

Justice beyond Status and Authority: Constitutional Equality and Legal Accountability in Modern Legal Systems

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Abstract

This research examined the nature of constitutional equality and legal responsibility in contemporary legal systems, focusing on justice beyond status and authority. The research method was quantitative, with doctrinal legal analysis and descriptive survey research as the approaches. The sample consisted of 120 law students, lawyers, legal academics, and practitioners in human rights or legal aid who participated in the study using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The secondary data were obtained from the constitutional principles, legal literature, and legal materials. The results showed strong agreement that constitutional equality guarantees equality for people across all social statuses (mean = 4.26, SD = 0.75). There was also strong agreement that there should be legal responsibility to stop people from abusing their authority (mean = 4.22, SD = 0.72). Judicial independence scored an average of 4.43 (SD = 0.67), indicating that the importance of impartial legal protection was recognised. Access to justice (mean = 4.44, SD = 0.68) was the most important factor to achieve real equality and had the highest mean score. The overall mean score of 4.34 (SD = 0.71) suggested that participants broadly agreed with the notion that no person, office, or institution is above the law. The results indicate that equality can only be achieved if there is accountability for all citizens, regardless of race or creed, and if there are fair and accessible remedies and impartial courts.

Keywords: Access to Justice, Constitutional Equality, Judicial Independence, Legal Accountability, Rule of Law, Status

1. Introduction

Justice is one of the most important principles in democratic societies, as it ensures that all individuals receive equal protection under the law. Further, justice ensures that an individual is treated equally, regardless of their position in society, wealth, political power, or institutional power. Public authorities must operate within the parameters set by the constitution. The principle of justice beyond status and authority means no one or no institution should be immune from legal responsibility by virtue of power or position. Equality before the law and the accountability of institutions have become a hot topic in legal theory, legal practice, and public policy, given the increasing interconnectedness and legal complexity of society (Daly, 2023; Krygier, 2022).

The emphasis on constitutional equality signifies that democracy focuses on political mechanisms and institutions recognised as fair, transparent, and impartial. Equality before the law is essential not only constitutionally, but practically as well, to keep the confidence of the public in the judicial system of a country. No citizen would disagree that courts and authorities of law should apply the law without bias, favour, or discrimination. In many nations, the effective realisation of constitutional equality is challenged by unequal access to justice, selective law enforcement, and political interference. Experiments show that the public trusts legal institutions more when judicial independence and accountability mechanisms are strengthened (Contiades & Fotiadou, 2024; Dixon & Landau, 2023).

As corruption, the abuse of authority, and misconduct in institutional management are on the rise, legal accountability has become important. Many governments around the world are introducing constitutional reforms, judicial oversight mechanisms, and independent accountability institutions so that public officials remain law-bound. Accountability ensures transparency, limits capricious choices, and bolsters the legitimacy of democracy. As the new legal research shows, constitutional accountability mechanisms strengthen the rule of law and democratic resilience by limiting the abuse of governmental power (Ginsburg & Huq, 2023; Barber, 2022).

Justice does not just mean that a provision is on the statute book. There are many provisions in Various constitutions of the world. But what matters is how these constitutional provisions are implemented at the ground level, in everyday governance. Increased awareness, the growth of civilization, technological developments, globalization, human rights movements, and more have placed greater demands on equal treatment. There is a more reliable institution. People expect the law to protect constitutional rights and to hold those in authority accountable for their conduct. As a result, the analysis of constitutional equality and legal accountability reveals that modern legal systems can deliver justice free from status, authority, or political influence (Bellamy, 2023; Tushnet, 2024).

1.1 Background of the Study

Constitutional democracy has existed for millennia, in which constituents must receive equal justice, among other benefits. The early ideas of the constitution sought to replace the arbitrary exercise of power with the rule of law, separation of powers, and judicial review. With the essential growth of the constitution, focusing on important rights, limiting the power of government, and creating measures that provide equality before the law. These constitutional ideals have generally achieved international acceptance; however, not all legal systems can escape the unequal impact of laws and the disparity in access to justice (Gardbaum, 2023; Kavanagh, 2022).

Over the past few decades, constitutional equality has garnered renewed scholarly interest owing to heightened worries around political polarization, executive overreach, judicial independence, and discriminatory treatment in legal institutions. In the opinion of international organizations and constitutional experts alike, constitutional texts are insufficient for achieving democratic stability. Instead, democratic stability is closely linked to legal accountability efforts that ensure the observance of the constitution. The view of independent courts, constitutional review, anti-corruption institutions, and transparent governance structures as safeguards against the abuse of public authority is on the rise (European Commission for Democracy through Law, 2023; Ginsburg & Huq, 2023).

One of the significant challenges is the essential requirement for constitutional governance in the context of globalization and digital transformation. Nowadays, governments are dealing with complex legal issues related to digital rights, artificial intelligence, privacy protection, transnational crime, and public accountability. To guarantee a balance between government power and individual freedom. And guaranteeing all are treated equally under the law. Recent legal studies argue that constitutional accountability must confront new governance challenges without

losing its essence of equality, fairness, and the rule of law (Sourdin, 2023; Fenwick & Phillipson, 2022).

