There has been substantial public debate on the enforcement of the right to equality in Hong Kong. Although the Hong Kong Equal Opportunities Commission has established several important precedents in the courts, the majority of complaints received by the Commission are not litigated. Rather, they are resolved through a largely confidential process of investigation and conciliation. While conciliation offers many advantages, the confidential nature of the process makes it difficult for the public to assess the impact of the laws and the enforcement model.

Based upon a random sample of 451 complaints and extensive interviews, this timely publication provides new insights into the complaint resolution process: the socio-economic backgrounds of participants, the nature of complaints filed, the outcomes, and the remedies obtained. The results of the study challenge the popular assumption that conciliation provides an adequate forum for discrimination complaints. Many complainants desire a public hearing and an opportunity to obtain a more systemic remedy. The authors therefore argue that an equal opportunities tribunal should be established.

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