

PROGRAMMING AND SOCIAL NEEDS AND INTERESTS

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Programming is an instrument of policy, a method of its formulating, its working out. In the course of the programming process draft plans of political solutions are made and policy is shaped. Programming is not the sole method of working out political solutions, although it accompanies political activities on all levels of social life's organization in socialism. Programming is the principal method of preparing political decisions and activities. The more effectively scientific principles of programming are applied the less room is left in the activities of political centres for hasty and spontaneous decisions, which are usually accompanied by a lack of consistency and voluntarism.

Politics has never been just a superstructure over economic processes, but has always been a more or less vital element of those processes. Nowadays, the presence of politics in economic processes is an everyday phenomenon. Such is the case not only in the socialist countries but also — although in a different way — in advanced capitalist countries.

The necessity of programming in conditions of socialist society as a universal method of preparing decisions and activities stems from the globalization of social processes and also economic processes due to the modern character of productive forces and social ownership of the means of production.

Thus programming is of political nature. It is, in the first place, political programming. Programming is made on the national level, but in order not to hang it in mid-air, it has to be carried out also on the remaining levels of society's organization and in accordance to the characteristics of those levels.

The programming work, defining the social substratum of this work, is based on social interests. In the socialist economy there is a particular connection between the goals of society and the goals of elements of which it is composed. This is, according to *B. Klapkowski* and *A. Jankowska*, the so-called double structure.¹ Economic effects should satisfy society as a whole and at the same time meet differentiated needs of social strata, social groups and individuals.

This is a theoretical postulate whose realization is only partly feasible. If economic effects do not comply with interests and aspirations of the whole of society, then this state is confirmed by various disintegration processes. The

lack of signs showing to the looming or already developed disintegration processes on a large scale due to i.a. economic reasons testifies to the preservation and maintenance of a functional equilibrium of economy vis-a-vis social objectives projected in common consciousness.

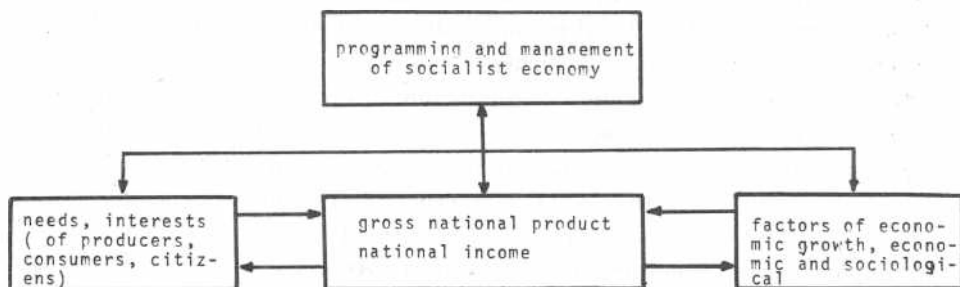
The maintenance of a functional equilibrium of economy does not negate the appearance of partial disintegration processes, which are manifestations of every development process. A task of social policy is to control the intensity of those processes in case they are due to economic reasons. Social integration is never fully feasible and depends on a number of factors, of which of particular importance is, according to *M. Borucka—Arctowa*, a degree of convergence of chief goals and interests represented by state authority and systems of values of individuals and social groups.² The state integrates the activities of various social groups, influences the structure and character of those groups also in the context of their needs and interests through an expansive information system and the initiating of new behavioral patterns.

The differentiation of social needs and interests is based on (1) social division of work and the place occupied in this division by individuals and social groups, and (2) discrepancies between social needs and resources, which at any given moment are limited in relation to needs. Always remaining in the socio-economic system an individual or a social group is always in a double relationship that occurs in that system, namely it is dependent on a state of social resources and division of work. Thus, it was not by incident that *K. Marx* wrote that »common interest exists only in imagination as »common«, but first of all in reality in the form of interdependence of individuals among whom work is divided».³ The content, forms and means of realization of interests — stated Marx — »... are furnished by social conditions, independently of individuals».⁴

»Economic relations of every society manifest themselves primarily as interests»⁵ — wrote *Engels*. In turn, in the whole of social interests projected in the consciousness of individuals, first of all personal economic interests are realized.⁶ In socialist society a premise co-defining the contents of those personal economic interests as well as in what measure and how they are translated into the language of political interests, is the way of solving discrepancies between social needs and resources.

