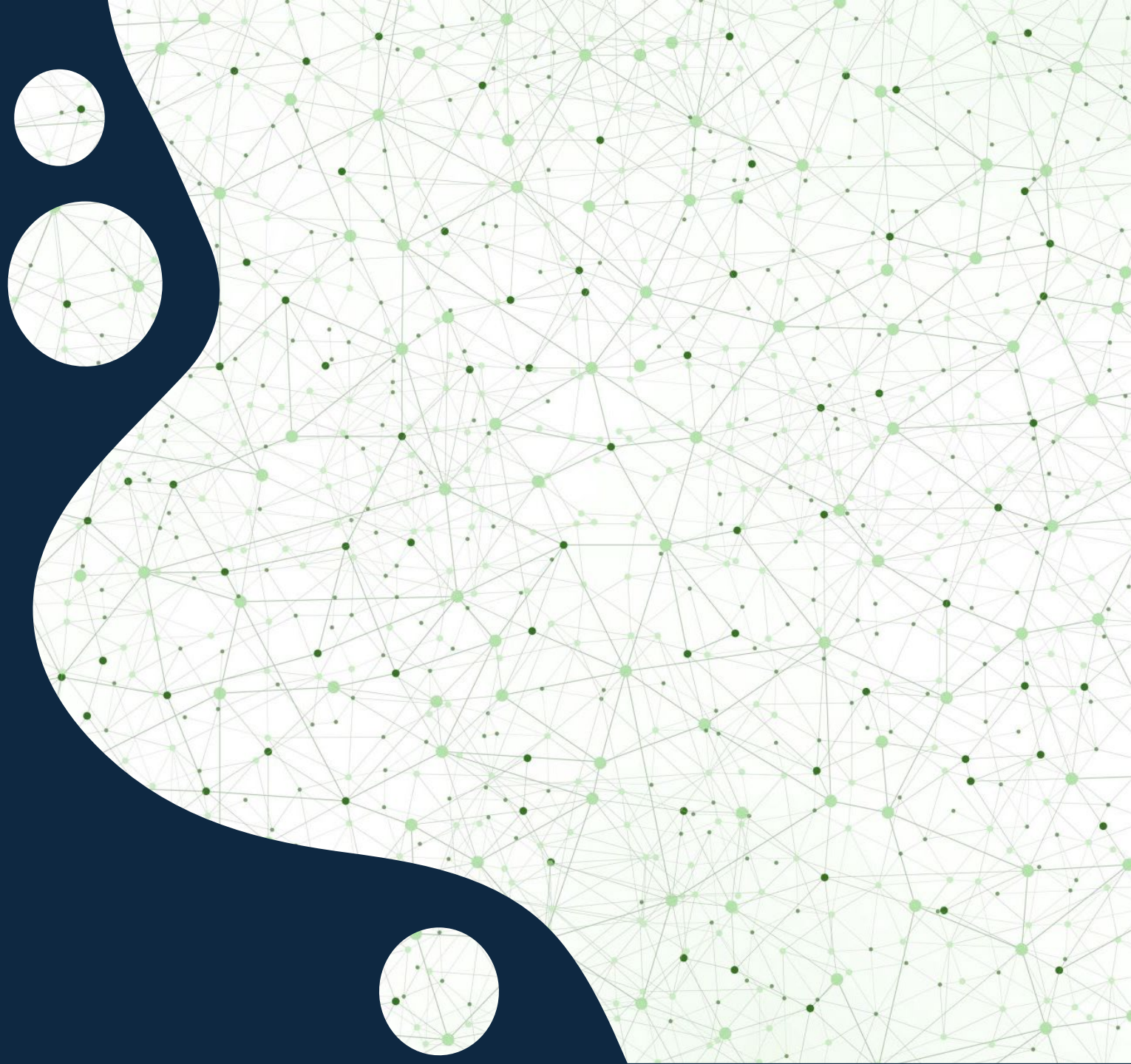


Internet and the Elections


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Outline

Internet and Elections –
Changing concepts of citizenry



Internet use X political
participation over time

Drawing from these related works

- **2011 GE**

- Pang, N. & Goh, D. (2015). Pro, Anti, Neutral: Political blogs and their sentiments. In T.H. Tan, A. Mahizhnan & P.H. Ang (eds), *Battle for Hearts and Minds: New media and Elections in Singapore*. World Scientific Publishing: Singapore.
- Pang, N. (2015). Squaring Political Circles: Coping with Conflicting Information. In T.H. Tan, A. Mahizhnan & P.H. Ang (eds), *Battle for Hearts and Minds: New media and Elections in Singapore*. World Scientific Publishing: Singapore.
- Pang, N. & Goh, D. (2016). Can blogs function as rhetorical publics in Asian democracies? An analysis using the case of Singapore. *Telematics and Informatics*, 33(2), 504-513.

