

Lee Kuan Yew's death, AHPETC saga were not top factors in GE2015: survey

Nurul Azliah Aripin

Yahoo News, Nov 4, 2015

The passing of Singapore founding prime minister Lee Kuan Yew as well as the Aljunied-Hougang-Punggol East Town Council (AHPETC) saga were not the top factors in influencing voters' decisions in the September general election, a survey by the Institute of Policy Studies showed.

Presented on Wednesday at the IPS Post-Election Conference, the survey findings showed that 73 per cent of respondents said that Lee Kuan Yew's legacy was important or very important in influencing their decision, while 44 per cent said the same about the AHPETC saga.

Need for efficient government, help for needy, fairness of government policy, cost of living and the need for checks and balances appeared to have been a bigger deal for voters at the polls, as more than 80 per cent of respondents said each of these issues was important or very important to them.

A total of 2,015 Singaporeans were interviewed for the survey, which was conducted via phone from 12 to 26 September and led by IPS senior research fellow Gillian Koh. It was the first official survey done after the September polls, which saw the People's Action Party get nearly 70 per cent share of the vote, up from just a little above 60 per cent in the 2011 elections.

After the results of the recent general election, several pundits believed that the death of Lee in March, when thousands of people queued up at the Padang to pay their respects, and the negative publicity over the finances of AHPETC run by the Workers' Party had been big factors in pushing the electorate closer to the PAP.

Meanwhile, the survey also found that from 2011 to 2015 there was a shift towards political conservativeness and the status quo. In 2011, 21.5 per cent of respondents were in the conservative cluster, while in 2015, this percentage increased to 44.3 per cent.

With that said, respondents also believed in having more diverse voices in parliament, with 86 per cent saying it was important or very important and 89 per cent saying the same about the need for checks and balances in parliament.

Highest increase in credibility goes to SDP

On the credibility of parties, the survey found that the Singapore Democratic Party led by Chee Soon Juan had a 22 percentage point increase in credibility in 2015 (42 per cent) as compared to 2011 (20 per cent).

The PAP had a 20 percentage point rise while the Workers' Party had a 15 percentage point increase.

Overall, the majority of respondents, or 63 per cent, said that PAP is a credible party. Those who believed it the most were mainly from the pre-independence generation aged 55 years and above.

Respondents who saw WP and SDP as credible were mainly in the post-independence generation, aged 39 and below. They mainly had university and diploma education.

Voters remain pragmatic

Meanwhile, a separate online survey involving 3,000 respondents showed that there was more confidence in the PAP than other parties when it came to issues such as cost of living, housing affordability, healthcare affordability, meeting retirement needs and government transparency and accountability.

PAP scored a mean of 4.73 while non-PAP parties scored a 2.81 for cost of living.

Housing affordability

PAP 5.39 non-PAP 3.28

Healthcare affordability

PAP 5.53 non-PAP 3.28

Meeting retirement needs

PAP 5.52 non-PAP 3.40

Government transparency & accountability

PAP 6.26 non-PAP 3.81

National University of Singapore associate professor Tan Ern Ser, who led the survey, said, "At the end of the day, the competition is between survival and pluralism... and survival wins."