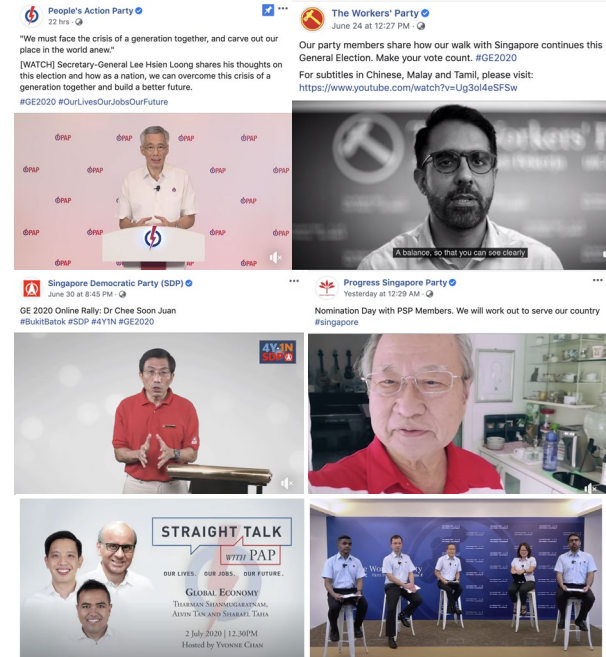


Fire-and-forget ?

Analysis of FB usage by four political parties in GE 2020

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OVERVIEW

1. Political parties pumped an unprecedented amount of content (especially videos) on FB during GE 2020.
1. But they mostly used social media as **distribution channels** for their messages instead of treating the platforms as data sources for testing their election hypothesis or campaign strategies.
1. Missed signals:
 - Ivan Lim incident
 - WP's Sengkang surge
 - De-sensitisation towards Covid-19; weakening interest in PAP's message on jobs/economy
1. This “fire-and-forget” approach towards social/online media will prove increasingly costly in future GEs.

DATA AND DEFINITION:

Data Source:

- Over **8,000 GE-related FB posts** from 15 public pages* between June 22 and July 11.
- Over **32,000 Covid-related FB posts** from 7 local media outlets between January 1 and July 12.

Definition:

- Total FB Interactions = Sum of “Likes”, “Shares”, “Comments” and user-expressions of “Love”, “Wow”, “Haha”, “Sad”, “Angry” and “Care”.

* FB Pages: PAP, WP, PSP, SDP, Lee Hsien Loong, Pritam Singh, Tan Cheng Bock, Lee Hsien Yang, CNA, ST, Today, Mothership, ZB, WB, Shin Min.

