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Symbols and the World System: National Anthems and Flags

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When one examines current national anthems and flags, one finds a great deal of variety. What explains this variation? Possible factors include a nation's world-system position and its degree of modernization. Specifically, I analyze the ways in which world-system position and modernization affect the design or configuration—the syntactic structure—of the symbols national leaders adopt to convey their nation's identity. Findings reveal a link between a nation's world-system position and the structure of its symbols. Leaders of core nations adopt more basic anthems and flags than their semiperiphery and periphery counterparts. However, modernization has no such influence.

KEY WORDS: national symbols; world systems; modernization; symbolic communication.

INTRODUCTION

"Individuals may form communities," wrote Disraeli, "but it is institutions alone that can create a nation." Like most politicians, Disraeli has told us only part of the story. Unarguably, institutions such as the political system or the economic order represent some of a nation's most central components. However, defining the nation solely in these terms confines our focus to a nation's "vital statistics": its borders, its system of government, and its methods of sustenance and production. Clearly, such vital statistics fall far short of fully describing any nation. Equally important are a nation's symbols, rituals, and traditions. These elements constitute a nation's identity, the image of the nation projected by national leaders both to their constituents and to the world at large. This identity, as much as

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any institutional factor, defines a nation (see, e.g., Giddens, 1987:152–155; Rustow, 1968:9; Wright, 1965, v. 2:992).

National symbols—in particular, national anthems and flags—provide perhaps the strongest, clearest statement of national identity. In essence, they serve as modern totems (in the Durkheimian sense)—signs that bear a special relationship to the nations they represent, distinguishing them from one another and reaffirming their identity boundaries. Since the inception of nations, national leaders have embraced and adopted national flags and anthems, using them to create bonds, motivate patriotic action, honor the efforts of citizens, and legitimate formal authority. (For greater historical detail, see e.g., Mead, 1980, and Reed and Bristow, 1987, with regard to anthems; Crampton, 1990, and Smith 1975 with regard to flags.)

National anthems and flags serve highly similar functions for all nations (see, e.g., Mead, 1980:46; Smith, 1975:34–59). However, when we review those adopted by current nations, we find that their *syntactic structure*—i.e., their design or configuration, the relationship between each symbol's parts—varies greatly from nation to nation. I will argue that these differences embody variations in communication strategies—different methods of conveying the national identity. What influences such differences? Traditionally, the literature points to factors such as a nation's colonial influence, geographic location, and the creative style of the period in which the symbols were adopted (see, e.g., Crampton, 1990; Mead, 1980; Nettl, 1967; Smith, 1975; Talocci, 1977; Weitman, 1973; Zikmund, 1968). But the predictive power of these factors has been minimal at best. In earlier work (Cerulo 1989a, 1989b) I attempted to introduce social explanations for the variation in symbol structure. I found that factors surrounding the adoption of the symbol—events such as wars, revolutions, independence movements, and nation's form of government—explain some of the variation. This article attempts to explain even more of this variation by exploring the influence of macrolevel processes like modernization and structural factors like the world-system position.

Modernization and the world-system position represent two dominant explanations of a nation's economic development. Yet the link between modernization, world-system location, and a nation's *cultural* development has been largely ignored. Working to fill this gap, this article posits that a nation's modernization experience and its world-system position, *as both exist at the time of symbol adoption,* will influence the structure of the symbols by which national leaders convey their nation's identity. This is because different symbol structures—representing distinct communication strategies—will be appropriate to variant phases of economic development and different economic locations. Furthermore, variations in symbol syntax will

follow a discernable pattern. First, I argue that in premodern nations, national leaders will adopt symbols with embellished syntactic structures, whereas leaders of modernized nations will adopt symbols with basic syntactic structures. Second, I contend that leaders of core nations will adopt symbols that are more basic than their semiperiphery and periphery counterparts.

To fully understand the links between modernization, world-system location, and syntactic structure, we must address two issues. First, we must examine the ways in which the syntactic structure of a symbol actually represents a communication strategy. Second, we must consider the effects that modernization and world-system location can have on the selection of communication strategies.

SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE AS A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

National symbols project a message. That message is purposively, meticulously constructed, with leaders of national governments consciously picking and choosing its elements (see, e.g., Agulhon, 1981:16–22; Boli-Bennett, 1979:222–223; Deutsch *et al.,* 1957:36; Lane, 1981:1, 191–195; Merritt, 1966: chaps. 1 and 2; Weitman, 1973:335; Zikmund, 1968:78). For example, contrary to the popular Betsy Ross myth, the American flag was carefully constructed by revolutionary leaders as a graphic manifestation of a new political program. The flag was to outline the structure of the governed, with stars and stripes representing the distinctiveness yet unity of the states. So, while Betsy Ross may have sewn the first flag, her stitches were predetermined by very precise specifications (Smith, 1975:55). Similarly, Irish patriots Meagher, O'Brien, and Mitchel consciously designed their nation's flag as a blueprint for national unification. The flag displays a green vertical stripe representing the Catholics, an orange vertical stripe representing the Protestants, and a white vertical stripe meant to indicate the peaceful coexistence of the two groups (Hayes-McCoy, 1979:140–145; Talocci, 1977:19). The same purposiveness applies to national anthems. For example, Haydn was so impressed with the effects of "God Save the King" on the British that he resolved, immediately upon his return to Vienna, to design a similar composition for his national countrymen (Sousa, 1890:89). Similarly, the design of "La Marseillaise" is credited to General Strasburg of France, who is said to have directed de Lisle, the composer of the anthem, to "produce one of those hymns which conveys to the soul of the people the enthusiasm which it (the music) suggests" (Sousa, 1890:99).

