



The “Nationality” of the Company: Historical Approaches to a Possible Paradox

**Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main, 17.-18. November 2017
Campus Westend, Casino, Room: Cas 1.801 (Renate von Metzler-Saal)**

Organizer: Boris Gehlen (University of Bonn), Christian Marx (University of Trier), Werner Plumpe (University of Frankfurt/M.), and Alfred Reckendrees (Copenhagen Business School)

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The relationship between nation states and the companies based in their respective territories is often ambiguous. Companies provide employment and they pay taxes, they contribute to national income and frequently to “national identity” (*Disney, Dior, Daimler*). Companies and businessmen engage in bilateral and international diplomacy, e.g. as door-openers for new relationships of the West to the Soviet Union in the 1950s or to China in the late 1970s. At other times, companies supported national policies of war and crimes against humanity.

The histories of *Chrysler, Krupp, or Rolls-Royce* – to name just a few examples – provide abundant evidence of embeddedness and dependence on state capacity. Time and again, even companies describing themselves as multi- or transnational seem to appreciate the security net of a nation state with its government and constituency of taxpayers, who act as lenders of last resort. In times of financial crisis there is no dearth of companies that claim to be citizens of a nation state for the sake of access to the respective state’s resources. At the same time the modern state has developed towards a ‘competition state’ acting like a company in a market of countries vying for investments. Nation states brand themselves; they try to attract customers and to service international markets.

The question of companies and their nationality opens the discussion about how companies relate to society and the nation state, and vice versa. What nationality (if it has one) does a company have and how can it be conceived? The conference discusses this question and its implications historically from several perspectives, including perceptions and construction of nationality, the strategic dimension of nationality, nationality in international companies and international mergers, companies in (post)colonial settings and economic nationalism.

Due to limited room capacity an informal registration is required: b.gehlen@uni-bonn.de (Deadline: October 20th 2017; priority registration for AKKU members: Sep. 30th 2017).

Friday, November 17th 2017

- 9.00–9.30 a.m. Get together with coffee and tea
- 9.30–10.00 a.m. Welcome address
Werner Plumpe, Frankfurt a.M., and Boris Gehlen, Bonn
Introduction: The „Nationality“ of the Company: Historical Approaches to a Possible Paradox
Alfred Reckendrees, Copenhagen
- 10.00–12.00 a.m. Panel I, *Chair: Alfred Reckendrees, Copenhagen*
Beyond ‘economic nationalism’: reflections on the nationalism/economy nexus and implications for studying the ‘nationality’ of companies
Stefan Berger, Bochum, and Peter Fetzer, Budapest
The Corporate Nationality: A Question of Culture and Community?
Eric Godelier, Paris
Creating a national identity? The issue of nationality in the energy-intensive industries in Norway, 1890–1940
Pål Thonstad Sandvik and Espen Storli, Trondheim
- 12.00–1.00 p.m. Lunch break
- 1.00–3.00 p.m. Panel II, *Chair: Werner Plumpe, Frankfurt a.M.*
Exporting national narratives: Historically rooted corporate narratives and Danish manufacturing in China
Kristoffer Jensen and Anders Ravn Sørensen, Copenhagen
Nationalisation and firm identity evolution in socialism: The case of Deutsche Werkstätten Hellerau in the GDR and beyond, 1945–1996
Katrin Schreiter (with Davide Ravasi), London
Capitalist Nationalism and Zionist Nation-Building in British-Ruled Palestine
David De Vries, Tel Aviv
- 3.00–3.30 p.m. Coffee & tea break
- 3.30–4.45 p.m. Panel III, *Chair: Stephanie Decker, Birmingham*
The paradox of the nationality of capital in a colonial context: economic nationalism and foreign investment in Angola (1920–1974)
Pedro Neves and Álvaro Ferreira da Silva, Lisbon
Nationality and domicile in international business: evidence from "British" overseas firms
Simon Mollan, Kevin Tennent, and Billy Frank, York
- 4.45–5.00 p.m. Coffee & tea break
- 5.00–6.15 p.m. Panel IV, *Chair: N.N.*
The Firestone Case. American Management vs. Swiss Labor Peace?
Sabine Pitteloud, Geneva
The impact of nationality on corporate governance: The case of the Dutch-German AKU/VGF/Akzo, 1920s to 1970s
Christian Marx, Trier, and Ben Wubs, Rotterdam
- 6.15–6.30 p.m. Award Presentation: AKKU Award 2017
Laudatory Speech: Martin Lutz, Berlin
- 7.30 p.m. *Conference Dinner*

Saturday, November 18th 2017

- 9.00–10.20 a.m. Panel V, *Chair: Christian Marx, Trier*
The Importance of Being European: Airbus and the West German Aircraft Industry, 1960s to 1980s
Ralf Ahrens, Potsdam
The Role of “Nationalism” and “Internationalism” in the Recruitment of Managers in German Companies, 1950s to 1980s
Stina Barrenscheen, Marburg
- 10.20–10.40 a.m. Coffee & tea break
- 10.40–12.00 a.m. Panel VI, *Chair: Boris Gehlen, Bonn*
Nationality as a determinant of success for Belgian multinational entrepreneurs in a global economy: The case of Edouard Empain (1880–1914)
Tobit Vandamme, Ghent
Nations as brands and brand communities as nation
Mads Mordhorst, Copenhagen
- 12.00–1.00 p.m. Lunch break
- 1.00–2.20 p.m. Panel VII, *Chair: Espen Storli, Trondheim*
Shades of Foreignness: German and British Commercial Rivalry in Colonial India (1890s to 1940s)
Christina Lubinski, Copenhagen
Loosing, repairing and maintaining organizational legitimacy: The move towards polycentric organization in British multinationals in Ghana and Nigeria 1945–1970
Stephanie Decker, Birmingham
- 2.20–2.40 p.m. Coffee & tea break
- 2.40–4.00 p.m. Panel VIII, *Chair: Christina Lubinski, Copenhagen*
Buy-national campaigns. Harnessing national sentiment on behalf of profits and the common good
Oliver Kühschelm, Vienna
The Nationality of an Industry: “Swiss Made” law and global competition in the watch business since 1970
Pierre-Yves Donzé, Osaka
- 4.00–4.30 p.m. Concluding remarks and concluding discussion
Boris Gehlen, Bonn
- 4.30 p.m. End of Conference