


Adolescence: A dilemma of social protection policy in Angola

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ABSTRACT

This text emerges from the need to contribute to the promotion of moments of reflection on social protection in Angola on the social protection of "adolescents". Angola is a country that is part of the 54 countries on the African continent. It has an estimated population of 30,000,000 inhabitants. And, of this total, 47% are under 18 years of age and mostly from poor families, living in underdeveloped or peripheral areas, with little supply, or even without schools, hospitals, basic sanitation, and sports infrastructure, and relegated to the world of delinquency, prostitution, drug use and other problems. The article aims to reinforce and instigate the debate on the social protection of adolescents from the perspective of the social critical approach, making use of the theoretical perspective that is not satisfied with the mere appearance of social facts or refractions of the social question. This reflection was guided by the principles of the Marxist historical-critical and dialectical method. The reflection on the theme was made through three points: the first deals with Adolescence - Historical foundations; and, the second, Adolescence in Angola: challenges and possibility, and the third and last, Social Protection for adolescents in situations of social unprotection in Angola. It was concluded that, as in every part of the world, in Angola, due to the level of precariousness of the population in general and of adolescents, the creation and implementation of social protection policies is of extreme urgency and emergency.

Keywords: Social protection, Adolescence, Human Rights and Social Policies.

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INTRODUCTION

This article results from a need to contribute to the promotion of moments of deep reflection on social protection in Angola on social protection of "adolescence". It aims to reinforce the debate on the protection of adolescence, from the perspective of the social critical approach, that is, making use of the theoretical perspective, which is not satisfied with the mere appearance of social facts or refractions of the social question, as feasible, but rather, which goes back to the analysis of the origins, the essences of the question. allowing to bring to light "the most real reality" possible of the object under analysis.

Angola is a country that is part of the 54 countries on the African continent. It has an estimated population of 30,000,000 inhabitants according to INE 2014. And, of this total, 47% are under 18 years of age and mostly come from poor families, living in underdeveloped or peripheral areas, with minimal availability of schools, hospitals, basic sanitation infrastructure and sports, and relegated to the world of delinquency, prostitution, drug use and other types of addiction and violence. That is, finding themselves in a situation of marginalized, excluded by the State itself through social policies that only privilege the minority.

This reflection was guided by the principles of Marx's historical-critical and dialectical method, although aware that it is necessary to go further in its deepening.

Thinking about the theme was done through three pillars. The first deals with Adolescence and Socio-historical Foundations; the second deals with Adolescence in Angola: challenges and possibility, and the third and last dealt with the Social Protection of adolescents in situations of social unprotection in Angola. The study was based on bibliographic and documentary research, through readings of legislation, books, articles, book chapters, decrees and others, as can be seen in the following points.

ADOLESCENCE AND ITS SOCIO-HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

On this point, a socio-historical analysis of adolescence as a social segment within the socio-historical organization of humanity was elaborated, and, in particular, of the elements that make them particular (or ground) in the capitalist mode of sociability.

The notion of childhood, adolescence, youth and old age best known through books, legislation and other documents is according to Xavier; Nunes (2015), resulting from the socio-historical construction of capitalist sociability since the twentieth century. The age division of the social life of the human being is the result of the capitalist mode of production, always with an economic interest, classifying or grouping it into active and passive population, as discussed by Unicef (2019),



The population of adolescents and young people represents a valuable human capital for the country, but investment in their training is urgent so that a better present and future can be built than what has been seen so far; with new and creative transformations in economic, social, environmental, cultural and human development. Girls and boys in Brazil need to find full conditions to develop their capacities and possibilities, through the guarantee of fundamental rights, such as access to quality education, health, family and community life, sports, leisure and citizen participation (UNICEF 2019, P. 6).

According to Unicef, although he is heading to Brazil, he presents a discourse that is pertinent to the world. And it is this discourse that characterizes, in part, the dominant (bourgeois) ideology, marked by the economistic spirit, which presents the adolescent as that individual who must be prepared, to be a commodity (labor force), of high economic quality, to better contribute to the continuous production of surplus value.

Starting from the principle that everything that exists always has a reason, in this sense adolescence is no exception. Adolescence is, according to Professor Azancot de Menezes and another (2022), based on the WHO (1965) and CRUZ (2011), a word of Latin origin, which refers to the second decade of human life, although it also depends on culture and other conditions exogenous to the biological factor.

From the Latin *adolescere*, which means to grow up, adolescence is a biopsychosocial period that comprises the second decade of life, that is, from 10 to 20 years of age (WHO, 1965). For the Angolan State, the line between adolescence and youth is tenuous, since, in certain circumstances, some young people carry their responsibilities earlier, as a way of guaranteeing their livelihood (CRUZ, 2011). The biological changes of puberty are universal and visible, modifying children, giving them the height, shape, and sexuality of adults (SANTOS, 2005), as well as changes in cognitive, social, and outlook on life (BIANCULLI, 1997) apud (Menezes et al 2022, P. 80).

