

## A Case Study on Equality Before the Law – Has Finland Been Able to Protect Its Women in The Divorce Proceedings Involving Mental Abuse?

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### Abstract

*Finland has extensive legal protections for women and their equality before the law; yet, they do not seem to be enforced in this case, as it disregarded its obligations to women under national, European, and international law. Not even the inherently Finnish laws, such as the Constitution, Criminal Code, Contracts Act, and Code of Judicial Procedure, were upheld, let alone provisions on legal representation. This is especially concerning given reports of widespread structural corruption and activities like the Dear Brother, which foster dependencies and conceal criminal conduct, making it appear to follow standard procedures.*

*For these reasons, this study aims to develop a nuanced understanding of the structural conditions affecting women, employing a doctrinal, qualitative, and interdisciplinary methodology. It critically examines the limitations of laws in light of the autocratic or narcissistic traits of wealthy individuals or governmental officers. As a result, Court proceedings seem biased, but should be transparent and comprehensible for laypersons, as legal protections are meant for everybody; without this, healing after the process is challenging, if not impossible.*

*Addressing systemic inequalities requires targeted reforms to enhance transparency, accountability, and accessibility. Strengthening mechanisms that allow objections, verbatim transcriptions, layperson juries, and the introduction of applicable laws can enhance ethical justice. Laws, made by people, can be modified by people; thus, adjusting the Code of Judicial Procedure benefits all, not just women. Importantly, legal systems should never serve as an incubator for authoritarian behavior among public officials or powerful individuals, as absolute power corrupts absolutely.*

**Keywords:** Dear Brother, defamation, equality before the law, judicial procedures, narcissism, procedural fraud, suggestions for improvement, and women.

### Introduction to Equality Before the Law in Finland: Structural Corruption and Institutional Challenges

After seven centuries of Swedish and Russian rule, Finland has forged a strong independent identity as a modern Western nation. Today, it stands out globally, frequently topping the rankings as the world's happiest country (World Population Review, Happiest Countries, 2025). Finland ranks second worldwide alongside Norway on the Gender Equality Index, with a score of 0.875, where 1.0 indicates full equality (World Population Review, Gender Equality, 2025). Furthermore, Finland is the fourth safest country in the world for women, after Denmark, Switzerland, and Sweden (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security). However, there is room for improvement concerning women, as Finland experiences a high level of violence against women. Statistics highlight that, in femicide cases based on 2022 data, women account for 80% of those killed by a current or former intimate partner and 65% of all victims in domestic homicides (Human Rights Centre, 16 May 2025; European Institute for Gender Equality). Women also earn less, with their income averaging approximately 84% of men's (Tilastokeskus/Statistics Finland, 19 March 2025).

There is also hidden, yet large-scale structural corruption that global monitors cannot detect, according to the Ministry of Justice, Finland, Mäntysalo (November 18, 2024). This structural corruption appears at the interface between business and public administration, as well as in the favoritism of close associates and acquaintances (Ministry of Justice, Finland, Mäntysalo, November 18, 2024). Professor Salminen of Vaasa University (September 16, 2018) characterizes corruption in Finland as involving hidden, murky practices, such as making backroom deals, favoring relatives, and failing to recuse oneself from decision-making when there is a conflict of interest or bias. *The Dear Brother or Old Boys' activity*, as explained by Salminen, refers to unhealthy networking that can foster a sense of indebtedness or obligation among participants (Salminen, September 16, 2018). *Dependencies develop but are hidden by decisions that appear to follow standard procedures*; in reality, the network is exploited to influence actions towards other objectives (Salminen, September 16, 2018).

The Dear Brother activity appears persistent even though Finland joined the Council of Europe's anti-corruption body (GRECO) in 1999 (Council of Europe, GRECO; GRECO, October 26, 2024). GRECO has released a report on Finland's progress in preventing corruption and promoting integrity within law enforcement agencies and the central government. According to the report, Finland has fully implemented only 4 of 14 recommendations issued in 2018, with 9 partly implemented and 1 not implemented (GRECO, October 26, 2024). GRECO concludes that Finland's *law enforcement sector still lacks sufficient compliance* with anti-corruption standards and has requested a progress report from Finnish authorities by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2025 (GRECO, October 26, 2024). Based on these alarming facts, especially for women, this study seeks to determine whether affluent businessmen and government officials exercise disproportionate influence over the dissolution of long-term marriage. The research focuses mainly on the role of the judiciary, with some additional focus on the police and bodies charged with monitoring obligations of judicial processes, both during and after marital dissolution proceedings:

