

The Formation of Electoral Alliances in the Republic of Armenia: A Case Study of the 2017 Parliamentary Elections

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Abstract

This article examines how electoral alliances were formed in the 2017 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Armenia. It hypothesizes that alliances were formed among parties that are ideologically compatible and could not individually overcome the electoral threshold. Contrary to the established theory in the field, the data collected and analyzed from February to May 2018 reveal that ideological and programmatic similarities were not the primary factor that influenced the party leaders' decision to cooperate with others. Instead, parties converged because of the short-term objectives of overcoming the electoral threshold and gaining more seats in the parliament.

Keywords

Electoral Alliances; Electoral Rule and Threshold; Experience of Cooperation; Ideology; Parliamentary Elections; Parties; Party Platforms; Republic of Armenia

Introduction

The 2017 parliamentary elections in the Republic of Armenia were unprecedented in two important respects. These were the first elections to the National Assembly after the country made a transition from a semi-presidential form of government to parliamentary (December, 2015), and starting from December 2016 to March 2017, a process of alliance formation took place, as a result of which ten parties coalesced into four alliances: “Yelq” (“Bright Armenia,” “Civil Contract”, and “Republic” parties), “Tsarukyan” (“Prosperous Armenia”, “Alliance”, and “Mission” parties), “Oskanyan-Raffi-Ohanyan” (“Heritage” and “Unity” parties), “Congress-PPA” (the Armenian National Congress and Peoples’ Party of Armenia).

This paper aims to reveal how these alliances were formed, i.e. what were the main factors that party leaders took into consideration while negotiating with potential allies. In order to accomplish that, a review of the literature was conducted (section 1), and both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered and analyzed in the light of theoretical framework on the formation of electoral alliances (sections 2-4). Data analysis was followed by interpretation and discussion of findings (section 5). Finally, conclusions from the inquiry were drawn and related back to the literature.

1 Literature Review

As a field of study within Political Science, the formation of electoral alliances has a history of slightly more than a decade, but substantive work has been done. Sona Golder, one of the pioneers and the most influential authors in the field notes that this is an important topic to study for several reasons. Firstly, electoral alliances have impact on election results and thus, the policies that are subsequently implemented. Secondly, the formation of alliances has ‘normative implications for the representative nature of governments’. Finally, as a political phenomenon, the formation of electoral alliances is quite common in many countries of the world (2006: 193-194). The theories on the formation of electoral alliances that have thus far been advanced and developed can be grouped under four categories or themes: *ideological compatibility and programmatic similarities*; *electoral rule and threshold*; *electoral support and representation*; and *post-election bargaining and government formation*.

1.1 *Ideological compatibility and programmatic similarities*

A number of authors researching the formation of electoral alliances state that alliances form among ideologically compatible parties (Allern and Aylott, 2009; Debus, 2009; Gandhi and Reuter, 2013; Golder, 2006; Greene and Haber, 2016; Ibenskas, 2015; Kellam, 2015; Machado, 2009; Wahman, 2011). Some add to this that alliances among ideologically similar parties are more likely if they have prior experience of cooperation (Debus, 2009; Gandhi and Reuter, 2013; Greene and

Haber, 2016; Ibenskas, 2015). Ideological compatibility, as all these authors acknowledge, makes electoral co-ordination easier and more successful.

Along with ideology, party platforms are also considered to be a factor that influences the formation of alliances. Distinguishing between *policy-seeking* and *office-seeking* parties, some authors (Ibenskas, 2015; Kellam, 2015; Spoon and West, 2015; Wahman, 2011) argue that parties that are policy-seeking, i.e. strive to win legislative seats in order to implement their programs, form alliances more often. Wahman (2011) states that opposition parties form alliances only when they are able to present clear policy alternatives to the incumbent. By contrast, there are authors (Lefebvre and Robin, 2009; Rakner et al., 2007; Sridharan, 2004) who argue that parties act as vote-maximizers and generally form alliances irrespective of ideological and programmatic differences.

