Joining Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah) and Leaving Parti Islam seMalaysia (PAS): The Case Study of Amanah Party Activists in Terengganu

Wan Rohila Ganti W.A.Ghapar[a]*, Che Hamdan C.M.Razali[b]
[a]School of Social and Economic Development, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu
[b]Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Pahang Branch
Email of corresponding uthor: wrg2110@gmail.com

Abstract

Party activists are assets to the political party. Their contributions to the party in terms of time, money and energy are undeniable. They are the strongest supporters of the parties and candidates during elections, very loyal and dedicated to the party and research shows that the more active members a party has in a constituency, the more votes it will win there. This paper explores the factors that drive individuals to become political party activists of a newly established party, Parti Amanah Negara – Amanah (National Trust Party). Then it is followed by a discussion on why do they leave the party (Parti Islam seMalaysia – PAS) they once became very active. The discussions are mainly guided by the General Incentive theory that suggests seven incentives that motivate individuals to become party activists. The last part briefly analyses the future and prospects of Parti Amanah Negara in the next 14th General Election, specifically in Terengganu, the PAS stronghold state. The respondents reveal that ideological differences between them and the former party are too great and they are more skeptical about the value of political engagement through PAS. This study also opposes the existing literature that the tendency for ideologically-extreme activists to leave the party is lower compared to the moderate activists since all the respondents were former active PAS activists in Terengganu and had been with party for years.

Keywords: Party Amanah Negara, Parti Islam seMalaysia, General Incentives model

1. Introduction

The ultimate goal of political parties in democratic world is to gain political office through elections. Their other objectives may be broader than just winning election, but electoral success is always the central objective. In order to secure the votes and maintain people supports for the political parties in the elections, and make them understand and approve party policies and leadership, a strong team consisting of loyal, committed and faithful party members is necessary to give the parties life, shape and permanence (Blake, Carty, & Erickson, 1991; Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, & Cooperman, 2010). This group of party members is known as political party activists that aims to see their desired candidate or party gets support, remains relevant and acceptable, wins the elections and forms the government (Milliar, 2012; Clark, Khan, & McLaverty, 2002; Vergani, 2014). Political party activists are unique people. They are unusual people because they voluntarily become active in a costly activity and take vigorous actions in politics (McLean & McMillan, 2003) like coordinating various party programs, attentively attending meetings and other party programs and making sure the party remains relevance. Majority citizens, on the other hands, choose to free – ride rather than getting involved with political and party affairs, as the benefits are already reaped without being political party activists. Not surprisingly, political party activism attracts only relatively small numbers of individual (Whiteley, Seyd, & Richardson, 1994). Scholars have been bewildered by the motives behind their decisions to be active participants in political parties. They have to be incentivized, proposed

(Whiteley & Seyd, 2002). They then formulated seven cost-benefits and value-norms incentives that motivate political party activism that is called the General Incentives Model.

Unfortunately, many political parties faced a significant decline in membership and grassroots party activism (Biezen & Poguntke, 2014; Mjelde, 2015; Ponce & Scarrow, 2014; Ingrid, Mair, & Poguntke, 2012). It is worrying phenomenon since activists and members are the central spines to the political parties, hence, this absence of a voluntary dimension to party activity has directly weakened the performance of political parties and their organizational capacity and threatened the future of democracy. Studies reported that the main reason for party activists to leave the party is the ideological differences between them and their party were too great (Dassonneville, Blais, & Dejaeghere, 2015; Wagner, 2016). There is a tendency for more moderate members to leave the party when they feel the party is loosening its ideological stance compared to more ideologically extreme activists. The altruistic - based activists leave the party when they think that they have little influence on the party line, and their involvement in political parties do not give any impact on society. The ideology promoted by the party is not well-translated into action, thus, keeping them away from that political party. They are more skeptical about the value of political engagement through parties they once joined.