*Has Finland fulfilled its obligations on women's equality before the law and full protection, stemming from national and international commitments?*

The case study will maintain anonymity by referring to the principal individuals as *Mia* and her now ex-husband, *Tim*, a wealthy businessman. However, all information presented can be verified through comprehensive documentation. Aware of cases similar to *Mia*'s, this research has been requested to explore the role and experiences of ethnic Finnish women in the Finnish judicial system. Before the divorce, *Mia* and *Tim* had been together since their teenage years, and had been married for more than 20 years with children. At the onset of their relationship, *Tim* was an emerging businessman. Following a contentious and highly publicized divorce, *Mia* suspects that certain governmental officials, as well as her ex-husband, exhibited corrupt, narcissistic and autocratic traits. Furthermore, she experienced what could be characterized as Dear Brother activity, where her perspectives were systematically disregarded. As previous research on Finnish corruption states that it is large-scale structural corruption, and the GRECO argues Finland has not implemented all anti-corruption procedures to judicial agencies (GRECO, October 26, 2024; Ministry of Justice, Finland, Mäntysalo, November 18, 2024), this research will examine:

1. *In what ways may corruption manifest in judicial processes, and for what reasons?*
2. *Are there factors that enable these violations, and what could be done to prevent them?*

### **Applying the Doctrinal Legal Method Across Disciplines**

This research employs a doctrinal approach to analyze Finnish, European, and international legal obligations concerning women's equality before the law and legal protections. Numerous treaty-based commitments Finland has adopted

will be examined, with particular focus on those addressing equality. Where implementation or procedural gaps are identified, the research will propose potential reforms. Adopting a qualitative and critical perspective, this study draws on interdisciplinary insights from law and psychology. In particular, the concept of narcissism and autocracy is central to understanding *Mia*'s experience within her marriage and the secondary victimization she endured through the judicial process. Women continuously encounter issues due to gender inequality and the non-implementation of basic human rights instruments, such as equality before the law and affirming everyone's right to equal legal protection without discrimination. Understanding the psychology of narcissism and autocracy is crucial for recognizing the effects of mental abuse, whether from a spouse or the judicial system. Aligning with a wider academic movement, recent research increasingly adopts comparative and theoretical perspectives to support legal reform (Hutchinson, December 2015). This study also aims to contribute to this ongoing discourse. The analysis is rooted in doctrinal legal research and concentrates on key legal instruments and well-intentioned measures for women.

### **Finland: Numerous Obligations on Equality Before the Law and Legal Protections**

Finland is bound by many national and international treaties, obligating the state to ensure women's equality before the law and equal legal protection. Accordingly, EU Law prevails in Finland based on the EU Membership since 1995 (European Union; Korkein Hallinto-oikeus, 2024). Examples of the EU Law are the *Regulations*, which apply directly in Finland, and *Directives*, which must be implemented but can seemingly be changed significantly:

- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) became the Data Protection Act;
- The Directive 98/5/EC on *lawyers' practice* became, unfortunately, the *Attorneys Act*. With roughly 20,000 lawyers and only about 2,400 attorneys in Finland, this Act contradicts the intent of the original English version (European Commission; EUR-Lex, Directive 98/5/EC; Finlex. Attorneys Act, Section 5b; Ministry of Justice, Finland, June 24, 2024, GDPR; Finnish Bar Association; Ikäheimonen, May 9, 2023).

Finland has ratified several international treaties that reaffirm the principles of equality before the law and the right to effective legal protection in case of *defamation*, for example. The Finnish Constitution carries the most significant weight. The following list outlines the most authoritative and legally binding treaties:

1. Constitution of Finland: equality before the law, and banned gender-based discrimination
- Section 6: "Everyone is equal before the law", and discrimination based on gender or other reasons concerning a person is prohibited (Ministry of Justice, Finland, The Constitution of Finland, June 11, 1999).

