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Antecedents of the International Association for Accounting Education and Research (1966–1983): A Review of Early Initiatives to Develop an International Academic Accounting Association

Abstract

Abstract: Interest in this topic followed examination of new data discussing several antecedent proposals for establishing an international academic accounting association in the period 1966–1983, culminating in the 1984 formation of the International Association for Accounting Education and Research (IAAER). Relevant correspondence between several academics is now publicly available in the R.J. Chambers Archive at the University of Sydney. This enables justified statements to be made about the pre-1984 antecedents of the IAAER, thereby filling a vacuum in our understanding of the history of the organization. We initially discuss Ray Chambers' and others' desire for, and attempts to promote an international approach to accounting research and practice. Chambers unsuccessfully attempted to organize an international think-tank, beginning in the mid-1960s with something like the International Economic Association of that time. He persisted, through participation in the Accounting Researchers International Association, an elite accounting society. Eventually those proposals were discarded as he and others like Adolf Enthoven and David Solomons proposed an international confederation of accounting educators and researchers in 1977 and 1978. Efforts of other leading accounting academics of that time, in particular Norlin Rueschhoff and Seigo Nakajima, are also shown to have influenced the eventual formation of the simplified 1984 IAAER body with, initially, its individuals-based membership and objectives. Later IAAER would become much more like the international confederation of accounting educators and researchers that Chambers had proposed in the 1997 Berlin International Conference on Accounting Education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 1960s and early 1970s was the right time to view accounting from an international perspective. International trade was booming, research in many business and other scientific fields was buoyant, and the post-war technological developments were rampant. There was a

desire to understand better how things work. This included understanding the theoretical basis of the practice of accounting technology—in its double-entry form, which was an enduring technology, approximately 700 years old (Sangster, 2016). Understanding how accounting meshed with related commercial disciplines was critical, as was an understanding of its reliance on measurement and communication principles (for more about this period, see Nelson, 1973; Gaffikin, 1988, 2005).

This period witnessed the development of several international research centres such as the Vernon K. Zimmerman Center for International Education and Research in Accounting at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign in 1962 (Bedford, 1997) and the International Centre for Research in Accounting (ICRA) at Lancaster University in 1971 (Mumford, 1994). It also witnessed the development of international accounting congresses and bodies—such as the First International Conference on Accounting Education in 1962, the International Accounting Historians Association in 1970, the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC) in 1972, the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) in 1977; as well as antecedent developments of what would emerge in 1984 as the IAAER (for more about these organizations, see Mueller, 1994; Schweikart et al., 1996; Loft et al., 2006).

Needles & Olmsted (2004) describes the IAAER's formation based largely on published material in *COSMOS Accountancy Chronicle*, which served as the organization's official newsletter until 2015, whereas the present narrative covers the earlier proposals for an international body that would foster education and research in accounting and promote the interests of academic accountants. The history presented here expands on a brief description of earlier attempts to launch an international association and is based on a recent biography of Raymond John Chambers, *Accounting Thought and Practice Reform: Ray Chambers' Odyssey*

(2019), and material from the Chambers Archive.¹ The direct antecedents of the IAAER are described in Needles & Olmsted (2004):

Accounting education conferences began in 1962 and provided an international forum for accounting educators. The 1962 conference was a spin-off of another conference series, the International [or World] Congresses on Accounting (organized by professional accounting organizations, later the International Federation of Accountants – IFAC), which began meeting in 1904. Since 1962, [those education and practitioner conferences] have been conducted separately, the education conferences addressed mainly to teachers of accounting and the congresses to public accounting professionals. The Sixth International [Education] Conference [on Accounting Education] was the first conference organized with the assistance of the [newly formed in 1984] IAAER and was held [in Kyoto] immediately before the 13th World Congress on Accounting, held in Tokyo (p. 1).

Surprisingly, there are few accounts of those early days of the combined international accounting practitioner and education conferences. Chapter 7 of Someya's *Japanese Accounting* (1996) is an exception. It provides detailed summaries of the early World Congresses on Accounting, beginning in St. Louis in 1904. Someya also recalls the early International Conferences on Accounting Education, beginning with the 1962 Illinois Conference:

The 1st International Conference on Accounting Education (ICAE), proposed and sponsored by the Accounting Department of the College of Commerce and Business Administration at the University of Illinois ... was held in Urbana[–Champaign], Illinois. From this time on the ICAE was held every five years ... in London (1967), Sydney (1972), Berlin (1977), Monterrey, Mexico (1982). [p. 61] ... The ICAE has never been merely a forum for discussing accounting course curriculum and teaching methods. Rather it is a place where persons engaged in the teaching of accounting at the university level can meet together in a friendly atmosphere to discuss the various challenges relating to accounting education. For this reason it has been referred to as the International Conference of Accounting Educators (pp. 63–4).

