

MERCANTILIST THEORY AND THE PRACTICE OF  
ECONOMIC POLICY IN AUSTRIA IN 1743:  
AN ACCOUNT BASED ON THE PROMULGATION OF  
THE POLICE REGULATIONS OF 1743

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This contribution deals with the contradictions between mercantilist theory and the practice of economic policy in the Austria of 1743, using as an example the discussions on theoretical principles that preceded promulgation of the police regulations (*Polizeiordnung*) of 1743. It reaches the following conclusions: The police regulations of high mercantilism in Austria had protectionist goals and were aimed at promoting domestic industrial production and securing an active balance of payments and trade. Direct intervention in the consumption sphere seemed the only means available for achieving this end. But there were practical obstacles in the way of its implementation, which resulted from lacking administrative structures and the fact that market economy principles were already well developed. This is why compromises were above all applied in mercantilist Austria in which market-economy elements can be discerned. Both the goals and the choice of means for intervention in the economic process in Austrian mercantilism indicate the existence of surplus purchasing power and a stable consumption basis among broad strata of the population.