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Title: Bourgeois Women and the Question of Divorce in Finland in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Year: 2018

Version:

Please cite the original version:

Saarimäki, P. (2018). Bourgeois Women and the Question of Divorce in Finland in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries. Scandinavian Journal of History, 43(1), 64-90. https://doi.org/10.1080/03468755.2017.1353192

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Scandinavian Journal of History

ISSN: 0346-8755 (Print) 1502-7716 (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/shis20

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To cite this article: Pasi Saarimäki (2018) Bourgeois Women and The Question of Divorce in Finland in The Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries, Scandinavian Journal of History, 43:1, 64-90, DOI: 10.1080/03468755.2017.1353192

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/03468755.2017.1353192

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Published online: 21 Jul 2017.

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Scandinavian Journal of History, 2018
Vol. 43, No. 1, 64–90, https://doi.org/10.1080/03468755.2017.1353192

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BOURGEOIS WOMEN AND THE QUESTION OF DIVORCE IN FINLAND IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

This article explores perceptions and actions of Finnish upper-middle-class women with regard to divorce in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Divorce was discussed in the periodicals of bourgeois women's associations and later in Finnish Parliament, in which several leading figures of the bourgeois women's associations were elected as members from 1907 onwards. Compared to other issues related to marriage and its legislation, divorce was not an especially important question for bourgeois women, but a tool to promote other issues. Women writers demanded drunkenness and violence as new grounds for divorce, and proposed that loveless marriages should be made possible to dissolve. Moreover, writers were concerned about mothers' custodian rights over their children, and demanded that mothers should be given the primary right to guardianship after divorce. Even though upper-middle-class women presented straight opinions about divorce in their periodicals, women parliamentarians brought out their claims only indirectly in their bills. Nevertheless, most of their objectives were realized when the new Marriage Act was approved in 1929.

Keywords women's history, divorce, Finland, 19th century, 20th century

Introduction

Marriage acts based on moralistic and religiously influenced pre-modern legislation had for a long time determined the legal relationship between husband and wife in all Nordic countries. In the 19th century marital legislation was in many ways considered outdated, and its hierarchical and patriarchal features no longer corresponded to new interpretations and demands for equality between men and women. There had already been partial reforms in the late 19th century, but not until the early decades of the 20th century were new marriage acts comprehensively reformed; in Sweden in 1915/1920, Norway in 1918/1927, Denmark in 1909/1922/1925, and finally Finland in 1929. The acts were all prepared with close cooperation, and they modernized the institution of marriage by reforming the process of marriage, enhancing the wife's individual and economic rights, ending the husband's legal power over his wife, and

setting equal custodial rights for mothers and fathers. These marriage acts, which were now based on the separation of property and formal legal equality of the spouses, have been called 'the Nordic model of marriage'.[1]

Among other things, divorce was also liberalized – i.e. legal grounds for divorce were extended and bilateral divorce accepted in Norway and Denmark – decades before European nations such as Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany.[2] However, there have also been different views about how liberal new Nordic divorce legislation actually was.[3] Earlier research on divorce in the Nordic countries in the early 20th century has mainly focused on legal aspects of divorce, and researchers have paid only some attention to public opinion and discussions about divorce. In the Nordic countries there has been considerable research on upper-middle-class women, who operated actively in the women's movement, and their views about divorce have also been studied to some extent, but the divorce question, especially among Finnish middle-class women, has been neglected.[4]

Historians have studied the divorce debates which occurred in Western countries from the 19th century onwards. These debates concerned creating or liberalizing divorce legislation. European feminists and women's associations usually took a liberal stance[5] on the divorce question. Divorce was an important issue for them because it was intertwined both with sexual double standards and demands for women's freedom, civil rights, and with the economic and legal equality between husband and wife. Wives had to have a way to get rid of bad-mannered husbands.[6]

The divorce question can be defined as the public discussion which concerned the appropriate rules for ending a marriage.[7] In Finland, different interest groups began to pay attention to divorce from the late 19th century onwards, and the debate over divorce took place in newspapers, periodicals, and in parliamentary politics. This article[8] examines opinions, arguments, and actions related to divorce among Finnish upper-middle-class women in the period 1886–1929. The divorce question is strongly connected to wider ideological and political aims of bourgeois women and their associations. I will argue that, for upper-middle-class women, divorce was not only an individual and significant question but also a means to promote more important themes in public. Therefore, the first main goal of this article is to study why bourgeois women actually discussed divorce, and what kinds of phenomena were connected with the divorce question. It will also be shown that there were certain contradictions between opinions over divorce and marriage/family ideals favoured by Finnish upper-middle-class women. The second main goal of this article is to find out to what extent the author's opinions matched or differed from the mainstream of bourgeois women.

Upper-middle-class women – or bourgeois women, used synonymously in the text – were a small group of women with a uniform background. Some of them were educated, upper-class people by birth, and others represented the new middle class, committed to bourgeois values.[9] Bourgeois women and their associations were a noticeable and powerful political interest group in criticizing outdated marital legislation and in influenceing its reform in all Nordic countries at the time,[10] and they also wanted to reform prevailing divorce legislation. Therefore bourgeois women are an especially worthwhile interest group for studying the divorce debate in the Nordic countries. On the other hand, by way of discussing divorce it is possible to examine wider moral, ideological, and social aspects of divorce and study feminists' attitudes towards good and bad marriages. The divorce question opens up new possibilities to study bourgeois women's views about marriage.

The first research material for this article includes three different periodicals which were connected to Finnish bourgeois women's associations. *Koti ja yhteiskunta* (*Home and Society*, 1889–1911) was the official periodical of the Finnish Women's Association (*Finsk Kvinnoförening/Suomen Naisyhdistys*). Union, the League of Finnish Feminists (*Suomen Naisasialiitto, Unioni*), published *Nutid* (*New age*, 1895–1917). The majority of pieces about divorce were published in *Naisten ääni* (*Women's voice*, 1905–1949), which was originally part of the functions of Union, the League of Finnish Feminists, but was soon connected with the Finnish Women's Union (*Suomalainen Naisliitto*).[11] These periodicals have been chosen for two reasons: firstly, they were the most significant periodicals of the women's associations; secondly, the large number of articles proves that the associations and their members showed an interest in the divorce question.[12]

Finnish parliamentary records (1907–1929) have also been used. Parliamentary reform had abolished the outdated political system in which official estates (Nobles, Burghers, Clergy, and Peasants) had exercised political power in the Diet of Finland in the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland. From 1906–1907 onwards, members were elected to a unicameral parliament by universal and equal suffrage. Finnish women were among the first in the world to receive the right to vote, and they were also the first to enter parliament as full citizens. Several leading figures of the bourgeois women's associations were elected as members of parliament in the first elections in 1907. Despite different political backgrounds and opinions on women's rights, women representatives, many of whom came from working-class women's associations, were committed to solving, in particular, social welfare questions; for example marital issues and the welfare of mothers and children.[13] To shed light on these aspects, I will employ legislative proposals, legislative bills and reports, and documents of parliament discussions in plenary sessions of parliament.

Even though bourgeois women's associations published some official statements concerning divorce, those taking part in discussions in periodicals and in parliament were nearly always single persons. Women representatives were always recognizable but writers usually used pseudonyms. It is not possible to identify actual persons behind the pseudonyms, but if writers used actual names, I will always mention them. It is possible that some writers using pseudonyms were men, because some men were also official members of these associations and strong supporters of feminism. Nevertheless, it is most likely that all writers were upper-middle-class women.

Women's associations were an important community for these women, because associations functioned as a platform that allowed women to make their voices heard in the public arena and to promote emancipatory aims. The periodicals, for example, supported the main goals of the women's associations, and with the help of periodicals it was possible to promote women's rights and suffrage, to improve women's status in society, and to contribute to the reform of marital legislation. Moreover, it was also important to find out women's opinions in order to publish them. Thus, the periodicals can be seen as representative of the middle class' conceptions of society, gender, and marriage.[14] The following findings and arguments will not highlight specific historical truth about the whole group of middle-class women in Finland during that time. Even though in many cases the opinions of individual authors were equivalent to the mainstream of upper-middle-class women, all of them did not necessarily receive unanimous endorsement among all women.

