Pathologies of Democratic Frustration

Voters and Elections Between Desire and Dissatisfaction

Sarah Harrison

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Acknowledgments

This book asks some fundamental questions about the relationship citizens have with the democracies. Time and time again when speaking to people in the research we conducted as part of the Electoral Psychology Observatory (EPO) research programme, I found that citizens would spontaneously refer to their sense of frustration with their system, with the processes, the politicians and their parties, and the general state of democratic affairs in their country.

I would like to thank my colleagues who assisted me in conducting the fieldwork, in particular Sandra Obradovic for the qualitative work and Adam Ozer for the experiment. Within the case studies, focus groups were supported by a wonderful team of research assistants, including Ginny Moruzzi, Luke Mansillo, Courtney Leung, and Rania Putri.

The surveys were expertly conducted by Opinium, with particular thanks to long-term colleagues James Endersby, James Crouch, and Adam Drummond who have continued to encourage the research we conduct at the Electoral Psychology Observatory. It was a pleasure to work on improving my initial ideas with Ambra Finotello, executive editor of politics at Springer who has accompanied the project from the start. I am also

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WHAT IS PATHOLOGIES OF DEMOCRATIC FRUSTRATION ABOUT?

Sometimes, people use a word so perpetually that one stops hearing it. How often has a husband or a wife, a friend, a parent realised—too late—that for months or for years, their spouse, their friend, their child had used words repeatedly that were telling them almost literally about the worry, the problem, or the crisis that they were experiencing but that they had failed to properly hear it and missed the obvious. They heard that there was a problem of course, they knew that there was a discomfort or indeed a "crisis", but often, the human brain is content with approximation or jumps at interpretation and displacement. Indeed, it is typically wired in such a way as to intuitively project its own connotations over the words of others instead of hearing them literally in their unique, very specific meaning.

Take frustration, for instance. Often people will tell us that something makes them feel frustrated, and we will simply hear that they are disappointed or unhappy. Yet, there is much more in the concept of frustration than mere unhappiness or even disappointment, and someone who tells us that they feel frustrated about a situation gives us a lot more information about their feelings and the structure of their emotions than the mere dissatisfaction that it entails.

One does not usually feel frustrated that they broke a leg, but they will likely feel frustrated that they cannot walk. They rarely talk of frustration when they catch a cold, but often do when they did not pass their exams, especially if they have a feeling that they could have worked harder for them. In other words, whilst dissatisfaction and negativity are inherent components of frustration, they are not sufficient to constitute it.

Crucially, as we will see in pages to come, as much as dissatisfaction, frustration requires the existence of a strong, almost irresistible desire which is unmet. The reason one may feel frustrated about being stuck home with a cast on their leg is that they very much desire being able to walk instead and can envision exactly how wonderful and exciting life would be if they were able to enjoy a walk in the sun. The reason they may feel frustrated about having failed their exam is that they retrospectively realise everything that they would have been able to do had in the past weeks and so desire that they had. Furthermore, in both cases, the frustration is not only related to dissatisfaction as an external phenomenon and desire of it, but often entails an element of self-blame which makes frustration pertain to the very definition of one's own identity.

As it happens, as many scholars of democratic crises know, "frustration" is one of the words that citizens of democratic states use most frequently and spontaneously to describe their feelings vis-à-vis the perceived dysfunctional nature of their political systems, personnel, and outcomes and what they do or do not get out of them. This book, quite simply, is about listening to this claim, to citizens' statement that democracy so often leaves them frustrated. This book is about taking that idea seriously and at face value, and exploring the details of what it involves systematically, analytically, and empirically, across four major democracies (US, UK, Australia, and South Africa) at the start of the 2020s, before it is potentially too late.[1]

As we will see throughout the book, looking at a model of "true" democratic frustration as an alternative to models of democratic dissatisfaction is, in fact, a complete change of perspective on the crisis between citizens and their democratic systems for at least three reasons.

First, whilst dissatisfaction models predominantly focus on what is seen as negative or dysfunctional in political systems, the democratic frustration

model puts desire at the heart of the democratic crisis. This does not merely mean that there is a "gap" between what citizens expect and what they feel they get from political systems, but rather that desire acts as a multiplier of the perceived effects of that very democratic gap.

A direct consequence of that is a second key difference: a shift from the perspective that understanding democratic crisis is an institution-centric quest to the idea that it requires a profound and careful understanding of behavioural phenomena and the psychology of contemporary democratic citizens. Thus, whilst dissatisfaction theories predominantly see perceptions of democratic systems as the "object" of citizens' dissatisfaction, the democratic frustration model addresses and encompasses theories of identity and involves an element of emotional appetite and self-blame in democratic crisis. It also speaks to how citizens appropriate the concept and institution of democracy, how it works and ought to work, what it brings them, and the perpetually evolving understanding of what it means to them in the first place. In other words, democratic frustration puts citizens themselves, their perceptions of their own role and contribution, at the heart of their systemic dissatisfaction and therefore underlines a critical introspective component in citizens' democratic disenchantment.

Third, whilst dissatisfaction can be conceived as a largely conscious phenomenon, frustration is by nature largely subconscious. This means that there is an inherent mismatch between the true object of a person's frustration and what they perceive it to be. In turn, this implies that researchers will need to rely on a combination of different instruments if we are to understand whether citizens genuinely are democratically frustrated and what this entails. Given the potential displacement of the purported object of democratic dissatisfaction as well as of the way democracies effectively function, it makes it even more arduous to understand whether democratic frustration can ever be resolved or whether it is instead condemned to perpetually move the goal post. That issue of a potentially perpetually "moving target" raises a critical question for this book about the very nature of the dynamics of democratic frustration. This final point relates to a critical component of the present book, the systematic dissection of the dynamics of frustration.

All those elements taken together have a further consequence. The combination of the roles of desire, introspection, and subconscious mechanisms crucially means that the people most likely to feel democratically frustrated are not quite the same as those simply expressing systemic dissatisfaction. This change in nature of the main victims of

unfulfilling democratic systems also consequently entails an equally fundamental change in the remedies that can patch processes of democratic frustration and return democratic political processes to their original essence: bringing to citizens a sense of efficacy, fulfilment, and democratic resolution.

The ambition of *Pathologies of Democratic Frustration* is thus simple. In the next few chapters, I will assess whether the major crisis that virtually all major consolidated and emerging democratic systems are facing at the moment is a case of democratic frustration or not, and the implications of such a diagnosis for our understanding of—and potential reactions to—those crises. This first means understanding what this would involve conceptually by looking at the psychological phenomenon of frustration and applying those psychological insights to democratic attitudes, whilst contrasting them to other existing models of democratic dissatisfaction. It then entails defining how we could capture and measure the phenomenon of democratic frustration, its components as highlighted above, and its possible dimensions. I will then empirically apply this model in the context of four major contemporary democracies to test the nature, dimensions, determinants, dynamics, cycle, and consequences of democratic frustration and even evaluate some of the responses which could be used to mitigate it. This quest will rely on a mixture of quantitative and qualitative, static, and dynamic, observational, narrative, and experimental methods including survey, panel study, in-depth interviews, and experiments.

This first chapter will delve into greater detail in the concept of democratic frustration as well as the nature of the democratic crises which contemporary political systems seem to be facing and how compatible they may be with democratic frustration theory.

Paradoxes of Democratic Crises

Democracy is in crisis, or so it is widely thought to be. Low levels of voter turnout are often attributed to prevalent disillusionment among citizens, widespread apathy, or a lack of efficacy. The rise of extremist and populist parties has been unprecedented in many countries. Populist forces such as the *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* PiS (Law and Justice Party) and *Samoobrona Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej* SO (Self Defence) in Poland and in Hungary *Fidesz—Magyar Polgári Szövetség* (Hungarian Civic Alliance) have dominated national politics for much of the recent decade, whilst

in Germany and Spain, parties such as the *Alternative für Deutschland*—AfD (Alternative for Germany) and the Spanish far right party, *Vox*, have emerged in systems where populist parties used to be virtually absent. In the meantime, electoral victories for Donald Trump in 2016 in the US and Brexit in the British referendum on European Union membership conducted the same year were frequently referred to as populist victories. Conversely, mass protest movements, from Extinction Rebellion or anti-Brexit marches to the Hong Kong uprising against China's increasing control, the Yellow Vest movement in France, or violent protests in Greece and Chile have rocked many streets, sometimes peacefully and sometimes violently. In short, contemporary democracies are confronted with a very serious issue: citizens are increasingly disillusioned and disappointed by their democratic institutions, personnel, and outcomes.

Much of political science has referred to those historical trends as dissatisfaction, protest, or even apathy. However, as I shall show, one concept often comes to characterise this phenomenon in the words of citizens themselves: frustration. Nevertheless, whilst such frustration is widely acknowledged (e.g. Brooks, 1985; Kim, 2018; Sorensen, 1982) this book suggests that those claims of frustration have not really be taken at face value. To say it differently, the vocabulary of frustration is frequently used in the literature, but often as though it was interchangeable with dissatisfaction, or merely adding some sort of sulking attitude to it. Scientifically, such an equivalent is simply not tenable. Indeed, in psychological terms, "frustration" has a rather specific nature, which makes the strength of an existing desire as central to it as an individual's sense that it is unfulfilled. The book proposes to correct this misconception and reinterpret contemporary democratic crises under the democratic adaptation of the psychological concept of frustration. Indeed, crucially, reinterpreting current democratic crises under the prism of frustration also has specific potential consequences, notably in the forms of withdrawal, anger, and aggression that can be usefully translated in political behaviour terms to characterise key pathologies of democratic frustration in contemporary societies.

This book thus theorises the concept of democratic frustration and explains how it can be mapped compared to other frequently used measures of democratic unhappiness such as apathy (or indifference), cynicism, and criticality. It suggests that democratic frustration comprises of three important dimensions: ideological, institutional, and political and

operationalises the concept and its dimensions based on an interaction between democratic desire and perceived delivery deficit (the difference between standards and perceived outcomes), along the (implicitly interactive) lines of the psychological definition of frustration as an unsatisfied desire. The model I develop in this book assesses how widespread democratic frustration is compared to some alternative combinations of desire and perceived delivery deficit, and how robust it is over time using both multi-waves experiments and a panel study in real-life historical context.

The Psychological Concept of Frustration

Etymologically, frustration stems from the Latin *frustra*, which means "in vain". The psychology and psychiatry literatures offer several seminal definitions, which all articulate a similar mismatch between desire and reality. The psychological concept of frustration is based on a "failure to satisfy a motive" (Underwood, 1949). Conversely, Jeronimus and Laceulle (2017) define frustration as "a key negative emotion that roots in disappointment […] and can be defined as irritable distress after a wish collided with an unyielding reality". A sense of frustration is reported when an individual is prevented from attaining a certain objective or goal. Frustration is thus sourced from a failure to satisfy a conscious or indeed (and more often) subconscious desire. That centrality of desire is of critical importance because it suggests that an individual will not feel frustrated about something that they do not care about—or to go a little further, that the potential for frustration increases the more one cares (or indeed obsesses) about something.

That role of desire as the cornerstone of frustration is emphasised by Lacan (1994) who redefined the psychoanalytical concept of frustration and its relationship to desire through three layers: symbolic, imaginary, and real. Those layers or depths of frustration are further supported by the findings of Chen and Vansteenkiste et al. (2015) which summarise the relationship between need and frustration by explaining that a need is either satisfied or frustrated. They also echo earlier research by Britt and Janus (1940) who identified that "the frustrating situation is analysed in terms of barrier or obstruction, and of interference with goal-attainment and of reward expectation". In all cases, the corresponding "level" of satisfaction or frustration is thus directly related to the strength of the need or desire, which sits at the heart of my operational model of democratic frustration.

The satisfaction deficit is thus only one of the two components of frustration alongside desire, so that frustration practically works as an interaction between the two as follows:

$$\text{Democratic frustration} = \text{Desire} * \text{Perceived delivery deficit}$$

that is:

$$\text{Democratic frustration} = \text{Desire} * \left[\text{Standard} - \text{Perceived Delivery}\right]$$

Beyond psychology, the link between desire and frustration has also been noted in arts. For instance, Smuts (2008) in "the desire-frustration theory of suspense" discusses how Hitchcock and Truffaut intuitively went against traditional aesthetic models to create suspense. Unlike most of their predecessors, they chose to "seed information" which generates a desire on the part of the spectator which can then be more effectively frustrated.

Research in criminology, organisational behaviour, and communication have also found frustration to be influenced by psychological (Berkowitz, 1989; Blair, 2010; Crosby, 1976; Rosensweig, 1944), sociological (Berkowitz, 1962; Fox & Spector, 1999), and socialisation determinants (Crossman, Sullivan et al., 2009; Lockwood & Roll, 1980; Perlman, Luna et al., 2014), in addition to specific stimuli (Kulik & Brown, 1979; Maslow, 1941). There is an important subconscious element to its expression (Yuan et al., 2015), which, crucially, is often displaced away from its direct source, which, in turn, thus risks leading us to endemic misdiagnosis.

Thus, according to the psychology literature, frustration must be treated as a naturally endogenous and largely subconscious variable, with psychological, social, experiential, and contextual sources, and multiple emotional, attitudinal, and behavioural consequences. Conversely, the model of democratic frustration developed throughout this book focuses on those very democratic desires and aspirations that remain unfulfilled, as much as on the more traditional question of the perceptions of delivery deficit itself. In that sense, the paradox of citizens' democratic frustration (as opposed to criticality or disengagement) will stem from necessarily strong democratic desire and standards which will be unfulfilled as opposed to being compatible with a lack of appetite or interest. Indeed, frustration requires a powerful desire, and its characterisation lies at the heart of understanding the frustration itself and what solutions can

be proposed that would reconcile desire and perceived delivery gap if such mitigation is conceivable at all given the nature, which we will soon discuss of the relationship between the three inherent and endogenous components of frustration: desire, standards, and perceived delivery.

As democratic frustration necessarily implies that people care and desire democracy and that there is a mismatch between expectation and perceived reality, it indeed assumes the simultaneous existence and variation of desire, standards, and perceived delivery rather than solely focusing on the latter (as the vast majority of models of democratic dissatisfactions do) whilst implicitly assuming the former two to be constant. Using psychology insights, the democratic frustration model can then inform the conceptualisation, causality, and pathologies of frustration and link them to the realities observed by the political behaviour literature on such elements as the crisis of participation and populism, so as to reassess the nature, dimensions, causes, and consequences of democratic frustration.

Mapping Democratic Frustration vis-à-vis Other Models of Democratic Crises

The crisis of democracies has of course been a key focus of attention in the political behaviour literature. Authors have seen it as symptomatic of the distrust (Bertsou, 2016) and cynicism of citizens towards political systems, institutions, and social elites (Capella & Jamieson, 1996; de Vreese, 2004; Kaase et al., 1996; Mishler & Rose, 1997; Newton, 2001; Seligman, 1997). A growing sense of dissatisfaction (Norris, 1999, 2011; Torcal & Montero, 2006) has accompanied a decline in turnout (Franklin, 2004; LeDuc et al., 1996) and party and union memberships (Katz & Mair, 1994; Pharr & Putnam, 2000; Scarrow, 1996) in parallel to a resurgence of populist and extremist behaviour (Harrison & Bruter, 2011; van der Brug et al., 2000) and mass protest movements. A sense of powerlessness, inefficacy (Kimberlee, 2002), and cynicism and alienation (Buckingham, 2000) alongside a lack of interest (Dalton & Welzel, 2015) have been found as key factors to—or perhaps, more accurately, rather key interpretations of—such crisis behaviour. The labels used and phenomena described may sometimes be confusing referring to dissatisfaction, distrust, or even apathy all of which have different theoretical implications. All, however, have something in common, a primary focus on the "object" of the crisis (democratic systems, institutions, or elites) rather than on the "subject" of it (what internal desire, appetite, or vision

is not really being satisfied), which makes them different from and largely incompatible in angle and scope with a frustration approach.

The literature also shows that the democratic crisis may sometimes particularly affect some categories of citizens. This is notably the case of young people, who are often vocal in their criticism of how democracy works, sometimes opting for non-electoral forms of participation (Dalton, 2008; García-Albacete, 2014; Martin, 2012; Norris, 2011). Young people in France also signalled a form of democratic frustration during the Presidential Election in 2017. The top two ballot choices for young people aged 18–29 were Mélenchon and Macron. "La France Insoumise" ("France Unbent") and "En Marche" ("Ahead!") both of which advocated "new ways" of doing politics with a promise to overhaul existing power structures. That tendency was further confirmed in 2022. Conversely, there has been ample evidence that both economically deprived and ethnic minority populations have lower turnouts than average (Franklin, 2004) and lower trust in democratic institutions (Fennema & Tillie, 1999; Fieldhouse & Cutts, 2008). Conversely, unemployment has been found to be a source of democratic marginalisation (Jordahl, 2006; Laslier et al., 2003) across many political systems.

The idea of a democratic deficit—or democratic under-delivery—often implicitly (and less frequently explicitly) underlines the importance of citizens' expectations in the literature. For instance, Norris (2011) points out that the perceived delivery of electoral democracy often "lags behind" citizens' expectations. Similarly, Ferrin and Kriesi (2016) offer an important contribution that deals with which substantive democratic values or conceptions of democracy (such as aspects of liberal democracy vs social democracy including the rule of law, freedom of the press, and direct democratic participation) are being prioritised by nations and citizens. This, in turn, leads them to assess what citizens from 29 European countries favour (what they call "normative conceptions of democracy") and which of those they believe their democratic systems deliver. The idea is that there are competing conceptions of democracy that different citizens may favour and that which such conceptions they favour will influence how they evaluate democracy. They use European Social Survey data and are interested in differences across which countries have citizens (dis)satisfied with democracy, as well as sociological differences in terms of (dis)satisfaction notably in terms of socio-economic status. This model of democratic satisfaction is based on substantive conceptions (or values) of democracy and aims to explain why people hold different conceptions

of democracy (in the tradition of Dahl), notably liberal, social, and participatory in Ferrin's and Kriesi's model. By contrast, the model I propose within this book shows how democratic frustration will produce different behavioural reactions depending on whether it is combined with specific democratic desire or an absence thereof and is more in the tradition of Eulau and Karps (1977).

This, however, remains fundamentally different from a frustration model, and like the other approaches discussed above, "Object" (or institution) centric. This means notably that in the Ferrin and Kriesi model as in the other ones being discussed, there is a central understanding that democratic crises are, at most, a gap between what is expected and what is delivered (the very notion of the "delivery deficit gap" in my model, which this book depicts as only one of the two components of democratic frustration), and therefore that any such democratic dissatisfaction is inherently fixable as long as the system moves closer to the citizens' expectations. This is a notion, which frustration models cannot agree with simply because part of the essence of frustration, as discussed earlier, is its objective displacement as well as the path dependency between the components of frustration that stems from the centrality of desire in the notion.

Fundamentally, this book argues that democratic desire is entirely unrelated to normative conceptions of democracy. Instead, it expects that this democratic desire will be grounded in functions which reflect insights from theories of representation and of what people really want to "get" out of democracy such as a sense of congruence, a sense of control, a sense of acceptability, and a sense of resolution. Those fold into three main dimensions: ideological, institutional, and political. For each of these dimensions, I measure the "standard" (which is how well democracies should really perform), the "perceived delivery" (how well democracies perform in practice), and the desire (effectively how much people care, how much it means to them). The operationalisation of frustration is then the interaction (or product) of the desire with the perceived delivery gap (i.e. the standard minus the perceived delivery).

The perceived delivery gap is thus only one of the two components of the frustration (the other being the desire), and importantly, it mirrors something which we know exists and is important from the psychology literature. Frustration is a state and a pathology, and as citizens describe themselves spontaneously as democratically frustrated, this book simply

assesses the extent to which some citizens indeed match the psychological definition of frustration and its operationalisation in their own relationship to democracy. It can then also evaluate whether the difference between those "democratically frustrated citizens" (in the psychological sense of the term) and other dissatisfied (but not frustrated psychologically speaking) citizens explains the variations of behavioural reactions that we observe in democracies in crisis in everyday life.

In short, most existing measures of democratic disengagement tend to focus on the perception of the "delivery" and implicitly assume political desire (and often democratic standards) to be constant or irrelevant. By contrast, the concept of democratic frustration is understood as the <u>interaction</u> between democratic desire which varies across individuals, time, and countries, and the difference between democratic standards and assessments of democratic delivery, both of which will be equally subject to both individual-level and system-level variations as well as temporal dynamics. Thus, both democratic desire and assessments of the gap between the delivery of the democratic system and a citizen's standards can vary together or independently. The interactive element means that those with higher desire will care more about perceived delivery deficit, to create a sense of democratic frustration. Consequently, there can be no frustration without a delivery gap, but equally no frustration without an inherent democratic desire, which will come to "weight" the democratic delivery gap to create frustration.

Whilst neither democratic desire nor standards tend to be systematically present in existing research on crises of democracy, the two elements do not have the same status here. As mentioned, a few existing models acknowledge the implicit existence of unfulfilled democratic desire, even though most don't. Empirically, however, many models focus on perceived democratic delivery or delivery deficit, without systematically and explicitly measuring the specific standards that citizens hold when it comes to democratic processes, personnel, and outcomes. Implicitly, those standards are treated as though they were constant or irrelevant. When it comes to democratic desire, however, it is typically ignored both analytically and empirically. Yet, from a psychological point of view, variations in desire and standards are at the heart of frustration, which so many citizens refer to when it comes to their democratic experience (Bruter & Harrison, 2020). Furthermore, this depicts citizens as surprisingly passive, unreactive, and dare we say uncritical within the context of democratic systems supposed to be built around their needs and to provide them

with control. At face value, those references to frustration also tend to differ in substance when it comes to the types of democratic functions which they relate to. Let us now turn to those potential dimensions of democratic frustration.

DIMENSIONS OF DEMOCRATIC FRUSTRATION

To explore dimensions of frustration, we need to start from the diversity of the relationship that each citizen may have with their democratic system. Specific categories of individuals may be more susceptible to (and differently affected by) frustration than others, and the taxonomy of frustration relates those variations to emotive elements (Lazar et al., 2006; Rosensweig, 1944; Shorkey & Crocker, 1981). At the same time, however, beyond the question of "how much" there is the equally important issue of "what", that is, the diverse nature of the objects that frustration may relate to. If such a thing as democratic frustration exists, it thus becomes essential to consider what could be its dimensions, and to do this, we consider the different ways in which citizens are known to ascribe functions to democracy and elections.

There is an abundant body of democratic theory literature, which informs us of the various potential functions of elections (Dahl, 2013; Dennis, 1970; Katz, 1997; Mayo, 1960; Sartori, 1965) as well as the bases through which citizens may derive a sense of democratic representation (Eulau & Karps, 1977; Miller & Stokes, 1963; Przeworski et al., 1999), legitimacy (Gibson & Caldeira, 1995), and accountability (Berry & Howell, 2007). Whilst this literature uncovers multiple discrete components of democracy and potential criteria to evaluate its quality, it is possible to understand them as emphasising three important dimensions that occur recurrently. The first is ideological congruence, which can give citizens the impression that their substantive preferences are represented by the system and the elites that are part of it (notably Eulau & Karps, 1977; Miller & Stokes, 1963; Rosema, 2004). The second dimension pertains to the importance of institutional processes, transparency, and effectiveness (for instance, Gibson & Caldeira, 1995; Przeworski et al., 1999), which can give citizens a sense of well-functioning democratic frameworks. Finally, a third dimension relates to the perceptions of political trustworthiness (Bertsou, 2016) and integrity of democratic elites. Based on those three components, we thus derive three possible dimensions of democratic desire, standards, delivery, and ultimately frustration:

- **Ideological**—this dimension pertains to the perception of a congruent offer to reflect a citizen's substantive preferences and provide him/her with a range of ideological options which he/she perceives as fit for purpose.
- **Institutional**—this second dimension relates to the perceived existence of adequate processes capable of effectively and transparently achieving democratic linkage, and providing efficacious, resilient, accountable, and fair system structure.
- **Political**—the third and final dimension encapsulates questions of agency, political personnel morality, and the integrity of their behaviour, ethos, motivations, and democratic service including a genuine will to put public interest at the heart of their action.

In sum, the ideological dimension relates to the democratic frustration people might experience if they feel that the existing political parties do not match their preferences. For example, in two-party systems if citizens do not feel like the parties competing for their vote truly represent their political interests, they may feel more frustrated than they would do if they had a diverse choice of parties such as in multiparty systems.

Conversely, however, if citizens feel that each of the many parties competing for their vote is mixing key ideological elements that they agree and disagree with, then the ideological offer of the system may feel confusing and frustrating. Whilst the dimension pertains to the democratic system as a whole, it is clear that political parties (or candidates depending on the system) will likely play a central role in ideological frustration. The institutional dimension stems from the democratic frustration citizens may feel if they believe that the system has inadequate democratic processes especially if the reality of decision-making, communication, and accountability mechanisms within the institutions does not fully meet their standards of what a democratic system should deliver. This time, and despite the dimension being once again conceived holistically, the crystallising focus of institutional frustration is likely to pertain to constitutional and design elements rather than individuals or parties. Finally, the political dimension corresponds to the democratic frustration which may arise when citizens are suspicious of the behaviour and ethos of politicians and political parties. When it comes to this dimension, the integrity of their motivations and democratic service is often in question and could arise in relation to questions of morality, honesty, or the purity of their intentions. Indeed, with regard to the political dimension, it is

political leaders—individually or collectively—who are likely to be at the heart of a sense of frustration.

It is worth noting that the description above implies that to an extent, the three dimensions of frustration will thus also differ in their primary object, parties for the ideological dimension, institutions for the institutional dimension, and people (the actual persons making up the elites) for the political dimension, a distinction noted in various works on democratic dissatisfaction (see, for example, Bertsou, 2016, on the difference between distrust in Parliament as an institutions and in actual parties).

Each of those components of democratic frustration is thus first a source of potential democratic "value" for citizens and may thus form a more or less important part of what I have labelled their "democratic desire". It is also secondly a potential basis of evaluation and perceived shortfall of delivery. In other words, citizens will hold certain (and heterogeneous) standards regarding how well they would expect a democratic system to minimally perform to be acceptable. There will conversely be variation in their evaluation of the ability of their own democratic system—institutions, parties, and elites—to deliver in practice. As such, each of the two constitutive components of democratic frustration as defined in the previous section will vary across individuals, systems, and time within each of those three fundamental dimensions.

All in all, the nature of democratic frustration as we have defined it thus has two important features summarised in Fig. 1.1. The first is that democratic frustration is not a directly measurable single item but rather a latent reality which stems from a product between two different and equally important measures: democratic desire (what citizens need and want to get from their democracies) and a hypothetical democratic delivery deficit (i.e. the shortfall between their democratic standards—their expectation as to how a normally functioning democracy should fare—and their actual assessment of the democratic delivery of the system they live within). The second critical feature is that those components (democratic desire, standards, and delivery) and the frustration which they interact to combine will be iterated along three different substantive dimensions: ideological, institutional, and political. In the next section, we will map some of the attitudinal and behavioural consequences which the thus defined democratic frustration and its inherent components and dimensions may have.

In the rest of this chapter, we will explore how to analytically model this concept of democratic frustration in all of its complexity, its three
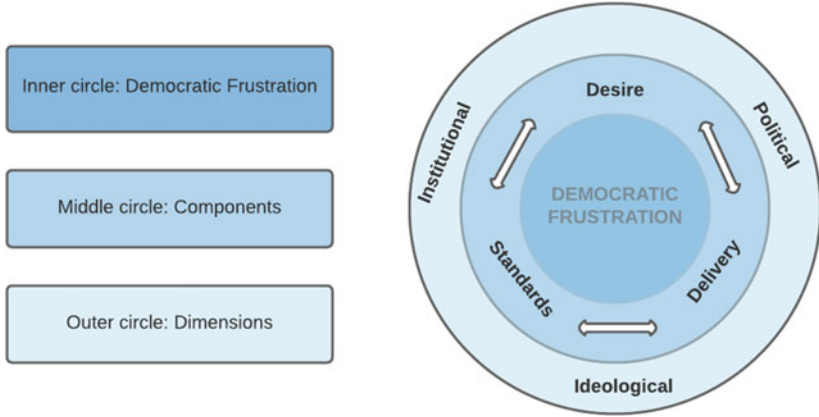
Fig. 1.1   The concept of democratic frustration

components, and its three dimensions. That is, we will unravel the analytical logic behind their determinants, their dynamics, and their attitudinal and behavioural consequences.

MODELLING DEMOCRATIC FRUSTRATION AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ELECTORAL PSYCHOLOGY DETERMINANTS

Let us first consider the causes of democratic frustration at the individual level. Bringing together insights from the various literatures on democratic dissatisfaction, electoral psychology, and insights from the psychology literature on causes and predispositions to frustration, we can identify a few key potential determinants that should be accounted for in our model. They are of different natures. First, we will consider several social and demographic predictors. Second, we will identify key psychological and personality determinants. Third, we will turn to broad political and behavioural factors. Finally, we will derive insights from the electoral psychology literature to see which of the variables from that body of literature would likely constrain the emergence and evolution of democratic frustration and its various components.

Social and Demographic Components

In terms of social and demographic determinants of democratic frustration as well as its individual components, three series of variables may be of particular interest, either because of their weight in some models of democratic dissatisfaction models or, more broadly, in some other segments of the political behaviour literature such as those concerned with participation and voting.

A first key variable is age, because of the general perception that young people are among the most alienated from democratic processes and the most excluded from some forms of participation. The case of young people is specific enough that in this book, I have included a very specific focus on first-time voters, whose frustration I expect to be particularly shaped by their initial civic and democratic experiences. There is a broad literature on the democratic participation and dissatisfaction of young people which justifies considering age (and indeed first electoral experience) as potentially important predictor of democratic frustration.

However, the very nature of those models leads to paradoxical expectations in terms of democratic frustration research. Indeed, whilst models of dissatisfaction mention a potential lack of involvement from young people, in a democratic frustration framework, this would likely lead to a lower democratic desire and therefore lower likelihood of frustration specifically whilst reinforcing the proportion of likely apathetic young people (though Cammaerts et al., 2016 point out that apathy is by no means a dominant feeling among unhappy European youth). At the same time, the sheer lack of democratic experience may lead to lower levels of democratic standards, which would limit the potential for a delivery gap and therefore, once again, the potential for democratic frustration among younger voters. This difference would be further exacerbated by the asymmetry in the internal relationship between delivery and standards which I consider in Chapter 2. As a result, age is a critical predictor of democratic frustration, but whilst young people are known to participate less, the very nature of the frustration concept would mean that they are also less likely to express democratic frustration and that consistently with psychological models, democratic frustration is more likely to "build up" and worsen over time if it is not immediately addressed and alleviated.

A second key demographic determinant is gender. Whilst research on the effects of gender on political behaviour is contrasted in its conclusions, some models within gender and feminist political science at least expect

women to have different democratic and behavioural experiences than men (see, for example, Córdova & Rangel, 2017; Stauffer & Fraga, 2022; Studlar et al., 1998). As a result, I include it as an important predictor in my models albeit with cautious expectations as to whether gender will retain much effect once other social, political, and psychological predictors are included directly into my models.

The third important social predictor to consider is socio-economic status. Indeed, income, education, and occupation have been traditionally noted to have important implications on several political behaviour outcomes from participation to electoral choice and extremism (Almond and Verba (1989 [1963]; Campbell et al., 1980; Converse, 1972; Ford & Goodwin, 2010; Marsh & Kaase, 1979). Given the very nature of the concept of democratic frustration and its core components, I do not expect such effects to affect frustration as much as dissatisfaction, precisely because it is likely to shape desire and standards as well as perceived delivery so as to produce conflicting—and potentially self-cancelling—effects. However, I include them as important control variables.

Finally, and similar ways, models of democratic frustration will also consider other controls such as ethnicity known for its important behavioural consequences in some of the countries in which I am conducting this research (e.g. US, South Africa) and disabilities—notably including hidden disabilities—which the electoral psychology literature in particular highlights as having important effects on citizens' electoral experience and consequently attitudes (Bruter & Harrison, 2020).

Psychological Predictors

I have already mentioned that psychological studies of frustration take into account developmental realities and the impact of age, suggesting that frustration tends to worsen as well as move away from its original object over the years, and that as a result, whilst many studies on democratic dissatisfaction suggest that young people are faring worse than most on that front, I expect that, in complete contrast, they will also feel less—rather than more—frustrated. However, that same psychological literature also highlights the fact that some personality profiles are more susceptible to frustration than others.

As a result, I consider the impact of personality on democratic frustration looking at two parallel models. When considering personality effects, much of the political science literature focuses on the OCEAN model

(the so-called big 5) (see, for example, Briggs, 1992; McAdams, 1992; Rosema, 2004 etc.), and here, I notably consider how conscientiousness and openness could shape democratic frustration. However, Bruter and Harrison (2020) find that many political and electoral psychology attitudes and behaviours are in fact much better explained by discrete personality traits as opposed to the big 5 indices. In this case, I am particularly interested in the impact of creativity, sensitivity, abstraction, and risk aversion, which importance these authors have highlighted in their electoral models.

Similarly, Bruter and Harrison also suggest that next to fundamental personality traits, moral hierarchisation is another source of psychological differentiation across citizens with occasionally immense impact on their political attitudes, experiences, and behaviours. I use their operationalisation based on hierarchisation of the moral commandments and popular 7 "deadly sins" and particularly consider the impact of focus on deprivation and family as moral priorities.

Those key psychological predictors are thus part of my understanding of how components of frustration will be determined and shaped, and beyond them democratic frustration itself.

Political Predictors

A third series of important predictors to consider come from the traditional political behaviour literature itself and focuses on political, partisan, and ideological characteristics.

Among those, we should first consider the potential importance of partisanship, which, since Campbell et al. (1980) all the way to Iyengar and Krupenkin (2018), has been seen as one of the most critical determinants of all political behaviour, notably in some of the US-centric literature. I include it as a control, but as noted in the next section, by contrast, the electoral psychology literature suggests that partisanship has been credited for a lot of variances that should instead be attributed to the concept of (non-partisan) electoral identity (Bruter & Harrison, 2020).

Moreover, another important predictor to consider is ideology, which is often perceived to work better than partisanship in multiparty systems (e.g. Franklin, 1992). Consequently, I will include ideology rather than partisanship as a control in most final models after testing for partisanship and ensuring that ideology indeed works better.

A third important political predictor to consider is interest in politics. That variable has been found to be important in many behavioural and network models, including Glenn and Grimes (1968), Furnham and Cheng (2019), etc. Substantively, there is good reason to expect that interest in politics could have a determining impact on citizens' democratic standards and desire which makes it an important predictor in my model.

Finally, an essential political predictor in many political behaviour models is efficacy and notably external efficacy (the perception of one's ability to influence political outcomes). This is thus an important control that I will consider in my models. However, it is important to note that recent electoral psychology literature has also questioned the value of traditional efficacy measures compared to projected efficacy (Bruter & Harrison, 2020), which reinterprets the notion of efficacy under a projection and integration framework to suggest that rather than individual impact, citizens will consider the potential effects of their behaviour as part of the projected choices of "people like them". As discussed, the next section, this is another important predictor that I will consider and given the risk of multicollinearity between efficacy and projected efficacy, I will test both separately and consider only keeping the more effective of the two variables in the final models.

Electoral Psychology Predictors

Finally, let us consider key determinants of democratic frustration and which critical importance has been amply evidenced in recent electoral psychology literature.

The first is the concept of electoral identity which is proposed by Bruter and Harrison (2020) and uses a sports analogy to distinguish between citizens who experience elections as "referees" and "supporters". The underlying theory is that the partisan identity model (Campbell et al. 1980) which has often been criticised by the literature ties the identity of voters to parties but that an alternative and in the authors' view more convincing alternative would be to say that whilst partisanship is very rarely mentioned by citizens when exploring their own identities, it does not mean that elections are "identity-less". Instead, their model suggests that citizens assume a role in electoral context which is either that of referees (arbitrating between different competitors) or supporters (backing one of them). They also show that this distinction is not simply

related to strength of partisanship but rather means that a vote is not the simple expression of a preference, but instead the conclusion individuals draw from embracing a certain role and function in how they experience, consider, and adjudicate an election.

A second important criterion is that of societal projection, also introduced in the same book. The basis of that model is that rather than being "purely individual" or "purely collective", elections are about the articulation between the individual and societal layers of an election. In other words, whilst individuals cast an individual vote, they will also estimate how it fits within broader societal dynamics, not least by assessing how the rest of the country (and/or specific people or groups they care about) will behave in the same event. That assessment of how the rest of country is behaving is termed societal projection and is shown to affect participation, electoral choice, electoral experience, and the sense of democratic resolution that citizens may or may not derive from an election. In that sense, I also expect societal projection to similarly affect individuals' democratic desire and likelihood to feel democratically frustrated.

A specific derivative of societal projection is projected efficacy. As discussed in the previous section, it is the extent to which citizens believe not quite that their individual vote will make a difference, but rather that if "they and people like them" (whomever these may include) behave in a certain way, then this will affect the outcome of the election. Bruter and Harrison (2020) find that the effect of projected efficacy is coherent with but almost systematically stronger than that of traditional external efficacy in all the behavioural and attitudinal models that they test. As a result, I also expect projected efficacy to be a critical predictor of democratic frustration and its component. As alluded earlier, the correlation between efficacy and projected efficacy is such that I will test for both independent variables in the model but likely only keep the more effective one to avoid multicollinearity issues.

Those three variables will thus play a key role in my models of democratic frustration and its component alongside socio-demographic, psychological, and political predictors which I briefly discussed above.

Modelling Systemic Level Determinants of Democratic Frustration

Having considered the individual-level determinants of democratic frustration, let us now assess some of the key comparative and systemic level attributes that may be susceptible to constrain and influence it as well.

Given that one of the components of democratic frustration is the perception of democratic delivery, it is only natural to consider that the objective democratic delivery it is based upon will have an impact on democratic frustration itself. In other words, whether a democratic system delivers "better" or "worse" to citizens should be a key ingredient within the democratic frustration recipe (notwithstanding the complex link with other components which we will explore later in this chapter when considering the cycle of frustration).

In turn, political science has long studied how various institutional arrangements, elite behaviour, and contextual realities affect the quality of democracy. Therefore, several key institutional and contextual variables need to be accounted for in my model. I have approached this by including a "broad spectrum" of institutional and contextual variables that may affect citizens' experience of democracy and be used as systemic level independent variables but also controls. In terms of case selection, there is a variety of electoral systems (majoritarian, proportional, and mixed electoral systems), territorial organisation (federal for the US, and Australia, and devolution in the UK), and differing levels of democratic consolidation (South Africa is a developing democracy). These systems also feature various measures of electoral administration including compulsory voting (e.g. in Australia), advance voting (Australia, US), and postal or mail-in ballots (Australia, UK, US). The four key case studies include presidential (US) and parliamentary (UK, South Africa) systems. These countries also encompass a wide range of socio-economic contexts, demographic characteristics including overall wealth and inequality, education levels, presence of minorities, and political ones including government stability, left or right wing majority, single party or coalition government, and key adversarial issues such as the Brexit referendum highlighting generational discrepancies in preferences, corruption scandals in South Africa, or heightened ideological polarisation in the US.

Whilst not included as a variable per se in the model, it is important to recognise that context will impact real life actual delivery (and thus also who is in power and how they act) and will obviously influence perceived delivery.

We now move onto the next section that models the potential behavioural consequences of democratic frustration.

Withdrawal, Anger, and Aggression—A Model of the Behavioural Consequences of Democratic Frustration

Democratic frustration is likely to have both attitudinal and behavioural consequences. Traditionally, in political science, we tend to start with attitudes before analysing behaviours, because there is a clear hierarchy between them (and identities and beliefs). In this case, however, it is worth remembering that psychologists have approached frustration from the observation and understanding of certain behaviours which were perceived as disruptive by those who suffered them, before "working backwards" to understand the underlying attitudes and structures that may lead to them. That clinical and therapeutic approach, however unusual in political science, perhaps needs to be observed here if we want to do justice to the promise of taking the concept of frustration seriously and of understanding whether democratic frustration meets the criteria of a traditional form of frustration in psychological terms.

It is in fact with those behavioural consequences that we shall start, because of the way that we have just described in which in psychology, the concept of frustration first emerged as a conceptual framework for clinical practitioners to explain a set of behaviour that they were observing among many patients and which they understood to be difficult to deal with in their lives. In other words, in psychological terms, as often, the observation of pathologies preceded the characterisation of their underlying cause. Those behavioural consequences are mostly triple: withdrawal, anger, and aggression.

The dimensionality of democratic frustration is interesting in its own right, but in modelling terms, it also comes with potentially complex and intense implications. Earlier in this chapter, we have related democratic frustration to the crisis of democracy in its multiplicity of pathological symptoms. Could different dimensions of democratic frustration also be responsible for the different (indeed, sometimes almost contradictory) attitudinal and behavioural consequences which have been observed across consolidated and emerging democracies, and which are often so

conveniently—but perhaps not always convincingly—regrouped under the general concept of "democratic crisis"?

To approach this question, I rely once again on the insights of psychologists when it comes to understanding the consequences of frustration in general, to apply them to the unique case of democratic frustration. Among the most relevant findings in the field, Berkowitz (1989) and Bandura (1973) conclude that frustration is indirectly facilitative of emotional responses such as aggression. Sargent (1948) describes a sequence of behaviour that features emotion as the central dynamic factor of three key behavioural consequences: withdrawal, anger, and aggression. Conversely, Wetzer et al. (2007) found that although frustration and anger were related conceptually, they differed in that frustration focuses on the negative outcome, whereas anger centres on blaming others. Anger is thus similar to the extra punitive response behaviour (Rosensweig, 1944) and provides support for findings that intolerance of frustration is associated with anger (Martin & Dahlen, 2004). Dollard et al. (1939) connect the frustration of a desire as the source of aggression, leading to the "frustration-aggression hypothesis" developed by Berkowitz (1969). In turn, this also echoes earlier work by Britt and Janus (1940), who considered that the frustration process includes "aspects of emotion, tension, conflict, inhibition, aggression and withdrawal", and that "reactions to frustration may be aggression, withdrawal, regression, resistance, anger, guilt and remorse, shame, and embarrassment".

The parallel between those expected psychological consequences of frustration and the symptoms of democratic pathologies that we have noted and discussed earlier in this chapter is rather striking. De-participation (abstention, membership decline) offers an obvious parallel to the psychological concept of withdrawal. By contrast, populist and extremist voting can easily be matched with the symptoms of what psychologists describe as anger. Finally, in similar ways, engaging in violent protests or Revolutions largely overlaps with psychological criteria for the notion of aggression. Thus, thinking of current pathologies of systemic crisis as symptoms of democratic frustration can explain physical violence but also protest and scapegoating.

This analysis is even more relevant that the withdrawal-anger-aggression model also relates to another fundamental characteristic of frustration which we briefly evoked earlier in this chapter, that of displacement. Indeed, when the source of the frustration is not clear to the subject, the violence (regardless of its forms and expressions) is typically

displaced on an innocent target, especially if the subject feels ignored or humiliated.

From a psychological point of view, we thus witness three types of behavioural consequences which likely stem from fundamentally different emotional responses, and from a systemic point of view, they embody distinct challenges and threats to the foundations and functioning of social and political systems. Those consequences also happen to be almost worryingly intuitive in their democratic equivalents, and as we have just seen, they happen to match the descriptions of many of the most common symptoms that scholars have attached to the crisis (or crises) of democracy across countries and systems from abstention to populism and from non-violent and violent protests all the way to very radical behaviours such as support for Revolutions and the choice to leave one's country. Indeed, when thought of in terms of democratic applications, each of the three behavioural consequences of withdrawal, anger, and aggression can be matched with a few both mild and radical behavioural symptoms. At the same time, each of them can also relate to several separate attitudinal consequences which may work as mediators and/or facilitators to those pathological behavioural outcomes.

From Hopelessness to Hostility: Mapping the Potential Attitudinal Consequences of Democratic Frustration

Whilst behavioural consequences of frustration are most relevant to psychologists, in the context of understanding democratic frustration as a political behaviour phenomenon, we are also crucially interested in attitudinal implications. In this book, I tie democratic frustration and its three components to four key concepts in the recent literatures in political science and electoral psychology: perceptions of electoral atmosphere, distrust, non-compliance, hopelessness, and electoral hostility.

Bruter and Harrison (2020) move from the concept of "context" in elections to that of perceived "electoral atmosphere". They argue that rather than context shaping elections directly in a top-down institutionalist way, citizens subconsciously capture a vast range of contextual and institutional signals which they merge into the perception of an electoral atmosphere which they amply comment on, and which, at least in recent years, has typically been described in very negative ways. In my model,

I expect that democratic frustration should lead to higher negativity in perceptions of electoral atmosphere as the frustration will be detrimental to citizens' ability to experience the positive elements of electoral periods.

Conversely, the concept of distrust has been principally theorised by Bertsou (2016, 2019), as a tribute to the fact that whilst much of political behaviour has been heavily invested in the concept of trust, the empirical reality of citizens' political discourse is more one of distrust than of trust. For the same reasons, I expect democratic frustration—and the democratic delivery component of it—to lead to greater distrust towards democratic institutions and personnel. Because of the nature of the dimensions, ideological frustration should particularly affect distrust towards parties, institutional frustration towards the system, and political towards political personnel and elite themselves.