This perspective is the one proposed by the ruling class and, therefore, defended by several authors, including Maria Borges (1987) in chapter V of her work "Introduction to Developmental Psychology", who points to adolescence as an ambiguous period of life because its somatic and physiological characteristics occur at different times or moments between the two genders. As we can see below,

Adolescence (preceded by pre-adolescence) corresponds to a period traditionally considered ambiguous, insofar as it is situated at different times in the two sexes and at different times depending on the socio-geographical context, although with a common denominator of the somatic-physiological type, which is biological maturation (BORGES 1987, p. 137).

The two approaches presented, both that of the authors represented by Professor Menezes (2022), as well as that of Borges (1987), reflect and/or represent in a vibrant way the approach to adolescence from the Psychological or Biopsychosocial perspective of the human being, which consists of perceiving it solely and exclusively through biological, psychological and social conditions, (although no less important), without considering the historical-dialectical movement,



"full" of multiple contradictions, including those linked to health, education, economy, culture, which cannot be left aside, because they demarcate one adolescence from the other, an adolescence in the working class *vis-à-vis* that of the bourgeois class, an adolescence in the city centers and another in the suburbs or favelas, and adolescence in other comparisons such as that of the villages of the indigenous peoples and that of the urban/rural. Thus, it cannot be said of adolescents, but of adolescence. And, as already presented, according to the authors Xavier; According to Nunes (2015), the biopsychosocial approach to adolescence is the result of the transformations that occurred in the twentieth century resulting from the emergence of capitalism to the detriment of feudalism.

The idea of differentiating specific characteristics of young people has existed since ancient Greece with philosophers, although referring to a minority of the population. However, it was only with the advent of capitalism, in the process of the industrial revolution in the West, that adolescence as we know it today was defined (PALACIOS and OLIVA, 2003). From this perspective, it is necessary to understand adolescence as a cultural phenomenon, a product of the twentieth century in the West, derived from historical, political, social and economic processes (XAVIER; NUNES, P. 50).

Also reinforcing this idea are the authors Xavier; Nunes (2015) when they point out that:

Adolescence thus refers to a period of social latency, that is, a time granted to the young person before assuming the responsibilities of the adult world, properly speaking, constituted from capitalist society and generated by the issues we have just exposed. Therefore, we agree with Klosinski (2006) when he affirms adolescence as "an expression of psychosocial interaction, and, consequently, a sociocultural phenomenon". When we define adolescence in a certain way, we are interpreting reality and attributing meanings, according to our subjectivity, and in turn, to the values, standards and social norms in force in the culture in which we are inserted. Consequently, this cannot be understood as a natural period of development. It is a moment interpreted and signified by a given society (LEVINSKI, 1998) apud (XAVIER; NUNES, P. 51).

It is in this sense that the understanding of childhood, adolescence, youth, as well as old age, cannot be or be limited solely and exclusively to biopsychosocial characteristics, intentionally selected according to capitalist logic, making them natural and unquestionable, but rather, illuminated by the perspective of Marxian historical-critical analysis that allows the construction of an analysis beyond biopsychosocial characteristics.

This is because it is understood that such conditioning factors do not represent the essence, but reduce the analysis to the apparent and do not allow us to see the "deepest depths" that "camouflage" hides the essential reality.

Changes in the body and cognitive development, for example, are hallmarks that Western society has highlighted to define the period of adolescence. Many other things may be happening at this time in the individual's life that have not been underlined (CONTINI, KOHLER and BARROS, 2002). In the same way, these same things can happen in other periods, and we do not mark it as a strong characteristic of that stage. For example, the bodily changes that occur in old age (Xavier; Nunes 2015, p. 51).



They continue to reinforce the same idea:

As a biological phenomenon; Puberty is universal among all members of the human species. As a psychosocial phenomenon, adolescence is not universal, and therefore not the same pattern and meaning in all peoples and cultures. Each society, for example, will define unique rites of passage that will mark the beginning of this period. It will also define the expectations, responsibilities and hopes placed on adolescents. This allows for a significant historical variation, as well as a plurality of approaches to this phenomenon in the field of Developmental Psychology, with emphasis on different, including dichotomous aspects (Xavier; Nunes 2015, p. 52).

With the approach made, from the biopsychosocial perspective, the idea of the existence of an adolescence that develops in the same way and in all corners of the world, according to the characteristics posed, homogenizing adolescence, is disseminated. That is, "fetishization of the real." Such a perspective, while seeking to disseminate, to convey the idea of a homogeneous adolescence, ends up violating, stratifying, discriminating, dividing and excluding, promoting and reinforcing social inequalities between the working class and the bourgeoisie, providing conditions for the criminalization and marginalization of some territories, giving rise to a "tragic adolescence"³ (when these are outside the order and/or characteristics already established).

Therefore, its approach should not homogenize, but rather heterogenize, to the extent that, reinforcing what has been said above, it can be a question of adolescence because, in addition to the gender difference, it follows that the adolescence of or in the bourgeois class is different from the working class due to its multiple determinations, and yet, even within each class, adolescence occurs. They develop differently, taking into account the culture, generation, ethnicity, type of family, country, province, geographical and environmental situation and others, which condition and/or determine the way in which the entry, passage and/or transition of an individual or group of individuals will take place, from childhood to adolescence and from adolescence to youth.