A discrepancy between needs and resources is one of the most complex problems of economic life. The solution of this discrepancy is always relative in the spatial-time aspect and is done through constant multiplication of social resources, choice of an optimum at a given time structure of needs and as big as possible effectiveness of consumption.⁷ In socialist society, on the national level, the growth rate of economic freedoms, choice of a realistic structure of consumption and conditions determining its effectiveness are defined in the sphere of politics, in the course of programming process.

Figure 1



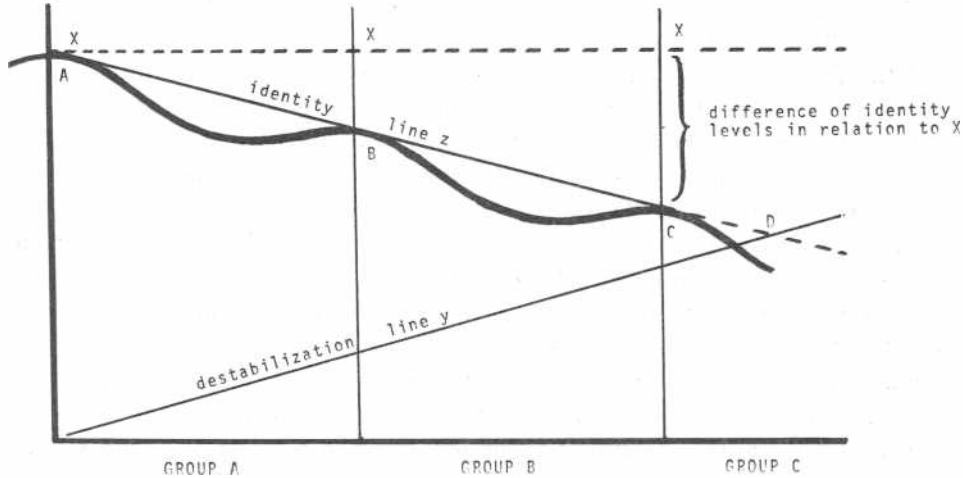
The so-called double structure of socialist economy (cf. above) makes it imperative that in the process of socio-economic programming both a general aspect of economy as a whole and an aspect of human behaviour (of individuals and groups) in the economic process be taken into account. Both those aspects have been always taken into account, namely in the period of industrialization and today, that is, in conditions of industrially mature economy based on intensive factors. On the other hand, social contents of both aspects differ since in those two periods needs and interests which are manifested in social aspirations and behaviours as well as factors of economic growth have had a different structure. A general structure of those interdependencies⁸ is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 is an illustration of the fact known from the experience of the socialist countries that social needs and interests influence the rate and structure of growth of gross national product (national income). Another, relatively autonomous element decisive of methods of achieving the said rate and structure of economic growth are factors of this growth. These factors are usually known; they are an objective element of socio-economic policy; on the other hand, the composition of these factors depends on social needs and interests which often make it necessary to revise the initially adopted decisions and plans.

Thus, for instance, the 1961—1965 five-year plan in Poland envisaged that the share of productivity in the growth of industrial output would amount to 80 percent, while the employment in the whole of economy excluding individual farms would increase by one million people. In fact, these indices in 1965 amounted to 67 percent and 1.3 million people, respectively. A small increase of real incomes and the pressure of rural population as well as women and adolescents on the job market resulted in the fact that the role of intensive factors of growth had to be practically smaller in order to solve social problems of that period.

The process of social production can and must be considered both in economic and sociological categories. This makes it possible for programming centres to read those needs and interests which are generated by the organiza-

Figure 2



tional system of economy and are in a direct relation with mechanisms of economy's management, a level of cohesion of organizational roles and social roles in general in an economic process. These factors might be called sociological factors of economic growth.

In production a lot depends on man's attitude to the process of work, the motives he is driven by, the level of his interest in the full and careful utilization of working time and material resources. In the process of programming and management of social production, workers interests should be read and utilized for the effective realization of socio-economic goals.⁹ The permanent workers' interests are manifestations of economic, sociological and organizational laws shaping economic processes. This stems from the fact, as has been correctly observed by P. Tobera, that individual enterprises take final decisions which are decisive for the functioning of the whole of economy and it is there that the final stage of a complex process of taking economic decisions is realized.¹⁰

A task of politics is to ensure the highest possible level of identity of interests of social groups. The problem might be schematically illustrated as follows¹¹ (Fig. 2).