2. From PAS to Amanah

This study throws light on the factors that lead someone to become committed political party activist while others refuse to do so and the factors they decide to leave the party they once became very active. Attention is given to the former activists of Parti Islam seMalaysia (PAS) in Terengganu, a PAS stronghold state in the northeast of Malaysia. The first part of this paper focuses on the factors they chose to be political party activists, followed by the factors that led them to leave PAS and join a new party, Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah). Lastly, this paper concludes with a discussion on the future and prospects of Amanah in Terengganu and how its emergence may affect PAS' performance in Terengganu.

Historically, the organizational conflicts that lead to splintering and factionalism in PAS previously befell due to the differences in their political approaches and strategies. It is not peculiar when PAS top leaders and committed members left the party to form a new party as a result of internal fractions and dissatisfaction. The 1960's three-cornered leadership crisis of PAS in Terengganu and the internal clash between the "Old Guard" led by PAS President, Asri Muda against the "Young Turks" of the ABIM prominent figures such as Abdul Hadi Awang, Fadzil Muhammad Noor and Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat are two crises worth mentioning. Asri Muda, for instance, left PAS in 1983 to form HAMIM. Others left and formed Parti Islah Malaysia and Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia (Wan Saiful, 2017). Whether these splinter parties survived or otherwise is another story. With the fading influence of the Old Guards, the Young Turks in PAS were pushing for more extensive and intensive Islamization process in the country. They relied on the issue of establishing an Islamic state to rival UMNO's nationalistic and secular ideology. PAS's success in wresting back Kelantan in 1990 was generalized as Malay-Muslim acceptance of PAS' Islamic state. However, the general election results in the 80s and 90s indicated the extremely weak support of the non-Malays for PAS. PAS understood the message and demonstrated its readiness to compromise its Islamic state and Hudud principles.

The combination of *ulama* and professional has shown the wave tolerance within party. *Ulama* faction generally adheres to a conservative interpretation of how Islam should be applied to public policy. They also hold an exclusivist view when it comes to dealing with non-Muslims, believing that major policy decisions affecting Islam must be mainly in the hands of Muslims. The

progressive faction in PAS, on the other hand, are commonly called the professionals, implying that they come from professional backgrounds as opposed to the usually traditionally educated *ulamas* (Wan Saiful, 2017). PAS' commitment to uphold democracy and support reform movement could be seen through its association with other opposition parties and NGOs, whose members are multi-ethnics. Moreover, this development brought the new approaches in dealing with the sensitive issues regarding the relationship between Muslim and Non-Muslim (Kasim & Ahmad, 2002). PAS then joined a tripartite alliance known as Pakatan Rakyat (PR), headed by Anwar Ibrahim. PR, comprises of Democratic Action Party (DAP) and Parti KeAdilan Rakyat (PKR), relentlessly tried to impose viable alternative *vis a vis* the ruling government of Barisan Nasional (BN) in the next general election. PAS, now holding 23 parliamentary seats, the least number of seats in PR, understandably occupies the lowest rung of the political power hierarchy within the alliance. This status quo does not go down well with PAS members who believe that the party commands no influence at all within PR. This development has given birth to 'the reformist Erdogan faction that had managed to reinvent the party to such an extent that it was able to join the Pakatan Rakyat coalition and present itself to the wider Malaysian electorate (including non-Muslims) as a viable alternative to the UMNO-led BN coalition' (Farish, 2014). For *ulama* camp, remaining in PR dominated by multi-ethnic DAP and PKR means that PAS runs the risk of giving up its fundamental vision of state and society based on Syariah (Islamic law) that the party has long been championing (Hamayotsu, 2010).

Behind the veil, this development has sparked the internal conflict between the reformists and the conservative *ulama* camp (Farish, 2014). The absence of diplomatic approaches in handling the conflict has worsened the psyche war between the two camps. Later, the en masse rejection from the PAS members during its 61st *muktamar* (general meeting) in 2015 was the turning point that saw the progressive group within the party stray to the new path. All the PAS stalwarts from this progressive group lost their positions in the party and have then left PAS including Mohamad Sabu, Salahuddin Ayub, Dzulkefly Ahmad and Khalid Samad. Started with the movement called Gerakan Harapan Baru formed in Johor, this group drifted to form Parti Amanah Negara or Amanah. Amanah was officially launched on 16th September 2015 with former PAS deputy president, Mohamad Sabu was appointed as a President and other high ranks leaderships was held by the former leaders of PAS mixed with the top figures from NGO IKRAM (Pertubuhan IKRAM Malaysia) and ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia).

