

NAMING AND BRANDING: ACCOUNTANTS AND ACCOUNTANCY BODIES IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE AND COMMONWEALTH 1853-2003

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This paper is preliminary and in places incomplete. Please do not quote. Suggestions for improvement are welcome.

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Abstract The number of professional accountancy bodies and accountants within the British Empire and Commonwealth has greatly expanded within the last 150 years. The names of these bodies have followed a formula pioneered in Britain in the 19th century and certain designations, notably 'chartered accountant' have evolved as brand names. Access to and use of these brands has spread not with colonization but with decolonization of, first, the settler colonies and then the non-settler colonies. The paper charts these developments, noting the apparent paradoxes of the proliferation of royal charters in an increasingly non-monarchical UK, charters in republics, and how each country's experience has been different. The paper concludes with a look at branded accountants in a global economy.

Introduction

Of the 155 professional accountancy bodies in 113 countries which in 2003 are members of the International Federation of Accountants, 61 (39%) are located in 41 countries (36%) that were members of the British Empire as it existed in the mid 20th century (see map). These remarkable statistics suggests that the growth of the accountancy profession worldwide cannot be understood without an imperial dimension. The first authors to recognize this were Johnson and Caygill (1971) in a paper written whilst decolonization was still proceeding. More recently a number of researchers have addressed this topic, for example Parker (1989), Chua and Poullaos (2000), Carnegie and Parker (1999), and Anisette (1999, 2000). The aim of the present paper is to trace the spread of accountancy bodies throughout the British Empire and Commonwealth during the past 150 years and to explain the names chosen by those bodies and the designations ('brand names') by which their members have come to be known.

The paper begins with a discussion of the importance of names and brands in general and the problem of finding a suitable name for an accountancy body. This is followed by an examination of naming within an imperial context. The remainder of the paper concentrates on the origins and the spread of the 'chartered' and other brand names; the measures taken by UK bodies and others to protect their brand names; and how use of and access to brand names has been spread by decolonization rather than by colonization.

Within an ever-changing Empire and Commonwealth, accountancy bodies have been given names since 1853. No attempt is made in this paper to refer to all the multitudinous bodies that have been created. Indeed, given the tendency to proliferation of such bodies, it is doubtful if a definitive and complete list could ever be established. Many bodies have published official histories and in recent years there

have been many excellent papers and books on the development of the accountancy profession but most give little or no space to choices of name. Little is recorded in archives about how names were chosen.

Names and brands

We are constantly naming things. This paper has a name; the computer file that contains it has a name; the author of the paper has a name. Naming is important, but difficult—even of cats, if we are to believe T.S.Eliot (1940). Names are not neutral. ‘What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.’ So says Juliet to Romeo but they could not escape the tragic consequences of bearing the names of Capulet and Montague. The Capulets and Montagues at least agreed upon the name of the city they both lived in. But there are those who cannot so agree (e.g. the inhabitants of, in alphabetical order, Derry or Londonderry) and who often find themselves on the opposite sides of barricades or at the least of political and religious divides. During the First World War the British royal family felt obliged to change its name from the Germanic Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to the reassuringly British sounding Windsor (Rose, 1983, p.174). On the other hand, many multinationals in recent decades have sought (and paid consultants vast sums for) names which are supposed to have a global rather than a national ring.

A brand name in the context of professional services is a name that distinguishes a service or the provider of that service from competing services or providers. A successful brand name for an accountant or an accountancy body should: provide the services offered with an identity; differentiate those services from those of other providers; segment the market; and remove uncertainty in the mind of the client (Kapferer, 1992). Many clients do not have the skills to evaluate the quality of accounting services and they perforce rely upon the name of the professional body, and the designation of the professional person.

Naming an accountancy body

Ideally, the name of an accountancy body should reflect its strategy. According to Macdonald and Ritzer (1988: 257-8), all occupational bodies face a ‘dilemma of exclusiveness versus market control’:

In order to control the market, the occupational body must include anyone with a reasonable claim to expertise, but such inclusion brings in marginal practitioners, who lower the standing of higher status members.

They also face other choices: how to define the central core of the occupation (Bucher and Strauss, 1961); and how to define the physical territory over which they wish to exercise control (Parker, 1989). For example, naming a body the Sydney Institute of Public Accountants in 1894 would appear to have signalled a strategy of exclusivity, limiting membership to accountants who were in public practice in Sydney or perhaps in New South Wales as a whole, and excluding accountants not in practice and those resident in other Australian cities and colonies. However, accountancy bodies do not always have the power to pursue the strategy they would prefer but are constrained by

state authorities and competing organizations (Chua and Poullaos, 1998). Thus in a study of naming and branding one needs to ask in any given historical and geographical context who has the power to decide what names are given to accountants and accountancy bodies and what constraints they have operated under. Within the UK there have been few constraints on naming by state authorities (although it would have been difficult, for, example, to adopt the name Royal Institute of Accountants) but, as we shall see later, the courts have been used (sometimes successfully) by contending accountancy bodies to restrict choice of name. In the rest of the Empire and Commonwealth state imposed restrictions have sometimes been greater. Except for the Society of Accountants in Edinburgh in 1853-54 the founders of all accountancy bodies have had to choose a name in the light of names already in use elsewhere. Indeed, almost all bodies have taken a serious interest in the names of other bodies.

Making due allowance for strategy and constraints, what are the criteria for choosing a name for an accountancy body? It can be argued (with hindsight) that a name should ideally be informative, persuasive and territorial, and provide a designation and a set of initials for its members. It should inform outsiders that a group of accountants (perhaps of a particular kind: for example, those 'in practice' as distinct from those 'not in practice') have come together in a 'society', 'institute', or 'association' within a particular territory (which may be a city, a country, an empire, or even the whole world). It should be persuasive in the sense that words intended to signify merit or claims to closure or monopoly (or a rebuff of such claims) are included or that a link is suggested with an already existing body of high repute. It should distinguish its members from other bodies of accountants – or deliberately not so distinguish.

In practice name givers have made use of a limited number of words. The Scottish bodies formed in the 1850s pioneered the formula: 'The X of accountants in Z', where X is a word such as 'institute', 'society' or 'association', and Z refers to a city, province, state, colony or country. This formula was later expanded by the English to 'The X of Y accountants in Z', where Y is a word such as 'chartered'.

