

Exploring the technical assistance activities of the International Labor Organization in the field of indigenous peoples: Development and Human Rights in the Andean Indian Program (1954-1968)

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Abstract

In 1954, the International Labor Organization (ILO) launched the Andean Indian Program (AIP), a rural development project aiming to assist Andean countries in integrating the indigenous peoples of the highlands, the Quechua and Aymara, into the respective national communities. Only three years later, the organization adopted Convention No. 107 called Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, which is considered the starting point for the establishment of an international regime of indigenous rights. Both Convention No. 107 and the AIP were presented by contemporaries and historians alike as complementary cornerstones of ILO's activities in the field of indigenous peoples.

Focusing on the history of the AIP and taking into account ILO internal documents, this article explores the relation between the AIP and Convention No. 107. It argues that ILO's technical assistance activities in the field of indigenous peoples were only partially connected to Convention No. 107 and furthermore ignored the discourse on indigenous rights. This article, therefore, helps to recalibrate the reading of ILO's agenda in the field of indigenous peoples in the period under consideration and contributes new insights to the historiographical discussion of the ambivalent relationship between human rights and development discourses in the post-WWII international arena.

Keywords: Indigenous Peoples, Human Rights, Andean Indian Program, Development Discourses

1. Introduction

In 1954, the International Labor Organization (ILO) launched its first major project in the emerging field of international technical assistance: The *Andean Indian Program* (AIP). In the fifteen years to come and in cooperation with the governments of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru, the ILO organized multi-faceted activities within this project for rural development. The project intended to “modernize” the indigenous peoples of the Andean highlands, the Aymara and Quechua, and integrate them into the respective national communities.[1]

The AIP became a central component of the national and multilateral policies of rural development in the Andes during the 1950s and 60s and influenced both future state programs

and international development projects in the field of indigenous peoples. However, the history of the project and its role in the related state policies towards the indigenous peoples, as well as in the international development assistance in the region, is still only scarcely investigated.[2]

Nonetheless, it stands out that the AIP is frequently mentioned in books and articles dealing with the present situation of indigenous human rights and the ILO's role in it (e.g. Swepston and Torriente 98; Xanthaki 49; or Clech Lam 527). In these publications, alongside the 1957 Convention No. 107 *Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention*, the program constantly serves as a point of reference for the historical genesis of the international regime of indigenous human rights as we know it today.

Moreover, the AIP and Convention No. 107 apparently stand in accordance with ILO's declared two-folded strategy of the time to simultaneously draft legal standards and grant technical assistance. Maul shows how the ILO implemented this approach of combined legal standard setting and development assistance during the 1950s and 60s, when the organization globalized its range of activities and integrated new member states during the de-colonization process.

With the *Declaration of Philadelphia* from 1944, ILO placed itself on the ground of a human rights discourse and proclaimed the necessity to realize human social rights worldwide. Thus, both fields of the organizations' activities – standard setting and development assistance – were legitimized through a human rights discourse. The implementation of the AIP, which was the organization's most important technical assistance project at the time (Maul, *Menschenrechte* 196), can be considered a major step in the establishment of the organization's activities in the field of technical assistance.

Luis Rodríguez-Piñero analyzes the history of ILO's activities in the field of indigenous peoples thoroughly in his book *Indigenous Peoples, Postcolonialism, and International Law* (2005). Departing from the 1930s, he reconstructs and analyzes the debate inside the ILO revolving around the indigenous question and its transformation over time, leading to the drafting of the *Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention* (no.169) in 1989. Because of his focus on the sphere of international law, the ILO's activities in the field of development assistance remain at the margins of his investigations. As a result, the degree to which the realization of the AIP was intertwined with the organization's standard setting activities and the underlying human rights discourse still remains unaddressed.

This article seeks to fill this gap and sets out to analyze how the ILO's declared complementary approach of standard setting and technical assistance framed the realization of the AIP. Placing the history of the AIP in the center of analysis, this article elaborates how the concept of human rights was related to the discussions revolving around the AIP. By doing so, it asks to what degree technical assistance and standard

setting were construed as mutually reinforcing activities guiding the ILO's agenda in the field of indigenous peoples. As such, this article contributes to the discussions on the character of ILO's policy in the field of indigenous peoples, which until now have focused mainly on the sector of international law and tend to neglect the area of development assistance. In addition, it tackles the question of how far ILO's human rights based approach in the field of indigenous peoples was related to and intertwined with the *indigenista* state policies of the period, which were later fiercely criticized as infringing on the rights of indigenous peoples.

2. The ILO and the indigenous question: The AIP and Convention No. 107

Recent publications in the field of international law that focus on the situation of indigenous peoples describe the AIP and Convention No. 107 as corner stones in the historical genesis of the international regime of indigenous rights (e.g. Torriente and Swepston 98; Xanthaki 49; Clech Lam 5). Clech Lam, for instance, writes:

The regime of indigenous peoples' rights was born, interestingly, not in the [UN] Commission on Human Rights but in a Specialized UN agency: the tripartite International Labour Organization (ILO) [...] In 1952 the ILO organized an interdisciplinary Andean Indian Program to investigate the situation of the concerned subject peoples. A mere five years later, the agency had in place an enforceable treaty pertaining to all indigenous and tribal peoples that was subsequently ratified by twenty-seven states: the 1957 [...] ILO Convention 107. (527)

Similar to Clech, most of these publications stay quite vague regarding the question of the relation of legal standard setting and development assistance.