Many jurisdictions have enacted constitutional reforms, but little has changed afterward. Disparity in treatment based on political influence, social class, or institutional power continues to undermine public trust in law. Concerns of this kind open the way to investigating the way equality before the Constitution interacts with legal accountability in effecting justice beyond status and power. A better grasp of this association may also prompt legal reforms to buttress judicial independence, enhance institutional transparency, and ensure the consistent and fair application of constitutional protections across current-era legal systems (Dixon & Landau, 2023; Contiades & Fotiadou, 2024).

1.2 Research Problem

The research issue is the gap between constitutional equality and legal accountability today. Though racist and Asiatic practices of the West were grossly condemned, the Constitution and laws maintain equality before the law. Still, the application of the law depends on power, position, pecuniary position, political party, official position, social status, etc. This contradiction creates a conflict between the ideal and the real. The average person suffers as a result of limited legal knowledge, restricted access to the courts, and money power. This act gives the rich class the power to shed any liability. The literature on access to justice emphasises the need for concrete mechanisms, rather than just paper guarantees, through which people can claim their rights.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To find out how constitutional equality helped to validate that no one is above the law.
2. To assess how legal accountability may deter the misuse of public authority, institutional power and social privilege.
3. To explain how judicial review, separation of powers, due process, and independent courts protected equal justice.
4. To identify the challenges that weakened constitutional equality, including corruption, selective enforcement, political influence, unequal access to justice, and institutional bias.

1.4 Questions of the Study

1. How did constitutional equality support the notion that all persons remained equal before the law?
2. How did laws serve to control the misuse of status, authority, and institutional power?
3. What did independent courts and judicial scrutiny do to uphold equality and accountability in the system?
4. 4. What challenges arose in working with the equal application of law in modern systems?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Constitutional Equality, Equal Protection, and the Rule of Law

Equality before the law was so explained as a condition of law, in which the "privileges of the cardinal power" were denied and in which the "privileges of the position of authority" and the "privileges of the position of institutions" lacked any special immunities from being held responsible for the ordinary laws. The linkage between the idea of constitutional equality and the rule of law is relevant only to the extent that constitutional equality was regarded as a condition of

the rule of law: the law must be applied to rulers and people alike by the same public processes. Equal protection could not only be about equal barriers to market entry for all groups of people, but also about how the inequalities of dominant, powerful, and official groups in legal systems are managed (Acemoglu & Wolitzky, 2021; Chng, 2023).

It was also clear from the literature that, for states to uphold equal protection, it would be required for courts to consider the purpose and effect of state action. Even though the legal terms used were 'neutral' from an executive perspective, they may have had an unfair effect on disadvantaged groups. Because of this, it was necessary to read between the lines of constitutional equality and to ask whether the public authority's classification, its approach to discretion, or its policy design had a disadvantageous effect. Additionally, the concepts of social history, racial disadvantage, institutional practices, and social exclusion had to be considered in the adjudication of equality at the structural level. It suggested that there had to be a search for hidden inequality rather than the official line in the court when it came to justice for everyone, not just those of status and authority (Chng, 2022; Parkes & Lawrence, 2024).

The theme of equality was also connected with the functional (as it works) interpretation of the role of the judiciary in the Constitution. Access to the right to equal legal treatment was weak, as people had no means to challenge administrative action, obtain remedies, or obtain independent review. The multi-level political hierarchies showed that sometimes public decisions made it to very complex levels of administration. Hence, the ordinary citizen struggled to consider them and hold them accountable. In these, equality meant that there had to be public action subject to inspection, accessible procedures, and courts that would consider public action. De Bellis (2021) and Chng (2023) also argue that substantive review had an impact on equality, as it enabled courts to examine whether state action is accorded weight in relation to constitutional values, rather than merely whether the court followed procedural requirements.

Legality, Autonomy of the Judiciary, and Restrictions on Public Authorities
In more recent studies, the willingness to assume the legal burden has been expressed as a threat to the institution's independence, rather than as a demand for the legitimacy of judicial and governmental power. Courts were independent within a judicial system and not subject to political interference; this, in turn, ensured accountability for the abuse, misconduct, and irresponsible decisions courts might make. There was a debate over scholarship regarding fair processes of judicial discipline and removal as a means to promote judicial independence, provided that it was done within legal, transparent, and due process. Judicial dialogue also played a prominent role during periods of rule-of-law deterioration, in which courts or supranational legal institutions resorted to judicial arguments to avoid political pressure. This indicated that, for some institutions, it was possible to maintain independence in the face of accountability, as judges were unpredictable and might not consider documents that would otherwise be exempt from the Minister's inspection. In contrast, for other institutions, the opposite was true: independence coupled with accountability; that is, a judge could be made accountable for not acting according to the law, but not for arbitrary action; and documents would be exempt from inspection by the Minister even if they were not in any other way.

