

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG PUBLIC OPINION PROGRAMME (POP)

CIVIC EXCHANGE

JOINTLY CONDUCT

2004 Legislative Council Direct Election : 2nd Survey 【 All constituencies in Hong Kong 】

SURVEY REPORT

Research Team Members

Project Director : CHUNG Ting-Yiu Robert
Project Manager : PANG Ka-Lai Karie
Research Executive : LAM Mo-Chun Calvin
Data Analyst : CHOW Kwong-Pok Cliff
Copy Editor : CHUNG Sin-Yan Yennice

JULY 2004

CONTACT INFORMATION

Date of survey	: 21-24 June 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 have been adjusted according to the age and gender distributions of the Hong Kong population as reported in the 2001 Population Census.
Sample size	: 1,023 successful cases
Response rate	: 63.9%
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 survey were released to the public earlier, while this was the second one in the row, with four main areas of investigation as follows:
- i. Hong Kong people's priorities and main considerations when casting a vote;
 - ii. Hong Kong people's impression of the 2004 Legislative Council Election;
 - iii. Hong Kong voters' voting behaviour and propensity to vote;
 - iv. 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 survey 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 21-24 June 2004. A total of 1,023 Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong citizens aged 18 or above were successfully interviewed. The overall response rate of this survey was 63.9% (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 7,236 telephone numbers sampled for the survey, 2,124 were confirmed to be ineligible, among them 314 were fax or data lines, 1,239 were invalid telephone numbers, 43 were call-forwarding numbers, while another 304 were non-residential numbers. Besides, 131 of them were invalidated due to special technological reasons, while 93 cases were voided because target respondents were unavailable at the numbers provided.
- 2.5 Meanwhile, a total of 2,646 telephone numbers were invalidated before the research team could confirm their eligibility. Among them 223 were busy lines and 1,551 were no-answer calls after making a maximum of 5 times' recalls. Thirty-two cases were diverted to answering devices while another 146 were blocked. Moreover, 163 cases were treated as

unsuccessful because of language problems, while 529 interviews were terminated before the screening question. Two more cases were voided for other problems.

- 2.6 On the other hand, 1,443 cases failed to complete the interview. Among them 10 were rejected at the household level, another 9 rejected the interview immediately after their eligibility was confirmed, 1,378 were unfinished cases with appointment dates beyond the end of fieldwork period. Besides, 31 cases were incomplete due to unexpected termination of interviews, 15 were classified as miscellaneous due to other non-contact problems, and the remaining 1,023 were successful cases (Table 2 in Appendix II).

3. Key Findings

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

3.1 Hong Kong People's Priorities and Main Considerations when Casting a Vote

- 3.1.1 To begin with, all respondents were asked, for the would-be Legislative Councillors returned in the upcoming election, what problems should they tackle first? Results revealed that "economy" again topped the list with 57% of the respondents mentioning it. "Labor and employment" issues followed, as cited by 30% of the respondents. Meanwhile, "livelihood" problems were considered as their top priority by 23% of the respondents, whilst 18% named "constitutional/democratic development" to be the most pressing issue to be handled by the Legislative Councillors returned in September (Table 3). It is noteworthy that, the same question was asked in the first survey but respondents were allowed to return the most important answer only. Due to the slight modification adopted in this survey where respondents could give as many answers as they liked, direct comparison with the previous results is not recommended.
- 3.1.2 Since inquiring only one single question may easily come up with polarized answers, the survey continued by asking respondents to evaluate, one by one, the importance of four pre-selected items when they cast their vote. This survey found that 85% claimed they would consider the livelihood policies as proposed by the candidates important. Meanwhile, the corresponding figures for economy, relations with the Central Government and political policies were 79%, 65% and 54% in respective order (Tables 4-7). These four items were all significant, however, relatively speaking, policies related to livelihood and economy came with a higher level of importance in people's mind when they voted, and such results were in line with their aspired priority list of the would-be Legislative Councillors mentioned above.
- 3.1.3 Party-list system (or "proportional representation system") would be used in the geographical constituencies' direct election of the upcoming Legislative Council Election, so what would be the key determinant factor for the voters' choice? Would it be the quality of individual candidates, the combination of candidates within a list, or support for a specific political party? As shown from Table 8, 55% of the respondents would mainly consider the quality of individual candidates, whereas 17% would be dominated by their support towards a political party, and 12% would decide on the combination of candidates within a list. Yet, another 16% failed to give a definite answer (Table 8).

