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**SPATIAL DIFFUSION OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY:
THE EXAMPLE OF „MONAR” MOVEMENT
IN POLAND**

In studies of contemporary social geography an increasing significance is attached to questions of social activity, of citizens' participation in socio-political life, emergence of spontaneous social organizations, etc. Such phenomena are treated as symptoms of the growing interest of citizens in participation in the execution of power at its various levels, and especially at the local level, and as the sign of dissatisfaction of a society with previous functioning of the state and its institutions (see Gundry and Heberlein 1984, Jasiewicz and Jasińska 1981). Simultaneously it is proposed that social activity is a consequence of growing human needs in the area of self-realization and development of personality, and therefore it is an effect of the systematic increase of educational level of the society, of higher personal incomes, etc. (Cox and Mc Carthy 1980, Smith 1985).

At the beginning of the 1980s there occurred in Poland a significant increase of socio-political activity within various domains of life. Among many symptoms of the increased activity of Polish society one can especially distinguish initiatives and movements related to health care of population. Beside the movements of ecological character or those related to gathering of funds for construction of health care facilities, there appeared a social movement aiming at stopping of the spread of drug addiction.

Perceptible increase of the drug problem started in Poland in the years 1968—1970. While in 1960 there were only 103 patients admitted to hospitals as drug addicts and in 1965 there were still only 148 such patients, in 1970 this number increased to 336 persons.. In 1968 there were 467 drug addicts registered, in 1969 — 584, in 1970 — some 1,100, and in 1972 — already around 2,500. But a really rapid growth of drug abuse, especially in its spatial aspect, occurred at the end of the 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s. In 1980 drug dependence was concluded in 8,365 cases, in 1981: in more than 10,100 cases, and in 1982 in almost 12,000

cases (Cekiera, 1985). Simultaneously, there was also an increase in the annual number of deaths related to drug abuse: 1979 in the whole of Poland only 19 such deaths were recorded, in 1980 — 33, in 1981 already 80, and starting with 1982 more than 100 drug addicts die this way every year. The spread of drug addiction, especially among young people and even among children—according to C. Cekiera (1985) in 1981 as many as 65% of drug addicts were of 18—25 years of age and further 13% of drug addicts were persons below 17 years of age—caused anxiety of the broad public, which resulted in the creation of Youth Movement for Countering Drug Addiction, “Monar”, in 1981.

The idea of social action aiming at limiting the drug abuse has in Poland some fifteen years of tradition. In 1973, for instance, a team dealing with studies of drug addiction among young people was created and affiliated with the Social Antialcoholic Committee. The real beginnings of the widespread social movement against drug addiction date, however, from the end of the 1970s and are closely connected with the person of Marek Kotański, psychologist, who has become in the fall of 1978 the head of the drug addiction treatment centre in Głusków, some 60 kms to the south-east of Warsaw. The effectiveness of methods applied in Głusków and the extraordinary energy displayed by M. Kotański, his associates and ex-patients, have earned wide reputation. In June 1981 a group of young people from secondary schools in Warsaw published an appeal concerning the fight against drug abuse. M. Kotański and his followers took advantage of this and started to work for creation and formal acceptance of a youth organization working against drug abuse, and succeeded in forming it in August 1981.

Activities of the Youth Movement for Countering Drug Addiction “Monar” can be summarized in three main points: (1) creation of treatment and resocialization centres for drug addicts, functioning according to the methods of M. Kotański, (2) development of prophylactic and medical as well as rehabilitation activities through facilities taking the form of a network of consulting centres, meant for drug addicts and for persons encountering the drug problem in their life (e.g. parents), (3) conducting of publicity and educational activities through the network of “Monar” divisions, where people worked actively against the spread of drug addiction. Starting from the premise that drug addiction is conditioned psychologically and socially, the “Monar” movement initiated their activity among youth aiming towards formation of attitudes based upon authentic commitment, towards creation of desires of gaining the feeling of one’s own value, opening up of mechanisms triggering the need of bringing help to others, etc.

The subject of this paper is only one aspect of the activities of the “Monar” movement, namely time and spatial distribution of the number of persons being formally members of the association in the period 1981/82—1986/87.

Table 1

Some data on the development of "Monar" movement in the period 1982—1986

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	Totals
1. Number of persons entering the movement in a given year	274	194	273	164	402	1307
2. Number of new divisions of the movement in a given year	14	4	6	2	10	36
3. Number of voivodships having members of the movement	19	26	34	35	43	

Data of Table 1 indicate that the inflow of members to the „Monar” movement was not uniformly distributed over time in the period considered.

