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As instituições formais e as políticas públicas: análise sobre as políticas ativas de emprego jovem em Angola

Formal institutions and public policies: an analysis of active youth employment policies in Angola

Instituciones formales y políticas públicas: un análisis de las políticas activas de empleo juvenil en Angola

Bendito Guilherme Muhusso¹

Resumo: O presente artigo tem como objetivo analisar a presença e influência das instituições formais no processo de formulação das políticas ativas de emprego jovem, com o foco para o Plano de Acção para a Promoção da Empregabilidade (PAPE) no contexto angolano. O PAPE foi uma política de emprego angolana, com vigência entre 2019 e 2023, e visou reduzir o elevado índice do desemprego jovem. Metodologicamente, o presente artigo adota a abordagem qualitativa, envolvendo a análise teórica, documental e estudo de caso (PAPE), buscando conhecer e compreender quais e de que forma as regras, normas, procedimentos, convenções e organizações que se constituem como instituições formais influenciaram no processo de formulação do PAPE. Com recurso à análise documental e bibliográfica, foi possível verificar que, para além de normas e regras formais domésticas, emanadas da constituição da república, das leis e dos planos estratégicos angolanos, o processo de formulação do PAPE foi também influenciado pelas convenções e agendas formais de âmbito regional e internacional, dados os acordos assinados entre as organizações/entidades deste âmbito e as entidades governamentais angolanas.

¹ PhD candidate in Public Policy – ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon; Master in Economic Policy and Development, Faculty of Economics, Agostinho Neto University, Luanda (Angola); Assistant Professor at the Private Polytechnic Institute Walinga do Moxico, Luena, Moxico (Angola). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-1563-5349>; E-mail: benditogui@gmail.com.

Palavras-chave: Institucionalismo; Regras formais; Política de emprego, Angola.

Abstract: This article aims to analyze the presence and influence of formal institutions in the process of formulating active youth employment policies, with a focus on the Action Plan for the Promotion of Employability (PAPE) in the Angolan context. The PAPE was an Angolan employment policy that ran from 2019 to 2023 and aimed to reduce the high rate of youth unemployment. Methodologically, this article adopts a qualitative approach, involving theoretical and documentary analysis and a case study (PAPE), seeking to know and understand which and how the rules, norms, procedures, conventions and organizations that constitute formal institutions influenced the process of formulating PAPE. Using documentary and bibliographic analysis, it was possible to verify that, in addition to formal domestic norms and rules, emanating from the constitution of the republic, laws and Angolan strategic plans, the process of formulating the PAPE was also influenced by formal conventions and agendas at regional and international level, given the agreements signed between organizations/entities at this level and Angolan government entities.

Keywords: Institutionalism; Formal rules; Employment policy; Angola.

Resumen: Este artículo pretende analizar la presencia e influencia de las instituciones formales en el proceso de formulación de políticas activas de empleo juvenil, centrándose en el Plan de Acción para la Promoción de la Empleabilidad (PAPE) en el contexto angoleño. El PAPE fue una política de empleo angoleña que se extendió de 2019 a 2023 y tenía como objetivo reducir la alta tasa de desempleo juvenil. Metodológicamente, este artículo adopta un enfoque cualitativo, que implica el análisis teórico y documental y un estudio de caso (PAPE), buscando conocer y comprender cuáles y cómo las reglas, normas, procedimientos, convenciones y organizaciones que constituyen las instituciones formales influyeron en el proceso de formulación del PAPE. A partir del análisis documental y bibliográfico, fue posible verificar que, además de las reglas y normas formales internas, emanadas de la constitución de la república, leyes y planes estratégicos angoleños, el proceso de formulación del PAPE también estuvo influenciado por convenciones y agendas formales a nivel regional e internacional, dados los acuerdos firmados entre organizaciones/entidades de este ámbito y entidades gubernamentales angoleñas.

Palabras clave: Institucionalismo; Normas formales; Política de empleo; Angola.

1. Introduction

As a field of political science, public policy analysis studies the political decisions and action programs developed by governments, seeking to describe and explain, beyond the relevance of the public problem to be solved, the main norms, rules, and formal procedures that guide public action, both in the process of formulation and implementation, as well as in the process of evaluating the consequences of policies (Araújo; Rodrigues, 2017, p. 11; Hill, 2005, p. 5).

The scientific literature on policy analysis presents several theoretical models that provide diverse perspectives and tools for "understanding the modes and rules of operation (...), as well as the processes and determinants of their development, and identifying the multiplicity of factors and forces that shape the actual processes of public policies" (Araújo; Rodrigues, 2017, p. 12).