3.2 Hong Kong People's Impression of the 2004 Legislative Council Election

- 3.2.1 As regards people's view on whether this year's Legislative Council Election would be conducted under a fair environment, 65% of the respondents were positive about this, as contrast to 15% who were not. However, as high as 19% of them failed to give a concrete answer to this question (Table 9).
- 3.2.2 Results also showed that, 70% of the respondents believed this year's election would be corruption free, while 10% held the opposite view. Those who failed to make a judgment accounted for 20% (Table 10).
- 3.2.3 As for whether the Central Government would intervene this year's Legislative Council Election, 44% of the respondents thought "no" whereas 38% said "yes". Similar to the last two questions, 19% of them were unable to give a definite answer (Table 11).
- 3.2.4 In consideration of the recent news on some off-shore mobilization for the election, fake voter registration within the territory, together with the SAR Government's responses to these, 62% of the respondents admitted that their overall confidence in the local election system had remained changed, while 24% with decreased confidence, and 5% increased (Table 12).

3.3 Hong Kong Voters' Voting Behaviour and Propensity to Vote

- 3.3.1 Of the 795 registered voters captured in this survey (Table 13), 6% of them (or 4% of total sample) submitted their registration less than a year ago, while 29% (or 22% of total sample) registered less than four years (Table 14).
- 3.3.2 Findings also showed that 63% (or 49% of total sample) of these voters self-reported that they had voted in the District Council Election last November, whilst 37% had not (or 28% of total sample, Table 15). On the other hand, 72% (or 56% of total sample) of this sub-group claimed they had voted in some Council elections before, 26% (or 20% of total sample) said they had not (Table 16).
- 3.3.3 As a snapshot taken two and a half months ahead of the Legislative Election, the registered voters' propensity to vote was found to be 79% (Table 17). 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 With respect to the prominent driving force that motivated respondents to vote, 46% of the registered voters who intended to vote (or 28% of total sample) said they were “to fulfill one’s civic responsibility”. Another 15% (or 9% of total sample) were in support of certain candidate(s), while 9% (or 5% of total sample) were driven by the hope to improve the social condition/community/livelihood, and 6% (or 4% of total sample) simply treated voting as their habitual behaviour (Table 18). Meanwhile, as for the reasons why not registered as a voter, 23% of such respondents (or 5% of total sample) said they had no time, 12% (or 3% of total sample) did not register because there was no political party or politician that appealed to them. Besides, 11% (or 2% of total sample) of them thought there was no need to vote at all (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 28% of the overall sample, whilst 27% inclined to support the pro-democracy camp (a drop of 5 percentage points from the last survey), and 4% went to the pro-China camp. Above all, 34% said they had no political inclination at all, which was a jump of 8 increase from the May figure (Table 20).

3.4.2 Looking back, 15% and 4% of the respondents claimed they had participated in July 1 and Jan 1 rallies respectively (Tables 21 & 22). What about the July 1 rally this year? 14% gave an affirmative answer (Table 23).

Summary Table (I) : Comparisons between the 1st and 2nd surveys

Date of survey	<u>18-20/5/2004</u>	<u>21-24/6/2004</u>	<u>Latest change</u>
Overall sample size	1,039	1,023	--
Number of registered voters	808	795	--
Overall response rate	62.3%	63.9%	--
Sampling error of % (at 95% conf. level)*	+/- 3%	+/- 3%	--
Registered voters’ propensity to vote	78%	79%	+1%
Political inclination : Moderate	30%	28%	-2%
Political inclination : Pro-democracy	32%	27%	-5%
Political inclination : Pro-China	5%	4%	-1%
No political inclination	26%	34%	+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.

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=222), while “old voters” is defined as those who had registered before that, and those who had forgotten the date of registration (base=548). This section has only included the most significant findings.
- 4.1.2 Our cross-tabulation analyses showed that, when they cast their votes, “new voters” (64%) appeared to attach more importance to candidates’ political policies than the “old” voters (56%). On the other hand, the “old” voters seemed to attribute more weight to candidates’ relations with the Central Government than the “new” voters. Proportions within these two groups who thought this aspect was important to their voting decision were found to be 69% and 63% respectively, i.e. a significant difference of 6 percentage points.
- 4.1.3 When asked to consider among the individual candidates, the candidate combination within a list and support for specific political parties, the “old” voters (60%) were pulled by the quality of individual candidates to a much higher degree than the “new” voters (48%).
- 4.1.4 On the other hand, 84% of the “new” voters believed this year’s election would be corruption free, which was 16 percentage points higher than that of the “old” voters (68%). Meanwhile, relatively more “old” voters (21%) failed to make a judgment about this than the “new” comers (10%).
- 4.1.5 In terms of their demographic profile, analyses showed that the “new” voters were generally younger than the “old” voters (within age bracket 18-29: 40% vs 11%), received relatively more education (with tertiary education or above: 42% vs 27%), and also with many more students (15% vs 1%).

