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A theory of decay of security communities with an application to the present state of the Atlantic Alliance

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1. Introduction

The Atlantic Alliance is widely seen as a shining model of a security community (Risse-Kappen 1995). Indeed, it shows all the ingredients which theorists of this particular form of security cooperation among nation states (Müller 200) have defined as necessary conditions for a security community to exist. At the same time, realists have claimed that NATO cannot endure for long beyond the demise of its erstwhile enemy, the Soviet Union (Hellmann/Wolf 1994). And in recent years, notably in the context of the 2003 Iraq war, cracks have appeared in the construction of this alliance which shed doubt on the optimistic prediction that, as a security community, this most powerful agglomeration in the history of mankind, this community of values, this astonishingly institutionalised edifice of military collaboration, will continue forever.

Most of us are children of the enlightenment. So is the construct of a security community. The most important discussions of this concept, (Deutsch et al. 1957, Adler/Barnett 1998, and Bellamy 2004) all show a striking asymmetry in the way they describe the evolution and existence of security communities through time: We learn a lot about the constituting conditions which make security communities possible, or cause their coming into being (in the more postitivist approach by Deutsch and colleagues), the attributes of the processes in which they emerge, and the factors which keep them stable once they have been established. We learn astonishingly little about the conditions under which such communities may decline, break down, or explode.

The enlightenment factor looms fairly large in this pattern of the academic discussion: As children of the enlightenment, we tend to believe in ever moving progress: things are supposed to become inexorably better over time. Good things are expected to come together. A security community represents immense progress in peacefulness compared to the rough waters of the traditional balance of power world of realists. Once such a strange animal has

come into being, the bias of enlightenment tends to wipe out any thought that it should be capable of decaying.

Nevertheless, human institutions can and do decay. For example, civilisations have decayed (Toynbee, Spengler), empires and nation states (Doyle) have, and hence security communities might be in danger of going to the abyss as well. At least it would be unwise to completely discard this possibility. While it is true that community - contrasted to society, association, alliance - is held together by particularly strong bonds, they may become apart nevertheless. Reading with great care through Deutsch et al.'s account, one discovers traces of the story of decay: Among the many cases they looked up for their landmark studies, there were indeed some security communities in history that once had existed but were no longer around. Deutsch's et al.'s successors had even less to say about this possibility. In Adler/Barnett, a single, fourteen-line paragraph informs the reader that, maybe, not all security communities are forever (Adler/ Barnett. 1998).

Even from the perspective of an enlightenment optimist, security communities are a precious asset in the incremental civilisation of international relations, which is progressing, if at all, on a fairly bumpy road anyway. This sentence looks particularly true once we consider the membership of present security communities which invariably includes countries that have been at each others throat for centuries, with most unpleasant consequences for their own populations, their neighbourhood, and, in certain circumstances, for the rest of the world. To be aware of the very possibility of decay, to know about the specific dangers leading into this direction, to think about ways and means to keep these dangers at bay is therefore not only of academic interest, but of considerable importance of political practice meant to enhance the chances of a sustainable peace.

This is the motivation behind this paper. I want to understand what factors may drive the members of a security community apart. To achieve this objective, I first visit the theory of security communities with a view to identifying those variables that are most crucial in making, maintaining, and killing such a community. I then look at three cases of decayed security communities - the Delian Sea League, the Hanse, and the Concert of Europe, to identify the relative weight of the factors that led to their demise. In the third part, I try to assess the state of play within NATO as far as these crucial factors are concerned. I end with

summarising the basic tenets of a theory of security community decay, and of how NATO scores according to the standards of this theory.

2. The theory of security communities

The motivation to build a theory of security communities emerged very much from the perceived necessity to make World War II a "never again" event. Deutsch and his collaborators wanted to understand the conditions under which war would cease to be a real possibility of action among nation-states. They studied instances where this condition was met through integration (amalgamation) into a new nation-state, or, less demanding, through the development of such close links and community-wise identities (pluralistic security communities) where the countries concerned, that is, their elites as well as their populations, would not consider war a legitimate or possible way to settle their enduring conflicts anymore.

Deutsch et al. worked as inductive positivists. They did not start from abstract assumptions from which they would deduce theoretical propositions. They looked at the available cases and induced the conditions of security communities from this level. As a consequence, they ended up with a most interesting combination of material and ideational factors making up a security community. But working in an essentially positivist and functionalist framework, these variables stood somehow oddly next to each other. Emphasis on these variables shifts back and forth throughout the work, producing occasional contradictions, and there is, in the end, no systematic effort to clarify the relations among them. With the take-over of the concept by the constructivists Adler and Barnett (and the further refinement, at the margin, by Bellamy), the relationship among the various variables took on a more convincing shape. It had become clear that the term "community" delineated a source of societal cohesion that went beyond the rationalist-utilitarian bond that keep society going. Community rests on ideational forces inscribed into the mental states of the individuals making up the community. The collective character of these individual mental states emerges through the ideational characteristics being shared among them, and being reproduced, confirmed, and reworked through practices among them. These practices connect the ideational level with the institutional and the material world.

With this approach, Adler/Barnett have reconstructed a three-stage-model from anarchical relations among states to mature, tightly coupled security communities. My own approach

starts from this latter concept. I have collected the whole criteria defining this end-stage of security community building, drawing on the works of Deutsch et al., Adler/Barnett, and Bellamy. This results in a list of alltogether eighteen criteria, standards, attributes or variables which read as follows:

Table 1: Criteria for mature, tightly coupled security communities

1) Community of values	11) Mutual trust
2) (Informal) governance	12) Free movement among members
3) Strong core	13) Multilateralism
4) Multiple transactions	14) Common threat definition
5) Transnational community	15) Material benefits
6) We-feeling/identity	16) Normative discourse
7) Responsiveness	17) Cooperative/collective security
8) War/war preparation unthinkable	18) Military integration
9) No worst case scenarios	19) Coordination against internal threats
10) No fortified borders	20) Diffuse reciprocity

My next step is a moderate condensation of this list. First, Community of values and Normative discourse are condensed into one. Norms are values translated into prescriptions and proscriptions of behaviour. Discourse are values translated into interpersonal language practice. These are no different matters, but two sides of the same coin. Common values that are not regularly articulated loose their claim to be common. So this is a singe criterion called "common values and norms".

Secondly, (Informal) governance and Multilateralism are condensed into one. I put "informal" in brackets, because governance might be practiced simply on the basis of non-formalized conventions resting on the basic consensus on the direction in which the community wants to move. On the other hand, community members may prefer institutions in order to enhance the certainty of expectations for the future; this might become the more appropriate the more numerous the membership and the more complex the pattern of activities to which the community refers. In a community, governance cannot be exerted other than in a multilateral form (even if participation and weight of influence is asymmetrically distributed). Likewise, it is hard to see what purpose multilateralism should serve but to achieve common decisions and directions.

Thirdly, War/war preparation unthinkable and No worst case scenarios are so obviously two sides of the same coin, the second criterion expressing exactly the content of the first one in terms of military planning that distinction is not justified. Thus, rather than dealing with seventeen criteria we end up with fourteen.

Fourthly, I amalgamate mutual trust and diffuse reciprocity. This might look odd at first glance, but the two elements are very closely related. Diffuse reciprocity implies the willingness to forego a direct reward/payment for a favour one renders to the other side. This readiness rests on the expectation that the partner(s) will remember this erstwhile favour and return it at a later date if an appropriate situation to do so arises. Such an expectation, and readiness to act thereupon, requires considerable confidence in the honesty and the sense for appropriateness on the side of the partners. This is another expression for mutual trust - the two are two sides of the same coin; more precisely speaking, diffuse reciprocity instantiates in interaction terms what mutual trust expresses as a mental state.

Following this latter consieration, I now try to marshal these terms in some sort of sensible typology. I start with those that are indicators or signifiers of the end state rather than variables working on other elements of the total setting. These are, in my view, War/war preparation unthinkable; No fortified borders; and military integration. The first criterion is co-extensive with the understanding of a security community as such: a group of political units among which war has become impossible and unthinkable (Deutsch et al. 1957). The second and third are clearly outgrowths of this metal state (you take down fortifications only if you do not expect your neighbours attacking you). Military integration might be employed as a means to reach that state of affairs (as the re-armament of Germany in the fifties was meant to prevent the re-emergence of a threatening Germand militarism), but the purpose as well as the German consent to this procedure was so obviously dictated from the thought that war *should* become unthinkable that it makes little sense to separate one from the other.

 In addition, these two latter criteria might, but must not, characterise a mature security community. Border fortifications might just persist because of convention, or the difficulty of removing them (who would destroy a Chinese wall equivalent just to demonstrate the existence of a security community). The Schengen system came late in the game of the building of Europe, long after the European Community could qualify for security community status, and quite a few member states are not yet part of the Schengen agreement, even though they clearly share membership in the security community.

My last cut is the consideration if all these criteria hold through time and space. I am interested here, as was Karl Deutsch, in a theory that can be applied in a trans-historical

comparison. It must thus be free of conditions that apply today, but have not been available previously in history. It appears to me that one criteria and one signifier fall victim to this standard. One is "free movement". This assumes that people can move in the beginning. This, however, has not really be the case through history; for most times, means of transport were limited, and this restricted travel to a sub-class of those living in a given political unit (traders, diplomats and, at times, soldiers). It appears to me that this criteria is too much geared to the conditions of today with the enormous number of travellers and tourists desiring to see the world. Secondly, and in connection to this discussion, the signifier "fortified borders" makes a couple of assumptions that do not hold over last phases of history. It assumes that there are borders at all; it thus assumes territoriality as an indispensable attribute of the political units which form the security community, and it also assumes contagious location to each other. Either assumption cannot be generalised. Empires, city-states, and medieval fiefdoms had not necessarily a clearly delimited territorial border as is the (not always realised) standard of today's nation state. And security communities must be conceived of possibly linking units that do not sit next to each other. For these reasons, I eliminate "free movement" and "no fortified borders" as criteria that might be useful to define today's security communities, but which are not useful in a comparison across history because they cannot be generalised.

