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Seite

ARTIKEL

- Cristóbal Kay
The Challenge to the Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment
Part II: Contemporary Latin American development issues - cases for a neo-dependency analysis? 3
- Mehdi Fallah-Nodeh und Helmut Kramer
Österreich und die Entwicklungsländer: Das Beispiel Iran 15
- Markus Kostner
Zur Transformation traditioneller Landwirtschaften -
Das Beispiel Swasiland 31
- Christian M. Neugebauer
Stamm - Ethnie - Nationalismus: ein kritischer Überblick 53
- Johanna Wölflingseder
Direkte Beschäftigungseffekte in Österreich induziert durch den Handel zwischen Österreich und den Entwicklungsländern 69

REZENSIONEN

- Nordafrika in der internationalen Politik. Probleme und Zukunft der südlichen Nachbarregion Europas. Hrsg. Helmut Hubel
(Thomas Weninger) 96
- Maria Mies, Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale. Women in the International Division of Labour (Andreas Schedler) 98

AUTORENNOTIZEN 101

Cristóbal Kay

THE CHALLENGE TO THE LATIN AMERICAN THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Part II: Contemporary Latin American development issues - cases for a neo-dependency analysis?

3. Contemporary relevance of the Latin American theories

Despite these criticisms and reservations, Latin American theories of underdevelopment and development provide a fertile starting-point for understanding and overcoming the Third World's, and particularly Latin America's, present-day predicament. This is especially the case if structuralism and dependency analysis are understood as methods of analysis, as frameworks, and as series of propositions rather than as fully fledged theories. A renewal of structuralist and dependency thinking is called for, and this could lead to a neo-structuralist and/or neo-dependency theory. Additionally, elements of the Latin American school of thought are being incorporated into other theories. The Latin American theories continue to challenge and to present an alternative to the neoclassical paradigm which has proved unable to tackle the problems of poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment.³⁹ As Prebisch reflected in his maturity "the root cause of the incapacity of neoclassical thinking to interpret peripheral capitalism lies above all in its failure to take into consideration the economic surplus, which is the hub of this system's basic characteristics. It disregards the structural heterogeneity which possibilitates the existence of a surplus; it bypasses the structure and dynamics of power which explains how the surplus is appropriated and shared out; it shuts its eyes to the monetary mechanism of production which allows the surplus to be retained by the upper strata; and it underestimates the waste involved in the ways in which the surplus is currently used. This shortsighted interpretation of the economic process predisposes neoclassical thinking to propose policy measures which do not succeed in promoting the development of the periphery; which increase and consolidate social inequality and which necessitate the establishment of authoritarian regimes, diametrically at variance with the ideas of democratic liberalism."⁴⁰

3.1. The curse of external vulnerability

In the late 1940s the structuralists argued that the key obstacle to Latin America's economic development was the foreign exchange constraint, and in the late 1960s the *dependentistas* expressed this central problem in terms of external dependence. The problem of capital accumulation and growth was above all a problem of

insufficient availability of foreign exchange rather than a problem of insufficient savings. This statement has even greater validity today although the causes as well as the cures of the foreign exchange constraint may differ. As a consequence of the neo-monetarists' outward-directed development strategy, and more specifically the debt crisis, Latin America's external vulnerability is even greater than before.⁴¹

In addition, the structuralists' and the *dependentistas*' analysis of the terms of trade and unequal exchange retains some validity, but new factors, such as the debt, contribute to the region's external vulnerability. Although the deterioration in the terms of trade continues to create periodic problems, its negative impact has been curtailed in countries like Brazil, which have been able to diversify exports from primary products to industrial commodities. Furthermore, the reasons for a relative deterioration in the terms of trade may diverge from those originally put forward by the structuralists.⁴² In recent years the studies on the terms of trade between North and South have multiplied, most notably because of their drastic deterioration and negative consequences, particularly for some African countries.⁴³ While in earlier decades neoclassical economists refuted or cast doubts upon the deterioration in the terms of trade, today at least they acknowledge that this has taken place. However, "what can be said about the reasons for this apparent secular deterioration in the relative prices of primary commodities is ... limited. The simple primary trends that we measured appear to go against the expectations of classical economists regarding the relative price movements of manufactured goods and instead to be consistent with the original Prebisch-Singer counterargument. It is not difficult, however, to show that these empirical findings can be theoretically explained outside both the classical and the original Prebisch-Singer framework. Neoclassical analysis of the effects of growth on relative trade prices offers numerous possible alternative explanations, and so does unequal development theory."⁴⁴

