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## Saving ‘the Savior’: The Mediating Role of Illegitimacy on the Relationship between Two Modes of Patriotism and Anti-Corruption Collective Protest Among Law Students

**Abstract:** This study aimed to explain the collective protest against the decision of the Corruption Eradication Commission in Indonesia to dismiss some of its employees due to their failure on the Civic Knowledge Test. A correlational survey in this research ( $N=720$ ) revealed that the perceived illegitimacy of the decision served as the strongest positive predictor of the collective protest. Other findings demonstrated that constructive patriotism positively, but blind patriotism negatively, explained support for the collective protest. We also found that blind patriotism was positively related to blaming the fired employees, but constructive patriotism was positively related to protecting the fired employees. In turn, the perceived illegitimacy of the decision and victim blaming significantly mediated the negative path from blind patriotism to participants’ support for the collective protest. The perceived illegitimacy of the decision and victim protection significantly mediated the positive path from constructive patriotism to participants’ support for the collective protest. These observations overall suggest the importance of public trust and modes of attachment to a nation as conduits for anti-corruption movements.

**Keywords:** *patriotism, illegitimacy, collective protest, victim blaming, victim protection, corruption eradication*

Corruption has various detrimental impacts, be they social and economic (e.g., poverty; Lewis, 2017) or psychological (e.g., decreased life satisfaction; Tay et al., 2014). There is thus an urgent need to find effective ways to tackle corruption. Despite its importance, corruption eradication is not an easy effort to achieve. This is because multifarious motives drive people to resist corruption, which is less well understood given the dearth of empirical research that has addressed such an issue (Jenkins & Büchner, 2021). To fill this gap, we aimed to investigate various psychological motives that underlie the mechanism by which people lend their support for the anti-corruption collective protest.

Corruption is one source of societal grievances that may drive collective actions to readdress it (Bauhr, 2017). More specifically, we sought to test the idea that what motivates people to support anti-corruption collective

protest not only has to do with people’s concern over specific corruption issues but also with people’s emotional attachment to their nation. We argued that when feeling strongly attached to a nation, people become sensitive and, ultimately, are highly motivated to respond to a collective protest they may consider as relevant to their identity as a member of such a superordinate category (Turner et al., 1979; Owens et al., 2010). Yet literature (Schatz et al., 1999; Staub, 1997; Huddy, 2016) suggests that national attachment is multifaceted, which may uniquely explain how people interpret grievances and respond to collective actions. Moreover, we also argued that, as attribution studies on social movements suggest (Dudley, 2019; Javeline, 2003), collective protest arises when group members assign blame for a grievance over a corruption issue to authorities or opposing groups. This concern is also driven by psychological processes through which



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people may think of government actions in handling the corruption issue as inappropriate and unjust. When interpreting such a decision or policy made by authorities as transgressing shared norms of justice, people experience perceived illegitimacy, which social-psychological research has shown to be one of the pivotal antecedents of collective protest (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2023).

By examining various forms of national attachment, victim attributions, and perceived illegitimacy, our study elucidates the understudied psychological mechanism through which anti-corruption collective protests are explained from multiple perspectives. In particular, we provide a more nuanced account of the dynamics of identity, cognition, and moral judgment in shaping support for anti-corruption collective protest. We derive these ideas, as it will be clear in the following sections, from some social-psychological theories and empirically test them within the context of anti-corruption collective protest in Indonesia.

## THEORETICAL RATIONALES

### Collective Protest and Illegitimacy

A protest is a public expression of disagreement, dissatisfaction, or rejection against an idea, policy, program, or other political issue (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2023). The term "public" in protest refers to people's disagreement or dissatisfaction with a political issue openly expressed through media such as forums, posters, speeches, petitions, or demonstrations. The term "political" in protest refers to people's opposition to the status quo, which refers to the prevailing idea, policy, or program supported or implemented by those in power (Chong, 1991). People may participate in protests individually or collectively. Collective protest is a joint action by a group to bring about social change by altering the status quo (van Zomeren et al., 2018). The group engaging in collective protest aspires that their actions can efficaciously improve the current political, economic, or social conditions of their group (Gillan, 2019).

Shuman et al. (2021) distinguished three forms of collective protest. The first is peaceful and normative collective protest, that is, group actions conducted without violence and that conform to socially and legally accepted social norms, such as peaceful demonstrations, petitions, fundraisers, and academic forums. The second is a peaceful but non-normative collective protest, where the group's actions are conducted peacefully but violate regulations or laws, such as strikes, sit-ins, and road blockages. The third is riotous and non-normative collective protest, which involves group actions marked by violence, such as assaults on police officers or vandalism during a demonstration.

Existing social-psychological literature posits that collective protest can stem from three factors (Klandermans, 2004). The first factor is group identification, particularly politicized group identification, which refers to the extent to which members of a group feel a strong

bond with their group that is striving for social change (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Strong political identification increases the sense that supporting and participating in collective protest is the responsibility of group members (Stürmer & Simon, 2004). The second factor is affective injustice, which is feelings of anger over conditions that are not ideal for a group, driving collective protest as a means for the group to improve its current disadvantaged conditions. The third factor is group efficacy, which reflects the extent to which a group believes that it can achieve the desired social change through collective protest. Van Zomeren et al. (2008) integrated these three factors into SIMCA (Social Identity Model of Collective Action). In SIMCA, political identification influences collective protest through affective injustice and group efficacy. Thus, SIMCA assumes that the influence of group efficacy and affective injustice is stronger than political identification in explaining collective protest.

Previous studies have elaborated on SIMCA by adding new variables to the model. For instance, Van Zomeren et al. (2018) added the variable of moral violations, denoting the belief that collective protest is a good and right action. Through a new model called AICAM (Axiological-Identitary Collective Action Model), Sabucedo et al. (2019) included the variables of ideology and moral obligation, complementing politicized identification, affective injustice, and group efficacy in influencing collective protest. Other research, which is the focus of this study, examines the role of legitimacy or illegitimacy in predicting collective protest.

Legitimacy is the belief that the existence of an entity (authority, institution, social system) or the procedures of actions (decisions, policies, rules) are appropriate, proper, or fair. With these qualities, individuals voluntarily respect and comply with the existence of such entities and procedures (Blondé et al., 2021; Tyler, 2006). Relatedly, Tyler (1997) distinguished between two forms of legitimacy: instrumental legitimacy and relational legitimacy. Instrumental legitimacy occurs when people comply with policies, decisions, or rules made by an institution because they believe in the legitimacy of the institution. Relational legitimacy occurs when people comply with policies, decisions, or rules made by an institution because they believe in the appropriateness and propriety of the personnel running the institution.