Thus, institutionalism as a theoretical model explains that public action is strongly influenced by formal (and informal) institutions, and these operate within a political-administrative system in force in a State in which public intervention is formulated and implemented. This system encompasses (understood as) the party composition of the government and parliament, the level of separation of executive, legislative, and judicial powers, as well as the existence of resources and multiple actors (Birkland, 2020; Cairney, 2020; Dye, 2017; Knoepfel et al., 2011).

Formal institutions are the set of predictable rules, practices, conventions, and procedures understood by all actors and designed to guide, discipline, regulate, and harmonize the actions of governments and other public organizations regarding the processes of formulating, implementing, and evaluating public policies. Despite the internal context of a state, however, in today's globalized world, where all nations are interconnected and interdependent (although operating within the limits of sovereignty), formal institutions have gained an international dimension and are disseminated to, between, and among governments and supranational organizations worldwide. From this perspective, the production of national (domestic) public policies is strongly influenced by the rules of international organizations (Faria, 2018; Karns et al., 2015; Radaelli, 2018), to which national governments adhere, through conventions or other instruments, to international agreements on various matters.

Taking the example of the World Bank (WB) as an international organization, one of the mechanisms through which this entity can influence the formulation of a state's public policies is financing public projects or programs aimed, for example, at promoting youth employment or combating poverty in certain countries. In this sense, the World Bank can define eligibility rules for program participants, which governments seeking to obtain WB funding must adhere to when formulating and implementing policy measures.

This article aims to analyze, from an institutionalist perspective, the process of formulating the Action Plan for the Promotion of Employability (PAPE) in Angola, as a public policy to promote youth employment. The article begins with the following question: what and to what extent were the formal norms, rules, and conventions that served as the basis for the formulation of the PAPE? In response, we propose the following hypothesis: in

addition to domestic formal norms and rules, emanating from the constitution of the republic, the law, and Angolan strategic plans, the process of formulating the PAPE was also influenced by formal conventions and agendas at the regional and international level, as they constitute the main legal and strategic instruments that guide and legitimize public processes and actions.

The article is structured in five sections, including the introduction. Section two provides a framework for the adopted methodological strategy; Section three was dedicated to a theoretical-conceptual approach to institutionalism, through the mobilization and review of the state of the art. Section four specifically analyzed the process of formulating the Action Plan for Promoting Employability in the Angolan context, applying the adopted theoretical model. Finally, the last section is reserved for concluding remarks.

2. Institutionalism: reviewing the literature

The concept of institutionalism refers to the study of institutions as the formal (and informal) space where the political process and public action unfold. However, this concept lacks consensus in the literature, perhaps because it is a theoretical construct whose approaches emanate from distinct doctrinal schools, or because these approaches consider contexts of distinct institutional realities and various perspectives of observation. Indeed, "the difference in the multiplicity of language used across disciplines" (Ostrom, 2007, p. 22) and in various contexts highlights the deep and extensive debates surrounding the concept. In the field of political science, for example, the concept encompasses a range of methodological approaches (Schmidt, 2005), which contribute to the division of opinions. By including informal institutions, such as tradition, custom, culture, and habits, in the concept of institutionalism (North, 1990), the debate deepens further, and it becomes increasingly difficult to reach consensus on the concept's definition. It seems that anything that can be identified as cultural manifestations or social representations can constitute an institution. In this regard, Rothstein (1996 apud Lowndes et al., 2018) observes that if the concept of institution "means everything, then it means nothing." However, as will be discussed in the approaches of different authors below, the constitutive (or characteristic) elements of the concept do not leave much room for highly asymmetrical interpretations of the meaning of institutionalism.

According to Schmidt (2005), institutionalism can be understood as the science that studies institutions as a set of rules, practices, and procedures of a legal-constitutional nature,

as well as the structures and context that influence the outcomes of the political process and shape political conduct and behavior. For Ostrom (2007, p. 22), "the term institution refers to many different types of entities, including both organizations and the rules used to structure patterns of interaction within and between organizations." In this concept, unlike Schmidt (2005), Ostrom adds organizations as rules. This means that international organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations (UN), for example, are considered "a set of formal rules intended to govern the behavior of actors at the international level" (Martin and Simmons, 2012, p. 328).

Since institutions are the set of rules, these are generally formal (and also informal), written, operational, and perceptible, and encompass the "governing structures" on which the process of policymaking, implementation, and evaluation is based (Cairney, 2020). Such structures can include bureaucratic agencies, the executive branch, legislative committees (parliaments), and courts (March and Olsen, 1990). However, Cairney (2020) emphasizes, institutions cannot be understood as buildings (infrastructures) or arenas within which political actors make policies; rather, it is the rules of behavior and operation that influence how they do so; "although the buildings in which organized entities are located are quite visible, the institutions themselves are invisible" (Ostrom, 2007, p. 22).