Resolving poor marriages

Contrary to many Catholic countries in Europe – for example, in France and Italy – where divorce debates concerned the drafting of divorce legislation,[15] in the Nordic countries the focus was on reforming outdated legislation. It had been possible for centuries to have a divorce. Legal norms derived from Martin Luther's ideas, and certain traditional grounds for divorce had been valid in Protestant and Nordic countries in the post-Reformation era. In order to be granted a divorce in Finland, the applicant had to demonstrate that the other party had severely violated the marriage. Local courts were authorized to grant a divorce if the husband or wife had committed adultery, or if they had been abandoned by their spouse. These grounds for divorce were based on the Code of Marriage in the 1734 Swedish Civil Code, which was still applicable in Finland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[16]

As in other Nordic countries, Finns were also able to take advantage of the so-called *exemption procedure*, under which in the late 19th and early 20th centuries a divorce application based on various, unofficial grounds could be presented to the Finnish Senate and, from 1918 onwards, to the Finnish Supreme court.[17] The number of total divorces rose rapidly in the early 20th century,[18] because exemption procedure divorces became more common. Their proportion was nearly 90% of all divorces in the late 1920s. The gap between formal divorce legislation and divorce practices had widened, and thus lawyers and politicians, in particular, considered divorce legislation to be in need of reform.[19] The increased visibility of a previously almost unheard of phenomenon caught the attention of various interest groups, because divorce was understood to be a delicate moral and social question. Bourgeois women also participated in public discussion by suggesting that new legal grounds for divorce should be formulated.

In spite of several unofficial grounds for divorce, writers emphasized that current legislation did not take into consideraton the various problems of marriage. Regarding divorce, articles and texts in the women's journals always concentrated on the standpoint of wives, and they underlined that marital problems created an enormous burden for wives especially. The authors demanded that the number of legal grounds for divorce be increased in order to ease divorces. Upper-middle-class women had similar public demands in all Nordic countries.[20] For example, a person using different pseudonyms and writing almost the same articles in 1907 and 1916 claimed that women's personal freedom in marriages was both inadequate and restricted. In the worst-case scenario husbands were tyrants and wives were forced to live in misery. The author stated that it should be possible for dysfunctional marriages to be dissolved.[21]

Bourgeois women paid attention to the wife's poor position in marriages because it was connected to more substantial issues in their agenda: women's overall poor position in society. The ideology of bourgeois women was fundamentally based on the ideas of Mary W. Wallstonefraft and John Stuart Mill, who had underlined that individuals had the possibility to progress towards a better and happier life. Finnish bourgeois women in principle stressed the role of men and women as rational agents and free individuals. They protested against women's subordinate position in private, marital, and public arenas, and they wanted to end unjust outdated gender hierarchy.[22] I propose that the authors' demands to free wives from poor marriages were part of a wider discourse that concerned expanding women's individual and legal rights. One specific means to liberate women and extend their rights was to simplify getting a divorce, as it was wives especially who suffered from poor marriages.

In order to make divorces easier, one author suggested that marriage legislation should be reformed. She also hoped that for the sake of human dignity and their freedom, Finnish women could collectively insist that divorces should be granted with less effort and in a less defamatory way. Simultaneously, the author summarized the prevailing views and the basic attitude of upper-middle-class women: divorce should not be perceived as an ideal event, but as a necessary legal tool in a difficult situation.[23] The author's demands were explicitly based on the thoughts of August Forell, who was a Swiss radical intellectual and psychologist with a doctorate in philosophy and legal science. Forell's ideas had found their way into the midst of Finnish upper-middle-class women via books and articles dealing with gender, sexuality, and drunkenness.[24] The individual's right to happiness was one main principle in the Nordic divorce discussion prior to the reforms during the 1910s and 1920s, and discussants suggested that miserable spouses had a moral right to divorce and that unhappy marriages should be dissolved.[25] Demands for new grounds for divorce were consistent with the views of other Western feminist thinkers: people should not be forced to live in poor marriages for life.[26]

In other Nordic countries it was also argued that excessively binding legal norms could cause more damage, whereas more liberal divorce regulations, as well as the strengthening of the wife's position, would promote family stability and work against immorality and illegitimate relationships.[27] Views about divorce may still be considered radical because basically they conflicted with the 'moderate emancipaton' of Finnish bourgeois women. In the idealistic sense, they connected women's natural lifepath primarily to family and home.[28] Why, then, did bourgeois women's periodicals agree to publish these kind of views, which, in practice, suggested the annulling of marriage and dissolving the family? My suggestion is that the radical tone of divorce views was eased by another idealization. Alongside the role of family mother, there was also an image of a socially active independent woman, who was able to maintain herself without the support of a husband.[29] In this context, it was acceptable to suggest that women should rid themselves of poor marriages, in which case for bourgeois women divorce was primarily a necessary tool.

These suggestions did not remain individual ideas, but bourgeois women's associations also made official statements concerning the matter. On the basis of lectures and public discussion in the summer seminar, the central administration of Union, the League of Finnish Feminists formulated official resolutions, which were widely published in Finnish newspapers in 1911. In the seventh section it was stated that it should be made easier to have a divorce, but the association did not make any concrete proposals for new grounds for divorce.[30]

Drunkenness and domestic violence

In addition to general demands for dissolving poor marriages, bourgeois women also made concrete suggestions for new grounds for divorce. Authors paid special attention to *drunkenness*, which was demanded as a new legal ground for divorce in the early phase of the Finnish women's movement. For example, the author Minna Canth – one of the most important role models and objects of admiration for the Finnish women's movement – had given a lecture at a temperance meeting in Kuopio in 1886, at which the topic was 'Is a woman entitled to divorce her alcoholic husband'.[31] Writers stated

that a drunkard's wife suffered the consequences of drinking. For example, the pseudonym T. S. emphasized that alcohol was the most significant violator of marital happiness. The writer quoted Auguste Forell, who believed that drinking narcotic poisons would result in harmful physical and moral decline, and the loss of judgement. Husbands who were addicted to alcohol were also jealous. Jealousy could thereafter develop into total insanity, and marriage could become pure hell. Wives then had to face endless suspicion, brutality, and threats.[32]

It was frequently emphasized that women had a moral right to abandon their drunken husband and leave their home behind. For example, the pseudonym Toivo Kullervo announced that, for the sake of their sacrosanct femininity, women should abandon their demeaning position and leave home, in which they had been forced to devote their life and own strength to a drunkard husband.[33] Writers – for example Maikki Friberg, who was a chief editor of the *Naisten ääni* periodical and a long-standing president of the League of Finnish Feminists[34] – emphasized that it was not possible to leave a drunkard husband due to the predominant marital institution and strict legislation.[35]

Drunkenness was not suggested as a new ground for divorce only by individual authors; the viewpoint was widely accepted among bourgeois women's associations. In 1893 the Finnish Women's Association had added to its charter of rules that drunkenness should also be included among the legal grounds for divorce.[36] Women were also very explicit in their demands in 1924 when the National Council of Women of Finland, which was the confederation of Finnish women's associations, handed over a proposal to the marriage law committee in the Finnish Parliament. They suggested that incurable drunkenness should be a new ground for divorce.[37]

Why was drunkenness emphasized in connection with divorce? It is clear that bourgeois women understood that drunkard husbands made the family atmosphere and women's position worse in a social and economical sense. A marriage with a drinking husband was a concrete example of a poor marriage. However, drunkenness was also connected to a wider social issue. Drunkenness as a basis of marital problems was often discussed in periodicals because upper-middle-class women were strongly involved in the contemporary temperance movement. Temperance in fact was nearly always the main theme in articles which combined drunkenness and divorce.