- **2015 GE**

- Pang, N., Goh, D. & Rohman, A. (2016). The impacts of mobile social media on collective action. In R.Wei (ed), *Mobile Media, Political Participation and Civic Activism in Asia*. Springer: South Carolina
- Pang, N., & Woo, Y. T. (2020). What about WhatsApp? A systematic review of WhatsApp and its role in civic and political engagement. *First Monday*, 25(12). <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v25i12.10417>

- **2020 GE**

- Pang, N. (2020). 9. Social Media and Changes in Political Engagement in Singapore. In A. Sinpeng & R. Tapsell (Ed.), *From Grassroots Activism to Disinformation: Social Media in Southeast Asia* (pp. 167-191). Singapore: ISEAS Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814951036-010>
- Pang, N., & Woo, Y. T. (2022). What drives changes in expressive social media use for generational cohorts? *International Communication Gazette*, 84(4), 306-330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17480485221094105>
- Pang, N. (2020). 9. Social Media and Changes in Political Engagement in Singapore. In A. Sinpeng & R. Tapsell (Ed.), *From Grassroots Activism to Disinformation: Social Media in Southeast Asia* (pp. 167-191). Singapore: ISEAS Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814951036-010>

What does political participation mean as a citizen?



“All must vote” campaign in 1959 (Source: National Archives Singapore)

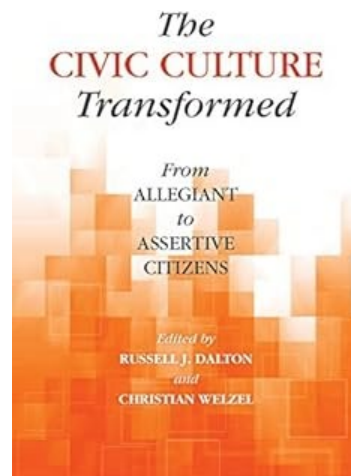


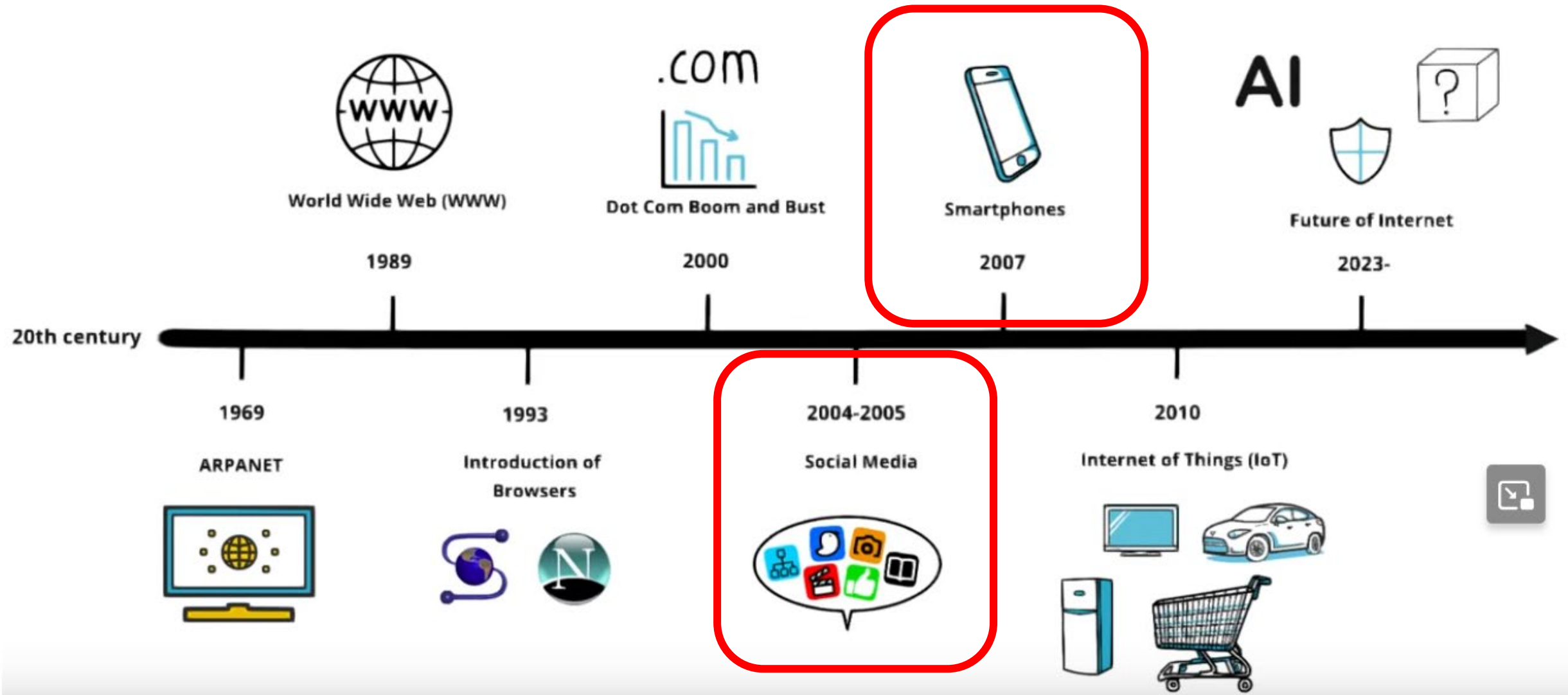
White Paper Protest in 2013 (Source: Joseph Nair, Associated Press)