2. European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR): prohibition of gender-based discrimination and enjoyment of any right
  - Article 14 on Prohibition of gender-based discrimination;
  - Protocol No. 12, Article 1: “The enjoyment of any right [...] shall be secured without discrimination”;
  - Finland’s ratification: 1990 (Council of Europe: The European Convention on Human Rights *and* the Department for the Execution of Judgements of the European Court of Human Rights).
3. Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (CFREU): equality before the law
  - Article 20: “Everyone is equal before the law”;
  - Finland’s ratification: 2009 (EUR-Lex. Access to European Union law. CFREU, October 26, 2012; EU. Founding Agreements).
4. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR): equality before the law and protection against defamation
  - Article 26: “All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law.” Gender discrimination is furthermore prohibited;
  - Article 17(1) protects against unlawful defamation attacks on a person’s honor and reputation, and Article 19(3) allows limiting freedom of expression to protect others’ rights and reputation;
  - Finland’s ratification: both the treaty and the Optional Protocol in 1975 (OHCHR; ICCPR, December 16, 1966; UN. OHCHR; Media Defence, February 2025).
5. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW): equality before the Law, in particular in courts and tribunals
  - Article 15(1): “States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law”;
  - Article 15(2): In particular, State Parties shall treat women “equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals”;
  - Finland’s ratifications: CEDAW in 1986, Optional Protocol in 2000 (CEDAW, September 3, 1981; OHCHR).

### Power, Narcissism, and the Dark Tetrad: How Leaders Exploit, Manipulate, and Deceive

This research argues that both Tim and the judicial officers exercised excessive power. Similarly, Walton (May 11, 2022) contends that the abuse of power is a common trait among business leaders and autocrats. Senior leaders may manipulate information and shape narratives to protect themselves and pursue personal goals (Walton, May 11, 2022). They often favor convenient facts while ignoring conflicting ones, which limits their perspective and encourages self-serving thinking. Over time, this can distort their sense of reality and lead to serious errors in judgment (Walton, May 11, 2022). Power can be both addictive and blinding - indicating that *power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely* (Walton, May 11, 2022).

Narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) is marked by self-centeredness, grandiosity, exploitation of others, and lack

of empathy. People with NPD can alternate between public superiority versus covert insecurity (Di Giacomo et al., March 30, 2023). Empathy plays a key role in identifying NPD, as it is crucial for manipulation and control; thus, understanding the wounding in others. Empathy is described as the understanding and sharing of others’ feelings, comprising two components: from cognitive thinking-based to emotional feeling-based (Di Giacomo et al., March 30, 2023). In NPD, the thinking part usually works, but the feeling part is weakened. This imbalance - known as affective dissonance - is linked to rivalry and traits within the *dark tetrad*, including qualities of narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and sadism (Di Giacomo et al., March 30, 2023). People with dark tetrad traits, such as narcissism, see themselves as exceptional and superior to others, while using them to reach personal goals in a Machiavellian way. Accordingly, these individuals usually lack empathy, and they exploit others without any remorse, showing psychopathic traits (Psychology Today). They also enjoy humiliating their victims in a sadistic way (Psychology Today).

### Prenuptial Agreement, Mutual Wills, and Marital Power: Legal and Emotional Exploitation

As mentioned earlier, this research presents the case of *Mia* and *Tim* under pseudonyms to protect *Mia*, as she has been continuously threatened and intimidated. Yet, all details are supported by verifiable documentation and research. The couple began dating in high school and bought an apartment together some years later. Following their graduation from business school, Tim began full-time employment at his father’s company. The couple later married and, on the same day, executed both a *prenuptial agreement and a mutual last will, verified by the same legal representatives*, a married couple of lawyers. The mutual (reciprocal) will was established to mitigate the terms of the prenuptial agreement, ensuring, for example, that each spouse would inherit from the other upon death. After returning from work abroad, *Mia* became pregnant, prompting Tim to seek a larger home. Her first birth involved an emergency caesarean, and she and their child faced serious health issues. They had two more children, each with health challenges, leaving *Mia* to manage childcare and the household largely alone. Based on the inability to have a career with sick children and Tim’s long hours, *Mia* sought professional progress and undertook a Master’s degree, successfully balancing academic commitments with family and occupational responsibilities, culminating in graduation after thirteen years.

