Chapter 32
Anger, Violence, and Political Science

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Abstract Violence is one of the major topics of political science. Yet, due to its general failure to study the role of emotions, the discipline is not fully equipped to address key issues central to violence. For the study of political violence, anger holds special significance. Anger has a clear connection with motivations to commit or support violence. This chapter summarizes findings and methods in the study of anger in psychology and other fields and discusses how insights from these fields can be borrowed or modified to improve the study of violence in political science. The chapter's last section illustrates the usefulness of these hybrid concepts by applying them to an important concrete case – Colombia's current drive to demobilize combatants and reconcile its society in the face of a continuing civil war.

32.1 Introduction

Violence is one of the major topics of political science. Yet, due to its general failure to study the role of emotions, the discipline is not fully equipped to address key issues central to violence. examples of this shortcoming are readily available. Political scientists often describe a "hardening" of ethnic identity after violence among ethnic groups. They do not, however, really explain why and how this phenomenon happens or consider why or when identities might again "soften" (Van Evera, 2001; Kaufmann, 1996). Other political scientists discuss how political entrepreneurs instigate riots before elections in order to "heighten" ethnic salience as a tactic to change voting behavior (Brass, 1996). In another version of this tactic, insurgents use violent provocations, such as blowing up a religious site, in order to create tit-for-tat spirals of violence that escalate the conflict. In these actions, insurgents believe that they can generate a reaction in a target population, even if that reaction works against the long-term interests of that population. Furthermore, in dozens of works, political scientists address the subject of post-violence "reconciliation" among groups in conflict. As discussed in the material below, often the focus is on ending a desire for vengeance that follows in the wake of war.

Emotions are clearly relevant to all of the phenomena above. Moreover, the emotion of anger is central to the specific issues above. As discussed below, emotions can be partly defined by identifying cognitive antecedents and action tendencies. Anger is defined by appraisal that an individual or a

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group has committed an offensive action against one's self or group. The action tendency of anger is to punish that individual or group. The "hardening" and "heightening" of identities through violence and provocation, the retaliatory spirals of violence seen in many conflicts, the pursuit of "normal life" free of obsessions for vengeance all involve the central appraisals and action tendencies of anger.

This chapter develops a conceptualization of anger useful for the political scientist studying violence and its aftermath. The next section addresses the core nature of political violence and why political science has not been able to address many key elements of violent conflict. In practice, political scientists studying violence not only ignore anger but also generally avoid reference to emotions at all. The second section summarizes findings and methods in the study of anger in psychology and other fields and discusses how insights from these fields can be borrowed or modified to improve the study of violence in political science. The last section illustrates the usefulness of these hybrid concepts by applying them to an important concrete case – Colombia's current drive to demobilize combatants and reconcile its society in the face of a continuing civil war.

32.2 Political Violence and Political Science

In this chapter, we are most concerned with war and violence among groups within a state. The domain includes civil wars, riots, and internal ethnic conflicts. While emotions such as anger certainly affect criminal violence and may influence interstate wars, it is internal war that accounts for much of the world's violence today. Since the end of World War II, civil wars have probably killed five times as many as interstate wars (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Clearly, variables such as economic inequality, imbalances in military force, and access to political institutions are linked to the outbreak, the length, and the termination of this violence. Yet, this set of standard structural variables fails to capture or address several salient and core qualities of political violence. A short list of these characteristics includes the following:

(1) *Recognizable actors and actions*. Political violence generally involves recognizable actors (ethnic groups, political parties, insurgent groups, leaders) committing specific, purposeful, and blameworthy actions. For the participants, and especially the victims, of political violence, there is usually a clear idea that "group X committed this harmful action against group Y."
(2) *Violence often takes place among groups with long-term relations*. "Group X and group Y" have likely interacted for years and will continue to interact in the post-conflict future.
(3) *Elements of domination*. Violence introduces elements of domination and subordination into group relations.
(4) *Intensity of experience*. The repressive actions, desecrations, killings, and bombings involved with political violence are likely to produce intense and possibly new experiences that disrupt normal life.
(5) *Distortion of cognitive processes*. The intense experiences during and after violence often trigger mechanisms that distort information collection and belief formation.
(6) *Elevated preferences*. Violence transforms and heightens specific preferences, in particular the desire for flight, retaliation, and vengeance.
(7) *Changing intensity of preferences*. For example, during "hurting stalemates" or in the post-violence period, participants are likely to want to "move on with their lives" and their desire to continue violence or to punish the opponent may fade.

The first three elements emphasize the social nature of political violence. The next two relate to the intensity and disruption. The last two address preferences and their transformation and evolution during violence. These elements have various effects at different stages in the outbreak and course of violence and internal war.

As currently practiced, US political science is not well-equipped to address these realities of political conflict directly. The main reason for this problem is that current norms within the field privilege methods and explanations based on assumptions of narrowly rational actors operating according to a restricted set of preferences. This issue is obvious in the case of rational choice methods, perhaps less obvious in studies employing large-n regressions.

During the last two decades, rational choice models and large-n statistical models have been the dominant methods for studying violence. In examining major political science journals, rational choice (RC) models came into common use during the late 1980s. In rational choice, the individual is assigned one ordered preference structure (e.g., safety > revenge > self-esteem) and action can be predicted from the nature of constraints and incentives. If safety is not at issue, then the individual may pursue the secondary goal of revenge. RC relies on certain consistency requirements regarding preferences. Two are most fundamental. First, the agent must be able to rank order all choices (completeness). Second, the preferences must be transitive. Underlying these specific consistency requirements is a more general assumption that preferences are essentially stable. Furthermore, rationality assumes that agents are collecting an optimal amount of information and forming logical beliefs from that information.

Clearly, RC is not well-tailored to several of the qualities of political violence listed above. First and foremost is the issue of preferences (points 6 and 7). Economists regularly order preferences. However, it is one thing to assume that individuals prefer $10 today to $20 a year from now, or to draw a curve representing trade-offs in spending between military programs and social programs, and quite another to make assumptions about the relative values of such disparate desires as revenge, safety, and self-esteem and subordination that are so central to political violence. RC also has little to say about how the intensity of preferences might change over time or about when one goal might suddenly dominate all others to the point that trade-offs are no longer considered.[1]

In RC, the stability of preferences is a simplifying assumption. Most practitioners of rational choice would probably agree that this simplification is not always useful for every type of human behavior. As many observers have noted, RC has produced its most useful insights in iterative situations or under stable institutional environments (as opposed to point 4 above). Both supporters and critics of RC agree with this view concerning the conditions appropriate for rational choice methodology. As one notable proponent of rational choice, George Tsebelis (1990) has summarized, "actions taken in noniterative situations by individual decision makers (such as in crisis situations) are not necessarily well-suited for rational choice predictions." Furthermore, in a rather obvious point, RC is not interested in addressing the problems of cognitive distortions (point 5) as it simply assumes them away.

