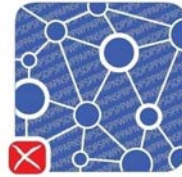


EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Impact of New Media
on General Election 2011



Youth, New Media and Political Participation in the Election



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GE2011: Watershed Election



PM said vote swing is because...

- greater proportion of critical young voters
 - Out of 2.21 million voters in 2011 GE, about 25% of all voters are between ages of 21-35 (Singapore Elections Department 2011)
- proliferation of new media



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Models of digital youth's political participation

Engaged vs. Disengaged

Dutiful Citizen

- obligation in political participation & voting,
- participation in civil society organisations

Actualising Citizen

- less government obligation
- no meaning in voting
- no trust in mass media

(Coleman, 2008)

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Singapore Youths: DC or AC Type?

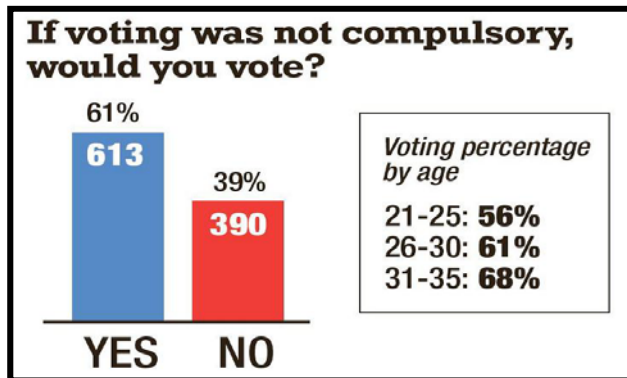
- Mixed views about whether they are more engaged or more disengaged over the years
- Mixed phenomenon:
 - Increase in political parties' youth membership
eg: PAP recruited 1,000 young members in 2009 and opposition parties increased theirs by as much as 50% (Lim 2010)
 - Tan, Chung & Zhang (2011): Singaporean youths are generally more politically active than their older counterparts, and are more active in the consumption of political content primarily through online channels
 - Doubts credibility of government and mass media

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Singapore Youths: AC Type

- Less obliged to vote

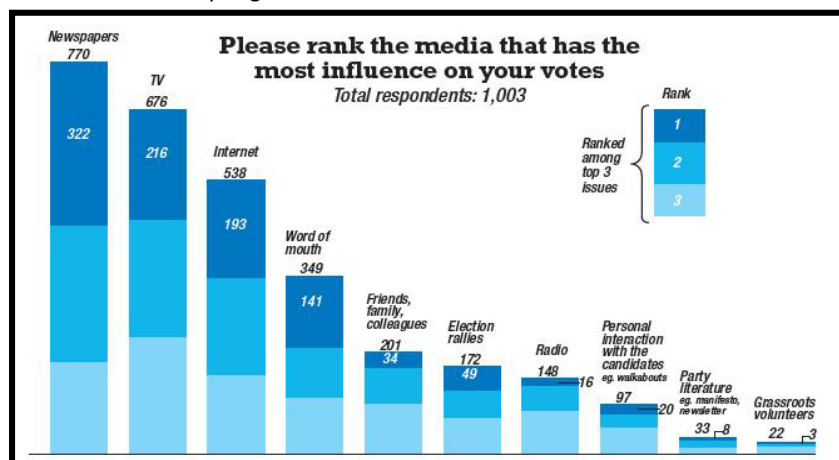
The New Paper Survey



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Youth's Media Use in Singapore: The New Paper Survey

Doubts credibility of government and mass media



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What do we want to find?

- Youth's political participation & voting behaviour
- Youth's media use (Old & New):
 - How often?
 - How important?
 - How trustworthy?
- Youth's perceptions of new media & impact on voting
- Youth's perceived media control & impact on voting
- Youth's political cynicism affect voting?
- Demographics (age, gender, education) affect voting?

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How did we do it?