In contrast, Rodríguez-Piñero's work (2005) thoroughly traces how the different strains of ILO policy in the field of indigenous peoples converged in the establishment of an international system of indigenous rights. For Rodríguez-Piñero, the

AIP marks a “preamble to the organizations’ 1957 standards on indigenous and tribal populations” (98) and the “drafting of the first international standards regarding indigenous populations might be explained as a by-product of the international development regime” (116). Rodríguez-Piñero is thus able to show how the drafting process and the final text of Convention No. 107 was influenced by the contemporary assumptions of the actors involved regarding national development. However, the question of how far the implementation of the AIP was bound back to ILO’s standard setting activities and the underlying human rights discourse is not considered in this work.

Since the end of World War II, the issue of human rights constantly appeared on the agenda of the ILO, raising the question of how far the principle could guide the organization’s practice. Moyn (2010) illustrates how in the decades after World War II, the UN and its specialized agencies (like the ILO) became a forum for the controversial debate on the significance of human rights between exponents of the industrialized countries and colonial powers on the one side and the non-industrialized countries on the other. Against the background of Cold War block confrontation and anti-colonial struggles for national liberation, the representatives of the countries from the so-called “Third World” especially emphasized the primacy of their right of collective self-determination and economic development against a more individualistic understanding of human rights spurred by the industrialized countries. This conflictive interpretation of the significance of human rights and the right of collective self-determination and economic development consistently fueled debates on different boards and at various levels of the UN system.

This discursive nexus of human rights and national development also reverberated in the ILO’s internal discourse regarding indigenous peoples. During the middle of the 20th century, the so-called indigenous question was at the forefront of the political discourse in many Latin American countries. Especially in Mexico, but also in the Andean countries of Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru – each of which contained a high percentage of indigenous populations –

intellectuals and artists redefined the imagined national community by claiming that the white mestizo national projects were incomplete and that the integration of indigenous populations was the only way to become a fully adequate nation (Giraud and Lewis 2012 or Lauer 1997). This integrationist discourse, which was politically diverse and oscillated between socialist and conservative positions, was coined under the term *indigenismo*. Its assumptions found their way into the state departments, which started to subsequently create *indigenista* institutions and *indigenista* integration policies towards the concerned indigenous peoples.

Rodríguez-Piñero (2005) clearly shows how Latin American delegates and professionals carried the issue of the indigenous question into the various panels of the ILO, construing the indigenous population as a subgroup of the general working population in need of special protection. In this context, in the course of the *IV Conference of the American States Members of the International Labour Organisation* in Montevideo in 1949, the delegates adopted the “Resolución sobre las condiciones de vida y de trabajo de las poblaciones indígenas,” which deliberately connected indigenous question with the issue of human rights. Referring not only to the *Declaration of Philadelphia* and the *UN Declaration of Universal Human Rights*, but also to the *Declaration of the First Inter-American Indianist Congress* held in 1940 in Pátzcuaro, the resolution underlined that all humans regardless their race and nationality – and thus also the indigenous population – must have access to the same rights.[3] At the same time, the declaration linked the situation of the indigenous peoples in Latin America to the question of national development, postulating that the “improvement of the social and economic conditions of these [indigenous, M.B] populations [would result] at the same time, in a fuller development of the national economies of the countries concerned.”[4]

Following the conference’s resolution, the ILO established the *Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour* in order to improve the organization’s expertise and legitimacy in the field. This committee, which mainly consisted of Latin American *indigenista* professionals, held its

first meeting in January 1951 in La Paz, Bolivia. In the context of the meeting, the experts invited further elaborated on the relation of development and human rights regarding the indigenous peoples. In the documentation of the meeting – the discussion paper prepared beforehand, as well as in the committee’s report after the meeting – two different interpretations of the concept of development with repercussions for the interpretation of the character of indigenous rights can be identified.[5]

In the discussion paper, development is predominantly framed in an intentional sense, arguing that active government action was necessary to improve the living conditions of the indigenous communities, which are described as being on a lower stage of development compared to the white mestizo population in the respective countries. Consequently, governmental action had to be taken in order to improve the living and working conditions of the indigenous population and to foster the development of the national economy as a whole.

In contrast, the final report combines this interventionist understanding of development with a more immanent interpretation of the term:

[The scientist] must accept the fact that social change is inevitable through the general economic and social development of the [indigenous, M.B] community, and an attempt must be made at channeling that development by means of standards that will safeguard indigenous groups from the risk of becoming overwhelmed by this change.[6]

This paragraph shows how the committee of experts framed the term *development* in regards to the indigenous communities, not only as something desirable that should be fostered by governments and international institutions, but also as something “inevitably” inherent to the social reality of the time. Furthermore, the committee members evaluated this development process as a potential risk for the indigenous population, as it might “overwhelm” the indigenous communities. Thus, development had to be “channeled” by the implementation of rights standards which should protect the

indigenous population from negative aspects of the process.