The temperance movement, which was one of the most important and influental social movements, had an important influence on making drunkenness a new ground for divorce in many Western countries from the 1850s onwards.[38] The temperance movement was the largest national mass organization in Finland in the late 19th century, and on the basis of the number of members, it was also the most important association in which women participated. From the perspective of women's activities, temperance can be called the strongest women's organization at the turn of the century. The women's movement and temperance movement had common interests; for example, both promoted universal and equal suffrage. The question was also gendered in both movements. Temperance was perceived as one of the most important questions for the women's movement because it was considered women's duty to foster temperance in the household and to contribute to the success of family life. Moreover, there were common and strong cultural images, which presented men as drunkards and their wives as victims.[39]

The members of the Finnish Women's Association and Union, the League of Finnish Feminists had close relationships with the temperance movement. Leading figures of bourgeois women's associations strongly believed in temperance, and many of them were also active in the *Raittiuden ystävät* (Friends of Temperance) association, which was the central organizaton of the Finnish temperance movement. In 1884–1909, there were 15 female board members, and six of them were also members of the Finnish Women's Association or Union, the League of Finnish Feminists. Moreover, one explicit function of the *Naisten ääni* periodical had been to act as an organ for the spreading of temperance. Later, bourgeois women promoted prohibition by way of their associations and in the Finnish Parliament.[40]

Along with drunkenness, writers insisted that domestic violence should also be added as a new ground for divorce, even if, in contrast to drunkenness, domestic violence was quite a rare topic in the periodicals. Writing pseudonymously, L. T. considered that marriage sustained by violence was the anthithesis to a harmonious, lasting marital relationship. Using the ideas of August Forell as a basis, she wrote that it was especially cruel to force people to live together in violent marriages. Wives in particular suffered from violence because men were more hot-tempered than women, and drunkenness contributed to barbarity and violent behaviour. According to Forell, divorce was the only reasonable consequence.[41] But in the case of domestic violence, there were similar problems as with drunkenness. For example, Maikki Friberg wrote that, due to prevailing legislation, it was impossible for wives to abandon their cruel, violent husbands.[42]

Domestic violence had had a certain overtone of acceptability in previous centuries. The master of the household (husband) had the disciplinary power, and he was entitled to use 'reasonable' force to control his 'unruly' wife or 'disobedient' children. In the 1889 Penal Code, domestic violence was, for the first time, considered a crime, but in order to protect privacy and decency, and to maintain family harmony, violent husbands were not liable to public prosecution. Domestic violence became a complainant offence. Bourgeois feminists preferred this standpoint: violence issues, the protection of personal integrity, or measures against violence were not discussed at all in connection with the 1920s legal reform, even though the vulnerable position of women in marriage was their concern.[43] Thus, bourgeois women discussed domestic violence only in connection with the question of divorce. These opinions were not only presented by individual authors; in the early 1890s the Finnish Women's Association updated its charter of rules so that domestic violence was included among legal grounds for divorce.[44]

Promoting love marriages

Drunkenness and violence were not only concrete proposals in periodicals when referring to new grounds for divorce; a few authors wrote about loveless and unemotional marriage. Bourgeois women overall shared a common starting point regarding the importance of love in modern marriage. Love, a persona, and equal attraction to another person, was considered both as a necessary reason to marry and as an important basis of a functional marriage in the views of the Western upper-middle class and aristocracy from the early 19th century.[45]

Therefore, it is not surprising that love was considered an essential precondition for a modern good marriage in women's periodicals. Writers relied again on August Forell, suggesting that marriages should be based on mutual respect and love.[46] The importance of love and a mutual emotional relationship was also emphasized by many of those readers who responded to an opinion poll in the *Naisten ääni* periodical in 1913. The periodical had asked if the spouse had a moral right to reject divorce even though the couple had already been living separately for a long time. Respondents argued that mutual love connected spouses, and the best way to ensure happiness was a voluntary and equal relationship. Some even referred to the Bible, stating that the biggest affront to the concept of marriage was the lack of love.[47]

The marriage became unbearable if love vanished, but it was not easy to solve this problem due to marital legislation. Divorce was even regarded as the most glaring flaw in the current Finnish legislation because it did not take loveless marriages into account.[48] Respondents criticized the fact that married couples had to stay together for the rest of their lives, even though their miserable marital union had continued longer than necessary and they wanted to separate. It was considered shameful and even unnatural that people who existed in loveless marriages and who had even already lived apart were bound together for life. One respondent offered a metaphor, saying that the effects of coercion on emotional life were similar to the effects of frost on delicate plants. Coercion destroyed the last germs of affection and compassion.[49]

However, these arguments were somewhat in conflict with the overall concept of marriage amongst Finnish upper-middle-class women. One author was very curious if conservative upper-middle-class women were actually so eager to promote the absence of love as a new ground for divorce.[50] I will argue that bourgeois women had a contradictory attitude towards love. Firstly, there were certain moral standards for accepted love. Authors did not accept love as a ground for divorce if the spouse had committed adultery. Many of them considered extramarital love 'illicit' and 'blinding'. Someone wrote that the spouse had an obligation to resist divorce if the other party had fallen in love with someone else because it was a sin against divine and human order. The pseudonym J. K. despised divorces and considered that people are only intoxicated by their momentary passions and urges.[51]

Secondly, there were juridical challenges. It had been quite straightforward to demand that violence and drunkenness should be new grounds for divorce because the courts could have assessed rather easily whether there was sufficient evidence. The lack of love and a poor relationship were much more complicated phenomena to measure. The courts would have been forced to rely on people's own interpretation and their statements. Then divorce would have been partly based on individual consideration, which was a very radical change to the basic principle of fault-based divorce legislation. It was still not easy to accept the idea of dissolving marriage by mutual consent between spouses.

Nevertheless, a few writers proposed these kinds of radical ideas. For example, one author wrote that in the case of problematic and loveless marriages a divorce should be granted if one of the spouses continued his/her demands for divorce for six months. On the other hand, imprudent quick divorces should be prevented by a reconsideration period.[52] Foreign ideas offer a suitable explanation for this confusing radicalism. The writer above based her suggestions on the views of German socialist August Bebel, who had written about equal companionship based on mutual love.[53]

It is surprising to discover August Bebel and Auguste Forel in the articles appearing in bourgeois women's periodicals because their ideas about marriage and sexuality were very radical, and both of them supported so-called 'free love'.[54] The idea of free love was the third area in which bourgeois women had doctrinal differences. The free love movement was a marginal group of thinkers in Western countries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; their basic message was that love, not juridical marriage, was the primary bond between man and wife. Additionally, regarding getting married or dissolving marriage, society and the Church should not set any norms or obstacles. The free love movement emphasized sexuality between free indivuals, and argued that people who had fallen in love should be allowed to have sex without marrying.[55]

Supporters of free love insisted that a marriage could be dissolved if there was no longer any mutual love.[56] Consequently, when authors cited Bebel's and Forel's ideas, and stressed the importance of love, they were at least indirectly supporting the ideas of the free love movement. However, this support went against the mainstream of Finnish upper-middle-class women, who disapproved of ideas of free sexual behaviour especially. The ideas of free love had appeared in Finland particularly via the lectures and writings of Swedish suffragette Ellen Key. The majority of bourgeois women stated very strongly that marriage was the only licit place for sexuality, and they were afraid that ideas of free love could result in the undermining of the institution of family, which was the core of society.[57] Even though there were individual supporters of the free love movement among Finnish upper-middle-class women[58], it is presumable that the majority of women's association members had difficulty in agreeing with all the proposed arguments. When members officially discussed new grounds for divorce in their official meetings, they never mentioned love or mutual consideration[59] or issued any official resolutions regarding love and divorce. The ideas remained only on the pages of periodicals.

A mother's natural and moral rights to custody

Writers were not only interested in new possibilities for obtaining a divorce, but also in the juridical consequences of actual divorces. In terms of the amount of space devoted to an issue, the periodicals usually dealt with divorce in connection with custody. Mothers had a high risk of losing their children if the marriage ended in divorce, and this was also a prominent issue among bourgeois women's associations in other Nordic countries.[60]

The problem originated in the larger problem facing upper-middle-class women: the unequal power relationship between husband and wife, the guardianship of married women; in other words 'household mastery' (*målsmanskap*). According to the Code of Marriage in the 1734 Swedish Civil Code, the husband was the guardian of his wife, and it was his right and obligation to represent her in public and the husband alone had the right to decide on family finances. The husband could make important family decisions and legal agreements without the spouse's permission. The wife could not sign an agreement, borrow money, buy on credit, or sell household goods without her husband's consent. The husband's right to act as the wife's guardian was the main concern in the old marriage law, and representatives of the women's movement strongly opposed this sort of patriarchalism and outdated legislation. The patriarchal model was also applied in the regulation of parenthood. According to the 1898 Guardianship Act, the

father was the guardian of the child's property and responsible educator. Fathers were the only legal guardians of children until 1929.[61] Due to the importance of reforming the legal relationship between wife and husband, custodian rights in connection with divorce were strongly emphasized. Moreover, it is reasonable to say that all bourgeois women without exception approved of the authors' opinions and arguments.

