally valued approach to the analysis of political ideas.

In relation to different analytical techniques Beckman describes several useful techniques of processing the collected empiric material, one of these being conceptual analysis of political messages. The meaning of political terms such as “liberty” and “equality” are often fundamental for how a political message should be understood. Therefore, by examining how such terms are used and what they are referring to we can

45 Beckman (2005), p. 14
46 Beckman (2005), p. 17
47 Beckman (2005), p. 48
48 Beckman (2005), p. 48
49 Beckman (2005), p. 30
understand the true message of a political text.\textsuperscript{50} The usage of certain terms can produce somewhat ambiguous messages. The way the Moderate Party makes use of equality does not necessarily mean the same thing to everyone, as the term equality might inhabit several different meanings. Political concepts may also inherit a certain level of vagueness. Such vagueness does not involve the different meanings, but rather that it might be difficult to pinpoint what a concept refers to.\textsuperscript{51} In relation to this, I will base my analytical approach on conceptual analysis as described by Beckman.

3.2 Material

The empiric material collected for this paper will focus on two specific periods of time. The paper will only consider material found in-between the periods of 15-09-1998 to 15-09-2002 and 14-09-2010 to 14-09-2014. Meaning that the collected empiric material will specifically focus on the elections of 2002 and 2014, any material that does not fit within the given periods will only be considered if its of fundamental relevance to the purpose of this paper. This demarcation was made in relevance to the topic at hand, but also in acknowledgement to the relative limited size and scope of this paper. In relation to demarcations, this paper will only attend to the Moderate Party’s gender equality discourse during the two given periods of time. It will not engage in any meaningful analysis of other political topics then those presented above. However, sidetracks can occur, but only if relevant to the understanding of the topic at large.

The database Retriever Research is the most extensive digital news archive in Scandinavia, and has been a useful tool in the process of collecting empiric material, as well as the database Artikelsök. When used, the keywords were (both in combination and individually): “Moderaterna”, “Nya Moderaterna”, ”Lundgren”, “Reinfeldt”, “Jämställdhet”, “Feminism”, “Utanförskap” and “Debatt”. Also, the Swedish government webpage\textsuperscript{52} holds an extensive database of official documents, such as political propositions and motions. This database has been of fundamental importance to the production of empirical material. I consider both the databases capable of providing the reader with a dependable array of empiric material in which the sources have thoroughly been reviewed. Most of the material collected will be in the form of political motions, propositions and news articles, however, this paper will also make use of other

\textsuperscript{50} Beckman (2005), P. 31
\textsuperscript{51} Beckman (2005), p. 32-33
\textsuperscript{52} Riksdagen.se – documents and laws
communicative events such as political television debates, radio interviews and public speeches.

The relevance and origin of sources has been of constant concern in the process of collecting empiric material. Due to the political topic of this paper, many of the sources will themselves inhabit a political opinion that might distort its original meaning. Hence, the origin of the source must also be considered to the same extent as its relevance. Furthermore, this paper will be presented in English. However, it must be emphasized that most of the empiric material will present itself in Swedish. The author must thus continually consider the implications of translation in order to minimize the risk of distorting the content of the source.

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that the Moderate Party is part of the coalition “Alliansen” between 2006-2014. Meaning that the coalition during this period made several statements and promises together, e.g. through their communal election campaign manifesto of 2014. This is problematic since this paper seeks to examine the Moderate Party, not the coalition as a whole. Yet, in order to create meaningful debate, this paper will build upon the understanding that political opinions jointly formulated by members of the coalition and the Moderate Party in communicative events, are also the political opinions of the Moderate Party. This conceptual adoption is paramount to the production of meaningful analysis.

4. Findings
This chapter will be divided into three main themes, “Collectivism vs Individualism”, “Patriarchal structures vs Differing preferences” and “Private sphere is political vs Private sphere is private”. The material collected will be placed within these three groups in accordance to the description of the analytical ideal types (see 2.2.3). However, it is important to acknowledge that some of the material used is not always easily categorized. A particular line of argument might possibly be housed within several of the themes formulated. Yet, all the material used has been closely considered and placed within each category to best fit the purpose of this paper.
4.1 Collectivism vs Individualism

4.1.1 The Election of 2002

In the fall of 1998, the Moderate Party hands in a proposition 1998/99:A802 to the government under the title “Modern gender policy”. In the propositions initial paragraph the following is stated:

“The Moderate Party proposes a new direction of gender policy so that it ensures that independent women and men can form their existence in line with personal preferences. Politics should not attempt to manage people in everyday life, but seek to create possibilities and diversity.”

The Moderate Party underlines that politics should not attempt to control individuals through legislation, but rather present them with opportunities so that they can choose for themselves. In addition, motion 2001/02:A228 states that sustainable gender equality can only be achieved through a change in attitudes. It is everyone’s responsibility to lead by example and to show sound judgment in the treatment of others.

