

TÍTULO DA TESE EM INGLÊS: The regulation functionalities of the media coverage over the electoral period in Portugal: a comparative study of the 2011 and 2015 general elections

This study examines the regulation functionalities of the media coverage during the electoral time frame in Portugal, namely the 2011 and 2015 general elections. It answers the starting question: How is it that the new legal regime, Law no. 72-A/2015 which regulates media coverage in electoral period, adapted to the national Mass Media setting? For 40 years, legislation created in 1975 of pre-constitutional nature was in force, regulating media coverage throughout the electoral time frame. This is a complex matter, politically and legally, putting into conflict, rights with equal constitutional dignity — freedom of the press and media and equal opportunities and treatment for all candidates. In this research several interventions are analysed, particularly, from the National Election Commission and the Regulatory Authority for the Media on journalistic discriminatory treatment; the Mass Media refusal to cover the electoral period; the ongoing calls for attention by the President of the Republic, the Superior Courts, the Ombudsman and the political parties. The selected methodological approach it's of qualitative nature using as preferential data collection instruments, the document search and the interview, implementing the interpretative analysis. The regulation functionalities of the media coverage over the electoral period are identified and assessed, and points towards the need to update the legal framework, more adapted to the national Mass Media reality, but in which the editorial freedom it's set as the key principle to the detriment of equal opportunities and treatment for all electoral candidates.

Palavras Chave: political parties, media coverage, regulation, general elections, equal opportunities and treatment for all electoral candidates.