Although the terms-of-trade debate continues to be relevant, it can no longer be sustained in the same way as in the past because of changing patterns of international trade. Some Third World countries, for example, are losing their traditional comparative advantage in primary production mainly because of rapid technological advances in, and subsidies to, the developed countries' agriculture. World trade in agricultural commodities is increasingly dominated by developed countries to the extent that some underdeveloped countries who used to be net exporters of food have now become net importers. On the other hand, some developing countries have acquired comparative advantages in certain manufacturing products. The so-called newly industrializing countries have made some inroads into industrial world-exports which were once exclusively dominated by the developed countries.

Continuing technological dependence also adds to the external weakness of the periphery, and one way in which this manifests itself is through the demonstration effect. As new and more sophisticated consumer products are developed in the centre, demand is created for imported products in the periphery through the imitative conspicuous consumption patterns of upper income groups.⁴⁵ Some products may later be produced internally but this involves the importation of machinery, equipment, raw materials, and spare parts, as well as the payment of royalties, profit

remittances, foreign management or consultancy fees, and so on, all of which require foreign exchange. Even in the unlikely event that a few developing countries may eventually succeed in exporting some of these new products, the net outcome is generally a further pressure on the already very fragile balance-of-payments position.

The structuralist terms-of-trade analysis has been transformed by marxists and *dependentistas* into the theory of unequal exchange.⁴⁶ This theory, in turn, has generated some debate.⁴⁷ While some authors emphasize the exploitation between countries, others stress the exploitation between classes. Some Marxists consider that those who focus on the North-South divide tend to erect a smoke screen which disguises the class exploitation within the developed countries and above all within the Third World. By presenting the Third World as victims of deteriorating terms of trade or exploitation by the developed countries, attention is diverted from the key issue - the exploitation between classes. For the unequal-exchange theorists, the nature of the commodities (primary or industrial products) exchanged between the centre and periphery countries is irrelevant.⁴⁸ So long as wage differentials are larger than the productivity differentials between the centre and the periphery, unequal exchange will continue to exist. Thus, according to the unequal-exchange theorists, the changing nature of international comparative advantages and trade might not necessarily mean that unequal exchange will diminish or even cease to exist.

In an attempt to mitigate the foreign-exchange problems of the Third World such as the wide fluctuations of primary commodity prices and their long-run deterioration, UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) was established in 1964. Prebisch was the driving force behind the creation of UNCTAD and its first Secretary-General. UNCTAD became a major forum for debating North-South issues and was an inspirational force for those countries who were calling for a new international economic order. However, UNCTAD failed to achieve a major breakthrough in North-South relations and its attempt at global Keynesianism was not to be.⁴⁹ No agreement was reached, for example, on how to administer and finance the establishment of some key primary commodities' buffer stocks, an essential measure for reducing price fluctuations. Without such buffer stocks there was even less chance of finding a compromise solution to the commodities' terms-of-trade issue. The buffer-stocks scheme failed because some developed countries were reluctant to finance it and because they also suspected that it could be used by the Third World to raise primary commodity prices. In the neoconservative climate of the 1980s, UNCTAD is making even less headway and its inefficacy is revealed with respect to the debt problem.

3.2. *The foreign debt burden: financial and technological dependence*

The debt crisis has added a new dimension to the region's financial dependence which has been considerably aggravated. It also reveals the limited options open to the debtor countries due to their technological dependence. In this way some aspects of dependency analysis are vindicated.

