





# ‘Coming together to awaken our democracy’: Examining precursors of emergent social identity and collective action among activists and non-activists in the 2019–2020 ‘Chile despertó’ protests

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## Abstract

By integrating the insights from social identity research on collective action, this article examines the social-psychological mechanisms behind the emergence of the 2019–20 ‘Chile despertó’ social movement, a major Latin American revolt against the government’s price hikes. Using survey data collected among Chilean activists ( $N = 549$ ) and non-activists (i.e., members of broader society,  $N = 234$ ), we analyse two major explanatory collective action frameworks: that is, the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA) and the encapsulation model of the social identity of collective action (EMSICA). Multi-group SEM with latent variables revealed that the EMSICA was slightly better suited as compared to SIMCA to explain collective action on behalf of newly formed collective identities. As concerns prosocial disobedience, these attitudes predicted collective action intentions indirectly through social identification among both activists and non-activists. The indirect effects of moral outrage were found to be more pronounced in non-activists, whereas

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perceived collective efficacy had stronger direct mobilizing effects among activists. The discussion highlights the importance of studying individuals' prosocial disobedience attitudes within social identity models of collective action. Please refer to the Supplementary Material section to find this article's [Community and Social Impact Statement](#).

#### KEYWORDS

Chile, collective action, collective efficacy, prosocial disobedience, protesters

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Social movements can become a powerful instrument of social change especially when they bring together splintered individuals and social groups who might normally have little to do with each other (e.g., Chayinska, Minescu, & McGarty, 2017; Radke, Kutlaca, Siem, Wright, & Becker, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019). But who are those individuals? Collective action scholars have traditionally argued that *activists*, that is, a social group within a wider society committed to particular ideological causes of injustice, constitute a driving force of any social movement. However, witnessing a rise in social justice movements across the globe made many collective action scholars recognize a crucial role of *non-activists*, that is, members of the general public, in sustaining social justice causes to the extent that they legitimize demands of activists (see Jiménez-Moya, Miranda, Drury, Saavedra, & González, 2019; Kutlaca, van Zomeren, & Epstude, 2020). Indeed, many social movements (e.g., Egypt's Arab Spring, Ukraine's Euromaidan) have been successful in influencing key decision-makers in the respective countries to the extent that members of the larger public sustained civil resistance and became part of it (see Uluç, Chayinska, & Tropp, 2021). Yet there is little systematic understanding as to whether activists and non-activists differ in terms of the social-psychological paths to social mobilization and if so, how. The aim of the present article was to broaden and deepen a scholarly understanding of a potential variability and similarity in the associations between the social-psychological precursors of collective action among activists and non-activists in a real-life setting.

To address this question, we situated our research in the context of the 2019–2020 Chilean protests, known internationally as '*Chile despertó*' (translated from Spanish as 'Chile woke up') social movement. The social protests started by the Chilean student social organizations in mid-October 2019 in response to a small change in public transportation costs in the country where the gap in basic living standards has been steadily narrowed in the past years (e.g., González et al., 2020). Over the weekend, the local student protests escalated into a nation-wide social movement that, reportedly, brought millions of people to the streets (e.g., Larsson, 2019). The movement lasted for a year until the Chilean national plebiscite was held in October 2020 (Ansaldi & Pardo-Vergara, 2020; McGowan, 2020). In this plebiscite, the 'Approve' side won with 78% of Chileans agreeing to draft a new constitution (e.g., New York Times, 2020).

By situating our research in this socio-political context, we seek to advance the collective action literature in three specific ways. First, we seek to examine a potential variability and similarity in the associations between three key action-related constructs – (a) moral outrage, (b) collective efficacy beliefs and (c) prosocial disobedience attitudes – in predicting social identification with the '*Chile despertó*' social movement and intentions to engage in system-challenging collective action among activists and non-activists. Secondly, we provide a situated empirical examination of two major explanatory collective action frameworks, specifically the social identity model of collective action (SIMCA; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008) and the encapsulation model of the social identity of collective action (EMSICA; Thomas, Mavor, & McGarty, 2012). In doing so, we aim to compare the precursors of

collective action in the context of the 'Chile despertó' social movement. Thirdly, we compare the psychological processes driving activists' and non-activists' responses to identify similarities and differences between the two groups in supporting collective action.

## 1.1 | Social-psychological precursors of identity-driven collective action

A central idea that distinguishes the social psychology of collective action from other scientific approaches is that shared social identities constitute one of the core drivers of collective action as well as continued commitment to social movements' cause (e.g., Di Bernardo et al., 2021; Dixon, Durrheim, Stevenson, & Kagal, 2017; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2008). Social identities relevant to a protest are not given per se but can be understood as an emergent, socially constructed and dynamic group-level phenomenon, predicted by a set of individual differences (e.g., ideologies) and psychological factors. The meta-analysis of van Zomeren et al. (2008) and subsequent research (e.g., Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021; Ayanian et al., 2021; Chayinska, Minescu, & McGarty, 2019; Tausch et al., 2011; Thomas et al., 2019; Włodarczyk, Basabe, Páez, & Zumeta, 2017) has highlighted the importance of two other action-related mechanisms, moral outrage and collective efficacy beliefs. Moral outrage conveys the perceptions of a certain state of affairs as illegitimate, immoral or otherwise unacceptable and is directed at an external actor deemed to be responsible for group-based deprivation. Instead, collective efficacy beliefs are based on individuals' appraisals of their coping potential for social change. Both perceived outrage and collective efficacy were shown to have distinct but complementary effects on collective action (e.g., Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). Importantly, many established theories of collective action have speculated that although both moral outrage and collective efficacy beliefs constitute two complementary routes to social mobilization, individuals may vary in their approach to resolving collective disadvantage and thus become inclined to engage more in either emotion-focused or problem-focused coping (e.g., Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren, Leach, & Spears, 2012).

