

# The semi-presidential system of Cape Verde: the relationship between the executive and the legislative powers\*

## *O sistema semi-presidencialista cabo-verdiano: a relação entre os poderes executivo e legislativo*

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### Abstract

The article analyses the relationship established between the executive and legislative powers in the Cape Verdean government system where researchers seek to understand it, taking into account their theoretical and constitutional setting practice. It should be noted the prominence of the debate and studies undertaken to understand how the scientific academy seeks to eradicate this problem. Two issues are relevant in this debate: the first reporting to the theoretical and constitutional configuration of Cape Verdean government system and the other to its policy and legislative practice.

**Keywords:** Cape Verde. Semi-presidential System. Systems of Government. Legislative and Executive Powers.

### Resumo

O artigo procura analisar a relação que se estabelece entre o poder executivo e legislativo no sistema de governo cabo-verdiano, onde investigadores buscam compreendê-lo, tendo em conta a sua configuração prática, teórica e constitucional. Há que realçar a proeminência do debate e dos estudos realizados no sentido de compreender como é que a academia científica procura debelar esta problemática. Duas questões são pertinentes neste debate: a primeira refere-se à configuração teórico-constitucional do sistema de governo cabo-verdiano e a outra à prática política e legislativa.

**Palavras-chave:** Cabo Verde. Sistema Semi-presidencialista. Sistemas de Governo. Poder legislativo e Poder Executivo.

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## 1 Introduction

Research on systems of government is frequent in Political Science, having its resurgence in the 20th century been marked by the process of democratisation of many States. In this article we seek to centralise our research within a constitutional, legal, sociological and institutional analysis of the Cape Verdean government system characterised as semi-presidential, trying to describe the relationship among the different institutional actors within the framework of the division of powers, in the context where it is assumed that these powers were assigned to prevent their concentration and not to impair the functioning of the various political and legal bodies..

In the Cape Verdean endogenous context we recognise that the system of government is one of the themes that enriches the field of Political Science, especially in the field of Constitutional Law, and we verify that, from the scope and complexity of the theme, we are challenged to seek to understand the constitutional engineering (SARTORI, 1996) which sustains that system under analysis. It is also a subject of some academic and scientific production, although there are no studies that develop theoretical and empirical issues involving the relations of powers in the configuration of the Cape Verdean government system, as we witness a weak doctrine of scientific production (SILVA, 2009; ALMADA, 2002; LIMA, 2004), which, in general, is one of the features of the studies on the relations of power in African democracies.

From the few scientific productions that exist, we will highlight here some, such as those of Roselma Évora who seeks to understand democracy and the configuration of the government system in the political and constitutional context. It is the case of the article “Cape Verde: Democracy and the system of government” (2013) and also of the doctoral thesis “The Legislative Power in the Democratic System in Cape Verde” (2009). Daniel Costa’s article on “The role of the Head of State in the Cape Verdean Semi-presidential system” (2009) and the master’s thesis on “The Semi-presidential system in Cape Verde, 1991/2000”, where he seeks to focus on the debate on the system of government that is configured from the political openness (1991) and the powers of the President of the Republic after successive constitutional revisions.

David Hopffer Almada, in 2002, published the book “The Presidential Issue in Cape Verde: a matter of Regime” describing the role of the President in the Cape

Verdean political scene, and envisaging possible conflicts at the time of cohabitation between the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister if they were not from the same political party. Raul Araújo published in 2000 the book “The Systems of Government of Democratic Transition in the P.A.L.O.P.” Making a brief analysis of the Cape Verdean government system, from the political openness and the adoption of the new Constitution of the Republic in 1992, he even characterises the system as parliamentary in its essence. In 2007, Vitalino Canas and Jorge Carlos Fonseca published the joint article on “Cape Verde: A Successful Semi-Presidential System?” where they focus on the endogenous and international debates about the Cape Verdean government system, arguing that, after the political openness, Cape Verde adopted a semi-presidential system.

Taking into account that these productions do not deepen the issues of the relations of powers in the Cape Verdean government system, we seek, with this article, to innovate the field of research on political institutions in democracies, encouraging further studies about the region where Cape Verde is framed, with the probability of bringing the institutional background to the context under analysis. Since the independence of Cape Verde, and, therefore, of the setting of the one-party system, there are, in the political and academic scenery, debates on the system of government that would be set up after the national independence and the functioning of the political institutions involved in it. With this article we seek to think about this issue, understanding divergent and convergent points of view, envisaging new paradigms that have emerged over the years in which Cape Verde became an independent State.

