

**HONG KONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
ELECTION 2012: NEW POLITICAL  
LANDSCAPE BRINGS NEW  
GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES**

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## **Executive Summary**

1. The four-yearly Legislative Council (LegCo) election on 9 September 2012 had the votes of 1.83 million Hong Kongers. The election had taken place amid low public confidence in the government in a tumultuous year that saw frequent large-scale protests.
2. This time round, the total number of LegCo seats had been increased from 60 to 70 and 40 of them were directly elected.
3. Contrary to expectation, the controversy over compulsory national education did not sway the results. Instead, the election is more of a tactical battle between the pro-democracy and the pro-establishment camps.
4. The pan-democrats have retained their veto power by winning more than one-third of the total seats but garnered a lower vote share. The pro-Beijing Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) is now the largest party in the LegCo.
5. Among the pan-democrats, the Democratic Party is the biggest loser in this election and its leading role in the LegCo is overtaken by the Civic Party.
6. Over the years, the electoral system adopted since 1997 has promoted the splintering of political parties in both camps and fragmented the legislature. There are now 17 political parties and groups on top of a handful of independents in the LegCo.
7. The mixed results of this election are indicative of a shifting political landscape in Hong Kong, with a reshuffling in the pro-democracy camp, an expanded DAB in a fragmented LegCo, and a society moving towards a more contentious direction.

8. The many voices demanding to be heard both within and beyond the LegCo will complicate policy-making for the government. It is foreseeable that Hong Kong's new Chief Executive (CE) Leung Chun-ying will have a hard time getting support for his policies.
9. The outcome of this election also shows that Hong Kong has politically and socially not changed much despite its growing economic ties with China. Many Hong Kongers, fearful of getting too close to China, have further strengthened their local identity to distance themselves from the Mainlanders.
10. Whether Leung will have a second term depends on how well he manages the differences both within the legislature and in the society. The future is not just more challenging for the CE. Hong Kong's road to direct election is also more bumpy.