

Mechanisms & Agents of diffusion

- ❑ Imposition
 - International/regional organisations
- ❑ Harmonisation
 - transnational society
- ❑ Imitation & emulation
 - national state or focal organisation
- ❑ Norm socialisation in professional networks
 - formal & informal transnational networks of professionals

Examples from Southeast Asia (I-M-S)

Imposition

- WB and ADB programmes and post-1997 IMF interventions in Indonesia

Harmonisation

- Not so much regional harmonisation
- Harmonisation in anticipation on WTO/GATS

Imitation & emulation

- Clear and conscious copying from US in S'pore & Malaysia (e.g. SMU/Wharton; regional innovation systems)

Norm socialisation in professional networks

- Through education abroad
- Through professional consultations and visits
- Through training & capacity building programmes

Examples from Southeast Asia (I-M-S)

Examples of local adoption and adaptation:

- ❑ Singapore: policy borrowing from (market oriented) US system, but very strong state interference in own system

- ❑ Malaysia: many policies still based on ethnic diversity in the country

- ❑ Indonesia: policies get mixed with politics; much attention to geographical equity.

Conclusions

- ❑ convergence decreases when going down the ladder of the four stages of discourse, decisions, practices and results.
- ❑ useful to look at non-functional explanations in order to explain domestic higher education policies
- ❑ strong national forces are at play in the formalisation phase: issues that seemed to be converging in the discursive stage can result in very different policies, practices and results.
- ❑ statements about convergence need to be approached carefully
- ❑ convergence can be positive as well as negative