The remaining eleven criteria fall into three categories. The first, and more significant, one concern description of the mental state, that is, the ideational level. To this level, obviously "Community of values", "We-feeling/identity" and "Responsiveness", that is, the almost automatic readiness to take partners' interests and feelings into account once national decisions are taken, belong. The second concern institutions and practices that connect the ideational with the material world. Into this category fall (Informal) governance, Strong core, Multiple transactions, Transnational Community, Free movement, Cooperative/collective security, and Political coordination against internal threat. The third category consists of two ideational variables which have utilitarian content. "Common threat perception" is the first one. The second one is "Perception of material benefits"; I transform the purely material term "benefit" into this ideational one, because experience shows that "real" benefits have no meaning until perceived as such by actors. The increased Euro-skepticism in populations who greatly profit from being in the EU, or the resentment of the Euro in countries like Germany which clearly profit from the existence of the common currency, clearly support that decision.

Table 2: A Typology of criteria for a mature, tightly coupled security community

Ideational normative	Ideational utilitarian	Institutional/practice	Signifiers
Community of values	Joint threat perception	(Informal) governance	War (preparation) unthinkable
We-feeling/identity	Material benefit perception	Strong core	
Responsiveness		Multiple transactions	Mil. integration
Mutual trust		Transnat. community	
		Coop./coll. security	
		Coordination against internal threat	

What is the relationship among these sets of variables? The left column gives the hard core of variables which constitute a security community. On these three ideational states of the mind hinges its existence. The second column indicates the persistence of the utilitarian motivation that might have existed at the outset of the emergence of the community and still assists in keeping it alive. It is an open question, however, if they are necessary to keep it going; it might well be that the normative complex containd in the left column would suffice. The rich menu in column three shows to what degree security communities are institutionalised and perpetuate themselves by common practices. If one would be very precise, one could distinguish here between more structural variables (strong core, transnational community, and maybe (informal) governance; and action variables (multiple transactions; free movement; cooperative/collective security; and coordination against internal threat), but the distinction might turn out to be voluntaristic, as the supposed structures might exist only in practice, and the practices might have evolved into fixed institutions. Finally, the right column shows the end-state, if one wishes, the "dependent variable", with an essential signifier - the absence of considerations of war - , and two optional, but not necessary, institutional signifiers, military integration and the lack of fortified borders.

With this apparatus, we are now equipped to tackle the task to formulate a model of security community decay.

A Model of Decay

I start from the same assumptions as Deutsch et al. and Adler/Barnett: They assume that there must be some trigger variables, events, developments or conditions, that get the march towards a security community under way. The same applies for decay; however, one has to be careful on which site to locate these variables, events, developments or conditions. The security community is a self-contained social unit. There is nothing in its construction that leaves room for its being explodes. By its theoretical constitution, it is a self-perpetuating animal that knows no instability. This means that the trigger(s) which push it of balance must emerge on another social level The Security Community is located at the intermediate level between the unit and the system. It is thus reasonable to locate the trigger at either the unit or at the system level.
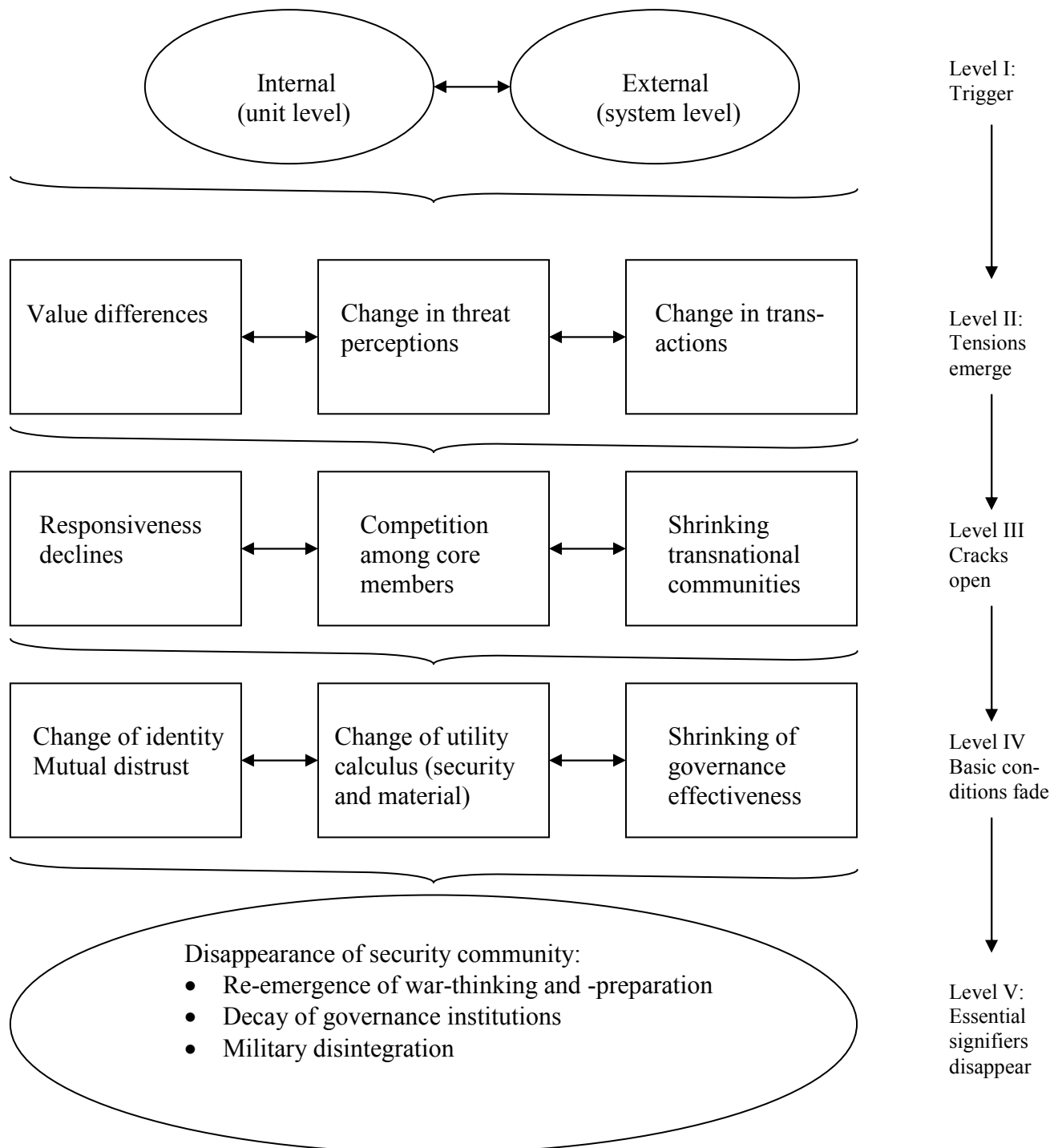
The first condition is that the trigger must, in some way, affect one of the three core variables in the left column. It is by definition not possible to affect the right column directly, as the path must necessarily work through the rest of the variables. It might not be sufficient to affect variables in the middle columns as long as the left one remains unscathed; since the strength of the left triad may lead to either ignoring the affected variables in the middle, or to lead to new practices and institutions to repair the limited damage that has occurred. As long as the core ideational variables hold, practices of repair are likely to restore the good condition of those variables that have been hurt by the disturbing events. If these three, however, are damaged, repair will become more difficult, as not the periphery, but the constitutive core of the community - the software that informs institutions and practice - has suffered cracks.

As soon as one of the three on the left is affected, however, the "wound" might be serve as inroad for utilitarian calculations (threat and benefit) to nag at the remaining edifice. In the same vein, less effective institutions, or diminished practices might lead to a vicious circle of diminished practice, reduced utility, and eroding core values which undermine, in the end, the fundaments on which the items in the right column are built.

A last consideration is devoted to the hierarchy among the variables in the left column. It would assume that a community of values is a condition of, and therefore prior to, both identity and responsiveness. Identity and responsiveness may be related in a benign or vicious

circle. From this we can conclude that common values are most vulnerable to negative external trigger events, and that identity and responsiveness will suffer after the commonality of values have been negatively effected. My model for security community decay looks thus like that:

Security Community Decay: A Model

Internal (unit level) ↔ External (system level)	Level I: Trigger
Value differences ↔ Change in threat perceptions ↔ Change in trans-actions	Level II: Tensions emerge
Responsiveness declines ↔ Competition among core members ↔ Shrinking transnational communities	Level III Cracks open
Change of identity Mutual distrust ↔ Change of utility calculus (security and material) ↔ Shrinking of governance effectiveness	Level IV Basic con-ditions fade
Disappearance of security community: • Re-emergence of war-thinking and -preparation • Decay of governance institutions • Military disintegration	Level V: Essential signifiers disappear

This model can be explained as follows: Internal and external change impacts upon an element of the core of a security community, that is, the ideational triad on which each such community must be based. As candidate, I have selected common values, as this appears to be on closer look most exposed to challenges from within and from without. I also hypothesise that, as a (non-necessary and non-sufficient) condition further weakening the community might be changes in threat perception that could be connected to system-level upheavals as well as to domestic change (e.g. a revolution, bringing hostile classes or ethnical or religious groups to power). In the category of practices/institutions the best candidate for initial change is transaction patterns which might be connected to technical innovation (e.g. in transport and communications), or shifts in mutual sympathies emerging from domestic change. The variables also interact with each other: threat perceptions may be reshuffled along common/antagonistic value perceptions, and vice versa; transactions may be redirected alongn new friend/enemy notions, and in favour of those where the commonality of values is still strongest.

In the second phase of decay, I expect responsiveness to shrink. This can be due to value differences (one is less inclined to listen or defer to folks striving for objectives which oneself does dislike), to differences in threat perception (as one may try to oppose an actor which is seen as a potential ally by another community member, or one does not react in a hostile way to someone perceived by others as enemy). Core members will try to persuade other partners to stick to - or newly adopt - the values they prefer, to embrace their new friends and oppose their new enemies. This will engender competition within the core that may sometimes look very similar to a classical interstate rivalry. With a smaller common value basis, tensions in whom one sees as friends and enemies, and shifted transaction flows, it is also reasonable to expect the number of those counted in the "transnational community" to diminish. Again, the variables are interactive on the same level: Core members' competition is likely to disincline them even more to listen to each other; with less people belonging to the transnational community, there are also less who plead for listening or to work on the increasing problem of competition.