Figure 2 shows the so-called tri-modal structure of identity of three diversified social communities (groups) in relation to the interest «x». The communities are not uniform, they are diversified as concerns e.g., the place they occupy in a social structure, which has the supreme interest «x». The task of the coordinating (programming) centre of a given structure is that (1) the difference in the identity levels of given groups in relation to the interest «x»

be as close to zero as possible, or (2) the difference in the identity level of the said social groups in relation to the supreme interest »x» do not project beyond a given critical point.

If the identity line »z» projected beyond the critical point »D», this would mean that the disintegration processes taking place within the structure threatened the minimum cohesion necessary to preserve the structure. The critical point of that cohesion is delineated by the destabilization line »y» when it reaches the value »D». If the value »D» of the destabilization curve »y» was equivalent to the value »C» the coordinating centre would have to undertake a series of basic measures in order to return balance to the structure. Those measures might be as follows: re-interpretation of the supreme interest »x» in concrete-situations categories, seeking of additional causes which undermined the place of group »C» in the system of interests of the whole community, that is, the examination of the state of disturbances in the system of relationships of group A and group B in relation to each other and in relation to group C, etc.

In socialist society there is a continuous process of clashing and coordination of social needs and interests. Let us now examine the role of socio-economic programming in controlling the process of coordination of social needs and interests. Coordination might be a spontaneous or controlled process. Coordination is an activity marshalling social behaviours in consideration of the given objectives projected also in norms and values. It is a manifestation of operation of mechanisms of self-regulation which on the nation-wide scale should have a character of dynamic self-regulation.

In the process of socio-economic programming the following problems are solved:

- »reading» and aggregation of articulated individual/group needs,
- definition of basic clashes of individual/group needs and interests,
- choice of a dominating system of preferences of individual/group and nation-wide interests,
- choice of methods of realization of the preferred needs and interests, considering also the fact of differentiation of interests on various levels of social life's organization,
- choice of an optimum socio-economic programme as an act putting an end to the clashing of interests round the goals of a draft socio-economic programme,
- the starting of programme's realization at the same time initiates the play of interests organized by the programme.

Let us now shortly examine the above tasks to purposefully steer human aspirations and behaviours which find their manifestation in individual/group needs and interests revealed in the course of socio-economic programming process.

»Reading» and aggregation of articulated individual/group needs and interests. The process of articulation is defined by K. Ostrowski as a process through which »the avant-garde is informed of postulates and needs of the masses», and its incipience is »a spontaneous forming in broad circles of society of various postulates necessitating decisions or acts of the political system», transferred through various channels of information and elaborated.¹²

J. P. *Georgica* distinguishes three stages of the articulation process, namely revealing of needs, arguing of interests and representing of postulates.¹³

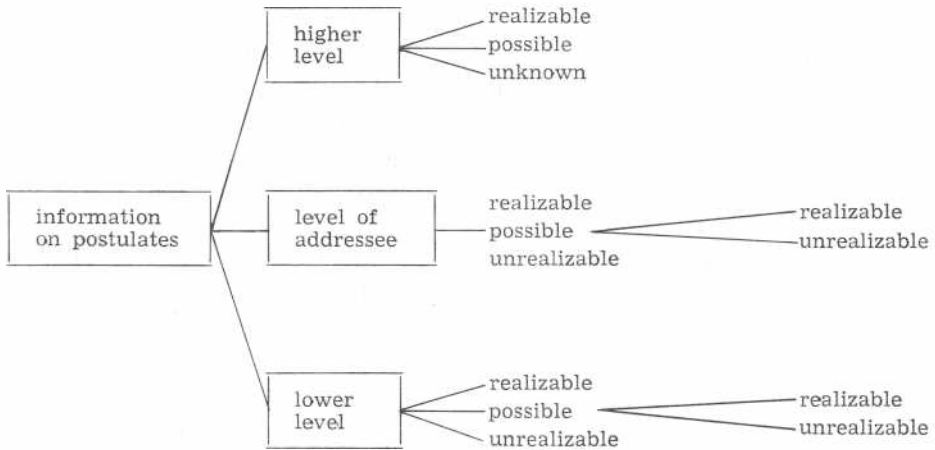
According to K. Ostrowski's approach each information of certain individual or group needs, evaluations and postulates containing a political context is a manifestation of the process of articulation of needs and interests politically significant. In this connection I would like to make two remarks.