The end of the twentieth century was the scene of a profound change in the understanding of the meaning of childhood, with repercussions in the legislative field, culminating in the recognition of children and adolescents as subjects of rights, people in a special phase of development, marked by the absolute priority that falls on this portion of the population (AZAMBUJA, 2018, P. 21).

Still, many authors and, in particular, Azambuja (2018), present that the emergence of capitalist society brings with it gains, especially children and adolescents, say that despite these profound changes and transformations that occurred in the world with the emergence of capitalist society, it does not go beyond the guarantee at the theoretical-legislative level of the adolescent as a subject of rights through various treaties and laws. For example, in the Convention on the Rights of the Child Adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution L. 44 (XLIV) on 20 November

³ Tragic Adolescence is the one experienced by some adolescents, without school, without leisure, without protection, where the solution is delinquency, prostitution and another.



1989, Articles 8 and 9 thereof (ASSEMBLÉIA GERAL DAS NAÇÕES UNIDAS, 1989, P. 3) it points out that,

8 Articles

1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name, and family relations, in accordance with the law, without unlawful interference.
2. If a child is unlawfully deprived of any or all of the constituent elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide him or her with appropriate assistance and protection so that his or her identity may be promptly restored.

9 Articles

1. States Parties shall ensure that the child is not separated from the parents against their will, except where, subject to judicial review, the competent authorities determine, in accordance with the law and applicable legal procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such a determination may be necessary in specific cases, for example, in cases where the child suffers mistreatment or neglect by his or her parents or when the parents live apart and a decision must be made as to the child's place of residence.

Undoubtedly, in contemporary times, this desideratum is far from being fulfilled, in all member states and, in particular, in Angola. Considering that all underdeveloped countries, as is the case of Angola, are characterized as dependent economies and suppliers of raw materials to developed countries (with central capital), is a country relegated to failures regarding the materialization of these guidelines, especially if it is under the leadership of a government that does not bet on the massification and expansion of social policies, Especially those related to social protection and related issues (education, health, housing, transport, employment, food.

Contemporaneity has been characterized by the relations of production and consumption permeating social interactions. We have been following changes in the relationships established between adults and children, as well as the emergence of a new production of subjectivity due to the organization of daily life by the media and the way in which the experience of children, young people and adults has been transformed in the consumer society. Therefore, children, adolescents and adults alter their intersubjective relationships based on the influences that the media and consumer culture exert on all of us. (GONDRA, (org), 2002, p.131).

For the author with whom one agrees, the Media is a medium captured by the bourgeoisie, which is prepared for and as a space for the dissemination of the bourgeois ideology that consists in making all authentic individuals consumers directly or indirectly. And, in this sense, through various programs, dependence on the products disseminated is enticed from an early age, turning the population into consumers, from the way of being and being. For this reason, the bourgeoisie, at the same time that through the State it creates laws that enunciate equal principles for all, legalizes exclusionary and unequal processes within the classes. Next, we will reflect on adolescence in Angola through a synthetic contextualization.



ADOLESCENCE IN ANGOLA: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

Reflecting on adolescence in Angola from the perspective of the heterogeneous totality, as well as the challenges and possibilities that are imposed on daily lives, both for the adolescents of the working class and those of the Angolan bourgeoisie, is challenging.

Angola is a country on the African continent located in the southern-southern zone, bathed by the Atlantic Ocean and has a total surface area of 1. 246,700 m². It consists of 18 provinces that are subdivided into 164 municipalities, in turn divided into 518 communes and 44 urban districts. Also according to ENE (2021), Angola has an estimated population of 30 million inhabitants, of which 13,289,983 are women, corresponding to 52% of the total population. And, Angola has a young population, about 47% of the country's total population, who are in the age group of 0-14 years old, including children and adolescents, according to the final data of the Population Census, carried out in 2014, by ENE. That country was a Portuguese colony from 1482 to 1975, the year of national independence. The current territorial division is the result of the colonization process, which had as one of the main milestones the Berlin Conference of 1884 to 1885, which aimed at the division of Africa by the European powers, (yielding and starving), eager with and in the exploitation and expropriation of the continent's riches.

Before the Portuguese arrival in the territory, which is now Angola⁴, it was organized by kingdoms. It had a form of political, social and economic structure different from the current one, as Vieira (2007, p.31) asserts, "[...] the existence of an organisational structure at the level of the capital and a certain social, economic and political development depending on the conditions in which the population worked and lived".

And, the author Menezes *et al* (2022) shares the same idea, when he states that:

Angola is a country located in Southern Africa. It was colonized by the Portuguese from 1482 to 1975 (493 years). The country was the product of the creation of the Portuguese because, initially, this space that is now called Angola was made up of several kingdoms autonomous from each other. Inhabited by different peoples and their respective cultures, including the Kingdoms of Congo, Matamba, Ndongo, Quiçama, Bailundo, Kwanhama, and Thokwe, among others, it is true that from 1482 to 1975, the health and education system accessible to the economic and commercial interests of the colonizers prevailed (MATEMBA, 2021). In this period of colonization, traditional medicine was the basis for the sustainability and treatment of indigenous peoples. Colonial educational policy tried at all costs to eradicate traditional education because it represented the strengthening of indigenous culture and cultural resistance to ethnocide and the penetration of colonialism (Menezes et al 2022, P.76).