A different consequence pertains to the effects of democratic frustration on electoral hostility. Bruter and Harrison (2020) propose to move away from affective polarisation models to embrace a broader concept of electoral hostility, largely detached from partisanship assumptions and grounded in a psychology-inspired cycle of emotions which features frustration as one of its stages. Electoral hostility pertains to citizens directing their frustration, anger, contempt, disgust, or indeed hatred at fellow citizens rather than institutions or elites. It is thus essential to assess whether indeed democratic frustration results in electoral hostility and also how those ties are affected by the way in which citizens ascribe blame to the various actors which they may perceive as the source of their frustration. This deterioration in emotional state from frustration to hostility has been discussed at length in the existing psychiatric literature; in particular, Alexander (1950) succinctly describes it as "frustration with hope is a constructive factor in life and without hope it is destructive".

I also suggest that democratic frustration by undermining a citizen's feeling that they fit with their democratic system as a whole will impact their compliant attitudes negatively. In other words, I expect democratically frustrated citizens to consider their political system and its actors and institutions as less legitimate, thereby also harming the perceived legitimacy of policy decisions and outcomes, and ultimately lowering citizens' intention to comply with any measures and particularly those towards which they do not express specific support (Easton, 1975; Gibson & Caldeira, 1995).

Finally, one last key variable proposed by Bruter and Harrison (2020) is that of hopelessness. It departs from existing models of optimism and pessimism by suggesting that in some cases, citizens may reach a very specific stage of pessimism, which is hopelessness and broadly relates

to psychological definitions of depression. Hopelessness is the perceptions a citizens may hold that their democratic system has no prospect of improving at all, and paradoxically, leads to a dangerous feeling that the prospect is indeed so bad, that nothing they could do could make it worse anyway. This, in turn, can disinhibit behaviours which are typically negatively connoted such as abstention and extremist voting. Bruter and Harrison also found that a critical threshold of hopelessness is not so much the way citizens evaluate their own relationship to their democratic system but rather the perception that things will be worse for the generations of their children and grandchildren than they have been for themselves. I am thus suggesting that democratic frustration, by participating in this ever-deteriorating cycle, will also contribute to citizens' sense of hopelessness as a final—yet essential—attitudinal consequence.

Overall, in my model, I am thus interested not just in where democratic frustration and its individual components come from, but also in what it results in, both in attitudinal and in behavioural terms, thereby emulating traditional frustration studies which focus not only on the frustration itself, but also, critically, on its pathologies, that is, in its attitudinal and behavioural outcomes and consequences. Those two types of reactions are not entirely separate. Instead, they can vary in intensity and complexity separately or together and interact together to produce ever-changing psychological expressed or enacted pathologies.

With all those parallels in mind between ample and alarming research on current crises of democracy across countries and their paradoxes, and extensive psychological research into the phenomenon of frustration, I will now turn to the question of the dynamics of democratic frustration and thus the way in which its nature and consequences may help us theorise the ways in which we could expect it to evolve over time at both individual and systemic levels.

Psychological Models of the Evolution of Frustration

Beyond the nature of frustration and its consequences, the psychology and psychiatry literatures—notably evolutionary psychiatry—also have a lot to say about the way frustration tends to evolve over time. As a general psychological state, unresolved fundamental desires will lead to ever-increasing (rather than stable) frustration. Indeed, Freud (1900) has famously founded much of psychoanalytical theory on the suggestion

that (magnified and potentially consequential) adult frustrations essentially proceed from unresolved (original and sometimes a lot more benign or anecdotal) frustrations occurring during infancy and early childhood.

Similar evolutions are reliably and repeatedly noted in the context of studies in evolutionary psychiatry (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017; Stevens & Price, 2015) suggesting that in practice, the whole psychiatric process of frustration corresponds to a progressive deterioration of the effects of an unachieved goal or desire.

What is clear throughout that literature is that frustration is virtually never a stable state. It is evolutionary in nature, either resolving or deteriorating or displacing. As frustration thus becomes increasingly buried, hidden, and/or detached from its original inception, diagnosing the nature and deep cause of frustration becomes increasingly difficult, and an individual's conscious understanding of his/her and others' responsibility in his/her state of frustration will likely be increasingly mistaken and ineffective. Let us now turn to the ways in which it indeed shapes problems of diagnosis.

Diagnosing Frustration

Having seen what frustration consists of, how it evolves, and what its consequences are, it is important to understand how frustration is normally diagnosed in psychology and psychiatry. In other words, given the model which I outlined earlier, and which differentiates between high desire situations like frustration and low desire states such as apathy, how can we recognise a case of democratic frustration—compared to say, simple dissatisfaction, criticality, or apathy, when faced with it as the emotional and attitudinal state of an individual?

A first important element of the frustration diagnosis is that in traditional psychological models, it is sometimes not so much frustration itself which is an issue but rather the difficulty an individual may experience living with it. In other words, in clinical terms, it is typically not so much frustration itself which is observed and diagnosed, but its consequences, which will then be understand as proceeding from a deep and underlying frustration. Furthermore, frustration rarely comes alone and indeed, is typically often intertwined with sets of other pathologies that reinforce it, make it harder to diagnose, and make it more important to cure at the same time. Harrington (2006) notably stresses that frustration intolerance beliefs often have strong links with anxiety, anger, and depression.

In previous research, the same author also uses a "frustration discomfort scale" to assess how intolerable frustration has become to a given individual (Harrington, 2005), thereby complementing previous measurements of "frustration tolerance" (Thetford, 1952) and assessment of an individual's "frustration threshold" by Maier (1956).

Altogether, this means that pragmatically, many psychologists and psychiatrists will not really diagnose frustration per se but take it as a given, and instead, they will assess the extent to which individuals are able to live with frustration without feeling overwhelmed by it and consequently debilitated in their daily lives, behaviours, and suffer as a consequence (see for instance Jibeen, 2013). The only approach which is more likely to systematically try to diagnose and assess frustration as such is psychoanalysis. Even then, however, the threshold for engaging in such a process and trying to address it is the perception that the sense of frustration of an individual is making them unhappy or leading them to develop attitudinal and behavioural responses which are either dangerous or disruptive for themselves or others.

The parallel with democratic frustration is not hard to make. As discussed earlier in this chapter, social scientists have long known already that ultimate negative consequences are there in terms of democratic dissatisfaction, distrust, anger towards political system, and behavioural outcomes such as chronic abstention or extremist behaviour from a significant proportion of citizens. The question becomes whether to relate those outcomes to an underlying frustration, not because it would add to the systemic challenges that have already been amply observed and described, but because it would enable the scientific and democratic communities to avoid misunderstanding them, looking for mistaken causes, and therefore pursuing ineffective or even counter-productive solutions.

Frustration and the First Vote

Of all the groups displaying some of those potential outwards consequences of frustration, none has probably attracted more attention than young people. When it comes to explorations of the crises of democracy and participation, young generations are almost systematically identified as the archetypal victims. However, the conceptual nature of democratic frustration makes it critical to understand how the phenomenon affects young citizens for other reasons. Indeed, if frustration is built upon a

trilogy of desire, standards, and delivery, it seems clear that desire of something takes a different form from those who have not had a chance to experience it yet than for those who have. Similarly, it would seem logical that desire and standards will be formed based on the expectations that we inherit from our experiences. They will consequently be articulated differently for those who ground them on the actual experience of their place within democracy as compared to those who have no such experience to refer to yet (Albarracin & Wyer, 2000). In fact, it is quite likely based on the socialisation literature that we explore later in this book that those initial experiences will shape future standards more than any other and subsequent ones.

Furthermore, we should remember that when it comes to frustration, psychologists underline the nature of a trail from an initial experience which effects could easily be resolved if identified early—to an evolutionary, increasingly distant, complex, buried, and destructive emotions. In that sense, it seems essential not only to understand how the sense of democratic frustration of first-time voters may differ from that of the rest of the population, but also to try and identify if there is any foundational experience of that early welcome into democratic citizenship which may have the power to serve as the traumatic basis of a future lasting, distorted, and complexified source of democratic frustration in later years.

My model therefore suggests that perceptions of first-time voters will be different from those of other adults and that it is partly in their expression of the mismatch between fantasised standards, early democratic desire, and one's first experience of active citizenship that we may find the ingredients that will later morph into robustly grounded and growing democratic frustration over the years.

Democratic Frustration, Guilt, and Self-Blame

On the face of it, when it comes to external displays of democratic dissatisfaction or criticism, there are always plenty of outsiders that can be—and indeed are—blamed: political elites, counter-powers, institutions and institutional frameworks, or even fellow citizens themselves. Adopting a democratic frustration lens, however, would suggest that this blame game could hide a crucial aspect of the reality. Indeed, we saw earlier in this chapter that Britt and Janus (1940) relate frustration to several negative introspective elements which include guilt, remorse, shame, and embarrassment. This is a particularly noteworthy element because in the

context of the difference between a democratic frustration model and the various existing models of democratic dissatisfaction discussed earlier in this chapter, we note that all of them tend to focus on outward blame only rather than also including the possibility of self-blame.

Whilst there is unanimous understanding that desire is at the heart of the concept of frustration, Maier (1949) takes a slightly different view of that relationship from much of the literature, framing frustration as a mismatch between behaviour and aims—or rather an absence of goal to underpin behaviour. In other words, Maier's assessments enable us to move the understanding of frustration a further step away from its subject-perceived cause to ascribe it to the behaviour of the individual him/herself and its aimless nature. That is to say, we move away from Underwood's (1949) suggestion that there is an aim, but it is not being fulfilled and almost reverse it into a situation where there is a behaviour, but it has, instead, "lost" any initial goal or logic which would have given it a sense of purpose, so that the behaviour itself becomes intrinsically unfulfilling. To be a little more concrete, under a democratic frustration model, the suggestion would be that citizens would still take part in democratic processes but would, effectively, lose sight of any good they were ever hoping to achieve through it. This situation would not only make democratic participation structurally unfulfilling, but it would also generate potential conditions for self-blame as it is the citizen him/herself who would lose motive and, beyond it, motivation.

Whilst the various components of outward blame (political system, political elites, fellow citizens) are all relevant, the element of guilt and introspective criticism is inherent to the nature of frustration and its known psychological intricacies. Indeed, one of the specificities of frustration as a psychological phenomenon and one which is directly instrumental, is the relationship between the frustration process and psycho-pathological consequences.

In the context of democratic frustration, this is all the more relevant than some of the key examples of expected withdrawal, anger, and aggression behaviours which I have identified as expected consequences of democratic frustration are known to be frequently associated with reactions of shame or embarrassment. This is for instance the case with abstention, extremist voting, and participation in violent demonstrations, all of which typically lead to sufficient levels of shame and guilt to frequently result in significant social desirability bias in survey responses as well as qualitative investigation.

It will of course be interesting to understand whether that element of guilt and self-blame will play an important role in the context of democratic frustration. However, it will be perhaps even more critical to consider whether those citizens who engage in those forms of predicted behavioural reaction can at all see a resolution of their democratic frustration as a result. Could it be the case, instead, that it might lead to a further worsening of frustration feelings as a result of the introspective unease and self-blame induced by their own consequential behaviour instead? Here, the question of the potential mismatch between perceived (or assumed) and actual problem is more relevant than ever. If what we witness is simple dissatisfaction—as opposed to the consequences of an underlying democratic frustration—then the reactions dissatisfied citizens engage with will logically make them feel better and resolve the objective and transactional problems that are causing their distress. If, on the other hand, the real cause underneath democratic dissatisfaction is a complex undercurrent of democratic frustration, which has become largely impenetrable to those who suffer from it in the first place, then reactions intended to enable individuals to come to terms with what makes them unhappy within their democracies will however make things worse rather than better. That distinction has far-reaching consequences on understanding the nature and shape of the cycle of frustration.

Cycles of Frustration and of Democratic Frustration

Indeed, what the element above reveal is also that apart from a psychological phenomenon, frustration is—in and of itself—a cycle. Initial, foundational denial of achieving a certain objective is followed by maturation, displacement, and then symptomatic reactions and pathologies of frustration. As a result, frustration is a dynamic process which leads to progressive deterioration unless the root cause (which is usually not the perceived source) of the frustration is addressed and its pathologies controlled.

The cycle of democratic frustration may follow similar patterns, and indeed, at societal level, it anecdotally seems that expressed levels of frustration have consistently increased as democracies have matured. In other words, democratic improvements may well worsen rather than resolving democratic frustration. This may appear paradoxical to many as undoubtedly, political systems have gone through obvious lengths

to try and generally improve processes and conditions of democratic engagement, transparency, and participatory opportunities. Whilst this may seem like a paradox when one thinks of democratic dissatisfaction (surely, democratic improvements should result in decreasing dissatisfaction), such sequencing would in fact be entirely consistent with the cycle of frustration highlighted above and with the fact that in the context of frustration, the evolution of desire matters just as much as the perception of a mismatch itself. As a result, any form of democratic improvement, whilst temporarily closing the gap between citizens' democratic standards and what their political systems can deliver will also secondarily result in an increase in those standards and increase in citizens' democratic desire, which will reignite the frustration process.

This is to say that under a democratic frustration framework, trying to resolve dissatisfaction does not resolve frustration. Instead, the search for a "perfectly functioning" democracy merely serves to perpetually move citizens' psychological goalpost in such a way that their democratic desire is always updated so as to feel unfulfilled.

To make things worse, as we shall discuss in Chapter 6, there is good reason to think that whilst democratic improvements, however positive, will result in increases in democratic desire and standards, democratic deteriorations may not be similarly prone to reducing what citizens want and expect from their democracies. That is because the experience of a negative situation will not make an individual forget the better days that he/she previously experienced. As such, the relationship between changes in democratic delivery on the one hand, and changes to democratic desire and standards on the other hand will likely be asymmetric, with strong elasticity when things improve (thereby perpetuating frustration despite progress) but poor elasticity when things get worse (thereby depriving democracies of a "frustration insurance policy").

Therapeutics of Frustration

The psychology of literature finally gives us some important information about how frustration is normally addressed and cured.

First, I noted earlier that much of the psychology and psychiatry approach to frustration is not about curing frustration itself but rather the ability to tolerate and live with it. This is notably the case with Harrington (2006) already mentioned, which focuses on the belief of being unable to tolerate frustration rather than frustration itself. In other words, the trigger for therapeutically addressing frustration is the fact that individuals exceed a certain tolerance threshold (Maier, 1956) or conversely that their

frustration becomes intolerable to them (Harrington, 2005; Thetford, 1952). The same trigger is used, usually more informally, as threshold for action in psychoanalytical approaches.

The consequence of this is also that therapeutic approaches may often focus not so much on the root cause of frustration but rather on the induced pathologies that stem from it, thereby sending us back to the anger, aggression, and withdrawal model of consequences of frustration developed earlier in this chapter. In other words, frustration does not so much become a target of therapy in its own self-contained right, as a causal ingredient—and possibly even a causal structure as such—which is to be considered when addressing the consequential pathologies which would not be there in the first place if not for the underlying frustration itself.

To return to the political analogy and the specific context of democratic frustration, the idea is thus that one might not so much wish to "fix democratic frustration" per se, but rather address abstention, demonstrations, or extremism differently as a result of their stemming from frustration rather than dissatisfaction or apathy because a therapeutic approach that would miss the fact that those pathologies are rooted in frustration would likely simply prove ineffective in the long term.

Altogether, in this chapter, I have outlined the different sections and sub-parts of my model of democratic frustration. This gives us a broad analytical framework to answer the question of

How Can We Explain the Determinants, Dynamics, and Consequences of Democratic Frustration?

In this quest, democratic frustration must critically be understood in its complexity and endogeneity, and thus analysed in both of its capacities as dependent and independent variable in psychological, political, and electoral psychology models. I have thus systematically highlighted the nature of democratic frustration as a complex function of three components: democratic desire, democratic standards, and perceptions of democratic delivery. I also underline its multi-dimensionality with expected ideological, institutional, and political dimensions that would be correlated but theoretically distinct.

I then moved on to sketch my understanding of what shapes democratic frustration and its components. At the individual level, I highlighted a series of socio-demographic (such as age, gender, socio-economic status,

and possibly ethnicity and disability), psychological (such as personality dimensions, discrete personality traits, and moral hierarchisation), political (potentially including partisanship, ideology, interest in politics, and efficacy), and finally, electoral psychological (notably electoral identity, societal projection, and projected efficacy).

Alongside those individual-level determinants, I also considered systemic level factors including electoral arrangements, party system, participatory structures, democratic background, and context.

On the flip side of the model is the question of the consequences of democratic frustration. On the one hand, I highlighted several potential attitudinal consequences. Those include perceptions of electoral atmosphere, distrust, (non) compliance, hopelessness, and finally, electoral hostility.

To those attitudinal outcomes, I then also added expectations of behavioural consequences directly derived from the psychology literature and based on a tryptic of withdrawal, anger, and aggression, all of which I adapt to the field of democratic and participatory behaviour in terms of their likely empirical manifestations, all of which sit at the heart of the abundant dissatisfaction literature and understanding of why such critical attitudes even matter for democratic systems, their survival, and their evolution.

Beyond the nature of democratic frustration, its determinants, and its consequences, my model also considers the questions of the dynamics of democratic frustration and notably the relationship between its components (and more specifically, the expected asymmetric effect of perceptions of democratic delivery—the most common measure of democratic dissatisfaction—on democratic standards and to a lesser extent desire). I also detailed my theory of the impact of those dynamics on the cycle of frustration, notably showing how democratic improvements may therefore not resolve democratic frustration but instead could potentially further worsen it under certain circumstances. I also highlighted how that part of the model should oblige us to consider the importance of the first vote and the likely evolution of democratic frustration over time both within individuals' lives and in terms of the democratic development of polities.

The entirety of the model is summarised in Fig. 1.2.
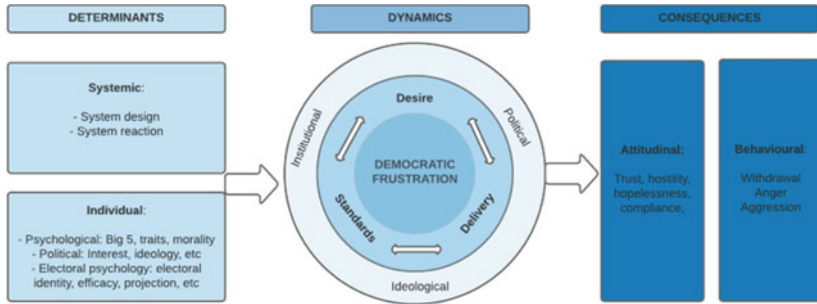
Fig. 1.2 Model of democratic frustration—determinants, dynamics, and consequences

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Models and Operationalisation of Democratic Frustration

DEMOCRATIC FRUSTRATION AND OTHER STANDARDS-DELIVERY GAP COMBINATIONS

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs established that beyond obvious human requirements such as physiological and safety needs, other more abstract ones such as esteem and self-actualisation are just as important. In many ways, this makes it very unsurprising that democracy may be at the heart of human desire, as primal and overwhelming as several other more physical priorities, because democracy can be at the heart of the feelings of freedom, fairness, equity, and efficacy which may work as prerequisites to many as an esteem or self-actualisation need.

In Chapter 1, we discussed how most measures of citizen disengagement rely on the concept of dissatisfaction and tend to focus on the perception of democratic "delivery". In contrast, the concept of democratic frustration is defined here as the interaction between citizens' desire of their democratic system and their perceptions of a deficit in the democratic delivery of those standards. The operationalisation of this concept separates the measure of the democratic desire and the measure of its perceived shortfall—i.e. the gap between democratic standards and perceived delivery. In this way, both standards and assessments of the democratic system can vary together (positive or negative correlations) or independently. The interactive element means that those with higher

standards, will care more about negatively perceived delivery, which thus in turn renders it more likely to create frustration. Consequently, there can be no frustration where the perceived delivery is positive, but also, critically, as per psychological models of frustration, there cannot be frustration where there is no high desire in the first instance. By contrast, where perceived delivery is negative, desire acts as a "weight" on frustration.

Therefore, democratic frustration is present when two conditions are met—(1) a desire exists that democracies should bring about certain positive outcomes, and (2) the democratic delivery does not meet the expectation of the citizen as to what such outcome should be.

By importing and transposing psychological insights, the model thus puts the notion of democratic desire alongside perceived delivery deficit to combine into the operationalisation of democratic frustration. In turn, those two components enable me to uniquely differentiate between democratic frustration and other patterns of negative feelings about democracy discussed earlier, which do not, by contrast, require either the same starting standards, or the same level of perceived delivery deficit. The resulting conceptual map is shown in Table 2.1. It suggests that whilst high desire and high perceived delivery deficit create the target concept of democratic frustration, a similar perception of deficit combined with low desire would instead constitute cynicism. When the low desire is combined with medium perceived delivery deficit, it would instead match the definition of apathy. Note that I suggest that one combination (low desire with low perceived delivery deficit) in that matrix is unrealistic. This is because existing research in psychology and marketing suggests that there is a conditional and asymmetric relationship between experience and standards. Poor experience may not lead to lower standards, but positive experience will lead to a more favourable re-evaluation of those standards (Carr et al., 2001; Johnson & Mathews, 1997; Rogers & Ward, 1993). As a result, someone experiencing consistently high democratic delivery would not be able to retain modest democratic standards. Instead, their experience would immediately lead them to be more demanding, a bit like someone who having experienced what they consider to be the employment of their dreams would never be able to consider a new "boring" job as something that could be normal and expected of a professional position thereafter. Because of the asymmetric nature of that relationship between experience and expectation, the contrary would not be true, and if, after experiencing stimulating professional situations, someone moved towards

Table 2.1 Conceptual model of democratic frustration: An interaction between standards and perceived delivery deficit

Institutional dimension	Perceived delivery deficit			
Standards		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
	HIGH	**SATISFACTION**	**CRITICALITY**	**FRUSTRATION**
	LOW	[Will recalibrate]*	APATHY/ INDIFFERENCE	**CYNICISM**

Notes *Existing research in psychology and marketing confirms that there is a conditional and asymmetric relationship between experience and standards. Poor experience may not lead to lower standards, but high experience will lead to those standards being re-evaluated (Carr et al., 2001; Johnson & Mathews, 1997; Rogers & Ward, 1993)

a more "boring" job, it would not result in them suddenly expecting all professional positions to be boring thereafter.

The book later revisits the consequences of this expected asymmetry in terms of what it means for cycles of democratic frustration and the relationship between its individual components. What this means is that because of this asymmetry, a positive change in democratic delivery would likely also result in a symmetric inflation of the corresponding democratic expectation whilst, by contrast, a deterioration of democratic delivery would not be similarly met by declining standards but, instead, would result in an increasing negative gap.

The Challenge of Operationalising Democratic Frustration and Measuring Its Components and Dimensions

Like most psychological concepts, frustration is a very difficult object to measure. There is no simple, obvious, and direct way to capture it, no "objective scale" that could be used. This is common with deep and complex psychological attributes—whilst wealth, age, or social category may be the object of some measurement controversies and discussions, there is a general agreement that corresponds to intuitive categories which may be at least approximately operationalised through some sort of direct measure. By contrast, in psychometric terms, most deep and complex personal, emotional, or psychological realities are typically understood to be inherently "buried", what we call "latent". There is therefore no

direct or evident measure of them, but their reality will unfold through a myriad of overlapping indications across a variety of measures which will be coloured—indeed, technically caused, by that latent variable alongside many other causes.

Of course, in clinical psychology and psychiatry, those subtleties can sometimes be disposed of when practitioners suggest that their purpose is practical and to seek therapy and soothing rather than research measurement or characterisation. As such, practitioners will often choose to ignore the underlying object of their work if they can find ways of measuring its pathological consequences, which cure is, by and large, the very object of their work. However, this is not a luxury that social science can afford. Instead, as discussed in Chapter 1, as one of the main purposes of this book is precisely to understand the consequences of democratic frustration, whilst symptoms of frustration may arguably be easier to capture than the phenomenon itself, it is critical not to use them as a proxy for democratic frustration, but instead, to operationalise the two distinctly and independently using entirely discrete observation so that the extent to which one causes the other can be tested empirically without the contamination of observational dependency.

The need for measurement accuracy is particularly acute in view of the expressed intention to ensure that I would operationalise democratic frustration as a "true" frustration in the psychological understanding of the term. As explained in Chapter 1, I have emphasised how the complexity of democratic frustration stems from its nature as the conjunction of several components, notably a standard, a perceived delivery which must lag behind it so that the difference between standard and perceived delivery equates to a perceived delivery gap, and finally, a democratic desire, which will come to interact with the aforementioned delivery gap to constitute democratic frustration itself. Furthermore, to make things even more arduous, frustration is a largely subconscious psychological state, and conceptually, it is critical not to merely rely on its conscious expressions for fear of only capturing the tip of the iceberg. In short, to understand the methodological context of this book, we must emphasise that democratic frustration is an object which is complex, largely subconscious, without any natural measurement, and which symptoms (consequences) and sources (predictors) we wish to assess, so that they require us to measure them independently, even though many clinical psychology models choose to use symptoms as a proxy of frustration because it is easier to measure than the underlying frustration itself.

Overall Research Design Architecture

The unique challenges pertaining to capturing such a complex and deeply buried psychological condition as democratic frustration mean that simply relying on a single one of the direct methods political scientists most frequently used in the fields of political behaviour and political psychology (such as only considering explicit survey items, or individual interviews, or an experiment) would necessarily produce an unbalanced picture missing out on some of the complexity and uniqueness of the object of the research. At the same time, each of those individual methodologies is hindered in distinct ways, and consequently, when a combination of multiple approaches is engineered, the key weaknesses of each may be counterbalanced by the strengths of another.

As a result, this book systematically uses a multi-pronged research design founded on triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to capture the nature of democratic frustration as well as its relationship to other social, psychological, and political realities. It similarly combines static and dynamic, inductive (or exploratory) and deductive, explicit and implicit, as well as self-reported and observational methods.

In details, this means that altogether, the book's methodological architecture relies on the following instruments, mapped on Fig. 2.1:

- Election study surveys conducted during a first-order election in each of the countries with two samples representative of the general population and of the country's first-time voters.
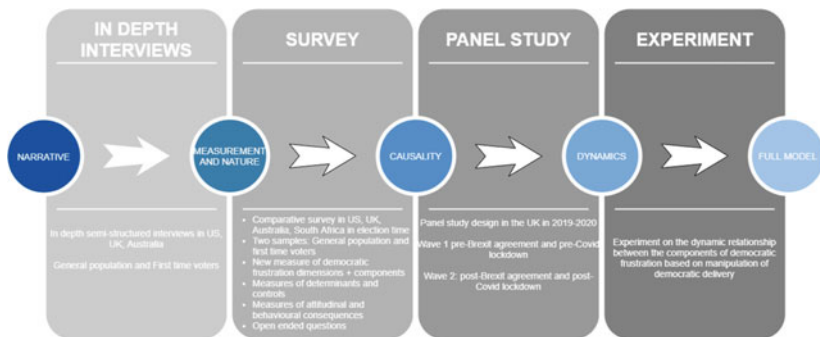
Fig. 2.1 Research design

- Panel study survey.
- Two wave experiment.
- In-depth qualitative interviews—once again split between general population and first-time voters.

These different components were conducted in one, two, three, or all four countries studied in this book (see pilot strategy section in this chapter). To further add to the complexity of the design, the series of elections surveys themselves were designed in such a way as to tap into multiple aspects of the analysis of democratic frustration. In particular, they combine five main sets of measures: open-ended spontaneous expressions of frustration (thereby captured from fully representative samples of the general population and of first-time voters), explicit indices of measures of the three components of democratic frustration for each of its three dimensions, implicit measures of frustration, measures of social, demographic, political, and electoral psychology predictors of democratic frustration, and finally, measures of attitudinal, behavioural, and electoral psychology consequences of democratic frustration. This enables me to test the operationalisation of the three dimensions of democratic frustration and uncover the relationship between its three components. It also makes it possible to assess their cause as well as their consequences by adapting the psychological model of withdrawal, anger, and aggression. Spontaneous expressions of frustration captured by open-ended questions and implicit measures were used in the surveys to tap into the integral subconscious elements of the concept and ensure that the analytical coherence and soundness of my theoretical model of frustration is upheld in terms of citizens' intuitive sense of their own democratic frustration (especially since those open-ended questions were systematically asked before explicit and deductive items were introduced into the survey).

In addition, a panel study survey was conducted in the UK in December 2020 and January 2021 to enable me to analyse short-term dynamics of the relationship between changes in democratic delivery and other components of democratic frustration as the panel was organised at a historically unique time when the Brexit agreement was signed, a new major lockdown was decreed, and the COVID-19 vaccination campaign started in the UK.

The in-depth interviews add another layer of qualitative and expressive capture of democratic frustration, its occurrences, sources, and impact

on citizens' thoughts and lives. Whilst not based on fully representative samples (not typically used for qualitative research) unlike the survey open-ended component, they enabled me to go into far greater narrative, expressive, and biographical details than the latter using a lengthy semi-structured interview design.

Finally, I ran a two-wave experiment on democratic frustration to assess the nature of the relationship between the three core components of democratic frustration, the (a)symmetry of those dynamics, as well as the implication they may have on the cycle of frustration itself, when one specific component improves or deteriorates. Approximately two weeks separated the two waves of the study.

Here are some more details about each of the individual components of the research design outlined above.

The Narrative Nature of Democratic Frustration: Two Sets of Qualitative Measures

In terms of intellectual logic, the first methodological approach used in this book consists of attempting to capture the narrative nature of democratic frustration by getting respondents from different countries to talk about it. This is achieved by two distinct and complementary methodologies: open-ended questions in the survey which offer brief but critical open narratives from representative samples, and in-depth interviews, which collect more granular and complex narratives from more limited numbers of participants.

This narrative step is fundamental to the object of the book. After all, I partly justify the very need to focus on the concept of democratic frustration based on the fact that spontaneous references to it are extremely frequent when citizens of contemporary democracies describe how they feel about their democracies and political systems, and the need to listen to their words carefully and systematically. It is thus essential to get an in-depth understanding of how they are intuitively and spontaneously characterising this feeling in their own words without pre-imposing any lexical or analytical framework upon them.

As mentioned, this is achieved by using two separate sets of qualitative measures. First, a series of in-depth interviews, whereby citizens are asked to characterise their sense of democratic frustration and talk about its origins, occurrences, manifestations, and how it relates to their democratic experience. Second, a set of open-ended questions asked in

the mass survey conducted in the four countries where respondents are being asked to characterise what it means to be democratically frustrated using spontaneous word associations.

A spontaneous, narrative understanding of democratic frustration is both indispensable in that it enables an inductive validation of the concept, and problematic in that resulting narratives may be hard to compare across individuals. It also runs the risk of locking the concept of democratic frustration in what Burgess describes (in the context of identities) as a language prison (Burgess in Bruter, 2005). If that occurred, it would mean that frustration may be condemned to always and only being "expressed" rather than understood, with the narrative characterisation of frustration becoming the frustration itself. In turn, the implications of such a free-text exploration of the nature of the concept must necessarily be accompanied by other more deductive and more operationally usable measures, but crucially, it is in any case necessary to ensure that those be congruent with democratic frustration as it is "truly" and spontaneously experienced by people, or otherwise, those deductive measures would be inadequate, invalid, and likely to essentially capture noise. Let me now detail the two types of qualitative measures used.

Spontaneous Open-Ended Evocations of Frustration from Large Representative Samples of Citizens

The first capture of those expressed evocations of frustration stems from the open-ended questions in the survey, which ask respondents to express the first words that come to their minds when it comes to the ways in which democracy may make them feel frustrated at times if at all. Depending on the countries (and survey capacity), respondents were either asked for the first word or first three words that came to their minds, so in the analysis, I focus on the first word provided by the respondent in all cases to keep the analysis comparable across the four cases.

The nature of this first indication of spontaneous, qualitative qualification of democratic frustration is analysed in two different ways. First, I simply compare the weight of words/word categories as they are being expressed narratively, only consolidating them by regrouping word families (such as corrupt and corruption) or synonyms (for instance, stupid,

idiot, dumb). A visual representation of the most common references is presented in Chapter 3 as part of the societal expressions of democratic frustration. It is notably worth remembering that the surveys were conducted during first-order elections in each of the four countries of analysis, which may also colour the references intuitively provided by citizens based on each country's specific historical and electoral context.

In a second instance, those open-ended answers are analysed more systematically along a number of analytical considerations which are introduced throughout Chapters 1 and 2. Those notably include such things as the three dimensions of democratic frustration (ideological, institutional, and political), electoral identity (referee and supporter framework), key emotions of frustration (notably positive and negative, mobilising and demobilising), key behavioural consequences of frustration (using the anger, aggression, and withdrawal model), targets of democratic frustration blame (whose fault it is, including self-blame if applicable), contexts of democratic frustration (e.g. elections, institutional politics, policy-making, etc.), key attitudinal and behavioural references (such as internal and external efficacy), dynamic connotations (improvement, deterioration), and structural ones (persistence or intermittence, constructiveness or fate). Finally, the analysis also uses several of the most frequent substantive references used by respondents (such as fraud, incompetence, distrust, polarisation, lack of democracy, and violence).

Altogether, this second, systematic component of the coding involves 35 different variables and scales, which help structure and compare the meanings and connotations of respondents' spontaneous answers on what their democratic frustration entails. Those variables and dimensions are then analysed in Chapter 4 and compared across countries as well as respondents' characteristics (such as age, gender, and electoral identity).

Exploring the Discourse of Democratic Frustration: In-depth Interviews

The second body of evidence used in the qualitative analysis is the result of individual interviews conducted face to face and/or virtually using Zoom (due to the COVID-19 context in which this research took place) during the fieldwork in the US, Britain, and Australia. To understand how democratic frustration emerges and to discover the consequences it may have on people's lives and behaviour, it indeed seemed extremely important and methodologically appropriate to conduct semi-structured interviews.

The interviews enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of democratic frustration, for example, what does it mean, how do citizens describe it, and how do they experience it. It was also important to discover the personal history of democratic frustration, such as the first memory of when they felt democratically frustrated, whether they could remember key moments or events which prominently stand out and relate to this sense of democratic frustration, how it has evolved over time, or in which specific periods, contexts, personal interactions those feelings tend to occur, etc. Similarly, we wanted to know how democratic frustration is evoked and discussed, notably among intimate spheres such as family.

Personal narratives are often recalled with emotion and none more so than those of democratic frustration. Consequently, we also asked respondents how it feels when they experience this type of frustration, how it differs from other types of frustration, and what specific emotions it provokes. The three dimensions outlined in the conceptual map (institutional, ideological, political) are a key aspect of the model. It was thus crucial to tap into the three dimensions to understand how these dimensions are appropriated by citizens. Another interesting series of questions enquired about blame ascription, for example, who or what do people identify as the trigger of the democratic frustration, how about self-blame, do they have a perception that they could be doing better to resolve their own frustration and how? These questions also allowed us to gain an insight into the consequences of democratic frustration, including those identified in the anger, aggression, withdrawal model, or indeed, other consequences. Finally, it was important to understand if and how institutional responses could change, mediate, or improve a sense of democratic frustration.

Overall, the interviews were structured by the following key themes with sub-questions formulated to probe deeper into the meaning and individual experience of democratic frustration:

1. Intuitions—when does the respondent feel frustrated and what does it mean.
2. Democratic frustration in the respondent's life? (origins, occurrences, and evolution).
3. Emotions and manifestations (how does it feel, what does it entail, how do they react?).
4. Causes and consequences (who do they blame, how do they think it impacts them as citizens and the democratic experience of others and of the country).

5. Potential solutions and innovations (whether spontaneous or reactive).

Due to the restrictions on face-to-face interaction imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted via an online platform such as Zoom or equivalent. The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and were guided by the semi-structured topic template. There were general themes of questions that ensured comparability across individuals and contexts, yet the discussion was not restricted to a strict formulation nor a finite list of questions, such as to allow for spontaneous dialogue between the interviewer and the participant. With the informed consent of all participants, interviews were recorded and were later transcribed by the researcher. Participants were recruited by the local researchers through multi-site contacts in each of the countries, and whilst it is not necessary to have any representative criteria, a diverse sample of respondents were sourced (age, gender, geographical location, education level, etc.). In line with the survey, a sub-proportion of the interviews were conducted with some first-time voters. These interviews with young people eligible to vote for the first time made it possible to compare how people get socialised into democratic frustration. It also enables me to systematically compare the feelings and experiences of first-time voters to those of the general population. Participants were provided with a study information sheet and an informed consent form (please see Appendix for samples).

The interviews were conducted in the UK, Australia, and the US. Each participant was assigned a respondent identification number that enabled us to anonymise the transcripts and signify important demographic characteristics such as age, gender, location, and whether the interviewee was a first-time voter or not. Interview transcripts were manually analysed by applying a thematic coding framework.

Quantitative Approaches

Whilst the qualitative approaches discussed above are great when it comes to the richness and granularity which they afford, they lack a certain element of generalisability and emphasise interpretative aspects of the analysis. Furthermore, whilst open-ended narratives are essential to understand how citizens spontaneously experience and describe the nature and implications of democratic frustration, they do not make it

easy to compare levels of democratic frustration across individuals or nations—that is, to use democratic frustration in models concerned with their causes or consequences, nor to analyse its dimensions or model its causes and consequences. This instead requires the use of specific set of deductively engineered close-ended survey-based measures which can be replicated identically across individuals and comparative contexts. The research design therefore also relies on quantitative approaches which, whilst less granular, offer greater scope for inference and generalisation. Those includes election surveys, panel study survey, and experiment.

A Comparable Index of Democratic Frustration: Survey Measures

The surveys were conducted during a historic period: starting with data collection from the "Brexit" referendum on European Union membership in 2016 in the UK and finishing with the US Presidential Elections in 2020. This series of survey data also includes the 2017 UK General Election, the 2019 European Parliament elections in the UK, the 2019 South African Election, and the 2019 Australian Federal Election. The surveys were conducted online with representative samples of the general population of 2000 respondents.

In Chapter 1, I discussed the interactive conceptual nature of democratic frustration using the following equation:

$$Democratic\ Frustration = Desire * Perceived\ delivery\ Deficit$$

That is:

$$Democratic\ Frustration = Desire * [Standard - Perceived\ Delivery]$$

The operationalisation of the measurement must now match that conceptual nature, and I tested two versions of it, using either a straight measure of perceived delivery deficit or a "step-by-step" version that further separated standard and perceived delivery. I thus designed multiple items to measure the proposed interactive concept of democratic frustration using either pairs or trios of variables.

Each pair or trio of items measured a democratic expectation and the evaluation of its perceived delivery deficit (how bad the system is at delivering). They were measured independently using 0–10 scales. The frustration items were operationalised as an interaction between those two

components so that frustration item 1 = democratic desire 1 * democratic delivery 1. As each of the two components was scaled 0–10, the frustration index could thus vary from 0 to 100. Complete unimportance or perfect delivery would automatically result in a level of frustration of 0, whilst utmost importance combined with worst delivery deficit will take the level of frustration to 100. Where trios of variables were used, the situation becomes more complex. Indeed, whilst democratic desire is still coded using a 0–10 scale, the now disaggregated measure of perceived democratic deficit, calculated as the difference between two 0 and 10 scales, and thus in fact vary from −10 to +10. Indeed, it is always possible that democratic delivery would exceed (rather than fall short off) the democratic standards that an individual would hold. Consequently, in theory, democratic frustration using item trios can thus, this time, vary from −100 to +100 scales, with positive scores corresponding to democratically frustrated individuals, whilst negative scores would indicate the absence of such frustration.

Individual items were chosen deductively to tap into the three dimensions of democratic frustration defined earlier, i.e. ideological, institutional, and political. I piloted different items corresponding to the three dimensions to optimise data coherence and robustness using both mean reliability indices and factor analysis. The nature of the components and examples of items are presented in Appendix 1: Table 2.2.

Items were factor analysed so as to assess the coherence and robustness of the dimensionality of my model, and models were tested with both factor scores and mean indices.

Ultimately, I thus created mean indices for each of the three dimensions based on a theoretical expectation as to which dimension of frustration it was measuring as grounded within the existing literature. For instance, the items that referred to the political dimension focused on the critique of the perceived ethos and integrity of the political elite, whilst the institutional items pertained to an opposition to a perceived inadequate system and process. Finally, measures intended to capture the ideological dimension referred to a perceived lack of ideological congruence or choice between the respondent and the entire country's political offer. I also used factor analysis to confirm the internal coherence of each dimensional variable. I then compared the mean and standard deviations for each dimension of democratic frustration for the population as a whole, as well as specific sub-categories.

Additional Survey Components

The surveys also included an important number of traditional and original variables that are being used throughout the book to understand the relationship between democratic frustration and other important attitudinal and behavioural characteristics, model the determinants that can lead to greater or lower propensity to feel democratically frustrated, and model its consequences on other aspects of political attitudes as well as both electoral and non-electoral behaviour.

Apart from major demographic variables, potentially relevant items such as cultural and ethnic characteristics, disabilities, and ideological and political preferences, personality and moral prioritisation features, as well as electoral measures such as turnout and electoral choice, the survey notably measures different components of respondents' electoral psychology. This includes aspects of the electoral memory of respondents (thereby capturing some of the electoral events and incidents which made the most lasting impressions on the respondent), as well as projected efficacy, empathic displacement, electoral identity (as per the referee/supporter model), and other components of individual-societal articulation as per the models of Bruter and Harrison (2020). In that context, the survey also captures citizens' level of electoral hostility, egocentric or sociotropic attitudes, and sense of projection.

Unravelling the Cycle of Frustration—An Experiment

In Chapter 1, we underlined the different theoretical expectations that can pertain to the cycle of democratic frustration. Almost no psychological model would be compatible with frustration having an inherently stable character. Indeed, the self-developing nature of frustration is such that unless frustration is addressed, an unresolved pain is doomed to worsen overtime, with the original cause of the frustration becoming increasingly remote, hidden, and invisible, whilst its consequences will be due to deteriorate. Put simply, if frustration is not addressed, it will inevitably get worse.

There is already a crucial implication to underline in this cyclical description. Because it is a psychological cycle, frustration can be perceived as a dynamic which is inherently loaded negatively. In other words, there is an inertia which predicts its natural deterioration rather

than resolution. In turn, this means that anything pertaining to the cycle of frustration or affecting its components is likely to be marred by asymmetric effects. This is to say that rather than an improvement of x or a deterioration of x having equivalent effects on frustration itself, we always must interrogate whether a number of changes to the determinants of frustration or of any of its components could work differently when they are positive and negative.

On the back of this dynamic, which is thus not quite as straightforward as it might first appear, it must be noted that several models are conceivable in terms of possible effects of democratic interventions on frustration. Traditional "dissatisfaction" models would have it that improving democratic performance itself would "close the gap" and therefore resolve frustration. However, as has been pointed out, psychological models of frustration are not about gaps but about function, interaction, and its primary ingredient, which is desire. As a result, frustration models imply a form of path dependency which is absent from the dissatisfaction vision. What this means is that unlike the former when an improvement in democratic delivery simply causes a gap, in the context of frustration's multiplicator formula, an improvement in democratic delivery will also consequently result in an increase in democratic standards and potentially in democratic desire, both of which could thereby paradoxically result in a greater—rather than lower—likelihood of frustration over time.

Furthermore, another key aspect of frustration models which is entirely absent from dissatisfaction approaches is the notion of displacement, which inherently follows from its complex and subconscious nature. It entails that a particularly problematic part of frustration is that its true nature is not really known to the sufferer him/herself. Instead, the apparent focus of their pain is merely a metamorphosis which started from a frequently different and ultimately hidden and unknown original real pain point. In that sense, the improvement of democratic delivery could simply help dispel a myth—or at any rate a naïve conception—of democratic responsibilities and get the sufferer closer to understanding that the real problems which they experience with their political systems and their societies may, in fact, be located elsewhere than where they have been looking all along. Such a propensity for camouflage and displacement of initial democratic trauma means a permanent risk of moving target and of the likelihood that addressing the apparent nature of dissatisfaction will do nothing to address the real underlying origin that it has. This is almost equivalent to the complex nature of the human nervous system.

Neural networks are such that a pain located in the foot may well only be noticed at the level of the back, or a facial injury be primarily noticeable in its effects on one's hand. Uncovering true hub of frustration is thus tantamount to following leads and strings which may take the researcher (or the institutional designer) very far away from the locus of the initial manifestation of something being "wrong" in how democracy is being delivered.

As noted, the experimental target is to understand the effect of changes to democratic delivery on the levels of democratic standards and desire. The experiment will help us arbitrate between the contradictory potential models and answer a very simple question for us: what actually happens to democratic frustration when democratic delivery improves? Metaphorically, this experiment is the equivalent of geographers who throw drops of colouring substances into the various streams which later merge into a river to understand which dominates and how those different water flows interact together. In this particular case, by manipulating perceptions of democratic delivery positively as well as negatively based on democratic news items focusing on all three dimensions of democratic frustration, I observe the consequential evolution of participants' perceptions of democratic standards as well as their levels of democratic standards and desire. Note that the parallel choice of positive and negative manipulation is absolutely critical to test the nature of the asymmetric relationships highlighted above.

The experiment is embedded as part of a survey and designed as a repeated measures experiment. It uses multiple combinations of informational stimuli encapsulating both high-quality and low-quality democratic delivery on the different dimensions of democratic frustration. This then enables me to consider their impact not only on evaluations of democratic delivery itself, but—more critically from the point of view of disentangling the cycle of frustration and understanding the impact of improving or deteriorating democratic outcomes—on democratic standards and desire over time. After controlling for the fact that I have successfully managed to affect perceptions of democratic delivery, the experiment thus enables me to assess the impact of such delivery improvement on (1) democratic standards, (2) democratic desires, and (3) frustration displacement. Furthermore, because I test those delivery manipulations across the three dimensions of frustration in different combinations, this also enables me to further test the permeability between dimensions of frustration. Those various sets of consequences put together will provide unique insights

on the cycle of frustration. Perhaps even more importantly and pragmatically, however, it will equip us with essential findings on the potential effects of the types of mitigation and intervention mechanisms which can be adopted to alleviate citizens' democratic frustration. How likely is it that those various mechanisms which aim to enable people to feel more comfortable and fulfilled within their democratic systems would be successful? Such an assessment could almost be conceived as the initial test and threshold of a therapeutic approach of sorts.