To find results in the literature, it was found that accountability depended on the integrity in the appointment of judges and the court's credibility. Judges were politicised and appointed out of turn, raising questions about legitimacy, neutrality and constitutional trust in the courts. Research on the struggle for the rule of law in Poland found that one aspect of civil society's involvement, especially in the fight for judicial independence against political pressure, involved Civil Society Organizations, the Legal Industry, and public institutions. Other studies of judges illegally appointed demonstrated that tainted appointments had long-term consequences for the constitution, related to the illegality of the appointment (however, the effect was more on the right to a lawful tribunal and the fairness of the result). Based on these studies, it is possible to draw the first conclusion: Justice above law requires not only independent judges but also fair (and

transparent) ways of selecting and monitoring judges (Bojarski, 2021; Szwed, 2023). This literature revealed that legal accountability operated as an institutional network rather than a rule, and that this network reduced the abuse of power in courts, the administration, and public offices (Lurie, 2023; De Bellis, 2021).

2.2 Access to justice, legal technology, and Accountability

In the literature, a trend towards access to justice as a practical necessity for equality under the Constitution was emerging. A system of law could say that everyone has equal rights, but those rights are not protected because people don't know the law, don't have any money, don't have anyone representing them, and don't know what procedures to follow. Civil justice uncovered that the personal experiences of access to justice went beyond access to the court to 'awareness of legal issues', access to legal procedures, access to decisions, and access to a remedy that was fair. Research indicated that many people faced legal problems but lacked legal representation, leading to an "uncircle" between legal rights and legal solutions (Dylag, 2023; Sandefur, 2019). Digital transformation has also featured in recent literature as both a chance for equality and accountability and a threat to it. The plan was to use online legal services, digital platforms, and automated court interfaces to hasten the process, make it more accessible, and lower costs. But the authors raised the potential for technology to create inequality if they lack digital literacy, if technology is not formally provided with language support or accessible features, if it lacks users' trust, and if the online process does not have their trust. This literature revealed that access to technology offered greater potential for equality only when new pathways to achievement were created, thereby decreasing opportunities for people with disabilities to enter. There was a hint in this literature that the implementation of technological instruments would not benefit the constitutionally guaranteed equality of all persons unless there is some reduction of the exclusion of people with disabilities, which encompasses the involvement that creates new forms of exclusion, procedural disadvantage (Kiršienė et al., 2022; Sela, 2021).

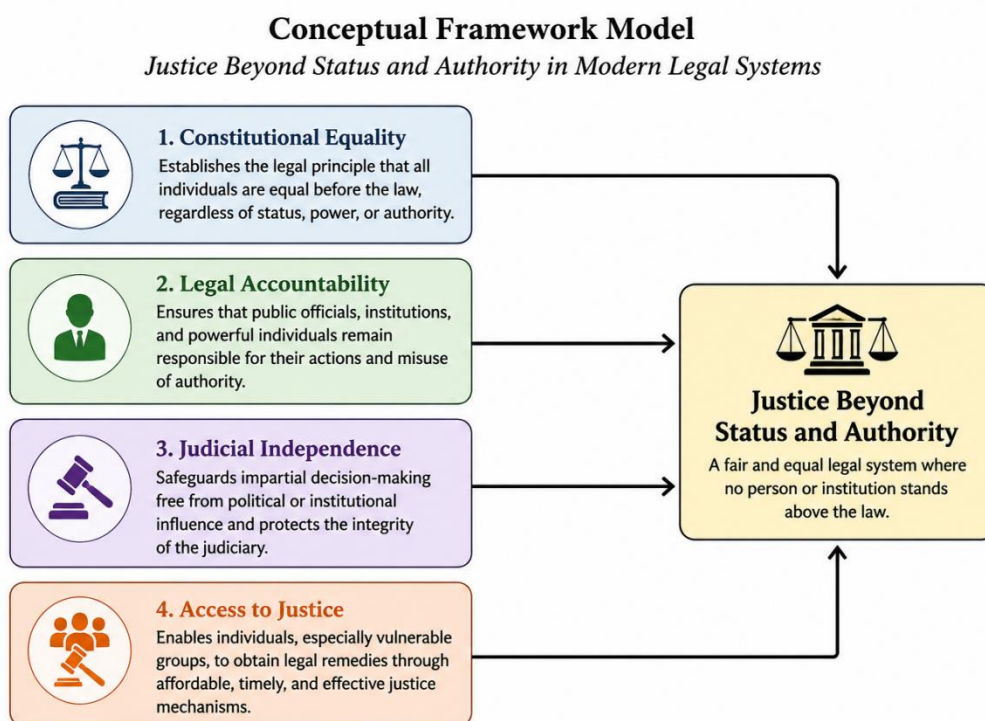
Going beyond the scope of the public sphere and beyond the boundaries of public institutions, the literature also made it its point to hold the influential private actors to account, as they might have the capacity to shape public discourse. Profound legal changes in the modern era have affected businesses, corporations, and financial institutions, with an undeniable impact on rights, markets, public policy, transnational businesses, and digital platforms. Corporate power challenged the traditional notion of the rule of law, since private power could blur private lives, as public power can. A brief research paper on corporate influence had called for guns to be able to function with and control private power. At the same time, in the course of the study on access to justice, it became apparent that ordinary people did need something that would allow them to raise their grievances and claims, and to escalate them through concrete channels to deal, to some degree, with imposing bodies. It also facilitated the segment of the argument for justice beyond status and authority and contributed to the advocacy of public institutions' accountability and private centres of power's accountability (Uvarova, 2025; Sandefur, 2019).

