

How collective demands strengthen sympathy for normative and non-normative protest action: The example of Hong Kong's anti-extradition law amendment bill protests

Frank Reichert  | Adelaide Tsz Nok Au | Anna Julia Fiedler 

The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Correspondence

Frank Reichert.

Email: reichert@hku.hk

Funding information

Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office, Grant/Award Number: SR2020.A8.006; Centennial Center; The University of Hong Kong; Research Grants Council Hong Kong, Grant/Award Number: T44-707/16-N

Abstract

Political demands are a relevant factor in protest participation. However, most studies examined demands as a tactical tool, and it remains unclear how the endorsement of collective demands may contribute to creating the mobilization potential. This analysis examines how collective demands facilitate links of collective identity, efficacy, and grievances with sympathy for normative and non-normative protest actions in the context of Hong Kong's anti-extradition law amendment bill social movement. The results show that collective demands are directly and indirectly related to sympathy for protest action and moderate the role of political dissatisfaction in forming the mobilization potential. The analysis also reveals distinct associations of sympathy for normative versus non-normative protest action with facilitating factors. These results are discussed with respect to their theoretical and practical relevance in forming the mobilization potential and how they may contribute to understanding social movements more generally.

KEYWORDS

collective efficacy, collective identity, demands, grievances, Hong Kong, mobilization

Adelaide Tsz Nok Au and Anna Julia Fiedler (the second and third authors) contributed equally to the manuscript.

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited and is not used for commercial purposes.

© 2023 The Authors. *Sociology Compass* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Social movement tactics and mobilization efforts are “means of communication” (Larson, 2013, p. 870) that are constantly negotiated and re-evaluated among movement insiders (i.e., its members) as well as between insiders and outsiders (i.e., non-members). One goal of these negotiations is the conversion of outsiders into movement sympathizers, a process leading to the formation of the “mobilization potential” or “sympathy pool”¹ (Almeida, 2019; Klandermans & Oegema, 1987). Researchers have identified various factors contributing to the formation of the sympathy pool, including efficacy, identification, and grievances (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013). However, the exact processes leading to sympathy for *normative* (e.g., authorized demonstrations) and *non-normative* (e.g., vandalism) social movement activities might differ. Furthermore, prior literature has not examined *how political demands* raised by a social movement influence the role of other factors in forming the mobilization potential. In addition, it is unclear whether a popular set of political demands can explain how those factors relate to sympathy for a social movement's actions in a highly politicized context with broad societal support and the use of novel elements and tactics to achieve the movement's goals, as seen during Hong Kong's large-scale protests against an extradition law amendment bill (ELAB). Therefore, the current study aims to examine how demands are linked to the establishment of a sympathy pool using the case of the anti-ELAB movement in Hong Kong. By integrating resonance with movement aims as a critical factor in the mobilization process and exploring whether the associations differ between support for normative and non-normative movement activities, we advance social movement research. Moreover, this research furthers the understanding of the role of collective demands that tend to radicalize in (semi-)authoritarian contexts, such as Hong Kong, Myanmar, or Thailand (Thompson & Cheng, 2023).

1.1 | Hong Kong's anti-ELAB movement

Hong Kong has seen several large-scale protests over the past decades. In 2019, the Hong Kong government planned to introduce a controversial ELAB that would have allowed extradition to other jurisdictions, including mainland China (Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2019). As a result, opposition groups began organizing activities across the city in the spring. The movement received widespread support, and protests were common until early 2020. The protests were initially large, peaceful, diverse, and authorized demonstrations but escalated into an anti-government movement and a spiral of police repression and militant protests (Ku, 2020). The movement had also adopted new tactics as a consequence of the unsuccessful “Umbrella Movement” of 2014 (Ho, 2020). In addition, young people were particularly active in the anti-ELAB movement (Lee et al., 2019), reflecting their increasing political dissatisfaction and perceptions of an unresponsive and ineffective local political system (Lam-Knott, 2019).

The movement's original demand to withdraw the bill was amended after police and protesters clashed on 12 June 2019, an event classified as a “riot” by the police. Subsequently, all parts of the movement adopted a set of five demands. Besides the original request to withdraw the bill, these demands included criticism of the authorities (mainly the police). They asked that the protests of June 12 not be classified as “riots,” as well as for arrested protesters to get amnesty, an independent commission of inquiry into alleged police violence, and genuine universal suffrage (Civil Human Rights Front, 2019). The slogan “Five demands, not one less” became a popular and unifying element of the movement, framing its purpose and goals. Even after protests subsided, the slogan remained a popular marker of sympathy with movement supporters (Wong, 2021). The coherent set of five demands focusing on the rectification of perceived injustices and the high level of solidarity and identification with the movement among normative and non-normative protest camps were two key characteristics of the anti-ELAB movement (Lee, 2020).

1.2 | Conceptual background

1.2.1 | Political demands

Demands are integral to the mobilization process directed at movement outsiders and often incorporated into slogans and commonly used as communication mechanisms (e.g., banners, merchandise, art). Demands function as interpretive and communicative tools and are part of a movement's broader frames to offer alternative narratives of "reality" (Flam & King, 2005). However, these frames result from dynamic exchanges between different social movement members, third-party actors, and movement opponents and are adjusted throughout a movement's life. Refinements to these frames are commonly necessary to adapt to changing situations and mobilize movement outsiders (Flam & King, 2005). Yet the re-evaluation of frames and demands can also increase the potential for internal conflicts and radicalization or demobilization of movement insiders (Thompson & Cheng, 2023).

Through effective framing that unites contested views, social movements highlight societal problems and potential solutions to bystanders and can convince potential participants of the necessity and efficacy of protest action (Vydt & Ketelaars, 2021). Movement frames are particularly powerful when they resonate with insiders *and* outsiders and establish a shared movement identity by emphasizing issues of concern to both groups (Benford & Snow, 2000). Clearly articulated demands are a means to highlight such shared concerns; they can even represent one form of movement frames. Thus, demands are an important element in the framing process by which social movements seek to align individuals' interests with the movement's goals and activities (Benford & Snow, 2000). Demands can also contribute to framing collective action by proposing possible solutions to the identified issues (e.g., universal suffrage as a response to intransparent political decision-making). Individuals' endorsement of and commitment to these demands can result in agreement with common goals, facilitating consensus and potentially raising movement support.

Still, the role that movement demands play in forming the sympathy pool by linking or moderating other factors, such as collective efficacy, grievances, and identity, has gained little attention. For example, civil servants more likely intended to participate in Hong Kong's anti-ELAB movement the more they agreed with the movement's demands and the more efficacious they perceived collective action by civil servants (Mak & Tse, 2022). However, the links between support for the demands and collective identity and efficacy were not examined. Similarly, Somma and Medel (2019) showed that the size of demonstrations in Chile was associated with the number of demands and their generality. Yet again, it was not explored how demands led to politicization. Rather, most studies examine demands as a tactical tool and whether administrations coopt them (Verhoeven & Duyvendak, 2017). This study aims to address this gap and probe how central support for a movement's demands is in forming the sympathy pool.

1.2.2 | Grievances

One prevalent cause for social movement participation are underlying grievances, such as perceived injustices or threats to one's interests (Almeida, 2019; Klandermans & van Stekelenburg, 2019). Social movement research has shown that grievances shared among a group, such as perceived injustice, disenfranchisement, or political dissatisfaction, can accelerate social movement participation (Opp, 1988; Reichert, 2021). Dissatisfaction with the accountability of authorities and perceived unfair governance are strong predictors of support for social movements (Klandermans, 2013). Furthermore, experiences of group deprivation and perceived unfairness (e.g., lack of political influence, biased electoral procedures) may cause the legitimization of radical action (Bos, 2018). Conversely, opportunities for democratic participation may reduce grievances, increase feelings of efficacy, and mitigate the risk of radicalization (Li, 2005). However, grievances that are not accompanied by, or do not turn into, collective demands may not lead to a shared identity and fail to politicize (Simon & Klandermans, 2001).