- Post GE2011 national telephone interview (May 2011)
- 447 Singaporeans (aged 21-34) out of 2,000 respondents



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Young Citizens' Political Participation in 2011 GE

	Youth	Total
Attended political rallies	30%	23.6%
Volunteered in political parties	3.6%	2.2%
Wrote to the media, government, or MP	7.5%	5.9%
Wrote on blogs, Facebook, or Twitter	28.2%	9.9%
Forward or share online content by email, Facebook or Twitter	20.2%	9.9%

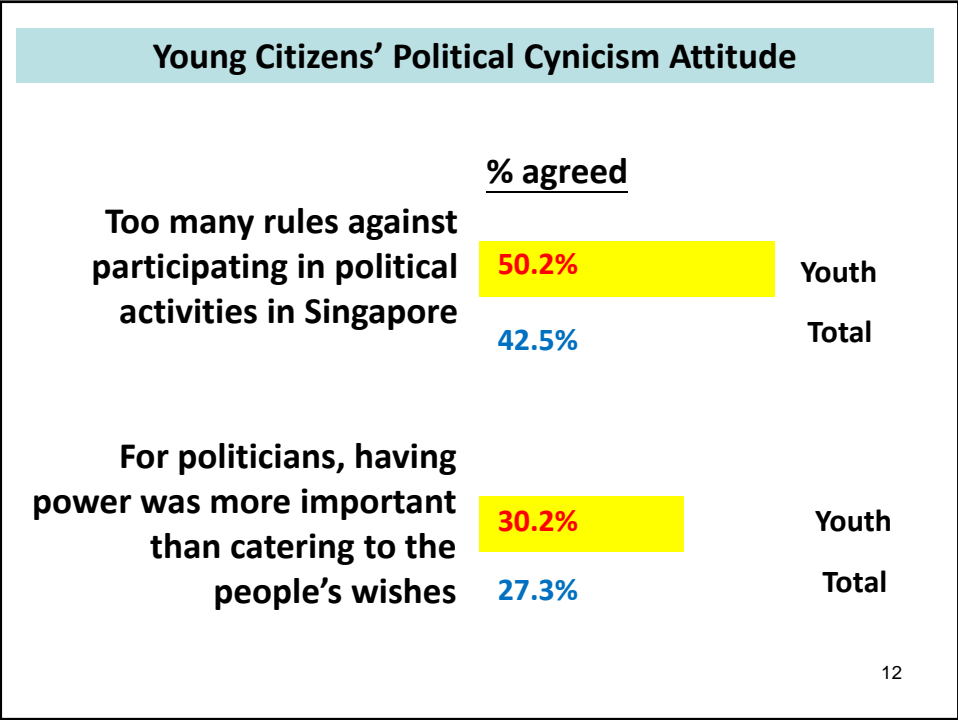
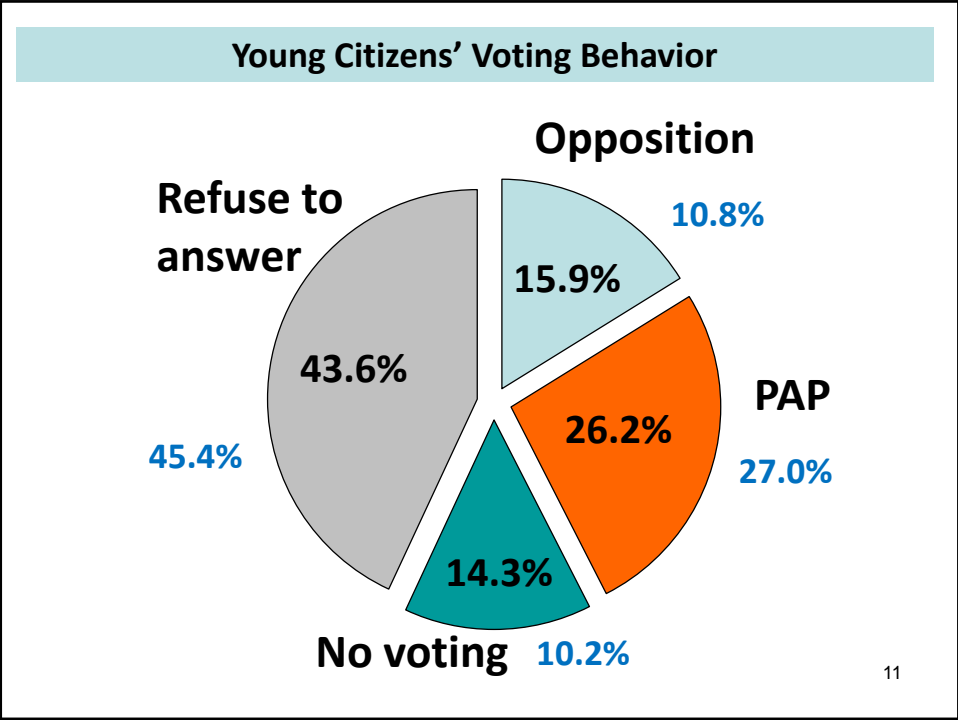
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Youth political participation