2.3 Conceptual Framework Model

Four interrelated and complementary legal principles have been recognized as key for aspirations of justice beyond status and authority in contemporary legal systems: (1) constitutional equality, (2) legal accountability, (3) judicial independence, and (4) the right to access justice. The principle of constitutional equality guarantees the same level of protection for every human being, irrespective of their institutions, financial means, political party, or social status. Ensuring enforceability depends on legal structures that hold public bodies, institutions, and other actors to account for committing crimes or abusing their powers. Judicial independence ensures that courts

decide cases impartially, without political or institutional influence, and ensures equality and the rule of law. Access to justice is essential to the implementation of these principles and is fundamental in providing individuals with a way to seek legal remedies that are accessible, efficient, and affordable. The four principles are interconnected and form a unified legal framework that is fair, open, impartial, treats all people and institutions equally, does not allow anyone or any organisation to be exempt from the law, and ensures that justice is equally applied in modern systems of constitutional law.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Model



3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The method of this study was a quantitative research design that examined the concept of justice beyond authority and rank in the modern legal system, focusing on the contributions of constitutionality and accountability to equality through legal research. This study used a doctrinal (legal) approach with a descriptive survey design. The doctrinal material analyzed values such as the rule of law, equality before the law, and the accountability of the judiciary, as well as other values from constitutional doctrine. The descriptive part was used to assess respondents' attitudes and perceptions regarding whether today's legal systems treat all people equally, regardless of status, authority, political power, or social position.

3.2 Population of the study

The study population comprised individuals involved in law, governance, constitutional rights, and the administration of justice. Members of this group included lawyers, law students, legal

researchers, law professors, human rights workers, and others knowledgeable in legal or constitutional matters. They were selected based on their knowledge of equality before the law, legal accountability, judicial independence, the rule of law, and access to justice.

3.3 Sample and Sample Size

The study involved 120 participants – practising lawyers, students, academics, legal researchers and human rights or legal aid advocates. The sample comprised a variety of viewpoints from the legal and justice sectors. It was considered adequate for descriptive analysis, but not too large as to be impractical for this study.

3.4 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling approach was used to select participants because personal knowledge of various aspects of constitutional law, legal responsibility, the rule of law, and equality before the law was particularly important to the study. The respondents were not selected from the public, as special legal knowledge is required. This was a way to gather valuable, relevant information.

3.5 Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary sources were used for data collection. A Structured Interview was used as the main data collection tool, with questions asked of the participants. The questionnaire addressed the concepts of equality, legal responsibility, the rule of law, judicial independence, equality before the law, and the role of status/authority in judicial decision-making.

3.6 Research Instrument

The main data collection tool was a structured questionnaire. It consisted of both negatively and positively worded statements, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The questionnaire aimed to evaluate the longitudinal value of the topics of equality of the person, equal treatment under the law, constitutional equality, legal accountability, judicial independence, and barriers to justice.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The respondents (selected) filled out the questionnaire after being informed of the purpose of the study. They were instructed to answer based on their knowledge and experience. Data collection was planned to ensure responses were clear, relevant, and reliable.

3.8 Data Analysis Method

A descriptive statistical approach was used to process and analyze the collected data. The frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to compile, tabulate, and analyse the responses to the questionnaires. These statistical tools enabled the evaluation of respondents' levels of agreement or disagreement with the principles of equality before the law and legal accountability.

4. Results And Analysis

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

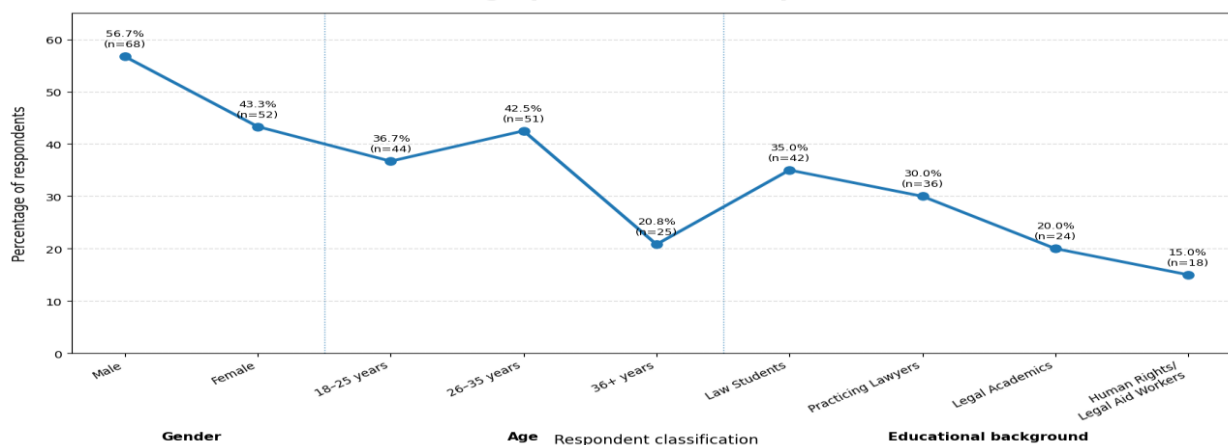
This analysis described the background characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Category	Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	68	56.7%
	Female	52	43.3%
Age	18–25 years	44	36.7%
	26–35 years	51	42.5%
	36 years and above	25	20.8%
Educational Background	Law Students	42	35.0%
	Practicing Lawyers	36	30.0%
	Legal Academics	24	20.0%
	Human Rights/Legal Aid Workers	18	15.0%
Total		120	100%