In Hong Kong, grievances can refer to a variety of issues. Early during the 2019 anti-ELAB movement, state actors proclaimed that the political unrest resulted from deprivation due to increasing social inequalities, such as a lack of affordable housing (Wong & Wong, 2022). At the same time, activists called for more channels of political

participation (e.g., universal suffrage), expressing their dissatisfaction with the status quo (Lee et al., 2019). Dissatisfaction with the lack of political influence is a prevalent example of grievances in Hong Kong and also motivated participation in the “Umbrella Movement” (Lee et al., 2017).

1.2.3 | Collective identity

Collective identities are inextricably connected with the emergence, persistence, and demise of social movements (Gillan, 2020). A social or “collective identity” consists of an individual's self-image derived from their membership in social groups (e.g., cultural or political groups; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Collective identities can develop and strengthen through perceived closeness, frequent contact with group members, and a shared fate (e.g., perceived political powerlessness; Turner et al., 1987). As movements often gather heterogeneous groups of people, the legitimacy and resilience of a movement also depend on the formation of shared meanings and a strong collective movement identity (Zlobina & Gonzalez Vazquez, 2018).

Collective identities tend to politicize when group members are aware that they share grievances over an issue (e.g., a lack of influence in political decision-making or alleged police misconduct; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Like-minded people who believe they have something in common, such as shared goals and collective demands, tend to feel closer to each other, and this perceived closeness contributes to the formation or salience of a shared identity (Turner et al., 1987). Moreover, groups and behavioral norms form that may encourage generally accepted, *normative* action or *non-normative* behaviors deviating from what most people consider acceptable to redress the factors blamed for the grievances (Smith et al., 2020). A collective movement identity can also be strategically deployed and eliminate concerns about the efficacy or inefficacy of movement tactics (Larson, 2013). However, the role of collective demands in turning grievances into a collective identity is rarely examined.

1.2.4 | Collective efficacy

Collective efficacy is the shared belief that one's group can resolve grievances through unified effort (Mummendey et al., 1999). Individuals are more likely to engage in movement action when they believe that acting as a group will help to eliminate their grievances at affordable costs (Klandermans, 2013). In addition, perceived collective efficacy can affect movement outsiders' sympathy for protest actions (Tausch et al., 2011). Thus, whereas collective identity reflects an expressive path to protest action, efficacy is an instrumental pathway to collective behavior (Larson, 2013). Therefore, both may show differential links to political demands and sympathy for movement action.

1.3 | Current study

The anti-ELAB movement built on pre-existing grievances and quickly adopted a coherent set of demands framing its purpose and goals. Particularly young people were dissatisfied with the political situation in Hong Kong (Lam, 2018), and young individuals and those with higher education were among the most active groups throughout the movement (Lee et al., 2019). However, while sympathy with the movement and its demands remained deep, concerns about the ineffectiveness and potential opposition to non-normative and violent tactics were also raised (Fiedler et al., 2022).

Notably, the mobilization potential stands for the *latent acceptance* of a movement, though it can culminate in *active engagement* (Almeida, 2019; Benford & Snow, 2000). Yet, mobilization research has primarily examined how sympathizers become activists (e.g., by attending rallies or donating to the movement's cause). There is a dearth of research on the links between movement frames and sympathy for movement activities and the role of political

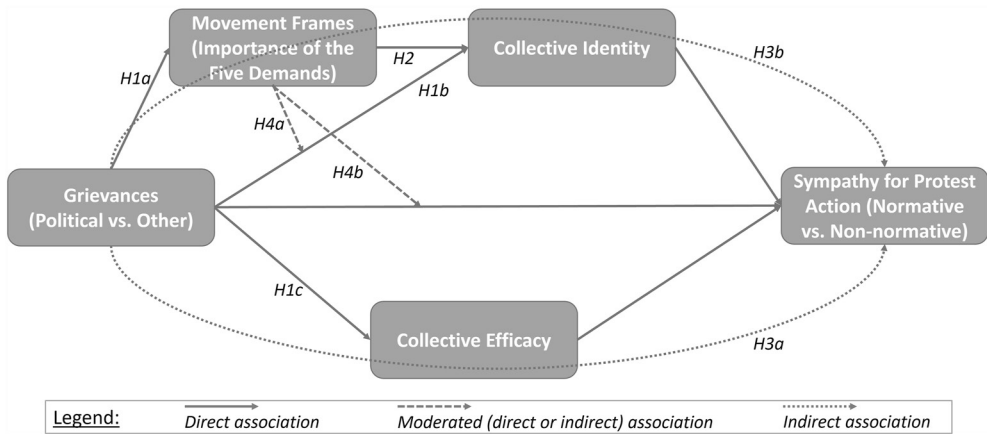


FIGURE 1 Hypothesized model (schematic illustration). Hypothesis H5 is not shown for simplicity.

demands in this process. More specifically, it is necessary to understand how shared grievances and agreement with the movement's demands relate to sympathy for its tactics.

This analysis aims to test a set of hypotheses using the example of Hong Kong's anti-ELAB movement. The hypothetical model (Figure 1) builds on the assumption that more aggrieved individuals are more likely to form the sympathy pool (Klandermans, 2013). That is, higher levels of grievances are hypothesized to be associated with attribution of more importance to the movement's demands (H1a), stronger identification with protesters (H1b), and the perception that collective action can be effective (H1c). Furthermore, movement frames are critical in forming a movement identity (Johnston, 2014). Therefore, we hypothesize that collective identification with protesters will be stronger the more importance one attributes to their demands as a particular type of frame (H2). Consequently, grievances may be indirectly associated with more sympathy for normative and non-normative protest action via collective efficacy (H3a) and sequentially via demands and collective identity (H3b).

In addition, movement demands are examined as a *moderating force* as they are expected to be particularly critical in forming the sympathy pool. Besides linking grievances indirectly to the mobilization potential, demands may moderate the associations between grievances and collective identification (H4a) and between grievances and sympathy for protest action (H4b).

Finally, we expect that moderated and indirect associations are stronger for grievances related to the reform of the political system than for other grievances (H5), especially since dissatisfaction with the political establishment has long been a concern among Hong Kong youth (Lam, 2018). Whether the hypothesized associations differ between normative and non-normative movement action is left for exploration, as preliminary evidence indicates the potential for differences in the respective mechanisms (Tausch et al., 2011; Zlobina & Gonzalez Vazquez, 2018).

2 | METHODS

2.1 | Data

The sample was drawn from an annual survey panel of students from two local universities who, as freshmen, first participated in an online survey about digital citizenship in 2019. The two universities account for over 30% of all undergraduate students at public universities in Hong Kong (University Grants Committee [UGC], 2023). The current analysis focused on the second-wave data when the variables of interest were measured in mid-June 2020. Then, the students were in their second year and reported their opinions on and participation in the anti-ELAB movement.

The institutional Human Research Ethics Committee approved the study, and all participants gave informed consent before completing the questionnaire.

Data from 388 students of local origin were analyzed, reflecting 46% of the invited local students (excluding 20 students with unreliable or incomplete responses). The response rate was deemed acceptable, given the sensitivity of the topic at the time when the survey was conducted (shortly before a national security law was implemented in Hong Kong). Chi-square and independent samples *t*-tests showed no significant response bias among respondents who participated in 2020 and those who did not respond to our invitation on variables measured in 2019, such as sociodemographic information, civic engagement, and efficacy ($ps > 0.05$). Weights were calculated based on the actual population of students at each university (adjusted for gender and origin) and applied in all analyses. The weighted data include 49% female and 51% male students between 18 and 23 years, with a mean age of 20 (for details about the procedures, see Reichert et al., 2020).