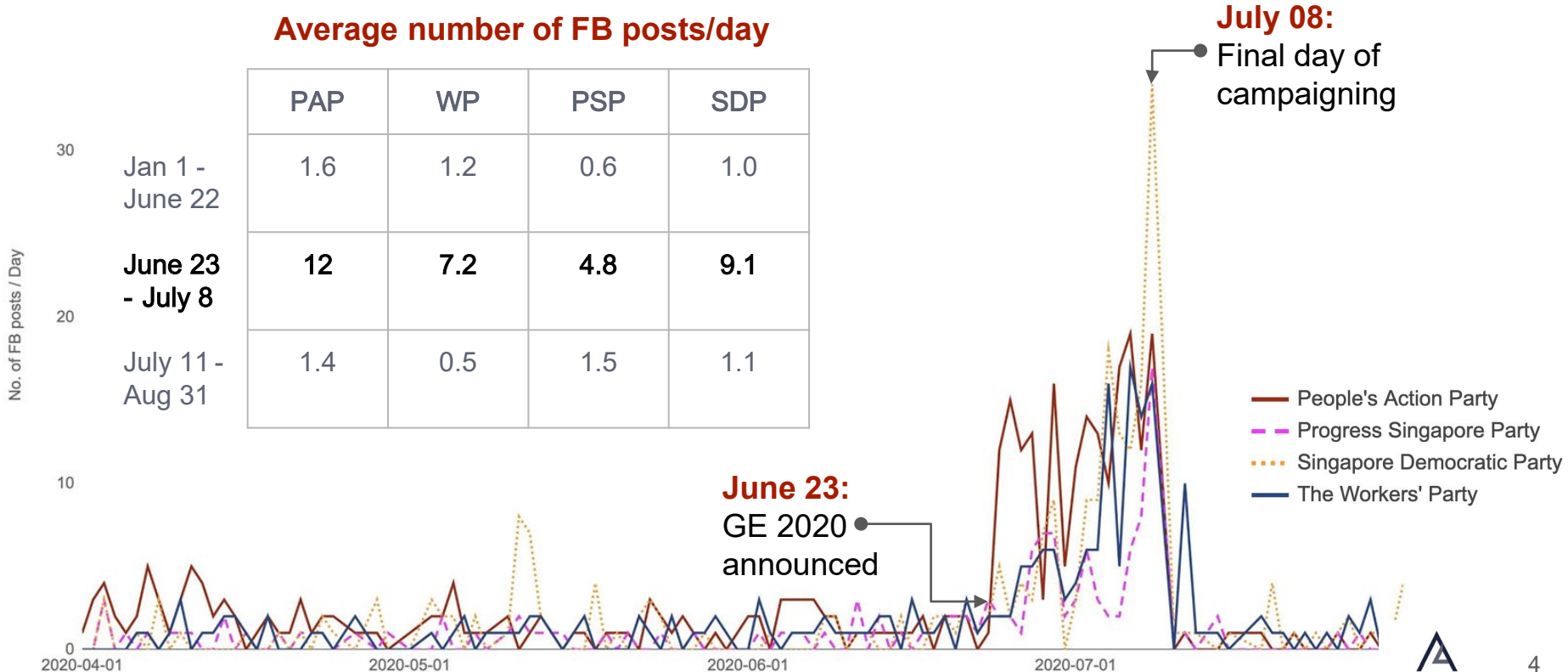
GE 2020: FB SURGE ONLY AFTER POLLS CALLED

Despite early rumblings, key parties were inactive on FB until June 23 when the election was called.

40

Average number of FB posts/day

	PAP	WP	PSP	SDP
Jan 1 - June 22	1.6	1.2	0.6	1.0
June 23 - July 8	12	7.2	4.8	9.1
July 11 - Aug 31	1.4	0.5	1.5	1.1