Thus, it is intended to underline that, according to the mode of socio-cultural organization, such as the Bantu educational process, both children and adolescents are not seen as detached segments, but rather linked to adults. For Bantu, the socio-educational and cultural process begins

⁴ The name Angola is derived from the Bantu Kimbundu language and means "KING". It is the title of the kings of the Kingdom of Dongo existing at the time during the Portuguese colonization.



from birth through the imitation of adults. In the Bantu culture, it is also thought to be the same in many others, children and adolescents learn from an early age the cultural values, the value of work, the love of others and nature, and others, through adults. In this way, she is never removed from the adult until she is confirmed to reach maturity, through proving her virility within the principles of each ethnic group or kingdom.

It was appropriately addressed because one of the authors of this article lives this and states that despite colonization, one still experiences it, because one was born in one of the most rural communities in the country, which preserves tradition. Returning to the point, one of the reasons that make adolescents, both girls and boys, inseparable from adults is the fact that the transmission of knowledge to the new generation was not carried out in school with rooms made of four walls, it was the theoretical-philosophical part (principles, life, cultural values, myths, tales and anecdotes) passed on and lived in a circle around the campfire. or in many cases, under trees planted more towards the center or near the house of the king/Soba of the community, of the kingdom.

And the practical part, which consists of the passage of work techniques, such as hunting, fishing

The ploughing, the construction of dwellings is done through the accompaniment and imitation of the adult (especially the mother and father, if they are still present). Therefore, these forms, very typical of non-Western populations (mainly African/Angolan and Bantu), have been disappearing and being lost year after year with capitalism that arrives "camouflaged" in the "skin of the other wolf" that is colonization, in the case of Angola, since the distant years of 1482. As Pirotta (2006) confirms, the concept and necessity of separation became more clear at the end of the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century.

Historians of everyday life, such as Philippe Ariès, note that during the Middle Ages there was no clear conception of either childhood or adolescence. Children were perceived to be dependent on them, and as soon as they could live without their mother's constant attention, they were integrated into the adult world. There was no idea that children should be kept away from the adult world in order to preserve or educate them. Adolescents, in turn, were already considered adults from this point of view. The concept of adolescence gained clearer contours from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century (PIROTTA 2006, P.1).

With the same idea, Menezes et al (2022) point out:

In the case of Angola, it seems to be peaceful to accept, traditional education that has its roots in traditional African Bantu education in the colonial period has been relegated to the background because it constitutes an impediment to the process of acculturation of Angolans. In this sense, colonial educational policy tried at all costs to eradicate traditional values, namely traditional education, because it represented the strengthening of indigenous culture and cultural resistance to ethnocide and the penetration of colonialism (MENEZES *et al*, 2022, p. 78).



According to Pirotta (2006), it would not be at all wrong to state that, before capitalism in the territory that is now Angola, the meanings attributed to biological, physical (bodily) transformations were not very relevant, or if not, they were not relevant to mark a certain age group because its socio-political and cultural organization did not separate the development process into stages. indivisible from adults. And as such, it can be seen in Menezes (*et al* 2022, p. 78), according to which:

During the colonial period, Angolan children did not have the dignified rights of a life in society. Customary law, rooted in the cultural and domestic values of each ethnolinguistic region, would be the only avenue of education and socialization for children in Angola. Due to the influence of the acculturation process to which Angolan society was subjected, there was no opportunity for the child to enjoy the protected rights and duties, compared to other territories. Colonization was a weapon applied in parallel with (Christian) religion, in the impediment and discrediting of values culturally accepted by the community, considered primitive habits. Thus, the values of a "Dog" were equated with Man, so that the native languages were considered languages of the "Dogs". This standardization altered the entire social order of the community, leaving aside the importance of the child as a being dependent on adults.

As can be seen, it is the colonization of capitalist ideas that introduces the perspective of the division of human life by age groups, in the need to prepare qualified labor, since the capitalist productive system imposes another form of work different from those of many populations, including the Bantu. And in order to fulfill these desiderata, a harsh and violent process of demonization of customary law, culture, and tradition of peoples was imposed, to the detriment of the assimilation of Western culture with capitalist ideology. To this end, they brought schools, churches and other institutions related to the Western capitalist system, which can be seen in Vieira (2007), when he states that,

In general, colonial education, not an education aimed at the Angolan populations, their culture and the promotion of their values, was an instrument of the ideological system of the colonial that aimed to inculcate moral, ethical, political and religious values about the Portuguese reality, intuiting ideas of servility in the consciousness of the Angolan. while the school was a form of expansion of the Portuguese language to the detriment of Angolan languages (VIEIRA, 2007, P.56).