Yet, over time, *Mia* became physically and emotionally exhausted, and the symptoms began already when they were dating. Only after the divorce did she understand that she was an over-giving empath, and narcissism is extremely wounding for her type of personality, and maybe also the reason why Tim chose her. Tim, on the other hand, was living his life without any limitations. When *Mia* was working at his branch office, nasty rumors started about her personality, and that the marriage had failed, etc. In the following Christmas celebration at the same office, Tim had *Mia* sit with his secretary. Unbeknownst

to Mia, Tim had an affair with this secretary, who shouted and went to a bathroom to cry. She had spread the lies Tim had told about Mia and could not keep quiet about the affair. Having Mia sit with his secretary was probably meant to threaten the secretary. Yet, Mia found out about the affairs only after the divorce. Accordingly, while Mia thought that Tim was working long hours and travelling frequently for work, she now knows that Tim also spent time with his numerous extramarital affairs, and one of them became his second wife shortly after the divorce. As such, a marriage agreement is also a contract, meant for two people, and extramarital affairs can legally be seen as a violation of this contract, even when affairs are not crimes.

### **Maniacal Tools: Domestic Violence by Financial Means, Mental Abuse, Identity Fraud, and Cyber Harassment**

When Mia met Tim, she was independent and confident, but when Tim decided to end the marriage, he also sought to destroy Mia in various ways. During the marriage, Tim grew increasingly cold, critical, and dismissive, ridiculing her appearance, personality, and intelligence. He also turned his and her family and their mutual friends against her during the divorce, alternating between heroism and victimhood. Years of stress, over-giving, and emotional abuse left Mia in constant pain and feeling unworthy, with no clear explanation for her suffering. Accordingly, some months before Tim announced that the marriage was over, defamatory conversations had appeared on an online community platform. The cybercrime persisted, yet neither the police nor the discussion forum acted on it. When she deleted the “conversations”, they came back as a whole chain of conversations. It thus felt like only one person perpetrated this bullying. The writer also knew a lot about her personal life, even when she was a shy and very private person, and also attacked her children.

According to this bullying, she was mentally ill and a criminal violating human rights, etc. As this took place approximately at the same time as Tim’s affair with his second wife, Mia suspects that they together perpetrated the cybercrime, as it would be easier to divorce Mia if she were shocked and scared. Later, Tim appeared to employ the same pattern of defamation against his second wife when he sought to marry his third. Mia suspects that he instigated articles in tabloid newspapers on how he wants his second wife to move out of his house. Several articles in the same tabloid newspaper reported how Tim had recently divorced his second wife and begun a relationship with his friend’s wife. The magazine also stated that Tim had now moved to the capital city with his new partner and purchased a €1.5 million apartment for them in an elitist area. Accordingly, this couple is now married. Furthermore, Tim also intimidated Mia by issuing invoices in her name, which in the United States is seen as domestic violence (Office on Violence Against Women. U.S. Department of Justice). As the divorce posed a threat to both her financial stability and credit record, the invoices heightened that effect. For instance, it took a full year to resolve a phone invoice Tim had issued in her name, until the company finally acknowledged that she had not authorized it.

### **Divorce Proceedings as a Civil Case Under Coercion and Procedural Fraud**

Tim initiated the divorce proceedings intensively, only a couple of days after announcing the divorce to Mia. He then summoned his first corporate lawyer and financial manager to their home. Surprisingly, the divorce contract was already written, and only signatures were needed. As the divorce plans after more than 20 years married and about 5 years together before the marriage were a shock to Mia, she was devastated and did not want to agree to the divorce or its terms. However, Tim’s primary objective was to retain his assets by depriving Mia of her legally entitled share of the marital property. To achieve this, he coerced her consent to a separation of assets *before* he would file for divorce, as he understood that, after such a long marriage, legally Mia should get a part of his property. He also attempted to intimidate her by referencing a case in which his business associate’s wife committed suicide during harsh divorce proceedings, suggesting pressure to secure Mia’s compliance.