Hence, the final report of the committee’s meeting clearly indicates a two-folded conceptualization of the term development; this double understanding was mirrored in the action program which the committee proposed for the future. On the one hand, the program aimed to strengthen the rights of the indigenous population by improving the enforcement of relevant rights standards. On the other hand, it required a set of technical assistance activities which were meant to improve the socioeconomic situation of the indigenous population in the countries involved.

The committee’s report guided ILO’s activities in the field over the next years, which eventually led to the realization of the AIP and the drafting of Convention No. 107. Needless to say that both endeavors – the AIP and Convention No. 107 – were profoundly shaped by external actors of the *Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour*; mainly ILO professionals and state officials of the countries involved were finally responsible for the actual planning and implementation. Nonetheless, the committee’s report represented the source of legitimacy for ILO’s activities in the field and the action program it contained served as a central point of orientation.

Looking to the character of Convention No. 107, drafted 1957, we can conclude that it indeed reflected a great extent of the spirit of the action program proposed by the *Committee of Experts*. The convention simultaneously promoted the protection of the indigenous population through the realization of legal standards while fostering development efforts to improve living conditions.

Regarding the AIP, it is more complicated to answer how closely the program related to the action program of the *Committee of Experts* and aimed to safeguard indigenous rights while improving the living standards of the population concerned.

Before we approach this question in the following section, the following paragraphs provide a short summary and historical contextualization of the AIP which qualifies the overall significance of the program and relates it to the *indigenista* state policies of the time. As previously mentioned, the AIP must be interpreted as part of the *indigenista* state

policies of the time that aimed to integrate the indigenous population into the respective national societies and economies. For the realization of their *indigenista* programs, the Andean countries in particular requested international technical assistance from U.S. institutions as well as the UN system. The AIP is one example of this intersection of *indigenista* state policies and international development cooperation. In 1952, the Andean states of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru submitted a request to the ILO for establishing a regional development project in the *altiplano* to foster the “modernization” and integration of the indigenous population, which represents the starting point for the AIP. From an ILO perspective, the launch of the AIP at the time represented the major outcome of the organization’s policy in the field of indigenous peoples next to Convention No. 107.

Following a request of the Andean governments, from 1954 onwards, the ILO started to establish a variety of so-called action bases in cooperation with the national governments of Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru at different spots of the *altiplano*. At these bases, teams of UN experts and national staff were meant to assist the nearby indigenous communities with technical expertise and equipment, e.g. in the sector of agricultural cooperatives, handicraft production, professional education, health services, as well as the colonization of subtropical valleys at the eastern slope of the Andes. In a later stage, these pilot projects should be extended to assist the entire indigenous population in the three countries. The AIP was designed as a UN multi-agency project under ILO leadership, including the cooperation of the FAO, WHO, and UNESCO. The funding was provided by the national governments paying for the national personnel and the on-site facilities, while the newly established UN *Extended Program of Technical Assistance* took care of expenditures for the international staff and technical equipment.

With the successive transfer of the action bases to national responsibility at the beginning of the 1960s, ILO activities concentrated more on advisory services, e.g. assisting the national governments with the extensions of their integrationists’ policies or applications for further external funding from international

donor institutions. The AIP finally faded out in the late 1960s when the indigenous question became less relevant in local political discourse and development efforts in the rural sector tended to avoid ethnic categorization. The ILO retrospectively estimated that the activities of the AIP had altogether directly reached about 250,000 people in the *altiplano*.^[7] From this context, we can affirm that the AIP was an important piece of the *indigenista* state policies at the time. Furthermore, via the AIP, the ILO became an important actor in the inter-American field of *indigenista* policies.

3. Human Rights and Development in the context of the Andean Indian Program

Focusing on the assumptions and proposals of the action program prepared by the *Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour* along with the final text of Convention No. 107, the question arises of how far the praxis and debates revolving around the AIP mirrored the understanding of development and human rights expressed therein. To put differently: How did ILO officials refer to the nexus of human rights and development established by the committee of experts and Convention No. 107, when they politically legitimized the AIP, defined the projects’ guiding principles, or planned its practical methods?

Considering the relevant ILO documents, we can distinguish between three different perspectives that need to be considered when answering this question. On the one side, there was the official ILO position regarding the AIP in dialogue with the concerned national publics and the international (*indigenista*) expert public. On the other side, the ILO officials involved discussed the AIP, the underlying assumptions, and practical aims internally. Furthermore, the ILO translated the ideas into a program of practical application and communicated with the actual subjects of the project, the indigenous farmers of the Andean *altiplano*. Although the scope of this article does not allow an extensive quantitative analysis of an entire set of archival material which might bear evidence for this question, the following paragraphs do draw upon

selected documents that serve as a spotlight on how the ideas of human rights and development have been negotiated from various perspectives. [8]

3.1 ILO's public perspective on the AIP

Official ILO information brochures on the AIP, ILO articles on the AIP printed in newspapers, scientific journals, as well as public speeches by ILO officials provide fruitful insights into ways that the ILO publicly presented the character and aims of the AIP.