2.2 | Measures

2.2.1 | Dependent variables

Nine items describing specific political activities measured students' sympathy for actions in support of the movement (1 = "Not at all" to 5 = "A lot"; Appendix A). Following prior research (Reichert et al., 2020), we used three items to measure students' sympathy for normative actions (e.g., attending authorized demonstrations) and six items to measure sympathy for non-normative actions (e.g., blocking roads).

2.2.2 | Independent variables

Eight items measured grievances for various socio-political issues in Hong Kong (Appendix A). We adopted eight of nine items used in prior research (Reichert et al., 2020): Three items measured satisfaction with the political context (e.g., Hong Kong's political development), and five items captured satisfaction with the socio-economic context (e.g., Hong Kong's economic development; 1 = "Extremely dissatisfied" to 5 = "Extremely satisfied").

2.2.3 | Intermediate variables

Several potential mediators and moderators of the associations between the independent and dependent variables were measured (Appendix A). *Collective efficacy* was measured via respondents' agreement with three items (e.g., "If the people in Hong Kong acted as a group, they could achieve their political goals; " 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree"). Students were also assessed on their level of *identification as a protester* using three items (e.g., "I feel strong ties with the protesters; " 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree"). Finally, students indicated the *importance of the five demands* for each of the movement's key demands (e.g., withdrawal of the extradition bill; 1 = "Not important at all" to 5 = "Very important").

2.2.4 | Additional measures

Additional measures accounted for confounding factors. Demographic variables often relate to political participation and radicalization (e.g., Bhui et al., 2014; Smith, 2009). Therefore, students' gender (male vs. female) and age (in years and months) were included in the analysis. Also, sympathy for normative and non-normative action may differ

based on perceived effectiveness (Saab et al., 2016). Thus, students' perception of the (in)effectiveness of violence to achieve the movement's goals was measured using one item, "Protesters' use of violence against people undermines support for the social movement cause" (1 = "Strongly disagree" to 5 = "Strongly agree"). Moreover, prior studies have shown that beliefs about "good" citizenship behaviors can influence political action (Oser, 2022). Students indicated how important they consider "participating in peaceful protests against laws believed to be unjust" for being a good citizen (1 = "Not important at all" to 5 = "Very important"). These variables were control measures in statistical analyses.

2.3 | Analysis

The analyses were conducted in Mplus (version 8.6; Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017). Maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors (MLR) was employed unless otherwise noted. First, confirmatory factor analyses determined whether the items measured the respective theoretical constructs. Subsequently, the structural model examined the direct associations between the predictors and each dependent variable. This step was followed by modeling indirect associations using the Delta method. The data were also bootstrapped with 10,000 resamples (using maximum likelihood because bootstrapping is unavailable with MLR in Mplus). Further models were specified to examine the hypothesized interaction effects. All non-binary variables were centered for the analyses, and variables involved in latent variable interactions were fully standardized when analyzing moderated structural equation models. Model-to-data fit was considered good if comparative fit index (CFI) ≥ 0.95 , root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) ≤ 0.06 , and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) ≤ 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

3 | RESULTS

Confirmatory factor analyses determined whether the observed items measured the respective theoretical constructs. We first examined each unidimensional and two-dimensional construct separately. A full measurement model was specified following any necessary modifications. Model fit and modification indices were used to determine necessary changes to the initial model, implemented one at a time to avoid overfitting. In the final measurement model (Figure 2), one item ("attending unauthorized demonstrations") was allowed to cross-load on sympathy for both normative and non-normative action supporting the social movement.² In addition, five residual correlations were modeled. All factors were at least of satisfactory reliability in the final measurement model (Table 1).

After determining the measurement model, a structural regression model with direct and indirect associations was specified to test the hypotheses. The structural model fit the data well and showed only a few significant, direct associations for the key variables (Figure 3; Appendix B summarizes the coefficients of the covariates and control variables). Hence, the presence of mediated and moderated associations seemed likely. Given their computational complexity, latent variable interactions were subsequently examined in separate models. In the following, we discuss the findings concerning the hypotheses and report the results from the mediation and moderation analyses.

3.1 | Direct and indirect associations of grievances with sympathy for protest action

In the measurement model, political satisfaction correlated strongly with sympathy for normative ($r = -0.60$, $p < 0.001$) and non-normative action ($r = -0.55$, $p < 0.001$). In contrast, the correlations of socio-economic satisfaction with sympathy for normative ($r = -0.24$, $p < 0.001$) and non-normative protest action ($r = -0.28$, $p < 0.001$) were weak (Cohen, 1992). These correlations indicate that students had more sympathy for either kind of movement action the less satisfied they were with the political and/or socio-economic situation of Hong Kong. However, in the

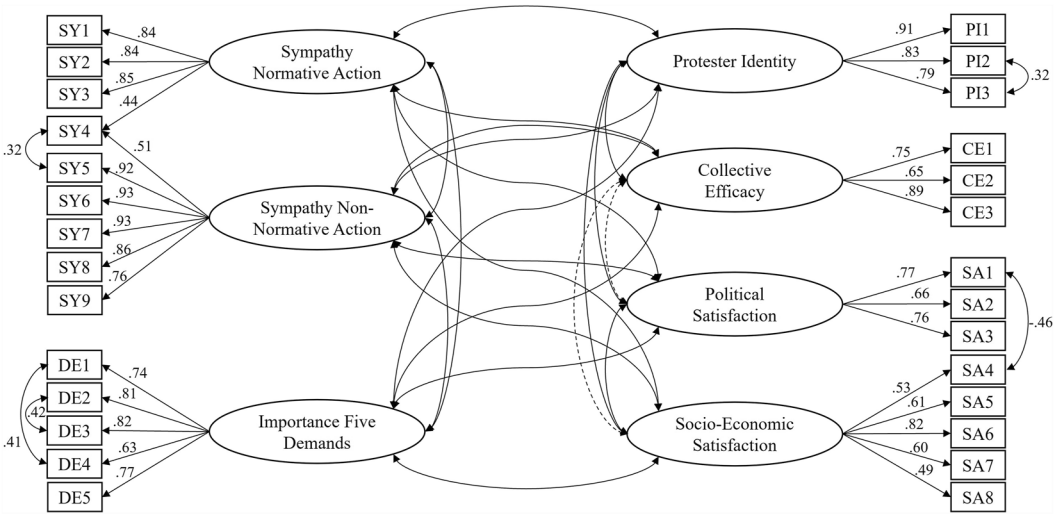


FIGURE 2 Factor loadings in the final measurement model of the latent variables. Standardized coefficients (correlation coefficients for latent factors not shown for simplicity). Model fit: $\chi^2(323) = 575.43$, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA < 0.05, SRMR = 0.05. Solid paths were highly significant ($p < 0.001$); dashed paths were non-significant ($p \geq 0.05$).

TABLE 1 Reliabilities of the latent factors.

	Coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951)	Coefficient omega (McDonald, 1999)
Sympathy for normative action	0.90	0.69
Sympathy for non-normative action	0.95	0.84
Political satisfaction	0.76	0.77
Socio-economic satisfaction	0.72	0.78
Five demands	0.88	0.84
Protester identity	0.90	0.85
Collective efficacy	0.80	0.81

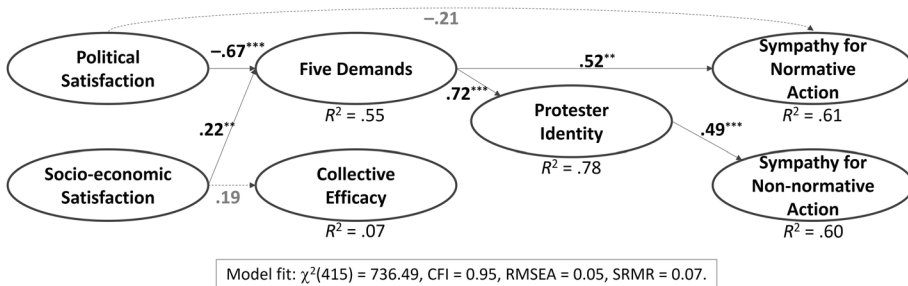


FIGURE 3 Structural model predicting sympathy for movement activities. Standardized coefficients of at least marginally significant paths (covariates and correlations not shown for simplicity). Solid paths were significant ($*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$); dashed paths in gray were marginally significant ($p < 0.10$).

multivariate structural model, the direct associations between grievances and sympathy for movement action turned non-significant ($p > 0.05$), suggesting indirect and/or moderated associations.

Still, there were significant direct associations of grievances with the five demands (H1a). In the structural model, support for the five demands was much higher among those less satisfied with the political situation. It was also slightly higher among those more satisfied with Hong Kong's socio-economic condition. There were no significant direct associations with collective identity as a protester and grievances in the structural model (H1b). However, the importance of the five demands was a strong, significant, and positive predictor of sympathy for normative action and collective identity (H2), and collective identity was a strong, significant, and positive predictor of sympathy for non-normative movement action. Consequently, sympathy for normative action was higher among students who more strongly supported the five demands, and sympathy for non-normative action was higher among those who identified more strongly as a protester (H3b). Thus, political satisfaction was indirectly and negatively associated with sympathy for both types of movement action. However, there was no significant indirect association of socio-economic satisfaction with sympathy for non-normative action (H3b).

Specifically, less political satisfaction was associated with a higher importance of the movement's demands, which in turn was associated with more sympathy for normative movement action (indirect path: $\beta = -0.35$, $p < 0.05$). There was no significant indirect association between socio-economic satisfaction and sympathy for normative action (indirect path: $\beta = 0.12$, $p > 0.05$). On the other hand, the importance of the five demands was indirectly related to sympathy for non-normative action via collective identity (indirect path: $\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, less political satisfaction was associated with more sympathy for non-normative action as it was related to a higher importance of the movement's demands, which in turn was associated with a stronger collective identity that was linked to the outcome (indirect path: $\beta = -0.24$, $p < 0.05$). Overall, political satisfaction was thus of strong, negative predictive value regarding sympathy for each type of movement action, whereas socio-economic satisfaction was of little relevance (H5).

Finally, collective efficacy was neither significantly associated with grievances (H1c) nor a significant predictor of either outcome variable. Thus, collective efficacy did not mediate the association between grievances and sympathy for movement action ($p > 0.05$; H3a). Consequently, the results regarding the first set of hypotheses were mixed, while the findings supported the second and fifth hypotheses. On the other hand, the third set of hypotheses received partial empirical support for the identity path but none for the path via efficacy.

3.2 | Interactions between grievances and political demands

Neither of the two grievances variables' association with protester identity was moderated by demands ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, H4a was not supported.

Additionally, interactions were examined separately for political and socio-economic satisfaction regarding their predictive value of sympathy for movement action (H4b). The analyses showed that each of these interactions was statistically significant. The negative association between political satisfaction and sympathy for normative action gained strength and significance at low support for the five demands (interaction: $\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$). That is, students to whom the five demands were rather unimportant had less sympathy for normative protest action the more they were politically satisfied (Figure 4A). However, the findings differed for students' satisfaction with the socio-economic situation (interaction: $\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$). Students who more strongly supported the five demands reported more sympathy for normative protest action the higher their socio-economic satisfaction was, whereas sympathy for normative action was lower among more socio-economically satisfied students who considered the five demands as rather unimportant (Figure 4B).

The results further showed that students whose support for the five demands was above the sample average sympathized more with non-normative action the less they were satisfied with the political situation (interaction: $\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.001$; Figure 5A). Although the interaction was also significant for socio-economic dissatisfaction ($\beta = -0.09$, $p < 0.01$), there were no significant regions for socio-economic satisfaction across three standard deviations above and below the mean value of five demands. Despite the funneling effect in Figure 5B, sympathy for

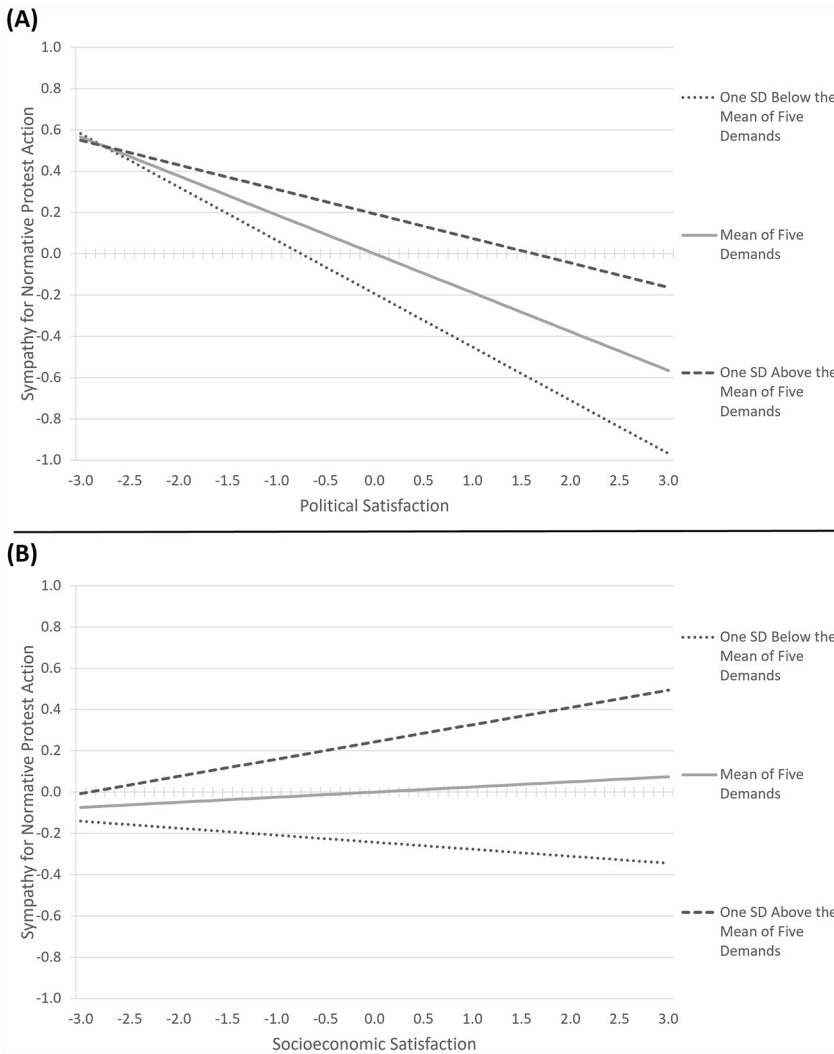


FIGURE 4 Sympathy for normative protest action at different values of (A) political and (B) socio-economic satisfaction for different levels of the importance of the five demands.

non-normative protest action was rather close to the variable mean over the range of socio-economic satisfaction across different levels of support for the five demands.

