Media Monitoring

English language print media

GE 2011

MARUAH (Paul Ananth Tambyah)

With thanks to:
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Disclaimer

• This presentation is entirely in my personal capacity and has nothing to do with NUS etc
• The data presented were collected by a number of individuals but I am responsible for the analysis, mistakes and all
• Although I have helped out with the SDP (mainly) and RP and SPP, I do not belong to any political party or would be thrown out of MARUAH
What are human rights?

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

Universal human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

Universal and inalienable

The principle of universality of human rights is the cornerstone of international human rights law. This principle, as first emphasized in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, has been reiterated in numerous international human rights conventions, declarations, and resolutions. The 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, for example, noted that it is the duty of States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems.
Human rights critical to our history

- "But we either believe in democracy or we not. If we do, then, we must say categorically, without qualification, that no restraint from the any democratic processes, other than by the ordinary law of the land, should be allowed... If you believe in democracy, you must believe in it unconditionally. If you believe that men should be free, then, they should have the right of free association, of free speech, of free publication. Then, no law should permit those democratic processes to be set at nought, and no excuse, whether of security, should allow a government to be deterred from doing what it knows to be right, and what it must know to be right... " - Lee Kuan Yew, Legislative Assembly Debates, April 27, 1955

- "If it is not totalitarian to arrest a man and detain him, when you cannot charge him with any offence against any written law - if that is not what we have always cried out against in Fascist states - then what is it?... If we are to survive as a free democracy, then we must be prepared, in principle, to concede to our enemies - even those who do not subscribe to our views - as much constitutional rights as you concede yourself." - Opposition leader Lee Kuan Yew, Legislative Assembly Debates, Sept 21, 1955

- "Repression, Sir is a habit that grows. I am told it is like making love-it is always easier the second time! The first time there may be some fear, some surprise, some awe, but it is never repeated exactly the same. But once we break this habit..."

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Lee_Kuan_Yew
UN panel praises Singapore for progress made in human rights

By Steve Mort | Posted: 07 May 2011 0707 hrs

GENEVA: Singapore has received praise from a United Nations panel for progress it has made in several key areas of human rights.

A government delegation has been meeting with UN officials and ambassadors in Geneva as part of a compulsory review of human rights in all member states.

During three hours of talks, there was broad support for strides taken by Singapore on issues ranging from the well-being of women and children, to the promotion of racial and religious harmony.

But some countries expressed concern over human rights in Singapore, and urged the country to establish a national institution to deal with the issue.

In all, 16 nations are getting their human rights report cards during two weeks of gatherings in Geneva.

Friday was the turn of Singapore.

The delegation said the country had balanced increased human rights protections for women, children, migrant workers and the disabled, while maintaining stability as its main priority.
LATEST – Updated on 12th May 2011
MARUAH’s Initial Response to Singapore’s 1st Universal Periodic Review

Highlights of Singapore’s UPR session on 6 May
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Highlights6May2011am

Ministry of Foreign Affairs press statement

Opening Statement by Ambassador Ong Keng Yong

UN webpage on Singapore’s UPR process

Videos of the session can be found below
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.

3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

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AIMS

• To objectively measure the relative impartiality of the print media during the GE 2011 Election Campaign period

• To contribute to the process of free and fair elections in Singapore as part of our rights as citizens under UDHR
Methods:

1. Quantitative coverage of the different political parties
2. Qualitative coverage - images of candidates from the different political parties
3. Qualitative coverage – placement of stories reporting the different political party messages
Methods II:

• Each volunteer collected data on column inches, headlines, themes, images and placement of stories daily
• There were three trained reviewers per paper
• An average was obtained if results were discrepant
• If there were wide discrepancies, a fourth reviewer was involved and the differences adjudicated
Data Gathering

Neutral or negative pictures

Front page placement

2 column inches x 5
=10 column inches
Politics ‘not just about parties, elections’

Data gathering

Placement

Positive images
MM: Why S’pore needs the best team

Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew took questions from The Sunday Times and other media at a press conference at Radin Mas yesterday.