Online > offline

- Young Singaporeans increased their political engagement in 2011 GE
- Offline political participation remains inactive (similar to the whole population)
 - 30% attended >1 political rallies in 2011 GE (increased from previous elections) ; 6.4% more than the whole sample
 - only 3.6% volunteered to assist political parties
 - 7.5% wrote to media or the government sector about election/politics.
- New media had more pull factors to engage young citizens (more active than the whole population)
 - 28.2% wrote on blogs, Facebook or Twitter about 2011GE (much higher than 9.3% of the whole sample)
 - 20.2% forwarded or shared online content regarding 2011 GE via emails, Facebook or tweets. (much higher than 9.9% of the whole sample)

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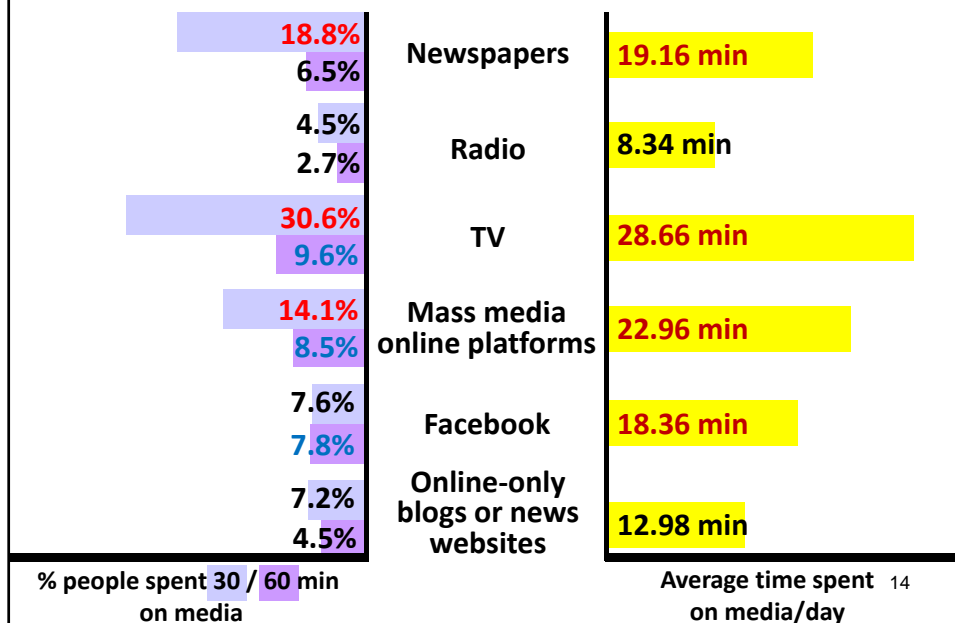
More political cynicism & voting for opposition