And, the division made (childhood, adolescence, youth and old age) aimed, among various interests of the bourgeoisie, at the creation of a group of non-productive population, composed of those who will be the future workforce and who must stay and attend spaces and institutions that guarantee their qualification (schools, training centers, university and others), being in this group the population composed of childhood and adolescence; and, from another group, composed of all those who are in old age, retired and the disabled. This is called the group of the passive population, the hindrances, those who hinder and hinder social development. Therefore, they are no longer socially important, because they are outside the production system. On the other hand, there is the group of the productive population, composed of the active and working mass, and therefore young. And,



consciously, it is this group, among others, that has a longer age range (from 15 to 45, 50 and some even go up to 60 years). And, in this sense, UNICEF (2019) points out that, in relation to adolescence,

Adolescence is a phase of the life cycle, or an age group, in which the cycle of physical development is completed, through various biological transformations that characterize PUBERTY. In addition, it is the period in which the child's body is abandoned, beyond the role and identity of a child, in order to begin a process of entry into the adult world. Despite the relevance of these biological and emotional transformations, it is also necessary to emphasize the sociocultural aspects associated with the new social roles and positions. During this stage, people take on a new status. It is a time of expansion of social relations, in which one experiences the passage from the private sphere of the family - to which the child's circle of relations is restricted - to the public, that is, more extended social relations. If, in childhood, children make their first SOCIALIZATION – basically experienced in the family space and at school – in adolescence the second part of this process begins, characterized by the insertion in new groups of coexistence, especially peer groups (other adolescents), no longer mediated by adults. This process of greater independence in relation to the family nucleus initiates a phase in which individuals begin to have a more conscious personal experience of what they are experiencing (UNICEF 2019, P. 9).

According to the above, in a biopsychosocial analysis, it is typical of the dominant ideology to convey the idea of the existence of milestones, general, universal characteristics of adolescence, which homogenizes adolescence. And, this homogenization allows the State to formulate policies without taking into account the specificities (cultural, environmental, territorial, social, economic and others) of adolescents, but rather homogenizes them, having as a model the adolescence of the bourgeois class, the one that is in the city, which has access to and enjoys all the rights (education, leisure, clothing, food, civil registration, etc.). the family, protection, and others). As Professor Samba (2007) points out, the lack of social programs aimed at the population, in this case, adolescents, raises the level of difficulties and challenges to their survival.

The infancy or even the lack of social policies such as programs, services and projects to assist this segment of the population in Angola make the situation more serious, as well as the lack of articulation between the few existing institutions, which demand from society and professionals in particular new perspectives and knowledge (SAMBA, 2007, p.113).

And, in the face of this barbarism, that is, in the face of the most varied forms of violation of the rights of the Angolan population, childhood, adolescence, youth and old age, particularly those of the working class, are going through various challenges in Angola. Adolescence, for example, the segment under approach, is divided into bourgeois class adolescents and working class adolescents, without reflecting on the issue of gender, economic power of families, generation, lineages, among others. Critical and/or tragic childhoods are those that, to a large extent, result from the descendants of unprotected, poor families, many of whom are found in the world of prostitution, delinquency, begging, drugs, "without a threshing floor or border", and many of them residents of socially



decriminalized neighborhoods (peripherals), excluded by the bourgeois State through the absence of public-social policy. As Samba (2007) states,

In addition to the issue of war, in addition to the issue of war, there is also the lack of significant policies that serve this segment of the population with a view to its integral and harmonious development, as well as the lack of policies in the country that defend and promote family institutionalization as a cornerstone of the social and cultural structure (SAMBA, 2007, p.115).

When in the formulation of public policy the reference group is not the most unprotected, but those of the core of the cities (of the bourgeois class), it will provide exclusion to the extent that it will continue to deconstruct in the peripheral neighborhoods, and to make matters worse, if a school is to be built in these spaces, most of the time the needs and ideas of the community will not be taken into account. but rather those taken and elaborated from the bourgeois nucleus. That is, to condemn one group and privilege another, is to exclude some and always benefit others. In this way, it is perpetuating the social and economic inequalities of some to the detriment of others. In the same sense, SCHERER (2013) reinforces that:

The difficulty of access to the right to health, as well as the precariousness of services, constitute a process of violence at the moment when they cause or potentiate to the subjects some type of damage or suffering, whether physical, moral or psychological (P.99)

And that's what social policies are promoting in Angola. In this process, the adolescent descendants of the bourgeoisie are privileged, having primacy in the urban centers where the necessary infrastructure in social terms is stimulated, while on the other side are the descendants of the working class, of those exploited by the bourgeoisie.

SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ADOLESCENTS IN SITUATIONS OF SOCIAL DISPROTECTION IN ANGOLA

After addressing the "universality" of the socio-historical processes that underlie the emergence of the term adolescents, that is, the processes that determined the interest in the division of the life of the human being into age groups and the uniqueness of adolescence in Angola, it will be dealt with from now on about the social protection of adolescents, but, in particular, about the situation of social unprotection in Angola.