We can analyze a national symbol's message in two ways. On the one hand, we can examine the content of the symbol: the colors or emblems used in a flag; the key, tempo, or lyrics of an anthem. In so doing, we could decipher the meaning of each component of the symbol—i.e., the red stripe of a flag symbolized bloodshed, the upbeat tempo of an anthem depicts triumph over enemies, and so on. Such an approach represents a *semantic analysis* of a symbol. A semantic analysis isolates the symbol's elements and focuses on the meaning of each of those elements. A second alternative would have us study the design or configuration of a symbol: the colors and emblems occupying adjacent positions in the flag; the number of planes or sections contained in the flag; the contour or shape of an anthem's melody; the relationship between melody notes, and between melody notes and their accompanying chords. When focusing on elements such as these, we are undertaking a *syntactic analysis* of symbols. A syntactic analysis examines the meaning conveyed by a symbol's structure—its design or configuration and the relationship between its parts. (For some good reviews of the large literature on both semantic and syntactic structure, see, e.g., Bertin, 1983; Grimshaw, 1973; Gusfield and Michalowicz, 1984; Hervey, 1982; Peterson, 1979; Ruberstein, 1973; Scholes, 1982; *Semiotics: An Introductory Analysis*, 1985).

While various scholars have explored the semantic structure of national symbols (see, e.g., Barraclough, 1969, Elting and Folsom, 1968, Firth, 1973, Pedersen, 1971, Smith, 1975, Talocci, 1977, and Weitman, 1973, with regard to flags; Cartledge *et al.,* 1978, Griffith, 1952, Lichtenwanger, 1979, Mead, 1980, Nettl, 1967, Piggott, 1937, and Sousa, 1890, with regard to anthems), their syntactic structure has been little studied. This is puzzling since communication theorists tell us that syntactic structure is as important as semantic structure when it comes to communication effectiveness (see, e.g., Barey, 1965:93; Cassirer, 1955:94, 96; Cherry, 1961:66; Hervey, 1982:219; Henrotte, 1985:660–661; Leach, 1976:45–49; and de Saussure, 1959). Syntactic structure orders or organizes a symbol's various elements. So, while the elements—the content—of two symbols may be identical, the method of combining or repeating those elements, or emphasizing one element over another can change both the meaning and the effectiveness of the symbol's message. By varying the syntactic structure, one varies the message.

Aural and visual communicae clearly illustrate the importance of syntactic structure (see, e.g., Barthes, 1967, 1977; Cassirer, 1955; Koffka, 1935:184; Leach, 1976:58–59; Meyer, 1967: chap. 1). For example, consider two well-known national anthems: "God Save the Queen" and "La Marseillaise." Both anthems are written in the same key and use many of the same

notes. Their content is similar. Yet we all know that by varying the order, emphasis, and repetition of those notes, the composers created two very different messages. "God Save the Queen" is a sparse, simple hymn of honor, while "La Marseillaise" presents a dense, dynamic call to arms. A historical example illustrates this point in the visual realm. When the revolution of 1848 broke out in France, leaders decided that a restructuring of the flag was needed to capture the tenor of the times. The blue–white–red tripartite flag was changed to a blue–red–white flag. By placing the two primary colors adjacent to one another instead of separating them with a white bar, the new flag took on higher contrast, thus conveying more activity and movement, more to digest than its predecessor (Smith, 1975:135–138). By changing the syntactic structure, the flag's message was changed. These two examples illustrate what has been implicitly suggested in the literature on national symbols—syntactic structure is vital to a symbol's message. With regard to national anthems, Nettl writes, "The full patriotic appeal of an anthem is determined *by the association and the relationship of its parts*" (1967:30—my emphasis). Firth makes a similar point with regard to the syntactic structure of national flags. He notes that "it is not simply the content of flags that is important, *but their form and the combination of their elements*" (1973:46—my emphasis. Also see Eco, 1985:173–174; Smith, 1975:10).

Given the importance of syntactic structure, devising a way to measure it becomes a central research task. In earlier work (Cerulo 1988a, 1989b, 1992), I developed measures for musical and graphic syntax. Using them, we can analyze anthem and flag syntax as it exists on a continuum of basic to embellish design.[2] In large part, this continuum addresses the structural complexity, the density, stability, and "busy-ness" of musical and graphic syntax. While it by no means encompasses every quality of symbol structure, it provides a starting point from which to study its foundations.

The continuum by which musical syntax is measured addresses the factors music theorists would consider in their initial examination of any musical score. *Basic musical syntax* is characterized as a stable, constant, and fixed musical structure. Its presentation is confined to the foundational elements—the building blocks—of music composition. Basic syntax exhibits a limited range of musical motion. In moving from one point to the next, composers choose the most direct route. This creates a sense of stability

[2]Readers will immediately note similarities between my approach and researchers using the concept of "codes" to analyze symbols. While the characteristics of the concepts on my continuum differ from these other scholarly attempts, my approach is certainly indebted to works such as Bergesen (1979, 1984a), Bernstein (1975), Douglas (1970), Eco (1976), and Saussure (1959). For a good review of this literature, see Corner (1986) or Giles and Wiemann (1987).

and constancy in the music. In addition, basic syntax is free of variation or ornamentation of simple musical patterns. Therefore, it appears fixed, as it utilizes only the most fundamental musical combinations and a narrow spectrum of musical sounds. Basic syntax offers the most concise, direct method of fulfilling the rules upon which Western tonal music is based. (For more information on the rules and characteristics of music composition, see, e.g., Dahlhaus, 1980a and 1980b, and Lindley, 1980. Dahlhaus 1980a:179, states that these general rules were established as early as 1600 and have been carried through to the 1900s.) *Embellished musical syntax* embodies opposite qualities. It is a decoration or ornamentation of basic syntax. Embellished syntax is characterized by erratic, wandering motion. Its composers broaden alternatives for movement, inventively varying basic syntactic patterns. Hence, embellished syntax is necessarily flexible, appealing to a wider range of musical sounds and combinations. Unlike basic syntax, embellished syntax elaborates, manipulates, and sometimes disrupts the central elements of Western tonal music composition. (For additional support of the basic-embellished contrast in music, see, e.g., Barthes, 1977:152–153; Bergesen, 1979:336–337; Eco, 1976:90; Guiraud, 1975:31; Henrotte, 1985:660; Meyer, 1956: chap. 6; 1967: chap. 1; Moles, 1966; Youngblood, 1958).