- **Youths are more cynical of government and politics** (compared to Singaporeans as a whole)
 - when comparing with the total sample, **7.7% more** young respondents viewed political participation in Singapore as over-regulated;
 - **2.9% more** distrusted politicians
- **More youths voted for the PAP, but higher percentage of opposition party voters than the whole population**
 - **No answer** (slightly more): 43.6% youth vs. 49.6% total sample
 - **No voting** (slightly less): 14.3% youth vs. 10.8% total sample
 - **10.3% more voted for the PAP than opposition parties**
 - **Voting for opposition parties** (More): 37.8% youth vs. 26.8% total sample
- Inclination of political cynicism and distrust in government & politics

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Young Citizen's Use of Old & New Media



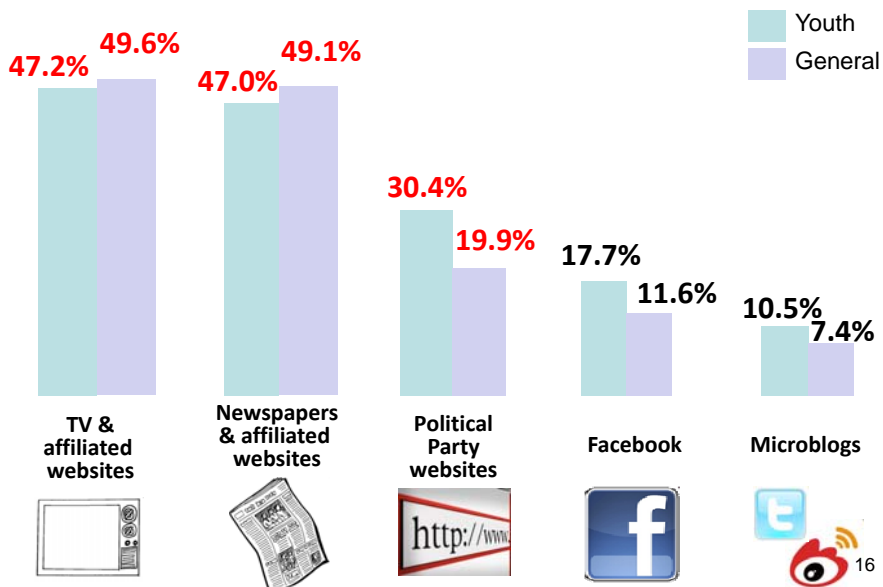
Young Citizens' Perceived Media Importance

Media	Percentage (Youth)	Percentage (Total)	Mean (Youth)
TV station & their websites	62.9%	64.4%	3.57
Newspaper & their websites	51%	66.3%	3.69
Political party rallies	51%	38.7%	3.26
Online only news websites & blogs	41.9%	26.9%	3.06
YouTube & video websites	40.9%	25.9%	3.06
Political party websites	40.3%	28.1%	3.00
Facebook	36.2%	22.5%	2.89
Microblogs	29.2%	13.1%	2.40

Likert Scale: 1 = Unimportant 5 = Very Important

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Youth's Perceived Credibility of Media



Mass media affect youth's voting more new media also impactful

- Still **spend more time** on TV & newspapers (**perceived importance & credibility**) to obtain political news than Facebook or internet-only local blogs or news websites
- Compared with the whole population, the young generation **spent more than double amount of time** on Facebook, internet-only blogs /websites, as well as consumed considerably more political and election news online.
- Media use was significantly correlated to people's perceived importance of media on voting decisions
 - The youth used mass media more often → greater impact on their voting decisions in 2011 GE than new media
 - Compared with the total population, the youths' voting were affected more by new media than total population

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Young Citizens' New Media Perceptions & Voting

	Perceive new media as important	Perceive new media as trustworthy
Say they vote for opposition parties	54.8%	52.5%
Say they vote for PAP	39.8%	38.6%

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Perceptions of New Media & voting

- Higher percentage of young opposition party supporters considered **new media as importance and credibility**
 - 54.8% of opposition party voters perceived that new media (i.e. Facebook, microblogs, YouTube, independent news websites, blogs, and SMSes) as crucial channels for disseminating election information
 - 52.5% regarded political information from new media as trustworthy.
 - slightly less than 40% of PAP supporters emphasized or trusted new media