1.2 Electoral rule and threshold

As a complement to theories that consider ideology, platforms, and prior experience of cooperation to be the main determinants of alliance formation, a group of authors have advanced theories that stress the importance of the electoral rule and the electoral threshold (Blais and Indridason, 2007; Carey, 2017; Ibenskas, 2015; Kaminski, 2001; Lefebvre and Robin, 2009; Golder, 2005, 2006; Parigi and Bearman, 2008; Sridharan, 2004). Whether alliances will form or not, as well as how they will form, according to these authors, largely depends on the type of the electoral rule (majoritarian or proportional) that a country has adopted, and the threshold that has been set. The dominant theory is that parties form and join alliances more often in countries that have systems favoring large parties, i.e. employ majoritarian electoral rule or set high electoral thresholds (Blais and Indridason, 2007; Golder, 2005, 2006; Lefebvre and Robin, 2009; Parigi and Bearman, 2008; Sridharan, 2004).

There is a consensus in the literature that proportional representation (PR) systems favor the formation of electoral alliances less than majoritarian systems. However, Ibenskas (2015) has found, based on a study of eleven post-communist countries, that alliances form more often under closed PR systems where voters do not have the opportunity to express preferences for individual candidates. Carey (2017) has found that as opposed to the widely used D'Hondt divisions method for translating votes into seats, the formula known as Hare Quota with Largest Remainders (HQLR) discourages the formation of alliances.

The authors who stress the importance of the electoral rule and the threshold in the formation of alliances also speak about party size. According to Golder (2006), alliances are more likely among parties that are similar in size and have compatible levels of electoral support. Alternatively, Ibenskas (2015) argues that alliances among one medium-sized and several small parties are more natural to form. Small parties, as is acknowledged, form and join alliances more

often than medium-sized and large parties because by doing so they have greater opportunities to overcome the threshold and gain seats in the parliament (Ibenskas, 2015; Spoon and West, 2015). Medium-sized and large parties may form alliances with the goal of gaining a majority in the parliament and forming the government (Ibenskas, 2015).

1.3 Electoral support and representation

A group of authors (Blais et al., 2014; Decker and Best, 2010; Duch et al., 2010; Eichorst, 2014; Golder, 2005; Gschwend and Hooghe, 2008; Plescia, 2016; Tillman, 2013) explain the formation of electoral alliances by voter behavior. Alliances, according to them, are ‘electorally motivated’ (Eichorst, 2014: 107) and provide valuable cues to the electorate with regards to future governments and policies.

Golder (2005) has argued that the formation of electoral alliances reduces voter uncertainty with respect to future governments and creates an incentive to turn out. Following her, Tillman (2013) has found that the presence of alliances increases voter turnout by 1.5%. Others (Gschwend and Hooghe, 2008; Plescia, 2016; Fortunato, 2017) have shown that voters tend to choose alliances over individual parties in case of perceiving them as ideologically homogenous and deny support to parties which they believe have made significant concessions by forming an alliance.

Some of the authors who stress the importance of electoral support and representation in the formation of alliances note that often, the phenomenon of “strategic voting”, as opposed to “sincere voting”, occurs, i.e. voters cast votes not for the alliance of their genuine choice, but for the one that seems more likely to win (Blais et al., 2014; Bowler et al., 2010; Duch et al., 2010). Blais et al. (2014) state that this is conditioned by *electoral history*: voters tend to cast votes for the alliances that have been successful in the previous elections and/or in the previous round of elections if the electoral system is majority run-off. Bowler et al. (2010) add that strategic votes are specifically cast for the parties that are the most expected to form the government. As they mention, ‘voters cast a vote to promote a policy outcome rather than a party platform, and that policy outcome will be the consequence of coalition bargaining’ (Bowler et al., 2010: 351).