What can be observed about the Angolan reality is the existence of processes that promote social inequalities, leading to marked violations of human rights, especially of adolescents when treated in a homogeneous way. In this case, it is as stated by Menezes *et al* (2022)

During the colonial period, Angolan children did not have the dignified rights of a life in society. Customary law, rooted in the cultural and domestic values of each ethnolinguistic region, would be the only avenue of education and socialization for children in Angola. Due



to the influence of the acculturation process to which Angolan society was subjected, there was no opportunity for the child to enjoy the protected rights and duties, compared to other territories. Colonization was a weapon applied in parallel with (Christian) religion, in the impediment and discrediting of values culturally accepted by the community, considered primitive habits. Thus, the values of a "Dog" were equated with Man, so that the native languages were considered languages of the "Dogs". This standardization changed the entire social order of the community, leaving aside the importance of the child as a dependent being of adults, (MENEZES *et al* 2022, p. 78).

It is, in fact, in the post-colonial period, that is, in the post-independence period, that the social protection of adolescents is concretely evidenced, through the creation of laws and protection institutions, as pointed out by Menezes *et al* (2022),

The efforts of the Angolan government to improve the human rights situation are visible, in particular with the approval of laws and regulations that direct special attention to this fringe of society, as evidenced in the Law on the Protection and Integral Development of Children (Law No. 25/12 of August 22, 2012). With the ratification of the International Convention on November 20, 1989, there is a concern of the different States to implement all legislative, administrative and other measures necessary for the realization of the rights recognized by this convention, and Angola adhered to these commitments on December 5, 1990 (MENEZES *et al* 2022, P. 78).

The post-independence, according to Isidro (2019), brings social protection to the governmental agenda, although not with much depth, gaining space in the first Law, the "Constitutional Law of the People's Republic of Angola of 1975" through articles no. 8 and no. 9. However, it is with the Constitutional Law of 1992 that there is expansion through the creation of conditions for the legitimation of institutions, such as INAC, which had already existed since 1990, as well as in the creation of a set of legislation, as shown by Menezes *et al* (2022),

In this field, Angola declares itself as a defender of the Rights and Protection of children, through the creation of the National Children's Institute (INAC), on March 16, 1990, a body responsible for the advocacy and defense of rights and policies for the protection of children. This was followed by the approval of several legal diplomas, namely, "The 11 commitments to the child of Angola (2011)", supervised by INAC, the Law on the Protection and Integral Development of Children (Law no. 25/12) of August 22, 2012, the Law on the Juvenile Court (Law no. 9/96), the Basic Law of the Education System (Law no. 17/16 of October 7, 2020) and the Basic Law on Social Protection (Law no. 07/04) apud (Menezes *et al* 2022, P. 78).

Thus, it is worth highlighting the Joint Executive Decree No. 16/96 and Law No. 9/1996 of April 19. This is the law that created the court to which the jurisdiction to take decisions on matters relating to minors is conferred.

Within its jurisdiction will be children and adolescents who are in a situation of social danger or pre-delinquency and who, due to their maturity, are outside the jurisdiction of the other courts.

Provision is made for the application of guardianship measures, which aim at the protection, assistance and education of minors whose situation of danger calls for coordinated intervention, by the judicial body composed of a judge and assisted by two expert advisors.



Various types of conduct by a couple and representatives of minors or the media, natural or legal persons, which violates the principle enshrined in the Constitutional Law that society owes social protection to minors is sanctioned.

The minor is recognized as a subject of law to whom the principles that guide the administration of justice are applied, giving them the necessary judicial guarantees (Angola, 1996P.145).

And, as for the purpose of the institution, it points out in its article no. 2 that:

The purpose of the Juvenile Court is to ensure that minors subject to its jurisdiction receive judicial protection, the defence of their rights and interests and the legal protection granted to them by the Constitutional Law, through the application of guardianship measures of surveillance, assistance and education (Angola, 1996 P.146).

This law, in accordance with its purpose, and with regard to the social protection of adolescents, articles 14 and 17 deserve to be highlighted, as they deal with the applicability of social protection measures oriented in practice, as observed below:

Article. 14th (Applicability of social protection measures)

Social protection measures are enacted when the physical or moral well-being of the minor is in danger, namely when any of the following situations occur: a) they are victims of physical or moral abuse or negligence on the part of those who have custody of them; b) are in a situation of abandonment or helplessness; c) they are seriously inappropriate to the discipline of the family and the community; (d) are used as labour and are subjected to physical exertion which could cause serious injury; (e) engage in begging, vagrancy, prostitution and debauchery, or make use of alcoholic beverages or drugs.

Article. 17th (List of crime prevention measures)

2. Crime prevention measures shall be as follows: (a) reprimand; b) imposition of rules of conduct; c) condemnation of the minor or his/her legal representative to fines, compensation or restitution; d) provision of services to the community; (e) assisted liberty; f) semi-internment in an assistance or educational establishment; g) internment in an institution of assistance or education. . (Angola. 1996, p.147)

In 2010, already in a period of peace, as a result of the end of the civil war, the law that marks the Third Republic emerged, called the "Constitution of the Republic of Angola of 2010⁵". And, as for social protection, it has theoretical support in several articles, but with greater emphasis on the IIIrd third chapter on "*Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Duties*", especially in its article 77, with its subparagraphs. Specifically about adolescents, in paragraphs 1 to 5 of article no. 80 in a text on Childhood (because the Constitution treats adolescents as part of childhood), it is stated that:

1. The child has the right to the special attention of the family, society and the State, which, in close cooperation, must ensure that he or she is fully protected against all forms of abandonment, discrimination, oppression, exploitation, and abusive exercise of authority in the family and other institutions.