For many political scientists, rational choice methods failed to live up to expectations (Green & Shapiro) and in the past few years, there has been a turn toward addressing violence through large-n regressions that employ structural variables. David Laitin and James Fearon's (2003) article on civil war and insurgency has been so influential in establishing discipline norms that it is used as an exemplar here. Their primary dependent variable is the onset of civil war. Based on a reading of other political science works, they develop a set of independent variables that includes level of gross

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[1] For an extended discussion of the role of emotions in economic theory, especially in light of their impact on preferences, see Loewenstein (2000).

domestic product, income inequality, nature of terrain, population size, ethnic and religious diversity, and extent of civil liberties. They find that the variables associated with grievances and identities are statistically insignificant, while those associated with level of GDP, terrain, and population size are statistically significant. Fearon and Laitin's interpretation of these findings is that civil wars are largely a matter of insurgent technology. Rebels fight for a variety of reasons but they do so only when they can rationally avoid capture by the state. They can challenge the state if they can hide in mountains or within large populations and if the state's capabilities are weak (proxied by GDP figures).

While these types of studies offer valuable accounts of the likelihood of war onset given structural conditions, they are limited in their ability to address the list of political violence characteristics above. The variables are necessarily coarse and static; they have difficulty engaging in the changing nature of social relationships in points 1–3. Fearon and Laitin's grievance variable is defined in terms of civil liberties and does not seriously try to capture the dynamics of dominance and group esteem that are fundamental to political violence.[2] Their rationalist interpretation clearly dismisses the discussion of cognitive processes and shifting preferences. In fact, the article suggests, by assuming the same motivations to be universally present, that scholars need not address motivations at all, let alone try to analyze specific emotions affecting violence.

Fearon and Laitin recognize the limits of large-n statistical studies and they also look to case studies and qualitative treatments of civil war as a check on their findings. However, Fearon and Laitin seem to transfer the rationalist assumptions underlying the regression findings to their treatment of this material. In a review of a set of largely anthropological and case study works on violence, they address the puzzle of why individuals appear to participate in communal violence when it does not appear rational to do so. They solve the puzzle by concluding that "'ethnic violence' can be a cover for other motivations such as looting, land grabs, and personal revenge; and the activities of thugs set loose by the politicians can 'tie the hands' of publics who are compelled to seek protection from the leaders who have endangered them" (2003, p. 874). Again, the explanation predictably seeks answers by positing a narrowly rational individual pursuing a constricted range of goods.

In a second highly influential cross-national quantitative study, Paul Collier (2003) and his collaborators conclude that civil war is overwhelmingly linked to economic variables. They find that political grievances and social divisions, inequality, and a host of other factors are not statistically significant; rather, a simple combination of accessible natural resources and a weak state produce civil war. These correlations are then interpreted in rational choice terms. The statistically significant variables are assumed to produce the constraints and incentives that affect the rational decisions of rebels in their pursuit of narrow interests, primarily economic goods. In this view, violence is a resource that is used to grab wealth. There are two versions of this "greed" theory. In one, the existence of natural resources provides a motive for conflict and war. In the other, the focus is on the lack of opportunities for legitimate economic activity in poorer, weaker states. Again, grievances and non-material motivations, let alone emotions, are not seen as productive avenues for explanation. In a passage on recruitment into rebel armies, Collier et al. address the question of non-economic motivation with the following speculation: "(T)he people who join rebel groups are overwhelmingly young uneducated males. For this group, objectively observed grievances might count for very little. Rather, they may be disproportionately drawn from those easily manipulated by propaganda and who find the power that comes from possession and use of a gun alluring. Social psychologists find

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[2]Fearon and Laitin include variables concerning whether there is an official religion or not and whether linguistic and religious groups with over 5% of the population fail to receive official recognition or not. These variables cannot capture the dynamic processes involved in ethnic conflicts and they lump together disparate cases.

that around 3% of the population has psychopathic tendencies and actually enjoys violence against others (Pinker, 2002) and this is more than is needed to equip a rebel group with recruits" (Collier et al., 2003, p. 68). In Collier et al.'s approach, the actual everyday experiences of larger groups of people do not carry explanatory significance. Anger at violence, resentment of domination, historically and culturally based prejudices, and stigmas are not particularly relevant. Rather, violence is a matter of greedy elites operating according to structural constraints who lead a small set of naïve or psychopathic recruits.

In sum, recent political science approaches to violence have tended to employ blunt, static variables interpreted within a rationalist explanatory framework. There is a lack of a sense of process, especially in terms of how violence creates changing social relations.[3] There is a general lack of specification of causal mechanism. Rational choice methods do identify a mechanism, but one not well-suited to address the nature of political violence. There is a lack of explanations based on non-rational mechanisms such as social norms, prejudice, cognitive distortions, and emotions.

Some movement away from this position can be observed. In an essay that includes a review of the political science literature on violence, Ronald Suny (2004) states: "I argue something that should be obvious, though not always for political scientists: emotions are key to human motivation. Indeed, we would not be human without them. They are a stimulus to action; they are fundamental to self-identification, to thinking about who "we" are and who the "other" is; they are involved in the social bonds that make groups, even whole societies, or nations, possible. And they are, therefore, powerful tools to explain why people do what they do politically." Several recent works have attempted to address the relationship between emotion and conflict (Kaufman, 2001; Petersen, 2002; Hyman, 2006; also Elster, 1999). It is still a short list. Suny is probably correct concerning the overall state of the study of emotions in political science and related fields when he concludes, "Far too often historians and other social scientists use explanations that emphasize emotions without specifying either that they are about emotions, which emotions are at play, and what the action tendency of those emotions is likely to be" (Suny, 2004).

Despite such urging, the inclusion of emotions into the study of political violence will accelerate only when the value-added of such inclusion becomes obvious. On the whole, political scientists seem to see emotions as too intangible and murky to be useful for a social scientific treatment of political violence. Many political scientists will ask if current models have good predictive power, then why should they try to incorporate emotion? There are two answers to this question. First, few would see the existing models as possessing strong predictive power.[4] Second, the hypotheses derived from existing models have not been tested alongside hypotheses derived from models that include emotions. Competitors need to be developed through rigorous application of the scientific method. The scientific method involves accurate description of a phenomenon, specification of causal mechanisms, and formulation of testable hypotheses. An understanding of emotion, in this case the emotion of anger, can be highly useful, if not essential, to all three tasks in the study of political violence.

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[3] A new wave of works concentrating on organization and the more dynamic processes of insurgency includes Kalyvas (2006), Weinstein (2007), and Wood (2003). Only Wood treats emotion (the emotion of pride) as a systematic factor.

[4] Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) model, for example, can only explain 20–30% of the variation in civil war onset.

32.3 Anger and Political Violence

If the description of political violence above is at all accurate, ignoring emotions impoverishes scientific analysis. The first step of the scientific method is observation and description of a phenomenon. Psychologists' theory and treatment of the emotion of anger describes and helps explain at least four of the seven characteristics of political violence listed above.