“By looking to ourselves and thinking about such issues we can achieve a lot in regards to gender equality, a lot that does not need governmental steering or political decisions. It is the harder path to take, but it is the only path that will eventually lead to true equality, based on a individualistic, humanistic view of human beings.”

In march 2002, Moderate Party member Inger René hands in a parliamentary question in which she underlines that equal terms and possibilities between men and women is a human right and should be treated as such. René states

“Gender equality policy is a human right and postulates that men and women must be autonomous and independent from each other. This independency also means that one must be able to make a living on ones wage. There can be no gender equality without economic independence. And with economic independence, I mean independence from the state, from husband/ wife, or other external circumstances.”

53 Proposition 1998/99:A802, section 1
54 Proposition 2001/02:A228 section 5.3.3
55 Parliamentary question, 2001/02:333, hand in by Inger René 21-03-2002
The paragraph refers to the Moderate Party’s initiative to reform existing gender equality legislation. Yet it interestingly outlines the idea that gender equality ultimately boils down to the economic relationship between individuals and between the individual and the state. Equality is only achieved if individuals inhabit economic autonomy so that they can live independent from others.

Moreover, in an open questioning online, party leader Bo Lundgren (1999-2003) is confronted about his stance on feminism. To which Lundgren replies “Feminism is to me ultimately about equal rights and responsibilities for men and women.”

Furthermore, the Moderate Party’s election manifesto of 2002 underlines that Sweden would benefit from increased equality between the sexes. However, gender equality can never be forced upon a population through gender quotation or other legislation, as such propositions treats women and men on different terms and thus works contra productive. Men and women are individuals and inhabit the same rights and responsibilities. The Moderate Party ultimately seeks to promote the equal treatment of all, not special treatment of a few.57

Moreover, the election manifesto “Freedom for all” of 2002 underlines fields in which gender inequality is predominant, such as corporate governance and business executives, would benefit from a more equal distribution in terms of gender. However, gender equality can never be achieved through legislation like female quotation, since it is the direct opposite of equality. The politics of the Moderate Party repeatedly emphasize the importance of equal treatment of every individual, no matter the gender. In addition, the manifesto defines several areas of special attention in regards to gender equality, some of them being:

- Further the possibilities of families to divide paid employment and household chores more freely within the family.
- Ensure gender equality through more modern attitudes amongst both men and women instead of enforcing political legislation and steering.
- No to gender quotation.58
- Ensure more female formation of opinion in company boards and at head positions within industry.59

56 Aftonbladet, online chat-forum, Bo Lundgren, 09-04-2002
57 Election Manifesto 2002 – The Moderate Party, ”Lika rätt för kvinnor och män”
58 Quotation refers to a specific recruitment quota of e.g. women in male-dominated industries.
The overall concept of empowering the individual is emphasized throughout the entire manifesto. Furthermore, the manifesto clearly indicates that the Moderate Party distance itself from any legislative measures intended to interfere with individual freedoms and with the steering of families. In relation to this, the following can be read in the opening section of the manifesto:

“The election of September 15th regards the future of Sweden. This election is foremost about the power over our own lives, about every human beings right to form their own existence in regards to their own will. Two alternatives stand against each other. One empowers and gives greater freedom to the individual and the family: one leads to an outmoded society in which the government and institutions rules much more, and the individual far less.”

4.1.2 The Election of 2014

In the fall of 2011 the Moderate Party led government handed over a petition outlining the overall goals of the coalitions gender policy during the period of 2011-2014. Signed by party leader Fredrik Reinfeldt, the petition formulates a number of areas of attention in relation to gender policy that the party intends to focus on. The equal distribution of power and influence is one of these areas, revolving around the notion that men and women should have equal possibilities to participate actively in society and to partake in the decision-making process. Moreover, the petition also mentions the importance of economic equality. Men and women should have equal terms and possibilities to educate themselves and to receive gainful employment. This includes that compensation in terms of wages should not include sex as a decisive variable when it comes to determining the wages. Additionally, in august 2014, party leader Fredrik Reinfeldt was asked if he considered himself a feminist, to which he replied that “No, I don’t see the world in terms of collectives, I believe in the individual”. Reinfeldt states that he does not want to use the term of feminism since it is belongs to the political opposition and thus defiled by conflicting meanings. In a radio interview Reinfeldt argues that he has no need of clinging to terms like feminism with the words “I am free, I believe in the individual, I am comfortable being a Moderate”. However, Reinfeldt does acknowledge that it is possible that the Moderate Party has roots in liberal-conservatism, but that a modern political party needs to be in constant movement in order to describe society in a way that voters recognize.