4 | DISCUSSION

Research has shown that support for a movement's demands is associated with (intended) participation (Mak & Tse, 2022) and that broader, universal demands are linked to larger protests (Somma & Medel, 2019). Still, the significance of demands in forming the mobilization potential and the mechanisms of how demands contribute to the sympathy pool were not explored previously. Without *claims* directed at the source made responsible for *discontent*, a movement's goals may remain diffuse and mobilization efforts ineffective. With its clearly articulated demands, the anti-ELAB movement in Hong Kong provided an excellent case to examine the role of demands in forming the mobilization potential. This study went beyond prior research by examining how central the perceived importance of a

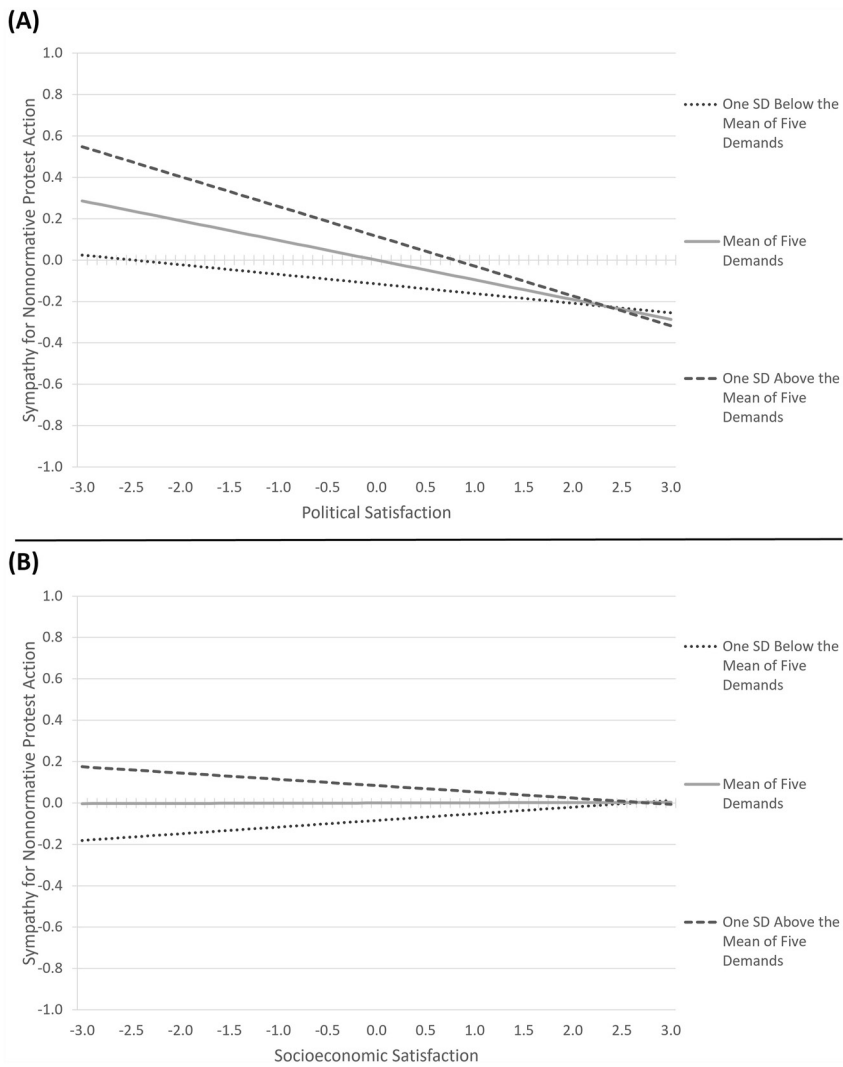


FIGURE 5 Sympathy for non-normative protest action at different values of (A) political and (B) socio-economic satisfaction for different levels of the importance of the five demands.

movement's demands is for creating a pool of sympathizers and enabling potential future mobilization in a restrictive political context.

Specifically, the current study examined the perceived importance of the five demands in the anti-ELAB movement as a mediating and moderating mechanism for different grievances and collective efficacy in forming the movement's sympathy pool. The findings contribute key insights into the central role of movement demands as a direct, indirect, and moderating force in establishing a sympathy pool. This study further demonstrates the dominant role of political (rather than social or economic) concerns in this process, thus addressing contrasting claims about the causes of youth politicization in Hong Kong. Finally, the analysis also shows distinct differences in the mechanisms linked to sympathy for normative and non-normative protest action.

4.1 | Mobilizing factors relate to sympathy for movement action directly and indirectly

4.1.1 | Political grievances are more powerful than socio-economic grievances

The analysis identified significant direct and indirect as well as non-significant associations suggesting that discontent with the political framework is particularly important for the mobilization potential. While some stakeholders blamed social inequalities for the political unrest in Hong Kong (Wong & Wong, 2022), our analysis points to political (rather than socio-economic) dissatisfaction as the more critical factor among highly educated youth. This insight amends prior research showing that young people in Hong Kong were particularly frustrated with the political system (Lam-Knott, 2019). Notably, higher levels of political dissatisfaction were indirectly linked to sympathy for protest action by association with support for the five demands. Moderated associations were also consistently stronger for political rather than socio-economic satisfaction, as discussed below. Consequently, criticism of the mainland Chinese political system and calls for greater autonomy for Hong Kong may need to be considered more seriously by political elites.

The positive association between socio-economic satisfaction and the importance of the five demands must be seen in the context of an analysis that examined a group of highly educated individuals and adjusted for various covariates. On the one hand, this finding means that among individuals who are *equally* (dis-)satisfied with Hong Kong's *political situation*, those who are less satisfied with the socio-economic situation of Hong Kong consider the movement's demands less important than socio-economically more satisfied individuals. In other words, individuals less satisfied with Hong Kong's socio-economic situation may care less about change to the political system as demanded by the anti-ELAB movement than about policies that address social or economic problems in Hong Kong.³

On the other hand, highly educated young people were particularly active in the anti-ELAB movement. Any society's future social, economic, and political leaders will likely emerge from highly educated youth. Thus, they represent a critical group for examining the mobilization potential, as understanding whether highly educated youth sympathize with a social movement's goals and actions can help anticipate future influences on public policy. Still, further research could explore whether education or socio-economic status moderate the identified association.

4.1.2 | Demands and collective identification differ in their associations with the outcomes

The five demands were critical in the politicization process as the claims remained largely unmet. The data reveal the five demands as an effective frame for strengthening the collective movement identity. However, collective identification only mediated the association between demands and sympathy for non-normative action. In contrast, the importance attributed to the demands rather than collective identification directly predicted sympathy for normative action. This finding demonstrates the centrality of movement claims, but it also raises the question of why movement demands were not directly related to sympathy for non-normative protest action. Collective identity has been identified as a key factor overshadowing other influences (e.g., collective efficacy) relevant to the development of support for radical collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Especially when an outgroup, such as the Hong Kong government, is perceived as incapable of change or compromise, hostility toward this adversary may surge among those who highly identify as protesters, thereby justifying radical action and promoting sympathy for non-normative means (Shuman et al., 2016). Thus, collective identification may generally play a more prominent role in radicalization processes than in normative paths to protest action and, therefore, must be considered as a potent mediator of collective demands and potentially other indirect influences on the radical mobilization potential.