In fall and winter 1981/82 in several urban centres of Poland (in Gdańsk — in September 1981, in Białystok, Bielsko-Biała, Łódź and Szczecin — February 1982) were formally created first branches of the movement, whose main seat had been since summer 1981 located in Warsaw. In the first year of the movement's activity one could observe significant spatial concentration of persons entering the movement, for more than 75% of members lived only in six voivodships: Warsaw (58), Szczecin (44), Katowice and Łódź (34), Cracow (20) and Poznań (19). A large portion of the initial members were persons professionally dealing with the drug problem: medical doctors, psychologists, students, journalists, teachers. That is why most of the initial membership share came from the main scientific and cultural centres of Poland being at the same time towns with well-developed health-care functions.

In 1983 the numbers of new members entering the movement and the numbers of newly established branches of "Monar" diminished. Simultaneously there appeared, during 1983, a tendency towards inclusion of less urbanized voivodships such as Jelenia Góra, Elbląg, Konin, Białystok in the geographical stretch of the "Monar" movement, which first developed in the greatest urban centres.

Then, in 1984 the numerical dynamics of the movement took an upswing again, due mainly to the increase of new memberships in Warsaw and Katowice as well as Łódź and Białystok voivodships. Simultaneously the movement kept on strengthening in less urbanized voivodships e.g. Leszno, Suwałki, Jelenia Góra, Elbląg.

The subsequent year, 1985, brought an important decrease in the numbers of new members of the movement, so that the only voivodship in which there were more than 20 new members was Lublin voivodship. Simultaneously with the membership crisis which occurred in the previously leading voivodships, there was further geographical spread of the "Monar" movement into new areas, e.g. to Włocławek voivodship.