Authors stated that they wanted to improve the rights of wives in custody cases. Writers criticized the unequal opportunities existing between husbands and their wives. If fathers had not committed any crimes and were considered fit for fulfilling their paternal obligations, they were automatically entitled to obtain custody if they divorced. For example, in a public lecture Maria Cederschiöld, the Swedish feminist and journalist, had criticized the fact that discussion of marital legislation reform had been restricted to economic questions, and parental custody rights had not been mentioned. If parents argued over their children, the situation left wives at a disadvantage. Men and women would become equal by abolishing the pre-modern guardianship of married women system.[62]

Aleksandra Gripenberg, who was the chief editor of the *Koti ja yhteiskunta* periodical, the founding member of the Finnish Women's Association, and one of the most influential Finnish bourgeois feminists,[63] criticized the fact that wives had to continue living with their children in a marriage which had turned into hell because they did not have the courage to apply for a divorce due to fear of losing their children. Another author drew the conclusion that the loss of their children was clear proof that, compared to men, women were in a secondary position.[64]

Equal opportunity between husband and wife was not, however, the main goal of these articles. Usually the writers insisted that mothers should be given the primary right to guardianship. For example, Tekla Hultin – who was a member of the Finnish Women's Association and Union, the League of Finnish Feminists, a journalist, and a member of the Finnish Parliament[65] – had discussed the wife's poor legal position in the party conference of the Young Fennoman Party in 1906. She had insisted that, compared to fathers, mothers were always more suitable guardians for children, if they were not the guilty party in a divorce or in some other way improper educators.[66]

Why were mothers regarded as better guardians than fathers? The authors underlined the importance of biological motherhood, stating that mothers were more suitable than fathers to act as a guardian because they were naturally much closer to children than fathers. Secondly, mothers had also received rights which were not available to fathers because they had resigned themselves to sadness, dangers, and physical sacrifices when they had given birth to and raised their children. One writer pointed out that the mother had protected children under her heart during pregnancy, given life to them at the risk of her own life, and had raised them with all her motherly love.[67] Consequently, with regard to divorce, it was logical that women should be given rights that enabled their status as an independent educator and fully authorized guardian.[68] Third, women demanded legal reform of custody practices in order to legalize and strengthen the special emotional ties between mothers and children.

It is probable that readers approved of these arguments because Finnish bourgeois women wanted to reform women's position in society by placing them primarily as members of the family, as mothers, and as educators of their chidren. Mary Wallstonecraft and John Stuart Mill had already emphasized that motherhood and parenting were women's primal duty. Finnish first-wave feminists applied these

viewpoints by again practising 'moderate emancipation'. They stated that motherhood and parenting were women's voluntary, natural tasks.[69]

Historian Irma Sulkunen has combined the ideal model of motherhood into 'bipartite citizenship' theory (*kaksijakoinen kansalaisuus* in Finnish), which upper-middle-class women advocated and which they tried to disseminate among all Finnish women. The basic idea of this model was that men's domain was public life and their mission was to support their family. The home was the territory of the housewife and, due to natural skills, their task was to take care of children and raise them. The mother's position, social motherhood (*yhteiskunnallinen äitiys* in Finnish), was seen as socially important.[70] By the 1920s, the middle-class housewife ideology was shared by a large majority of women in Finland, and female politicians tended to enhance the position of women as mothers. Motherhood was seen as a crucially important factor both for women themselves and for the state.[71] Even though divorced mothers did not automatically match that ideal model, I suggest that the ideal model of motherhood was not limited to the nuclear family, but a similar model was also offered to divorced mothers.

These demands were not restricted to the pages of periodicals. One wife had lost her childern after divorce, and Union, the League of Finnish Feminists successfully defended her publicly: the Supreme Court made a final decision in her favour.[72] The central administration of Union, the League of Finnish Feminists also formulated official resolutions regarding the matter, demanding in 1911 that, in the case of divorce, mothers should have a primary right to custody of children upon divorce, if they were not unsuitable for that task.[73]

Divorce question: a minor issue in the Finnish parliament

In the late 19th century and early 20th century, bourgeois women's associations had sent their own own bills concerning women's legal status to the Diet of Finland.[74] A new way to promote their views on marriage formed when many bourgeois women were elected as members of the Finnish Parliament. In 1907–1913, women members from different parties submitted almost 30 proposals concerning the reform of marital legislation: for example, improving the status of women, equalizing the economic and legislative relationship between husband and wife, and abolishing the legal guardianship of married women. The proposals were usually also published[75] in the periodicals of bourgeois women's associations as such. These were a continuation of partial reforms – over 25-year-old unmarried women were freed from guardianship of their fathers (1864), the marriage settlement (1869), the code of marriage and inheritance (1878), and the decree on marital property and obligations (1889)[76] – which had come into effect in the latter half of the 19th century.[77] Partial reforms were considered unsufficient.

What about divorce, then? Even though several bourgeois women had demanded new grounds for divorce in their journals and in public, and the associations had made separate official demands regarding the matter, they did not submit any legislative proposal concerning new grounds. Legislative proposals concerning marriage only indirectly raised the matter of divorce, and the issue did not have any significant importance in these new proposals.

For example, it was considered a problem that women were able to enjoy their own share of marital property only after certain events, for example divorce. This particular proposal was initiated by Lucina Hagman,[78] a member of the Youth

Fennoman Party, who was also the founding member of both the Finnish Women's Association and Union, the League of Finnish Feminists, long-standing chair of Union, and the most influental supporter of women's rights in Finland.[79] Another proposal, initiated by Tekla Hultin, also concerned the financial rights between husband and wife in connection with divorce.[80] Participants in divorce debates in other Nordic countries also paid attention to these issues, and gendered economic consequences were taken into account in the final versions of the marital acts.[81]

Only custody rights connected with divorce appeared as an independent topic in two separate proposals. Women members of the conservative Finnish Party (*Suomalainen puolue*) submitted a total of seven separate proposals to the Finnish Parliament concerning the mother's rights to custody of their children. In practice, there was only one proposal, which was submitted repeatedly. The signatories were activists in bourgeois women's associations: Aleksandra Gripenberg, Hilda Käkikoski,[82] Iida Vemmelpuu, and Iida Yrjö-Koskinen were members of the Finnish Women's Association, and Hedvig Gebhard, who was also a journalist and a pioneer of the Finnish cooperative movement,[83] was an active member of Union, the League of Finnish Feminists. Tekla Hultin, who was also active in the woman's movement, signed the proposal in 1912. In addition, Vera Hjelt from the Swedish People's Party of Finland (*Svenska folkpartiet i Finland*) also belonged to the circle of acquaintances of the women's associations. The signatories claimed that the mother's rights to custody during marriage and after divorce should be recognized. Their statements on the unfair position of mothers and the undeserved privileges of fathers were already familiar from the pages of periodicals. The signatories positioned mothers implicitly as primary guardians when they argued that it is common knowledge that mothers are better educators of the new generation than fathers.[84] Moreover, the members of the Youth Fennoman Party submitted legislative proposals in 1908 and 1910 which concerned the jurisdiction of wives, spousal property, and spousal rights over their children. The demands formulated by many bourgeois women activists were identical to the above-mentioned proposal.[85]

The above-mentioned proposals did not result in the immediate advancement of legislative reform, even though it is plausible that they influenced the views of other parlamentarians, and the subject remained topical. Because of the First World War, operations of the Finnish Parliament were interrupted in 1914–1917. During the parliamentary break (1916), bourgeois women's associations commented jointly on the preliminary legislative statement concerning the relationship between spouses. The associations proposed that spouses should have the right to annul their marriage if there was a possibility that marital life endangered the life of the other spouse. Possible dangers were not defined and divorce was not explicitly mentioned in their statements.[86]

The Finnish Parliament resumed operations in 1917, and almost immediately bourgeois women, headed by Lucina Hagman, proposed that, in addition to previous demands, sections of the law concerning divorce should also be reformed.[87] Sami Mahkonen has estimated that due to strong ideological views – mainly religious ones – parliamentary projects focusing on divorce legislation reform had progressed much slower than reforms related to marital property rights.[88]

Why did bourgeois women representatives not demand new grounds for divorce in Parliament? I suggest that despite the situation of wives in poor marriages, divorce was quantitatively still quite a marginal phenomenon. Consequently, there were many more significant concrete marital issues which women's associations were eager to

resolve. Economical questions and demands for an equal relationship between husband and wife concerned nearly all Finnish women, whereas divorce affected only a small fraction of them.[89] In other words, Finnish upper-middle-class women were not key figures in reforming divorce legislation. The earliest discussions that concerned divorce had taken place in the Finnish Parliament in the 1870s and 1880s on the initiatives of lawyers. The Finnish Senate also commissioned separate reports about divorce legislation in 1898 and 1917.[90]

Reform of marital legislation continued in the shape of legislative bills and statements after Finland gained independence in December 1917. The enactment of the Marriage Act was no longer an issue of principal debate but more a technical process of refining details.[91] In the 1920s divorce was briefly mentioned in connection with custody, guardianship, family mediation, and marital property. Partial marital legislation reform was rejected in 1923, and parliament started to prepare reforms that focused on all possible sections of marital legislation. Divorce as an independent section appeared in legislative bills for the first time in 1924 and, after a long parliamentary process, the new Marriage Act was approved on 13 June 1929. Technically, the 1929 Marriage Act was implemented at the beginning of 1930, when president Lauri Kristian Relander signed it.[92] Bourgeois women's associations had presented several demands for reforming marital legislation and most of these were achieved. For example, wives were now equal citizens to their husbands.