We can analyze the syntactic structure of flags by translating the qualities of the basic-embellished continuum from the aural to the visual realm. *Basic visual syntax* is characterized by limited range. For visual symbols like flags, crests, emblems, and the like, this means limited numbers of colors or fields (i.e., sections). Basic visual syntax is stable. In visually basic symbols, then, we see limited examples of stark color contrast. There are few examples of adjoining primary colors. Rather, adjoining colors consist of primary and secondary colors of the same hue; white (the absence of color) is often used to avoid a clash of primary colors. Finally, basic visual syntax contains limited ornamentation. In the case of symbols like flags, this means few superimposed emblems or signs on the field. As with musical syntax, *embellished visual syntax* displays the opposite qualities. (For additional support of the basic-embellished continuum for visual symbols or for more information on the characteristics of color composition upon which this continuum is based, see, e.g., Bergesen, 1984a:191–195; Cowen, 1987; Guiraud, 1975:31; Levi-Strauss, 1969:20; Leach, 1976:58; Munsell, 1981; Stockton, 1983.)

Having constructs with which to conceptualize variations in syntactic structure, we can proceed to explore the social factors that influence these variations. Specifically, how do modernization and world-system location affect the adoption of syntax?

MODERNIZATION, WORLD SYSTEMS, AND NATIONAL SYMBOLS

When attempting to explain the development of nations and their institutions, social scientists have overwhelmingly favored two perspectives: modernization theory and world-system theory. Modernization theorists argue that nations develop according to evolutionary stages. Moving from traditional structures to modernized ones is an international process contingent on characteristics of the societies themselves. These changes begin at different times, and proceed at different rates in every developing nation (e.g., Black, 1966; Smelser, 1966). World-system theorists, in contrast, argue that nations are not societies having separate, parallel histories. Rather, the characteristics of a larger whole—a world of nations—are crucial to national formation. "Asymmetric linkages between the core, semiperiphery, and periphery of the world system affect socio-economic development more than does internal backwardness or modernization" (Wellman, 1983:162). It is the wider world system that legitimates a nation's sovereignty, purpose, internal rules of property, and fundamental territorial jurisdiction (see e.g., Frank, 1969; Mann, 1980:299; Ruggie, 1983; Thomas and Meyer, 1984:465; Wallerstein, 1979:53; Wellman, 1983:161–162).

Despite their differences, both of these theoretical perspectives draw a common criticism: they maintain a predominantly economic focus. Yet both modernization and membership in the world system should have consequences for cultural as well as economic development (Bergesen, 1984b; Doob, 1964; Inkeles, 1967:v; Rogers, 1969:377–378; Wellman, 1983:162). One such cultural consequence concerns changes in communication strategies.

Modernization presents a completely new phase of existence to each of the nations in which it occurs. In addition to the introduction of industrialization, modernization produces drastic changes in social relations (see, e.g, Plascov, 1982:79). In modernizing nations, leaders must convince a heterogeneous citizenry that they are now a part of a larger, more cohesive unit—one that transcends old tribal, group, or regional loyalties. Some refer to this task a *political modernization*. As political modernization progresses, a national population moves from existing as a heterogenous collection of individual groups to a single national body with a more unified, more homogeneous focus (Black, 1966; Smelser, 1966).

The process of political modernization is vital to a nation's development. Some argue that until the task is accomplished, a nation's economic transition cannot be successfully completed. South Korea, for example, is currently grappling with this problem according to some experts:

> For this divided, impatient people, so swift to teach themselves how to build First World steel mills and auto factories, mastering the art of compromise and civilized political unity poses the toughest challenge yet. If they pass the test however, as it seems likely, Korea's drive toward greatness seems assured. (Fortune, 1988:75).

While vital, political modernization is a delicate task that must be carefully executed. National leaders are acting out new scripts for their constituents; their audience is engaged in a new, confusing, and perhaps stressful process. Faced with this delicate task, national leaders need tools to help them accomplish the transition. Symbols like national anthems and flags become important in this regard—tools of adaptation constructed and employed by national leaders. Such symbols become the "emblems of modernity" (Shils, 1966:81), giving "new" citizens something to embrace when preindustrial traditions slip away. In short, national symbols help convey "which people are to be unified, why, and what their avowed goals are" (Smith, 1975:55).

Since national symbols are so important to the political modernization process, national leaders will want to project the most effective, most appealing symbols possible. In essence, leaders are attempting to link symbolic forms to social forms, choosing the symbols that are most appropriate to the state of their target audience, the national population. I argue that the phase of modernization experienced by a nation can significantly affect the state of the national audience, and thus influence the appropriateness and the effectiveness of certain syntactic structures.

Some scholars argue that factionalism and diversity of social relations are at their height prior to political modernization. As political modernization progresses, national populations generally move from a heterogeneous collection of individual groups or tribes to a single national body with a more unified, homogeneous focus (see e.g., Black, 1966; Smelser, 1966). These changing levels of factionalism constitute changes in audience or group structure. The differences in the structure of the premodern, early modern, and advanced modern audience will call for different communication strategies. We can predict the nature of these strategy variations by referring to the more general literature on symbol construction. That research indicates that symbols adopted in heterogeneous or factionalized social settings (as generally evidenced during premodern or early periods of political modernization) exhibit characteristics suggestive of what I have defined as embellished syntactic structure. During such periods, social audiences subscribe to multiple foci. Hence, there is a dissipation in shared expectations and common assumptions. Therefore, symbols requiring universal attention from a factionalized audience must build on a symbol structure that is variable, dynamic, and able to convey maximum amounts of information. Embellished syntactic structure embodies such a strategy. It