1.4 Post-election bargaining and government formation

A final group of authors links the process of electoral coalition formation to the processes of post-election bargaining and government formation (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2011; Carroll and Cox, 2007; Chiru, 2015; Christiansen et al., 2014; Debus, 2009; Decker and Best, 2010; Eichorst, 2014).

Carroll and Cox (2007) state that parties form alliances with the goal of having shares in the distribution of cabinet posts. As an explanation, they refer to Gamson’s law, according to which coalition governments distribute posts proportional to each member’s contribution. Bandyopadhyay

et al. (2011) develop a game-theoretical model of alliance formation and argue that ideologically distant parties may also form electoral alliances.

Trying to explain the legislative behavior of the parliamentarians after the formation of alliances, Christiansen et al. (2014) have found that MPs representing alliance member parties tend to vote similarly thus signaling that they can govern together. Eichorst (2014) and Chiru (2015) have looked at the effects of alliance formation on government durability and revealed that largely due to the prior experience of cooperation among member parties, governments based on electoral alliances last longer.

2 Theoretical Framework

Two theories, one emphasizing the role of ideological compatibility and the other- that of the electoral rule and threshold, served as the theoretical framework for this study. As noted by Golder (2005), electoral systems that favor large parties also favor the formation of electoral alliances, and parties that are ideologically compatible, i.e. have similar orientations towards issues of social and political significance, are more likely to form or join alliances (Golder 2006). These two theories were chosen for the analysis of alliance formation in Armenia because of the following reasons.

Firstly, ideology and programmatic similarities are often viewed as the ‘natural’ and indeed the decisive factor that makes cooperation among parties possible. Except for one (“Yelq”), alliances in Armenia did not promulgate joint statements, and thus, the basis for cooperation was not explicit.

Secondly, in May 2016, a year before the 2017 parliamentary elections, a new electoral code was adopted by the National Assembly: transition was made from a mixed electoral system to a fully proportional one³. The change in the electoral code could be one of the reasons for the formation of an unprecedented number of alliances (four) in Armenian history since independence in 1991.

No studies have been conducted on the formation of electoral alliances in Armenia. Thus, this study aims to make a small contribution to the literature by examining the patterns of alliance formation in a post-Soviet Caucasian country.

3 Research Design and Methodology

This study used a mixed-method research design to reveal how alliances were formed in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections. The following hypotheses were advanced:

H₁: Electoral alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections were formed among parties that are ideologically compatible.

³ Instead of electing 90 MPs through proportional system of closed party lists and 41 MPs through single member constituencies, now 105 MPs are elected through a proportional system.

H₂: Electoral alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections were formed among parties that could not individually overcome the electoral threshold.

As the decision to form an alliance is a matter of party leadership, in-depth interviews were chosen as the primary method for data gathering and analysis. The sampling approach was purposive, i.e. party members that had been directly involved in the decision-making process and thus, could provide better insight into the respective party's decision to form or join an alliance, were chosen. After the analysis of interview transcripts, a survey among the general public was conducted to reveal the attitude of franchised citizens towards factors that influenced the formation of electoral alliances in Armenia. For the survey, non-probability, convenience sampling was used, and thus, the findings were not deemed to be generalizable, neither correlations were established.

4 Data Collection and Analysis

4.1 Analysis of In-depth Interviews

The analysis of data collected through in-depth interviews with members of parties that formed alliances (n=5, conducted from February 16 to March 7, 2018) was performed using pattern coding. The interviewees were asked seven questions related to the factors that influenced their party's decision to form or join an alliance (see Appendix 1), and the transcripts were coded by four categories or themes dominant in the literature on the formation of electoral alliances:

- *ideological proximity* - the party chose allies based on the similarity of ideological orientations and agenda priorities;
- *electoral rule and threshold* - the main reason for forming the alliance was the objective of overcoming the threshold;
- *electoral support and representation* - the party formed an alliance (joined one) to appeal to the broader population and gain more seats in the parliament; and
- *post-election bargaining and government formation* - the party formed an alliance in order to have influence on post-election processes, namely the formation of government.

