



Summary Results from the National Deliberative Poll in Mongolia on Constitutional Reform

In the first application of the new “Law on Deliberative Polling,” a national random sample of the Mongolian people gathered from all over the country in the Government Palace in Ulaanbaatar over the weekend of April 28-30, 2017. The Center for Deliberative Democracy at Stanford University provided advice and technical support. Here is a brief summary of the results, made publicly available by the National Statistical Office (NSO), from this national deliberation.

Representativeness

The NSO did a superb job of selecting the sample, conducting the field work and gathering this scientifically representative group from the entire country to come to Ulaanbaatar. The NSO randomly selected households from randomly selected geographical areas (or strata) and then randomly selected an adult in each of those households to be interviewed. In effect, each adult citizen in the country had an equal random chance of being selected. This approach is widely recognized around the world as one of the “gold standard” methods for scientific sampling. However, like all methods of sampling it can be undermined if the response rate is low. In this case, the response rates were exceptionally high so we can have a very high level of confidence in these results.

1,568 households were randomly selected within geographical areas so as to cover the entire country. A strict scientific process was followed to randomly select people within the selected households. Tablets with GPS kept track of the interviewers and their progress in completing the field work. 96% of the people selected, completed the initial interview (1515 out of 1568). In conformity with the law on Deliberative Polling, more than half of those who completed the interview were invited. Out of the 785 who were invited, 669 came to Ulaanbaatar and completed the entire weekend of deliberations. This is an extraordinarily high rate of participation (85% = 669 out of 785). The NSO Report has more data on representativeness. (NSO Report in Mongolian: http://1212.mn/files/ZSAS_2.pdf, in English:

<http://cdd.stanford.edu/2017/main-findings-of-the-first-nationwide-deliberative-polling-on-constitutional-amendment-of-mongolia/>)

What the Public Concluded

The six proposed constitutional amendments generated 18 questions about specific aspects of the proposals. Ten of those eighteen questions (55%), changed significantly. It is worth discussing both the significant changes and the proposals that were rated most highly at the end, regardless of change. The highest rated proposals withstood all the criticisms and still came out at the top of the list. They can be considered the people's considered judgments about what should be done.

Let us start with the opinion changes and then look at the top rated proposals. Support for two of the most ambitious proposals dropped dramatically with deliberation. The proposal for "Creating a Parliament with two chambers: a people's representative body (People's Great Khural) and legislative body (State Baga Khural)" went from 61% to 30% a drop of 31 points. With deliberation, the public became more skeptical that "a second chamber would provide effective oversight of the lower house of Parliament." Agreement with this idea dropped from 70% to 38%. More specifically, there was increased agreement with the criticism that "both chambers would be controlled by the same political parties, thereby not providing proper oversight." Those agreeing with this proposition rose from 43% to 59%. There was also a significant increase from 48% to 57% in those who agreed that "adding a second chamber would create too many politicians."

A second major drop in support occurred with the proposal for an indirectly rather than directly elected President for only a single six year term. There were two components to this proposal, the change in the term and indirect election. Support for "Electing the President for a single six-year term, without reelection" dropped from 61.5% to 41% with deliberation. Support for "Electing the president for a single six year term by an expanded plenary session of the Parliament that includes Parliament members and the Citizen's Representative Councils of aimags and the capital city" started at 36% and ended at 33% (not a significant drop but showing a low level of support after deliberation.) There was a significant drop in support for one of the arguments in favor of indirect election: "If the President is indirectly elected by the Parliament and the Citizens Representative Councils, then he/she will be someone acceptable to all sides and above political fray." Agreement with this conclusion dropped from 55% to 38%. On the other hand, there was strong agreement before and after with one of the key arguments in favor of direct rather than indirect election: "If the President is directly elected

s/he can better speak for the interests of all people” (84% before, 80% afterward, no significant change).

By contrast, the deliberators supported an amendment that would increase the power of the Prime Minister: “Granting the Prime Minister the authority to appoint and dismiss the members of his/her Cabinet.” This proposal increased significantly from 57% to 73%. Deliberators agreed that, “If the Prime Minister cannot even appoint the members of his/her own Cabinet then s/he lacks the authority to get anything done.” 68% agreed before and 66% afterwards (not a significant drop).

