



HONG KONG PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH INSTITUTE

香港民意研究所

Address: Units 9-11, 6/F, Tower B, Southmark, 11 Yip Hing Street, Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong

地址: 香港黃竹坑業興街 11 號南滙廣場 B 座 6 樓 9-11 室

Website 網址: [pori.hk](http://pori.hk) Tel 電話: 3844 3111

## **Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute**

### **Opinion Survey on the Staying or Resignation of Democratic Legislative Councillors**

#### **Research Proposal**

1. After the Hong Kong SAR government decided to postpone the Legislative Council election in 2020, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress immediately decided that the current Legislative Council would continue to perform its duties for not less than one year, leading to social controversy and the democratic camp's debate on whether incumbent Legislative Council members should continue to serve on the Council. The Democratic Party hopes that the issue of whether Council members should stay or go could be resolved by a public opinion survey, and it has invited the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (HKPORI) to design and execute the survey.
2. HKPORI welcomes democracy advocates' proposal to resolve social issues through the democratic process. In the spirit of promoting science and democracy, HKPORI made certain proposals to the Democratic party. However, HKPORI wants to emphasise that public opinion referencing and public mandate are different in concept and nature. A public opinion survey should only be regarded as temporary public opinion referencing at best, and it can in no way replace large scale public mandate.
3. The Legislative Council election originally scheduled for September 6 this year would have been a formal and proper public mandate, and the Democratic Camp's



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primaries held in mid-July this year were a public mandate resembling formal voting. However, both mandates were voided by the cancellation of the election by the SAR government. The legitimacy of the Legislative Council which will start its operation in October is therefore questioned. In this vacuum period without a clear mandate, the issue of a speedy resolution of the issue by democratic process is a very tricky, if not impossible, problem.

4. HKPORI has always been of the view that the democratic process should proceed in a cycle of a three-step process, i.e. public opinion survey, deliberative discussion and public vote. It is a pity that we can only complete the first step in this process this time because of the lack of time. HKPORI earnestly hopes that all those who are willing to be bound by this survey will regard it as an expedient measure under the constraint of time, and that this will help buy time and space for wider and more in-depth public consultation and resolution in the future. Attention must be drawn to the fact that the SAR government seems to have no intention to conduct any Legislative Council by-election in the coming year. If the result of this opinion survey is for Members not to continue to serve on the Council, then it would seem that there will be no need for future surveys and resolution since it will be impossible for Members to rejoin the Council in the absence of a by-election.
5. HKPORI believes that, even if the poll is a short-term solution to the problem, there are still some important issues that need to be resolved in advance, including from whom to seek mandate? Binding which Members? How to set the threshold ..... and so on. HKPORI makes recommendations on each of these issues, but the final decision would be left to the Democratic Party.
6. On the question of seeking mandate, HKPORI suggests that the Democratic Party should ask all legislators who are willing to be bound by survey results to decide beforehand whether to seek mandate from all Hong Kong people, or to limit it to



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supporters of a particular faction? Or just supporters of individual political parties? Or just supporters of individual Members? Multiple answers allowed. If it is up to HKPORI to decide, it would suggest a double-authorization system such that one channel is open to all citizens, regardless of their differences, in order to promote democracy, while the other channel is open to specific supporters, in order to deal with the issue of re-mandating, matching with the balanced-threshold concept. Please see Annex 1.

7. As for the setting of a threshold, it can be relatively simple: there is no threshold for opinion surveys in the first place, but only a margin of sampling error for determining the sample size. If it is a must to turn public opinion surveys into a voting mechanism, HKPORI would reluctantly suggest setting some pre-determined thresholds, like first past the post, more than half, more than two-thirds, more than three-fourths and so on, to be decided by the power-delegator. If the thresholds are to be determined by HKPORI, it will set two balanced thresholds: one for exceeding one-half of all Hong Kong people, and the other for exceeding two-thirds of the reference group. The reference group refers to the supporters of those Legco members who are willing to be bound by the result of the survey. Because the sub-sample size of the reference group would be smaller than the overall sample size, the sampling error would be larger, and the chance of making a wrong judgement is bound to be greater. Therefore, the threshold should be higher. Moreover, the reference group should have a better understanding of the relevant issues, so that it would be easier to reach a consensus. On the other hand, if there is no consensus in the reference group, the Members concerned seems to have a greater responsibility to make his or her own judgment for the reference group.
8. In terms of specific operation, HKPORI suggests the following core questions for the survey (Note: Q1 and Q2 will each account for half of the sample).



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8.1.Q1: The current term of the Legislative Council will continue to operate for at least one more year. How much do you support or oppose the staying of AAA, BBB, CCC and ..... (i.e. state clearly that they are Members of the Democratic Party, Civic Party, all incumbent directly elected Members of the democratic camp, all incumbent Legislative Councillors of the democratic camp ..... etc. who are willing to accept the bundling of opinion polls) as Legislative Councillors for another one year?

8.2.Q2: The current term of the Legislative Council will continue to operate for at least one more year. How much do you support or oppose the resignation of AAA and BBB and CCC and ..... (i.e. state clearly that they are Members of the Democratic Party, Civic Party, all incumbent directly elected Members of the democratic camp, all incumbent Legislative Councillors of the democratic camp ..... etc. who are willing to accept the bundling of opinion polls) from the Legislative Council?

8.3.Q3: Please confirm whether you are a supporter of AAA or BBB or CCC or ..... (i.e. specify whether you are a supporter of Democratic Party, Civic Party, all incumbent directly elected Members of the democratic camp, all incumbent Legislative Councillors of the democratic camp ..... etc.) (Supporters of Members who are willing to accept a bundle of opinion polls)? (Counted on the date of the survey, assuming being honest)

9. Regarding the sample size, HKPORI proposes to set the sample size at 2,000, with half of them being fixed-line telephone samples, and the other half being mobile telephone samples, with a minimum age limit of 18 years old.