VIDEOS DOMINATE THE CONTENT SURGE ON FB

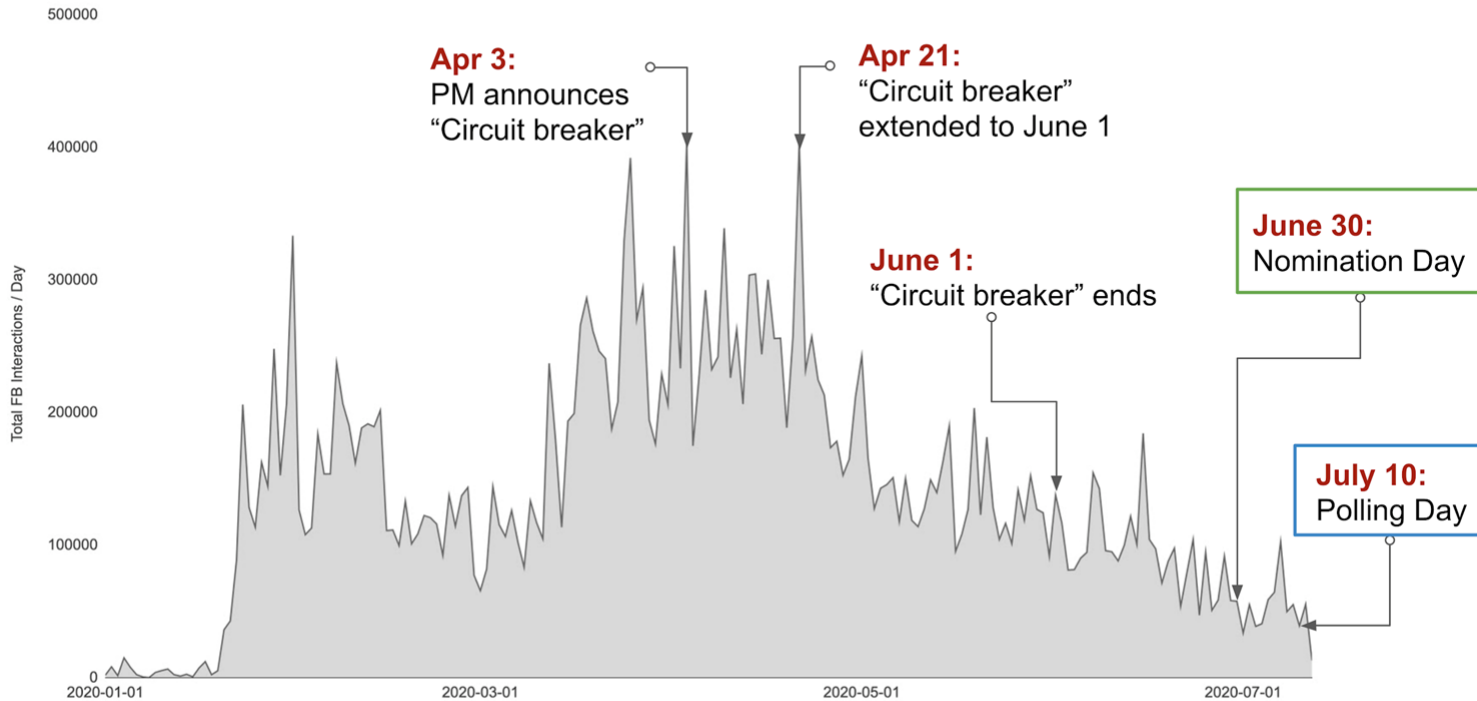
* Videos+ accounted for nearly **62% of the 530 posts** that the four main political parties published on FB between June 23 and July 8:

Party	Content Type	No. of posts
People's Action Party	Native Video	109
	Live Video Complete	31
	Photo	26
	Live Video Scheduled	18
	Link	7
	YouTube	1
Progress Singapore Party	Native Video	50
	Photo	13
	Live Video Complete	8
	Link	4
	YouTube	2
Singapore Democratic Party (SDP)	Native Video	85
	Photo	51
	Link	7
	Live Video Complete	2
	YouTube	1
The Workers' Party	Photo	61
	Native Video	41
	Live Video Scheduled	7
	Link	5
	YouTube	1

*: Excludes scheduling of live videos and YouTube links

MISSED SIGNAL #1: COVID DE-SENSITISATION

Despite the deluge of posts, signs are that the parties missed broader signals on social media:



* User interaction with Covid-19 FB posts had fallen very sharply from peaks in April by Nomination Day.