## 2 Revisiting the various systems of Government

There are, depending on the reality of each country, specific settings in the systems of government. However, there is a set of elements that characterise and distinguish each of them. There are three types of government that prevail in democracies, which are the presidential, the parliamentary and the semi-presidential (LIJPHART, 2003).

In the presidential system, the executive power is monocephalic, that is, the President is Head of State and of Government, yet aided by Ministers appointed by

him. Both the President and the Parliament are elected by direct and universal suffrage, and the first is not politically responsible for the second. The President cannot be dismissed by Parliament, but that can occur through the process of impeachment, if he is involved in crimes. The way the President is elected allows him to enjoy a broader legitimacy before the Parliament, being that the program of his government does not always coincide with the ideals and political conceptions of parliamentary majority. However, if the President cannot bring together in Parliament a majority to support him, he will have some difficulties to implement certain policies because, in this case, the Parliament as well cannot be dissolved by the Executive, which gives it autonomy, albeit relative.

The presidential system ensures greater political stability because, constitutionally, the President has a fixed term that exists for a set time, allowing him to carry out social changes objectively established. On the other hand, this system of government has its disadvantages and one of them is the concentration of powers in the person of the President of the Republic, which can enhance less democratic attitudes centered in the field of authoritarianism. Serious institutional crisis can also occur concerning the possible disagreements between the Legislative and the Executive powers, being that there are no ingenious instruments to quickly resolve political crises, as we see in the parliamentary system. The U.S.A and Brazil are pointed out as the most ruined and paradigmatic of the presidential system.

In the Parliamentary system there is the sharing of the executive power between the President and the Head of Government (Prime Minister), being the latter appointed or chosen by the Parliament. The President of the Republic exercises merely ceremonial functions and of symbolic representation of the State, depending on the investiture of the Parliament, and the government will have to excel for a stable majority in Parliament; otherwise, it can be dissolved, forming a new government of parliamentary basis (PASQUINO, 2005). Normally the Head of Government comes from the board of the political party that gets the parliamentary majority or from the coalition of parties that support him, and thus we believe that his political-administrative knowledge can facilitate his action vis-à-vis the Parliament.

Some advantages are assigned to this system of government such as the relationship established between the Executive (Government) and the Legislative powers

(Parliament), enabling greater articulation and reconciliation among them (FERREIRA FILHO, 1993). The government does not have a fixed mandate, because it depends on the parliamentary support and the political environment within the framework of the political confidence of the partisan majority that supports it. If there are differences between the Head of Government and the parliamentary majority that supports him, the risk of withdrawing his support to the Government may occur, which is one of the disadvantages of the parliamentary system.

In the semi-presidential system, the Head of State (President) is elected by direct and secret suffrage for a constitutionally determined period, and the same happens with the Parliament. However, if Parliament has a stable and coherent majority, the Head of State is exactly in the opposite situation, since the Executive power is cephalic, that is, the Head of Government, normally the Prime Minister, with a parliamentary majority, will be able to rule without interruption and with the supremacy within the executive power, if the Head of State does not have the support of the same party that represents the majority in Parliament. In this case the Prime Minister has the political responsibility vis-à-vis the Parliament. The President has, among other powers, that of appointing and exonerating the Prime Minister by listening to the parliamentary forces in accordance with the results of the legislative elections, and he can also dissolve the Parliament in the event of serious institutional crisis. The independence of the Head of State, his promotional power and the threat of dissolution facilitate the mechanism of minority governments. It is the case of the current process in Portugal and other European countries.

The practical configuration of these government systems analysed above depends on the reality of each country. Duverger (1978), when analysing the powers of the President, emphasises that there are countries where the President comes from a direct popular election, and in practice he may have weak or strong powers and vice versa. In France, the Constitution assigns few powers to the President, who in practice has, in fact, strong powers; and there are countries that face inverse situations. The degree of power of a President is related to the parliamentary seats, and there are differences between a President with a majority and another one without a parliamentary majority.

In this process of practical configuration we high-

light the relationship between the executive and the legislative powers. It is a general rule that in democracies the legislative power belongs to Parliament and the executive to the Government. The Parliament is a political institution formed by one or more assemblies (monocameralist or bicameralist) with a set of powers such as legislation and supervision (DUVERGER, 1985).