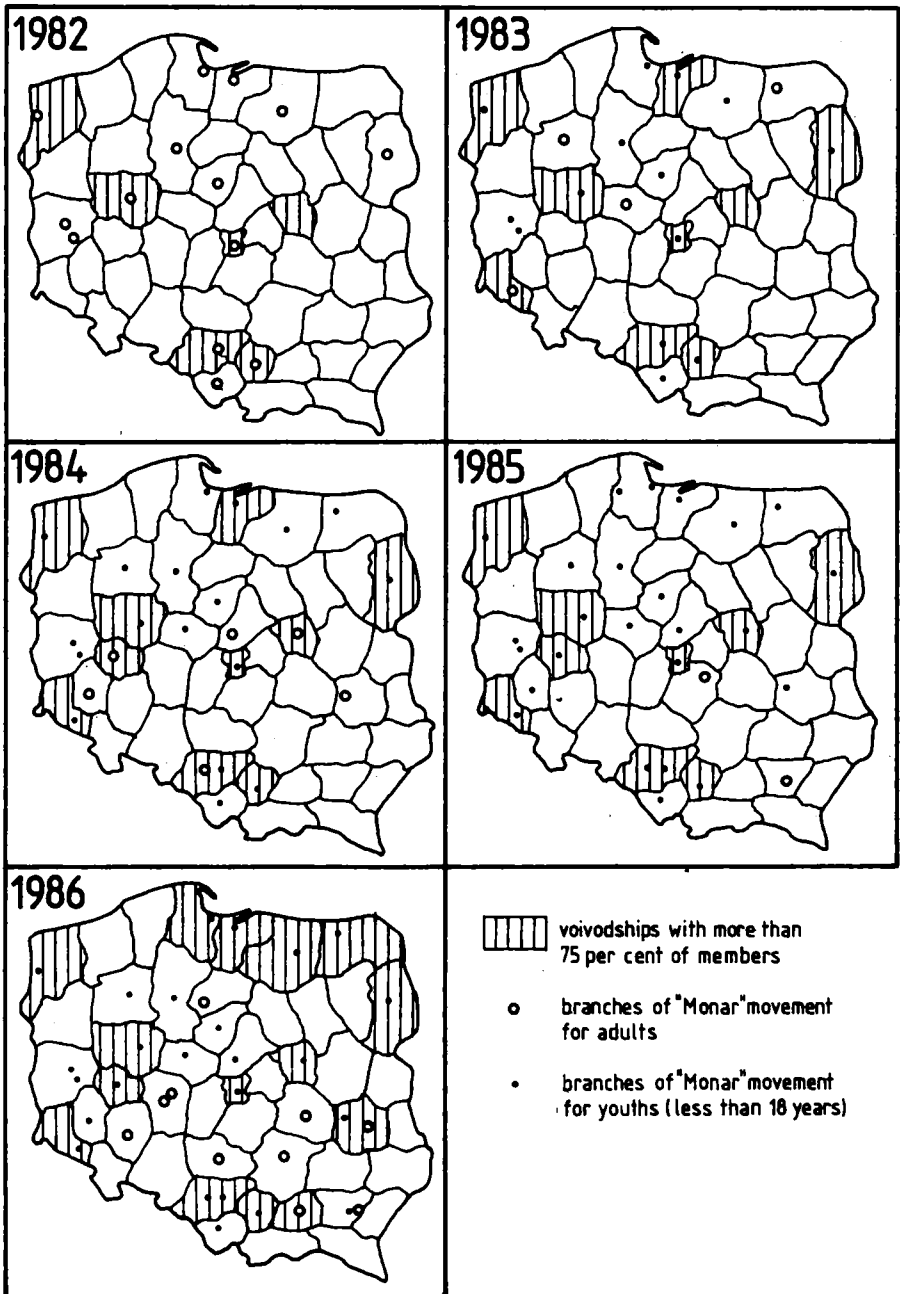


Fig. 1. The distribution of "Monar" members movement in the years 1981—1986

The last year of the period analysed, that is 1986, brought a rapid increase in the number of new members. The greatest number of persons entered "Monar" in Częstochowa voivodship. A significant growth of membership occurred also in Warsaw, Leszno, Olsztyn and Tarnów. It can be concluded from the data for this particular year that the "Monar" movement especially developed in smaller urban centres¹.

All this information, together with the maps of Figure 1, indicate that in the period 1981/82 — 1986/87 there has been a development in the "Monar" movement membership both in numbers and in geographical stretch. This allows tracking of the "Monar" movement growth in the light of the concept of innovation diffusion. According to the definition given by E. Katz et al. (1963), the subject of innovations may be constituted by ideas or attitudes, which means that in the given case it was possible to admit as innovation the acceptance of premises of the "Monar" movement as expressed by the fact of entering the association².

The maps presented in Figure 1 imply the following conclusions: (1) in the period considered, that is 1981/82—1986/87 there occurred a significant spatial growth of membership in the "Monar" movement, seen also in foundation of new branches of the movement; (2) a tendency towards deconcentration of membership can be observed in the process of geographical spread of the movement, as demonstrated by the fact that in 1982 as many as 75% of the members lived in just six voivodships, while in 1986 the same share extended already to fifteen voivodships; (3) in the first period of the "Monar" movement activity its members lived primarily in large urban agglomerations, while in later years an increasing number of persons represented small centres.

When analysing in more detail the mechanism of spreading of the "Monar" movement one can observe that popularization of its ideas and therefore also the inflow of its new members were shaped by the following most pronounced factors: (1) direct or indirect contact of an increasing number of persons, and mainly young people, with the drug abuse problem; (2) continuous mass media messages concerning the spread of drug addiction in Poland and in the world, and the threats resulting from this; (3) publicity for the activities of the "Monar" movement made by the mass media, and mainly by the TV and the radio, (4) personal energy, of organizers and members of the "Monar" movement, who travelled through the whole country and popularized the movement during numerous meetings —

¹ Some persons associated with the movement either left it after some time due to a positive action from their side or their membership was cancelled because they did not pay their dues. Thus, within the period considered altogether 1,307 persons entered the movement, but on March 31 st, 1987, the total number of members was 793.

² The concept of innovation diffusion was applied to studying drug addiction, for instance by M. Green (1974) and C. Wilvert (1976).

mainly in secondary schools — outlining the activities aimed at countering the drug abuse. It is hard to assess the ranks of the factors mentioned according to their strength of influence, but it seems that the first factor is not so important in determining the association with the “Monar” movements. This is demonstrated by the fact that in some voivodships with significant intensity of the drug problem (e.g. Wrocław, Legnica, Opole and Gdańsk voivodships) there are relatively fewer members of “Monar”, than in other parts of Poland, where the threat is much less acute (e.g. Częstochowa, Leszno and Tarnów voivodships), and where numbers of persons entering the movement are quite significant and still on the increase.