Emotion theorists commonly define and differentiate specific emotions by five characteristics: arousal, expression, feeling, cognitive antecedent, and action tendency. The cognitive antecedent of anger is that an individual or a group has committed a blameworthy action against one's self or group. The first point above is that political violence generally involves recognizable actors (ethnic groups, political parties, insurgent groups, leaders) committing specific, purposeful, and often reprehensible actions. For the participants, and especially the victims, of political violence, there is usually a clear idea that "group X committed this terrible action against group Y." As opposed to much criminal violence and some international conflicts, during internal political violence, the actors and their actions can be named. For example, Muslims in Bosnia can say "Serbs mass-murdered Muslims in Srebrenica" and residents in Colombia can say "the guerrilla group FARC committed a massacre in our town." In many of these cases, individuals might be able to name their neighbors as participants or supporters. It is these specific appraisals that underlie violent conflicts.[5]

The sixth point observes that a commonly observed effect of political violence is a desire for vengeance. In terms of emotion theory, the action tendency of anger is toward punishing the individual or the group that committed the harmful action. Under the influence of anger, individuals become "intuitive prosecutors" (Goldberg, Lerner, & Tetlock, 1999). That is, individuals tend to specify a perpetrator and then seek justice. Inextricably linked to this strong desire to punish is the need to blame an individual or a group. Anger lowers the threshold for attributing harmful intent. Angry people blame humans, not situations (Keltner, Ellsworth, & Edwards, 1993). Once angered, individuals "perceive new events and objects in ways that are consistent with the original cognitive-appraisal dimensions of the emotion" (Lerner & Keltner, 2000). This creates a positive feedback loop – anger increases blame which, in turn, increases anger (Lerner & Tiedens, 2006).

As anger feeds on itself, it may also persist through rumination. The mechanism is as follows: "When an emotion node is activated, past events and beliefs associated with that emotion are brought to mind, prolonging or increasing the emotion. Rumination or self-focus on the negative emotion should enhance this spreading activation and therefore exacerbate the emotion" (Rusting & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998, 791). The cognition about the past anger episodes generates new episodes of state anger, amplifying the intensity and duration of the anger (Sukhodolsky, Golub, & Cromwell, 2001).

Addressing point five above (distortion of cognitive processes), the cognitive mechanisms associated with anger also enter into the course of the conflict. Critically, under the influence of anger, individuals reduce their estimates of risk and are more willing to engage in risky behavior (Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Gallagher & Clore, 1985; Mano, 1994; Lerner, Gonzalez, Small, & Fischoff, 2003; Chapter 21 by D.M.T. Fessler, this book). Imbued with anger, combatants become overly optimistic in estimating the chances of successfully retaliating. These lowered estimates of risk therefore help create spirals of violence, with each side believing that they can successfully carry out their desired retaliation. Anger also heightens prejudice and locks combatants into stereotyping one another. Finally, in a point related to rumination, anger is capable of creating selective memory. Newhagen (1998) found that images producing anger were remembered better than those inducing fear, which

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[5]It is worth noting that this understanding of the cognitive foundations of anger seems to be common across cultures. See Kassinvove, Sukhodolsky, and Tsytsarev (1997) on this point.

in turn were remembered better than those creating disgust. These selected negative images can become embedded into the developing narratives of a conflict.

Addressing the seventh point (changing intensity of preferences), psychologists have also studied the decline of anger. As Chapter 22 by M. Potegal, this volume points out, "any theory of anger must provide an account of temporal dynamics if it is to be considered complete." Generally, social psychologists have found that anger rises quickly and then declines at a slower rate.

Psychologists have examined the ways in which the decay of anger might be accelerated through a study of "quenching mechanisms." Quenching refers to a process that disrupts or dispels anger (Chapter 22 by M. Potegal, this book). It is commonly conceived of as a response to some extrinsic stimulus (a diversion), but can also be an intrapersonal mood regulation strategy: self-focused distraction (Rusting & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998, 790). In essence, quenching refers to any thought, behavior, or external phenomenon that changes the emotional state, in this case, reduces the intensity of anger (Baumeister, 1991; Larsen, 1993; Morris & Rielly, 1987; Rusting & Larsen, 1993; Thayer, Newman, & McClain, 1994; Tice & Baumeister, 1993). If violent conflicts are sustained through anger and its effects, then the quenching of anger must be a major part of the termination of conflict and the reconciliation of its combatants.

It is important to emphasize that reactions to violence and victimization are extremely complex. At the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the senior author conducted dozens of interviews with survivors of some of the most brutal experiences of World War II and witnessed interplay of several emotions.[6] These survivors experienced anger but also grief, fear, and pride (Petersen, 2005). There are also long-term issues of guilt and shame. Additionally, many victims clearly suffered from post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD). At the time of writing, the junior author is conducting a large-scale survey and in-depth interviews of demobilized paramilitaries in Colombia to evaluate their cognitions and reactions to violence.

While we accept that emotional responses to atrocity are likely multifaceted and complex, we focus on the emotion of anger for several reasons. First, survivors' psychological traumas exist at the individual level of analysis and are not amenable to aggregation to the units of analysis with which political scientists are concerned: insurgent organizations, ethnic groups, states, etc. Second, violence to peace transition policies are built around notions of anger. While states seek to ensure healthy individual citizens (psychologically and physically), the dominant peace and reconciliation policies occur at a more aggregate level (that of a society) and assume an emotional logic that emphasizes anger, not other emotions. This is not to say that these other emotions (guilt, shame, grief) are not present or that they do not merit attention. However, there is no easy "quenching" of the emotional and psychological effects of violent conflict. Governments cannot easily address an issue like PTSD,[7] but they often do seem compelled to address motivations for vengeance. For the study of political violence, anger holds special significance. Anger has a clear connection with motivations to commit or support violence. There is a clear imperative to reduce the intensity of this motivation. States may not be able to create the presence of factors required for deep reconciliation and reintegration, but they may be able to create an absence of intense anger.

As will be discussed in more detail in the empirical case below, post-conflict reconciliation is often based on a theory of how punishment, truth and apology, and reparations may act to reduce the corrosive effects of anger. These policies are based, implicitly, on theories of quenching anger. While

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[6]These interviews were critical to Petersen (2001) and Petersen (2002).

[7] Although increasingly, demobilization and reintegration programs include a social–psychological dimension according to the logic that only psychologically stable individuals can reenter the work force and civil society successfully. The motivations for including social–psychological treatment are not to prevent violence or to encourage reconciliation.

policymakers move ahead with reconciliation policies, social scientists should follow by developing knowledge and hypotheses capable of testing the basic contours of these policies. Existing work on quenching of anger provides direction for this task.