Of course, an important consideration is that the three dimensions of democratic frustration which I highlight earlier might be of different natures or, at any rate, lead to different forms and strengths of frustration. This is even more relevant that when unravelling the theoretical model of democratic frustration which will be followed in this book, I noted that there may be a form of hierarchy between the three dimensions of democratic frustration with some of them being more epidermic and others more profound and structural in nature. Conversely, things may differ between cases whereby citizens are only frustrated along one dimension or on multiple ones.

This is thus another aspect of what this experiment tests. As a result, the experiment randomises combinations of positive and negative stimuli on all three possible dimensions of democratic frustration. This means that some participants may only get manipulation pertaining to one dimension or two or three, as well as manipulations which may all go in the same direction (either positive or negative) or instead a contradictory combination of both. Those elements of complexity are intended to largely mirror the reality of cognitively confusing democratic signals that citizens may experience in real life. Indeed, in practice, periods of coherent information may alternate with others of cacophonic democratic quality, and a focus on a single dimension (e.g. only ideological) may occur at some points in time, whilst parallel information on two or three dimensions may be true at others. Whilst this complex design influenced the number of participants needed in the experiment, I believe that it was also critical to reinforce the credibility and usability of the design by replicating some of the fundamental complexity that citizens are cognitively exposed to in real democratic life, and the understanding of the true nature and asymmetries of the democratic frustration cycle.

The experiment is based on repeat measures with pre-test and post-test questionnaires ran approximately two weeks apart. This is crucial to

limit risks of artificiality in the effects being measured. Whilst the stimulus itself is administered directly after respondents completed the pre-test questionnaire, asking them to complete the post-test questionnaire immediately would present an obvious risk of answers rationalisation. As a result, the lag of 1–2 weeks before administering the post-test questionnaire is aiming to counteract that risk. The overall experimental process is summarised in Fig. 2.2.

The goals for my experimental exploration are twofold. First, I intend to provide internal predictive validity for these three dimensions of frustration. Second, I seek to provide more evidence for the overarching theory regarding the effects of real-life political changes on the three key components of democratic frustration, the internal dynamics between them, as well as the (a)symmetry and durability of those effects.

The design aims to test whether when individuals are exposed to positive political outcomes, not only do they acknowledge in their perceptions
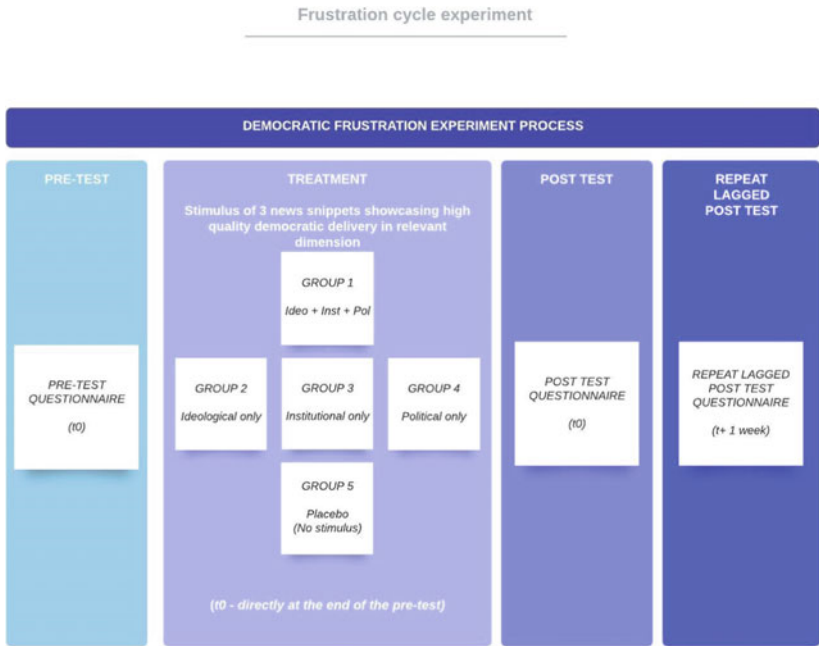
Fig. 2.2 The frustration cycle experiment

of democratic delivery, but in turn, this also raises the democratic standards which they will use to assess future democratic situations. I similarly hypothesise that this will also positively affect their democratic desire. Thus, perhaps counterintuitively, positive political outcomes, by resulting both in higher democratic standards and also in heightened democratic desire can in fact *increase* political frustration. This, in turn, can result in all the attitudinal and behavioural consequences that I describe in Chapter 1. However, crucially, as discussed earlier, I also expect those effects to be asymmetric, so that exposure to negative political outcomes will not have similarly elastic consequences on either democratic standards or democratic desire, so that such disappointing occurrences will not conversely decrease democratic frustration.

I designed a survey experiment which I have conducted online using the survey service Prolific in both the US and UK. Prior to experimental treatment, respondents answered a full pre-test questionnaire, including measures of respondents' pre-existing levels of democratic frustration. As a reminder, this is calculated based on the three components of (1) democratic desire, (2) democratic standards, and (3) democratic delivery. As noted, using these indices, I constructed a measure of democratic frustration as the product of desire and the difference between standards and delivery. Thus, frustration is higher for those who have higher democratic standards relative to their satisfaction with the delivery of those standards. This is further exacerbated when participants have a greater democratic desire on the relevant dimension.

In the experiment itself, respondents are shown a series of brief news bulletins which outline positive or negative political outcomes occurring in local government. These articles have been manipulated to correspond to the three dimensions of political frustration. Examples of a treatment, which has been manipulated along each dimension, can be found in Appendix 1: Table 2.3. Using random assignment via the survey software Qualtrics, participants received a randomised combination of three individual treatments, which may pertain to different dimensions of frustration or reinforce the same one and include positive snippets, negative ones, or a combination of both. By measuring levels of political frustration before and after treatment, subdivided into all three components and all three dimensions (i.e. 9 independent measures in each wave), I was able to measure differences in the level of change based on the three dimensions of frustration but also, between components (does change in delivery affect other measures) and between positive and negative stimuli.

Democratic frustration is measured using the same indices as before. In doing so, I can measure shifts in all three dimensions of frustration post-treatment whilst also controlling for their baseline levels as measured prior to treatment. Second, I model both democratic desire and democratic standards based on change in perceived democratic delivery. Utilising indicators representing each treatment received, we thus arrive at two main equations for regressions analyses:

$$Y_{\text{post\_frustration}} = \alpha + \beta_{\text{ideological\_treatment}} + \beta_{\text{institutional\_treatment}}$$
$$+ \beta_{\text{political\_treatment}} + \beta_{\text{pre\_frustration}} + \varepsilon \quad (2.1)$$

$$Y_{\text{post\_desire}} = \alpha + \beta_{\text{ideological\_delivery}} + \beta_{\text{institutional\_ delivery}}$$
$$+ \beta_{\text{political\_ delivery}} + \beta_{\text{pre\_desire}} + \varepsilon \quad (2.2)$$

$$Y_{\text{post\_standard}} = \alpha + \beta_{\text{ideological\_ delivery}} + \beta_{\text{institutional\_ delivery}}$$
$$+ \beta_{\text{political\_ delivery}} + \beta_{\text{pre\_standard}} + \varepsilon \quad (2.3)$$

In practice, we intend for democratic delivery perceptions to serve as an implied mediation, where the manipulations represent a change (increase or decrease) in actual delivery resulting, in turn, in a corresponding change (increase or decrease) in perceptions of delivery (mediation), and in a subsequent increase or decrease in democratic standards and desire (dependent variable of our dynamics of frustration model). Finally, I ran Eqs. 2.2 and 2.3 separately for respondents exposed to positive, negative, and mixed stimuli so as to be able to assess the symmetric of the internal dynamics of democratic frustration.

Additional Panel Study Survey

Of course, experiments can never replicate entirely natural conditions, even when a lag is planned between measurement phases. Furthermore, as discussed, the model is based on there being three dimensions of political frustration: (1) ideological frustration, the perception that there are few electoral choices that represent one's own beliefs, (2) institutional frustration, the perception that the electoral and political systems are ineffective and inefficient, and (3) political frustration, the perception that one's political representatives lack the public's values and overall morality, so this also has to be captured in the tests of dynamics of frustration. Yet,

because of the limits of the experiment, sample size, and need for clarity of design and power, the experiment could not test the separate (or cross) effects of individual dimensions of democratic delivery.

To an extent, I would expect to find that each of the three dimensions of frustration would exhibit their own unique treatment effect. More specifically, I expect that the dimension of the manipulations will influence which dimensions of democratic frustration are primarily affected by the experimental stimulus whilst allowing for contamination across dimensions given their correlations. In other words, I would expect that participants exposed to news relating to, say, the ideological dimension of democratic delivery will see their level of ideological frustration and its components affected more greatly than their institutional and political frustration, albeit not exclusively so. This would provide further predictive validity for my theoretical model of political frustration.

In order to fully test dynamics of democratic frustration, I therefore also designed a two-wave panel study. In addition to the individual election surveys described earlier, that panel study survey was conducted in the UK between December 2019 and January 2020, so as to estimate the stability and dynamics of democratic frustration within individuals over a relatively short but historically intense period of time (in between the two waves, key events occurred such as the signature of a Brexit exit agreement between the UK and the European Union, the second COVID-19 infection wave started as did the vaccination campaign). This panel study design aims to work a little as the "best of both worlds" between the election surveys which enable for the test of various models, but not of the dynamics of frustration, and the experiment which targeted dynamics of frustration but represents an artificial context, detached from the reality of democratic delivery in citizens' real lives, and did not permit me to look for differentiated effects across dimensions of frustration. The limitation is that of course, panel studies, whilst intended to function as quasi-experiments or natural experiments, do not enable for a full control of external context, but given the relatively short time frame, we would argue that this cost is largely outweighed by the advantages of running the analysis on the basis of an actual panel study survey at a time marked by such crucial changes in real-world democratic delivery.

Running the main surveys during election time ensures some level of comparability in contexts but also means that they were fielded at different moments during a period of 18 months (from May 2019 in Australia to November 2020 in the US). Whilst this is typically quite short in the

context of such comparative studies, it should be noted that the time element presents its own challenges in this specific case. In particular, the US election survey took place in the COVID-19 period, whilst the Australian, South African, and UK election studies were all conducted in the pre-COVID-19 world, whereby a number of democratic contexts and processes were different. Furthermore, it is difficult to interpret any contextual logic when only one main survey was conducted in each of those countries. Those risks are also avoided by the non-electoral panel study conducted in the UK only. Whilst the study has a smaller number of items pertaining to the causes and consequences of frustration, it enables a unique insight into the dynamics of democratic frustration as well as the aggregate and individual-level stability of democratic frustration, its components, and its dimensions over time in the specific context of the UK, and of its basic social and demographic correlates.

The full and final battery of items measuring democratic frustration was included in both waves as well as the full measures of the expected behavioural consequences of withdrawal, anger, and aggression. Furthermore, this panel study was also conducted in the COVID-19 world (December 2020–January 2021) enabling non-panel comparisons of dynamics with the main election survey (from December 2019). It also encompasses the period before and after a full post-Brexit trade deal was agreed between the UK and the EU and announced by the British Government, thereby offering unique insights on how major real-life delivery outputs and events (Brexit deal, major outbreak of the third coronavirus wave and corresponding restrictions and lockdown and start of the mass COVID-19 vaccination campaign) can shape democratic frustration and its components.

This panel study thus largely works as a quasi-experiment, as it took place in a period of intrinsic change in democratic delivery, which could be either positive or negative depending on the profiles and priorities of individual respondents.

Case Selection

This book analyses data derived from four key case studies: the UK, US, South Africa, and Australia. This case selection includes a variety of institutional systems and political contexts. In terms of institutional variety, it features a range of electoral systems (plurality in the UK and US, alternative voting/ranked choice in Australia and closed list proportional

representation in South Africa), as well as Presidential, semi-Presidential, and Parliamentary systems. The systemic variations also encompass federal (US, Australia), unitary, and devolution, two-party and multiparty systems (South Africa), and some examples of vote at 16 (for instance, Scotland and Wales) and of compulsory voting (in Australia). In terms of political context, South Africa has gone through recent democratic transition unlike the other three cases and still has a dominant party; some countries have gone through highly polarising recent votes (US, UK), leadership crises in both government and opposition (Australia, UK), and major issue-based debates (same-sex marriage in Australia, Brexit in the UK, corruption scandals in South Africa). At the same time, all four countries are democracies where electoral transparency is guaranteed by independent electoral commissions (UK, Australia, South Africa) and elected registrars (US) and/or strong judicial review of the electoral process (US, South Africa).

Conversely, non-political contexts vary with significant populations living under conditions of major social and economic deprivation, whilst the other three are predominantly advanced economies albeit with varying levels of inequality (very high in the US, much less so in Australia) and different ethnic, religious, and linguistic compositions. All face continuous questions on the crises of democracy, new or changing electoral situations (election of Mr Trump in the US in 2016, Brexit referendum and two hung Parliaments in quick succession in the UK, decline of the ANC in South Africa, hung Parliaments and unprecedented tight races or uncertain elections in Australia). Of particular interest, this selection of countries also experience issues related to youth participation, various forms of protest behaviour, and expression of dissatisfaction and diffidence as well as several accusations of institutional or systemic unfairness, discrimination, and/or fraud.

It is important to note that the case selection is intrinsically asymmetric. The fact that not all components were run everywhere, but also that pilot measures led to multiple measures being tested before the final operationalisation of the three dimensions of democratic frustration was retained means that not all parts of the analysis can be run in all countries. Whilst this is obvious when it comes to the interviews—ran in 3 countries—or the experiment and panel study—ran in one—it also affects the analysis of survey data. For all parts of the main election survey analysis and first-time voter survey analysis, the US data is analysed as our "gold standard" case with optimal measurement. However, some parts

of the model—such as the consequences of democratic frustration—can also be ran in the other three countries with some caveats, as are analyses relying on the coding of the open-ended data. By contrast, in some other aspects of the work, such as determinants of democratic frustration or its nature, data heterogeneity imposes that I solely focus on the US data for part of the analysis because the data available elsewhere would simply not be sufficient and/or comparable.

Throughout this geographic landscape, the research design incorporates a multi-methodological approach to capture democratic frustration (1) at the individual level, (2) between young people and others, and (3) at country level as well as (4) in some limited context, over time. Notably, this will allow me to understand how democratic desire and standard-perceived delivery gaps vary both across and within systems, capture differences in dimensions of frustration, and in who/what people blame as a source of their democratic ills. Through open-ended questions in the survey, I will assess how the language and discourse vary across groups and countries.

Risks and Advantages of Pilot Research Measurement

This book and the project associated with it have a very ambitious aim: to theoretically and operationally map and analytically model and understand a new concept. In much existing research in social sciences, researchers can just use measures which have become standard and widely accepted in the field. In fact, even if those standard measures are criticised, they are worth keeping as they are if only to maintain the possibility to compare across different studies and datasets. By contrast, a significant part of my work in this book has precisely pertained to exploring the operationalisation of a concept which is not only new in political science but is inspired by a discipline (clinical psychology) where the methods used to capture its psychological equivalent differ radically from the political science tradition. People who study frustration in clinical psychology do not assess it through surveys, interviews, or focus groups but rather through clinical observation or psychoanalytical discussion, thereby giving little pre-existing material to emulate in this book's research.

This is further heightened by the complex aims and ambitions of this book, including conceptualising, operationalising, and modelling democratic frustration, understanding its dynamics, determinants, cycle, and consequences, and exploring its context and its evolution.

In short, the operational aspects of the research design, and in the context of the survey and dependent variable measures in the experiment had to be created from scratch, hoping to start a discussion in the field on how best to do so. This involved piloting, testing, and improving initial measurement intuitions until the final elaboration of the measurement model was achieved.

The advantage of this iterative process has been to progressively improve measurement of democratic frustration, its individual components, and its three dimensions to make it a lot stronger than it was in the first phases of the empirical work. The disadvantage, by contrast, is that the final measurement, which was used in the US general public survey as well as the first-time voters survey and the experiments, was partly different in the other three countries. In the UK main surveys, the same frustration model was tested, but two of the items were not tested. However, there were additional surveys ran in the UK as part of the Hostility Barometer series, which are analysed in this book as panel data, notably to assess the stability of democratic frustration and its components over time. Those are based on exactly the same measurement as the US core survey. To complicate matters further, in Australia and South Africa, there was no independence of measurement between the democratic desire and democratic standard components of democratic frustration.

Whilst it is important to note those differences, they are not insurmountable. To accommodate them, when it comes to the analysis of the quantitative data, I treat the US survey as the "gold standard" data for quantitative measures of frustration and analyse it extensively as a reference case study with the full comprehensive data, and refer to the UK and to Australia and South Africa comparatively based on the items available across the country studies. In other words, the analysis refers to the US for a full analysis, a US-UK comparison with a few noted omissions, and all four countries with further restrictions in operationalisation of democratic frustration in broader comparative evaluations and when referring to other bodies of data such as the open-ended measures of democratic frustration.

Indeed, importantly, those restrictions only pertain to the close measurement of democratic frustration and not to the open-ended data which was collected in similar ways across all of the four countries included in the analysis (although answers in Australia and South Africa were based on three open words and those in the UK and the US on one open word). The measurement of all of the independent variables used in the models (demographic, social, political, and electoral psychology inspired), as well as that of the potential consequences of democratic frustration, and items capturing democratic equivalents of withdrawal, anger, and aggression were also rigorously similar across all surveys.

Just like most of the survey items, when it comes to the other components of the research design, there are no similar restrictions, and the operationalisation was rigorously similar across the countries in which each component of the research was run. However, it is worth noting that the interviews were run in the US, the UK, and Australia. In terms of further dynamic analysis, the experiment was conducted in the US and the panel study was run in the UK only, thereby creating a variable geometry comparative design.

Ultimately, the variations imposed by the iterative nature of the development of an entirely new operational measure intended to capture an equally new concept is largely inevitable. It imposes some specific limitations—or at any rate, creates a need to be cautious—in some of the ways in which we can compare data across the four countries. However, it does not prevent us from doing so in any way. The same is true of the fact that some of the countries do not get one specific aspect of the multi-method fieldwork, whilst some elements are, on the contrary, common. The solution proposed here can be summarised quite simply: throughout the book, I will be able to compare all four countries on some core questions, notably relating to the exploration of open-ended data and the consequences of democratic frustration. By contrast, in some other parts of the model, based on the specific methods and measures available, I will use the US and UK case studies for further in-depth analysis and to test specific and important question which may not require the same comparative breadth as the rest of the model such as over-time stability. This is because, largely due to chronology (the UK and US elections included in this study followed those that I studied in Australia and South Africa), those two countries end up offering the most polished measurement and the most comprehensive set of complementary multi-method instruments

which can offer some particularly useful insights on some aspects of the research in their own right.

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Nature of Democratic Frustration: Democratic Desire, Standards, and Perceived Delivery in Action

APPROACHING THE NATURE OF FRUSTRATION

The first task of this book is to confirm an important intuition which I more thoroughly explained in the first two chapters: that the sense of frustration expressed by citizens when it comes to the way their democracy functions is exactly that: a form of frustration in the psychological sense of the word. This implies a need to assess the conceptual and operational nature of frustration fully and systematically and understand its three individual components.

In this chapter, I am therefore interested in doing three different things. First, characterise the nature and distribution of democratic frustration and its component, that is, assess their levels and distribution. Second, I want to look at its determinants. In other words, we will learn how a number of key demographic predictors (such as gender and age), political (such as ideology, interest in politics, and efficacy) and electoral psychology predictors (such as electoral identity, projected efficacy, and societal projection), and finally at psychological predictors (such as the big 5 dimensions of personality structure, a number of discrete personality traits, and elements of moral hierarchisation) affect citizens' levels of democratic desire, standards, perceived delivery, and ultimately their level of democratic frustration. In a third and final part of this chapter, I am interested in evaluating how stable democratic frustration is over time.

There are three crucial steps to such a test, however. First, since democratic citizens refer to their democratic frustration consistently, almost continuously, it is first of all essential to listen and understand how they express that frustration in their own words. I do so by relying on two bodies of data: in-depth narrative interviews and responses to an open survey question asking citizens to explain what the first word that comes to their minds when they think of the way in which democracy may sometimes make them feel frustrated is. Second, I present the deductive model which I use to measure and compare the nature of democratic frustration, its dimensions, and its components. Later in this chapter, I then turn to mapping democratic frustration and its components using both quantitative evidence and qualitative evidence.

Whilst the survey is based on strictly representative samples and the in-depth interviews are not, both the comparative survey data from the four countries considered in this book, and comparative narrative interviews in which we interviewed series of citizens from three countries (US, UK, and Australia) provide an in-depth insight into the concept of democratic frustration and what it means in the hearts and minds of citizens. The surveys were conducted twice on two parallel samples of respondents: one series with a cross section of citizens and a second with first-time voters specifically, whilst interviews also included both general respondents and first-time voters.

As detailed in Chapter 2, the interviews were semi-structured and comprised of five important themes:

- How do citizens describe what democratic frustration means to them and how they experience it?
- How does democratic frustration emerge and develop throughout respondents' lives?
- What are the emotions that citizens associate with their democratic frustration and how does that frustration manifest itself?
- How do citizens characterise the causes and consequences of democratic frustration? Who do they blame and how do they believe it affects them and others in the country?
- And finally, how do they react to a number of potential solutions and mitigations to democratic frustration which I further develop later in this book?

Each theme started with open, narrative questions before moving on to a more confirmatory and theory-driven section testing some of the analytical expectations—including the hypothesised ideological, institutional, and political dimensions of frustration and the proposed withdrawal, anger, and agreement model—using more targeted prompts. In other words, whilst the interviews follow a broadly semi-structured protocol with five harmonised themes and a more flexible range of questions, within each theme, I included both an initial narrative and largely inductive section, and a second more pointed and deductive one.

Conversely, one notes from the description of the themes that whilst the primary focus is on the individual's sense and experience of democratic frustration, part of the questioning pertains to societal (or more broadly others') frustration as well. This is because as discussed elsewhere in this book, there is a risk that certain elements of the very phenomenon of frustration which I want to observe and characterise could be affected by potentially biasing effects such as social desirability whilst, more broadly, I explained in Chapters 1 and 2 that I expected much of the frustration process to be, in fact, subconscious. I thus use insights from existing research which have shown that in the context of sensitive psychological issues, displacing the "target" of the narration from the individual him/herself to their entourage or anonymous others can often minimise social desirability effects, lower rationalisation of answers, and even weaken the barrier of consciousness to reveal highly important intuitions and deep perceptions which the participant will be able to characterise in relation to others whilst they may well be blinded about their own attitudes.

Dimensions of Democratic Frustration: An Empirical Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 2, I operationalise democratic frustration as the product of democratic desire (i.e. what people hope to get from democracy) and a delivery deficit (i.e. in itself the difference between a standard of delivery corresponding to what people would expect a well-functioning democracy to produce and a perceived delivery, which is their perception of how well their specific democracy is performing on that front at a given point in time). We summarised that function as:

$$\text{Democratic Frustration} = \text{Desire} * [\text{Standard} - \text{Perceived Delivery}]$$

At the same time, I also explained that based on the existing literature on aspects of democracy and democratic norms, I conceptualise democratic frustration as multi-dimensional and notably based on an ideological dimension (the ability of democracies to meet citizens' substantive democratic standards and needs), an institutional dimension (the capacity of democracies to deliver on citizen's procedural and functional democratic standards and needs), and a political dimension (the extent to which democracies performance matches citizens' moral and organic democratic standards and needs). The first dimension pertains to a range and quality of democratic offer, the second to effectiveness and transparency of processes and procedures, and the third to the moral integrity and trustworthiness of the elites which embody the democratic system in the citizen's perceptions and experience.

Each of those three dimensions is in turn captured by three sets of items, which are further described in appendix.

Ideological dimension:

- Being represented by people whose ideas are close to the citizen (congruence).
- A genuine range of ideological alternatives (choice).
- A genuine choice between short-term and long-term options (projection).

Institutional dimension:

- A system creating channels of bilateral communication between politicians and citizens (responsiveness).
- A system that involves the citizen in the democratic process (engagement).
- A system that enables citizens to get rid of political leaders when they are dissatisfied by them (accountability).

Political dimension:

- Politicians more interested in what is best for citizens rather than themselves (sociotropism).
- Politicians who are transparent and honest (trustworthiness).
- Politicians that respect citizens (respect).

In turn, each of those 9 items is subject to a trilogy of expectation, standard, and delivery performance questions to enable me to calculate the democratic frustration function summarised above. It is important to note that in some countries, slightly different versions of the items were used as part of some of the survey question pilot, so that in the section below, I focus on data from the US and the UK which used all final versions of the items.

In this section, I first want to look at the distributions of democratic desire for each item to understand which of them citizens care about most. I will then compare those results with the other component of the democratic frustration equation, the perceived democratic delivery gap, based on which aspects of democracy citizens perceive to be best delivered, or more specifically perceive to be delivered most adequately to their own standard expectations.

Mapping Democratic Desire

Let us start by exploring the nature of democratic desire using the example of the US. It is first worth noting that distributions are overwhelmingly skewed towards high levels of democratic desire, with 66–72% of citizens giving desire scores of 6–10 on a 0–10 scale. The results are presented in Fig. 3.1.

Looking at the detail, in terms of ideology, means for the three items in the US range from 6.7 (projection) to 6.8 (congruence) and 7.0 (choice). In the UK, based on the 2019 data, those numbers are respectively 6.9 for congruence and 7.5 for choice. It is worth noting that in both cases, congruence matters less to citizens' desire than the existence of genuine options.

When it comes to the institutional dimension, the three items are distributed very similarly in the US with means of 6.8 for engagement and 6.9 for responsiveness and accountability. In the UK, those means are quite a lot higher, and respectively 7.3 for engagement and 7.5 for accountability, and 7.8 for responsiveness.

Finally, it is with regard to the political dimension that a little more heterogeneity can be noted with a mean of 6.6 for the respect item, 6.9 for sociotropism, and 7.2 for trustworthiness in the US. Again, in the British cases, those figures are significantly higher, and respectively 7.3 for respect, 7.9 for sociotropism, and even 8.1 on trustworthiness. On balance, we can thus say that democratic desire is therefore generally
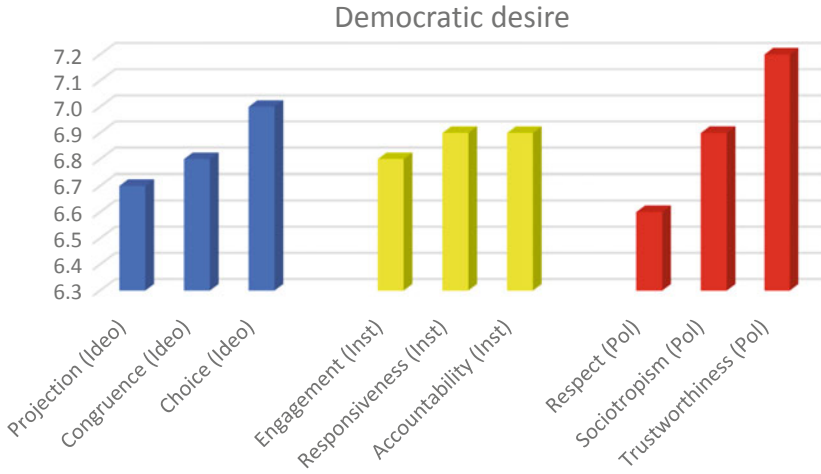
Fig. 3.1 Dimensions of democratic desire (*Notes* Each time, the first column is the average perceived delivery, the second column the perceived standard, and the third column the residual perceived democratic delivery deficit)

high—an essential prerequisite to democratic frustration and fairly evenly distributed.

Mapping the Democratic Delivery Gap

Having looked at the distribution of citizens' democratic desire across the three dimensions, let us now turn to the other side of the democratic frustration interactive term: the democratic delivery gap, which is operationalised as the difference between citizens' expected democratic standard and perceived actual system delivery. Once again, we first look at distributions using the three ideological, institutional, and political dimensions. Findings are reported in Fig. 3.2.

Two initial general findings are noteworthy. First, democratic delivery gaps are very much the norm. In other words, perceived delivery quality is systematically lower than the democratic standards which citizens expect to see met in a well-functioning democracy. This is very important because again, just as the existence of a democratic desire, the reality of a perceived democratic delivery gap is an absolute prerequisite to
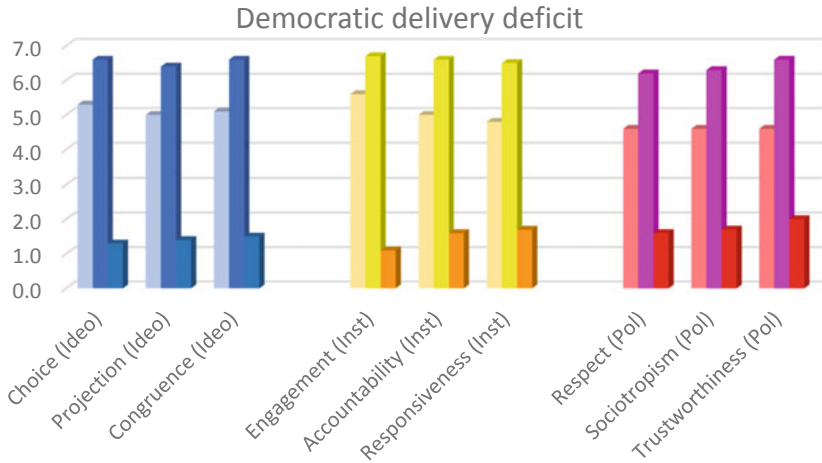
Fig. 3.2 Dimensions of democratic delivery deficit (*Notes* Each time, the first column is the average perceived delivery, the second column the perceived standard, and the third column the residual perceived democratic delivery deficit)

democratic frustration. Second, the findings suggest far greater differences across items than in the context of democratic desire, mostly due to substantive variance in perceived delivery quality for the various items considered.

Just like democratic desire, the distribution of democratic standards tends to be skewed towards high levels, suggesting that most citizens expect a normally functioning democracy to perform quite highly on all three dimensions. Indeed, on a scale from 0 to 0, between 59% (respect) and 67% (engagement) of citizens rate their expected delivery standard between 6 and 10. By contrast, levels of perceived delivery tend to be tri-modal with significant proportions of citizens considering that their democracy performs very poorly, average, and very well. There are also significant variations across items. If we compare the proportions of citizens giving a low (0–4) and a high (6–10) score, we find that low scores are dominant for all political dimension items whilst by contrast, a majority of citizens give high scores to all three ideological items as well as engagement. The institutional dimension is the most contrasted as low scores are also slightly dominant for responsiveness, and high scores slightly dominant for accountability—though it should be noted that

here, we are talking about majoritarian systems whereby accountability is generally easier for citizens to avail themselves of than in proportional systems which tend to favour other components of democratic performance and representation. Let us now bring those two elements together to focus on the perceived democratic delivery gap which is the truly important variable in the context of democratic frustration rather than standard or perceived performance individually.

The ideological dimension tends to see the lowest democratic delivery gap of all three dimensions. It is generally highest for congruence, with an average delivery gap of 1.5 (standard: 6.6, perceived delivery: 5.1), followed by projection with a gap of 1.4 (standard: 6.4, perceived delivery: 5.0), and choice with a gap of choice 1.3 (standard: 6.6, perceived delivery: 5.3).

Average delivery gaps tend to be a little higher when it comes to the institutional dimension of democratic frustration. This is notably the case for the responsiveness item, with a delivery gap of 1.7 (standard: 6.5, perceived delivery: 4.8), and accountability with a gap of 1.6 (standard: 6.6, perceived delivery: 5.0). The exception is engagement, which, with a perceived delivery gap of 1.1 (standard: 6.7, perceived delivery: 5.6), is the item for which democracy seems to perform closest to citizens' typical expectations.

Finally, it is with regard to the political dimension of democratic frustration that democratic delivery falls shortest compared to citizens' expected standards of provision. The best illustration is the trustworthiness item, with a delivery gap of 2.0 (standard: 6.6, perceived delivery: 4.6). This is followed by the sociotropism items with a gap of 1.7 (standard: 6.3, perceived delivery: 4.6) and just behind by respect with a gap of 1.6 (standard: 6.2, perceived delivery: 4.6).

Given the 0–10 scale, we can thus note that there is a general perception of a democratic delivery gap affecting all three dimensions of democratic frustration, with particular emphasis on the political dimensions, whereby democratic performance tends to fall well short of citizens expected democratic standards. It is also important to consider the implications of the ideological dimensions being typically the one which betrays the lowest gaps between expected standards and actual delivery. A significant proportion of the extent work on democratic dissatisfaction and representation alike largely focuses on the mismatch between parties' positions and citizens' preferences, assuming it to be the most likely because of democratic unhappiness and perceptions of insufficient representation.

Instead, our findings suggest that this is the least likely source of such dissatisfaction with democratic performance compared to the quality of institutional processes and procedures (institutional dimension) and the perceived integrity of and trustworthiness of political elites.

Mapping Democratic Frustration as an Interactive Object

Having considered the nature and distribution of both democratic desire, and the democratic delivery gap and its two components (standards and perceived delivery), it is time to assess what this entails in terms of the distribution of democratic frustration as their interactive product.

In the US case, on scales from −100 to 100, ideological frustration is the lowest, with a mean of 9.31 and a standard deviation of 23.5. The political dimension has a mean of 14.78 and a standard deviation of 30.25, and the political dimension is of almost exactly comparable magnitude, with a mean of 14.82 and a standard deviation of 30.25. In the UK, based on the 2021 data, typical levels of frustration—still using the same −100 to 100 scale—are a lot higher. The ideological dimension is still the lowest, with a mean of 20.12 and a standard deviation of 25.55. The institutional dimension reaches a mean of 22.55 and a standard deviation of 28.32. This time, the political dimension of frustration is substantively higher, with a mean of 30.40 and a standard deviation of 33.18. As a reminder, it is impossible to fully compare those levels with those in South Africa and Australia because of differences in measurement.

This notably means that populations in both countries are predominantly feeling democratically frustrated (since our scales have an "easy" natural 0 point which separates frustrated from non-frustrated citizens), that those levels of frustration tend to be higher in the UK than in the US, and finally, that in terms of dimensions, the ideological dimension of democratic frustration, despite being largely the most talked about in much of political science, is in fact the least salient, whilst institutional frustration is higher, and in particular, the political dimension, which pertains predominantly to politicians and elites, is the highest, in particular in the UK.

Analytical Categories

Of course, it is essential to understand how those deductive measures relate to citizens' spontaneous narratives on the nature of their sense of democratic frustration. In this chapter, I will thus also report on citizens' spontaneous narratives of democratic frustration, but the fact that I made an explicit choice to avoid overly framing citizens' answer—or at any rate to give them the space to express their intuitive thoughts as openly as possible in the survey and in the initial parts of all of the narrative interviews—does not mean that I did not have a specific set of categories of references in mind, which shaped the later parts of the interview protocols as well as the ultimate coding of respondents' answers. I looked for the following elements in citizens' open narratives:

1. References to the three dimensions of democratic frustration—ideological, institutional, and political as defined in Chapter 1;
2. References to the three key consequences of frustration—anger, aggression, and withdrawal, which are also detailed in Chapter 1;
3. Perspective references as referees and supporters (Bruter & Harrison, 2020), which will have a strong impact on perceptions of a citizen's place within democracy;
4. Emotional references—as discussed earlier, frustration is a psychological condition likely to elicit a number of different emotions, so I am interested to negative demobilising (depression, tiredness, etc.) and negative mobilising (anger, fury, etc.) emotions, but also potentially in references to positive emotions which can be elicited by the desirous or expectative component of democratic frustration in its own right;
5. Targets of blame—also discussed in Chapter 1 is the potential nature of blame in the context of democratic frustration, which may affect political elites, the institutional system as such, other stakeholders and elites (e.g. the media, religion, the justice system, the police, bureaucracy, etc.) but also fellow citizens and even oneself. All those represent important references in spontaneous narratives of frustration;
6. Process-related elements—democracy is made of different moments, such as elections, representation, and policymaking, so an interesting element is to see if any of those particular moments is specifically mentioned in the context of democratic frustration;

7. Related variables—I am interested in some related variables such as distrust (Bertsou, 2019), and both internal and external efficacies which may become proxies for democratic frustration;

8. Cyclical information—I described in Chapter 1 the potential natures of the cycle of democratic frustration. I am therefore interested in understanding whether citizens will make reference to the way their democratic frustration may be evolving, notably in the form of deterioration or improvement, or even elements of persistence or occasionality among others;

9. Constructive or fatalistic nature of frustration—finally, I am very keen to understand if respondents refer to democratic frustration in constructive term—looking for potential avenues of mitigation or resolution—or fatalistic terms—as something which cannot really be influenced or remedied.

Throughout the chapter, my analysis will thus also refer to those important parameters which I am using to "map" the different spontaneous references citizens make as part of their spontaneous narratives relating to democratic frustration. Of course, that framework does not preclude identifying other narrative references made by citizens which would not fit those different analytical dimensions. Nevertheless, those important elements are what will also help to relate those spontaneous narratives in both interviews and open survey answers with the analysis with the more structured data analysed in the remainder of this book.

Spontaneous Narratives of Dimensions of Frustration

It is reassuring to note that some citizens' narratives confirm the theoretical structure of democratic frustration as defined in this book. For example, using the open-ended question on what frustration means to people in the representative survey, it is interesting to note the comparative differences in references across countries. In South Africa, the overwhelming dominance of corruption is obvious, as is the reference to unmet expectations. For instance, one respondent referred to their frustration being based on "*unrealistic expectations*".

Individual narratives also largely uphold the book's tri-dimensional model of democratic frustration, with distinct ideological, institutional,

and political dimensions. Examples of references to the **political dimen-sion** of frustration in spontaneous references in representative survey are as follows:

> I asked myself, what type of democracy is this? and why is the government full of corruption?
>
> Our leaders are just in this for their own benefit
>
> self-serving politicians

In Australia too, examples of references to the **political dimension** of frustration in spontaneous references in representative survey were frequent:

> they say one thing and do another
>
> they only care about themselves
>
> they live in a bubble
>
> they don't care
>
> they are all the same
>
> out-of-touch politicians
>
> line their pockets
>
> childish behaviour

Whilst the open-ended answers offer an irreplaceable snapshot of what democratic frustration spontaneously evokes to citizens and means to them, and how it is structured, they remain short, immediate associations. By contrast, in-depth interviews allow us to get a far deeper understanding of the conscious and subconscious nature of democratic frustration, of when it emerges, and of its manifestations in citizens' daily lives. To map the concept of democratic frustration and understand how citizens relate to it in their own words, it was critical to gain a deeper insight into how they experience it and how they speak of it in their own words. The full semi-structured interview guide appears in the Appendix and the main themes structure the analysis here.

Continuing with references to the political dimension of democratic frustration, here is how two of the respondents—one from the US and one from the UK—were talking about it in greater details:

I don't think just the parties, it's more a sense of the people in the parties as well and making the public feel more involved and as part of them. Attitudes do need to be changed in this respect. (2,19_UK_FTV_003)

I think also maybe just like the rhetoric that sort of has been used a lot with like, politicians sort of attacking each other. And sometimes it feels like they're just focused on that, rather than like, necessarily maybe showing a particular vision that they have for the country, or particular plans that they have. (2,21_CA_US_001)

Moving on to the second dimension in our model, examples of references to **ideological dimension** of frustration in spontaneous references in representative survey were also made by many respondents, notably in the following Australian examples:

little choice of good policies

lack of policy

limited parties

Once again, in-depth interviews provide more granular details of how this ideological dimension is of critical importance for a number of citizens when they consider what they find frustrating with their democracies as in the three examples below:

Well the thing in the UK for me is that representation excludes a large spectrum of society. Additionally, promises that politicians make in the cabinet are largely dismissed, so it's not very fair I would say. (2,20_UK_FTV_004)

The interviewee then expands this point by explaining that trust is diminished when representation is unequal, and it is hard to place in trust in politicians that are seen to disregard their campaign promises.

I guess the political trust sort of goes, if also not everyone is represented and promises aren't kept, it's quite hard to trust the politicians and the system. Many people will also feel the same, I think the effects come hand in hand. (2,20_UK_FTV_004)

It was really frustrating because I wasn't represented by the parties. I identified the Conservative Party as the Brexit party, so I couldn't vote for them based on my principles. I didn't agree with the program of labour

so at the end I think I've wasted my vote. But I couldn't find any political party to represent my interests at the time. (1,56_UK_005)

I do not think that my personal views are represented by a major political party or institution in the United States. However, I do find that there are smaller, more grassroots organizations that do align with more with my issues. And I think those are starting to become more popular have more of an impact. (2,20_KS_US_004)

Finally, we move on to the third **institutional dimension** of frustration, which is evoked in several spontaneous references in the open-ended survey answers in South Africa:

service delivery especially at local government level

what democracy?

The Rules are not followed according to the democratic alliance

There were similarly frequent spontaneous references to the **institutional dimension** of frustration in those survey open-ended answers in Australia:

compulsory voting

undemocratic processes

broken system

Finally, once again, those references were expanded and detailed by many of our respondents in the in-depth interviews, who characterised their sense of democratic frustration along institutional lines:

well yes. I guess, the system as a whole, because it's majoritarian, there are a lot of wasted votes. And I feel like, although it's a democracy to be a true democracy, a proportional system would be more beneficial. (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

The interviewee then elaborates further on why the system is contributing to how she feels frustrated with democracy.

It's just that you would cast a vote, which ultimately doesn't have an effect on the outcome of the election. It is like wasted; you might as well not

vote. Like, if you're in a safe seat constituency, what's the point if you're going to vote for the opposition? (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

I think it's outdated and completely defunct, but, you know, I think there were obviously existing problems, but Brexit has just, like, shot a spotlight on how annoying and how restrictive the, like, electoral system and the parliamentary system can be. (1,19_UK_FTV_006)

The Nature of Democratic Frustration—How Is It Experienced?

Beyond the dimensions of democratic frustration comes the question of how it is experienced by citizens. We noted elsewhere that a lot of citizens spontaneously refer to feeling frustrated by their democracies, but what do they actually say about it, and how do they describe that feeling when it occurs. We now consider a number of those descriptions that emerged from the in-depth interviews conducted across three countries.

Just general, underlying anger and disappointment. (1,25_UK_001)

I would say I guess the lack of transparency in our democracy, like, not really feeling like there is any party that really represents young people, I know a lot of people also think the same, for example, not really knowing what to vote for as there is not much of an appealing party that usually wins. (2,19_UK_FTV_003)

I've definitely felt frustration in like, I mean, okay, this is probably quite an obvious and recent example. But the referendum, the Brexit referendum, for me was a huge event. And I was very frustrated by a lot of aspects from that. I thought there was a lot of misinformation. [pauses to think] Not as much in the media though, more kind of just way that the information was brought around, like even just when if I was driving around, I could see information popping up in, you know, like signs on the side of the road and, and misinformation specifically. And that really, that made me very frustrated. And I think I was also frustrated by the fact that the result was actually pretty close. And it was something that made a huge difference and the fact that there didn't seem to be a clear majority. (1,25_UK_001)

Well, I was frustrated by the referendum because at the time I was a European living in London, and I didn't have the possibility to vote for

something that really affected my life. It was really frustrating not being able to be heard. (1,56_UK_005)

It's just so frustrating to not see like a consensus, or any kind of effort by either party to, you know, forge a common ground or anything like that is always so adversary. And so, you know, trying to one up each other all the time, and not really, you know, forge a consensus, and that has been so frustrating. (1,19_UK_FTV_006)

Brexit for me, was the beginning of the frustration, I think, yeah. You know, there's, there's a big distrust and politicians. And you know, it has to be said, there were lots of scandals before Brexit, like the MPs expenses, scandals, you know, that was a massive thing. And that was huge, huge for, you know, distrust in government and just trust in, you know, all politicians. And I think, for me, if we're talking about me, personally, I think Brexit is the catalyst only because, you know, I was of an age where I could start to understand these things. (1,19_UK_FTV_006)

This past election that being the 2020 general election, I felt pretty frustrated with the way that the voting turned out in my state, particularly with regards to the amount of voter turnout, we had a pretty low voter turnout in a lot of our counties and I felt really disappointed by that. (2,20_KS_US_004)

Democratic Frustration and Emotions

Democratic frustration is not only evoked as an occurrence, but often, specifically related to sets of largely negative emotions, including fear, worry, anger, or implied underneath symptoms such as tears. Here are a few such emotions as evoked by participants in our in-depth interviews.