According to Rhodes et al. (2006, apud Cairney, 2020), identify institutions as a set of organizational structures, such as the central government, provincial governments, local authorities or municipal administrations, civil society, economic and financial institutions, public companies, courts, parliament, political parties, churches, non-governmental organizations, electoral systems, etc., which exert influence on the public policy process, through the mobilization and use of available resources.

The discussions of several authors above demonstrate that the constitutive elements of the conceptualization of institutions are, in fact, relatively divergent. Perhaps these divergences in conceptualization can be explained by the fact that "there are no qualifying criteria for the social construction of rules, nor for whether the rules are explicit or implicit, nor for their nature" (Martin and Simmons, 2012, p. 328).

However, the understanding that remains is that the structures of government and other organizations are merely spaces, i.e., organizational structures, in which rules are applied and, also, from where these rules are forged for the external space (meaning society and intervening organizations), with the aim of influencing, regulating, and guiding social and political processes, human conduct or behavior, and the actions of organizations. Thus, rules are conceived and shared prescriptions (should, shouldn't, or may) that are mutually

understood and predictably applied to prohibit, require, regulate, or guide certain types of actions (Martin and Simmons, 2012, p. 328; Ostrom, 2007, p. 23).

In other words, formal organizations, such as companies, universities, courts, banks, ministries, provincial governments, or local authorities, aim to achieve certain goals, and they operate through explicit rules, norms, and procedures that are adopted by the people who operate within these organizations (Rosa et al., 2021, p. 43).

2.1 Types of Institutionalism

The literature prominently presents three classic schools of institutionalism, although other forms have emerged over time, such as discursive, normative, and empirical institutionalism (Faralli, 1993; Peters, 2016). However, we will address only these three schools of thought: historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, and sociological institutionalism. These three doctrinal schools emerged as responses to the behaviorist perspectives that were influential in the 1960s and 1970s, seeking to clarify the role played by institutions in determining economic, social, and political outcomes (Hall & Taylor, 2003). For authors of historical institutionalism, institutions, which comprise the set of official and unofficial procedures, practices, norms, and conventions inherent to the organizational structure, are associated with formal organizations (Hall & Taylor, 2003, p. 196) and therefore focus on the various state structures through which government actions are carried out, both organizational structures involved in the field of political economy—such as companies and financial institutions—and structures involved in the public policy process (Schmidt, 2005, p. 104).

Historical institutionalism is a line of research that analyzes how processes and phenomena that occur over time, namely the moments and sequence (phases) of events, influence the origin and transformation of formal and informal institutions that govern political, economic, and social relations, and how these relationships and the resulting changes impact public policies (Fioretos et al., 2016, p. 32; V. Schmidt, 2005, p. 105).

A focus on temporal phenomena, such as critical (historical) junctures and path-dependent trajectories, has helped scholars reveal the far-reaching consequences that institutions can have for the nature of political power and for actors' strategies, preferences, and identities over time. Attention to temporal phenomena has also helped scholars bridge accounts of political history as a series of punctual changes followed by high levels of institutional stability and theories of incremental change to explain the sources of complex and overlapping structures of political authority (Fioretos et al., 2016, p. 32).

As organizational structures are not made up of abstract elements, but rather of various actors involved in the public policy process, the changes that occur over time can be explained by the change of individuals and the integration of new groups within organizations, which have their own interests and characteristics; on the other hand, by the redefinition and adoption of new strategies, new programs and new objectives, which can alter the course and mechanisms of the political process; and, finally, by cyclical crises, which are exogenous variables and are capable of causing profound changes in organizational structures and, consequently, influencing the process of developing public policies. Hall & Taylor (2003, p. 196-220) present four characteristics of historical institutionalism: first, the relationship between institutions and the behavior of individuals is analyzed from the (i) calculative perspective, in which the behavior of an individual actor in the public policy process is oriented towards maximizing their interests or benefits, based on a strategic calculation, considering that this calculation is made taking into account the information that institutions provide in relation to the behavior and expectations of other actors involved in the process, on the one hand, and from the (ii) cultural perspective, in which, although the individual is a rational being who seeks to maximize their interests, their behavior based on strategic calculation is limited by the protocols and models (moral and cognitive) of behavior provided by institutions, which subject their actions to filters of interpretation about themselves and the rules of the organization. The second characteristic has to do with power relations, which are distributed unequally among groups in society, in which institutions grant one group disproportionately the power to make decisions, in relation to the other, which is considered a loser. A third characteristic concerns the existence of social, political, or economic causality, taking into account the historical trajectory of events, with previous public policies influencing subsequent ones; finally, the fourth characteristic assumes that, in addition to institutions, there are other factors that influence the public policy process (Hall & Taylor, 2003, p. 196-220). The second strand of institutionalism is rational choice, which, in the first instance, corroborates the historical strand approach, in which actors share preferences, but each seeks to maximize the needs of their preferences, based on strategic calculations (Hall & Taylor, 2003, p. 205). However, there is a risk associated with a situation in which the rational maximization of individual utility or gain would result in a loss, insufficiency, or underutilization of resources for other actors or the community, resulting in a "common tragedy" (Hardin, 2009).