More recent collective action research has effectively extended the existing models with prosocial disobedience attitude (i.e., a civil disposition to challenge the status quo in a non-violent manner in order to advance the interests of society as a whole). Proposing a complementary perspective to existing collective action models, Fattori, Pozzi, Marzana, and Mannarini (2015) have highlighted the importance of studying prosocial disobedience attitude in predicting collective action tendencies. The idea that prosocial disobedience attitudes can predict identity-driven collective action aligns with the previous research that highlighted an expressive function of attitudes, meaning that individuals' civil dispositions generally act as a marker of their group membership and as such predict their identity-affirming behaviours (e.g., Hornsey et al., 2006; Simon, Trötschel, & Dähne, 2008). When moral attitudes and convictions are expressed publicly, they might be especially sustentative in terms of defining 'who we are' and 'what we stand for' (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021; Hornsey, Majkut, Terry, & McKimmie, 2003). Indeed, Fattori and colleagues (e.g., Fattori, Curly, et al., 2015; Fattori, Pozzi, et al., 2015) have shown that attitudes towards prosocial disobedience can operate as a stable psychological predisposition associated with people's behavioural intention to engage in prosocial collective action to the extent that people become committed to a shared group. In the current research, we integrate these three action-related constructs into a theoretical model to innovatively examine a variability and similarity of the mobilization paths among activists and non-activists.

## 1.2 | Are activists and non-activists mobilized in a psychologically distinct way?

While extensive empirical evidence suggests that moral outrage, collective efficacy beliefs and prosocial disobedience attitude are likely to uniquely predict the formation of new social identities and collective action on their behalf among activists (Fattori, Curly, et al., 2015; Fattori, Pozzi, et al., 2015; Passini & Morselli, 2009; Pozzi, Quartiroli, Alfieri, Fattori, & Pistoni, 2018), there is little empirical evidence to suggest whether these constructs will effectively operate among

non-activists. Members of the larger public may indeed be affected by the issues of societal concern and become vocal about the legitimacy of activists' attempts to achieve social change (Jiménez-Moya et al., 2019; Puga, 2016).

Much of the earlier collective action research has long seen moral outrage as a spontaneous reaction at the violation of some shared normative standards (van Zomeren et al., 2012). It is reasonable to argue that in the case of the 'Chile despertó' social movement, the identification with the cause among both activists and non-activists may be predicted by their moral outrage at the authorities' decision to increase the tariff on public transportation in the country (e.g., González et al., 2020). It is also possible that in that context, prosocial disobedience attitudes play a crucial role in the formation of shared-group identities related to social justice cause as well as collective action when democracy is perceived as endangered (e.g., Jiménez-Moya et al., 2019; Puga, 2016). The collective action literature generally suggests that both activists and non-activists can form a commitment to a particular social justice cause to the extent that they have a shared emotional appraisal of injustice and prosocial disobedience attitude (Fattori, Curly, et al., 2015; Fattori, Pozzi, et al., 2015; Passini & Morselli, 2009; Pozzi et al., 2018).

In contrast, there is little understanding in the literature about how members of the general public perceive their collective efficacy and whether their decision to participate in social movements is based on their instrumental considerations. On one hand, a meta-analysis conducted by van Zomeren et al. (2008) has suggested that there is a positive, medium-sized relationship (mean effect size  $r = .34$ ) between collective efficacy beliefs and collective action across a diverse set of samples, including community samples. On the other hand, a series of studies challenge this assumption (e.g., Hornsey et al., 2003).

In summary, little research has systematically examined a potential variability and similarity in the associations between (a) moral outrage, (b) collective efficacy beliefs and (c) prosocial disobedience attitude in predicting commitment to a social justice cause and political participation among both activists and non-activists. While it is largely recognized that a conjoint effort of both groups determines the success of social movements (e.g., Kutluca et al., 2020; Simon & Klandermans, 2001), the current study aims to explicate both similarities and differences in how social-psychological precursors relate to social identification with a cause and collective action intentions among activists and non-activists. Before we move forward, there is one important theoretical proposition that our case study additionally seeks to examine.

