

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Public Opinion Programme

Activities in 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

I. Preamble

This is the first annual report of the Public Opinion Programme (POP) ever compiled. Incidentally, the University's Internal Audit Office has just completed an audit review of POP, and POP will also be reviewed by the Faculty together with other research centres in due course.

While POP welcomes such reviews, it should be noted that POP differs significantly from other research centres in the following ways:

- POP's current *modus operandi* is like an independent research centre, although it is only a "research programme" in name. The original idea is to give POP the flexibility of operating under different centres, departments or even University-owned companies if and when deemed desirable. POP was established in June 1991 within the Social Sciences Research Centre under the Faculty of Social Sciences. It was transferred to the Journalism and Media Studies Centre in May 2000, and then back to the Faculty of Social Sciences in January 2002. Its status has remained unchanged since then.
- Although the principal activity of POP may be similar to some other research units, POP adheres strictly to a set of self-imposed service policies designed to safeguard its independence, autonomy and a share in the proprietary rights of the research output it produces.
- POP receives no direct funding from the University, neither any one-line budget nor research grant. Nevertheless, POP does not take on pure consultancy projects. POP also tries hard to avoid competition with similar research units in the University.
- POP uses its own budget to conduct tracking opinion surveys to serve the need of the community.

II. Mission

POP was established in June 1991 to collect and study public opinion on topics which could be of interest to academics, journalists, policy-makers, and the general public. Since its establishment, POP has been providing quality survey services to a wide range of public and private organizations. Up to this date, POP has conducted more than 1,000 independent surveys and other kinds of research, almost all supported by outside bodies and funding. POP's project collaborators include government departments, public organizations, non-government organizations, professional bodies, political groups, leading commercial firms, small and medium enterprises, as well as local and overseas media organizations.

III. Strategy

POP adheres strictly to a set of self-imposed service policies designed to safeguard its independence, autonomy and a share in the proprietary rights of the research output it produces.

POP receives no University funding and is not a research centre. Nevertheless, POP does not take on pure commercial projects. At this stage of development, POP is willing to operate modestly as a self-funded frontline research programme aiming at serving the needs of our local academia and society.

In the long run, POP aspires to become an opinion research centre like the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, or the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut, just to mention two well-known overseas examples.

IV. Output

Conference papers

Chung, R.T.Y. (2007), “Hong Kong under One Country Two System: From the People’s Perspective”, International Conference on “The Tenth Anniversary of the Hong Kong Handover: Retrospect and Challenges”, organized by the Department of Political Science of Soochow University, July 2-3, 2007, Taipei.

Yu, Ching-hsin, Chung, R.T.Y. (2007), “Comparing the self-identities of Taiwan and Hong Kong peoples” (in Chinese), Annual Conference of the Taiwan Political Science Association cum Conference on “The Practice of Democracy in Taiwan: Responsibility, System and Behaviour”, organized by the National Cheng-Chi University, November 17-18, 2007, Taipei. 游清鑫、鍾庭耀 (2007), 台灣與香港民眾自我認同的比較, 台灣政治大學主辦, 2007 年台灣政治學會年會暨「台灣民主的實踐：責任、制度與行為」學術研討會.

Chung, R.T.Y. (2007), “The meaning of Hong Kong’s District Council Elections 2007 from public opinion figures” (in Chinese), Seminar on “Projecting the Future of Democratic Development in Taiwan and Hong Kong from Hong Kong’s District Council Elections”, organized by the Friends of Hongkong & Macau Association, November 20, 2007, Taipei. 鍾庭耀 (2007), 從民調數字看 2007 年香港區議會選舉的意義, 中華港澳之友協會主辦, 「從香港區議會選舉展望當前台港民主化進程」座談會.

Chung, R.T.Y. Yu Ching-hsin, Lim, J.C.T. (2008), “Beyond Nation Building in Peripheral East Asia: A Cross-Cultural Study on Ethnic Identity in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Okinawa”, International Conference on “Democracy, Development & Disasters: The 3Ds of Opinion Research in the Transitional Societies”, organized by the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR), February 27-29, 2008, New Delhi.