¹ The R.J. Chambers' Archive (part of the University of Sydney's personal archives) was officially launched by the University of Sydney Chancellor Gavin Brown in November 2004. The archive is referred to as USA P202 of Ray Chambers and is accessible online at http://sydney.edu.au/arms/archives/chambers_items871.shtml. The *COSMOS Accountancy Chronicle* Archive can be accessed online at <http://www.iaaer.org/pages/COSMOS>. See Dean, Wolnizer, & Clarke (2006) for a discussion of the R.J. Chambers Archive.

Several well-known academic accountants were involved in organizing and presenting at the pre-1977 international education conferences, including Norton Bedford, Ray Chambers, Adolf Enthoven, Paul Garner, Richard Mattessich, Gerhard Mueller, Kyōjirō Someya, William Vatter, and Vernon Zimmerman (for more biographical information, see Moonitz, 1991; McWatters, 1994; Previts & Samson, 1997; Flesher 2010; & Clarke et al., 2012). This is confirmed by Someya's *Japanese Accounting* (1996) which also lists papers presented at those meetings.

2. BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Our narrative is preceded by brief biographical information about several actors, namely Ray Chambers, Adolf Enthoven, and Seigo Nakajima.

2.1 Raymond J. Chambers

Chambers was born in Newcastle, Australia, in 1917. He received a Bachelor of Economics degree from the University of Sydney in 1939, and qualified as a certified accountant in 1941. He entered academia in late 1943, after having worked for short periods in the government sector—the office of the Attorney General of New South Wales, the wartime Prices Commission set up by the Australian government to regulate prices—and in the private sector at several companies, including the Shell Oil Company.

Chambers' first academic appointment was as a Lecturer at Sydney Technical College (now part of the institution known as TAFE NSW). Chambers remained at the college until 1953, when he was appointed as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney. This was followed by promotions to Associate Professor in 1955 and Professor in 1960. In the early-to-

mid 1960s Chambers traveled widely and held several visiting professorships at various institutions such as the Universities of Chicago, California at Berkeley, Florida, and Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, but he remained in permanent employment at the University of Sydney throughout his career.

Chambers was one of the twentieth century’s greatest accounting thinkers (AAA, 1977; Edwards, 1994; Staubus, 2003). His research aimed to reform financial reporting and accounting practice. He published nearly 300 articles, a dozen books and monographs, and made over 100 submissions to the press and various public and professional accounting bodies, as well as delivering close to 400 lectures across the world. *Accounting, Evaluation and Economic Behavior* (1966), *Securities and Obscurities* (1973), and *An Accounting Thesaurus* (1995) are his most well-known contributions and their implications continue to stir debate (e.g., see Wilson, 2005; Dean & Clarke, 2010b; Persson & Napier, 2018).² Chambers’ activities resulted in numerous accolades, three honorary doctorates, and induction into The Ohio State University Accounting Hall of Fame in 1991 (for more about Chambers, see Al-Hogail & Previts, 2001; Gaffikin, 2012; Clarke et al., 2019).³

2.2 Adolf J. H. Enthoven

Enthoven was born in Nijmegen, The Netherlands, in 1928, and he arrived in the United States as a student in 1953. He obtained a Master of Commerce degree from the University of Toronto, in 1953, and an advanced diploma from the International Institute of Social Studies in 1957. Studying under the supervision of the future Nobel Laureate Jan Tinbergen, he obtained his

² *Securities and Obscurities* (1973) was republished in 1982 as *Accounting in Disarray*.

³ The Accounting Hall of Fame moved from The Ohio State University to the American Accounting Association in 2017. The hall can be accessed using the following website: <http://aaahq.org/AHOF>.

doctoral degree in business economics at the Netherlands School of Economics (today Erasmus University Rotterdam).

Enthoven worked for the accounting firm Coopers & Lybrand (today PwC) from 1957 to 1963, before moving to Washington D.C. for a position as a senior investment officer for the World Bank. Once he left the Bank in 1966, he had a number of short-term academic appointments, first at his former alma mater, the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, and then at the Universities of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, Harvard, and North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

After the short-term appointments, Enthoven joined the University of Texas at Dallas where he remained as a professor until his death in 2013. During that time, Enthoven launched the university's accounting program, served as a special consultant to the World Bank, and an advisor to the George Soros' Open Society Foundations. In keeping with the nature of much of his consulting work, Enthoven's teaching and research was focused on international accounting issues, and he wrote and contributed to about 20 books on the accounting profession and its practice in developing countries and emerging economics (for the most prominent of these contributions, see Enthoven, 1973, 1977, 1981).