### 1.3 | The applicability of SIMCA and EMSICA in the context of the 'Chile despertó' social movement

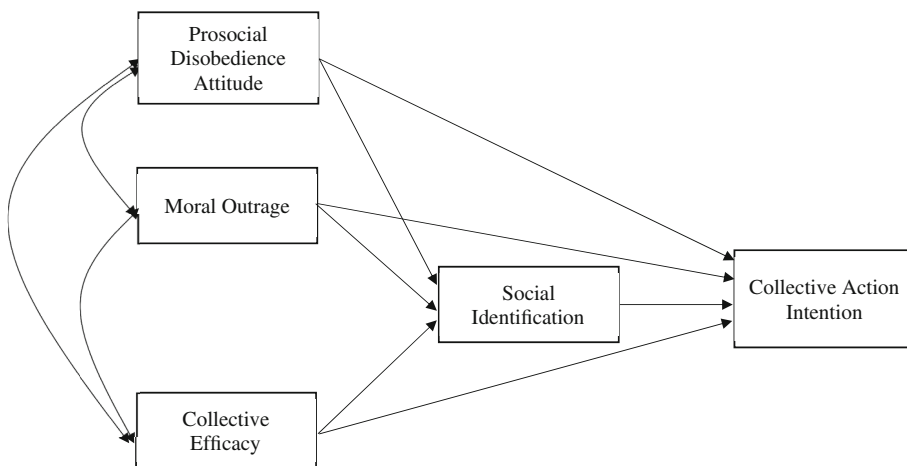
So far, the social identity models of collective action have proposed several, sometimes competing, hypotheses with respect to the causal order of social identification processes and other action-related mechanisms. Specifically, the SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2008) posits that while collective efficacy, moral outrage and social identity are direct predictors of collective action; social identity facilitates and reinforces the group experience of injustice and efficacy (thereby acting as an indirect predictor of collective action). Furthermore, the SIMCA suggests that the direct effect of identification will be stronger when identity is politicized. An alternative model called the EMSICA (Thomas et al., 2012; Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009) inverts the causal relations proposed by the SIMCA. The EMSICA's proponents suggest that individuals' affective reactions to injustice and a sense of efficacy precede and informs a shared recognition of 'who we are' as members of the group related to a social injustice cause; the emergent sense of collective identity then predicts individuals' intention to engage in collective action on its behalf. However, the main difference between the SIMCA and the EMSICA may not be just the causal sequence of mediation but the content of shared identity as well. Whereas SIMCA has been shown to reliably predict individuals' collective action on behalf of low-status or otherwise deprived social groups, EMSICA might be more suitable to explain it driven by new social identities formed on demands of intergroup context (Bamberg, Rees, & Seebauer, 2015; Chayinska et al., 2017, 2019; Uysal & Akfirat, 2021; Włodarczyk et al., 2017). Recently, a few collective action scholars (Bamberg et al., 2015; Chayinska et al., 2017, 2019; Uysal & Akfirat, 2021; Włodarczyk et al., 2017) have sought to

provide a comparative test of the main assumptions of both the SIMCA and the EMSICA in the contexts of real-world political social movements (e.g., Ukraine's Euromaidan revolution and Gezi Park protests), concluding that the latter might be better situated to understand the mechanisms underlying bottom-up identity formations related to a particular societal cause.

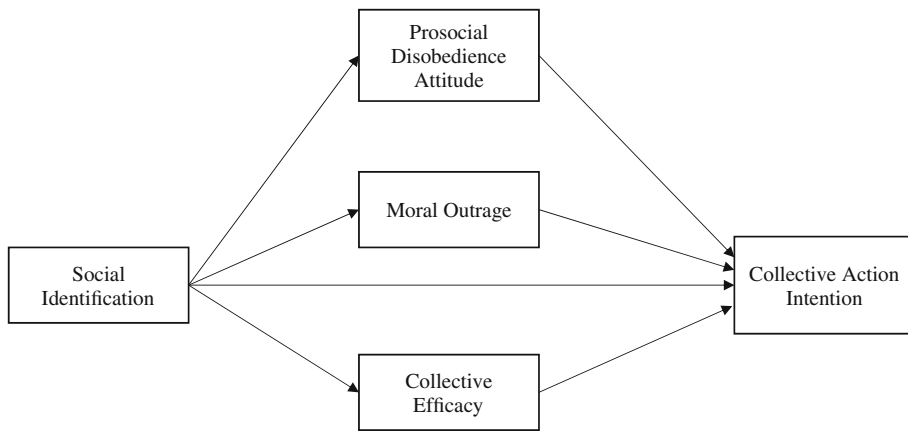
The occurrence of the 2019–2020 ‘Chile despertó’ social movement provided us with an opportunity to determine which of the established theoretical models better describes the emergence of the protest identity in this context. We propose that the EMSICA, compared to the SIMCA, may be more applicable to the Chilean context. Because the change in public transportation costs came as a surprise, it could arguably evoke strong affective reactions to the status quo as well as trigger civil disposition to disobey the authorities not only among activists but also the general public. It is thus reasonable to suggest that the simultaneous experience of moral outrage at the authorities and prosocial disobedience attitude coupled with collective efficacy beliefs could facilitate the formation of new shared identity which, in turn, could provide a psychological basis for collective action among both activists and non-activists.

