

# The Commonwealth Brand

Global Voice, Local Action

VICTORIA TE VELDE

THE COMMONWEALTH BRAND

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Global Voice, Local Action

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First published 2011 by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

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### **British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Velde, Victoria te.

The Commonwealth brand : global voice, local action.

1. Commonwealth (Organization)--Membership.
2. Commonwealth countries.
3. Commonwealth countries--Politics and government.
4. Commonwealth countries--Relations.
5. Commonwealth countries--Case studies.

I. Title

909'.0971241-dc22

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

te Velde, Victoria.

The commonwealth brand : global voice, local action / by Victoria te Velde.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4094-2917-3 (hbk) -- ISBN 978-1-4094-2918-0 (ebk)

1. Cultural pluralism.
2. International cooperation.
- 3.

International relations. I. Title.

HM1271.T4 2011

305.8009171'241--dc23

2011019347

ISBN 978-1-409-42917-3 (hbk)

ISBN 978-1-315-61488-5 (ebk)

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# Preface

This book examines the evolution of Commonwealth membership and identity, and the related issues of enlargement. We identify and discuss the different theoretical international relations approaches to analysing the Commonwealth. In so doing we expose various shortcomings in current thinking about international relations and the Commonwealth. Most analysis tends to be state-centric and fails to sufficiently incorporate the wide range of actors now active on the global scene, including the Commonwealth. Global governance is shown to be an appropriate framework for analysing the Commonwealth in the twenty-first century, because it incorporates current issues such as globalisation and the role of non-state actors.

We reveal how a number of turning points in the organisation's history have shaped its membership rules. The most recent of these was Mozambique's accession in 1995 and Rwanda's in 2009. A tightening of the membership criteria followed, which ruled out a number of applicants. Nevertheless, we also show that the official Commonwealth still has the legal potential to expand. We examine the cases of a number of eligible states and assess their likelihood of achieving membership. We also analyse the case of a handful of non-eligible states that, notwithstanding the new 'rules', are still bent on joining.

Despite its traditional image, Commonwealth membership is shown to be a rather fluid concept that evolves with the times. The implications of this are that it should be regarded as a more open organisation than most analysts currently assume. Moreover, Commonwealth civil society organisations now play a greater role in influencing membership, both through their advocacy work and at the policy-making table. The informal Commonwealth, with its global networks of professionals, is growing in strength and reach. Thus, we see both top-down and bottom-up activity that may yet lead to the further expansion of the modern Commonwealths.

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# Acknowledgements

Throughout my research, many people have assisted me in various ways. I have conducted many interviews and there are so many people I contacted, it would be difficult to list them all. My thanks goes to them all.

This book would not have come about if it was not for the support and patience of my family and I would like to dedicate this book to them.

Victoria te Velde  
London

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (States) (in association with EU)
ACU	Association of Commonwealth Universities
ACUNS	Academic Council on the United Nations System
ANC	Africa National Congress
ANDEA	The Andean Community
ANZCERTA	Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation
ARF	Asia Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Association
BIT	Bilateral Investment Treaty
CACM	Central American Common Market
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDC	Commonwealth Development Council
CDP	Compulsory Deferred Pay
CFTC	Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CMAG	Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group
CNIS	Commonwealth News and Information Service
Comecon	Council for Mutual Economic Aid (Soviet-aligned Communist countries)
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMNET-IT	Commonwealth Network of Information Technology
ComSec	Commonwealth Secretariat
CoNGOSAM	Commonwealth Non-Governmental Office for South Africa and Mozambique
CPLP	Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (Community of Portuguese-speaking countries also referred to as Lusophonie)
CPSU	Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CTO	Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation

DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DTT	Double Taxation Treaty
EFTA	European Free Trade Agreement
EU	European Union
FAM	Forças Armadas de Moçambique (Mozambican army)
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FLS	Front Line State
FNLA	Frente Nacional de Liberatacao de Angola (National Front for the Liberation of Angola)
Frelimo	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IGGCM	Inter Governmental Group on Commonwealth Membership
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	International Organisation
IPE	International Political Economy
IR	International Relations
ISP	Internet Service Provider
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NEPAD	New Economic Partnership for African Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONUMOZ	United Nations Operation in Mozambique
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation

RCS	Royal Commonwealth Society
Renamo	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
RM	Radio Mozambique
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SADCC	Southern Africa Development Co-ordination Conference
SAMP	Southern African Migration Project
SARDC	Southern African Research and Development Centre
SWAPO	South-west Africa People's Organisation
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Co-operation
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence (Rhodesia)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP HDI	United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
UNOMOZ	UN organisation monitoring the Mozambique peace process
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organisation
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

It is therefore all the more important for students and analysts of international affairs to be able to determine exactly what the Commonwealth does. Because today's Commonwealth has evolved. An understanding of that *process of growth*<sup>1</sup> is essential to an understanding of its character and qualities (Anyako in Larby, 1993: p. xii).