The problem today is not just one of insufficient growth of foreign-exchange earnings and capital accumulation: it has been made considerably worse as a result

of the crippling foreign debt. In order to service this debt Latin America has become a net exporter of capital since 1982.⁵⁰ This has meant that the rate of capital formation has fallen with the consequent stagnation or negative growth of the economy.⁵¹ Although the region's volume of exports has increased to service the debt, the value of total exports has remained roughly the same during the first half of the 1980s owing to the deterioration of the commodity terms-of-trade. With the rise in debt service, Latin American countries have had to reduce their imports by a staggering one-third between 1983 and 1985.⁵² The brunt of the cuts in imports was borne by capital goods, as it is difficult to reduce the imports of essential consumer goods like food. Although Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico have acquired some technological capacity, capital-goods requirements for the region as a whole still have to be met from outside. Thus, the *dependentistas'* focus on the negative consequence of technological dependence continues to be relevant but has to be adjusted to the new circumstances.

The origins of the debt crisis also illustrate the *dependentistas'* claim of the pervasive influence of external factors on developments in the periphery as well as the interaction between external and internal factors. According to Prebisch,⁵³ the ultimate origins of the debt problem lie in the abandonment of the Bretton Woods agreement by the USA in 1971, when dollar-gold convertibility was abrogated. This, together with the development of the Eurodollar market, allowed the US to run higher and higher balance of payments deficits, i.e. to import more and more in relation to its exports.⁵⁴ The 1973-4 oil shock is another factor which facilitated the debt crisis. Finally, the crisis erupted in 1982 when the largest debtor countries - Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico - technically defaulted on their payments. Among the more immediate causes for this were the sudden rise in US interest rates in 1979, the unusually high interest rates prevailing during the early 1980s, and the world recession. As a consequence the servicing of the Third World's debt (which is largely held in dollars) rocketed, while at the same time its export earnings declined. The US and world recession in the early 1980s meant that export markets dried up for the South at the same time as prices of primary commodities fell. Thus, many debtor countries ran into serious external imbalance difficulties and were unable to continue to service their debt.

3.3. The continuing structuralist-monetarist controversy: stabilization policies

"The failure of recent monetarist stabilization experiments in Latin America has produced a search to understand inflation as something more than just a monetary phenomenon. This has rekindled the old monetarist-structuralist debate about the causes of inflation in Latin America."⁵⁵ The debt crisis, together with the resurgence of inflation, has also led to a renewed interest in the old structuralist-monetarist debate on the IMF's adjustment and stabilization programmes.⁵⁶ Many Latin American governments resent IMF interference in the formulation of their internal economic policies. However, most debtor countries have to come to terms with the IMF so as to acquire desperately needed loans and, above all, to reschedule their massive

debts with foreign banks whose consent is only forthcoming if the debtor countries swallow the bitter medicine of the IMF. This policing role of the IMF is particularly disliked by Third World governments as it raises questions of sovereignty.

The IMF stabilization programme largely follows the neo-monetarist line. The diagnosis is always one of excess demand. Supply factors are largely ignored and structural factors are given short shrift. The same medicine is prescribed for all countries without acknowledging that the patients may differ in significant respects. The difference with past IMF prescriptions is that anti-inflationary measures are now intertwined with policies geared to reduce the debt burden. The purpose of some stabilization measures, like the reduction in internal demand, is to reduce imports and free resources for export. The IMF adjustment-programme usually requires the liberalization of foreign exchange and import controls, greater freedom of capital movements, and encouragement of foreign investment and exports. These measures largely aim to promote exports so as to ease the foreign debt. Policies designed to deal specifically with inflation include, *inter alia*, control of bank credit, increases in interest rates, reduction in government deficits, curbs on nominal wage rises, and dismantling of price controls. The effects of these austerity programmes are invariably a sharp fall in incomes of the poor due to cuts or abolition of food subsidies, reduction in real wages, rising unemployment, and so on.⁵⁷

In his last public address, made shortly before his death, Prebisch exposed the essence of monetarism as he saw it.⁵⁸ In his view monetarist policies were deliberately designed to increase unemployment (although this was often not admitted to by monetarists) so as to bring down real wages. Thus, the burden of adjustment falls on the shoulders of those least able to bear it. It is estimated that in 1985 per capita income in much of Latin America had fallen to levels prevalent ten years before.⁵⁹