The demographic profile of the respondents is shown in Table 1. The results showed that 68 respondents participated; 56.7% were male, and 52 respondents (43.3%) were female. This shows that both men and women were involved with the study, and it also shows that a larger percentage of men were involved than women. The 26-35 age group (42.5%—51 respondents) was the most dominant age group, based on the age distribution. The 18 (18-25) and 44 (36.7%) respondents were 26-35 years old, and 25 (20.8%) were 36 years and above. This result identified young (early career on work journey) and mature respondents in this study. According to their education and professional backgrounds, 42 respondents were studying law, 36 were currently working as lawyers, 24 were legal academics, and 18 were human rights activists and legal Aid workers. It was essential to have these groups present, as the topic raised issues of conscious thinking about legal systems, constitutional thinking, equality before the law, and public accountability.

Figure 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents
Demographic Profile of Respondents



4.2 Constitutional Equality and Equal Treatment Before Law

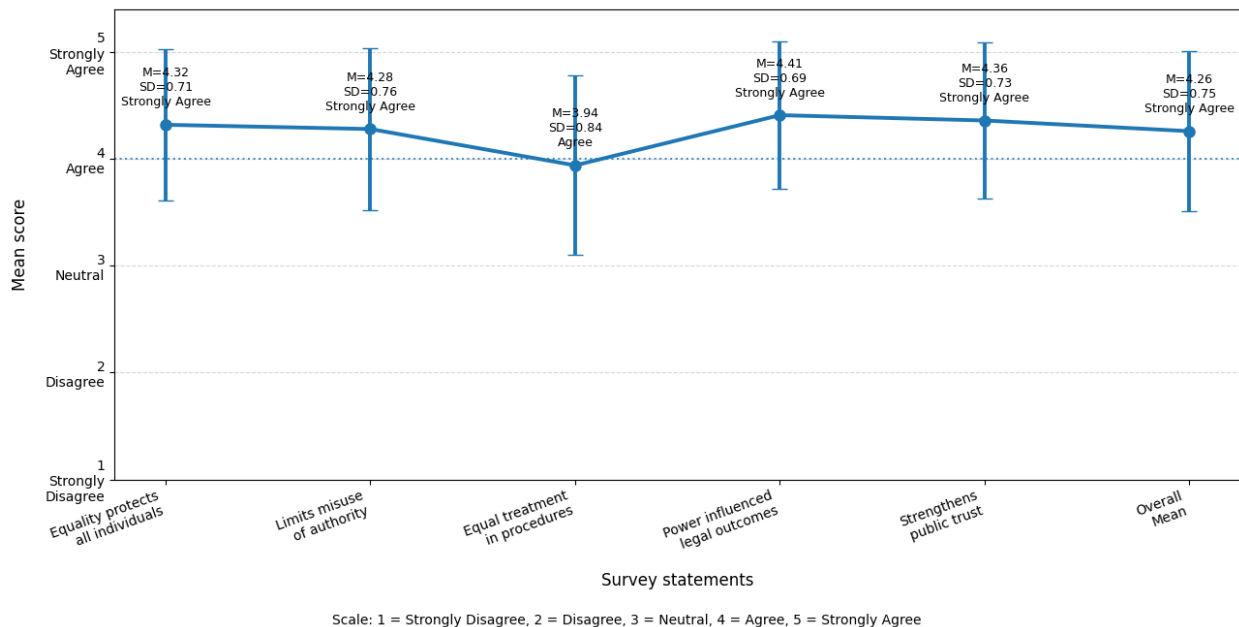
This analysis explored respondents' perceptions of constitutional equality and whether modern law is universal and equal to all men, irrespective of social standing, political rank, or power.

Table 2. Respondents' Views on Constitutional Equality

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Constitutional equality protected all individuals regardless of social status.	4.32	0.71	Strongly Agree
Equality before the law limited the misuse of authority.	4.28	0.76	Strongly Agree
Modern legal systems promote equal treatment in legal procedures.	3.94	0.84	Agree
Political or economic power still influenced legal outcomes.	4.41	0.69	Strongly Agree
Equal protection of the law strengthened public trust in justice institutions.	4.36	0.73	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.26	0.75	Strongly Agree

The results on respondents' views on constitutional equality and equal treatment before the law are presented in Table 2. Overall, respondents showed strong agreement, with an average score of 4.26. This led to the finding that respondents felt the principle of equality is to be adhered to by the legal system in the modern world, as enshrined in the Constitution. The mean for the statement that "Political or economic power still affected the legal result" was the highest at 4.41. The discovery showed that the respondents knew that there were 'gaps' between the ideals in the Constitution and the practice of the law. The next statement to receive strong agreement was equal protection of the law (mean score = 4.36). This showed that there was a link between equality and trust in legal institutions.

