

# A Meta-Vexillological Classification & Study of Flags

by Christopher Maddish

**Abstract** The Fraternal Flag Partners of Europe Major: A Meta-Vexillological Classification & Study of Flags, an acute classification system for flags, based upon similar designs and cultural parallels.

The taxonomy of flags is an important and key subject area in vexillology. Usually the criteria for classifying flags are based upon similar colors, designs, and cultural dimensions. Orders by culture include the pan-Slav and pan-African categories. Another established way to classify flags is by design such as the tri-bar. Lastly some categories fuse both culture and design as is the case with the Christian Cross or Islamic Crescent flag categories.

However the purpose of this paper is to present flags in a highly structured meta-vexillological format. It is essentially an acute classification system that is closed ended – with a one to one parity. Previous methodologies to classify flags are typically open ended, such that pan-African or horizontal tri-bar flag categories can have a theoretically unlimited number of flags under their particular domain. Examples of flags outside of Europe classified in this binary manner are Canada & Peru, Ghana & Ethiopia, and Fiji & Tuvalu. But in this paper the national flags of “Europe Major” will be the focus and presented in a closed system of pairs.

## Introduction

### Flag taxonomy

Creating new ways to classify and group flags is a common mainstay in vexillology. All one needs to do is to provide a logical framework and compare a flag to that particular definition. If a flag fits a particular definition set by the flag taxonomist, then that flag is put into that group. Usually this methodology of grouping flags is open ended, so that any number of flags can fit into that particular rubric. For example one can create a class of flags that have discs upon them or a class of flags with quad-bars or a class of flags with four colors.

One new class of flags recently created on my blog The Voice of Vexillology was posted online on January 28, 2012 - Aquageotic. The flags of Cyprus, Chatham Island, the flag of the 'Permanent Antarctic Treaty Secretariat,' and proposed flag of Antarctica by Bartram Graham belong in the Aquageotic Class of Flags. The Aquageotic Class is defined as follows: a flag that utilizes a mapped outline of the island or other natural water-land barrier in the shape of its design.

But this paper presents a revolutionary meta-vexillological comparative classifying



Cyprus



Antartica



Chatham Island



Permanent Antartic Treaty Secretariat



technique that essentially measures the degree of resemblance of one flag unto another. The rules for measuring and classifying the similarities are based upon similar colors and overall geometry. Note that this is a relative classification system dependent on comparison.

The classes of flags are designated with the Greek Alphabet. Since nine classes of flags will be presented, nine letters of the Greek Alphabet will designate the particular types of classes/relationships. Essentially the closer to the beginning of the Greek Alphabet that two compared flags get, it indicates that these two flags are more similar. Essentially this rubric is a comparative tool to underline the similarities between two flags.

### The big picture

Many people have noted that some flags look remarkably alike to others. For example, Italy's flag looks remarkably like Mexico's flag, or rather Mexico's flag looks a lot like Italy's flag. Likewise the colors and patterns of Germany and Belgium are similar. The plain Serbian Flag looks like an upside down Russian Flag or vice versa. Usually the discussion ends there, but what if you dug deeper on the issue of similar flags? Is it possible that the national flags can be put into a harmonious order? The sense of noticing coincidences that seem non-related is related to the notion of synchronicity. Much of the peculiar cultural alignments between compared countries are founded on this phenomenon - when seemingly random events align up in a certain order and have value to the observer.

This is the endeavor of this paper, to illustrate that the flags of Europe Major exhibit an uncanny yet palatable kind of flag symmetry. Not the mathematical precise kind of symmetry, but a harmonious symmetry of color and geometry reinforced by synchronicities of history and culture. Note that this is a meta-vexillological harmony like the harmony of song, food, and comparative history. In other words the gravity between paired up flags is enhanced by parallels of culture, geography, history. Sometimes the cultural parallels are precisely similar and others they are of a countercharged axiom. An example of a countercharged historical axiom being: imagine that one nation was invaded by France during a particular war, while the other invaded France in the very same war.

### Europe Major – Geographically Defined

Note that only the flags with nations grounded to the region of Europe wholly east of Asia and wholly north of Africa will be the subject to this paper. The defining line between Eastern and Western Europe is blurry. But with respect to this paper a logical geographic definition for the end points of Europe with respect to Asia and Africa will be articulated. Using longitude and latitude via the continental extreme end points of Africa and Asia, an objective set of geographic coordinates that separate Europe from Asia and Africa is evident.

First on the dividing lines between Africa and Europe, from approximately 36° 0' NORTH to 37° 0' 20' NORTH the continents of Europe and Africa are parallel. South of 36° 0' NORTH, no part of the continent of Europe is more south than Africa, this is the purely African latitude with respect to the continent of Europe. Likewise Ras Ben Sakka in Tunisia at 37° 0' 21' NORTH is the most approximate northern point of Africa, thus north of this point is the purely European latitude with respect to the continent



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Africa. Note that these figures do not include islands in between continents, since it is debatable as to which continent they should be associated with.

Second - on the diving line between Europe and Asia, the basis for this longitude is for the most western point on the continent of Asia, which is Asia Minor. This extreme point is at Cape Baba (Babakale) at approximately 26° 03' EAST. West of this meridian Europe is more western than Asia, but east of this meridian Asia and Europe overlap. Unfortunately the most western point of Europe is not so clearly defined. And for the purpose of this paper it does not matter, so it will be ignored. The main idea is that at longitude 26° 03' EAST, this region of Europe is wholly west of the Asian Continent.

Thus the area in between the most northern point of the African Continent and eastern most point of the Asian Continent is by definition constitutes the area known as Europe Major. In an effort to keep this presentation under twenty minutes only those nations wholly residing in this area of Europe Major will be the subject of this paper. However if any nation within Europe Major should partner with another nation outside of this area, it will be included.

Also note in the slides illustrating the area of Europe Major is my proposed flag for the Mediterranean Sea. It uses the colors yellow, indigo, lime green, black and white. The flag is divided horizontally down the middle with yellow in the superior position and indigo on along the bottom half. Along the fly is a white stripe followed by a lime green area. Within the green area is a black seahorse facing the hoist. The yellow portion represents the coastline of Europe, the indigo portion represents the coastline of Africa, and the green portion represents the coastline of Asia. This flag represents the fact that all three continents that make up the Old World meet at the Mediterranean Sea. Additionally when you combine yellow and indigo it makes lime green, this illustrates that the Europe and Africa touch Asia and are culturally united as a group through the religions that have emerged out of Asia. The seahorse emblem was chosen because the shape of the Mediterranean Sea looks like the outline of a seahorse to some extent.

## Alpha Flag Symmetry

Alpha classification is defined when two flags match in an overall geometric pattern and have matching colors, which can vary slightly by tint and also ignoring small differences in national emblems.