Furthermore, these IMF-inspired adjustment packages have so far shown little sign of success.⁶⁰ Seers attacked the short-sightedness of IMF policies and, while castigating some developing countries who followed structuralist-type policies for financial irresponsibility, argued that economists in the developed countries could learn useful lessons from the structuralist-monetarist debate.⁶¹ He criticized those economists for not taking the structuralists' contribution on inflation into account and condemning their ignorance of it. In turn, structuralists need to consider short-term monetary and fiscal measures and to link these more closely to the debt problem when designing an anti-inflationary programme.

The new democratic regimes in Brazil and Argentina, as well as the populist government of Alan García in Peru, have adopted novel stabilization policies which combine structuralist and monetarist features.⁶² These 'heterodox shock' stabilization policies comprise a whole set of economic and social measures enshrined in the Plan Cruzado (1986) in Brazil, in the Plan Austral (1985) in Argentina, and in the Plan Inti (1985) in Peru, for which the governments sought public support through a series of political campaigns.⁶³ (The name of these plans derives from each of their new national currencies.) Despite their drastic nature these stabilization programmes initially had widespread support, as the previous monetarist stabilization policies were widely discredited. Also, after years of dictatorship the new civilian governments in Brazil and Argentina, and the popular government of García, were riding on a wave

of goodwill and were given the benefit of the doubt. There was also a realization that rampant three digit inflation (which in Argentina reached over 1,000 per cent!) had to be brought under control. While achieving some initial success these stabilization plans were later abandoned, as no consensus could be reached on how to share the heavy burden of adjustment.

3.4. Structural heterogeneity, marginality, and the informal sector

The analysis of structural heterogeneity⁶⁴ retains significance, especially as differences in productivity between and within sectors have become even more acute in the last decade. Such disparities in productivity lead to increased intra- and inter-sectoral imbalances, widen income differentials, limit the spread of technological progress, and reflect the continuing, if not growing, marginalization. Most new investments and modern technologies go to the most productive enterprises within each sector and much, if not most, of these new investment resources to the industrial sector.

The discussion on marginality⁶⁵ has largely been taken over during the 1970s by informal-sector analysis and by Marxist debates on modes of production. The concepts of marginality and marginal pole of the economy have influenced the Marxist discussion on articulation of modes of production in particular. Whatever the rubric under which authors prefer to discuss the problem of marginality and the marginal pole of the economy, there is little doubt that the issue continues to be relevant, topical, and unresolved.

Marginality is still a problem as labour continues to be marginalized both from and by a modern technology which is largely imported from the advanced countries. This foreign technological progress is biased in favour of upper income products in the context of the Third World. Consumption patterns in underdeveloped countries are increasingly being 'denationalized' or internationalized as growing sectors of the population imitate those of the developed countries. The creation of such dependent consumption habits extends as far as agro-industrial food products. Many enterprises are unable to adapt or adopt the new technology, and as their products become obsolete they have to close down or become part of the petty-commodity sector of the economy. The neo-conservatives' lack of concern with development and their stabilization programmes have increased the mass of the structurally unemployed. These unemployed have to fall back on their ingenuity to devise survival strategies varying from petty activities to casual and low-paid labour in the petty commodity, domestic, or informal sectors of the economy.

Given the capital-intensive nature of advanced technology, the industrial sector has been unable to absorb much labour even in those countries with high rates of industrial growth. The problem is compounded by the rapid rate of population growth and the high rate of rural-urban migration. The problem of absorbing this new contingent into the labour force is even more acute in those countries which experienced a process of 'premature de-industrialization' over the last decade or so as a consequence of neo-conservative policies. Thus, in countries like Chile, Peru,

and Argentina the percentage of the total labour force employed by the industrial sector has significantly declined.⁶⁶ This lack of labour-absorptive capacity of the industrial sector means that most of the new labour force either ends up in the service sector performing a great variety of casual low-productivity activities or remains unemployed. According to some observers this swelling of an heterogeneous service sector reflects a process of 'premature tertiarization' of the economy. In most Latin American economies well over 40 per cent of the labour force was employed in the service sector in 1980.⁶⁷