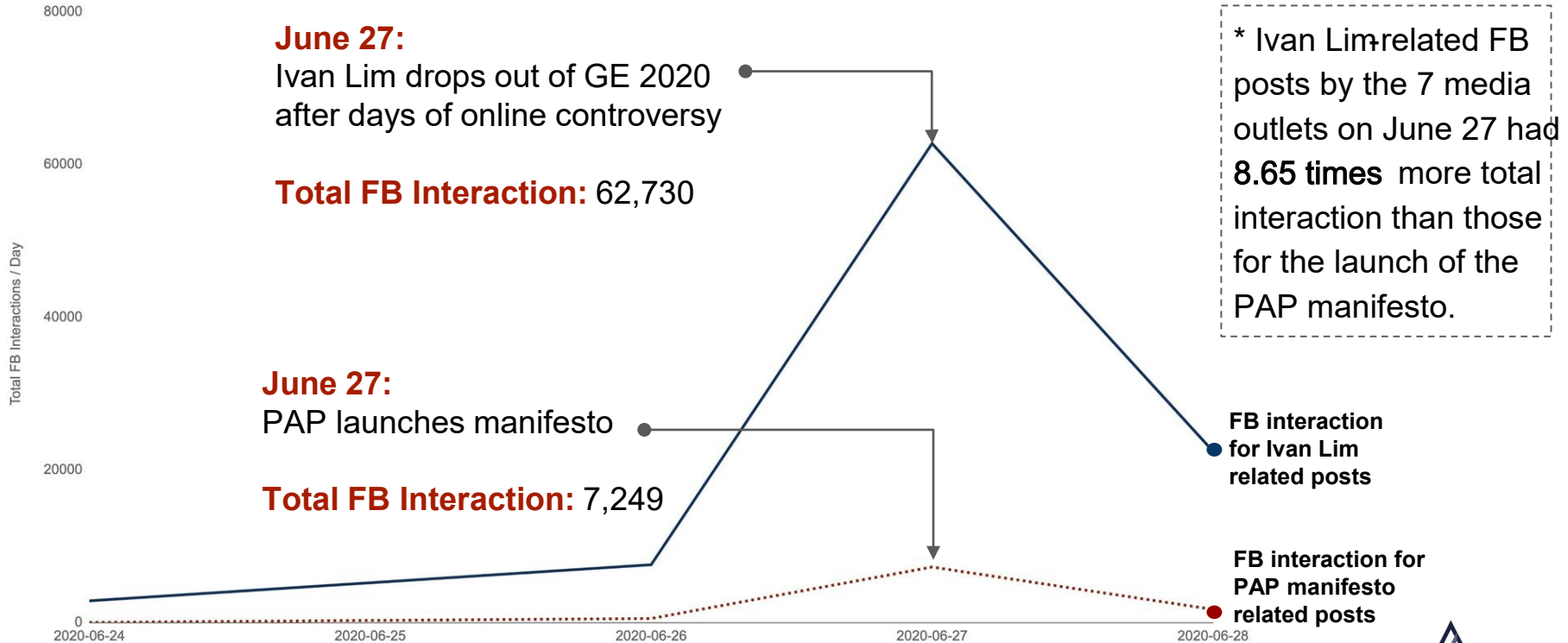
* "Flight to safety" instinct, if it existed, likely dissipated along the way.

* GE 2020 was a "Covid-election" in form, not in substance.

Source: 32,602 Covid-19 related FB posts from CNA, ST, Mothership, TODAY, ZB, WB and Shin Min between Jan 1 and July 12