The dominant factor in the formation of electoral alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections, as the analysis shows, was ***electoral support***. Except for one, all the interviewees noted that public attitude is an important factor that has to be taken into account while making important political decisions, such as the one to form or join an alliance. 'People like unity. They vote more for the parties that compete allied with other parties', stressed one interviewee (Interview 4).

The newly-adopted proportional ***electoral rule and the electoral threshold***, set at 5% for individual parties and 7% for alliances, also had a considerable impact on the formation of electoral alliances. All the interviewees noted that the newly-adopted electoral rule, though proportional in

name, is more like a majoritarian rule that favors large parties. However, two of the five interviewees noted that the threshold was not the main factor that influenced their decision to form or join an alliance. As one of them emphasized, 'By forming the alliance, we pursued the goal of not simply overcoming the threshold, but of gaining as many seats as possible' (Interview 1).

Ideology and programmatic similarities played a decisive role in the formation of only one of the alliances, and to some extent had an impact on the formation of another. As the interviewee from the first alliance member party noted, 'The parties in our alliance pursue the goal of building a Western-model state that combines liberal democratic values, such as the rule of law, with long-established national traditions and interests' (Interview 2). The interviewee representing the other alliance noted that their party had declared before the elections that will cooperate with parties that have similar agenda priorities (Interview 5). All other interviewees conceded that ideology was not the primary factor influencing their choice of allies. Instead, the decision to form an alliance was based on either the short-term objective, i.e., overcoming the threshold and gaining more seats in the parliament, or past experience of cooperation.

Finally, the objective of taking part in ***post-election bargaining and government formation processes*** played a role in the formation of only one of the alliances. As the interviewee noted, 'By forming the alliance, we pursued the goal of gaining a majority in the National Assembly and forming the government' (Interview 5). All other interviewees (4/5) noted that their party identifies itself as opposition and did not aim to take part in government formation processes after the elections. In the words of one of them, 'The dominance of one party does not allow the governments that are subsequently formed to represent the popular will' (Interview 3).

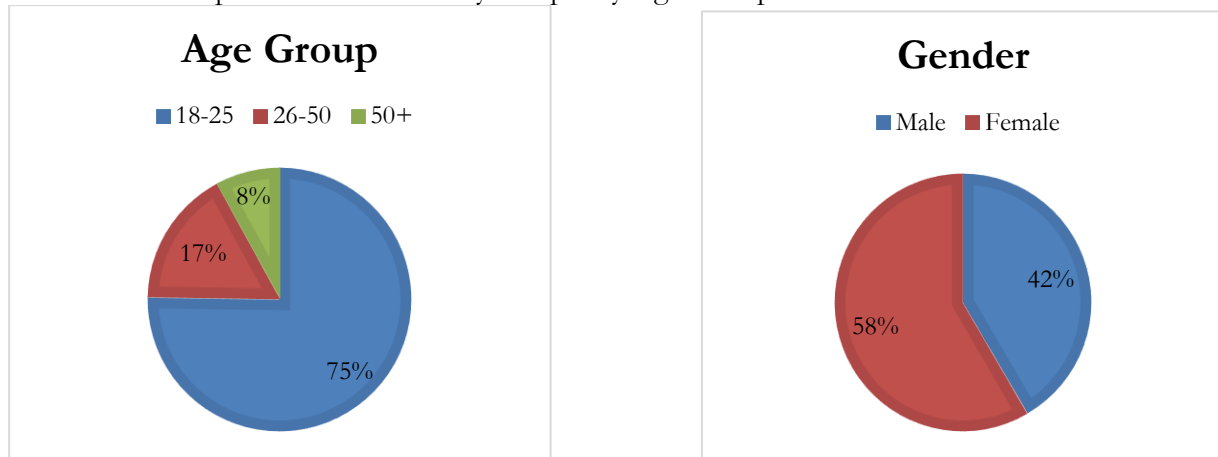
Besides the above-mentioned factors, other factors as well, such as *financial considerations related to the organization of the political campaign and the personal ties among party leaders*, played a role in the formation of electoral alliances. All the interviewees noted that the role of leaders in forming the alliance was notable, and the majority (3/5) stressed that it is difficult for a single party, especially an opposition one, to afford the organization of political campaign.