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60 The Moderate Party election manifesto 2002, "Freedom for Sweden", p. 3
62 Swedish radio, SR P3 Nybetr - Välfestivalen i P3, Fredrik Reinfeldt about Feminism, 12-08-2014
63 Swedish radio, SR P3 Nybetr - Välfestivalen i P3, Fredrik Reinfeldt about Feminism, 12-08-2014
Furthermore, in the election manifesto of 2014, the initial paragraph states that the Moderate Party and the coalition will seek to focus on the individual. The overall goal of the party’s politics revolves around capturing the capabilities of all individuals and creating a context in which all are allowed to “grow and build” freely.\textsuperscript{64}

\textbf{4.2 Patriarchal structures vs Differing preferences}

\textit{4.2.1 The Election of 2002}

The proposition 1998/99:A802 underlines that “the Moderate Party does not build its worldview on the assumption that the male half of the Swedish population systematically oppresses the female half”.\textsuperscript{65} Indicating that the party does not acknowledge the existence of patriarchal structures. Also, the petition states that the party “is worried that the government seems to adopt radical feminism, spawning from the perspective of a gender struggle”.\textsuperscript{66} Furthermore, the party discusses the term of “choosing equality” as a way of promoting gender equality through the furtherance of individual freedom and capability.

“With the term “choosing equality”, we mean that political decisions should make it easier for individuals, alone or in consultation with a partner, to steer their own lives and combine work with family duties and pleasures in accordance to personal preferences, and the systems collectively built does not hinder this. Through a perspective of gender equality, this means that it is less troubling if women are underrepresented statistically within a field, but more troubling if gender is the decisive variable in the recruitment of certain jobs or types of educations.”\textsuperscript{67}

In relation to oppressive patriarchal structures, the Moderate Party expresses less concern in relation to the fact that women are underrepresented within certain fields. The party does not seek the explanation to why women are underrepresented in some spheres of the labor force, while heavily dominating others. According to paragraph above, the Moderate Party is not worried if women in general decide to engage in a particular type of job to a larger extent than men. If assumed that men and women compete equally within society, and women opt for certain types of jobs and educations in aggregate. Then such statistical dissimilarities revolve around general differences in personal preferences of men and women, rather than patriarchal structures that oppress

\textsuperscript{64} Election Manifesto 2014, "Vi bygger Sverige", p. 9
\textsuperscript{65} Proposition 1998/99:A802, section 2
\textsuperscript{66} Proposition 1998/99:A802, section 2
\textsuperscript{67} Proposition 1998/99:A802, section 2 – Real equality, what does it mean?
women’s capabilities to choose freely under the same premises as men. Yet, if type of sex was a decisive variable in e.g. the recruitment of certain types of jobs, then it is a question of direct discrimination of one half of the population. However, it is unclear at what point that “type of sex” becomes a decisive variable. The nature of such variables is arguably rather ambiguous and dependable on a number of factors within society.

Yet, the Moderate Party does stress that the labor market is inherently gender segregated and that this is a topic of concern. In critique of motion 1999/2000:24 Moderate Party states that “The Moderate Party is in contrast to the government, convinced that the only way to address the issue of a gender segregated labor market is by focusing on Sweden’s structural issues and to break of state monopolies.”\footnote{Motion 1999/2000:A1, med anledning av skr. 1999/2000:24 Jämställdhetspolitiken inför 2000-talet, section 2} Here the party acknowledges that an under and overrepresentation of certain sexes within certain fields of the labor force is of concern, in contrast to the arguments described above. The motion mentions structural issues as a potential cause of segregated labor markets. Furthermore, in relation to unequal wage levels between sexes the party states, “We are convinced that unwarranted wage differences exist and that it is unacceptable. Yet, this is overshadowed by the fact that women are overrepresented in low-paying jobs, mainly within the public sector.”\footnote{Motion 1999/2000:A1 , med anledning av skr. 1999/2000:24 Jämställdhetspolitiken inför 2000-talet, section 3} Displaying that the party to some extent indulges in the discussion of structural factors that might steer women into certain, less lucrative, sectors of the labor force. Yet, the party does not acknowledge the existence of patriarchal structures oppressing women collectively, as it namely goes against the party’s perception of individualism as a core aspect of its ideology.

Furthermore, the Moderate Party directly opposes gender quotation, as it ensures favorable treatment of only one half of the population. Also, the party seeks to ensure gender equality through “modern” attitudes amongst men and women, rather than political legislation and engineering. Proposition 1998/99:A802 describes the issue in the following way:

\textit{“Equality is ultimately a question of attitudes and values, meaning that much of the work is achieved over the long-term. We believe that much of the work must start in households and within families, but also in school, where many values first take form.”}\footnote{Proposition 1998/99:A802, section 1 - Summary}
However, the party does not clarify what such “modern attitudes” involve, nor does it identify what aspects of common general attitudes are at the root of the problem. The underlying notion is that the Moderate Party does not support a furtherance of the governments influence over individual’s decision-making capabilities. Therefore, in terms of promoting gender equality the party promotes the use of “soft governance” rather than and legislative means of achieving such goals.