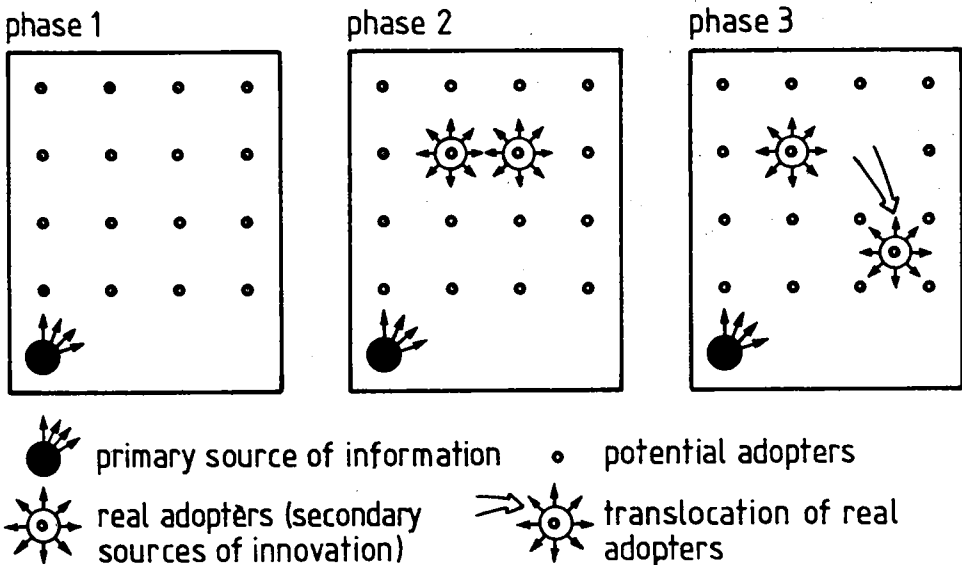


Fig. 2. The model of “Monar” movement diffusion

Figure 2 presents in a schematic way the mechanism of spatial propagation of membership in the “Monar” movement. When analysing spatial development of the “Monar” movement one can state that the character of this process is in its type similar to relocalational—hierarchical diffusion (Łoboda, 1974) since spreading of the ideas proceeds down the hierarchy of the settlement system, with simultaneous translocation of the source of information. On the other hand, the character of this process is in accordance with the contact — source model (Łoboda, 1983), since ideas of “Monar” are being disseminated both by the steady source of information (Head Office of “Monar” in Warsaw, and especially the president of this movement, M. Kotański — by TV, press and radio), and also through personal contacts of movement organizers, its members and sympathizers. A precise analysis of the data concerning the spatial and

time development of the "Monar" movement gives grounds to say that the latter factor may have the greatest importance in causing the increase of spatial reach of membership of "Monar" — and instances of that might be the mechanism of entering the association in Jelenia Góra voivodship (years 1984—1986), in the township of Łańcut with a bit more than 16 thousand inhabitants, in Rzeszów voivodship (April 1986), or in Tarnów (October 1986)³.

All in all it should be stated that the development of the "Monar" movement in Poland proceeded from the very start to a large extent according to the model of phenomena considered by geographers as adequately described by the innovation diffusion theory. Similarly as in the case of many other innovations, propagation of the ideas of "Monar" was especially influenced by the hierarchical effect of innovation spread. It is difficult to say something more about the features of processes described on the basis of studies encompassing just a few years. Already now, however, it can be assumed that in the propagation of the "Monar" movement an important role is played by the neighbourhood effect (Zielona Góra — Nowa Sól, 1982, Rzeszów — Łańcut, 1985/86, Kalisz — Ostrów Wielkopolski, 1986), and possibly also by the barrier effect (e.g. disadvantageous attitude of the local community). Verification of the hypothesis would require first a longer time of observation of the phenomenon studied, and, secondly, making of adequate research at the local level in order to more completely grasp the mechanism of innovation propagation, through studies of perception of the drug abuse phenomenon, of attitudes and motivations of innovation adopters as well as their social status etc. Studies performed to date leave also quite open the problem of whether the spatial development of the "Monar" movement resulted from its organizational prowess and personal commitment of its members or whether it results from the generally increasing social and political activity of wider and wider population strata, who become conscious of dangers related to drug abuse.

³ Establishment of the "Monar" division in Łańcut and recruitment of first movement members (14) there was related to the visit of M. Kotański in this town.

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