2. Public policies in the field of family, education and health must safeguard the principle of the best interests of the child, as a means of ensuring their full physical, mental and cultural development.

⁵ The Angolan Constitution, through article no. 24, considers the age of majority to be from 18 years old, which presupposes that everyone who is under 18 years old is a child, or part of childhood, as it says in article 77 of this same law.



3. The State shall ensure special protection for children who are orphans, disabled, abandoned or otherwise deprived of a normal family environment.
4. The State regulates the adoption of children, promoting their integration into a healthy family environment and ensuring their integral development.
5. The work of minors of school age shall be prohibited by law.

With this scenario, we observe, for the first time (although many say it is better late than never), in 2021, the creation of the National Social Action Policy, through Presidential Decree No. 37/21 of February 8. Article 2 of this document highlights the National Social Action System (social protection), which:

1. The National Social Action Policy is based on principles, axes and services through which the protection of people and families and communities that are in a situation of poverty and severe vulnerability or that need State support on a temporary or permanent basis is implemented. 2. The National Social Action System is the set of bodies and institutions, services and equipment that, in an integrated manner, ensure the minimum social conditions for people, families and communities in situations of vulnerability and social risk, severe dependence and poverty, especially children, the elderly, people with disabilities and women (ANGOLA 2021, p. 1754).

And the same document also points out in its first chapter on the Introduction, from its numbers 3 to 6 that:

3. This Policy establishes the theoretical and methodological bases for a National System of Social Action, based on the actions of the different actors and promoters of Social Action. 4. The Policy also deals with the characterization of the current challenges according to the context of the country, embodies the synthesis of the fundamentals of Social Action in Angola and presents the principles of the right of access to Social Action and Social Solidarity programs and projects. 5. This Policy establishes the responsibility of the State for the guidance, management, financing and control of Social Action, within the framework of the National Social Welfare System. 6. The State is also responsible for the integration and application of the axes of Prevention, Protection and Promotion (the «3P»), among other principles in the National Social Action System, (ANGOLA 2021, p. 1754).

In view of this scenario, it can be seen that in the post-independence period there was concern with social protection, especially for the most needy, although negligible, taking into account the precariousness that plagues families, most of them the result of the sequelae of colonization on the one hand, especially in the first decade after independence, and on the other hand, the result of the civil war that lasted 30 years, aggravated by the mode of governance adopted in the country by the party. that leads the country from independence to the present day, captured by the capitalist system. But, opening a parenthesis: if it is true that Angola only registers the emergence of the first social action policy (social protection) in 2021, how did the Angolan State-government face the social problems (refractions of the social question) that demanded and stampede a social intervention? One of the many reasons that ensure the statements presented, it is highlighted that the Angolan State, since the achievement of independence, has been captured by the capitalist system, camouflaged under the garb of an unsuspecting socialism, as stated by Monteiro (2016), later assumed the



establishment or requirements of partnerships with international institutions such as the IMF, UN and World Bank and others.

Among the various initiatives are those aimed at children and adolescents in need. After all, it is as they say that "social policy is a means through which the State distributes socially produced wealth", however, it is also a space of struggles of both classes where, at the same time, in which the working class seeks to expand its rights, the bourgeois class seeks to end them, to limit them, through the logic of reducing spending (cuts in financial spending) in social policies.

In this sense, the Angolan State in relation to childhood and adolescence created the INAC (Angolan Children's Institute, the Juvenile Court; the Family Court (Family Court), the Kuzola Children's Home, and the law of the juvenile court.

Therefore, in the case of the centers of the capital cities of the provinces, and in many of the cases with difficulties, the repeated practices of human rights violations are favored and, in particular of the 11 commitments of children and adolescents, it ends up promoting discrimination, exclusion, and the deepening of social inequalities among adolescents. As stated (MENEZES et al 2022, P. 81):

Alongside our discussions and research, several organizations, including the International Bureau for the Rights of the Child (IBCR, 2016; 2018), have carried out studies and from them it was possible to gather the set of seven main problems that affect children in Angola:

- Lack of birth registration;
- Violence against children;
- Domestic and sexual violence (and special);
- Early marriage and pregnancy;
- Children accused of witchcraft;
- Abandoned and homeless children;
- Precarious education system.

This reality calls into question the much-vaunted 11 commitments assumed as a banner in the materialization of human rights, in the Angolan context, which are widespread and which the Angolan State claims to defend:

The "11 commitments to the child of Angola" (2011), for example, reflect several wishes distributed by age groups, in a total of eleven commitments, namely, (1) Life Expectancy at Birth, (2) Food and Nutrition Security, (3) Birth Registration, (4) Early Childhood Education, (5) Primary Education and Vocational Training, (6) Juvenile Justice, (7) Prevention, Treatment, Support and Reduction of the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Families and Children, (8) Preventing and Combating Violence Against Children, (9) Social Protection and Family Skills, (10) Children and the Media, Culture and Sports, and (11) Children in the National Plan and in the General State Budget (Menezes et al 2022, p. 79).