provides a symbolic form that conforms to the fragmented social form of the communication target. Conversely, the literature suggests that symbols created or adopted in increasingly homogeneous social settings (as generally evidenced during the advanced phases of political modernization) exhibit characteristics suggestive of what I have defined as basic syntactic structure. During such periods, those creating or projecting symbols assume, or demand, the population's familiarity with a strong set of shared expectations, conventions, and common assumptions—a singular focus. Under such conditions, then, those producing or projecting a symbolic message can do so with minimal informational input. They need not spell out the details of their message. By using a basic syntax, they can appeal to a symbol system's commonly held building blocks—a symbolic shorthand.[3] (For support of this argument with regard to political symbols, see, e.g., Cherry, 1961:116; Deutsch, 1953:93; Deutsch, *et al.,* 1957:7, 55; Merritt, 1966:60–190; Moore, 1975:223. For more general support, see, e.g., Bergesen, 1979:334–337; 1984:194–197; Bernstein, 1975: chap. 8; Douglas, 1970; Durkheim, 1915; Swanson, 1960: chaps. 3 and 4. Also see a larger review of this literature in Corner, 1986.) This line of reasoning leads to the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 1:* Nations at similar stages of the political modernization process will adopt anthems and flags with similar syntactic structures. Symbols adopted by nations in the advanced stages of political modernization will be more basic than those adopted by premodern nations or those in the early stages of the process. These effects will occur despite unique characteristics of a nation's history or colonization.

Like modernization, a nation's world-system position has the potential to affect much more than its economic advancement. Research in other areas of cultural development has demonstrated this, showing that nations occupying similar structural positions in the world system generate similar patterns and products in areas such as politics, religion, and science (Boli-Bennett, 1979; Shils, 1972; von Gizycki, 1973; Wuthnow, 1980a, 1980b). I propose that we extend such notions to the realm of communication. The link between world-systems position and communication strategy selection rests on the status competition that is an inherent characteristic of the world system (Boli-Bennet, 1979:232–233). That sense of competition affects not only a nation's economic sphere but its cultural sphere as well.

Consider the way in which status competition could influence the adoption of a national symbol. From a world-systems perspective, adopting national symbols is a delicate process. Each symbol will be projected not

[3]While the thrust of this argument rests on Durkheimian logic, it necessarily builds on the sender intentionality that is central to the process of nation symbol adoption.

only to the national population, but to the world beyond a nation's borders. Therefore, much is at stake in this process because projecting the proper image and identity is vital to the nation's acquisition of legitimacy. "Nations gain status for what is *believed* about what they do, not simply for what they do per se" (Boli-Bennett, 1979:232). National symbols become an important part of generating these beliefs. National leaders must carefully construct symbols that simultaneously conform to world ideological standards while making individualistic statements. For example, a nation's anthem and flag must be sufficiently similar to those of other world community members so as to avoid any hint of exclusionary sentiment. Substantive examples underscore this point. The lyrics of all anthems in this sample, for instance, are confined to only 5–6 substantively different themes. Similarly, all national flags restrict their designs to a small number of potential colors. The same is true for flag shape. With the exception of Nepal's flag, which follows a medieval pennant design, all national flags are rectangular. At the same time, these symbols must be sufficiently different from those of other nations so as to notify the world with regard to what the nation is and what it is not.

In selecting a strategy aimed at striking the delicate balance between symbol "sameness" and "uniqueness," a nation's world-system location should play a major role. Within the competitive world system, one finds major differences in nations' ability to implement power. As one moves from the highly technologized and well-integrated core nations to the less industrialized and more factionalized semiperiphery and periphery nations, the implementation of power diminishes. In such an environment, Boli-Bennett suggests an inverse relationship between the ways in which a nation identifies itself and its actual practices—"What cannot be done in practice tends to be more expansively described in ideology" (1979:233). We can apply Boli-Bennett's argument to communication strategies. "Expansive descriptions" are best captured via embellished syntactic structures. In essence, semiperiphery and periphery nations tend to overcompensate for the weak implantation of power with dense, information-laden representations of their national identity. Symbols of these nations will express, in great detail, all of the virtues and qualities that, as yet, the nations have been unable to demonstrate in practice. Core nations, on the other hand, will symbolically express their identities using basic syntactic structures. Given the power of such nations, core symbols need not elaborate or explain their qualities and strengths. Rather, symbols from the core need only refer to well-established well-known qualities and practices. Anthems and flags of core nations serve as a symbolic shorthand for the long-standing exercise

of power, control, and dominance that characterizes their identity within the world system.

These ideas can be systematically stated in hypothesis form:

Hypothesis 2: Leaders in structurally equivalent positions within the world system will adopt similarly structured symbols. Specifically, symbols adopted in core nations will be more basic in design than those adopted by their semiperiphery and periphery counterparts. These effects will occur despite unique characteristics of a nation's history or colonization.

Having considered the links between modernization, world-system location, and the symbolic expression of a national identity, we can now begin to analyze the relationship in detail.

METHODOLOGY

The Sample: National Anthems

The sample used in this study consists of 133 national anthems, representing 131 countries. The sample includes only those anthems following a Western musical tradition—i.e., they must be based on diatonic scales (major, minor, or church modes). Anthems based on other musical systems (e.g., whole tone, pentatonic) would destroy the stylistic uniformity of the sample, making comparative analysis difficult to interpret. Cartledge *et al.* (1978) served as the primary source for compiling the data set; the sample was verified in Mead (1980). Table I lists the nations in the sample, along with each national anthem's date of adoption.