The third phase brings the security community to the tipping point. The feeling of identity vanishes: common values are gone, a lack of responsiveness gives the feeling that one has started to talk past each other. Friends and enemies are different, and those still preaching the

"we" are a small group only, preaching to the deaf and are undercut by the core members pulling in different directions. Distrust about the ambitions and intentions of the partners will reappear at this stage. In this phase, the cool assessment of cost and benefit of the community, so far repressed by the overlay of an identity that was not to be challenged, will be recalculated; with mutual trust eroding, partners will be reluctant to grant each other diffuse reciprocity any longer. In security terms, it may turn from positive to negative as the partners are not willing to face the same enemy, and inclined to fight one's friends. In economic terms, transactions go elsewhere; trading partners have changed, and with the security benefits diminished, nullified, or even reversed, costs of the security community itself weigh now heavily as negative. It is at this stage (at the latest) that we should expect fairly ineffective practices and institutions of governance: lack of responsiveness hurts communications that are essential; lack of transnational communities deprives governance of its actor basis. The interaction effects on this level see the utility calculus further tilted against the community by ineffective governance producing less utility (if not negative utility), and by identity hurt by the notion that the (still) partners are a drain on one's welfare (and/or security) while contributing nothing to enhance the national interest.

At this point, the re-emergence of the possibility of making war against each other is likely to reappear, driven by core rivalry and the change of friends and enemies whose relations may have katalytic negative effects on intra-community relations. Military integration cannot be maintained if the possibility of violent conflict looms larger and larger. It might become possible to take defensive measures along common border or even to curb cross-border movements. There is nothing left to jointly govern - institutions that were created for providing the common good will dissolve. The security community is finally decayed.

We are still lacking a solid idea about the trigger developments unleashing the whole process. I intend to try to find them inductively, by reviewing three cases where existing security communities became extinct over a period of time. The tree cases are the Delian League of the 4th century B.C.; the Hanseatic League of the 13th to 17th century, and the Concert of Europe that lasted from the Congress of Vienna 1815 until the Crimean War in 1854.

The Delian League

The Delian League formed in the context of the Hellenic-Persian wars of 490 and 480 B.C..(Doyle 1986, Chapter 2; Meiggs; http://www.livius.org) It was initially an alliance of Greek city-states against the Persian empire. The motivation for getting together was initially the common enemy that mounted an overwhelming threat against which each single one of the political entities in ancient Greece would not have been able to muster the necessary counterweight; in addition, the League had an implicit mission directed against Sparta and its allies as a possible future threat. While the foundation of the League could thus be thought of a relatively trivial form of an alliance within a neo-realist (Waltian) theory of allicance formation (Walt 1988), a closer look reveals interesting ideational traces that make the League appear as an early model of a security community.

The Greek *polis* was a new and unique political entity, based on self-rule of a compact agglomeration of free citizens and quite distinct from the strictly hierarchical autocracies which were the most frequent form of political rule and extended their control usually over much larger territoriy than the polis. This implied that the League was not only an alliance without regard to the internal form of rule and the ideology behind that form, but as well an organisation of resistance by the then unique form of protodemocratic or democratic *polis* (as the city states would call themselves) against the time-honoured autocratic form of rule that prevailed in most polities of the time. It was this latter identity which gave the Delian League its anti-Spartan direction, as the overwhelming members of the Delian League were democratically ruled (by those accepted as citizens in the respective town), while Sparta and her allies (later forming the Peloponnesian League) were mostly ruled by a narrow aristocracy.

The Delian League created its own identity myth in emphasising the common origin. Many Ionian cities, located at or close to the coast of Asia Minor, accepted solemnly Athens as the mother city. The start of the League was during the Persian wars 490-479 B.C., and the league was firmly institutionalised (see below) by 478 B.C.. Most of the members were sea-faring people after the Persian wars. The existence of their polis depended to a certain degree on trade (notably in grain, oil, pottery, wine). The association in the League, in addition to help deter or fend of the main military threat, did also foster this economic interest and helped the trade among the city states themselves; the trade in certain goods was exclusive among League members.

The League was even institutionalised. There was a "consultation norm" as far as major issues that could affect security and survival of each of them was concerned, even though the leadership of Athens was widely accepted. A regular meetings of representatives (no small thing given the constrained means of communication and transport at the time) in the city of Delos, and, most astonishingly, a common treasure that would support the defense of the members at the time of conflict which was also originally placed in Delos. A formula for burden sharing was adopted: Athens would provide the major part of the League's ships. Some of the more wealthy allies would also contribute ships. Others would help to man Athenian ships, and the rest would contribute cash to the common treasure.

The Delian League as Security Community

Ideational normative	Ideational utilitarian	Institutional/practice	Signifiers
Community of values *Independence, self-rule*	Joint threat perception *Persia (Sparta)*	(Informal) governance *Regular meetings* *Joint treasure*	War (preparat-ion) unthinkable *Small cities asked for Athenian leadership*
We-feeling/identity *Hellenism/Ionianism* *Self-ruled city states* *Self-ruled city states*	Material benefit perception *Security, trade*	Strong core *Athens, Ionian Islands*	Military integration *Joint fleet*
Responsiveness *Consultation rule*	Multiple transactions *Intra-community trade*	Transnat. community *Contacts between pol. elite and mer-chants*	
		Coop./coll. security *Defense of attacked allies*	
		Coordination against internal threat *Restauration after aristocratic coups*	

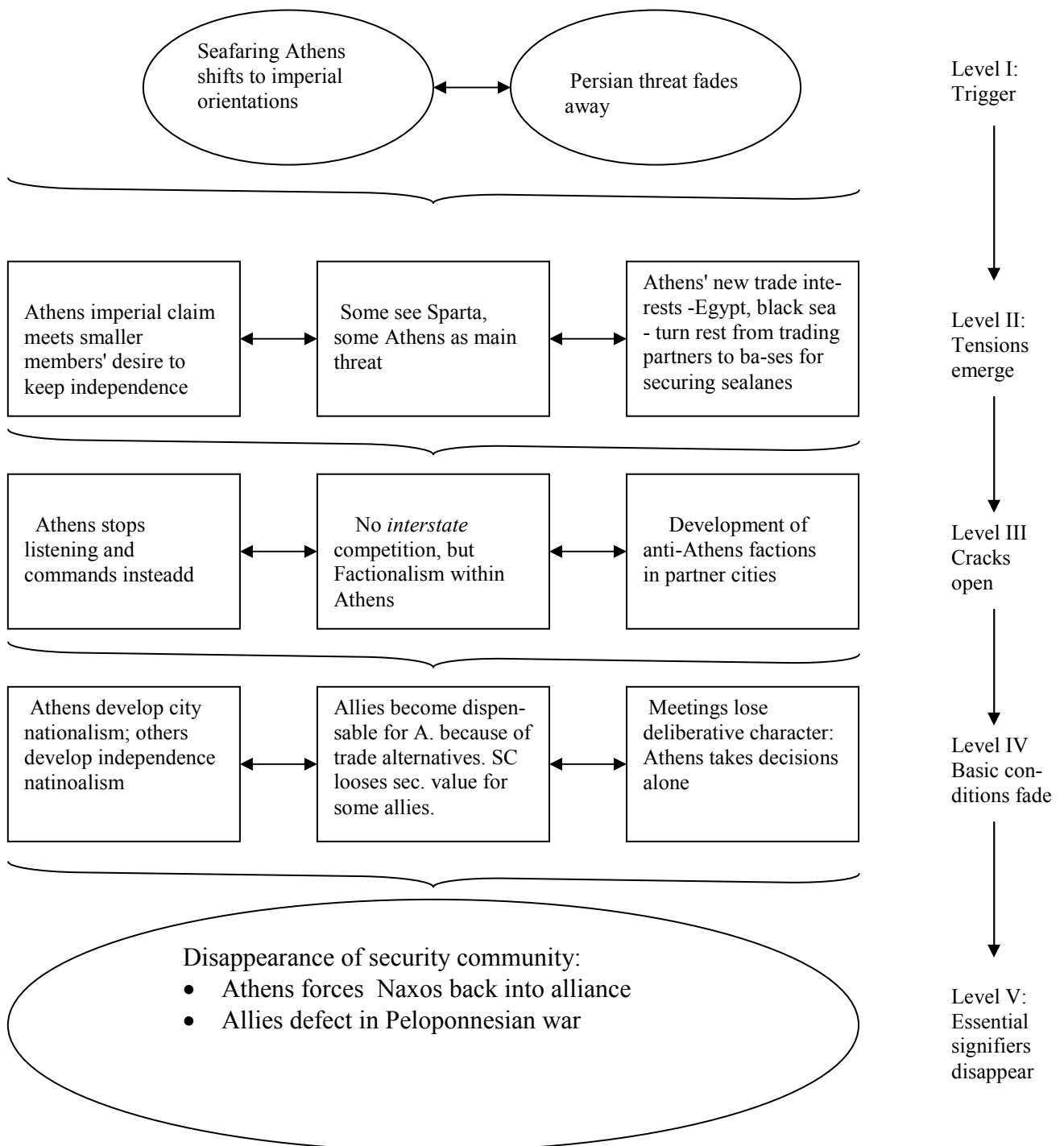To summarize, the League disposed of some essential attributes of a Security Community. There was a strong feeling of identity (Hellenic city states), a common understanding of threat, economic networking activities, and common institutions. Warfare against each other was (initially) unthinkable. Only when circumstances changed did the possibility of war within the Hellenic family re-enter the political calculus.