Political participation reflect changing notions of citizenry in civic culture

ALLEGIANT	ASSERTIVE
Emphasis on order and security	Emphasis on voice and participation
Deference to authority	Distance from authority
Trust in institutions	Scepticism of institutions
Limited liberal view of democracy	Expanded democratic expectations
Limited protest/protest potential	Direct, elite challenging action
Traditional forms of participation	Mixture of traditional and new forms of participation

Source: Dalton and Welzel (2014)





Source: [TimeLine](#)

Drivers, and how internet use reflect changing notions of civic culture

[← BACK TO LISTING](#)

GOVERNANCE OF A CITY-STATE

Political blogs from the 2011 to the coming election

📅 AUGUST 27, 2015



By: Natalie Pang and Debbie Goh

During the last general election in 2011 and the Hougang by-election in 2012, we began two studies to understand the influence of blogs in the context of a general election. In the 2011 general election, we reviewed 764 blog posts from 200 blogs. In the 2012 by-election, we surveyed voters for their opinions on election issues and compared these to online opinions from 170 blog posts. In the studies, we examined two questions: were the issues raised in the blogs different from the ones highlighted by the mainstream media? Was there diversity in the way each issue was discussed and deliberated?

Who set the agenda?

On 20 April 2011, a week before Nomination Day, *The Straits Times* published an article listing 11 issues expected to be of concern to the electorate. These issues were: scholars in opposition; hot seats; 4G (fourth generation) leadership; “Y-Fi” access (this refers to the engagement of younger, Gen-Y voters); new benchmarks; cost of living; unease towards foreigners, just to name a few. Our results show

Dominant use of blogs in 2011 and 2015 elections + Facebook pages, websites by all political parties

2020 General Election



- All parties had to campaign online, but there are distinct approaches
- Massive use of social media to discuss politics by citizens
- Key viral moments and memes (sometimes overtaking what should have been major moments for parties)
- Youth using social media and the internet for content creation, to heighten political knowledge, agenda-setting, and engaging other youths (eg 'DLCGNS' by Chang Zi Qian)
- Emerging internet cultures: Stan culture, influencers and micro-celebrities covering interviews, walking the ground, following campaigns