- Matching colors, differ slightly only in tint
- Similar geometric patterns
- National Coats of arms and emblematic designs are ignored if they do not constitute a major portion of the flag
- To the untrained eye they can easily be mistaken as one for the other



### **Moldova and Andorra**

The Little Bookends of Eastern and Western Europe

- Harmonious Colors: Red, Yellow, and Blue



- Harmonious Geometry: Horizontal Tri-bars
- National Arms are present in both flags. Both feature cows and Christian Icons
- Easily mistaken for one another to the lay audience

#### *Flag comparisons*

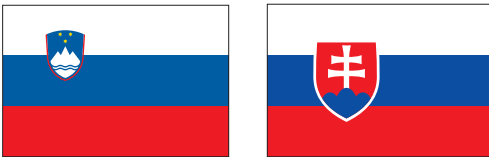
Their flags match by geometry as both are vertical tribars and by order of color - blue, yellow, and red. Coincidentally both arms feature oxen and Christian symbolism. In the lower right corner of Andorra's shield of arms are two red oxen with blue horns, blue collars, and blue hooves, while Moldova features a centrally placed yellow oxen head. Of Christian Symbolism, in the upper left corner of Andorra's arms is a Catholic Miter with a Shepard's crook, while the eagle of Moldova's flag holds a yellow cross in its beak.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Geographically both are small nations that echo the balance between Eastern and Western Europe. Although rooted to Christianity, the dominant denominations highlight the original millennial schism of the once united Church of Europe. Since 1054 the rift between the churches allied to Rome and Constantinople went un-reconciled. In the wake of this division much of Eastern Europe would follow Constantinople while Western Europe followed Rome. Subsequently Andorra and Moldova were naturally pulled to their church closest to their local.

### **Slovenia and Slovakia**

Slavic, Catholic, & in Central Europe



- Harmonious Colors: White, Blue, and Red all in the same order
- Harmonious Geometry: Horizontal Tri-bars
- Both flags feature the national coat of arms. Coincidentally both feature a horizon with three peaks – Slovenia's are sharp peaks while Slovakia's are curved hilly peaks
- Easily mistaken for one another to the lay audience

#### *Flag comparisons*

Both are horizontal tri-bars that match in geometry and color. Their major differences are in coat of arms. Even so a few similarities are also present in their national coat of arms. Both arms feature three mountains. The mountains of Slovenia's flag are sharply drawn, while the mountains of Slovakia are hilly.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Slovenia and Slovakia were both a part of larger nations that are no more – Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Both were former satellites of the Soviet Union, but it was in the aftermath of the Cold War their separation into their present smaller forms took place. Slovakia left the Czech Republic on December 31, 1992, while on June 21, 1992 Slovenia declared its independence from Yugoslavia. Relative to the other nations that succeeded Yugoslavia, Slovenia's path towards independence was relatively peaceful with a short 10 day war. Likewise Slovakia's separation from her Czech half was so peaceful it has been called the Velvet Divorce.

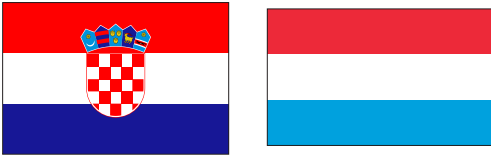
Oddly as their names are easily confusable in English as are their flags, their linguistic

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heritages are far removed from each other. However they do share a degree of mutual intelligibility with their former neighboring sibling state they were once a united with. Slovaks can easily understand Czechs and to lesser degree Polish speakers. Likewise Slovenians can easily understand and communicate with Croatians, Bosnian-Herzegovinians, Montenegrins, and Kosovians, and Serbs.

### **Croatia and Luxembourg**

At the doorstep of Southeastern and Northwestern Europe



- Harmonious Colors: Red, White and Blue, the tint of blue varies – lighter for Luxembourg and dark for Croatia
- Harmonious Geometry: Both are Horizontal Tri-bars
- Croatia uses its national coat of arms to distinguish itself, coincidentally the light sky blue of Luxembourg's flag can be found in the three of the crown of arms in Croatia's Flag
- Easily mistaken for one another to the lay audience

#### *Flag comparisons*

The flags Croatia and Luxembourg match in geometry and color but vary by tint and Croatia's arms upon the center allow it to stand out amongst a number of nations with a similar pattern. Also note the lighter blue of Luxembourg's flag is repeated in the crown of arms in Croatia's flag.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Luxembourg also shares an Alpha Symmetrical parallel with the Netherlands, differing mainly by tint. However in this presentation the cultural axis comes into play and overrides the connectivity to the Netherlands. Rather, Croatia and Luxembourg are on a similar cultural magnitude of worldwide cultural presence. Neither nation was a colony maker or adopter of less developed civilizations outside of Europe, partially due to their relatively small size, smaller populations, and being blocked by larger national neighbors. France and the Netherlands were key leaders in during the colonial era and match accordingly in magnitude of spreading their culture around the planet.

Geographically Luxembourg and Croatia are in the middle of Europe but at different axis points. Luxembourg is tilted toward North Western Europe, while Croatia is tilted towards South Eastern Europe. Additionally their relative proximity to Rome has rooted their dominant baseline religious affiliation and customs towards a Roman Catholic Tradition. Nonetheless they are at a spiritual crossroads. Croatia lies along the divide between Orthodox and Catholic communities, while Luxembourg skates along the tightrope between Protestant and Catholic areas.

Both nations are in a relatively central portion of Europe and have close linguistic ties to their neighboring regions, yet have their own particular language that separates themselves from their neighbors. Luxembourgish is a lot like German, yet its distinct in its Luxembourgish way. Likewise Croatian is proximal to Serbian and Bosnian, yet of its own character.



### Italy and Mexico

A Distant and yet so similar Mirror

- Harmonious Colors: Green, White, and Red
- Harmonious Geometry: Vertical Tri-bars
- Mexico always features the national emblems, occasionally so does Italy
- Easily mistaken for one another to the lay audience

#### *Flag comparisons*

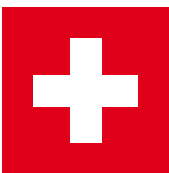
The colors match as do their geometric designs. They differ only by tint and Mexico displays its national arms in the center while Italy does not.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Culturally they are a continent and ocean away, yet connected in religious communion since their dominant faith is Catholicism. Before the Christian Era, they were both thriving centers of ancient civilizations. Italy was the home to the far-flung Roman Empire, while Mexico was at the center of the Aztec Empire. These Ancient Civilizations were high water marks before either hemisphere was clearly aware of each other. The Roman Empire rose as a civilizing leader in the Old World, while the Aztecs did so in the New World. Likewise both ancient civilizations were paradoxically famous for their academic achievements as well as having a powerful and sometimes brutal conquering military.

Geographically they harmonize by being at the center of worlds. Although Italy is an integral part of Europe, its protrusion into the Mediterranean Sea puts it in a nexus between Asia, Africa, and Europe. Likewise the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico is at a middle point between North and South America.

Note that Italy is included in this paper even though it has a small portion that is parallel to Africa – Sicily. But since islands are not official in the definition of continental landmass, they can be ignored. Thus the boot of Italy is wholly within the region designated in the paper as Europe Major.