One target audience for ILO's presentation of the AIP was, without doubt, the international expert public that was interested in the organization's activities and the UN system in general. A central publication which thoroughly reflects the way in which the ILO presented the AIP to the concerned public is the article "The Andean Programme", published in ILO's flagship journal *International Labour Review* in 1961. Written by ILO Deputy Director General Jef Rens, the article portrays the program as an attempt to realize the aims formulated in Convention No. 107 practically, namely the protection of the rights of the indigenous population and their integration into the respective national societies. Rens, who was the highest-ranking ILO official directly concerned with the realization of the AIP, comprehensively framed the program as part of ILO's two-sided strategy of combining international standard setting and technical assistance. In his words the AIP should:

help the Indians, not merely by proclaiming equal rights and recognizing the validity of social and economic needs and cultural aspirations, but also by taking action to make the rights an everyday reality so as to meet the peoples' needs and satisfy their aspirations. (432)

Thus, Rens explicitly centered the AIP in a human rights context by underlining that the program should "make the rights [of the indigenous population, M.B.] an everyday reality". In accordance with the direction of Convention No. 107, the article describes the realization of indigenous rights through technical assistance

under the lemma of "integration," arguing that an equality of rights between the indigenous and non-indigenous parts of the population could only be achieved via the integration of the former into the latter.

Another target audience for ILO's presentation of the AIP was the inter-American field of *indigenista* experts. The *indigenista* institutions like the *Instituto Indigenista Interamericano* and the national *indigenista* institutes provided the framework for the inter-American debate on the so-called indigenous question (Giraud and Martín-Sánchez 2012) and, at the same time, were narrowly intertwined with the respective state policies towards the integration of indigenous populations. At the fifth *Congreso Indigenista* organized by the *Instituto Indigenista Interamericano* in Quito in October 1964, Rens held a speech on the character and the objectives of the AIP. In his speech, he again underlined that the AIP was essentially inspired by Convention No. 107. Taking on the concept of integration, he created an image of the AIP as a program that sought to simultaneously realize equal conditions in the legal and material sphere for the indigenous population:

Al buscar para los poblaciones indígenas la igualdad de derecho y de hecho con respecto a los otros sectores de la población, el Programa Andino es, al mismo tiempo, un programa de humanización y de desarrollo económico.[9]

Consequently, Rens presented the AIP to the present *indigenistas* as a program of humanization and "at the same time" of economic development. Semantically connecting the terms of *rights* and *humanization* (*derecho* – *humanización*) as well as *materiality* with *development* (*hecho* – *desarrollo económico*), Rens created an image of both aspects as necessary and mutually dependent conditions for the solution of the so-called indigenous question.

Next to exposing the AIP to international expert publics, the ILO also presented the program in the national publics of the Andean countries. Here, newspaper articles and info-brochures communicated ILO's position.[10]

The brochure “El Programa Andino” published by the ILO exclusively in Spanish in 1961 contains the organization’s perspective in a coherent way. The ninety-nine page brochure, which was apparently designed for a broader public and comprehensively illustrated with photos and pictograms, gives a detailed overview of all aspects of the AIP depicting and describing the living situation of the indigenous highland communities as well as the activities of the program. The envisioned improvement of the living conditions of the indigenous highland population, their integration into the national communities, and the acceleration of the development of the national economies seemingly justified the program. To use the words of ILO General Director David Morse who wrote the foreword to the brochure (3):

Elevar su [the indigenous, M.B.] nivel de vida, integrarles en el seno de sus respectivas colectividades, alentar su esperanza en el futuro, brindar a sus países el pleno poderío de un acervo humano hasta la fecha intacto: tal es la razón de ser del Programa Andino.

However, the brochure neither tackles the issue of human rights nor does it mention Convention No. 107 in any way. In fact, ILO’s activities in the field of standard setting and the human rights discourse in general are factored out within this publication.

This distinction demonstrates how the ILO presented the AIP to international experts and national publics in profoundly different ways. The main difference consisted in characterizing and contextualizing the central aims of the program. While for the international and inter-American *indigenista* experts, the ILO presented the AIP as an attempt to realize human rights for the indigenous peoples *through* economic development, this dimension is totally absent from the presentation of the program to national audiences. Here, the development of the national economies was presented as purpose *per se* and the link to ILO’s standard setting activities and the concept of human rights was absent.

This cleavage in the presentation of the AIP might stem from a strategic adaption of ILO’s

choice of arguments regarding the concerned publics. The discourse of human rights, as Moyn (2010) pointed out, ranged predominantly on an expert level. In the international arena, it served as a source of legitimacy for the UN system and thus for the ILO. In contrast, the question of economic development was more deeply anchored in the national political discourses of the time, especially in the so-called “developing countries”. It seems that the ILO officials adopted these stances when they outlined the justification for the realization of the AIP for the expert community or the national publics respectively. In the next section we will elaborate in how far this flexibility in the public characterization of the AIP also reverberated in ILO’s internal debates on the program.

In any case, we can state that neither the presentation of the AIP to the expert nor the national publics reflected the notion of a conflictive relation between the idea of national development and indigenous rights, which was expressed in the report of the *Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour* from 1951. In fact, while the presentation to the national publics simply factored out the issue of rights standards, the exposition of the program to the expert publics framed technical assistance as a praxis to reinforce economic development and human rights. The assumption of the *Committee of Experts* that economic development might jeopardize indigenous rights and thus should be “channeled” by rights standards is absent from this argumentation. With this in mind, the next section will focus on how the relevant ILO panels and officials internally discussed the AIP in regards to human rights.