Internet and participation over time

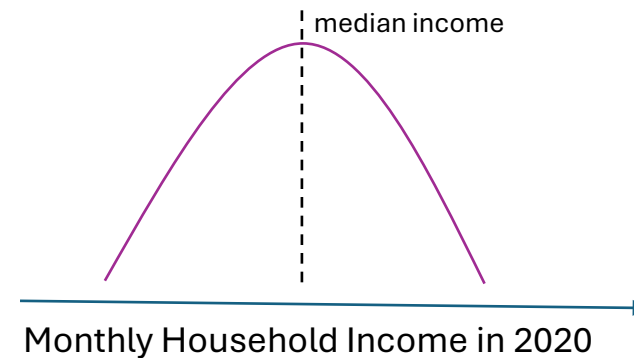
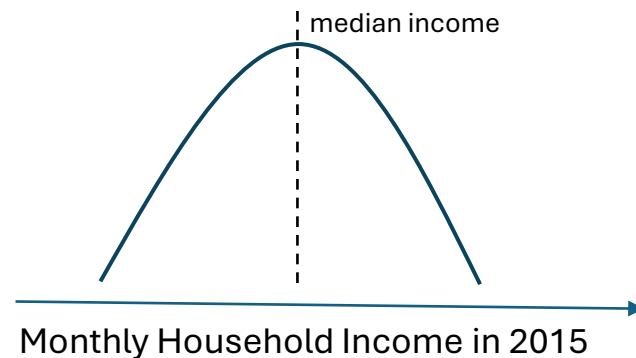
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2015 \leftrightarrow 2020

Survey snapshots of elections do not tell us much about the changes over time

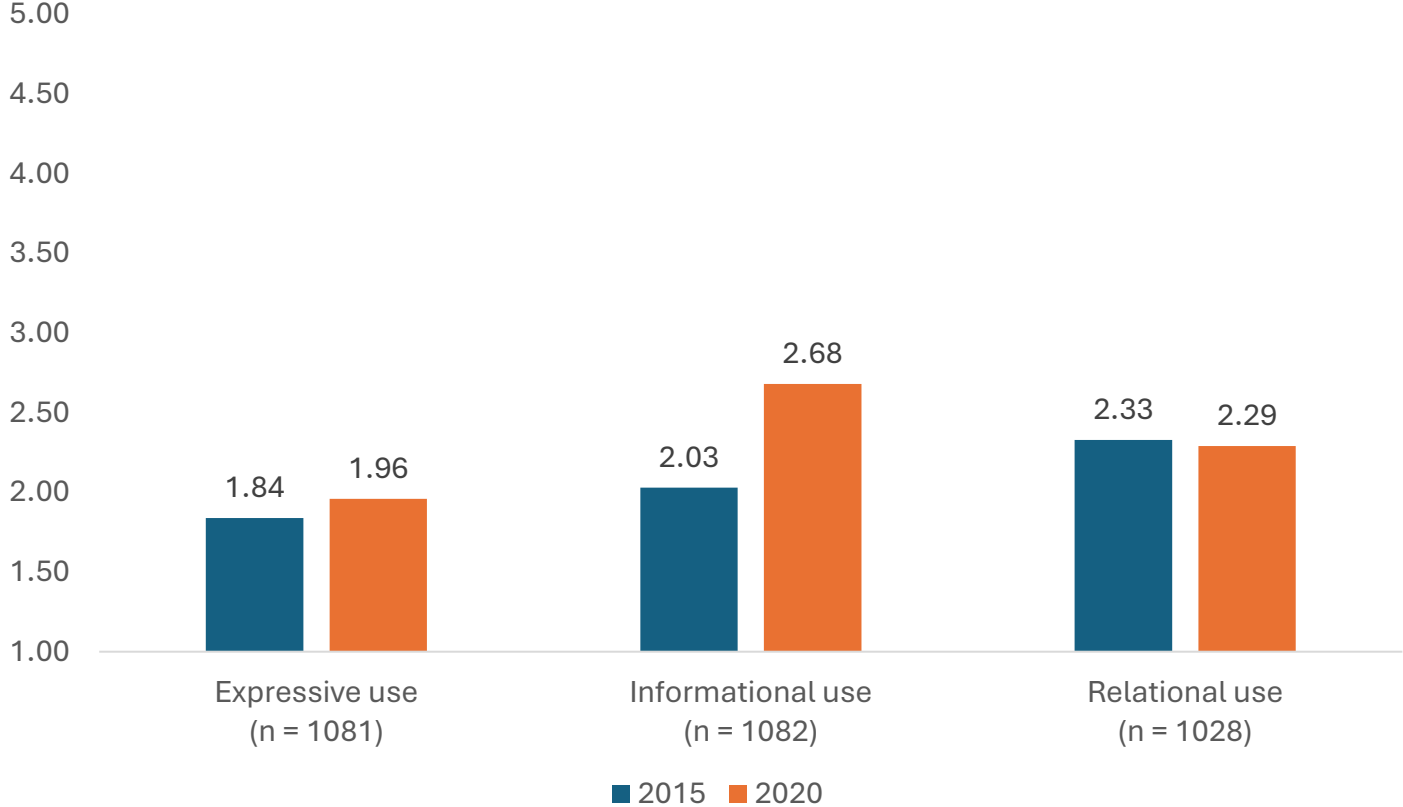
Method: Creating a pooled dataset from 2015 and 2020 by matching demographically similar participants in 2015 and 2020

