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• 10 July 2020 – Polling Day •

- [WEBINAR](#): Post-Election Roundtable, 11am on Saturday.
- [COMMENT](#): Cherian George & Donald Low on how Singapore lost.
- [READING LIST](#): 20 book chapters and journal articles for free download.

WEBINAR

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GE2020 SINGAPORE

THE MORNING AFTER

An academic roundtable on the outcomes of the republic's 13th General Election

Moderator:
Cherian George

Speakers:
Priscilla Chia, Terence Lee, Elvin Ong, Kevin YL Tan

11am Sat 11 July
Webinar on Zoom
Register at academia.sg

Join our post-GE conversation, Saturday 11am

Although its big-picture outcome was never in doubt, GE2020 has not been short of talking points. In this panel discussion, writers from the fields of political science,

media studies and law will highlight key takeaways from the results and how we got there. They will examine possible implications for post-pandemic policymaking, the PAP's leadership succession plans, the future of opposition parties, and popular participation in the nation's public life.

The speakers are editors and authors of a forthcoming volume on GE2020 to be published in the last quarter of 2020. The book is a sequel to [Change in Voting: Singapore's 2015 General Election](#) and [Voting In Change: The Politics of Singapore's 2011 General Election](#), both also edited by Terence Lee and Kevin Y.L. Tan.

[Register Now](#)

COMMENT



Why Singapore may lose, whatever the final score

With more than 120,000 readers since we posted it on Tuesday, this is Academia.SG's best-read article yet. **Cherian George** and **Donald Low** reflect on a negative campaign that could leave many Singaporeans disaffected and the country less prepared for the post-pandemic challenges ahead. > [Read](#).

20 FOR 20: A GE READING LIST

Thanks to the authors and publishers for making these journal articles and book chapters available for free download. You can also view the list on our [website](#). If

you'd like to buy the books where the chapters came from, note that Ethos Books is offering a 20% discount for its entire [elections collection](#). And, Routledge is offering Kenneth Paul Tan's [Governing Global-City Singapore](#) to Academia.SG readers at a 50% discount: type the code GC50 on checkout.

RULING PARTY DYNAMICS

Democratic backsliding since GE2015 – Walid Jumblatt Abdullah | After GE2015, the PAP reverted to its familiar authoritarian stratagem. This was possible because of the absence of a strong and coherent opposition and genuine reformers within the ruling party.

- Walid Jumblatt Abdullah (2020) “‘New normal’ no more: democratic backsliding in Singapore after 2015”, *Democratization*. doi: 10.1080/13510347.2020.1764940 – [DOWNLOAD PRE-PRINT](#)

How the PAP changed and didn't between GEs 2011 and 2015 – Cherian George | The 2015 election underscored the PAP's ability to respond to electoral setbacks but also showed a reluctance to address systemic faults.

- Cherian George (2020) “Future-proofing the PAP,” pp.169-176 in *Air-Conditioned Nation Revisited*. (Singapore: Ethos Books). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

The likely fourth PM faces challenges similar to the second – Cherian George | Heng Swee Keat is saddled with circumstances not of his own making.

- Cherian George (2020) “4G and the 2 Shans,” pp.101-109 in *Air-Conditioned Nation Revisited*.(Singapore: Ethos Books). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

Oxleygate and Singapore's elite cohesion – Cherian George | The Lee Family feud tested Singapore's uniquely strong establishment unity.

- Cherian George (2020) “Elite Cohesion,” pp. 94-101 in *Singapore, Incomplete: Reflections on a First World Nation's Arrested Political Development*. (Singapore: Woodsville News). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

How Meet-the-People Sessions contribute to the PAP's resilience – Elvin Ong | The ruling party's constituency service through MPs help compensate for the weaknesses of other authoritarian institutions, just entrenching Singapore's authoritarian system.

- Elvin Ong (2015) “Complementary Institutions in Authoritarian Regimes: The Everyday Politics of Constituency Service in Singapore,” *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 15: 361-390. – [DOWNLOAD](#)

Terence Lee | After 2011, the PAP identified and responded to its failures. The PAP also benefited from the LKY Effect and SG50.

- Terence Lee (2015) “The Pragmatics of Change Singapore’s 2015 General Election,” pp. 9-25 in *Change in Voting: Singapore’s 2015 General Election*, edited by Terence Lee & Kevin YL Tan (Singapore: Ethos Books). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

Why election rallies matter – Terence Chong | Banned in 2020, election rallies are political performances alien to other spaces like the mainstream media or public forums where thick decorum and practiced deference conspire to neutralise the visceral and intuitive.

- Terence Chong (2011) “Election Rallies: Performances in Dissent, Identity, Personalities and Power”, in *Voting In Change: The Politics of Singapore*, edited by Terence Lee & Kevin YL Tan (Singapore: Ethos Books). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

OPPOSITION PARTIES

What we can gather from the opposition’s first thirty years in Parliament –

Loke Hoe Yeong | Singapore’s post-independence opposition has a history of ups and downs that doesn’t conform with theories about democratic waves.