The Sample: National Flags

While I have developed a large sample of national anthems, my work of flags is in its preliminary stages. For the purpose of this study, then, I confined my sample of flags to those adopted in the same year as the nation's national anthem (see Table I). Limited my data in this way enabled me to focus on a single time period when collecting information for the independent variables in the study—i.e., modernization and world-system position. Smith (1975) provided the primary source for compiling the data set. The sample was verified in Talocci (1977). To be sure, the sample of flags is small—33 cases. Consequently, we must view any findings with regard to flag adoption as strictly exploratory. Yet even this small sample affords us the opportunity to begin examining the similarities and differ-

Table I. Anthem and Flag Adoption Years for Nations in the Sample

Nation	Year anthem adopted	Year flag adopted
Afghanistan	1974	1974
Albania	1912	
Algeria	1963	1963
Andorra	1914	
Argentina	1813	
Australia	1974	
Austria	1945	1945
Bahamas	1973	
Barbados	1966	
Belgium	1938	
Belize	1981	
Benin	1960	
Bolivia	1842	
Botswana	1966	
Brazil	1922	
Brunei	1951	
Bulgaria (Time I)	1885	
Bulgaria (Time II)	1964	
Burma	1948	
Cameroon	1948	
Canada	1980	
Cayman Islands	[a]	
Chad	1960	
Chile	1941	
China (People's Republic of)	1949	
China (Republic of)	1929	
Columbia	1905	
Congo	1969	1969
Costa Rica	1853	
Cuba	1868	
Czechoslovakia	1920	1920
Denmark	1844	
Dominican Republic	1900	
Ecuador	1948	
Egypt	1960	
El Salvador	1953	
Estonia	1917	
Fiji	1970	1970
Finland	1848	
France	1794	1794
Gabon	1960	1960
Gambia	1965	1965
Germany (Democractic Republic of)	1950	
Germany (Republic of)	1922	
Ghana	1957	1957
Greece	1864	
Grenada	1974	1974
Guatemala	1896	
Guinea-Bissau	1974	
Guyana	1966	1966
Haiti	1904	

Table I. Continued

Nation	Year anthem adopted	Year flag adopted
Honduras	1915	
Hungary	1844	
Iceland	1874	
Indonesia	1949	
Iran	1933	
Ireland	1926	
Israel	1948	1948
Italy	1946	1946
Ivory Coast	1960	
Jamaica	1962	1962
Jordan	1946	
Kampuchea (Cambodia)	1976	
Kenya	1963	1963
Korea (Democratic People Republic of)	1947	
Korea (Republic of)	1948	
Laos	1947	1947
Latvia	1874	
Lebanon	1927	
Lesotho	1967	
Liberia	[a]	
Lichtenstein	[a]	
Lithuania	1918	
Luxembourg	1895	
Malawi	1964	1964
Malaysia	1957	
Maldives	1972	
Mali	1962	
Malta	1923	
Mauritius	1968	1968
Mexico	1854	
Monaco	1867	
Mozambique	1975	1975
Nepal	1899	
Netherlands	1626	
New Zealand	1940	
Nicaragua	1939	
Niger	1961	
Nigeria	1960	1960
Norway	1864	
Oman	1970	1970
Pakistan	1954	
Panama	1903	1903
Papua New Guinea	1976	
Paraguay	1846	
Peru	1821	
Philippines	1898	1898
Poland	1927	
Portugal	1910	
Rhodesia	1974	
Romania	1881	
Rwanda	1961	1961

Table I. Continued

Nation	Year anthem adopted	Year flag adopted
San Marino	1894	
Saudi Arabia	1950	
Sierra Leone	1961	1961
Singapore	1959	1959
South Africa	1936	
Sri Lanka	1952	
Surinam	1876	
Sweden	1885	
Switzerland	1885	
Syria	1936	
Tanzania	1961	
Togo	1960	1960
Tonga	1874	
Trinidad and Tobago	1962	1962
Tunisia	1958	
Turkey	1921	
Uganda	1962	1962
Ukraine	1917	
United Kingdom	1745	
U.S.S.R.	1943	
United States	1931	
Upper Volta	1960	
Uruguay	1845	
Venezuela	1881	
Vietnam (Democratic Republic of)	1946	
Western Samoa	1962	
Yugoslavia	1918	
Yugoslavia	1945	
Zaire	1971	1971
Zambia	1964	1964

[a]Missing data.

ences found in the aural and visual communication strategies adopted by national leaders.

Measuring Musical Syntax

The characteristics of the basic-embellished continuum of musical syntax can be quantified. By plotting the configuration of melodies, dynamic changes, rhythmic patterns, and so on, we can mathematically calculate the motion or busy-ness, the stability, and the ornamentation of an anthem's syntactic structure. In this study, I will use measures designed expressly for this purpose. (See Cerulo 1988a, 1989b for a full description.) *Overall musical syntax*, the dependent variable in this study, represents the basic-em-

bellished aspects of several musical dimensions: melody, phrasing, harmony, form, dynamics, and rhythm.[4] It is a continuous variable, ranging from –5.85 to 9.27; its mean equals 0, with a standard deviation of 3.15. Negative values on this variable are associated with basic musical syntax, while positive values indicate embellished syntax.

Measuring Visual Syntax

Like musical syntax, the characteristics of the visual basic-embellished continuum can be quantified. By calculating factors such as the number of points in a flag exhibiting color contrast, the intensity of that contrast, and the number of colors, fields, and emblems used, we can mathematically determine the motion, stability, and ornamentation of the flag's syntactic structure. To capture these qualities, I will use a measure outlined in Cerulo (1992). *Overall visual syntax*, the second dependent variable in this study, represents the basic-embellished aspects of contrast, differentiation, and ornamentation in flags. It is a continuous variable, ranging from –5.9 to 8.2; its mean equals 0, with a standard deviation of 2.73. As with the measure of musical syntax, negative values on this variable are associated with basic visual syntax, while positive values indicate embellished syntax.