Marginality analysis could be extended to encompass the recent phenomenon of de-industrialization in some mature developed countries. This creates a new type of unemployed worker who does not even act as a labour reserve, being permanently unemployed. The transition from an old industrial economy, like that of the UK, to a service economy marginalizes those workers who are linked to the decaying traditional industries. When these workers are declared redundant they are unable to find new employment as their skills do not match those of the new industries or the service sector. Furthermore, the neo-conservative development model no longer creates sufficient employment opportunities even for the new generation of young workers. However, the social origins of these marginals, as well as the process of marginalization, differs from that taking place in the Third World. In the developed countries marginal workers are largely former industrial workers and the process of marginalization is not due to dependent industrialization as is the case in the Third World but to de-industrialization and the transition to a service economy.

3.5. New industrialization strategies

In the late 1940s and early 1950s when the structuralists or *cepalistas* first advocated import-substituting industrialization, they had to battle against orthodox economists who argued that less-developed countries should continue to specialize in primary-commodity production on the grounds of international comparative advantage. At that time the dispute was over whether Third World countries should industrialize or not; today it is about whether Third World countries should industrialize or not; today it is about whether they should follow an import-substituting or an export-oriented industrialization strategy. At present there is a general awareness of, or even a consensus on, the shortcomings of import-substitution policies. Neoclassical economists who advocate an export-oriented industrialization strategy conveniently forget that a couple of decades earlier they were opposed to any kind of industrialization strategy for the Third World - except for one spontaneously and gradually induced by free markets. Their position has changed (though often not publicly admitted) in view of the successful industrialization of the newly industrializing countries in East Asia, i.e. South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong.⁶⁸ The spectacular breakthrough into manufacturing exports of these four countries in the last couple of decades is hailed as a success of free-market policies and is used as a stick with which to beat the early supporters of import substitution and all those who favour state interventionism in the economy.⁶⁹

However, on closer examination a more complex picture emerges from the industrialization experience of the newly industrializing countries.⁷⁰ While some oriented their industrialization to the external market, many entered the export market after having first gone through an import-substitution process. Furthermore, most relied on government intervention, or what Lal calls *dirigisme*,⁷¹ to get their industrialization under way.⁷² Such interventionism took a variety of forms, from protective tariffs to export subsidies. The key difference between the old import-substituting countries and the East Asian newly industrializing countries is that government intervention in the latter was much more selective, flexible, and less enduring, and their ultimate purpose was increasingly to expose the industrial sector to international competition.⁷³ Meanwhile, in many old import-substituting countries government interventionism degenerated into spiralling protectionism which shielded an increasingly inefficient industrial structure. However, this does not mean that the only or optimal way of remedying the vicissitudes of import substitution is to expose these countries to the full rigours of foreign competition, as is argued by neo-conservatives.

The contrast between the way in which Brazil and Chile have attempted to overcome the problems of import substitution is illustrative. In Brazil the post-1964 state has only gradually and partially exposed the industrial sector to international competition and has strongly supported industrial exports, through subsidies and other measures.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, in Chile the post-1973 state thoroughly and mercilessly implemented a rigorous neo-conservative policy which dismantled most of the protectionist barriers within a short time, exposing the industrial sector to fierce foreign competition.⁷⁵ In Brazil the state industrial sector expanded even further and spearheaded many developments, while in Chile it was almost completely privatized. As a consequence Brazil has become a major industrial power and a large proportion of its exports are industrial commodities, while Chile has suffered a process of premature de-industrialization and most of its exports continue to be primary products, although they have become more diversified and industrialized.⁷⁶ Monetarist policies in Argentina also resulted in industrial decline for a few years but the policies and their outcome were less severe than in the case of Chile.⁷⁷

Those advocating an export oriented industrialization strategy not only misrepresent the actual experience of the newly industrializing countries but fail to acknowledge that the East Asian model may not be generalizable.⁷⁸ For a start the 'fallacy of composition' has to be considered, i.e. that if most Third World countries begin to export industrial products this will not only lead to a fall in industrial prices but might also bring forth even more protective barriers by the developed countries against industrial exports from the Third World. It is not necessary to be an export pessimist to recognize that the favourable conditions existing in the world market for industrial exports in the pre-1980s might no longer hold, especially as the expansion of industrial exports has already declined during the recession-prone 1980s. The increasing competition for developed countries' markets, the pressures for greater protectionism in the advanced countries, and new technological developments (such as robotics) which threaten to create new advantages for locating industries in the developed countries will make it more difficult for developing countries to export

industrial products.