The theoretical review of legitimacy above can be used as an analogy to discuss illegitimacy as the inverse or antithesis of legitimacy. Construed as such, perceptions of illegitimacy may denote the negative pole of the same evaluative dimension, which emerges when people perceive the normative criteria that confer legitimacy, such as shared values and procedural fairness, to be violated (Devers et al., 2009; Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Hudson & Okhuysen, 2009; Vergne, 2012). Using this argument, we can differentiate illegitimacy based on the existence of institutions, the procedures of actions, as well as instrumental and relational aspects. Meanwhile, Altunsu (2023) argues that the content or substance of illegitimacy can be normative and regulative. Normative

illegitimacy relates to the assessment of the inappropriateness or incorrectness of institutions or procedures due to the beliefs that they are wrong, not good, or unfair. Regulative illegitimacy pertains to the assessment of the inappropriateness or incorrectness of institutions or procedures due to the beliefs that they violate prevailing rules or conventions.

Grounded in perceptions of whether institutions and their decisions comply with formal rules and procedures, regulative legitimacy aligns closely with instrumental legitimacy, which judges the appropriateness of these actions. Violations of these rules can attenuate regulative legitimacy, which ultimately erodes the instrumental acceptance of authority (Tost, 2011). On the other side, given that it hinges on judgments regarding the moral integrity and appropriateness of institutional actors, relational legitimacy is more closely connected to normative legitimacy. As such, violations of shared values undermine this type of legitimacy, which in turn diminishes relational legitimacy (Tost, 2011). While both types of legitimacy shape overall legitimacy judgments, they have distinct mechanisms by which they are affected. In particular, rule-based violations undermine regulative legitimacy, causing a loss of instrumental legitimacy. Value-based violations diminish relational legitimacy, decreasing perceptions of normative or moral correctness.

Within SIMCA, perceptions of legitimacy or illegitimacy are closely linked to the injustice component that drives collective protest. Perceiving authority as illegitimate attenuates political trust and fosters support for collective actions purported to correct perceived wrongs (Villagran, 2025). These rationales are in line with the emotion-focused approach model of collective protest proposed by Van Zomeren et al. (2012). This model states that one of the strongest triggers for collective protest is anger over actions that are believed to be illegitimate. For example, Thomas and Louis (2013; Study 1) found that participants' assessment that the proposal related to Coal Mining in Queensland was illegitimate, along with group efficacy, encouraged them to support peaceful collective protest against the initiative. In Chile, research by Jiménez-Moya et al. (2019) reported that politicized identification increased the legitimacy of a social movement to protest an issue in the country. Blondé et al. (2021) in France found that illegitimacy ignited anger, which in turn increased participants' intention to engage in a collective protest. Research by Sittenthaler et al. (2015) found that participants who received an illegitimate (inappropriate) treatment by someone else felt this experience aversive, which ultimately encouraged participants to take a negative approach action. This behavioural orientation took the form of anger towards the perpetrator. Accordingly, it can be argued that the stronger people's beliefs that a government authority's policy to dismiss public employees based on a contested evaluation process is illegitimate (i.e., perceived as wrong or unfair), the more likely they are to endorse collective protest against that decision.

### ***Blind Patriotism and Constructive Patriotism***

Corruption harms not only the public but also state interests (Endoltseva et al., 2019). How members of society support collective protests against corruption can thus be explained based on how they assess the existence of the state as their superordinate identity. To explain this dynamic, this research examines the role of two forms of national identity: blind patriotism and constructive patriotism. National identity functions as a superordinate social identity that shapes how individuals evaluate state actions by providing a shared sense of belonging and normative reference (Turner et al., 1979; Huddy, 2001). Individuals express national identification in different ways: some emphasize outgroup dominance or external recognition (e.g., nationalism or national narcissism), whereas patriotism reflects an ingroup-focused attachment that varies in its orientation toward criticism (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989; de Figueiredo & Elkins, 2003).

Among those various modes of national attachment, our focus is on patriotism. Unlike nationalism or national collective narcissism, denoting people's tendencies to assert superiority vis-à-vis other nations or defend national dignity from external threats (Federico et al., 2023), in the context of challenging corruption within a nation, patriotism is especially relevant. This is the case because patriotism may propel people towards collective action as a response to issues surrounding their country's internal systems (Richey, 2025). However, patriotism takes shape in various forms, which may have differential impacts on how much people support anti-corruption collective protests.

Staub (1997) is the first to theoretically conceptualized the bimodal nature of patriotism. They posited that such an ingroup-focused attachment may take shape via blind patriotism, which involves uncritical loyalty and rejection of dissent, reflecting a feeling of love for a country by defending the country right or wrong. It may also take the form of constructive patriotism, a feeling of love for a country, by openly criticizing the existing government for any possible improvements. Blind patriotism and constructive patriotism, despite their different characteristics, are similarly oriented towards strong, positive feelings of attachment to a nation (Schatz et al., 1999).

Based on the theoretical rationales of Staub (1997), Schatz et al. (1999) created measures to assess blind patriotism and constructive patriotism and confirmed both as distinct constructs. They also found, as theorised, that blind patriotism and constructive patriotism positively correlated with national attachment. However, as predicted, blind patriotism is negatively related, but constructive patriotism is positively related to political knowledge, political efficacy, and political activism.

Testing and elaborating on the research by Schatz et al. (1999) explained above, follow-up research has shown that constructive patriotism, but not blind patriotism, relates to higher levels of critical thinking (Sekerdeç & Roccas, 2016, Study 3) and greater concern for civil liberties (Richey, 2011; Williams et al., 2008). Further-

more, extant work has revealed that constructive patriotism enhances political engagement (Rupar et al., 2021), tendencies to help and contribute to the nation (Marzęcki, 2020; Sekerdej & Roccas, 2016; Simić, 2024), and involvement in activism (Chaitin et al., 2021). These findings support the notion that constructive patriotism may also predict intentions to protest, as all of these outcomes reflect a commitment to improving the nation, and collective protests can serve as a direct means to instigate positive change.

Empirical studies have provided direct evidence on such arguments. Research by Elban and Aslan (2023) in Turkey, for example, found the role of constructive patriotism in increasing participants' intentions to engage in collective protests against injustice. Ortmann (2021) found that more constructive patriotism among Hong Kong citizen participants was related to more support for collective protests to criticize and oppose mainland Chinese government policies. In the United States and Korea, blind patriotism negatively corresponded with students' support for civil liberties, which included aspirations to carry out collective protests (Oh et al., 2009). These theoretical rationales and their related empirical findings are taken to suggest that constructive patriotism increased and, conversely, blind patriotism decreased support for collective protest.

We also argued that blind patriots, relative to their constructive counterparts, to maintain a positive image of the nation, may demonstrate victim-protecting attitudes in responding to injustice or wrongdoing. In contrast, constructive patriots, compared to their blind counterparts, are more likely to demonstrate victim-protecting attitudes and be motivated to support actions to address such injustices. In line with these rationales, research by Sahar (2008) revealed that, among U.S. participants, blind patriots were less likely than constructive patriots to blame the government's foreign policy as a cause of the 9/11 attacks. Mashuri et al. (2021) also observed how blind patriotism decreased, but constructive patriotism enhanced tendencies to blame the ingroup members for their wrongdoings against other fellow ingroup members. These empirical findings suggest that blind patriotism and constructive patriotism may have a unique impact on victim attributions. Whereas blind patriotism may drive people toward victim-blaming, constructive patriotism may motivate people toward victim-protection.