I think that part of it is definitely fear. You know, I think you, when you feel like democracy, or I feel like democracy is not working the way that I would hope it will, then it makes me scared about what's going to happen for the future. So fear, and worry, and then also sometimes sadness, because I'm worried about the future effects, but also then sometimes I'm made sad by the present day effects of what I see to be going wrong. (2,20_KS_US_004)

I definitely cried about Brexit. And I, for me, it wasn't just frustration, it was just anger. And so that kind of feeling can affect everyday life, like I

was, I was, I had, like a kind of underlying feeling of anger for like a year, which is a really long time. I wasn't just like angry all the time. But it's just like a little underlying feeling when you met with people, you know, when it's something that affects people around you, like an example I want to give is with Brexit. I believe that it gave some people the confidence to be less tolerant. For example, I was working just after Brexit, I had a summer internship in a place near Manchester and I went into a petrol station to pay for petrol and I went with a friend of mine, who is blonde like very blonde, blue eyes, very pale. And I believe the lady in the shop said something about him being Polish or Eastern European. And she literally said the words how "we're going to get rid of your soon", which I had never in my life had in the UK. And if it's something that, you know, when stuff like that starts happening, then everything you do you have that underlying kind of little bit of fear, a little bit of frustration, a little bit of anger, and it's not like an everyday action that you do all day, but it is kind of there. (1,25_UK_001)

I wouldn't say angry or anything, just quite annoyed. (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

I would say sort of, irritated, angry, like it is hard to associate with politics when it is not really representative of everyone. A bit unfair, as, it shouldn't really be like that. (2,19_UK_FTV_003)

I do think it's unfair. Obviously, it's just undemocratic how people are excluded in society. It makes me feel angry I guess. (2,20_UK_FTV_004)

I felt powerless. I felt that other people could control my life. I realised that European citizens do not have the same rights and duties as people living in the country. And as a result, I applied for the British Citizenship. (1,56_UK_005)

I think, just disappointment, because obviously, these are elected officials, you know, we've elected them because we believe that they can do the best job and they can, you know, work in our interest. Yet, all they seem to be doing is either toeing the party line, or, you know, doing something to, like further their own political ambitions. (1,19_UK_FTV_006)

I think I do get angry. But for very brief moments and times, I think I'll get angry at an elected official, let's say for a moment, and then it passes because I'm more focused on like I said, maybe in the past, when I first was feeling democratically frustrated, I think there was probably

definitely a lot more anger. And I think that anger has lessened because, again, I'm viewing less as individual politicians or individual, individual political actions that I don't like, I'm not seeing them as individual things anymore, but more as part of the system and so rather than being angry, I fear the extent of that system and what that system will continue to do or I feel hopeful about our ability to combat these systems in the future. (2,20_KS_US_004)

Perceptions of Democratic Frustration in Self and Others

Those experiences of frustration and the emotions that accompany it combine into a broader phenomenon of acknowledgement of democratic frustration in self and others. In in-depth interviews, democratic frustration is often noted, witnessed, observed, and described as a phenomenon which is as widespread as it is evident. Here are some examples of those characterisations.

I think Brexit has been the only thing that I have really argued about, in terms of elections and in terms of something about with friends and with that specific friend when she told me she was voting for Brexit, so even before I heard any of her reasons, we didn't speak for about a month. And she was one of my best friends, well, we still are now, we were able to kind of, you know, figure it out. (1,25_UK_001)

When prompted by the interviewer to expand on this reaction:

Angry. Just really angry. Yeah. really angry. I just couldn't understand. Yeah. Like, why? (1,25_UK_001)

One particular interviewee described how she had argued with her grandfather about political issues and how that made her feel:

Yes. With my grandfather actually, it's funny, because at any family gathering, he's 81, he's so entrenched in his old ways. likely to have his old way of thinking from his generation. That generation was very like, you know, end of the war and about immigration. Like he's not racist, but, he was like, I remember, he said to me like, when I was telling him the reasons why I wanted to remain, how I'd been indoctrinated to think like that, like my generation. [prompted to describe how this made her

feel] 'Both frustrated in the moment, obviously, like, about the issue. But, also more recently, how, you know over the summer, the whole statues were being taken down, and he was against that like, saying its part of our history, and I was just annoyed because it's still racist. Like, young people can change their attitudes towards it, and he just didn't understand. (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

Democratic Frustration in Intimate Circles—Discussing and Cultivating Frustration with Family and Friends

Acknowledging that one feels democratically frustrated, but also witnessing that it affects others leads us to another important observation about the nature of democratic frustration. It permeates citizens' daily lives and notably intimates spheres. It is discussed within friends and family circles, and sometimes present and influential without even needing to be specifically discussed. Here, we consider a few references made during the in-depth interviews as to how democratic frustration does indeed come to enter and sometimes disrupt intimate spheres.

> Honestly, I'm not sure about my friends, as I don't talk much about it with them, but I guess, my parents and grandparents. Well, my parents voted conservative last time, I think they were annoyed because they didn't like the opposition. (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

> It's frustrating to have a conversation with, you know, a seventy, well, my grandma's 79 now, and like, you know, it's frustrating to have a conversation with someone of that generation, because their values and their ideas are very different to those of, you know, the modern generation or my generation. (1,19_UK_FTV_006)

> I think it's sort of a common talking point almost, that everyone's upset, and yet nothing is changing. So, it's very, but yeah, I would say friends, family, and even people that I encounter in my academic and professional life seem to be frustrated. (2,20_KS_US_004)

Managing Frustration—Expectations and Resolution

When discussing the theoretical nature of democratic frustration in Chapters 1 and 2, we emphasised the importance of expectations and standards. Spontaneously, citizens frequently recognise the importance of those democratic expectations, their conscious or subconscious existence, and even consider whether management of expectations (or lack thereof) could be a source of frustration. Here are two examples from the in-depth interviews.

> Maybe a more realistic world. Just about the politicians being more realistic with what they say and what they do. Maybe also more checks to make sure what they say is realistic and plausible. More representation in terms parties also. I guess, a change of people in power to make it more consistent and relatable. Basically, just having the party leaders be more appealing to the younger generations really. (2,19_UK_FTV_003)

> If things change! And if positive actions are taken, then my sense of frustration will decrease […] You know, I think frustration might turn into happiness, if something changes, you know, for example, if we change the electoral system, I would be much happier, much more content. But, you know, I, I, I think that the passion or the emotion will stay there forever, hopefully. (1,19_UK_FTV_006)

From thinking of frustration in terms of unmet expectations to considering how to resolve, there is only one small step. Throughout the course of the interviews, participants frequently volunteered ideas as to how to potentially cure democratic frustration within their societies. For example, when asked, what could you do personally to make things better? or is there anything you think you're doing wrong yourself? One interviewee remarked:

> What to make myself not care? [laughs]. Um, I think the best thing we can do is that whenever we vote, we have to be informed. And that's what I'm going to try and do every time that I vote. (1,25_UK_001)

When prompted by the interviewer, is there anything you can do to make yourself feel better about the situation? The respondent added:

Um, no, well, I think, it is just part of the system, and, there's not much that I can do to change that, like, it's just the system and the way it is. I don't think it impacts me too much at the moment [prompt: and, do you think this might change in the future?]

I feel like. Probably. I mean, as I get older, I'll probably get more engaged in Politics, like it is what I want to do, but, I don't know if my attitudes will change towards it, it depends on who I vote for and if that changes. (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

Well, obviously, the PR system, I think, like many European countries, would have less wasted votes. But then, well because we are a single member constituency, and we have one representative, I think, if instead we had a multi-member district, it would be better for representation and would increase the chances of being represented how people want. (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

When asked about how they would describe an ideal democracy, one interviewee from the UK described how representation could be improved to make the system fairer.

Ideally one in which representation is better. So, kind of, a more proportional system. For example, like in other European democracies and the European elections. I think every spectrum of the democracy and every minority should be represented the same. Especially ideally one with the absence of islamophobia and positive attitudes towards immigration. I think this would be a better form of democracy as the policies and outcomes would be of better quality in terms of representation and accuracy. (2,20_UK_FTV_004)

I think it's hard for every citizen to realise what politicians' intentions are as well as the corruption of false promises. In terms of representation, I guess a more proportional form, and less exclusion of minorities which stem from public opinion changes. (2,20_UK_FTV_004)

I think we need to find more accessible ways to vote. To make voting cooler, more popular, more interesting. Like, we can use testimonials from social networks for young people, giving them the possibility to vote via an app, or, give more information, not content information, but instead about the rights to vote, and how important that is.

I want more politicians with emphatic skills. For example, what I've seen during this crisis, the last few months crisis, only the big countries would

really emphatic head of states have been successful. Woman for instance, I would like to see more woman as heads of state. And I'd like to see people that really can feel you know, what the people, the electorate feels. (1,56_UK_005)

I think proportional representation, I think public deliberation. I think, open debate and discussion about, you know, issues. I think deliberative democracy itself is a step too far right now, I think if we get proportional representation, and then we can think about deliberative democracy. (1,19_UK_FTV_006)

instead of just feeling like hopeless, about things, it was like, well, all of these people are working to change these things, and sometimes they're getting results. A specific example, like Stacey Abrams, and the state of Georgia was able to lead programs that registered like so many voters, and seeing things like that happen and seeing people make change successfully, I think that really was a contributing factor to my changing perspective on the terms of frustration. (2,20_KS_US_004)

In my ideal system, there's a larger number of parties, I would like to see more of my views represented, partially just because I think that those views are present within the country and not present within the current political system. So, more parties with a wider variety of viewpoints. I would love a much, much, much higher voter turnout, and that sort of an increase, I think, to the point where I think in my ideal system actually voting is, like, obligatory to an extent. (2,20_KS_US_004)

Democratic Frustration: Complex, Emotional, and Disruptive Nature of Widely Acknowledged Phenomenon

We have now learnt more about the nature of democratic frustration. After dissecting its two main components of democratic desire and democratic delivery gap, we have seen that it is widespread and largely acknowledged by citizens in terms of both general levels and specific details.

We have seen that despite what much of the literature on democratic dissatisfaction would suggest, the ideological dimension of democratic frustration is probably the least worrying and prominent compared to

its institutional and political counterparts. We have also seen that in qualitative evidence, citizens do not only confirm the structure of democratic frustration as unveiled in Chapters 1 and 2, but also underline its importance, through frequent occurrence, emotional loading, and the ability of democratic frustration to permeate private spheres and intrude within citizens' relationships with their friends and family.

Of course, one of the originalities of this book is to use psychological insights to differentiate between the different components of democratic frustration—desire, and standards and delivery which difference constitutes and democratic delivery gap. In their description of democratic frustration, many citizens evoke the importance of managing expectations and possible routes towards a frustration resolution, typically involving "improving" politics. However, is this possible? Whilst dissatisfaction models would naturally imply that delivery improvement would close a delivery gap, the same is not necessarily true of democratic frustration because of what we do not yet know about the dynamic interaction between its three components. This is the puzzle that we will now tackle in Chapter 4.

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Dynamics of Democratic Frustration: An Asymmetric Bottomless Well

Dynamics of Democratic Frustration

The nature of democratic frustration as based on the relationship between three individual components inherently involves complex potential dynamics between them. Democratic desire, standards, and perceived delivery could vary independently, or some could even be less elastic than others. It could be the case, however, that there is path dependency between those components, so that a change in one of them might affect others, or even asymmetric path dependency, meaning that an increase in one component may result in an increase in the other, but that a decrease would by contrast prove without induced effects, or the other way round. The nature of the dynamics between components of democratic frustration is precisely what this chapter is concerned with exploring.

In a way, as a psychological concept, this book suggests that frustration is a marathonian pathology rather than a sprinter. Frustrations emerge, get buried, become complex, become apparent, and remain stable or worsen over time rather than spontaneously disappear. This is different from mere dissatisfaction which is susceptible to going away if delivery improves or becomes closer to an individual's preferences.

In this chapter, I am therefore interested in understanding the dynamics of democratic frustration, that is both its stability over time

at both individual and aggregate levels, and the internal relationship between its three components—democratic desire, democratic standards, and perceptions of democratic delivery, and in particular the question of whether a change in delivery impacts the other two components, and whether such a change is symmetric (i.e. happening regardless of whether the change in delivery is positive or negative) or asymmetric (making democratic frustration an implicit vicious circle).

Methodologically, as described in Chapter 2, I approach this question using two complementary methodologies: a two-wave experiment on the dynamics of democratic frustration, but also a panel study survey ran in the UK between December 2020 and January 2021.

An Experiment on the Nature of Democratic Frustration

The experiment is designed with simplicity and will enable us to understand whether democratic frustration is a phenomenon that mirrors the logic of dissatisfaction models or, instead, differs from it. In a nutshell, we will manipulate participants' perceptions of the quality of democratic delivery (positively) to perceive whether improved democratic performance solely leads to amelioration in perceptions of democratic delivery (which will be true in both scenarii) or will also result in a subsequent increase in participants' democratic standards and desires.

Put simply, if the logic of democratic frustration mirrors what we know of democratic dissatisfaction, its primary focus should be on the question of democratic delivery. If, by contrast, it is to be taken at face value, then improved democratic performance will instead lead to consequential increases in desire and standards, which could make such improvements paradoxically counter-productive or at any rate ineffective in frustration terms. If such is the case, democratic frustration will be confirmed as a vicious circle which can never be entirely resolved or ended. Finally, if improvements in democratic delivery lead to a perceived stability (or even decrease) in democratic desire, then we will know that democratic frustration is, in fact, the result of a displacement process as is the case for most examples of psychological frustration.

The results of the experiment on those grounds will not only highlight the true nature of the dynamics of democratic frustration per se.

Instead, it will also give us unique insights regarding the type of solutions or mitigation that can be used to relieve citizens' perceptions of democratic frustration and the pathologies that stem from it.

The experimental process itself is straightforward and described in detail in Chapter 2. Prior to the experimental treatment, we measure all three components of democratic frustration (desire, standard, and perceived delivery). As part of the experimental stimulus, we then expose participants to news snippets presenting stories of very high democratic performance on the ideological, institutional, and political dimensions, respectively. As a reminder, the experimental participants are divided into five different groups to account for the possibly different natures of the three dimensions of frustration when it comes to the frustration cycle. One group is exposed to three news snippets all presenting information suggestion a high-quality democratic performance from an ideological point a view, a second three articles presenting similarly positive information about institutional performance, and a third three articles positively framing political democratic performance. In addition to those three groups with a stimulus focused on a single dimension, a fourth group is presented with three news snippets suggesting positive democratic performance on all three dimensions that can lead to democratic frustration (one positive article per dimension), and finally a fifth is a placebo group without any informational stimulus.

A week after the pre-test and the exposure to the experimental stimulus, we measure the three components of the democratic frustration equation again post-test to validate whether the stimulus has resulted in higher perceptions of democratic delivery, but more importantly in the context of what the experiment is testing, on renewed levels of democratic standard as well as expectation for the relevant dimension of frustration. Furthermore, after a further lag of one week, we then retest those measures once more as part of a lagged repeat post-test questionnaire so as to limit the risk of answer rationalisation and also allow for the experimental effects to potentially settle a little after the original part of the experiment. Whilst we do not repeat the democratic frustration items for the placebo group in the first post-test (conducted in the direct aftermath of the experimental stimulation), we do, however, measure it again as part of the second lagged repeat post-test conducted a week later, which notable enables us to control for the effects of any potentially relevant news that may have occurred in the real world as part of the countries' democratic organisation and performance. Of course, all participants are

fully debriefed after the end of the experiment so as to complement the informed consent procedures which were ran prior to the running of the experiment itself. Full details of the experimental procedures are presented in Chapter 2 and notably in Fig. 2.2.

Experimental Results

Whilst the experimental design did not allow me to differentiate between dimensions of democratic delivery in the stimulus due to the need to maintain sufficient statistical power, it provided an opportunity to test for the most important questions that this book raises on the internal dynamics of components of democratic frustration, namely: (1) does a change in democratic delivery result in a change in citizens' democratic standards? and (2) is that effect symmetric? (in other words, are democratic standards in equally elastic to a negative change in democratic delivery as to a positive one).

As a reminder, to avoid manipulation being unduly skewed towards one specific dimension of democratic delivery or frustration, the negative manipulation stimulus included three distinct snippets on negative democratic delivery (one relating to ideological delivery, one to institutional and one to political delivery, as defined in Chapters 1 and 2). Similarly, the positive stimulus included a set of three symmetric democratic delivery information snippets (positive ideological, institutional, and political delivery, respectively). Finally, a third group measured changes in democratic standards without any information relating to democratic delivery (thereby constituting a placebo group).

As a reminder, in order to avoid capturing short-lived, artificial effects, the two waves of the experiment were conducted approximately two weeks apart, with wave 1 conducted on 9 December 2021 for all respondents, and the fieldwork for wave 2 completed between 21 and 26 December 2021. In wave 1, respondents were randomly assigned to the positive delivery, negative delivery and placebo groups. By the end of the two-wave experiment, there were 160 respondents in the negative delivery group, 164 in the positive delivery group, and 171 in the placebo group. We measured levels of democratic standards in wave 1 to ensure that the random assignment had been effective and there was indeed no major difference between the group. In fact, on balance, only the negative delivery group had very slightly higher levels of democratic standards in wave 1. The mean ideological standard was 8.05 for the negative group,

7.77 for the positive group and 7.81 for the control group. For institutional standards, those figures were 8.43, 8.23, and 8.20, respectively, and for political standards, 8.55, 8,07, and 8.03. In short, more positive standard effects for the group exposed to news of positive political delivery could not possibly be due to more positive pre-existing standards due to the random assignment producing some unexpected bias. The retention rate in wave 2 was over 80% and as illustrated by the above figures, it was effectively similar across the three groups so experimental results were also not the result of heterogenous churn across the two experimental and the placebo groups.

In that context, the results of the experiment seem to decidedly answer both questions on the relationship between change in democratic delivery and dynamics of democratic standards. They are presented in Fig. 4.1.

First of all, the results provide clear evidence supporting the hypothesis that a change in the level of democratic delivery results in a clear change in dynamics of democratic standards. In other words, for each of the three dimensions, people exposed to information about positive democratic delivery saw their democratic standards increase far more than people exposed to stories of negative democratic delivery, with people in the placebo groups somewhere in between those two. Bearing in mind that
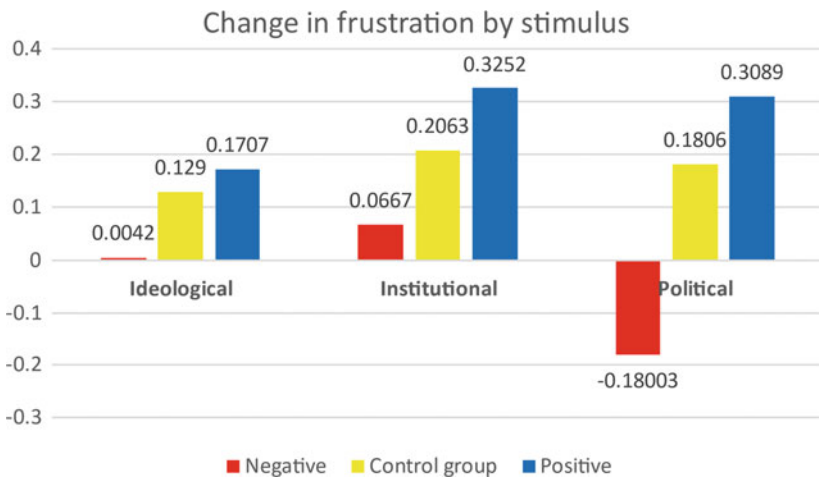
Fig. 4.1 Experimental results

democratic standards are measured using a standardised 0–1 scale, so that change can theoretically range between -1 and 1, the difference between the mean change in democratic standards between people exposed to negative and positive stimuli is 0.17 for the ideological dimension, 0.26 for the institutional dimension, and 0.49 for the political dimension. As mentioned, people in the placebo group are somewhere between the negative stimulus and positive stimulus groups in every single one of the three cases, confirming the effective impact of democratic delivery on change in democratic standards.

Perhaps even more importantly, however, in answer to the second important question raised in this chapter and book about the internal dynamics of democratic frustration, however, the experimental findings also confirm that democratic delivery actually has asymmetric effects on democratic standards, though important differences are observed across dimensions of democratic frustration.

Indeed, only in the context of the political dimension of democratic frustration does reference to negative democratic delivery seem to result in a decrease in democratic standards. By contrast, such negative delivery does not lead to any change in ideological democratic standards at all, and even in an apparently small increase in institutional democratic standards. By contrast, when it comes to positive democratic delivery, it results in clear and meaningful increase in all three dimensions of democratic standards.

In other words, what our experiment is demonstrating is that when people are exposed to positive democratic delivery, their democratic standards almost immediately increase, thereby significantly limiting the ability of such good democratic delivery to meaningly decrease–let alone ever fully resolve—democratic frustration. By contrast, when citizens are exposed to bad democratic delivery, their democratic standards do not become more permissive as a result expect when it comes to political democratic standards, and even so, the decrease in democratic standards as a result of negative delivery is almost twice less than the increase in such standards as a result of positive delivery.

In many ways, both of those findings are critically important. The first, more general finding about dynamics of components of democratic frustration illustrates the fact that the three components are intimately related and dynamic, so that a change in democratic delivery will not necessarily result in a change in democratic frustration, because it will also "move the goalpost" that political institutions and elites effectively need

to attain in order to satisfy citizens. This finding highlights the inter-dependent intrinsically endogenous nature of the three components of democratic frustration. It accentuates the fact that one of them cannot be transformed without the others two (and particularly democratic standards) also being affected in turn in a similar direction. This substantively confirms, somehow, that democratic standards are a moving target, and that better democracy first and foremost leads to more demanding democratic citizens.

The second finding, however, is also crucial and possibly even more problematic for democratic institutions. It entails that to make things worse, those effects are not symmetric. In other words, whilst improving democracy results in more demanding standards, negative delivery does not necessarily similarly convert in citizens cutting some slack to their political elites and institutions. Consequently, whilst there is a certain "be careful what you wish for" aspect to improving democratic delivery in the sense that a political system functioning well will end up being judged more harshly by citizens, being mediocre is not a solution. Indeed, negative delivery will actually increase citizens' democratic frustration as a decline in perceived democratic delivery will simply not be matched by a commensurate decline in citizens democratic standards, particularly in terms of ideological and institutional dimensions.

In that sense, the experimental results seem to suggest that political elites and institutions have no choice but to continuously perform ever better, and so, without any hope of ever fully resolving democratic frustration per se. Indeed, if political systems perform poorly, democratic frustration will immediately worsen, but if they perform well, any decrease in democratic frustration will be short lived as it will open the door to citizens wanting ever more and better from those democratic systems.

Of course, this experiment is limited in a number of ways. First of all, as mentioned, it did not enable me to compare the potentially diverging effects of ideological, institutional, and political democratic delivery. Each may in fact have a distinct effect on the corresponding democratic standards. Second, there are limits that pertain to all experimental designs despite their advantages in terms of the "cleanliness" of manipulation and their internal validity. Indeed, an experimental design is of course potentially unrealistic (although it should be noted that manipulation checks were performed) and the effects of an experimental manipulation may always differ to an extent from corresponding effects in real life, causing potential issues of external validity. I tried to limit the artificiality of the

design by entrenching a lag on approximately 10–14 days between the exposure to the experimental stimulus and the post-test measurement. However, even then, this is of course no substitute for a true context of real-life environment.

Finally, by nature, and despite the lagged third wave, an experimental design like the one tested here always suffers from limited time frames. In other words, it is not particularly compelling to see if positive democratic delivery results in an immediate increase in democratic standards if there is an inherent risk that such an increase is only short lived, and citizens' democratic standards may in fact revert to their central tendency a little while later.

The Test of Time–How Stable Is Democratic Frustration?

Thankfully, however, I am able to test whether those all-important experimental findings are in fact upheld in real life by looking again at internal dynamics of democratic frustration using this time a panel study design in a completely real situation which happened to somewhat mirror the parameters of a quasi-natural experiment. In other words, I am able to look at the impact of perceived change in democratic delivery on perceived change in democratic standards over a period of just under two months using a panel study conducted in the UK at a time where real news—including the signature of a Brexit agreement between the UK and the EU, a significant deterioration of the coronavirus situation accompanied by a new and particularly severe lockdown, and the start of the rollout of the coronavirus vaccination campaign make it likely that for many citizens, perceptions of ideological, institutional, and political democratic delivery may have varied in unusually significant ways, which may also, depending on citizens, be either positive or negative depending on their own political preferences as well as comparative focus on distinct and highly salient news. Let us now explore those results in detail.

Therefore, we re-address the question that this chapter raises about dynamics of democratic frustration by using, this time, a panel study data from the UK which was collected in late 2020 for the first wave and early 2021 for the second wave using a sample of 865 panel respondents. Once more, the panel study can help us answer several critical questions. First of all, how stable are democratic frustration and its individual components over time at the aggregate level? Second, what is the story at the individual

level and are individuals' democratic desire, standards, perceived delivery, and overall frustration stable or volatile? Third, can we derive some information from that evolution of how changes to one specific component of democratic frustration affects the others? Finally, are these effects similar for the three dimensions of democratic frustration?

The second and fourth questions could not possibly be addressed by the experiment. The third question could, but it takes an entirely new meaning here due to the specific context of the panel study. Indeed, between the two waves of our panel study, Britain moved from a situation of tension regarding the end of the Brexit transition period and where most media suggested a strong risk that negotiations between the EU and Britain may fail to result in a deal, to the announcement of an agreement between the two parties just around Christmas time. A strong majority of the population clearly welcomed the news with a general sense of relief. At the same time, the announcement of the country's worst COVID-19-related lockdown was accompanied by a relatively fast implementation of the first stages of COVID-19 vaccination among the population. Overall, at face value, the second wave of our panel study thus coincided with a context of strongly improving government approval. Even more interestingly, however, the context could lead to either fast improving or fast deteriorating assessments of democratic politics compared to the first wave, depending on the main criteria and substantive preferences of individual citizens. All of this could be summarised as a prima facie improvement in perceptions of democratic delivery in my model. This makes it interesting to confirm not only whether such improvement or deterioration in perceived delivery is indeed reflected in the survey for different population segments, but also whether it affects, in any way, citizens' expression of their democratic desire as well as the democratic standards which they hold. Let us now consider those results in turn.

Components of Democratic Frustration: A Tale of Aggregate Level Stability and Limited Individual Level Variations

Let us first consider the relative stability of the three individual components of democratic frustration and their three dimensions. We will study them first at the aggregate level, and second at the individual level.

The aggregate level outcomes are summarised in Fig. 4.2. They show a pattern of quasi-systematic stability across the two waves. This is particularly true when it comes to the democratic standards components when

none of the changes (ranging from −0.01 to +0.04 on a 0–10 scale) are statistically significant. There are marginally higher positive changes for democratic desire (from +0.09 for the institutional component to +0.12 for the political one), but it is really in terms of perceived democratic delivery that there are positive changes of some magnitude (from +0.12 for the political dimension to +0.35 for the institutional one).

After looking at the individual components, we then turn to stability in overall democratic frustration in Fig. 4.3. The pattern observed logically follows from our analysis of individual components, with democratic frustration proving largely robust overall, but decreasing slightly during the period. Overall, political frustration decreased by 0.32, ideological by 1.21, and institutional by 2.78, bearing in mind the -100 to 100 scale.

Note that this sense of overall stability is further reinforced by an additional test comparing stability of aggregate levels of all three dimensions of democratic frustration over a longer time period between 2017 and 2019–this time based on time series (non-panel) data in the UK. This is illustrated in Fig. 4.4. It shows that over the panel period, levels of democratic frustration have gone up a little in all three dimensions—from 41 to 43 for the ideological dimension, from 43 to 45 for the institutional dimension, and from 50 to 54 on the political dimension. Note that the difference of means comes from the fact that in the time series data, there is no churn and weightings could be applied to ensure true
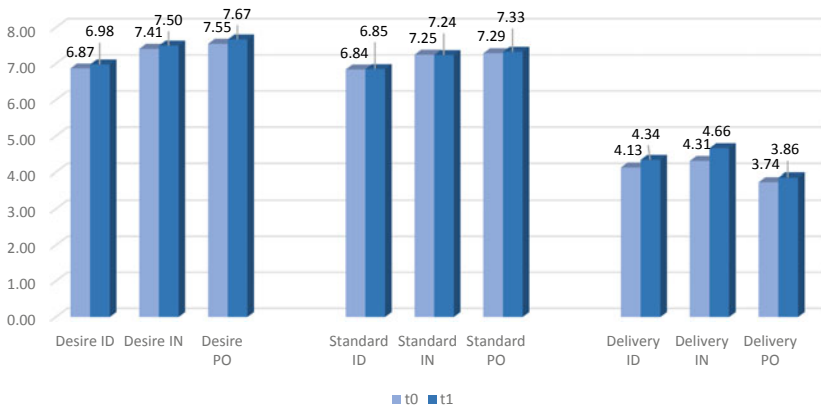
Fig. 4.2 Stability of frustration components over time—panel data
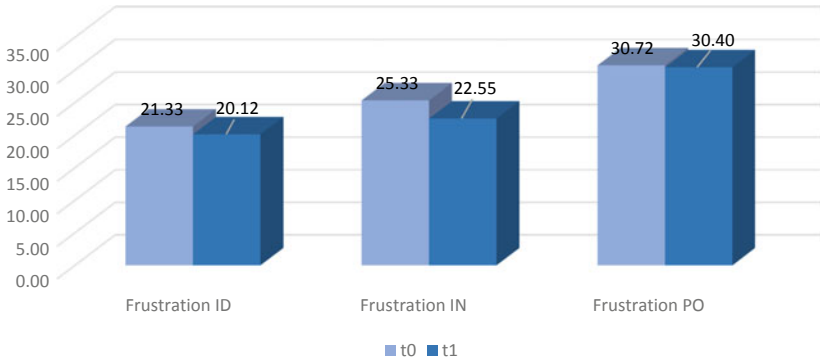
Fig. 4.3 Stability of democratic frustration over time—panel data

means, which was not possible in the panel data given that some respondents from wave 1 did not participate in wave 2, suggesting that overall, less frustrated respondents were more likely to continue answering the panel study.

Of course, however, evidence of aggregate level stability could mean anything from individual level stability to significant individual level variations that merely cancel each other out. Thankfully, the availability of panel (rather than time series) data makes it possible to assess which specific scenario we are dealing with in the context of components of democratic frustration, with the results presented in Fig. 4.5. As a reminder, each component is based on the index of three individual variables, so the potential for absolute stability is in fact very low. Due to the scales, between the two time points, each component can change by anything from −10 to +10. In the figure, I effectively categorise into three different categories, each split by sign. I consider the index fully stable if it varies by less than 1 between the two waves. I deem it moderate if it varies by less than 5. Finally, I consider the index change high if it ranges between 5 and the potential maximum of 10. Moderate and high changes can be positive or negative, and stability can be leaning positive, leaning negative, or an absolute 0.

Of the three components, perceptions of democratic delivery is clearly the least stable. Typically, less than a quarter of respondents belong to the stable category (ranging from 22.8% for the political dimension to 24% for the ideological one). Similarly, about 1 in 5 respondents displays
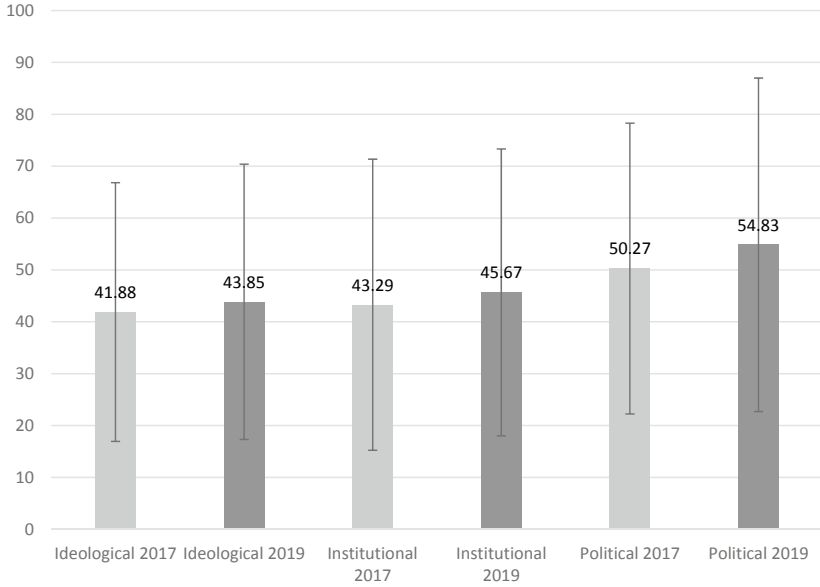
Fig. 4.4 Increase in means and standard deviations of democratic frustration in the UK 2017–2019—time series representative data
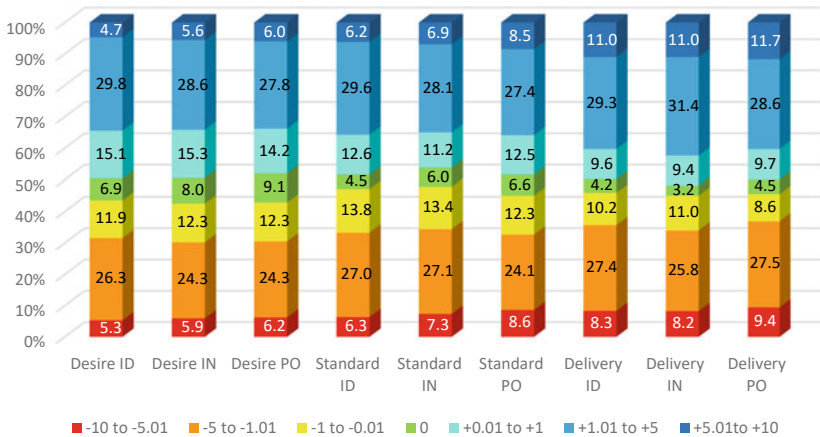
Fig. 4.5 Panel change to frustration components over time—individual responses

significant changes in perceived democratic delivery during the period, ranging from 19.3% for the ideological dimension to 21.1% for the political one. For each dimension, a clear majority fit in the moderate change category (from 56.1% for the political dimension to 57.2% for the institutional one). Unlike the other two components, on balance, for all three dimensions, more respondents display positive changes than negative ones during the period. The balance is 49.9% vs 45.9% for the ideological dimension, 50% vs 45.5% for the political dimension, and 51.8% vs 45% for the institutional one. However, it is worth noting that both significant positive and significant negative changes are higher than for the other two components of frustration.

Democratic standards are comparatively a lot more stable. This time, the proportion of stable respondents is close to a third, ranging from 30.6% for the institutional dimension, to 30.9% for the ideological dimension, and to 31.4% for the political dimension. By contrast, significant change is a lot lower for the ideological (12.5%) and institutional dimensions (14.2%) though a little bit more for the political dimensions (17.1%). Finally, moderate changers account for 51.5% of total respondents for the political dimension, but 51.5% for the institutional dimension, and as much as 55.2% for the ideological one. This time, the sample is extremely balanced between positive and negative changers (48.4% positive vs 46.9% negative for the ideological dimension, 46.2% vs 47.8% for the institutional dimension, and 48.4% vs 45% for the political one).

Finally, democratic desire is the most stable of all three components of democratic frustration. This time, the proportion of stable voters is systematically above a third. It reaches 33.9% of the sample for the ideological component, 35.6% for both the institutional and political dimensions. By contrast, the proportion of high changers barely reaches 10% for the ideological dimensions, 11.5% when it comes to the institutional dimension, and 12.2% for the political one. Finally, moderate changers represent 52.1% for the political dimension, 52.9% in the context of the institutional dimension, and as high as 56.1% for the ideological dimension. In all three cases, a greater proportion of voters have seen an increase to their democratic desire compared to a decrease (48% vs 42.8% when it comes to the political dimension, 49.6% vs 43.5% for the ideological dimension, and finally 49.5% vs 42.5% for the institutional one).

As previously, we then consider the same individual distribution of change for the three dimensions of democratic frustration as a whole in Fig. 4.6. It reveals a similar pattern, with aggregate level stability effectively hiding not insignificant but fairly balance change. In practice, 49.2% of panel participants had their ideological frustration increase during the panel period and 49.3% had it decrease. In terms of institutional frustration, the changes were 47.4% (increase) and 50.6$ (decrease), respectively, and finally for the political dimension, 48.6% and 49.8%. Interestingly, whilst at the aggregate level, the political dimension is the one which saw the most meaningful decrease; in effect, at the individual level, it was the one which saw the most significant negative and positive variations alike, with 16.5% and 16.4%, respectively, in the groups with the most radically increased and decreased frustration. In other words, the negotiation of a Brexit deal as well as a sharp negative turn in COVID-19 contaminations mostly resulted in frustration with politicians and their perceived integrity changing radically—and symmetrically—for a third of the population.

Using Panel Data to Unravel the Dynamics of the Relationship Between Frustration Components

We have first seen that at the aggregate level, most components of democratic frustration looked stable during the panel period, except for perceptions of democratic delivery. However, when looking at individual level panel data, the story proved to be a lot more complex. The visible aggregate level change to perceptions of democratic delivery is due to a mixture of broader individual level volatility, but also of a greater imbalance between the proportion of respondents showing an increase in democratic perceptions compared to those showing a decrease, as opposed to other components. However, we also saw that the apparent aggregate level stability in those is by no means synonymous to complete stillness at the individual level. At the individual level, there is thus variance in all three dimensions of all three components of democratic frustration, and the panel data also gives us a unique opportunity to uncover the relationship between them.
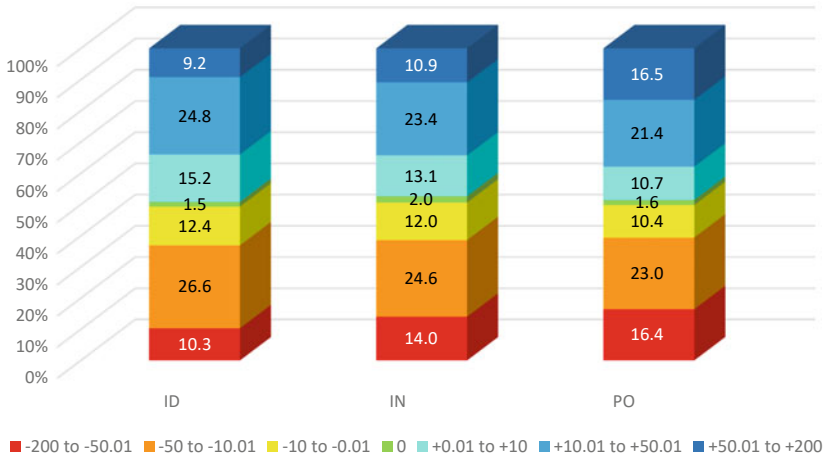
Fig. 4.6 Panel change to democratic frustration over time—individual responses

In a sense, the panel study design transformed into a quasi-natural experiment in that as discussed earlier in this chapter, in between the two waves, at least two events of major political visibility and magnitude occurred: the signature of a final agreement on the new relationship between the UK (in which the study was conducted) and the EU in the aftermath of Brexit and the transition period (whilst many feared no such agreement would be reached), and a major change to the coronavirus pandemic situation with crisis levels of contamination leading to a new lockdown, but also a seemingly fast and effective start to the COVID-19 vaccination campaign across the country. We know from media reports during the period and publicly accessible surveys that this resulted in increases in overall government popularity during the period and there is a strong case to associate that with improvements in perceptions of democratic delivery which we have just evoked.

On that basis, looking at the correlation between changes in different components of democratic frustration between the two panel waves can achieve three very important things. First of all, it can serve as a test for the robustness of democratic frustration, especially given the fact that as we have just seen, at the individual level, there is some level of evolution between frustration component levels between the two time points.

What this means is that if those changes are highly correlated it will enable us to exclude the possibility that those variations are a symptom of lack of robustness in the measurement of the components. The second and perhaps more important use of those correlations, however, is to provide a new and more robust test of the relationship between components of frustration. Indeed, if we accept that change in perceptions of democratic delivery has, in this case, largely been prompted by exogenous political events such as the signature of the final Brexit agreement between the UK and the EU, and the evolution of the coronavirus pandemic and vaccination campaign, then we can look at the correlation between such change and the dynamics of the other two components of democratic frustration to understand whether variations in perceived democratic delivery also affect democratic standard and desire. We will also be able to assess the symmetry (or lack thereof) of that relationship. Indeed, as noted in my model, my fundamental expectation is that an increase in perception of democratic delivery will lead to an increase in democratic standards, but that a decrease in perceived delivery will not similarly affect standards. In turn, this test is complemented by the experimental evidence considered earlier in this chapter. Thirdly, the correlations will enable us to understand the relationship between variations in components of democratic frustration and change in democratic frustration as a whole, which is the object of an analytical spotlight in Chapter 5 on determinants of democratic frustration. Furthermore, we will also explore whether this should be differentiated along the three substantive dimensions of democratic frustration, something which could not be tested in the experimental design.

Let us start by considering correlations between changes within each of the three dimensions of each component to assess the robustness of the measurement. Those are shown in Table 4.1 (appendix 1). It is important to remember that each index is, in and of itself, based on three individual variables per dimension, which represents a demanding threshold for high correlations, not to mention that each dimension is (obviously) intended to measure significantly different realities which may not always all evolve similarly. Nevertheless, the levels of internal correlations achieved within each dimension are very robust. For the three dimensions of democratic

desire, they range from 0.78 to 0.84. They are even higher for democratic standards, ranging from 0.86 to 0.90. Finally, the story is almost exactly similar for dimensions of perceived democratic delivery for which they range from 0.86. to 0.89. Those very high correlations between change levels suggest highly robust and reliable measurement throughout the three components and the three dimensions of democratic frustration. It is worth noting that conversely, this also results in very high correlations between changes in the three dimensions of the complex democratic frustration measurement, ranging from 0.85 to 0.90, which again reinforces prima facie confidence in the robustness of the operationalisation of democratic frustration itself.

The second element of interest is the relationship between changes in perceived democratic delivery and other components of democratic frustration, and notably the question of understanding whether it results in an increase in democratic standards, which would thereby limit the likely change in perceived delivery deficit.

First, the correlations reveal that there is little relationship between the change in perceived democratic delivery and democratic desire. Change in perceived ideological delivery is minorly correlated with ideological desire (0.09) but not with the other two dimensions, change in perceived institutional delivery has similarly low correlations with the ideological and institutional dimensions of democratic desire (0.11 and 0.10, respectively) but not with political desire, and change in perceived political delivery is not correlated at all with any form of democratic desire.

Considering that as seen earlier, democratic desire and democratic standards are broadly correlated, this lack of meaningful correlations between change in perceived delivery and democratic desire is in noteworthy contrast to the systematic correlations between the same change in perceived delivery and change in democratic standards. Change in perceived ideological delivery is positively correlated with change in democratic standards at levels ranging from 0.10 (political dimension) to 0.21 (ideological dimension). Similarly, changes in perceived institutional delivery is also positively correlated with change in all three dimensions of democratic standards ranging from 0.15 (for the political dimension) to 0.24 (for the ideological one). Finally, change in perceived political delivery is positively correlated with change in all three dimensions of democratic standards at levels that range from 0.12 (institutional and political dimensions) to 0.20 (ideological dimension.

In Chapter 2, however, whilst I hypothesised that change in perceived democratic delivery would lead to changes in democratic standards, I specifically suggested that those effects would be asymmetric. Namely, I suggested that whilst on the one hand, an improvement in democratic delivery would typically result in an increase in an individual's democratic standards, on the other hand, a deterioration in perceived democratic delivery would not actually result in a lowering of the democratic standards those citizens hold. That asymmetry was initially supported experimentally earlier in this chapter. However, unlike the experiment, the panel study gives a unique and ideal opportunity to test this theory. To do so, for each of the three dimensions of perceived democratic delivery, I first split the sample between positive and negative changes, and then compared the correlation between change in that form of perceived democratic delivery and change in all three dimensions of democratic standards. The results are presented in Table 4.2.

There is no significant difference between the parts of the sample which have considered institutional democratic delivery as improving or deteriorating during the panel period. By contrast, the situation is completely different when it comes to both the ideological and political dimensions. Indeed, in both cases, a negative change in perceived democratic delivery is not correlated with changes in democratic standards (bar a limited correlation with ideological standards). By contrast, still in both cases, a positive change in democratic delivery is significantly and meaningfully correlated with a similarly positive change in all three dimensions of

Table 4.2 Splitting correlation between delivery change and standards change by negative and positive changes

		Ideological standards	Institutional standards	Political standards
Ideological delivery	Negative	0.14**	0.09	0.06
	Positive	0.17**	0.15**	0.11*
Institutional delivery	Negative	0.19**	0.18**	013**
	Positive	0.18**	0.17**	0.10*
Political delivery	Negative	0.11*	0.05	0.08
	Positive	0.18**	0.14**	0.13**

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05

democratic standards. In terms of the ideological dimension, the correlation level increases between +0.03 (ideological) and +0.06 (institutional standards) when comparing those experiencing an increase as opposed to a decrease in perceived democratic delivery. In the context of political delivery, the difference is even more acute, and ranges from +0.05 for the political dimension to +0.09 for the institutional dimension when comparing those who experienced an increase rather than a decrease in perceived democratic delivery during the panel period. In short, for those two dimensions, reactions to an improvement in democratic delivery strongly differ from reactions to its deterioration.

Those results are striking. They emphatically confirm the hypothesis of asymmetry and raise an extremely important problem when it comes to assessing how democratic improvements could be hoped to resolve democratic frustration. That issue is that based on the panel study evidence, any such improvement would likely be followed by an increase in perceived democratic standards (thereby limiting their ability to result in a lowered perceived delivery deficit) but that by contrast, a posterior crisis leading to a decrease in citizens' appreciation of democratic delivery would not, this time, result in a lowering of those now higher democratic standards, therefore resulting in the perceived democratic deficit increasing with crises. In other words, the relationship between democratic change and perceived democratic deficit (and thus democratic frustration) is likely to follow the shape of an accordion, with democratic improvements having limited effects on democratic frustration because they make citizens ever more demanding, whilst democratic crises will be paid cash by political systems in frustration terms because a decline in delivery will, on the contrary, result in an immediate increase in democratic delivery gap.