### 1.1 Introduction

There is no doubt that the Commonwealth has a strong brand. Its identity and reach are shaped by its members, which with 54 members and growing, has at times been a challenge. In June 2005, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Foundation celebrated their 40th anniversary. The establishment of the Secretariat is often taken to be the beginning of the 'modern' Commonwealth. Others might point to the London Declaration of 1949, which accommodated India's desire to remain within the Commonwealth on becoming a republic. Since 1949, the Commonwealth has steadily grown in size from seven countries to its current strength of 53<sup>2</sup> member states. Throughout the 52 years of the Commonwealth's existence – i.e. 12 years before the establishment of the inter-governmental Secretariat – interested countries have requested to join the Commonwealth of Nations and most have been granted membership. On the whole, those who have joined have remained members, and those who left have sought to rejoin. There can be no doubt that the Commonwealth has a strong attraction to many states as well as NGOs. It has been expanding since its establishment and it continues to do so even now.

Much of the debate on the identity of the Commonwealth has focused on the earlier stages of growth (Mayall, 1998; McIntyre, 1991, 2001; Papadopoulos, 1982; Derek Ingram, 1962, 1969, 1979, 1997). Understandably, much attention has been given to India's admittance and Ireland's withdrawal as a republic. However, there is not much written which compares these critical turning points in the Commonwealth's evolution, along with other equally 'surprising' turns in the organisation's history, on the issue of membership and identity. After India joining and Ireland pulling out, the next major turning points could be summed up as:

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1 Italics are authors own.

2 Zimbabwe left the Commonwealth following the Abuja CHOGM in November 2003, bringing the number of members down from 54 to 53.

1. the first black state to join,
2. the first Communist member state,
3. the first undemocratic state in the organisation, and
4. most recently the first members that were never British dependants.

This gap in the analysis of the changing nature and identity of Commonwealth membership is the focus of this book.

## **1.2 The motivation**

The Commonwealth is a much-neglected organisation in academic, especially social science, literature. As a microcosm of the world it has much to teach us about the state of affairs in the world around us (Shaw, 2003a,b,c; Shaw, 2004). At a time when multilateralism is a buzz-word and other international organisations like the EU, WTO, ACP etc. continue to expand, it is odd that the Commonwealth is treated so differently (i.e. not at all) in research. Commonwealth critics and realist scholars have difficulty explaining the queue of countries that are interested in acceding to it, let alone analysing the burgeoning unofficial Commonwealth. Here we attempt to make redress.

In this book we will examine issues of brand and identity in the modern Commonwealth(s), formal and informal. These issues are an integral part of what the Commonwealth is and what it wants to be in the future (Shah, 2002a,b,c; Shaw, 2003a,b,c). As Chief Emeka Anyaoku (former Secretary-General) said (see above), there is a need for a greater understanding of the ‘process of growth’ that the Commonwealth is undergoing (Larby, 1993).

Throughout the book we juxtapose a global governance framework with other international relations (IR) analytical frameworks. We attempt to bridge the academic void between proponents of global governance and the more traditional IR scholars (see Chapter 2). Both approaches have tended to ignore the Commonwealth, albeit for very different reasons. Here we address that and find that it is global governance, rather than the other approaches, that is most appropriate. By allowing one to look at both the state and non-state dimensions (the formal and informal Commonwealths), global governance enables me to pose new questions on the issue of Commonwealth memberships. As a consequence we expose new insights into its nature.