Blaming constitutes secondary appraisal according to Lazarus (1991), which triggers approach motivation towards parties who are considered responsible for a problem. Van Zomeren et al. (2012) explained that blaming is one factor that triggers collective protests as a realization of approach motivation. Supporting this argument, research in Russia by Javeline (2003) found that participants who engaged in blaming, compared to those who did not engage in blaming, were involved in more protests during the 1998 economic crisis in that country. Van Zomeren et al. (2012) added that blaming instigates collective protests because of its role in increasing people's tendency to believe in the illegitimacy of policies,

decisions, or actions to support the victims. Drawing on these theoretical arguments and related empirical findings, blind patriotism arguably discourages people's support for collective protest because it promotes uncritical conformity to authorities and justifies their decisions. By encouraging people to attribute injustice or wrongdoings to the personal failings of the affected, blind patriotism elicits a victim-blaming orientation. This attributional tendency attenuates perceptions that the authority's decision is inappropriate or unjust, which consequently weakens beliefs in the illegitimacy of the decision and, ultimately, diminishes motivation to engage in collective protest. In contrast, constructive patriotism may promote people's support for collective protest because it underscores critical engagement and accountability toward national institutions. By encouraging individuals to attribute injustice or wrongdoings to politically or systemically motivated factors, constructive patriotism facilitates a victim-protecting orientation. This attribution may promote perceptions that the authority's decision is illegitimate, and, as a result, strengthen the beliefs that collective action is necessary and justified.

### The Context of the Present Research

To test the ideas put forward above, we used the contextual background in Indonesia concerning the pros and cons of the decision made by the leaders of the Corruption Eradication Commission (Indonesian: KPK [Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi]) to dismiss some of their employees (Khasna & Diniyanto, 2021; Umam & Head, 2020). The KPK implemented a policy of transferring all KPK employees to civil servant status (Indonesian: Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN). This policy followed the enactment of Law No. 19 of 2019, which was operationalized through Government Regulation No. 41 of 2020 and KPK Regulation No. 1 of 2021. This transition process included the requirement of KPK's employees to pass a Civic Knowledge Test (Indonesian: Tes Wawasan Kebangsaan/TWK) (Yuliyanti et al., 2021)

KPK dismissed some of its employees as of 30 September 2021 after they were declared unsuccessful in passing the TWK (Winarto & Sihidia, 2022). The implementation of the TWK as a screening mechanism ignited public debate. The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia (Indonesian: Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia/MK) defended the policy, justifying that the TWK was lawful and consistent with the Indonesian Constitution. In contrast, the National Human Rights Commission (Indonesian: Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia/Komnas HAM) concluded that some aspects of the TWK raised concerns over human rights issues. Komnas HAM considered the aspects unrelated to the core functions of corruption eradication, such as intrusion into private life and personal beliefs, ideological stigmatization, and expectations of unconditional conformity (Tsia & Santoso, 2021). Komnas HAM accordingly recommended that Joko Widodo, the President of Indonesia, could restore the employment status of affected KPK employees (Muthiariny, 2021).

In response to the controversy, Indonesian students led a mass demonstration at KPK Headquarters to reject the dismissal of some of its employees (Nugraha, 2021). The wave of demonstrations called themselves the anti-corruption movement (Kurniawan et al., 2021). What sparked these actions is protesters' anti-corruption concerns and their concerted efforts to oppose KPK's decision, which they perceived as illegitimate (Mawardi, 2021). Through the actions, they aimed to defend dozens of the KPK's figures they believed had high integrity and strength in handling major cases of corruption in Indonesia, who were ironically declared to have failed and subsequently dismissed (Aryodamar, 2021). Several elements of civil society affiliated with the Indonesian Anti-Corruption Community Coalition held an action in front of the KPK Headquarters to protest the implementation of the TWK. The protesters also asked the Indonesian President to intervene in resolving the TWK polemics (Mudhoffir, 2023). The non-government organizations including Amnesty International Indonesia, Transparency International Indonesia, and Greenpeace Indonesia, wrote an open letter demanding that the dismissal of KPK employees should be cancelled ("Open letter: Request for cancellation of KPK officers dismissal", 2021; Transparency International Indonesia, 2021). These anecdotal records point to both perceived regulatory illegitimacy and normative illegitimacy (Altunsu, 2023). Applying this insight to the context of our research and referring to an emotion-focused approach model of collective protest (Van Zomeren et al., 2012) and some related empirical findings in the previous research (Blondé et al., 2021; Jiménez-Moya et al., 2019; Sittenthaler et al., 2015; Thomas & Louis, 2013), we predicted that the higher the beliefs that the decision of the KPK to dismiss some of its employees due to their failure on the TWK was illegitimate (wrong, unfair), the higher the participants would support a collective protest against the decision (Hypothesis 1).

Yet despite such opposition, some social elements, such as Milenial Indonesia (Indonesian: *Himpunan Aktivis Milenial Indonesia*), otherwise publicly backed the KPK's decision to dismiss its employees who failed the TWK, construing the decision as essential for strengthening the anti-corruption body (Yuana et al., 2021). This position may align with how blind patriotism (Schatz et al., 1999) can manifest, denoting actions of defending a national leadership or institution uncritically, casting aside concerns about legitimacy, accountability, or fairness. Based on these observations and taking into account the bimodal patriotism model (Schatz et al., 1999) as well as previous relevant empirical findings (Chaitin et al., 2021; Elban & Aslan, 2023; Marzęcki, 2020; Oh et al., 2009; Ortmann, 2021; Richey, 2011; Rupar et al., 2021; Sekerdej & Roccas, 2016; Simić, 2024; Williams et al., 2008), in this research, we accordingly argued that constructive patriotism increased and, conversely, blind patriotism decreased support for collective protests (Hypothesis 2).

In addition, in the context of our work, blind patriotism may encourage people to attribute the fired

KPK employees to their failure. This victim-blaming attitude, according to an anecdote published in the Indonesian media, stemmed from the accusations that the fired KPK employee was exposed to radicalism (Santoso, 2021). On the other hand, constructive patriotism may encourage people to defend the fired KPK employees. This victim-protecting attitude stems from the attributions of the dismissal of KPK employees to a systematic act of weakening KPK (Mudhoffir, 2023). Considering these contextual backgrounds, we predicted in this research that blind patriotism was positively related to victim blaming, while constructive patriotism was positively related to victim protection (Hypothesis 3).

