Political analysts watching the election closely say that the James Gomez factor is not going to be the deciding factor for a vote.

In fact they look forward to the matter being put to rest - even as the People's Action Party presses the Workers' Party to clear the air on what actually happened at the Elections Department.

The hallmark of this election so far has been its predictability, in terms of where candidates from all parties will be fielded, and what analysts call "a profound lack of issues".

Dr Terence Chong, Fellow, Institute of South East Asian Studies, said: "If you look at the past general elections, there have been various overarching issues, like for example the graduate mothers scheme, the formation of GRCs and CPF withdrawal. All these are overarching issues that have captured the public's imagination and voting patterns have largely pivoted on these issues."

But analysts I spoke to in fact agree that there is a pressing issue at hand, which is the future of Singapore, and where the elderly and needy stand in this future.

However, the "missing form incident" came along, and has hijacked the hustings.

Eugene Tan, Assistant Law Professor, SMU, said: "That prevents the parties from engaging on the issues that matter. It is not that the James Gomez issue doesn't matter. I think we need to rise above this given that elections provide rare opportunity for political parties to engage the voters in a very intensive campaign. I don't think if it drags on, it will do either party any benefit and in the end the voters will probably stand to lose because the real issues that matter from the PAP and opposition's perspective don't get aired."

He feels the WP should be more forthcoming on the details of the incident to avoid more pressure from the PAP to do so.

And if in fact, it was more than just an "honest mistake", then analysts felt the WP should withdraw James Gomez's candidacy.

Some local issues have, however, managed to surface, such as lift upgrading, which seems to be the immediate need of residents at this election.

Dr Chong said: "When it comes to Singapore politics, the litmus test for young politicians will be municipal government, whether politicians can take care of their constituencies and any or other extra demand on the politicians will depend on how well they look after the constituency. I think that's what the voters will be looking out for - good municipal governance."

Analysts feel that it is also important that Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has also articulated the bigger picture issues likely to resonate most with younger voters.

Whatever the different views, analysts Channel NewsAsia spoke to agreed on one point: they hope, over the next few days, the PAP and opposition parties will engage voters on the future of Singapore, and capture their imagination.

The Gomez issue aside, in this election, the Workers' Party is seen as the strongest contender with its credible slate of candidates.

The Singapore Democratic Party, however, has been campaigning more on ideological issues like freedom of speech.

Eugene Tan, Assistant Law Professor, SMU, said: "The SDP, to me, has ruled themselves out from the start - the internal divisions, the fact that they don't really have a manifesto...and Ling How Doong seems to be on his own, don't know where they are heading."

Analysts felt this is the party that has made the least impact in this election. - CNA/ch