Finally, sociological institutionalism defines institutions not only as formal rules, norms, and procedures, but also includes the cognitive frameworks, cultural schemas and

symbols, meaning systems, and customs that guide human action, disseminated throughout organizational and non-organizational environments (Schmidt, 2005, p. 107; Hall & Taylor, 2003, p. 209). "They emphasize the highly interactive nature of relationships between institutions and individual action, in which each pole constitutes the other. When individuals act according to a social convention, they simultaneously constitute themselves as social actors (...) and reinforce the convention they obey" (Hall & Taylor, 2003, p. 210). Thus, institutions are considered environments of socialization, in which actors participating in public policy processes socialize and interact, and allow the exchange of experiences and resources to achieve objectives.

Broadly speaking, they are the norms of behavior we encounter in many different contexts, from social norms about gender roles to expectations about political objectives that are taken for granted in specific organizations. Although we write and talk about them, rules are often unwritten, unspoken, and difficult to discover. They "exist in people's minds." (Cairney, 2020).

Informal rules "are assimilated through socialization and relate to shared and reproduced, but not necessarily accepted, practices and understandings, such as habits, routines, conventions, beliefs, values, and cognitive schemes" (Rosa et al., 2021, p. 39).

In short, rational choice institutionalism emphasizes the state as a rational actor pursuing the logic of self-interest, on the one hand, and as an incentive structure within which rational actors follow their preferences and rationally maximize their utility, on the other. In contrast, historical institutionalism focuses on the origins and development of the state and its constituent parts, taking into account the processes and phenomena that occur over time. Finally, "sociological institutionalism, in turn, understands the State as socially constituted and culturally framed, with political agents acting according to the 'logic of appropriateness' that derives from culturally specific rules and norms" (Schmidt, 2005, p. 99).

However, several authors point to criticisms of institutionalism in the full operation of public policies. One criticism raised "is that it conceives of institutional arrangements with optimal implementation criteria in more developed countries, which are seriously questioned by the path dependence of their adaptation in less developed countries" (Hernandez, 2008, p. 19), as there are very peculiar realities in these countries that interfere with the regular functioning of formal institutions.

Regarding rational institutionalism, Hall & Taylor (2003) emphasize that "while recognizing that human behavior is rational and goal-oriented," they are still limited to a set of "established protocols or already known and pre-established models of behavior." Regarding historical institutionalism, Schmidt (2014), for example, emphasizes that "historical

institutionalism lacks the “microfoundational logic” present in rational choice institutionalism”, that is, it is not capable of capturing the changes that occur in formal institutions resulting from the behavior of individuals who present a multiplicity of customs, beliefs and different value frameworks among them, therefore, it focuses much more on the historical trajectory of institutions.

3. Methodology

The methodological strategy adopted to analyze the formulation process of the Action Plan for the Promotion of Employability (PAPE), first and foremost, is institutionalism, as a theoretical model. Considering that the political process of implementing the PAPE is institutionalized, obeying a set of rules, practices, legal procedures, and regional and international conventions, the analysis was therefore conducted assuming the (rules) of formal institutions, as suggested by Knoepfel et al. (2011), Ostrom (2007), Rosa et al. (2021), Peters (2016), and Schmidt (2005). This does not rule out the possibility that the process of formulating and implementing the PAPE was perhaps influenced by informal rules, such as symbol systems, cognitive schemas, moral models, and other forms of cultural manifestation that guide human action, as observed by Hall and Taylor (2003). However, since these elements are unobservable and therefore difficult to capture through document analysis, they were not considered in the PAPE analysis.