Over the years, the competition over Islamization process in Malaysia is between PAS and UMNO. Now, PAS suddenly has a new competitor who is also staking a claim on the right to define and shape the discourse on political Islam in the country (Wan Saiful, 2017). Amanah promotes the motto of *'Amanah, Progresif, Peduli'* (Trustworthy, Progressive, Caring) with the hope 'to redefine the Islamic movement to a newer, bigger framework that fits the national agenda, and sees the movement as a continuation of what was left by the Prophet Muhammad' (Mujahid, 2015). It tries to posit itself as a progressive and inclusive Islamist party and offer itself as an alternative to PAS, whose discourses are dogmatic and exclusive. It tries to persuade the middle – class urban voters to view the party as a new platform for future Malaysia that would not marginalise and discriminate any segment of Malaysian society. The party allows full and equal membership to all Malaysians above the age of 17, regardless of race or religion.

3. Parti Amanah Negara in Terengganu: The Prospects
The politics in Terengganu is dominated by two Malay political parties; UMNO and PAS. The arena of political contestation and politicization in Terengganu is highly critical, causing the high-intensity political activism among the party activists from both parties. Both parties are blessed with highly committed and faithful party activists. For record, PAS ruled the state twice (1959 and

1999), and the rest of elections are won by UMNO. Yet, PAS domination and influence cannot be underestimated as PAS denied UMNO's two-third majority in the 2008 and 2013 elections. Other than UMNO – PAS contestation, the other parties generally did not garner enough attention from the voters. Splinter parties like Parti Negara led by Onn Jaafar and Semangat46 led by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah did not last longer in Terengganu even though they had won few seats. PSRM (Parti Sosialis Rakyat Malaysia) was noticeable in urban areas but never won any seats in this north eastern peninsular state. PAS' splinter parties, HAMIM (Parti Hizbul Muslimin Malaysia) and BERJASA (Barisan Jemaah Islamiah Se-Malaysia) formed by two former Chief Ministers of Kelantan due to party's internal conflicts were in action form one term only.

Reading the fates of splinter parties and small parties in Terengganu based on historical records, would Amanah Terengganu receive the same fate? Contesting in a PAS stronghold state would be tough for Amanah, as it is not financially well resourced and having small base of grassroots activists. However, the entrance of PAS leading figures in Terengganu to Amanah including Raja Bahrin Shah (Kuala Terengganu Member of Parliament), Dr. Sulaiman Abdullah (former PAS Assemblyman of Ladang), Ustaz Roslan Ismail (former PAS Assemblyman of Bukit Besi), Ustaz Aziz Abas (former PAS Assemblyman of Jerteh), Ustaz Rozali Mohamad (former PAS Assemblyman of Permaisuri), Syed Azman Syed Nawawi (Batu Buruk Assemblyman) and Hasbie Muda (former PAS Youth Central Committee) should not be underrated by PAS.