Society, association and institute are all words derived from Latin roots. 'Society' (from *societas*) was used as early as the 16th century to mean a group of persons united in fellowship (the Society of Apothecaries, 1617, for example). 'Association' (medieval Latin *associatio*) also dates from the 16th century, with much the same meaning. 'Institute' comes from *instituere*, to set up, to establish, and was first used to describe an organisation in the early 19th century (e.g. the Institute of Actuaries, 1848). By the second half of the 19th century the three words were almost synonymous, but perhaps formed a continuum of formality with association indicating the least formal body and institute the most formal. In *HMS Pinafore* (first performed in 1878) Gilbert and Sullivan's Sir Joseph Porter is articulated presumably to a member of the Law Society but nevertheless sits for 'the pass examination at the Institute', so that a rhyme can be achieved with 'bran new suit'.

As the first body to be founded, the Society of Accountants in Edinburgh had a free choice of these words. It is tempting to suggest that as a small group who clearly considered themselves an elite, the word 'Society' with its implications of a united fellowship may have been chosen as more appropriate than 'Institute', especially as the body they most wished to emulate was probably the Society of Writers to the

Signet, the leading body of solicitors in Edinburgh. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of this. The founders of the SAE originally set up what they termed an 'Institute'. Somehow this metamorphosed into a 'Society' in the royal charter granted in 1854 (ICAS, 1954: ch 2). Scotland's second body was the Institute of Accountants and Actuaries in Glasgow (IAAG), established in 1854 and granted a royal charter in 1855. The name of the IAAG was adopted after 'considerable deliberation' according to the official history (ICAS, 1954: 27) but its founders appear to have regarded 'Society' and 'Institute' as interchangeable terms. It is possible that the term 'Institute' was chosen the better to distinguish the new body from its Edinburgh counterpart.

Choice between institute, society and association was, however, often constrained by the existence of a body with a prior claim to one of the words. Thus in the UK incorporated accountants formed a Society in 1885 because there was already an Institute (formed in 1880); and certified accountants formed an Association in 1904 because there was already both an Institute and a Society. In Quebec the Association of Accountants in Montreal (formed in 1880) wanted to change its name to an Institute but for many years was unable to do so because a competing body had got their first. It became a Society instead in 1927, only later (1946) becoming an Institute.

The second part of the naming formula was 'accountants'. 'Accountant' has always been an ill-defined term but the word had already established itself in Scotland by the 1850s (Murray, 1930). The Glasgow Institute added the word 'actuaries' which at that date signified 'any clerk or secretary to a company, particularly one "skilled in calculations" such as the secretary of an insurance company or a friendly society' (Horne, 1947: 51). The calculations were not necessarily highly mathematical or statistical. Kedslie (1990b) has shown the greater importance of such appointments to the founders of the Glasgow Institute than those of the Edinburgh Society and concludes that the choice of name arose from a strong involvement with insurance and an undoubted desire to signal to the local business community their intention to retain this considerable interest.

Kirkham & Loft (1993) show how the 19th century accountancy bodies sought to ensure that 'accountants' (as distinct from, say, 'bookkeepers') were male not female. They also sought members who were middle class not working class, and, for the most part, white Anglo-Saxon protestants.

The third part of the formula was the name of a territory. The earliest accountancy bodies were based in particular cities and the name of the city was often included in the name of the body. In Scotland this was so in Edinburgh (1854), Glasgow (1855) and Aberdeen (1867); in England in Liverpool (1870), London (1870), Manchester (1871) and Sheffield (1877); in Canada in Montreal (1880); in Australia in Adelaide (1885) and Sydney (1894). The Scottish bodies retained their city-based titles until 1951, even though, for example, many members of the Glasgow Institute practised in Dundee. No one of them alone could extend its territorial designation to Scotland as a whole and the three bodies merged only slowly and unwillingly (Shackleton & Walker, 199x). The geographical limitation to Edinburgh was at first strictly observed in the SAE's admission policies (Kedslie, 1990a: 220). During the first fifty years of the SAE's

existence, however, the careers of members of the SAE were increasingly located in other parts of Scotland; in England, Wales and Ireland; and in North America (Walker, 1988: 44). Some even ventured as far away as Australia (Carnegie et al, 2000). The same was true of the Glasgow Institute and the Aberdeen Society. Nevertheless, the Scottish chartered bodies never adopted a policy of imperial expansion or intervention.

The Montreal and Adelaide bodies changed the territorial part of their names to Quebec (1927) and South Australia (1899) respectively much earlier. The names of states or provinces were included from the beginning in the names of bodies founded in, just to give a few 19th century examples, Manitoba (1886), Queensland (1891), Nova Scotia (1900) and Western Australia (1900). Irish (1888) and New Zealand (1898) bodies adopted the names of their countries.

From an early date some UK bodies (e.g. the Society of Accountants and Auditors, 1885) eschewed a territorial designation, thus implicitly claiming their territory to be the world, or at least that considerable part of it which constituted the British Empire.

Naming in an imperial context

When the first accountancy bodies were formed in Scotland in the 1850s, Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland were already one United Kingdom ruled from London, although Scots law was distinct from English law. An initiative in one part of the kingdom influenced but did not necessarily determine developments in other parts. British settlers in Canada, Australia and New Zealand regarded themselves as overseas Britons and at the same time looked forward to increasing self-government. For them, decolonization (although the term was not in general use before the end of the 1950s: McIntyre, 1998: 7) was already under way. By the time new bodies were set up in the UK in the 1880s, the colonists already enjoyed a considerable amount of local autonomy. The Dominion of Canada was established in 1867; the Australian colonies federated into what they called a Commonwealth rather than a dominion from 1 January 1901; New Zealand became a dominion in 1907; and the Union of South Africa was created as a dominion in 1910. What exactly constituted dominion status was always slightly imprecise but the national, provincial and state governments in the dominions certainly had powers to enact legislation relating to locally established professional bodies. Newfoundland (which did not initially join the Canadian confederation) and Southern Rhodesia (which did not join the South African Union) also enjoyed considerable self-government. Throughout the non-settler Empire, however, imperial rule was much more London based and decolonization did not begin until after the Second World War.