### Switzerland and Turkey

Romulus and Remus, in the Wake of Rome

- Harmonious Colors: Red and White
- Harmonious Geometry: Both feature red background with a white emblem of religious significance
- National Emblems differ but are balanced with the icons that stem from the two most numerous active religions of books in the Western World: The Bible and the Koran

#### *Flag comparisons*

Fields of red with a central white emblem of religious significance mark these flags as a harmonious pair. The emblems are derived from the two highest of holy books, regarded with divine intention to arise from Western Asia, and take root in Europe as authoritative sources for the meaning and methodology of life. The Swiss emblem is a small white cross reflective of the Christian Faith through the Bible, while Turkey's



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crescent moon with star is reflective of the Islamic Faith via the Koran.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Historically the assertion of the Swiss and Turkey's genesis is in a similar time frame. Switzerland's date of distinct genesis is dated to 1291 when Schwyz, Unterwalden, and Uri signed a charter for an Eternal Alliance. Likewise the distinct moment for the crystallization of Turkey's genesis dates to the same decade and only a mere eight years later in 1299. The historical tradition for the beginning of the Ottoman Empire began with reign of Osman I in 1299, this first Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Although Switzerland never created a Swiss Empire, she was nonetheless a vital component and ally to the Holy Roman Empire.

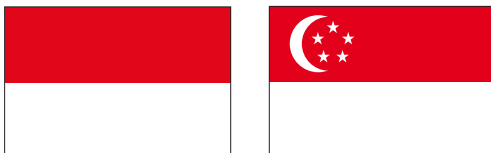
Switzerland is famous for its central location in the heart of Europe, guarded by a sentinel of mountains. Switzerland is also home to the most famous of European Mountains the Matterhorn, which is a power point for the three major families of Western Europe – Latin, Germanic, and French. Likewise Turkey a nation of the mountains and is home to another mountain regarded with holy significance - Mt. Ararat. Mt. Ararat is power point of pride for the three major religions of the Western World – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Turkey and Switzerland are rich nations that are a mosaic of cultures. Switzerland readily embraces and recognizes her four distinct linguistic heritages: the most dominant being German-Swiss, followed by French-Swiss, followed by Italian-Swiss, and finally the smallest group of Romanch-Swiss speakers. On the other hand, Turkey has four distinct linguistic minorities that match in similar numerical ratio to Switzerland are as follows: the most dominant being Turkish-Turks, followed by Kurdish-Turks, followed by Armenian-Turks, and a small group of Greek-Turks.

Switzerland is famous for her political neutrality and ability to get un-entangled in another nation's affairs. This has given the Swiss a certain level of pride for their objective and non-partisan calm and steady point of view. Relative to Switzerland, Turkey is far removed from a balanced neutral point of view. But in the bigger picture of the Western World, Turkey in a similar way takes a relatively balanced calm and steady point of view relative to her Islamic sister nations of the Western Mediterranean World. Turkey is the proverbial Switzerland of Islamic nations, having the most objective and non-partisan point of view of nations relative to other nations rooted to Islam. Also note that Turkey like the Swiss has opted for the original Roman Alphabet for the conduct of their national languages.

#### **Monaco and Singapore**

Intense Density on opposite Ends of the World



- Harmonious Colors: Red & White
- Harmonious Geometry: Both are divided horizontally in the middle
- The national emblem of Singapore is in the canton, but is not a distraction to overall harmony

#### *Flag comparisons*

A horizontal divide of between and upper red and lower white half connect these na-



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tions on opposite ends of the Old World. Singapore has a national emblem of a crescent moon with five stars, while Monaco does not.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Culturally they connect the East to the West. They are flowering nations that bloomed in the wake of ancient Rome and China. The dominant core cultures are tied to China and Rome – namely Monegasque speaking Monacans and Mandarin Chinese speaking Singaporeans. Both countries can be broken three major cultural divides. For Singapore the three dominant cultures stem from India, Malay, and China. For Monaco the three dominant cultures stem from Italy, France, and England. Subsequently most of their nationals are bilingual and often trilingual.

Although Singapore is geographically classified as a part of Asia, she is separated from the mainland as an island nation. Ironically Monaco may not be a part of Asia, yet is directly linked by land to Asia without a separation of water. In a sense Monaco is a part of the 'super continent island' that is composed of Asia and Europe, while Singapore is not a part of the 'super continent island.' Singapore is one step removed by a water barrier.

Finally of culturally coincidence is the Formula 1 Gran Prix Race racing circuit. Since 2008 Singapore has matched Monaco by hosting a round for the Formula 1 Grand Prix Race. Monaco has been doing so since 1955, and its national pride is partially tied to Formula 1 racing.

#### **Old Macedonia and Kyrgyzstan**

Under the Yoke of the Czar & Sultan



- Harmonious Colors: Red and Yellow
- Harmonious Geometry: Red Backgrounds with a shining sun in the center
- Flags do not feature national arms, but the design of the suns are nationally recognized

#### *Flag comparisons*

A centrally placed yellow sun on a field of red unites these flags in a colorful harmony. Macedonia had to change her flag and name due to protests from Greece. Although the early 1990s Macedonian flag is no longer used in an official sense, it was indeed official from 1992 to 1995, thus it qualifies to be used for flag symmetry associations.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Recently Macedonia and Kyrgyzstan were meeker elements in a larger communist nation. Macedonia was a part of Yugoslavia, while Kyrgyzstan was a sub-federal component of the Soviet Union. Their transitions to 'free world' democracies were of day and night. Ethnic tensions exploded all around Macedonia, while Kyrgyzstan simply abandoned the socialist model. Kyrgyzstan and Macedonia represent the connectivity between Asia and Europe at book ends of that ill-defined region of Eurasia.

Eurasia indeed, both nations are deeply tied to the essence of Eurasia due to the most recent Empires of the Sultan and the Czar – who both saw their Empires fall in





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the Wake of World War I. Russia and Turkey are the official epitome of Eurasian culture which is a mixture of East and West. Turkey more tilted towards the East, while Russia tilted towards the West. However their national territories are officially speaking upon both continents. Russia and Turkey are grounded to both Asia and Europe. Russia has a coastline on the Pacific Ocean just north of China; while Turkey has taken Constantinople and baptized it Islamic on lands seeped in Greek Culture. How does this relate to Macedonia and Kyrgyzstan? Both are smaller cultural reflections of these key Eurasian nations - Macedonia is Slavic like Russia and oriented to the Eastern Orthodox Church, while Kyrgyzstan is Turkish and oriented to Mecca.

Of a balanced harmonious note in history: Slavic Eastern Orthodox Macedonia was adopted and colonized by the former Sultans of Turkey, while Turkish Islamic Kyrgyzstan was colonized and adopted by the former Czars of Russia. Later Kyrgyzstan and Macedonia were pulled into a communist orbit by higher powers. Finally they were free to be their own nation in the wake of the Cold War.



### **San Marino and Trentino-Alto Adige**

To be Italian or not to be Italian? That is the Question!

- Harmonious Colors: White and Blue, the blue varying by tint
- Harmonious Geometry: Both flags are divided horizontally down the middle
- Both flags feature coats of arms

#### *Flag comparisons*

The flags of San Marino and Trentino-Alto Adige Region align by background geometry as horizontally divided by blue and white. Although the national arms differ, they both feature avian elements. San Marino has three bird feathers from an ostrich, while Trentino-Alto Adige has four eagles of differing colors. San Marino uses a lighter blue when compared to Trentino-Alto Adige

#### *Cultural comparisons*

The match of San Marino with a sub-national region of Italy may seem out of place, since it is out of rank. This pair links an official nation to the sub-federal entity. But this pair has a complementary relationship with Italy. This is further reflected back with the pair of Ticino-to-Liechtenstein which will be covered in the next section.