Integrating Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 with the rationales of appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991) and collective action as an approach motivation model (Van Zomeren et al., 2012), as well as relevant research on blaming and collective action (Javeline, 2003), in the context of our research, we aimed to test two mediation hypotheses. First, blind patriotism would be a negative predictor of participants' support for collective action to protest the KPK's decision not to pass several of its employees in the TWK because of its role in increasing victim blaming and, as a result, reducing the belief in the illegitimacy of the KPK's decision (Hypothesis 4). Second, constructive patriotism would be a positive predictor of participants' support for collective action to protest the KPK's decision not to pass several of its employees in the TWK because of its role in increasing victim protection and, as a result, increasing the belief in the illegitimacy of the KPK's decision (Hypothesis 5).

## METHOD

### Participants and Design

Participants were 720 undergraduate students at the Faculty of Law, University of Brawijaya, Indonesia. Out of a total of 720 participants, 442 are females, and 278 are males ( $M_{\text{age}} = 18.98$ ,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 2.66$ ). They took part in this research voluntarily in exchange for no reward and were recruited based on convenience sampling. This research was designed as a correlational survey wherein each variable under investigation was assessed through a scale.<sup>1</sup>

### Procedure and Measures

We administered this research online. Using Google Forms, we distributed a questionnaire to assess variables in this research. The questionnaire commenced with informed consent. Upon confirming their agreement to take part in the research, participants were presented with various questions to assess blind patriotism, constructive patriotism, blaming the victim, protecting the victim, regulatory illegitimacy, normative illegitimacy, support for protesting the decision of KPK, and support for protesting the President. Scores were created by averaging partici-

<sup>1</sup> Raw data and supplementary materials in this research can be openly accessed via Open Science Framework (OSF): <https://osf.io/u3bhn/overview>

pants' agreement with each of the questions, ranging between 1 (*not at all*) and 5 (*very much*).<sup>2</sup>

We assessed *blind patriotism* (12 items; e.g., "We should not have complete freedom of speech when criticizing Indonesia";  $\alpha = .80$ ;  $\omega = .80$ ) and *constructive patriotism* (six items; e.g., "If I criticize Indonesia, I do so out of love for this national group";  $\alpha = .74$ ;  $\omega = .74$ ) using the scales from Mashuri et al. (2021) adapted from the original work by Schatz et al. (1999).<sup>3</sup> In the subsequent part of the questionnaire, participants were presented with information published by some mainstream media in Indonesia (Aji, 2021; Arunantaa, 2021). This information pertained to the decision made by KPK to dismiss 51 of their Employees due to their failure to pass the TWK. In response to the news, we first assessed *blaming the victim* with four items (e.g., "KPK employees have indeed been infiltrated by members who have a political ideology that threatens the United States of the Republic of Indonesia [NKRI]";  $\alpha = .81$ ;  $\omega = .81$ ), followed with *protecting the victim* with four items (12 items; e.g., "There is a deliberate attempt by some components of the Indonesian nation itself to weaken the Corruption Eradication Commission [KPK]";  $\alpha = .83$ ;  $\omega = .83$ ). We self-developed scales of blaming the victim and protecting the victim by suiting the items on each scale to the context of this research.

Regulatory illegitimacy was assessed with four items (e.g., "The action of the leaders of the Corruption Eradication Commission [KPK] in deciding that 51 of their employees can no longer join the government agency are wrong and unfair from a legal perspective";  $\alpha = .81$ ;  $\omega = .81$ ), so was normative illegitimacy (e.g., "The action of the KPK leaders in dismissing 51 of their employees is wrong and unfair because it did not give these employees the right to question the decision.";  $\alpha = .87$ ;  $\omega = .87$ ). Inspection of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal axing factoring with Promax rotation revealed that items measuring regulatory illegitimacy and normative illegitimacy formed a single factor or dimension that explained 52.30% of the total variance (factors loadings varied from .63 to .81). Accordingly, we integrated regulatory illegitimacy and normative illegitimacy into a single construct of *illegitimacy* ( $\alpha = .90$ ;  $\omega = .90$ ).<sup>4</sup>

We assessed support for protesting the decision of KPK with three items (e.g., "I support a petition that urges the Indonesian government to save KPK";  $\alpha = .83$ ;  $\omega = .83$ ), so did support for protesting the President (3 items; e.g., "I support scientific activities such as seminars, discussions, etc. to urge President Jokowi to immediately follow up on the Ombudsman's findings regarding the TWK KPK";  $\alpha = .90$ ;  $\omega = .90$ ), which we

self-developed in line with the context of the present work. EFA using principal axing factoring with Promax rotation resulted in one factor or dimension for items to measure support for protesting the decision of KPK and support for protesting the President, which explained 57.48% of the total variance (factors loadings varied from .66 to .87). Taking into account this observation, we accordingly combined support for protesting the decision of KPK and support for protesting the President into a single construct of *support for collective protest* ( $\alpha = .88$ ;  $\omega = .87$ ).<sup>5</sup>

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate their age and gender. We thanked and debriefed participants after completing the questionnaire.

## RESULTS

### Analytical Strategies

In this research, we focused more on relationships among constructs under investigation, i.e., support for collective protest, illegitimacy, blaming the victim, protecting the victim, blind patriotism, and constructive patriotism, rather than the items to measure each of the constructs. Accordingly, we transformed those constructs into latent variables and specified their relationships in a hypothesized structural model. In doing so, we constructed indicators for each of the latent variables using item parceling (Little et al., 2002). Indeed, as reported by Marsh et al. (2013), there are pros and cons to the use of item parcels. However, item parcels relative to items provide more beneficial psychometric properties, including a reduction of error. As such, as pointed out by Little et al. (2013), item parceling can efficiently represent the latent variable.

Based on EFA using principal axis factoring with oblique rotation (i.e., Promax), we created the item parcels. Following some recommendations (Little et al., 2002; Sass & Smith, 2006), we used an item-balancing technique for a unidimensional variable. Using this technique, we combined the item with the highest factor loading with the item with the lowest factor loading to create the first parcel. We created the second and subsequent parcels by combining items with the next highest and lowest factor loadings. If the variable was multidimensional, then the parcels were derived from a domain-representative technique. Using this technique, item parcels were created by combining the first item from the first factor with the first item from another factor. The second and subsequent item parcels were created by combining the second item from the first factor with the second item from another factor, and so on.<sup>6</sup>

To assess the psychometric quality of the hypothesized structural model, we used some indices of goodness-

<sup>2</sup> Item wordings for each scale are provided in Supplementary Material A.

<sup>3</sup> We calculated Omega ( $\omega$ ) as a reliability coefficient of latent variables in this research using Mplus version 7 as recommended by Hayes and Coutts (2020). The Mplus syntax for calculating the Omega can be found in Supplementary Material B.

<sup>4</sup> Table S1 in Supplementary Material C provides the results of the factor structures of the items for regulatory illegitimacy and normative illegitimacy.