As Mia filed a civil case to pursue her rights, she revealed in the court hearings how Tim threatened public humiliation over the divorce, but her testimony was disregarded. She also spoke of being defamed through cyberbullying, yet again, her statements were treated as worthless, without any probative value. Even when lying at court in civil cases violates the *Code of Judicial Procedure*, Chapter 14, Section 1 (Ministry of Justice, Finland), Mia suspected that procedural fraud was perpetrated, or, frankly, that the court wanted to be deceived by Tim and his witnesses. Procedural fraud, or its attempt, is often considered perjury when persons knowingly make false statements to the court (Ellilä, February 11, 2021). The Finnish Criminal Code, Chapter 36, Section 1 *Fraud and other dishonesty*, also criminalizes fraud that causes economic loss to the victim in the following way:

“A person who, *to obtain unlawful economic benefit for himself or herself or another person or to cause damage to another person*, deceives another person or takes advantage [...], and this way *causes economic loss to the deceived person* [...] shall be sentenced for fraud to a fine or to imprisonment for at most two years.” (Ministry of Justice, Finland. Criminal Code, 36(1), highlighted with italics by this research).

### **Abuse by Legal Representation and Concealment of Assets: Unfair Contract**

Tim’s first corporate lawyer had been part of his family since childhood, handling the legal aspects of their business dealings. Mia met this person for the first time just before Tim announced the divorce. This corporate lawyer expressed a desire to represent both of them in the event of a divorce. As Mia was unaware that Tim had been planning the divorce for years, she thought that this corporate lawyer was joking, as he also offered to have sex with her. Yet, the divorce was a reality, and after a longish period of coercion and pressure from him, his corporate lawyer, and his financial manager, and the ongoing cyberbullying, Mia did not want to sign the contract. Finally, Tim’s corporate lawyer stated that he

could not continue as their “mutual” lawyer as Mia did not want to sign the contracts, as he understood that it would look bad if Mia had no own legal representation. Then the corporate lawyer told Mia that his former subordinate in court wants to become Mia’s attorney [*sic!*]. Mia was a layperson, inexperienced and naïve, and she foolishly agreed to this under pressure. Yet, Mia’s attorney was absent from the negotiations, leaving her without representation. She was forced to sign the divorce agreement, although the husband’s assets had not been examined and no formal division of marital property had been effected, raising serious concerns regarding procedural fairness and legal impropriety.

Upon realizing that she had been deceived and defrauded, and that her legal claim to even part of the property had been denied, she filed a civil lawsuit against him in the local court. From the outset, it became evident that securing justice would be highly challenging, if not impossible. No local attorney or governmental legal officer was willing to represent her upon learning the identity of Mia’s husband. She finally found one from a far city, and the proceedings started. When this attorney took on Mia’s case, the primary responsibility was to ascertain the full extent of Tim’s assets following the dissolution of the marriage, as *it would otherwise be impossible to evaluate whether the prenuptial agreement and the non-division of assets are unfair* [*sic!*]. Given the inequitable nature, the prenuptial agreement and the non-division contract should have been subject to judicial adjustment in accordance with the Finnish Contracts Act, the foundational Civil Law Statute governing the validity and enforceability of contracts and other legal acts. Under Chapter 3, Section 36(1) *Invalidity and adjustment of contracts*, a contract must be set aside or adjusted:

“If a contract term is *unfair or its application would lead to an unfair result* [...]. In determining what is unfair, regard shall be had to the entire contents of the contract, the positions of the parties, the circumstances prevailing at and after the conclusion of the contract, and to other factors.” (Ministry of Justice, Finland. Contracts Act, Chapter 3, Section 36(1), highlighted with italics by this research).

Accordingly, the Supreme Court - the final instance in civil cases - has stated in its decision KKO:2001:103 that a spouse may, within a reasonable time after the expiry of the time limit for contesting the distribution, demand that the division of property must be adjusted. The grounds for this adjustment are that the spouses’ agreement for the division of property turned out to be *unreasonable based on later circumstances* (Supreme Court; Finlex, KKO:2001:103). Mia also noticed after the trials that the mutual last will she and Tim created simultaneously with the prenuptial agreement had “mysteriously disappeared”. She had previously handed those documents to Tim, and seizing the opportunity, he hid the will, which benefited him.

