Many researchers understand the concept of emotion as a multicomponent construct. Among the key aspects of emotions most frequently mentioned are valence (positive vs. negative), arousal and motivation (approach vs. avoidance). Valence refers to evaluation of felt emotion and depends on the degree in which somebody likes or do not like subjective feelings related to experienced emotional state. Motivation is considered as a force striving towards or from a specific stimulus. Approach motivation directs our behavior towards desirable stimuli while avoidant motivation is activated by threatening cues or signals of possible punishment. Over past few decades studies investigating the consequences of emotions put focus on valence as the main aspect of emotion that impacts our cognitive functioning. Positive and negative emotions were often linked to approach and avoidance motivation, respectively. However, this view seems to be oversimplified in light of recent findings. A good example of emotion that do not fit the aforementioned categories is anger that comprises of two seemingly contradictory characteristics: negative valence and high approach motivation. The primary aim of this project is to examine how anger influences our cognitive functioning and to what extent it differs from other emotions of different valence, direction of motivation and/or motivational intensity.

The project has two parts and consist of four studies. The goal of the first part is to investigate the effectiveness of combining autobiographical recall and imagery as emotion induction method that will be applied in second part of the project. Second part will examine the relation between anger and its cognitive consequences, i.e. focusing visual attention on rewarding stimuli, taking risky decisions, and overestimation of one`s cognitive abilities. These cognitive outcomes were chosen by the virtue of their associations with perception of certainty and control – the core aspect of cognitive appraisal related to anger. In this stage of the project it is planned to compare consequences of state anger with four emotions (i.e. desire, joy, sadness, fear) selected so that each of them differs in at least one aspect (valence, direction and/or intensity of motivation) from the others.

This project will enrich current state of knowledge on anger as an emotional state and emotions per se. Examination of anger`s cognitive consequences will undoubtedly lead to better understanding of anger`s function in the daily life on the behavioral (individual and social) dimension. Moreover, comparing different emotions in terms of their impact on cognition can significantly contribute to establish which emotion`s aspect plays the most important role in our cognitive functioning.