32.3.1 Problems with the Psychology Approach to Anger

While the insights of psychologists have much to contribute to the study of political violence, many of the concepts cannot be directly applied without significant modification. While psychology does a good job in addressing the cognitive antecedents, action tendencies, strong and obsessive preferences, and preference change within political violence, most psychology treatments of anger cannot capture either the intensity of the experience of living through internal war or the rich, long-term social nature of political violence and its consequences.

Consider intensity first, the fourth point above. Although transient anger has been induced in any laboratory experiments with college students and some other accessible groups, these experiments cannot reproduce the feelings of atrocity survivors. As Jon Elster has summarized, "(B)ecause of the power of many emotions, there are limits to what we can learn from studies of human behavior under controlled conditions. Inducing strong emotions of love, shame, and hatred in the laboratory would not only be blatantly unethical but unfeasible. And there is no presumption that what we can learn from studying the milder forms of these emotions – liking, embarrassment, or disliking – will generalize to the more urgent or virulent forms" (Elster, 1999, p. 404). Psychology, as Elster further notes, identifies and specifies emotion-based mechanisms. Through the specification of these mechanisms, the laboratory provides the basis for creating hypotheses to be tested with data from violent conflicts even if the phenomena tested in the laboratory and the experiences in actual violent conflicts cannot be directly equated.

Second, addressing points two and three above, the emotions involved with political violence are acutely social. Unlike many laboratory experiments, real-life conflict is not a one-shot event. Consider the problem of post-violence reconciliation. David Cohen, working East Timor in its reconstruction period, tells the story of a widow who could not avoid seeing on a regular basis her husband's killer wearing her husband's jacket.[8] While most experiences are not so dramatic, in many instances of political violence, members of combating ethnic groups must intermingle in the post-violence period. Members of victim groups may have to buy something from a member of a perpetrator group. Even in situations where warring factions have been separated, groups may be looking across a river or a barrier and being reminded of previous atrocities. After being told that a Sunni family had moved into their family's home, a displaced Shiite responds in an interview, "I try to imagine my room and what they do in it" (NYT, Tavernise). Often, cultural symbols take on new meanings and power. In the divided city of Mitrovica in Kosovo, for instance, Serbs have built a church high on a hill on their side of the river; the Albanians on the other side of the river cannot help but see it, and see it in light of the Serbs' previous political dominance and acts of ethnic cleansing. A similar situation exists in the divided city of Mostar, Bosnia, with Croats and Muslims erecting religious structures at the boundary lines.

The experience of anger in these situations is something between rumination, discussed above, and constant new, but similar, evocations of anger. Memory of past atrocities mingles with daily experience. It is not clear that social science presently possesses the language to communicate this

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[8]Story told at the Conference "Peace and Accountability in Transitions from Armed Conflict," 15–16 June 2007, Bogotá, Colombia.

experience, but it is close to anger in its overall contours. The cognitive antecedent and action tendencies are basically the same. Similar to anger, the intensity of the experience seems to decay over time.

The one area in which anger needs radical redefinition from its common use in psychology is in terms of temporal dynamics, especially duration. In laboratory settings, psychologists measure the duration of emotions in terms of seconds and minutes. Chapter 22 by M. Potegal, this volume estimates that "a half hour is the modal duration of everyday anger." Some episodes of anger last longer. For example, "A longitudinal study of consumers who had suffered service failures for which they consider getting even, found that anger had a half-life of more than a couple weeks" (Gregoire & Tripp, 2006, cited in Tripp and Bies). If anger lasts this long with respect to a service failure, then the death of a family member during a violent conflict should trigger a much slower decay of anger. Given the intensity of the experiences of political violence and the way these experiences connect to existing social groups and hierarchies, anger created through violent political conflicts must be treated in months and years instead of minutes and days.[9]

Finally, as noted above, psychologists have often found that anger quickly rises and then decays at a much slower rate. It is not clear that this particular curve will also be found in events associated with political violence. At the current level of understanding, we can only speculate on what such curves would look like. As shown below, assumptions about the temporal dynamics of anger are actually at the heart of crucial policy questions.

32.3.2 Developing an Analytical Framework Based on an Understanding of Emotion and Anger

We have been working toward a hybrid concept of anger that can generate testable hypotheses relating to political violence. This conceptual framework should be able to speak to the concerns and methods of political scientists. Ideally, the framework should help address major policies working to reduce violence or facilitate post-violence reconciliation. This section delineates which elements of anger, and by extension, emotion in general, should be emphasized within this framework.

An emotion is a complex of phenomena composed of cognitive antecedents, action tendency, specific cognitive mechanisms, as well as the immediate physical manifestations related to arousal, expression, and feeling. First of all, cognitive antecedents and action tendencies will likely be key accessible characteristics to define and differentiate emotions. (The physical manifestations of emotions are likely to be more relevant to voting and the effects of political advertising.). Second, some of the cognitive mechanisms associated with a particular emotion will be much more relevant to political violence than others. For example, one of the core models of conflict in political science is "the spiral model" which explains how retaliatory cycles of escalation and violence are initiated and maintained. The question arises as to why actors believe they can successfully win in these escalations. Clearly, mechanisms relating to beliefs about risk are important for this issue. Another puzzle for political scientists is the "hardening of identities" that occurs during conflict. On this issue,

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[9]This is not to suggest that we merely rename the time axis with months and years instead of minutes and days; rather, as will be discussed below, we must reconceive the anger curves following atrocities. One way to imagine the graph would be as convex functions with survivors' anger depreciating daily (in accordance with the dominant psychological findings), but then also being re-elicited daily by a combination of memories and rumination which returns the individuals' anger to elevated levels. These peak daily levels, however, would diminish over time as the original anger-provoking event fades and therefore produces weaker cognitions and ruminations that, in turn, elicit weaker emotional responses.

knowledge of mechanisms relating to blaming and stereotyping is most crucial. It is worthwhile to break down an emotion into its sub-phenomena and then build hypotheses upon the most relevant mechanisms and aspects of that emotion. Third, how the emotion decays will be important.

In keeping with our "value-added" approach to including emotions, Fig. 32.1 illustrates a rational action model. Starting on the right side of Fig. 32.1, individuals are seen as holding a short list of stable and ordered preferences or desires. Given these desires, individuals then collect information about how best to attain their goals. They form beliefs about the most effective means and strategies to gain what they want. An action then Results as a combination of desires and beliefs. This cycle is of course oversimplified but does capture the basic elements of the rational choice approach summarized earlier.