Many of the highest ranked proposals after deliberation were also rated highly beforehand. All the proposals were evaluated on the same scale from 0 to 10 where “0 means strongly oppose and 10 means strongly support and 5 is exactly in the middle.” Here are the top ten proposals listed from highest to lowest. Except for the proposal allowing the Prime Minister the authority to appoint and dismiss the members of the cabinet, all the proposals concern the transparency, accountability and meritocratic operation of various aspects of the government, including the civil service and the judiciary. We show the percentages of support in parenthesis for each proposal (we rank them by the mean post-deliberation). The top ten proposals after deliberation are:

1. *Adding that the Public Service Commission should regulate recruitment, promotion, and security of tenure based on merit (91.3%)*
2. *Adding that public servants cannot be dismissed because of election results or on the basis of their political views (90.4%)*
3. *Adding that the public service should be professional, merit-based, and independent from political interference (90.3%)*
4. *Creating mechanism in the Constitution for state responsibility and accountability (89.2%)*
5. *Creating more clear procedures and principles for appointment of judges and chief justice (82.6%)*
6. *Adding a clause to the constitution that protects the independence of the Public Service Commission (78.2%)*
7. *Adding the structure of the Cabinet ministries in the Constitution (78.9%)*
8. *Establishing a parliamentary body to strengthen state accountability and ensure implementation of anti-corruption policies (75.8%)*
9. *Granting the Prime Minister the authority to appoint and dismiss the members of his/her Cabinet (72.7%)*
10. *Expanding membership of the General Judicial Council responsible for ensuring the autonomy of the judiciary (70.8%)*

These ten priorities speak to the most urgent concerns of the participants. Two of the “most important problems with the current political system” are “corruption among high level officials” (86.1%) and “corruption in the financing of campaigns” (82.4%). The only other problem rating as high is “too much debt” (83.9%). These are very high levels compared to other key concerns such as “Government effectively delivering public services” (32.7%) and “Government effectively managing public resources” (29.3%).

Apart from issues of corruption and accountability, deliberators’ worries about the political process actually lessened with deliberation. Concern that “too many elections are creating obstacles in the current political system” went down significantly from 63.0% to 54.4%. Their belief that “Parliament is able to get things done” increased significantly from 54.4% to 63.0%. Their belief that the “President is able to get things done” increased significantly from 40.7% to 49.1%. However, their belief that “the Prime Minister is able to get things done” did not change significantly (53.2% to 53.9% post deliberation). Their most urgent concerns were not the structure of the government but corruption.

After deliberation, only 37.6% agreed “there are not enough limitations of the President’s power” and only 33.2% agreed that “there are not enough limitations on the power of Parliament.” Given these perceptions of the problem, it is not surprising that they failed to endorse dramatic changes in the structure of the Presidency or the Parliament.

By contrast 81.7% thought it was important for “public servants to have security of tenure”, 78.7% for them to be “non-partisan” and 90.2% for them to have “To have promotion based on merit.” They wanted a professional and meritocratic civil service and they wanted constitutional protections for it as we saw with the top proposals. The second highest priority in the top ten was “Adding that public servants cannot be dismissed because of election results or on the basis of their political views (90.3%.) This result also seems linked to the support for priority number 7 “Adding the structure of the Cabinet ministries in the Constitution (78.9%).” It was argued in the deliberations that this proposal would prevent reorganizing the ministries after elections and thus protect civil servants from losing their jobs on political grounds.

Evaluation

At the end of the weekend, the deliberators were asked to evaluate all the main components of the process. 76.1% thought the small group discussions were valuable, 79.4% thought the briefing materials were valuable, 82.5% thought the plenary sessions with competing experts were valuable. 89.3% said “the event as a whole” was valuable.

On more specific aspects, 95.8% agreed that “my group moderator provided the opportunity for everyone to participate in the discussion” and 92.5% agreed that “the members of my group participated relatively equally.” Only 17.2% thought the group moderator “sometimes tried to influence the group with his or her own views.” 67.8% agreed that “my group moderator tried to make sure that opposing arguments were considered” and 93.8% agreed that “the important aspects of the issues were covered in the group discussions.” In reflecting on the event as a whole, 88.2% agreed with the conclusion that “I learned a lot about people very different me—about what they and their lives are like.” Given that the process engaged a national random sample randomly assigned to small groups, the diversity the participants encountered would have reflected that of the entire society.