As far as divorce was concerned, the final legislative outcome was positive for bourgeois women's original demands, even though bourgeois women parlamentarians had had a passive attitude concerning new grounds for divorce. According to the 1929 Marriage Act, divorces were granted only by local courts of law, and the number of grounds for divorce had increased. *Adultery* and *the long-standing absence of the other spouse* were familiar, traditional grounds. The new grounds were not completely new, as in the 1920s the Supreme Court had granted divorces on the basis of them[93]: *venereal disease*, *imprisonment lasting at least three years*, *committing a despicable crime*, *repeated misuse of intoxicating substances* (alcohol or drugs), *incurable insanity*, or *idiocy lasting at least three years during the marriage*, *domestic violence*, and finally *physical separation*, if spouses had lived separately for a minimum of two years after the breakdown of their relationship.[94]

The question of custody was also resolved positively, even though mothers did not gain primary guardianship. According to the 1929 Marriage Act and the new Guardianship Act, which had been prepared simultaneously, courts had to either grant joint custody or decide that one of the parents was the primary guardian. Guardianship had to be decided in the best interests of the child – good care and education – but another influential factor was which parent was the guilty party in the divorce.[95] Compared to Finland, the importance of motherhood was more strongly emphasized in the other Nordic countries. In Denmark and Norway, Custody Acts strengthened the situation of mothers by positioning them as primary guardians in the case of divorce. Moreover, in Sweden, legal praxis had positioned mothers as primary guardians since 1915.[96] On the other hand, divorced mothers were, in practice, also prioritized as the primary caring parent in Finland until the 1980s.[97]

The final discussions on the new Marriage Act remind us that even though women accepted divorce as a means to dissolve broken marriages, they did not favour divorces. Both Hedvig Gebhard and Mandi Hannula,[98] who was a member of the Law Committee and vice-chair of the Finnish Women's Association, criticized the legislative process for omitting the

section concerning obligatory family conciliation in cases of quarrelsome marriages. Gebhard and Hannula argued that disagreements might have been solved with the help of family conciliation. Thereafter spouses could have returned to their home, which benefitted both parents and children. Moreover, Gebhard emphasized that it was important for family members and for the whole of society that marriages remained valid. Families could have been severely damaged and disrupted by the dissolution of marriage.[99] Gebhard's views were likely based on her ideology and background as a well-known advocate of families and households, and on her position as chief editor of the Kotiliesi periodical, which stated that the home was the heart of society.[100] Mandi Hannula's view probably originates from her strong religious ideology, in which marriages were considered basically indissoluble.[101]

Discussion

In this article I have examined bourgeois women's viewpoints on divorces, and simultaneously revealed their definitions of bad marriages, in which the wife felt uncomfortable. Individual authors critized poor and loveless marriages, and especially underlined that drunken or violent husbands made their wife's life miserable. Thus they proposed that drunkenness, violence, and lack of love should be new grounds for divorce. Additionally, they stated that the mother's rights to custody should be improved in the case of divorce. Even though most of these demands were, from time to time, presented as the official expression of the opinion of bourgeois women's associations, women parlamentarians did not raise the question in Finnish Parliament, whereas the mother's rights to custody were also promoted in the Parliament through the agency of women parliamentarians.

I argue that the divorce question was also a tool to promote those issues that were important to Finnish feminists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. When discussing poor marriages, drunkenness, and domestic violence, authors actually talked about how to liberate women from poor conditions and expand their marital rights. On the other hand, drunkenness per se was an important issue for women and their associations, because the temperance movement had a significant influence on them. The importance of love was often discussed in women's peridocals, because love was considered the essential basis of marriage from the point of view of the Western upper-middle class. Divorce and custodian rights were emphasized because they represented patriarchalism and outdated legislation. Upper-middle-class women were against men's custodian rights by default, and they wanted to improve mothers' rights and the relationship between mother and children. Moreover, the mother's custodian rights in the case of divorce were emphasized because bourgeois women had acquired the ideal model, in which motherhood and the role as a children's educator were women's natural task.

These more significant aims toned down the radical nature of divorce claims among Finnish bourgeois women, who practised 'moderate emancipation' by basically supporting women's important role as a family member and mother. On the other hand, the women's movement also accepted the model of the individual woman actor in society, which divorced mothers could adapt to. Bourgeois women regarded domestic violence as an internal matter within families and did not suggest reforming legislation. Thus authors' ideas about domestic violence as a new ground for divorce were opinions rare among upper-middle-class women. The authors' radical suggestions about love were somewhat in contradiction with bourgeois women's family values.

Why did individual writers, who often based their writings on socialist thinkers, succeed in publishing their sometimes radical ideas in the periodicals of bourgeois women's associations? The main answer is that the articles were always connected with the more important aims of bourgeois women's associations. On the other hand, there might have been differences between journals. Most articles were published in the *Naisten ääni* periodical. Union, the League of Finnish Feminists, which was behind *Naisten ääni*, was considered a more liberal association than the Finnish Women's Association.[102] Regarding guardianship and divorce, individual authors and bourgeois women's associations were unanimous.

It is still reasonable to say that, as a whole, divorce was actually not an especially important question for upper-middle-class women. Compared to the number of other articles and publications that concerned women's rights and marriage, divorce was not a very common or regular theme in periodicals. The subject was almost entirely absent from official papers (minutes, annual reports, etc.) of bourgeois women's associations,[103] and upper-middle-class women did not particularly actively raise the issue of divorce in public debate in the course of preparing the new Marriage Act.

In Western countries, the bourgeois women's rights movements were deeply divided over the divorce question. Some supported liberalization in order to release women from poor marriages, but for others the subject was too delicate, as there were movements that wanted to defend the family and marriage. Marriage and family were regarded as fundamental guarantors of social stability, and some of them believed that it would weaken the family and society if divorce was more accessible.[104] Nordic bourgeois women's associations took a positive stand on the liberalization of divorce even though they did not consider the issue especially important. As far as the divorce question was concerned, women did not take the initiative, but when the matter was dealt with in parliament, they supported reforms. Generally, they emphazised that divorces should not be granted without very serious reasons. Marriage was meant to be a permanent solution that should not be dissolved without good cause.[105]

The religious background of Finnish upper-middle-class women may provide a more detailed explanation for their restrained enthusiasm to comment on the liberalization of divorce. Even though the emancipation of women was fundamentally an anti-conservative project, many activists were deeply religious, and they had certain conservative attitudes towards the family. The ideological background of these bourgeois women's associations was liberal Christianity, and most middle-class women were liberal Christians. Liberal Christian feminists combined Christian values with liberal ideals and maintained that Christianity signified equality rather than hierarchy. Nevertheless, Christianity was understood to be the founding principle of women's emancipation.[106] Especially among those women who were conservative Christians, the original Christian idea of holy, indissoluble marriages might have made it difficult to write about divorce.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1 E.g. Melby et al., 'Introduction', 13–17, 19; Melby et al., 'Inledning'; Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings of Equality', 26–37; Melby et al., 'The Nordic Model of Marriage'; Le Bouteillec, Bersbo, and Festy, 'Freedom to Divorce', 193.

2 E.g. Melby et al., 'Introduction', 16–17; Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings of Equality', 37; 'Skilsmisse i norden'; Le Bouteillec, Bersbo, and Festy, 'Freedom to Divorce', 194–5.