Firstly, it is difficult to agree with W. *Narojek* that issues of workers' interests in Polish economy have only a limited chance to become a basis of political articulation.¹⁴ This is negated, to give but one example, by the December 1970 socio-economic crisis, as well as speeches and public discussions by our leaders in the years 1974—1975. Moreover, the practice of everyday activities of state administration and party apparatus is filled with information of workers' postulates transferred vertically.

On the other hand, one may observe a phenomenon of specific, intensive dispersion of workers' postulates accompanying their aggregation and horizontal coordination, which might be called a law of the aggregation process. This phenomenon is especially intensified due to the so-called discipline of the plan (budget) and often red-tapey methods of managing funds contained in separate chapters of the plan (budget). This constitutes a formal argument in favour of revoking individual postulates. Moreover, the leadership system of society prefers comprehensive structural solutions with a bearing on the future and that is why a specific neurosis of passivity towards postulates that necessitate another than the proposed distribution of current resources has been adopted in state administration and partly in trade unions and party apparatus. With the growing affluence of society and administration and management methods becoming more flexible this »neurosis» somehow gradually disappears.

Secondly, the »reading» of articulated workers' needs and postulates, also those which relate to non-economic problems, is a particularly vital act »all in itself» if one considers that it might be done as a manifestation of mistrust and proposals of other solutions than those that have been adopted in programme documents of party instances and the government. This might be sometimes interpreted also a result of foreign propaganda, influence of bourgeois political system's patterns, etc. That is why a lot depends on the mode of political management. A proposition adopted by Poland's political leadership after 1970 that it is necessary to pave the way for a critical-constructive attitudes of human

Figure 3.



individuals and groups towards current social phenomena on the basis of political values and norms of socialism constitutes a proper ground for overcoming many disintegration processes in human attitudes and activities.

The aggregation of individual/group needs and postulates submitted as public affairs should take into account their contingencies and motivations. In this way *key issues of individual/group interests are defined*. They reveal a level of equilibrium between a partial interest (individual/group) and a general interest, that is a degree of those interests' cohesion (cf. Figure 2). They also reveal the appearance of new needs and interests of general nature. The determination of the kind of causality tissue of articulated individual/group interests is at the same time the definition of decision levels relevant to the solution of given problems. Thus, this is at the same time a primary selection (arbitrage) of the postulates submitted. This selection depends on many factors, among which the already mentioned mode of political management is of by no means little significance.

A recipient of information on the reported needs and postulates in public affairs, for example a representative of a trade union, councillor, representative of a party instance, representative of economic administration, journalist, etc. initially locates the addressee of the information who is in power to assume an attitude towards realization possibilities. For example, the information might be related to the following decision levels together with an evaluation of chances to realize a postulate it contains (cf. Figure 3).

A recipient of information on a postulate usually makes double or even triple classification of the postulate. He initially determines its addressee, evaluates its realizability from the point of view of binding norms, disposable

Figure 4.

subsidiary criteria basic criteria	social concent- ration factor	state of social resour- ces	inter- national factor	time factor	
				long- term	short- term
ideological	1	0	1	1	0
praxiological	0	1	1	0	1
of consciousness	1	1	0	0	1

resources, binding preferences on individual decision levels, psychological reactions of postulate's addressee, etc. In many cases information on a postulate might not be transferred to the addressee already at the initial stage due to one of the above reasons. It might also be added to other postulates in such a way that it loses its autonomous character and undergoes minimalization from the point of view of social significance; this process might be called a negative aggregation.