## 1.4 | The present research

This article was designed to contribute to social movement and collective action scholarship by highlighting the ways in which activists and non-activists can be mobilized to participate in system-challenging collective action for social change. First, we examined a potential variability and similarity in the associations between moral outrage, collective efficacy beliefs and prosocial disobedience attitude in predicting social identification with the ‘Chile despertó’ social movement and intentions to engage in system-challenging collective action among activists and non-activists. Specifically, building on the previous collective action research (Fattori, Pozzi, et al., 2015; Hornsey et al., 2003, 2006; Thomas et al., 2012) and empirical studies conducted with activists and non-activists in the socio-political context in Chile (González et al., 2020; Jiménez-Moya et al., 2019; Puga, 2016), we argue that prosocial disobedience attitude can act as a potentially strong precursors of social identification with the social movement among both activists and non-activists as it conveys a civil disposition to challenge the status quo in a non-violent manner in order to advance *the interests of society as a whole*. We predict that collective efficacy beliefs may operate as a particularly strong mobilizing resource for activists whose prior formal engagement in political civic activities may feed a more agency-focussed route to collective action compared to non-activists.



**FIGURE 1** The extended encapsulated model of social identity in collective action (EMSICA). Prosocial disobedience attitude was added as precursor of both social identification and collective action intention



**FIGURE 2** The extended social identity model of collective action (SIMCA). Prosocial disobedience attitude was added as mediator between social identification and collective action intention

A further major purpose of the current study was to compare the two major explanatory collective action frameworks (i.e., EMSICA and SIMCA) in the context of the ‘Chile despertó’ social movement. Building on the previous research (Bamberg et al., 2015; Chayinska et al., 2017, 2019; Uysal & Akfırat, 2021; Włodarczyk et al., 2017), we hypothesized that EMSICA (see Figure 1) would be more suitable to explain collective action on behalf of newly formed collective identities as compared to SIMCA (Figure 2).

## 2 | METHOD

### 2.1 | Procedure and participants

The data collection was conducted between December 2019 and January 2020 in agreement with the ethical norms laid down by the Italian National Psychological Association. The questionnaire was originally constructed in English and then translated into Spanish by the study’s bilingual collaborator. Participants were invited to take part in an online self-report questionnaire on active citizenship. A total of 925 participants were recruited via convenience sampling over social media (mostly Facebook and Twitter), targeting groups discussing the protests in Chile. They were informed of the research aims and were asked to voluntarily participate in the study with no actual compensation. One hundred and three partial responses belonging to respondents who left the survey before answering all questions were removed. In addition, 39 responses from people aged less than 18 years and those who did not indicate their age were also removed. The final sample comprised 783 participants. The control measure for the categorization as activists and non-activists was used at the beginning of the survey: participants were asked to indicate how many times they had participated in a ‘peaceful protest march in the last month’. The anchors were: ‘0 = none, 1 = one time, 2 = two or three times, 3 = more than three times’. Thus, they were categorized as activists (answers 1 to 3,  $n = 549$ , female = 54.8%,  $M_{age} = 28.47$ ;  $SD = 10.54$ , range = 18–74 years) or non-activists (answers 0,  $n = 234$ , female = 60.7%,  $M_{age} = 31.00$ ;  $SD = 14.39$ , range = 18–82 years).

### 2.2 | Measures

Responses were rated using a 7-point Likert type scale (1 = *totally disagree*, 7 = *totally agree*), unless otherwise indicated below.

### 2.2.1 | Prosocial disobedience attitude

Three items adapted from Fattori, Pozzi, et al. (2015) were used to measure the extent to which participants had attitudes towards prosocial disobedience. The items for activists were: 'I am proud to take part in a demonstration against unjust political decisions', 'I am attending a demonstration against an incompetent government' and 'I appreciate people who protest for their rights',  $\alpha = .75$ ; the items for non-activists were: 'I would be proud to take part in a demonstration against unjust political decisions', 'I would attend a demonstration against an incompetent government' and 'I appreciate people who protest for their rights',  $\alpha = .88$ .

### 2.2.2 | Moral outrage

Three items adapted from Thomas et al. (2012) were used to measure the extent to which participants experienced moral outrage towards the government. These items were: 'I feel outraged when I think of people who experience inequalities', 'I feel angry when I think of people who experience inequalities' and 'I feel annoyed when I think of people who experience inequalities'. The scale showed an excellent reliability among both activists ( $\alpha = .82$ ) and non-activists ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

### 2.2.3 | Collective efficacy beliefs

Three items adapted from Thomas et al. (2012) were used to assess the extent to which participants believed in the efficacy of collective efforts to address the campaign's goals. These items were: 'I think this protest can improve people's lives', 'In my opinion, this protest is able to influence the decisions of governments to improve the conditions of people' and 'In my opinion, this protest has the capacity to promote the overcoming of the condition of inequality'. The scale was internally consistent among both activists ( $\alpha = .85$ ) and non-activists ( $\alpha = .91$ ).

### 2.2.4 | Social identification

Using a 3-item scale adapted from Thomas et al. (2012), we asked both activists and non-activists to indicate the extent to which they identified with a group of supporters of the '*Chile despertó*' social movement. For activists, the items were: 'Protesting reflects well who I am and my philosophy of life', 'I feel I have much in common with other supporters of this protest' and 'In general I am happy to be a supporter of this protest',  $\alpha = .84$ . For non-activists the items were: 'Supporting the protest well reflects who I am and my life philosophy', 'I feel that I may have a lot in common with other supporters of this protest' and 'In general, I would be happy to be a supporter of this protest',  $\alpha = .94$ .