4.2 Survey Analysis

Following the analysis of in-depth interviews, from April 17 to May 6, 2018, a survey was conducted to reveal the attitude of the general public towards the formation of electoral alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections. The questionnaire (see Appendix 2) was administered electronically, through e-mail and social media website (Facebook). Some, mainly with people over 50, were handed in for completion.

Three-fourths of the respondents (n=101) were 18-25 years old, and women accounted for a greater percent than men (58 and 42%, respectively). As the sample size itself, the composition of the sample by age group is not representative of the population.

Charts 1-2. Composition of the Survey Sample by Age Group and Gender



Source: Author

For ideological compatibility as a determinant for alliance formation, data analysis yields the following results (see Table 1 below). The majority of respondents (66/101; “strongly disagree” and “disagree”, as well as “strongly agree” and “agree” attitudes combined) disagree that alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections were formed among parties that are ideologically compatible. Males and females are equally likely to regard ideology as a determinant for alliance formation (8/42 and 11/59, respectively), though females are almost twice as likely to express attitudes of disagreement than males. More than half of the respondents across all age groups are inclined to think that ideology did not play a significant role in the formation of alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections.

Table 1. Contingency for *Ideological Compatibility* as a Determinant of Alliance Formation

		<i>Age Group</i>			<i>Gender</i>		<i>Total</i>
		18-25	26-50	50+	Male	Female	
<i>Ideological compatibility</i>	Agree	14	2	3	8	11	19
	Disagree	50	11	5	25	41	66
	Neutral	12	4	0	9	7	16
<i>Total</i>		76	17	8	42	59	101

Source: Author.

For the electoral threshold, the reverse is true. A great majority of the respondents (71/101) is inclined to think that the threshold, set at 5% for individual parties and 7% for alliances, was the main factor that influenced the formation of electoral alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary

elections. Again, males and females are equally likely to express attitudes of agreement, and the attitudes of disagreement among women outnumber those among men. Across age groups, the pattern is just the reverse of the one found in case of ideological compatibility: more than half of the respondents for each group (54/76; 11/17; 6/8) agree that alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections were formed among parties that could not individually overcome the threshold.