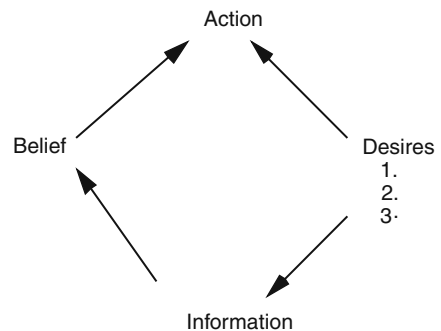**Fig. 32.1** Action cycle with no reference to emotion

Figure 32.2 incorporates Fig. 32.1 but in this cycle, belief also leads to emotion. Following many socially oriented theorists, emotion can be conceptualized as "thought that becomes embodied because of the intensity with which it is laced with personal self-relevancy." (Franks & Gecas, 1992) As Ortony, Clore, and Collins (1988) write: "Our claims about the structure of individual emotions are always along the lines that *if* an individual conceptualizes a situation in a certain kind of way, *then* the potential for a particular type of emotion exists."[10] In Fig. 32.2, belief also leads to emotion. For example, a belief about threats can lead to fear. A belief about status inconsistency can lead to resentment. A belief about the lack of worth of an object or an individual can lead to contempt. As discussed here, belief that an individual or a group has committed a blameworthy action against one's self or group leads to anger.

Three general effects of emotion may follow, marked as A, B, and C effects in Fig. 32.2. Many of these effects have been mentioned above. First, and most fundamentally, emotions are mechanisms that heighten the saliency of a particular concern (A effect). This effect is closely related to action tendency. The emotion acts as a "switch" among a set of basic desires. Individuals may value safety, money, vengeance, and other goals, but emotion compels the individual to act on one of these desires above all others.[11] This effect may shape preferences lexicographically or it may operate by shaping the trade-offs among specific preferences (Elster, 1998). Emotion creates an urgency to act on a

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[10]One of the biggest debates in emotion theory is the relationship and ordering of beliefs and emotion. Clearly, the relationship works both ways as is clear in Fig. 32.2 and its B and C effects. This issue is covered by several other chapters in this volume and we cannot do justice to it here. In other works, I have treated emotion as preceding beliefs. See the treatment of the emotion of rage in Petersen (2002).

[11]The most influential work on the instrumental value of emotion in selecting among desires is probably Antonio Damasio's (1994).

Fig. 32.2 Action cycle
illustrating three possible
effects of emotion
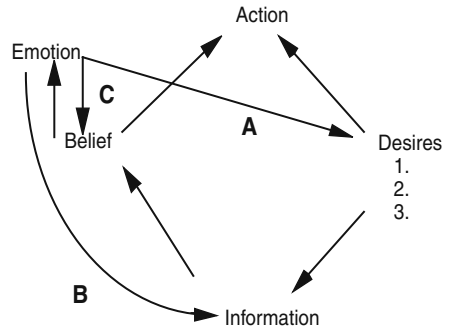
particular desire; the value of future pay-offs on other preferences is discounted; particular issues
become obsessions. The emotion of anger heightens the desire for punishment and vengeance.

Second, once in place, emotions can produce a feedback effect on information collection
(B effect). Emotions lead to seeking of emotion-congruent information. For example, individu-
als under the influence of fear may come to obsess about the chances of catastrophe. They may
concentrate only on information stressing danger and ignore information about the lack of threat.

Third, emotions can directly influence belief formation (C effect) (Frijda, Manstead, & Bem,
2000). Emotions can be seen as "internal evidence" and beliefs will be changed to conform to this
evidence. Even with accurate and undistorted information, emotion can affect beliefs. The same
individual with the same information may develop one belief under the sway of one emotion and
a different belief under the influence of a different emotion.[12] Furthermore, the style of belief for-
mation may change under the grip of emotion. As political scientist William Riker has pointed out,
rational individuals may operate according to several different sorts of strategies ("sincere," "avoid
the worst," "average value," "sophisticated") (Riker, 1986, p. 26). For example, it is likely that emo-
tions such as fear can influence a switch in method of belief formation, perhaps to an "avoid the
worst" strategy.

With this general framework in mind, the specific emotion of anger can be summarized. Anger
forms from the belief that an individual or a group has committed an offensive action against one's
self or group. Its A effects heighten desire for punishment and vengeance against a specific actor.
Under the influence of anger, individuals become "intuitive prosecutors" specifying perpetrators
and seeking vengeance (Goldberg et al., 1999). Anger's B effects distort information in predictable
ways. The angry person lowers the threshold for attributing harmful intent; the angry individual
blames humans, not the situation (Keltner et al., 1993).[13] Anger tends to produce stereotyping
(Bodenhausen, Sheperd, & Kramer, 1994). Anger's C effects shape the way individuals form beliefs.
Under the influence of anger, individuals lower risk estimates and are more willing to engage in risky
behavior (Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Gallagher & Clore, 1985; Mano, 1994; Lerner et al., 2003). In
sum, regarding the key sub-phenomena of anger in relation to political violence, anger heightens
desire for punishment against a specific actor, creates a downgrading of risk, increases prejudice and
blame, as well as selective memory (Newhagen, 1998).[14]

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[12]Also, the complete lack of emotion certainly affects information and belief formation. See the work of Damasio and
others with brain-damaged patients who have lost their capacity for emotion.

[13]Keltner, Ellsworth, and Edwards studied angry subjects compared to sad subjects, asking both groups to interpret
agency in an ambiguous event. Sad subjects assigned blame to the situation, angry ones to the actors.

[14]Newhagen found that images producing anger were remembered better than those inducing fear, which in turn were
remembered better than those creating disgust.

Before discussing hypothesis formation, the temporal dynamics of emotion, especially anger, must be discussed. One of the essential questions of political violence is post-violence reconciliation. Closely related to this issue is whether negative emotions closely connected to the violence will recede in time and whether there are policies which will accelerate decay. How might emotions connected to political violence, such as anger, fade over time? It is possible to draw curves representing possible half-life functions of anger. Currently, social scientists possess little research that allows us to draw such functions for issues involved with political violence; however, some conjectures are possible. Figures 32.3, 32.4 and 32.5 represent different emotion curves. The vertical axis represents the intensity of the emotion. The horizontal axis represents time. As has been discussed, the time measure must be drawn in months and years. In Fig. 32.3, the intensity of the emotion declines in a linear fashion over time.[15] Fig. 32.4 illustrates a situation of exponential decay in which the emotion is initially high but then decays rapidly. Figure 32.5 represents an inverse exponential relationship in which anger remains high for a long period and then declines at increasing rates.