- Loke Hoe Yeong (2019) “Introduction,” pp. i-xi in *The First Wave: JBJ, Chiam & the Opposition in Singapore* (Singapore: Epigram Books). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

Explaining opposition party cooperation – Elvin Ong | Drawing on the literature on the bargaining model of war, Ong explains opposition coordination in GE2015, focusing on the conflict between the Workers’ Party and the National Solidarity Party.

- Elvin Ong (2016) “Opposition Coordination in Singapore’s 2015 General Elections,” *The Round Table*, 105(2): 185-194, doi: 10.1080/00358533.2016.1154385 – [DOWNLOAD](#)

Why the Workers’ Party has succeeded where others failed – Elvin Ong and Mou Hui Tim | Opposition parties face a “credibility gap” that WP has dealt with better than others.

- Elvin Ong and Moh Hui Tim (2014) “Singapore’s 2011 General Elections and Beyond: Beating the PAP at its Own Game,” *Asian Survey*, 54(4): 749-772. – [DOWNLOAD](#)

New online falsehoods law and what it says about the future – Cherian George | POFMA indicates that the next generation of PAP leaders are content to retain their governance model.

- Cherian George (2020) “The Dogma behind POFMA,” pp.177-186 in *Air-Conditioned Nation Revisited*. Singapore: Ethos Books). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

Complex electoral manipulation is aided by voter apathy – Elvin Ong | The absence of simple electoral malpractice conceals other forms of manipulation, such as redistricting, which are not perceived by the electorate as violating the democratic principles.

- Elvin Ong (2018) “Electoral manipulation, opposition power, and institutional change: Contesting for electoral reform in Singapore, Malaysia, and Cambodia,” *Electoral Studies*, 54: 159-171. doi: 10.1016/j.electstud.2018.05.006. – [DOWNLOAD](#)

Why Singapore needs an independent election management body – Netina Tan | The redrawing of constituency boundaries have sparked allegations of gerrymandering. The process calls for non-partisan technical experts, statisticians or judges.

- Netina Tan (2015) “Pre-Electoral Malpractice, Gerrymandering and its Effects on Singapore’s 2015 GE,” pp. 169-190 in *Change in Voting: Singapore’s 2015 General Election*, edited by Terence Lee & Kevin YL Tan (Singapore: Ethos Books). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

How the PAP has shaped the parliamentary system – Kenneth Paul Tan | It has innovated on the Westminster model to balance representation and effectiveness, while legitimising and strengthening its authoritarian rule.

- Kenneth Paul Tan (2013) “The Singapore Parliament: Representation, Effectiveness, and Control,” pp. 27-46 in *Parliaments in Asia: Institutional Building and Political Development*, edited by Zheng Yongnian, Lye Liang Fook, Wilhelm Hofmeister. (Routledge). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

VOTING BEHAVIOUR

Votes are tied mainly to perceptions of party credibility – Steven Oliver & Kai Ostwald | The PAP has used its dominant position to reshape voter preferences in line with its comparative advantages.

- Steven Oliver and Kai Ostwald (2018) “Explaining Elections in Singapore: Party Resilience and Valence Politics,” *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 18 (2):

GE2015 left the dominant party system intact – Kenneth Paul Tan | The PAP's strong performance bucked the recent trend, showing the durability of its substantial performance legitimacy

- Kenneth Paul Tan (2017) "Singapore's Dominant Party System", in *Governing Global-City Singapore: Legacies and Futures after Lee Kuan Yew* (Routledge). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

On "freak elections" and suspicious "bookies predictions" – Cherian George | Contrary to elites' theories, Singapore electorate has been remarkably consistent in the way it uses its vote, but it can be manipulated by disinformation.

- Cherian George (2017) "Freak elections," pp.67-72 in *Singapore, Incomplete: Reflections on a First World Nation's Arrested Political Development*. (Singapore: Woodsville News). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

What happened to the "new normal" post-2011 – Lam Peng Er | Explaining the dramatic swing back to the PAP between the 2011 and 2015 elections.

- Lam Peng Er (2015) "New Normal Or Anomaly? 2015 General Election and PAP's Electoral Landslide," pp. 246-264 in *Change in Voting: Singapore's 2015 General Election*, edited by Terence Lee & Kevin YL Tan (Singapore: Ethos Books). – [DOWNLOAD](#)

What influenced voters in GE2015 – Bridget Welsh | Singaporeans wanted a stronger opposition, but were divided on the opposition's performance in Parliament and at the grassroots.

- Bridget Welsh (2015) "GE2015 Survey: Post-Election Insights on Voting in Singapore." (Slides) – [DOWNLOAD](#)

What Singaporeans want from the opposition – Cherian George | Voting patterns show Singaporeans want more opposition as a check on the PAP, not to bury it.

- Cherian George (2020) "Opposing a dominant party," pp. 113-121 in *Air-Conditioned Nation Revisited* (Singapore: Ethos Books, 2020) – [DOWNLOAD](#).