### 2.2.5 | Collective action intention

A single item adapted from Marta and Pozzi (2008) was used to assess participants' 'intention to participate again in the future collective action to support the cause' (1 = *no intention*; 7 = *total intention*). To measure collective action intention among non-activists, we asked participants to indicate the extent to which they considered 'joining the protest movement in the future' (1 = *no intention*; 7 = *total intention*).

## 2.3 | Data analysis

The correlations between the variables of the model were estimated and *t*-tests were performed to verify whether the two groups of participants (i.e., activists and non-activists) were different from each another in terms of the action-related experiences, commitments and beliefs. Then, we used structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the extended EMSICA and SIMCA. The SEM was estimated via maximum likelihood using the Mplus 8 software program (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) and was conducted with latent variable modelling. We used multigroup analysis with the unconstrained paths across groups. We were interested indeed in observing whether and how the models varied across groups. The goodness-of-fit indexes were examined through Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Consistent with the recommendation of Hu and Bentler (1998), goodness-of-fit criteria were used in order to quantify acceptable (CFI > 0.90, TLI > 0.90, SRMR < 0.10, RMSEA < 0.08) and excellent fit (CFI > 0.95, TLI > 0.95, SRMR < 0.08, RMSEA < 0.06). Because of the relatively small size of the non-activist group ( $n = 234$ ), we tested the power of the models via a Monte Carlo study (Muthén & Muthén, 2002). The analyses confirmed an acceptable power with our sample size for all the estimated parameters in the models.

Moreover, we tested (a) the direct and indirect effects of prosocial disobedience attitude, moral outrage and perceived collective efficacy on collective action intention via social identification (based on the extended EMSICA) and (b) the direct and indirect effects of social identification on collective action intention by the mediation of prosocial disobedience attitude, moral outrage and perceived collective efficacy (based on the extended SIMCA). Mediation was tested with the delta method as implemented in Mplus, which produce tests of indirect effects that are equivalent to Sobel tests (MacKinnon, 2008). Finally, EMSICA and SIMCA were compared using the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), for which lower values indicate a better and more parsimonious model (Ullman, 2006).

**TABLE 1** Means, SDs and *t*-tests for the two study's samples: activists ( $n = 549$ ) versus non-activists ( $n = 234$ )

	Activists		Non-activists		t-test	
	M	SD	M	SD	t	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Prosocial disobedience attitude	6.64	0.87	5.78	1.59	7.80***	0.67
Moral outrage	6.57	0.79	5.61	1.66	8.48***	0.73
Collective efficacy	6.52	0.85	5.34	1.73	9.87***	0.86
Social identification	6.04	1.22	4.67	2.02	9.69***	0.82
Collective action intention	6.16	1.31	4.02	2.17	14.04***	1.19

\*\*\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ . \* $p < .05$ .

**TABLE 2** Bivariate correlations for the two study's samples: Activists ( $n = 549$ ) versus non-activists ( $n = 234$ )

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Prosocial disobedience attitudes	—	.57***	.60***	.71***	.59***
2. Moral outrage	.31***	—	.66***	.71***	.52***
3. Collective efficacy beliefs	.42***	.45***	—	.78***	.59***
4. Social identification	.62***	.36***	.50***	—	.74***
5. Collective action intention	.49***	.31***	.48***	.58***	—

Note: Correlations for non-activists are above the diagonal and correlations for activists are below the diagonal.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \* $p < .05$ .

