

Just out in [PNAS](#) (2009, 106:15073-15078), "Formidability and the logic of human anger" by Aaron Sell, John Tooby and Leda Cosmides supporting an evolutionary analysis of anger based conflict resolution. The article is available with subscription [here](#) and we hope will soon be available on the site of the [Center for Evolutionary Psychology](#) where some [background material](#) is already available. (See also Jerome Barkow's comments in his own piece in the same issue of PNAS [here](#)).

Abstract: Eleven predictions derived from the recalibrational theory of anger were tested. This theory proposes that anger is produced by a neurocognitive program engineered by natural selection to use bargaining tactics to resolve conflicts of interest in favor of the angry individual. The program is designed to orchestrate two interpersonal negotiating tactics (conditionally inflicting costs or conditionally withholding benefits) to incentivize the target of the anger to place greater weight on the welfare of the angry individual. Individuals with enhanced abilities to inflict costs (e.g., stronger individuals) or to confer benefits (e.g., attractive individuals) have a better bargaining position in conflicts; hence, it was predicted that such individuals will be more prone to anger, prevail more in conflicts of interest, and consider themselves entitled to better treatment. These predictions were confirmed. Consistent with an evolutionary analysis, the effect of strength on anger was greater for men and the effect of attractiveness on anger was greater for women. Also as predicted, stronger men had a greater history of fighting than weaker men, and more strongly endorsed the efficacy of force to resolve conflicts-both in interpersonal and international conflicts. The fact that stronger men favored greater use of military force in international conflicts provides evidence that the internal logic of the anger program reflects the ancestral payoffs characteristic of a small-scale social world rather than rational assessments of modern payoffs in large populations.