Huat (2015) analyses the future of Amanah in Malaysian politics and concludes that Amanah can survive based on protest votes. He brought two situations, where PAS benefited protest votes in the 1990 and 1999 elections. In the 1990, the UMNO internal crisis between team Mahathir and team Tengku Razaleigh had weakened UMNO and given advantage to PAS until it won Kelantan. In the 1999 election, PAS won Terengganu due to voters' rejection against the six-term Chief Minister, Wan Mokhtar Wan Ahmad, who had held the position since 1974. In addition, Anwar Ibrahim's dismissal also affects the victory of PAS. PAS did not win solely due to its own strength and strong support base, but also due to protest votes by the voters who were disappointed with the incumbent party. Huat (2015) then suggests that Amanah should learn from the failures of new and small parties like Parti Negara in 1959, Parti Semangat46 in 1995 and Parti Keadilan Nasional in 1999 elections. These parties received promising popular votes but they lost due to scattered seats they contested. They contested in many constituencies without having strong base and strong groundwork. They were popular in certain areas but not in other areas. Parti Keadilan learnt from its 1999 mistakes by focusing on mixed constituencies. As a result, they received unprecedented victory in the 2008 election. Similar to Amanah Terengganu, focus and strategy should be on specific constituencies like urban areas that could accept its ideology. Amanah might loss its election deposits in rural areas in under Parliament Besut, Hulu Terengganu and Setiu. Contesting in all state seats also is not a right decision since they may lose focus. Fielding winnable candidates, offering practical promises that can ease voters' burdens and not over – depending on lame issues like IMDB and its 2.6 billion scandal are amongst the formula that should be applied.

Amanah's close relationship with DAP also has tarnished its Islamic image in the eyes of conservative voters in Terengganu. Amanah's stands on several religious and moral issues like rejecting Hadi's Syariah bill, reluctant responses on rights of non – Muslims and non – Malays on open festival of beer drinking, criticizing the failure of *Tahfiz* schools to observe fire safety and mingling around with liberals supporting LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) like Siti Kassim and SIS (Sister in Islam) during women's demonstration on toxic politics have been questioned by Malay voters. They are being cynical over Amanah's motto – *Rahmatan lil Alamin* (Mercy to All).

4. Theoretical Approach: The General Incentives model

The general incentives model of political participation refers to the individual's motivation to

participate in political activities beyond a narrowly cast economic analysis of incentives and resources (Baras, Correa, & Rodriguez, 2013; Milliar, 2012; Haute & Gauja, 2015; Whiteley & Seyd, 2002). It is a comprehensive model as it adds the elements of affective motives, moral concerns, and social norms that have not been touched by other political participation models like the Rational Choice model and the Civic Voluntarism model. Prominent party membership researchers, Whiteley & Seyd, (2002) propose seven incentives that motivate individuals to involve actively in political parties.

The first incentive is selective process incentive. It is the psychological satisfaction derived from the process of participation itself. The entertainment values of being involved in political activities like an opportunity to meet like - minded people, participate in various political activities, learn about the political process at first hand and receive better political information. They join for the benefits of group distinction and the status resulting from membership. The second one is selective outcome incentives. They are the positive results of being party activists in the materialistic form such as gaining politically appointed positions in the executive and legislative branches, developing a full-time career in party politics and getting government projects or contracts (Weldon, 2006; Whiteley & Seyd, 2002). In order to survive, Farouk, (2011) suggests that parties must from the very beginning distribute material incentives such as prestigious positions and projects or contracts to some of its members to tie them up. However, he reminds enticing the activists with material returns will weaken the credibility of the party as an organization dedicated to a public good and therefore adversely affect its distribution of collective incentives.

The next incentive is collective incentive. Party activists believe and identify themselves with political ideas convicted by political parties. They have a greater incentive to be active if their party is pursuing policies which closely congruence with their own policy preferences. Collective incentives to be active in a political party are twofold: positive and negative. Activists will participate not only because they want to promote particular policy goals but also because they oppose the policy goals of other parties (Whiteley & Seyd, 2002). Collective incentives are always equated with ideological incentives. The ideology, manifestoes and directions of the party are the factors party activists feel motivated to be active compared to those who attach a lower priority to the party policies. The normative incentives are directed at compliance with social norms and the perceived opinions of significant people whose opinions they respect and value. Some party activists receive a pressure that forces them to win the respect or approval from their circles like it is a family tradition to become activists, influence by educational institution, religious institution and peers (Back, Teorell, & Westholm, 2011; Cross & Young, 2008). It is also about the public perception of the status and image of the party and its activists. They also choose to be politically active because they feel they ought to be, since party activism is normal and it provides them with an opportunity to express their values and loyalties to the social norms (Gallagher, Liston, Marsh, & Weeks, 2002).