Measuring the Influences of Symbol Syntax

This study focuses on a nation's modernization process and its world-system location as they influence symbol syntax. I measured each of these factors as follows:

Modernization

In this work, I confine my discussion of modernization to what most theorists refer to as *political modernization*. This term refers to the consolidation of modernizing leadership—that point in which areas become unified under a single, centralized, organized government (see Black, 1966.). In this analysis, I attempted to locate nations in relation to the various phases of the political modernization process. Specifically, by subtracting the year in which political modernization occurred in a nation from the

[4]The anthems used in this study were recorded in piano reduction format. Consequently, orchestration could not be addressed.

years in which that nation adopted its anthem and its flag, I created two continuous variables. The first variable represents a nation's modernization phase at the time of anthem adoption; the second reports modernization phase at the time of flag adoption. Black (1966) and Kurian (1979) provide these data. Negative values of both variables correspond to premodern nations, while positive numbers characterize postmodern nations.

The data show that Great Britain was the first nation in the sample to undergo political modernization; the process began in 1649. Maldives, Singapore, and Zambia were the last to begin the process, initiating political modernization in 1965.

World-System Location

Each nation in the sample was coded as either a core, semiperiphery, or periphery in accordance with its world-system position during the year in which its symbols were adopted. Classifications were based on data collected from Wallerstein (1974, 1975, 1980), Chirot (1977), Snyder and Kick (1979), and Bollen (1983).[5]

In addition to these variables, I controlled this analysis for a number of factors that have previously proven influential to symbol syntax: a nation's level of domestic control, its form of government, its geographic location, the overall musical/visual syntax of the mother country's symbol, and the style period in which a nation's symbols were adopted. By including these variables in the analysis, I can distinguish between syntactic variation caused by factors already known to influence the structure of symbols and the additional predictive power offered by modernization and world-system location. These control variables were measured as follows:

Domestic Control

Previous research reveals that high domestic control is associated with the adoption of basic syntactic structures. As control diminishes, embellished structures are more frequently adopted. To control for these effects, I included domestic control variables in the analysis. The variables reflect national events that can influence a ruling body's control of internal affairs. Each nation in the sample was classified according to three levels of do-

[5]The world-system measure has three values: 1 = core, 2 = semiperiphery, and 3 = periphery. While this type of interval measure is unusual, it has theoretical merit; it is in keeping with Wallerstein's description of the relationship between these three positions. However, please note that I also ran the regression models using dummy variables to represent the world-system categories. Results yielded patterns identical to those reported here.

mestic control: high, moderate, and low. *High domestic control* is characterized by unity, high focus, and shared commitment; it includes conditions such as nationalistic movements, victory in war, independence movements, or formal declarations of independence—situations that allow elites to maintain high levels of internal command. *Low domestic control* is characterized by fragmentation and conflict; it includes conditions such as periods of revolution, bloody coups, wars in which the fate or position of the nation is uncertain, and large-scale disasters such as the onset of major economic depressions—situations that pose a threat to the ruling elite's command. *Moderate domestic control* is characterized by events that fall to the center of this spectrum—periods of relatively peaceful socioeconomic development. In constructing this variable, I collected data on the social conditions within each nation at the time its anthem and flag were adopted.[6] For further details on how the data were coded, see Cerulo (1989a).

Form of Government

Previous research shows that democratic regimes tend to adopt symbols with embellished syntax while authoritarian regimes favor basic syntax. To control for this effect, I included a form of government variable in the regression model. Each nation's government was classified as either authoritarian (including monarchies, dictatorships, and military rule) or democratic (including presidential governments or parliamentary rule). Again, the classifications were based on the year in which a nation's anthem and flag were adopted. For more details on how these data were coded, see Cerulo (1989a).

Geographic Location

Nations in the sample were clustered in nine regions: Africa, Australia, Eastern Europe, Far East, Near East, North America, Scandinavia, South America, and Western Europe. This allowed me to construct dummy variables representing each region. By including the variables in the analysis, I can control for regional influences.[7]

[6]These sources were Banks (1971), Cartledge *et al.* (1979), *Chronology of World History* (1975), *Encyclopedia Britannica Macropedia* (1973, 1987), Kurian (1979), Mead (1980), Nettl (1967), Sousa (1890), *The Worldmark Encyclopedia* (1984), and Wright (1965).

[7]I ran a preliminary regression equation to determine which of the nine geographic areas should be entered into the final model. South American was the only region significantly associated with anthem syntax. Africa was the only region associated with flag syntax. Hence, these are the only variables entered into the equations.

Syntax of the Mother Country's Symbol

I identified the mother country for each nation in the sample. Then I calculated the overall musical/visual syntax for each mother country's symbol. This variable controls for the potential cultural influence exerted by a colonial power.

Stylistic Period

I recorded the year in which each symbol was adopted, producing a continuous variable ranging from 1626 to 1976. This variable controls for the influence of stylistic developments in art and music.

Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data.[8] By simultaneously entering all variables, we can determine the relative effects of modernization and world-system location on variations in the syntactic structure of national symbols. Each effect is examined while controlling for the influence of all previously mentioned variables.

FINDINGS

The findings offer strong support for the world-systems hypothesis. The symbols of core nations are more basic in structure than those of semiperiphery and periphery nations. The findings, however, offer little support for the modernization hypothesis; modernization phase bears no significant relationship to syntactic structure.

Before elaborating on the full sample results, we can profit from examining the most basic vs. the most embellished anthems and flags in the sample. They provide substantive illustrations of the statistical findings. Great Britain's anthem was most basic (–5.85) followed by the East German anthem (–5.37). Great Britain was located in the core at the time of the anthem's adoption, while East Germany straddled the core and semiperiphery location. Thus, these two cases are in keeping with the world-system hypothesis. At the opposite end of the syntactic structure continuum, Ecuador displayed the most embellished anthem (9.27) followed by the Turkish national anthem (8.32). Ecuador was positioned in the periphery at the time of the anthem's adoption while Turkey was in the semiperiphery. Here too, observations are consistent with the world-systems

[8] I examined the appropriate measures of association between all the variables used in the models to follow. No two variables were correlated at a level higher than .40. Therefore, multicollinearity should not influence the analysis.

hypothesis. But the findings with regard to modernization are less clear-cut. At the basic end of the continuum, the findings prove consistent with the hypothesis. Both national symbols were adopted well into the postmodern period of each country's history. Great Britain's anthem was adopted 96 years after modernization began, while East Germany's anthem was adopted 147 years into the postmodern period. However, at the embellished end of the syntactic continuum, the cases examined run counter to the hypothesis. Ecuador adopted its anthem 73 years into the modernization process, while Turkey adopted its anthem 13 years after modernization ensued. Despite the fact that both nations were in the postmodern period, and thus expected by the hypothesis to adopt basic symbols, both chose highly embellished anthems.

