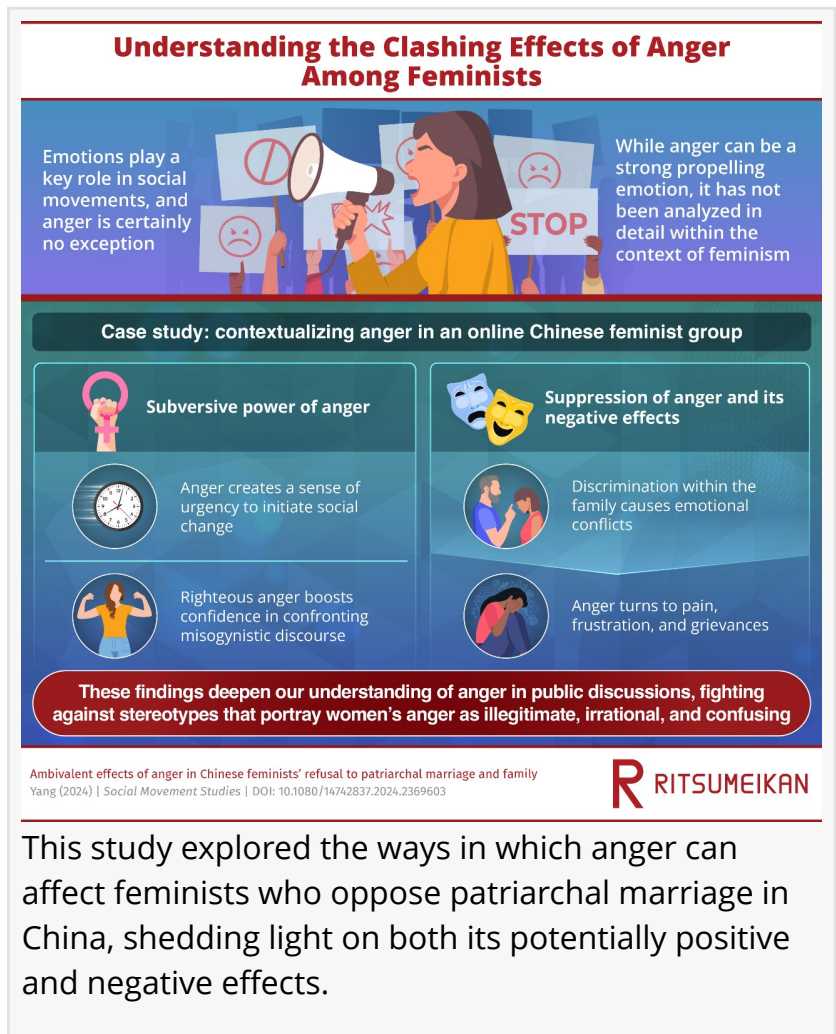


# The Role of Anger in Social Movements: A Look into Feminism in China

*This study explores the positive and negative effects that anger brings to the table for women opposing patriarchal marriage.*

KYOTO, JAPAN, August 6, 2024

[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- For better or for worse, emotions permeate virtually all human activities and endeavors, sometimes prompting people to act yet other times holding them back. In social movements, including feminism, emotions are known to play major roles, as evidenced by a growing body of research conducted over the past two decades. However, most of these studies have analyzed emotions in social movements in a rather broad fashion, with little regard for contextual features. This makes it challenging to understand the functions of particular emotions in specific social movements.



**Understanding the Clashing Effects of Anger Among Feminists**

Emotions play a key role in social movements, and anger is certainly no exception

While anger can be a strong propelling emotion, it has not been analyzed in detail within the context of feminism

**Case study: contextualizing anger in an online Chinese feminist group**

- Subversive power of anger**
  - Anger creates a sense of urgency to initiate social change
  - Righteous anger boosts confidence in confronting misogynistic discourse
- Suppression of anger and its negative effects**
  - Discrimination within the family causes emotional conflicts
  - Anger turns to pain, frustration, and grievances

**These findings deepen our understanding of anger in public discussions, fighting against stereotypes that portray women's anger as illegitimate, irrational, and confusing**

Ambivalent effects of anger in Chinese feminists' refusal to patriarchal marriage and family  
Yang (2024) | *Social Movement Studies* | DOI: 10.1080/14742837.2024.2369603

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This study explored the ways in which anger can affect feminists who oppose patriarchal marriage in China, shedding light on both its potentially positive and negative effects.

Against this backdrop, Yushuang Yang—a PhD candidate from the Graduate School of Sociology at Ritsumeikan University—decided to analyze the effects of anger in the context of feminism. As stated in her latest paper, which was published in [Social Movement Studies](#) on June 23rd, 2024, Yang sought to shed light on how anger is evoked, expressed, and discussed among Chinese feminists; these people often face a unique set of challenges stemming from their rejection of patriarchal marriage and the ensuing family and societal conflicts.

To gather data, Yang turned to a popular Chinese social networking platform called Douban. “Douban is known for having feminist communities renowned for their ‘radical’ opinions that encourage women to oppose patriarchal values. Thus, for this study, I selected a private women-

only feminist group with more than 10,000 members," explains Yang. "I initially collected all article titles in the community using a data miner tool, totaling 1,031 entities, and then identified the most relevant ones using quantitative text analysis software." Through this process, Yang ultimately selected 79 articles regarding marriage and family that expressed some form of anger.

Afterward, using methods of emotion discourse analysis, Yang identified various themes in these articles and focused on two specific aspects. The first involved the subversive features of anger in the context of feminism, particularly when directed at imposed structures and opponents of the movement. Meanwhile, the second explored the consequences of anger when it is misaligned with other emotions, such as those felt towards people with whom one has an affective relationship.

According to Yang's analysis, women in this online group did not usually discuss emotions explicitly in their articles related to the marriage system, but instead took a wholly rational tone to present feminist theories. Not only was anger a factor evidently present in their stance against the injustices inherent in patriarchal marriage, but it also had an empowering effect. "In this online community, righteous anger propels many Chinese feminists to refuse marriage and motherhood as a form of resistance and commitment to their beliefs. Even feminists who faced derogatory treatment from men found their righteous anger and humor helped them overcome fear and confront the shame imposed on them," argues Yang.

As for the other side of the coin, anger seemed to be more of a problem when it had to be actively suppressed in the context of family relationships. Given that anger is harder to express when dealing with those with whom one holds affective ties, this emotion was transformed into frustration, pain, and resignation. Of course, these negative emotions take a toll on one's physical and mental well-being, affecting them at a personal level.

Overall, this study showcases the markedly different roles that a single emotion can have within a social movement, highlighting the importance of studying these topics in context. "My paper rejects the lineal connection between anger and movement participation and provides a contextualized discussion on the ambivalent effects of anger, alongside its interaction with other emotions," concludes Yang, "In this way, it contributes to deepening our understanding of anger in public discussions, as women's anger is usually stereotyped as illegitimate, irrational, and confusing."

Further studies in this field will hopefully pave the way to a more thorough understanding of the roles of emotions in social movements, enabling us to leverage their positive aspects while minimizing their detrimental effects.

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Reference

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