Planning — says W. Narojek — is a method of linking group activities, that is, a central management of those activities with certain purposes in view. Similarly to the market in a free-competition system planning is a mechanism of self-regulation of the economic system, it is a mechanism of attaining goals that have been mapped out.¹⁵ In the course of the programming process a draft of the plan is prepared, which aggregates social interests on the macro-scale according to the set preferences. The plan constitutes a projection of distribution of social resources (more strictly, their increment and the part for the needs of simple production), thus directing group activities. The plan defines methods of attaining goals only in that part which necessitates definite material resources. The plan does not define, however, methods of disaggregation of macro-objectives into individual/group objectives. This end is served by a separate product of the programming process, namely the principles of economic management established according to the goals of the plan.

In the course of the programming process a *dominating system of preferences* of individual/group and national interests is selected. The choice of a concrete variant of the plan and methods of attaining its goals is a specific kind of arbitrage between many systems of individual/group and national preferences.¹⁶

The choice of preferences of individual/group interests is always made in the context of national interests. At least several kinds of criteria might be distinguished on the national level, with the help of which decisions are taken as to what interests and what methods to realize them are to be selected. They constitute a specific matrix of preferences (cf. Figure 4).

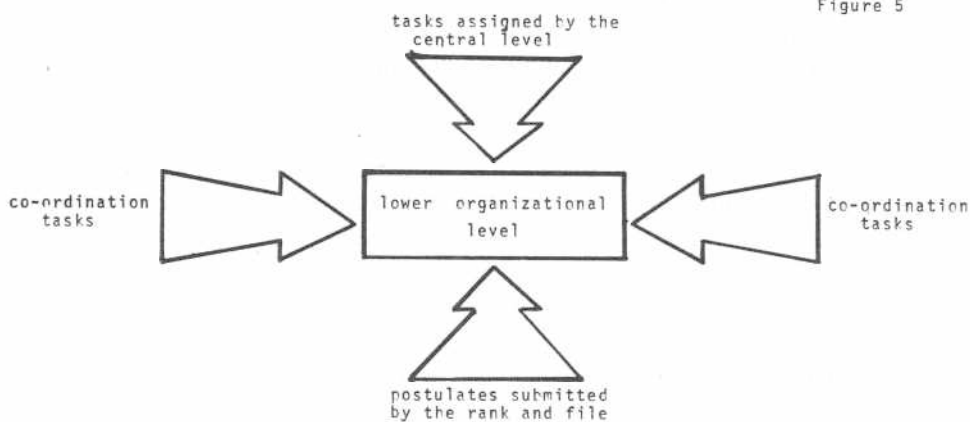
Figure 4 shows two groups of criteria defining preferences of a managing centre. Following *S. Zawadzki*, we have included into basic criteria an ideological criterion, that is, the criterion of a value of communist ideology, a praxiological criterion (rationality of action) and a criterion of the state of social consciousness.¹⁷

As concerns subsidiary criteria, they include a criterion of the state of social resources determining to what extent and in what way given social needs and interests might be satisfied. An important criterion in our opinion is international situation and the state of politico-economic connections of the country with abroad conditioning both the distribution of gross national product (e.g., in conditions of international tensions or disturbances on raw-materials markets) as well as reflecting on consumption patterns or behavioral patterns of some social groups. The choice of social preferences depends also on the time factor, and it depends on it in a double sense, namely (1) the factor of common social consciousness usually prefers solution in the shortest time possible, whereas the rationality factor and all the more so the ideological factor prefer solutions of long-term nature. In conditions of socialism there exist all possibilities to (2) seek a possibility of dynamic social equilibrium which implies optimization of socio-economic processes in a long period of time taking advantage of the opportunities furnished by a dialogue between »the party and society«. This means that there is a possibility of maintaining the states of lack of partial equilibrium in many sectors for a long period of time in favour of more comprehensive, structural solutions in the sphere of economy, social and cultural infrastructure, etc.

An especially essential subsidiary criterion is the so-called social concentration factor. This concerns the problem of social representativeness and force of environments in which given postulates and opinions have been formulated. If they are postulates representing aspiration of e.g. workers' or intelligentsia environments with a high degree of concentration and significance for social life, a managing centre usually has to take into account opinions of those environments and on the basis of those opinions amend drafts of decisions worked out in the course of the programming process (providing they are not repugnant to the reason of state).

In given social situations individual subsidiary criteria might become criteria decisive of the selection of given decisions and social undertakings. All those criteria reflect situational conditioning and determine social utility of decisions that have been worked out.