2.3 Seigo Nakajima⁴

Nakajima was born in Tokyo in 1912 and remained in the city throughout most of his career. He received an undergraduate degree from the Tokyo Institute of Business Training (today Hitotsubashi University) in 1947, after a brief interruption to his studies due to war service. Three years later, he was appointed as a full-time lecturer at Meiji Gakuin University and was

⁴ This section is based on a translated version of Ishii's (2013) obituary of Seigo Nakajima. We thank Sadaharu Takeshima, Kanazawa University, for translating Seigo Nakajima's obituary from Japanese to English.

sent to the United States to pursue an MBA at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. He matriculated in 1951 and returned to Meiji Gakuin University where he was promoted to an assistant professor position in 1954. This was followed by a nine-year stint at Yokohama National University, before moving back to Tokyo as a professor at the International Christian University (ICU) in 1964. While at Yokohama National University, in 1959 Nakajima returned to the United States for a second time as a Fulbright Fellow at Columbia University.

While at ICU, Nakajima received a doctorate in commerce from his undergraduate alma mater, Hitotsubashi University, and served the university in various positions, such as head of the undergraduate sociology department, head of the publication administration research department, and secretary to the university president. After twenty years at ICU, in 1984 Nakajima accepted his final professional appointment as President of Ferris Women's University (today Ferris University), which had been founded by the same group of American Presbyterian missionaries who had also established Meiji Gakuin University. Nakajima also served as the Japanese representative on the IASC (today the International Accounting Standards Board) from 1973 until 1988 (for more about his involvement in the IASC, see Camfferman & Zeff, 2015).

Nakajima died in 2013. His legacy is that of a devout Christian and a leader in the development of accounting thought in post-war Japan. He is particularly known as an “Evangelist” of American accounting theory and standards, an influence that can be traced to his two visits to the United States. At the Wharton School, Nakajima studied under Rufus Wixon, who had completed his doctoral studies under William A. Paton at the University of Michigan, and his visit to Columbia University coincided with Henry W. Sweeney's seminars on “stabilized accounting” (i.e., Sweeney's proposal [1927, 1935, 1936] to adjust accounting

numbers for changes in general price levels using a consumer price index).⁵ This influence manifested itself in Nakajima's Japanese translation of *An Introduction to Corporate Accounting Standards* (1940) and his publications (over 300 in total), which focused on introducing the work on accounting theory by authors such as A. C. Littleton, Paton, and Sweeney to students and mainly Japanese scholars (for more information about these authors and their work, see Mosich, 1974; Zeff, 1992; & Persson, 2016).

What follows focuses primarily on the efforts of Ray Chambers, as he was a prominent proponent of the confederation-style association of accounting educators and researchers that emerged, coincidentally, as the IAAER. This occurred directly as a consequence of a proposal by Murray Wells, a close associate of Chambers, with the support of Norlin Rueschhoff. Wells and Rueschhoff subsequently were elected President and Secretary, respectively, of the IAAER.

3. THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE IAAER

3.1 1966–1974: Chambers' International Association Efforts

Regarding Chambers' views about the need for an international focus on education and research initiatives, the Edwards et al. (2013) analysis of the rise and fall of the early 1970s' elite accounting society, Accounting Researchers International Association (ARIA), is apposite:

“Soon after his admission to ARIA [September 1974], Chambers suggested that the internationalization of academic engagement might be a role for ARIA to pursue,”⁶ particularly given that it was an area neglected by the leading American academic accounting organization, the American Accounting Association (AAA). Chambers favored a meeting confined to idealists

⁵ For more about Sweeney's stabilized accounting proposal, see Clarke & Dean (1989), Dean & Clarke (1989), and Persson & Fafatas (2018).

⁶ Edwards et al. (2013, p. 369), based on Chambers to Robert Sterling, USA P202, #7518, 08/12/1974. Sterling had founded ARIA in early 1974.

committed to “change” and to the development of a program capable of achieving change:

“What we need is an integration of ideas rather than continued aggressive assertion. I could just hope that people dedicated to cleaning up the Augean stables might agree on a point or two.”⁷

Barring the mid-to-late 1970s [ARIA] “Taxi Symposium” discussed in Edwards et al. (2013),⁸ there was little action in this regard by ARIA. Although Chambers had high expectations he was disappointed in the symposium’s outcome, as this extract from a letter to Edward Stamp—then a professor of accounting at Lancaster University, founder and director of International Centre for Research in Accounting, and a prominent voice on matters of financial reporting in the UK—attests: “The [ARIA] ‘Taxi Cab’ problem was a genuine attempt to focus attention [of a group of like-minded researchers] on a ‘specimen’, as in the manner of scientists. The experience showed that the ‘focusing’ was not effective. Some other mode of focusing might be more fruitful. If I ever have time, I propose to give it a try.”⁹

ICAEs were held initially every five years in association with World Congresses on Accounting. Sometimes both were held in the same city. The R.J. Chambers Archive reveals that nearly a decade earlier, and little more than a year before the 9th World Congress on Accounting to be held in Paris in late 1967, Chambers had suggested to congress president, François-Maurice Richard, that there should be an international association like the International Economic

⁷ Chambers to Sterling, USA P202, #7520, 31/12/1974. This was not long after Chambers published “Anguish of Accountants” in the *Journal of Accountancy*. The focus there was on the futility in using committees to achieve a better accounting. Contiguously, Chambers expressed similar concerns in another *Journal of Accountancy* article, ‘Accounting Principles or Accounting Policies’ in May 1973.