Yadav, Y., Frankovic, K.; Chung, R.T.Y. (2008), “Surveys and the process of democratization: Challenges and opportunities”, Plenary discussion session, International Conference on “Democracy, Development & Disasters: The 3Ds of Opinion Research in the Transitional Societies”, organized by the World Association for Public Opinion Research (WAPOR), February 27-29, 2008, New Delhi.

Online articles for public consumption

Chung, R.T.Y. (2007), “LC By-election Rolling Survey Article Series No.1: Weighted Analysis and Election Forum Effect” (bilingual article), November 29, 2007, uploaded at HKUPOP Site, <http://hkupop.hku.hk>. 鍾庭耀 (2007), 立法會補選滾動調查文章系列之一：加權分析和論壇效應.

Chung, R.T.Y. (2007), “LC By-election Rolling Survey Article Series No. 2: Political Alignment and Rolling Period” (bilingual article), November 30, 2007, uploaded at HKUPOP Site, <http://hkupop.hku.hk>. 鍾庭耀 (2007), 立法會補選滾動調查文章系列之二：選民政治取向分析與滾動日數.

Chung, R.T.Y. (2007), “LC By-election Rolling Survey Article Series No. 3: Feature studies riding on rolling surveys” (bilingual article), December 1, 2007, uploaded at HKUPOP Site, <http://hkupop.hku.hk>. 鍾庭耀 (2007), 立法會補選滾動調查文章系列之三：滾動調查中的專題探討.

Public research reports

POP compiled and delivered over 70 research reports of various types to project collaborators, many of which are available online at the HKUPOP Site (<http://hkupop.hku.hk>).

Other intellectual property

POP writes its own software for computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI), online surveys, palm-top data input, and optical mark recognition (OMR) tasks.

V. Activities

Social influence

A wisenews search of media coverage of POP activities during the period covered by this report gives 1,446 print reports, or around 120 print stories per month. This search excludes stories covered by the electronic media.

Commissioned research projects

During the period covered by this report, POP conducted over 70 projects commission by, or in collaboration with, outside organizations. The projects receive no funding from the University, but most of them are placed in the public domain via the HKUPOP Site (<http://hkupop.hku.hk>).

Regular tracking polls

Apart from working on projects commissioned by outside parties, POP has self-funded a pool of almost 200 tracking questions which are repeated periodically. They relate to a spectrum of social issues in Hong Kong, such as the popularity of the Chief Executive and the HKSAR Government, reaction to policy and budget speeches, people’s assessment of the political, economic and social conditions, freedom indicators, social indicators, and so on. POP self-funds these surveys as part of its community service. POP releases the findings of these tracking polls to the media and the public regularly on a complimentary basis. All materials are also uploaded to POP Site (<http://hkupop.hku.hk>) for public consumption.

Lectures, talks and workshops

“Student Workshop on the Basics of Sample Surveys”. A workshop for members of Statistic and Actuarial Science Society of HKUSU, presented at the POP’s Office, January 24, 2008.

“Quantitative Communication Research Methods: ‘Politics and Ethics of Exit Polls’”. A lecture for

the City University of Hong Kong students taking the course Quantitative Communication Research Methods [EN3506], the Department of English and Communication, City University of Hong Kong. April 24, 2008.

“Press Freedom from Poll Figures”. A presentation at the “Seminar on Press Freedom in Hong Kong and China” organized by the Hong Kong Journalists Association and a number of local and international organizations as part of the “2008 World Press Freedom Day” Seminars and Arts Fair, May 2, 2008.

“An Overview of FTU Popularity Ratings”. A presentation at the “Seminar on Development of Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions’ Patriotic Labour Movement”, organized by the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions to celebrate its 60th Anniversary, May 10, 2008.

“The Professional Standards of Exit Polling”. A luncheon talk co-organized by the Hong Kong Democratic Foundation and The Professional Commons, June 12, 2008.

VI. Collaborations

POP has worked with the WorldPublicOpinion.org (WPO) to globally conduct and release survey findings via our “World Public Opinion Platform” accessible through our POP Site and the “Hong Kong People’s Opinion Platform” at <http://www.hkupop.hk>. POP will construct and host the Chinese website for WPO, coordinate organizations in the Greater China Region (GCR) to participate in the WPO project, and also construct a GCR opinion research network in due course.

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