4.2.2 The Election of 2014

In contrast, nearing the elections of 2014 Reinfeldt admits that women take more responsibility for household duties, that women are paid less than men and that men’s violence against women is a societal problem. Yet when confronted, Reinfeldt argues that

“A lot of men use violence against women, which is despicable. But that does not mean that all men are violent against women. Many of the wages set for women are lower than those of men, yet this does not apply to the entire labor market.”\(^{71}\)

Further, in the closing remarks of the interview Reinfeldt is asked why he is so scared of admitting that he is a feminist, to which he replies “Because others own the interpretation of that term and I am my own person. I will never let Gudrun Schyman dictate my terms, that is a promise.”\(^{72}\)

Additionally, in an government discussion session, Jenny Petersson outlines the Moderate Party’s stance on gender equality with the words “as a member of the Moderate Party, gender equality means freedom, freedom for both men and women to decide for themselves how they want to live their lives”\(^{73}\). Yet, in relation to structural inequality Petersson states:

“(T)he coalition seeks to tear down systems that uphold an unjust and unequal distribution of power, resources and capabilities between the sexes...The politics of the Moderate Party revolves around the belief that people are unique and that every individual is capable of formulating and making their own decisions”\(^{74}\).

In addition, the party’s election manifesto of 2014 states that women in general have been overrepresented among those on sick-leave and those prematurely retired for

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\(^{71}\) Swedish radio, SR P3 Nyheter - Välfestivalen i P3, Fredrik Reinfeldt about Feminism, 12-08-2014

\(^{72}\) Swedish radio, SR P3 Nyheter - Välfestivalen i P3, Fredrik Reinfeldt about Feminism, 12-08-2014

\(^{73}\) Parliament Protocol 2011/12:82, 14-03-2011, 09.00-19.11, speaker nr 6, Jenny Petersson

\(^{74}\) Parliament Protocol 2011/12:82, 14-03-2011, 09.00-19.11, speaker nr 6, Jenny Petersson
almost 30 years.\textsuperscript{75} Also, the manifesto underlines that women are paid less in aggregate, and that this in turn is directly linked to an unequal division of unpaid household responsibilities.\textsuperscript{76}

Furthermore, in relation to gender quotation several established names within the party, Sven Otto Littorin, Per Schlingman and Anders Borg argued on different occasions that it might be necessary to legislate in favor for gender quotation in order to increase the number of female board members nearing the elections of 2014. Yet, such notions were finally subdued by massive opposition within the party and never realized.\textsuperscript{77}

4.3 Private sphere is political vs Private sphere is private

4.3.1 The Election of 2002

In 2001 the Moderate Party hands in proposition 2001/02:A228 in which the party outlines their view on gender policy, naming it “basic humanism”. The party’s fundamental premise revolves around the notion that all individuals are equal in value and that all should thus have the same capabilities, regardless of sex.\textsuperscript{78} Furthermore, the proposition also states that:

“We believe that politics which forces women to be working parents, with children at daycare is just as wrong as the type of politics in which women are expected only to cook and give birth to children. No politician should be allowed to steer lifestyle-patterns for a single individual. The duty of politics is instead to ensure that people can choose freely.”\textsuperscript{79}

In an interview during 2002 election campaign, party leader Bo Lundgren is confronted with the notion that the Moderate Party disagrees with a proportion of the parental leave being specifically designated towards the male parent. To which Lundgren replies “I want to make sure that parents can choose for themselves. I don’t believe that politics should limit the free choice of parents.”\textsuperscript{80}

Furthermore, the party’s election manifesto of 2002 states that it will seek to empower families, while also underlining that everyone should have the right to lead the sort of life they have reason to value, based on individual preferences. Moreover, the

\textsuperscript{75} The Moderate Party Election Manifesto 2014, p.34
\textsuperscript{76} The Moderate Party Election Manifesto 2014, p.35
\textsuperscript{77} Olsson, Erik, “Ständiga bråk om kvotering i Alliansen”, 03-05-2013 SVD Näringsliv
\textsuperscript{78} Proposition 2001/02:A228, section 5.1
\textsuperscript{79} Proposition 2001/02:A228 section 5.1
\textsuperscript{80} SVT, Utfrågningen – Bo Lundgren, August 2002, party leader interview – Swedish television
manifesto also highlights that the state should not meddle in the division of labor and work between parents both within and outside of the household. The choice of childcare and the division of household chores should be kept within the individual family to decide.\textsuperscript{81} In the manifestos initial paragraphs the party claims that it seeks to liberate families and individuals and put and end to a societal development that upholds the “system” first and the people second. Also, the party aims to provide individuals with more time and responsibility for his or hers own future, but also for the future of ones family. Political solutions must revolve around the notion of emphasizing the integrity and will of the individual rather than the political ambition to rule.\textsuperscript{82}