The Government has the executive power, as it is the institution that holds the unit to execute the laws and, therefore, to monitor their applications, having several senses: first, it can designate the whole of the political bodies of the State; secondly, it can designate a particular government body; and third, it can also “designate only one element of this Executive, the Ministry or the ministerial office, as opposed to the Head of State” (DUVERGER, 1985, p. 117). In any system of Government it is important to establish a relationship of complementarity between the powers, especially between the Executive and the Legislative. However, there are variations with regard to balance or imbalance between them.

Lijphart (2003), in a study carried out in the period from 1945 to 1996 of 36 countries with democracy, confirms that in parliamentary systems we can notice a certain balance of powers between the office and the Parliament, as it happens in Belgium, but it is also possible to find a clear predominance of the Executive, as in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Barbados, since the same margin of variation also occurs in presidential and semi-presidential systems. These significant variations depend on a set of institutional configurations such as the duration of the offices (LIJPHART, 2003); the relationship between the parties and the Offices or of parliamentary majorities (PASQUINO, 2002), and, above all, the characteristics that every system of Government has (LIJPHART, 2003; MALAMUD, 2003; GROHMANN, 2001).

### **3 The Institutionalisation of the semi-presidential system in Africa: the case of Cape Verde**

With the third wave of democratisation (HUNTINGTON, 1991), many African States which were under the rule of authoritarian one-party regimes, chose to change into multiparty democratic regimes and two institutional configurations were fundamental, being the first one the adoption of a new Electoral system and the other of a new system of Government (PEREIRA, 2013). We

consider, taking into account the vast African literature before its period of political transition, that many African States after independence opted for a system of Government which was characterised as presidential one-party regime, which legitimised through a hegemonic discourse that preached the centralisation of power in one person, or structure (usually military), as a condition to “protect national interests, ensure national unity and avoid social breakdown” (ÉVORA, 2013, p. 336).

Before this scenario, the presidential government system, that some African States had, was the subject of some speculation. On the one hand, they advocated that the presidential system held the danger of personification of power (LINZ, 1990) and that, therefore, it would be better to adopt the parliamentary (LIJPHART, 1991) or semi-presidential (ELGIE, 2004) system; on the other hand, that the same system of Government did not suit the eventual transition to the multi-party democratic regime (MAINWARING, 1993).

In an analysis and confrontation between formal and non-formal institutions in African Democracies, it is possible to notice three informal institutions that seem especially relevant, namely: clientelism, corruption and the “Big Man” in presidentialism (BRATTON, 2007). This approach explains the danger of the personification of power that the presidential system involves for the continent. As, in this system, regardless of the constitutional provisions, the power is heavily customised around the image of the President. He is, literally, above the law, he controls, in many cases, a large proportion of the State property, without the necessary accountability (WALLE, 2003).

With the political transition, i.e. the transition to multiparty democratic regimes, many African States, especially the Portuguese-speaking countries (PALOP), have opted for a semi-presidential system of Government, mostly under the influence of the Portuguese system. This option derives from the possibility that this system of government allows the adequacy of the President and the Parliament’s powers, trying with that to “eliminate some of the vices of the two pure systems: presidentialism and parliamentarianism” (PEREIRA, 2013, p. 3).

The process of political transition in Africa is related to two fundamental issues. Firstly, the fact that few African countries have managed to achieve some degree of success in this process, where some of them have even reverted to authoritarian regimes or remained in what

we can define as “grey zone” between democracy and authoritarianism (CAROTHERS, 2002, p. 9). Secondly, in some countries that have reached the political transition, the political parties responsible for the national liberation struggle and for independence won the elections that founded the democratic regime, as in the case of Angola (MPLA), Guinea-Bissau (PAIGC) and Mozambique (FRELIMO). The exception is revealed in Cape Verde (MPD) and Sao Tome and Principe (PCD-GR), where the opposition came to power.

Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and Cape Verde are Portuguese-speaking African States that, from an institutional point of view, have opted for the semi-presidential system, with different features and settings.