1. Sort respondents in both datasets according to **age, gender and ethnicity**
2. Within each age-gender-ethnicity subgroup, order and match respondents according to their **monthly household income**



Overall Engagement in 2015 and 2020

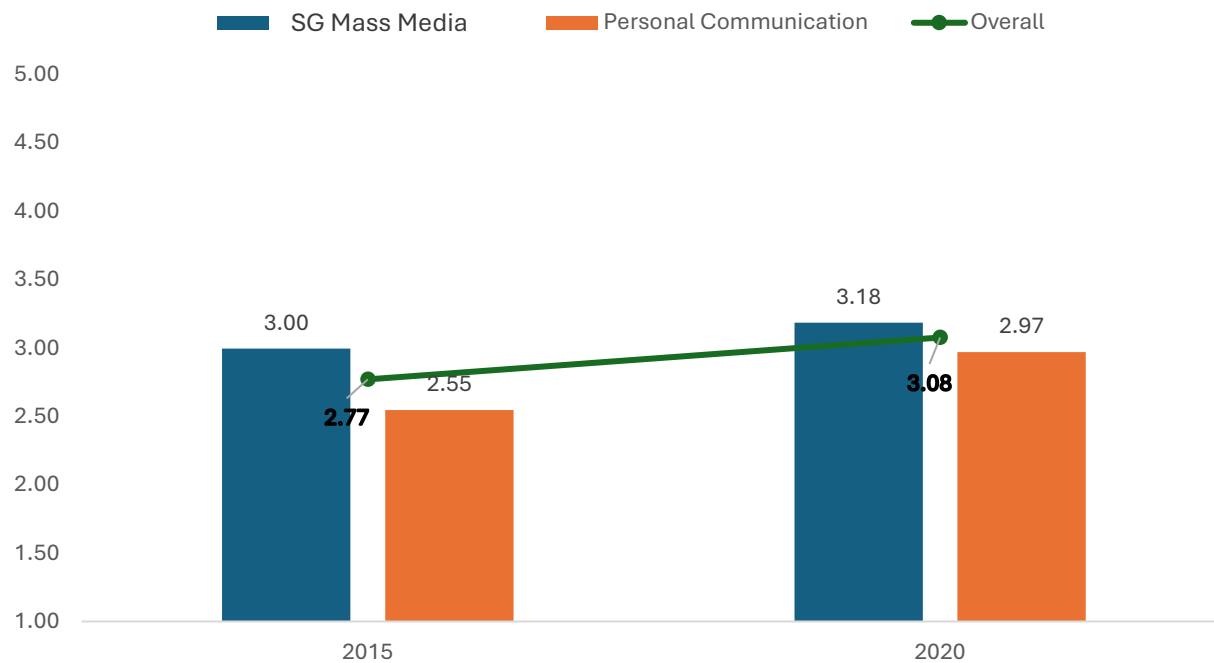
Social Media Engagement in 2015 and 2020



- Significant increases in **expressive use** and **informational use** from 2015 to 2020
- Difference for relational use not statistically significant

Perceived trustworthiness of various platforms differed across both year and platform