Yet, according to publications about Tim’s company, he acquired full ownership ten years after marrying Mia, at which point the company’s revenue was approximately €40 million. By the year of their divorce, the business had grown

to generate around €165 million in revenue, with a net profit of €43 million. However, this information was never properly disclosed, and both Tim and his second corporate lawyer, an attorney, as well as his parental figure, provided false statements in court. All this made Mia suspect that her attorney was also corrupt. Accordingly, when her attorney partially disclosed Tim’s wealth, Tim’s second corporate lawyer, an attorney, scolded her at the break, looking like she had violated a mutual contract. Later, when Mia contacted her attorney about the violations, her attorney tried to intimidate Mia by having the most famous defence lawyer send her an email. Furthermore, the family doctor of many years, who had previously testified in writing that Mia lacked the mental capacity to enter into legal agreements due to extreme pressure, began behaving strangely. During the court proceedings, the doctor contradicted their earlier assessment, acting inconsistently and in a highly irregular manner. Unfortunately, it appears the doctor may have been threatened as well.

### **Suspected Dear Brother Activity: Nepotism, Favoritism, and Secretive Alliances in Court and Police**

Mia suspects a Dear Brother activity based on several facts. According to public records, Tim’s first corporate lawyer had served as a trusted legal counsel and a person of confidence to his father since the 1970s. This casts doubt on the corporate lawyer’s integrity when pretending to advocate for Mia was inherently conflicted; he should have recused himself and stepped aside from the outset. Furthermore, this first corporate lawyer had previously held a high-ranking position in the same court where Mia’s case was handled. Adding to the irregularity, the first corporate lawyer had Mia represented by his former court subordinate, an attorney, raising serious concerns about impartiality and propriety. Accordingly, this subordinate testified against her at the trial, without her permission. He just showed up at the hearing, and *the leading judge forced Mia to accept his testimony*. This judge also appeared to have a close relationship with this subordinate, who testified without justification, suggesting that the subordinate may have previously worked under this judge, too. Furthermore, the judge repeatedly interrupted Mia’s testimony during the proceedings, even though she cried heartbreakingly, and she was subjected to humiliation by both the court and her opposing party, resulting in secondary victimization. To testify against his initial client, Mia, in the same case is a violation of the Code of Conduct for European Lawyers, since a lawyer must always act in the best interests of his client, and may not act on behalf of other clients in the same case (Council of Bars, 2021). It also violates the Attorneys Act, Section 5c, stating that an attorney shall not, without due permission, disclose his client’s secrets (Finlex, Attorneys Act, Section 5c). When Mia reported this conduct to the attorneys’ union, it was not deemed reprehensible, despite being potentially unlawful.

Mia ultimately lost the case but vigorously lodged formal complaints with the police, the ombudsman, and all relevant governmental oversight bodies. All of them behaved in a passive-aggressive manner, and Mia was explicitly threatened to discourage her from pursuing these matters. She came to

realize that her now ex-husband likely wielded significant influence in their region, possibly even having certain officials aligned with him. Accordingly, some years after the processes and therapy, she understood how narcissistic Tim was, if not even dark tetrad, as he seemed to get pleasure when bullying Mia. She also concluded that she could not have been Tim's first victim, but understood how blessed she was that the marriage was over. It was accordingly shocking how arrogantly the governmental officers treated her, as if she were the villain in the case.

### **Denied Justice: Systemic Inequality and Legal Failures under Finnish, European, and International Law**

To address the research questions, this study concludes that corruption or Dear Brother Activity can lead to an unwillingness to seek the truth and a reluctance to apply the law fairly, particularly in cases where an individual is perceived as doomed from the outset. When examining Finnish, European, and International Law, Mia was not equal to her husband before the law, as all Finnish legal processes failed to protect her, signalling a Dear Brother activity or other forms of corruption. Even when European Law takes precedence, no law appears to have been applied in Mia's case, not even loosely. Her statements were not afforded credibility, leaving her feeling humiliated in court and throughout the subsequent proceedings. For example, it would have been easy for the police to investigate who wrote the defamations, but no. Finland chose not to apply all these treaties in Mia's case, as there was no equality before the law and courts, no legal protection by the law, no legal protection against defamation, and no enjoyment of the same rights (Constitution of Finland, Section 6, June 11, 1999; ECHR, Art. 14 and Protocol 12, Art. 1; CFREU, Art. 20, 2017; ICCPR, Arts. 17(1), 19(3), 26, 1966; CEDAW, Art. 15(1)-(2), 1981).