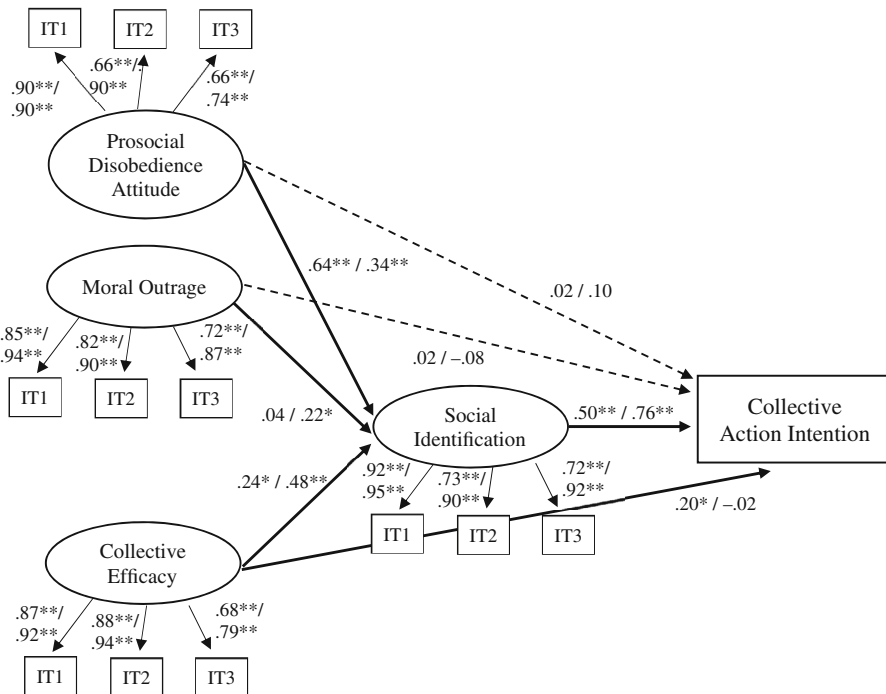


### 3 | RESULTS

Descriptive analyses can be found in Table 1. *t*-test analyses showed significant differences on all the model variables between activists and non-activists. Activists demonstrated significantly higher scores compared to non-activists' prosocial disobedience attitude, moral outrage, collective efficacy, social identification and collective action intention. As can be seen in Table 2, all the variables in the present study were highly correlated with *r*s ranging from .31 to .78 (*p* < .001), showing associations in the expected direction.

#### 3.1 | Test of the extended EMSICA

The results of the SEM with latent variables on the extended EMSICA showed that the model displayed a good fit:  $\chi^2(80) = 249.50$  (activists = 142.35; non-activists = 107.15), *CFI* = 0.98, *TLI* = 0.98, *RMSEA* = 0.05, *SRMR* = 0.05. All items loaded on the intended latent variable with significant factor loadings (*p* < .001). As can be seen in Figure 3, across both subsamples, prosocial disobedience attitudes were strongly and positively associated with social identification which in turn predicted collective action intentions. The direct association between prosocial disobedience attitudes and collective action intentions was found to be non-significant across the two subsamples. Consistent with our prediction, moral outrage was found to significantly positively predict social identification only among non-activists but not among activists. As in the case with disobedience, across the two subsamples, the direct association between moral outrage and collective action intentions was found to be non-significant. Finally, we observed that collective efficacy beliefs were strongly and positively associated with social identification which in turn predicted collective action intentions.



**FIGURE 3** The extended encapsulated model of social identity in collective action (EMSICA): activists (*n* = 549) versus non-activists (*n* = 234). On the left activists values, on the right non-activists values. In bold paths that differ between groups. \*\**p* < .001, \**p* < .05

collective action intentions across both subsamples. The direct link between collective efficacy beliefs and collective action intentions was significant only for activists. Hence, prosocial disobedience attitudes stood out as a unique and robust medium-size predictor of collective action for both activists and non-activists (Cumming, 2014). This association was fully mediated by social identification with the movement among the two study's samples. The model explained 65/82% (activists/non-activists) of the variance of social identification and 44/58% of collective action intention in both groups, respectively (see Figure 3).

To further test the between-group difference, we compared this model with a model in which all regression paths were constrained to be equal across activists and non-activists. The log-likelihood ratio test (LRT, Bentler & Bonett, 1980) indicated a better fit of the data for the model with unconstrained paths, supporting the hypothesis of a difference between the two groups:  $\chi^2(9) = 44.21, p < .001$ . In particular, the between-group difference of the paths was tested via Wald test (Wald, 1943). The test showed that the paths from prosocial disobedience, moral outrage and collective efficacy to social identification and from collective efficacy beliefs to collective action intentions were statistically different between activists and non-activists at the level of  $p < .05$ . The social identification was more strongly connected to prosocial disobedience among activists, while its links with collective efficacy and moral outrage were weaker. Activist also showed a stronger relationship between prosocial disobedience and intentions.

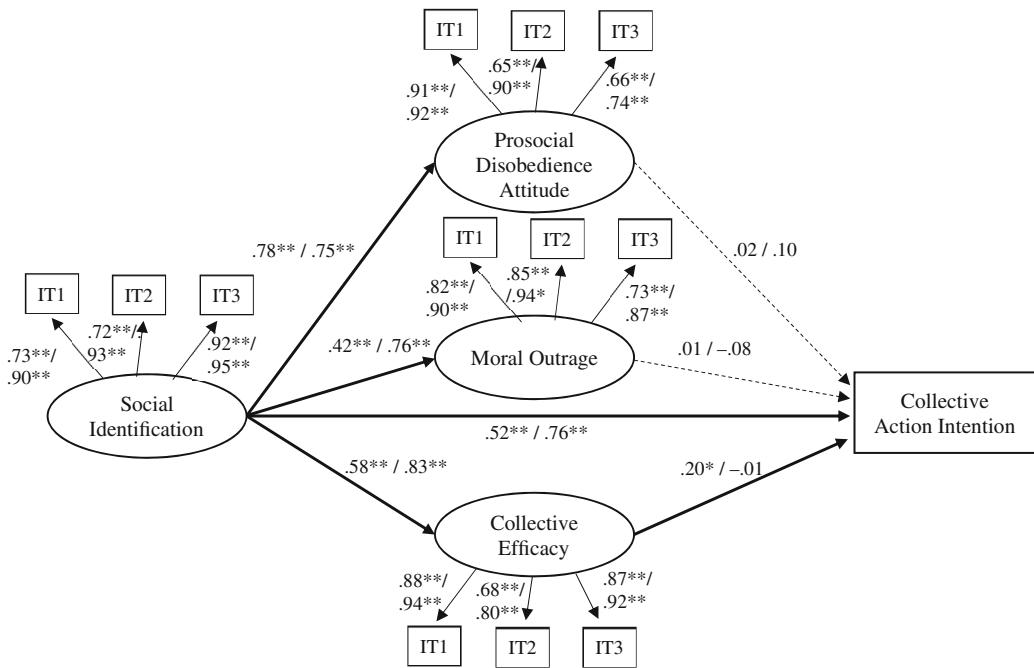
Then, we tested the indirect effect of prosocial disobedience attitude, moral outrage and collective efficacy beliefs on collective action intention with social identification as a mediator, using 5,000 bootstrapping resamples. In both groups, the total effects of prosocial disobedience attitudes (activists  $\beta = .34, p < .001$  and non-activists  $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ) and collective efficacy beliefs (activists  $\beta = .32, p < .001$  and non-activists  $\beta = .34, p < .001$ ) on collective action intention were significantly mediated by social identification (see Table 3 for indirect effects). Moreover, in the non-activist group, the total effect of moral outrage on collective action intention ( $\beta = .09, p = .27$ ) was significantly mediated by social identification. Results revealed a negligible between-groups difference in the indirect association between prosocial disobedience attitude and collective action, mediated by social identification, meaning that prosocial disobedience was likely to mobilize both activists and non-activists in a uniquely similar way. The observed indirect effects of other two paths (i.e., from moral outrage and collective efficacy beliefs, respectively) were found to be statistically larger among non-activists.