3 Nordic legal historians have offered different interpretations of the liberalization of divorce legislation. They have argued that, even though official legal grounds were broadening, in a legal sense it became even more difficult to obtain divorce, because former official and unofficial routes had been abolished, and all divorces were now treated equally by the courts. Thus, new divorce legislation would not have been so liberal after all, but it even went so far as to establish state control over marriage, protected the sanctitity of marriage, and discouraged divorce. E.g. Mahkonen, *Avioero*, 202–6; Le Bouteillec, Bersbo, and Festy, 'Freedom to Divorce', 191–2, 194–5, 198–204; Bersbo,*"Rätt för kvinnan"*, 34.

4 E.g. Melby et al., 'Introduction'; Melby et al., 'The Nordic Model of Marriage'; Melby et al., 'Inledning'; Melby, 'Liberalization of Divorce'; 'Det Nordiske samarbejde'; 'Skilsmisse i norden', 95–124; Manns, 'Den gifta kvinnans frigörelse'; Niskanen, 'Marriage and Economic Rights'; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 37–122; Le Bouteillec, Bersbo, and Festy, 'Freedom to Divorce', 191–6, 199–204; Bersbo,*"Rätt för kvinnan"*. For the opinions on divorce of Finnish lawyers, politicians, and working-class women's organizations, see Mahkonen, *Avioero*; Allardt, *Miljöbetingade differenser*. For attitudes of the Finnish Lutheran Church, see Antikainen, 'Marriage Law Reform', 188–91.

5 Openly religious feminists and women's associations opposed the liberalization of divorce legislation. E.g. Beaumont, 'Moral Dilemmas', 464–72, 480–1; Pedersen, *Legislating the French Family*, 58–61, 65–6, 68; Basch, *Framing American Divorce*, 72–80.

6 Divorce debates in France, e.g. Copley, *Sexual Moralities in France*, 108–34; McBride, 'Public Authority and Private Lives'; Pedersen, *Legislating the French Family*, 13–102. In Italy, e.g. Seymour, *Debating Divorce in Italy*. In Great Britain, e.g. Shanley, 'One must Ride Behind'; Horstman, *Victorian Divorce*, 46–87, 105–8, 158–62; Stone, *Road to Divorce*, 353–82, 390–401. In the United States, e.g. Tyler May, *Great Expectations*, 1–7; Basch, *Framing American Divorce*, 3, 7, 15–16, 37, 45–50, 57–91, 187–91; Celello, *Marriage Work*, 16, 20.

7 Basch, *Framing American Divorce*, 15.

8 The article is the first result of the project *The debate over divorce in Finland, 1903–1930 – The struggle over the boundaries between good and bad marriages*, the aim of which is to study attitudes towards divorce and the way divorce was understood in different Finnish interest groups. The Finnish Cultural Foundation funded this project (00140836) in 2014–2015. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the European Social Science History Conference in Vienna in April 2014. I am grateful to the participants of our divorce sessions for their comments.

9 Hagner and Försti, *Suffragettien sisaret*, 17.

10 E.g. Melby et al., 'Introduction'; Kuusipalo, 'Finnish Women in Politics', 56–7; 'Det Nordiske samarbejde'; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, Hagner and Försti, *Suffragettien sisaret*, 54–6.

11 The strongly conservative and fennoman Finnish Women's Association was established in 1884, and it was the first Finnish suffragette association. Union, the League of Finnish Feminists was established in 1892 by svecomans – Swedish nationalists in Finland – and liberal fennomans, who had been expelled or voluntarily resigned from the Finnish Women's Association. The Finnish Women's Union was established in 1907 by women who were members of the Young Fennoman Party, and this association was thereafter ideologically closely connected to this party. The associations shared the same bourgeois ideology, and many active members had networked in several associations simultaneously. E.g. von Alfthan, *Seitsemän vuosikymmentä Naisasialiitto Unionin historiaa*, 24–35, 63–70, 102–5; Tuulio, 'Suomen Naisyhdistyksen yhdeksän vuosikymmentä', 330–58; Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 13–20, 32–52, 57; Kuusipalo 'Finnish Women in Politics', 56–7; Hagner and Försti, *Suffragettien sisaret*, 17, 20–5, 28, 48–61.

12 I have analysed news information, columns, official resolutions, and commentaries concerning Marriage Bills, and printed lectures.

13 E.g. Kuusipalo, 'Finnish Women in Politics', 55–8, 61–2; Sulkunen 'Suomi naisten äänioikeuden edelläkävijänä', 10–14, 58–70; Lähteenmäki, 'Naiset tasa-arvoisemman yhteiskunnan puolesta', 88–92; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 10, 73, 88–90; Sulkunen 'Suffrage, Nation and Political Mobilisation', 83–7, 91–3.

14 Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 57–69; Malmberg, 'Naisten ja kotien lehdet', 193–6, 270–2, 275–7; Heiskamo, 'Women's Voices', 213; Hagner and Försti, *Suffragettien sisaret*, 48–51; Töyry, *Varhaiset naistenlehdet*, 27–8, 53–4, 71, 79–80, 203–45; Kauppinen, 'Lannistumattomien ääni', 81–7; Turunen, 'Naistenlehdet Suomessa', 43–7.

15 Pedersen, *Legislating the French Family*, 13–102; Seymour, *Debating Divorce in Italy*.

16 E.g. Allardt, *Miljöbetingade differenser*, 22–7, 129; Mahkonen, *Avioero*, 2, 29–56, 159–62; Melby et al., 'The Nordic Model of Marriage', 656–7; 'Skilsmisse i norden', 92–5.

17 Le Bouteillec, Bersbo, and Festy, 'Freedom to Divorce', 192; Allardt, *Miljöbetingade differenser*, 26, 130–1; Mahkonen, *Avioero*, 2, 31–3, 53–6, 105, 112–44; Phillips, *Putting Asunder*, 403–4; 'Skilsmisse i norden', 94–5.

18 There had only been a few dozen divorces in Finland until the last decade of the 19th century, when the number of divorces started to increase rapidly. By the late 1920s, 1,000 marriages were being dissolved annually. In relative numbers, divorces per 1,000 married women increased from approximately 0.3 to 2.0 per annum between 1900 and 1930. Allardt, *Miljöbetingade differenser*, 29–31, 36–7; Mahkonen, *Avioero*, 1–3, 14–18, 75–8, 91–104, 113; Pitkänen, 'Marital Dissolution in Finland'; Anttila,'Finland', 17.

19 Allardt, *Miljöbetingade differenser*, 29–31, 36–7; Mahkonen, *Avioero*, 1–3, 14–18, 75–8, 91–104, 113; Pitkänen, 'Marital Dissolution in Finland'; Anttila,'Finland', 17.

20 'Skilsmisse i norden', 118–19.

21 *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 1: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 5–8; *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 2: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 22–3; *Naisten Ääni* 29.4.1916, no. 15: 'Naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta avioliitossa', 181–2; *Naisten ääni* 6.5.1916, no. 16: 'Naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta avioliitossa', 197–8.

22 Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 15–16, 20–3, 52–4; Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings of Equality', 31; Korppi-Tommola, *Tahdolla ja tunteella tasa-arvoa*, 11–12.

23 Korppi-Tommola, *Tahdolla ja tunteella tasa-arvoa*, 11–12.

24 It was possible to read August Forell in a German or Swedish translation. His significant book *Die sexuelle Frage* was translated into Finnish in 1911 (*Sukupuolikysymys*). Nieminen, *Taistelu sukupuolimoraalista*, 216, 221–3, 305, 307, 312.

25 Melby et al., 'The Nordic Model of Marriage', 652, 656, 658.

26 E.g. Phillips, *PuttingAasunder*, 487–8, 494.

27 Melby et al., 'The Nordic Model of Marriage', 657; 'Skilsmisse i norden', 118–19.

28 Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 56, 58, 63, 69.

29 Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 25, 54–60, 68, 70.

30 *Naisten ääni* 1911, no. 3: 'Suomalaisen naisliiton luentopäivät Helsingissä maalisk. 1–3 p:nä', 32–3; *Naisten ääni* 1911, no 8: 'Avioliittolainsäädäntö', 86–7; *Naisten ääni* 1911, no. 12: 'Eräitä ponsilauseita siitä, mihin suuntaan voimassa oleva avioliittolakimme on uudistettava', 136–7.

31 *Naisten ääni* 31.3.1928, no. 6–7: "Heräämiseni", 104.