Individuals are also motivated by altruistic incentives where they have an emotional attachment to the party which has little to do with the policy positions which it espouses, and they contribute without considering the costs and benefits of their actions (Young & Cross, 2002). They defend the perceived civic duties like fight for the interests, rights, and identities of others, offer aids to asylum seekers, political refugees, immigrant workers, peoples whose human rights are being infringed, victims of racist acts or sentiments, and populations of Third World countries and never serve their own interests (Passy, 2001). Altruistic concerns are expressed in terms of idealistic goals, such as the desire to create a more compassionate and tolerance society (Young & Cross, 2002). Political activism is also the result of the desire to support specific political ideologies of the party. The 'official' political ideas and ideologies of political parties such as nationalism, communism, liberal - democratic and Islam have structured one's political understanding and inspired his/her path to party activism. It also frames one's perspective through which the world

is understood and explained. Heywood, (2012) claims that party ideologies are commonly associated with particular social classes such as liberalism with the middle classes, conservatism with the landlord aristocracy and socialism with the working class. Finally, the expressive incentives have to do with publicly expressing one's perceived psychological, ideological and moral values attached to the party without fear. Strong party identification allows an activist to publicly express their attachment to the party. They proudly wear shirts with party logo, hung posters at the windows, posting, sharing and re-tweeting political statements at social media and joining rallies. Party activism provides a way of expressing their loyalty to the party (Back et al., 2011) and supporting party's stand on certain values include ethnic supremacy, religion, human rights, economic justice, political equality or supremacy of the constitution.

5. Method

A survey was conducted on 13-14 January 2017. The questionnaire was distributed to the Amanah activists during its party program; "Anti-Takfiri Tour with Ustaz Wan Ji". This tour was held in five different parliament constituencies in Terengganu including Besut, Setiu, Kuala Nerus, Dungun and Kemaman. As a newly established political party in a PAS stronghold state, the attendance was encouraging. Of all distributed questionnaires, 98 were returned, consisting of 73% of males and 21% of females. The female activists mostly came with their husbands and other family members, who happen to be Amanah activists as well. Majority of them claim to be active members of the party (80%) and 53% have been active in politics for more than five years. Majority voted for PAS in the last election (79.1%) and another 19.9% did not respond. However, it is assumed that the respondents who did not respond to this question are either voted for PAS as no respondent ticked for UMNO column or were yet registered voters at that time. The questionnaire consists of two parts; measuring respondents' political party activism and the factors that motivated them to leave PAS. The data are analysed using SPSS 17.0.

6. Results and Discussions

The first part of the questionnaire consists of 10 questions on respondents' motivations of becoming a party activist. Questions are extracted from Whiteley & Seyd, (2002) and modified to suit Malaysian political situation.

6.1 Factors to Become Party Activists

As shown in Table 1, altruistic incentives score the highest percentage (83%). Party activists are unique people; they are party worker, party funder and party supporter, become active in a costly activity and take vigorous actions in politics (McLean & McMillan, 2003). Majority citizens, on the other hands, choose to free – ride rather than getting involved with political and party affairs, as the benefits are already reaped without being political party activists. The noble desire to serve one's fellow human beings and create a better nation through political parties motivates respondents to become party activists. They regard activism as a way to fulfil their civic duties, and the indescribable feeling of satisfaction pushes them to maintain their activism. When asked about voting and its obligation, 95.4% strongly agree that voting is compulsory and should be taken as serious matter. In contrast to pessimist citizens who do not trust politicians, 71% of respondents trust politicians as agent of change. Most of them are also very optimist that opposition pact is capable to become the next government (86.5%).