⁸ Edwards et al. (2013, pp. 369–70).

⁹ Chambers to Sterling, USA P202, #5935, 25/08/1978. Edwards et al. (2013, p. 369), based on Chambers to Sterling, USA P202, #7518, 08/12/1974. Chambers turned to surveys in the late 1970s and early 1980s (e.g., Chambers et al., 1984).

Association. Its membership ought to be limited to about fifty, with a meeting to be held every few years:

I would therefore like to see established an international accounting association or academy the members of which would be people having a thorough knowledge of their local practices and theoretical developments and a strong sense of the importance of international collaboration and continuous exchanges of ideas. As you will appreciate, in social affairs the opportunity for experimentation is limited, and developments of social institutions are very much a matter of choosing the advantageous elements of other observable institutions. International cross comparison is a critical process in the promotion of advantageous changes.

I have long been dismayed by the absence of serious appreciation of this. But beside it runs the naive belief that each country can generate ‘the best’ ideas without needing to draw on the inventiveness and acumen of the members of another. No such belief is held in the sciences or indeed in most of the cultural and industrial arts. The freedom from political barriers is one of the great sources of vitality in those fields, a vitality which I venture to think accounting cannot claim.

You will know that there are international associations of many kinds. The kind I have in mind is an association of individual members, not representatives of associations, or even of countries. Ideally they would be people who have made some significant contribution to the practice or literature of accounting, and who would be willing seriously to propose ideas, or to criticize the ideas of others, or to feed in particular examples, background material, experiences and so on as tests or supporting evidence of the ideas of others. No balance as between membership from different areas, or as between practitioners and teachers, is envisaged. I think only of a group wholeheartedly concerned with the advancement of accounting, that is all.¹⁰

Richard responded, albeit over eighteen months later, that: “Your letter of 11th January 1966 developed many interesting recommendations regarding the establishment of an international accounting association of some sort. I have received a number of requests from various Institutes to bring up officially the subject of the establishment of a permanent secretariat during the 9th Congress. This question will be discussed at the general meeting of Institute Presidents on Tuesday 12th September 1967.”¹¹ Chambers replied more promptly: “Could you

¹⁰ Chambers to Richard, USA P202, #2172, 11/01/1966.

¹¹ Richard to Chambers, USA P202, #2173, 22/08/1967.

tell me whether anything emerged from the discussion? ... I did not think a representative committee, merely representing the official associations, would procure the object I sought. From my observations of professional organizations in English speaking countries, there seems to be a great reluctance to take a firm line on matters of principle, largely I suppose because their memberships embrace many people with widely divergent, but firmly held views.”¹² There is no evidence in the R.J. Chambers Archive of a response by Richard.

In December 1974 Chambers lamented to Robert Sterling, a long-time correspondent and then the Arthur Young Distinguished Professor of Accounting at the University of Kansas, that nothing had come of the think-tank proposal—“a couple of years ago [May 1972] I made another suggestion to Leonard Spacek [of Arthur Andersen & Co], that perhaps the FASB might consider funding a conference of international researchers, together with members of the Board, say every two years.”¹³ That letter had followed the March 1972 publication in the *Journal of Accountancy* of Chambers’ “Anguish of Accountants” and the AICPA’s 1972 *Wheat Report*. The latter, inter alia, discloses the proposed US\$500,000 annual research budget of the (replacement) FASB research division. And, it also provides further evidence of his thoughts on an international think-tank:

The Report of that Study leaves me with the curious feeling that people believe that money is the cure for whatever ills beset the profession. I refer only to the proposed budget for research – \$500,000 or more per year. I am only a small fish, and likely to be staggered by such a figure. But I would really like to know whether any serious thought has been given to what can fruitfully be done with so much money every year. The mere mention of all that money recalled to mind a project I have often thought about. Progress depends, I believe, not on the more or less random association of people with different viewpoints, but on the association of people with some kind of passion for substantive improvement. Less debate and more concerted effort to construct anew is what is needed. I have envisaged the bringing together of people from a number of countries who have

¹² Chambers to Richard, USA P202, #2174, 20/11/1967.