**TABLE 3** Indirect effects for EMSICA and SIMCA on activists ( $n = 549$ ) and non-Activists ( $n = 234$ )

Path	Non-activists				Activists				Comparison	
	$\beta$	$p$	LLCI	ULCI	$\beta$	$p$	LLCI	ULCI	Wald test	$p$
EMSICA										
PDA → SI → CAI	.26	<.001	.09	.43	.32	<.001	.08	.56	2.45	.12
Moral outrage → SI → CAI	.17	.01	.01	.33	.02	.48	-.06	.10	5.71	.02
Collective efficacy → SI → CAI	.36	<.001	.15	.58	.12	.02	-.01	.26	6.23	.01
SIMCA										
SI → PDA → CAI	.08	.23	-.09	.24	.03	.74	-.21	.27	0.28	.60
SI → Moral outrage → CAI	-.06	.26	-.21	.08	.01	.62	-.05	.07	1.53	.22
SI → Collective efficacy → CAI	-.02	.84	-.21	.18	.12	.01	.01	.23	3.05	.08

Note: Wald test of coefficient comparison with 1 degree of freedom.

Abbreviations: CAI, collective action intention; PDA, prosocial disobedience attitude; SI, social identification.



**FIGURE 4** The extended social identity model of collective action (SIMCA): activists ( $n = 549$ ) versus non-activists ( $n = 234$ ). On the left activists values, on the right non-activists values. \* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .001$

### 3.2 | Test of the extended SIMCA

The results of the model testing the extended SIMCA obtained a good fit:  $\chi^2(76) = 255.43$  (activists = 146.06; non-activists = 109.37),  $CFI = 0.98$ ,  $TLI = 0.98$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.05$ ,  $SRMR = 0.05$ . All items loaded on the intended latent variable with significant factor loadings ( $p < .001$ ). As can be seen in Figure 4, all the hypothesized path coefficients were significant, except for the ones from prosocial disobedience attitudes (mediator 1) and moral outrage (mediator 2) to collective action intention. Furthermore, we found that the path from collective efficacy (mediator 3) to collective action intention was not significant in the non-activists group. Therefore, the direct link between social identification and collective action intentions was fully mediated by collective efficacy beliefs among activists only. The model explained 60/57% (activists/non-activists) of variance of prosocial disobedience attitude, 18/58% of variance of moral outrage, 34/69% of variance of collective efficacy and 44/58% of variance of respondents' collective action intention.

Model comparison with a constrained model in which all regression paths were set to be equal across groups confirmed the between-group differences:  $\chi^2(7) = 69.01$ ,  $p < .001$ . The Wald test showed that the difference was statistically significant at the level of  $p < .01$  for the paths from moral outrage and collective efficacy to social identification and from collective efficacy to intentions. The between-groups difference of path from social identification to intention tended to significance ( $p = .10$ ).

Finally, we tested the indirect and total effect of social identification on collective action intention with prosocial disobedience attitude, moral outrage and collective efficacy as mediators, using 5,000 bootstrap resamples (see Table 3 for indirect effects). In the non-activist group, the path from social identification to collective action intention was not significantly mediated by any variable. Instead, in the activist group, the total effect of social identification on collective action intention ( $\beta = .65$ ,  $p < .001$ ) was mediated just by collective efficacy beliefs, leaving a significant direct effect of  $\beta = .47$ ,  $p < .001$ . This difference between the two groups was confirmed by the Wald test. Finally, comparing the AIC obtained for the extended EMSICA (AIC = 27,327.96) and the extended SIMCA

(AIC = 27,382.70), consistent with our prediction, the EMSICA was found to be slightly better suited to explain collective action on behalf of newly-formed collective identities.

