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Could two negative emotions be a positive? The effects of anger and anxiety in enemyship

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### Abstract

Enemyship is an important but understudied interpersonal phenomenon. Prior research on this topic has focused on enemyship's cognitive, control-maintenance function following a threat. The present studies advance theory and research by showing the role of emotion, particularly anger, in this process. Using appraisal theory as a framework, we draw on recent research into approach and avoidance motivational dynamics during threat. We propose an interaction between anxiety-inducing threat and enemy-directed anger on perceptions of control and certainty, and motivation. More specifically, we expect that when an anxiety-inducing threat is present, perceptions of control and certainty will be significantly higher when enemy-directed anger is also present than when it is not. Additionally, we sought to demonstrate the consequences of these processes for motivation. Perhaps counterintuitively, we propose that individuals who experience anger at an enemy following an anxiety-inducing control threat will experience a boost in motivation, an effect mediated by perceptions of control and certainty. We find support for our moderated mediation model across three studies with undergraduate and working adults (Total  $N = 673$ ).

### Keywords:

Control threats; Enemyship; Anger; Anxiety; Motivation; Approach-avoidance

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