¹³ Chambers to Sterling, USA P202, #7519, 10/12/1974 (for more about Sterling, see Wolnizer, 2010).

worked for some time on the analysis or clarification of principles. Let them meet, for, say a month each year for several years, to participate in the presentation and discussion of argument and evidence. Let them discuss the pros and cons of all the main schemes which have been suggested as the hard-core ideas of accounting. Let them be a forum, not a committee commissioned to prepare a report. Let the necessity of reporting emerge when they are sufficiently convinced of the soundness of any conclusions they reach. Let them work freely over all the proposals which have been put up, with the object of finding the best, the scheme best supported by the evidence they can bring together.¹⁴

Chambers must have been frustrated that nothing came of his proposal, as he had discussed the matter in principle in earlier correspondence with Ernest Weinwurm, Maurice Moonitz, and Richard Mattessich as far back as the mid-to-late 1950s (for more about Chambers' interactions with Weinwurm, see Dean & Clarke, 2010a). Consider in Weinwurm's 25 August 1955 letter an enclosed memorandum (sent to several like-minded U.S. academics and practitioners) proposing that "An Institute of Accounting Research is Urgently Needed."¹⁵ Two decades later Chambers, in an unpublished 1975 festschrift paper (composed for Weinwurm) returned to this institute proposal with its international participants across various disciplines.¹⁶ He "pointed out the pragmatic, trial and error origins of accounting procedures, the absence of 'integration and coordination' in accounting doctrine, and the general lack amongst accountants of belief in the value of scientific approach to accounting problems." This accords with his 20 October 1955 response to the Weinwurm letter to U.S. academics and practitioners.¹⁷ For, while supportive of Weinwurm's research institute idea, he was nonetheless pessimistic regarding its likely success, noting that the "difficulty lay in getting the profession to sponsor it."

¹⁴ Chambers to Sterling, USA P202, #9017, 12/05/1972.

¹⁵ Weinwurm to Chambers, USA P202, #173, 25/08/1955.

¹⁶ Correspondence with Cara Weinwurm with unpublished festschrift material enclosed, USA P202, #9313, 01/01/1975

¹⁷ Chambers to Weinwurm, USA P202, #8091, 20/10/1955.

3.2 1975–1983: Pre-IAAER Formation Proposals

As noted, by the early 1970s separate international accounting congresses of practitioners and conferences of educators and researchers were being held every five years. The 10th World Congress on Accounting was held in Sydney in October 1972, with a colleague and practitioner friend of Chambers, Sir Ronald Irish, chairman of the Organizing Committee.¹⁸ The Fourth International Conference on Accounting Education was also to be held in Sydney with Chambers prominently involved. For the Fifth International Conference, which was to be held in October 1977 in Berlin, Chambers was elected as the organizer of the program of speakers. During this period Chambers continued to refine privately his think-tank proposal, but he had achieved little progress in advancing the idea publicly. The 1977 Congress, however, proved a watershed. Chambers, putting his think-tank idea to one side, broached the idea of an international confederation of academic accounting associations in a concluding conference speech. The idea had in-principle support from several delegates, including David Solomons, then president of the American Accounting Association and Arthur Young Professor of Accounting at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania (for more about Solomons, see Zeff, 1995).

Letters in the Chambers Archive imply that his conference initiative had been little more than a suggestion, raised publicly for the first time, something to get people thinking about a way forward as international accounting education and research issues became more prominent. Chambers, as did Solomons, wanted people to reflect on the idea so it could be properly considered. Rushing forward was the last thing he had hoped for. But others had different views about what an international body of accounting educators should look like.

¹⁸ Irish was a Chartered Accountant by training, a longtime serving secretary for *The Australian Accountant*, and in the 1970s the Chief Executive of the tobacco company Rothmans of Pall Mall Australia (Dyster, 2017).

After the Berlin Conference, a working group was formed, comprising Enthoven, Louis Perridon (at the University of Lancaster) and Chambers. Other delegates like Solomons and Nakajima (and later Moonitz and Mueller) were copied on all group correspondence. The differences within the group are clearly evident in the post-conference draft proposals and comments between those academics.¹⁹ In November 1977 Enthoven prepared a full draft constitution of the proposed international association for consideration and comments. By mid-December he had received what he described as “valid comments and suggestions” from Chambers and Perridon and he circulated a revised draft constitution.²⁰ The international body now being proposed was much grander than that hinted at by Chambers and others, like Solomons, involving amongst other things fee-paying membership for individuals. Other mainly coordination features are captured in the association’s proposed major aims: (1) to foster closer ties between accounting educators throughout the world, exchange information, research efforts and know-how, and spur—by mutual effort—post-secondary school accounting education and training in both developed and developing nations of the world, in order to make accountancy more relevant and useful in the socioeconomic process of nations; and (2) to aid accounting educational bodies and/or educators/institutions in developoing countries/regions in their efforts to improve accounting education, know-how, research and development, and practices.

Material in the Chambers Archive confirms that Chambers was unhappy with what he perceived as the rushed initiatives. He expressed those concerns to Solomons, who was also concerned, and then to the others about what might eventuate. In a letter to Solomons, Chambers observes that the draft constitution could lead to just “another dues-paying international association!” In that letter, he observes that he had hoped for something much simpler, a

¹⁹ USA P202, #s5111, 5114, 5117, 5118, 5375–79, & 5383.