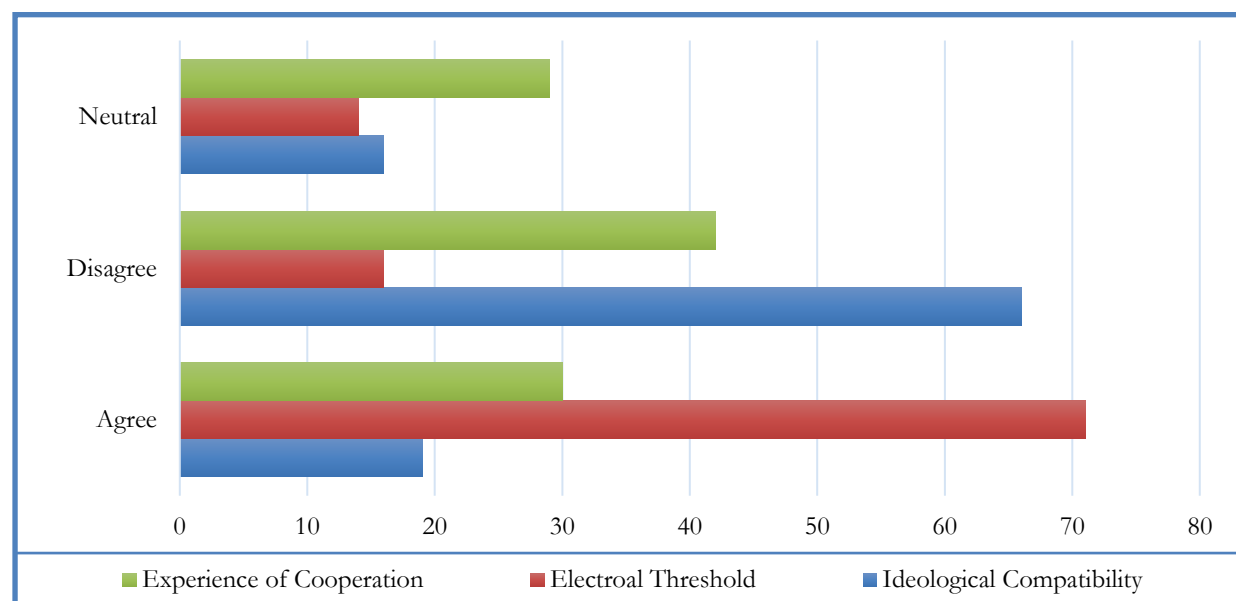
Table 2. Contingency for the *Electoral Threshold* as a Determinant of Alliance Formation

		<i>Age Group</i>			<i>Gender</i>		<i>Total</i>
		18-25	26-50	50+	Male	Female	
<i>Electoral threshold</i>	Agree	54	11	6	34	37	71
	Disagree	11	4	1	4	12	16
	Neutral	11	2	1	4	10	14
<i>Total</i>		76	17	8	42	59	101

Source: Author

A significant number of respondents (42/101) are inclined to think that alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections *were not* formed among parties that have experience of cooperation. The attitude of neutrality for this factor, as compared with ideological compatibility and electoral threshold, accounts for a greater percent (see the chart below). For other factors influencing the formation of alliances, such as *financial considerations* related to organization of political campaign and *leadership ties*, the attitudes of agreement and neutrality split almost evenly, and together account for 80-85 % of responses.

Chart 3. Public Attitude towards Some Factors of Alliance Formation



Source: Author

There is a substantial agreement among respondents (over 90%) that parties in the 2017 parliamentary elections formed alliances to increase the electoral support that they could get. There is also a strong belief that alliances were formed among opposition parties. The majority (95%) of respondents agree that party size has an impact on the formation of alliances, and that small parties form or join alliances to overcome the electoral threshold. A small number of respondents (29/101) disagree that alliances among one medium-sized and several small parties are more likely, and slightly more (35/101) disagree that large parties are less likely, as compared with medium-sized and large parties, to form or join alliances.

Of the four alliances, “Yelq” alliance (“Bright Armenia”, “Civil Contract”, and “Republic” parties) is considered to be the one in the formation of which ideological and programmatic similarities played a decisive role. The overwhelming majority of the respondents (84/101) ranked it the first by the level of ideological compatibility among the member parties.

5 Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

Electoral support and representation, as the analysis of in-depth interviews shows, was the dominant factor that influenced the formation of alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections. Party leaders identified public attitude as an important factor that has to be taken into account while making a decision to form or join an alliance. Likewise, the general public is inclined to think that parties formed or joined alliances to increase the electoral support that they could get. This finding is in line with the view that alliances are often ‘electorally motivated’ (Eichorst 2014).

Ideological compatibility cannot be viewed as a determinant of alliance formation in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections. Only two of the five interviewees noted that their party chose allies based on ideological and programmatic similarities, and the majority of survey respondents (65%) disagree that alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections were formed among parties that are ideologically compatible. As noted by the interviewees from both “Bright Armenia” and “Civil Contract” parties, ideological and programmatic similarities played a decisive role in the formation of “Yelq” alliance, and in public opinion as well, this is the alliance the member parties of which are the closest in ideological and policy orientations.