Mozambique and Rwanda’s entry to the Commonwealth, which has also been much neglected academically, in fact has much to teach us about the Commonwealth and its changing identity. An important part of this book therefore are the case studies of Mozambique and Rwanda’s accessions to the Commonwealth. The reason we chose Mozambique and Rwanda, rather than any other member of the Commonwealth, is three-fold. First, they are the most recent states to have joined the Commonwealth and are thus the most contemporary case studies available. Secondly, Mozambique’s ‘status’ as an ‘exception’ warrants analysing

and contextualising. Thirdly, Mozambique's admission forced the Commonwealth to focus on its identity and was the reason that the Inter-Governmental Group on Commonwealth Membership (IGGCM) was set up in 1996. This in turn can be seen as the beginning of codification and tightening of membership criteria, which has affected new applicants and thus the future course of the organisation. Notwithstanding this, Rwanda's accession in 2009 indicates that issues surrounding identity and the membership debate are not over.

This book makes an original contribution to international relations. By juxtaposing global governance and the Commonwealths via membership issues, we provide new insights into our understanding of why a global governance framework is the most appropriate for contemporary analysis. Furthermore, the focus on issues of Commonwealth membership fills an analytical gap in current literature. The comparative approach taken in the chapters on membership of international organisations (IOs) and that on Commonwealth enlargement provide a more balanced view of Commonwealth membership than has hitherto existed. The impact assessment of Mozambique and Rwanda's accession is a unique contribution to the disparate debates on the Commonwealth in the twenty-first century.

### **1.3 The context in the twenty-first century**

Following the above, our main concern in this book is to gain a greater understanding of Commonwealth brand and identity through its membership and the challenges this has thrown up over time. To this end, we explore how a global governance approach compares to other IR schools in analysing this.

- So, how does a global governance approach contribute to our understanding of Commonwealth membership criteria and how does this affect its identity?
- What does this approach reveal about Commonwealth enlargement in the twenty-first century?

In this book we challenge popular theories and thinking on Commonwealth membership. Building on existing international relations theory, we evaluate the following hypotheses.

1. Global governance, by allowing one to include non-state actor issues in analysis, is the more appropriate framework for analysing the modern Commonwealth in the twenty-first century (Chapter 2).
2. Commonwealth membership criteria have changed over time and continue to do so. There is a discernible gap between the membership criteria of the formal and informal Commonwealths (Chapter 3).
3. Mozambique and Rwanda's admission has had notable and irreversible effects on Commonwealth membership criteria. Conversely, Commonwealth

membership has only had a minor, but measureable impact on Mozambique or Rwanda (Chapter 4).

4. Notwithstanding the current membership criteria, which are tighter since Mozambique, the Commonwealth still has the potential to expand (Chapter 5).

## **1.4 An overview of the book**

The structure of this book is as follows. Chapter 1, the Introduction, introduces the subject and sets the parameters for the study. It then provides an overview of the content of each chapter. Chapter 2 sets the theoretical foundations for the book and reviews the relevant literature. Chapter 3 examines the issues of membership and identity from a theoretical point of view. Chapter 4 provides a practical analysis of accession by way of the case study of Mozambique and Rwanda's entry. This vertical analysis is followed by Chapter 5, which is a horizontal (cross-section) analysis of the countries relevant to the enlargement debate. A brief overview of each chapter follows.

### ***1.4.1 Global governance***

Chapter 2, 'The Commonwealth and International Relations Theory' starts with an analysis of the emergence of multilateralism at the end of the twentieth century. We then take a step back in time and compare how the major IR schools of thought (realism, rationalism and idealism) deal with the Commonwealth. We place the different approaches to Commonwealth membership in the context of IR theories to examine their consistency. It allows me to identify convergence and disagreement on the issue of expansion of the Commonwealths.

We then go on to look at a more recent strand in the multilateral debate, namely new-multilateralism and global governance frameworks. After this, we spend some time exploring the relationship between multilateralism and conflict analysis. In the final part of Chapter 2, we examine the Commonwealth through a global governance lens which sets the theoretical foundations for the following chapters.

### ***1.4.2 Enlargement***

The third chapter is 'The Commonwealth Brand: Membership and Identities'. This chapter is more technical in nature. It deals with the legal and procedural aspects of eligibility and accession using comparative frameworks and case studies. In keeping with the global governance framework employed throughout the book, we examine both the formal and the informal Commonwealth. Here, we compare membership of a number of international organisations, focussing on which states are permitted to join which organisations. Having considered the bigger picture,