Figure 3: Respondents' Views on Constitutional Equality
Respondents' Views on Constitutional Equality



4.3 Legal Accountability and Misuse of Authority

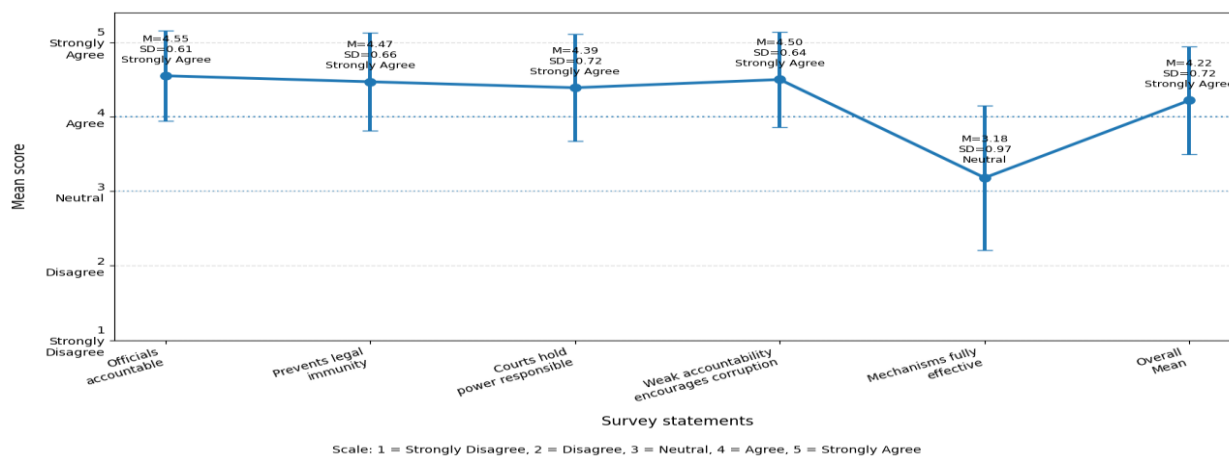
This analysis examined the role of legal accountability in controlling public officials, institutions, and powerful individuals.

Table 3. Respondents' Views on Legal Accountability

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Public officials should remain legally accountable for misuse of power.	4.55	0.61	Strongly Agree
Legal accountability prevented authority from turning into legal immunity.	4.47	0.66	Strongly Agree
Independent courts played an important role in holding powerful actors responsible.	4.39	0.72	Strongly Agree
Weak accountability encouraged corruption and selective law enforcement.	4.50	0.64	Strongly Agree
Accountability mechanisms in modern legal systems are fully effective.	3.18	0.97	Neutral
Overall Mean	4.22	0.72	Strongly Agree

Table 3 shows participants' attitudes toward legal responsibilities and misuse of power. The overall mean score showed strong consensus at 4.22. A finding indicated that respondents believed that legal responsibility in controlling the abuse of power was important. They believed that state officials and officials at various other levels of government, such as judges, police, administrators, and political officials, were subject to the same accountability as any other citizen for their own unlawful conduct. The maximum mean score was 4.55 on the statement "Public officials should be held legally liable for the misuse of power. It was quite obvious that this strongly endorsed the idea that nobody was held responsible for its consequences, given its official nature. However, weak accountability (mean score 4.50) was accompanied by strong disagreement among respondents, which promoted corruption and selective law enforcement. They accepted the concept of accountability and strongly felt that accountability systems were not always operating effectively.

Figure 4: Respondents' Views on Legal Accountability
Respondents' Views on Legal Accountability



4.4 Judicial Independence and Protection of Justice

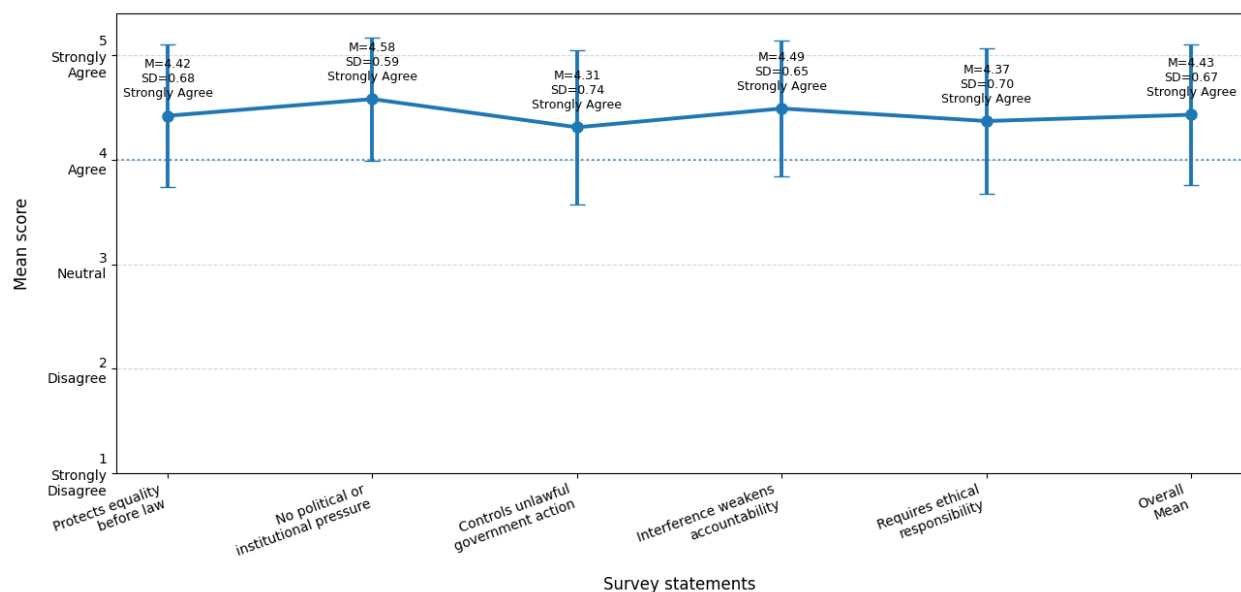
This table explores the role of autonomous judicial systems in constitutional equality and legal liability.