Thus, it would be foolish to advise Third World countries to opt exclusively for an export-oriented strategy. On the one hand, the chances of replicating the export success of the East Asian countries are slim; on the other hand, the debt crisis, on top of the depressed state of primary-commodity prices and of market opportunities for primary-product exports, should encourage some import substitution, although depriving less-developed countries of capital for undertaking such new investments.

It might therefore be judicious for underdeveloped countries to combine varying degrees of both an inward- and outward-directed development strategy according to changing circumstances. In such a combined strategy exports become a means of achieving further internal development. Such a strategy would seek to break down the barriers between economic sectors by enhancing, for example, the industrialization of agriculture, by stimulating exports of industrial products of primary products, but with as high a degree of industrial processing as possible so as to maximize value added, and by promoting an indigenous technological capacity.

Undoubtedly the state will continue to play an important part in the periphery's development process. In view of the premature de-industrialization of the Southern Cone countries, the task today is to devise an efficient import-resubstitution industrialization strategy as well as promoting industrial exports where it is sensible so to do. The civilian governments which have recently emerged in some Latin American countries have reversed some of the previous neo-conservative and neo-monetarist policies and given greater scope to government intervention and industrialization. Reflecting this new mood, many structuralists would endorse the following comment by a perceptive foreign observer: "Difficult though it may be, there is a broad commitment in Latin America to harness and use government intervention more productively. That translates into greater selectivity and decentralization of authority; into reliable access to real resources, rather than second-best measures that provoke other disequilibria; into attention to macroeconomic policy as well as to cost pressures that reproduce high rates of inflation; into adequate growth of exports to reduce the constraint on growth emanating from the balance of payments: exports are a means, not an end, important for their regular supply of foreign exchange rather than industrial dynamism; and into acceptance of integration into international financial markets, so long as they compensate for, rather than induce, vulnerability to external and internal shocks."⁷⁹

4. Final remarks on development theory and options

While in the early 1960s Dudley Seers held out the hope that the new discipline of development economics might overcome the crisis in economics,⁸⁰ by the late 1970s he argued that development economics itself was in crisis. On the one hand, he perceived that developed countries were beginning to experience structural problems in the post-industrial era and, on the other hand, that the rapid industrialization of some developing countries, together with the growing interdependence of the world economy, revealed a new situation. He also argued that development econo-

mics had not lived up to its promise as it had failed to address the crucial problems of mass poverty and unemployment in the midst of growth in the Third World. In his view, "To insist on the 'difference in circumstances', i.e. that the industrial countries were a 'special case', seemed revolutionary to some in the 1960s. Indeed, it was then a step forward. It discouraged the naive transfer of neo-classical economics ... to continents for which they had not been designed."⁸¹ He then concluded that, "From a professional point of view, the time has come to emphasize similarities rather than differences in circumstances and to dispose of development economics".⁸²

Seers argued that the way forward was for economics and development economics to be replaced by development studies because it offered the best hope for an interdisciplinary and world-system approach which was required for understanding and tackling the development problems in both the North and the South. In this context he mentioned that the Latin American school of development provided some useful pointers.⁸³ Paul Streeten echoes similar sentiments by arguing that today it is necessary to stress the 'unity in diversity' and concludes, following Albert Hirschman, that "the explanation of Southern societies, with different tools of analysis, has often led to new illuminations and discoveries in our own Northern societies, thereby re-establishing the unity of analysis".⁸⁴