3.2 ILO’s internal perspective on the AIP

In addition to the ILO attempts to justify the AIP in the public, its officials also internally discussed the program and its aims and methods. The question arises to what degree the concerned experts and boards related the implementation of the AIP to Convention No. 107 to the realization of indigenous rights.

One set of documents which demonstrates the internal discussion of the AIP is the collection of reports prepared in the context of the first meeting of the *Panel of Consultants on Indigenous and Tribal Populations* in October 1962. The ILO installed the *Panel of Consultants on Indigenous and Tribal Populations* as a follow-up committee for the aforementioned *Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour*. Thus, the *Panel of Consultants* served as a body of experts to advise the ILO's activities in the field of indigenous peoples.[11] The main purpose of the first meeting was to evaluate the proceedings in the ILO's agenda towards indigenous peoples and define the future strategy since the last meeting of the *Committee of Experts* in 1954. For this purpose, the ILO administration prepared a set of reports which summarizes the activities of the previous eight years. The general report points out:

A large part of the effort of the I.L.O. and the other international organisations [in the field of indigenous peoples, M.B.] has during this period been devoted to the development, consolidation and expansion of the Andean Indian Program on which a special report has been prepared for consideration by the Panel. (2)

Hence, in the eyes of the ILO professional staff, the AIP represented a considerable portion of the organization's activities in the field and required a separate report to inform the *Panel of Consultants*. [12] Comparing the special report, the general report, and the final report of the *Panel of Consultants*, drafted in the aftermath of the meeting, some relevant differences can be stated regarding the negotiated topics.

In the first place, the overall report concentrated on the activities that had been realized since 1954 *other than* the AIP, namely regarding the so-called "forest dwelling" indigenous population in the Amazonian region and the nomad population in the Arabic countries. As the ILO had no running technical assistance projects relevant to these groups, the summary concentrated primarily on the rights situation (especially concerning land rights) of these peoples and how Convention No. 107 could serve as a guideline for their

protection and integration into the respective national societies. The parts of the final report of the committee subsumed the opinions expressed by the panel members on the issue, centering on the standard setting activities and the rights situation.

In contrast, the special report on the AIP – apparently prepared by the Regional Office of the AIP in Lima – almost exclusively revolved around the technical and political aspects of the implementation of the AIP, only sporadically relating the program to Convention No. 107 and the question of the protection of indigenous rights. This focus is also adopted in the part of the final report dealing with the AIP. Here, the panel members argued how to expand or re-orientate the AIP without connecting or evaluating the program at any point regarding Convention No. 107 or the rights situation of the Andean indigenous peoples.

In this sense, it seems that the AIP on the one hand and the further ILO activities in the field of indigenous peoples on the other were in the eyes of the authors of the reports as well as the panel members two separate issues following differing logics. This finding might not be very surprising at first, given the fact that the AIP was a program of development assistance while the activities in the sphere of standard setting were more closely related to questions of indigenous rights and rights violations. Nonetheless, the observation shows that for the ILO officials and the Panel members, neither Convention No. 107 nor the question of indigenous rights in general seemed to be of theoretical or practical relevance for the realization of the AIP or the situation of the indigenous population of the Andean *altiplano* in general. This becomes even clearer if we consider that the reports on the AIP do not relate to the fact that at the time only Peru had ratified Convention No. 107, while Bolivia and Ecuador still refused.

An evaluation of the reports elaborated in the forefront of the Regional Meetings of the AIP in December 1963 [13] and December 1964 [14] supports these findings. The ILO established the format of the Regional Meeting in order to foster the dialogue between ILO experts working in the national programs of the AIP in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. At these meetings, the ILO experts

working on the AIP in Latin America reunited to internally discuss the advances and setbacks of the program. The reports give an impression of how the AIP was discussed internally when no external opinions were present. Both the reports prepared in the forehand of the meetings as well as the minutes of the discussions at the meetings show that the internal discussions exclusively concentrated on technical and political aspects. The reports situate the AIP in the political arena of *indigenista* state policies and international development cooperation, identifying problems and obstacles in its realization and extension and evaluating possible cooperation with other programs and actors in the field. However, neither Convention No. 107 nor the rights situation of the concerned indigenous people were tackled or negotiated at any point.

Considering the reports of the Panel of Consultants and the Regional Meeting, it can be concluded that the ILO officials concerned with the AIP oriented their examinations exclusively alongside the logic of the technical assistance apparatus arguing that their activities were enhancing productivity and material living standards; however the internal discussion of the AIP essentially ignored the dimension of the protection of indigenous rights and the respective instrument of Convention No. 107. The question of the rights situation of the indigenous people and communities, who were the subjects of the AIP, was apparently absent from the considerations of the ILO experts on the ground. Furthermore, it seems that in ILO's general internal debates on indigenous rights, the issue of the rights situation of the indigenous peoples of the Andean *altiplano* disappeared *because* of the realization of the AIP and the functionalist discourse it entailed.