San Marino is in the heart of Italy with Italian speakers and a deeply Italian culture. Yet officially they are not Italian, rather they are officially Sammarinese. During the formation of Italy, San Marino was oddly left out in the creation of a greater Italy, due a political dynamic that hinged ironically on the creation of Italy. In contrast, the Trentino-Alto Adige region was incorporated into the Italy after WWI and retains a strong non-Italian element that is culturally tilted to Germany, more so for Alto Adige. Yet this autonomous region of Italy remains a part of Italy rather than Austria.

The irony is San Marino is culturally tilted towards Italy, yet is not a part of Italy; amazingly San Marino also has a flag that mirrors an autonomous region in Italy more alien to Italy due to its German heritage. By traditional convention of language and culture, it would make more sense for Trentino-Alto Adige to be an independent nation, and have San Marino integrated into Italy as an autonomous area.



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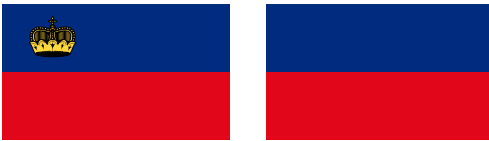
## Beta Flag Symmetry

Beta Flag symmetry is defined in a similar manner to Alpha Flag Symmetry except that a flag must be rotated. When a flag is rotated to a particular degree, it will make apparent the convergence of design.

- All major colors are the same, only varying in tint
- The geometric pattern flows in order when rotated
- National Emblems are ignored, so long as they do not constitute a major portion of the flag

### Liechtenstein and Ticino

Latin to Germanic is to Germanic to Latin?



- Harmonious Colors: Red and Blue
- Harmonious Geometry: Both Feature a horizontal divide down the middle, 180 degree rotation of either flag
- A golden crown in the upper fly distinguishes Liechtenstein but does not interfere in the overall pattern

#### *Flag comparisons*

Once again this is an unusual pair - an internationally recognized nation matched to a sub-national entity. Coincidentally Liechtenstein and Ticino echo and complementary dynamic the nation to sub-federal pair, as it is with San Marino and Trentino-Alto Adige.

Liechtenstein and Ticino have flags divided horizontally down the middle of red and blue. The primary difference is their background fields are 180 degree inverts of each other. Ticino has red above blue, while Liechtenstein has blue above red. Another minor difference is that Liechtenstein has a golden crown in the Canton.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Liechtenstein is of the smallest of nations of the earth. Why isn't Liechtenstein a part of Switzerland or Austria? Also note that Ticino is a region in Switzerland of the cultural minority. Switzerland is culturally a multi-tongued nation. Dominantly Switzerland is German speaking, then French Speaking, followed by its Italian Speaking community. In fact the only Swiss sub-federal region that officially endorses Italian as official is Ticino.

The complementary dynamic is that Ticino stands culturally apart in between Austria and Switzerland. On the other hand, Liechtenstein is culturally in closer orbit to Austria, Germany, or German Switzerland, yet Liechtenstein stands out as an independent nation.

In the big European picture, the match of a nationally recognized "Italian San Marino" with a sub-national "German Trentino-Alto Adige" region may seem odd - since this pair breaks convention and class. However this cultural dynamic is repeated and reversed with the pairing of Liechtenstein with Ticino. In Liechtenstein's case it is a nationally recognized "Germanic Liechtenstein" with a sub-national "Italian Ticino" region.

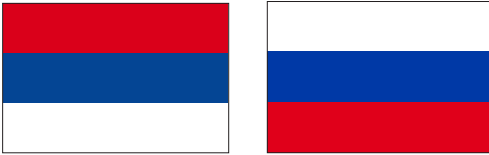


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In other words: Federal German Liechtenstein with sub-federal Italian Ticino balances with Federal Italian San Marion with sub-federal German Trentino-Alto Adige. Capisci?

### Serbia and Russia

Ursa Major & Ursa Minor – The Great Bear and Little Bear



- Harmonious Colors: White, Blue and Red
- Harmonious Geometry: Both are Horizontal Tri-bars, when either flag is rotated 180 degrees
- Serbian Flag often has national coat of arms, but not always

#### *Flag comparisons*

The background patterns for Russia and Serbia are aligned by 180 degree inverts of each other. The flag of Serbia often has the national coat of arms on it and sometimes it does not.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

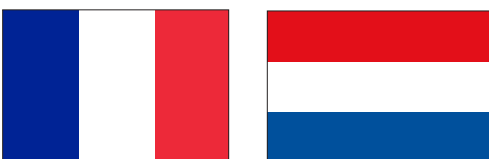
Culturally speaking both nations has parallel political notes. Most recently both nations were the dominant political entity during their Communist phases. Russia being the primary building block of Soviet Union, while Serbia was the numerically dominant element in Yugoslavia. During the Middle Ages both nations saw their cultural identity tested by Islam. In Russia's case, Moscow was incorporated into the Mongol Empire and ruled by Islamic Mongols and Tatars. In Serbia's case Belgrade was overrun by the Ottoman Empire and ruled by Islamic Turks. Nonetheless their Eastern Orthodox Christian ways were not undone, even when they experimented with Communism.

After the end of the Cold War both nations became entangled in deadly wars for independence. Serbia saw her former Yugoslavian Brethren violently leave the family, the most tragic episodes taking place in Islamic Bosnia-Herzegovina. Likewise in Russia the Caucasus became deadly centers of resistance namely in Islamic Chechnya.

Russia is renowned as the Great Bear like the constellation Ursa Major, which coincidentally partly makes up the Alaskan Flag. Additionally Russia was the first European nation to visit and colonize this integral part of the United States. With the parallels between these two nations it is a natural harmony to refer to Serbia as the Little Bear, Ursa Minor, whom like the Greater Bear has a constellation amongst the stars.

### France and Netherlands

The Tulip and the Lilly vs. the Tower and the Windmill



- Harmonious Colors: Red, White, and Blue
- Harmonious Geometry: Either rotate the French Flag counterclockwise 90 degrees or the Netherlands Flag clockwise 90 degrees for geometric tri-bar harmony

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### *Flag comparisons*

A slight rotation of either flag by 90 degrees makes these flags harmonize.

### *Cultural comparisons*

Culturally in any definition France and the Netherlands are always counted as a part of Western Europe. During the colonial ages they amassed empires on all ends of the earth. Even today their colonies in the Americas continue to thrive. Although colony has run out of its archaic use, due to its negative connotations, rather the term 'over-seas department' or something of that sort has become the politically correct definition.

The successor nations often maintain tie to their linguistic motherland. Haiti is to France as Suriname is to the Netherlands. Additionally France and the Netherlands both have given birth to 'half-breed' children with the United Kingdom whom have risen to positions of global importance. France fathered Anglo-French Canada with the UK, while the Netherlands created the double tongued Anglo-Dutch nation of South Africa. Of course Canada and South Africa are home the hundreds of others languages but in the traditional stock of European heritage, Canada is dominantly quasi-French Quebecer and English Speaking, while South Africa is quasi-Dutch Afrikaner and English Speaking.