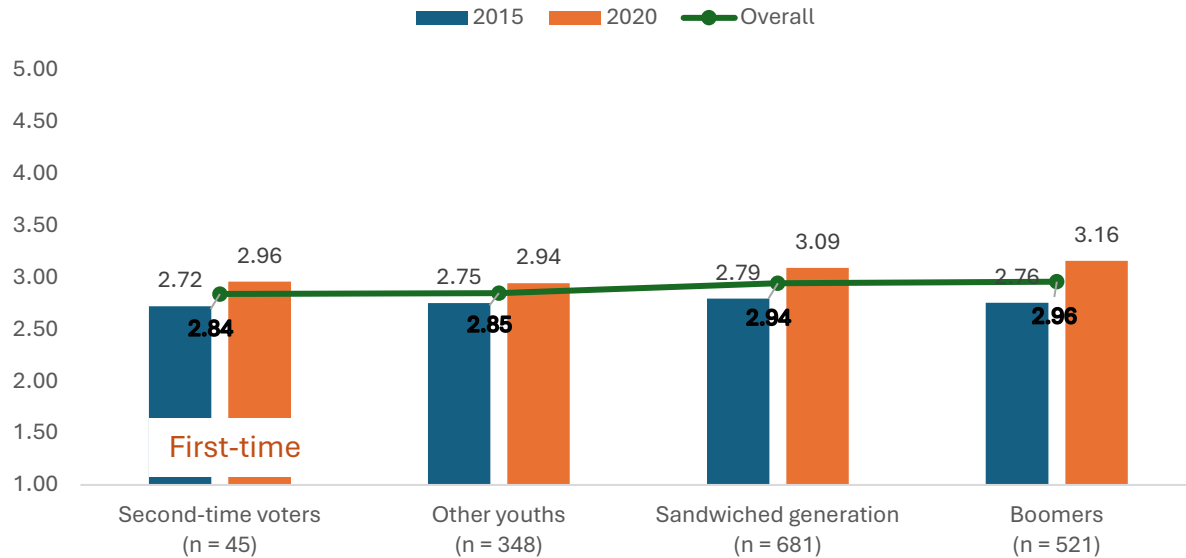
Perceived Trustworthiness of Different Platforms in 2015 and 2020



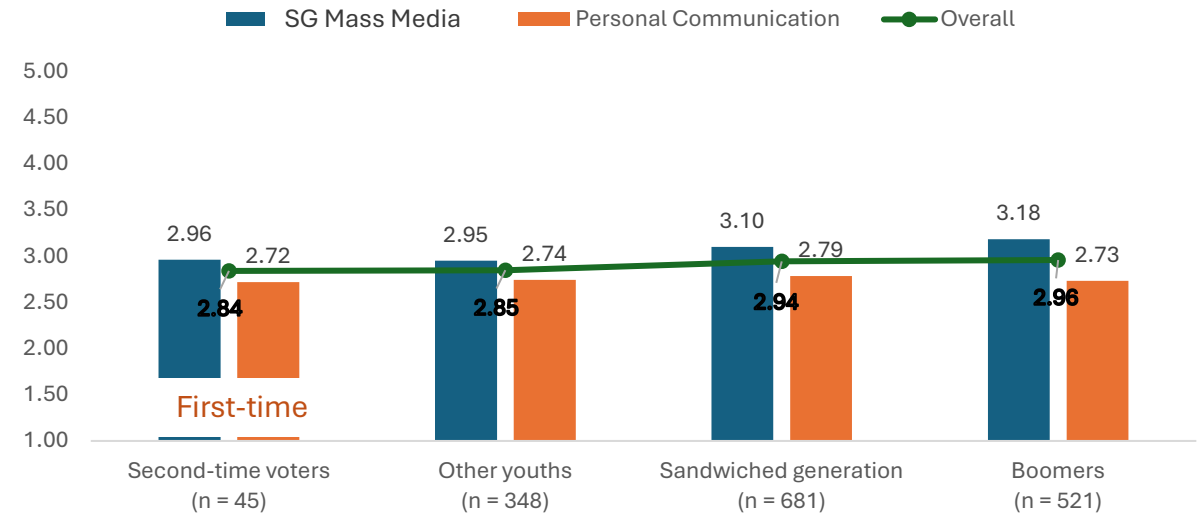
- Regardless of platform, increase in trust from **2015 to 2020**
- Regardless of year, **SG mass media** was more trusted than personal communication
- But, increase in trust from 2015 to 2020 was greater for **personal communications** than mass media