32 *Naisten ääni* 31.3.1928, no. 6–7: "Heräämiseni", 104–5; *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 1: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 6–8; *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 2: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 23.

33 Ibid.

34 Maikki Friberg (1861–1927), a doctor and teacher, was also an active member of the Finnish Women's Union, and a founder of the *Naisten ääni* periodical. von Alfthan, *Seitsemän vuosikymmentä Naisasialiitto Unionin historiaa*, 42–53; Hietala, 'Friberg, Maikki (1861-1927)'.

35 *Nutid* 1.3.1903, no. 3: 'Referat af d:r Maikki Fribergs föredrag i sedlighetsfrågan hållet vid Kvinnosaksförbundet Unionens möte 28 / II 1903', 111–12; *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 2: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 23.

36 *Koti ja yhteiskunta* 15.3.1904, no 3: 'Suomen Naisyhdistys 1884–1904', 32.

37 *Naisten ääni* 10.5.1924, no. 9: 'Naisten päivillä Oulussa', 134.

38 Phillips, *Putting Asunder*, 495–8, 502.

39 Sulkunen, *Raittius kansalaisuskontona*, 12, 33–4, 206, 237–8; Sulkunen, 'Suomi naisten äänioikeuden edelläkävijänä', 41–2, 77–9; Sulkunen, 'Suffrage, Nation and Political Mobilisation', 88–9. Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 65–6. Creating images of the drunkard and his wife among pro-divorcian and pro-temperance feminists in USA, see Basch *Framing American Divorce*, 77–8.

40 Sulkunen, *Raittius kansalaisuskontona*, 53–60, 206, 237–8; Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 38; Heiskamo, 'Women's Voices', 213; Korppi-Tommola, 'Vuosisadan naisparlamentaarikkoja', 219; Sulkunen, 'Suomi naisten äänioikeuden edelläkävijänä', 41–2; Lähteenmäki, 'Naiset tasa-arvoisemman yhteiskunnan puolesta', 105–10; Sulkunen, 'Suffrage, Nation and Political

Mobilisation', 88–9; von Alftan, *Seitsemän vuosikymmentä Naisasialiitto Unionin historiaa*, 169–70.

41 *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 1: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 6–7; *Naisten Ääni* 29.4.1916, no. 15: 'Naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta avioliitossa', 182.

42 *Nutid* 1.3.1903, no. 3: 'Referat af d:r Maikki Fribergs föredrag i sedlighetsfrågan hållet vid Kvinnosaksförbundet Unionens möte 28 / II 1903', 111–12.

43 E.g. Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings of Equality', 27; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 77–8, 82, 84, 92–3, 98, 106.

44 *Koti ja yhteiskunta* 15.3.1904, no 3: 'Suomen Naisyhdistys 1884-1904', 32.

45 Eg. Bjurman, *Catrines intressanta blekhet*; Lystra, *Searching the Heart*; Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 60, 88, 97–8.

46 *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 1: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 6; *Naisten Ääni* 29.4.1916, no. 15: 'Naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta avioliitossa', 182; *Naisten ääni* 5.5.1917, no. 16: 'Avioliittolain uudistus. Eikö perinpohjaisempia korjauksia', 183–4.

47 *Naisten ääni* 25.3.1916, no. 10: 'Vastauksia "kärsivälle"', 118–19; *Naisten ääni* 26.2.1916, no. 6: 'Vastauksia "kärsivälle"', 67; *Naisten ääni* 4.3.1916, no. 7: 'Vastauksia "kärsivälle"', 84–5.

48 *Naisten ääni* 5.5.1917, no. 16: 'Avioliittolain uudistus. Eikö perinpohjaisempia korjauksia', 183–4.

49 *Naisten ääni* 26.2.1916, no. 6: 'Vastauksia "kärsivälle"', 66–8; *Naisten ääni* 18.3.1916, no. 9: 'Vastauksia "kärsivälle"', 104. See also *Nutid* 1.4.1899, no. 4: 'Framåt går det dock', 102.

50 *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 1: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 6; *Naisten Ääni* 29.4.1916, no. 15: 'Naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta avioliitossa', 182; *Naisten ääni* 26.5.1917, no. 18: 'Mietteitä avioliiton uudistuksesta', 209–10.

51 *Naisten ääni* 26.2.1916 no. 6: 'Vastauksia "kärsivälle"', 66–8; *Naisten ääni* 18.3.1916, no. 9: 'Vastauksia "kärsivälle"'.

52 *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 2: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 23; *Naisten Ääni* 29.4.1916, no. 15: 'Naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta avioliitossa', 182.

53 Bebel's most important book, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (1883), was translated into Finnish in 1904 (*Nainen ja yhteiskunnallinen kysymys*). Nieminen, *Taistelu sukupuolimoraalista*, 105, 124–6, 189, 208–10, 215, 253, 256, 312; Räisänen, *Onnellisen avioliiton ehdot*, 53; Sulkunen, 'Suomi naisten äänioikeuden edelläkävijänä', 11.

54 Nieminen, *Taistelu sukupuolimoraalista*, 124–6, 208–10, 215–16, 221–3, 305, 307, 312; Räisänen, *Onnellisen avioliiton ehdot*, 49, 53–4, 128–9.

55 Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 108–12; Räisänen, *Onnellisen avioliiton ehdot*, 48–53, 126–30; Basch, *Framing American Divorce*, 83–4.

56 Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 108; Räisänen, *Onnellisen avioliiton ehdot*, 50.

57 Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 64, 108–12; Räisänen, *Onnellisen avioliiton ehdot*, 50–3; Hagner and Försti, *Suffragettien sisaret*, 60–1.

58 E.g. Räisänen, *Onnellisen avioliiton ehdot*, 52.

59 This claim is based on reviewing the archives of bourgeois women's associations. The Archive of Union, the League of Finnish Feminists. FNA; The Archive of the

Finnish Women's Association and the Archive of Finnish Women's Union. The City Archive of Helsinki.

60 E.g. 'Skilsmisse i norden', 108–9.

61 Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings', 27–30; Korppi-Tommola, *Tahdolla ja tunteella tasa-arvoa*, 25; Heiskamo, 'Women's Voices', 214–18; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 40–4, 102–3.

62 *Koti ja yhteiskunta* 15.11.1901, no 11: 'Äidin omistusoikeus lapsiin. Neiti Maria Cederschiöldin esitelmä Suomen Naisyhdistyksessä lokak. 8 p:nä 1901', 110–13.

63 Author and suffragist Aleksandra Gripenberg (1857–1913) was also a long-standing president of the Finnish Women's Association, and a member of the Finnish Parliament in 1907–1909. Korppi-Tommola, 'Vuosisadan naisparlamentaarikkoja', 218–19; Sainio, 'Gripenberg, Aleksandra (1857-1913)'.

64 *Koti ja yhteiskunta* 15.7.1905, no. 7–8: 'Naisasian nykyinen kanta Suomessa', 91; *Koti ja yhteiskunta* 15.9.1908, no. 9: 'Suomen naisen oikeusasemasta', 95. *Naisten ääni* 31.3.1929, no. 5–6: 'Te merkilliset olennot', 122. See also *Nutid* 1.3.1903, no. 3: 'Referat af d:r Maikki Fribergs föredrag i sedlighetsfrågan hållet vid Kvinnosaksförbundet Unionens möte 28 / II 1903', 111–12.

65 Tekla Hultin (1864–1943) was a teacher, the main registrar of Statistics Finland, and also the first woman in Finland to receive a doctorate. Korppi-Tommola, 'Vuosisadan naisparlamentaarikkoja', 220–1; Sainio, 'Hultin, Tekla (1864-1943)'.

66 *Naisten Ääni* 1906, no. 6–7: 'Parannuksia naisen oikeusasemassa', 89–90.

67 *Koti ja yhteiskunta* 15.11.1901, no. 11: 'Äidin omistusoikeus lapsiin. Neiti Maria Cederschiöldin esitelmä Suomen Naisyhdistyksessä lokak. 8 p:nä 1901', 113; *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 1: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 6; *Naisten ääni* 1907, no. 2: 'Naidun naisen persoonallisesta vapaudesta', 23; *Koti ja yhteiskunta* 15.9.1908, no. 9: 'Suomen naisen oikeusasemasta', 95.