After World War II both nations saw their East Asian Colonies reach for independence in violent struggles. Vietnam would break free from France, while Indonesia would free herself of Dutch rule. Since these episodes are now becoming a memory, the time of healing has begun. The French and Dutch imprint of Vietnam and Indonesia has become a source of anxiety and paradoxically pride.

France and the Netherlands have also left an imprint on the American Psyche on her two leading port authorities: New York City and New Orleans. New York City is metropolis of many people but its foundation rests squarely upon the Netherlands, likewise New Orleans is varied city with rich history from people all over the world but its famous French Quarter the sparkle of enchantment. New York City's flag is based upon the old Orange Dutch Colonial Flag, just as New Orleans has a stylized French like flag with a fleur-de-lis.

### **Ireland and the Ivory Coast**

Cloudy Ivory & Sunny Ebony



- Harmonious Colors: Green, White, and Orange
- Harmonious Geometry: Rotate either flag 180 degrees – both are vertical tri-bars
- National Coat of Arms are rarely used on either flag

### *Flag comparisons*

A rotation of either flag 180 degrees puts them in a direct match of color of white, green, and orange.

### *Cultural comparisons*

Although in the same hemisphere, their climate and geography are like two different planets. Culturally they are polar opposites like day and night. However both nations

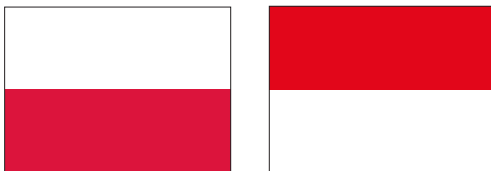
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became independent in the 20th century, breaking away from prosperous Western Nations. Ireland took the lead amongst the colonized or aggressively adopted nations of the world. Ireland essentially led the decolonization process from Western Europe in 1922, as much of Africa and Asia would later follow in the wake. Ireland gained became free of the English Yoke while the Ivory Coast broke freed herself from a French Yoke.

Since independence ethnic troubles has afflicted both nations due to the geographic bounders set by the adopter nations that do not wholly reflect ethnic and religious compositions. In Ireland's case the old colonial division set by the UK has led to religious and ethnic tension between mostly Irish Catholics versus Protestant Scotch-Irish and English. In balance, the Ivory Coast is also home to a deeper religious divide between Christians mostly of the Catholic domain versus Islam. Likewise the cultural divisions set by Colonial France are quasi-artificial and do not wholly reflect tribal and ethnic divides across the region, as it is in northern regions of Ireland.

### **Poland and Indonesia**

Lands Far Far Away, yet So So Close



- Harmonious Colors: Red and White
- Harmonious Geometry: Both are divided horizontally down the middle, rotate either flag 180 degrees and they are in alpha flag alignment
- National Coat of Arms are sometimes used for the Polish Flag

#### *Flag comparisons*

Poland and Indonesia are 180 degree inverts of each other. It is a perfect example of hanging a flag upside down, accidentally changes its national character.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Although a world away from each other, their flags match like Yin and Yang. Culturally speaking they are like night and day. As is their climate, Indonesia is a perpetual summer while Poland has long and beautiful winters.

Both nations are at the geographic cusps of Asia at opposite ends. Poland is wholly east of Asia's most western continental point on Asia Minor, while Indonesia is just off the continent of Asia Major. Indonesia is usually classified as a part of Asia, but no part of Indonesia is on the Continental Body, but Poland is directly linked to Asia as a part of the Eurasian Landmass.

Poland and Indonesia take the lesser, counter religious grounding of their ethnic families. The Polish are a Slavic people and the majority of Slavs fell into line with Eastern Orthodox Christianity, however the Poles are dominantly Roman Catholic. Likewise the Indonesians are East Asian. Although most East Asian nations have a strong appreciation for Buddhism, Indonesians prefer the teachings from the Koran.

They are ancient nations yet were subject to colonial powers, and not just from the West but from also from the East. From the West, Poland was colonized by Prussia, Germany, and Austria while Indonesia was colonized by the Dutch. From the East, Poland was colonized by Russia, while Indonesia was colonized by Japan.



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Indonesia and Poland's final barrier for true national freedom marks the beginning and end of the Cold War. In both cases they illustrate that both sides of the Cold War nations had losses. The Western Coalition of nations would lose their colonial empires, just as the Eastern Soviet Union would no longer have a rigid control in alien nations.

Although the West may have claimed victory, both the East and West underwent an astounding metamorphosis. First Indonesia's path to independence would highlight the political and social metamorphosis of the West. At the beginning of the Cold War the West wanted to keep their colonies and citizens in a second class social order. All over the world the Western Colonial Powers failed to reassert their leadership on their former colonies. Indonesia would struggle against the West, namely the Netherlands, to earn her freedom at the beginning of the Cold War. Likewise the racial caste system of the United States received a death blow from the modern world and the America of 1961 was no more compared to the America of 1991, just as the Soviet Union would become a nation no more in 1991.

Poland on the other hand struggled against the East. Independence was not realized until the end of the Cold War, until after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Basically Indonesia gained freedom from the West at the beginning of the Cold War, while Poland gained freedom from the East at the end of the Cold War.

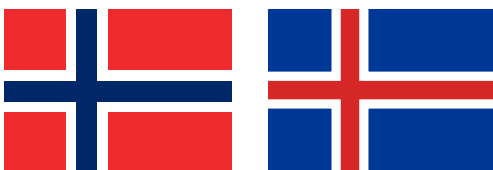
## Gamma Flag Symmetry

Gamma Flag symmetry is defined by flags matching in overall geometry and major colors, yet differing in a counter charge manner.

- All major colors match, but a juxtaposition of color with geometry leads to counter charge harmony
- The general geometry is in order
- Emblems and national seals can be ignored if they are not a large component of the flag

### Norway and Iceland

Lands of the High Noon Starry Night Moon



- Harmonious Colors: Red, Blue, and White
- Harmonious Geometry: Countercharge of Scandinavian Crosses with a white fimbriation
- National Emblems are not usually used on the flags

#### *Flag comparisons*

The colors of red and blue are a countercharge pattern that conserves geometry.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

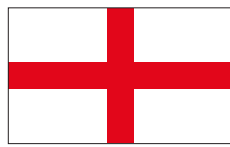
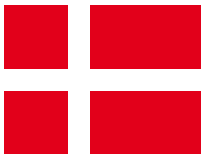
Iceland and Norway can compete for the title of the midnight sun, which is in reference to their long days of summer when the sun shines at midnight. Additionally my title illustrates the complementary point that they are also witness to a starry night at



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noon. They are at the extreme ends of Europe and have adapted resistance to the brutal winters that this planet can produce.