**Table:** General characteristics of the systems of Government (1991/2011)

Countries	First multi-party elections	Number of parliamentary elections	Number of presidential elections	System of Government
Angola	1992	3	1	Semi-presidential
Mozambique	1994	4	4	Semi-presidential
Guinea-Bissau	1994	4	5	Semi-presidential
Sao Tome and Principe	1991	5	5	Semi-presidential
Cape Verde	1991	5	5	Semi-presidential

Source: adapted African Elections Data Base (<http://africanelections.tripod.com/>).

In the case of Mozambique, the system is semi-presidential, and the President is elected for a period of five years, and the Government is responsible before the National Assembly (ELGIE, 2008). Meanwhile, the “powers of the President are far above the other semi-presidential countries” (MACUANE, 2009, p. 182). On the one hand, the representation in the Parliament of the party of the President is the majority. On the other hand, the President appoints the Prime Minister assigning to him the governance functions, without, however, being possible to identify in the political practice if it is the Prime Minister who leads the Government.

In Angola, they opted for a constitutional law in 1992, which allowed the consecration of a semi-presidential system of government, with a strong presidential penchant (SANTOS, 2007). However, the practical configuration of this system arouses debate among research-

ers, some of whom defending it is presidentialism and not semi-presidentialism. It is considered that the system took the parliamentary majority for the President to become holder of the Government, discharging the existence of the Prime Minister (FEIJÓ, 2007). In this way, the President is the one who guides and sets the national policy of the Angolan people, dismisses and is able to appoint and exonerate the Prime Minister, presides over the Council of Ministers, dictates the dissolution of the Parliament, calls elections and referenda and he signs and promulgates the laws of the Parliament and the Government decrees.

The powers that are attributed to the President allow, in political practice, to characterise the Angolan government system as a system of presidential-parliamentary tendency, where there is a constitutional imbalance between the powers conferred to the President and to the Parliament. However, under the terms of a new Constitution approved in January 2010, the President must be elected indirectly by the members of the National Assembly for a five-year term.

In Guinea-Bissau, the duration of the 1993 Constitution allowed the adoption of a semi-presidential system of Government. The political practices of the country and the struggle for power (AZEVEDO, 2009) have produced a system of Government with presidential tendency, to an extent that it is characterised as a strong semi-presidential system (KOSTA, 2007). We realise, through the Constitution of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, that the President has substantial legislative powers with the right of legislative being that, to overcome this veto power, two-thirds of votes cast are needed in Parliament.

Among the functions of the President of the Republic we highlight that of legislating, through presidential decrees, without, however, consulting or hearing other legislative bodies, such as the Government and the Parliament. Thus, this configuration strengthens even more the idea of a Guinean system with strong presidential penchant. The President also appoints the Prime Minister consulting the parties with parliamentary seat. We attest that, from the practical configuration of the Guinean government system, the concentration of powers in the person of the President hinders the process of pacification of conflicts between the bodies of national sovereignty. The effect of this process is the high probability of harming the people of Guinea-Bissau, who deposit their confidence in a President who, by the structuring

of State institutions, is sometimes unable to manage the conflicts.

In the particular case of Cape Verde, the configuration of the system of government has been the subject of permanent political and constitutional discussion, allowing the adoption of different approaches, mainly from the political openness and the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Cape Verde (CRCV) in 1992.

With the implementation of the first Republic (1975-1990) and with the election of the first People's National Assembly, a system of Government characterised as parliamentary is emerging. To the Constitution of the People's National Assembly fifty-six MPs were elected and the PAIGC was the only party to participate in the elections, through a list submitted by a group of citizens devoted to it. The Assembly had the power to elect the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic who was the General Secretary of the Party (Aristides Pereira), with real powers of governance, chairing all the Councils of Ministers and holding a special regulation on Foreign Affairs and State Security.

The 1980 Constitution of the Republic of Cape Verde stated the People's National Assembly as the supreme organ of State power, and it decided on all the fundamental issues of the State internal and external policy, organised and monitored the application of the political, economic, social, cultural, defence and security lines set by the PAICV. It also had the power to dismiss or call new elections. The election of this body happened every five years by direct universal suffrage.

The implementation of the second Republic that happened with the political openness in 1990 symbolised the democratisation period with new configurations and the articulation of new political institutions in the Cape Verdean State panorama. It is also marked by the emergence or even the functionalisation of democratic pluralism, when the first multi-party elections in the history of Cape Verde were held on 13th January, 1991. The strongest opposition Party, the MPD, won with a qualified majority of two thirds of the Members. The elected National Assembly approved a new Constitution in September 1992, which overhauled the system of government. The President of the Republic and the National Assembly started being elected by direct and universal suffrage, similar to what occurred in other countries that had the same semi-presidential system. The Government is elected and formed according to the election results for

the National Assembly, requiring approval by this one. Elections take place every five years (Parliament, Government and President of the Republic), and for the Town Hall they take place every four years.

