
1-22-1998

Trends. Kosovo and Angola: The Enemy of My Enemy as Friend or Enemy?

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Recommended Citation

Editor, IBPP (1998) "Trends. Kosovo and Angola: The Enemy of My Enemy as Friend or Enemy?," *International Bulletin of Political Psychology*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 3 , Article 5.
Available at: <https://commons.erau.edu/ibpp/vol6/iss3/5>

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Title: Trends. Kosovo and Angola: The Enemy of My Enemy as Friend or Enemy?

Author: Editor

Volume: 6

Issue: 3

Date: 1999-01-22

Keywords: Angola, Heider, Kosovo, NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE, Serbia, UN, United Nations

A time-honored contribution of social psychology is that of balance theories applied to interpersonal configurations. Popularized by psychologist Fritz Heider, balance theories often are constructed to predict changes in attitudes among a discrete number of social actors sharing a social situation. One of many hypotheses of balance theories is that one's attitudes towards a social actor who becomes an enemy of one's enemy may become more positive. Another hypothesis from balance theories and from intersecting lines of research on attitude-behavior consistency is that attitudes may often beget congruent behaviors. Integrating the above hypotheses and empirical research on them and generalizing from the laboratory to the so-called "real world"--e.g., of warfare--one may surmise that in certain situations one might more likely initiate or maintain a ceasefire or lowering of violence between combatants by working towards them sharing a common enemy.

At least two ongoing civil wars are providing data on such a surmise. In Kosovo, the roles of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have interchangeably been viewed as positive or negative by the combatants: forces of the Serbian government and those of the Kosovo Liberation Army. For example, NATO has threatened to bomb Serbian government military assets and also to stop money and weapons from reaching the KLA. The OSCE has sought to deter and minimize violence through monitoring of both sides to the conflict and currently is viewed as very negative by the Serbian government because it has publicly blamed the government for a recent massacre. Once NATO and the OSCE are simultaneously viewed with very jaundiced eye by both sides to the conflict, data can be observed that may at least partially support or disconfirm the prediction of violence reduction or cessation.

In Angola the verdict is already in. Both sides--the Angolan government and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola--view the United Nations (UN) as an enemy of respective political objectives. So, have they joined together in a cooperative and peaceful fashion? Have they even decided to stop their fighting to join and fight a common foe? No, they have already joined in sabotaging the work of the UN in its attempts to stop the fighting so that they can more freely fight each other. Apparently, what works in international blockbuster movies like *Independence Day*--wherein intractable adversaries cooperate against a common foe--finds less correspondence among real combatants fighting for their version of independence. (See Alessio, J.C. (1990). A synthesis and formalization of Heiderian balance and social exchange theory. *Social Forces*, 68, 1267-1286; Crano, W.D., & Cooper, R.E. Examination of Newcomb's extension of structural balance theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 27, 344-353; Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum; McNeil, D.G., Jr. (January 19, 1999). Peacekeepers prepare to leave unpeaceful Angola. *The New York Times*, p. A6; Millar, M.G., & Millar, K.U. (1998). The effects of prior experience and thought on the attitude-behavior relation. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 26, 105-114; Perlez, J. (January 21, 1999). U.S. to push NATO to Issue ultimatum to Serb leader. *The New York Times*, p. A3; Wellen, J.M., Hogg, M.A., & Terry, D.J. (1998). Group norms and attitude-behavior consistency: The role of group salience and mood. *Group Dynamics*, 2, 48-56; Wyer, R.S., & Lyon, J.D. (1970). A test of cognitive balance theory implications for social inference processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 16, 598-618.) (Keywords:

International Bulletin of Political Psychology

Angola, Heider, Kosovo, NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE, Serbia, UN, United Nations.)