Both nations are children of Denmark. Norway's exit from Danish dominion was a proverbial 'caesarian section' from Denmark in the wake of the Napoleonic wars. Since Demark sided with Napoleon, Norway was forced to leave Denmark under the Treaty of Kiel, only to be placed under Sweden's Care in 1814. Then in a second step, nearly 100 years later in 1905 Norway became an independent nation. Iceland's entry unto the forum of recognized nations was cordial 'natural child birth' when she receive independence in two steps as well. In 1918 Iceland became quasi-independent via a personal union with Denmark, but this relationship expired in 1943 and Iceland was fully detached from Denmark.



### Denmark and England

The Island Nations Separated Europe

- Harmonious Colors: Red and White
- Harmonious Geometry: Both feature crosses, but crosses are off center. England's Cross is centered, while Denmark's Cross is off center towards the hoist in a Scandinavian Manner

#### *Flag comparisons*

Their flags are a counter charge of colors. However the geometry is not so precise. The cross of England is centered in the middle of the flag, while the flag of Denmark is left of center nearer to the hoist in a traditional Scandinavian manner.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Geographically both nations are mostly island nations of the north shores of Europe. The capital cities of both nations are set part from the main body of Europe. Copenhagen like London is on an island. This has given them a detached point of view from Europe. However both nations retain territory on the continent of Europe. Copenhagen has retained possession of the large northward peninsula of Jutland, while London asserts her power on the small southward peninsula of Gibraltar.

Denmark was a kin to the United Kingdom before Norway, Sweden, and Finland left her orbit. In a similar manner England is the Demark of the United Kingdom. In England's case Southern Ireland has left the Union and political forces may someday see the parting of Scotland and Wales. It is not all unreasonable that someday the United Kingdom will follow suit of the once grand Kalamar Union. Just as the England lost all of her land claim in France, Denmark too lost all of her land claim upon the Scandinavian Peninsula, even though they both have historical and heritage roots their forlorn lands, which are English or Danish no more.

During the age of Colonial Empires no nation of Europe would adopt and plant so many colonies in her own image across the world than England. Starting with Wales and moving unto every ocean and continent, the England was successful in franchising her culture to indigenous peoples and colonists. However England was also a colony to one other nation – Denmark. It was under Canute the Great that England was given a Danish treat. Fleeting embers of this cultural tie can be seen the cultural

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parallels most importantly in the Epic Poem of Beowulf. Although it is a Danish-Scandinavian tale it has been wholly adopted by the English. Even in the United States which is far removed from Denmark has adopted the story of Beowulf into their own in popular culture and school curriculum.

Denmark and England are cousins separated by a rift of time and water. The beginning of the United States began with England in 1607, with the Virginia Colony. The United State would later expand at the expense of the Canada, Mexico, and Spain. However the final expansion took place with Denmark through the purchase of the Danish Virgin Islands in 1917. Thus the territorial expansion of the United States began with Mother England and ended with Auntie Denmark. Although the Virgin Islands are a meek addition to US territory, it is nonetheless the last. As England was the first, it historically harmoniously matches from the Virgin Colony unto the Virginia Islands from "alpha to omega."

## Delta Flag Symmetry

Delta Flag symmetry is defined as when two flags share a similar geometry and match in major color schemes. The flags vary only by tint, also national arms or emblem does not dominate the overall pattern. However the order of colors differ that flag rotation in any degree does not put them into a parallel alignment nor do the colors exhibit a counterchange of colors.

- All major colors match, only varying in tint
- The basic geometry is in order such that they can be linked
- Although the geometry is similar and the colors match they differ in the order or placement upon the different sections
- National Coats of arms and emblematic designs are ignored if they do not constitute a major portion of the flag

### Bulgaria and Hungary

That delicate fence on Eastern Europe

#### *Flag comparisons*

- Harmonious Colors: Red, White, Green
- Harmonious Geometry: Horizontal Tri-bars
- Out of Order Colors: White and Green no rotation will put them in harmony, but their red bars align when rotated 180 degrees

The flags match in colors and geometry, but the order is different. Although Hungary exhibits beta symmetry with Italy, Italy is linked with Mexico since they have the higher order harmony - Alpha Symmetry.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

The most recent cultural parallel between Hungary and Bulgaria is their recent economic metamorphosis from a communist-socialist state into western oriented free economies. Bulgaria and Hungary have run the full spectrum of politics during the 19th century from the extreme right and extreme left, however they have settled for





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the logical middle. During the Cold War they were drafted unto the Communist Socialist hemisphere in a Soviet Orbit, but during War of Endless Tears (World War II/The Great Patriotic War) both nations were allied to Nazi Germany.

During the 1800s as the race of colonial empires spread to Africa, America, and Asia – it is often overlooked that Europe too was under colonial pressure. Europe was under an alien colonial pressure from the East, the Ottoman Empire. During the 1800s Imperial Turkey was successful in colonizing all of Bulgaria and much of Hungary. However as the Ottoman Empire stagnated Bulgaria and Hungary saw partial protection from Austrian Empire.

In a short time span Bulgaria and Hungary have seen the political forces ebb and flow across the Europe as both nations were subjects to an Islamic Empire, foreign Christian Imperial Empires, fascist powers, and finally communist powers. In the end the spirit of a native Bulgaria and native Hungary would prevail.



### **Czech and Philippines**

In the Wake of the Hapsburg Family Tree

- Harmonious Colors: blue, white, and red
- Harmonious Geometry: horizontally divided with triangle divisions by the hoist
- Out of Order Colors: white and blue, but bottom red trapezoid in harmonious order
- National Emblem of the Philippines features a yellow sun and three stars, which does not interfere in harmony

#### *Flag comparisons*

United by red, white, and blue and a similar geometry, a nation of the Far East is aligned to a nation of the Far West. Both flags have triangles by the hoist. The Czech hoist triangle is blue, while the Philippine triangle is white with a yellow national emblem – a yellow sun with three yellow stars.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Both nations became colonies of the Hapsburg families at a power point of global convergence. Global convergence occurred in 1521 when Magellan and his crew completely circumnavigated planet Earth - for the first time a human completely and knowingly travelled around the Earth crossing all meridians.

For the Philippines the Western Hapsburg family of Spain would then proceed to adopt the Philippines brining the furthest reaches of the East Asia under spiritual allegiance with Western Europe, subsequently Catholicism was deeply rooted in the far flung nation so very far away from Rome and the Levant. In balance the Czech people saw a reversal of fortune as a power from the East – the Ottoman Empire – proceeded to colonize Eastern Europe. In order for the Czech essence to maintain its Western orientation it submitted itself to become a satellite of Eastern Hapsburg family line through Austria after the battle of Mohacs in 1526. For the next three centuries the Philippine and Czech peoples were under the gravitational tow of the Royal Hapsburg House.



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During the WWII these nations were annexed unto the Eastern and Western end of the fascist alliance between Germany and Japan. Partially welcomed and eventually despised. They welcomed their liberators who would become proverbial foster parents - the Soviet Union for the Czech and the Americans for the Philippines.