British settlement and conquest considerably influenced naming patterns of all kinds throughout the Empire. The language and names of the mother country or imperial centre were exported to, imported by and sometimes imposed upon the periphery. The influence of British place names is amply demonstrated on maps of North America, Australasia and other areas of British colonization (Christopher, 1988: 230-4). For example, there is an Exeter not just in England but also in New Hampshire and many other states in the US, in Ontario in Canada, in New South Wales and Tasmania in Australia, and no doubt elsewhere. The names of accountancy bodies and the designations of accountants were also imported and exported throughout the British

Empire and the Commonwealth, with the difference, however, that UK bodies with brand names were not keen to have those names taken over by local bodies. The greater the extent of decolonization, however, the less they were able to prevent this.

Thus the formation and naming of accountancy bodies on the periphery of the Empire were affected in two ways. First of all there were precedents that the importers of professional accountancy might wish to follow. This is brought out well by the statement by leading Australian accountant Thomas Brentnall that accountants in Melbourne in the 1880s:

knew the position attained by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which had been incorporated by Royal charter in 1880, by the Society of Accountants and Auditors in 1885, as well as the three Scottish Institutes, which had come into existence some years previously. With these examples before us, we had no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion that our object could best be attained by following in their footsteps (Brentnall, 1938: 64)

Secondly, however, peripheral bodies might be constrained in what they could do. Accountancy bodies in the imperial centre, and especially those based in London, had the opportunity to exercise influence on accounting developments throughout the Empire. The leading UK journal, *The Accountant*, took a lively interest in accounting throughout the world and was quick to defend the interests of British accountants and the designations of any rivals, especially within the Empire (Carnegie & Parker, 1999). The strategies of the largest British bodies differed, however. The ICAEW favoured exclusiveness. It did not seek members outside the UK, but it used its influence with the Colonial Office to protect the chartered brand throughout the Empire (Chua & Poullaos, 2000), although that influence was relatively limited in the settler colonies which had become Dominions. It was much stronger in the non-settler colonies, few of which developed accountancy bodies before independence (see Tables 1 and 2 below) and where accounting work was dominated by expatriate members of UK bodies. By contrast, the Society of Incorporated Accountants (established in 1885) and the Association of Certified and Corporate Accountants (formed by merger in 1939: see below) did not limit membership to accountants trained in the UK. Before its integration into the Chartered Institutes in 1957 the SIA actively sought members in countries such as South Africa and Australia, being particularly successful in the former. After its failure in 1970 to achieve a similar integration, the ACCA took on the SIA's role as an exporter of qualifications but, as decolonization progressed, to the non-settler British Commonwealth rather than to the old Dominions.

‘Chartered’ accountants in Scotland: originating and protecting the brand

The most successful brand name has been ‘chartered accountant’. According to Millerson (1964: 90-91):

In medieval England, a charter signified royal approval by awarding some monopoly power, then it became a more accessible form of incorporation, granting a legal monopoly for business or control; finally in modern times the

Charter has assumed a new dignity, by affording a different level of incorporation....Consequently a Charter has developed as an inter-association status symbol, a distinguishing mark, acknowledging supremacy in a particular field and the ability to provide a sound public service.

No body of accountants within the Empire and Commonwealth has ever received both royal approval and monopoly power but nevertheless 'chartered' has proved to be a powerful brand. Matthews (2003) goes so far as to argue that a major role of the chartered institutes in the UK was 'protecting the designation "chartered" and thereby defending the value of their members' training...this was the key function of the chartered accountants societies...The main function of the chartered societies was to create a hall-mark by which accountants with prolonged training and experience could distinguish themselves from those who lacked it.' It follows that other accountancy bodies might try to establish a similar brand for their members or to obtain for their members use of the chartered brand.

For 25 years there were 'chartered accountants' only in Scotland (Stewart, 1977). They were always relatively few in number: still only 332 by 1885. In 1855 and 1856 the members of the SAE and the IAAG formally resolved to call themselves 'chartered accountants'. This was a masterstroke of persuasive naming and branding: persuasive not informative because the word 'chartered' was not in the titles of the bodies and it was the bodies not their members that had received charters. No other profession at that date had members who referred to themselves as 'chartered', even though there already existed professional bodies in England and Wales of physicians, surgeons, civil engineers, solicitors, architects and veterinary surgeons that had been incorporated by royal charter, as was normal before the company legislation of 1844 onwards (Millerson, 1964). According to Walker (1991: xx) the term soon became popular, although more slowly in Edinburgh than in Glasgow. It was adopted by the Aberdeen Society from the date of incorporation in 1867. The designation was thus a brand name shared by three separate bodies which were not to merge until 1951. Richard Brown, the secretary of the Edinburgh Society wrote in 1905 that:

It naturally took some little time before the new name became familiar to the public or even in the mouths of the members themselves, but ere long it acquired a definite signification throughout Scotland ... (Brown, 1905: 212)

James Martin of the Corporation of Accountants (see below) put it rather differently, commenting that chartered accountants put the initials CA 'upon their intimations of births, their marriages and deaths, nay, even on their tombstones' (Martin, 1897: 33-34).

The Scottish chartered bodies were aggressively opposed to any new body perceived to be encroaching on their brand. This was linked, however, with a territorial limit. Scottish chartered accountants did not object to English and Welsh accountants adopting the chartered label within England and Wales in 1880 but they did object to the recruitment to the new body of members resident in Scotland. Some of these Scottish members were also members of the Scottish Institute of Accountants (SIA), established in Glasgow in 1880, the first body in Scotland to challenge the elitism and de facto near monopoly of the chartered bodies (Kedslie, 1990a: ch 8; Walker, 1991). The name of the SIA was carefully chosen to challenge the alleged geographical

limitations of bodies based in and named after Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. The founders of the SIA made much of the fact that they were a Scotland-wide body. They made three unsuccessful petitions for a royal charter, all of them opposed by the three bodies already possessing a charter. The first petition (1884) proposed that SIA members be allowed to use the chartered designation; the second (1889-90) that the SIA be allowed to use the name 'The Incorporated Society of Accountants in Scotland'; the third (1895-96) that the SIA be allowed to use the name 'The Scottish Provincial Institute of Accountants' and the designation CPIA. In 1891 the SIA sought incorporation under the Companies Act 1867 as 'The Incorporated Society of Accountants in Scotland'. All these attempts were vigorously and successfully opposed by the three chartered bodies as implying representativeness of the whole profession in Scotland. Walker (1991) regards this as a defence of monopoly; a subtler description would be protection of a brand, since the chartered accountants could not prevent other accountants from offering the same services.