However, it is also possible that the five demands were perceived as rather moderate when the data were collected. That is, although the five demands remained central throughout the existence of the anti-ELAB movement, further demands evolved as the movement progressed. In the later stages of the social movement—and similar to claim radicalization in Thailand a few months later when the initial three demands (e.g., for a new constitution)

transitioned into calls for the reform of the monarchy (Thompson & Cheng, 2023), insiders and outsiders of the anti-ELAB movement may have considered the five demands less radical than claims such as for Hong Kong's independence (Lee et al., 2020). The endorsement of moderate goals (i.e., the five demands) would, therefore, directly strengthen sympathy for comparatively moderate means (i.e., sympathy for normative action). On the other hand, support for the "moderate" five demands would not show a direct association with more radical means, thus explaining the absence of a direct association with sympathy for non-normative protest behaviors.⁴

Although this study did not examine the pathway from sympathy to actual protest action, these findings shed light on the practical significance of unifying movement demands, as sympathy for specific activities likely precedes actual behavior (Almeida, 2019). While the endorsement of a movement's demands may be insufficient to get third parties' approval for radical and even violent protest tactics, our results tentatively suggest that agreement with such demands facilitates the conversion of outsiders into sympathizers of a movement that adopts legal forms of protest. Consequently, developing a strong collective identity may not be necessary for forming a sympathy pool when clear and unifying demands exist. Given the highly politicized climate in which the anti-ELAB movement took place with the widespread endorsement of the movement's aims in the population, future research could additionally explore this association in less politicized contexts.

4.1.3 | Collective efficacy is of limited relevance

Interestingly, collective efficacy was not directly associated with sympathy when accounting for the other factors. This finding may underline the limited relevance of collective efficacy in protests against structural disadvantages (van Zomeren et al., 2008), especially when widely supported demands and a strong collective identity can be utilized for expressive purposes, thus potentially eliminating concerns about efficacy (Larson, 2013). It is also possible that collective efficacy does not directly translate into sympathy and that other factors (e.g., anger) mediate collective efficacy (Zhu & Chou, 2021). It can also be speculated that this path may be less relevant when a movement has not achieved its goals, as in recent protest movements in Hong Kong.⁵

4.2 | Movement demands are a powerful moderator in the formation of the sympathy pool

Demands also turned out to be a moderating force. While there was no interaction between grievances and demands in the regression of collective identification, demands moderated the associations between sympathy for protest action and grievances *above and beyond* the identified direct and indirect associations. These findings further stress the essential role of demands in forming the sympathy pool.

Furthermore, there were different associations between political satisfaction and sympathy for normative versus non-normative protest action. Although political dissatisfaction was associated with more sympathy for normative action at various levels of support for the five demands, political satisfaction was associated with less sympathy for normative protests at below-average importance of the movement's demands. There were also differential associations between socio-economic satisfaction and sympathy for normative action at high versus low importance of the five demands. The stronger sympathy for normative movement action among more socio-economically satisfied individuals might be due to the population that was the focus of this study, and future studies could explore the role of education.

Conversely, the combination of political dissatisfaction and above-average importance of the demands was associated with more sympathy for non-normative protest action. This result further highlights the importance of movement demands in the formation of the sympathy pool and for potential mobilization. This finding also indicates that radicalization of the mobilization potential is more likely when grievances go in hand with the resonance of such demands. These results provide tentative evidence that political (dis-)satisfaction might work as a counter mechanism

regarding sympathy for normative action among individuals unsupportive of the movement's demands whilst facilitating potential radicalization among those with strong support for those demands.

Finally, this discussion indicates potential differences in the mechanisms leading to sympathy for normative versus non-normative protest action. For example, collective identification is critical in the latter process but appears less relevant for sympathy for normative action. Moreover, perceived injustice may legitimize radical behaviors if demands are not addressed and/or continue to be raised against the "opponent" (Bos, 2018). These findings expand studies indicating that the pathways to different types of protest action could vary (Tausch et al., 2011; Zlobina & Gonzalez Vazquez, 2018).

4.3 | Limitations and directions for future research

Our study has limitations to be acknowledged. First, the analysis relied on cross-sectional data, and the identified associations were correlational. Although this study adopted a strong conceptual framework, repeated measurements are needed to determine causality. However, the increasingly restrictive environment for the local opposition in Hong Kong makes such research more difficult. In addition, the data came from second-year students at two local universities. Hence, the findings are not representative of the entire student population as students at other universities in Hong Kong might differ from the ones sampled (e.g., regarding socio-economic background or grievances). It is also possible that more senior students may have been less optimistic about the anti-ELAB movement's prospects (e.g., due to previous experiences in the Umbrella Movement), and students in their final year might have been more concerned about job opportunities. Still, the weighted data can be considered representative of the respective cohort of students at the two institutions from which the sample was drawn, which accounted for over 30% of the total undergraduate student population at all eight public universities in Hong Kong (UGC, 2023).

Moreover, our analysis did not measure emotions, which may be associated with perceptions of injustice and collective efficacy (Zhu & Chou, 2021). Therefore, future research could examine whether emotions mediate the path of collective efficacy to sympathy for movement action and whether grievances are more strongly related to sympathy for action via collective identification or emotions. Also, the current study focused on the formation of the sympathy pool and not on predicting actual behavior. Hence, future research should examine whether the path from collective efficacy to movement participation is direct rather than mediated via sympathy for movement action.

In addition, most local students had engaged in some activities to support the movement. Public support for the movement was high, and even former participants who objected to the movement's radicalization still sympathized with its cause (Fiedler et al., 2022). Future research might examine these processes in less politicized climates with a larger pool of movement "outsiders" (e.g., movements on indigenous people's rights) to learn whether these processes work differently when the majority does not share grievances. Intensive longitudinal studies could also model dynamic relationships between the formation of the sympathy pool and protest participation.⁶

A strength of our study is its use of a direct measure of collective identification (i.e., identification with protesters) instead of broader group identity. Future studies should retain such direct measures and could further include more specific measures of efficacy (Saab et al., 2016). In addition, the results for collective efficacy require further research. On the one hand, collective efficacy may be more proximal to actual behavior than to sympathy for protest activities. On the other hand, our measure of collective efficacy was rather generic, and future research could adopt narrower measures of collective efficacy focusing on the specific social movement (e.g., "the opposition" or "activists") as the collective of interest instead of "people in Hong Kong."

Finally, additional factors of relevance in the mobilization process have been proposed and could be studied, including political ideology (Zhu & Chou, 2021), moral conviction (van Zomeren et al., 2018), or the perceived legitimacy of specific protest activities (Zlobina & Gonzalez Vazquez, 2018). Furthermore, the role of social media in the described processes needs to be explored as studies indicate that social media use can strengthen solidarity and facilitate strong and lasting collective action frames (Lee, 2020; Mak & Tse, 2022).

5 | CONCLUSION

Movement frames, such as agreeable demands accompanied by slogans used to align individual interests and movement goals, can provide a powerful mechanism for turning bystanders into sympathizers and sympathizers into activists (Vydt & Ketelaars, 2021). Our findings indicate that widely acceptable demands that resonate with a large pool of individuals are central to forming the mobilization potential. These demands relate to sympathy for movement action directly and indirectly and even mediate and moderate the associations of collective grievances and efficacy with sympathy for movement action. This sympathy pool can be tapped as sympathizers may turn into activists. Thus, movement demands represent a key factor in forming the mobilization potential and deserve more attention in social movement theory and research.

The identified distinct paths of political grievances to sympathy for normative versus non-normative movement action also provide valuable information for those who want to retain broad public support and stay on the normative side. Specifically, a sympathy pool may not form if support for movement demands remains low or political satisfaction high (or both). These insights lead us to conclude that collective grievances, demands, and identities may not further politicize, and intentions to involve third parties may not emerge if public grievances and demands are addressed and satisfied before conflicts escalate and demands expand. Additionally, political grievances were the driving force of youth's sympathy for protest action and should not be mistaken for social or economic causes of youth politicization, as is often done in Hong Kong (Wong & Wong, 2022). Importantly, highly educated youth may represent the pool from which future leaders are drawn. Hence, these young people's criticism of the political elites and calls for democratic participation (Lam, 2018; Lam-Knott, 2019) may need more serious consideration to prevent further radicalization, alienation, and a "brain drain" in Hong Kong.