When we shift our focus to flags, similar patterns emerge. While world-system location is predictably linked to flag syntax, the modernization phase follows the predicted pattern at only one end of the visual syntactic continuum. Austria's flag displayed the most basic syntax (–5.90) followed by France's flag (–5.50). Both countries were located in the core of the

Table IIA. Breakdown of Anthem Syntax by World-System Location[a]

	Core nations (%)	Noncore nations (%)
Basic musical syntax	62	41
Embellished musical syntax	38	59
	100	100

[a] $N = 131$. Fisher exact test, $p = .05$.

Table IIB. Breakdown of Flag Syntax by World-System Location[a]

	Core nations (%)	Noncore nations (%)
Basic graphic syntax	67	37
Embellished graphic syntax	33	63
	100	100

[a] $N = 33$. Fisher exact test, $p = .05$. Both anthem and graphic syntax were dichotomized at the mean.

world system when they adopted their flags, thus confirming the world-system hypothesis. The most embellished flag in the sample belongs to the Philippines (8.20) followed by the flag of Uganda (8.00). Again, as predicted, both countries were located in the periphery of the world system when they adopted their flags. The modernization findings are less clear-cut. While Austria adopted its flag 99 years after political modernization occurred, and thus well into the postmodern period, France adopted its flag while only 6 years into the process, a period in which we would expect a somewhat more embellished design to emerge. At the basic end of the continuum, then, modernization does not present a clear influence on flag structure. Yet at the other end of the visual syntax continuum, the illustrative cases support the modernization hypothesis. Both the Philippines and Uganda adopted their flags in the very year political modernization ensued, a time in which we would expect highly embellished designs.

One additional preliminary note is worth mentioning here. For the 33 anthems and flags adopted in the same year, $r = .382$. This correlation suggests that design choices are similar across media.

Table IIIA. Breakdown on Anthem Syntax by Modernization Period[a]

	Premodern nations (%)	Modernizing nations (%)	Postmodern nations
Basic musical syntax	51	60	45
Embellished musical syntax	49	40	55
	100	100	100

[a] $N = 131$. Fisher exact test, $p = .31$.

Table IIIB. Breakdown of Flag Syntax by Modernization Period[a]

	Premodern nations (%)	Modernizing nations (%)	Postmodern nations
Basic graphic syntax	67	47	47
Embellished graphic syntax	33	53	53
	100	100	100

[a] $N = 33$. Fisher exact test, p = .26. Both anthem and graphic syntax were dichotomized at the mean.

Tables IIA–IIIB give a breakdown of the full sample results. Both tables underscore the substantive findings reported above. Focusing first on Tables IIA and IIB, we can see that core nations are significantly more likely to adopt basic anthems and flags than their noncore counterparts. This findings lends support to the world-systems hypothesis.

On the other hand, Tables IIIA and IIIB offer no such support for the modernization hypothesis. Whether dealing with anthems or flags, there appears little significant difference in the structure of premodern symbols versus those adopted during the modernization transition or those adopted during the postmodern period.

Table IV lists findings generated by two multiple regression models addressing variation in symbol syntax. The first column lists the variables in the model. The second column lists the expected sign of the coefficients in light of the research hypotheses. Column three lists the regression coefficients for a model addressing anthem syntax. Column four displays the findings associated with flag syntax. Both models in Table IV suggest clear effects from a nation's world-system location and less impressive effects from modernization.

With regard to variations in anthem syntax, the coefficients indicate that leaders of core nations tend to adopt anthems with basic musical syntax. As we move closer to the periphery of the world system, leaders are

Table IV. The Effects of Social Factors on Symbol Syntax

(1) Independent variables	(2) Expected coefficient sign	(3) Anthem syntax (*B*/beta)	(4) Flag syntax (*B*/beta)
Modernization phase	–	–.001/.012	.001/.121
World-system location	+	1.483/.306[a]	2.713/.914[a]
Low domestic control	+	2.861/.350[a]	.566/.084
High domestic control	–	–2.561/–.403[a]	–.272/–.061
Form of government	+	2.414/.276[a]	.563/.120
South American Reg./ African Reg.	+	.591/.093	4.421/.654[a]
Mother country syntax	+	.083/.091	1.392/.992[a]
Stylistic period	+	.010/.061	.051/.230
R^2		.44	.36
Adjusted R^2		.40	.28
F		.605[a]	10.28[a]
N		133	33

[a]Significance at .05 or better.

more likely to adopt anthems with embellished musical syntax. This finding is significant when controlling for the effects of modernization and other social factors included in the model. Modernization phase, to the contrary, does not appear to influence anthem syntax. The regression coefficients representing modernization fail to reach statistical significance.

Confirming earlier research, the coefficients show that conditions of high domestic control are associated with the adoption of basic anthems'; periods of low domestic control are associated with the adoption of embellished anthems. With regard to form of government, authoritarian regimes are likely to adopt basic anthems while democratic regimes more often adopt embellished anthems. The remaining variables—geographic, location, syntax of the mother country's anthem, and stylistic period are not significant predictors of the variation in music's syntactic structure. The social and economic variables in the model appear to overpower their influence.

