

Post-GE Survey: “One-and-a-half party” system more likely in Singapore, says analyst

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With the PAP forming the Government, and a permanent opposition party, a check and balance system would be present in Parliament

Singapore — Referring to the results of a post-election survey by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), an analyst has said that a likely scenario for Singapore’s political future is “the emergence of a one-and-a-half party system within the next decade or two”.

At an online forum on Thursday (Oct 1), Senior Research Fellow at the East Asian Institute Dr Lam Peng Er expressed doubts that a two-party system is likely to emerge in the country in the near future, according to channelnewsasia.com (CNA).

“There’s ... speculation that General Election 2020 has given rise to an incipient two-party system in Singapore. I very much doubt it.

If you’re going to put a gun against my head and ask me to anticipate what is the likely party system in Singapore — it’s not going to be a PAP monopoly of all the seats in Parliament after the Barisan Sosialis walked out. I think (we are) more likely to see the emergence of a one-and-a-half party system within the next decade or two.”

Dr Lam, who studies politics in Japan, said Singapore could develop a system similar to that Japan had from 1955 to 1993, when the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) held power. At the same time, the Japan Socialist Party was the permanent opposition party.

Dr Lam added: “If such a Japanese scenario would emerge, then it will be a Goldilocks outcome for the majority of voters,” referring to a situation that does not go to any extreme.

And for Singapore’s context, he explained, with the People’s Action Party (PAP) forming the Government, a check and balance system would be present in Parliament, and the country would experience political stability and predictability.

The panel discussion, moderated by IPS’ Dr Gillian Koh, included Dr Lam, independent scholar Dr Derek da Cunha; the director of the Asian Barometer Survey, Professor Chu Yun-han; and IPS postdoctoral fellow Dr Teo Kay Key.

The discussion may be viewed in full on the IPS YouTube channel [here](#).

Commenting on Singapore’s political culture vis-a-vis what Asians desire from their governments, Prof Chu said: “Asian citizens expect democracy to deliver, they don’t conceive of democracy in the terms a typical political scientist would define it ... their understanding of democracy is good governance, it’s clean politics, it’s efficiency.”

Dr Lam commented positively on WP chief Pritam Singh being officially named as Leader of the Opposition after the WP’s unprecedented wins in this year’s elections, noting that a sense of fairness was “very important”. /TISG