The change emerged largely from within the League's most powerful member, Athens. A new generation emerged that put "being Athenic" above "being Hellenic". It appears that the driving force was the newly discovered Athenic capability in naval affairs that was largely stimulated through the need to defend on sea against the Persian assault. Athens developed faily speedily a strong navy and very strong and far-reaching trade interests. The trading class was interested in keeping the League together because it afforded trade privileges on the member's markets. The political class (which was largely identical with the economic powerful) saw things the same way. For the underclass citizens, naval activities promised employment (as rower/soldiers) and, eventually, land (in colonies on conquered territories). Athens developed a distinct patriotic identity that was distinct from the pan-Hellenism that had dominated the Persian wars and the initial formation of the League and which would show very strongly in Athens' undisputed leader Perikles' speeches at the outset of the Peloponnesian War which started in 431.(Doyle 1986,65-68)

About twenty years after its formative phase, Athens pressed increasingly strongly within the League for ever more intense subordination under its will. As Thucydides reports, initially the smaller states had asked Athens to lead, but later most members loathed the heavy-handed Athenian style of hegemony. The freedom and independence of the smaller members - being part and parcel of the League's very identity - were put in jeopardy. Athens strove for transforming the League from an association of legally and morally equals into something hierarchical where its own voice would count much more than that of anybody else. When Naxos decided to leave the Delian League because the Persian threat had receded, Athens used force to bring the reticent island back into the League's ranks. Later, Athens seized the common treasure and shipped it from Delos to Athens to assure permanent, reliable control. This served as the final warning signal that those still interested in their independence might look for ways to preserve it. Some found defection Sparta, Athens' main rival in the Hellenic world. While the League continued to endure as a name, its character had definitely changed. It had become an empire, held together, on the one hand, by Athens sheer power and the occasional application of force; on the other hand, there was some binding force emerging from the fear of democratic rulers that, absent Athenic support, their domestic aristocratic foes may overwhelm them (Thucydides 1954, Book I; Doyle 1986, 57-59). Rather than we-feeling and identity and a sense of community, power pressure and utilitarian considerations kept the transformed league somehow in place. Its death knell came during the late phase of the Peloponnesian war: When Sparta had developed a navy that could match the Athenian one,

fear and utility of sticking to the league broke down, and a stampede of defectors occurred, accelerating Athens' fall into catastrophic defeat (Doyle 1986, 74/75).

The Delian League: Decay Model

Seafaring Athens shifts to imperial orientations ↔ **Persian threat fades away**	Level I: Trigger
Athens imperial claim meets smaller members' desire to keep independence ↔ **Some see Sparta, some Athens as main threat** ↔ **Athens' new trade interests -Egypt, black sea - turn rest from trading partners to ba-ses for securing sealanes**	Level II: Tensions emerge
Athens stops listening and commands insteadd ↔ **No *interstate* competition, but Factionalism within Athens** ↔ **Development of anti-Athens factions in partner cities**	Level III Cracks open
Athens develop city nationalism; others develop independence natinoalism ↔ **Allies become dispensable for A. because of trade alternatives. SC looses sec. value for some allies.** ↔ **Meetings lose deliberative character: Athens takes decisions alone**	Level IV Basic conditions fade
Disappearance of security community: • Athens forces Naxos back into alliance • Allies defect in Peloponnesian war	Level V: Essential signifiers disappear

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The Hanseatic League (or Hanse)

The Hanse (Postel, Rainer) was also an association of city-states, founded during the second half of the 13th century, at the height of the Middle Ages, but foreboding the change to the modern age. Hanse cities were trading places which drew their wealth as well as their power from controlling trade in Northern Europe - with the Baltic Sea as the decisive center. Members of the association existed in what is today Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, and the Baltic states. The Hanse was at its apex of power from the mid-14th to the mid-15th century, slowly, but continuously declining since.

As in the case of the Delian Sea League, the origin and primary motivation for associating was security. Rather than security against a trans-territorial military attack, however, it was security of trade that was in the forefront of the organisation's aim. Long-range trade over land and sea was endangered by a panoply of predatory actors. The territorial prince, the initial motivator for the League's getting together, was initially not the main threat against which the tradesmen decided to join their forces, though, as time went by, this menace would become more and more imposing. While princes could occasionally be malign, most were interested in obtaining the welfare effects of long-range trade and thus accepted the service the Hanse was rendering, provided it would pay some tariff or fee by crossing his territory. During the high time of the Hanse, princes like Eric and Waldemar of Danmark, or Henry of Mecklenburg, would try to prey on Hanse trade, but would be defeated after some time by the League. The effect of their challenge was to enhance the military power of the alliance, adding to the utility benefits accruing to its members (Zimmerling, 134/5).

The most frightening predators against which trade had to be protected, rather, were marauding bands of poor people; low-rank nobles whose fiefdoms produced too little value to make a living; landless nobles (from second sons on) who had no regular income altogether

and would either serve in the armed forces of higher-rank feudal lords and princes, or would try to feed themselves out of robbery; these two categories made up the "robber knights" that have become the subject of quite a few entertaining vovels about medieval times. And then there was pirates, abundant because of a lack of territorial control, and sometimes the maritime equivalent of land-locked "robber knights".

The Hanse's main purpose was thus the security of commerce. Behind this common utilitarian objective, however were two intertwined bonds of identity that set the members of the Hanse apart from their then societal and political environment. The first was, similar to the one that had constituted the identity of Hellenic poleis, was the distinctiveness of the self-ruled city as opposed to the territorial unity run by a feudal lord, prince or king, or a clergical dignatory. Attempts by daring nobles to take away the liberty of one or the other Hanse city only confirmed this distinctiveness and re-inforced the respective identity (Dollinger 1966).

The second element of identity was the class characteristic of the merchants. The Middle Ages were an era of stasis. Life was believed circular, a feeling re-inforced by the ever-lasting repetition of the church year. The medieval society kept people in their places. Social mobility was thought to be evil. And life was very much local. The horizons of people ended most of the time at the city wall or the next forest or river. The merchants were distinct. They were highly mobile, enjoyed wide horizons (extending from London to Nowgorod in Russia), and their aim in life was not to stay on the same material level, but to enhance their welfare by their own commercial effort. The merchants, in other words, were heralds of the new time that was about to develop over the next centuries (Zimmerling 1978, 44). While the merchants did not belong to the two upper classes in medieval Europe, nobility and clergy, in the social context of the city, they represented a bourgoise aristocracy: Set apart from ordinary people like craftsmen or simple worksmen, they build a class of their own, linked through intermarriage, and keeping themselves consciously distinct from the plebejan elements.

The Hanse, typically, bound together the two elements of identity, city and class: The condition for a city to belong to the Hanse was to be ruled by the Council. A city council was composed of the representatives of the upper class family, inevitably the merchants. If the rule in the city was taken over by a prince or the mob, membership wold cease. The decisive, constitutive act for Hanse identity, at the end of the 13th century, was the melting of the merchant with the city. The Hanse, that had existed in name before as security associations of

merchants, became a league of merchant-controlled cities (Zimmerling 1978, 86). The backbone of the Hanse were the "Wendian cities", Lübeck, Rostock, Wismar, Kiel, Hamburg, Lüneburg and Stralsund; plus Danzig in Prussia, Bremen at the North Sea, and the inland city of Cologne. Around this core, some 70 cities plus the Teutonic Order of Prussia- the one exception - made up the regular membership. Around this"second ring", some 120 more towns belonged to the community as lesser members. For long, the Hanse functioned without a strong institutional set up.

Institutions were strongest in the trading posts ("Kontors") abroad such as in London, Bruges, Nowgorod, or Bergen in Norway. The charters of these posts regulated precisely the rights and duties of those coming there, that is, the merchants from the various cities; rules were strict: whoever attended Kontor meetings late, left them early, or spoke out of order was due to a fine (Zimmerling 1978, 178/9). These posts had extraterritorial status, that is they were under a system of self-rule even though located on foreign territory. Otherwise, the Hanse flourished wihthout a charter or any organisation except that it took decisions (e.g. granting or suspending membership, declaring war, ratifying peace, instructing representatives on negotiation briefs, adjudicating conflict among members etc.) by meetings of delegates, the "Hanse Days". Decisions were taken by simple majority. Since many of the member states were too poor to participate in every such meeting, they could be represented by more well-off, larger cities. Every member city obtained a written and sealed copy of the record. Hanse days took place about twice in three years during the high time of the community, and more rarely thereafter (Pagel 1963).

The Hanse League as Security Community

Ideational normative	Ideational utilitarian	Institutional/practice	Signifiers
Community of values	Joint threat perception	(Informal) governance	War (preparat-ion) unthinkable
Commerial adventiurism independence	*Predatory princes pirates, robber knights*	*Hanse days; Sec. Gen. Sec. general, Treasure*	*No wars between Hanse cities*
We-feeling/identity *Free merchant cities* *Merchant aristocracy*	Material benefit perception *Security of trade Profit*	Strong core *Wendian cities* *Danzig, Cologne*	Mil Integration *Joint fleets* *Joint Kontor defense*
Responsiveness *Consultation*	Multiple transactions *Mutual trade,*	Transnat. community *Kontor staff* *Merchant dynasties*	Mil. integration *Joint fleets,* *Joint Kontor defense*
		Coop./collective security	

