

Fostering a culture of gender equality in Hong Kong: what role can institutional mechanisms play?

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Similar to many Western liberal democracies, Hong Kong has a rights-based legal framework; a statutory body, the Equal Opportunities Commission; and an advisory body to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, the Women's Commission, which provide the institutional infrastructure to support laws and policies on gender equality. Paradoxically, Hong Kong's political system is non-democratic, Executive-led and there is no universal suffrage. The Hong Kong Women's Commission has a pivotal role to play in supporting the promotion of equality policies to support the advancement of women, but its policy influence and access is limited. Grounded in qualitative interviews conducted with multiple stakeholders including members of the Equal Opportunities Commission, Women's Commission, women's groups and scholars in Hong Kong, this research presentation will explore how a culture of gender equality can be effectively fostered in Hong Kong and the promise and limitations of law and institutional mechanisms in this process.



Amy Barrow is a Senior Lecturer at Macquarie Law School (Sydney, Australia). Amy has a keen interest in interdisciplinary research and to date her research has focused on two principal themes - the intersection between gender, international law, peace and security; and law and society in Hong Kong and other Asian contexts. Amy researches law in action by drawing on qualitative research methods to consider how international laws and policies are implemented in practice by multiple actors. Amy aims to extend theorising about the promise of law, as well as its limitations, particularly in highly context-specific situations such as during post-conflict periods and in societies experiencing transition. Amy is a member of the WILPF Academic Network, a think tank connecting academics and peace activists working on issues of gender, peace and security as well as a founding member of the Everywoman Everywhere Coalition, which grew out of the Initiative on Violence against Women at the Harvard Kennedy School's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy. Along with Joy Chia, she co-edited the book *Gender, Violence and the State in Asia* published by Routledge in 2016. Prior to joining Macquarie Law School she held posts at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom.

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