4.3.2 The Election of 2014

Towards the elections of 2014 Hillevi Engström, minister of labor 2010-2013\textsuperscript{83}, stated that one of the most important factors regarding gender equality is the general state of the labor market for women. She highlights that many of the female dominated sectors are physically and physiologically demanding and that women as well as men, should have the right to fair wages. However, Engström point out that the key to achieving gender equality is also a more equal distribution of the parental insurance. A system where men and women share parental leave equally amongst themselves would benefit children, women and men all around the country. This will in turn lead to more equal wage levels between the sexes and more beneficial pensions for women as they will spend more time engaged in employment.\textsuperscript{84}

Also, petition 2011/12:3 underlines that the distribution of household chores and responsibilities is closely related to women’s ability to fully engage in the labor force. However, how a family decides to divide responsibilities within itself is beyond the boundaries of politics. Politics should merely strive toward providing equal circumstances under which men and women can take responsibility for unpaid household chores on equal terms.\textsuperscript{85} In relation, the party emphasizes how the “house service deduction act” (RUT-avdrag) and “gender equality bonus” (Jämställdhetsbonusen) both are good example of legislative measures taken in order to ensure such terms.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{81} The Moderate Party election manifesto 2002, ”Freedom for Sweden”, p. 12-13
\textsuperscript{82} The Moderate Party election manifesto 2002, ”Freedom for Sweden”, p. 5
\textsuperscript{83} Riksdagen.se, Ledamöter & Partier, Hillevi Engström (M)
\textsuperscript{84} Almedalen 2014, ”Hillevi Engström om en jämställd arbetsmarknad”, Moderate Party Official YouTube-channel 08-07-2014
\textsuperscript{85} Regeringens skrivelse 2011/12:3 – Jämställdhetspolitikens inriktning 2011-2014, p. 22
\textsuperscript{86} Regeringens skrivelse 2011/12:3 – Jämställdhetspolitikens inriktning 2011-2014, p.22
Furthermore, the petition formulates that gender equality policy will mainly focus on the following four areas between 2011-2014:

- **Equal distribution of power and influence.** Men and women should have equal possibilities to participate actively in society and to partake in the decision-making process.

- **Economic equality.** Men and women should have equal terms and possibilities to educate themselves and to receive gainful employment. This includes that compensation in terms of wages should not include type of sex as a decisive variable.

- **Equal distribution of household chores and responsibilities.** Men and women must take equal responsibility for non-paid household duties. The possibility to engage in gainful employment while still caring for household related responsibilities such as childcare is fundamental and an essential tool in achieving gender equality.

- **Men’s violence against women must stop.** Women and men, girls and boys must all have the same right and capability to bodily integrity. 87

Yet, in terms of means to reach such goals, the petition does not emphasize the use of specific legislation. However, it is stated that the topic of men’s violence against women will receive the most attention out of the given four. 88

The election manifesto of 2014 states that men and women should have the same possibilities and capability to participate in society and lead the sort of life they have meaning to value. Also, the manifesto stress that women take more responsibility for household duties and childcare. One of the fundamental aspects highlighted is that women make more use of parental insurance 89 than men because parental leave commonly fall under female responsibility. 90 In addition, the manifesto mentions that women in general generate less total net income during their active time in the labor force compared to men, resulting in less advantageous pensions for women. 91 This is in turn related to the fact that women are often forced to work part time in order to juggle

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87 Regeringens skrivelse 2011/12:3 – Jämställdhetspolitikens inriktning 2011-2014
88 Regeringens skrivelse 2011/12:3 – Jämställdhetspolitikens inriktning 2011-2014 – Section ”Skrivelsens huvudsakliga innehåll”
89 Parental insurance, Föräldraförsäkringen, refers to parts of the Swedish social insurance, e.g. paid maternity and paternity leave, the right to reduced working hours
90 Election Manifesto 2014, ”Vi Bygger Sverige” – Alliansen 2014, p. 34
91 Election Manifesto 2014, ”Vi Bygger Sverige” – Alliansen 2014, p. 35
both work and sustain a household of children. Additionally, the manifesto draws parallels between lower income levels for women and unequal distribution of household chores. In fact, the manifestos entire paragraph regarding gender equality repeatedly emphasize the uneven distribution of household duties and responsibilities, such as childcare and parental leave, as the main contributors to gender inequality.\textsuperscript{92} In addition, the manifesto also states that the Moderate Party will seek to increase the bonus directed towards parents that share parental insurance equally between themselves. In relation to family policy, the manifesto also state that the coalition will seek to ensure more equal terms for parents by proposing several minor changes in the parental insurance, such as removing the obligation to report child illness the same day and the guarantee compensation for loss of income during preoperational schooling for kindergarten.\textsuperscript{93 94}