To assess that, however, it is time to consider the relationship between change in frustration components (and notably change in perceived democratic delivery) and change in democratic frustration as such.

First returning to Table 4.1, it is clear that all three components of democratic frustration have very significant and very meaningful levels of correlation with democratic frustration as a whole. The correlations between desire and frustration range from 0.41 and 0.54, the correlations between democratic standards and democratic frustration between 0.47 and 0.62, and finally the correlations between perceived democratic delivery and dimensions of democratic frustrations between −0.54 and −0.66. Whilst on the face of it, this seems to suggest that change in perceived democratic delivery has the closest relationship with change in

democratic frustration; it is worth remembering that as discussed earlier in this chapter, in this specific panel study, change in perceived democratic delivery was also the more changeable of the three dimensions of democratic frustration which may well explain that situation. It is, however, difficult based on the panel information alone to determine whether the greater volatility of perceived democratic delivery is simply the result of the specific political context which I described previously and the occurrence of a series of major political events during the period, or if, as I suggest theoretically, it is instead a broader and more permanent state of affair. As a reminder, under the model that I depicted earlier, democratic standards and even more so democratic desire would always be robust and less likely to vary than perceptions of democratic delivery which may be more elastic to political contexts and events.

The changeability of democratic frustration would therefore be constrained by a "funnel" of partly asymmetric stability between its three components, with perceived democratic delivery being most affected by objective changes in democratic outputs but also by individuals' ideological and electoral pre-conceptions, democratic standards being partly elastic to changes in democratic delivery and effectively meaning that citizens are more likely to feel more demanding in democratic term throughout their life cycle as well as throughout the stages of evolution of democratic societies, and finally democratic desire being the strongest determinant of democratic frustration but also the most stable of them (and also likely to only evolve asymmetrically over time).

ARE FRUSTRATION TUNNELS LIGHTLESS?

So far, we have explored the nature, origins, and consequences of democratic frustration, but arguably, a particularly worrying finding has been that in respondents' own perceptions, over the years, and across the four nations that we have put under the microscope, democratic frustration has been largely and consistently worsening.

In conscious discourse, many citizens ascribe this evolution to things "getting worse and worse", but as mentioned many times in this book, with over 90% of our political attitudes and behaviours being subconscious in origin and process, it would be remiss of us to stop at expressive measures of citizens' feelings. In this particular case, the very nature of the psychological model that I use makes such an "obvious" interpretation of the source of frustration is problematic for at least two reasons.

A first reason is that as highlighted by our model, frustration works as the product of a desire and of a delivery deficit. As a result, logically, whilst an increase in frustration may indeed stem from a worsening of delivery deficit over time, such an evolution may or may not correspond to a worsening of the delivery itself in that it could equally be the result of an upwards adjustment of the expected standard of delivery over time, in other words, democratic societies expecting increasingly high levels of ideological, institutional, and political democratic delivery without the political system and actors not adapting or progressing fast enough.

Even more obviously, the same deterioration of democratic frustration could equally correspond to an increase in the other term of the equation, namely democratic desire. In other terms, even with the democratic delivery deficit remaining constant—or even, theoretically, potentially reducing a little over time—democratic frustration can get worse if, and when emancipating citizens hold increasing levels of democratic desire. Such a situation would be entirely consistent with theories explored earlier in this book, which suggest that improvement in delivery will automatically lead to increases in democratic standards, and potentially, to a lesser extent, to desire, such that any progress by democracies would—in a way, worryingly for institutions—result in an automatically heightened threshold of democratic desire, which would never fall below levels of democratic performance.

Instead, what the dynamic analyses performed in this chapter suggest is that deterioration in democratic frustration may not require an actual deterioration in democratic practice at all. Instead, it may stem from the very nature of democratic frustration and the inbuilt relationship between its components. Thus, referring to what we discussed in Chapter 1, early work by Freud (1900) suggests that "painful" expressions of frustrations effectively originate from infancy and early childhood situations of frustrated desires which then become more complex and more debilitating over time, ultimately resulting in complex mental situations and pathologies. This progression is similarly emphasised in contemporary models of evolutionary psychiatry (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017; Stevens & Price, 2015), and Laceulle et al. (2015) systematically confirm the process of deterioration of frustration situations from early childhood to adolescent psychopathology and beyond.

It is easy to illustrate this situation in the context of South Africa which, among the four case studies this book centres on, is a system of relatively recent democratisation. In the Apartheid period, the democratic desire of

many—if not most—citizens may well have been summarised as an intense desire that Black and coloured people be given fair access to democratic representation and an equal right to shape the destiny of the country through the vote than the white minority of the population. However, by the time those efforts were finally successful, Apartheid was ended, and Nelson Mandela and the ANC took over as the leading forces in the country, it is quite conceivable that citizens started developing new democratic needs and desires—from ideological diversity to system transparency and end to corruption, which, a mere few years earlier, were simply invisible or unsaid compared to the urgency of the need to achieve racial equality and ending Apartheid.

With both elements in mind, there is thus good reason to expect that democratic frustration may be an "automatically" vicious circle due to both evolutionary logics and the way democratic standards and democratic desires alike may well update and be readjusted upwards any time democracy or even society achieve any progress.

Breaking the Vicious Circle: Principles and Options

Of course, that the mechanisms of frustration be a natural vicious circle does not mean that such a circle cannot be broken, and the relationship between citizens and their democratic systems be repaired. After all, in general psychological terms, frustration is something that can be—and often is—successfully treated whilst at the same time, its consequences can be successfully mitigated and resolved through therapy. Let us perhaps explore how this could theoretically happen in the context of democratic frustration.

To start with, given the structure of democratic frustration, there are three separate elements which could result in a decrease in those feelings of frustration: the most obvious is of course an increase in the perceived quality of democratic delivery. The other two, however, are a decrease in expected democratic standards, or a decrease in democratic desire.

Crucially, in the above scenarii, the assumption is of course that one element changes but that the other two remain constant. An assumption that this chapter has proven to be erroneous, and particularly so in the context of improving delivery. As such is not the case, those changes may not result in such decrease in frustration. For instance, an increase in perceived democratic delivery will not result in a reduction in citizens'

sense of democratic frustration if it is accompanied by a commensurate increase in expected delivery standards. This point is not a mere abstract proviso. As we have discussed earlier, the relationship between changes in experience and standards is asymmetric. Thus, whilst negative experiences may not lead to lower standards, an improved experience will, by contrast, result in an upwards re-evaluation of standards (Carr et al., 2001; Johnson & Mathews, 1997; Rogers & Ward, 1993).

Even if the democratic delivery gap perception reduces, this will be even less likely to result in a decrease in democratic frustration if, at the same time, democratic desire also increases, though panel study evidence suggests such a link is less clear. Still, it has already been noted by the literature that in recent years, a perception of crisis of democracy (i.e. the sense that democracy is failing to provide what citizens would like it to) may have increased despite democratic provisions globally improving rather than regressing. In this book, we suggest not only that citizens' democratic desire may simply have progressed faster than anything democratic systems have been able to catch up with, but that democratic progression may in and of itself has fed this increase in democratic desire which could only result in heightened levels of frustration in the end.

In other words, this chapter has demonstrated clear path dependency between the three components of democratic frustration which may complicate the potential avenues for the mitigation and demining of democratic frustration itself. This complexity is at the heart of pathologies of democratic frustration, but it does not follow that they must make resolving democratic frustration or taming the potential consequences of its pathologies impossible altogether.

Addressing the Displacement-Frustration-Pathologies Triangle?

There is thus a possibility of the cycle of frustration working as a "*catch 22*" vicious circle, whereby any positive experience in democratic delivery will simply and primarily result in an upward re-evaluation of democratic standards and desires. In that framework, any attempt to relieve democratic frustration by improving democracy would simply result in a consecutive potential for further frustration to emerge as the multiplier

element which combines with perceived democracy delivery gap to create frustration which will increase rather than decreasing.

However, the issue of the dynamics of frustration can be further complicated by another phenomenon which is not directly tested here: object displacement. It is worth noting that the asymmetric delivery-standard dynamics does not necessarily mirror traditional models of psychological frustration. However, the reason why most life situations do not lead to the vicious circle I envisage above when the desire which is highlighted by an individual as the core source of their frustration is fulfilled is because when this happens, this merely exposes the displacement that founded the frustration and the first instance and which I discuss in Chapter 1. In other words, the fulfilled desire merely uncovers the fact that the object of the frustration has become a mutated proxy for other aspects of an individual's life dissatisfaction so that he/she realises that in fact eating a mandarin, working for a top five bank or whatever else which absence they had identified as the source of their unhappiness does not fundamentally alter their existential condition or bring them happiness. As this process occurs, the sufferer revises—rather than increase—their desire and learn to better understand the real nature of the gaps which they are facing and focus on the pathology itself (the "unhappiness") rather than on a collateral object which came to embody it in their minds.

The parallel in the context of democratic frustration is fairly straightforward, and it would suggest that improving democratic delivery might not merely lead to further increase in democratic desires but rather make citizens acutely aware that a better functioning democracy–be it ideologically, institutionally, or politically, would not guarantee them a better functioning society, resolve some of the many crises which political power may have no impact on, or, to put it simply, would not make them happy as individuals and as citizens.

We now thus face a further critical question: the need to understand whether democratic desire is "real" and foundational, so that it is being met by democratic delivery which would cause a never-ending cycle of frustration, or a displaced symptom, which becomes hostage to deeper and more lateral pathologies, which blame democratic processes for outcomes and realities that they are not truly responsible for.

When thinking of frustration as a source of pathologies, the consequences of this dichotomy are immense. In psychological contexts, pathologies that proceed from frustration are not resolved by giving a

mandarin to someone who feels frustrated by its absence but rather by helping them to understand the underlying nature of their true desire before it was displaced on the mandarin. It even entails learning to live without a mandarin whilst controlling the induced frustration and its derived pathological consequences such as the withdrawal, anger, and aggression model which we have explored throughout this book.

In the context of democracy, the possibility of resolution thus depends on whether we find that democratic frustration must be taken at face value or whether, instead, it makes democratic institutions and processes "pay the price" of several other underlying griefs from our relationship to others and sense of inclusion or exclusion to anything that may be wrong with society from inequality to chaos, or even our own internal sources of insecurity, inefficacy, or inadequacy. We must understand which is the true nature of democratic frustration—literality or transposition. This is indispensable to know how best to resolve democratic frustration or help systems and citizens manage the pathologies that follow from it and to cope with the emotions, reactions, and unhappiness that it can create. Thankfully, empirically, this can best be explored experimentally.

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Determinants of Democratic Frustration: Socio-Demographic, Psychological, Behavioural, and Electoral Psychology Factors

Dissecting Determinants of Democratic Frustration—Individual and Combined Components and Types of Predictors

Moving away from the internal dynamics between the components of democratic frustration, let us now take a step back and look at some of the main predictors of democratic frustration, and understand how they vary.

To do so, we will look in turn at the key components of democratic frustration—democratic desire, and the democratic delivery gap—between looking at predictors of democratic frustration as a whole. Each time, we will consider four key sets of predictors on a bivariate level—demographic and social, political, electoral psychology, and psychological determinants, before assessing their combined effect in multivariate models.

DETERMINANTS OF DEMOCRATIC DESIRE

To start with, let us thus first focus on the part of the model which is typically entirely unknown in existing dissatisfaction research: the determinants of democratic desire. As noted, I will look in turn at social and demographic, political, electoral psychology, and psychological predictors.

Social and Demographic Determinants

I first look for any difference related to gender. For the US sample, the results are reported in Fig. 5.1. However, on that front, when it comes to democratic standards, differences are minimal and typically below statistical significance.
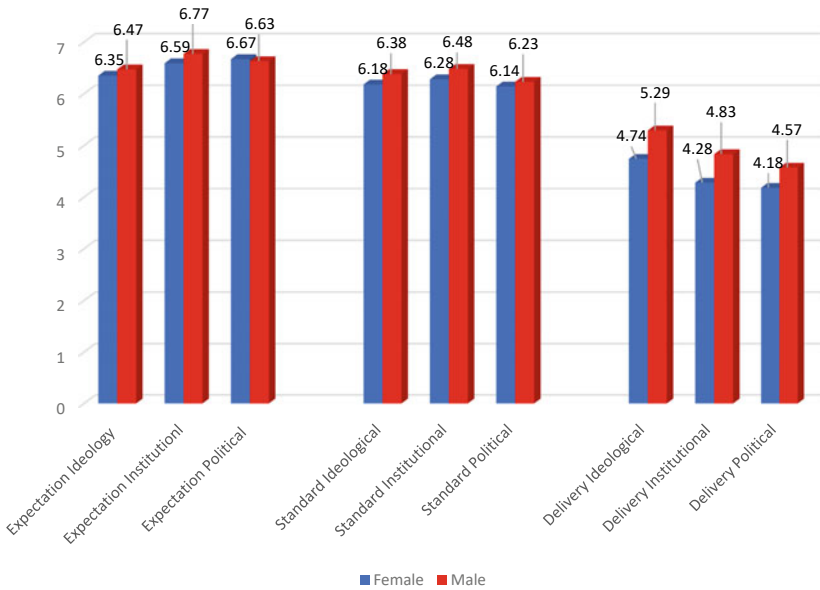
Fig. 5.1   Frustration components by gender

Table 5.1 Correlations of components of democratic frustration with ideology and political interest

		Ideology	Interest	Efficacy	Projected efficacy	Electoral identity	Societal projection
Democratic desire	Ideological	0.10**	0.32**	0.35**	0.43**	0.09**	0.10**
	Institutional	0.06**	0.34**	0.35**	0.43**	0.09**	0.01
	Political	0.06**	0.27**	0.29**	0.36**	0.09**	0.05**
Democratic standards	Ideological	0.17**	0.38**	0.33**	0.39**	0.08**	0.01
	Institutional	0.14**	0.32**	0.26**	0.35**	0.06**	−0.01
	Political	0.13**	0.32**	0.27**	0.34**	0.05**	0.03
Democratic delivery	Ideological	0.15**	0.27**	0.38**	0.32**	0.01	0.29**
	Institutional	0.15**	0.16**	0.31**	0.22**	−0.04**	0.38**
	Political	0.16**	0.16**	0.30**	0.20**	−0.06**	0.39**

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05

Political Determinants

To start let us consider differences in democratic desire based on political determinants such as ideology and interest in politics. I present those effects on differences in democratic desire in the context of the US in Table 5.1. When it comes to ideology, there are small positive correlations with democratic desire, which is thus a little bit higher among right wing citizens than left-wing ones. The correlations are all significant at 0.01 level or better, but very small however—only 0.06 for institutional and political dimensions of democratic desire, and 0.10 for the ideological dimension. By contrast, levels of correlations between interest in politics and democratic desire are not only similarly significant but a lot higher substantively: 0.27 for the political dimension of democratic desire, 0.32 for the ideological dimension, and even 0.34 for the institutional one. The same is true of efficacy, correlated with democratic desire at 0.29 for the political dimension and 0.35 for the institutional and ideological ones.

Electoral Psychology Predictors

However, whilst those correlations with efficacy are high, it is worth noting that the competing electoral psychology concept of projected

efficacy is even more strongly related to democratic desire. The political dimension is once more the (relatively) more modestly correlated one, with a coefficient of 0.36, whilst the ideological and institutional dimensions are correlated at a very high level of 0.43. The other two electoral psychology variables under consideration are less relevant here. First, electoral identity is, once again, correlated with democratic desire in a direction which means using the Bruter and Harrison (2020) scale, supporters tend to have higher levels of democratic desire than referees, with correlation coefficients of 0.09 for each of the three dimensions of democratic desire and all statistically significant at 0.01 or better. As for societal projection, it has no significant correlation with the institutional dimension of democratic desire but is significantly (though relatively modestly) correlated with the political (0.05) and ideological (0.10) dimensions.

Psychological Determinants

Finally, the last set of variables in which relationship with democratic desire is of interest in this model are measures of personality and moral hierarchisation. As noted earlier, we are interested in three different sets of variables. Personality structure as measured by the OCEAN (or "big 5") model of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness, a series of 12 discrete personality traits (creativity, alienation, sensitivity, pessimism, gregariousness, care, abstraction, risk aversion, confrontation, control, resentment, and guilt), and finally moral hierarchisation as measured by internal hierarchisation of the seven "deadly sin" and the ten commandments (or rather than six of the ten commandments which reflect moral principles). Correlations between each of those and the three dimensions of democratic desire are presented in Table 5.2.

First when it comes to the big five, one major structural dimension is very highly correlated with all three dimensions of democratic desire: conscientiousness (0.21 with the political dimension, 0.22 with ideological, and 0.27 with institutional, all significant at 0.01 or better), so that the more conscientious citizens are more likely to have high democratic desire. All other dimensions of the big 5 also have statistically significant correlations with one or all dimensions of democratic frustration, notably neuroticism with ideological (−0.10) and institutional (−0.11) dimensions of democratic desire, and agreeableness with the institutional dimensions (0.10). in a nutshell, democratic desire tends to be higher

Table 5.2 Personality and components of democratic frustration

		Exp ID	Exp IN	Exp PO	Stand ID	Stand IN	Stand PO	Del ID	Del IN	Del PO
Personality Big 5	Extraversion	0.06**	0.04*	0.02	0.05*	0.01	0.04	0.11**	0.07**	0.07**
	Agreeableness	0.06**	0.10**	0.08**	0.10**	0.10**	0.10**	0.01	-0.03	-0.03
	Conscientiousness	0.22**	0.27**	0.21**	0.25**	0.22**	0.21**	-0.04	-0.14**	-0.15**
	Neuroticism	-0.10**	-0.11**	-0.08**	-0.12**	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.04*	0.01	0.03
	Openness	0.06**	0.07**	0.05**	0.09**	0.08**	0.09**	-0.05*	-0.07**	-0.06**
Personality discrete traits	Creativity	0.03	-0.00	-0.02	0.03	0.01	0.04*	0.15**	0.18**	0.18**
	Alienation	-0.10**	-0.06**	-0.07**	-0.08**	-0.06**	-0.07**	-0.19**	-0.18**	-0.19**
	Sensitivity	0.10**	0.13**	0.13**	0.10**	0.09**	0.09**	-0.05**	-0.11**	-0.12**
	Pessimism	-0.02	-0.03	0.00	-0.04*	-0.02	-0.03	-0.01	0.02	0.02
	Gregariousness	-0.07**	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.08**	-0.10**	-0.07**	0.04	0.01	0.03
	Care	0.05*	0.06**	0.05*	0.08**	0.07**	0.08**	0.11**	0.12**	0.12**
	Abstraction	0.08**	0.10**	0.09**	0.08**	0.10**	0.07**	-0.09**	-0.12**	-0.13**
	Risk aversion	0.14**	0.20**	0.16**	0.16**	0.17**	0.13**	-0.12**	-0.20**	-0.23**
	Confrontation	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.04*	-0.04	-0.06**	-0.07**	-0.06**
	Control	0.04*	0.04*	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.04*	0.05*	0.02	0.04*
	Resentment	0.10**	0.10**	0.08**	0.07**	0.07**	0.07**	-0.01	-0.04	-0.04*
	Guilt	0.00	-0.03	-0.00	-0.05	-0.02	-0.02	0.13**	0.17**	0.19**
Moral hierarchy	Family	0.18**	0.22**	0.21**	0.14**	0.18**	0.17**	-0.14**	-0.23**	-0.23**
	Deprivation	-0.14**	-0.19**	-0.18**	-0.13**	-0.15**	-0.15**	0.14**	0.22**	0.23**
	Truth	-0.09**	-0.09**	-0.08**	-0.04	-0.08**	-0.07*	0.02	0.05	0.04
	Aggression	-0.09**	-0.13**	-0.13**	-0.06*	-0.08**	-0.06*	0.01	0.06*	0.07*
	Laziness	0.02	0.04	0.05*	0.02	0.03	-0.00	-0.08**	-0.09**	-0.09**
	Narcissism	0.06*	0.07*	0.08**	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.00	-0.03	-0.05
	Sexuality	0.00	0.02	0.01	-0.02	0.01	0.03	-0.01	-0.03	-0.02
	Immoderation	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.06*	0.03	0.03	0.07*	0.07*	0.07**

among agreeable and open people, and lower among neurotic ones. Extraversion is the least correlated dimension.

In terms of discrete personality trait, risk averse people tend to have significantly higher levels of institutional (0.20), political (0.16), and ideological (0.14) dimensions of democratic desire. The same is true of sensitive people who have higher levels of institutional (0.13), political (0.13), and ideological (0.10) desire, as do abstract people (institutional dimensions), resentful ones (ideological and institutional dimensions). On the contrary, alienation is negatively correlated with democratic desire (particularly ideological). Other significant but weaker correlations occur with gregariousness (negative), care (positive), and control (positive).

Finally, democratic desire is also strongly correlated with several aspects of moral hierarchisation. There are particularly strong positive correlations between democratic desire and the emphasis on family morality (0.18 with the ideological dimension, 0.21 with the political one, and 0.22 with the institutional one) whilst by contrast, a strong emphasis on deprivation commandments is associated with lower levels of democratic desire (0.14 with the ideological dimension, 0.18 with political, and 0.19 with institutional democratic desire). Conversely, high emphasis on sins related to aggression is also typically correlated with lower levels of democratic desire, particularly in its institutional and political dimension (0.13). Other significant but weaker links related democratic desire with the emphasis on truth (negative) and narcissism (positive).

Multivariate Model of Democratic Desire

Having looked at bivariate correlates of democratic desire, it is now time to bring all those elements together in three regression models. Based on the different bivariate outcomes found throughout this chapter, I build a series of parsimonious models that only include the demographic, psychological, and political predictors that seemed most clearly promising. This is important both in order to have a lean and readable model but also so as to limit issues of potential multicollinearity which would emerge for instance when including two partly overlapping moral hierarchisation models, or big five personality dimensions and individual personality traits that would be highly related to one of them. Ultimately, the models thus include age and gender as key demographic predictors, electoral identity, interest in politics, ideology, projected efficacy, and societal projection as five key political and electoral psychology determinants, the family and

deprivation dimensions of moral hierarchisation, conscientiousness and openness as two of the big five personality dimensions, and creativity, sensitivity, abstraction, risk aversion, and guilt as discrete personality traits.

I then run three models for the ideological, institutional, and political dimensions of democratic desire. The results are reported in Table 5.3. The first and perhaps most obvious conclusions from the regressions is that the models do a very strong work of explaining democratic desire. R^2 is 0.26 for the political dimension, which is least well explained, 0.31 for the institutional dimension and as high as 0.32 for the ideological dimension of democratic desire which is most widely explained by the model.

In terms of individual variables, a number of findings seem particularly striking. In terms of demographic predictors, age is a strongly statistically significant predictor of democratic desire in all three cases, with desire increasing as people age. By contrast, gender never makes a difference in any of the three models. In political terms, interest in politics is also a meaningful and statistically significant predictor with citizens who are

Table 5.3 Regressions—determinants of components of frustration

Regressions determinants of democratic desire

	Ideological	*Institutional*	*Political*
Moral hierarchy family	0.20** (0.06)	0.18** (0.06)	0.21** (0.06)
Moral hierarchy deprivation	0.06 (0.04)	0.04 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)
Creativity trait	0.04 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)	0.05* (0.02)
Sensitivity trait	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	−0.00 (0.03)
Abstraction trait	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Risk aversion trait	0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)
Guilt trait	0.00 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.03** (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Big 5 Openness	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Interest in politics	0.05** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)
Ideology	0.03* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
Electoral identity	−0.03 (0.04)	−0.06 (0.04)	−0.03 (0.04)
Projected efficacy	0.12** (0.01)	0.11** (0.01)	0.09** (0.01)
Societal projection	0.05** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.05** (0.01)
Gender	0.08 (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)	0.11 (0.07)
Age	0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
Constant	−3.08** (0.41)	−2.81 (0.41)	−2.91** (0.42)
R^2	0.32	0.31	0.26

more interested in politics also quite logically holding higher levels of democratic desire whilst ideology only marginally matters in the models of the ideological and political dimensions of democratic desire. There is no significant difference between referees and supporters. However, both projected efficacy and societal projection are electoral psychology predictors with vast implications on democratic desire. In terms of personality, conscientiousness is a statistically significant predictor for the institutional and ideological dimensions, and creativity for the political dimension alone. By contrast, in terms of moral prioritisation, those who prioritise family commandments are far more likely to also hold high levels of democratic desire than those who do not.

Determinants of the Democratic Delivery Gap

As with democratic desire previously, let us now consider how the democratic delivery gap and its two components of democratic standards and democratic delivery perceptions vary according to major demographic, social, and psychological predictors. Whilst the concept of interest in democratic frustration is the democratic delivery gap per se, it indeed seems worthwhile to disentangle every individual component of it in order to know as specifically as possible whether any difference that we identify stem from divergences in standards, in perception of delivery, or in both.

Social and Demographic Determinants

As with democratic desire, let us start by considering differences across gender, which are shown earlier in this chapter in Fig. 5.1 for the US sample. In terms of democratic standards, once more, the differences between men and women are very small and typically insignificant (even though it is worth noting that anecdotally, as for democratic desire, male scores systematically seem to be marginally above female ones). By contrast, differences in terms of perceived democratic delivery are more substantial and, this time, statistically significant, and show that in general, men tend to be a little bit less critical of democratic delivery compared to their female counterparts. Still using a 0–10 scale, differences range from +0.39 with regards to the political dimension to +0.55 for both the ideological and institutional dimensions. As a reminder, the measure

is one of delivery satisfaction so the lower the score, the more critical the respondent.

The combination of the two components of the perceived democratic delivery gap also results in a typically lower perceived gap for men than for women. The differences are statistically significant and amount to a gap of 0.3 for the political dimension and gaps of 0.35 for both the ideological and institutional dimensions.

As was the case with democratic desire, however, age effects are typically far more substantive than gender ones, at least when it comes to democratic standards. Once again, the US results are shown in Table 5.1. Correlations between age and democratic standards are all positive and statistically significant, ranging from 0.22 for the political dimension to 0.26 for the institutional dimension and 0.27 for the ideological one. In terms of perceptions of democratic delivery, differences are far less pronounced. They are not statistically significant for the ideological dimensions, whilst they are a negative 0.11 for institutional delivery and a negative 0.14 for political delivery. Once again, remembering the coding direction, this means that the older the citizens, the more negative they become about the institutional and political democratic performance of their political system.

Even more than for gender, those correlations tend to further amplify the impact of age on perceived democratic delivery gap. This time, as citizens age, they tend to become both more demanding in terms of standards and more negative in terms of delivery, which results in an even larger divergence in perceived delivery gap than is the case for either of those two components taken individually.

Political and Electoral Psychology Determinants

Let us again continue our investigation of the causes of perceived democratic delivery gap by looking at the relationship between political predictors such as respondents' ideology, interest in politics, efficacy (political determinants) as well as electoral psychology determinants such as projected efficacy, societal projection, and electoral identity and those perceptions.

Let us start with the impact of ideology on both democratic standards and perceptions of democratic delivery. In both cases, the correlations are statistically significant for all three dimensions of both democratic standards and democratic delivery and always positive. This means that

citizens who see themselves as right wing are likely to have both more demanding democratic standards, and more positive assessments of democratic delivery, though it ought to be remembered that this information was collected during the 2020 Presidential election at a time when conservative Donald Trump was the incumbent President of the US and candidate to his re-election. All US results are shown earlier in this chapter in Table 5.3. Whist those correlations are all significant, they are of moderate magnitude. For democratic standards, they range from 0.13 for the political dimension and 0.14 for the institutional one to 0.17 for the ideological component of democratic standards. In terms of perceptions of democratic delivery, those correlations are 0.15 for the ideological dimensions and 0.16 for the political dimension.

When it comes to interest in politics, in the US context, correlations are once again all positive and all statistically significant, but this time, they are also of a very meaningful magnitude. Perceptions of democratic delivery significantly improve the more respondents that are interested in politics, with positive correlations of 0.16 for both the institutional and political dimensions of democratic delivery. Perhaps expectedly, the correlation is yet much stronger when it comes to ideological democratic delivery when it reaches a level of 0.27. In short, people who care about politics are also those who tend to think that democracy delivers a lot. Those correlations are, however, even more substantial when it comes to citizens' democratic standards, with 0.32 for the institutional and political dimensions of democratic standards and 0.38 for the ideological dimension. In other words, those citizens who have a high interest in politics do not only think that democracy delivers satisfactorily but also, and perhaps even more importantly, have very high standards and expectations for it.

The third traditional political correlations which we are interested in is efficacy. It is highly correlated with democratic standards (0.26 with the institutional dimension, 0.27 with the political dimension, and even 0.33 with the ideological one, all three statistically significant). It is even more highly correlated with democratic delivery perceptions (0.30 with the political dimension, 0.31 with the institutional one, and this time again, the ideological dimension is most highly correlated at a 0.38 level).

As before, we compare those correlations with those achieved by the competing electoral psychology concept of projected efficacy. This time, in terms of perceived democratic delivery, projected efficacy, whilst still strong, performs a little less well (0.20 for the political dimension, 0.22 for the institutional one, and, finally, 0.32 for the ideological dimension

of democratic delivery). By contrast, in terms of democratic standards and as was the case with democratic desire, projected efficacy is even far more strongly correlated with the component of democratic frustration than traditional external efficacy is. This time, the correlation level for the political dimension of democratic standards is 0.34, it is 0.35 with the institutional dimension, and even as high as 0.39 for the ideological dimension.

The same is not really true of electoral identity. Whilst democratic standards are also correlated with the referee-supporter scale at a statistically significant level for all three dimensions, the substantive magnitude of those correlations is weak, only reaching a level of 0.08 for the ideological dimension, 0.06 for the institutional dimension, and 0.05 for the political one. Each time, the democratic standards of supporters are slightly higher than those of referees. Interestingly, when it comes to perceived democratic delivery, whilst the correlations are substantively just as weak for the institutional and political dimension, and statistically insignificant when it comes to the ideological one, they go in the opposite direction. What this means is that it is referees who rate democratic delivery a little bit more leniently than supporters with correlations of 0.04 for the institutional dimension and 0.06 for the political one, both statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Finally, when it comes to societal projection, the picture is a lot more contrasted and even perhaps paradoxical. Societal projection is effectively unrelated to perceptions of democratic standards across all three dimensions. By contrast, it is very highly and positively correlated with perceptions of democratic delivery. Whilst that correlation is of 0.29 for the ideological dimension, it goes as high as 0.38 and 0.39 for the institutional and political dimensions, respectively. In other words, thinking of others when we vote impacts our assessment of democratic delivery, but it does not entail significant differences when it comes to what we believe democracy should be able and expected to deliver.

With regards to both ideology, interest in politics, efficacy, and projected efficacy, both standards and perceived delivery thus increase as citizens are more right wing (in the first case) and more interested (in the second). In the case of ideology, those effects effectively entirely cancel out so that there is no correlation at all between ideological self-placement and perceptions of a delivery deficit. However, when it comes to interest in politics, the increase in democratic standards far outweighs that of increase in perceived delivery quality so that the more citizens are

interested in politics, the more disappointed they are by the shortcomings between what they see as the reality of democratic performance and their own standards as to how a well-functioning democracy should deliver. In the US, this results in statistically significant correlations between interest in politics and perceived amplitude of the democratic delivery gap of 0.06 for the ideological dimension and 0.11 for the institutional and political dimensions. All those correlations are statistically significant at 0.01 or below.

Interestingly, in the context of efficacy and projected efficacy, whilst both perceived standards and perceived delivery are positively correlated, the magnitude of those two components of democratic frustration is reversed in the two cases. In other words, the positive correlation is stronger for delivery than for standards when it comes to traditional external efficacy, but stronger for standards than for delivery when it comes to projected efficacy. As a result, when moving to the next stage of the model and assessing the relationship between efficacy, projected efficacy, and perceptions of a democratic delivery deficit, we witness statistically significant (though relatively weak) negative correlations with efficacy (ranging from −0.04 for the political dimension to −0.08 for the ideological one) but on the contrary statistically significant positive correlations between projected efficacy and the institutional (0.08) and political (0.09) dimensions of democratic delivery deficit. The relationship is not statistically significant when it comes to the ideological dimension.

By contrast, however, when it comes to societal projection and electoral identity, the picture is very different and perhaps far more surprising. In the context of societal projection, the variable is strongly and positively correlated with perception of democratic delivery but not at all with democratic standards. The result is that democratic delivery deficit perception has a strong negative correlation with societal projection (i.e. people who tend to think of other voters in elections and their behaviour are far less likely to have an acute sense of a democratic delivery deficit). The correlations range from −0.24 for the ideological dimension to −0.28 for the political dimension and −0.29 for the institutional one, with all three statistically significant. When it comes to electoral identity, the correlations work in opposite directions for democratic standards and perceived democratic delivery. What this means is that supporters do not only have higher standards of democracy in principle, but that they are also even more severe when it comes to their assessment of extent delivery, thereby furthering the difference between their perceived democratic delivery gap

and that of referees. This means that when looking at the correlation between electoral identity and the democratic delivery gap itself, correlations are statistically significant at 0.01 level for all three dimensions, and with correlations of 0.05 for the ideological dimension, but also 0.07 for the institutional dimension and 0.08 for the political one. In that sense, the relationship between electoral identity and a perceived democratic delivery gap magnifies, to a certain extent, the sum of its two components.

Psychological Determinants

As previously, the third set of predictors of interest when it comes to democratic standard and perceived democratic delivery are psychological, including the big 5 OCEAN dimensions of personality structure, twelve discrete personality traits, and elements of moral hierarchisation measured by the ordering of both the traditional deadly sins and commandments.

Multivariate Models of the Democratic Delivery Gap

Finally, as for democratic desire, let us consider the way the entire series of demographic, political, and psychological predictors succeed as multivariate models of the democratic delivery gap and its components. As previously, I use parsimonious regression models to avoid excess noise in the models and the risk of high multicollinearity, and as mentioned previously, to avoid unduly complex comparison across the models, the parsimonious model chosen is the same across all regressions (democratic desire, democratic standards, democratic delivery, the democratic delivery gap, and finally interactive democratic frustration all that across all three ideological, institutional, and political dimensions).

I thus first ran separate regressions for the two components of the democratic delivery gap, that is democratic standards and democratic delivery. I will mention these briefly and the regression results are presented in Tables 5.4A and 5.4B

The lean models of democratic standards perform very strongly overall, with R^2 ranging from 0.23 for the institutional dimension to 0.25 for the political one and to a much higher 0.32 for the ideological dimension of democratic standards. In terms of the individual variables with strongest performance, we note the importance of age but not gender in demographic terms. In terms of moral hierarchisation, the family dimension is significant in the institutional and political dimensions but not the

Table 5.4A Regression determinants of democratic standards

	Ideological	Institutional	Political
Moral hierarchy family	0.08 (0.06)	0.18** (0.06)	0.16* (0.06)
Moral hierarchy deprivation	0.00 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)	0.02 (0.05)
Creativity trait	0.05* (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)
Sensitivity trait	0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)
Abstraction trait	−0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)
Risk aversion trait	0.03 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)
Guilt trait	−0.04 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.00 (0.02)
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.03** (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Big 5 Openness	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Interest in politics	0.07** (0.01)	0.05** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)
Ideology	0.08** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)
Electoral identity	−0.02 (0.04)	−0.02 (0.04)	−0.01 (0.04)
Projected efficacy	0.09** (0.01)	0.08** (0.01)	0.08** (0.01)
Societal projection	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Gender	−0.00 (0.06)	−0.04 (0.07)	0.00 (0.07)
Age	0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
Constant	−2.27** (0.41)	−2.45** (0.43)	−2.61** (0.43)
R^2	0.32	0.23	0.25

Table 5.4B Regression determinants of democratic delivery

	Ideological	Institutional	Political
Moral hierarchy family	−0.09 (0.06)	−0.10 (0.06)	−0.06 (0.06)
Moral hierarchy deprivation	0.05 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)
Creativity trait	0.04 (0.02)	0.06* (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)
Sensitivity trait	0.03 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)
Abstraction trait	−0.02 (0.02)	−0.02 (0.02)	−0.02 (0.02)
Risk aversion trait	−0.03 (0.03)	−0.04 (0.03)	−0.05* (0.02)
Guilt trait	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Big 5 Conscientiousness	−0.00 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)
Big 5 Openness	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)
Interest in politics	0.05** (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
Ideology	0.03* (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)
Electoral identity	−0.03 (0.04)	−0.03 (0.04)	−0.05 (0.04)
Projected efficacy	0.08** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)
Societal projection	0.07** (0.01)	0.08** (0.01)	0.07** (0.01)
Gender	−0.12 (0.07)	−0.15* (0.06)	−0.07 (0.06)
Age	0.00 (0.00)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.01* (0.00)
Constant	−0.85* (0.43)	−0.40 (0.42)	−0.66 (0.41)
R^2	0.3	0.31	0.33

ideological one. By contrast, in personality terms, it is only in the model of the ideological dimension of democratic standard that creativity has a statistically significant effect, whilst conscientiousness is significant in both ideological and institutional models. Finally, it is political and electoral psychology predictors which matter most. Both interests in politics and ideology have strong statistically significant effects in all three models, as does projected efficacy

Models of democratic delivery perform even more compellingly, with overall R^2 of 0.30 in the ideological dimension model, 0.31 for the institutional one, and 0.33 in the political dimension of democratic standards. In terms of specific variable performance, age no longer works as a statistically significant predictor in models of democratic delivery perceptions except (marginally) the political dimension, unlike models of democratic standards. By contrast, gender has a statistically significant effect in the institutional model (with a negative sign, meaning that women typically have lower democratic standards than men). This time, moral hierarchisation questions as well as the big 5 are no longer statistically significant in any of the models. By contrast, some discrete personality traits become statistically significant in some or all models. This is notably the case of creativity, which become statistically significant in the institutional model. Conversely, risk aversion is statistically significant in the political dimension standards. This time again, however, it is political and electoral psychology predictors which have the most robust influence in the models. Interest in politics is particularly significant in the ideological model and ideology mostly in the institutional and political standard models. Projected efficacy and societal projection have meaningful and statistically significant effects in all models though electoral identity does not.

Let us now look at the three models of democratic delivery gaps, presented in Table 5.5. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the overall model performance is a little bit lower than for the individual components of the deficit though still reasonably high by political behaviour model standards. R^2 ranges from 0.17 for the ideological delivery deficit model to 0.20 for its institutional dimension and 0.22 for its political one. In demographic terms, age matters in all three models (older people tend to have a perception of a higher delivery deficit) and gender in none of them. In terms of moral hierarchisation, the family dimension matters in all three models (though especially in the institutional one). Exactly the same pattern is true of the role of conscientiousness. In terms of discrete personality traits,

Table 5.5   Regressions determinants of democratic delivery deficit

	Ideological	*Institutional*	*Political*
Moral hierarchy family	0.14* (0.07)	0.20** (0.07)	0.17* (0.07)
Moral hierarchy deprivation	−0.04 (0.05)	0.00 (0.05)	−0.04 (0.05)
Creativity trait	0.00 (0.03)	−0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Sensitivity trait	−0.02 (0.03)	−0.00 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)
Abstraction trait	0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Risk aversion trait	0.06* (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Guilt trait	−0.05* (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.02 (0.02)
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.02* (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)
Big 5 Openness	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Interest in politics	0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Ideology	0.04* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
Electoral identity	0.01 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Projected efficacy	−0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Societal projection	−0.04** (0.01)	−0.05** (0.01)	−0.04** (0.01)
Gender	0.11 (0.07)	0.09 (0.07)	0.06 (0.07)
Age	0.01* (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
Constant	−1.03* (0.46)	−1.45** (0.44)	−1.36** (0.44)
R^2	0.17	0.2	0.22

risk aversion (positively) and guilt (negatively) both matter in terms of the ideological delivery deficit only. This time, traditional political predictors are of little impact. Interest in politics is not significant in any of the models and ideology—aptly—in the ideological dimension of democratic deficit only. In terms of electoral psychology predictors, however, societal project matters in all three models, suggesting that those who are societally projective (thinking of others and of the vote as a societal event) are likely to feel that there is less of a democratic delivery deficit at all.

THE DESIRE-DELIVERY GAP INTERACTION: CAPTURING THE CAUSES OF DEMOCRATIC FRUSTRATION

Having looked at the determinants of the two individual components of the frustration interaction, namely democratic desire and the democratic delivery gap, it is now time to consider their interaction, that is, democratic frustration itself, and understand the sources of its variations. Once again, we will consider in turn socio-demographic, political, electoral

psychology, and psychological determinants before turning to multivariate analysis.

Socio-Demographic Determinants

Once more, we will look in turn at socio-demographic, socio-political, and psychological determinants, and then unite all of them as part of a multivariate regression model.

The first demographic predictor of interest is gender. As we saw earlier, gender seemed to have little incidence on democratic desire or democratic standards, but women were significantly more critical of democratic delivery than men, so it is interesting to assess whether those differences in perceived delivery are enough to result in differences in levels of overall democratic frustration. The findings, shown in Fig. 5.2, show, quite simply, that they are. Whilst both men and women have mean levels that are clearly on the "frustrated" side of the 0 neutral point for all three dimensions, women tend to be systematically a little bit more democratically frustrated than their male counterparts. In both cases, frustration is typically lowest on the ideological dimension (7.59 for men and 10.5 for women on the -100 to 100 scale with 0 as neutral frustration point) and higher on the institutional (13.16 for men and 15.96 for women) and political (13.19 for men and 15.89 for women) scales.

Standard deviations for men and women, respectively, are 21.91 and 24.47 on the ideological dimension, 28.57 and 31.26 for the institutional dimension, and 28.43 and 31.41 for the political one. When considering the magnitude of the standard deviations and comparing them to the means, it is worth remembering that those standard deviations are in fact not particularly high on a 200 point scale, and also that whilst I chose a -100 to 100 scale to illustrate the existence of a "0" frustration neutral point, a mean on 7.59 for ideological frustration for men could have equally been expressed as 107.59 on a 0 to 200 scale with no impact whatsoever on the standard deviation.

As compared to gender, we found that age has a far more consistent and significant effect on both the desire and delivery deficit sides of the democratic frustration equation. Let us see how this pans out when it comes to the frustration interaction. The results are presented in Table 5.6. Unsurprisingly, the level of correlation between age and all three dimensions of democratic frustration remains very high.
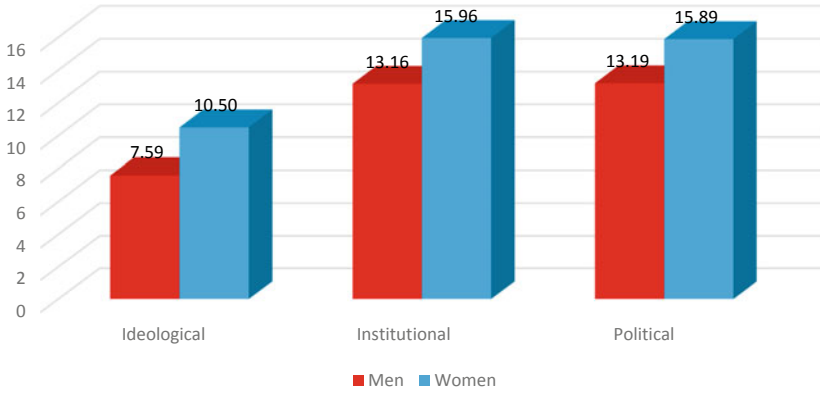
Fig. 5.2 Level of democratic frustration by gender (USA) (*Notes* entries are mean scores on a −100 to 100 scale where positive figures mean that the person is democratically frustrated. Standard deviations for men are 21.91, 28.57, and 28.43 respectively for ideological, institutional, and political dimensions of frustration, and 24.47, 31.26 and 31.41 for women. When comparing standard deviation levels to mean, it is important to note that the former is dependent on the choice to present the scale as −100 to 100 to highlight the existence of a neutral point. A mean of 7.59 on that scale could have equally been expressed as 107.59 on a 0–100 scale whilst the standard deviation would remain unaffected at 21.91)

Table 5.6 Correlations of dimensions of democratic frustration with demographic, socio-political and psychological predictors

	Ideological	*Institutional*	*Political*
Age	0.22**	0.30**	0.29**
Ideology	−0.01	−0.04*	−0.04*
Interest in politics	0.10**	0.15**	0.13**
Efficacy	−0.03	0.01	0.00
Projected efficacy	0.09**	0.15**	0.14**
Electoral identity	0.07**	0.09**	0.09**
Societal projection	−0.22**	−0.26**	−0.25**

Indeed, the three dimensions of democratic frustration are all highly positively correlated with age at levels of 0.22 for the ideological dimension, 0.29 for political, and even 0.30 for the institutional dimension. All those correlations are statistically significant at 0.01 level or better. In

other words, citizens get significantly and measurably more democratically frustrated as they get older.

Political Determinants

After those two demographic predictors, we now turn to the three sets of potential traditional political factors of democratic frustration discussed earlier in our model: ideology, interest in politics, and efficacy. We remember that both ideology and interest in politics were significantly correlated with all three dimensions of both democratic desire and perceived democratic deficit. However, those correlations were substantively weaker for ideology than for interest in politics. Perhaps more importantly, they were positive for all three measures of democratic desire, standards, and perceived delivery, which presented a risk that some elements may "cancel each other out in the context of democratic frustration (that is, for instance, right wing people tended to rate democratic delivery higher than their left-wing counterparts, but equally, the standards that they expected were higher too). Similarly, in the context of ideology, the correlations pertaining to democratic desire—a key prerequisite of democratic frustration—were weak. However, in the context of efficacy, the positive effects noted in terms of democratic standards and perceived delivery largely cancel each other out whilst the variable is not really correlated with democratic desire at all. As a result, efficacy is simply not significantly correlated with any of the three dimensions of democratic frustration as a whole.