The findings may also help us understand social movements outside Hong Kong, suggesting that clear demands to which the broad public is receptive (e.g., a fair distribution of wealth and, subsequently, a new constitution in Chile; Medel et al., 2022) are key in forming the sympathy pool. Social movements may even be able to stimulate sympathy among those without (or with little) collective grievances, provided they formulate several clear and popular (ideally universalistic) demands (Somma & Medel, 2019). Widely attractive demands might be particularly critical in (semi-)authoritarian contexts where people may fear repression for engaging in protests demanding substantial change to the rules by which society functions (though additional factors, such as grievances, resources, or networks, might be required). For example, in Iran, where significant restrictions on women's liberties have become a norm, it would have been difficult to sustain the immense and sometimes radical demonstrations without widely endorsable claims for more civil liberties and a clear slogan ("woman, life, freedom")—fueled by grievances and discrimination (Bayat, 2023).

Moreover, a sense of identification with protesters is required to cultivate a mobilization potential sympathetic to radical means. These insights may be especially relevant for environmental activism, as many people appear concerned about climate change and want their governments to act but believe governments are not doing enough (European Commission, 2023). At the same time, sympathy for radical actions taken by movements such as the Last Generation appears to be limited (Brändlin, 2022; Rucht, 2023). A lack of identification with the protesters might explain the public's mixed perceptions of these actions.

The insights also provide valuable starting points for movement organizers who aim to convert movement outsiders into sympathizers (and eventually active supporters) and maintain broad public support, as well as for authorities who represent the interests of the populace and usually want to avoid violent demonstrations and other disruptions to public life. However, the effect of concessions by the authorities on potential radicalization after movement demands have already gained traction requires further investigation.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Frank Reichert: Conceptualization; methodology; formal analysis; writing (original draft, revision); project administration; supervision. **Adelaide Tsz Nok Au:** Formal analysis; writing (original draft). **Anna Julia Fiedler:** Conceptualization; writing (original draft, revision).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research project was funded by the special round of the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme from the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (Project Number: SR2020.A8.006), by the Research Grants Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under its Theme-based Research Scheme (Project Number: T44-707/16-N), by the Seed Fund for basic research at The University of Hong Kong, and by the Second Century and Bryce Funds through the Summer Centennial Center Research Grants Scheme of the Centennial Center for Political Science and Public Affairs.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The anonymized survey data will be made publicly available through the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in accordance with its guidelines and the requirements specified by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data 5 years after conclusion of the research project.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at The University of Hong Kong (ethical approval number: EA1912024). All participants gave informed consent before participating in this research.

ORCID

Frank Reichert  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0692-5082>

Anna Julia Fiedler  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3286-9600>

ENDNOTES

- ¹ We use the terms “mobilization potential” or “sympathy pool” synonymously.
- ² Sensitivity analyses showed that the conclusions for the structural model remained the same when removing this item.
- ³ We also tested the interaction between political satisfaction and socio-economic satisfaction in the latent variable regression of support for the five demands. However, socio-economic satisfaction did not moderate the relationship between political satisfaction and support for the five demands ($\beta = 0.06$, $p > 0.05$).
- ⁴ We would like to thank the anonymous reviewer who raised this interpretation.
- ⁵ We also examined five demands as a moderator of collective efficacy. Although these latent variable interactions were statistically significant (sympathy for normative action: $\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$; sympathy for non-normative action: $\beta = 0.10$, $p < 0.001$), further graphical inspections of the regions of significance showed limited practical relevance.
- ⁶ As protest mobilization was already taking place at the time of data collection, we conducted additional sensitivity analyses that controlled for students' prior protest participation in the anti-ELAB movement. These analyses showed that the findings were robust and not substantially altered when taking prior protest participation into account.

REFERENCES

- Almeida, P. (2019). *Social movements: The structure of collective mobilization*. University of California Press.
- Bayat, A. (2023). Is Iran on the verge of another revolution? *Journal of Democracy*, 34(2), 19–31. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2023.0019>
- Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26(1), 611–639. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.611>
- Bhui, K., Warfa, N., & Jones, E. (2014). Is violent radicalisation associated with poverty, migration, poor self-reported health and common mental disorders? *PLoS One*, 9(3), e90718. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0090718>
- van den Bos, K. (2018). *Why people radicalize: How unfairness judgments are used to fuel radical beliefs, extremist behaviors, and terrorism*. Oxford University Press.
- Brändlin, A.-S. (2022). *Museum climate protests spark debate on activism tactics*. Deutsche Welle. Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/museum-climate-protests-spark-debate-on-activism-tactics/a-63590402>

- Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF). (2019). 民陣回應今日林鄭講話新聞稿 [CHRF responds to today's press release on Carrie Lam's speech]. Civil Human Rights Front. Retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20210718000045>
- Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(1), 155–159. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.112.1.155>
- Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16(3), 297–334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02310555>
- de Vydt, M., & Ketelaars, P. (2021). Linking consensus to action: Does frame alignment amongst sympathizers lead to protest participation? *Social Movement Studies*, 20(4), 439–458. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2020.1770071>
- European Commission. (2023). *Special Eurobarometer 538 climate change – report*. European Union. <https://doi.org/10.2834/653431>
- Fiedler, A. J., Tsang, A. Y., & Reichert, F. (2022). Why not? Explaining sympathizers' non-participation: The example of Hong Kong's 2019 social movement. *Sociology Compass*, 16(8), 1–20. Article e13007. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.13007>
- Flam, H. & King, D. (Eds.) (2005), *Emotions and social movements*. Routledge.
- Gillan, K. (2020). Social movements, protest, and practices of social change. In G. Ritzer & W. W. Murphy (Eds.), *The Wiley Blackwell companion to sociology* (2nd ed., pp. 301–318). Wiley.
- Ho, M. (2020). How protests evolve: Hong Kong's anti-extradition movement and lessons learned from the Umbrella movement. *Mobilization*, 25(SI), 711–728. <https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-25-5-711>
- Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6(1), 1–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118>
- Johnston, H. (2014). *What is a social movement?* Polity Press.
- Klandermans, B. (2013). The dynamics of demand. In J. vanStekelenburg & C. Roggeband (Eds.), *Future of social movement research: Dynamics, mechanisms, and processes* (pp. 3–15). University of Minnesota Press.
- Klandermans, B., & Oegema, D. (1987). Potentials, networks, motivations, and barriers: Steps towards participation in social movements. *American Sociological Review*, 52(4), 519–531. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095297>
- Klandermans, B., & van Stekelenburg, J. (2019). Identity formation in street demonstrations. In J. E. Stets & R. T. Serpe (Eds.), *Identities in everyday life* (pp. 309–327). Oxford University Press.
- Ku, A. S. (2020). New forms of youth activism – Hong Kong's Anti-Extradition Bill movement in the local-national-global nexus. *Space and Polity*, 24(1), 111–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562576.2020.1732201>
- Lam, W.-M. (2018). Changing political activism: Before and after the Umbrella movement. In B. C. H. Fong & T.-L. Lui (Eds.), *Hong Kong 20 years after the handover: Emerging social and institutional fractures after 1997* (pp. 73–102). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lam-Knott, S. (2019). Responding to Hong Kong's political crisis: Moralism activism amongst youth. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 20(3), 377–396. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2019.1649016>
- Larson, J. A. (2013). Social movements and tactical choice. *Sociology Compass*, 7(10), 866–879. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12069>
- Lee, F. L. F. (2020). Solidarity in the anti-extradition bill movement in Hong Kong. *Critical Asian Studies*, 52(1), 18–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2020.1700629>
- Lee, F. L. F., Chen, H.-T., & Chan, M. (2017). Social media use and university students' participation in a large-scale protest campaign: The case of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(2), 457–469. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2016.08.005>
- Lee, F. L. F., Tang, G. K. Y., Yuen, S., & Cheng, E. W. (2020). Five demands and (not quite) beyond: Claim making and ideology in Hong Kong's Anti-Extradition Bill Movement. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 53(4), 22–40. <https://doi.org/10.1525/j.postcomstud.2020.53.4.22>
- Lee, F. L. F., Yuen, S., Tang, G., & Cheng, E. W. (2019). Hong Kong's summer of uprising: From anti-extradition to anti-authoritarian protests. *China Review*, 19(4), 1–32. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26838911>
- Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. (2019). *Fugitive offenders and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters legislation (amendment) bill 2019*. Legislative Council of the Hong Kong SAR. Retrieved from https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/bills/brief/b201903291_brf.pdf
- Li, Q. (2005). Does democracy promote or reduce transnational terrorist incidents? *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 49(2), 278–297. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002704272830>
- Mak, M. K. F., & Tse, H. (2022). Institutional actors' participation in social movement: Examining the roles of perceived damage to work reputation, collective efficacy, and communication patterns. *Social Movement Studies*, 21(5), 679–715. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2021.1967123>
- McDonald, R. P. (1999). *Test theory: A unified treatment*. L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Medel, R. M., Asún, R. A., & Zúñiga, C. (2022). Why do people engage in violent tactics during a protest campaign? Understanding radical activist through regionalist mobilizations in Chile. *Social Science Quarterly*, 103(5), 1061–1083. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.13203>