Reform or revolution is still the paramount development dilemma facing Third World countries sixty years after Haya de la Torre and Mariátegui started this important debate.⁸⁵ Today, however, this central dichotomy has to be qualified, as development experiences since then have shown that a variety of transitions are possible. Also, the process of transition to a society free from poverty, discrimination, exploitation, and inequality is a far longer and more difficult historical task than originally envisaged. Furthermore, reformists and revolutionaries alike have often neglected or underestimated the possibilities and strengths of a neo-conservative challenge. Neo-conservative theory has provided a powerful ideology and tool of transformation for many counter-revolutionary modernizing elites in recent times in the Third World. Thus, it is the outcome of the class struggle which eventually decides which particular path of transition is followed by society.

There is certainly an urgent need today to develop and assert alternatives to neo-conservative theories and policies in both the South and the North. Given that many issues raised by structuralist and dependency writers are still relevant and that their original analyses retain some validity, it is possible that a new generation of neo-structuralists or neo-dependentistas might arise to develop these theories further. However, they would need to address a number of shortcomings and update these schools of thought if they are to make a new contribution to development theory. In this article I have sought to present the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the Latin American theories of development and underdevelopment, and to have shown their potential for further development.

NOTES

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Cristóbal Kay, Centre for Development Studies, Adam Smith Building, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8RT, Great Britain

Mehdi Fallah-Nodeh und Helmut Kramer ÖSTERREICH UND DIE ENTWICKLUNGSLÄNDER: DAS BEISPIEL IRAN

Einleitung

Die Beziehungen Österreichs zum Iran sind in den 70er Jahren und in den 80er Jahren mehrmals zum Gegenstand öffentlicher Diskussion in Österreich gemacht worden: So kam es anlässlich der wiederholten (Privat-)Besuche des Schah von Persien in Wien zu einigen Demonstrationen gegen den persischen Diktator gegen die Tätigkeit des iranischen Geheimdienstes SAVAK in Österreich. Nach dem Sturz des Schah und der Geiselnahme von US-Botschaftsangehörigen in Teheran nahm Bruno Kreisky in seiner Eigenschaft als Vizepräsident der Sozialistischen Internationale gemeinsam mit Olof Palme und Felipe Gonzales an einer Mission nach Teheran teil, um zwischen dem islamisch-fundamentalistischen Regime und den USA zu vermitteln. Schließlich gerieten ab Mitte der 80er Jahre die wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen Österreichs mit dem Iran in das Zwielficht illegaler Waffentransporte und verdeckter Kompensationsgeschäfte.

In diesem Beitrag¹ soll versucht werden, die Beziehungen und die konkrete Verflechtung Österreichs mit dem Iran in möglichst allen relevanten bzw. empirisch ausleuchtbaren Dimensionen in Form einer Längsschnittanalyse darzustellen. Eine derartige Gesamtdarstellung und -bilanzierung der konkreten Beziehungen Österreichs mit einem wichtigen "Entwicklungsland"² ermöglicht im Beobachtungszeitraum auch zu untersuchen, ob die gravierenden politischen und wirtschaftlichen Strukturbrüche im Iran, der Regimewechsel von einer pro-westlichen Regierung zu einem islamisch-fundamentalistischen politischen Regime, der Krieg mit dem Irak ab 1980 sowie die wirtschaftlichen Wechselfälle des Iran als Mitglied der OPEC in den wirtschaftlichen und politischen Beziehungen mit Österreich ihren Niederschlag gefunden haben.

1. Wirtschaftliche Beziehungen

1.1. Außenhandel

Die Handelsbeziehungen zwischen dem Iran und Österreich erfuhren in den 70er Jahren eine lebhaftere Aufwärtsentwicklung. Tabelle 1 zeigt, daß die österreichischen Exporte in den Iran von einem Niveau von 0,5 % an den Gesamtexporten Österreichs in den Jahren 1970 und 1971 auf 1,2 % im Jahre 1975 und auf 1,7 % im Jahre 1976 anstiegen. Diese Aufwärtsentwicklung hielt im großen und ganzen bis Mitte der 80er Jahre an. Der Iran wurde nach den USA zum zweitgrößten außereuropäischen