Table 4. Respondents' Views on Judicial Independence

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Judicial independence protected the principle of equality before the law.	4.42	0.68	Strongly Agree
Courts should decide cases without political or institutional pressure.	4.58	0.59	Strongly Agree
Judicial review helped control unlawful government action.	4.31	0.74	Strongly Agree
Political interference weakened legal accountability.	4.49	0.65	Strongly Agree
Judicial independence requires judges to exercise ethical responsibility.	4.37	0.70	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.43	0.67	Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 4, the respondents' attitudes towards judicial independence and the protection of justice are positive. According to the respondents' views presented in Table 4, their attitudes toward judicial independence and judicial protection are positive. The mean score was 4.43, indicating a good level of agreement. This meant that having an independent judiciary was important to respondents to ensure equality in the constitution and accountability in the law. Without political or institutional influence, a statement by an independent court scored the highest average rating of 4.58. This finding showed strong support among respondents for independent decision-making. It also advised on political interference as a grave threat to justice. The second value was judicial independence, with a mean score of 4.37; respondents strongly agreed that judicial independence is needed. This result implied that the respondents did not think judicial independence was absolute.

Figure 5: Respondents' Views on Judicial Independence
Respondents' Views on Judicial Independence



Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

4.5 Access to Justice and Practical Equality

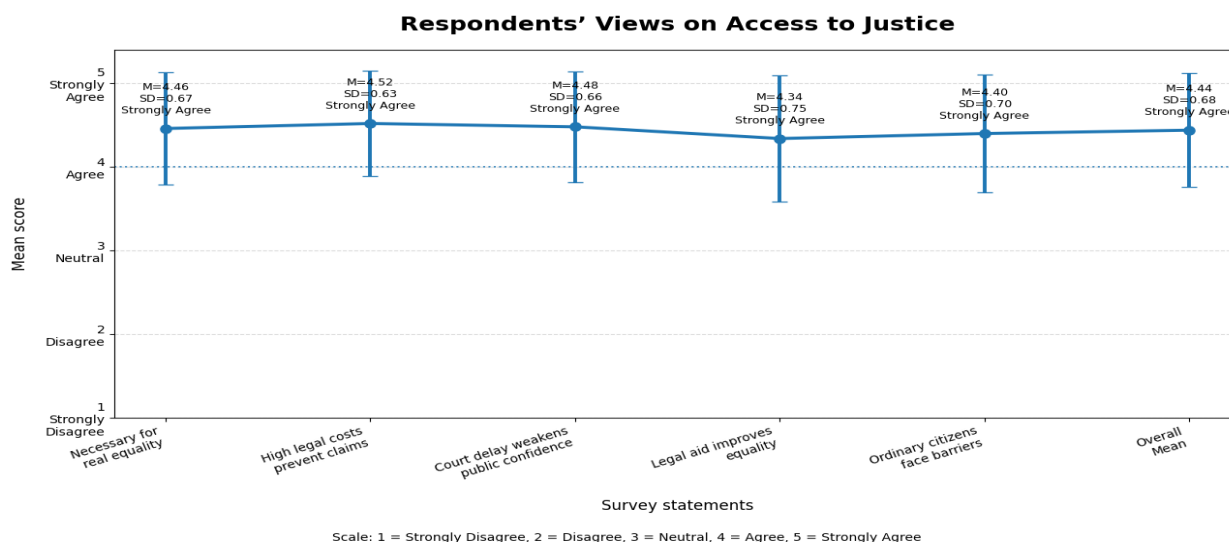
This analysis examined whether ordinary citizens could access legal remedies and whether access to justice affected constitutional equality in practice.