In addition to the theoretical model adopted for the analysis, the methodological strategy also considers, from a paradigm perspective, a qualitative approach, using document analysis as the technical data collection procedure, and thematic analysis was chosen as the information analysis technique. Of the three thematic analysis approaches suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006, 2019) and Braun et al. (2018), we adopted the reflective (interpretative) approach. Despite its limitations in privileging the author's subjectivity (Morgan, 2022), the approach seems appropriate to the nature of the study, as it relies solely on documents with pre-existing texts (secondary data) and is not combined with another primary data collection instrument, such as interviews, which would enable the construction of analytical dimensions and categories (Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2022).

Thus, documentary analysis encompassed the mobilization and subsequent interpretation of key legal and strategic documents, of domestic, regional, and international origin, which provide the formal rules that guide the PAPE formulation process. At the

domestic level, the analysis focused on the Constitution of the Republic of Angola, the basic law on first employment, the Long-Term Development Agenda Angola 2025 (EDLP-Angola 2025), the National Development Plan 2017-2022, and Presidential Decree No. 113/19, which formalizes the PAPE. At the regional level, we analyzed the policy framework for the Promotion of Youth Employment, of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU). At the international level, we analyzed Convention 122 and the Global Agenda on Employment and Decent Work of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations (UN). All of these documents allowed us to identify the main rules that influenced the process of formulating and implementing the PAPE. After collecting documents from the official websites of the Angolan government and regional and international organizations, the analysis process continued. First, the documents were classified into two categories (not in an analytical sense, but rather by "document type"): (i) legal documents, consisting of the Constitution, Laws, and Decrees; and (ii) political-strategic documents, consisting of Plans and Agendas. Following classification, their authenticity and reliability regarding origin/ownership were verified for validation. The next step was a superficial familiarization reading and in-depth reading (detailed examination) to understand the context, nature, and key concepts of the texts, as part of a preliminary or exploratory analysis (Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2022).

After this process, thematic analysis was finally carried out, which allowed for the identification (and subsequent interpretation) of common themes/topics, forms of expression, and patterns in the documents that supported the formulation of the PAPE (Fereday; Muir-Cochrane, 2006). A comparative analysis was also carried out between the documents studied, with the aim of identifying similarities in domestic standards and their alignment with the standards of regional and international agendas. The common themes/topics identified in the documents studied and which are referenced very frequently are "youth," "employment policies," "employment," "vocational training," and "entrepreneurship." These topics emanate from the standards, rules, guidelines, regulations, and procedures present in the documents in the form of recommendations, guidelines, and objectives as common standards. A bibliographic analysis was also used, which consisted of mapping the scientific literature specializing in approaches related to institutionalism. This literature consisted of scientific articles, books, and book chapters obtained from various international databases, such as Annas Archives, Scopus, Wiley Online Library, SpringerLink, Sage Journals, Taylor & Francis Group, ResearchGate, and Oxford Academic. The objective of the literature review

was necessarily to serve as a theoretical basis for documentary analysis and interpretation, which allowed establishing a relationship between the operational concept of institutions borrowed from the literature consulted and the rules, norms, procedures, and guidelines present in the documents studied, as formal institutions that guided the process of formulating the PAPE.

4. Analysis of the Action Plan for Promoting Employability

4.1. Economic and Social Context of PAPE Formulation

The PAPE was designed in a context where the economic situation was marked by successive periods of recession due to the 2014 economic and financial crisis, caused by the drop in the price of oil on the international market, a commodity that significantly supports Angola's public finances. Except for 2015, from 2016 to 2018, periods prior to the implementation of the PAPE, the gross domestic product (GDP) showed negative growth rates (-2.6, -0.2, -1.7, and -0.9, respectively) and inflation rates of 24.65% (average) for the 2016-2018 period (CEIC-UCA, 2021). As an economy heavily dependent on oil exports, the drop in the price of this product resulted in a reduction in the stock of foreign currency and, consequently, in the progressive devaluation of the national currency against the US dollar and the euro. As a consequence, investment in the productive sector was negatively affected and the economy has been insufficient in creating jobs, in addition to the market having been registering an exponential increase in the prices of essential goods and services, increasing the cost of living for families (Banco de Angolano de Investimentos, 2022; INE-Angola, 2019a; Maquiadi, 2021). At the time of the implementation of the PAPE, the unemployment rates recorded for the periods 2015 to 2018 were 20%, 22.6%, 24.7%, and 28.8%, respectively, being higher for young people (aged 15-24), according to the CEIC-UCA report (2021) and the Employment Survey in Angola, published annually by the National Institute of Statistics (INE-Angola). This situation reflects the Angolan economy's inability to create jobs, income, and skills for families. Another factor explaining unemployment, especially youth unemployment, is the lack of professional qualifications due to the limited training available and the mismatch of professional profiles with the real needs of the labor market and the economy in general (World Bank, 2020; Government of Angola, 2019; UNDP, 2020). In its report, INE-Angola (2020) noted "insufficient provision of technical-professional education and low qualification levels among the economically active population, primarily in technical

professions." In 2018, it found that only 6.95% of young people aged 15 to 34 had some vocational training, and 23.9% of young people aged 15 to 24 were not working, studying, or undergoing vocational training (INE-Angola, 2019b).