Table 1: General Incentives that Motivate Respondents to be Party Activists

General Incentives	%
Altruistic	83
Political ideologies	76
Collective	64
Expressive	41
Normative	28
Selective process	9
Selective outcome	6

Party ideologies are also the main factor one chooses to support and work for that particular party, followed by collective incentives. This is congruent with the overall findings in ten parliamentary democracies covering 77 political parties that party activists are generally motivated by ideological incentives and political values hold by the parties (Haute & Gauja, 2015). Respondents identify themselves with political ideas and policies convicted by political parties. Majority of respondents (75%) rejects the controversial statement that only Malay-Muslim political parties can be trusted to uphold Malay supremacy and 66.2% believe that Islamic state, including *hudud*, is not suitable to be implemented in Malaysia yet as Malaysia is a multi-racial country. Material rewards, positions and titles do not motivate them to give unconditional support to the party. This could be explained that Amanah is not a ruling party, hence, there is no direct access to government contracts, tenders and executive positions. Moreover, respondents are former PAS grassroots activists, who are very well known for their financial generosity and commitment to the party. When they crossed over to Amanah, they brought that culture with them. They are willing to work for free and to contribute towards paying for party activities as and when necessary (Wan Saiful, 2017). Likewise, the entertainment values enjoyed by activists as a result of being involved in political parties and group distinction and society's positive perception towards them are obviously not the main reasons that force them to be party activists.

6.2 High – Intensity Participation

Whiteley and Syed (2002) have introduced a concept of high-intensity and low-intensity participation. High-intensity participation is a participation that takes a lot of time and effort involving the most committed members of the party (Goodwin, Ford, & Cutts, 2012), the gladiators who are prepared to participate even in the highest-cost activities (Spier, 2013). The political activities categorized as high-intensity are contacting and communicating not only with fellow party members but also with other members of the community on behalf of their party, campaigning for their party, fund-raising, recruiting members and preparing for and running election campaigns, representing their party by holding office and donating money to their party (Seyd & Whiteley, 2002). Table 2 indicates that 81% of respondents have donated money to fund party activities. Higher levels of emotional (Fisher, 1999) and religious attachments (Zaki, 2003) to political party or candidates motivate activists to donate money. However, Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, (2003) argue that donating money is relatively a low cost, low risk and less time consuming form of political activism, resulting it to be the most preferable party activities.
Table 2: Types of High-Intensity Participation

Types of Political Activities	%
Donate money	81
Attend party program	78
Campaign in election	75
Become party machinery	70
Join demonstration	65
Attend party meeting	61

For the political party to stay relevant and get supports, party programs at a big or small scale must be held frequently. The activists coordinate and plan party programs, promote them to the society and ensure they achieve party's objectives. *Tamrin* (training courses), weekly *usrah* (religious circle), *ceramah* (public talk), sports and entertainment carnivals, rallies, charity dinner and walkabout are among the party activities that rejuvenate party image and help maintain people support to the party. Party activists are backbones of the party. Their absence may cause the candidates or party loss elections (Nexon, 1971). Subsequently, their time, money and energy are the most sought after during election campaign period. Campaigning in elections includes putting up posters and flags (55.4%), house-to-house campaign (50.8%), uploading political statuses and relevant photos to social media (49.4%) and canvassing and mobilizing voters (44.6%). Of all respondents, 76.9% revealed that they became full-time party activists in the last general election. They also join demonstrations (70%) as a way to express political solidarity with the party.

6.3 Factors of Leaving Former Party

There are ample studies on why people become active in politics and the political activities that take place along with their involvement. However, the study on what drive members' decisions to leave the party is very little. Wagner, (2016)'s study reveals two main reasons on why members leave the party they once became active. Firstly, they feel more disengaged from politics and are more sceptical about the value of political engagement through parties. Secondly, they are more likely to hold moderate ideological beliefs, probably because they feel less strongly about their ideological preferences. This study asks why respondents had left PAS and they were given a list of seven possible reasons cited from Whiteley & Seyd, (2002), from which they could select as many as applied. Table 3 presents the most relevant factor that motivates Amanah activists to switch party is due to their disagreement with PAS' standpoint on various issues particularly on the idea of forming a unity government between PAS and UMNO.