4.2 Comparison between 1998 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 early March 1998 and this survey, i.e. roughly 2.5 months ahead of the elections, the percentage of those who thought the election would be conducted under a fair environment surged from 34% in 1998 to 65% this year, representing a remarkable increase of 31 percentage points. Meanwhile, those who thought it would not be a fair play significantly dropped from 1998's 30% to 15% this time. This and the subsequent questions were not available for the year 2000 with comparable timing.
- 4.2.2 As regards respondents' assessment of whether the election would be corruption free, the positive figure also grew from 61% to 70% this year, i.e. a 9-percentage-point increase in 6 years' time. Simultaneously, the negative figure had decreased from 14% to 10%.
- 4.2.3 Finally, our comparative analyses indicated that the proportion of respondents who predicted the Central Government would intervene the Legislative Council Election had remained relatively stable over the past 6 years. Such figure was 41% as registered in 1998 and dropped to 38% this year.

Summary Table (II) – Time Series Analyses between 1998 and 2004 data

Date of survey	<u>2/3/1998</u>	<u>21-24/6/2004</u>	<u>Latest change</u>
Overall sample size	527	1,023	--
Overall response rate	46.1%	63.9%	--
Sampling error of % (at 95% conf. level)*	+/- 4%	+/- 3%	--
This year's LegCo Election [^] : A fair play	34%	65%	+31%
This year's LegCo Election [^] : Not a fair play	30%	15%	-15%
A corruption-free election	61%	70%	+9%
Not a corruption-free election	14%	10%	-4%
Some interference from the Central Government	41%	38%	-3%
No interference from the Central Government	44%	44%	--

* "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.

[^]The question wording in 1998 was "Is the electoral system of the 1998 Legislative Council Election fair or not?", which was slightly different from this year's.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Findings of this survey revealed that, “economy” issues topped the priority list of most respondents (57%) when asked what the would-be Legislative Councillors returned in the upcoming election should tackle first. As for the respondent’s key consideration factor when casting their vote, 85% considered the livelihood policies as proposed by the candidates important, 79% thought the same for the economy-related policies, whilst the corresponding figures obtained by candidates’ relations with the Central Government and their political demands were 65% and 54% respectively.
- 5.2 In consideration of the quality of individual candidates, combination within a list, and support for a political party, 55% of the respondents would give more weight to the individual candidates, whereas 17% would go for the political party they supported, and 12% said they would decide upon the combination of candidates within a list.
- 5.3 With respect to people’s impression towards the upcoming Legislative Council Election, results showed that 65% of the respondents believed the election would be fair, 70% thought it would be corruption free, and 44% predicted there would be no interference from the Central Government. Besides, 62% of them said their overall confidence in the local election system had not changed regardless of the negative news reported recently.
- 5.4 As a snapshot taken 2.5 months ahead of the Election, the self-reported propensity to vote among the registered voters captured in this survey was 79%. Most of them were driven by the obligation to fulfill one’s civic responsibility (46% of the sub-sample). As for their voting history, 63% of these voters claimed they had voted in the DC Election last November.
- 5.5 Regarding their political inclination, 27% of the respondents affiliated themselves with the pro-democracy camp; those who opted for pro-China camp accounted for 4%, and 28% preferred the moderate camp.

- 5.6 Cross-tabulation analyses showed that generally more “new” voters (those registered less than 4 years) than “old” voters (those registered at least 4 years ago and had forgotten the registration date) regarded the candidates’ political policies important to their voting decision, (64% and 56% respectively). However, more “old” voters than “new” voters thought the candidates’ handling of relations with the Central Government important (69% and 63% respectively). Also, most “old” voters (60%) would assign more weight to the quality of individual candidates as compared to 48% of the “new” voters. On the other hand, in terms of their impression of the upcoming election, a higher proportion of the “new” voters (84%) believed it would be free of corruption (68% among the “old” voters).
- 5.7 Finally, as indicated by the comparative analyses, the proportion of respondents who thought the election would be fairly conducted surged from 34% in 1998 to 65% this year. Simultaneously, a 9-percentage-point increase was observed for those who believed the election would be corruption free, i.e. from 61% to 70%. As for whether the Central Government would intervene the Legislative Council Election, the figures had remained relatively stable over the past 6 years, with the negative assessment stayed at the level of around 40%.