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Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute

“Opinion Survey on the Staying or Resignation of Democratic Camp Legislative Councillors” a.k.a. “Council Frontline, People’s Choice Survey”

Design and Operation

1. After the Hong Kong SAR Government had 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 should continue to perform its duties for not less than one more year. This has led to controversy in the society on whether the incumbent Legislative Council Members should stay. Some Legislative Councillors of the Democratic Camp hope to resolve the controversy by a public opinion survey, and through the Democratic Party they have invited the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (HKPORI) to design and conduct the survey.
2. On August 25, 2020, HKPORI submitted a research proposal to the Democratic Party, which briefly described the difference between public mandate and public opinion referencing, and proposed two different sets of voting thresholds along the two different concepts, collectively known as the “dual mandate cum balanced threshold system”, details of which are not to be repeated here.

3. After consulting other councillors of the Democratic Camp, the Democratic Party adopted some but not all of the recommendations of HKPORI. In gist, for the opinion poll of the reference group of supporters, two-thirds majority of the respondents would be used as the threshold to decide whether to stay or leave; for that of all Hong Kong people, there will be no threshold, but the concept of public opinion referencing will be adopted. HKPORI terms this as a “mandate plus referencing system”.
4. It should be noted that, when calculating the threshold, those who have no comment will be excluded first, while those who show definite neutral view of “half-half” will be retained. In case both two-thirds thresholds of stay or leave are not met, the councillors at stake would make a decision after considering all survey findings.
5. HKPORI welcomes councillors of the Democratic Camp to resolve civil issues through a democratic process. Although public opinion polls cannot replace the function of large-scale votings in granting mandates, and the decision is obviously more anchored on the opinions of the support groups, given the shortage of time and resources, the method is still reasonable, although not ideal.
6. HKPORI stresses once again that the democratic process should proceed in a continuous, cyclic manner on the basis of “public opinion trilogy”: public opinion survey, deliberations and civil referendums. HKPORI earnestly hoped that all those who are willing to be bound by the survey results will regard this survey as an interim measure, paving way for wider and more in-depth public consultation and votings in the future.
7. In terms of specific operation, HKPORI intends to use the following three “voting questions” and a number of analytical questions (note: Q1 and Q2 will each account for half of the sample and will be placed at the beginning of the questionnaire).

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- Q1. [Tentative] The current term of the LegCo will continue to operate for at least one more year. How much do you support or oppose all the Legislative Councillors of the Democratic Party, Civic Party, Claudio Mo and Fernando Cheung to continue their current term for another one year? (Interviewers to probe the degree of support or opposition)
- Q2. [Tentative] The current term of the LegCo will continue to operate for at least one more year. How much do you support or oppose the resignation of all the Legislative Councillors of the Democratic Party, Civic Party, Claudio Mo and Fernando Cheung from their current term? (Interviewers to probe the degree of support or opposition)
- Q3. [Tentative] Please confirm whether you are a supporter of the Democratic Party, Civic Party, Claudio Mo or Fernando Cheung?
8. Regarding the sample size, HKPORI has decided to set it at 2,000, with half of them being landline telephone samples and half being mobile telephone samples, with a minimum age of 18 years old. The survey is expected to begin on September 21, 2020.
9. HKPORI intends to work in parallel with the Centre for Communication and Public Opinion Research of the Chinese University of Hong Kong to conduct the survey, with a 50:50 split, and a further split of 50:50 between landline and mobile phone sub-samples in each sample. HKPORI will be wholly responsible for the data collation, weighting and analysis of all the data collected.

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