## Epsilon Flag Symmetry

Epsilon flag symmetry is defined that the colors are similar but the colors are out of order like Delta Symmetry, but the flags must also be rotated to see the apparent harmony

- All Colors Match
- Colors are out of order, like Delta Flag Symmetry
- Flags must be rotated to see the apparent harmony
- National Coats of arms and emblematic designs are ignored if they do not constitute a major portion of the flag

### Germany and Belgium

Charlemagne would be Proud



- Harmonious Colors: Red, Yellow, Black – varying in tint
- Colors out of Order: yellow and red
- Rotation of 90 degrees after putting into order

#### *Flag comparisons*

The basic geometry and colors of Germany and Belgium are in accordance. The primary difference is the way their bars are divided. Germany is horizontal tri-bar, while Belgium is a vertical tri-bar. Additionally the order of colors is different.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Germany and Belgium are cornerstone countries of Western Europe. They have similar environments and similar struggles. As Belgium is divided between here Dutch and French cultural orientations, so too is Germany divided between her Catholic and Protestant orientations. Belgium also has German speaking minority that connects her east to Germany, just as Germany has Slavic speaking minority that connects her to the east.

Culturally Germany and Belgium were late powers in the scramble for Colonial Empires. Belgium was limited to central Africa with the creation of Greater Congo – also known as Zaire, West Congo, or the Democratic Republic of Congo. Germany also scrambled for unattended regions in Africa with Namibia and Tanzania.

## Eta Flag Symmetry

Eta Flag symmetry is defined as flags that match in overall color scheme but differ much in geometric ways; yet have an underlying similarity by background color, emblem choice, arms, or other apparent geometric pattern



- All the major colors must be similar, differing by tint
- They should have at least two of the following – a similar background, similar emblem, similar arms, or similar geometric figure

### **Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina**

New from the former Yugoslavian Republic

- Harmonious Colors: Navy Blue, White, Yellow with a variation in tint of yellow to gold
- Harmonious Geometry: Both flags have a navy blue background, utilize white stars

#### *Flag comparisons*

The emblematic geometry between Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina is off balance yet they colors and background fields are a match. Additionally both flags utilize white stars. The primary differences relate the placement of white stars and the yellow portion. Bosnia-Herzegovina's flag has a bold abstract triangle which represents the three dominant cultural divisions – Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. In contrast to Bosnia-Herzegovina's flag the central golden yellow emblem of the Kosovo flag has an irregular geographic shape.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Both nations were once united as one, in Yugoslavia. As with other core Eastern European nations they were made colonies by Islamic Civilizations. This has given them a different outlook from Western and Northern European countries and both were colonized by the Ottoman Empire. It was primarily due to their association with Ottoman Civilization that Islamic culture gained a foothold in Europe. Thusly Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina owe their religious orientation to the effects of the Ottoman Empire's efforts in Europe. The 'Yugoslavians' and 'Albanians in Yugoslavia' who converted to Islam, became the core demographic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, respectively.

## Zeta Flag Symmetry

Zeta Flag symmetry is defined when two flags have a similar geometry and color format but differing slightly in color by one step progression. They share a similar color and pattern yet one color differs either by: yellow to white, red to orange, or green to blue

- Flags have an similar overall geometry
- They have at least matching colors, varying in tint only
- Arms, Emblems, can be ignored if they do not constitute a major portion of the flag
- There is one variance in only one color of related colors: yellow to white, red to orange, or green to blue

### **Austria and Spain**

The Legendary Kingdoms of Europe

- Harmonious Geometry: Both are horizontal tri-bars, slightly offset with dimensions



- Harmonious Colors: Both use red in the upper and lower tri-bars
- The National Arms of Spain are present in the middle yellow bar
- Variance of middle bar yellow to white

#### *Flag comparisons*

Two red horizontal bars with lighter colors in the middle are common elements of Austria and Spain.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Culturally both nations were the author of expansive European Empires. Austria was a 'domestic' hegemonic European power in Europe adopting many peoples within Europe, while Spain was an 'international' hegemonic European power outside of Europe adopting and spreading its culture all across the world beyond Europe.

It was during the reign of the Hapsburg Family lines that these empires would increase. Austria took the lead amongst nations in Europe, while Spain took the lead amongst nations outside of Europe. During their roles of colonizers and European leaders they would block Islam from penetrating North Western Europe. Austria resisted Ottoman advances in South-Eastern Europe, while Spain resisted the Islamic advance in South-Western Europe.

Although their ethnic and linguistic heritages are far removed, Latin and Germanic, Austria and Spain have maintained a spiritual loyalty to Rome and did not welcome the reformation that spread like wildfire all along North-Western Europe.

## Theta Flag Symmetry

Theta flag symmetry is defined when two flags have a similar overall geometry, share a common color but differ in the variance of one color. The variance allowed is as it is with Zeta Flag symmetry: red to orange to brown, yellow to white, or green to blue to black. This class is like Gamma Class, but with a Zeta Class color shift.

- Flags have a similar overall geometry
- They have at least matching colors, varying in tint only
- They have a counterchange of colors
- Arms, Emblems, can be ignored if they do not constitute a major portion of the flag
- There is one variance in only one color of related colors: yellow to white, red to orange, or green to blue

### **Sweden and Finland**

Nordic and yet not Nordic



- Geometry: Both feature Scandinavian Cross
- Harmonious Colors: Blue, vary in tint
- Counter charge of light to dark with crosses and background
- Finland Flag sometimes has arms, sometimes does not
- One variance in counterchange of yellow to white. Sweden has a yellow cross while Finland has white background



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### *Flag comparisons*

The geometry between Sweden and Finland is solidly similar, since both utilize the Scandinavian Cross in their flags. Sweden and Finland share only one color, blue, in a countercharge like fashion. If it was not for the color shift of white to yellow, this pair would fit in the Gamma Class of flag symmetries. But since this only a slight change in color it belongs into the Theta Class.

### *Cultural comparisons*

Both are nations of Scandinavia. Their climates and cultures may have surface similarities, but their linguistic divide is as sharp as day and night. For the much of Finnish History it was a part of Sweden until 1809, allowing a bit of cultural assimilation. However the Finnish were able to hold on to their unique language.

During WWII Sweden was neutral. On the other hand, Finland doubly polarized fighting both the Allies and the Axis Powers.

## Iota Flag Symmetry

Iota flag symmetry is defined when two flags have a similar basic geometry or similar emblem and at least one matching dominant color. However there is a variance in geometry and or at least one variance in a major color, yet the common design can be seen in the compared flags.

- The compared flags have at least two common elements of the following: a common background, a similarly shaped emblem, or a similar coat of arms
- One variance in one color beyond the color shifts as outlined Zeta and Theta Flag symmetry
- Minor geometric variances, emblems, can be ignored if they do not interfere in the overall harmony

### **Albania and Montenegro**

A Dream of Two Siamese Eagles



- Similar Color: Background Red
- Harmonious Geometry: Double Headed Eagle, different designs
- Montenegro has yellow frame Albania does not, but this does not distract from overall harmony

### *Flag comparisons*

A Siamese Eagle on a field of red is the common design. However there is a slight geometric discord, since Montenegro has frame and Albania does not. Additionally the Siamese Eagles differ in color and vary in design. The Siamese Eagle of Albania is black and in a natural state, since it does not hold a manmade object. But for Montenegro the Siamese Eagle is golden yellow and holds a Christian Orb in its left talon, a Christian Scepter in its right, a Christian Crown in above its head, and a shield of arms is centered on its chest.