The Corporation of Accountants, Ltd was incorporated by James Martin and others under the Companies Act in 1891 with a name deliberately chosen to produce the initials CA. The articles of association contained a clause that members designate themselves 'Corporate Accountant' or 'any initial or abbreviation thereof'. In 1892-93 the chartered bodies were successful in the Court of Session in Edinburgh in preventing members of the Corporation from using the initials 'CA'. In 1900 Martin tried again when the Corporation passed a resolution to adopt 'MCA' as the designation of members but were unsuccessful when taken to court. Finally the Corporation adopted, without formal opposition from the chartered bodies, the designation 'FCRA' (Fellow of the Corporate Registered Accountants).

These episodes show how important names were considered to be by the Scottish chartered bodies defending their brand. What they possessed and were determined to hold on to was a de jure monopoly not of the performance of particular professional tasks but of the control of the names of bodies and members, such that other accountants without those names did not de facto get appointed to carry out those tasks.

Whereas the Scottish chartered bodies were quick to defend their interests in Scotland, they made little or no attempt to influence accountancy names and designations outside Scotland. This was a task they left to the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which quickly became a larger and more powerful body.

Anglicizing the brand: chartered accountants in England and Wales:

English chartered accountants followed the Scottish precedents but also established new ones. In particular, they included the word 'chartered' in the name of their Institute and sought, with mixed success, to restrict its use throughout the British Empire. They did not seek, however, to export the English chartered qualification within the Empire. As we shall see later, non-chartered bodies based in England took advantage of this and began actively to export their non-chartered qualifications at first imperially and later globally. Specialized bodies were also set up.

The earliest English accountancy bodies were the Incorporated Society of Liverpool Accountants (1870), the Institute of Accountants in London (1870), the Manchester

Institute of Accountants (1871), The Society of Accountants in England (SAE) (1873), and the Sheffield Institute of Accountants (1877). All followed the Scottish formula of using the words 'Society' and 'Institute' apparently indiscriminately and indicating a restricted geographical location. Unlike Scotland, however, practising accountants were not concentrated in a few towns. Hence the need for the SAE. This was the largest Institute numerically but when the bodies were merged in 1880 it was the elite London Institute which dominated.

The original intention was to incorporate the new body by Act of Parliament but when the opportunity arose the alternative of a royal charter was preferred. The new body was named the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW). Unlike the Scottish chartered bodies, the ICAEW included the word 'chartered' in its name, the first accountancy body to do so. The members were designated chartered accountants. The name of the accountancy body was thus chosen to be the same as that of the designation or brand name of its members. Significantly, the new body was called an Institute of Chartered Accountants not a Chartered Institute of Accountants. It is not clear why it became an Institute rather than a Society—perhaps because of the dominance of the London Institute. By contrast, members of the Institution of Surveyors were more reluctant to call themselves 'chartered'. The Institution, founded in 1868 and incorporated by royal charter in 1881, was not renamed the Chartered Surveyors' Institution until 1930. It became the Royal Institution of Surveyors in 1946 (Thompson, 1968:173-8, 292, 333).

From the formation of the ICAEW there were many more English chartered accountants than Scottish ones and in 2003 the ICAEW is still the largest institute of chartered accountants in the world. The adoption of the designation 'chartered accountant' by the English Institute ensured, to continue the quotation from Brown (1905) above, that '... it soon became a recognised term wherever the English language was spoken'. This included not only the British Empire but also the United States.

Royal charters for all UK accountants: challenging and diluting the brand

Bodies competing in England and Wales with the chartered accountants attempted, after some initial hesitation, to establish their own brands. The most successful were the Society of Accountants and Auditors (SAA) (1885) whose members were designated 'incorporated accountants' and the London Association of Accountants (LAA) (1904) whose members were designated 'certified accountants'. The SAA took over the Scottish Institute of Accountants in 1899 and the LAA took over the Glasgow-based Corporation of Accountants in 1939. The members of the SAA and the LAA eventually became 'chartered' by different routes: the incorporated accountants were absorbed by the Chartered Institutes; the certified accountants became 'chartered certified accountants'.

The SAA changed its name twice: to Society of Incorporated Accountants and Auditors in 1908 and to Society of Incorporated Accountants in 1954. Its original name probably reflected the need to distinguish it from the ICAEW ('Society' rather than 'Institute' and the inclusion of all accountants not just auditors). There is more certainty about the reasons for the changes in name. Following the Scottish example, the SAA had chosen a designation ('incorporated accountant') for its members that

was not part of its name. When exclusive use of this designation was threatened by the LAA, the Society sued successfully and changed its name to include the designatory word (Garrett, 1961: 51-5). The change in 1954 was, according to the Society's secretary, a move towards conciseness without loss of comprehensiveness (Garrett, 1961: 2).

The negotiations for the absorption of the members of the Society into the chartered institutes in 1957 demonstrated what features of the brand the latter considered fundamental. Those members of the Society who had not been articled in a practising office and those who had qualified outside the British Isles were admitted to the Institutes not as 'chartered accountants' but as 'incorporated accountant members'. However this discrimination was abandoned in 1965, except for those who wished to practise in the UK.

The London Association of Accountants was incorporated under the Companies Acts in 1904. Its choice of name is not explained in the official history (ACCA, 1954) but it is highly likely that 'Association' was chosen because 'Institute' and 'Society' were already spoken for. It was founded in London but membership was not confined to London-based accountants (p.8). Perhaps it was thought that provincial accountants would be attracted by the cachet of membership of a metropolitan association. The name did not provide a designation. An attempt to use 'Incorporated Accountant, Lon.Asson' led to the dispute with the SAA already mentioned. As a result the Council of the Association chose instead in 1907 the designation 'certified accountant' (pp.8-9). However, the name of the LAA was not changed until the merger with the Corporation of Accountants in 1939. The merged body was given the name Association of Certified and Corporate Accountants (ACCA). The initials remained unchanged when the name was changed to Chartered Association of Certified Accountants in 1984 on the grant of a royal charter, suggesting that ACCA was regarded as a brand. The abbreviation CACA was avoided. In 1997 the initials ACCA were redefined as Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, members obtaining the right to call themselves 'chartered certified accountants'.