The coefficients in column four redirect our attention to visual syntax. Interestingly, some of the findings on flags are similar to anthems, while some are quite different. Like anthems, flags adopted in core nations are likely to have basic visual syntax, while semiperipheral and peripheral nations adopt more embellished flags. This finding is significant when controlling for modernization and the other social variables in the model. Also as with anthems, modernization phase does not significantly influence the visual syntax of flags.

The remaining variables illustrate clear differences regarding the influences of anthem versus flag syntax. The syntactic structure of flags appears unaffected by levels of domestic control or form of government. However, national leaders are influenced by the syntactic structure of their mother countries' flags; they tend to adopt flags with similar syntax. (This is in keeping with previous suggestion by Firth, 1973, and Weitman, 1973.) In addition, African flags tend to be more embellished than flags from other geographic regions. The remaining variable—stylistic period—is not significantly related to variations in the syntactic structure of flags. As with anthems, the social and economic variables appear to overpower its influence.

DISCUSSION

Modernization and world systems represent two concepts frequently used to explain the development of a nation's "vital statistics." This article has attempted to extend that focus by asking whether the effects of mod-

ernization and world systems influence cultural as well as economic development. Specifically, do they affect the formation of a nation's symbols? I have examined variations in symbol structure as differences in the communication strategies that national leaders employ to convey their nation's identity.

The findings suggest little connection between a nation's modernization experience and the structure of its symbols. However, such conclusions must be interpreted with caution. More precise or inclusive measures of modernization may uncover a stronger relationship between the modernization process and the cultural products that emerge from it. Clearly, further research is called for.

The relationship between world-system position and symbol structure is quite clear and confirms the research hypothesis. First, structurally equivalent leaders choose the same communication strategies. In addition, as we move from the core to the periphery of the system, syntactic structures become increasingly embellished in design. I have argued that this relationship can be explained by referring to status competition within the system. Upon further reflection, however, there may be additional elements to consider. First, basic and embellished syntax represent two different communication strategies. Some argue that when dealing with national symbols, basic syntax represents *normative communication*—that which is dictated by sociocultural convention. Embellished syntax, on the other hand, represents a distortion of the normative. Such syntactic distortion is often a useful communication technique for capturing audience attention (see Cerulo 1988b). With this in mind, the findings with regard to world-system location carry some interesting implications. When we review the flags and anthems with the earliest adoption dates, we find that most display a basic syntax. In addition, most were adopted by core nations. This suggests that the normative format of anthems and flags was developed in the core of the world system. In a sense, then, these symbols establish basic syntax as the convention for their respective genres. Leaders outside the core of the world system must project their national symbols into a previously formatted symbolic arena. If it is true that embellished syntax gains audience attention by distorting the normative, these leaders may be choosing such a syntax in order to gain maximum attention for their new and important message. For such leaders, embellished syntax represents a more jarring, a more demanding communication strategy.

A second point must also be considered in reviewing the world-systems findings. Factionalism was an important component in the modernization hypothesis. It may be equally important to fully understanding the world-system results. Previous research reveals that core nations display less

factionalism than their semiperiphery and periphery counterparts—i.e., fewer ethnic groups, fewer linguistic groups, fewer religious sects, and so on (Cerulo, 1985, 1989a). I have contended that the factionalized audience requires a density of information. When selecting symbols, then, communicators from the semiperiphery and periphery may wish to include as many aspects, slants, bents, and pieces of information as possible: something for everyone, the colors or emblems of every faction, folk melodies or harmonies of every group. Such an effort would necessarily dictate an embellished syntax—a communication structure that leaves room for as many inclusions or elaboration as necessary.

Another aspect of the findings deserves comment. Regression analysis reveals both similarities and differences between the factors influencing aural and visual communication strategies. While internal forces such as form of government and domestic control influence anthem structure, external characteristics like syntax of the mother country's symbol or geographic region seem more important to the development of flags. Usage patterns may help explain these differences. Both anthems and flags are used to make internal statements of national identity. Leaders will use both anthems and flags (as well as other national symbols) to create bonds among their citizens, to motivate action, to legitimate their own authority, or reinforce loyalty among the citizenry. When citizens pledge allegiance to the flag or fly the flag on national holidays, when they sing the national anthem in a theatre or sports arena, when official leaders appear against the backdrop of these symbols, they proclaim the national identity for those within the nation's borders. National identities, however, are also projected beyond national borders. Flags appear most central to these external statements. It is the flag that drapes foreign embassies and decorates diplomats' limousines. Nations claim new territories by hoisting their flag. Foreign vessels announce their arrival by flying their flag. Flags are more portable and versatile than other symbols; they become the calling card of choice for projecting the national identity to those outside national borders (see, e.g., Nettl, 1967; Smith, 1975; Talocci, 1977; Mead, 1980). Given the distinction between anthem and flag usage, the adoption of flags may require greater sensitivity to the external audience. In projecting a message to the internal arena, political leaders may feel it is more important to consider the symbolic elements of their colonial power, their neighbors, or other members of the world of nations rather than being influenced by conditions specific to their nation. However, these conclusions must remain speculative at this stage of the research. Additional work is needed to more precisely explore the differences in aural and visual communication strategies.

CONCLUSION

The role of national leaders in symbol adoption is only one chapter of a larger story. Future research must investigate the role of the national audience and their reaction to projected symbols. What do varying symbol structures mean to the larger collective? Do certain symbolic structures lead to greater usage, attachment to or acceptance of symbols by the collective? If so, why? Exploring audience usage of symbols will offer some of the answers to these questions. We must also learn more about the cognitive processes involved in the reception and interpretation of aural and visual messages. Are certain symbol structures more effective than others at motivating social action? To be sure, such knowledge need not be restricted to national symbols. We can pursue questions of power and effectiveness with reference to any area that uses music or visual images to communicate messages: politics, advertising and marketing, mental/emotional therapy, and so on. Indeed, our full understanding of symbols in society is only beginning, and our research agenda can only succeed through continued, systematic investigation of the complex interaction between the social and symbolic realms.

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