Finland chose not to apply other inherently Finnish Laws either, such as the Finnish Code of Judicial Procedure under Chapter 17, Section 26, *Evidence, Hearing of a party*. It clearly states that parties shall speak the truth when testifying in civil matters. The witnesses are also obliged to tell the truth under the same Chapter, Sections 18-24 (Ministry of Justice, Finland, Code of Judicial Procedure, 17(26), 17(18-24)). Furthermore, the divorce contract on non-division of property and prenuptial agreement remained unadjusted, and the court showed no interest in establishing a factual basis for the claim, refusing to allow the probate administrator to assess the full extent of Tim's assets, violating the Contract Act (Ministry of Justice, Finland, Contract Act, Chapter 3, Section 36(1)). As a result, the case appeared effectively lost from the outset of the proceedings. Accordingly, neither the court nor the police made any effort to expose the lies that were told in court; *thus, the judgment lacks a legal basis and rests on false statements and procedural fraud*.

### **Repairing Procedures Against a Lack of Judicial Integrity and Transparency in Finnish Courts**

Further, regarding the research questions, the reluctance to uphold judicial integrity and transparency may arise from two

aspects. It can stem partly from the absence of clear procedural codes and partly from the Dear Brother activity or the arrogance of governmental legal officers – both of which can be rectified by modifications to the Code of Judicial Procedure, bringing more transparency. In Mia's case, it was evident that Mia existed as a legal nonentity, and her treatment throughout the proceedings reflected this attitude at every moment. However, a factor that enables false statements in court is the non-existent practice of clerks transcribing verbatim: thus, lying in Finnish courts is easy [*sic!*]. Accordingly, if a Party like Mia wishes to know precisely what was said in the Finnish court in question, they must transcribe the audio recordings themselves. For this research, transcribing the court recordings proved to be a considerable undertaking. Cornell Law School, Legal Information Institute (LII) describes a court transcript as the official, verbatim record of all proceedings in a trial, taken by a court reporter. It serves as the *certified written record*, which may include a bill of exceptions (Cornell Law School, LII). Thus, this research suggests the following modification:

- The Code of Judicial Procedure shall entail the obligation for all courts to employ a clerk to transcribe all testimonies verbatim.
- These testimonies shall act as a certified written record and can be used to prove a false statement, *inter alia*

Furthermore, false statements can result from the inability to raise objections during the hearings. Finnish Law does not allow for objections in court hearings, as outlined by Cornell Law School, LII. A Party or their legal representative can object *during a proceeding* to prevent the court from accepting certain evidence (Cornell Law School, LII). Thus, Mia was forced to sit in silence as the lies spread through the courtroom, with her attorney choosing not to challenge them. Thus, this research suggests the following modification:

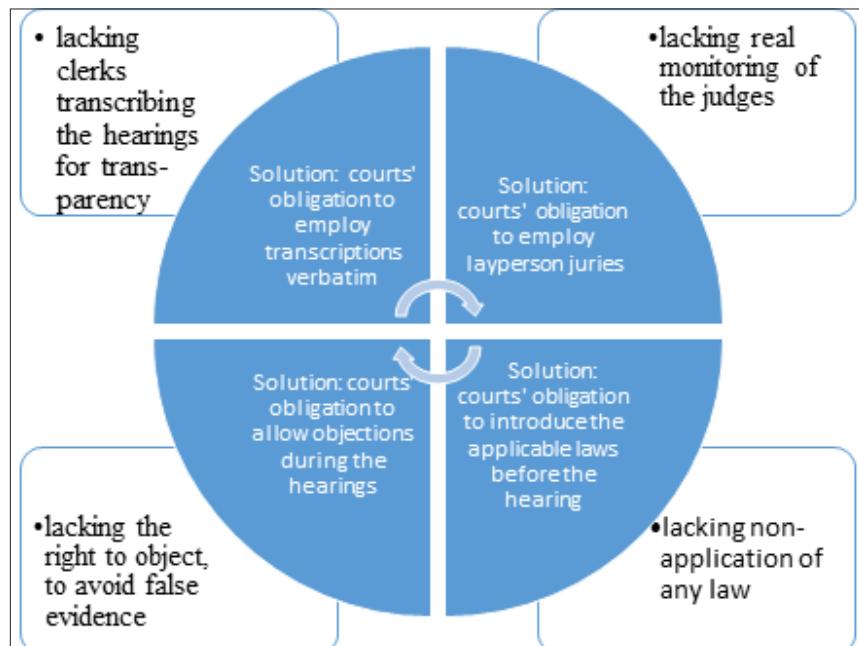
- The Code of Judicial Procedure shall provide Parties with the right to actively raise objections during the hearing, to prevent procedural fraud