And, like Tonett (...), in view of the above, it is worth questioning the following:

- 11 commitments of the child, for what and which children?
- Why, although the constitution (2010) enshrines in its Article 22 the principle of universality and Article 23 the principle of equality is also questionable: universality and equality below and for whom?



Why is the State not able or not part of its ideology to guarantee the universality and equality of all in terms of rights, policies, as well as programs that are designed and implemented by itself?

First, because capitalist society is itself a classist society, which is divided into antagonistic classes, where one seeks above all forms to impose itself on the other, appropriating everything, leaving the other with only the labor power, and the former usually finds itself in the center of capital cities, relegating the latter to suburban or peri-urban areas.

This scenario favors the emergence of groups of adolescents who, despite being in the same age group, but live different realities, taking into account their culture, environment, social and economic conditions, education, sanitation, leisure, both in quantity and quality, which will make an immense difference when defining adolescence, which makes it impossible to put into effect the principles of universality and equality in capitalist society. Therefore, it is a fallacy or utopia to bring in discourse the equality and universality of rights. As Menezes *et al* (2022) say, after analyzing the efforts that the State makes,

Despite several efforts to ensure the well-being of the child, there is still a long way to go, as there are several basic problems, such as poor access to health services, non-registration of births, difficult access to primary education, lack of spaces for leisure, sports and culture. In the field of health, there is a lack of hospital units, as well as professionals for medical care and medication - the main factors for the cause of malnutrition in early childhood. In the context of birth registration, despite being a fundamental right that allows the integration and participation of the child in school life, there is a shortage of services, especially in rural areas. With regard to the education sector, policies to expand the teaching-learning system are visible, despite the lack of classrooms and teaching staff, with greater emphasis on rural areas. With regard to leisure, the lack of public spaces, entertainment, and means for the effects is notorious, significantly influencing the child's psychosocial development (Menezes *et al* 2022, P. 79).

It is about the fact that the State, although it is the regulatory and legitimizing entity of the process of class exploitation, if it were in its interest to pay attention to the effectiveness of the principles discussed above and to actually intervene in the situations presented by Menezes *et al* (2022), it should privilege the realization of a diagnosis or in-depth study of the country's reality, through universities and centers of free and serious studies and research. From the results observed, it could design policies that would meet and welcome all differences in gender, color, age, economic and social situation, location, and geographic and environmental situation, for example.

Another point is to be aware that there is inequality in the capitalist system and that it will not end, because to end them is to end the system. However, it would be one of the best possibilities within the system, while creating the objective and subjective conditions for the societal revolution, which is only possible through a radical rupture, giving rise to another that will be socialism, where universality and equality are basic principles of existence, Tonett (n.d.).



ENDNOTES

According to the historical-critical perspective, the approach to adolescence should not be done in a homogeneous way because it privileges generalizations of characteristics and their needs. It must be done in a heterogeneous way, which presupposes an analysis of adolescence not limited to biopsychic transformations, but of the entire socio-historical process that influences or conditions the most varied spaces, territories or social classes, and therefore, it is not about adolescence but about adolescence.

The way in which the approach to childhood, adolescence, youth and even old age has been and continues to be disseminated is typical of capitalist sociability that aims to naturalize and homogenize it, in order to "camouflage" the inequalities sustained by social policies. For this reason, the state will not be able to solve all the refractions of the social question, in particular adolescents, because it will first involve eliminating itself.

Therefore, it is as Menezes *et al* (2022) say, following the example of the result of a survey carried out in Angola that,

Despite several efforts to ensure the well-being of the child, there is still a long way to go, as there are several basic problems, such as poor access to health services, non-registration of births, difficult access to primary education, lack of spaces for leisure, sports, and culture. In the field of health, there is a lack of hospital units, as well as professionals for medical care and medication - the main factors for the cause of malnutrition in early childhood. In the context of birth registration, despite being a fundamental right that allows the integration and participation of the child in school life, there is a shortage of services, especially in rural areas. Regarding the education sector, policies to expand the teaching-learning system are visible, despite the insufficiency of classrooms and teaching staff, with greater emphasis on rural areas. About leisure, the lack of public spaces, entertainment and means for this purpose is notorious, significantly influencing the psychosocial development of the child. (Menezes *et al*, 2022, p. 79).

In view of the above, it is concluded that, as in all parts of the world, in Angola, due to the level of precariousness of the population in general and of adolescents, the creation and implementation of social protection policies is extremely urgent. These must be the one that considers all social strata, with their socio-historical and cultural, economic, geographical, environmental, and other conditions, to reduce asymmetries, inequalities, providing at least political emancipation, not as an ultimate end, but as a stage of survival, paying special attention to the creation of objective and subjective conditions for the rupture with the system. towards human emancipation, as Tonett points out in *Citizenship or Human Emancipation* (n.d.).



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