The electoral threshold, set at 5% for parties and 7% for alliances, as data demonstrate, played a key role in the formation of electoral alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections. The interviewees noted that the newly adopted electoral rule, though proportional, clearly favors large parties and thus, makes small ones to cooperate. In public opinion, as well, alliances were formed among parties that could not individually overcome the electoral threshold. Except for the “Prosperous Armenia”, all the parties that formed alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections had to cooperate with others to overcome the electoral threshold. This finding is in line with the theory

that small parties form alliances to overcome the threshold, while medium-sized and large parties do so with the goal of gaining more seats in the parliament and having impact on government formation processes (Ibenskas, 2015; Spoon and West, 2015).

Conclusion

The 2017 parliamentary elections in Armenia were unprecedented by the number of the electoral alliances that were formed. Prior to elections, ten parties coalesced into four alliances, two of which succeeded in overcoming the threshold and gaining seats in the National Assembly. This study tried to reveal *how* these alliances were formed, and for that purpose, both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered and analyzed from February to May 2018. Despite limitations of the study (small sample size for both the interviews and the survey; non-probability sampling for the survey), data analysis revealed notable patterns for the role of ideology and the electoral threshold in the formation of alliances in Armenia. The first hypothesis (*'Electoral alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections were formed among parties that are ideologically compatible'*) is rejected, while the second one (*'Electoral alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections were formed among parties that could not individually overcome the electoral threshold'*) is accepted. Future research can investigate whether the nature of past cooperation (successful vs. unsuccessful) has impact on the formation of alliances among the same parties in several consecutive elections. Also, hypotheses related to leaders' role in making a party decision to form alliances can be advanced and tested.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interviews with Party Leaders

1.1 List of Interviewees

- Interview 1. Board member, “Bright Armenia” Party
Held at the central office of the party (Yerevan, 1 Baghramyan Avenue), on 16 February 2018
- Interview 2. Board member, “Civil Contract” Party
Held at the central office of the party (Yerevan, 2 Koghbatsi Street), on 28 February 2018
- Interview 3. Board member, “Heritage” Party
Held at the central office of the party (Yerevan, 75 Yerznkanyan Street), on 5 March 2018
- Interview 4. Board member, “Armenian National Congress” Party
Held at the central office of the party (Yerevan, 38 Saryan Street), on 6 March 2018
- Interview 5. Board member, “Prosperous Armenia” Party
Held at the office of the interviewee, the National Assembly of Armenia (Yerevan, 19 Baghramyan Avenue), on 7 March 2018

1.2 Interview Questionnaire⁴

(Date and Place of Interview / Interviewee / Party)

Thank you for your willingness to contribute to my research on the formation of alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections. The answers you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality, and your identity will be kept anonymous.

1. Why did your party decide to compete in the 2017 parliamentary elections as a part of an alliance rather than independently?
2. What role did ideological orientations and party platforms play in your party's choice of allies?
 - 2.1. How would you rate ideological proximity of your partner parties to your party (close, very close, at a medium distance)?
 - 2.2. Would you still cooperate with the same parties if you had to make concessions regarding the political agenda?
3. How did the newly-adopted proportional electoral rule and the electoral threshold, set at 5% for parties and 7% for alliances, influence your party's decision to form an alliance (join one)?
4. What role did the electoral support that you expected prior to elections play in making the decision to form an alliance (join one)?
5. Did your party form or join an alliance because of the financial considerations related to the organization of political campaign?
6. Did your party form an alliance to gain more seats in the parliament and thus, have an influence on post-election bargaining and government formation processes?
7. What role did the ties among party leaders play in the formation of the alliance that your party represents?

Appendix 2. Public Attitude Survey⁵ Survey Questionnaire

The Formation of Alliances in the 2017 RA Parliamentary Elections

This questionnaire is administered to the citizens of the Republic of Armenia that are 18 years of age and older.