*Defense of merchant
ships and Kontors*

Coordination against
 internal threat
*Restauration after
aristocratic coups*

The agonizingly drawn-out decline of the Hanse was caused by several developments. One was the rise of the territorial state, the capability of certain princes to consolidate their power over a larger chunk of territory, and the growth of princely ressources that would come with this. This was notably true for England, Danmark, Sweden, Russia, and - in e non-princely structure of rule - the General States of the Netherlands. All these states than developed their own commercial interest in the increasingly mercantilist spirit. This put more pressure on the Hanse, demanding more risk (in defensive warfare) from its members and thus exposing fissures in the interests of those that were immediately threatened and those which were not because they were far away from the point of attack.The Hanse cities were thus thrown back to an individual utility calculus (Zimmerling 1978, 142/3).
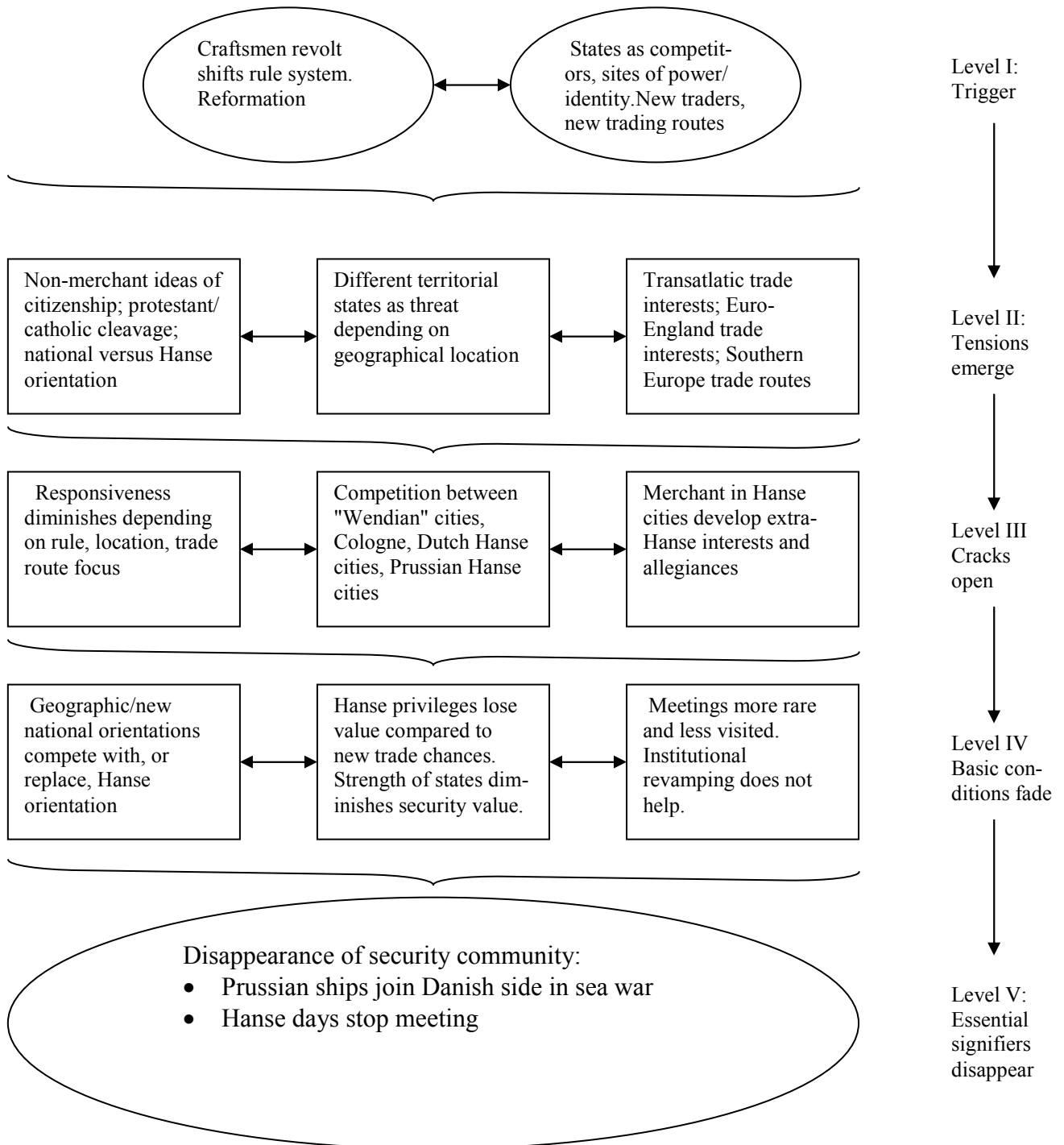
Secondly, the change of the schwerpunkt of transregional trade (the rise of the Mediterranean/Burgundy/Flanders/England axis, and later towards the transatlatic exchange shifted the commercial interests of some of the member cities (such as Cologne). The emergence of national trading interests in England, the Netherlands, and Russia took also influence on the utility calculus of Hanse cities and sharpened the differences of interests, depending on geographical location. The shift in the economic framework conditions thus exacerbated the always existing competition among the members and led to increasing conflict. It also brought new competitors to the North, notably the huge commercial/financial empires of Augsburg, with the Fugger family at the top. These new economic actors understood better to combine banking and trading and enjoyed the support of the emperor.

Thirdly, the domestic constitution of the cities were continuously challenged by the claim of the petit bourgeoisie - the craftsmen and their guilds - for participation in city decision making. This led to repeated revolts, even in the pivotal Hanse city of Luebeck, its virtual capital, and weakened identity time and again. Fifthly, the reformation was detrimental to Hanse cohesion in two different ways: For one, it divided the (large majority) of protestant cities from a minority of those that stuck to Catholicism, notably, again, Cologne. And it led to populist uprisings - reinforcing the revolts of the craftsmen class - in a couple of cities that

compromised the rule of the merchant aristocracy and thus weakened the bonds of identity; the Luebeck uprising that weakened the Hanse badly, was also strengthened by protestant fervour (Zimmerling 1978, 264-276).

Counterintuitively for those brought up in security community theory, the increasing attempts at institutionalisation in the sixteenth century were no sign of community growth, but of its decay. The interests, orientations, and identities of the cities diverged more and more. As long as common identity and common interests were strong enough, the community would persist through the practice of the members, that was so reliable as to be not in need of institutional support. Once these conditions were gone, the Hanse increased the frequency of its meetings, adopted the statute of a confederation, introduced a fee, scaled along the different wealth of the cities, and even nominated what would today be called a "secretary general" in 1556. None of these measures sufficed to reverse the decline, and compliance with the new rules was not up to expectations. In a last gasp, the Hanse which had decided to make Luebeck, Hamburg and Bremen its representatives, managed to be included in the Westphalian Peace in 1648. Only briefly thereafter, the Hanse held its last meeting which was attended by only six towns (Zimmerling 1978, 280-302). And yet traces of identity can even be found until today. Bremen and Hamburg are still "free Hanse cities" with their own state (Länder) government in todays Federal Republic, and these to cities as well as Lübeck and Rostock keep the "H" for Hansestadt on the number plate on their citizens' cars before the first letter of the city name, that is, HB, HH, HL and HR, respectively.

The Hanse League: Decay Model

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┌─────────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────┐
│  Craftsmen revolt   │              │  States as competit-│        Level I:
│  shifts rule system.│  ◄────────►  │  ors, sites of power/│       Trigger
│  Reformation        │              │  identity.New traders,│
│                     │              │  new trading routes  │
└─────────────────────┘              └─────────────────────┘
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| Non-merchant ideas of citizenship; protestant/ catholic cleavage; national versus Hanse orientation | ◄──► | Different territorial states as threat depending on geographical location | ◄──► | Transatlatic trade interests; Euro-England trade interests; Southern Europe trade routes |

Level II:
Tensions
emerge

| Responsiveness diminishes depending on rule, location, trade route focus | ◄──► | Competition between "Wendian" cities, Cologne, Dutch Hanse cities, Prussian Hanse cities | ◄──► | Merchant in Hanse cities develop extra-Hanse interests and allegiances |

Level III
Cracks
open

| Geographic/new national orientations compete with, or replace, Hanse orientation | ◄──► | Hanse privileges lose value compared to new trade chances. Strength of states dim-inishes security value. | ◄──► | Meetings more rare and less visited. Institutional revamping does not help. |

Level IV
Basic con-
ditions fade

Disappearance of security community:
- Prussian ships join Danish side in sea war
- Hanse days stop meeting

Level V:
Essential
signifiers
disappear

The Concert of Europe

21

My third case is the Concert of Europe that succeeded in keeping peace among the great European powers from the end of the Napoleonic wars to the Crimean war in 1856. This choice begs an explanation, as the Concert has been described by Robert Jervis as a Security Regime in the classic special issue of International Organisation on the theme of international regimes (Jervis 1982). Jervis rightly reports that the ingredients of a regime, as defined by Krasner in the same volume, were there. However, his research also demonstrates with great accuracy that there were additional features that, in my view, bring the Concert much closer to the core definition of a security community.

To start with the defining criterion, Jervis says that "war was not thought to be likely", and even "they did not prepare for war" (Jervis 1982). This, of course, is what a security community is all about. Most regimes in the field of security policy (notably arms control) are exactly installed because war is likely and rules are required to make sure that preparations do not go out of hands as to lead to an uncontrolled escalation towards an armed conflict. In the "concert", no doubt due to the exhaustion after more than two decades of almost permanent fighting, members did not only not want a war, but they trusted that this feeling was shared by their partners. A sense of duty emerged from here that made states shy to pursue secondary interests too hard lest their moral reputation may suffer.

As to we-feeling and identity, Jervis is not so informative. But Henry Kissinger's account of Castlereagh and Metternich (Kissinger xxx) as well as Holbrad's seminal study on the Concert (Holbrad 1970) show the roots of identity; it is well reflected in the title of Kissinger's book "a world restored". All European Great Powers were run by Kings and an aristocracy; in England, to be sure, there was a Parliament (as existed in France after 1830 again), but the most deputies were from nobility, and, anyway, governmental posts in general and leadership positions in particular were held by people whose families had a tradition of allegiance to the "Ancien Regime". They shared a deep dislike of disorder, recognised each other as members of an elite, had the distinct idea that people born into upper class families were generally better fit to run their countries. So, there was a double "we-feeling" available: The awareness of the exclusive responsibility of the "big ones" to avoid a repetition of the slaughters of the recent past; and the shared class consciousness of people borne to rule (or, in rare cases, co-opted by those borne to rule). This elite formed a transnational community; many of them were bound by family ties through cross-marriages through the centuries; the "commerce

nobility" whose progeny made it to the top through co-optation had their own networks of business and finance, which was not negligible, though, of course, much weaker than in our time (Held et al. xxx).

From this, a community of values, another key ideational criterion of security community, emerged: Members placed high value in peace and stability (rather than in conquest, aggrandisement and stimulating unrest that would weak competitors, as in most of the Westphalian era). In addition, they loathed domestic turmoil and bad governance. The maintenance of countries being ruled by quality people (such as themselves) also mattered. To what degree the common inheritage of Christianity (notwithstanding the Catholic/Protestant/Anglican divide) played a role is not clear from the inquiries into the Concert, but cannot excluded either. Altogether, it was a conservative pattern of values that was shared by the elites of the member states.

The strong core was the axis Britain/Hapsburg, led by Castlereagh and Metternich, the architects of the Concert. Informal governance was available, within the constraints of the communication and transport systems of the time. A series of conferences - representing the multilateral element - and the ambassador system served as the basis for co-ordination and information exchange. But as in the case of the Hanse, the character of a Security Community, though contra-intuitive to the prevailing discourse of the subject, may be much more confirmed by weak institutions rather than by strong ones. For if the community functions through the everyday practice of its members rather than by the constraints emerging from a dense institutional network, the social bonds (which are the decisive standard of community) must be fairly strong. The Concert had a collective security purpose as well as a common threat definition. Members were prepared to come to the assistance of each other; the main threat was seen in turmoil either in smaller states at the periphery, or even in one of themselves. In other words, security concerns and policy co-ordination extended even to internal issues.