The last few months have shown consciousness that democracy is not enough if elections are rigged or political parties are not competitive. The last PAP win was not a landslide...
Results: Overall Cumulative Coverage

TOTAL Coverage: ST, TODAY, TNP

Column inches

- PAP
- NSP
- RP
- SDA
- SDP
- SPP
- WP
Results: Coverage by Paper

Column inches

- PAP
- NSP
- RP
- SDA
- SDP
- SPP
- WP

ST
TODAY
TNP
Results:

Straits Times Daily Quantitative Coverage

[Bar graph showing column inches for different dates and parties]
Relative Coverage: By political parties
Size and Voice: Quantitative Coverage by No. of Candidates

Coverage/candidate

Column inches/candidate

PAP(82) NSP(24) RP(11) SDA(7) SDP(11) SPP(7) WP(23)

ST TODAY TNP
Results: Positive images

Number of pictures with smiling candidates

Total positive pictures: ST, TODAY, TNP

- PAP
- NSP
- RP
- SDA
- SDP
- SPP
- WP
Results: Positive images by paper

Number of pictures with smiling candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TODAY</th>
<th>TNP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSP</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>SDP</td>
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<td>SPP</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>WP</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive images by number of candidates: Size matters

- PAP(82)
- NSP(24)
- RP(11)
- SDA(7)
- SDP(11)
- SPP(7)
- WP(23)

Smiling pictures per candidate

- ST
- TODAY
- TNP

Graph showing the number of smiling pictures per candidate for each political party, with varying sizes represented by the height of the bars.
Results: Placement

How many pages do you need to flip?

PAP  NSP  RP  SDA  SDP  SPP  WP

Average first page message appears

ST  TODAY  TNP
Results: Placement: Front-page

Number of days with Page One stories

- PAP: 6
- NSP: 2
- RP: 4
- SDA: 8
- SDP: 10
- SPP: 12
- WP: 8

ST | TODAY | TNP
Results: “Blackout days”

Days with no coverage at all

- **ST**
- **TODAY**
- **TNP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>PAP</th>
<th>NSP</th>
<th>RP</th>
<th>SDA</th>
<th>SDP</th>
<th>SPP</th>
<th>WP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Days</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Minimization of this function results in a set of normal equations, a set of simultaneous linear equations in the parameters, which are solved to yield the parameter estimators, $\hat{\beta}_0, \hat{\beta}_1$.

In the case of simple regression, the formulas for the least squares estimates are

$$\hat{\beta}_1 = \frac{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})^2} \quad \text{and} \quad \hat{\beta}_0 = \bar{y} - \hat{\beta}_1 \bar{x}$$

where $\bar{x}$ is the mean (average) of the $x$ values and $\bar{y}$ is the mean of the $y$ values.

See simple linear regression for a derivation of these formulas and a numerical example. Under the assumption that the population error term has a constant variance, the estimate of that variance is given by:

$$\hat{\sigma}_e^2 = \frac{SSE}{N - 2}.$$ 

This is called the mean square error (MSE) of the regression. The standard errors of the parameter estimates are given by

$$\hat{\sigma}_{\beta_0} = \hat{\sigma}_e \sqrt{\frac{1}{N} + \frac{\bar{x}^2}{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})^2}}$$

$$\hat{\sigma}_{\beta_1} = \hat{\sigma}_e \sqrt{\frac{1}{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})^2}}.$$ 

Under the further assumption that the population error term is normally distributed, the researcher can use these estimated standard errors to create confidence intervals and conduct hypothesis tests about the population parameters.