The effect of all of those discrepancies is both straightforward and complex. They are also shown in Table 5.6. First of all, on balance, ideology has very little relation with democratic frustration. In terms of the ideological dimension, there is no statistically significant correlation at all, and when it comes to the institutional and political dimension, the correlations are extremely weak (-0.04) and only statistically significant at 0.05 level. As a reminder, given the coding, the negative sign means that right wing voters feel a little less democratically frustrated than their left-wing counterparts. This would perhaps not altogether surprising given that the election took place with both presidency and Senate held by Republicans, except that the one dimension for which there is precisely no correlation at all is ideological frustration.

The relationship between interest in politics and democratic frustration is a lot more straightforward, but not necessarily what most commentators would have expected. Indeed, the outcome is that despite them being typically more positive about democratic outcomes, citizens with high levels of interest in politics are also, on balance, more frustrated with it. Correlations are positive and statistically significant for all three dimensions of democratic frustration: the ideological dimension (0.10), the political dimension (0.13) and highest of the three the institutional one (0.15). Those relationships illustrate two key aspects of the specificity of democratic frustration and its difference from usual measures of dissatisfaction. The first is that dissatisfaction and frustration do not go hand in hand. Indeed, it is now several categories for which we highlighted that typically more lenient judgements on democratic delivery is fully compatible with even more burning levels of frustration. The second is the critical role of democratic desire, which does vary across individuals and is arguably, in some ways, the crucial and underrated lever of the current crisis of democracy, an "on/off" switch button of democratic frustration and all of the attitudinal and behavioural consequences that it can have.

Electoral Psychology Determinants

Finally, we look at electoral psychology predictors. Let us first start with projected efficacy. The picture is entirely different from traditional efficacy. This time the three sets of correlations work together in such a way as to lead people who feel more projectively efficacious to paradoxically also feel more democratically frustrating. The resulting correlation is relatively weak when it comes to the ideological dimension (0.09) though statistically significant, but it is quite strong when it comes to both the political (0.14) and institutional dimensions (0.15). Similarly, we noted that electoral identity, differed very fundamentally from the other two in that this is the only one which had positive correlations with democratic desire as well as democratic standards, but negative correlations with perceived democratic delivery. In that sense, despite relatively modest correlations with individual components, the difference between referees and supporters would prima facie seem to be even more meaningful when it comes to democratic frustration than with regards to its individual components, because the way those correlations are structured means that supporters have a symptomatically larger perception of the

democratic delivery gap than referees due to both higher standards and more critical evaluations of delivery.

It is societal projection which has the strongest final correlations with democratic frustration as a whole. This time, they are negative, meaning that people who are societally projective are also far less likely to feel democratically frustrated on the whole. All three correlations are negative and statistically significant, and as noted previously, the effects are weakest with the ideological dimension of frustration (-0.22) and strongest for the political dimension (-0.25) and particularly the institutional one (-0.26).

The relationship between electoral identity and the three dimensions of democratic frustration, whilst less high than in the case of interest in politics, is perhaps the most interesting. As mentioned earlier, individual components of frustration across all three dimensions were typically less meaningfully correlated with electoral identity than with other political predictors, but because each individual component is "rowing in a similar direction" of increasing the potential for frustration of supporters vis-à-vis referees, the ultimate result for the democratic frustration index is statistically significant across all three dimensions. With regards to the ideological dimension, the level of correlation of electoral identity with democratic frustration is 0.07, and it is even higher for the institutional and political dimensions, reaching a level of 0.09. All three correlations are statistically significant at 0.01 or better. What this means is that whilst on the face of it, supporters are not really far more "dissatisfied" with democracy than referees, they are by contrast significantly more frustrated by it, because the combination of their higher desire and standards and their marginally lower satisfaction combines into a perfect storm of higher frustration.

Overall, it is thus the case that whilst traditional political predictors sometimes have strong correlations with individual components of democratic frustration, they end up having relatively little impact on frustration as a whole with the limited exception of interest in politics. By contrast, when we consider electoral psychology predictors, not only do they often have meaningful correlations with individual components of frustration, but the articulation between all those relationships tends to act as "perfect storm", which gets further magnified in the context of democratic frustration as an overall state. This is true, if moderately of electoral identity. It is, however, even more meaningful (and also positive) in the context of projected efficacy, and most noticeable (and this time negative) when it

comes to societal projection. It is also worth noting that all three electoral psychology variables tend to work less well on the ideological dimension of democratic frustration than on its more profound—and perhaps more subconscious—institutional and political ones.

Psychological Determinants

As was the case with individual components, we end our bivariate analysis by looking at the correlations of dimensions of personality structure (big 5), twelve discrete personality traits and two scales of moral hierarchisation with the three dimensions of democratic frustration. The results of those analyses are shown in Table 5.7.

Let us start with major dimensions of personality structure as defined by the OCEAN model. Four of the five dimensions typically have statistically significant correlations at 0.01 or better for all three dimensions of frustration: neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness. The neuroticism scale has the least meaningful correlations and suggests that neurotic personalities are only marginally less likely to be democratically frustrated, in the same way more agreeable people are slightly more likely to be. Openness also results in higher levels of democratic frustration, with correlations of 0.10 for the political dimension, 0.11 for institutional, and 0.12 for ideological which is most affected here. However, the most significant impact is that of conscientiousness as conscientious people are very significantly more likely to feel democratically frustrated than average, when it comes to the ideological dimension (0.25) but even far more so in the context of the institutional and political dimensions of democratic frustration (both 0.28).

In many ways, individual personality traits represent an even more startling story with several of them being quite strongly correlated with all three dimensions of democratic frustration. For instance, the more creative a person, the less likely they are to be democratically frustrated (correlations of −0.10 for the ideological dimension, −0.13 for the institutional, and −0.14 for the political dimension). People with a propensity for guilt similarly have a lower sense of democratic frustration (−0.13 for the ideological dimension, −0.14 for institutional, and −0.16 for political frustration). By contrast, the propensity for democratic frustration significantly increases with alienation (0.09 for the ideological and institutional dimensions, 0.10 for the political one), sensitivity (0.14 for the ideological dimension, 0.16 for institutional, and 0.18 for political),

Table 5.7 Personality and democratic frustration (US)

		Ideological frustration	Institutional frustration	Political frustration
Personality Big 5	Extraversion	−0.05*	−0.04	−0.03
	Agreeableness	0.08**	0.10**	0.09**
	Conscientiousness	0.25**	0.28**	0.28**
	Neuroticism	−0.06**	−0.07**	−0.07**
	Openness	0.12**	0.11**	0.10**
Personality discrete traits	Creativity	−0.10**	−0.13**	−0.12**
	Alienation	0.09**	0.09**	0.10**
	Sensitivity	0.14**	0.16**	0.18**
	Pessimism	−0.02	−0.02	−0.02
	Gregariousness	−0.07**	−0.06**	−0.07**
	Care	−0.03	−0.04	−0.04*
	Abstraction	0.14**	0.17**	0.16**
	Risk aversion	0.24**	0.28**	0.29**
	Confrontation	0.04*	0.03	0.03
	Control	−0.01	0.01	0.01
	Resentment	0.08**	0.09**	0.09**
	Guilt	−0.13**	−0.14**	−0.16**
Moral hierarchy	Family	0.26**	0.33**	0.33**
	Deprivation	−0.25**	−0.30**	−0.31**
	Truth	−0.06*	−0.11**	−0.09**
	Aggression	−0.07*	−0.12**	−0.12**
	Laziness	0.08**	0.08**	0.08**
	Narcissim	0.03	0.06*	0.07**
	Sexuality	0.01	0.04	0.04
	Immoderation	−0.03	−0.03	−0.03

and abstraction (0.14, 0.17, and 0.16 respectively). The most substantial correlation, however, relates democratic frustration to risk aversion, at levels of 0.24 for the ideological dimension but especially 0.28 for the institutional dimension and 0.29 for the political one. Gregariousness also has negative correlations with democratic frustration and resentment positive ones.

Besides personality, we also tested the relationship between hierarchisation of moral priorities and the three dimensions of democratic frustration using both commandments and sins. Using the recoded sins scales, aggression, and laziness, both have respectively negative and positive statistically significant correlations with democratic frustration. For

laziness, it is a modest 0.08 for all three dimensions, always significant at 0.01 or better. For aggression, the relationship is weak with the ideological dimension but a stronger -0.12 with both institutional and political dimensions. Narcissism is also positively correlated with the political dimension of frustration at a level of 0.07, and statistically significant below 0.01.

However, it is the commandments scale which leads to the strongest relationships of all personality and morality variables. Truth prioritisation is negatively correlated with the political dimensions of frustration (-0.09) as well as its institutional dimension (-0.11). Those negative correlations are however quite overwhelming when it comes to the prioritisation of deprivation (-0.25 for the ideological dimension, -0.30 for institutional, and -0.31 for political). Conversely, positive correlations are very significant between the prioritisation of family commandments and the ideological dimension of frustration (0.26) but even more meaningfully its institutional and political dimensions (0.33). All those correlations are statistically significant at 0.01 level or better.

In short, people who are creative, neurotic, and have a high propensity to feel guilt are less likely to be democratically frustrated, whilst on the contrary, those who tend to be open, conscientious, alienated, resentful, sensitive, abstract, and most of all risk averse are far more prone to feel such frustration, and particularly its institutional and political dimensions. Conversely, human being who tend to particularly prioritise moral precepts focusing on aggression, truth, and deprivation are a lot less likely to feel democratically frustrated whilst, by contrast, those who focus a lot on laziness, narcissism and family commandments are far more likely to feel so.

Multivariate Analysis

After looking at all those bivariate relationships and having run multivariate regressions for each of the components in which interaction results in democratic frustration, it is now time to do the same of democratic frustration itself as an interactive variable. The results are presented in Table 5.8. The overall models still perform strongly, with R^2 of 0.17 for the ideological dimension of democratic frustration but 0.22 for its institutional dimension and 0.24 for the political one. At this stage, it is worth noting that the same model works better for different dimensions across the different components of democratic frustration. In particular,

whilst the model works least well for the ideological dimension of frustration as a whole as was the case of democratic delivery deficit models, the opposite was true of democratic desire models as well as democratic standards which explained the ideological dimension better than any other. Conversely, the political dimension of democratic desire is least well explained by the model, but best in the context of democratic delivery gap models as well as democratic delivery ones, and ultimately democratic frustration as a whole.

As in most other models, age is a strong democratic predictor in all models and confirms that older people are more likely to be democratically frustrated. Gender does not have a statistically significant effect in any moral. Once again, the family dimension of moral hierarchisation also has consistently significant effects across all three models. In terms of dimensions of personality structure as per the OCEAN model, conscientiousness also has statistically significant effects in all three models. In terms of discrete personality traits, however, only risk aversion has a positive effect in the political dimension model only and guilt a negative effect in the ideological one. When it comes to political predictors, interest

Table 5.8 Regressions determinants of democratic frustration

	Ideological	*Institutional*	*Political*
Moral hierarchy family	0.16* (0.07)	0.23** (0.06)	0.20** (0.06)
Moral hierarchy deprivation	−0.04 (0.05)	−0.00 (0.05)	−0.03 (0.05)
Creativity trait	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.04 (0.02)	−0.00 (0.02)
Sensitivity trait	−0.03 (0.03)	−0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Abstraction trait	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Risk aversion trait	0.05 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.06* (0.02)
Guilt trait	−0.05* (0.02)	−0.02 (0.02)	−0.02 (0.02)
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.02** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)
Big 5 Openness	0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	−0.00 (0.01)
Interest in politics	0.01 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Ideology	0.02 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)
Electoral identity	0.00 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)
Projected efficacy	0.02 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)
Societal projection	−0.03** (0.01)	−0.04** (0.01)	−0.03** (0.01)
Gender	0.13 (0.07)	0.11 (0.07)	0.07 (0.06)
Age	0.01* (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
Constant	−1.23** (0.46)	−1.55** (0.43)	−1.62** (0.42)
R^2	0.17	0.22	0.24

in politics which was an important independent variable in a number of component models has no remaining impact on democratic frustration as a whole nor does ideology. By contrast, in terms of electoral psychology predictors, societal projection has the most consistent effects. This suggests that those who are more societally projective are less likely to feel democratically frustrated across dimensions. By contrast, projected efficacy has a positive impact on the institutional and political dimensions of democratic frustration. Electoral identity has no statistically significant effect in any of the three models.

Qualitative Illustrations

Beyond observed models, it is also useful to listen to more expressive interpretations of their own democratic frustration by citizens themselves. In many ways, this does not so much inform us about the genesis of democratic frustration, nor its determination, but instead about the intuitive blame attribution that citizens operate.

In in-depth interviews, indeed, many citizens had an intuitive understanding of who or what they believe is to blame for their own democratic frustration, or more broadly for that of the population.

Interestingly, quite often, citizens intuitively blame each other for democratic frustration, or more specifically the lack of interest or information of fellow citizens as in the examples below.

> I think it is very frustrating, very frustrating, that not enough people feel strongly about democracy. And, what makes me upset is the number of people that go to vote. The percentage is very low, you know, sometimes 23%, sometimes 35% of the electorate, and I don't understand why young people and also certain group of my friends, why they cannot be bothered to go and vote. And we have an example so like the American election for the presidential political elections in autumn this year, they just changed the way they could vote. So, they made their vote more accessible to people. More people went to vote, around 80% of the electorate at which again, was really great. I think we need to do something to push more and more people to be proud to exercise their voting rights. (1,56_UK_005)

> I find it very frustrating. I just feel, I mean, like I mentioned before, I feel like if you're voting, you should be voting informed. And you know, I do feel that there is a responsibility to put more information out there. (1,25_UK_001)

I think that there is definitely a large level of blame on specific politicians, and the way it was handled in that sense. But I think, in the terms of citizens, I felt that a lot of people didn't take the time to truly research this, to really look into it research, what would actually happen, like what the outcome would be, and this was really obvious after the results, and after Brexit started, and people started saying, oh, but I didn't realize that would happen. And in my mind, I was like, well, I did realize that this would happen, and I have the same information that you did, all you had to do was Google. Yeah, I guess, the blame and the responsibility falls both on politicians and the media, but also citizens themselves. That being said, I wonder if it was really something that should have been a referendum in itself. (1,25_UK_001)

I think social media is the main way that false promises and false information is spread. I guess it can only get better when politicians stop making all these grand promises. So with the US as well, an example is the manipulation and access to data through Facebook in the run up to the Trump election. I think this should how social media impacts the population and decisions, but how obviously it can be dangerously misleading. (2,19_UK_FTV_003)

I think that so many people across all generations, have felt mobilized because of the issues. But I also think so many people, again, across all generations have become fed up! They don't want to know, they don't care who's sitting in Parliament, they just want to go around their lives and get on with their lives without the intervention of the state and without the having to worry about Brexit, or the migration crisis, or economic recession or anything like that, you know, I think Brexit really was the catalyst for a lot of political fatigue. (1,19_UK_FTV_006)

Frequently, however, citizens also spontaneously blame the system, the political elites, or a mixture of the two. This is illustrated by the following examples.

I think the system itself. Because it's so entrenched, there's no, like, I don't think it will be changed …. I'd never not vote, I think I will always vote, actually. Although it can be wasted. There's a difference between casting a vote and a worthless system. I would always vote because it's like every vote does have a say, but not in the sense that you would think like. It's not really. It is your vote that ends up being a number of like this much of percentage of it went to labour or conservatives instead of like your vote contributed to the winner gets kind of lost. (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

> The parties are there to represent people anyway, and they are created based on that, so I do not think it is that. Institutions are the main reason why many people do not get represented in our majoritarian system. It is much harder to feel represented in a way because of that. (2,20_UK_FTV_004)

> just the idea that my vote was not important. That was very frustrating. It was very frustrating at a time when I was young, and I went to put a vote. The idea that you put your vote and the party never wins. They don't win and after that it is a delusion. (1,56_UK_005)

Finally, there were also a fairly significant number of cases when even though citizens laid primarily blame for democratic citizens on either fellow compatriots or political institutions and elites, they did acknowledge in explicit or implicit ways a form of self-blame for democratic frustration as well. This typically entailed a sense that they had stopped trying, given up, and that this helped the frustration get worse.

In many ways however, those expressive references to potential causes of democratic frustration pertain specifically to intuitive analyses of the causes of underwhelming democratic delivery. By contrast, possibly the most interesting findings of this chapter do not so much pertain to those conscious and supposed links, but rather to an observed reality, which, by contrast, shows that much of what explains the propensity of a citizen to feel democratically frustrated will, in fact, go well beyond the external factors that may lead to poor delivery and dissatisfaction.

DEMOCRATIC FRUSTRATION—UNIQUE DETERMINANTS FOR A UNIQUE LOGIC

Beyond the obvious, the analysis of determinants of democratic frustration and of its components that we have just completed sheds unmistakable light on how such frustration differs from the logic and genesis of political dissatisfaction. Asking citizens about the reasons for their dissatisfaction with democracy leads researchers to focus on institution-centric causality, which is largely ineffective in the context of democratic frustration.

Even looking at non-expressive predictors, models of dissatisfaction typically suggest that young people are often the most critical towards their democracies, and that efficacious citizens are also less dissatisfied.

However, we have seen that in the context of democratic frustration models, citizens actually grow increasingly frustrated as they age—something that we identify as a life cycle effect, to which we will devote more attention in Chapter 6. We have also seen that projected efficacy tends to be associated with greater—rather than lower—levels of democratic frustration.

Those differences are loaded with meaning. They emphasise the endemically negative slope of democratic frustration throughout the life cycle as well as its perpetually displaced and largely insidious nature. Democratic frustration is not about what citizens know is wrong with their democracies. Rather, it is about what the perpetually growing baggage of unmet hopes, unfulfilled desires, and missed democratic opportunities' build-up so as to create lagged but powerful unease and defiance.

Citizens may barely know it is there, largely ignore where it comes from, and find ways to function with and despite it. Nevertheless, as they do, that long-held seed is still growing into something worse. Let us now turn back the clock and attempt to trace this frustration back to its point of inception, at a time when, perhaps, it would have had a chance of being tackled and resolved.

Reference

Bruter, M., & Harrison, S. (2020). *Inside the mind of a voter: A new approach to electoral psychology in six democracies*. Princeton University Press.

Emergence of Democratic Frustration: The Case of First-Time Voters

What's so Special About First-Time Voters?

In Chapter 5, we have seen that young people typically express less democratic frustration than their older counterparts. However, isn't the fact that those who enter civic life appear to be the least frustrated whilst we also know then to be highly dissatisfied and less likely to engage in participation paradoxical?

We have earlier suggested that we believe the relationship between age and frustration identified in Chapter 5 to be reflective of a life cycle effect. In this chapter, we consider how two seemingly contradictory realities might therefore work hand in hand by focusing on the case of first-time voters. Namely, we suggest that whilst first-time voters express far less frustration than others, it is because their democratic expectations are simply not yet set, and the excitement of acquiring a new status as citizens hides the reality of critical early disappointments. We also suggest, however, that it is in those formative civic years that we will typically find the inceptive seeds of frustration, the initial democratic disillusion which will then only blossom and become apparent later in life.

First experiences are special. From first dates to the first time you drive a car, whether positive or negative experiences, it is likely that you will remember that special first time (Bruter & Harrison, 2020). Similarly,

the existing political behaviour literature has shown the long-term importance of the first electoral experience. Butler and Stokes (1969) showed that electoral choice in the first two elections largely determines future votes. Franklin (2004) and Coppock and Green's (2016) works show how turnout at the first opportunity may start a habituation process. Lodge et al. (2014) and Bruter and Harrison (2017) go even further and find that voting in the first two elections of their lives will likely make citizens regular participants, whilst abstaining in both may lead them to become chronic abstentionists instead. The participative experience of the first electoral decision often determines your likely electoral turnout and behaviour for much of your voting life.

Despite the importance of the first vote, western democracies have experienced increasing levels of turnout decline since the 1970s (Franklin, 2004; LeDuc et al., 1996, 2002) and this trend has particularly affected young voters. Pattie et al. (2004) suggest that young people have embraced new participatory modes of political engagement such as "political consumption" (including practices of boycotting or *procotting*). These alternative modes of participation have often replaced traditional engagement such as party membership (Pharr & Putnam, 2000; Scarrow, 1996). This changing behaviour is accompanied by negativity towards political systems, institutions, and elites (Kaase et al., 1996; Mishler & Rose, 1997; Seligman, 1997), a growing sense of "dissatisfaction" (Norris, 1999; Torcal & Montero, 2006) and distrust (Bertsou, 2016), all of which notably affect the younger generation more than their elder counterparts. Younger citizens have become steadily more dissatisfied with democracy—not only in absolute terms, but also relative to older cohorts at comparable stages of life (Foa et al., 2020). The authors of this report on youth satisfaction with democracy state that there are notable declines in four regions: Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, western Europe, and the "Anglo-Saxon" democracies, including the UK, Australia, and the US.

The impact of the Eurozone crisis and decades of rising wealth inequality have left younger citizens facing many challenges: finding secure employment, owning a home, or starting a family. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is still unravelling but it has already exposed the growing intergenerational divide in life opportunities. Politicians offering alternatives to economic orthodoxy, and pledges to implement a progressive agenda addressing youth debt, unemployment, and wages are often perceived to be the recipients of the support from discontented young

citizens. However, it is also the case that where right-wing populists such as Marine Le Pen's National Rally (Rassemblement National) in France or the Vlaams Belang in Belgium have pivoted towards interventionism, youth support has flowed to anti-system challengers on the right.

This crisis of participation is heightened by unique impediments faced by first-time voters who are disproportionately affected by registration issues (James, 2014; Mitchell & Wlezien, 1995; Nagler, 1991). First-time voters are also most vulnerable to misregistration due to inconsistent residential addresses (Franklin, 2004), a "seasonality of absence" when elections take place during holidays or exam periods, and indirect social vulnerability (disproportionate inability to take time off work when in training, or on zero-hour contracts). Bruter and Harrison (2017) refer to this web of limitations as a problem of "effective access to the vote".

Socialisation may also explain differences in attitudes and behaviour at the age of franchise. Easton and Dennis (1969) and Greenstein (1965) show the impact of family transmission on partisan identification, interest in politics, efficacy, and participation, whilst Hess and Torney (1967) and Austin and Nelson (1993) assess the influence of school and media on young people's efficacy and civic participation. Torney-Purta (2002) finds that participation in school councils shapes political interest later in life (though not turnout), and Campbell and Niemi (2016) that civic education influences political discussion.

Yet, many doubt this "indifference" theory. Young people have led many key political events: anti-Brexit demonstrations, Arab Spring, Maidan square protests, Occupy, and umbrella movements. In their extensive report on the state of youth satisfaction with democracy, Foa et al. (2020) note findings in some regions and countries in which younger generations exhibit greater democratic contentment compared to their elders—including in the post-communist democracies of central and eastern Europe, in Germany, and in Asia. Specifically, the authors report that in Iceland, Germany, or Taiwan, younger citizens hold political institutions to high standards, and for now, those standards are being met (Ferrin, 2016). There is no evidence that rising expectations have led to a deterioration in democratic legitimacy among youth in these societies (Foa et al., 2020).

Bruter and Harrison (2009) find youth participation to be heterogeneous with a highly engaged core, and show many young people hold idealist views of electoral democracy. Cammaerts et al. (2014, 2016) find no evidence of apathy within the European youth but instead a *desire*

of participation, and near-universal preference for elections over other modes of participation (see also Soler-i-Marti & Ferrer-Fons, 2015). They also find young people very excited at the idea of voting for the first time. Whilst much less likely to feel a duty to vote than older citizens (Ford, 2017), the excitement of voting thus often takes first-time voters to the polling station and uniquely shapes their emotions as they vote for the first time (Bruter & Harrison, 2017). This echoes broader research on the role of excitement in other first experiences from one's first drink (Ludwig et al., 1974) or cigarette (DiFranza, 2008) to sex (Cohen & Shotland, 1996). Interestingly, authors have highlighted how this excitement potential interacts with the influence of family (Chilcoat & Anthony, 1996), friends (Sieving et al., 2006), and institutions (Mulder & Wagner, 1998) to affect levels of satisfaction (Sprecher et al., 1995), depression (Campbell et al., 1995), and short- (Simintiras et al., 1997) or long-term behaviour (DiFranza et al., 2004) ranging from sexuality to parenthood, consumption, and substance addiction.

Whilst elections are a lot more emotional to citizens than the literature often suspects, it is particularly so for young people invited to vote for the first time in their lives. If elections matter so much to young people as to make them emotional and even to make them cry, then it would seem very counter-productive to ignore the importance of electoral psychology. From that point of view, the findings we have uncovered in Bruter and Harrison (2017, 2020) leave no doubt as to how emotional elections are—both for those who realise it and for those who see themselves as flawlessly detached and rational or indeed interested—and how acute that emotionality is among first-time voters in particular.

Around 28% of British citizens claimed to have "tears in their eyes" during referendum night on 23 June 2016 alone. Among those aged 18–24, that proportion increased to 39%. It is not, however, only negative emotions which are much stronger among first-time voters but positive ones as well. In the UK, 52.1% of first-time voters claimed to be happy as they voted whilst only 37.7% of those voting for at least the third time did so, and in the US, 61.6% of those voting for the first- or second-time reported feeling emotional compared with 50.8% for more experienced voters.

Given all those specificities, in this book, I have gone through most unusual lengths in order to assess how first-time voters are affected by democratic frustration. In each of the countries in which the survey was run, as well as in each of the countries in which interviews were

conducted, uniquely, a parallel fieldwork was conducted for first-time voters. This means that alongside the 2,000 survey respondents answering as part of the general population, an additional sample of approximately 500 first-time voters were surveyed. I believe that this uniquely strengthens the design and offers potentially ground-breaking perspectives. However, it should be noted that due to the smaller sample size and the nature of the variables used, some of the quantitative elements will be likely to be affected by multi-collinearity, more so than for the general population in which the large sample size enables greater confidence in the estimates. In this chapter, I will therefore use both the analysis of the survey of first-time voters and their sub-set of interviews so as to be able to almost entirely replicate the analyses that I have performed throughout the book on the general population as a whole.

Age and the Frustration Cycle

In Chapter 1, I notably discussed the different patterns corresponding to the possible cycle of democratic frustration. I notably explained that in traditional models of frustration, the initial condition of being unable to meet (or prevented from meeting) with a desire normally occur during a person's young years, but that it is after a certain amount of time that the condition of frustration emerges after the initial experience and disappointment is buried, and its object typically hidden as part of the object displacement normally occurring as part of the frustration process. It is yet some further time down the line that the consequences of frustration themselves—and notably the noted models of withdrawal, anger, and aggression—tend to start developing unless the frustration is fundamentally addressed and resolved.

In the context of democratic frustration—as with other psychological forms of frustration—this reality has significant implications on the relationship between the development, worsening, or resolution of frustration and the life cycle. In effect, whilst the occurrences of frustration of a condition—let alone of its derivative pathologies and complications, are rarely observed at a very young age, and tend to increase in both occurrence and gravity of pathologies in later years, the actual sources of that frustration are virtually always to be found in the early years of one's life. It is also the case that frustration is, by far, easiest to address and cure in a person's younger years whilst further sequences of displacement and layers

of burial will make it harder and harder to diagnose let alone mitigate or resolve in the later years of one's life.

If we look more carefully at each of the individual components of frustration (desire, standard, and perception of delivery), the likely evolution of each throughout the life cycle will routinely follow an even more complex logic. Desire can be strong but less precise in younger years. In a nutshell, a young citizen who has never really voted or participated in democracy directly may well have a vivid desire for it in principle, but such desire is likely to be far more abstract and far less specified than for an exercised voter. In other words, whilst there may be great excitement at the idea of being a citizen able to be part of democracy for the first time when a teenager reaches adulthood and electoral franchise, it is quite likely that "everything" will feel exciting as part of that enfranchisement and that even the meekest of democratic influences will appear like a significant form of efficacious progress to the young person. In other words, the democratic desire of first-time voters is likely to be more emotionally intense than technically mature, more abstract than detailed, and more of a discovery of one's democratic freedom than pertaining to very specified perceptions of what such freedom and efficacy should probably entail.

When it comes to democratic standards, another element of complication emerges. In Chapter 1, I talked about existing insights about the asymmetric relationship between experience and standards. In a nutshell, the idea is that positive experiences will likely be followed by a commensurate increase in standards, whilst in the other direction, a negative experience or deterioration will not lead an individual to forget or override their prior knowledge and conception of higher standards. In other words, if someone has always been living in difficult circumstances, in the past, progressive accession to wealth will likely quickly lead them to get used to a better off life, but conversely, if they experience a reversal of fortune, this will not necessarily result in their forgetting what a wealthy life felt like. Similarly, experiencing a fulfilling job or friendship will likely lead individuals to update their standards upwards "for good" as later disappointments are unlikely to make them forget what a great job or a great friendship felt like nor easily accept to settle for any less. If we assume similar models when it comes to exposure to democracy, then age will only ever lead to unchanging or increasing democratic standards, never to decreasing ones. This will also imply that as people age, there will be less and less tolerance for mediocre democratic delivery to compensate a perceived democratic delivery gap.

Finally, the question of democratic evaluation itself is a lot less clear. On the face of it, much literature associates young voters to high dissatisfaction and disengagement. Yet, there is no obvious reason why perceptions of democratic quality would necessarily increase with age in the same way that we would expect democratic desire and standards to do. In fact, since Bruter and Harrison (2020) show that first- and second-time voters engage with democracy and elections with significantly more positive emotions than more experienced voters, one would effectively expect democratic assessment to be more positive among young citizens than among older ones, if only because in democracy—and notably in the context of frustration, we have seen in Chapter 1 that what a voter "brings in" the democratic process will affect what they believe they are getting out of it.

On balance, this would lead one to expect democratic frustration among young voters in general and first-time voters in particular to register lower levels than for more experienced citizens, but also the nature of that frustration—however developing—to be determinant in predicting the future nature and shape of a voter's frustration. As mentioned, this is in clear contrast with what dissatisfaction models suggest, but it is confirmed by our exploration of democratic frustration as a dependent variable in Chapter 5. To make things more complicated, it is of course conceivable that life cycle effects in democratic frustration may affect the three dimensions of frustration differently, especially if, as discussed earlier, those three dimensions tend to be hierarchized and to an extent sequential as part of the democratic frustration cycle. In assessing the democratic frustration of young citizens, it is thus important to not only differentiate between the three components of desire, standard, and perceived delivery, but also to do so across the three dimensions of democratic frustration to better understand how the "seeds" of future frustration may already be present in the democratic mind and emotions of a voter from a very young age before evolving the way all frustrations do: negatively and worryingly.

Approach

However, those differences tell us about when democratic frustration will show, and not, in any way, about when it finds its initial sources. Consequently, in this chapter, I use two separate bodies of data, both already mentioned in Chapter 2.

The first is an analysis of surveys that were conducted with samples of first-time voters in parallel with the general population surveys at election time in all four countries (although, as with the general population analysis, I will primarily focus on the US case as that with the fullest data). The second instrument is a series of semi-structured narrative interviews conducted with first-time voters on democratic frustration in the UK, the US, and Australia. The interviews were conducted by local research assistants under my supervision and structured around a variation of the same themes that were used in the main population interviews.

Whilst the first-time voter survey can help us confirm whether first-time voters' frustration is less acute than for other adults, and whether it follows similar causal logics, by contrast, the interviews can help us to identify the "patient zero" of pathologies of democratic frustration, and to understand the inception of that phenomenon and its original causes.

Are First-Time Voters More or Less Democratically Frustrated Than the Rest of the Population?

In this first section, I start by looking at quantitative evidence to compare levels and nuances of democratic frustration among first-time voters vis-à-vis the rest of the population. Let us start by considering the descriptive reality of democratic frustration between first-time voters and the rest of the population. In short, whilst we know that young people are more likely to abstain in elections, I suggested in my model that as with other psychological forms of frustration, democratic frustration should typically worsen over time as its initial seeds will continue to deteriorate as years elapse and the initial source of frustration becomes both more entrenched and more confused.

Table 6.1 confirms this theoretical expectation. It indeed shows that mean democratic frustration is significantly higher among the general population than among first-time voters. In fact, the mean democratic frustration of first-time voters is typically very close to zero on a theoretical scale ranging from -100 to 100. The ideological frustration is lowed at 0.12 whilst means for institutional and political frustrations are merely marginally higher at 1.67 and 2.19, respectively. By contrast, for the rest of the population, mean scores are decidedly in the "democratic frustration" territory. Ideological frustration has once again the lowest mean

Table 6.1 Descriptives of democratic frustration: first-time voters vs others

	Democratic frustration		
	Ideological	*Institutional*	*Political*
First-time voters	0.12	1.67	2.19
	(17.66)	(21.08)	(21.17)
Others	11.45	17.88	17.72
	(24.16)	(31.19)	(31.28)

Notes Means with standard deviations in brackets. Scale from −100 to +100 (not frustrated at all to highest possible level of frustration)

at 11.45, whilst political and institutional frustrations average 17.72 and 17.88, respectively.

I also ran frequencies to understand where the difference lies. Specifically, the findings presented in Table 6.2 largely confirm the picture drawn from the comparison of means. Indeed, among first-time voters, democratic frustration is typically normally distributed across all three dimensions, with very few people on either extreme, and an almost perfect balance between moderately frustrated and moderately un-frustrated young citizens. By contrast, the same frequencies show that for the rest of the population, the distribution is largely skewed towards moderate frustration. Entirely un-frustrated citizens are once more very rare, but moderately un-frustrated ones are also a clear minority this time, whilst moderate frustration is generally the mode of the distribution and even an absolute majority when it comes to the ideological dimension of frustration. In terms of institutional and political frustration, a significant minority of about 1 in 6 respondents also registers very high frustration scores, whilst this proportion was under 1 in 25 among first-time voters instead. This confirms, once again, the theoretical expectation that frustration gets worse later as citizens mature.

Finally, I also compared descriptive statistics for each individual component of democratic frustration (democratic desire, standards, and perceptions of democratic delivery). The results are presented in Table 6.3. The picture is very straightforward in general. First-time voters all at once express significantly lower democratic desire than the rest of the population and have significantly lower democratic standards. At the same time, they are also typically less severe when it comes to their perceptions of democratic delivery than the rest of the population, except when

Table 6.2 Descriptives of democratic frustration: first-time voters vs others

		Democratic frustration		
		Ideological	Institutional	Political
First-time voters	−100 to −50.01	0.4	0.8	0.8
	−50 to −0.01	45.4	43.7	43.1
	0	9.1	9.7	10.8
	0.01 to 50	43.6	42.1	41.4
	50.01 to 100	1.5	3.7	3.9
Others	−100 to −50.01	0.6	0.4	0.3
	−50 to −0.01	27.0	25.9	26.4
	0	9.0	9.4	9.5
	0.01 to 50	55.8	47.2	45.8
	50.01 to 100	7.6	17.1	17.9

Notes Entries are % of each total sample (first-time voters and general voting population excluding first-time voters) divided into each category of frustration index. Each series of five proportions thus totals 100 (apart from rounding effects)

it comes to the ideological dimensions. In terms of dimensionality, differences are typically limited. The only significant insight is that among the general population excluding first-time voters, the ideological dimension is the object of both less democratic desire and a more lenient assessment of democratic delivery than the institutional and political dimensions. Among first-time voters, however, this difference does not really exist.

Table 6.3 Descriptives of democratic frustration components: first-time voters vs others

	Democratic desire			Democratic standards			Democratic delivery		
	ID	IN	PO	ID	IN	PO	ID	IN	PO
First-time voters	5.45 (2.54)	5.39 (2.48)	5.54 (2.71)	5.27 (2.35)	5.31 (2.38)	5.31 (2.38)	5.05 (2.42)	4.97 (2.53)	4.84 (2.51)
Others	6.62 (2.45)	6.96 (2.57)	6.91 (2.78)	6.49 (2.29)	6.60 (2.55)	6.37 (2.53)	4.95 (2.64)	4.40 (2.80)	4.22 (2.81)

Notes Means with standard deviations in brackets. Scale for each category is from 0 to 10

Determinants of Democratic Frustration Among First-Time Voters

It is, of course, not enough to show that average levels of democratic frustration are lower among first-time voters than they are among the rest of the population, however important the findings. As a result, I also wanted to rerun regressions pertaining to the causes of democratic frustration so as to understand whether the same determinants of democratic frustration which I identified for the general population equally apply to first-time voters as well.

As with the general model, I thus ran regressions for each individual component of democratic frustration (desire, standards, and perceived delivery) as well as delivery deficit calculated as a gap between standards and deliver, and democratic frustration as an overall index. The results are presented in the series of Tables 6.4A to 6.4D as well as 6.5.

It should be noted that because of the lower number of respondents, the regressions are more fragile to multi-collinearity than is the case for the main sample, and as a result, there is a higher threshold for coefficients to be statistically significant.

Nevertheless, the regressions come up with some truly interesting findings. First, when it comes to mapping democratic desire, for all three dimensions, R^2 values are very high (from 0.35 for the political dimension and 0.37 for the institutional one to 0.48 for the ideological dimension). It is also noteworthy that in this case, the ideological model seems to work best whilst there was no major difference in the context of the general population sample. Two of the electoral psychology predictorsprojected efficacy and societal projectionwork by far best, with gender and guilt also significant in some models.

The regression of determinants of democratic standards also performs well, with R^2 of 0.27 for the institutional dimension, 0.28 for the political one, and finally 0.30 for the ideological dimension. However, individual coefficients are sketchier. Ideology tends to be a significant predictor across models (although interestingly, least so in the regression of ideological standards), and projected efficacy is highly significant for the institutional dimension and just shy of 0.05 (0.051–0.052) for the ideological and political models but few other causes are confirmed.

R^2 for the third component, that is, perceptions of democratic deliveryalso ranges from 0.24 for the political dimension, to 0.27 for the

Table 6.4
Regressions—
determinants of
components of
frustration first-time
voters

	Ideological	Institutional	Political
Table 6.4A: Regressions determinants of democratic desire			
Moral hierarchy family	−0.15	−0.22	−0.42
	(0.31)	(0.32)	(0.36)
Moral hierarchy deprivation	0.01	−0.02	−0.10
	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.24)
Creativity trait	−0.03	−0.10	0.02
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.15)
Sensitivity trait	0.06	−0.08	0.12
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.14)
Abstraction trait	−0.08	0.07	0.01
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)
Risk aversion trait	−0.17	−0.11	−0.21
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.15)
Guilt trait	0.11	0.23*	0.18
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.13)
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.02	0.01	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Big 5 Openness	−0.07	0.06	−0.01
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Interest in politics	0.09	0.05	0.04
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Ideology	−0.06	−0.12	−0.03
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Electoral identity	−0.20	−0.18	−0.06
	(0.18)	(0.19)	(0.21)
Projected efficacy	0.32**	0.36**	0.36**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Societal projection	0.34**	0.19**	0.24**
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)
Gender	0.67*	0.92**	0.75*
	(0.32)	(0.33)	(0.37)
Constant	1.86	2.53	2.89
	(1.96)	(2.02)	(2.27)
R^2	0.48	0.37	0.35
Table 6.4B: Regression determinants of democratic standards			
Moral hierarchy family	0.11	0.09	0.35
	(0.35)	(0.34)	(0.35)
Moral hierarchy deprivation	0.00	0.06	0.18
	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.23)

(continued)

Table 6.4 (continued)

	Ideological	Institutional	Political
Creativity trait	0.08	0.07	0.09
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Sensitivity trait	0.07	0.21	0.27
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Abstraction trait	0.02	−0.07	−0.06
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Risk aversion trait	−0.03	−0.07	−0.11
	(0.15)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Guilt trait	−0.03	0.01	0.07
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.07	0.06	0.03
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Big 5 Openness	−0.10	−0.07	−0.11
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Interest in politics	0.19*	0.06	0.13
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Ideology	0.19*	0.24**	0.22**
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Electoral identity	−0.27	0.14	0.07
	(0.20)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Projected efficacy	0.16#	0.23**	0.15#
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Societal projection	0.12	0.03	0.09
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
Gender	0.09	0.00	0.23
	(0.36)	(0.35)	(0.36)
Constant	2.28	1.98	−0.93
	(2.20)	(2.16)	(2.21)
R^2	0.30	0.27	0.28
Table 6.4C: Regression determinants of democratic delivery			
Moral hierarchy family	−0.29	−0.17	−0.15
	(0.34)	(0.38)	(0.36)
Moral hierarchy deprivation	−0.08	−0.16	−0.26
	(0.23)	(0.25)	(0.24)
Creativity trait	−0.01	0.09	−0.04
	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Sensitivity trait	−0.07	0.06	−0.05
	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.14)
Abstraction trait	−0.10	0.05	−0.00
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.11)

Table 6.4   (continued)

	Ideological	Institutional	Political
Risk aversion trait	−0.21	−0.43**	−0.31*
	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.15)
Guilt trait	0.19	0.17	0.22
	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.13)
Big 5 Conscientiousness	−0.01	−0.07	−0.04
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Big 5 Openness	−0.04	0.06	0.03
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Interest in politics	0.18*	0.12	0.09
	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.08)
Ideology	−0.08	0.03	0.03
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Electoral identity	−0.16	−0.43#	−0.36
	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.21)
Projected efficacy	0.06	0.07	0.07
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Societal projection	0.24**	0.22**	0.19*
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Gender	−0.36	−0.26	−0.19
	(0.35)	(0.39)	(0.37
Constant	5.94**	5.01*	5.76*
	(2.16)	(2.38)	(2.28)
R^2	0.29	0.27	0.24
Table 6.4D: Regressions determinants of democratic delivery deficit			
Moral hierarchy family	0.06	0.03	0.14
	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.13)
Moral hierarchy deprivation	0.03	0.07	0.12
	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.09)
Creativity trait	0.03	−0.01	0.04
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Sensitivity trait	0.04	0.04	0.09
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Abstraction trait	0.04	−0.03	−0.02
	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Risk aversion trait	0.06	0.10	0.06
	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Guilt trait	−0.08	−0.04	−0.04
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.03	0.04	0.02
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)

(continued)

Table 6.4 (continued)

	Ideological	Institutional	Political
Big 5 Openness	−0.02	−0.04	−0.04
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Interest in politics	0.00	−0.02	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Ideology	0.09**	0.06	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Electoral identity	−0.04	0.16*	0.12
	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.08)
Projected efficacy	0.03	0.04	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Societal projection	−0.04	−0.05	−0.03
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Gender	0.15	0.07	0.12
	(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.14)
Constant	−1.65	−1.40	−2.42**
	(0.93)	(0.89)	(0.84)
R^2	0.14	0.14	0.13

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05
# indicates coefficients that are significant at 0.10 level. Due to the complexity of the measurement and the risk it entails in terms of multicolinerity in some equations, I felt that it would be important to note coefficients that are significant at 0.10 level, not as a level that I think is significant enough to confirm that the coefficient is significant, but as an indication that there maybe a potential relationship to further explore using additional measurement strategies in the future

institutional one and 0.29 for the ideological dimension. This time, societal projection is the electoral psychology attitude which most consistently predicts perceptions of delivery deficit, with risk aversion significant in the institutional delivery model, and to a lesser extent the political one (with less risk averse people proving more likely to rate democratic delivery high). Electoral identity borders on statistical significance in the institutional model, whilst interest in political is significant at 0.05 level in the ideological model.

Across all three models, it is quite interesting to confirm that ideological components of frustration seem easier to explain than their institutional and political counterparts. Moving on to democratic delivery deficit measured as a gap between standards and delivery, the results are a lot weaker. R^2 ranges from 0.13 to 0.14, and the only variables to

Table 6.5 Regressions determinants of democratic frustration

	Ideological	Institutional	Political
Moral hierarchy family	0.11	0.60	4.00
	(2.76)	(3.44)	(3.19)
Moral hierarchy deprivation	−0.99	0.96	2.59
	(1.82)	(2.26)	(2.10)
Creativity trait	−0.25	−0.78	0.39
	(1.13)	(1.40)	(1.30)
Sensitivity trait	−0.05	0.96	1.98
	(1.10)	(1.37)	(1.27)
Abstraction trait	0.53	−0.81	−0.27
	(0.87)	(1.08)	(1.01)
Risk aversion trait	1.48	1.95	1.28
	(1.18)	(1.47)	(1.36)
Guilt trait	−0.58	−1.11	−0.89
	(0.98)	(1.22)	(1.13)
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.59	0.79	0.72
	(0.37)	(0.45)	(0.42)
Big 5 Openness	−0.05	−0.73	−1.01
	(0.47)	(0.58)	(0.54)
Interest in politics	−0.11	−0.41	0.09
	(0.65)	(0.81)	(0.75)
Ideology	1.29*	0.81	0.65
	(0.61)	(0.76)	(0.71)
Electoral identity	−1.24	3.55	2.97
	(1.61)	(2.01)	(1.86)
Projected efficacy	1.28*	2.23**	1.46*
	(0.61)	(0.77)	(0.71)
Societal projection	−0.73	−1.19	−0.30
	(0.58)	(0.72)	(0.67)
Gender	4.12	3.49	2.81
	(2.85)	(3.55)	(3.29)
Constant	−15.58	−20.99	−47.35*
	(17.44)	(21.72)	(20.16)
R^2	0.13	0.15	0.16

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05

reach significance in some models are ideology (ideological dimension) and electoral identity (institutional dimension).

Finally, we consider the case of democratic frustration as an overall interactive index, with the results presented in Table 6.5.