A striking feature was "responsiveness", maybe the weak spot in the two preceding cases. Responsiveness is visible in the restraint to exploit advantageous situations for pressing one's own interests; vital interests of the partners were respected as a matter of principle. Diplomatic defeats of each of them was not being sought, but collectively prevented. And it developed a practice of diffuse reciprocity; members would not insist that favours were

immediately paid back, but relied on the good will of their partner to reciprocate somehow later in time. In other words, the interests - at least the vital ones - of those participating in the concert were taken into account carefully by the others, and external behaviour was harmonised with these interests as much as possible; when this norm of behaviour was violated, indignation was audibly uttered - a clear indication that this was part of the "lifeline" on which the Concert was thriving (Jervis 1982, 363,364/5).
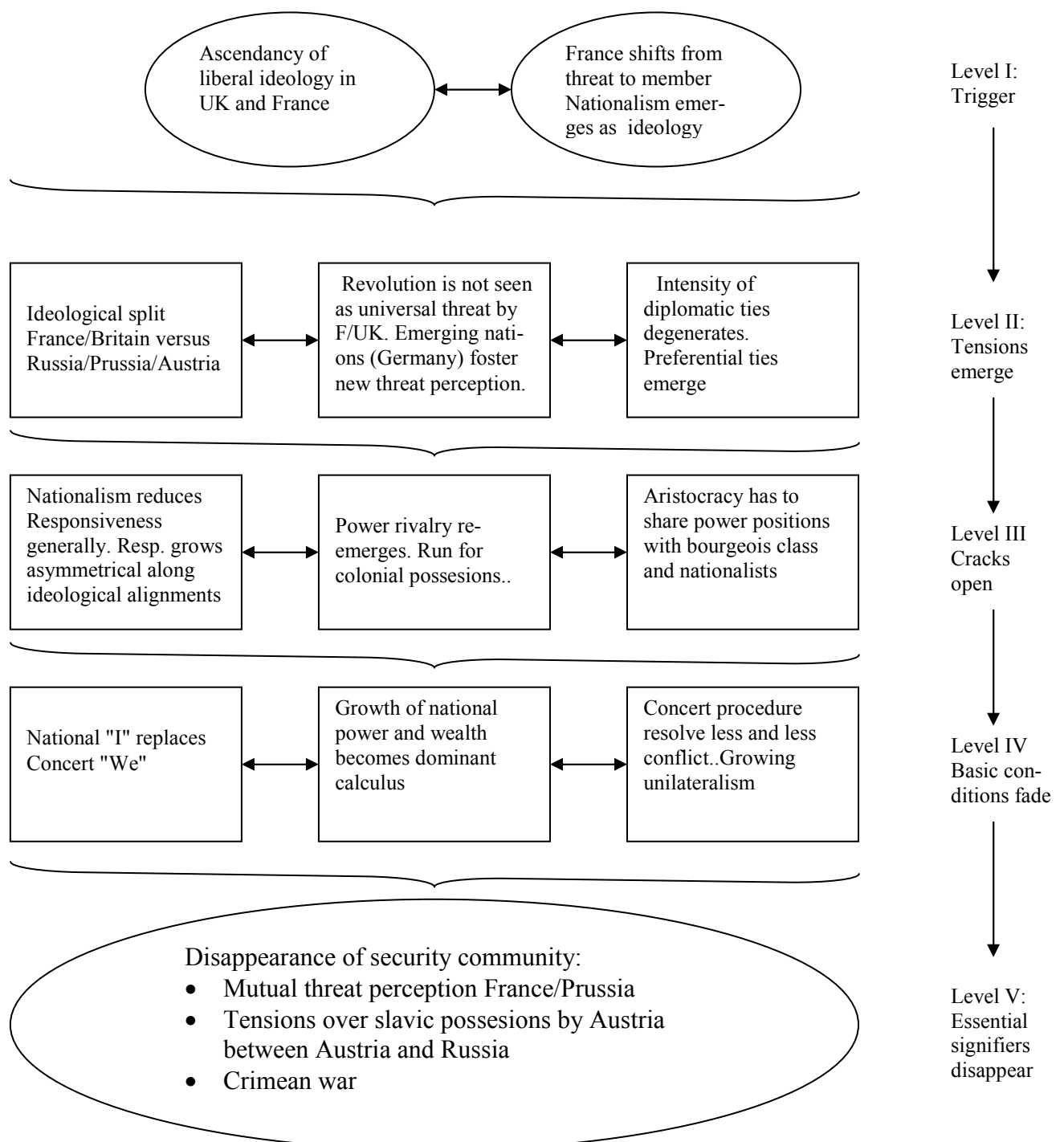
The Concert of Europe as Security Community

Ideational normative	Ideational utilitarian	Institutional/practice	Signifiers
Community of values	Joint threat perception	(Informal) governance	War (preparat-ion) unthinkable
Stability *Peaceful conservatism*	*Popular upheavals* *Imperialist usurpators*	*Regular conferences* *Dense system of envoys*	*Solemn commitment to respect territorial integrity*
We-feeling/identity *Aristocratic servants of European monarchs Consciousness of joint Responsibility*	Material benefit perception *Peace, Security*	Strong core *England/Austria-Hungary*	Mil Integration *None. Occasional joint operations*
Responsiveness *Demonstrative respect for partners' vital interests*	Multiple transactions *Frequent meetings; intermarriages*	Transnat. community *Trans-European ari-stocracy*	
Mutual trust *Expectation of com-pensation for partners' territorial gains*		Coop./collective security *Mutual aid promise in case of attack*	
		Coordination against internal threat *Possible intervention in case of revolution*	

We can conclude that a great deal of the criteria of a security community, notably the core ideational ones, were existing for the Concert. Only military integration is completely absent. The decay, it appears, emerged from a double challenge to the "we". Two of the members, England and France, developed in a more liberal direction. During the existence of the Concert, the suffrage was extended in England, and France underwent a little revolution in 1830 that turned the regime from semi-absolutist to rather constitutional. The English sympathies for the Spanish uprising in 1822 foreshadowed the more and more prevailing sense of the liberal values of the enlightenment that extended to suppressed ethnic minorities and to suppressed people in general, while Austria, Russia, and Prussia remained staunchly

conservative and autocratic. The second major force was nationalism. It had emerged from the French revolution and spread to other countries, more liberal or more autocratic. While increased popular participation weakened the aristocratic elite's identity's influence, while opposition of liberal and conservative values diminished the common value basis, nationalism created a prevalence of the "I" over the "we" and reduced the willingness to abide by the norm of responsiveness. It is on the basis of these developments that the concert was less an less able to achieve its erstwhile purpose, and its decay would finally be sealed by some of its members taking up arms against each other in the middle of the century.

The Concert of Europe Decay Model

Ascendancy of liberal ideology in UK and France ⟷ France shifts from threat to member Nationalism emerges as ideology	Level I: Trigger
Ideological split France/Britain versus Russia/Prussia/Austria ⟷ Revolution is not seen as universal threat by F/UK. Emerging nations (Germany) foster new threat perception. ⟷ Intensity of diplomatic ties degenerates. Preferential ties emerge	Level II: Tensions emerge
Nationalism reduces Responsiveness generally. Resp. grows asymmetrical along ideological alignments ⟷ Power rivalry re-emerges. Run for colonial possesions.. ⟷ Aristocracy has to share power positions with bourgeois class and nationalists	Level III Cracks open
National "I" replaces Concert "We" ⟷ Growth of national power and wealth becomes dominant calculus ⟷ Concert procedure resolve less and less conflict..Growing unilateralism	Level IV Basic conditions fade
Disappearance of security community: • Mutual threat perception France/Prussia • Tensions over slavic possesions by Austria between Austria and Russia • Crimean war	Level V: Essential signifiers disappear

Analysis

What can we learn about the trigger events from our three cases? In the Delian league, the young security community came under double pressure from the fading of the Persian enemy (it did not disappear, but it looked much less threatening after 479, motivating, for example, Naxos to try to terminate membership) and from the decisive internal change in the Athenian orientation from a primus inter pares obliged to provide protection to other Hellenic (Ionian) city-states to an imperial power whose duty it was to pursue its own glory and interests. In the Hanse, the pincer attack emerged from the rise of the nation states that created new threats as well as new orientations (notably in the case of the Dutch members); and from the inner uprisings of the craftsmen with their more populist values, challenging the merchant-aristocracy identity of the Hanse, re-inforced by the effects of the reformation. For the Concert, external change started with the co-optation of the erstwhile enemy (and threat) France into their ranks, and the rise of liberal orientation in two members, France and Britain, affecting the way these two countries looked at revolutions in smaller European countries (such as Belgium, Poland, or Greece), destroying the notion of a common threat (internal unrest within Europe), and eating up the shared identity of a conservative, elite aristocratic caste keeping the continent on the track of stability. Simultaneously, the rise of nationalism as a system-wide hegemonic discourse inevitably re-arranged the utility calculus of the nation-states and their capability to identify with actors across national borders at a time when the national "we" was powerfully re-asserted, and so far passive parts of the population were mobilised around of the identity-building theme of the nation (Gellner, Anderson xxx).

Once the trigger events had happened, events developed very much along the cascade proposed in the model. However, it is remarkable that the decay of the Delian League appears to have precipitated the quickest, as the orientation shift within Athens worked most massively to undercut the common identity. This may point to the possibility that changes in the orientation of the security community leader, if there is one, can engender particularly dramatic and grave consequences in the short term. The more asymmetric a community is

structured, then, the more value change within a single member - the biggest one - are apt to work destructively on the cohesion of the community. In this case,

The Atlantic Allicance: Diagnosis and Prognosis

Together with the European Union, the Atlantic Alliance is generally cited as the pivotal example of an existing security community. Thomas Risse's study is the most convincing proof that the ingredients of a security community are in abundant supply for NATO..