MISSED SIGNAL #2: IVAN LIM INCIDENT

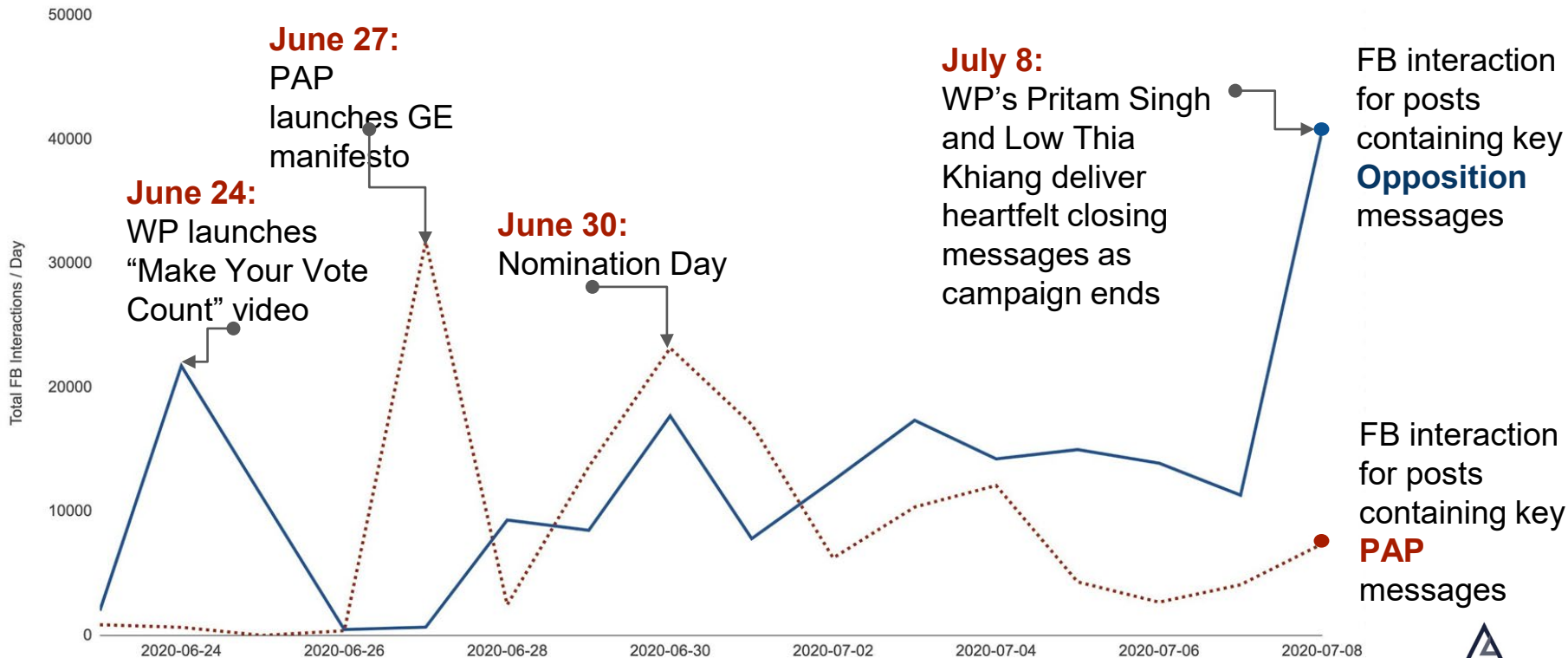
The controversy over the former PAP candidate was the first major sign that the party's core message on jobs wasn't resonating with voters in a big way:



Source: 89 FB posts from CNA, ST, Mothership, TODAY, ZB, WB and Shin Min with keywords containing "Ivan Lim" + "PAP", and "PAP" + "manifesto".

MISSED SIGNAL #3: THE 'ENTHUSIASM GAP'

