

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG PUBLIC OPINION PROGRAMME (POP)

CIVIC EXCHANGE

JOINTLY CONDUCT

2004 Legislative Council Direct Election : 3rd Survey 【 All constituencies in Hong Kong 】

SURVEY REPORT

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Date of survey	: 26-29 July 2004
Survey method	: Telephone survey with interviewers
Target population	: Cantonese-speaking population of Hong Kong aged 18 or above
Sampling method	: Standard POP telephone sampling method was used. Telephone numbers were selected randomly from residential telephone directories and mixed with additional numbers generated by the computer. If more than one subject had been available, the one who had his/her birthday next was selected.
Weighting method	: The data reported had been adjusted according to the age and gender distributions of the Hong Kong population as reported in the 2001 Population Census.
Sample size	: 1,005 successful cases
Response rate	: 60.6%
Std. sampling error	: Less than 1.6%

< Everything in this publication is the work of individual researchers, and does not represent the stand of the University of Hong Kong. CHUNG Ting-Yiu Robert is responsible for the work of the Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong.>

1. Preamble

- 1.1 The Public Opinion Programme (POP) was established in June 1991 to collect and study public opinion on topics that could be of interest to academics, journalists, policy-makers, and the general public. POP was at first under the Social Sciences Research Centre, a unit under the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Hong Kong, and was transferred to the Journalism and Media Studies Centre in the University of Hong Kong in May 2000. In January 2002, it was transferred back to the Faculty of Social Sciences in the University of Hong Kong. Since its establishment, POP has been conducting opinion researches on various social and political issues and providing quality survey services to a wide range of organizations provided that they agreed to publicizing the findings to the general public, as well as allowing the research team to design and conduct the research independently, and to reserve the right to release the findings for public consumption.
- 1.2 In May 2004, Civic Exchange commissioned the POP Team to conduct a series of opinion surveys on the 2004 Legislative Council direct election. The results of the first two surveys were released to the public earlier, while this was the third one in the row, with five main areas of investigation as follows:
- i. Hong Kong people's knowledge of the 2004 Legislative Council direct election;
 - ii. Hong Kong people's appraisal of local party politics;
 - iii. Hong Kong people's views towards role of media and election campaign;
 - iv. Hong Kong voters' voting behaviour and propensity to vote;
 - v. Hong Kong people's political inclination and participation in political activities.
- 1.3 The questionnaire was designed in consultation with the client, and part of it was extracted from the first two surveys in order to facilitate direct comparison. The POP Team was fully responsible for designing and conducting this study, without any interference from the client. In order to maintain neutrality, the POP Team did not provide advisory or consultative services of any kind apart from data interpretations and analyses.

2. Research Method

- 2.1 This was a random telephone survey conducted by telephone interviewers under close supervision. To minimize sampling bias, telephone numbers were first drawn randomly from the residential telephone directories as "seed numbers", from which another set of numbers was generated using the "plus/minus one/two" method, in order to capture the unlisted numbers. Duplicated numbers were then filtered, and the remaining numbers were mixed in random order to produce the final telephone sample.
- 2.2 The target population of this survey was Cantonese-speaking population of Hong Kong aged 18 or above. When telephone contact was successfully established with a target household, one person aged 18 or above was selected. If more than one subject had been available, selection was made using the "next birthday rule" which selected the person who had his/her birthday next from all those present.
- 2.3 Telephone interviews were conducted during the period of 26-29 July 2004. A total of 1,005 Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong citizens aged 18 or above were successfully interviewed. The overall response rate of this survey was 60.6% (Table 1 in Appendix II), and the standard sampling error for percentages based on this sample was less than 1.6 percentage points. In other words, the sampling error for all percentages was less than plus/minus 3 percentage points at 95% confidence level.
- 2.4 As shown in Table 2, among the 7,957 telephone numbers sampled for the survey, 2,627 were confirmed to be ineligible, among them 392 were fax or data lines, 1,585 were invalid telephone numbers, 38 were call-forwarding numbers, while another 373 were non-residential numbers. Besides, 161 of them were invalidated due to special technological reasons, while 78 cases were voided because target respondents were unavailable at the numbers provided.
- 2.5 Meanwhile, a total of 2,795 telephone numbers were invalidated before the research team could confirm their eligibility. Among them 192 were busy lines and 1,534 were no-answer calls after making a maximum of 5 times' recalls. Forty-five cases were diverted to

answering devices while another 202 were blocked. Moreover, 218 cases were treated as unsuccessful because of language problems, while 593 interviews were terminated before the screening question. Eleven more cases were voided for other problems.