If we compare these findings with the focus of the AIP outlined to the expert publics by Jef Rens, we can state that the internal discourse on the AIP profoundly differed to the official presentation of the project. As shown before, Rens publicly presented the project to "make rights an everyday reality" for the concerned indigenous peoples and thus to implement Convention No. 107 via technical assistance. Against this backdrop, it seems that for the practical ILO planners, the AIP existed autonomously from

Convention No. 107 and it was not necessary to bind the technical assistance activities back to questions of indigenous rights and their protection; to the ILO, the AIP and Convention No. 107 were internally envisioned and treated as two separate endeavors, which were only loosely connected to each other.

The ILO officials who wrote the reports on the AIP were also responsible for the factual implementation of the program, the negotiations with the state administrations, and the planning of the practical activities. Here, we come to the issue of how the internal discussion of the project was transferred to its practical implementation and to what degree Convention No. 107 and the concept of human rights served as guidelines for the practical implementation of the program.

3.3 The practical relevance of Convention No. 107 and the concept of human rights

It is hard to elaborate on how Convention No. 107 and the concept of human rights were related to the AIP on a practical level, compared to the sphere of public relations and internal discussion of the program. A comprehensive approach would consist of an analysis of the practical manuals for the AIP personnel, information material prepared for the indigenous communities concerned, and instruction material applied to teaching courses for members of the communities, e.g. in the sphere of vocational training, health education, agricultural activities, or community leader training. This type of analysis is beyond the scope of this article and the following discussion will be confined to a few examples that allow for a preliminary view on the issue.

One document that provides fruitful insights is the so-called "Calendario Andino". The ILO Regional Office in Lima edited it in 1962 to inform the indigenous communities about the UN system and the AIP.[15] The booklet, which was written in simple language and illustrated with pictures and graphs, explained in detail the history of the UN system, the ILO, and its structures and institutions. Furthermore, it presented the goals of AIP and its multi-sectoral

activities as assisting the *campesinos* in their everyday lives. However, no section in the thirteen-page brochure provides a legitimation for the existence and activities of the described institutions or the AIP. There are absolutely no references to the concept of human rights or to the UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, ILO's *Declaration of Philadelphia*, or Convention No. 107, so common in ILO's presentation of the AIP to expert publics.

Against this background, it can be concluded that in the eyes of the on-site ILO personnel, it was not necessary to include the issue of human rights or the existence of Convention No. 107 regarding the protection of indigenous rights in the material dedicated to provide information about the AIP to the actual subjects of the program, indigenous farmers. The "Calendario Andino" rather attempts to inform the indigenous farmers regarding the institutional outline of the AIP giving the information to identify the involved UN institution, instead of justifying the program before its primary subjects.

While the general information material on the AIP for the indigenous communities apparently omitted the issue of human rights and Convention No. 107, the situation in the training courses might have been different. A passage of a supplement paper to the *Panel of Consultants on Indigenous and Tribal Populations* under the subchapter "Organisation of communities and citizenship organization" indicated that:

[in] Ecuador assistance has been given to the indigenous communities in the organisation of cabildos and their functioning as effective village councils. The instruction given by the social welfare workers and educators to the cabildo members regarding their rights and responsibilities and those of the Indians in general under the law, have been reinforced by courses given to the cabildo leaders at the Guaslán Training Centre. A similar course of training for community leader is being planned for the proposed Pillapi School in Bolivia.[16]

Thus, the rights "of the Indians in general under the law" were a subject of training courses in the context of the AIP. Bretón Solo de Zaldivar

(2001, 71-86) pointed out that a variety of the leaders of indigenous movements in the 1980s and 90s in Ecuador completed AIP educational courses in their youth. Even though the AIP was strongly aligned with a government policy aiming to pacify indigenous struggles for land in the *altiplano*, its educational courses enabled the apprentices to formulate collective claims that later stood in contrast to government policies. Here, the concept of indigenous rights, which since the 1970s served to justify the claims of indigenous communities in the national and transnational arenas (Kemner 2013), was certainly of high importance. Taking this into account, further research could validate how far the content of the teaching courses of the AIP transported the concept of indigenous rights and how this content was appropriated by the students and employed on their own accounts.

4. Conclusion

This article has raised the question of how far the realization of the AIP was shaped by ILO's Convention No. 107 and its respective concept of human rights. The analysis shows that ILO officials publicly framed the AIP as an attempt to realize the rights of indigenous peoples in the Andean *altiplano* via technical assistance and in accordance with Convention No. 107. However, this framing of the AIP was restricted to the official ILO discourse directed to the international expert publics.

In contrast, ILO's presentation of the AIP to the national publics of the Andean countries excluded the question of indigenous rights and the relevance of Convention No. 107 in its realization and justified the program exclusively with the promise to foster national development. This perspective was apparently in accordance with the position of the national *indigenista* policies, which considered the AIP as an integral part for a state driven development and integration of the indigenous highland communities.