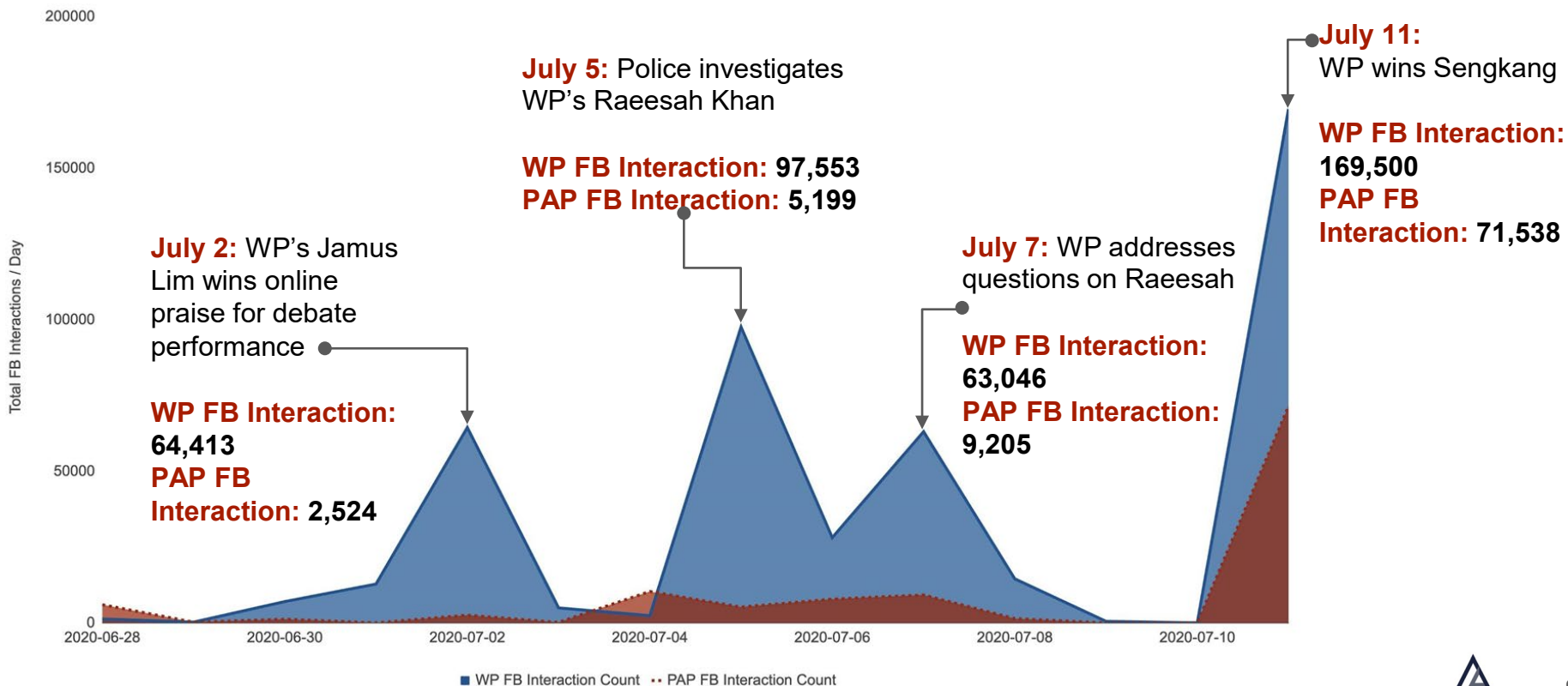
User interaction with FB posts related to PAP's "jobs, jobs, jobs" message peaked well before Polling Day, while that for the Opposition - to deny the PAP a "blank cheque" - peaked just in time.



Source: 154 FB posts from CNA, ST, Mothership, TODAY, ZB, WB, SM, PAP, WP, SDP, Lee Hsien Loong, Pritam Singh and Lee Hsien Yang using keywords used in PAP and Opposition messaging.

MISSED SIGNAL #4: THE 'SENGKANG SURPRISE'

Early warning signs pointed to a massive gap in mindshare between the PAP and WP teams:



Source: 325 FB posts from CNA, ST, Mothership, TODAY, ZB, WB, and Shin Min containing 18 keywords and names of candidates frequently mentioned in Sengkang-related stories.

IMPLICATIONS:

1. Parties here still have a “fire-and-forget” attitude towards political content on social/online media (including their own), even though they are getting better at producing and distributing said content on social media.
1. Singapore politics is a “low signal” environment due to the lack of public polls and a passive media environment. Social/messaging/online data fill that vacuum but can also be manipulated.
1. Success in future GEs will go to parties that can accurately sift out the signals from the noise in these imperfect proxies of public opinion.

USEFUL LINKS:

* Full write-up + analysis of GE 2020 analysis by Analytix Labs:

<https://www.analytix-labs.com/insights/ge2020-review>

* Analysis of key topics in GE 2020: <https://www.analytix-labs.com/insights/ge2020-topics>

* Visual primer on GE 2020: <https://www.analytix-labs.com/insights/ge2020>

* Sentiment analysis of key political speeches leading to GE 2020:

<https://www.analytix-labs.com/insights/cb-speeches>