The predecessor bodies of today's ACCA include not only the LAA and the Corporation of Accountants but also the Institution of Certified Public Accountants (ICPA, formed in 1903) and the Central Association of Accountants (CAA). The founders of the CAA (incorporated in 1905) had fairly obviously chosen a name that included the initials CA. When it was proposed that the designatory letters of members of the new body should be ACAC for associates and FCAA for fellows, they were taken to court by the ICAEW—unsuccessfully (Stacey, 1954: 77-78). The members of the Central Association were absorbed by the ICPA in 1932, which in its turn was absorbed by the ACCA in 1941.

Two specialized bodies were also formed: the Corporate Treasurers' and Accountants' Institute (CTAI) (1885) and the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants (ICWA) (1914). Both bodies changed their names more than once. The Corporate Treasurers' and Accountants' Institute was set up in 1885 (Sowerby, 1985). The word 'corporate' referred to municipal corporations, 'treasurer' to the name attached to the job by most employers. The CTAI was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 1901 and renamed the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants (IMTA). The name originally intended was the Institute of Municipal

and County Treasurers but ‘and County’ was dropped on the opposition of some county treasurers. After a number of attempts a royal charter was granted to IMTA in 1959 without a change of name but with the designation for members of chartered municipal treasurer. After the failure of the integration proposals in 1970, a petition for a supplemental charter to change the name to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) was presented in 1971 and approved in 1973. As a result of objections from the English and Irish Chartered Institutes, the designation was changed not to the preferred ‘chartered public finance accountant’ but to ‘institute of public finance accountant’ (IPFA).

The Institute of Cost and Works Accountants (ICWA) was formed in 1919 as the Institute of Cost Accountants, whose members were to be designated FCAs and ACAs. Loft (1988: 194) believes that it is quite possible that the prime mover of the new body, W.E. Stacey, ‘deliberately chose a title for the new Institute which was aimed at confusing its members with chartered accountants’. However, the addition of the word ‘Works’ accurately reflected the new body’s rather down to earth engineering connections. By the 1960s in the UK the more glamorous term ‘management accountant’ had been imported from the US. When integration with the chartered accountants failed in 1970, the ICWA applied for its own royal charter. This was granted in 1975 and in the same year the name was changed to the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants (ICMA). The charter did not grant a right to the designation chartered management accountant and when this was requested in 1983 it was refused (Banyard, 1985, pp.63-4). In 19xx the name was changed to the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA).

In 2003 there are thus five major accountancy bodies in Great Britain, all of which have been granted royal charters. All attempts at merger have failed (Shackleton & Walker, 2001). The leaders of the ACCA, CIMA and CIPFA obviously believe that the benefits to their members of the grant of a royal charter and the right to use the designation ‘chartered’ are worth striving for, although like all brands quantification of the benefits is very difficult. It is possible that the proliferation of charters has diluted the brand. As Gilbert and Sullivan pointed out in *The Gondoliers* (1889), ‘when everybody is somebodee, then no one’s anybody’. If all accountants are chartered accountants the term becomes generic.

Charters (royal and non-royal) for settlers: Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders

The concept of a professional accountancy body was exported from the UK to the rest of the British Empire, but the formation of local bodies was for many years restricted to those (increasingly self-governing) colonies dominated by European settlers (Parker, 1989). The imperial power’s precedents were followed: but always with a difference. This had its effect on naming patterns. The Canadian, Australian and New Zealand experiences were not only different from the UK but also from each other.

Canadian Provincialism

The establishment and naming of accountancy bodies in Canada was influenced by Scottish and English precedents and complexities but also by the local political environment. In Canada 'charters' could be granted not only not by the Crown but also by legislatures. In Quebec names were also influenced by French speakers.

The Canadian confederation was established in 1867 as the Dominion of Canada. The founding provinces were Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. As settlement moved westward they were joined by Manitoba in 1870, British Columbia in 1871, and Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905. In the maritime provinces Prince Edward Island joined in 1873 but Newfoundland deliberately stayed out of the confederation until 1949. The two most economically advanced provinces were Quebec and Ontario and they were the first part of the British Empire outside the UK in which accountancy bodies were set up. As in the UK there was a multitude of competing bodies (Richardson, 1993). The names of the bodies and the designations of their members were largely modelled on that of the Scottish and English bodies. Eventually every province had a body whose name combined the phrase 'chartered accountant' (although none of the bodies had been granted a royal charter) with the name of the province. A Canada wide body, the Dominion Association of Chartered Accountants (now the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants) also emerged.

The first Institute of Chartered Accountants in the British Empire to have the word 'chartered' in its name but not to have a *royal* charter was the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario (ICAO). This followed the North American usage of referring to all acts of incorporation as charters. It was also took advantage of the reputation of the chartered brand in the UK. The establishment of the ICAO was apparently hardly noticed by the ICAEW (Chua & Poullaos, 2000). The original name of ICAO was the Institute of Accountants and Adjusters of Canada. It then briefly operated under the name of Institute of Accountants of Ontario before with some difficulty obtaining a charter from the provincial government in 1883 (Creighton, 1984: ch.1).

The ICAO has not changed its name since 1883. The body which started life as the Association of Accountants in Montreal (AAM) changed its name no less than five times (Collard, 1980). In 1927 it became the Society of Chartered Accountants of Quebec (SCAQ), a change first mooted in 1910. According to Collard (1980), what was wanted was a change from Association to Institute to indicate a desire to be seen as a professional body rather than as a club, and a change from Montreal to Quebec to indicate that the organisation had become province-wide. In the event Society had to be adopted rather than Institute because another body in the province (the Institute of Accountants and Auditors of the Province of Quebec, IAAPQ) was already using that designation. Under the legislation closing the profession in Quebec in 1946 the SCAQ became the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Quebec (ICAQ), absorbing the members of the IAAPQ and other bodies. When the provincial government's Chartered Accountants Act came into force in 1974 the name in the English version was changed to the Order of Chartered Accountants of Quebec (OCAQ), Order being a translation of French *Ordre*. In 1978 as a result of the government's language policy the name became the French version only: *Ordre des comptables agrees du Quebec*, although the English version is still in use unofficially. *Comptables agrees* (literally approved accountants) preserves the initials CA in French. The expression is not used in France, where the term employed is *expert comptable*.

