

TÍTULO DA TESE EM INGLÊS:

THE SEMI-DIRECT DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL

**– CONDITIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR ITS CONSOLIDATION IN THE PORTUGUESE
POLITICAL SYSTEM –**

ABSTRACT

The high rates of abstention evident in electoral acts, the political apathy of the citizens, their distrust and discredit in the institutions and the elected ones are eroding the pillars of the current liberal democracies. Such factors raise doubts about the legitimacy of elected representatives and political institutions, relaunching the debate about the possibility of implementing mechanisms of direct democracy in the context of representative democracy, thus building what has been named a semi-direct democracy in order to alleviate the so-called crisis and erosion of representative democracy.

Also in Portugal, several fragilities have been identified in its model of representative democracy. Thus, the present work investigates some experiences of semi-direct democracy in the contemporary politics, focusing particular attention on those realized in Portugal, trying to evaluate its possibilities to mitigate the weaknesses of representative democracy. It examines the historical, political and legal constraints and indicators that obstruct the use of direct democracy mechanisms available to the Portuguese citizens, constitutionally enshrined with caution in the Portuguese Constitution (CRP). Possibilities and operational modifications are explored in the sense of affirming the mechanisms of direct democracy in the Portuguese political system which, conjugated with the representative democracy (semi-direct democracy), can contribute as a complement and barometer to its functioning. Finally, an agenda of political reform is proposed in order to mitigate and solve some of the obstacles identified in Portugal to semi-direct democracy.

KEYWORDS : direct democracy, semi-direct democracy, representative democracy, political power, citizens, Portugal.