²⁰ USA P202, #5738, 15/12/1977

federation of local associations—a clearing house for national associations operating in parallel with a federation of associations of practice, namely IFAC, which had recently been formed.²¹ While Enthoven’s proposal was not Chambers’ preferred international think-tank of individuals, arguably the process was a start in assisting the examination of international education and research issues.

After more working-group deliberations Chambers returned to the issue. In May 1978 he responded to Enthoven’s December draft with several letters. He explained that the hiatus on his part was due to an extremely taxing workload during the second half of 1977 and the first half of 1978 (this is confirmed in Clarke et al., 2019). In a 7 July 1978 letter to interested colleagues, Enthoven, Moonitz, Mueller, Nakajima, Perridon, and Solomons, Chambers outlines a lengthy proposal and an accompanying draft constitution of the “International Association for the Advancement of Accounting Education” in which he continued to advocate a much simpler organization, with the view to letting it grow naturally, thereby making less of a demand on educators.²² He proposed a confederation of associations, not one based on individual memberships. That “proposed constitution” is reproduced in full:

Name and Objects

1. There shall be an association entitled the ‘International Association for the Advancement of Accounting Education’.
2. The Association shall be an association of national or regional bodies of accountants whose members are principally persons engaged as teachers or researchers in universities and equivalent institutions.
3. The objects of the Association shall include
 - (a) to foster the dissemination among members of the member-associations of information relating to activities of the Association and its member-associations
 - (b) to seek the collaboration of national and regional journals in giving publicity to

²¹ Chambers to Solomons, USA P202, #5376, 07/12/1977.

²² Chambers’ letters to Enthoven, Perridon, Solomons, Nakajima, Mueller, and to Maurice Moonitz, the president-elect of the AAA (USA P202, #5383, 7 July 1978). See also subsequent Chambers’ and respondents’ letters during July and August 1978 (USA P202, item #s5385–88).

activities of the Association and generally of matters which are of more than regional interest

- (c) to assist in the dissemination of information relating to employment and research opportunities
- (d) to explore the possibility of exchanges of faculty personnel and students
- (e) to seek to collaborate with and to foster the collaboration of member-associations with international and regional associations of accountants in practice and in commerce, industry and government, on educational matters and on accounting research
- (f) to assist in the organizing and conduct of periodical international conferences on accounting education
- (g) to foster and to assist in the establishment of national or regional associations having aims and objects similar to those of member associations
- (h) to assist in securing sponsorship or financing for the translation of significant books or articles on matters of interest to the Association
- (i) to do such other things as are necessary to advance these objects

Membership

- 4. The member-associations shall in the first instance be (here insert such associations as signify their wish to be named in this clause, provided they satisfy clause 5)
- 5. Member-associations shall be associations of the kind described in clause 2, provided they have a membership of not less than 50 individual members.
- 6. Associations of the kind described in clause 2 which have fewer than 50 individual members shall be eligible to be corresponding members, and shall have all the privileges of members other than provided by clause 8.

Meetings and Committees

- 7. There shall be a general meeting of the Association on the occasion of each International Conference on Accounting Education.
- 8. There shall be an Executive Committee of the Association which shall consist of the President for the time being and one other member of each of the member-associations; provided that where the number of member-associations exceeds five, the member-associations entitled to nominate persons to be members of the Executive Committee shall be determined, by postal ballot in the first instance and thereafter at general meetings of the Association, each member-association having equal voting rights.
- 9. The member-associations entitled to nominate persons to be members of the Executive Committee shall be determined at general meetings of the Association.
- 10. There shall be a Chairman of the Executive Committee who shall act as intermediary for exchanges with member-associations on matters relating to the Association. The Chairman shall be elected annually by the members of the Executive Committee; the retiring Chairman shall be eligible for re-election once only.
- 11. The Executive Committee may appoint such other committees, from its own members or from member-associations or corresponding members for any purpose of the Association and may disband such committees.
- 12. The Executive Committee shall appoint a Conference Committee, not less than three

years before the next ensuing International Conference on Accounting Education, to assist the host-member or host-institution in arranging the conference.

13. The business of committees of the Association shall be conducted by correspondence.

In that 7 July 1978 correspondence Chambers observes: “I have had intimations, however, that some persons who have established international interests would be averse to a complex or costly ‘additional’ apparatus. To ‘assist’ or to ‘foster’ things that are capable of being ‘done’ by regional bodies or by individuals seemed to me to be sufficient justification for the Association; and it would avoid the centralization and duplication of effort which more elaborate schemes may produce.”