The configuration of the new system of government after independence attributed to the President the power to dismiss or call new elections in the event of serious institutional crisis, which undermine the integrity of the Cape Verdean Nation State and of its institutions. Meanwhile, since the political openness, researchers have been looking for a scientific and political-constitutional explanation to the Cape Verdean government system. Some claim this is rationalised or mitigated parliamentarianism; others prefer to talk of a semi-presidential system; in any case, the system of government is an important issue and one of the most interesting of the Constitution of the Republic of Cape Verde (SILVA, 2009, p. 197).

Carlos Veiga, in the opening speech of the programme of the MPD party on the eve of the first parliamentary elections in 1991, defended and thought to be best for Cape Verde the "mitigated parliamentarianism" system (ÉVORA, 2009, p. 178); Araújo (2000) defines it as parliamentary in essence. For Évora (2009), the system of government established in the 1992 Constitutional Charter is parliamentary. Fonseca (2004) calls it a "weak semi-presidential system"; Canotilho (2003) considers it as a mixed presidential-parliamentary system; Lima (2004), one of the researchers who best studied the Cape Verdean government system, describes it as semi-presidential, suggesting however that it is the weakest of the semi-presidential systems. According to Canas and Fonseca (2007, p. 124) the system of government established by the CRCV is a semi-presidential system, like the "Portuguese system of the 1976 Constitution, in which it was clearly inspired".

Similar to the concept of some researchers, in response to a current opinion in Cape Verde, Costa (2001) defines the Cape Verdean government system, taking into account the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Cape Verde, as a semi-presidential system, a definition inspired by Duverger and Elgie's structure of analysis. That system almost completely devalues the role of the Heads of State that are "monarchist or republican, reducing them to symbolic figures, with no real power and who only perform protocol functions and are only system catalysts" (LARA, 2007, p. 28).

The debate between researchers and national and foreign personalities is not only scientific but also party-political. On the one hand, there is the Movement for Democracy party (MPD), and on the other, the African Party of for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV). The PAICV positioned itself in favour of a semi-presidential system, by assigning to the President the function of guarantor of National Unity and of the Constitution and as a result the MPD would oppose firmly the semi-presidential system, advocating the rationalised parliamentarianism, considering that the Parliament should be the vital focus of the political system, the President could neither have governance functions nor interfere in the governance, and it was in this sense that these two clearly defined positions marked the constitutional debate between 1990 and 1992. Today the consensus about the system of government has not been achieved yet, “despite the rapprochement between the two parties, about one or another aspect” (SILVA, 2009, p. 199-200).

Regardless of the debate, we can scientifically state, taking into account the classical theorists and the Constitution of the Republic of Cape Verde (1999), that the system of government is semi-presidential, for the following reasons: the President of the Republic is elected by universal, direct and secret suffrage, by voters listed on national territory and abroad, under the law, as well as the Parliament; the President is elected for a period of five years, beginning with the inauguration and ending with the inauguration of the new President elected. However, this is not enough to say that the Cape Verdean government system is semi-presidential, because in the presidential system, the President is also elected by direct and universal suffrage.

Furthermore, we can also mention that it is the President of the Republic who appoints the Prime Minister, after hearing the political forces with a seat in the National Assembly and taking into account the results of the elections. The President dismisses the Head of Government, but after hearing the forces represented in Parliament. The President also dissolves the National Assembly, after complying with the provisions and hearing the political parties that have a seat there. The National Assembly will be dissolved whenever, during the same parliamentary term, two motions of confidence to the Government are rejected. The National Assembly may also be dissolved in case of a serious institutional crisis, whenever this is necessary for the proper functioning

of democratic institutions, and this action, at the risk of legal absence, must be preceded by the assent of the Council of the Republic. And besides, the Cape Verdean executive power is cephalic, i.e., the Head of State shares power with the Head of Government, the Prime Minister (COSTA, 2001). Therefore, it can be said that the Cape Verdean government system is semi-presidential with specific institutional configurations that differentiate it from other government systems.