Table 3: Factors Former PAS Activists Left the Party

Factors of Leaving	%
Ideological difference	66.7
Former party did not bring change to society	65.6
Did not receive any benefits from the party	16.9
Involve in other social activities	10.8

The rumours over *muzakarah* (talks) between conservative *ulama* team and UMNO spread among PAS supporters and create tense between the two camps. PAS President, Abdul Hadi suggested that cooperation with UMNO would only take place under certain conditions and solely focus on the advancement of Muslim faith and their interests in Malaysia, and at the same time, allow PAS to monitor abuses of power by the regime. The President stressed that in handling national issues, any party is allowed to cooperate with any party (Hamayotsu, 2010; Liow, 2011). Hadi's pro-UMNO decision was not welcomed by the progressive senior members and supporters who strongly committed to PR. Informants firmly argued that they have been

committed in PAS for years due to PAS' unshaken stand to fight UMNO, which for them is full of corruptions, scandals, cronyism and lies, and replacing UMNO and BN (Barisan Nasional) should be PAS' utmost objective. PAS decision to be lenient and close to UMNO, and leave the promising PR was considered as backward and frustrating decision. For them, this move simply prolongs the sinking UMNO's lifeline.

It is understood that they have made a heavy decision to leave PAS, a party they used to fully devote their time, money and energy to see PAS stays relevance and gets supports from Malaysian voters. Therefore, accusing them as failing to display *wala'* (loyalty) regarding the party policy on *hudud* and *kafir* (allegation of infidels and away from Islam) is simply baseless accusations. The informants are basically having moderate view over *hudud* and Islamic state. They do not against *hudud* and formation of Islamic state but stress that serious focuses should be put on other urgent issues such as economic downturn, uncontrolled price hiking, Goods and Services tax (GST), rampant corruption, mismanagement of country's resources like 1MDB and unemployment. Informants also mentioned that the rampant *takfiri* (allege others as infidel) culture in PAS is not suitable with their moderate stand. For them, Islam is not exclusive to PAS only, and PAS does not hold the key to Heaven. They idolize Erdogan's and Ghannouchi's approaches and political ideas in Turkey and Tunisia, where Islam is inclusive and contextual and relevant in a multi-racial, multi-ethnic country like Malaysia (Wan Saiful, 2017; Maszlee, 2017).

Interestingly, this study opposes Wagner's finding on the tendency to leave the party is obvious among the ideologically – moderate members as their faith to party ideology is incomparable to ideologically – extreme activists. Respondents were staunch PAS supporters and they left the party. As 83% of respondents are altruistic – type of activists, they left PAS because PAS did not bring positive change to society and did not walk the talk. They are sceptical about PAS' ability to translate its party ideology and promises into action and perceive their engagement with PAS did not bring altruistic values. The absence of material benefits and group distinction were not the factors that pulling them out from their former party. Moreover, 93.8% of respondents will not vote for PAS in the next election. This is congruent with Dassonneville's et al., (2015) findings that political dissatisfaction and frustration probably motivates the voters to find another platform.

7. Conclusion

The factors that led the former PAS activists to leave the party they once became very active can be explained by two main factors. It appears that the decisions for Amanah activists to leave PAS are associated with their specific attitudes towards recent development in PAS and the nature of PAS that deviates from its initial objectives. Reversing Whiteley's & Seyd's, (2002) General Incentive theory, this study found respondents' political and ideological distance from PAS and their disappointment and frustration with the current nature of PAS in handling socio-economic issues have steered the respondents to choose a new platform. In the context of Amanah's future in Terengganu, initial observation concludes that it would be hard for Amanah as a PAS splinter party to compete in PAS stronghold state. The demography and political views of Terengganu voters are different with their counterparts in urban constituencies like Selangor, Johor and Kuala Lumpur. Focuses should be on winnable seats like Kuala Terengganu and Dungun, and the efforts to increase the number of active grassroots activists should be doubled. Amanah Terengganu also should display more strict and firm stands on Malay and Islamic issues and prove that they are not a DAP puppet.

Future research should increase the number of respondents as this study is only focusing on Amanah activists in Terengganu. Furthermore, it is suggested that a qualitative study should be applied to explore why these former PAS activists left the party they used to strongly affiliate with, as quantitative studies may not be able to deeply explore their inner feelings (Pierre, 1986).

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