- 2.6 On the other hand, 1,530 cases failed to complete the interview after confirming their eligibility. Among them 6 were rejected at the household level, another 4 rejected the interview immediately after their eligibility was confirmed, 1,459 were unfinished cases with appointment dates beyond the end of fieldwork period. Besides, 51 cases were incomplete due to unexpected termination of interviews, 10 were classified as miscellaneous due to other non-contact problems, and the remaining 1,005 were successful cases (Table 2 in Appendix II).

3. Key Findings

(Please refer to Appendix II and Summary Table below for cross-reference of the tables cited.)

3.1 Hong Kong People's Knowledge of the 2004 Legislative Council Direct Election

3.1.1 To begin with, the survey investigated the people's knowledge of the geographical constituency direct election this September. Regarding the voting system, as high as 52% of the respondents said that they did not know whether the proportional representation system (or the "party-list" system) was suitable for Hong Kong, 29% believed the system was suitable for Hong Kong, while 19% said the opposite, which was a drop of 4 percentage points from the survey conducted in mid-May (Table 3).

3.1.2 Regarding people's knowledge on the total number of directly-elected seats in this year's Legislative Council Election, as shown in Table 4, 77% admitted they had no idea on this, while 10% thought they knew but their answers were wrong. Only 13% could give a correct answer on the number of directly-elected seats as 30 (Table 4).

3.1.3 When it came to their own geographic constituencies, the latest figures showed that the respondents' knowledge level on this aspect had been improved over the past 2 months. While 88% of the respondents confessed that they did not know the number of directly-elected seats in their geographic constituencies in the last survey, the percentage had dropped to 79% this time. Nevertheless, only 7% was able to answer this question correctly (an increase of 4 percentage points from the survey conducted in mid-May), revealing that the knowledge level was still at a low level. Besides, 15% thought they knew but their answers were wrong (an increase of 6 percentage points from the survey conducted in mid-May, Table 5).

3.2 Hong Kong People's Appraisal of Local Party Politics and Views towards the Role of Media and Election Campaign

3.2.1 Results also showed that, 45% of the respondents thought that party politics were more beneficial to the overall democratic development in Hong Kong, whilst 21% thought half-half and 15% thought that they were more harmful (Table 6). Besides, 59% of the respondents claimed there was no political party which could represent their interest, whereas a quarter (25%) held the opposite view (Table 7).

3.2.2 As regards the role played by the local media in this year's Legislative Council Election, among the 4 prescribed choices, "to report the election-related news factually" was most widely accepted by the respondents (49%). Besides, 36% hoped the media could balance and report on both the positive and negative materials and arguments. Only a minority of respondents demanded the media to focus on reporting the materials and arguments favourable or unfavourable to some candidates, accounting for 2% and 1 % respectively (Table 8).

3.2.3 Regarding the strategies used in the election campaign, 73% of the respondents resisted blackening of the candidates' names, while only 6% accepted this (Table 9). Besides, the majority (87%) resisted the candidates' publicity materials being damaged, while only 2% found this acceptable (Table 10).

3.3 Hong Kong Voters' Voting Behaviour and Propensity to Vote

3.3.1 Of the 747 registered voters captured in this survey (Table 11), 8% of them (or 6% of total sample) submitted their registration less than a year ago, while 27% (or 20% of total sample) had registered for less than 4 years. Moreover, 26% registered at least 4 years ago (or 19% of total sample), and another 47% had forgotten when (or 35% of total sample, Table 12).

3.3.2 Findings also showed that 57% of these voters (or 42% of total sample) self-reported that they had voted in the District Council Election last November, whilst 42% had not (or 31% of total sample, Table 13). On the other hand, 72% of this sub-group (or 53% of total sample) claimed they had voted in some Council elections before, 26% (or 20% of total sample) said they had not (Table 14).

3.3.3 As a snapshot taken 1.5 months ahead of the Legislative Election, the registered voters' propensity to vote was found to be 77% (or 57% of total sample, Table 15). Nevertheless, this percentage should never be taken as a projection of the actual turnout rate because many people who claimed they would vote at this stage would eventually not vote.

3.3.4 Figures showed that, among the 194 voters who had registered for more than 4 years, 33% (or 6% of total sample) expressed that their propensity to vote in this year's Legislative Council Election had increased when compared to the last Election in 2000. On the other hand, 19% (or 4% of total sample) claimed their propensity to vote had decreased and 45% said there was no change (or 9% of total sample, Table 16).