<sup>5</sup> Table S2 in Supplementary Material D provides the results of the factor structures of the items for support for protesting the decision of KPK and protesting the President.

<sup>6</sup> Tables S3, S4, S5, and S6 in the Supplementary Material E present the item parceling for each construct or variable.

of-fit in structural equation modelling (SEM), i.e., Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). The hypothesized structural model is said to fit the data well when the value of its RMSEA is no more than .06, that of its SRMR is as high as .08, and its CFI and TLI are equal to or greater than 0.95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).<sup>7</sup>

### Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 below presents correlations among the latent variables of blind patriotism, constructive patriotism, blaming the victim, protecting the victim, illegitimacy, and support for the collective protest. As shown in Table 1, blind patriotism and blaming the victim negatively, but constructive patriotism, protecting the victim, and illegitimacy positively corresponded with support for the collective protest. Illegitimacy, relative to other variables, was more strongly correlated with support for the collective protest.<sup>8</sup>

### Structural Model

To test each of the hypotheses, we analyzed the data using a structural model (Wang & Wang, 2012). Initial inspection revealed that the data violated the assumption of multivariate normality (Skewness:  $M = 14.75$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Kurtosis:  $M = 481.89$ ,  $SD = 2.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Following a recommendation for data with no missing values that violate the assumption of multivariate normality, we used Mplus version 7.00 with an MLM estimator (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017).<sup>9</sup>

The hypothesized structural model is presented in Figure 1.<sup>10</sup> The results revealed that the hypothesized model fitted the data well (RMSEA = 0.042, 90% confidence interval [CI] = [0.032, 0.048], SRMR = 0.049, CFI = 0.97, and TLI = 0.96). The hypothesized structural

**Table 1.** Bivariate Correlations among Latent Variables in this Research

| Variables                          | (1) | (2)    | (3)   | (4)    | (5)    | (6)    |
|------------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| (1) Blind patriotism               | —   | -.31** | .37** | -.18** | -.16** | -.30** |
| (2) Constructive patriotism        |     | —      | -.09* | .39**  | .38**  | .43**  |
| (3) Blaming the victim             |     |        | —     | .02    | -.16** | -.26** |
| (4) Protecting the victim          |     |        |       | —      | .76**  | .66**  |
| (5) Illegitimacy                   |     |        |       |        | —      | .74**  |
| (6) Support for collective protest |     |        |       |        |        | —      |

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

model explained 10% variance in blaming the victim (standardized error [SE] = 0.03,  $p < .001$ ), 12% variance in protecting the victim (SE = 0.03,  $p < .001$ ), 50% variance in illegitimacy (SE = 0.04,  $p < .001$ ), and 55% variance in support for collective protest (SE = 0.04,  $p < .001$ ).<sup>11</sup> As shown in Figure 1, illegitimacy positively and significantly explained support for collective protest ( $\beta = .46$ ,  $se = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.34, .57]), corroborating Hypothesis 1. Substantiating Hypothesis 2, blind patriotism was a significant negative predictor ( $\beta = -.10$ , SE = .03,  $p = .004$ , 95% CI = [-.16, -.03]) and, conversely, constructive patriotism was a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = .11$ , SE = .04,  $p = .005$ , 90% CI = [.03, .19]) of support for the collective protest.

In line with Hypothesis 3, the subsequent findings demonstrated that more blind patriotism was significantly related to more blaming the victim ( $\beta = .32$ , SE = .04,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.24, .40]), whereas more constructive patriotism was significantly related to more protecting the victim ( $\beta = .35$ , SE = .05,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.26, .44]). The final findings showed that, in support of Hypothesis 4, the role of blind patriotism in attenuating support for collective protest passed via blaming the victim and illegitimacy (Indirect effect:  $\beta = -.02$ , SE = .01,  $p = .001$ , 95% CI = [-.04, -.01]). Verifying Hypothesis 5, the role of constructive patriotism in giving rise to support for collective protest passed via protecting the victim and illegitimacy (Indirect effect:  $\beta = .11$ , SE = .02,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI = [.07, .16]).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Following Preacher et al. (2006), the procedure of computing Power for RMSEA by specifying Alpha = .05, degree of freedom = 178, sample size = 720, null RMSEA = 0.80, and alternative RMSEA = 0.05 resulted in Power = 1.00, which is desirable (i.e., Power is greater than 0.80; see Cohen, 2016). These findings are consistent with the alternative method in which planned effect sizes are determined before analyses (Wang & Rhemtulla, 2021), which also produced desirable power ( $> .80$ ) for factor loadings, direct effects, and indirect effects specified in the hypothesized structural model (see Table S15 in Supplementary Material Y).

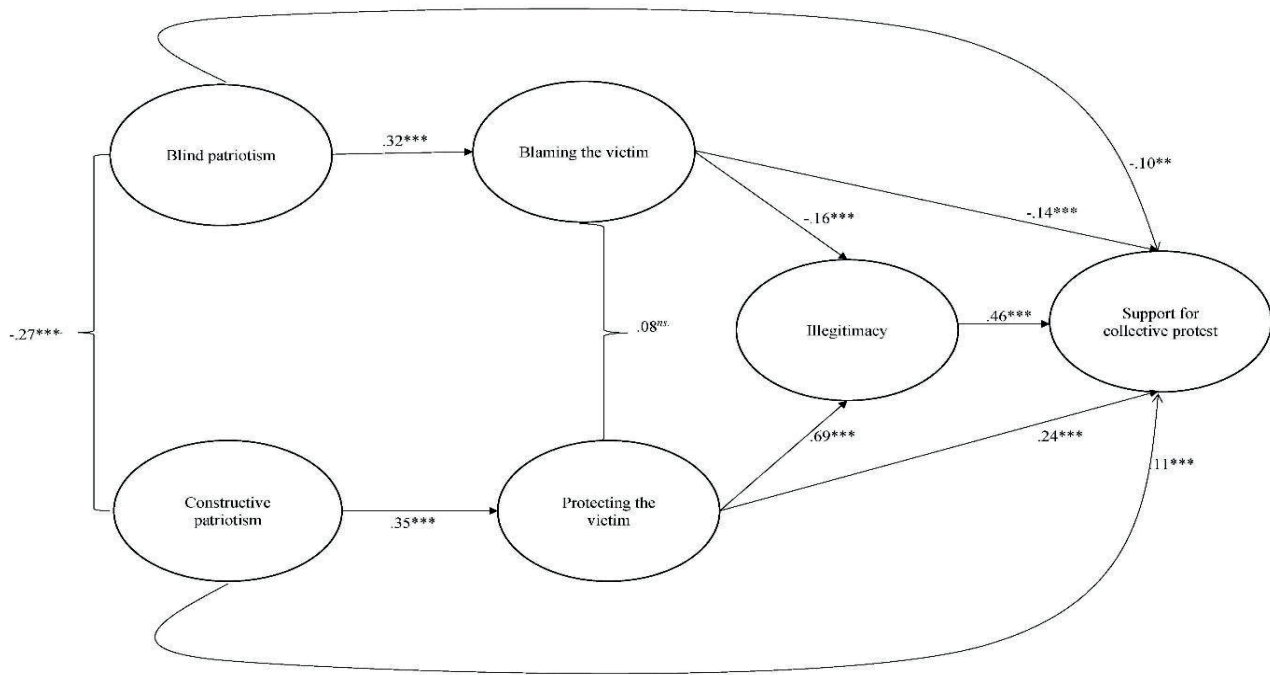
<sup>8</sup> Supplementary Materials F provides the Mplus syntax for generating the latent variables in this research. Table S7 in the Supplementary Material G presents the results of multicollinearity diagnostics, showing the absence of multicollinearity as all values of Tolerance are above 0.10 and those of VIF are below 10. Table S14 in Supplementary Material X shows that the values of Average Extracted Variance (AVE) are above .50, indicating empirical evidence for discriminant validity of all latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table S8 in Supplementary Material G presents the results of principal axis factoring with Promax rotation for all items within each of the constructs.

