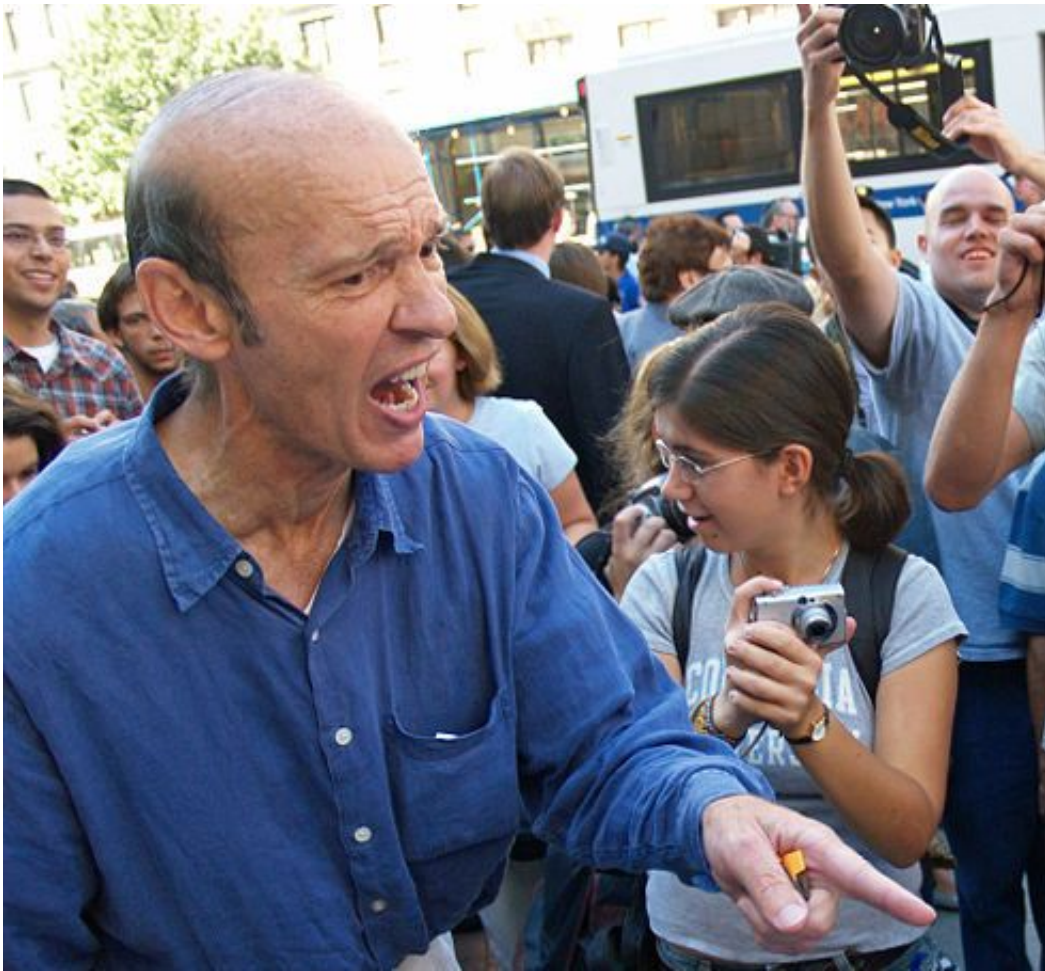


# Researchers find men use anger as manipulation tool with other men

January 14 2014, by Bob Yirka

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Credit: David Shankbone/Wikipedia

(Phys.org) —Researchers Uri Gneezy, with the University of California and Alex Imasc with the University of Amsterdam have together found

that men understand the impact anger has on decision making and use that knowledge to help them manipulate other men when engaging in contests of both skill and strength. They have had their paper describing a study they conducted on the subject printed in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Most people intuitively understand that they and other people don't make decisions as well when angry as they do when they are calm. What's unclear is if people use that knowledge to manipulate other people—for example, by making them angry when trying to beat them at something. In this latest effort the pair of researchers sought to find out, if only in a limited way.

Gneezy and Imasc focused strictly on young [men](#) for their study, enlisting the services of 140 male college students as [volunteers](#). They asked them to participate in two types of experiments. In the first, all of the volunteers were asked to squeeze a device as hard as they could to see who could squeeze the hardest. To add an element of [anger](#), they paired up the volunteers and allowed one to also assign administrative work to the other—the assumption being that the more work given, the more angry the second volunteer would become. In the second experiment, the volunteers were again paired off this time to compete against one another in a computer game—part of which had a component that would allow one player to antagonize the other, and vice-versa, thus giving them the opportunity to make one another angry, or not.

In analyzing the results of both studies, the researchers found that when angering an [opponent](#) resulted in a better outcome for themselves (causing their opponent to lose concentration on a skill game) the men chose to anger the other man when possible. But when doing so would offer no such gains, or worse if it gave the opponent an edge (being angry might make them perform better with the hand grip) the men

tended to not resort to making their opponent [angry](#).

The researchers claim their limited test suggests that men use anger as a tool to manipulate other men (and possibly women) when wishing to best an opponent. Oddly, the researchers chose to not interview the volunteers to learn whether they were using anger intentionally or if it was an inadvertent response that came about without them having to even think about it.

**More information:** "Materazzi effect and the strategic use of anger in competitive interactions," by Uri Gneezy and Alex Imas. *PNAS*, [www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1313789111](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1313789111)

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