### *Cultural comparisons*

During the Cold War both nations were allied to the Soviet Union yet distinctly segregated. Albania was the smallest of communist nations, while Montenegro was a part



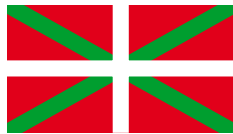
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of the Yugoslavia. But after the fall of the Berlin Wall both nations became oriented towards the West.

The Ottoman Empire made these nations subjects to the Sultan. Subsequently the majority of Albanians and a minority of Montenegrins converted unto to an Islam. The Muslims of Montenegro are mostly Slavic Muslims better known as Bosniaks, while about half of Albania is roots in a spiritual tradition to Islam. But since Albania is in close proximity to Orthodox Christianity and muted by a generation of communism, the Islam practiced in Montenegro or Albania has a European tone, rather than as it is in the Middle East.

### UK and Basque

The Briton & the Basque



- Similar Colors: Red, White
- Similar Geometry: St Andrew's Cross & St. Georges Cross overlay, causing eight triangles to appear of dissimilar colors
- Minor Color Shift: Green to Blue, Minor Geometric shift due to broken St. Patrick's Cross in the UK Flag that has no balance in the Basque Flag

#### *Flag comparisons*

An overlay of crosses and matching angles puts these flags in alignment. The United Kingdom and Basque flag both have the central t-shaped cross dominant to the others. For the UK the red cross of England is unbroken, while a white cross whole for the Basque Flag. The common colors shared between both flags are red and white. But there is a modest shift between a similar third color – blue and green. For the Basque flag the green cross is a saltire recessive to the white cross, for the UK flag the blue flag the blue triangle represent are recessive elements of the Scottish Flag. Another geographic discrepancy is that the UK flag has double minimized red Saint Patrick's Cross quartered and reduced in half.

#### *Cultural comparisons*

Culturally they are light years away yet so very close. Both flags represent people from Western Europe. However the cultural heritage of the British and Basque is like night and day. Although the British Empire is no more, the cultural dominance of British is understated. On the other hand the Basque people are at the opposite pole of cultural outreach.

These flags represent an opposite of political nationalisms. First the Basque flag is a sub-federal banner yet often flies high in the name of Basque Nationalism. On the other hand, the British flag is a federal banner yet nationalist forces within in the UK may lead to its dissolution. If Scotland ever leaves the United Kingdom, surely the British flag will become irreverent. The dissolution of Scotland would surely lead to the dissolution of Wales and perhaps Cornwall. Thus with these hypothetical course of events England will revert to the simple red English Cross. And it would only make sense, that only Northern Ireland retains the UK Union Flag since it is composed of Scottish, English, and Irish peoples. However if the Basque people are able to leave Spain it will not affect the value of the Spanish Flag, since no element of the Basque flag is included.



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Perhaps a prediction is in order? If Scotland were to succeed from the United Kingdom, it would embolden the Basque people to follow suit and leave Spain, or vice versa; and all this would happen within in a four year span?

## Conclusion

Everyone who has studied flags, professional or not, has noticed that few flags look alike here and there. These coincidences are noted but no further analysis is aggregated beyond a simple curiosity. But the professional studier of flags will make an attempt to recognize a pattern. Due to apparent similarities flags are usually grouped into particular classes. Usually there is a cultural undertow as is the case with Slavic Flags with their tendency to have horizontal stripes and reserving the top stripe for the color white. Likewise Pan-African flags use the colors red, yellow, and green. But utilizing these colors does not always indicate that it is an African nation, as is the case since Lithuania, Bolivia, and Myanmar, if one were to use color as the central criteria for this group.

However this paper advances this 'noticing of similarities' to the meta-vexillological level. Combining the study of history and culture with vexillology, a pattern is revealed which is wholly unexpected. This is a higher ordered dimension of flags which reflects an uncanny connectivity between nations and peoples.

This paper also presents a new methodology to compare and rank a given flag to one another. Previous classification techniques are static – meaning a flag fits in a group such as the horizontal tri-bar, Pan-African, or both. However, the classes of flags presented in this paper are set to variable axis. The particular class of a flag is dependent upon another flag. For example Italy is Alpha Class when compared to Mexico, Beta Class when compared to Hungary since you must rotate a flag 90 degrees, Epsilon Class when compared to Bulgaria since they are out of order and need to be rotated, and Zeta Class when compared to Ireland because orange and red are minor color shifts. Essentially this is a comparative classification ranking scheme measures the level of similarity between the flags in a logical fashion.

The key to linking a particular flag to another begins with noticing a geometric and color harmony shared between two flags. Once again this is association between flags is further enhanced by geographic, cultural, and historical parallels and harmonies. Of course, timing is a key factor for the revelation of this phenomenon.

Thirty years ago this fraternal flag concept would have been incomplete - due to the geographic and flag dissimilarities of 1983.

Also note in 1998 Bosnia-Herzegovina adopted its current flag, and for a decade it would have no fraternal flag partner since Kosovo was still a part of Serbia. But as circumstance would have it, in 2008 Kosovo became a recognized nation (at least by the majority of Western Nations) and adopted a flag that harmonized and balanced with the flag of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Also note that some pairs exist outside of the present official moment, as is the case with pair of the Macedonia Star of Vega Flag and the current flag of Kyrgyzstan. Likewise some pairs cross class since a federal flag sometimes pairs up with a sub-federal flag, as is the case with Trentino Alto Adige-to-San Marino and Liechtenstein-to-Ticino. Certainly the political climate in Belarus may affect a flag change back to the red stipe on white flag.

The remedy to these open ended issues is that these oddities and as of yet unpaired



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flags will balance and iron out themselves with time, as had happened when Bosnia-Herzegovina adopted their flag in 1998. Bosnia-Herzegovina had to wait a decade before it would get its fraternal flag partner in 2008, with Kosovo.

This emergent pattern leads vexillology to wonder, does this happen with the flags of Africa, Asia, America or on the sub-national level?

Indeed it does, papers have been presented on this particular issue that deal with the sub-federal flags of Japan, Russia, Canada and the United States. At the 23rd International of congress such data was presented with the sub-federal flags of Japan. At the 43rd North American Vexillological Association's meeting at South Carolina data was presented showing this binary phenomenon with the southern state flags of United States. At the 2010 Spring Meeting of the UK Flag Institute, data was presented with the flags of Canada. Finally at the 23rd International Congress of Vexillology, my display table showed a video showing the same phenomena with the sub-federal flags of Russia. As of virtual footnote the videos that were shown at the vexillological forums have been included in the bibliography.





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## Biography

Christopher Maddish is lifelong educator who has worked at all levels from kindergarten to university and in a variety of environments. Mr. Maddish has previously taught conversational English at a Japanese High School in Fukuoka Prefecture. Afterwards he briefly taught elementary Japanese at Penn State. Currently he teaches high school biology and science in the Philadelphia region serving the inner city and suburban area. Mr. Maddish has written over one thousand articles on the subject of vexillology which can be freely accessed on his blog 'The Voice of Vexillology.' His blog runs the entire gambit from light hearted, serious, silly, and all things related to flags and vexillology. You can visit his website here <http://zebratigerfish.blogspot.com/>