The impact of this situation has been reflected in monetary and multidimensional poverty and, consequently, in the well-being of many Angolan families. According to the Multidimensional Poverty Report in Angola, based on the 2018-2019 Expenditure and Income Survey in Angola (IDR), monetary poverty is 40.6%, that is, for every 100 Angolans, around 41 have a consumption level below the poverty line, estimated at Kwanza 12,181.00 per month, with a higher incidence in rural areas (57.2%), compared to 29.8% in urban areas (INE-Angola, 2020). It was in this context and in fulfillment of the creation of 500 thousand jobs promised on the eve of the 2017 elections, that the Angolan Government implemented, through Presidential Decree No. 113/19, of April 16, the Action Plan for the Promotion of Employability (PAPE), a public policy that aimed to reduce the high rate of youth unemployment through three intervention measures, namely (i) professional training, (ii) professional internship and (iii) financial support and professional kits.

4.2. The Formulation of PAPE from the Institutionalist Perspective

The analysis focuses on the "formal-institutional" dimension, which encompasses the Angolan government's legal framework and strategic documents, as well as regional and international instruments. These define the main rules, procedures, standards, and formal conventions in the form of strategies, objectives, guidelines, and recommendations. These have been aligned with the PAPE's objectives, as noted by Schmidt (2005) and Hall & Taylor (2003).

In this context, and considering the PAPE as an employment policy, particularly for young people, its institutional framework is formally based on the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA), whose normative guidelines are defined in Articles 76 and 81, which state that "the Angolan State is responsible for promoting the implementation of employment policies that guarantee young people access to vocational training and their first job, in order to realize their economic, social, and cultural rights." Therefore, it is a norm of higher hierarchy in the domestic legal sphere and, according to Martin & Simmons (2012, p. 328) and Ostrom (2007, p. 23), it is prescribed to, with the duty of mandatory compliance, guide any employment policy initiative to be conceived by the government. It is the norm of higher hierarchy because subsequent legal instruments, such as laws and decrees, for example,

are subject to it. Thus, laws or decrees that formalize any employment policy measure must be produced in accordance with the terms of the superior (constitutional) norm. The general content of employment policies is then set out in Law No. 1/06 of 18 January, the Basic Law on First Employment, which establishes the scope and concept of beneficiary eligibility, the objectives and general principles guiding the policy, the implementation mechanisms, the priority sectors, financial support and tax incentives, and the entities involved in implementing the policy actions and measures (Articles 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 19, 23, and 28). Therefore, the standards contained in these articles served as the reference for defining the scope, target audience, objectives, actors, resources, and implementation strategies of the PAPE. To comply with the above standards, the National Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (INEFOP) is responsible for implementing the PAPE, as per Article 1 of Presidential Decree No. 128/15 of June 2, which approves the Organic Statute.

As a formal procedure, which any political process adheres to, public policy formulation in Angola is governed by the National Development Plan, a guiding document that defines the priorities and political programs for implementation over a five-year period, corresponding to a government term. Accordingly, the PAPE formulation process was formally based on its planning in the National Development Plan (PDN) 2018-2022, discussed in the Council of Ministers, with two main programs being defined: i) "Program 2.5.2: Promotion of Employability" and ii) "Program 1.3.2: Strengthening the National Vocational Training System", which we can consider as formal scheduling, according to the approaches of Birkland (2020), Dye (2017), Fischer et al. (2007) and Knoepfel et al. (2011).

As youth unemployment is a strategic objective, the formulation of the PAPE is also based on the Angola 2025 Long-Term Development Agenda (EDLP-Angola 2025), in which the state commits to promoting youth employment and ensuring professional qualifications for their integration into the workforce.

At the regional level, as a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Angola aligns its strategies with SADC's standards, regulations, and guiding documents. Employment policies are developed in alignment with the principles, purposes, goals, objectives, and policy priorities defined in the SADC "Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Youth Employment" (QPPEPEJ), approved in 2016. This importation of supranational norms as formal institutions to shape domestic policies reminds us of Ostrom's observation (2007, p. 22), who refers to the term "institution" as "different

types of entities, including both organizations and the rules used to structure patterns of interaction within and between organizations."