For those studying political violence, one crucial question, as seen in the empirical case below, is whether policies can be created to change the shape of these temporal dynamics. This issue

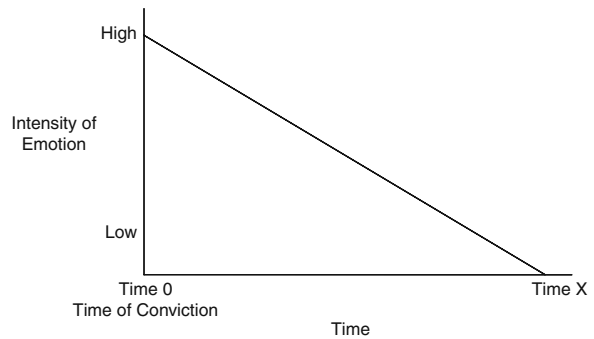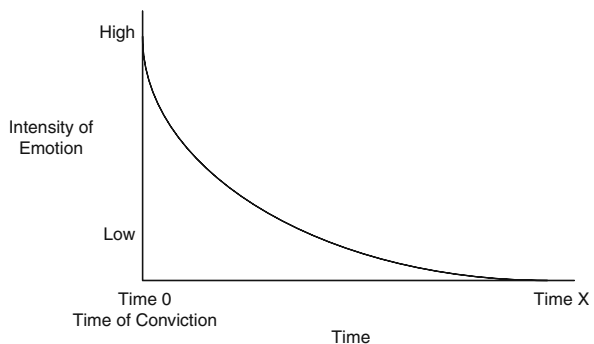
Fig. 32.3 Linear decline of emotion

Fig. 32.4 Exponential decay of emotion

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[15]As mentioned in an earlier footnote, another way to draw this curve would be as a series of convex functions whose maximums decrease linearly over time; that is, every day (or at an alternative frequency), some memory, cognition, or event re-evokes the original anger-causing event (be it the imagining of what a Shiite is doing in your home or seeing your husband's killer wearing your husband's coat). The result is a spike in the raw emotion of anger, which then declines in the order of minutes (or hours) until the next re-evoking event or thought. However, the spikes in anger likely also diminish over time. Three or ten years following the atrocity, the cognition is unlikely to elicit the same emotional response as 3 or 10 days after.

Fig. 32.5 Inverse
exponential decay of emotion
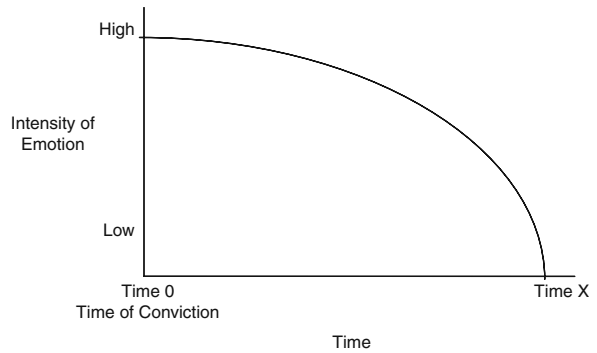
brings us back to the study of "quenching mechanisms" mentioned above. In fact, many governments around the world have been developing policies connected, at least implicitly, to the erosion of anger. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission is the most well known, but similar programs can be found in many Latin American and African states. These policies often see a combination of punishment, truth-telling, and apology as essential to reconciliation. In emotion-theory terms, these actions serve as quenching mechanisms. Knowledge of anger theory and the intertwined study of quenching help make explicit the causal logic often remaining implicit in these policies.

For victims, punishment facilitates quenching in several ways. First, violence creates an inequality between victim and perpetrator (addressing political violence point number three). The state's vengeance acts to equalize this unbalanced power relationship. The victim is no longer the inferior one, the one to whom things can be done, the helpless and the object of someone's arbitrary action. Vengeance also creates a sense of one's power and control. Closely linked to power equalization is the restoration of threatened or damaged social prestige or self-esteem. Atrocities often attack a victim's very sense of personal value and identity and vengeance enables the victim to reassert him/herself. One's identity, in some cases, is so intimately linked to the esteem of a group that offenses against the group will also evoke strong desires for revenge and will give revenge much of its emotional force (see Frijda, 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Revenge also takes away the prospect of the perpetrator leading a happy life while one suffers. So the victim, through vengeance, accrues the benefit of taking away the offender's gains. The victim gets "even in suffering." Last, for family/friends of victims, revenge is a means to make their close-ones' deaths meaningful, to keep faith with the dead, and to honor their memory. Revenge further serves to assign responsibility and thereby "relieve the moral ambiguity and guilt survivors often feel." Finally, victims also use revenge to externalize their grief and bring closure (Hamber & Wilson, 2002).

Truth may quench anger by reducing the extent of error in the appraisal of perpetrators' intentions. Victims seek to understand harm doers' intensions so as to calculate the just response. However, they "make attribution errors about the harm doer's motives... All such errors cumulatively add up to sloppy detective work and excessively blaming the harm doers, believing that the harm doer's intentions were more intentional and personal than they actually were" (Tripp & Bies, 7). Truth thus cleans up some of the detective work and provides more information as to "why" the event occurred and the offender's level of responsibility for offense (Kelley 1972, cited in Tripp and Bies). Since revenge requires blaming someone, truth, by changing the causal analysis of what happened, can reduce desires for revenge.

Related to truth is the notion of apology. When offenders apologize, anger, the desire for revenge, and levels of punishment are hypothesized to diminish (Weiner, Graham, Peter, & Zmuidinas, 1991; Bennett & Earwaker, 1994; Darby & Schlenker, 1989; Gonzalez, Haugen, & Manning, 1994; Holtgraves, 1989; Scher & Darley, 1997).[16] The causal processes are fourfold. First, by exhibiting the emotions of sorrow, sadness, regret, shame, or guilt, the offender demonstrates to the victim his/her humanity which enables the victim to overcome stereotypes brought on by anger. Second, the apology produces a separation between the offender and his negative action; the offense is shamed, but the perpetrator is not. In this way, the perpetrator's inherent self-worth is redeemed and s/he becomes potentially worthy of restored relations and reconciliation with the victim (Petrucci, 2002). In experimental work, evidence points to a relationship between offenders' apologies and victims' improved impression of their offenders and subdued feelings of aggression (Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie, 1989). Third, the truth-telling and offered apology helps shift blame from the victim to the perpetrator. Victims often feel responsible for the offense or the atrocity. They suffer guilt, as they believe they could and should have prevented the offense. According to Petrucci (2002), learning that the atrocity's occurrence was not in their control through the apology "place[s] the responsibility of the act [back] on the shoulders of the offender."[17] Last, apologies often comprise some type of offer of compensation, repair, or restitution, which serves as a power and status equalizer between the victim and the perpetrator. At the same time, throughout the apology offer and apology acceptance process, the victim remains in control (Abel, 1998). The literature indicates that the apology's timing (sooner is better), delivery (private and face-to-face preferable), believability, and the severity of the offense impact the apology's effectiveness at quenching anger (see Tavuchis, 1991; Petrucci, 2002.

The question is whether the framework above and its specification of mechanisms can help formulate hypotheses relevant to actual cases of political violence. We thus turn to an actual case, Colombia's civil war and its efforts to demobilize, to illustrate how testable hypotheses might be formulated from this theoretical framework.

32.4 Application to Colombia[18]

Over the past four decades, the Colombian conflict has touched every region of the country. In the past 20 years alone, violence has taken the lives of at least 70,000 people, internally displaced 3.5 million, and tortured, "disappeared," and kidnapped tens of thousands (CINEP, 2004a, b, 2005; Amnesty International, 2005). This violence has been committed by a variety of groups, not only by guerrillas, urban militias, criminals, and narco-traffickers but also by paramilitary groups with at least tacit linkages to the military.