- 3.3.5 In consideration of the influence of last year's and this year's July 1 rallies, findings revealed that, 24% of the registered voters (or 18% of total sample) said the 2 rallies had increased their propensity to vote, 4% (or 3% of total sample) said decreased, while as high as 69% claimed their propensity to vote had not changed (or 51% of total sample, Table 17).
- 3.3.6 Recently there has been more communication between the Central Government and the democrats, has this affected the registered voters' propensity to vote? Results showed that, as high as 73% of the registered voters (or 54% of total sample) said there was no change on their propensity to vote, while 23% (or 17% of total sample) said yes. Among this latter group of people, 22% (or 16% of total sample) claimed this had increased their propensity to vote, while only 1% (or 1% of total sample) with decreased propensity (Table 18).
- 3.3.7 With such development, 16% of the registered voters (or 12% of total sample) said they had now become more supportive to the pro-democracy camp, 14% (or 10% of total sample) more fond of the moderate camp whereas 3% (or 2% of total sample) became more supportive to the pro-China camp. Yet, 61% (or 45% of total sample) said such development had not changed their vote preference (Table 19).

3.4 Hong Kong People's Political Inclination and Participation in Political Activities

- 3.4.1 Results of this survey revealed that, those who preferred to label themselves as the "moderate" accounted for 36% of the overall sample, indicating an apparent increase of 8 percentage points from the survey conducted in late June, whilst 29% inclined to support the pro-democracy camp, and 5% went to the pro-China camp. Above all, 23% said they had no political inclination at all, which was a significant drop of 11 percentage points from the figures registered in late June (Table 20).
- 3.4.2 Looking back, 16% and 10% of the respondents claimed they had participated in July 1 rally last year and this year respectively (Tables 21 & 22).

Summary Table (I) : Overview of comparisons among the 3 surveys

Date of survey	<u>18-20/5/2004</u>	<u>21-24/6/2004</u>	<u>26-29/7/2004</u>	<u>Latest change</u>
Overall sample size	1,039	1,023	1,005	--
Number of registered voters	808	795	747	--
Overall response rate	62.3%	63.9%	60.6%	--
Sampling error of % (at 95% conf. level)*	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	--
Believed proportional representation syst. was suitable for HK	27%	--	29%	+ 2%
Believed proportional representation syst. was not suitable for HK	23%	--	19%	-4%
Did not know if proportional representation syst. was suitable for HK	50%	--	52%	+ 2%
Correct answer to the total no. of directly-elected seats in HK	16%	--	13%	-3%
Wrong answer to the total no. of directly-elected seats in HK	9%	--	10%	+ 1%
Did not know the total no. of directly-elected seats in HK	76%	--	77%	+ 1%
Correct answer to the no. of directly-elected seats in their own GC	3%	--	7%	+ 4%
Wrong answer to the no. of directly-elected seats in their own GC	9%	--	15%	+ 6%
Did not know the no. of directly-elected seats in their own GC	88%	--	79%	-9%
Registered voters' propensity to vote	78%	79%	77%	-2%
Political inclination : Moderate	30%	28%	36%	+ 8%
Political inclination : Pro-democracy	32%	27%	29%	+ 2%
Political inclination : Pro-China	5%	4%	5%	+ 1%
No political inclination	26%	34%	23%	-11%

* "95% confidence level" means that if we were to repeat a certain survey 100 times, using the same questions each time but with different random samples, we would expect 95 times getting a figure within the error margins specified.

4. In-depth and Comparative Analyses

4.1 “New” Vs “Old” Registered Voters

- 4.1.1 As with the first survey, cross-tabulation analyses were conducted in order to study the differences between the “new” voters and “old” voters, in terms of their main consideration factors, impression of the election, and their voting behaviour. “New voters” is operationally defined as those who submitted their voter registration after the last LegCo Election took place four years ago (base=201), while “old voters” is defined as those who had registered before that, and those who had forgotten the date of registration (base=546). This section has only included the most significant findings.
- 4.1.2 Our cross-tabulation analyses showed that, regarding the proportional representation system, generally more “new” voters (39%) regarded it as suitable for Hong Kong than “old” voters (27%). On the contrary, 23% of the “old” voters thought that the proportional representation system was not suitable for Hong Kong, whereas only 17% of the “new” voters shared the same view.
- 4.1.3 Concerning the influence of the two July 1 rallies on the registered voters’ propensity to vote, this survey showed that, 32% of the “new” voters’ propensity to vote had increased accordingly, while the corresponding figures of the “old” voters was just 21%. Besides, 71% of the “old” voters said their propensity to vote had not been influenced by the July 1 rallies, while the corresponding figures of the “new” voters was lower (64%).
- 4.1.4 In terms of their demographic profile, analyses showed that the “new” voters were generally younger than the “old” voters (within age bracket 18-29: 38% vs 13%), received relatively more education (with tertiary education or above: 33% vs 27%), and also with many more students (17% vs 1%).

4.2 Comparison among 1998, 2000 and 2004 Direct Elections

(Please refer to Summary Table below for cross-reference of the figures cited.)