Layperson juries would also bring more transparency and integrity, but are unfortunately mostly absent from Finnish courts. As a lawyer, this research has not seen these juries in the observed trials. It would, nevertheless, be very essential and make Finnish judicial processes more transparent for all, especially for laypersons. Even though judges' lawfulness should be monitored by, for example, the Chancellor of Justice and the Parliamentary Ombudsman, under the Constitution of Finland, Section 108, this does not seem to be the reality, as the judges did not apply basic human rights and liberties for all in Mia's case (Ministry of Justice, Finland. The Constitution of Finland, Section 108, June 11, 1999). For these reasons, this research argues that judges seem to employ absolute power, and according to Walton, power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely (Walton, May 11, 2022). For the police, the case appears to be the same; for example, the person monitoring their colleagues gets their paycheck from the same

police station. Accordingly, the highest-ranking police officer accessed Mia's emails but took no action.

Several additional factors undermined Mia's trust in the court in question. Despite her request, the court failed to seal the judgment based on her medical records. When Mia later applied to correct this, the highest person at that court denied the concealment. The judgment also contained factual inaccuracies and appeared to reflect only Tim's version of events. Accordingly, Mia's attorney did not provide any guidance on how to act in court, and Mia felt she would be blamed for things she did not know and would also suffer the consequences. It is thus essential to involve laypersons and to foster comprehension of judicial processes, as this research argues that the general public understands what is morally right. Accordingly, the core principles of Finnish Law reflect a sound and morally grounded understanding of right and wrong. See Chart 1 for the challenges based on the lack of procedural stipulations and also for the non-application of laws, along with the solutions. Thus, this research suggests the following modification:

- The Code of Judicial Procedure shall provide for non-political layperson juries for the transparency of judicial procedures;
- The judges' roles shall be limited to guiding the process only;
- The judges shall be obligated to present and explain the laws applicable to each case to the layperson jury and to any laypersons attending the court;
- Such presentation shall, whenever practicable, occur before the hearings and may be affected through visual or audiovisual aids, including, but not limited to, PowerPoint presentations or equivalent methods, to ensure comprehension of the legal framework governing the proceedings.



**Chart 1:** Procedural barriers to equality before the law and reforms for judicial transparency

### Conclusion: Advancing Women's Equality Before the Law and Legal Protections Through Modifications to Judicial Procedure

This study underscores that, despite Finland's robust legal framework and numerous obligations to ensure equality before the law, structural corruption and institutional challenges continue to undermine judicial integrity and fairness. The application of doctrinal legal methods across disciplines reveals how power dynamics, narcissistic leadership, and manipulative practices - both within families and legal institutions - can facilitate exploitation, procedural fraud, and denial of justice. A case involving domestic abuse, unfair marital arrangements, financial coercion, and legal representation abuses highlights the multifaceted ways in which individuals, particularly women, may be rendered legal nonentities, unable to secure

the protections guaranteed under national, European, and International Law.

Addressing these systemic inequalities requires targeted reforms in judicial procedures to enhance transparency, accountability, and accessibility. By strengthening mechanisms that allow objections, safeguard against nepotism and favoritism, and ensure procedural fairness, the Finnish legal system can more effectively uphold the principle of equality before the law and the legal protections. Ultimately, advancing women's legal protections and promoting a morally and ethically grounded administration of justice depends not only on codified rights but also on the active enforcement of procedures that make these rights meaningful in practice. Finnish Law, when implemented with integrity and vigilance, embodies a clear understanding

of moral and legal correctness - but maintaining this standard demands continuous institutional vigilance and reform. Accordingly, employing, for example, verbatim transcribing clerks would make it straightforward for the police to conduct investigations and reach just conclusions, as the transcripts would be official and certified written records. *However, none of these measures will be effective if those enforcing them are driven by greed or lack moral integrity.* Finally, and most importantly for Mia, though she experienced victimization and was wronged, she is nobody's victim.

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