**General linear model**

In the more general multiple regression model, there are $p$ independent variables:

$$y_i = \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} + \cdots + \beta_p x_{ip} + \varepsilon_i,$$
Placement and Outcome??*

Blackout days and vote share

\[ y = 0.1105x^2 - 3.0025x + 51.523 \]

\[ R^2 = 0.7091 \]

*Association does not equal causation
Positive images and outcome

Positive images and vote share

\[ y = -0.0004x^2 + 0.217x + 29.319 \]

\[ R^2 = 0.9361 \]

*Association does not equal causation*
Positive images by number of candidates: Size matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TODAY</th>
<th>TNP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAP</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSP</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Positive images per candidate and vote share

\[ y = -0.007x^2 + 0.7042x - 13.341 \]

\[ R^2 = 0.7072 \]
Print media coverage and vote share

\[ y = -2 \times 10^{-6}x^2 + 0.0177x + 30.217 \]

\[ R^2 = 0.88 \]

*Association does not equal causation*
Limitations of the study

• Three reviewers per English paper - ideally more
• Subjectivity in assignment of picture tone, headlines
• Difficulty in teasing out content of paragraphs
• Data for Chinese, Malay and Tamil papers not completely analysed and thus not presented
Media monitoring matters

• There do appear to be discrepancies in the English language print media coverage of GE 2011
• There is an association between more and better coverage and higher vote share
• More detailed analysis is required to show evidence of causation
Future directions/Recommendations

• There should be multiple organisations performing media monitoring

• All media including TV/Radio/Chinese/Malay/Tamil should be included

• Content analysis or word counts could be considered

• Feedback could be provided to media in real time and should be widely publicised
Not as bad as some places
Used to be worse:

A personal experience of “self-censorship in the 2006 blogsphere

----- Original Message ----- 
From: Colin Goh <colingoh@colingoh.com>
To: Paul Tambyah <Patski2@aol.com>
Sent: Mon, 1 May 2006 10:15:24 +0800
Subject: Re: Story

Hi Paul,

This came in a wee bit after I’d posted the update, so I’ll hold it for next week.

It’s hilarious though - your best work yet. Maybe you should be the one writing more film scripts!

Just got in the day before. Was told by a reliable source we have to be a wee bit careful as people are watching the site... The Senior Singh ad has been going round like gangbusters and apparently it’s caused some discomfort...

--C

On 4/30/06 8:26 PM, "Patski2@aol.com" <Patski2@aol.com> wrote:

> A bit long. Feel free to edit as usual.....
>
Voting for opposition signal a mature electorate

OF THE comments on the General Election, none are as mature as that which proclaims that an opposition vote shows an electorate coming of age. A mature electorate would not have allowed their party to vote against them, a great distinction. Mature voters would have been part of a team which has made no real contribution to the country. What had the incumbents of A
district done to lose the election?

A mature electorate would consider the candidates and their party manifestos before making their choices. A mature electorate would not have thought that they would be better off in the advertising industry with good pay, an unknown grassroots record, and an unknown candidate who has seven solid years of community service in the government. A mature electorate would not have circulated untruths on the Internet that the government spends only 1.4 per cent of the gross domestic product on health. This is not to say that all who voted for the opposition did so without thinking diligently. I am certain many did. But to equate voting for the opposition with political maturity is just silly. Thankfully, over 60 per cent voted for a party with a brilliant record and a solid slate.

So, perhaps, we do have a mature electorate after all.

Tan Ying San

Yesterday

ST 14 May 2011
Lee Kuan Yew steps down
He and Goh Chok Tong retire to give PM room to break from the past

"SM Goh and I believe this is the right thing to do, to give PM and his team the room to break from the past, and we want to make it clear that the PAP has never been averse to change."

MM Lee’s reply to questions from The Straits Times:
"Our main reason is to show Singapore is in a new era.
"It cannot be government as usual.
"Both former PMs withdrawing from the Government will indicate that it is not government as usual, and that the PM can and will revise and..."
Human beings have human rights
Fair Media help Fair Elections

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