The Cape Verdean government system has its specific configuration, starting with the relationship between the executive and the legislative powers and their political practice. One of the mechanisms to measure the prevalence of a power over the other is the duration of the offices. An office that remains in power for a long time has the probability of being dominant over the legislature, “while an office of brief duration must be quite weak” (LIJPHART, 2003, p. 153). Since the political openness and the first legislative election in 1991, the offices were always the majority, of long duration, allowing a stable and vigorous Executive. The MPD has achieved two consecutive terms (1991-1995) and the PAICV three consecutive terms (2001-2011), allowing a certain hegemony of the Executive over the Legislative (LIJPHART, 2003). Évora (2007) points out that all the legislative elections (1991 to 2011) in analysis have produced absolute majorities, with the exception of 1991 and 1995, in which the MPD party got a qualified majority. All these majorities enabled the Government a peaceful and quiet governance.

The absolute majority in Parliament has shaped, to some extent, the relationship established between the legislative and the executive power, despite this, but by observing that in the political arena there is a strong party discipline, facilitating the approval of programmes submitted by the Government. Party discipline establishes the relationship between the Executive and the Legislative branches, although the Constitution assigns to the National Assembly the power to monitor the Executive, more specifically the Government, using in many cases the motion of censure, which did not happen in the case of Cape Verde, probably because it encountered a strong party discipline and stable parliamentary majorities achieved over several legislatures. Furthermore, in the Constitution of the Republic of Cape Verde, the Government has broad legislative powers in matters not designated to the Assembly, which exercises through decree-law, being able, in addition, “to produce legisla-

tive decrees on matters of relatively reserved competence of the Assembly upon its authorisation” (CANAS; FONSECA, 2007, p. 126).

The existence of a Government with the power to produce laws, which is the exclusive competence of the National Assembly, resulted, to some extent, in an imbalance between the Executive and the Legislative powers, and the dominance of the Executive power over the Legislative. In 1992, the new Constitution turned out to establish a form of government that, in practice, devalued the National Assembly “and reinforced the Executive powers” (ÉVORA, 2009, p. 185). The author draws a few lines of important analysis that help understand this configuration. First, with regard to the proposed law presented and its approval in the different legislatures in Cape Verde (from 1991), we notice a clear predominance of the Executive over the Legislative, which is paradoxical, since legislating is a primary function of the Parliament; second, we note, in fact, that the Legislative has relative powers in the Cape Verdean government system, but the configuration of the institutions makes that, in practice, they are purely formal; third and last, the structure of the party system itself and the way how the Prime Minister is elected dictate the degree of power of the Parliament considering, then, that the parliamentary majority and the party discipline make the mandate of the Cape Verdean Executive even more stable.

With a two-party system, the executive power prevails over the legislative power, in the Cape Verdean government system, since in bipolar systems, governments are safer. The legitimacy of the government, which is the direct result of its electoral success, is high. In this sense, the ministerial crises, which occur only as a result of disunity within the current majority, are not very frequent. Governments have a reasonable ability to consider long-term projects, as they have more confidence that they will be in power for the time needed to implement them (MALAMUD, 2003)

#### 4 Final remarks

The article allowed us to understand important institutional configurations in democracies, especially the separation of powers and the relationship that is established in this field, with particular incidence in the legislative and executive powers. We highlight the importance of the separation of powers, allowing institutions to be

connected in an important web of interdependence and independence. The article also allowed us to notice some variations in the relations between the powers, enabling us to emphasise that one thing is the ideal type; another thing is the practice resulting from this reality. In itself, the system of government can dictate the way the powers relate as well as the practical configurations. These observations allowed to understand and explain the reality intrinsic to the Cape Verdean government system, with developed theoretical and constitutional evidence, and to argue that the system of government is semi-presidential, with specific features and institutional configurations. In the Cape Verdean government system, as in other African systems, the relationship between the legislative and the executive power is factual, despite the practical variations from what the Constitution advocates. All configurations allow asserting that in the Cape Verdean government system there is a certain predominance of the executive power over the legislative, even if the principle of separation of powers contests such event. This predominance could be related to a number of factors, such as: the party system configuration; the formatting of political institutions such as political parties and the organisation of the political actors and social subjects. We believe, in this regard, that the subject is open for possible analyses and further development which might contribute to a better problematisation of the issue under review.

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