Regarding ILO's internal perspective on the AIP, we can conclude that the ILO professionals concerned with the program scarcely related it to Convention No. 107 or questions regarding

rights of the indigenous peoples under concern. Furthermore, the *Panel of Consultants on Indigenous and Tribal Populations*, which ILO installed to supervise its activities in the field, treated the AIP separately from Convention No. 107, focusing exclusively on technical and political issues regarding its implementation. The rights situation of the indigenous peoples of the Andean *altiplano* apparently disappeared from ILO's agenda during the realization of the AIP (while the organization in contrast went on to discuss the rights situation of other indigenous peoples, e.g. of the Amazonian basin).

In the sphere of practical implementation, the results of this analysis must be regarded as preliminary, due to the state of source material under consideration. It seems that the ILO officials on the ground did not attempt to legitimize their activities in front of the indigenous subjects of the program by relating it to Convention No. 107 or the issue of indigenous rights. However, the teaching material applied in the educational courses of the AIP referred to the rights issue and thus might have enabled its indigenous apprentices at a future date to draw on the international debate on indigenous rights while formulating political claims (which were frequently directed against the interests of local and national governments). Here, further research would be necessary, as it might shed some light on so-called "unintended" consequences of international development cooperation.

These results lead to further conclusions when looking at the historiographical evaluation of ILO's agenda in the field of indigenous peoples during the period under consideration. The leading ILO officials of the time as well as historians like Maul (2007) described the organization's agenda as following a two-fold strategy of standard setting and technical assistance to approach its goals. And indeed, ILO Deputy Director General Jef Rens publicly contextualized the AIP accordingly as part of just this strategy in the field of indigenous peoples. However, we can conclude that in the context of the AIP, the issue of indigenous rights as well as Convention No. 107 merely played a role for creating a justification on the level of an international expert discourse. In fact, in

national debates and ILO's internal discussions regarding the AIP, the topic was factored out and the program was apparently perceived as autonomous from the sphere of standard setting.

In the eyes of the contemporary ILO officials, this might not have been a contradiction because both standard setting and technical assistance would have been portrayed as pursuing the same goals, even if not inherently connected to one another. For the historiographical analysis, this observation bears some conclusions: First, a retrospective evaluation of ILO's policy in the field of indigenous peoples in the period under consideration should be conscious that the implementation of the technical assistance activities – which consisted predominantly in the AIP – was only loosely connected to the field of standard setting and eventually followed an autonomous logic and functional mode. Thus, scholars who elaborate on the historical genesis of the international regime of indigenous rights should avoid simply subsuming the AIP as an aspect or expression of ILO's standard setting activities (as shown in the introduction and first section of this article) and instead reflect upon the autonomous character and relevance of the technical assistance and potential frictions within the sphere of standard setting.

In addition, a critical historical evaluation of ILO's activities in the field of indigenous peoples should furthermore expand its focus from the sphere of international law to the sphere of international development cooperation. The activities executed under the umbrella of the AIP reached hundreds of thousands of indigenous farmers in the Andean *altiplano* and therefore shaped their social realities. In comparison, Convention No. 107 was often described by its critics as a "paper tiger," providing only modest instrumentation for the protection of indigenous rights which was moreover only scarcely applied in the decades after its ratification (Bennett 42-78). Thus, a balanced examination of ILO's policy in the sphere of indigenous peoples in the period under consideration should equally incorporate the organization's technical assistance activities.

Against this background, a critical evaluation of the AIP would allow for an investigation of how ILO's approach towards the indigenous question became entangled in the course

of the program's implementation between the logic of the *indigenista* state policies and the apparatus of international development assistance. Therefore, the orientation of the AIP was constantly in debate between the different actors involved and the question of indigenous rights and the implementation of Convention No. 107 were actually pushed into the background.

The *Declaration of Barbados* from 1971 initiated a wave of fierce critique against the *indigenista* integration and development policies of the 1950s and 1960s.[17] The main argument of the critics was that these policies would infringe upon the rights of indigenous peoples (Aubry 1982, Kaltmeier 2015). As Rodríguez-Piñero (2005) and others have shown, the *Barbados Declaration* also marked a turn in the ILO's agenda in the field of indigenous peoples that finally resulted in the drafting of *The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention* (No. 169) in 1989, which replaced Convention No. 107 and its integrationist credo.

Nonetheless, for a better understanding of ILO's role in the field of indigenous peoples in the decades after World War II, it is essential to consider the aspect of technical assistance, especially the AIP. An in-depth analysis of the history of the AIP would allow for contextualization of ILO's role inside the *indigenista* development policies of the time and might better explain how the ILO, which actually set out to improve human rights through technical assistance, came to organize a project that ultimately neglected the issue of indigenous rights.

Endnotes

[1] In the 1960s, the AIP also expanded to Argentina, Chile, and Colombia. The main focus of activities remained in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru. For an overview of the program's history, see e.g. Maurel (2012). For a contextualization of the activities of the AIP in the Peruvian case, see Breuer (2017).

[2] To date, there is not a monograph that concentrates exclusively on the history of the AIP comprehensively summarizing the transnational character of the program. Jason Guthries' dissertation titled "The International Labor Organization and the Social Politics of Development" (2015) thoroughly investigates the program in the context of U.S. foreign policy and development cooperation.