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10.HKPORI will design and execute the survey independently according to the terms and conditions of its Hong Kong Public Opinion Program (HKPOP). In order to further develop our civil society, HKPORI proposes that the Democratic Party will also commission the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Research of the Chinese University of Hong Kong to conduct surveys simultaneously according to the above design and conditions, with a sample size roughly the same as that of HKPOP. HKPOP will be wholly responsible for the data collation, weighting and analysis of all data collected. Without affecting the core questions, the research teams are free to add other questions to the survey to increase its research value.

August 25, 2020.



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## Annex 1

### Certain possible scenarios under the double-authorization cum balanced-threshold system

|  | Ref group | Others | Total | Ref group  | Others | Total      |
|--|-----------|--------|-------|------------|--------|------------|
| Support A  | 601       | 300    | 901   | <b>67%</b> | 38%    | <b>53%</b> |
| Support B  | 200       | 300    | 500   | 22%        | 38%    | 29%        |
| Half-half  | 99        | 200    | 299   | 11%        | 25%    | 18%        |
| DK   | 100       | 200    | 300   | -          | -      | -          |
| Total  | 1000      | 1000   | 2000  | 100%       | 100%   | 100%       |
| <b>Conclusion: A wins</b>                          |           |        |       | A wins     | NA     | A wins     |
|  |           |        |       |            |        |            |
|  | Ref group | Others | Total | Ref group  | Others | Total      |
| Support A  | 601       | 200    | 801   | <b>67%</b> | 22%    | 45%        |
| Support B  | 200       | 600    | 800   | 22%        | 67%    | 45%        |
| Half-half  | 99        | 100    | 199   | 11%        | 11%    | 11%        |
| DK   | 100       | 100    | 200   | -          | -      | -          |
| Total  | 1000      | 1000   | 2000  | 100%       | 100%   | 100%       |
| <b>Conclusion: A wins</b>                          |           |        |       | A wins     | NA     | No winner  |
|  |           |        |       |            |        |            |
|  | Ref group | Others | Total | Ref group  | Others | Total      |
| Support A  | 601       | 50     | 651   | <b>67%</b> | 6%     | 36%        |
| Support B  | 200       | 750    | 950   | 22%        | 83%    | <b>53%</b> |
| Half-half  | 99        | 100    | 199   | 11%        | 11%    | 11%        |
| DK   | 100       | 100    | 200   | -          | -      | -          |
| Total  | 1000      | 1000   | 2000  | 100%       | 100%   | 100%       |
| <b>Conclusion: Inconclusive, decision deferred</b> |           |        |       | A wins     | NA     | B wins     |



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## Certain possible scenarios under the double-authorization cum balanced-threshold system (cont.)

|  | Ref group | Others | Total | Ref group  | Others | Total      |
|--|-----------|--------|-------|------------|--------|------------|
| Support A  | 301       | 100    | 401   | <b>67%</b> | 8%     | 24%        |
| Support B  | 100       | 900    | 1000  | 22%        | 75%    | <b>60%</b> |
| Half-half  | 49        | 200    | 249   | 11%        | 17%    | 15%        |
| DK   | 50        | 300    | 350   | -          | -      | -          |
| Total  | 500       | 1500   | 2000  | 100%       | 100%   | 100%       |
| <b>Conclusion: Inconclusive, decision deferred</b> |           |        |       | A wins     | NA     | B wins     |
|  |           |        |       |            |        |            |
|  | Ref group | Others | Total | Ref group  | Others | Total      |
| Support A  | 250       | 100    | 350   | 56%        | 8%     | 21%        |
| Support B  | 150       | 900    | 1050  | 33%        | 75%    | <b>64%</b> |
| Half-half  | 50        | 200    | 250   | 11%        | 17%    | 15%        |
| DK   | 50        | 300    | 350   | -          | -      | -          |
| Total  | 500       | 1500   | 2000  | 100%       | 100%   | 100%       |
| <b>Conclusion: B wins</b>                          |           |        |       | No winner  | NA     | B wins     |
|  |           |        |       |            |        |            |
|  | Ref group | Others | Total | Ref group  | Others | Total      |
| Support A  | 250       | 350    | 600   | 56%        | 29%    | 36%        |
| Support B  | 150       | 650    | 800   | 33%        | 54%    | 48%        |
| Half-half  | 50        | 200    | 250   | 11%        | 17%    | 15%        |
| DK   | 50        | 300    | 350   | -          | -      | -          |
| Total  | 500       | 1500   | 2000  | 100%       | 100%   | 100%       |
| <b>Conclusion: Inconclusive, decision deferred</b> |           |        |       | No winner  | NA     | No winner  |



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## **Annex 2**

### **Service Policy of HKPOP**

- All HKPOP studies shall be published for public consumption preferably as soon as they are completed but in no way longer than 6 months after a study is completed.
- HKPOP shall be fully responsible for the research design, including but not restricted to the sampling method, questionnaire design, fieldwork operation, data analysis, and report writing.
- HKPOP reserves the right to add opinion or demographic questions to a survey study which may not be of interest to the collaborator, provided that such questions are methodologically sound and do not impair the original design.
- HKPOP shall retain the copyright of all the raw data and collated findings gathered from the HKPOP studies, but this right can be shared with the project collaborator any time, and once a study is published, the copyright of the study would be opened to the world.
- Full acknowledgment according to normal citation standards shall be given to HKPOP and the project collaborator in any subsequent publication or re-publication using whole or part of the data collected by HKPOP.
- HKPOP is free to deposit any number of such study reports and raw datasets at any library or data archive in the world after the studies are published.