5. Analysis

5.1 Collectivism vs individualism

Individualist notions inherently inhabit the political ideas and messages that the Moderate Party communicated towards the elections of 2002. The party proposes a “modern” perception of gender equality in which men and women are independent from each other and capable of deciding for themselves. The Moderate Party does not support the enforcement of rules and legislation in order to reach equality between the sexes. As such measures involves regulation of individual capabilities to lead a life based on personal preferences. Yet interestingly, the party argues that truly sustainable gender equality is only achievable through a collective shift in attitudes. In which responsibility lies upon the individual to critically reflect upon issues of gender inequality. This would in turn allow for a path towards gender equality that does not involve government steering. The fundament of most argument revolves around an individualist perception of how society should be governed. The Moderate Party disagrees with a furtherance of the state, instead promoting a society in which the government has limited say in the every day decisions of individuals.

Towards the elections of 2014, the party’s general communication in regards to gender equality still emphasizes individualist notions. Party leader Reinfeldt refuses to

\textsuperscript{92} Election Manifesto 2014, "Vi Bygger Sverige" – Alliansen 2014
\textsuperscript{93} Compensation for loss of income refers to parental insurance, Föräldrapenning, which is to be guaranteed during the periods when parents are expected to accompany their children to kindergarten in order to ease the transition.
\textsuperscript{94} Election Manifesto 2014, "Vi Bygger Sverige” – Alliansen 2014
make use of terms like feminism, whilst stressing his belief in the individual as a way of being free. Yet, the Moderate Party does not embrace the notion of individualism as straightforwardly as it did during the election period of 2002. The party does to some extent emphasize that there are issues of collective nature in relation to gender inequality, mostly in regards to the unequal distribution of household duties between sexes. However, the party’s liberal roots are highly evident, as discussions tend to lean towards issues of inequality between individuals rather than equality between men and women.

Reinfeldt does acknowledge the party’s liberal-conservative roots, in which such notions of individualism occupy a central role. Yet, Reinfeldt also acknowledges that political party’s needs to be “in constant movement” in order to describe society in a way that the electorate can relate to. This encapsulates the notion of a more pragmatic approach to the issue of gender related inequalities within society. The party does acknowledge that they occur to some extent, occasionally emphasizing that they are structural and collective/general in nature. Yet, the party does not provide any meaningful propositions to eradicate such inequalities in terms that rime with collective measures, such as gender quotation.

In relation to the terms of collectivism and individualism, the Moderate Party does display a more pragmatic approach to the issue of gender related inequalities within society towards the election of 2014. The underlying difference is found within the outset from which the party engages in the discussion surrounding gender inequality. In 2002, the party built arguments on the assumption that men and women in general inhabit equal capabilities to engage in e.g. a productive career. If women chooses to engage in specific sectors of the labor market, then that is a choice made by an individual woman and should not be perceived as a collective issue. However, towards 2014 the party shifted somewhat in its communicated understanding of the issue. The party does to some limited extent stress that there are issues of a more structural nature. Yet, the party does not state that the solution is found in collective legislation and steering. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the possibility of external factors that might have pushed the issue of gender inequality further up on the agenda within the political landscape. Thus, ultimately the Moderate Party does not display a clearly defined shift from individualism towards collectivism in regards to the issue of gender equality.

5.2 Patriarchal structures vs Differing preferences
Towards the election of 2002 the Moderate Party repeatedly stated that the issue of gender inequality could never be eradicated through legislation. The party emphasizes a
“modern approach” to the topic and that the solution is found within a shift towards more “modern attitudes” amongst men and women. Legislative measures, such as gender quotation, are contra productive in terms of promoting equal terms for men and women. Furthermore, the party does not support the notion of a specific proportion of the parental leave being designated towards the father, on the grounds that it would encumber the freedom of choice of individual families. Leading up the elections of 2002, the party generally promotes the use of “soft governance”, rather than legislative measures.

In proposition 1998/99:A802 the Moderate Party underlines that it does not acknowledge the existence of patriarchal structures. As an alternative the party proposes the notion of “choosing equality”, which states that politics should ultimately strive towards ensuring the electorate with the necessary options and possibilities needed for them to choose a equal life in terms of gender for themselves. The party states that statistical dissimilarities underlining how women are underrepresented in certain parts of the labor force does not indicate the existence of patriarchal structures. The party does seem to build its perception of society on the assumption that men and women compete equally within the labor market, and that such statistical dissimilarities are the product of general differences in preferences between men and women. E.g. if a man and a woman applies for the same job, then the employer would rationally choose the individual best suited in terms of experience and education etc. Type of sex would in such context not be considered a decisive variable and is thus not of interest. However, the party clearly states that if gender was considered a decisive variable, then it an issue of discrimination which the party directly opposes. Yet, it is never described at what point gender turns into a decisive variable rather than just a variable amongst many. Hence, the party does to some extent communicate that it on the one had opposes the existence of patriarchal structures, but if they do exist, then such structures are not supported by the Moderate Party.