[3] The ILO published the "Resolución sobre las condiciones de vida y de trabajo de las poblaciones indígenas (adoptada el 6 de mayo 1949)" in the volume "Resoluciones adoptadas por la Cuarta Conferencia de los Estados der América Miembros de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo. Ginebra 1949. The original text in Spanish says the following: "f) que, de conformidad con los principios enunciados en la Declaración de Filadelfia, la Resolución de la tercera Conferencia de los Estados de América Miembros de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo, la Declaración Solemne de Principios Fundamentales del primer Congreso Indigenista Interamericano, la Carta de Garantías Sociales de la novena Conferencia Internacional de los Estados Americanos y la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas, debe otorgarse a todos los seres humanos igualdad de derechos y oportunidades sin distinción de razas o nacionalidades."

[4] Regarding the concept of development, the Spanish original of the resolution says: "c) que una más efectiva utilización de estos recursos [meaning the indigenous labor force, M.B.] redundaría en un mejoramiento de las condiciones sociales y económicas de esas poblaciones y, al mismo tiempo, en un mayor desarrollo de la economía nacional de cada uno de los países interesados."

[5] For the list of the committee members, see Rodríguez-Piñero (2005, 182). Most of the members were Latin American experts.

[6] See International Labour Office, Report of the Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour, First Session, La Paz, 15-27 January 1951, (8).

[7] See International Labour Office (2003). ILO Convention on indigenous and tribal peoples, 1989 (No.169): A manual. Geneva, (3).

[8] The documents analyzed for this article form part of the body of sources that I compiled for my PhD project on the history of the AIP, which I am currently realizing at the *Center for InterAmerican Studies* of Bielefeld University, Germany. Minutes and reports of meetings of the relevant panels of the ILO as well as ILO publications of the time especially shed light on the character of the AIP and form part of the selection of documents which I analyzed for this article. Though, the analysis concentrates on a set of key documents in which ILO officials discussed the character of the AIP.

[9] See page 3 of the manuscript "Discurso del Director General Adjunto de la O.I.T. señor Jef Rens, ante el Quinto Congreso Indigenista Interamericano (Quito, 19-25 octubre de 1964) (ILO Archive Geneva: Series DADG, File Number 8-24, Jacket 1).

[10] The ILO edited various information booklets on the AIP in Spanish and also published articles in regional newspapers, e.g. the article "La misión indigenista andina: Un informe de la O.I.T." on December 6 1956 in *El Comercio*, a daily newspaper from Lima, or the article "El indigena vive en la Sierra Andina como en la época de la conquista por los españoles, dice libro de la OIT" on April 3, 1959 in *El Diario de Ecuador* from Quito.

[11] See the report “Panel of Consultants on Indigenous and Tribal Populations, First Session, Geneva 15-26 October 1962, First Item on the Agenda: Action Taken to Implement the Recommendations of the Second Session of the Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labor (PCITP/1962/I/1).” Interestingly, the panel was more diverse in regarding its regional composition; members from Latin America were not as dominant as they had been in the *Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour*.

[12] See the report “Panel of Consultants on Indigenous and Tribal Populations, First Session, Geneva 15-26 October 1962, Second Item on the Agenda: Appraisal of the Achievements of the Andean Indian Programme (PCITP/1962/I/2).” The importance of the AIP becomes even clearer when comparing the differing extent of the concerned reports. While the general report, which informed the Panel regarding the drafting process of Convention No. 107 and the activities of the ILO in the field besides the AIP, is about seventeen pages long, the special report on the AIP – supposedly written by ILO’s Regional Office in Lima – counts 110 pages. Furthermore, the other UN agencies involved in the AIP – FAO, UNESCO and WHO – also handed in supplementary reports regarding their activities in the AIP.

[13] See the “Documento de Trabajo para Primera reunion regional de la Acción Andina” from December 1963 (ILO Archive Lima, Collection AIP, Document No.181) and the “Informe sobre la primera reunión regional de la Acción Andina” also from December 1963 (ILO Archive Lima-Collection AIP- Document No. 189.4)

[14] See the “Documento de Trabajo para Segunda reunión regional de la Acción Andina” from December 1964 (ILO Archive Lima, Collection AIP, Document No.180) and the “Informe sobre Segunda reunión regional de la Acción Andina” also from December 1964 (ILO Archive Lima, Collection AIP, Document No. 189.3).

[15] “Calendario Andino” (ILO Archive Geneva: Series TAP/A, File Number 7, Jacket 2).

[16] See page 4 of the report “Panel of Consultants on Indigenous and Tribal Populations, First Session, Geneva 15-26 October 1962, Second Item on the Agenda: Appraisal of the Achievements of the Andean Indian Programme (PCITP/1962/I/2), Supplementary Paper prepared by the United Nations

[17] The anthropologists participating in the *Symposium on inter-Ethnic Conflict in South America*, held in Barbados in January 1971, published in the aftermath of the meeting a report titled “The Declaration of Barbados: For the Liberation of the Indian.” The text described the precarious situation of the indigenous peoples on the American continent and fiercely criticized the state policies towards the indigenous peoples. The declaration was widely distributed and became the starting point for a wave of critique of the integrationist and developmentalist approach of the official national and transnational policies of the time regarding indigenous peoples.

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