Table 5. Respondents' Views on Access to Justice

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Access to justice was necessary for real constitutional equality.	4.46	0.67	Strongly Agree
High legal costs prevented many people from claiming their rights.	4.52	0.63	Strongly Agree
Delays in court proceedings weakened public confidence in the justice system.	4.48	0.66	Strongly Agree
Legal aid improved equality for poor and vulnerable people.	4.34	0.75	Strongly Agree
Ordinary citizens faced more barriers than powerful individuals in legal disputes.	4.40	0.70	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.44	0.68	Strongly Agree

Table 5 presents respondents' perceptions regarding access to justice and equality in practice. The range of agreement was significantly above the general level, with an overall mean score of 4.44. This discovery implied that participants in the survey perceived a need for constitutional equality to encompass people's access to the law in practice. Rights and protections were not truly realised until they could gain access to courts, were literate enough to understand how countries work, could access lawyers, and could obtain remedies and have them delivered in a timely fashion. The long process of going to court was very costly, financially, for poor and vulnerable people, so that one of the most significant factors that hindered justice was financial, characterised by saying "Many people were inhibited from claiming their rights due to the high cost of the legal process", which had the highest mean score of 4.52. Public trust in Justice was undermined by the length of time taken in court, which had a mean score of 4.48. This discovery not only showed that time and procedure influenced justice, but also that the law did.

Figure 6: Respondents' Views on Access to Justice



5. Discussion

The outcomes revealed a strong link between justice beyond status and authority and equality for women under the law, access to justice, legal accountability, and the independence of the judiciary. According to respondents, equality before the law is not merely a constitutional promise but a legal obligation for public officials, courts, and institutions to treat all citizens equally and fairly. This aligns with a recent finding that the rule of law enhances democracy and equality and enables rules to work effectively at the borders (Webber, 2024; Sunstein, 2024).

Political and economic power, the results showed, continues to shape judicial outcomes. The finding highlighted the discrepancy between the Constitution's hopes and the law in practice. Modern constitutional protections guarantee equality, yet citizens' social status continues to create differential impacts on representation, efficiency, treatment, etc. This is consistent with conclusions that legal systems distort when the law is used to legitimise authority rather than curb its excesses, according to Winter (2022) and Foran (2022).

The study's findings also highlight the need to make responsible authorities legally accountable, so they are not granted legal immunity. Respondents agreed that public officials at different levels of power may mislead them and that these officials should be held accountable for their actions. The participants seem to believe that it is not possible to escape the law because of one's office, institutional status, or rank. Such results are consistent with the scholarship indicating that the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and the effective functioning of the administration are essential for constitutional governance (De Gaetano, 2024; Malik, 2023).

There were mixed responses to questions about the effectiveness of accountability systems, with some participants confident in accountability and others doubting its enforceability. The law quoted above speaks to evaluating law beyond its text, as well as to the actions taken against powerful people (investigate, review, or punish). The evidence reinforces studies that argue public confidence stems from perceived court integrity, prior experience, and the absence of political manipulation or misinformation (De Micheli & Taylor 2024; Bayer 2024).

The sample is strongly in favour of an independent judiciary. Courts are essential to ensure equality before the law, to check unaccountable government actions, and to prevent selective enforcement. Moreover, according to the respondents, the judges are morally bound in their judgments regarding the independence of the judiciary. Independence did not mean freedom without limits, but it meant a type of freedom – one that is protected, just, transparent & accountable (Tepelija, 2025; Piątek, 2025).

Research on access to justice has shown that practical access is necessary to achieve true constitutional equality. Respondents reported that high legal costs, court delays, and a lack of legal knowledge and legal assistance hinder ordinary citizens. So, it was noted that many people could not afford the legal representation of their choice and were unable to get timely remedies. This finding also highlights previous studies that have shown the importance of legal empowerment and legal aid, along with practical solutions for communities at risk (Chaara et al., 2022; Storgaard, 2023).

5.2 Conclusion

The member states have noted at various times that the European human rights apparatus is not perfect. Equality mandated by the Constitution, accountability that prevents the abuse of power, judicial independence that ensures due process in court, and access to the courts to enforce citizens' rights are essential to the Rule of Law. As such, justice beyond position and power may not be merely a legal concept but rather practically requires just institutions. The research suggested that current legal orders must bolster enforcement, maintain the separation and independence of judiciaries, ensure remedies are accessible, and hold both private and public actors equally

accountable.

Justice, even outside status and authority, is the study's conclusion, which is very much a part of the contemporary constitutional legal system. This result means that constitutional equality, legal accountability, judicial independence, or access to justice are contained in the proposition that no one is beneath the law or above the law. The legal basis of constitutional equality imposes accountability on public authorities, powerful individuals, and institutions for their illegal acts or abuse of power. The study shows that equality before the law can only be achieved when the law administration institutions act equally and without discrimination in each case.

5.3 Recommendations

Modern legal systems should better implement constitutional equality, the study finds. Everyone, regardless of social status, political power, financial empowerment, institutional authority, etc., should be treated alike in the case of public law. All-powerful persons and public functionaries must not be immune to investigation, prosecution, and legal proceedings. Laws and policies, as well as the actual practice, must be the same for all and allow not only the same posited equality before all but the same actual equality in the law's application.

5.4 Future directions

Future research should compare the constitutions regarding equality and legal accountability. Research of this type provides insight into power abuse and how to guard against power abuse through equality before the law. By comparing and contrasting various legal systems, researchers can identify current successful strategies and assist efforts to enhance accountability, judicial independence, and access to justice in new ways.

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