Across all three models, the R^2 is moderate, ranging from 0.13 for the ideological dimension to 0.15 for the institutional one and 0.16 for

the political dimension. It is interesting to see that this time, the ideo-
logical dimension model seems to be the least effective. In terms of
individual predictors, projected efficacy is significant in all three models,
and particularly the institutional dimension model but little else is.

On balance, it is thus the case that determinants of democratic frus-
tration seem harder to confirm within the first-time voter's sample than
among the general population. This also makes it difficult to identify
clearly from the quantitative data what explains why some first-time voters
will likely develop democratic frustration early on whilst others will not,
with only electoral psychological determinants such as projected effi-
cacy and societal projection seemingly achieving some relatively coherent
effects across models.

Behavioural Consequences of Democratic Frustration Among First-Time Voters

Finally, without wishing to spoil the suspense of the next major ques-
tion, which is addressed by this book, that is, "what are the consequences
of democratic frustration?", we consider the behavioural consequences
of democratic frustration among first-time voters and assess whether the
withdrawal, anger, and aggression model that we will test in Chapter 7
alongside attitudinal consequences applies to them. The results are
presented in Appendix 1: Table 6.6.

Once again, R^2 values across all models are relatively high ranging from
0.22 for leaving the country, to 0.28 for extremist voting and violent
demonstrations, 0.29 for abstention, 0.30 for taking part in a Revolu-
tion, and even 0.37 for participation in a peaceful demonstration. Whilst
those results show significantly better performing models of behavioural
consequences of frustration for first-time voters than for the rest of the
population, it should be noted that the control element of voting for a
moderate opposition party is, this time, in line with the expected conse-
quences of frustration whilst we will show it to be significantly lower than
them for the general population.

It is also the case that democratic frustration as an overall index has
limited impact in most models. Institutional frustration has coherent
effects on voting for the opposition, and expressions of anger (both
peaceful and violent demonstrations), and political frustration when it
comes to explaining participation in violent demonstrations only.

The two separate components of frustration perform better. The ideological dimension of democratic desire has significant effects when it comes to explaining willingness to leave the country, participate in a peaceful demonstration, participate in a Revolution, vote for the opposition, and border significance when it comes to explaining extremist voting. Similarly, the institutional dimension of frustration performs at significant levels when it comes to explaining willingness to participate in a Revolution, and to a lesser extent, leaving the country, participating in both peaceful and violent demonstrations, and voting for the opposition. At the same time, the political dimension only matters when it comes to peaceful demonstrations. As for perceived democratic delivery deficit, only the institutional dimension reaches statistical significance in several different models: abstention, violent demonstrations, and extremist voting.

Finally, among control variables, ideology and interest in politics matter when it comes to intended participation in peaceful demonstrations, and income is instrumental with regards to a citizen's willingness to leave the country when they feel democratically frustrated.

Overall, models on behavioural consequences of frustration thus reach relatively high R^2 and show a regular effect of both democratic frustration as a whole and of some of its components, but those results are slightly weakened by the fact that voting for a moderate opposition party (which I use as a control variable unrelated to withdrawal, anger, and aggression) behaves quite similarly to the actual expected consequences of frustration.

ATTITUDINAL CONSEQUENCES OF DEMOCRATIC FRUSTRATION AMONG FIRST-TIME VOTERS

Beyond those behavioural consequences, as will again be done for the general population, I now explore some of the key attitudinal consequences of democratic frustration, and notably its impact on other electoral psychology concepts.

A first crucial attitudinal consequence of democratic frustration of interest is on perceptions of the atmosphere of elections be it as negative or as intense. Based on a series of adjectives used to characterise the atmosphere of elections, I thus create two indices and regress them notably on democratic frustration as well as a series of demographic, political, psychological, and electoral psychology determinants. The results are presented in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 Democratic frustration and electoral atmosphere

	Negative atmosphere index (FA)		Intense atmosphere index (FA)	
	b (s.e)	β (sig.)	b (s.e)	β (sig.)
DF (ideological)	−0.01 (0.00)	−0.10	−0.01 (0.00)	−0.11
DF (institutional)	0.01 (0.00)	0.12	0.01 (0.00)	0.20**
DF (political)	0.00 (0.00)	0.04	0.00 (0.00)	0.01
Gender	0.12 (0.09)	0.06	0.09 (0.09)	0.04
Age	−0.02 (0.03)	−0.03	−0.01 (0.03)	−0.02
Income	−0.05 (0.02)	−0.10*	−0.05 (0.02)	−0.11*
Big 5 Extraversion	−0.04 (0.01)	−0.16**	−0.04 (0.01)	−0.15**
Big 5 Agreeableness	0.01 (0.01)	0.03	0.01 (0.01)	0.02
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.02 (0.01)	0.06	0.01 (0.01)	0.05
Big 5 Neuroticism	0.03 (0.01)	0.11*	0.03 (0.01)	0.10*
Big 5 Openness	0.01 (0.01)	0.04	0.02 (0.01)	0.08
Ideology	0.02 (0.02)	0.09	0.03 (0.02)	0.07
Interest in politics	0.05 (0.02)	0.13**	0.07 (0.02)	0.19**
Electoral identity	−0.05 (0.05)	−0.05	0.01 (0.05)	0.01
Constant	−0.08 (0.66)	0.12	−0.31 (0.65)	
Adj R^2		0.08		0.11

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05

Whilst adjusted R^2 for negativity of perceived atmosphere index is low (0.08), it is a little higher when it comes to its perceived tension (0.13). This is in fact the opposite of the findings we have for the general population. More broadly, models explaining perceptions of electoral atmosphere work a lot less convincingly for first-time voters than for

the population in general, though of course, the differences in sample size (from 1 to 4) may have something to do with the significance of effects. In terms of the specific impact of democratic frustration which is of interest to us here, when it comes to explaining how intense first-time voters perceive the atmosphere of elections to be, the institutional dimension of democratic frustration has a statistically significant and substantive impact (0.20**). In the negativity of atmosphere model, however, frustration does not really matter. In both cases, significant control variables include extraversion, interest in politics, and, to a lesser extent, neuroticism.

Another crucial variables developed in electoral psychology models is that of hopelessness, and I used factor analysis to measure it and regress this hopelessness index on the three dimensions of democratic frustration as well as key other independent variables. The results are presented in Table 6.8.

Overall, the model has an R^2 of 0.16, which is far from the R^2 value of 0.46 that the same model will prove to achieve for the general population as we will see in Chapter 7. Only the ideological dimension of democratic frustration is just shy of the 0.05 threshold of statistical significance whilst both ideological and institutional dimensions were significant in the general population model. Other relevant predictors include conscientiousness, and interest in politics. Overall, it therefore appears that the impact of democratic frustration on the all-important question of citizens' hopelessness only becomes apparent later in their civic life whilst it only explains very little during the first vote.

A second important consequence pertains to the effects of democratic frustration on electoral hostility. Results are shown in Table 6.9. Here again, I used factor analysis to create an electoral hostility index and looked at hatred towards fellow voters as a single item dependent variable. The R^2 values for the models are 0.14 for the index dependent variable, and 0.10 for hatred. By contrast, with the general population models, those levels of explained variance are of 0.25 and 0.16 for the single hatred variable.

This time, none of the dimensions of democratic frustration are even statistically significant whilst all of them were significant when modelling the electoral hostility of the general population. Instead, only income, agreeableness, interest in politics, andonly for the index dependent variable—neuroticism have any explanatory power. This time again, it seems that democratic frustration simply does not explain as much of first-time voters' attitudes as it does for the rest of the population, confirming the

Table 6.8 Democratic frustration and hopelessness

	Hopelessness (FA)	
	b (s.e)	β (sig.)
DF (ideological)	−0.01 (0.00)	−0.12#
DF (institutional)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.03
DF (political)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.08
Gender	−0.03 (0.09)	−0.02
Income	0.00 (0.01)	0.00
Big 5 Extraversion	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.04
Big 5 Agreeableness	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.03
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.02 (0.01)	0.09*
Big 5 Neuroticism	−0.00 (0.01)	−0.02
Big 5 Openness	−0.00 (0.01)	−0.01
Ideology	0.03 (0.02)	0.09#
Interest in politics	0.12 (0.02)	0.31**
Electoral identity	−0.06 (0.05)	−0.05
Constant	−0.78 (0.20)	
R^2	0.16	

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05
# indicates coefficients that are significant at 0.10 level. Due to the complexity of the measurement and the risk it entails in terms of multicolinerity in some equations, I felt that it would be important to note coefficients that are significant at 0.10 level, not as a level that I think is significant enough to confirm that the coefficient is significant, but as an indication that there maybe a potential relationship to further explore using additional measurement strategies in the future

Table 6.9 Democratic frustration and electoral hostility

	Electoral hostility (FA)		Hatred (single)	
	b (s.e)	β (sig.)	b (s.e)	β (sig.)
DF (ideological)	−0.01	−0.10	−0.01	−0.04
	(0.00)		(0.01)	
DF (institutional)	−0.00	−0.01	−0.02	−0.10
	(0.00)		(0.01)	
DF (political)	−0.01	−0.12	−0.01	−0.08
	(0.00)		(0.01)	
Gender	−0.00	−0.00	0.07	0.01
	(0.08)		(0.29)	
Income	−0.03	−0.13**	−0.10	−0.12**
	(0.01)		(0.04)	
Big 5 Extraversion	−0.01	−0.04	−0.04	−0.04
	(0.01)		(0.04)	
Big 5 Agreeableness	−0.03	−0.14**	−0.10	−0.13**
	(0.01)		(0.04)	
Big 5 Conscientiousness	−0.01	−0.06	−0.01	−0.02
	(0.01)		(0.04)	
Big 5 Neuroticism	0.02	0.10*	0.03	0.04
	(0.01)		(0.04)	
Big 5 Openness	0.00	0.01	−0.02	−0.02
	(0.01)		(0.04)	
Ideology	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.04
	(0.2)		(0.06)	
Interest in politics	0.05	0.13**	0.12	0.10*
	(0.02)		(0.06)	
Electoral identity	−0.04	−0.04	0.00	0.00
	(0.05)		(0.17)	
Constant	0.06		4.40	
	(0.19)		(0.70)	
R^2		0.14		0.10

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05

logic of continuous grounding and worsening of democratic frustration as citizens age.

Finally, we consider the impact of democratic frustration on non-compliance or intentions of non-compliance and systemic cooperation, such as accepting to pay higher taxes to protect the interests of people whom, we believe, electorally caused the negative economic and social situation in our country, or being willing to give a new leader one did

not vote for the benefit of a "honeymoon" period, because even though we did not vote for him/her ourselves, we acknowledge that they are part of a legitimate and transparent democratic process. After running those models for the general population, we thus also wanted to establish how they perform within our sample of first-time voters only. The results are presented in Table 6.10.

Starting with the solidarity criterion (the willingness to pay more taxes to protect the economic and social interest of the very people who "created their own misery" by voting for a party or candidate whom we did not approve of and who put them in a position of economic and social fragility and vulnerability), the overall model for first-time voters has an R^2 of 0.14, which is a bit better than the 0.09 for the general population. In terms of specifics, none of the dimensions of democratic frustration is significant at 0.05 level or better, though the institutional dimension is close to it (around 0.08 level) which may be enough to consider the likelihood of a true effect given the small sample. This contrasts with the general sample where the political dimension of democratic frustration had statistically significant effects. Interest in politics, neuroticism, and openness also have statistically significant effects.

When it comes to willingness to grant new leaders one did not vote for a honeymoon period as a result of the legitimate democratic process that led to their victory, the R^2 is weaker at 0.09 (compared to a much higher 0.24 for the general population). This time, the ideological dimension of democratic frustration has a statistically significant effect on support for honeymoon periods, which pales in comparison with the general population sample whereby all three dimensions of democratic frustration had statistically significant effects at 0.01 or better. Interest in politics and extraversion are also significant.

A certain pattern is thus reproduced for a third time. Even though a lot of young people talk about their democratic frustration, in practice, our models on consequences of frustration do not explain their own attitudes and behaviour nearly as well as they do for the rest of the population. In particular, whilst democratic frustration is merely emerging among first-time voters and does not yet seem to relate very effectively to the rest of their political and electoral psychological characteristics. The conclusion I draw from this important situation is a confirmation that democratic frustration is in some ways a late blooming plant, and that its early causes take time before they transform into a cycle of bitterness.

Table 6.10 Democratic frustration and non-compliance

	Non-compliance (tax proxy)		Non-compliance (honeymoon proxy)	
	b (s.e)	β (sig.)	b (s.e)	β (sig.)
DF (ideological)	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.03	0.03 (0.01)	0.16*
DF (institutional)	−0.03 (0.02)	−0.19#	0.01 (0.01)	0.07
DF (political)	0.02 (0.02)	0.11	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.12
Gender	0.26 (0.39)	0.04	−0.23 (0.25)	−0.04
Income	−0.07 (0.05)	−0.08	−0.02 (0.03)	−0.03
Big 5 Extraversion	−0.07 (0.05)	−0.10	0.08 (0.03)	0.11*
Big 5 Agreeableness	−0.04 (0.05)	−0.06	−0.02 (0.03)	−0.03
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.02 (0.05)	0.02	−0.03 (0.03)	−0.04
Big 5 Neuroticism	0.11 (0.05)	0.14*	−0.05 (0.03)	−0.08
Big 5 Openness	−0.12 (0.06)	−0.14*	−0.01 (0.04)	−0.02
Ideology	0.07 (0.08)	0.06	−0.07 (0.05)	−0.07
Interest in politics	0.26 (0.08)	0.23**	−0.22 (0.05)	−0.21**
Electoral identity	−0.26 (0.22)	−0.07	−0.09 (0.15)	−0.03
Constant	3.29 (0.95)		−2.59 (0.60)	
R^2		0.14		0.09

Note that as the honeymoon proxy is coded in the direction of compliance ("people should give the winner a chance"), the measure was inverted before carrying out the analysis so that both regressions are of non-compliance

** means significance <0.01

* means significance <0.05

# indicates coefficients that are significant at 0.10 level. Due to the complexity of the measurement and the risk it entails in terms of multicolinerity in some equations, I felt that it would be important to note coefficients that are significant at 0.10 level, not as a level that I think is significant enough to confirm that the coefficient is significant, but as an indication that there maybe a potential relationship to further explore using additional measurement strategies in the future

Cycle of Bitterness

That democratic frustration would work as a cycle of bitterness is an extremely important finding. The literature has often highlighted the fact that young peopleand notably first-time votersare at the heart of many components of the current crisis of democracy shaking most advanced and emerging democratic regimesfrom abstention to multiple forms of direct protest. They are not, however, at the heart of the democratic frustration phenomenon.

Probably because of its largely subconscious nature, as well as the inherently asymmetric relationship between its three components, democratic frustration is not the sort of state which emerges instantaneously, but rather one that pertains to early citizenship years, but which symptoms and consequences take years to register, become apparent, and develop.

This situation seems to draw an almost perfect parallel with psychologists know of frustration in general. An unsatisfied desire will typically date to early years, but at that time, a person will likely be aware of it and be able to phrase it explicitly. It does not thus qualify as frustration just yet. It is only years later, when more mature adults have lost sight of the unmet desires from years long passed that their suffering will become more obscure, displaced, and consequentially all the more insidious and more powerful.

The exact same is true of democratic frustration it now appears. Young people can give us fairly acute accounts of what they believe is not working as it should in their democratic systems and how it disappoints them, but as such, this conscious evaluation simply does not meet the definition of frustration just yet. By contrast, years later, the discourse of exercised citizens about what frustrates them with their democracies may often become less precise, more generic, perhaps even less spontaneous, and genuine, but by that time, their frustration has settled, subconscious and deeply held. It is the time when we can truly measure it, and the time when its consequences become as strong as they are predictable. This is what makes democratic frustration a cycle of bitterness, a phenomenon which, by the time it becomes truly incubated and apparent, is not nearly as easy to address let alone to cure.

Unearthing the Initial Seed of Frustration: Findings from the In-Depth Narrative Interviews

Can we identify the inception of democratic frustration, the seed, which will later germinate into problematic unease? Can we work back what initially happened to patient zero? To look for this information, we have decided to focus on young people's original welcome into citizenship, that is, the time of their first vote. Whether positive or negative, the first electoral experience is often something that is remembered throughout one's life. To explore this often quite personal or intimate moment in one's electoral life, we decided that the most appropriate methodology to investigate this was a series of exploratory qualitative discussions with first-time voters. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on five main themes:

- Intuitionswhen does the respondent feel frustrated and what does it mean to them?
- Democratic frustration in practiceorigins, occurrences, and evolution?
- Emotions and manifestationshow does it feel, what does it entail, and how do they react?
- Causes and consequenceswho do they blame, and how do they think it impacts them as citizens and the democratic experience of others and of the country?
- Potential solutions and innovationsspontaneous and reactive?

Throughout the following sections, these five themes are used to structure the analysis of the qualitative data. Verbatim quotes are used to provide examples and insights from the four case studies.

First Memories of Frustration

Sometimes, citizens remember quite specifically when was the first time that they felt democratically frustrated, and they mention it explicitly in in-depth interviews. Interestingly, those references, even when made later in life, often pertain to very early experiences, sometimes even experiences that occurred during childhood, well before the person had the right to vote or any intention of engaging in democratic life.

The two examples below illustrate those early inceptions of frustration, memories that are still vivid decades after they occurred in a person's life

> The first time that I remember being frustrated with democracy, for me, it would probably be when I was about 10 or so, in the early to mid-2000s, the governor of my state that we elected, I remember really disliking and feeling that he was making a lot of bad choices, and then my state chose to elect him again. And I was like, this is a bad system that this man keeps getting this job that I don't think he should have. So I was pretty young. (2,20_KS_US_004)

> I don't know the words of disappointment, but like, like feeling really, really let down and feeling very disillusioned. That's probably one of the earlier times I guess, like, like, being aware of that frustration. (2,21_CA_US_001)

A Sometimes Anti-climactic First Vote

Many times, however, when it comes to describing early memories of their democratic frustration, citizens do not refer to random early (or for that matter later) memories, but specifically to the context of their first electoral experience.

Bruter and Harrison (2020) highlight the fact that when it comes to one's first election, many young people draw explicit or implicit parallels with it being one of the many "first times" of teenage years, a form of rite of passage into adulthood which can be both extremely enthralling and exciting, but also a little intimidating. They think about it, try to imagine what it will be like, and often develop high hopes about how it will symbolise their transition from childhood into adulthood, in this case in civic terms.

Yet, in the in-depth interviews, a number of first-time voters also emphasised how the actuality of their first vote may at times bitterly differ from those idealised expectations. A number of young people in fact describe an almost routine nature of voting, which is anti-climactic compared to what they had imagined. Such cases can make many people see casting their vote as "just another chore" rather than a reason to meet acquaintances, neighbours etc.

> It was a bit of a let-down, to be honest! All you had to do was go to the table, and they'd like, check your name, address, and they'd be like 'Here's

your ballot' and that's it! You just put it in and that's it. There was no… I don't know… 'celebration' kind of thing about it? It was like, oh my gosh, all that excitement was for nothing. (1_LDN_190621)

I thought I would feel more, when I left after voting for the first time, but it felt a bit anti-climactic, if anything. Because nothing really happened—I just went, there was no queue, I got given a piece of paper, I ticked a box and then I put it in the box—and that was about it. So, I was like: Oh… It's not that—woah, what have I just done? But I guess it was kind of cool, first-time taking part in democracy and stuff, I was like, 'Cool!' But yeah. Nothing that much—I was just like, I'm glad I voted, but that's it. (7_LDN_190714_ftv)

it was quite stressful actually, because, well, I think they confused my name, as when I registered they wrote my middle name as my last name, so it didn't come up on the register. and, I was just worried like they wouldn't let me vote, but then it all got sorted and I did manage to vote in the end. (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

I wouldn't describe it as exciting. Just interesting I guess, feeling more like a part of society. (2,20_UK_FTV_004)

You don't feel fulfilled or satisfied if you go and vote. It's not the same for everybody, so, the vote does not install any positive feelings that people are very proud of. (1,56_UK_005)

It was […] very strange to me how many more names are on the ballot, how many more positions are on the ballot. I ended up having to, like, look up guides online before I voted that explained what all of these different issues meant. definitely a much more daunting process than voting in midterm elections in a rural area, voting in a major election and an urban area was a very different experience. (2,20_KS_US_004)

the first time I ever voted was the midterm elections in 2018. And I was voting from Vienna, because I was studying abroad. And I think, I mean, that was kind of interesting, because there was sort of, like, a sense of removal, or distance, of what was happening, because I wasn't in the country, but also because it wasn't a presidential election, so maybe it didn't feel as, like intense, or, like, I didn't feel as much as like, I was necessarily confronting sort of the frustrating aspects of democracy. (2,21_CA_US_001)

In some case, those descriptions are openly compared by first-time voters to some of their other first times, as discussed above.

> I feel like first time voting… as anything with the first time, there's a sense of, almost, naivety? An innocence kind of thing, where you're trying to, like—your parents who are, in that situation, smarting their way through— street-smarting, sort of, and you're following… as in, you don't really know how to approach it. Yeah, so you kind of just go with the flow, and… I think it mirrored a lot of other first-times. I would say, a similar situation is like, I was—the first time I was spear-heading a competition. Because that thing, you have to take responsibility on yourself to be able to… well, to do it. Because there's a lot of people who don't—who couldn't vote, and so…. (5_NCL_190709_FTV)

> I think… it's less nerve-wracking. Like, if I take the first time I was driving, I was really scared to be there because they take you straight out onto the road and it's like, scary, if you think about, 'Oh, I don't know what I'm doing, I'm probably going to crash into people'—all that stuff. And, you're more nervous because you're in a car with someone completely new, you don't know who your driving instructor is and stuff. So I'd say it ware more nerve-wracking whereas first-time voting was pretty chilled, especially because I went, like, in the middle of the day. I was just like, 'Oh, we're going to go to the polling station…' so it was quite nice, I think. (7_LDN_190714_ftv)

In terms of the first-time voter experience, it was noted by all respondents that a lack of dedicated features and or activities meant that the experience was less 'special' or notable than they had expected.

> I was thinking to myself that this is really weird? I was thinking, 'Is this it?' Because I genuinely thought it would be, like, a big thing. And there wasn't really much direction when I was in there? I just got there. And at the end, I didn't even know where to put the paper because I couldn't see the ballot box. So at the end, I was just standing there for a few minutes; I've made my choice, 'what do I do now?' because there just wasn't any obvious box to put it in. I mean, it was next to them on the side, but I couldn't see it. I think they could've been more enthusiastic. I think they could have asked 'Is it your first-time voting?' or something, just because it was my first time. (6_LDN_190710_ftv)

One of the interesting findings drawn from the interview of a young first-time voter who voted at the Embassy of their country of residence contrasted their actual experience to what they had imagined prior to Election Day. It seems that the bigger the effort required to cast a vote (in this case many hours of travel), the bigger the anticipation of the experience seems to be. This echoes the observations we have made previously regarding how democratic frustration can be triggered early on if the reality fails to live up to or match what is expected.

> The day before election… I think I had this, a lot more… grander an idea of what an election is? Like, the polling booths would be in marble columns or something (laughs). But like, it's a lot more humble, more ho-hum than I expected it would be.

> I guess, in that way, it kind of lends itself to the legitimacy of it? To the genuineness of the environment—it's not something that's… it's by the people for the people, so that's a more community kind of feel. (5_NCL_190709_FTV)

Naturally, the election atmosphere more palpable/significant for bigger elections with higher stakes, such as General Elections or the Brexit vote (which many participants noted they wish they could have voted in at the time).

> I think the EU referendum was a big one. We were at school and it was what everyone was talking about. It was such a big deal. We also knew quite a lot about it because it was on the news so much. I mean, I don't think I really talked about other elections. Oh, and I suppose the General Election. (6_LDN_190710_ffg)

In Australia, the "hype" factor of Election Day is perhaps hampered by the fact that voting is obligatory and this transformation of a right to a duty seems to somehow hinder the excitement of an election.

The atmosphere leading up to Election Day, and perhaps sometimes even more so after the event, can been incredibly divisive and intense. Interviewees in Australia remarked upon this and commented on how frustration and misunderstanding can lead to friction and division within societies.

In 2014, you know I just realised that politics is very important. Why? Because… this was the first time our society was divided. The friction was—before, it was never like this. (5_NCL_190709_ffg)

In the UK, participants were also keen to express their perceptions of the hostility that surrounded the Brexit referendum and the aftermath of the vote. In the extract below, an interviewee describes how emotional elections can be and details how the adversarial nature of campaigns can divide voters into camps or sides that naturally coin one side a winner and another a loser thereby sometimes creating a sense of exclusion or isolation if you are in disagreement with the result.

Yes, it's very, very emotional. To the point where I feel that it's very divisive and vile. I mean, the rhetoric of all the parties are just horrible, divisive, it's hostile… it doesn't make you feel welcome as a voter. It makes you feel like… I've now got to pick a side and if I pick a side and tell someone what the side is, they're going to hate me for it. It means there's a less sociable atmosphere on voting, and in a time when everyone participates in the system together, you feel isolated from said system if you participate in the system and you disagree with somebody. (17_LDN_191211)

Another potentially negative reference was to feelings of nervousness at the time of becoming an active citizen for the first time.

I was nervous. I was nervous that… what if I made the wrong choice? As in, what if the person I chose isn't what's best for my country, or if there was someone better that could have done it." (5_NCL_190709_ffg)

Unravelling the Cycle of Democratic Frustration in First-Time Voters' Own Words

For a lot of participants, there was also a sense that democratic frustration increased over time, and with life experiences, as they started to directly see how politics impacted and interacted with their personal lives:

I suppose my frustration, my frustration has got worse. Because I, you know, going back those 40 odd years. It wasn't part of my life. (1_71_UK_030)

if I'm talking to someone, and […] they're opposed to workers' rights, then there's almost like we're in different worlds, and there's no point debating them, there's no point conversing with them, there's no point sort of, you know, feeling anything, but disdain-like, and then and I suppose that those feelings have grown. […] I've far less tolerance for, you know, people on the right then that I used to have […] It's just like, how do you respond to those people other than like "You're a fucking idiot", because they don't … they don't exhibit, there's no … the level of empirical evidence backing up their kind of arguments is like non-existent. (2_31_AU.003)

I think when I was a child, I didn't really find it very frustrating, I don't think it affected me. It was more getting older and kind of understanding the news, more stuff like that. And also, a level of being able to question things. I think when you're younger, sometimes you can listen to politicians and say, oh, okay, without ever really questioning things. Um, and so yeah, I can't say that I when I was younger, I was particularly involved. (1,25_UK_001)

In some cases, in the in-depth interviews, respondents were not so much referring to the cycle of frustration as part of their life cycle, but as part of the democratic and electoral cycle of their country, with periods that appear particularly propitious to triggering those negative frustration feelings as in the following example.

I think that I feel a lower level of frustration, kind of, always. And then around election seasons, it increases. (2,20_KS_US_004)

Democratic Frustration and Life Cycle—Generational Divides

Finally, in the discourse of some interviewees, references to the cycle of democratic frustration are more implicit and refer to a spontaneous tendency to contrast the democratic frustration of different generations.

What is particularly interesting here, however, is that when this happens, by far the dominant intuition of participants is to refer to the heightened frustrating experiences of young people rather than of other generations. In that sense, I interpret this quasi-systematic pattern as an acknowledgement of the fact that even though young people are less likely to express frustration per se, young and old alike intuitively remember

that the most striking, noticeable, or even traumatic initial seeds of frustration are typically experienced in younger years even if, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter, they may not be transformed into frustration for a further while.

Here are some such references by first-time voters, who negatively compare their experience and exposure to seeds of frustration to what they perceive as the milder experiences of those older than them.

> I think the topic is more frustrating for younger people anyway. I think, at this age, there's a lot of things that can happen at this age in life that can really impact your future. So, that's why I think it's probably more frustrating for younger people. (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

The same interviewee continues to explain this point by adding a reference to the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union (also commonly referred to as the Brexit Referendum),

> I think, I was just also annoyed because the younger people didn't have a say, like, in the end it is the younger ones who have longer to live and having seen the Scottish referendum lower the voting age to 16 -17 year olds and not have the same here kind of felt like we didn't really have a say. (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

> just more the fact that between generations, people's opinion and attitudes towards change can differ. (1,20_UK_FTV_031)

> Yeah, compared to older generation definitely. I think most of them are or would be generally dissatisfied with the system. For example, my grandparents, they'll vote for the same party no matter what and they always have. Whereas I know very very few people our age that do that. But then also I know many people our age who just don't care about voting. (2,19_UK_FTV_003)

Paradoxes of Cycles of Frustration

All in all, this chapter has highlighted an important and falsely paradoxical duality in the cycle of frustration. Early on, democratic frustration is barely visible whilst later on in the life cycle, it becomes more acutely and assertively expressed by citizens. However, at the same time, the seeds of democratic frustration overwhelmingly seem to already be there and

acquired in those early formative years of one's identity as democratic citizens and being.

The terrifying mechanics of democratic frustration make it a slippery slope, and they are already decidedly unleashed at a time young citizens themselves are not even aware of their future pathologies of frustration. Patient zero is infected, the virus is in their system, and they are just asymptomatic still and waiting for those symptoms to be triggered. As we will see now, when they are, the attitudinal and behavioural consequences of democratic frustration can prove startlingly dramatic.

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Behavioural and Attitudinal Consequences of Democratic Frustration: The Withdrawal, Anger, and Aggression Model

WHY COULD DEMOCRATIC FRUSTRATION MATTER? TYPOLOGY OF POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES

In Chapter 6, we have seen that democratic frustration cycles follow a pattern whereby largely undetected—or at any rate dismissed as unimportant a little bit too fast—will develop into an increasingly debilitating snowball of unease and resentment.

Why should democratic frustration matter when we already have models of dissatisfaction in the political science literature? Dissatisfaction as such is a "technical" issue. It means that an object is unfit for purpose and that this object ought to be improved for the subject evaluating it to be satisfied. Dissatisfaction effectively assumes cruder consciousness and rationality than we know can be expected from human subjects. Dissatisfaction is a verdict, an evaluation, not a pain. Democratic frustration matters because psychology research tells us that frustration results in suffering, affects someone's very identity and self-perception. Because it becomes part of them—in this case, potentially part of the very definition of how they conceive and experience their identity as a democratic agent within society—it has the potential to ruin the relationship between citizens and their democratic systems. It may even corrupt their very understanding of the nature of democratic citizenship and degrade it into an unhealthy and unrealistic condition.

In this book, I consider that those consequences of democratic frustration, that suffering and its expression, will most take the form of two different kinds of consequences—attitudinal (including in the identity consequences of those transformed attitudes) and behavioural. In this chapter, we will consider those in turn, starting with behavioural implications, which in a way, are those that society and democratic institutions worry most about.

Behavioural Consequences of Democratic Frustration

In Chapter 2, we proposed that the three dimensions of democratic frustration will open the route to different symptoms of what is globally termed a crisis of democracy, both in terms of the human choices that they represent, and in terms of the challenges that they raise for democratic systems. Those behavioural consequences will emerge alongside another set of attitudinal consequences, ranging from a deteriorating perception of electoral atmosphere, and increasing hostility, to a risk of outright hopelessness. Interestingly, I argue that those varying responses also seem to echo what psychology research quite precisely has identified as the three main types of human responses to frustration.

At the heart of this model, Sargent (1948) describes a sequence of behaviour that features emotion as the central dynamic factor of three key behavioural consequences of frustration: withdrawal, anger, and aggression. Those three potential responses to frustration are confirmed over and again by the psychology literature. Berkowitz (1989) and Bandura (1973) conclude that frustration is indirectly facilitative to emotional responses such as aggression, Wetzer et al. (2007) explore the relationship between frustration and anger. Anger is deemed similar to the extra punitive response behaviour (Rosenzweig, 1944) and a measurable consequence of intolerance of frustration (Martin & Dahlen, 2004). By contrast, Dollard et al. (1939) connect the frustration of a desire as the source of aggression, leading to the "frustration-aggression hypothesis" developed by Berkowitz (1989).

The parallel with symptoms of democratic pathologies is rather striking. De-participation (abstention, membership decline) is close to the psychological concept of withdrawal. By contrast, populist and extremist voting can easily be interpreted as symptoms of what psychologists describe as anger, whilst engaging in violent protests or Revolutions meets

their criteria for aggression. Thus, thinking of current systemic pathologies as symptoms of democratic frustration can explain violent protest but also radicalisation and disengagement. This is even more relevant that when the source of the frustration is not clear to the subject, violence (regardless of its forms and expressions), anger, or withdrawal is typically displaced on an innocent target, especially if the subject feels ignored or humiliated.

We thus highlight three types of behavioural consequences which represent fundamentally different yet predictable responses to potential frustration from a psychological point of view, namely withdrawal, anger, and aggression. Those typical patterns of behaviour that political scientists have associated with a sense of democratic unhappiness can thus be "translated" alongside the psychological definitions of withdrawal, anger, and aggression quite easily. A typical form of withdrawal could be abstaining in elections, different types of demonstrations can be construed to represent expressions of anger and overthrowing the system through participation in a Revolution to act out on one's unhappiness matches the psychological concept of aggression. I consequently derived 6 possible reactive patterns, two each (one "soft" and one "hard") for the three types of psychological reactions considered. I then asked respondents how likely it would be for them to engage in them in view of their potential frustration with a political situation to assess the potential consequences of each dimension of democratic frustration. In addition, I also use "voting for an opposition party" as a control reaction which I described as cooperation (as opposed to withdrawal, anger, and aggression). This operationalisation is summarised in Table 7.1.

The model explores how the different dimensions of democratic frustration may affect different behavioural patterns, notably assessing the circumstances under which democratic frustration will lead to "pathologies" such as disengagement, extremism, or violent protest, defined here

Table 7.1 Typology of the consequences of democratic frustration

Reaction Level	Withdrawal	Anger	Aggression
Soft	Abstention	Peaceful demonstration	Extremist vote
Hard	Leaving the country	Violent demonstration	Revolution

as the potential democratic equivalents to the psychological symptoms of withdrawal, anger, and aggression. As my model suggests that the three dimensions of democratic frustration are hierarchized, with ideological frustration being perceived as more "redeemable", political frustration as the most personalised, and institutional frustration the most fundamental, I expect the ideological dimension to result in more "benign" pathologies resulting in withdrawal, the more personalised frustration resulting in corruption and dishonesty of the elite personnel to be more likely to lead to anger, and the more fundamental institutional frustration to be more likely to lead to anti-system reaction, i.e. be more likely to result in aggression. In short, the three dimensions will lead to increasingly severe frustration reactions. The expectation is also that whilst levels of the three dimensions of democratic frustration will affect the six democratic withdrawal, anger, and aggression symptoms, they will not be predictors of cooperation in the form of voting for a regular opposition party.

How Widespread Are the Behavioural Consequences of Democratic Frustration?

There are two potential strategies that we could be adopting to evaluate how widespread the potential for the typical consequences of democratic frustration is.

One option would be to focus on actual behavioural occurrence, but there are issues with that. Some "harder" forms are notoriously contaminated by social desirability effects (such as extremist vote) or could even potentially present a danger for respondents if admitted (such as acknowledging actual participation in a violent demonstration). Furthermore, throughout the book, I have shown that democratic frustration can be a moving target, a dynamic funnel which can worsen over time or, as we shall see later in that book, potentially improve based on a number of potential mitigating options.

As a result, it seems more sensible to consider the potential for withdrawal, anger, and aggression rather than their occurrence by considering behavioural intentions as opposed to the occurrence of the negative behaviour itself. I thus asked respondents to what extent they would consider potential withdrawal, anger, and aggression behaviours when unhappy with their democracy.
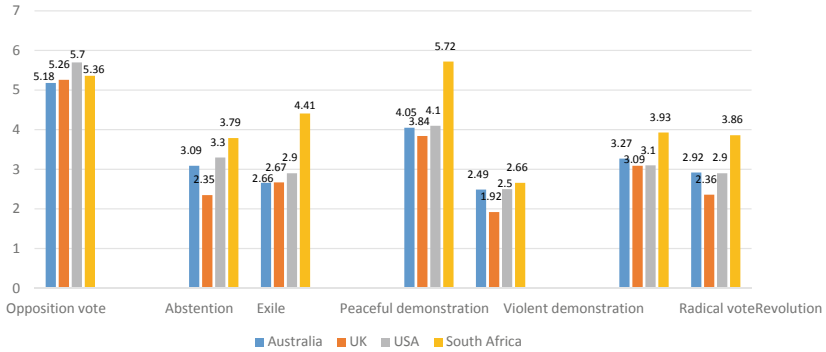
Fig. 7.1 Consequences of frustration—the withdrawal, anger, aggression model

The results are presented in Fig. 7.1 across the four main countries of analysis, based on survey responses with the fieldwork conducted around the elections that took place in each country.

To start with, the "baseline" behaviour—voting for the opposition, which is not an expected consequence of democratic frustration per se—is more likely to be chosen by respondents than any of the frustration-derived behaviours. The only exception is South Africa where voting for the opposition rates marginally lower than participating in a peaceful demonstration (the "soft" measure of anger), but this needs to be contextualised as South Africa where the ANC has historically benefited from extremely strong support from a significant part of the population which saw it as the party which ended Apartheid. Indeed, the ANC still routinely obtains approximately 60% of the vote or over in most elections (though this was "only" 57.5% in the 2019 General Elections), and a lot more in some regions. Similarly, standard deviations are typically proportionally lower for this than for the hostility-related behaviours. This lower variance suggests that the baseline behaviour is less discriminating than my measures of withdrawal, anger, and aggression, again consistently with my theoretical expectations.

In terms of the three expected forms of behavioural reactions to democratic frustration, let us start with withdrawal. Psychologically, withdrawal is a way for someone who suffers from frustration to extract him/herself from the source of their suffering—in this case national democratic

institutions themselves. Here, I suggest that a "soft" form of such with-drawal is abstention in elections—which is about secluding oneself from the "democratic" process part, and a "hard" form exile, which involves extracting oneself from the country as a whole, a far more radical option. Figures only partly confirm the hierarchy between the "soft" and "hard" measures of withdrawal, with respondents declaring a lower average prob-ability to abstain than to leave the country in two of the four countries (although only marginally so): South Africa and the UK. In both cases, however, it is possible to imagine a contextualised narrative which explains why leaving the country may be an option of particular relevance. South Africa is, quite simply, a country of emigration, marked by high levels of inequality, insecurity, and economic vulnerability. This logically explains a significantly higher propensity to consider leaving the country in case of dissatisfaction (4.41 on a 0–10 scale) compared to all other coun-tries. While the UK only has an exile propensity (2.67) in line with both Australia (2.66) and the US (2.9), it is worth remembering that the Brexit schism led a significant number of remainers to notably mourn the loss of their right to live anywhere in the EU following Brexit. Just as impor-tantly, few respondents report a high probability to abstain in elections in case of dissatisfaction (from 2.35 in the UK to 3.79 in South Africa), which would in principle suggest that it is not such a "soft" form of withdrawal after all. Nevertheless, it is likely that those figures are largely affected by social desirability bias and that in fact, a significant proportion of citizens who not only would likely consider abstaining but have in fact done so, sometimes repeatedly, feel some shame admitting to it.

Voting for a radical party initially appears to be a similarly little widespread "soft" option in the field of aggression. This time, the option gets an average probability of 3.09 in the UK to 3.93 in South Africa. Here again, however, there is a certain issue with knowing whether self-placement measures are optimal in assessing the true likelihood of people choosing such an option in case of dissatisfaction given the social desirability issues surrounding extremist voting. It is also worth noting, however, that the specific case studies in which this research occurs are also not the most propitious to radical electoral behaviour. Indeed, options for radical parties are very marginal in the US or even Australia. Conversely, it is quite possible that many people voting for the Brexit Party or UKIP in the UK or the Economic Freedom Fighters in South Africa may vibrantly deny that their electoral choice ought to be consid-ered radical, even though many of their opponents may be under little

doubt that they are. This time, however, the "hard" option—taking part in a Revolution—systematically rates lower as a probable response to democratic unhappiness, with figures ranging from 2.36 in the UK to about 2.9 in both Australia and the US, and 3,86 in South Africa.

Finally, the third category of answers fit in the category of anger. Here, both measures relate to demonstration, but the "soft" option refers to peaceful demonstrations whilst the "hard" option pertains to events that could turn violent. The differences in ratings are this time very clear cut. Probability to react through peaceful demonstrations ranges from 3.84 in the UK to 5.72 in South Africa. Once again, Australia and the US are very closely aligned around 4.1. It is worth remembering that peaceful demonstrations hold a special place in the history of democratisation in South Africa and have also been identified with significant mass movements in recent months in both the US (Black Lives Matter, but also previously some significant demonstrations by opponents to President Trump) and the UK (anti-Brexit demonstrations notably). Probability of participating in potentially violent demonstrations is much lower everywhere, ranging from just above 1.9 in the UK (where such demonstrations are historically extremely rare) to 2.66 in South Africa. Once more, both the US and Australia report very similar figures around 2.5.

It is thus the case that in terms of overall descriptive statistics which we wanted to consider first, there is a clear difference between the non-frustration-related baseline reaction mode of voting for a mainstream opposition party and the six items identified as representing withdrawal, anger, and aggression types of behaviour. Apart from participating in peaceful demonstrations, those all typically rate quite low (an average of about 3 on a 0–10 scale), which actually makes it all the more propitious to use those items to test whether reactions of withdrawal, anger, and aggression are, as claimed, specific consequences of democratic frustration. We note a few interesting comparative differences, with those reactions being typically least likely in the UK and most likely in South Africa, but with relatively little difference between the UK, US, and Australia with regard to most items. Finally, the differences between the "soft" and "hard" reaction thresholds for each of the three reactions are typically confirmed but relatively limited in scope, perhaps illustrating the fact that withdrawal, anger, and aggression are in fact never entirely harmless reactions when it comes to a democratic context.

The Impact of Dimensions of Democratic Frustration on Withdrawal, Anger, and Aggression: Multivariate Analysis

Let us now consider the extent to which democratic frustration is really at the heart of explaining the consequential behaviours that I theoretically attributed to it, and notably the extent to which individual dimensions may lead to different types of consequences. In order to assess this impact, it is indispensable to use dimensions of democratic frustration as independent variables in multivariate models in which they have to "compete" with known social, demographic, and political predictors of those behaviours to understand the extent to which dimensions of democratic frustration have robust behavioural effects. The demographic variables that we enter include gender and age, social controls are captured by income, and political controls by ideology and interest in politics.

However, the nature of my democratic frustration operationalisation creates an additional complication which most similar multivariate analyses do not entail. As we have seen throughout this book, the very specificity of my operational concept of democratic frustration is that it works as an interaction between democratic desire and perceived democratic delivery deficit (Chapters 1 and 2). In models seen previously, notably in Chapter 5, where democratic frustration worked as the dependent variable of interest, this did not have any methodological consequences. However, now that we are considering it as an independent variable leading to further consequences, it is important to remember that in classic modelling theory, entering interactive effects in a regression equation should normally be systematically accompanied by the inclusion of direct effects (i.e. the individual components which make the equation) as discussed for instance by Allison (1977), Crawford, Jussim et al. (2014), and Jaccard, Turisi et al. (2003). In this case, this means that alongside the three dimensions of frustration, we ought to include the individual terms for democratic desire and perceived delivery deficit. In fact, beyond methodological classicism, there is good substantive reason for doing this as this. Indeed, it will enable us to understand the relative strengths of the individual effects of those two fundamental "ingredients" of frustration, and notably demonstrate whether as suggested throughout this book, the importance of democratic desire is likely to have been underestimated in many existing models of political protest.

The findings from the multivariate analysis are presented in Tables 7.2A and B. As before, we include "voting from a mainstream opposition party" as a control dependent variable as this measure of cooperation is not deemed to be a likely consequence of frustration in my model. We run two versions of the regressions—one which includes "true interaction" (Appendix 1: Table 7.2A), that is, separate entries for democratic desire, democratic delivery deficit, and democratic frustration operationalised as the interaction between those, and a simplified version that only includes democratic frustration per se (without individual components) to avoid risks of multi-collinearity (Appendix 1: Table 7.2B). In both cases, it is worth remembering that the variables used for the three frustration dimensions are the factor scores from the three factor analyses, and similarly, the three measures of ideological, institutional, and political democratic desire are the result of factor analysis between the relevant 9 measures included in the survey, as are the three measures of perceived democratic deficit.

As a reminder, there is an element of correlation between dimensions of democratic frustration which raises a risk of multicollinearity between them. However, this risk is further emphasised by the nature of the inclusion of both interactive terms and main effects in regression as amply noted in the literature (Nizalova & Murtazashvili, 2016), which can sometimes create issues with the signs of measured relationships in the regression test of fully specified interactive models. As a result, many scholars choose to test interactive regression models omitting direct effect. Whilst I report the main, fully specified model at the top of Table 7.2, I also run the model with this omission of direct effects and report the frustration items that are then statistically significant in the bottom part of the same Table. That way, readers have access to both the classically tested fully specified model which presents a "tough test" for the interactively designed democratic frustration and enables me to disentangle the effects of the desire and delivery deficit component of the term individually as well as their added interaction, but risks including an element of multicollinearity, and the simplified model which focuses on overall frustration effects and does not distinguish between the relative powers of the two components of frustration, but gives a good overall assessment of the most important dimensions of frustration in each model, and meaningfully reduces the risk of multicollinearity.