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[16]One might wonder if offenders wish to apologize and if victims wish to accept the apologies and forgive. Evidence shows that indeed offenders are interested in apologizing (Schlenker & Darby, 1981; Fercello & Umbreit, 1998) and that victims only very rarely reject apologies (Bennett & Dewberry, 1994; Bennett & Earwaker, 1994).

[17]Rusting and Nolen-Hoeksema indicate some preliminary findings that "it may be much more difficult to distract from angry thoughts and feelings in the heat of an unresolved situation than later after the situation has been somewhat resolved or the person has found a way to 'live with' the past event" (1998, 801). Truth and apology can potentially resolve situations and therefore bring closure.

[18]This section is from Roger Petersen and Sarah Zukerman's *Revenge or Reconciliation: Theory and Method of Emotions in the Context of Colombia's Peace Process*, 2009 in the Peace Research Institute of Oslo's Forum for International Criminal Justice and Conflict publication series. Spanish version to be published in Colombia by the Vice Presidency and the Universidad del Rosario Press.

Repeated violence across a long period of time develops its own local life. This was especially true of an earlier period of Colombian history, referred to as "La Violencia" (1948–1958), a period in which Conservatives and Liberals killed each other in deadly, and often local, spirals. As Robin Kirk (2003, p. 25) summarizes:

> These were not crimes between strangers, but acts of astonishing violence between people who had known each other their whole lives. Called "La Violencia," the struggle that rapidly consumed Colombia, was personal. Grand political fortunes were at stake, but so too were simmering land disputes, municipal rivalries, indiscretions, ambitions, and the affairs of the heart and gonads. Most of the killers were town men or of peasant stock, immersed in a world little different than that of their parents, grandparents, or even great-grandparents. So were the victims. The people who killed often knew their victims well, had known them since childhood, and had even been playmates, friends, family or neighbors.
>
> Once blood had been shed, it was answered with more blood, in a spiral that devoured whole families. Vengeance is a theme that runs deep and true through Colombian history, the "scorpion in the breast," to quote Colombian novelist Jose Eustacio Rivera, that "stabs at any instant with its stinger." People killed to pay back other killings, to even the score left by Gaitan's death, the War of a Thousand Days a half century earlier, the loss of land, of pride, of control. Often, killers left notes claiming responsibility for atrocities, ensuring that survivors were clear on their authorship.[19]

These local dynamics reappear in recent examples and data. León (2005) tells the story of Barrancabermeja, a typical Colombian town that has suffered waves of killing and counter-killing. First, it became an "incubator" of the ELN guerrillas in the 1980s that infiltrated the lower class neighborhoods, local politics, and the unions. In response to this "dangerous" symbiotic relationship between the ELN and the local population came brutal police repression at levels incommensurate with the scale of the strikes and protests. Indiscriminate repression in turn drove angry civilians into the arms of the ELN and the FARC who consolidated control over the region. Then, in 2001, the paramilitaries stormed Barranca, killing hundreds as they seized control over the territory and punished, in waves of reprisals, all civilians suspected of sympathizing with the guerrillas.[20]

In each round of offensives, there are fatalities and displacement that generate a new population of victims. Some of these are impelled to take their desire for revenge and justice into their own hands. Figures can also be broken down by localities or groups. In Medellín, 25% of those joining the paramilitary Bloque Cacique Nutibara did so for reasons of personal revenge related to the death of a loved one. Another 25% joined due to external threats. Only 23% joined for economic reasons (Villegas, 2005).

Cognizant of the need to break these vicious cycles of killing, the Colombian government has embarked on a process of demobilization and reconciliation founded on law number the Justice and Peace Law. The law calls for a three-pronged process of truth, reparations, and punishment. On truth, individuals must make a full and honest confession of their actions in order to receive the full benefits and leniency of the law. On reparations, a newly created court establishes both monetary and symbolic compensation.

While truth and reparations are highly significant innovations in this reconciliation process, punishment is central. First, it represents a complete reversal of past policy. In the past, combatant leaders were enticed into laying down their arms with unconditional offers of amnesty which became a cycle

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[19] In this work, Kirk argues passionately against seeing Colombia's violence as resulting from a specific national "culture of violence." Our position is that anger and the desire for revenge are a natural part of human nature and are found across a wide set of cases and time. For instance, the Law of Talion and innumerable instances of revenge in literature and religion (Medea, Oresteia, Hamlet, Tess, Cain's killing of Abel, God's expulsion of Adam and Eve, "an eye for an eye") and in politics (in Corsica, the Balkans, Sudan, feudal Japan, and the southern United States) attest to the power and universality of the desire for vengeance. See, for example, Gould (2000).

[20] Four hundred and three homicides were reported in Barranca in 2001.

of conflict followed by amnesty, then reinsertion, then conflict again (see Chernick, 1999).[21] Today, Colombian political leaders emphasize that there can be no impunity, rather reconciliation demands punishment. Colombian leaders have tied their hands on this issue by allying with international human rights organizations.

Why have Colombians come around to the position that punishment is necessary to break cycles of violence? While some of the answer has to do with creating the conditions for future deterrence, the impulse toward punishment seems more based on an intuitive understanding that punishment, the diminishment of anger, and justice are all inextricably linked.

32.5 Generating Hypotheses from a Conceptual Framework of Anger

The state's policy of punishment can be seen in terms of a process connected to Fig. 32.2. In a first cycle, atrocities and violence create the cognition of anger: an individual or a group has committed an offensive action against one's self or group. The resulting emotion of anger greatly elevates a desire for retaliation and shapes information collection and belief formation. In effect, the state's actions create another turn of the cycle and add new information and beliefs. After a conviction of the perpetrators, the victim now holds the belief that an individual or a group has committed a negative action against one's self or group and that the state has put the perpetrator in prison.

This new set of appraisals may produce a lower intensity of the emotion of anger and its A, B, and C effects. In turn, the victim engages less in blaming and stereotyping. Victims are likely to assess the risks of retaliation more accurately and more soberly consider the costs of taking matters into their own hands. Victims may become less obsessed with the past and more oriented toward the future. In short, both punishment of the offenders and the passage of time may reduce anger.