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Perceived Media Control & Voting

Chi-square analysis:
perceived media control is significantly correlated to voting behavior

	Control of traditional media	Control of new media
Say they vote for opposition parties	37.3%	32.6%
Say they vote for PAP	42.0%	44.7%
	$\chi^2 = 22.21; P < 0.001$	$\chi^2 = 8.87; P < 0.05$

Despite dissatisfaction in media control and cynicism in politics

- Almost half of young voters still trusted old media
- More voted for the ruling party

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Gender & Voting

Chi-Square analysis: significant relations between gender, age, and education and the voting behavior

	Male	Female
Vote for opposition	28.6%	10.3%
Vote for PAP	20.2%	23.1%
$\chi^2 = 10.03; P < 0.01$		

Young males are more likely to support the opposition parties than females

Among those who expressed voting decisions...

- young males voted for opposition parties 18.3% > females
- Young female voters supported the PAP just 2.9% > males

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Age, education & Voting

Older & less educated respondents tend to support PAP

	21-24	25-29	30-34
Vote for opposition	18.8%	17.5%	8.8%
Vote for PAP	25.7%	23.1%	31.0%
$\chi^2 = 21.80; P < 0.01$			

	University degree or higher	Polytech Diploma	ITE	Junior College (A level)	Secondary (O or N level)	Primary school (PSLE)
Vote for Opp.	15.8%	15.0%	12.8%	25.5%	14.6%	9.1%
Vote for PAP	21.1%	25.2%	28.2%	25.5%	43.8%	36.4%

$\chi^2 = 32.88; P < 0.05$

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Conclusion & Implication

- Disengaged Singaporeans in general
- The youth increased their political engagement in the 2011 GE as a result of the prevalence use of new media.
- Despite dissatisfaction in media control and cynicism in politics, > 50% young citizens trusted old media and voted for PAP
- When comparing with the total population, a higher percentage of youths
 - perceived new media as more important and trustworthy
 - voted for the opposition parties
- Similar results as in Tan, Chung and Zhang's study (2011):
 - youths participated more in political activities than their older counterparts
 - youths consumed more online political content

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Conclusion & Implications

- Singapore's young voters, fit the category of **AC citizens** (Coleman 2008)
 - vote less
 - distrust government & politics
 - prefer decentralized networked activism to address political issues.
- To engage the youths, inexpensive **new media** (i.e. political party websites, Facebook, blogs, and microblogs) are effective tools
 - new media show greater influence on young citizens than the whole population
- Bennett (2008) suggested, the government can improve **civil curriculum** to boost the youths' trust and interest in politics.
 - extend political studies after post-secondary levels
 - enhance young students' civil education by incorporating social media and new technologies in learning

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Conclusion & Implication

- Youths still trusted **mass media** and used them more during the 2011 GE, but their impact on voting are decreasing
 - mass media ought to produce political news or information to fit with young people's lifestyles and values or involve them in the information process (eg. citizen journalism or user-generated content)
- New media had greater influence on young citizens' voting than the whole population
 - Government & political parties should develop new media strategies to communicate with AC youths and assign specialists to facilitate online/mobile political discussions & activities
- In this wired society, new media will become even more vital for political parties' campaigning in future

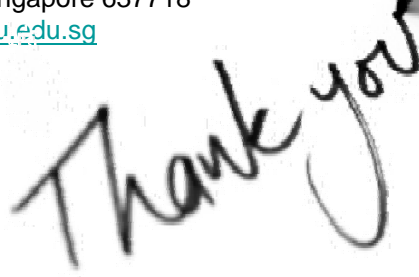
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Conclusion & Implications

- **Content control** over old and new media arouses distrust or dissatisfaction
 - young voters who trusted new media and believed too much content control on media tended to vote for the opposition parties
- Since it is an inevitable trend to have vibrant online political participation, the government may consider further loosening of media content control, especially for online politics → encourage AC youths or Singaporeans to actively engage in political or civil activities.

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Thank you

Feedback welcomed!

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