As international observers, our own evaluations are very much in keeping with those of the participants. The NSO did a superb job of sampling and recruitment. The response rates for the initial questionnaire and the participation rate for the weekend are among the highest in the deliberative projects conducted around the world in 26 countries. The high level of discussion in both the small groups and the plenary sessions was evident to any observer and confirms the participant evaluations. The results are coherent and suggest clear ways in which the people expressed their priorities. We believe further data analyses as well as qualitative analyses of the transcripts will provide further confirmation of this very positive picture.

Appendix

Appendix A: Demographic Representativeness

Appendix B: Attitudinal Representativeness

Appendix C: Priority Rankings of Proposals Post Deliberation

A: Demographic Representativeness

This table compares the demographics for participants and non-participants of the Deliberative Polling process. The participants, 669, are those who completed the first survey, attended the weekend deliberations, and completed the final survey prior to departure. The non-participants, 846, are those that completed the first survey and either decided not to attend the event and/or were not invited to attend the event. This table compares age, gender, education level, employment, marital status, and monthly individual income. The significance level below .01 is indicated with *** and below .05 is indicated with **. More asterisks indicate more difference between participants and non-participants. 3 of the questions were statistically significant, while 3 questions were not significant (meaning there were no differences between participants and non-participants).

	Participants (N=669)	Non-Participants (N=846)	Sig.
Age (in years)	42.3	41.5	n.s.
Gender			
Male	46.9	43.1	0.008***
Female	53.1	56.9	
Education Level			0.026**
No formal education	1.9	7.0	
Primary	6.0	9.8	
Incomplete Secondary	14.9	13.7	
Secondary	31.8	31.9	
Vocational	15.5	10.6	
Higher	29.7	27.0	

Employed			
Yes	58.1	60.8	0.045**
No	41.9	39.2	
Marital Status			
Single (Never Married)	16.1	13.7	n.s.
Married/Living together	62.3	60.9	
Living with Partner	8.8	10.4	
Separated	1.5	1.8	
Divorced	2.7	3.2	
Widowed	8.5	10.0	
Monthly Individual Income			n.s.
Less than 300,000	64.4	68.9	
300,001-500,000	22.0	19.0	
500,001-700,000	6.9	5.2	
700,001-900,000	2.2	2.2	
900,001-1,100,000	1.8	1.5	
1,100,001,1,600,000	0.9	0.7	
More than 1,600,001	0.6	1.2	
Don't Know	1.2	1.2	

Appendix B: Attitudinal Representativeness

This table compares the attitudes for participants and non-participants of the Deliberative Polling process. The participants, 669, are those who completed the first survey, attended the weekend deliberations, and completed the final survey prior to departure. The non-participants, 846, are those that completed the first survey and either decided not to attend the event and/or were not invited to attend the event.

This table compares the attitude policy questions. The significance level below .01 is indicated with ***, below .05 is indicated with **, and below .10 is indicated with ‡.

	Participants (N=669)	Non- Participants (N=846)	P-NP	Sig.
201: How well or poorly would you say the present system of democracy in Mongolia works these days?	4.73	4.69	0.04	0.711
202: Granting the Prime Minister the authority to appoint and dismiss the members of his/her Cabinet	6.42	5.99	0.43	0.055‡
203: Limiting the number of Cabinet ministers who are also Members of Parliament to 1/3 of the Cabinet	4.30	4.30	0.00	0.982
204: Adding the structure of the Cabinet ministries in the Constitution	7.78	7.72	0.06	0.744
205: Electing the President for a single six-year term, without reelection	6.42	5.86	0.56	0.170
206: Electing the president for a single six-year term by an expanded plenary session of the Parliament that includes Parliament members and the Citizen's Representative Councils of aimags and the capital city	3.92	3.71	0.21	0.384
207: Revoking the right of the President to initiate legislation	4.67	4.63	0.04	0.860
208: Revoking the right of the President to issue directional decrees to the Cabinet	4.58	4.32	0.26	0.255
209: Adding that the public service should be professional, merit-based, and independent from	9.01	8.81	0.20	0.105