A separate problem is a matter of applicability of criteria shown in Figure 5 for decisions taken on lower levels of social life's organization. Lower levels of organization are under three kinds of influence, namely (1) of tasks assigned by the central level which stem from the disaggregation of national goals and preferences. They result from (2) postulates submitted by the rank and file



(also those coming from the lower level), which result from either unsatisfied requests from former periods or »play of interests» organized in the course of the process of realization of tasks determined by central tasks and supplementary tasks stemming from the process of distribution of own resources. Thirdly, they result from (3) coordination tasks included in the structure of a given organizational level as a task of a functional equilibrium of this level (cf. Figure 5).

A managing centre of the lower organizational level participates in the process of programming by the central level by submitting to it its postulates and tasks as well as data on the state of resources. It fulfills those tasks both in the phase of the preparation of the central programme (plan) and in the course of its implementation. After having been assigned central tasks it should disaggregate them and prepare its own programme. The programme of a given organizational level is never able (because of the limitations of national resources) to fully satisfy the needs and interests of a given organizational level since even in the situation of especial affluence of e.g., a region, a part of increment of its resources is expropriated by the central level to satisfy the needs of other regions which have a deficit of resources. In this situation a managing centre may choose one of two strategies:

- revoking of all postulates submitted by the rank and file which do not fit into the framework of resources envisaged in its own programme approved by a higher organizational level. In this situation arguments of ideological nature explaining the existing situation by national reasons are used for justifying the negative attitude towards additional postulates. In situations of social conflicts a managing centre of a given organizational level practically ceases to exist.

— aggregating of additional postulates submitted by the rank and file as well as tasks stemming from the necessity of maintaining functional equilibrium of a given level and seeking of additional methods of satisfying the most pressing needs which have not been included in the initial programme prepared on the basis of central tasks. Such a situation transferred to the national scale broadens the scale of spontaneity of socio-economic processes, brings about inflationary phenomena, etc., but at the same time it makes it possible to more fully utilize the resources and to maintain a high rate of growth. In the course of the programming process carried on on a given organizational level as well as in political influence on social attitudes, the ideological pressure is considerably smaller than in the first case in favour of broader consideration of a praxiological criterion and appealing to individual/group consciousness in categories of common values.

A choice of one of the above strategies totally depends on the rules of social game adopted by the central level on the basis of a general state of society and its concrete/historical preferences. It is one of the key problems of *choosing methods of realizing preferred national needs and interests* in such a way that they in effect would ensure dynamic national equilibrium. Both strategies are aimed at the maximum utilization of material and psycho-social resources. Both strategies, however, are accompanied by certain social costs; experience has taught us that the first strategy is typical of the industrialization period.

Those costs manifest themselves, for instance, in the fact that in the case of the first strategy, the differentiation of interests of various levels of social life's organization is not taken into consideration. This leads to a situation in which a number of resources and reserves at disposal of individual levels are not revealed and gives rise to phenomena of affairs the centralization of decision-taking is strengthened. In result, the system of programming and management becomes little productive and red-tapey.

On the other hand, social costs involved in the second strategy include the conscious acceptance of elements of a specific spontaneity of socio-economic phenomena which dynamize the whole of social system of economy provided that they are controlled. This makes it possible to better »fix» differentiated interests of various organizational levels of society in a national objective.

In other words, this strategy makes it possible to link individual/group interests with interests of economic organization or more generally speaking of a given organizational level through the system of motivations (identification, adaptation) and participation in taking organizational decisions.¹⁸ In this case organization is a fully autonomous unit and only as a whole linked with national objectives. In case of the first strategy individual/group goals/interests are in some measure directly considered as national objectives and are only the result of the disaggregation process of the latter. The existing links

are of political nature, and described in material categories, as outcomes of technological-economic balances, they give rise to a phenomenon of fetishization of politics and its alleged omnipotence. The implementation of tasks at each work post is supported with a normative (ideological) constraint. Organization as links handling individual/group interests and aspirations and as a whole combining with national objectives exercises secondary functions. To this boils down a sociological sense of the difference between the two strategies. Experience has shown that the efficiency of socio-economic system functioning is sometimes looked upon through a prism of efficiency of an organization in which a given individual or social group functions. On the other hand, in the majority of cases this efficiency is evaluated through a prism of functionality of services and state administration. Only in specific cases which might be called marginal situations the bond between individual and national interest is perceptible in the everyday process of work (and in leisure time).