Nearing the election campaign of 2014, the party displays a relative change in communication relating to societal structures oppressing women. Acknowledged members of the party does on different occasions mention the possibility and necessity of legislation in favor of gender quotation. Yet, as such notions met heavy resistance within the party and was never realized it still displays a small shift in attitude towards the possibility of legislative measure as a mean to achieving gender equality. However, it is important to acknowledge that the Moderate Party was in government leading up to the
election of 2014. Meaning that the party needed emphasize actual tangible measures in order to prove that it produced results while in office.

Furthermore, party leader Reinfeldt states in interview that many of the wages women receive are lower than their male colleagues. However, Reinfeldt is quick to add that unequal wage differences do not apply to the entire labor market. Furthermore, Reinfeldt also argues that the term of feminism and its related assumptions (acknowledging patriarchal structures arguably being amongst such assumptions) is owned by the left wing of the political spectrum. Which is why he refuses to make use of such terms, as it would mean that others could dictate his terms. In relation, the party states that it seeks to tear down unjust systems that uphold an unequal distribution of possibilities, power and influence between men and women. Yet, as described by Pettersson, Moderate Party politics ultimately assumes that every individual is capable of leading their own lives and deciding for themselves. In a somewhat stretched interpretation of such communication, it is possible to identify that the party does acknowledge that unequal treatment related to gender does occur. Yet, the party underlines that individuals are all capable of deciding for themselves. Meaning that politics should merely seek to encourage people to lead such lives that benefit equality between the sexes in order to ensure gender equality. In such regards, there are many similarities to the term of “choosing equality” which the party formulated towards the elections of 2002. In all, the Moderate Party does not openly acknowledge the existence of patriarchal structures in the election campaign of 2014. However, the party does repeatedly emphasize that gender related inequality does occur and that the party clearly seeks to minimize such occurrences. Yet, notions of patriarchal structures oppressing and preventing women from competing equally within society is rather incompatible with the party’s underlying perception of how all individuals ultimately are capable leading the sort of life they have reason to value.

Hence, the Moderate Party does not display a shift towards the left in relation to the observed communication related to the notion of patriarchal structures between 2002 and 2014.

5.3 Private sphere is political vs Private sphere is private
Nearing the election of 2002 the party outlines their vision on equality through the term of “basic humanism”. The term revolves around the idea that all individuals have the same value, and that everyone should thus inhabit the same possibilities in life regardless of gender. In addition the party clearly states that it is beyond the jurisdiction of politics
to steer any “lifestyle patterns” of individuals, ultimately underlining that the “private sphere” should not be politicized. Such attitudes are for example seen in how the party opposed the use of specific periods of the parental leave being directed towards the male parent, as Lundgren describes it as an intrusion of parents’ free choice. Still, the concept of family is treated as its own political entity. Much effort goes in to explaining the importance of individual capabilities, and that decisions must be left for the individual to make regardless of sex. However, the traditional concept of family commonly involves a group of individuals. Yet, when it comes to issues of e.g. the division of household chores, the Moderate Party treats the family as a single unit, capable of deciding for itself.

As the party does not indulge in the discussion of unequal gender structures within the “family unit” around 2002, there is an underlying assumption that men and women “compete equally” in the division of unpaid household related responsibilities such as childcare. The concept of a capable “core family” is much at the center of this discussion. The Moderate Party states that is seeks to “liberate” families from government interference, relating to the notion that the “private sphere” within families is ultimately private and should not be politicized. Moreover, the party’s underlying goal towards the election of 2002 revolved around the notion of providing individuals with “more freedom”. More freedom to handle ones private life in an individual manor based on personal preferences and circumstances, free from state interference. E.g. the party states how politics that force women to work is just as unjust as politics that expects women to look after the household and take responsibility for childcare.

Yet, leading up to the elections of 2014, the party more openly discussed issues related to what is considered as a part of the private sphere. High ranking party members like Hillevi Engström emphasizes how societal systems in which men and women share equally are the most desirable in relation to the division of unpaid household related chores. Similarly, petition 2011/12:3 emphasizes that men and women must share equally, as equal distribution of household related chores is paramount to achieving equality.

Moreover, in the election campaign of 2014 the party continually builds upon the idea that the government should not attempt to steer how individual families distribute household responsibilities within the family. The party underlines that politics should only strive to create “equal circumstances” for men and women to take responsibility for such duties. Likewise, the party argues that the “household service deduction act” (RUT-avdrag) and the “gender equality bonus” (Jämställdhetsbonus) are both examples of
legislative measures that provide families with better circumstances to divide household duties more equally. The underlying argument is that such measures provide families with more “rational” options to divide household responsibilities more equally. E.g. it would be the rational choice to divide parental insurance more equally if the family receives a bonus, or that families would benefit economically from employing household services, as it would allow the female spouse to instead engage in paid employment. Yet, the effectiveness and purpose of the “household service deduction act” is highly debatable in relation to promoting gender equality. Ensuring gender equality was probably not the main agenda of such legislation. However, the “gender equality bonus” displays a direct will to engage in legislative measures in relation to ensuring a more equal distribution of parental insurance.