political interference				
210: Adding a clause to the constitution that protects the independence of the Public Service Commission	8.35	8.38	-0.03	0.836
211: Adding that the Public Service Commission should regulate recruitment, promotion, and security of tenure based on merit	9.09	9.18	-0.09	0.402
212: Adding that public servants cannot be dismissed because of election results or on the basis of their political views	9.15	9.08	0.07	0.616
213: Revising the Constitution of Mongolia to clearly establish administrative and territorial units of Mongolia into following subdivisions, aimag divided into soum and cities (locally governed), soum divided into bags and villages, capital city divided districts, districts divided into khoroos, and city divided into khoroos	7.98	8.11	-0.13	0.440
214: Allowing city, soum, and district governors to directly appoint the governors of their bags, khoroos, and villages	4.78	4.50	0.28	0.239
215: Creating a Parliament with two chambers: a people's representative body (People's Great Khural) and legislative body (State Baga Khural)	6.29	5.74	0.55	0.022**
216: Creating mechanism in the Constitution for state responsibility and accountability	9.32	9.05	0.27	0.011***
217: Establishing a parliamentary body to strengthen state accountability and ensure implementation of anti-corruption policies	8.81	8.71	0.10	0.437
218: Expanding membership of the General Judicial Council responsible for ensuring the autonomy of the judiciary	7.15	7.67	-0.52	0.008***
219: Creating more clear procedures and principles for appointment of judges and chief justice	8.82	8.72	0.10	0.096‡

Appendix C: Priority Rankings of Proposals Post Deliberation

This table shows the rankings of proposals post-deliberation. The question numbers precede the proposals. The numbers in parenthesis are the T1 rankings, prior to deliberation. Rankings are inferred from the means at Time 2.

	T1	T2	T2-T1 (diff)	Sig.
1. 211: Adding that the Public Service Commission should regulate recruitment, promotion, and security of tenure based on merit (3)	0.911	0.914	0.004	0.721
2. 212: Adding that public servants cannot be dismissed because of election results or on the basis of their political views (2)	0.915	0.909	-0.006	0.591
3. 209: Adding that the public service should be professional, merit-based, and independent from political interference (1)	0.905	0.901	-0.004	0.729
4. 216: Creating mechanism in the Constitution for state responsibility and accountability (1)	0.934	0.900	-0.034	0.001
5. 219: Creating more clear procedures and principles for appointment of judges and chief justice (6)	0.881	0.864	-0.017	0.186
6. 210: Adding a clause to the constitution that protects the independence of the Public Service Commission (7)	0.835	0.823	-0.012	0.429
7. 204: Adding the structure of the Cabinet ministries in the Constitution (9)	0.779	0.815	0.036	0.044
8. 217: Establishing a parliamentary body to strengthen state accountability and ensure implementation of anti-corruption policies (5)	0.881	0.800	-0.081	0.000
9. 202: Granting the Prime Minister the authority to appoint and dismiss the members of his/her Cabinet (11)	0.641	0.782	0.141	0.000
10. 218: Expanding membership of the General Judicial Council responsible for ensuring the autonomy of the judiciary (10)	0.713	0.772	0.059	0.002
11. 213: Revising the Constitution of Mongolia to clearly establish administrative and territorial units of Mongolia into following subdivisions, aimag divided into soum and cities (locally governed), soum divided into bags and villages, capital city divided districts, districts divided into khoroos, and city divided	0.794	0.686	-0.108	0.000

into khorooos (8)				
12. 214: Allowing city, soum, and district governors to directly appoint the governors of their bags, khorooos, and villages (14)	0.479	0.628	0.150	0.000
13. 208: Revoking the right of the President to issue directional decrees to the Cabinet (16)	0.455	0.500	0.045	0.047
14. 207: Revoking the right of the President to initiate legislation (15)	0.466	0.495	0.029	0.202
15. 205: Electing the President for a single six-year term, without reelection (12)	0.640	0.473	-0.167	0.000
16. 203: Limiting the number of Cabinet ministers who are also Members of Parliament to 1/3 of the Cabinet (17)	0.431	0.405	-0.025	0.231
17. 206: Electing the president for a single six-year term by an expanded plenary session of the Parliament that includes Parliament members and the Citizen's Representative Councils of aimags and the capital city (18)	0.390	0.381	-0.009	0.670
18. 215: Creating a Parliament with two chambers: a people's representative body (People's Great Khural) and legislative body (State Baga Khural) (13)	0.627	0.358	-0.270	0.000