Those 1977–78 efforts to form a new international association of teachers and researchers then stalled. Our searches of the R. J. Chambers Archive resulted in only two immediate post-1978 letters on the antecedent-IAAER proposals. Chambers wrote to Moonitz in May 1979 asking “What has happened about the ‘international association of academic societies’? Since I sent off some comments before the 1978 AAA meeting on Adolf’s draft, I’ve heard nothing more about it whatever.”²³ Moonitz replied quickly: “Adolf has been busy [writing and circulating overseas, especially among the developing countries the report of] his AAA Committee on International Accounting Operations and Education.”²⁴ Attached as an appendix was the December 1977 Enthoven draft mentioned above, albeit with revisions.

The emphasis was still on an organization based on dual (organizations and individuals) fee-paying membership. But there were some changes. Moonitz summarizes the latest version of the Enthoven proposal which suggests “two types of membership: Full and individual. Full members are professional organizations, and associations of teachers in post-secondary

²³ Chambers to Moonitz, USA P202, #5799, 08/05/1979.

²⁴ Moonitz to Chambers, USA P202, #5801, 21/05/1979.

institutions. Individual membership has undergone a metamorphosis, and now leans in your direction, if memory serves me right. ‘Individuals’ are defined as: (a) academic and other post-secondary accounting educational institutions; (b) groupings of individual educators and practitioners ... *where no national entities exist*; and (c) international, regional and local development agencies, foundations and other interested bodies (*emphasis added*).”

However, nothing significant occurred for nearly four years. A letter (dated 23 September 1982) from Chambers to Norlin Rueschhoff—then professor and chair of the Accounting Department at the University of Notre Dame—in response to the latter’s request for information provides an indication of what may have happened next:

Dear Norlin,

In response to your letter of September 10 (which I have just received), I enclose items (a) and (b). Item (a) includes your item (c). There were no newspaper reports of the proceedings [of the 1977 Meeting]. The ad hoc committee of Berlin was, I presume, the Committee of Perridon, Enthoven and Chambers. It arose out of a proposal I made for a confederation of teachers or academic associations. Because of official commitments in which I had to leave Berlin before the matter was put to the Conference. When it was put the form of the proposal became another association of individual members, with all the trappings of such an association — not a confederation of the style I advanced. I had some discussions later in Munich with Perridon and Enthoven, and we exchanged draft suggestions for some time afterwards. My antipathy to the full-blown, individual membership scheme was no doubt apparent. Gradually the interchanges ceased. That was that. I hope this is not too late to reach you before you leave for Monterrey, and that the Fifth Conference will be pleasurable and fruitful.²⁵

The Needles & Olmsted (2004) historical account of the IAAER notes that Rueschhoff, chairman of the Fifth Conference on Accounting Education in Monterrey in 1982, played a prominent role in reactivating the push for the new international association. This is confirmed by the Chambers Archive correspondence. But post-1982 correspondence in the Chambers Archive between Nakajima, Chambers, Mueller, Enthoven and others further suggests that

²⁵ Chambers to Norlin, USA P202, #6476, 23/09/1982.

financial necessity and the role of Nakajima in particular were the direct catalysts leading to the IAAER being established. Nakajima had been asked at the Monterrey Conference to help organize the Sixth Conference on Accounting Education to be held in Kyoto in August 1987. He had been informed by the Japan Accounting Association that a letter from a formal international association of accounting educators and researchers was needed before an application could be lodged with the Science Council of Japan for a grant of US\$10,000 for the proposed 1987 conference. Today that amount appears amazingly small. The following extract from a letter by Nakajima to Chambers (similar letters were likely sent to Mueller, Enthoven and others) and Chambers' response are instructive. Nakajima wrote to Chambers on 21 December 1983:

In order to secure a financial support from the above-mentioned Council for 1987, it is necessary to receive a formal letter from an international academic organization on accounting, requesting Japan Accounting Association to sponsor the 1987 Conference in Japan, by February, 1984. The letter should be written by a non-Japanese and should be mailed from some country outside Japan. Since we do not yet have any formal, permanent, international and academic organization on accounting on a global basis, the above-mentioned formal letter is hardly available. The Special Committee of Japan Accounting Association requested me to contact such eminent persons as you so as to organize urgently an international organization of such a nature and to secure such a letter as would satisfy our Science Council for this purpose. In our preliminary discussion, it was judged that, because of the very tight restriction on time, forming a federation of existing national academic or regional organizations would be difficult to realize, because this would need longer time to secure approval of respective governing bodies. Nakajima put forward the following five-point temporary proposal:

- (1) To organize International Association on Accounting Education and Research with voluntary individuals from Canada, U.S.A., U.K., West Germany, Australia, Netherland and Japan
- (2) To accept those on the attached list and others who are recommended by them, who expressed their wish to join this Association, as founder members
- (3) To collect ten U.S. dollars from each member as the membership fee for the years 1984 and 1985
- (4) To nominate a president tentatively from senior U.S.A. members, based on ballots among U.S.A. members

- (5) To arrange a formal opportunity to examine, and approve constitution and by-laws, and to appoint officers as early as practicable.²⁶