The Atlantic Alliance as Security Community

Ideational normative	Ideational utilitarian	Institutional/practice	Signifiers
Community of values	Joint threat perception	(Informal) governance	War (preparation) unthinkable
Liberal democracy *Market economy*	*Communism* *Soviet Union*	*NATO organisation*	*No notion of mutual war*
We-feeling/identity *"The free West"* *"The Atlantic community"*	Material benefit perception *Security* *Economic welfare*	Strong core *US/Great Britain/ Germany*	Mil Integration *Fully integrated mil. Staff, Air defense, Allied Corps*
Responsiveness *Consultation norm*	Multiple transactions *Military deployments, Trade and Investment Cultural/scientific exchanges*	Transnat. community *Core transatl. sec. establishment; transatl. business associations*	
Mutual trust *Basic belief in allies' reliability*		Coop./collective security *Mutual aid promise in case of attack*	
		Coordination against internal threat *Propaganda war against communism*	

Looking at the table, it is not hard to understand why the Atlantic Alliance serves so often as a template for the concept of Security Community. All the attributes which the theory postulates as constitutive and indicative for such a Community are here, and in particularly strong form (as, for example, in military integration). There is little doubt that the Alliance started as an value-bound endeavour: It was a pact of liberal democracies to prevent another

totalitarian predator to reduce their numbers; for strategic convenience, a few non-democracies were admitted, or the change from democracy to non-democracy (Turkey, Greece) was tolerated in order to presere the geostrategic position of the Alliance. The core, however, and the vast majority of the members were devoutedly democratic. Democratic discourse was prevailing (including in the Charter and Communiqués), the few non-democratic members not-withstanding. The other half of shared values was free market liberalism (and this, then, included the non-democrats in NATO ranks, uniting them in the ideology of anti-communism). From this joint value and ideological basis, a common identity emergied that expressed itself in terms like "The Atlantic Community" and "The Free West", identity terms that were part of everyday's language in political speeches as well as Media accounts. Thomas Risse's finding of a "consultation norm" in the Atlantic Alliance is the most tangible indicator of the power of "responsiveness" which Karl Deutsch labeled the most important condition for a security community to flourish (Risse-Kappen 199xxx)

The community developed their own identity very much in contrast to the "other", totalitarian communism and its flag-bearer, the Soviet Union, which was identified as the Mmain threat which the Alliance was facing. Economic crisis was seen as another, indirect threat, an understanding developed from the experience of the thirties and the belief that such crisis would offer an inroad to communist agitation as it did then to Nazi agitiation. Consequently, the contribution of this community to perceived utility was high both in security and in economic terms. The Marshall Plan had inculcated the Europeans with the consciousness of the huge value of the transatlantic relationship for their economic welfare, and the incredible comeback of European economies during the fifties and sixties only confirmed this early attitude.

NATO established a quite formal structure of security governance, first in Paris, then in Brussels. Increasingly dense security and economic transactions created huge number of people who were engaged in regular contacts across the Atlantic, rangig from simple soldiers through politicians, bureaucrats to businessmen, scientists, artists and, last but not least, ordinary folks traveling as tourists. This transnational community or communities were bolstered by a panoply of institutional ressources, starting with NATO itself and ranging through bi- and multilateral conventions of parlamentarians, regular security conferences (like the one in Munich), scientific conferences, exchanges, partnerships, and joint projects, chambers of commerce and so on. These relations were strongest among the core members.

The US and Great Britain kept their special relationship dating back to World War II, while the US-German relationship developed as a second "core leg", marking another special relationship between the vanquished enemy turned ally that had become the geostrategic fulcrum of Western defense througout the Cold War, and by the weight of the American military presence, and its own economic weight as the engine of the European Community, became Washington's most important partner on the Continent. Collective defense was enshrined in Art. V of the NATO Charta and instantiated in the dayly practice of NATO's forward deployed troops, in the risk-sharing nuclear posture, and in the huge maneouvers, notably the REFORGER series. Collective security was less visible, but worked mainly preventively with a view to prevent NATO members from entering into serious violent conflict. This practice was, of course, most acute between Turkey and Greece, but was also employed during the short-lived "Cod War" between Iceland and Britain. We can regard this as a preventive collective security function. There was also a common effort to counter communist propaganda as to prevent an internal "fifth column" from emerging as a strong force, and there was, as mentioned, also the common understanding that economic growth had a very important function to cope with this internal threat.

NATO has been the most integrated military alliance in peacetime in history, with joint staffs, its air defense network, the multinationally personell on AWACS airplanes, and the multinational corps at the central front. This signified the willingness by the members to renounce the thought of violent conflict against each other. The exception, as statet, were Greece and Turkey, while Iceland and Great Britain most likely entered their skirmishes in the firm knowledge that they could never escalate to a full-scale military conflict (Hellmann/Herborth 2004).

How does NATO fare if we apply heuristically the decay model to its present state of play? I will discuss this issue by walking the path backwards from the signifiers to the external trigger events, looking at each element of the decay process before drawing my conclusions.

To start with, the thought of an intra-NATO war appears still very strange and, indeed, unbelievable. I would argue, however, that we have seen developments on the symbolic use of language which, despite the persisting conviction that war is excluded for good, may indicate that a change of this attitude, while not in the offing, may not be completely impossible. Let me give three indications for this: First, in fall 2003, an EUROBAROMETER poll placed the

United States at rank two of the states viewed by European majorities as "threats to world peace"; Thomas Friedman, a centrist US columnist, declared in September 2003 in a New York Times editorial that France and the United States were "at war", and the US Armed Forces Protection Act of 2002 authorizes the President to use military force if a US citizen is brought before the International Criminal Court at The Hague, the capital of a NATO country. of course, these three instances are anecdotical and can be taken lightly; "threat to world peace" does not mean Europeans expected to be attacked by the United States; Friedman's article can be taken as metaphorical (it was not unique, however. The metaphor of war between the United States and the continental European powers was used repeatedly in the media around the 2003 Iraq war), and no US President would seriously consider sending the marines to liberate a US war criminal (e.g. a mercenary picked up in some bloody conflict in Africa). It is also true that the mending-fences-policy on both sides of the Atlantic have pushed that sort of metaphorical hostility into the background. But the interesting thing to note is that these expressions of serious adversaryship could enter political language in the first place. It does not mean (yet) that the unthinkable - war - has become thinkable. It may indicate, however, that there has been a certain erosion of unthinkability.

This has not really affected the "physical" signifier, military integration. While the United States has vastly reduced its troops in Western Europe and considers further re-deployments, NATO has even added new integrated structures, namely the Joint Headquarters, and the NATO Rapid Reaction Force; either are designed to cope with out -of-area contingencies. It is these contingencies - in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan where NATO has conducted its first real life integrated operations, with reasonable success.

This continued practice of military integration points to the persistence of strong institutions. Indeed, the Brussels bureaucracy is as firmly entrenched as ever, the NATO Council is functioning, the ministerial meetings proceed as ever. NATO has successfully completed its enlargement and has installed new consultative councils with Russia and the Ukraine. In addition, the Partnership for Peace program has added an important institutional activity. In these councils and the Partnership, NATO is meeting its "other" inside itself, practicing identity in an institutionalised way.

However, the utility calculus has changed compared with Cold War times. For the United States, the Alliance has lost its centerplace for national security. The preference for

"coalitions of the willing" demonstrates this shift. It is not as if NATO were completely useless, but its contribution to perceived US national security objectives has clearly lessened. In Europe, the new members are more inclined than the old ones to see the transatlantic Alliance in the same security terms as before. With the elimination of the Soviet threat, the alliance with the United States is more seen as a result of political will than of an indispensable tool of national or regional security. In economic terms, the European interest in viable relations with the US continues to be very strong. For the United States, European markets are still interesting, but there is a strong view that economic dynamics have shifted to Asia.

The most disturbing developments regard identity and trust. A majority in European countries has responded that it does not wish a US world leadership; clear majorities hold very negative views of the Bush Presidency. Up to the re-election, they made a clear distinction between the US government and people; after Mr. Bush was granted his second presidency, this distinction eroded sharply (in some cases as much as by 20%). Since, sympathies for America at large rebounced somewhat. But the development shows that transatlantic "we-feeling" is not carved in stone, but can be affected by the way the political representatives are assessed. Interestingly, US views of Europeans appear to be more stable.
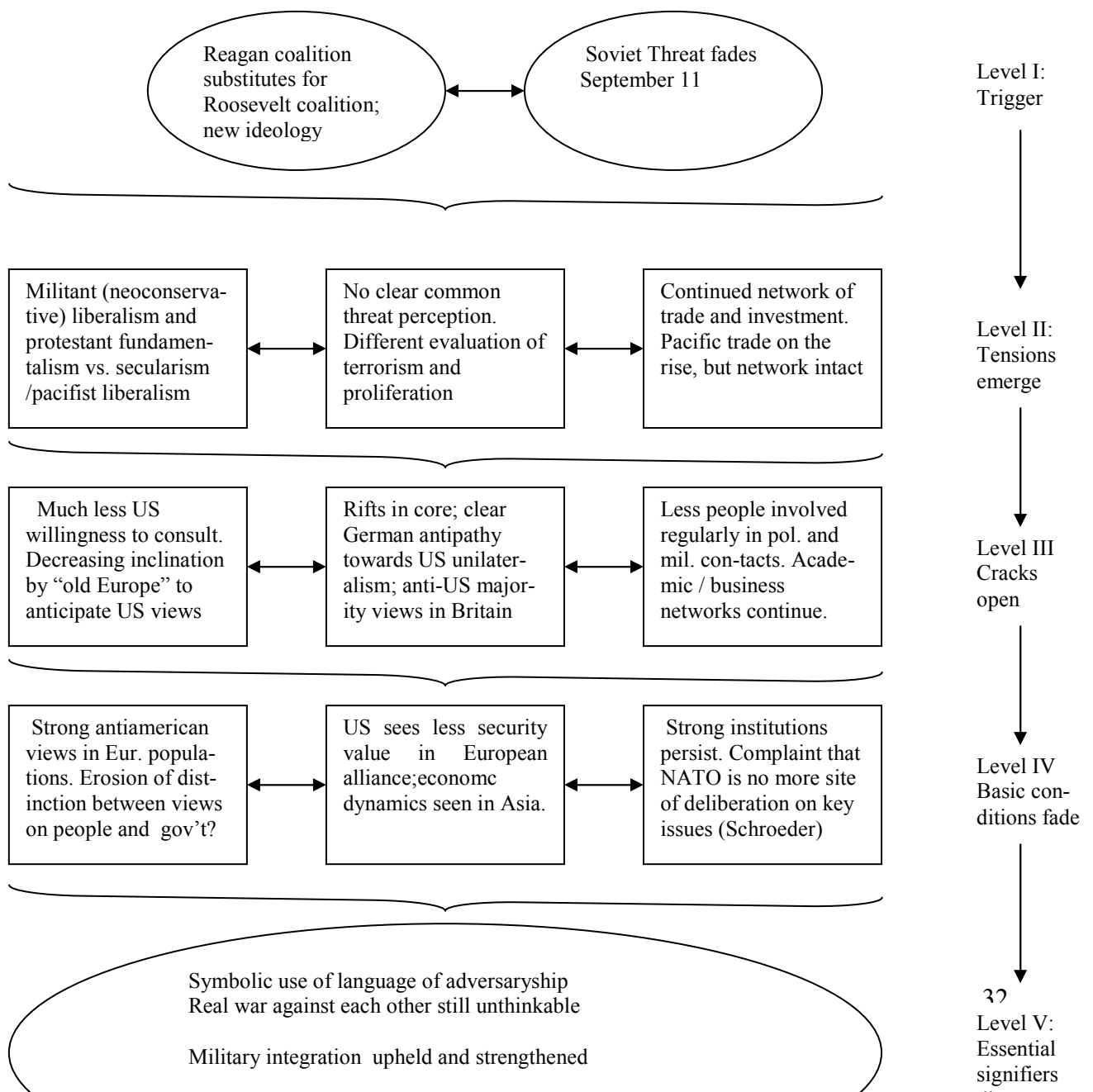
Transatlantic institutions still rest on multiple transactions. It is remarkable, though, that political traffic has diminished compared to Cold War times. Most notable is the reduction in direct contacts between parlamentarians on the two sides. Less contacts are also taking place in the military sector, due to the vast reductions in US deployed troops in Europe. Business and academic interaction, in contrast, continues at a high level. It would certainly exaggerated to claim that no transnational community exists bridging the Atlantic, but it has somehow shrunk.