Accountancy bodies obtaining local legislation allowing the chartered designation were established in other provinces as follows: the Chartered Accountants' Association in Manitoba (1886); the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nova Scotia (1900); the Institute of Chartered Accountants of British Columbia (1905); the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan (1908); the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Alberta (1910); the Institute of Chartered Accountants of New Brunswick (1916); the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Prince Edward Island (1921); the Institute of Chartered Accountants of the Yukon (1976). The Manitoba Association changed its name to the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba in 1913 in order to bring uniformity of title among the provincial institutes.

In spite of opposition from the provincial bodies in Ontario, Manitoba and Nova Scotia, a Dominion Association of Chartered Accountants (DACA) was granted a federal charter in 1902. The original but unsuccessful application had been for an Institute of Chartered Accountants of Canada. In 1909 it was restructured as a federation of provincial Institutes (Creighton, 1984: ch. 4). The word 'Dominion' in its name reflected its ambition to be a nationwide body, Canada having been since confederation in 1867 the Dominion of Canada. The name was changed in 1951 to the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA). By this date use of the word dominion was declining.

Whereas the accountants in the Canadian provinces were able to obtain local legislation allowing them to designate themselves as 'chartered accountants', the accountants of Newfoundland, a self-governing but impecunious colony, were prevented from doing so in 1905 by the Colonial Office, at the request of the ICAEW (Chua & Poullaos, 2002). The Institute of Accountants of Newfoundland was not incorporated by charter until Newfoundland joined the Canadian confederation in 1949.

Many other accountancy bodies were set up in Canada, notably the Canadian Accountants Association which was established in 1908 by industrial accountants. It received a federal charter in 1913 but opposition from CAs led to a name change to General Accountants Association to prevent use of initials similar to CA. In 198x the name was changed to Certified General Accountants Association of Canada.

Australian Colonial Nationalism

Australian accountants set a precedent that was not followed elsewhere: the obtaining of a royal charter by an accountancy body not based in the UK. In the last two decades of the 19th century, accountants in the Australian colonies successfully resisted takeover by UK based bodies (in particular the Society of Incorporated Accountants and Auditors) but imported the British tendency to regionalism and proliferation (Parker, 1989). At least one body was set up in each state (as the colonies became from 1 January 1901). Most of the earliest bodies included in their names their state or capital city of origin: Adelaide Society of Accountants (1885); Incorporated Institute of Accountants, Victoria (IIAV) (1886); Queensland Institute of Accountants (1891); Sydney Institute of Public Accountants (SIPA) (1894); Tasmanian Institute of Accountants (1897); Society of Accountants and Auditors of Victoria (1900); Institute of Accountants and Auditors of Western Australia (1900);

South Australian Society of Accountants (1903); Institute of Incorporated Accountants of New South Wales (1908). All of these are predecessor bodies of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia or of CPA Australia, as also are bodies which had a claim in their names to be nationwide: Federal Institute of Accountants (1894); Corporation of Accountants of Australia (1899); Institute of Public Accountants of Australasia (1907); Australasian Corporation of Public Accountants (ACPA) (1908); Association of Accountants of Australia (1910).

The most important of these many bodies were the IIAV based in Melbourne (Victoria), and the SIPA and the ACPA, Sydney (New South Wales), then and now the largest cities in Australia, although the relative importance of the two has changed over the years. The IIAV has changed its name many times, but its names have always lacked persuasiveness. Its original name was informative but clumsy. It was changed in 1918 to the Incorporated Institute of Accountants, Commonwealth of Australia, a belated recognition of the establishment of the federation of the Australian colonies into a 'Commonwealth' from 1 January 1901. The name was shortened in 1921 to Commonwealth Institute of Accountants, into which was merged in the 1920s bodies based in the other mainland states. 'Commonwealth' was the Australian equivalent of the Canadian use of the word 'Dominion', but unlike the DACA the Commonwealth Institute failed to provide its members with the chartered designation. This was not for want of trying: the IIAV attempted but failed in the 1900s to obtain a royal charter (Poullaos, 1994). When the Commonwealth Institute merged with two other bodies in 1952 it changed its name to the Australian Society of Accountants, changed in 1990 to Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants (ASCPA) and in 2000 to CPA Australia. The adoption of the CPA brand denotes not only an attempt to challenge the chartered brand but also a turning away from an imperial towards a Pacific Rim and US view of the world. CPA Australia has pursued a vigorous policy of recruitment in the West Pacific Rim.

The ACPA's name before it was incorporated in 1908 was the Institute of Public Accountants in Australasia. It would have preferred to remain an 'Institute' but became a 'Corporation' in order to avoid confusion with the recently formed Institute of Public Accountants of Australasia (Graham, 1978: 5). The alternatives 'Society' and 'Association' were perhaps avoided because of the English bodies bearing those names. The expression 'public accountants' followed the precedent of the Sydney Institute of Public Accountants and reflected the fact that in Australia, as in Britain, there were tensions between accountants in practice and those not in practice. The ACPA was founded by accountants who wanted a separate body for public accountants. The term 'Australasian' rather than 'Australian' was used to leave the door open for New Zealand accountants. The ACPA obtained a royal charter in 1928 and changed its name to the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia. By this date it was clear that NZ accountants would not join. No attempts were made to follow the Canadian precedent of obtaining permission from the federal or a state government to use the term chartered.

New Zealand

New Zealand was the last of the former settler colonies to have 'chartered' accountants. The NZ Society of Accountants did not change its name to the Institute

of Chartered Accountants of New Zealand until 1996, when it was granted a charter by local legislation.

Charters for republicans: and rebels: Ireland, South Africa and Zimbabwe

Canada, Australia and New Zealand are still monarchies, but the durability of the chartered brand is such that it can survive in countries that become republics or even leave the Commonwealth altogether. When the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland (ICAI) was incorporated by royal charter in 1888 following the naming precedent of the ICAEW, the whole of Ireland was part of the UK. An Irish Institute with a royal charter still made reasonable sense after partition in 1921: Northern Ireland remained part of the UK and the Irish Free State became a dominion. In 1937, however, a president was elected in the Irish Free State and in 1949 the Republic of Ireland was created outwith the Commonwealth. The ICAI did not change its name. For the first time a body of chartered accountants was based (in part at least) in a republic which was not part of the British Empire or even a member of the Commonwealth.