Generational differences in trust

Trust (Regardless of Platform) in 2015 and 2020



Trust (Regardless of Year) for Mass Media and Personal Communication



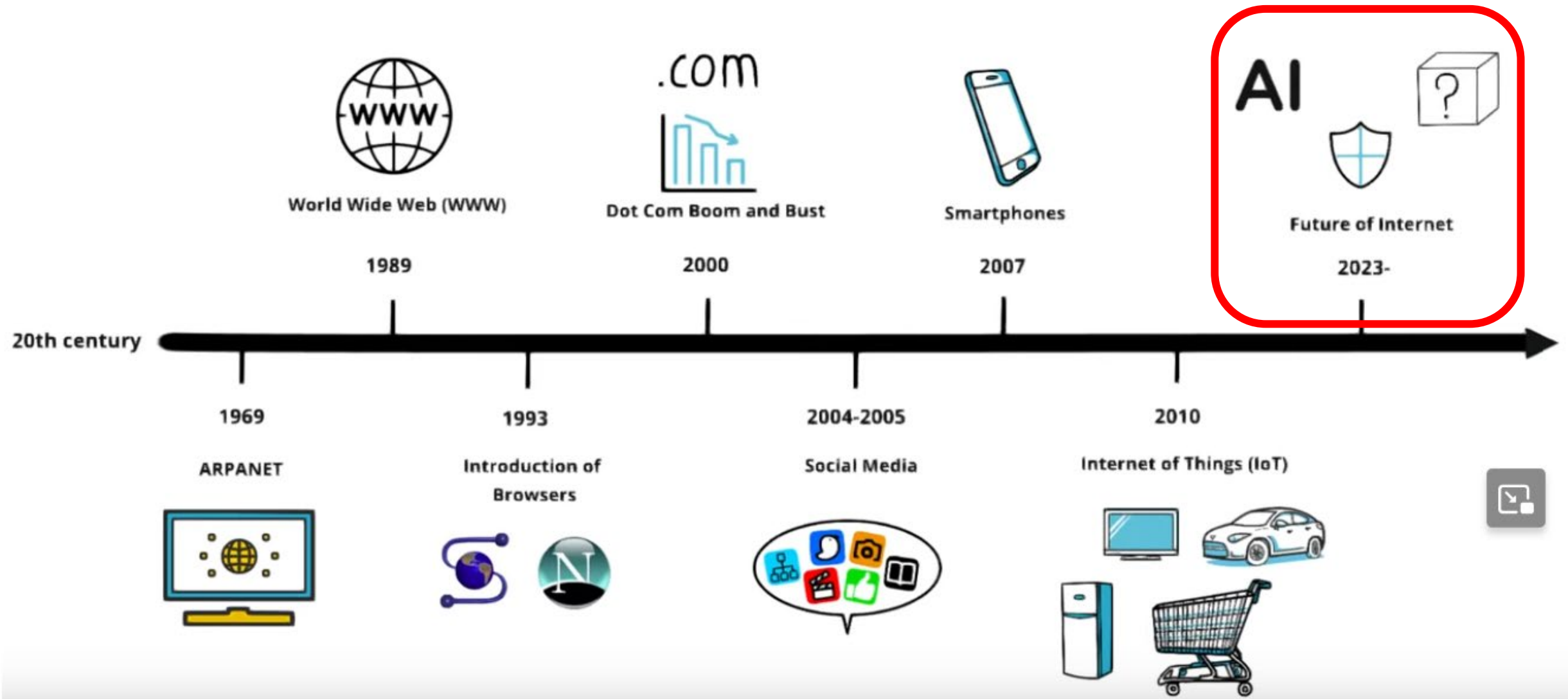
- Regardless of year and platform, **other youths** reported lowest trust¹, significantly lower than the sandwiched generation and boomers
- Increase in trust from 2015 to 2020 was greater for **older respondents**
- Greater distrust for personal communication (compared to mass media) by **older respondents**

Increase in Expressive Engagement from 2015 to 2020

Predictor	Overall	Second-time voters	Other youths	Sandwiched generation	Boomers	
Change in mass media usage	0.16**	0.33**	0.29**		0.21*	
Change in social media usage	0.29**	0.21*	0.24**	0.42**	0.26**	
Change in knowledge score	-0.10**			-0.01*		
Change in trust towards SG mass media	-0.07*					
Change in trust towards personal communication / messaging	0.20**		0.22*	0.19**	0.26*	
Change in frequency of political talk	0.18**			0.15**	0.30**	
	<i>R</i> ²	0.28**	0.30*	0.25**	0.29**	0.35**

Summary

- Internet use reflect changing notions of citizenry
- Social media was especially significant in shaping how Singaporeans engaged with the election – especially in terms of expressive and informational behaviours.
- Generational differences in trust, and changes in media use



Source: [TimeLine](#)

What's ahead?