The old NATO core is no longer intact. The US and Britain cultivate their (somehow one-sided) "special partnership", but the German pillar is out of the loop. One might interject that this was an aberration of the Red-Green coalition and that Germany will come back to the center under the Merkel leadership. Equally possible, however, is a stronger German effort to push forward the European identity project (notably its foreign policy and defense aspects) out of the feeling that the "big bang" enlargement has overtaxed the integrative capabilities of

the Union and that a determined effort is required to save the Union as a viable element of the European order.

US responsiveness has come to an all-time low under Bush. His statement, commenting on the admonition by a European leader to enhance consultations "At some point we may be the only ones left. That's okay with me. We are America" (Woodward 2002, 81). European complaints about not being listened to across a panoply of international negotiations abound. On the American side, the feeling is strong that Europe has not grasped the impact of 9/11 on the US mindset and does not display the necessary understanding for the way Americans react.

NATO: Decay Model

Reagan coalition substitutes for Roosevelt coalition; new ideology	Soviet Threat fades September 11

Level I: Trigger

Militant (neoconservative) liberalism and protestant fundamentalism vs. secularism /pacifist liberalism	No clear common threat perception. Different evaluation of terrorism and proliferation	Continued network of trade and investment. Pacific trade on the rise, but network intact

Level II: Tensions emerge

Much less US willingness to consult. Decreasing inclination by "old Europe" to anticipate US views	Rifts in core; clear German antipathy towards US unilateralism; anti-US majority views in Britain	Less people involved regularly in pol. and mil. con-tacts. Academic / business networks continue.

Level III Cracks open

Strong antiamerican views in Eur. populations. Erosion of distinction between views on people and gov't?	US sees less security value in European alliance;economc dynamics seen in Asia.	Strong institutions persist. Complaint that NATO is no more site of deliberation on key issues (Schroeder)

Level IV Basic conditions fade

Symbolic use of language of adversaryship
Real war against each other still unthinkable

Military integration upheld and strengthened

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Level V: Essential signifiers

Going further back on the "decay ladder" we see a solid fundament of transactions in the e conomic, political and other sectors underlying the transnational communities. Far less encouraging, in contrast, is the state of affairs concerning threat perception. While terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are identified by both sides as the main threats to security, they cannot work as unifier to the same degree as the Soviet Union did. First, these threats are much more diffuse and much less tangible. Second, the urgency of the threat is felt differently. Third, while there is considerable concern in the United States government (and the underlying parts of the security establishment) that WMD, "rogue states", and terrorism might converge to a single threat syndrom, there is little conviction in Europe that this is the case or under way, and the lack to find this connection in Iraq after the war only strengthened these doubts. As a consequence, Europe does not feel"at war", while America does. This amounts to a dramatic difference in threat analysis.

The ideational foundation of a common identity is in shambles. In the US government and the supporting societal forces, we see a combination of neoconservatism and protestant fundamentalism, whereby neoconservatism is the lead element. Neoconservatism is a brand of militant liberalism with a dichotomic view of the world, an unashamed belief in one's own moral superiority, and a willingness to use force, if need be, to extend the geographic scope of one's own belief system. International law is disregarded, partly because it is seen as ineffective, partly because it is dismissed as an unprincipled compromise between right and wrong, good and evil, that is, between democracies and autocracies. For the same reason, international organisations are not highly appreciated if they are not exclusive clubs of democracies, or mission-defined "coalitions of the willing".

On the European side, the world is seen in less bifurcated terms but rather with a large grey zone in the middle. Democratisation is seen as desirable, but relying on non-violent means.

Autocracies are not worshipped, but seen as possible partners that can evolve towards more amenable forms of rule; for the time being, cooperation with non-democracies is without alternative, and international law a desirable (and reasonably effective) means of policy coordination and norm-setting. The use of force is generally seen as despisable, unless used in self-defense or as the (really) ultimate means to prevent something very horrible from happening, and within the rule of international law and with a proper mandate by the United Nations (European Union 2003, 2004).

Public opinion polls show the populations much closer to each other than this description would suggest, and this is certainly a reason for consolation, as it proves a more solid ground of common values. Nevertheless, one should not unerrate the powe of agency. A long-lasting process of estrangement, led by the elites, might eventualle reverberate in the publics. The reactions in Europe to the re-election of George W. Bush might be indicative to the risks involved here.

This brings us to the upper part of the decay ladder, the triggering events. At the systemic side, this is obvious: It is the elimination of the erstwhile threat that had united the security community in the beginning, the Soviet Union; the change in polarity that gave new freedom of action to the United States; and the singularity of September 11 that led the way to deviating interpretations of a threat that was jointly seen only in principle. On the internal side the development that propelled the value dissonance forward was the domestic re-alignment in the United States that took place during the seventies. The Roosevelt coalition was replaced by the Reagan coalition as the dominant force. As Charles Kupchan remarked, the bulk of Bush's supporters is sitting in the "heartland", the West and Mid-West (Kupchan 2003). In an even more daring interpretation, one could describe the hart core of this coalition's support as residing in the countryside and the small town, while the modern, urban centers tend to support rather traditional republicanism or democratic liberalism. I am aware that this is an ideal-type distinction which is, however, borne out by and large by an analysis of the vote. It correspondents to the ideological orientation: The strong religiosity, the aversion against a strong state intruding into one's own property rights are basic orientation typical for the rural landowner of an early modern era. It is bolstered by the US myth of the West, which is not, as the European cliché would have it, the trigger-happy cowboy, but the hard-working, honest farmer or rancher who had, against his will, to make, uphold, or enforce the law in the absence of guaranteed order. It is this structure of thinking informing much of

neoconservative foreign policy ideology. I do not, of course, pretend that neocons are farmers; I just point to the topical correspondence in thinking with the typical early modern myths of the rural West.

Nothing comparable exists in Europe. The American re-alignment that brought big business together with rural folks alienated by the decay of mores in the sinful city, and attracted blue and white collar workers estranged by equal opportunity programs and other efforts by the welfare state that appeared to enhance the competition for jobs and other distributive values has no true equivalent in the Old Continent, not even in places that tried to emulate a part of the conservative (or neo-liberal) US model agenda. As a consequence, the ruling US interpretation of world events is distinctly right of the center, while the prevailing European interpretation is continuingly centrist. The ruling US agenda is revolutionary, while the prevailing European agenda is status quo plus incremetalism. The mixture is risky for the security community. It is not necessarily deadly as the possibility for rapproachment still exists.

Conclusion

A look at the NATO decay model shows, that the practical and institutional foundations of the security community are still very solid, if not resurgent. The utilitarian elements have only partially survived the trigger events that engendered the crisis, but might, with the assistance of institutitional instantiation, still be capable to uphold the security community. The risk is on the ideational side. Value differences are strong between the ruling elite in the US and its basis, and the European mainstream, elite and publics alike. The repercussions of that onto identities as felt among ordinary Europeans are already tangible; identity is rescued in Europe mainly by the inclination to distinguish between government and people on the US side. But it cannot be taken for granted that this distinction will outlast every degree of frustration.

It might be possible that responsiveness, almost completely destroyed, and the resulting lack of trust on either side, might be at least formally restored. The shattered dreams of the Greater Middle East revolution and the extreme difficulty to extract itself from the Iraqi quagmire may make decision-makers in Washington more prone to return to the consultation norm which has been underlying responsiveness in the Atlantic area. Again, there is no guarantee that this will indeed happen, but Condoleezza Rice's smile offensive might be the forerunner to something that is more than just fence-mending. Trust will certainly not be restored any

time soon, but even mending fences might help to keep the security community going until another re-alignment (more likely in the US, less likely on the other side of the Atlantic), brings stronger commonality of values around the old center, or establishes a new one.

Security communities, as institutions in general, can decay as well as they can emerge. This essay has tried to bring some light in the process by which decay might happen. Its final section has shown that the Atlantic alliance, one of the most astonishing security community in history, has several steps behind it on the path of decay. It has not arrived there finally, and strong institutions are there to prevent that from happening. But with enough folly, it possibly will.