Thank you for your time to take this survey. Your answers will be used for the completion of a research project that is being conducted within the scopes of a graduate research methods course at the American University of Armenia. I urge you to be honest with your answers and assure that your answers will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

⁴ The interview transcripts are available at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/foy2fu7ry9t53n6/The%20Formation%20of%20Alliances%20in%20Armenia%20Interview%20Transcripts.pdf?dl=0> (28 September 2018).

⁵ The survey data (in Excel spreadsheets) are available at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/130kkx1lauq4b1u/Alliances%20Survey%20data.xlsx?dl=0> (28 September 2018).

Section I. Descriptive (*this section captures general descriptions that are important in grouping your answers*)

1. Please indicate your age group.

- ☐ 18-25 years of age
☐ 26-50 years of age
☐ 51 and older

2. Please indicate your gender.

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

Section II. The formation of electoral alliances (*this section contains questions related to the patterns of electoral alliance formation in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections*)

3. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1=total disagreement; 2=disagreement; 3=neither agreement nor disagreement; 4=agreement; and 5= strong agreement), please check the box that best represents your position on each of the statements that follow.

	1	2	3	4	5
Alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections were formed among parties that are ideologically similar and share agenda priorities.					
Alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections were formed among parties that have past experience of cooperation.					
Alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections were formed among parties that could not individually overcome the electoral threshold of 5%.					
Alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections were formed among parties that could not individually afford the effective organization of political campaign.					
Alliances in the 2017 parliamentary elections were formed among parties whose leaders have close personal ties.					

4. Please respond 'yes' or 'no' to each of the statements that follow.

	Yes	No
Parties form alliances to appeal to wider segments of the population.		
Parties form alliances to appeal to wider segments of the population and increase voter turnout.		
Parties form alliances to appeal to wider segments of the population, to increase voter turnout, and to gain a larger number of votes.		
Parties form alliances to gain a larger number of votes and increase their chances of overcoming the threshold.		
Parties form alliances to appeal to wider segments of the population and gain majority in the parliament.		
Parties form alliances to gain majority in the parliament and form the government.		

5. Please indicate whether you *agree* or *disagree* to each of the statements that follow.

	Agree	Disagree
Party size affects a party's decision to form or join an alliance prior to elections.		
Small parties form or join electoral alliances to overcome the threshold.		

Medium-sized and large parties form alliances to gain parliamentary majority.		
Alliances between one medium-sized and several small parties are more likely.		
Large parties are less likely than small and medium-sized parties to form or join an alliance.		

Section III. Voter perception of the alliances (*this section contains questions related to your perception of the four alliances that were formed before the 2017 RA parliamentary elections*)

6. If you participated in the 2017 parliamentary elections and voted for one of the four alliances that were formed (“Yelq”, “Tsarukyan”, the Armenian National Congress-People’s Party of Armenia, and ORO), why did you do so?

☐ I am a member of one of the parties that formed the alliance.

☐ I sympathize with the party (parties) that formed the alliance and have a similar vision of future of our country.

☐ I voted for the alliance because it had better chances of overcoming the threshold and gaining seats in the parliament.

☐ I have personal ties with the candidate(s) in the party list(s).

☐ None of the above/Other (please specify). _____

7. Please rank order each of the four alliances that were formed in the 2017 parliamentary elections by the level to which you think they were formed on the basis of ideological and programmatic similarities.

_____ “Yelq” Alliance

_____ “Tsarukyan” Alliance

_____ “ORO” Alliance

_____ Congress-People’s Party of Armenia Alliance

8. On a 1 to 7 point scale, please indicate the level to which you think the parties that formed alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections can be characterized so.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Opposition								Pro-governmental
Established								Newly-formed
Popular								Unpopular

9. In your view, what was the main factor that influenced the formation of electoral alliances in the 2017 RA parliamentary elections? (*Please give your answer as a word or phrase*)