The South African experience was different again (Noyce, 1954). Numerous bodies were formed in the then four colonies (later provinces). The most important, but by no means the only, to emerge in each province were the Transvaal Society of Accountants (1904), the Natal Society of Accountants (1909), the Cape Society of Accountants and Auditors (1907) (originally the Society of Accountants in the Cape Colony), and the Society of Accountants and Auditors in the Orange Free State (1908) (originally in the Orange River Colony). The names of these bodies reflect the influence in South Africa of the London-based SIAA (until 1908 known as the SAA) of which many members of the South African societies were also members. In 1927, however, legislation was passed conferring upon members of the four societies the use of the designation Chartered Accountant (South Africa). This was superficially similar to the position in Scotland but the term ‘chartered’ did not refer to a royal charter. A Joint Council of the Societies of Chartered Accountants of South Africa was formed in 1946. The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants was established in 1980. More recently South Africa has been divided into nine provinces but the Institute continues to be administered from offices in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Bloemfontein. As in Quebec the names of accountancy bodies in South Africa have needed translation. For example chartered accountant is *geoktrooierde Rekenmeester* in Afrikaans, an expression not used in Dutch.

South Africa’s long sojourn (1961-94) as a republic outside the Commonwealth had no effect on the chartered designation. By 1961 there were Institutes of Chartered Accountants in four republics: Ireland, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The first of these had already left the Commonwealth and Pakistan was a non-member from 19xx to 19xx. During the decades to follow many more ex-colonies chose to become republics (see Tables 1 and 2)

The white settlers of the self-governing colony of Southern Rhodesia voted not to join the South African Union. They established an Institute of Chartered Accountants of Southern Rhodesia in 1928. This survived UDI in 1965 to become the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Zimbabwe on the establishment of majority rule in 1980.

Charters in the non-settler Commonwealth

India and Pakistan became republics in 1947 but recognized the British monarch as head of the Commonwealth. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India was established by national legislation in 1949. The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Pakistan was similarly established in 1961. Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) gained independence in 1948 and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka was established in 1959. Thus began the spread of chartered accountancy bodies and the chartered brand to the non-settler Commonwealth.

Unlike the settler colonies, accountancy in the non-settler colonies was for long dominated by expatriates, most of whom were members of UK based bodies. Few locals could afford to go to the UK to qualify as chartered accountants and most of the firms to which they would have had to be articled were not very welcoming to non-white applicants from the colonies. A simpler course was, to qualify locally as certified accountants. Local bodies were usually not established until after independence. The typical first step was the voluntary formation of an 'Association' of expatriates (most of whom were chartered accountants, including former members of the Society) and locals (most of whom were certified accountants). The next step was to try to obtain state approval for the foundation of an 'Institute'. The histories of most of these bodies have still to be written but the events of two very different countries, Nigeria and Trinidad & Tobago, have been well researched.

Nigeria (Wallace, 1992; Uche, 2002?) was the most populous non-settler colony outside the Indian sub-continent but at independence in 1960 had only 41 qualified accountants (i.e. Nigerian nationals who were members of UK bodies). This was a larger number than any other non-settler African colony. In 1960 certified accountants in Nigeria, both local and expatriate, were recognized by the ACCA as a local branch. In the same year the Association of Accountants of Nigeria (AAN) was registered as a company limited by guarantee, with a membership comprising resident members, both local and expatriate, of UK bodies, and an ambition to form an elite body of 'chartered accountants' based on the model of the ICAEW. The name of the body reflected the fact that it was a coming together of already established accountants without - yet - a locally accepted brand name. Not all locally resident chartered accountants (local and expatriate) joined the new Association, believing that it would dilute the chartered brand and that the AAN was dominated by certified accountants. Some of these sought to incorporate an Institute of Chartered Accountants (Nigeria), with membership limited to Nigerian nationals who were members of the ICAEW, but this was successfully opposed by both the AAN and the ICAEW (the latter on the grounds that it was nationally and racially exclusive). The AAN's superior political clout resulted in 1965 in the establishment by legislation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), membership of which eventually became mandatory for any person wishing to practise as a chartered accountant in Nigeria.

The development of the accountancy profession in Trinidad and Tobago, a much smaller country than Nigeria, has been researched in depth by Annisette (1999, 2000), who, however, makes no reference to the Nigerian experience. The first professional accountancy body in Trinidad and Tobago was established in 1964, two years after independence in 1962. It was unincorporated and unimaginatively but informatively named the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Chartered Accountants and Certified

Accountants, its members comprising (mainly expatriate) members of the UK chartered institutes and (mainly indigenous) members of the ACCA. In 1970 the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Trinidad and Tobago (ICATT) was incorporated by Act of Parliament. The ICATT was promoted by the state and its founding members as a means by which indigenous accountants could, inter alia, lessen their dependence on the ACCA for education and training. The plans in the 1960s for the ACCA, the ICWA and the IMTA to be integrated into the UK and Irish Institutes would have removed the opportunities post-integration for accountants overseas to become members. In the event integration failed (Shackleton and Walker, 2001). As a result the ACCA has continued to provide examination facilities for accountants in Trinidad and Tobago, internationalization triumphing over indigenization. If integration had succeeded, there would have been no more ‘certified accountants’ in Trinidad and Tobago. Instead, as in many other Commonwealth countries, in today’s Trinidad and Tobago ‘the term Chartered Accountant has come to signify an ACCA-qualified accountant ... in the public’s eye to be a chartered account is to be a certified accountant ... the distinction between ‘chartered’ and certified’ is largely irrelevant’ (Annisette, 1999: 123, 127). Thus in many of the smaller Commonwealth countries the brand names ‘chartered’ and ‘certified’ are now joined in a relationship which has arisen as a combination of the results of the strategies of UK bodies, the colonial experience and the internationalization of accounting.

Chartered accountants almost everywhere

Nigeria and Trinidad and Tobago are examples of a process that took place throughout the Commonwealth. By 2003 there was an Institute of Chartered Accountants in no less than 22 Commonwealth countries. They are listed in Table 1. Two things apparent from the table are the very small memberships of some of the bodies and the link (outside the UK and Ireland) between the dates of self-government and independence. Small memberships are mainly the result of the combination of small populations and relatively underdeveloped economies. The British government failed in its attempt to set up federations before independence. Thus there is no Institute of Chartered Accountants in the West Indies but instead separate Institutes of Chartered Accountants in the Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, all with memberships of less than 1,000.