At the international level, the formal rules of reference in defining the objectives of the SADC Youth Employment Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Youth Employment (SADC Youth Employment Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Youth Employment) can be cited as those contained in the Global Agenda for Employment and Decent Work and Convention No. 122, both of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which recommend that member states define employment policies. Other international references are objectives 1, 4 (specifically, in point 4.4.), and 8 (in point 8.3.) of the 2030 Agenda, of the Unified Concepts, on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and Objective 1, of Aspiration 1, of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063.

As can be seen, several international organizations, through their strategic instruments, influence the formal rules of national governments in the process of implementing domestic public policies, with the specific case, here, of employment policy (PAPE) in the Angolan context. This process of governments incorporating the policies (understood as formal rules) of an international organization of which they are a member into their domestic policies is called, in the European context, for example, Europeanization (Ladrech, 1994; Radaelli, 2018). The latter author, for example, refers to Europeanization as "a process of construction, diffusion, and institutionalization of formal and informal rules and procedures, of public policy paradigms (...), which are incorporated into the logic of discourse, political structures, and public policies." domestic policies."

Therefore, both national legal and strategic instruments, namely the CRA and Law No. 1/06 of January 18, the EDLP-Angola 2025, and the PDN-2018-2022, respectively, as well as regional and international instruments, issued by the AU and SADC, and the ILO and UN, respectively, constitute formal rules that establish the strategies, objectives, and target audiences of policies. It is in these terms that the Angolan government formulated the PAPE, as argued by Rosa et al. (2021, p. 39) on "formal rules influencing public policies: the City Statute is formalized in Law No. 10,257 of 2001," in the Brazilian context.

Having completed this general analysis of the formal assumptions, which elucidates the framework of national, regional, and international rules that influenced the institutionalization of the PAPE, we now move on to the second phase, which describes the specific legal framework that defines the content of the PAPE, namely the scope of the policy, objectives, intervention strategies and measures, beneficiaries, expected results, etc., as noted by Knoepfel et al. (2011) and Lasswell (2016).

The institutionalization of the PAPE was achieved through the approval of Presidential Decree No. 113/19 of April 4, which defines the main formal rules for the policy's operation. First, ten objectives are defined to guide all activities that contribute to promoting youth employment and contributing to quality of life and economic development. This is the purpose of the rules in determining economic and social outcomes, as noted by Hall & Taylor (2003) when referring to the role of institutions (here, understanding institutions as formal rules).

To achieve these objectives, strategic dimensions of intervention were defined, with respective objectives, target audiences, and requirements that must be observed during implementation, as shown in Table 1.

The PAPE Presidential Decree also establishes, in its content, that the continuation of the programs and their respective objectives should benefit 83,500 young people, including unemployed youth and those already engaged in some activity and in need of financial support, professional kits, and training to boost their businesses. Consequently, it is expected to generate direct effects, such as (i) increased productivity and turnover; (ii) reduced youth unemployment through job creation; (iii) increased income and purchasing power of young beneficiaries and their families; (iv) increased employability. From the text above, it can be seen that certain elements, such as youth, financial support, and increased employment, are in line with the objectives or recommendations of the SADC "Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Youth Employment" (QPPEPEJ), the UN 2030 Agenda, the AU Agenda 2063, and the ILO Global Agenda for Employment and Decent Work. The objective contained in the PAPE, in paragraph f), "to contribute to the fight against hunger and poverty," is aligned with Objective 1 of the 2030 Agenda and Priority 2 of Objective 1 (of Aspiration 1) of the AU Agenda 2063, which refer to poverty reduction.

The objective of paragraph b), which refers to "training unemployed youth and entrepreneurs in technical-vocational skills and small business management," is aligned with point 4.4 of Objective 4 of the 2030 Agenda which recommends that all nations "substantially increase the number of young people and adults with relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent work, and entrepreneurship."

In general, the purpose of the PAPE itself, which is to promote youth employment and foster youth entrepreneurial initiative, is aligned with articles 76 and 81 of the CRA: "to promote the implementation of employment policies that guarantee young people access to vocational training and their first job (...)." It is also aligned with goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda, more specifically point 8.3: "to promote development-oriented policies that support

productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services," and is also aligned with priority 1 of goal 1 (of aspiration 1) of the AU Agenda 2063.

Table 1 summarizes the specific rules defined in the formulation process and that must be observed during the implementation process, which should guide the administrative acts and all logical activities that generate the causal process to achieve the results, objectives and impacts on young beneficiaries and in the socioeconomic context.