The party’s election manifesto of 2014 clearly highlights how women take more responsibility for household chores and childcare in aggregate. Moreover, women make more use of parental insurance as parental leave commonly fall under female responsibility. In addition, the party draws clear parallels between lower income levels for women and unequal distribution of unpaid household responsibilities. Surrounding the 2002 election the party distinctively outline that the private sphere is beyond the scope of politics and is best left for the individual family to decide for themselves. Yet nearing the elections of 2014 the party openly address such issues related to the individual family in a more consultant manor. The party does not apply direct legislation that actually enforces specific regulation upon families, but rather makes use of such tools that might encourage families to “run their business” in accordance to their “suggestions”. Thus, the Moderate Party does display a certain change in relation to its attitude towards how the private sphere is of political importance. Where the left wing might argue that the private sphere is inherently political in nature, and should hence be treated accordingly. The right wing might generally emphasize that politics does not belong within the household in a manor of “what goes on within my family is none of your business”. Placed between such ideal types, the Moderate Party has arguably drifted somewhat towards the left side, yet only to a very limited extent. The fundamental change is found in how the party openly creates political agendas found within “the private sphere” towards the elections of 2014, whereas in 2002 it would have discarded such discussions as intrusions on the capability and freedom of the family unit. Hence, the Moderate Party does display a shift towards the left between 2002 and 2014 in accordance to the
observed communication of the party’s attitudes concerning the political importance of the private sphere.

5.4 Ideal types results
The following classification scheme allow for an oversight of the arguments and conclusions reached in the discussion above.

6. Conclusion
In relation to the formulated research question, the Moderate Party does not display a clear shift towards the left of the political spectrum in regards to issues related to gender equality between 2002 and 2014. Individualism plays a central part in the party’s overall
ideology, and is thus always apparent in how the party approaches issues related to

gender equality. It seems that if the party were to embrace a more leftish attuned take on

gender equality, it would do so on some serious expense of original party ideology.

Furthermore, it is important note that this paper makes use of a “yes or no” approach.

The real answer to whether or not the Moderate Party has drifted towards the left in

regards to the formulated themes of analysis is most likely very nuanced. Hence, any

conclusions reached in this paper should therefore only be generalized with this in mind.

The overall conclusions drawn from the observed party communication in relation to

gender equality show that the party has only shifted on one point; the political nature of

the private sphere. This shows that even though the party does not display a clear overall

shift, it does to some limited extent exert signs of change in relation to issues related to

gender equality. It is also important to acknowledge that there are many external factors

at play in any change in political party’s, factors that in regards to the relative size

of this paper was not considered.

Moreover, the results concluded in the discussion above do not mean that the

Moderate Party opposes gender equality. Yet, the party does display an inherent inability

to attract female voters between the elections of 2002 and 2014. With the theories

regarding a gender gap within female and male voting patterns, women tend to prefer to

opt for options leaning towards the political left. The observed failure to shift towards

the left in regards to the topic of gender equality could therefore further the

understanding of why the Moderate Party failed to appeal to female voters, while it so

successfully attracted numerous new male voters. Furthermore, the Moderate Party does

display a relatively constant number of female votes received between 2002 and 2014, it

is rather the number of male votes that fluctuates heavily during this period. This would

also support the conclusion the Moderate Party’s policy regarding gender equality

between 2002 and 2014 proceeded relatively unchanged. Which is thus reflected in the

fact that the party receives a rather constant amount of female votes during the given

period. Also, the party has on other occasions borrowed terms that might conflict with

the party’s traditional ideology, for example during 2006 as the party referred to itself as

the “worker friendly party”. However, in relation to gender equality the party refuses to

make use of terms like feminism and patriarchy, as it is believed that such terms belong

to the political opposition. In other spheres such terms were used as weapons to win

over parts of the electorate from the opposing side. Though in regards to gender

equality, party communication proceeded much unchanged. In order to display a clear
shift towards the left side of the political spectrum the party might have needed to make use of such terms.

Finally, the conclusion that the Moderate Party overall did not shift towards the left in relation to gender equality helps us to further the understanding of a major and highly influential political party in Sweden. To attempt to answer why the party was unsuccessful is far beyond the scope of this paper and would involve numerous external factors. Yet, the results presented in this paper briefly suggest that the female electorate might prefer “left-wing gender equality”, though the findings of this paper does not attempt to answer such questions, it highlights an interesting area calling for further scientific investigation.
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