<sup>9</sup> The Mplus syntax for testing the assumption of multivariate normality can be checked in Supplementary Material H.

<sup>10</sup> The Mplus syntax to calculate the hypothesized measurement model is presented in Supplementary Material I. The Mplus syntax to calculate the hypothesized structural model is provided in Supplementary Material J.

<sup>11</sup> Following recommendations (Podsakoff et al., 2012, 2024), to assess common method bias, we compared the hypothesized oblique six-factor measurement model with Harman's single-factor model (the Mplus syntax can be seen in Supplementary Material K). The results provided empirical evidence that measures in our research are free from common bias, given that the goodness of fit of the hypothesized measurement model is significantly better than that of the single-factor model (Table S9 in the Supplementary Material L presents the results of this analysis).

<sup>12</sup> Table S11 in Supplementary Material N presents all mediation effects in the hypothesized structural model. In addition, the results of bootstrapping analysis with 1000 replications, as shown in Table S12 in Supplementary Material P (see also the Mplus syntax for the boot-



**Figure 1.** The Results of the Structural Model on the Impacts of Two Modes of Patriotism on Collective Protest through the Mediation of Illegitimacy

*Note.* Numbers in the structural model represent standardized coefficients. All constructs within the model were calculated in terms of their latent scores. \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . *ns* = nonsignificant. For simplicity, the figure does not present factor loadings for each latent variable, which can be checked in Table S10 in the Supplementary Material M.

### The alternative models

The plausibility of the hypothesized structural model in our research was examined by comparing its goodness of fit with some alternative models. The first alternative model is a reversed structural model, specifying that perceptions of the illegitimacy of the KPK's decision precede and shape participants' reactions toward the dismissed KPK employees, manifested as victim blaming or victim protection. In turn, these attributions of the victims directly influence participants' support for anti-corruption collective protest. We derived this alternative model from a dynamic model of engagement in collective action (Becker & Tausch, 2017; Tausch et al., 2011), suggesting that perceptions of illegitimacy activate moral emotions of contempt, implicated by people's tendencies to blame the system and protect those harmed by the system. In addition, the justice motive model by Lerner (2003) suggests that when perceiving decisions as illegitimate, people are more likely to morally align with victims and engage in victim protection. Within this alternative framework, consistent with the system-justification perspectives, blind patriotism is assumed to attenuate perceptions of illegitimacy, whereas constructive patriotism otherwise fosters perceived illegitimacy by encouraging critical evaluation of authorities, indirectly fostering victim protection and support for anti-corruption protest.

The first alternative model explained above is non-nested within the hypothesized structural model. Follow-

ing a recommendation by Burnham and Anderson (2004), we compared the goodness of fit of the two models based on Akaike information criteria (AIC) and Bayesian information criterion (BIC). The goodness of fit of the two models is said to be significantly different from each other if the values of  $\Delta AIC$  and  $\Delta BIC$  are 4 or greater. A smaller AIC and BIC indicate better fits to the data. The results revealed that the AIC (= 31141.112) and BIC (= 31479.976) of the hypothesized structural model are significantly less than the AIC (= 31215.947) and BIC (= 31559.391) of the alternative structural model,  $\Delta AIC = 74.835$ ,  $\Delta BIC = 79.415$ .<sup>13</sup>

The second alternative structural model is also not nested within the hypothesized structural model, by integrating blaming the victim, protecting the victim, and perceived illegitimacy as correlated parallel mediators. We based this model on Just World Theory (Lerner, 2003; Lerner & Montada, 1998), which suggests that when perceiving an event as illegitimate, people are driven to engage in blaming or protecting the victims to restore a sense of justice. We found that the AIC (= 31139.589) of this alternative model is not significantly lower than the AIC (= 31141.112) of the hypothesized model,  $|\Delta CFI| = 1.523$  ( $\Delta CFI < 4.00$ ). However, the BIC (= 31496.770) of the alternative model is significantly higher than the BIC (= 31479.976) of the hypothesized model,  $|\Delta BIC| = 16.794$  ( $\Delta BIC > 4.00$ ). These findings collectively indicate that

strapping analysis in Supplementary Material O), are relatively identical to those of the analysis with the MLM robust estimator in this research.

<sup>13</sup> Supplementary Material Q presents the Mplus Syntax for the first alternative structural model, whereas Figure S1 in Supplementary Material R presents the results of the first alternative structural model.

the hypothesized structural model fitted the data significantly better than the second alternative model.<sup>14</sup>

The third alternative structural model is nested within the hypothesized structural model. This alternative model, in particular, was specified by adding paths from blind patriotism to protecting the victim, from constructive patriotism to blaming the victim, as well as from blind patriotism and constructive patriotism to perceived illegitimacy. The rationale for conducting this comparison is parsimony in model selection, to test whether adding the paths within the hypothesized structural model is necessary (Falk & Muthukrishna, 2023). Given that MLM is used as a robust method, following a recommendation by Satorra and Bentler (2010), we used the chi-square difference of the hypothesized structural model and the third alternative model to test the relative goodness of fit of the two competing models.

The results revealed that the chi-square of the hypothesized structural model ( $\chi^2 = 404.867$ ;  $df = 178$ ; the scaling correction factor = 1.2075) was not significantly different from that of the third alternative model ( $\chi^2 = 396.260$ ,  $df = 174$ ; the scaling correction factor = 1.2097),  $p = .083$ . What can be derived from these findings is that additional paths specified in the third alternative model are unnecessary, leading to the conclusion of the parsimony of the hypothesized structural model in explaining the data<sup>15</sup>.