Table 1. PAPE intervention dimensions

Dimensions	Programs	Objectives	Requirements
Dimension 1: Professional Training	Capacita (long-term courses)	Equip people with the theoretical and practical knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for a profession.	Unemployed youth: 1. Be between 17 and 40 years of age; 2. Complete a physical application form..
	Avanço (short-term courses)	Train those engaged in professional activities to improve their performance and generate sustainable income.	
Dimension 2: Microcredit and Professional Kits	Encouragement of Entrepreneurship (Microcredit)	Financing professionals who already work or intend to work so they can offer their products or services to the market independently (self-employed).	1. Be between 17 and 40 years of age; 2. Have a business or project that requires financing (microcredit) or work tools or equipment (professional kit); 3. Have training in entrepreneurship/business management; 4. Complete a physical application form.
	Promotion of Self-Employment (Kits)	Guarantee entrepreneurs' access to essential equipment and tools for their employment and income-generating activities.	
Dimension 3: Professional Internship	Professional Internship	1. Consolidate academic or professional training in a real-world workplace. 2. Support the transition between the education/vocational training system and the labor market. 3. Supplement and develop citizens' skills, with a view to adapting their professional profile for better integration into working life.	1. Be between 18 and 25 years of age and have completed vocational training, high school, or higher education. 2. Exception: Candidates between 25 and 30 years of age who are unemployed, do not hold any academic qualifications, and have completed vocational training within the last year. 3. Complete a physical application form.

Source: Presidential Decree No. 300/20, of November 23; INEFOP.

Final considerations

Analyzing public policies through theoretical models is a complex exercise, whether due to the variety of doctrinal currents, whose dimensions or analytical variables are influenced by various contextual factors over time, such as the configuration or structuring of political systems, which influence formal institutions, as well as the framework of values, symbols, and other forms of cultural expression of the society on which the policy analysis is

conducted. However, by addressing formal institutions, it was possible to understand how domestic, regional, and international rules, norms, and formal conventions influence the public policymaking process and shape the conduct of the actors involved. The analysis of PAPE from an institutionalist perspective provided us with the necessary theoretical and methodological support through which it was possible to identify and understand that the process of formulation and institutionalization of PAPE was based on the rules, norms, and formal internal (national) procedures emanating from the Constitution of the Republic, the Basic Law on First Employment, the Long-Term Development Agenda Angola 2025 and the National Development Plan, being materialized by the Presidential Decree itself (n.º 113/19) that approves it. At the regional and international levels, the formulation of the PAPE was influenced by formal conventions stemming from the SADC Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Youth Employment; the AU Agenda 2063; the UN 2030 Agenda; and the Global Agenda for Employment and Decent Work and ILO Convention No. 122. Both domestic rules and regional and international conventions and agendas constituted the main legal and strategic instruments that guided and legitimized the political process and public actions of the Angolan government within the scope of the PAPE.

Beyond the analysis itself, this article aims to contribute to the academic debate and instigate researchers in the field of public policy analysis, aiming to understand the contexts and reasons that motivate and guide Angolan public entities to (not) make certain decisions. Therefore, to stimulate debate and future research, we pose some questions for reflection: will the incorporation of formal regional and international rules into formal rules? Does domestic policy take into account the particular conditions and contextual factors of the territory in which they are implemented? If not, to what extent might this explain the failure of certain policy measures? If, due to contextual conditions and factors, national governments fail to harmonize certain rules, practices, and procedures with formal regional and international institutions, what implications will there be for the process of implementing and evaluating public policies, from the standpoint of support (political, cooperation, resources, acceptance, etc.) or the recognition and validation of actions, results, and impacts?

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Attachment

Table A.1 - Legislation and strategic documents

Strategic documents	Institutions and legislation
Agenda 2030 - Sustainable Development Goals	United Nations (UN)
Agenda 2063 - Common Strategic Framework for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development	African Union Commission - https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview
Global Agenda for Employment and Decent Work	International Labour Organization (ILO)
Constitution of the Republic of Angola 2010	https://governo.gov.ao/documentos
Convention No. 122, on Employment Policy	International Labour Organization (ILO)
Action Plan for the Promotion of Employability in Angola	Presidential Decree No. 113/19
Regulation of Professional Internships in Angola	Presidential Decree No. 300/20, of November 23
Long-Term Development Strategy Angola 2025	Republic of Angola - Ministry of Planning https://www.mep.gov.ao/
First Job Framework Law	Law No. 1/06, of January 18 (Angola)
National Development Plan 2018-2022 - Angola	Ministry of Economy and Planning. www.mep.gov.ao
Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for the Promotion of Youth Employment	Southern African Development Community (SADC)