Abstract

The governance structure of the Lebanese Republic is particularly characterized by its confessional nature guaranteeing a pre-defined representation of Christians and Muslims and its sectarian subgroups in parliament. In this sense, the composition of the parliament is based on the allocation of a specific number of seats to each of the two major religious groups and its sectarian subgroups. However, the ratio being used to assign seats to these sectarian subgroups is still intensively discussed. Recently, Diss and Zouache (2015) have addressed some aspects of power in the Lebanese Parliament. Applying the Penrose-Banzhaf and Shapley-Shubik indices, they investigate the relative confessional power distributions under the current seat distribution and a proposal for its amendment and revealed some paradoxical effects. In this paper, we re-examine their results applying the Penrose-Banzhaf measure. Furthermore, we extend their analysis by including the seat distribution from the previous constitution into our analysis and relate our findings to the motivations for the electoral reforms underlying the three studied seat distributions. Additionally, we address the implications of the existing party blocs in the current parliament from a party and confessional perspective. Currently, their existence is put into question in the public and political discussion. With our analysis, we deliver a theoretical foundation for this debate and demonstrate that in terms of parliamentary power the current bloc formation is a priori disadvantageous.