- Mummendey, A., Kessler, T., Klink, A., & Mielke, R. (1999). Strategies to cope with negative social identity: Predictions by social identity theory and relative deprivation theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(2), 229–245. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.76.2.229>
- Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (1998–2017). *Mplus user's guide* (8th ed.). Muthén & Muthén.
- Opp, K.-D. (1988). Grievances and participation in social movements. *American Sociological Review*, 53(6), 853–864. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095895>
- Oser, J. (2022). How citizenship norms and digital media use affect political participation: A two-wave panel analysis. *Media and Communication*, 10(3), 206–218. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v10i3.5482>
- Reichert, F. (2021). Collective protest and expressive action among university students in Hong Kong: Associations between offline and online forms of political participation. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 2. Article 608203. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2020.608203>
- Reichert, F., Au, A. T., Fiedler, A. J., & Tsang, A. Y. (2020). *Collective identification and the protest movement in Hong Kong: Understanding associations with collective efficacy and protest behavior*. Report to the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government.
- Rucht, D. (2023). Die Letzte Generation: Eine kritische Zwischenbilanz. *Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen*, 36(2), 186–204. <https://doi.org/10.1515/fjsb-2023-0018>
- Saab, R., Spears, R., Tausch, N., & Sasse, J. (2016). Predicting aggressive collective action based on the efficacy of peaceful and aggressive actions. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 46(5), 529–543. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2193>
- Shuman, E., Cohen-Chen, S., Hirsch-Hoefler, S., & Halperin, E. (2016). Explaining normative vs. nonnormative action: The role of implicit theories. *Political Psychology*, 37(6), 835–852. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12325>
- Simon, B., & Klandermans, B. (2001). Politicized collective identity: A social psychological analysis. *American Psychologist*, 56(4), 319–331. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.4.319>
- Smith, L. G. E., Blackwood, L., & Thomas, E. F. (2020). The need to refocus on the group as the site of radicalization. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 15(2), 327–352. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691619885870>
- Smith, M. L. (2009). The inequality of participation: Re-examining the role of social stratification and post-communism on political participation in Europe. *Czech Sociological Review*, 45(3), 487–517. <https://doi.org/10.13060/00380288.2009.45.3.01>
- Somma, N. M., & Medel, R. M. (2019). What makes a big demonstration? Exploring the impact of mobilization strategies on the size of demonstrations. *Social Movement Studies*, 18(2), 233–251. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2018.1532285>
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (2nd ed., pp. 7–24). Nelson-Hall.
- Tausch, N., Becker, J. C., Spears, R., Christ, O., Saab, R., Singh, P., & Siddiqui, R. N. (2011). Explaining radical group behavior: Developing emotion and efficacy routes to normative and nonnormative collective action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 101(1), 129–148. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022728>
- Thompson, M. R., & Cheng, E. W. (2023). Transgressing taboos: The relational dynamics of claim radicalization in Hong Kong and Thailand. *Social Movement Studies*, 21(5–6), 802–821. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2022.2134107>
- Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. Basil Blackwell.
- University Grants Committee (UGC). (2023). *Student enrolment (full-time equivalent) of UGC-funded programmes by university, 2016/17 to 2022/23*. UGC. Retrieved from <https://cdcf.ugc.edu.hk/cdcf/searchStatSiteReport>
- van Stekelenburg, J., & Klandermans, B. (2013). The social psychology of protest. *Current Sociology*, 61(5–6), 886–905. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392113479314>
- van Zomeren, M., Kutlaca, M., & Turner-Zwinkels, F. (2018). Integrating who “we” are with what “we” (will not) stand for: A further extension of the social identity model of collective action. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 29(1), 122–160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463283.2018.1479347>
- van Zomeren, M., Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2008). Toward an integrative social identity model of collective action: A quantitative research synthesis of three socio-psychological perspectives. *Psychological Bulletin*, 134(4), 504–535. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.134.4.504>
- Verhoeven, I., & Duyvendak, J. W. (2017). Understanding governmental activism. *Social Movement Studies*, 16(5), 564–577. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2017.1338942>
- Wong, B. (2021). *Hong Kong protests: Judge says political slogans on masks, not their yellow colour necessitated removal from courtroom*. South China Morning Post. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-and-crime/article/3117600/hong-kong-protests-judge-says-political-slogans-masks>
- Wong, M. Y. H., & Wong, S. H.-W. (2022). Income inequality and political participation: A district-level analysis of Hong Kong elections. *Social Indicators Research*, 162(3), 959–977. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-021-02863-9>

- Zhu, A. Y. F., & Chou, K. L. (2021). Collective action in the anti-extradition law amendment bill movement in Hong Kong: Two integrative group identification models. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 21(1), 1033–1053. <https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12268>
- Zlobina, A., & Gonzalez Vazquez, A. (2018). What is the right way to protest? On the process of justification of protest, and its relationship to the propensity to participate in different types of protest. *Social Movement Studies*, 17(2), 234–250. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2017.1393408>

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Frank Reichert is Assistant Professor at The University of Hong Kong. He previously worked at universities in Germany and Australia and was a Spencer Postdoctoral Fellow of the National Academy of Education in Washington, DC. His primary research interests comprise citizenship, civic education, political participation, social identity, and youth development.

Adelaide Tsz Nok Au was a research assistant at The University of Hong Kong and currently is a quantitative social researcher conducting market and UX research for industrial designers. She obtained her Master's degree from the University of Manchester and her Bachelor's degree (Hons) at Cardiff University.

Anna Julia Fiedler holds a B.A. in Sinology from Free University Berlin and a research M.A. (hons) in Asian Studies from Leiden University. During the last 3 years, she worked as a research assistant at The University of Hong Kong. Her research is driven by an interest in Hong Kong, political participation, identity, and social inequality.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

How to cite this article: Reichert, F., Au, A. T. N., & Fiedler, A. J. (2023). How collective demands strengthen sympathy for normative and non-normative protest action: The example of Hong Kong's anti-extradition law amendment bill protests. *Sociology Compass*, e13169. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.13169>