

How LIS ideas travel internationally to make libraries inspiring, surprising and empowering

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When ideas travel internationally, innovation occurs. Things that we see around us in libraries and that we take for granted have come about as a result of the spread (or diffusion) of LIS ideas. The example on this poster comes from a school library in South Africa. Seven innovations are illustrated. Some are specific to LIS; others are innovations in educational policies and practices. Inspection of the picture will show more examples. The current shape of libraries is the result of innovations that occurred over a long period of time.

In the panel I have used an adapted version of Lasswell's (1948) well-known "communication formula" (in spite of its theoretical deficiencies) as a framework for analyzing the process through which LIS ideas spread internationally. The most widely known model of the diffusion of innovations is that of Everett M. Rogers (2003), but it has limitations when applied to international spread of ideas in a field such as LIS. In the rightmost column I refer to a number of other models, theories and insights (see references below).

This poster draws on a draft chapter, still in progress, for a book I am writing on international and comparative librarianship. Draft chapters can be found at <http://peterlor.com/the-book>. Comments will be welcomed.

References

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Adapting Lasswell's (1948) Communication formula
 WHO says WHAT to WHOM in WHICH CHANNEL, with WHAT EFFECT?

Adapted formula	Questions	Resources & alternative models
<p>WHICH COUNTRY transfers</p>	<p>Where did the innovation come from? Which countries were the ultimate, mediating and proximate sources of the innovation? Can specific countries be identified? Global influences? UK: 3, 6; USA: 1, 4, 5; Anglo-American: 7; Global: 2 In South Africa: competing influences of British & US models.</p>	<p>Cf. Knuth (1999) and paper by Carroll, Kerr, Musa & Afzal at LTR/SET joint open session of this Congress.</p>
<p>WHAT ideas, policies, technologies, etc.</p>	<p>What is transferred or disseminated?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Books, journals, materials - Virtual access to databases - Furniture, equipment, technology - Systems (4) - Techniques, procedures (3, 5, 6) - Education and training - Professional associations - Policies (Funding & governance) (7) - Social & educational aims (1) - Values (2) <div data-bbox="1003 443 1624 798" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p style="text-align: center;">What is transferred or disseminated?</p> </div>	<p>Cf. Attributes of innovations as set out by Rogers (2003) Literature on “policy borrowing” in education, (e.g. Ball 1998); “Policy transfer” in public administration (e.g. Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000).</p>
<p>to WHICH COUNTRY</p>	<p>Which were the recipient countries? What was their relation to source countries?</p>	<p>Hegemony? North-South flow? Coercive transfer (Steiner-Khamsi 2010).</p>
<p>through WHICH CHANNELS</p>	<p>Channels of information and influence: Literature, foreign travel, education abroad, job exchanges, visiting experts, training courses, intergovernmental organizations, international NGOs, libraries of embassies and cultural agency libraries (e.g. British Council), etc. Roles: expatriates, colonial administrators, immigrants, experts</p>	<p>Role of networks: SNA: Social Network Analysis, cf. Roldán & Schupp (2006)</p>
<p>with WHAT MOTIVES</p>	<p>Recipient-initiated transfer: fortuitous discovery, solution-seeking missions, reform. Modernization, catch-up, electoral politics Donor-initiated transfer: trade, proselytizing, colonization, cultural, political & security interests, globalization, enforced “opening up” of markets, philanthropy, etc.</p>	<p>See Maack (2001) on cultural diplomacy in Francophone Africa during the Cold War; also Sturges & Neill (1998).</p>
<p>with WHAT OUTCOMES</p>	<p>Rogers (2003): Adoption or rejection: continued adoption, later adoption, discontinuance, continued rejection</p>	<p>Cowen (2006, 2009): Effects: transfer, translation, transformation (indigenization or extinction)</p>