The effectiveness of the second strategy has been proved by the economic practice of Poland in the first half of the seventies. In general, however, there is a lack of theoretical generalizations of this economic process, which sometimes leads to extreme opinions that e.g. there is no mature economic theory of the development of socialism.¹⁸

*The choice of an optimum socio-economic programme completes the process of clashing of interests round the goals of draft programme,*¹⁹ developmental proposals, directions of resources distribution, methods of realization, etc. Then begins a play of interests of adaptational nature in the framework defined by the programme (plan) and taking into account circumstances which can never be sufficiently accurately anticipated in the plan.

Repeating W. Narojek it might be said that the system of organization of social activities defined by the plan reveals interest-creating capabilities²⁰ as by steering social aspirations and defining rules of social behaviour stemming from plan assumptions it leaves for economic processes to turn plan goals into reality through a large mass of human behaviours. Steering those behaviours is a property of management. Management is the guiding of plan implementation, pursuance of economic policy — says J. Beksiak — is a continuous process of decision making.²¹

The beginning of programme (plan) implementation at the same time initiates a game of interests organized by the programme. The social sense of this game of interests might be defined as follows: various levels of management (enterprises, industrial combines, unions, etc.) have various economic interests that are uniform in their basis but manifest this uniformity in differentiation. Similarly differentiated are particular interests of mutually bound economic subjects of the same level. The system of economic interests in socialism reflects and represents economic interrelations and interdependencies

in economy,²² projected on the tissue of technological-economic ties and balance relationships.

Those ties and relationships are realized in the situation of a great heterogeneity of conditions of the realization of the management rationalization principle. There is a great differentiation of conditions of attaining mutually bound goals in time (outlays-effects) between economic subjects made mutually dependent by the plan or supply contracts. Their dependence on foreign relations are often differentiated. Differentiated is also their dependence, say, on climatic conditions. Differentiated social and living conditions as well as wages integrate or disintegrate workers' crew and thus strengthen or weaken the discipline of plan realization. Mutually dependent economic subjects often differ in socio-professional structure of their crews (for example a big share of the so-called farmers—workers in one of them) which is of paramount importance for a production rhythm and production costs.

Examples of differentiation of operation conditions of economic subjects mutually linked by the plan might be quoted on end. They point to the wealth of conditionings of the programming process and the management process; they indicate to what measure social prosperity depends on motivations and attitudes of participants in the economic process.

NOTES

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7 R. Bielousov, *Plan, intieresy, aktivnost trudiashchikhsia*, Moscow 1974, p. 11.

8 Cf. R. Bielousov, *Plan, intieresy, aktivnost trudiashchikhsia*, *ibid.*, p. 65.

9 R. Bielousov, *ibid.*, p. 3.

10 P. Tobera, Sociological problems of decision-taking in an industrial enterprise, in: *Contemporary problems of management*, Warsaw 1974, p. 334.

11 Cf. O. Lange, *Introduction to econometrics*, Warsaw 1971, p. 15. Cf. also: H. M. Blalock, *Statistics for sociologists*, Warsaw 1975, p. 92—102.

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¹⁶ A. K. Koźmiński, Sociology and economics, in: J. Danecki (ed.), *Social aspects of economic expansion*, Warsaw 1974, p. 107.

¹⁷ S. Zawadzki, A contribution to the theory of taking state decisions, *Studies of Political Sciences*, 1975 No. 1.

¹⁸ Cf. S. Rainko, The party and intellectuals. An attempt to analyse certain problems of socialism, part 2, *Kultura*, December 7, 1975.

¹⁹ B. Kłapkowski, A. Jankowska, *ibid.*, p. 215.

²⁰ W. Narojek, *ibid.*, p. 504.

²¹ J. Beksiak, *A Managing Society*, Warsaw 1972, p. 27—34.

²² L. Abalkin, Ekonomicheskii rost SSSR i problemy upravlenia proizvodstvom, *Komunist*, 1973, No. 13, p. 44.