Chambers responded on 19 January 1984:

I agree with the proposal of your letter of December 21. There was a proposal in 1977 to form an international organization as a confederation of academic associations. But it lapsed. The limited time you now have for action makes your proposal the only presently feasible arrangement. I enclose my cheque for \$13 Aust. which I judge will more than cover the membership fee. I hope the scheme turns out to be satisfactory.²⁷

Letters were sent by Nakajima to many international accounting academics, and most promptly agreed to pay the US\$10 joining fee. The IAAER was thus officially formed in mid-1984 with a much more limited constitution than Enthoven's December 1977 draft had envisaged. As the Nakajima proposal noted, its fee-paying members were initially "voluntary individuals" of various national associations and its primary task was to be a relatively simple one, to assist Nakajima organize the 1987 Conference.

Needles & Olmsted (2004) provides this observation: "The first officers for the Association represented various international geographic regions: Paul S. Garner, President (University of Alabama, USA), W. John Brennan, Secretary-Treasurer (University of Saskatchewan, Canada); Vice-Presidents: Seigo Nakajima (International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan), Edward Stamp (University of Lancaster, United Kingdom), Murray Wells (University of Sydney, Australia), and Vernon Zimmerman (University of Illinois [at Urbana-Champaign], USA)."

Elected in 1984, the first executive committee worked diligently toward ensuring the success of the Kyoto Conference. The Conference illustrated the need for a distinctive organization that served the unique needs of international accounting educators and researchers

²⁶ Nakajima to Chambers, USA P202, #6742, 21/12/1983.

²⁷ Chambers to Nakajima, USA P202, #6744, 19/01/1984.

not represented elsewhere. The founders of the Association recognized that while academic accountants participated in other international associations, they played only a minor role in those associations which take it upon themselves to make pronouncements about accounting education and research. Importantly, those associations also play no role in the development of accounting academics engaged in teaching and research.

Following the 1982 Monterey Conference a supporting contribution of US\$10,000 from Japan's Conference Organizing Committee allowed the newly formed IAAER's Executive Committee to establish the Association as a permanent organization and to finance the 1987 Kyoto Conference. The major role of the association initially was to assist Nakajima and the Japan Accounting Association to organize that Conference which, by all accounts, was an outstanding success which generated a surplus of \$50,000. That more substantial sum stimulated the IAAER Executive to explore options for the future and, as Needles & Olmsted (2004) observes, the body would morph substantially over the next decade. "Sydney School" academics Murray Wells and Sidney Gray played prominent roles in those developments. By the late 1980s, for example, Wells had proposed amendments to the 1984 Constitution which resulted in its greater confederation role. Wells was elected its second president in 1988. Gray was elected the third President in 1992 and was responsible for organizing the 8th Conference held in 1994 in Paris.

In a further, coincidental twist, in the 1990's there was a move to focus on research and in 1998 the IAAER held its "Second International Research Conference" in Chicago, thereby confirming the direction which Chambers had proposed twenty years earlier!

4. CONCLUSION

The post-1984 history of the organization of the IAAER, with its confederation structure of individual and association members is well covered in Needles & Olmsted (2004). We have augmented this by drawing on material unearthed while researching for the recent Ray Chambers biography (Clarke, Dean, & Persson, 2019). That material discloses Chambers' and others' desire for, and attempts to promote, an international approach to the research and practice of accounting. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to organize an international think-tank, beginning in the mid-to-late 1950s. Chambers proposed in the 1960s something like the International Economic Association of that time. His "think-tank" ideas were eventually put aside as were his compromise confederation proposals, developed to ensure accounting was viewed from an international perspective—this allowed a major proposal to emerge which fostered an international confederation of associations for educators and researchers. As well as Chambers' efforts we explored those of other 1970s accounting academics, including Adolf Enthoven, David Solomons, Norlin Rueschhoff and Seigo Nakajima.

Our account entails a brief background of developments in the 1966–74 period—and moves quickly to examine developments in the 1975–84 period. We examined the formal proposals of Chambers and Enthoven following the October 1977 Berlin Conference on Accounting Education. The December 1977 grandiose plans of Enthoven met resistance from Chambers and others, like David Solomons and Gerhard Mueller, and discussions stalled for nearly four years.

Rueschhoff then reactivated the push for an international body from about 1982. After further discussion financial necessity underpinned a much more simplified, individuals-based proposal being put forward by Seigo Nakajima in late 1983. The IAAER was formally constituted in 1984 with its primary purpose to facilitate funding for the organization of the Sixth

International Accounting Education Conference held in Kyoto in 1987. After that conference, under the shepherding of Chambers' close colleague Murray Wells, the simplified structure was replaced by a confederation style association similar to that advocated by Chambers. This ensured the continuance and importance of International Conferences on Accounting Education and Research every five years until 2006, and thereafter every four years.

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