Few in Colombia have considered how the policy might work over time. The nature of the erosion of the emotion is uncertain but Figs. 32.6–32.7 suggest some possibilities. For instance, punishment may change the values on the vertical axis (Fig. 32.6). Assume time 0 represents the perpetrator's date of conviction. Knowing that he will certainly be punished, the victim's anger drops immediately. Then the intensity of the emotion may decline according to the same function. The overall result, in this conception, is both a lower overall level of anger and a shorter life span of the emotion.
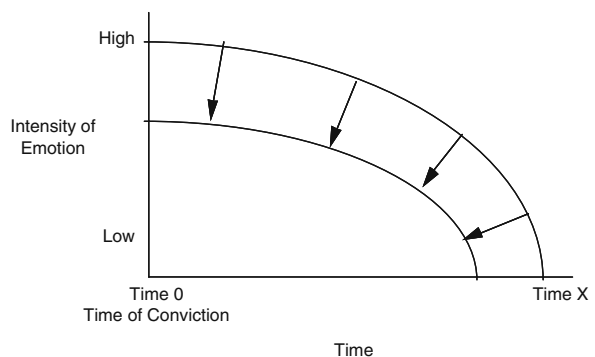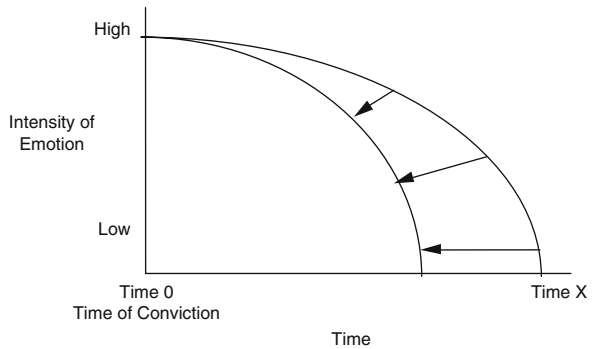

Fig. 32.6 A possible effect of punishment on the intensity of anger

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[21]Law 35, operative 1981–1986, was the law of "olvido y perdón en pro de la paz" (law of forgetting and forgiveness in favor of peace).

Fig. 32.7 Possible effects of punishment on time effects of anger

A second possible effect of punishment might be compressing the horizontal axis, or the amount of time needed for the decay of anger. Time erodes anger. But how much time? If the perpetrator is punished, then anger may fade in 5 years rather than 10. Then the curve might look like Fig. 32.7. While the original intensity might remain high even at the time of conviction, the rate of decay accelerates.

Third, time of decay might remain the same, but punishment might change the shape of the curve. With convictions, anger's half-life might switch from Fig. 32.5 to Fig. 32.4 or Fig. 32.3.

The point to be made here is that the specification of anger mechanisms and the conjectures regarding its temporal dynamics help identify a set of variables and suggest possible causal relationships among those variables. The dependent variable here is the intensity of anger. The primary independent variables are the level of punishment, the passage of time, and the level of atrocity. These hypotheses might include the following:

Hypothesis 1: Higher levels of atrocity and violence will produce higher levels of anger.
Hypothesis 2 (general form): A significant level of punishment combined with the passage of time will reduce the level of anger.
Sub-hypotheses:

(2A) From the time of conviction, the decline of anger will be linear (Fig. 32.3).
(2B) From the time of conviction, the decline of anger will be exponential (Fig. 32.4).
(2C) From the time of conviction, the decline of anger will be reverse exponential (Fig. 32.5).
(2D) At the time of conviction, the level of anger will drop precipitously and then decline according to one of the functions in 1A–1C (Fig. 32.6).
(2E) A significant level of punishment will not produce an immediate drop in the level of anger but will reduce the total life of anger (Fig. 32.7).
Further hypotheses can be linked to the other elements of the reconciliation law – truth and reparations. These are listed below along with a brief explanation of their causal logic:

Hypothesis 3: If reparations are added to punishment, anger will erode at an enhanced or accelerated rate.
Causal logic: Reparations are another form of punishment, in monetary terms rather than in prison time. There is a direct element of vengeance also, as resources are taken directly away from the perpetrator and given to the victim. This process bolsters the sense of equalization

of victim and perpetrator. Material reparations can "open space for bereavement, addressing trauma, and ritualizing symbolic closure... can [further] concretize a traumatic event and re-attribute responsibility" (Hamber & Wilson, 2002).

Hypothesis 4: If perpetrators confess to their crimes, if there is the addition of "truth" to punishment, anger will erode at an enhanced or accelerated rate.

Causal logic: In the transitional justice literature, it is hypothesized that truth-telling enhances the mitigating effect of "justice" on anger. It does so by constructing a common story of the past, honoring victims, breaking impunity, facilitating punishment of the guilty, and preventing the atrocities' repetition. It is important to note that, for those who wish to know the truth, knowledge of the offender's identity and motivations impacts levels of anger not via the ability to know whom to punish but through a different mechanism: by altering the information available to the victim. Learning the perpetrators' motives and circumstances can undo the distorting effects of anger on information and beliefs; that is, by individualizing the perpetrator and showing his/her humanity, truth confessions can enable the victim to overcome stereotypes brought on by anger. If anger impels the victim to increase his/her prejudices and assignment of blame, remember selectively, and desire revenge, then truth, by providing new information, can alter the victim's cognition that the perpetrator committed a harmful action against him/her. It thereby enables the victim to understand and forgive (see Gibson, 2004; Mockus, 2007):[22] the act of removing the attribution of harmful intent from the offenders. In these ways, truth reduces anger.

The question remains as to if these hypotheses can be realistically tested in a case like Colombia. To our knowledge, no one has attempted to do so. A minimum requirement is that each of the variables – level of anger, level of atrocity, level of punishment, passage of time, reparations, and truth-telling – be operationalized in a realistic and reliable way. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to address this second stage of the scientific method – theory testing – but we seek to evaluate them elsewhere (Petersen & Zukerman, forthcoming).[23]

32.6 Conclusions

Our goals in this chapter have been threefold. First, we aimed to show the relevance of the emotion of anger for the study of political violence. Perhaps surprisingly, political scientists seldom make reference to anger. Second, we have shown how findings from psychology and related fields can be used to enhance the description of political violence, to specify relevant mechanisms, and to develop a framework that generates hypotheses. Far from being a flight from science, reference and knowledge of emotions can enhance the scientific approach to political violence. Third, we have shown

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[22]More generally, some political figures have posited that only with truth can there be true forgiveness which in turn may reduce anger. This relationship between truth and forgiveness has been a central issue in the reconciliation process in South Africa. Gibson's work shows that the acceptance of a common narrative of apartheid created positive effects concerning the legitimacy of the post-apartheid government and the acceptance of the rule of law. The role of forgiveness in reconciliation has been emphasized by the former Mayor of Bogotá, Antanas Mockus. In a talk titled "Why Forgiveness?" (Seminario Internacional Paz y Responsabilidad en la Resolución de Conflictos, Bogotá June 16, 2007), Mockus concentrated on the relationships between the emotions of guilt and shame but implied that pardon also reduces anger.

[23]The authors have attempted to tackle this difficult issue in another forum. See Roger Petersen and Sarah Zukerman (2009).

how an understanding of anger and an analytical framework developed from that understanding can help develop methods to evaluate an important, ongoing violent conflict.

The incorporation of emotions such as anger into the study of political violence is challenging, but the pay-offs can be substantial.

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