## DISCUSSION

The anti-corruption protest presumably originates from multifaceted motives. This assumption, however, lacks empirical tests. To fill this research gap, within the context of a controversial decision made by KPK (English: The Corruption Eradication Commission) in Indonesia to dismiss some of its employees, the main goal of the present work was to examine various social-psychological motives of support for the anti-corruption collective protest. We found, as predicted, that first, the beliefs in the illegitimacy of the decision constituted the positive, strongest antecedent of support for the collective protest. Second, different modes of patriotism were uniquely related to support for the collective protest. More specifically, blind patriotism negatively predicted, whereas constructive patriotism positively predicted support for the collective protest. High levels of blind patriotism significantly corresponded with high levels of accusing the fired employees of being radical Islamists (i.e., blaming the victim). High levels of constructive patriotism significantly corresponded with high levels of attributing the

decision to the systematic effort to weaken KPK (i.e., protecting the victim). Finally, the negative path from blind patriotism to support for the collective protest significantly passed through the illegitimacy of the decision and blaming the victim. The positive path from constructive patriotism to support for the collective protest significantly passed through the illegitimacy of the decision and protecting the victim.

## Theoretical Implications

We found, substantiating Hypothesis 1, that higher levels of the beliefs that the decision of the KPK to dismiss some of its employees due to their failure on the TWK was illegitimate (wrong, unfair) corresponded with higher levels of the participants' support for a collective protest against the decision. In this research, we operationalized illegitimacy by combining its multivarious aspects based on relevant literature (Altunsu, 2023; Blondé et al., 2021; Tyler, 1997, 2006). More specifically, we assessed illegitimacy in the domain of actions, that is, the decision of KPK to fire some of its employees who failed to pass TWK. The second aspect has to do with the normativity of the decision, denoting how much the decision is considered good or correct based on social norms. The third aspect relates to the legality of the decision, reflecting the extent to which the decision is judged as conforming to the existing rules and regulations. Within the existing social-psychological research, this research has elaborated on previous work by integrating multifaceted aspects of illegitimacy with victim attributions (i.e., blaming the victim and protecting the victim) and multifaceted modes of patriotism (i.e., blind versus constructive) to explain people's support for collective protest.

Other findings corroborated Hypothesis 2, wherein constructive patriotism increased, but blind patriotism decreased support for collective protests. Attachment to a group, as advocated by SIMCA (Social Identity Model of Collective Action; van Zomeren et al., 2008), serves as a strong positive predictor of collective protest especially when it takes shape via politicized identification, denoting the extent to which people feel part of a group that is striving for a social change. SIMCA, hence, thinks of group attachment as a single, unitary construct that is directly connected to collective protest. In this research, our focus was on two modes of patriotism, whether blind or constructive, and connected them to collective protest. We found that the two modes of patriotism uniquely explained support for collective protest. In particular, blind patriotism, which constitutes people's attachment to a nation by defending it right or wrong, attenuated support for collective protest. In stark contrast, constructive patriotism, which constitutes people's attachment to the nation by openly criticizing it for the sake of its improvement, elevated support for collective protest. What can be derived from these findings is that, complementing SIMCA, the collective protest may reasonably stem from multivarious forms of group attachments that touch upon a broader context beyond collective protest and that

<sup>14</sup> The Mplus syntax for calculating the second alternative structural model is presented in Supplementary Material S. Figure S2 in Supplementary Material T presents the results of the second alternative structural model.

<sup>15</sup> The Mplus syntax for calculating the third alternative structural model is presented in Supplementary Material U. Figure S3 in Supplementary Material V presents the results of the third alternative structural model. Table S13 in Supplementary Material W presents the procedure for testing the model comparison.

differently have a role as a facilitating or hindering factor of collective protest.

Moreover, in elaborating on the Axiological-Identitary Collective Action Model (AICAM), Grigoryev et al. (2024) conducted cross-country research to test pancultural and culture-specific factors of collective protests against corruption. They found that national identification constituted one of the pancultural variables that have contributed to anticorruption collective protests either in samples of Western countries (i.e., Spain, the United States, Germany) or those of non-Western countries (i.e., Nigeria, Russia, India). This empirical finding is aligned with different ways blind patriotism and constructive patriotism affected anticorruption collective protest in our work. This is because, as evidenced in the research by Schatz et al. (1999), blind patriotism and constructive patriotism are rooted in national identification, denoting the degree to which people are emotionally attached to a country or nation. Construed as such, blind patriotism and constructive patriotism were found to positively correspond with national identification, suggesting a unique way through which people feel emotionally attached to their nation or country. Yet despite this commonality, blind patriotism negatively predicted, but constructive patriotism positively predicted political activism (Schatz et al., 1999). In sum, the findings in our work have complemented the research by Grigoryev et al. (2024) by demonstrating that different modes of national attachments may boost or otherwise inhibit anti-corruption collective protests.

We also predicted and found in this research that, in support of Hypothesis 3, blind patriotism was positively related to victim blaming, while constructive patriotism was positively related to victim protection. These results have pivotal theoretical implications for making sense of how different forms of patriotism explain evaluative and moral judgments in socio-political contexts. People high in blind patriotism, aligned with research on defensive attribution, given their uncritical group attachment, are more likely to assign blame to victims to maintain the image and perceived morality of the group (Schatz et al., 1999; Lerner, 2003). Constructive patriotism, in contrast, denoting a combination of national attachment with critical evaluation and a commitment to the improvement of socio-political systems, enhances recognition of systemic or institutional factors underpinning unjust outcomes. This argument is consistent with findings that critical attachment with one's group fosters prosocial responses toward those negatively impacted by political or organizational policies (Aslan, 2023; Sekerdej & Roccas, 2016). Theoretically, these findings underscore how different modes of patriotism can either enable or constrain civic engagement within the context of an anti-corruption protest.

Finally, we found that, in support of Hypothesis 4, blind patriotism negatively predicted participants' support for collective action to protest the KPK's decision not to pass several of its employees in the TWK because of its role in increasing victim blaming and, as a result, reducing

the belief in the illegitimacy of the KPK's decision. We also found, in support of Hypothesis 5, that constructive patriotism negatively predicted participants' support for collective action to protest the KPK's decision not to pass several of its employees in the TWK because of its role in increasing victim protection and, as a result, increasing the belief in the illegitimacy of the KPK's decision. Theoretically, these findings suggest that different models of patriotism function as a cognitive lens that determines how people interpret injustice, assign blame, and evaluate institutional decisions, which in turn influences political trust (Moon & Travaglino, 2025) and the likelihood of people's engagement in protest tendencies (Ekup-Nse, 2024; Simić, 2024). This notion pinpoints the dual role of national attachment in both limiting and augmenting collective action as reactions towards perceived institutional wrongdoings. In addition, by assessing various blame attributions and their distinct impacts on support for the collective protest against corruption, our work has enriched the literature on social-psychological accounts of collective protest. This is because previous studies examined other forms of attributions as conduits for collective protest, such as the perceived success or failure of collective protest in the future (e.g., Tausch et al., 2013) and the perceived intentionality of agents accountable for injustice (Cervone et al., 2024).

### Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Social-psychological literature proposes other modes of defensive national attachment besides blind patriotism, such as national narcissism (Golec de Zavala, 2024) and national glorification (Roccas et al., 2006). The first is the exaggerated view of the superiority of a nation that is not recognized by other nations. The second is the subjective view that a nation is superior relative to other nations. Each is characterized as a defensive national attachment given its impact on negative attitudes towards ingroups or outgroups. Future studies may assess national narcissism and national glorification, complementing blind patriotism, which is vital to examine how much such multifarious forms of defensive national attachments uniquely or otherwise overlappingly shape anti-corruption collective protests.

In this research, we missed assessing politicized identification, the construct that, within the context of this research, refers to the degree to which participants feel emotionally attached to a group in a struggle to collectively protest the decision of KPK. Follow-up research can thus overcome such a shortcoming by assessing politicized identification along with blind patriotism and constructive patriotism. This research direction is important to examine the comparative impacts of group attachment within a wider social context (i.e., blind patriotism and constructive patriotism) and a specific context (i.e., politicized identification) on support for an anti-corruption collective protest, which is unexplored in existing social-psychological models such as SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2008) and AICAM (Sabucedo et al., 2019).

The sample in this research is confined to undergraduate students at the Faculty of Law, University of Brawijaya. We selected law students because they may have a higher-than-average knowledge of legal institutions and corruption-related issues, such as the KPK and TWK in Indonesia, relative to students from other disciplines. This knowledge enables them to give informed responses on victim attributions, perceptions of illegitimacy, and attitudes toward collective protest, rendering them especially relevant for examining our theoretical model. However, we acknowledge that our research did not explicitly probe participants whether they were involved in anti-corruption collective actions. This missing information constitutes a limitation in our research because prior participation may determine perceptions of illegitimacy and support for collective protest. Although our focus is on psychological mechanisms of attitudes towards anti-corruption protest rather than actual protest behaviors, future studies can assess measures of prior protest involvement to test whether the mechanisms may operate differently among participants with varying degrees of direct activism. Moreover, corruption has detrimental impacts on all segments of society, which ultimately triggers public attention and sentiment. Future research, thus, may also recruit non-student participants to verify the extent to which empirical findings in this research may generalize to a more representative population. In addition to this direct replication, future research may also conduct conceptual replication (Derksen & Morawski, 2022). In doing so, future research may examine how much the relationships among variables in this research can be applied to collective protests beyond the context of the anti-corruption movement.

The direct and conceptual replications are also relevant to ensure the robustness of the findings, given the high  $R^2$  (i.e., more than 50%) of the hypothesized structural model in this research in explaining support for anti-corruption collective protest. This observation points to the potential overlap among variables in this research. Replication studies, thus, help validate the extent to which the hypothesized structural model consistently produces similar results across different samples and contexts. Moreover, conceptual replication is instrumental in getting better insights into the robustness of the findings in our work beyond the existing research framework. It also allows adjustments to variables that the hypothesized structural model may not have well-controlled.

In this research, a post-hoc analysis demonstrated that the sample size ( $N = 720$ ) and desired power (0.80) were adequate to fit the hypothesized structural model. However, given that post-hoc power analysis has limitations by potentially overestimating or misrepresenting the true power of the study (Giner-Sorolla et al., 2024), future research can conduct a priori power analysis to estimate the minimum required sample size before data collection. Monte Carlo simulation (Muthén & Muthén, 2002) is one of the techniques widely used to estimate a priori sample size and ensure adequate statistical power for the hypothesized structural equation modelling. A priori

power analysis is important because it ensures that hypothesized effects can be reliably detected, improving the credibility of research findings (Anderson & Maxwell, 2017). In sum, employing these techniques in follow-up research will allow for more robust testing of theoretical models explaining the roles of different modes of patriotism, attributions of victim, perceptions of illegitimacy, and anti-corruption collective action.

The final limitation pertains to the empirical convergence of regulatory illegitimacy and normative illegitimacy into a single construct, despite their conceptual differentiation in the relevant literature (e.g., Altunsu, 2023). However, previous research has advocated that theorizing distinct legitimacy dimensions may be challenging to verify empirically, especially within the contexts in which moral norms and legal rules are closely aligned (Bitektine & Haack, 2015). In the context of collective action against corruption, people may interpret regulatory violations as moral transgressions, causing the overlap. This limitation can be addressed in future research by, for example, comparative research across protest contexts. This step may help clarify whether the overlap between regulative illegitimacy and normative illegitimacy is context-dependent or reflects a broader pattern in people's perceptions of illegitimacy.

### Practical Implications

Predicating upon empirical findings in this research, some practical recommendations deserve discussion. First, anti-corruption policy makers should recognize that procedural and normative transparency are not just a legal requirement but, more importantly, also a psychological safeguard against public dissent and grievance. This is because in this research, perceptions of illegitimacy, which stem from legality, moral wrongness, and norm violation issues, serve as the key psychological drivers of collective protest against corruption. Indeed, previous research on legitimacy has shown that authorities' capability of communicating decisions in ways that articulate voice and fairness can increase public acceptance (Burke & Leben, 2024). Accordingly, institutional actors should actively address public concerns about legality and fairness on corruption issues, particularly when decisions they make can affect those perceived as victims of systemic injustice. Failure to do such proactivity can trigger moral outrage and mobilize collective action against corruption, particularly among people high in constructive patriotism who view protest as a medium to reform, rather than threaten, the nation.

Second, for civic engagement in collective protest, the findings in this research highlight the significance of differentiating blind patriotism from constructive patriotism in designing collective action framing. Civil society actors and protest organizers can benefit from framing anti-corruption protests as an articulation of constructive patriotism, which emphasizes institutional reform and national improvement rather than as opposition to the nation itself. This argument is in line with evidence that politicized identification enhances collective action when

people view protest as morally necessary and normatively justified (van Zomeren et al., 2018). In addition, given that blind patriotism positively corresponded with victim blaming and attenuated perceptions of illegitimacy, interventions that encourage critical reflection may weaken defensive reactions and elevate public support for anti-corruption efforts. Thus, educational programs that normalize critical loyalty to the nation may function as a long-term resource to sustain democratic accountability while preventing the moral disengagement that prevents the public from caring and taking action towards corruption issues.

## CONCLUSION

People's support for anti-corruption collective protest depends on either perceptions of institutional legitimacy or the nature of patriotism. On one side, constructive patriotism strengthens critical engagement, prompting people to protect victims of unfair decisions and support actions to readdress the problem. On another side, blind patriotism encourages uncritical loyalty, leading people to engage in victim-blaming, which reduces protest participation. Promoting constructive forms of patriotism and establishing public trust in institutions, therefore, have a potential for the enhancement of civic engagement and collective action against corruption.

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