- 4.2.1 When compared with the data collected in mid-April 1998, early August 2000 and this survey (roughly 1.5 months ahead of the elections, with the registered voters as the base), the percentage of voters who regarded the proportional representation system as suitable for Hong Kong urged from 13% in 1998 and 2000 to 30% this year, representing a significant increase of 17 percentage points.
- 4.2.2 As regards the number of directly-elected seats, the proportion of voters who got a right answer on that of Hong Kong as a whole increased remarkably from 6% in 2000 to 17% this year. Despite those who answered correctly on that of their own geographical constituency also increased from 2% to 9%, the figures had remained below 10%, this revealed that the voters did not have a good understanding on their constituencies 1.5 months ahead of the Election. Such questions were not available for the year 1998 with comparable timing.
- 4.2.3 Finally, our comparative analyses indicated that the registered voters' propensity to vote had been on a constant growth from 64% in 1998 to 69% in 2000, and surged to 77% this year.

Summary Table (II) – Time Series Analyses among 1998, 2000 and 2004 data

Date of survey	14-15/4/98	3-7/8/00	26-29/7/04	Latest change
Overall sample size	522	1,081	1,005	--
Number of registered voters	361	1,081	747	--
Overall response rate	41.0%	51.5%	60.6%	--
Sampling error of % (at 95% conf. level)*	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	--
Proportion of registered voters who:				
Believed proportional representation syst. was suitable for HK	13%	13%	30%	+17%
Believed proportional representation syst. was not suitable for HK	21%	17%	21%	+4%
Answered correctly on the total no. of directly-elected seats	---	6%	17%	+11%
Did not know or answered wrongly on the total no. of directly-elected seats	--	94%	83%	-11%
Answered correctly on the no. of directly-elected seats in their constituency	--	2%	9%	+7%
Did not know or answered wrongly on the no. of directly-elected seats in their constituency	--	98%	91%	-7%
Voters' propensity to vote	64%	69%	77%	+8%

* "95% confidence level" means that if we were to repeat a certain survey 100 times, using the same questions each time but with different random samples, we would expect 95 times getting a figure within the error margins specified.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This survey revealed that, as high as 52% of the respondents failed to judge whether the proportional representation system (or the “party-list” system) was suitable for Hong Kong. Besides, 77% claimed they had no idea on the total number of directly-elected seats in this year’s election. Whilst 79% did not know the number of directly-elected seats in their own geographical constituencies, and another 15% claimed they knew but answered wrongly. All these seemingly pointed to the fact that Hong Kong people’s general knowledge of this year’s Legislative Council direct election was far from adequate.
- 5.2 On the other hand, 45% of the respondents believed that party politics would do more good than harm to the democratic development in Hong Kong. However, 59% claimed there was no political party that could represent their interest at present. Regarding the role played by the media in the election, 49% hoped the media could report the election-related news factually, which accounted for the largest proportion of the respondents. Results also found that, the majority of the respondents resisted blackening the candidates’ names (73%) and damaging candidates’ publicity materials (87%).
- 5.3 As a snapshot taken one and a half months ahead of the Election, the self-reported propensity among the registered voters captured in this survey was 77%. Among these registered voters (no matter they had participated or not), 69% claimed last year’s and this year’s July 1 rallies made no impact on their propensity at all. Furthermore, despite the more frequent communication between the Central Government and the democrats recently, 73% of the registered voters reported no change to their propensity to vote. Similarly, 61% of the registered voters said the relatively more harmonious relation between the Central Government and the democrats would not affect their vote preference either. Meanwhile, 33% of the voters who had registered for more than 4 years expressed that their propensity to vote in this year’s LegCo Election had increased when compared to the 2000 Election.

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- 5.4 Regarding their political inclination, 29% of the respondents affiliated themselves with the pro-democracy camp; those who opted for pro-China camp accounted for 5%, and 36% preferred the moderate camp.
- 5.5 Cross-tabulation analyses showed that generally more “new” voters (those registered less than 4 years) regarded the proportional representation system as suitable for Hong Kong than “old” voters (those registered at least 4 years ago and had forgotten the registration date), accounting for 39% and 27% of these 2 groups respectively. Besides, the “new” voters’ propensity to vote was more likely to be influenced by the two July 1 rallies than the “old” voters (32% and 21% respectively).
- 5.6 Finally, as indicated by the comparative analyses, the proportion of registered voters who believed the proportional representation system was suitable for Hong Kong surged from 13% in 1998 and 2000 to 30% this year. However, even though the proportion of voters who could answer correctly to the total number of directly-elected seats in Hong Kong increased significantly from 6% in 2000 to 17% this year, while those who got a correct answer for their own geographical constituency also increased from 2% to 9%, these figures had continued to remain at a rather low level. Meanwhile, the registered voters’ propensity to vote, taken at a comparable timing, appeared to be on an upward trend over the years, i.e. from 64% in 1998 to 69% in 2000, and further jumped to 77% this year.