## 4 | DISCUSSION

Two key findings emerge from our analysis. First, when analysing the similarities and the differences in how the key precursors predicted collective action intentions among activists and non-activists, we found that social identification has a prominent role in mobilizing collective action intention. Social identification was found to fully mediate prosocial disobedience attitude and collective efficacy beliefs in both activists and non-activists. Moreover, social identification was found to fully mediate moral outrage on collective action intention but only for non-activists. Consistent with our prediction, there was a direct association between collective efficacy beliefs and collective action intention but only for activists. Prosocial disobedience attitude formed a unique mobilizing path to collective action intentions fully mediated by social identification across both groups.

With respect to the group differences, we found that moral outrage predicted collective action indirectly (full mediation), through social identification, among non-activists, but not among activists, suggesting that non-activists were more inclined to have an emotion-focused approach to coping with collective disadvantage. On the contrary, the direct association between collective efficacy beliefs and collective action intention was fully mediated by social identification among non-activists only. The direct path of collective efficacy beliefs on collective action intention (for activists only) suggests that activists had a more problem-focused approach to social mobilization shaped primarily by their beliefs that the attainability of change depends primarily on one's own actions.

Secondly, results of our study support the idea that social identities relevant to a protest are not given per se but are emergent, socially constructed and dynamic group-level phenomena, predicted by a set of socio-psychological factors. When testing the applicability of the extended EMSICA and the extended SIMCA, we found that a simultaneous experience of moral outrage at the authorities and prosocial disobedience attitude coupled with collective efficacy beliefs facilitated to a varying extent the formation of new shared identity among both activists and non-activists, which, in turn, provided a psychological basis for their willingness to engage in collective action.

Taken together, this study highlights an important idea that non-activists as members of a broader society can be politically active too, and that their intentions to engage in system-challenging collective action can, in part, be explained through the social-psychological mechanisms that typically drive behaviour of political activists. As we compellingly showed, for both activists and non-activists, prosocial disobedience attitude acted as a common indirect mechanism robustly predicting political participation in anti-authority social movement in Chile via social identification with the shared cause. As to the intergroup differences, our study revealed that the indirect effects of moral outrage were more pronounced among non-activists, whereas perceived collective efficacy had stronger direct mobilizing effects among activists.

A major theoretical and practical implication of the current study is that it suggests that there may be a remarkable support for a political social movement among the broader society to the extent that people share a belief that democracy is in risk and has to be safeguarded. Their prosocial disobedience attitude may then eventually precede the formation of a shared social identity and drive subsequent political behaviour aimed to safeguard one's country's path towards democracy.

## 5 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The present study presents some limitations. Firstly, our research was correlational, thus, further longitudinal or experimental evidence is needed to make any causal inferences about the indirect associations between prosocial disobedience attitude and collective action, mediated by social identification. Second, participants in both

subsamples were recruited in online groups that discussed the ongoing social protests in Chile and, therefore, it is possible that all respondents (i.e., 'activists' and 'non-activists') were virtually exposed to echo chambers or otherwise homogeneous opinion-based groups that shared the same idea about the need for systematic changes in this Latin American country. Future research should further examine the role of other potentially confounding variables such as prior engagement in progressive collective action, perceived violations of political rights, perceived threat to democracy, perceived morality of political authorities as well as intersecting social identities, all of which may further explain the linear associations between prosocial disobedience attitude and collective action. Third, future qualitative research should also explore how lay people define the meanings of prosocial disobedience and whether they view it as a form of active citizenship. Qualitative collective action studies may also explore whether and how activists and non-activists differ in the way they visualize a desired social change or alternative to the status quo. Moreover, it would be important to study the politicized identity of activists and non-activists, as the collective action taken into account in the present research is a protest against the government and to promote new elections (Alberici & Milesi, 2018; Saavedra & Drury, 2019; van Zomeren et al., 2008). To better understand the role of non-activists, who perhaps already see the protester group as effective, and therefore do not play an active role as highlighted by Olson (1968), participative efficacy should also be considered (van Zomeren, Saguy, & Schellhaas, 2013), as well as the impact of the role of a specific group, such as the family, for the intergenerational transmission of collective action (González et al., 2020; Pozzi et al., 2021).

The present case study was conducted in the socio-historical context of Chile, a Latin American country with a recent history of dictatorship and systematic suppression of all political dissidence (1973–1990). The 2019 '*Chile despertó*' social movement apparently occurred when millions of Chilean citizens had become concerned with a possible decline of their hard-won democracy and took joint efforts to challenge the status quo. Future collective action research should capitalize on our findings to better understand how laypeople understand democracy and what actions they consider to be the most effective to safeguard it.

## 6 | CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the current research has revealed a unique role of prosocial disobedience attitudes in predicting the identification with the Chile *despertó* social movement and willingness to engage in collective action on its behalf among both activists and non-activists. It showed that not only civil activists but also members of a broader society can demand systemic changes through collective action when they experience concerns about anti-democratic trends and human rights abuses, thus becoming agents of social change.

In line with the previous research, we found that social identification with a cause was a crucial psychological condition enabling the translation of individuals' prosocial disobedience attitudes into their political actions.

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Maura Pozzi, upon reasonable request.

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