68 Kurki-Suonio, *Äidin hoivasta yhteishuoltoon*, 387–8.

69 Jallinoja, *Suomalaisen naisasialiikkeen taistelukaudet*, 53–7, 63; Hagner and Försti, *Suffragettien sisaret*, 16, 44–5, 82.

70 Sulkunen, 'Naisten järjestäytyminen', 158–67, 171–2; Ollila, *Suomen kotien päivä valkenee*, 37–42, 46–51, 56–62, 132–45; Räisänen, *Onnellisen avioliiton ehdot*, 116–20; Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings', 32–3.

71 Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings', 32–3; Heiskamo, 'Women's Voices', 214–15; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 26.

72 von Alftan, *Seitsemän vuosikymmentä Naisasialiitto Unionin historiaa*, 119–20.

73 *Naisten ääni* 1911, no. 3: 'Suomalaisen naisliiton luentopäivät Helsingissä maalisk. 1–3 p:nä', 32–3; *Naisten ääni* 1911, no. 8: 'Avioliittolainsäädäntö', 86–7; *Naisten ääni* 1911, no. 12: 'Eräitä ponsilauseita siitä, mihin suuntaan voimassa oleva avioliittolakimme on uudistettava', 136–7.

74 E.g. von Alftan, *Seitsemän vuosikymmentä Naisasialiitto Unionin historiaa*, 115–20; Hagner and Försti, *Suffragettien sisaret*, 52, 54; Kangas, *Omaisuuden yhteisyydestä*,

75 Korppi-Tommola, *Tahdolla ja tunteella tasa-arvoa*, 64. E.g. *Koti ja yhteiskunta* 15.6.1907, no. 6: 'Äidin oikeus lapsiinsa', 69; *Koti ja yhteiskunta* 15.2.1911, no. 2–3: 'Naisten anomukset eduskunnassa', 14–16.

76 Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 43; Kangas, *Omaisuuden yhteisyydestä*, 15–44.

77 Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings', 33–4; Melby et al., 'The Nordic Model of Marriage', 659; Lähteenmäki, 'Naiset tasa-arvoisemman yhteiskunnan puolesta',

100; Kangas, *Omaisuuden yhteisyydestä*, 13–61; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 37–48, 53–65, 80–1, 87, 96–7.

78 Lucina Hagman (1853–1946) was a supporter of the liberal stance of the Finnish bourgeois women's movement. Alongside Aleksandra Gripenberg, she was the most influental feminist in Finland. She was also a principal of the Finnish co-educational school and founder and chair of the new Finnish co-educational school. von Alfthan, *Seitsemän vuosikymmentä Naisasialiitto Unionin historiaa*, 30–42; Korppi-Tommola, 'Vuosisadan naisparlamentaarikkoja', 220–1; Ollila, 'Hagman, Lucina (1853-1946)'.

79 E.g. VPA, Liitteet III: 27.5.1907, anomusehdotus no. 2, 5–14; VPA, Liitteet III: 18.2.1908, anomusehdotus no. 8, 5–6.

80 E.g. VPA, Liitteet IX, III: 15.8.1908, anomusehdotus no. 133, 50–3; VPA, Liitteet III: 14.3.1910, anomusehdotus no. 64, 112–13.

81 Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings', 36; Melby et al., 'Introduction', 20–1; Melby et al., 'Inledning, 654–5; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 96–7, 102.

82 Hilda Käkikoski (1864–1912) was an author, vice-chairman of the Finnish Women's Association, and teacher of history in the Finnish co-educational school in Helsinki. Korppi-Tommola, 'Vuosisadan naisparlamentaarikkoja', 219–20; Ahtisaari, 'Käkikoski, Hilda (1864-1912)'.

83 Hedvig Gebhard (1861–1961) was a member of the Finnish Parliament, and she also acted as a journalist both for the Pellervo periodical and Kotiliesi periodical, which concentrated on the education of homemakers. Korppi-Tommola, 'Vuosisadan naisparlamentaarikkoja', 217, 219; Sysiharju, 'Gebhard, Hedvig (1867-1961)'.

84 E.g. VPA, Liitteet III: 29.5.1907, anomusehdotus no. 18, 20–2; VPA, Liitteet III: 11.3.1910, anomusehdotus no. 69, 115; VPA, Liitteet III: 14.3.1912, anomusehdotus no. 64, 21.

85 VPA, Liitteet IX, III: 15.8.1908, anomusehdotus no. 133, 50–3; VPA, Liitteet III: 14.3.1910, anomusehdotus no. 64, 112–13.

86 *Lausunto koskeva Lainvalmistelukunnan mietintöä*, 20. See also Kangas, *Omaisuuden yhteisyydestä*, 58–64; Hagner and Försti, *Suffragettien sisaret*, 55; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 97.

87 VPA, Liitteet III: 24.4.1917, anomusehdotus no. 13, 162–4; VPA, Pöytäkirjat I: 22.6.1917, 609–11.

88 Mahkonen, *Avioero*, 153, 162–8, 178–81, 203–11.

89 Mahkonen, *Avioero*, 176.

90 Mahkonen, *Avioero*, 150–9, 178–84.

91 Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 99.

92 VPA, Asiakirjat I: 25.2.1921, Hallituksen esitys no. 2 laiksi aviopuolisoiden oikeussuhteista; VPA, Asiakirjat III: 30.11.1923, Lakivaliokunnan mietintö N:o 5 Hallituksen esityksen johdosta laiksi aviopuolisoiden oikeussuhteista; *Ehdotus uudeksi aviokaareksi*; VPA, Asiakirjat III: 14.10.1927, Hallituksen esitys no. 40 uudeksi aviokaareksi; VPA, Asiakirjat III: 14.11.1928, Lakivaliokunnan mietintö N:o 2 hallituksen esityksen johdosta uudeksi aviokaareksi. See also Allardt, *Miljöbetingade differenser*, 133–9; Kangas, *Omaisuuden yhteisyydestä*, 65–73; Mahkonen, *Avioero*, 3, 152–3, 184–99.

93 See Mahkonen, *Avioero*, 55–4, 112–44.

94 Grönvall, *Uusi avioliittolainsäädäntö*, 77–84, 207–13; Mahkonen *Avioero*, 199–201.

95 Grönvall, *Uusi avioliittolainsäädäntö*, 87–8, 216; Kurki-Suonio, *Äidin hoivasta yhteishuoltoon*, 375–9; Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings', 36; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 102–3.

96 Pylkkänen, 'Finnish Understandings', 36; Melby et al., 'Introduction', 16–17; Melby et al., 'The Nordic Model of Marriage', 655–6; Kurki-Suonio, *Äidin hoivasta yhteishuoltoon*, 377; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 102–3.

97 Kurki-Suonio, *Äidin hoivasta yhteishuoltoon*, 398–408, 440–5, 481–2.

98 Mandi Hannula was a teacher and long-standing politician who had an important role promoting the new Marriage Act in the Finnish parliament in the 1920s. She was also active in the temperance movement and the Martha Organization, and was a member of the editorial staff of the Kotiliesi periodical. Marjomaa, 'Hannula, Mandi (1880-1952)'.

99 VPA, Asiakirjat III: 14.11.1928, Lakivaliokunnan mietintö N:o 2 hallituksen esityksen johdosta uudeksi aviokaareksi, vastalauseet, 42–3; VPA, Pöytäkirjat I: 8.2.1929, 62; VPA, Pöytäkirjat I: 62, 1.3.1929, 342–3.

100 Sysiharju, 'Gebhard, Hedvig (1867-1961)'.

101 See Marjomaa, 'Hannula, Mandi (1880-1952)'.

102 von Alftan, *Seitsemän vuosikymmentä Naisasialiitto Unionin historiaa*, 26–30, 48–51, 53.

103 The Archive of Union, the League of Finnish Feminists. FNA; The Archive of the Finnish Women's Association and the Archive of Finnish Women's Union. The City Archive of Helsinki.

104 Phillips, *Putting Asunder*, 500–7; Copley, *Sexual Moralities in France*, 113; Basch, *Framing American Divorce*, 69, 72.

105 'Skilsmisse i norden', 118–19.

106 Räisänen, *Onnellisen avioliiton ehdot*, 109–16; Pylkkänen, *Trapped in Equality*, 75–6; Markkola *Synti ja siveys*, 132. Religion had, in general, a great influence on the ideology and actions of Nordic upper-middle-class women. E.g. Markkola *Gender and Vocation*; Markkola, *Synti ja siveys*.

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