Dates of formation are closely related to self-government and independence. The provincial chartered bodies of Canada are not in the table but all were established before the First World War. The date of CICA is late because of the prior establishment of provincial Institutes. The Australian date is even later because of the desire of their public accountants to obtain a *royal* charter. The Zimbabwe date is explained by the country’s period as a settler-dominated colony. The NZ date is hard to explain.

Table 2 lists the 17 Commonwealth or former Commonwealth countries with professional bodies of accountants that are members of IFAC but do not include the phrase ‘chartered accountants’ in their names. There are some smaller Commonwealth countries (Antigua and Mauritius, for example) in which no professional accountancy body has been established.

Table 1 Chartered Accountant Bodies in Commonwealth Countries 2003

Institute of Chartered Accountants in

Australia (1928)

England and Wales (1880)

Ireland (1888)

Institute of Chartered Accountants of

*Bangladesh [1971]

*Barbados [1966]

*Cameroon [1961]

*Guyana [1966]

India (1949) [1947]

*Jamaica (1965) [1962]

*Namibia [1990]

New Zealand (1996)

Nigeria (1965) [1960]

Pakistan (1961) [1947]

Scotland (1854, 1951)

*Sierra Leone [1961]

Sri Lanka (1959) [1948]

*Trinidad & Tobago (1970) [1962]

Zimbabwe (1928) [1980]

*Bahamas Institute of Chartered Accountants [1973]

Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (188x, 1902)

*Institute of Chartered Accountants (Ghana) (1963) [1957]

South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (192x, 1946)

N.B. The Canadian provincial Institutes of Chartered Accountants are not listed in this Table. Dates of independence in square brackets.

- membership less than 1,000

Table 2 Former British Colonies with an accountancy body but no chartered body

*Bahrain [1971]

*Botswana [1966]

~Cyprus [1960]

- *Fiji [1970]
- Hong Kong
- *Jordan [1946]
- ~Kenya [1963]
- *Lesotho [1966]
- *Malawi [1964]
- *Malta [1964]
- ~Malaysia [1957]
- ~Singapore [1965]
- *Sudan [1956]
- *Swaziland [1968]
- *Tanzania [1961]
- *~Uganda [1962]
- *Zambia [1964]

N.B. Dates of independence in square brackets. The Brunei Institute of Certified Public Accountants 1987 [1984] (Foo, 1993; Yapa, 1999) is not a member of IFAC.

- membership less than 1,000
- ~ ‘certified public accountants’ in name

Branded accountants in a global economy

According to IFAC, there were almost 2.4 million members of accountancy bodies in 2003. Although accountants with membership of a ‘chartered’ body (a wider brand than ‘chartered accountant’ *tout court*) are pre-eminent within the Commonwealth, globally they are exceeded in numbers by ‘certified public accountants’. The largest accountancy body in the world by far is the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the second largest is the Chinese Institute of Certified Public Accountants (Nobes & Parker, 2002: ch 1). Chartered accountants from the British Isles were very active in the USA before the First World War (Lee, 2002) but the chartered brand has never been adopted by any US accountancy body. Recently formed accountancy bodies outside the Commonwealth have typically chosen, in the English language version of their names, the CPA rather than the CA brand. Examples within Asia are: China, Japan, Korea and the Philippines; within Eastern Europe and the Middle East: Bulgaria, Greece, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. This list of countries is a reminder of the decline of British power and of where American economic power and influence has been strongest. Within the Commonwealth there are bodies of certified public accountants in Cyprus, Kenya, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore. As already noted there are certified *practising* accountants in Australia. The chartered brand has not established itself outside the bounds of the Commonwealth, although there are bodies in Albania and Poland with ‘chartered accountants’ as part of the English versions of their name.

In a burst of imperial enthusiasm, *The Accountant* (7 August 1897), in the year of Queen Victoria’s diamond jubilee, proposed ‘a federation of the various associations of accountants throughout the world’ but in spite of the worldwide influence of its

accountants there has never been a Commonwealth federation of accountants, a Commonwealth accounting standards committee, or Commonwealth directives on company law. Lord Benson was an English chartered accountant born in South Africa, with a belief in the supremacy of British accounting, but he was the driving force behind an *International Accounting Standards Committee* and his firm (now part of PricewaterhouseCoopers) does not, even in the UK, advertise itself as a firm of chartered accountants. Indeed, in the global economy the brand names of firms have become better known than the brand names of accountancy bodies. In their advertisements and on the home pages of their websites, international accounting firms typically do not refer to chartered accountants or CPAs. Neither brand is sufficiently global. Rather the brand name is that of the firm, although how shaky that can be was shown by the demise of Andersens.

By contrast the websites of national and local firms typically emphasize the chartered or CPA brand. The websites of accountancy bodies all emphasize their own brand but differ in other respects. Some make a feature of their global reach and reflect this in their URLs, e.g.. www.accaglobal.com, www.cimaglobal.com.

Summary and conclusions

The concept of professional accountancy bodies and the names and brands associated with those bodies originated in Scotland and England in the 19th century. They spread to the colonies of the British Empire but local accountancy *bodies* were formed not during the period of colonization but during the period of decolonization. Decolonization proceeded at a different pace for settler and non-settler colonies. Thus accountancy bodies were formed at an early stage in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and only much later in the non-settler Commonwealth.

Each body has needed a name, informative, persuasive and territorial, that reflected its strategy and ‘branded’ its members. Brands have been protected by litigation and behind the scenes influence. The most successful brand name has been that of ‘chartered accountant’. The paper demonstrates how the term ‘chartered’ has been gradually disassociated from its origins in the grant of a royal charter as a means of incorporation. In Scotland it was applied to the members of a body rather than the body itself; in England and Wales the brand was included for the first time in the name of the body; in Canada it was applied to a body incorporated by statute not by royal charter; in Ireland it was retained by accountants who lived in a republic. Newly independent members of the Commonwealth have accepted the term. Bodies in countries that have left the Commonwealth have retained the term. In the UK challengers to the chartered brand (incorporated accountants, certified accountants, specialized bodies) have themselves successfully sought to be ‘chartered’, possibly diluting the brand. Worldwide only ‘certified public accountants’ have achieved greater numbers. International accounting firms, however, have cultivated their own brand names, an option less appealing to smaller firms.

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