The findings from Tables 7.2A and 7.2B are startling in a number of different ways. First of all, in terms of overall model performance, using

the full true interaction models, we note that all 6 models come up with fairly strong levels of explained variance (at least by standards set by most behavioural models). In the US, they range from an adjusted R^2 of 0.19 for leaving the country to 0.22 for peaceful demonstrations, 0.23 for voting for an extremist party, 0.24 for abstention, 0.27 for taking part in a Revolution, and finally 0.30 for participating in a violent demonstration. Furthermore, this contrasts with an R^2 of only 0.15 for voting for the opposition, which is emphatically not explained by our model of democratic frustration as was indeed our expectation theoretically. In general, the models perform better for "hard" measures of the consequences of frustration than for the "soft" measures, except for leaving the country which we immediately see may present issues as a measure of withdrawal as we will discuss later. With the simplified model in Table 7.2B, the R^2 logically goes slightly down from 0.07 for the control, 0.15 for peaceful demonstrations, 0.17 for exile, 0.19 for extremist vote, 0.21 for abstention, 0.23 for participating in a Revolution, and 0.27 in a violent demonstration. The hierarchy of effects is largely similar to the earlier models, and it makes it easier to understand which dimensions are most consequential later in the analysis.

I then ran the same models in the other three countries included in the study (albeit with the dependent variable measurement limitations discussed earlier in this book) to assess whether models similarly work outside of the US. The findings are reported in Fig. 7.2. Typically, with less comprehensive measurement, the models perform less well, but they remain able to explain significant variance in other countries. The abstention model has adjusted R^2 of 0.11 and 0.14 in the UK and Australia, respectively, though working less well in South Africa, leaving the country has an R^2 of 0.18 in Australia, almost similar to the US, but performs less well in the other two countries. Models of peaceful demonstration perform strongly everywhere (0.13 in South Africa to 0.18 in the UK) as do models of violent demonstration (0.11 in the UK to 0.23 in Australia), and models of taking part in a Revolution (R^2 of 0.10 in the UK to 0.15 in Australia). Only the models explaining a vote for extremist parties are weaker outside of the US (R^2 of 0.10 in both Australia and South Africa).

Of course, however, it is not only important to look at the overall model performance but also to specifically ensure that democratic frustration is making a significant contribution to those models. I do so by first running "baseline" models with all the control variables (i.e. all variables except the three dimensions of democratic frustration) and then
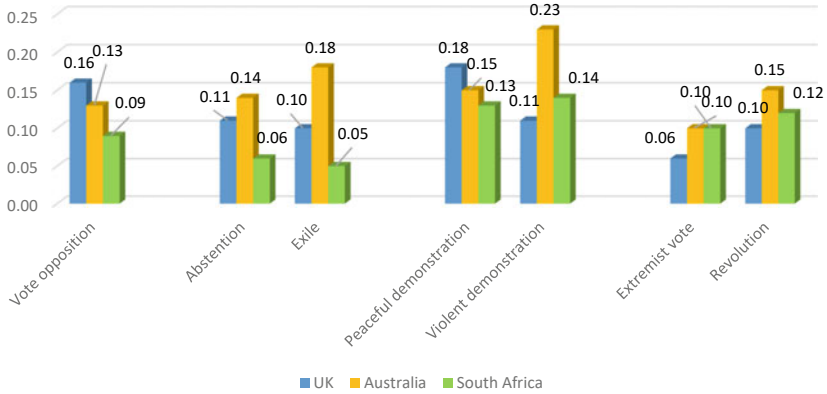
Fig. 7.2 Comparative behavioural consequences of democratic frustration

assessing how much the models' overall performance improves in the fully specified version where those frustration variables are included. This gives the "minimum" possible effect of frustration (as in reality, frustration will take a significant share of the variance which is also shared with the control variables). Again, in the context of the control model (voting for the opposition), the three democratic frustration variables add nothing to overall model performance. In all models of the consequences of frustration, however, including the democratic frustration variables adds substantive improvements to the R^2. This ranges from a model + 0.05 in the model of leaving the country and + 0.07 when it comes to both measures of aggression (extremist voting and taking part in a Revolution) and + 0.08 for everything else, that is, abstaining, participating in a violent demonstration, and engaging in a Revolution. In other words, overall, including a sense of democratic frustration in the model does certainly make a very substantive difference to understanding the likelihood of citizens to engage in those politically behavioural forms of withdrawal, anger, and aggression.

I ran similar tests in the other three countries. This time, R^2 improvement by adding frustration items tends to be a little bit more modest than in the US, undoubtedly as the result of the worsened measurement, even though gains remain present in all models. The withdrawal models tend to show the most modest improvements. In the context of abstention models, R^2 increases by 0.01 to 0.02 (in Australia) compared to 0.08 in

the US. In the context of leaving the country, those improvements are from 0.01 to 0.03 (in both Australia and South Africa) again 0.05 in the US. When it comes to aggression models, minimal effects range from 0.01 to 0.04 (in South Africa) which is much less than in the US (0.07), and for participating in a Revolution from 0.01 to 0.02 (in Australia), which contrasts once again with 0.07 in the US. Finally, when it comes to anger models, the effects are broader comparatively. In terms of peaceful demonstrations, minimal effects range from 0.02 in Australia to 0.08 in South Africa (compared to 0.09 in the US), and in terms of participating in violent demonstrations, from 0.02 to 0.06 in Australia (compared to a minimal effect of 0.10 in the US). This time again, minimal effects are comparable in the control model.

However, this comparison for a baseline model is unfair on democratic frustration items, as it assumed that all shared variance is (unrealistically) fully ascribed to control variables as though none of it was to be explained by our meaningful variables. As a result, I also calculate the "maximal effects" explained variance by running models only with all the democratic frustration individual components and overall (interactive) variable but none of the control variables. By contrast, this gives the maximum possible effect of democratic frustration by ascribing all shared variance to our independent variables of interest which is also unrealistic but an important calculation. This time, the lowest model is again achieved when it comes to explaining leaving the country (R^2 of 0.08). All other models are much higher in terms of frustration explained variance, ranging from an R^2 of 0.12 when it comes to explaining participation in a peaceful demonstration, 0.13 for extremist voting, 0.14 for taking part in a Revolution, 0.15 for our control voting for the opposition model, 0.16 for abstaining, and finally 0.18 for participating in a violent demonstration. By political behaviour models, those are generally very high levels of explained variance given the narrowness of the independent variables that I include, and which were never intended to "replace" a number of other key causes such as interest in politics or ideology.

And once more, when it comes to assessing those maximal effects in the UK, Australia, and South Africa, they tend to be less strong than in the US but still generally robust. Let us first consider the two types of aggression consequences, which is where the models are weakest. The model performs very poorly when it comes to explaining extreme right voting in the UK (0.01) but note the skewed dependent variable in the country given the party system. By contrast, the model performance goes

up to 0.05 for extremist vote in South Africa and for participating in a Revolution in Australia. When it comes to the two types of withdrawal consequences, both abstention and leaving the country, those effects range from 0.01 (South Africa, abstention) to 0.06 (Australia, abstention and leaving the country). By contrast, for the two anger models, the models range from 0.03 (Australia, peaceful demonstrations, UK, violent demonstrations) to 0.10 (South Africa, peaceful demonstrations, Australia, violent demonstrations).

In other words, combining both "worst case scenario" and "best case scenario" figures, we can say that the variance explained by the democratic frustration ranges between 0.05 and 0.08 for models of leaving the country, 0.08 and 0.12 for participating in a peaceful demonstration, 0.07 and 0.13 for voting for an extremist party, 0.07 and 0.14 for taking part in a Revolution, 0.08 and 0.15 for voting for the opposition, 0.08 and 0.16 for abstaining, and finally 0.08 and 0.18 for participating in a violent demonstration. Those are the realistic ranges of democratic frustration total effects on what I have highlighted as the possible anger, aggression, and withdrawal behavioural consequences of democratic frustration in the US case.

Finally, the most crucial part of the analysis is of course to look at the impact of individual dimensions of frustration and understand which dimensions tend to explain which forms of behavioural consequences. Those are summarised in Fig. 7.3. It also involves comparing the effects of democratic frustration as an interaction and of its two critical components: democratic desire and perceived democratic delivery deficit, both of which have an important role to play in my model. The results are highly revealing from both the points of view of dimensions and of components. In terms of the control model, only the ideological and institutional components of democratic desire have an effect. For the rest, there are key differences both in terms of which dimensions are more relevant and which components of frustration.

Let us consider the fully specified models in turn starting with the two forms of withdrawal consequences. Abstention is particularly interesting because three independent variables of interest have statistically significant effects representing each a different dimension and a different component: those are the institutional interactive variable, the ideological dimension of desire, and the political dimension of perceived delivery deficit. By contrast, leaving the country shows that it is a weaker model
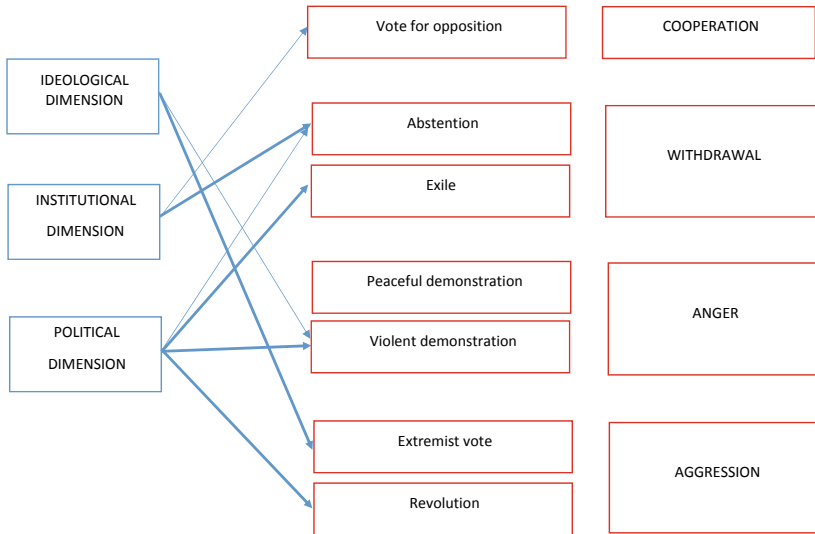
Fig. 7.3 Summary of behavioural consequences of the dimensions of demo-cratic frustration

with only the ideological dimension of democratic desire having a statis-tically significant effect. When considering the reduced models, which only include the overall frustration variables rather than also adding its two components, the institutional dimension of frustration has statisti-cally significant effects in both models, and the political dimension on leaving the country only.

In the other three countries included, overall, when it comes to abstaining in elections, both the ideological and institutional dimensions of democratic frustration end up being significant in at least some context. When it comes to the ideological dimension, the frustration interaction as well as an ideological delivery deficit has statistically significant effects in both the UK and Australia, whilst ideological desire is significant in the UK only. The institutional dimension follows the exact same pattern apart from desire which is not significant anywhere. However, the polit-ical dimension has no statistically significant effect anywhere. By contrast, when it comes to explaining leaving the country, all three dimensions have some significant effect in at least one country. When it comes to the ideological dimension, the frustration interaction has no significant

effect, but desire has in both the UK and South Africa, and ideological delivery deficit in South Africa only. By contrast, the institutional dimension has statistically significant effects for both the frustration interaction and delivery deficit in the UK as well as Australia, but desire does not. Finally, when it comes to the political dimension, frustration as a whole and delivery deficit have statistically significant effects in South Africa, but not in either Australia or the UK.

Moving on to the two models of anger leads to equally interesting results. This time, for peaceful demonstration, it is the ideological interactive frustration term which is statistically significant. The ideological dimension of both democratic desire and perceived delivery deficit is also statistically significant alongside the institutional dimension of desire. By contrast, when it comes to participating in a violent demonstration, the two statistically significant effects are the ideological dimension of desire and the institutional dimension of delivery deficit. In terms of the simplified models, two of the frustration items are significant in the context of participating in violent demonstrations: ideological and political.

Let us consider again the situation in the other three countries included. This time, when it comes to peaceful protest, all three dimensions have some significant impact. In ideological terms, the frustration interaction and delivery deficit have no significant effect, but desire has strong and significant effects in both Australia and South Africa. In ideological terms, the interaction and delivery deficit have statistically significant effects in the UK, and desire in South Africa. Finally, in political terms, desire has a statistically significant effect in South Africa again. When it comes to participating in violent demonstrations, the ideological dimension has no meaningful effects. Institutionally, however, the frustration interaction has a significant and meaningful effect in Australia, and delivery deficit in all three countries. Finally, when it comes to the political dimension, it is mostly democratic desire which has significant effects in Australia and South Africa.

Finally, let us take a look at the two measures of aggression consequences of frustration. When it comes to extremist voting, only the ideological dimension of democratic desire is a statistically significant predictor. More items perform well when it comes to participating in a Revolution: the ideological and institutional dimensions of democratic desire, and the political dimension of perceived democratic deficit. Looking at the simplified models, it is the ideological dimension of frustration which remains statistically significant to explain extremist voting,

and its political dimension which explains participating in a Revolution. We also ought to compare those to the opposition vote control model, whereby two dimensions of desire (institutional and political) are statistically significant in the fully specified model, the institutional dimension of frustration being the only one that also remains statistically significant in the simplified model.

Once more, let us turn to the other three countries included in the analysis, starting with the propensity to vote for an extremist party, for which both the ideological and institutional dimensions have some significant effects. When it comes to the former, this is limited and ideological democratic desire has an effect in South Africa only. By contrast, the institutional dimension shows interactive frustration effects in both the UK and Australia and institutional delivery deficit in all three countries. The political dimension has no statistically significant effects in any model apart from the US. Participating in a Revolution results in largely similar patterns except that this time all three dimensions prove to have some impact. In terms of the ideological dimension, it is once a case of only ideological desire being meaningful in South Africa alone. This time again, however, the institutional dimension proves a lot more relevant with frustration interactions having significant effects in the UK and Australia and delivery deficit in the same two countries. Finally, in political terms, frustration has significant effects in Australia as has democratic desire, but delivery deficit is not significant anywhere.

With all those elements considered, it is thus obviously the case that democratic frustration is a meaningful source of behavioural reactions of withdrawal, anger, and aggression. This is evidenced both by the fact that democratic frustration items are quite powerful within models of the six behavioural modes of withdrawal, anger, and aggression that I explore and by the fact that their unique contribution to those models is very significant effectively contributing somewhere between 5 and 18% of total variance depending on the model and whether we consider the more conservative or more generous versions of the models.

One of the most crucial findings that we can derive from all those multivariate analyses is that depending on the specific model, democratic desire, perceived delivery deficit, and overall democratic frustration conceived as the interaction between those two are all meaningful determinants of withdrawal, anger, and aggression. In fact, whilst existing behavioural models tend to primarily emphasise output dissatisfaction, it is noteworthy that in most of the models that I ran, the democratic desire

components have more significant effects than the perceived delivery deficit ones (ten occurrences of statistically significant as opposed to four). One or more dimensions or other of democratic frustration as an interactive term is statistically significant in either full and/or simplified models for each of the six behavioural consequences analysed.

Equally crucially, I find that all three dimensions matter in some cases but not others, so that they have specifically differentiated behavioural consequences. Thus, ideological frustration seems to have important effects in the case of anger reactions, and the desire component of ideological frustration specifically also on withdrawal and aggression. Overall institutional frustration has an important impact on abstention but also of the opposition vote control. Conversely, the desire component of institutional frustration specifically has an impact on peaceful demonstrations whilst by contrast, perceptions of an institutional delivery deficit have a greater impact on participating in violent demonstrations instead. Finally, the political dimension of democratic frustration tends to have its strongest effect on "hard" measures with withdrawal, anger, and aggression (leaving the country, participating in violent demonstrations, or even in a Revolution). Perceptions of a political delivery deficit specifically also impact abstention, whilst high political desire results in a greater likelihood to consider voting for the opposition in reaction to a situation of democratic unhappiness.

Among the limitations of the findings, it is worth noting that the one model which systematically works less well than the other regressions pertain to leaving one's country as a result of feeling democratically frustrated. There are two aspects to that limitation. The first one is that it is not entirely clear that leaving the country works as a form of withdrawal. Indeed, whilst leaving the country may be construed as a way to extract oneself from a given political and social environment, it may not really meet the psychological criteria of withdrawal in that in psychological terms, withdrawal primarily consists of a form of apathy (or at any rate increased passivity) and closing in on oneself, leaving the country is, in fact, a radically active choice of escape which may, in itself, be much closer to a behavioural expression of anger. Indeed, it is worth noting that whilst the regressions ran to explain the choice to leave the country as a consequence of democratic unhappiness have very little in common with abstention models, they are, by contrast, much closer to hard anger models such as those explaining the decision to join a violent demonstration. Secondly, those models explaining the decision to leave the country

see democratic frustration explain a little less than most others. This is probably due to greatly skewed data and some significant preconditions to one being in a position to consider leaving the country, notably age as this option is simply not realistic to many middle-aged respondents with a family whilst it is to many young people regardless of their level of democratic frustration.

Overall, this particular behavioural outcome is thus a little bit harder to use as part of the withdrawal, anger, and aggression model than the other five, and it might be worth considering alternative forms of withdrawal. To the extent that the psychological concept of withdrawal could almost be defined as passivity, that is, in and of itself, an absence of behaviour, it may be more relevant to include attitudinal consequences or even the possibility of "doing nothing" as a response to democratic unhappiness in future research.

Narratives of the Behavioural Consequences of Democratic Frustration

The different types of behavioural consequences of democratic frustration which we assess in this chapter under the withdrawal, anger, and aggression model and its adaptation to the field of democratic politics are amply echoed by the narratives of citizens' frustration from their in-depth interviews.

For instance, we just mentioned the limitations of the regression models of leaving the country as a result of one's democratic frustration, but that outcome is explicitly mentioned by some respondents, and directly related to their sense of democratic frustration as in the examples below:

> after Brexit, I was genuinely very much kind of thinking leaving the country. So, I've lived in the UK for the past two decades now. decades, yeah. Almost decades. I went to school here, University, and I was kind of quite set on my life being here. And I don't know if it's part of just getting older growing up. But the way that the government, the way that Brexit happened, the vote, I didn't really feel as welcome over here. And the end, the way the pandemic was dealt with, I kind of got the feeling very often that people didn't matter so much, you know, that it was almost an inhumane way of looking at things. And it made me think, yeah, might

be, it might be worth for me, maybe moving country going to somewhere where I might feel looked after represented. (1,25_UK_001)

Sometimes, however, references to form of withdrawal are a lot more moderate or even conciliatory in appearance, but effectively still suggest that respondents are somehow giving something up as a result of feeling democratically frustrated.

> I guess my first annoyance would probably be The Brexit Referendum. My family was split over the issue. Mum voted leave, dad voted remain, and I would have voted remain It was like, at that time I was frustrated that the vote went to this other side because I personally wanted to stay. But then again, it wouldn't be democracy if I'd got my way: there's always going to be a loser. And I feel like the petition was made to reverse it would have been bad because it wouldn't be a democracy if you then wanted to reverse the policy. Like although I didn't agree with the outcome, I accepted it. Because then, the leavers would have been just as unhappy, you know. So, I feel like there's not a perfect system, as there always has to be a loser in democracy. (1,19_UK_FTV_002).
>
> I would always vote. I feel it is important. It will create an impact although it may not be the outcome you want necessarily (2,19_UK_FTV_003)

References to the second set of behavioural consequences—anger—are no less frequent. Referring to the referendum of the UK's membership of the European Union, one respondent described the anger that derived from the frustration they felt towards their friends.

> I felt very angry towards my friends. And I felt that I was worthless. And I also found that everything I did for the country, for the UK like working, volunteering, charity where I put my skills forward to help improve the country, it just hurt (1,56_UK_005)

The same interviewee added further detail to this experience by describing how this anger and frustration resulted in disagreements and fall outs with friends over this particular aspect.

> We've had a lot of arguments. Some I didn't want to be friends with anymore [….] if you don't share the same points of view, we don't share the same values. So, I don't want to be friends with you (1,56_UK_005).

The personal consequences of my frustration is that I have now got myself into a situation where I am studying a degree in politics. That's how frustrated I am. If I wasn't frustrated, I would be doing history, you know. I want to make a difference, because I'm frustrated with the current status quo and that has led me to make certain life changing choices. You know, because of that frustration, you know, I felt so moved by, you know, what was going on at the time when I was making, you know, choices for a levels and choices for university degrees [....] It has had real ramifications on my life. And I now want to go into politics and work in public policy or some branch of policy, governance, political governance, because of my frustration, because I am unhappy with the current status quo that exists in the world. Yes, alone in the UK, you know, and that it has had real ramifications on my life. And it's changed my worldview on so many different issues and so many different, you know, ideas and concepts and norms, you know, has completely changed because of my frustration towards politics (1,19_UK_FTV_006)

In my model, a particularly relevant form of anger is the decision by a citizen to vote for extremist parties. This is again spontaneously mentioned by several respondents in the interviews.

Well, no, because, as much as I think that votes are wasted, I think not voting for who you want and outing your vote on an extremist party is an even bigger form of wasted votes. As you're casting it for smaller opposition parties, you might as well cast it for someone else (1,19_UK_FTV_002)

The next interviewee describes how they felt the need to do something after they were left feeling extremely frustrated with the outcome of the Brexit referendum.

I was very, very annoyed. But, I needed to find some way to express my point of view, to push me towards actions, I had to do something. I joined one of the civil society organization. It was an organisation made to connect Europeans in London. I was also a member of the old parliamentary groups in the UK Parliament for the rise of EU citizens affected by Brexit. Becoming an activist for me was a way to direct my anger and my energy in a positive way. So, it helped me a lot (1,56_UK_005).

Finally, the last set of behavioural consequences of interest in my model relate to the psychological concept of aggression, and can take a number

of forms, some mild, such as demonstrations, but also some acute, such as a willingness to take part in a Revolution as illustrated here:

> I was talking to my Uni friend about it the other day. We were talking about the situation and it being hard to know where it could go from here. I guess, I just feel that the only way that there could be change is a revolution although it seems very unrealistic. It's sort of a self-fulfilling prophecy I guess. It does depend on the public too how they want to instrument this change, and also by their knowledge of the situation. Especially the younger people as they are coming more to the realisation (2,19_UK_FTV_003)

In short, throughout the interviews, respondents largely confirmed my typology of withdrawal, anger, and aggression as the most likely behavioural consequences of democratic frustration, as well as echo the way we have operationalised them in ways that mirror, some of the forms of protest and democratic pathologies that often most worry observers and academics alike.

From Behavioural to Attitudinal Consequences

Whilst behavioural consequences of democratic frustration are critical when it comes to adapting psychological models of frustration to the field of democracy, my model also suggests that the state of democratic frustration experienced by many citizens will also and perhaps even more obviously impact several of their democratic and electoral psychology attitudes.

In particular, I noted that I expect democratic frustration to affect citizens' perception of the atmosphere of elections, their level of institutional distrust, non-compliant tendencies, as well as their levels of hopelessness and of electoral hostility. All these elements are also associated in different ways to the current crisis of democracy. Let us take some of those elements in turn.

Democratic Frustration and the Atmosphere of Elections

The atmosphere of elections is a prominent concept in the work of Bruter and Harrison (2020) when highlighting its role as a major factor defining

the electoral experience of citizens. The idea is that whilst many political behaviour scholars have devoted significant attention to the role of context in elections, from the point of view of individuals' narratives, references are not so much made to context as to atmosphere, which can be understood as the way in which citizens digest a whole range of contextual elements and short aggregate infinitesimal and often unnoticed short-term factors (Campbell, Converse et al., 1960). Bruter and Harrison (2020) have found that typically, the atmosphere of elections is always described overwhelmingly negatively by most citizens (with positive references almost anecdotal). They also suggest that ultimately, when comparing the perceived atmosphere of different elections, individuals tend to express their perception of it along two principal scales: negativity and intensity, both of which primarily characterise those atmospheric features. In this case, I thus explore the relationship between levels of the three dimensions of democratic frustration, and two indices of electoral atmosphere using confirmatory factor analyses of multiple individual characterisations to capture how negative and intense citizens describe the atmosphere of the election as. As a reminder, the focus on electoral atmosphere also stems from the timing of the main surveys used in this book, which were conducted during election time.

The negativity element is measured as the factor score from the single factor solution of six atmospheric characteristics of the election perceived as tense, divisive, hostile, toxic, aggressive, and frustrating. The intensity element is also a single factor solution of the analysis of atmospheres perceived as uncertain, intense, and dramatic. In the negativity factor analysis, the single factor solution had an eigenvalue of 4.03 (explaining 67.2% of total variance) with all items correctly loading, and in the intensity factor analysis, the single factor solution had an eigenvalue of 2.83, explaining 70.8% of total variance. Note that an exploratory factor analysis of those and other atmospheric items also ascribed them to the right factors.

To understand the role of democratic frustration on the perceived atmosphere of the election, I then ran regressions of those atmospheric indices, using the three dimensions of democratic frustration alongside a few key social, demographic, psychological, political, and electoral psychology controls (gender, age, income, big 5 personality dimensions, ideology, interest in politics, and electoral identity). The results are presented in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3   Democratic frustration and electoral atmosphere

	Negative atmosphere index (FA)		Intense atmosphere index (FA)	
	b (s.e)	β (sig.)	b (s.e)	β (sig.)
DF (ideological)	0.00 (.00)	−0.01	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.05
DF (institutional)	0.00 (0.00)	0.09*	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.09
DF (political)	0.01 (0.00)	0.22**	0.01 (0.00)	0.18**
Gender	0.03 (0.05)	0.02	0.16 (0.06)	0.08**
Age	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.03	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.06*
Income	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.05*	−0.01 (0.01)	0.03
Big 5 Extraversion	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.04	−0.00 (0.01)	0
Big 5 Agreeableness	−0.03 (0.01)	−.05*	0.00 (0.01)	0
Big 5 Conscientiousness	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01	0.03 (0.01)	0.06*
Big 5 Neuroticism	0.03 (0.01)	0.08**	0.02 (0.01)	0.05
Big 5 Openness	0.02 (0.01)	0.04	−0.00 (0.01)	0
Ideology	−0.06 (0.01)	−0.14**	0.01 (0.01)	0.02
Interest in politics	0.10 (0.01)	0.23**	0.11 (0.01)	0.24**
Electoral identity	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.01	−0.06 (0.02)	0.07**
Constant	−0.54 (0.20)		−0.1.31 (0.22)	
R^2	0.22		0.09	

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05

The models confirm, in different ways, that democratic frustration does indeed affect citizens' perceptions of the atmosphere of democracy and elections. The effect on the negativity of the atmosphere is significant with both institutional and political dimensions of democratic frustration having meaningful and statistically significant regression effects, especially the latter. Those frustration effect trump most controls, though neuroticism, extraversion, ideology, and interest in politics among others as well as gender, age, and income remain of importance. Adjusted R^2 is 0.27.

Adjusted R^2 is also very high at 0.26 in the UK despite less accurate measurement of the dependent variable, but a lot less compelling in South Africa (0.09) and Australia (0.13). Interestingly, however, all three dimensions of democratic frustration have statistically significant effects in the UK, the ideological and political dimensions in South Africa, and the political dimension alone in Australia.

Effects on the perceptions of atmospheric intensity are a little bit less acute, but still show a very meaningful and statistically significant effect for the political dimension of democratic frustration. This time,

control variables that have an effect in the model differ a little. They include gender, interest in politics, and electoral identity. The R^2 is a little bit lower in the US this time at 0.23, but falls more sharply elsewhere (0.05 in South Africa to 0.09 in the UK). In the US, both the institutional and political dimensions of democratic frustration achieve statistically significant effects, whilst relevant control variables include extraversion, neuroticism, openness (marginally), interest in politics and ideology alongside age, gender, and income. However, only the political dimension of frustration has statistically significant effects in Australia and South Africa.

On balance, however, the regressions simply confirm that as expected, feeling democratically frustrated leads to find the atmosphere of elections more negative, intense, and uncomfortable, and that the institutional and in particular the political dimensions of frustration—which pertain to institutional processes and the quality and integrity of political elite, respectively, have the greatest impact in high performing models.

Democratic Frustration and Hopelessness

We now turn to the impact of democratic frustration on hopelessness, one of the most consequential electoral psychology attitudes identified by Bruter and Harrison (2020). Hopelessness is a very meaningful behavioural outcome, not only because it is a striking attitude in its own right, but also because it can have critical disinhibiting effects on such attitudes and behaviours as electoral hostility, abstention, and extremist and populist voting.

In this case, we operationalise hopelessness based on the factor score of the single factor solution of a factor analysis of four attitudinal items. Those, respectively, pertain to the feelings that things are going from bad to worse, the hope that things will get better, the perceptions that children and grandchildren will live a better life, and that collectively, the people of the country make the right decisions. As the factor is dominated by positive items, it is then recoded inversely to become a measure of hopelessness rather than hope.

We then run a regression of this indexed measure of hopelessness as explained by the three dimensions of democratic frustration, and also using the same control variables as in the previous consequence regressions (gender, age, income, big 5 personality dimensions, ideology,

interest in politics and electoral identity). The results are presented in Table 7.4.

The findings are striking and confirm that democratic frustration has a statistically significant and very meaningful effect on making citizens feel more hopeless. This is true of all three dimensions of democratic frustration although only marginally for the political one. Among the control variables, there are highly significant effects of extraversion, agreeableness, interest in politics, ideology (with right-wing people more likely to feel hopeless, though it is worth remembering that this was an election won by the Democrats), and electoral identity (with supporters tending to feel more hopeless than referees). Overall, the model performs strongly with an adjusted R^2 of 0.13 for the full regression.

However, this time, the model performance is far more impressive in the other countries studied, reaching R^2 of 0.44 in the UK, 0.28 in Australia, and 0.17 in South Africa. All three dimensions of democratic frustration have statistically significant effect in Australia, ideological and institutional in South Africa and ideological alone in the UK, which may say something about the ideological stakes of the 2019 election

Table 7.4 Democratic frustration and hopelessness

	Hopelessness (FA)	
	b (s.e)	β (sig.)
DF (ideological)	0.01 (0.00)	0.18**
DF (institutional)	0.01 (0.00)	0.16**
DF (political)	0.00 (0.00)	−0.01
Gender	−0.10 (0.04)	−0.05*
Age	−0.01 (0.00)	−0.15**
Income	0.01 (0.01)	0.02
Big 5 Extraversion	0.00 (0.01)	0.01
Big 5 Agreeableness	−0.00 (0.01)	−0.01
Big 5 Conscientiousness	−0.05 (0.01)	−0.10**
Big 5 Neuroticism	0.04 (0.01)	−0.09**
Big 5 Openness	−0.01 (0.01)	0.01
Ideology	−0.20 (0.01)	−0.43**
Interest in politics	−0.00 (0.01)	0
Electoral identity	−0.05 (0.02)	−0.06**
Constant	1.74 (0.18)	
R^2	0.46	

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05

in the country. Note that among the controls, electoral identity is also statistically significant in the UK and Australia but in the opposite direction from the US (i.e. this time, it is referees who feel more hopeless), whilst agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism are all significant in some of the countries and ideology and interest in politics everywhere.

DEMOCRATIC FRUSTRATION AND ELECTORAL HOSTILITY

I also expect democratic frustration to make citizens more likely to be electorally hostile towards one another, that is, to develop negative emotions and feelings towards those who vote differently from them, such as anger, distrust, contempt, disgust, and hatred. One of the issues with electoral hostility is that it is conceived by Bruter and Harrison (2020) as a "cycle of ever deteriorating emotions" which raises issues about data structure when it comes to indexing those elements as they may be both hierarchised and successive (dynamic). As a result, I run a double regression to test my hypothesis on the impact of democratic frustration on electoral hostility. The first one is based on the single factor solution to a factor analysis of four of all 8 negative hostility emotions (distrust, frustration, anger, hostility, disgust, contempt, animosity, and hatred). The second is based on hatred as a single factor which encapsulates the final stage of electoral hostility. The results for both equations are presented in Table 7.5.

Both regressions confirm that democratic frustration has a significant and meaningful impact on electoral hostility (both as an index and as a sole focus on hatred towards opposite voters). The institutional and political dimensions of democratic frustration have statistically significant and meaningful impacts in the index hostility regression, though multi-collinearity between the institutional and political dimensions leads to the wrong sign being ascribed to the latter. In the hatred model, only the political dimension matters. Among control variables, agreeableness, conscientiousness (both negative), neuroticism (positive) ideology (left more hostile), and interest in politics (more interested citizens are also more hostile) all have meaningful effects in both regressions. Extraversion and electoral identity are also statistically significant in the electoral hatred regression only, and neuroticism only in the indexed electoral hostility one. R^2 are quite high: 0.12 in the general electoral hostility variable and 0.14 in the single item electoral hatred one.

Table 7.5 Democratic frustration and electoral hostility

	Electoral hostility (FA)		Hatred (single)	
	b (s.e)	β (sig.)	b (s.e)	β (sig.)
DF (ideological)	0.01 (0.00)	0.14**	0.01 (0.00)	0.10*
DF (institutional)	0.00 (0.00)	0.09*	0.01 (0.00)	0.12**
DF (political)	−0.00 (0.00)	−0.09*	−0.02 (0.00)	−0.19**
Gender	−0.20 (0.05)	−0.10**	−0.55 (0.16)	−0.09**
Age	−0.01 (0.00)	−0.20**	−0.04 (0.01)	−0.20**
Income	−0.00 (0.01)	0	−0.03 (0.02)	−0.03
Big 5 Extraversion	0.03 (0.01)	0.06*	0.10 (0.04)	0.07**
Big 5 Agreeableness	−0.07 (0.01)	−0.15**	−0.20 (0.04)	−0.13**
Big 5 Conscientiousness	−0.07 (0.01)	−0.13**	−0.20 (0.04)	−0.13**
Big 5 Neuroticism	0.04 (0.01)	0.08**	0.06 (0.04)	0.05
Big 5 Openness	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.02	−0.06 (0.04)	−0.04
Ideology	−0.09 (0.01)	−0.19**	−0.13 (0.04)	−0.09**
Interest in politics	0.07 (0.01)	0.17**	0.09 (0.03)	0.07**
Electoral identity	−0.01 (0.02)	−0.01	−0.18 (0.06)	−0.07**
Constant	1.61 (0.20)		8.31 (0.64)	
R^2	0.25		0.16	

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05

Once more, the models of consequences of democratic frustration tend to typically work better outside of the US, with adjusted R^2 of 0.21 in the UK, and 0,17 in Australia for the indexed model, though only 0.06 in South Africa. In terms of the hatred model, R^2 are a little lower (between 0.06 in South Africa and 0.15 in the UK). In terms of democratic frustration predictors and in the context of the indexed model, unlike the US model, it is the ideological dimension of frustration which is, this time, best at predicting electoral hostility in the other three countries. The same is true when it comes to the hatred model, though this time, the institutional dimension also matters in the UK. In the UK and Australia, gender (more hostility from men), and age (negative) also matter in addition to psychological and political controls. Furthermore, outside of the US, electoral identity is also an important predictor of electoral hostility in South Africa (both models) and the UK (hatred model only) with referees being more likely to be hostile than supporters in both countries.

Democratic Frustration and Compliance

Finally, at the border between attitudes and behaviour, one key aspect of my theoretical model is that democratic frustration, because of its nature and make up will also result in the de-legitimisation of the democratic order and a lack of diffuse support for it (Easton, 1975), which will ultimately lead citizens to be less willing to comply with public policy outcomes which they disagree with and refuse to accept the decisions of political leaders which they have not voted for in the election. Compliance is critical to democratic robustness and stability because it is what leads citizens to continue abiding by the institutional system and its outcomes even when it is not run in a way which they specifically approve.

Whilst I do not have a direct behavioural measure of compliance in the survey (which would effectively assess the propensity of individuals to have disobeyed the law, I use two different proxies to measure and model the non-compliance phenomenon. The first one has to do with outcomes and the likelihood of respondents resenting paying higher taxes to fund political situations that have proceeded from an electoral outcome which they did not desire. The second measure pertains to citizens' belief that electoral victors should be given the benefit of the doubt when they take office even when they have not voted for them, in other words, the principle of an electoral honeymoon. As the item was phrased positively (support for a honeymoon effect), that variable was first inverted so that both regressions are of non-compliance. The results of the two regressions are presented in Table 7.6.

Let us first consider the resentment towards paying taxes towards non-desired outcomes. In this case, only the institutional dimension of democratic frustration has a statistically significant effect (in the correct direction) with more institutionally frustrated citizens more likely to resent paying higher taxes to fund political situations proceeding from electoral results which they did not choose, which can have enormous consequences on solidarity and the very fabric of democratic legitimacy. Among control variables, agreeableness, interest in politics and ideology have statistically significant effects. The overall power of the model is modest, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.12.

The model performs sensibly similarly overall in the other three countries, with R^2 of 0.09 in Australia to 0.12 in South Africa. However, in South Africa, it is the ideological rather than institutional dimension of democratic frustration which matters most with a secondary effect for

Table 7.6   Democratic frustration and non-compliance

	Non-Compliance (tax proxy)		Non-Compliance (honeymoon proxy)	
	b (s.e)	β (sig.)	b (s.e)	β (sig.)
DF (ideological)	0.01 (.01)	0.04	0.02 (0.00)	0.19**
DF (institutional)	−0.01 (.01)	−0.04	0.02 (0.00)	0.19**
DF (political)	0.02 (.01)	0.15*	−0.02 (0.00)	−0.28**
Gender	−0.91 (.26)	−0.14**	−0.23 (0.14)	−0.04
Age	−0.01 (.01)	−0.04	−0.03 (0.00)	−0.17**
Income	0.00 (.04)	0	0.06 (0.02)	0.07**
Big 5 Extraversion	−0.07 (.06)	−0.04	0.00 (0.03)	0
Big 5 Agreeableness	−0.16 (.06)	−0.10*	−0.11 (0.04)	−0.08**
Big 5 Conscientiousness	0.02 (.07)	0.01	−0.15 (0.04)	−0.11**
Big 5 Neuroticism	−0.02 (.06)	−0.01	0.04 (0.03)	0.04
Big 5 Openness	−0.07 (.06)	−0.04	0.03 (0.03)	0.03
Ideology	0.10 (.06)	0.07	−0.35 (0.03)	−0.27**
Interest in politics	0.17 (.05)	0.12**	−0.05 (0.03)	−0.04
Electoral identity	0.23 (.10)	0.08*	−0.05 (0.06)	−0.02
Constant	6.19 (1.04)		1.25 (0.56)	
R^2	0.09		0.24	

** means significance <0.01
* means significance <0.05

the political dimension. Among controls, electoral identity has meaningful effects in the UK and South Africa but in opposite directions (supporters are more tempted by non-compliance in the UK whilst it is referees in South Africa). Gender has meaningful effects in all other three countries unlike the US (with men more tempted by non-compliance) as is age in Australia and the UK but in opposite directions. Income matters in the UK only with poorer people being more likely to choose non-compliance.

The second version of the model is based on rejection of the honeymoon phenomenon and giving election winners a chance even when one has not voted for them, just because their election is the result of a fair and transparent democratic process. This time, all three dimensions of democratic frustration have statistically significant effects, though it follows the wrong sign for the ideological dimension undoubtedly due to multicollinearity with the other dimensions. Among control variables, electoral identity, age, income, agreeableness, and interest in politics all have statistically significant effects. This time, the overall model has an adjusted R^2 of 0.15.

Moving to the UK, Australia, and South Africa, models tend to perform better in the first two with adjusted R^2 of 0.21 in the UK and 0.17 in Australia but only 0.10 in South Africa. In the UK, the three dimensions of democratic frustration also have statistically significant effects, whilst ideological and political matter in Australia, and the ideological and institutional dimensions in South Africa. Most significant controls are similar to the US. Electoral identity notably matters significantly in the UK and South Africa but with the opposite sign from the US. Ideology also matters outside of the US in addition to interest in politics, and conscientiousness in the UK and South Africa. Gender matters in the UK only.

Overall, between those two elements, it is, therefore, clear that democratic frustration leads citizens on the path towards non-compliance and increases their propensity to disinhibition when it comes to justifying disobedience towards political leaders and outcomes, which they do not specifically support in an Eastonian sense of the word (Easton, 1975). Note, however, that perhaps logically, those effects are much stronger when it comes to the willingness to give new leaders a chance in principle, than when it comes to the more specific feeling of resenting paying taxes that will effectively protect fellow citizens from the consequences of those leaders' policies. In that sense, it may take a higher and harder level of frustration to lead citizens further along the path of non-compliance beyond what may be construed as a first threshold of "democratic sulking".

Everyday Attitudinal Consequences of Democratic Frustration—qualitative Evidence

Using survey evidence, I have shown that democratic frustration seems to have consistent and significant attitudinal and behavioural consequences. However, those consequences go beyond a statistical reality and are amply exemplified by the narratives of citizens in individual interviews.

The first way citizens refer to the attitudinal consequences of democratic frustration in in-depth interviews is by spontaneously expressing emotions which echo a sense of seriousness of gravity, and indeed of hopelessness. Democratic frustration is a scale with milder or more worrying characterisation. This attribute of seriousness is notably evoked by a few South African respondents, who spontaneously related frustration to hopelessness:

Our Country is Ending
no Hope or Freedom of Change
Hopeless Promises
Helplessness
Depressing
Shameful

A second series of narratives focus on the transformation of democratic frustration into non-compliance. This can take several different forms, more or less serious, in the discourse of various interviewees.

I refused to vote after Whitlam got sacked. he was the person I supported and the way in which he was removed from office I was really offended by and objected to. And it was pretty obvious that the Libs were seizing power in a way that was, well had never been done in Australia before. So I refused to vote in that election that elected Fraser. So, it was complete waste of time! And the Commonwealth police did hunt my mother down and did try to serve papers on her for not, for me not voting. […] So I guess I, it, it destroyed any naivety I had about democracy at that point. (1_AU_65_002)

A third set references are to electoral hostility, starting with hostility towards specific groups of citizens including one's own.

[…]But frustration not at the system. But at people my age not engaging with politics. Or anyone, like, my biggest frustration is anyone that moans about politics and they go I go, oh, did you vote in the last election? They go no. And I'm like, well, then you can't have a say! You can't then like, just go spoil your ballot paper […] So, at that point you know, it's your own fault, you go and vote then if you really care that much. So that's one of my frustrations as well is people our age (2_24_UK_012)

It's frustrating but I think women are the highest proportion of floating voters. So, it does frustrate me when I hear women saying like, oh, there's no point in engaging. I'm sure you remember, in the last election, there's a whole campaign in, at least a few counties, that counties have like tactical voting. So, if you wanted to oust a certain party, you would vote for a party that you didn't even necessarily want in, but you just wanted the other one out. And I found that really painful and frustrating, because it undermines the whole, like system and process of the whole thing if you're not even voting for a party that you want. So, it's all very maddening, sorry it's a bit depressing! (1_26_UK_017)

> […]the type of speeches that the president gives, how ludicrous they are, how poorly you know, he's, he's managed policies and so on. Even though he lost some seats in Congress, his party, they're still in like a nominal majority. And that just frustrates me so much, because I'm just sitting there thinking like, are these people living in the same country that I am? Like, are they not seeing what's happening? And like, there's frustration, yes, against voting them, wanting the fact that there is still voting for the President. But my frustration also is, I think, in just how lightly people take voting. […]So that that part frustrates me. I think the fact that some people just take it very, very lightly. 1_21_UK_FTV_021

Of course, hostility can also be directed at voters from the other side, An interesting sidenote to all of this is that people tended to emphasize getting frustrated with other people because they just wouldn't listen or they didn't try to look at their point of view, but rarely did they consider (or reflect on) their openness towards the other persons point of view—which means it becomes a bit of a zero-sum engagement, neither side is listening and both feel frustrated. But ultimately "dialogue" isn't dialogue, it's about persuasion.

> Yeah, I would say that in, sort of, navigating these discussions with people who maybe don't necessarily align with me, there are occasionally… I honestly don't think I've ever really had an argument in the sense of like yelling at someone that's never or being yelled at. That's never happened to me. I've never been a part of that. But like disagreeing with people for sure. And I think sometimes that does increase my frustration when I feel like I'm in a disagreement with someone who is so completely on another side of an argument to me and like not, and I feel like they're not willing to look at my points in good faith, I think that does increase my frustration with democracy as a whole sometimes, because it's like, well, how is this supposed to work when people aren't paying attention to these things that are important to me? Yeah. (2,20_KS_US_004)

> I think I've become more apathetic towards that way. You know, seeing more and more of the same shit. I'm not shocked. You have to be a certain kind of person to get into politics (1_30_AU_007)

> I get emotionally aggravated because the decisions coming up ahead of the election. And you tend to get emotionally argumentative with your colleagues at work, your social friends at the golf club or neighbours, right? You know, your neighbours put up as big signs saying vote communist. And you resent that. You didn't know that they really were in support! So, I think yes, in a period ahead of an election, it appeared, all sorts of

emotions are exposed, and it makes you anxious, aggravated, argumentative, and so on. Because you want to discuss it with somebody, and then when they react, you get very disappointed. (2_76_UK_010)

> So, I have a very good friend in America who I've known for 40 years. They live in Carolina. So, you know, it's the South. So, it was traditionally quite Republican, and now they've been, they have gone to Democrats. And he said, it's really scary. He said, I don't dare talk about the subject to people because you never know how they're going to react. If they're Trump supporters, they react, you know, really, very negatively. And I've got in shouting matches with people I've never had an argument with in my life. And, and yet, they get really aggravated about it because they think Trump was right. And that he should have been re-elected. And he's been cheated on. It's even gotten to the point that his sister who's 81 years old, won't talk to him any longer. Which is sad. He's 79 and his, sister is 81. And she's stopped talking to him won't answer the phone. Yeah, and she's just got married and didn't invite him to the wedding! Because he's married a Trump supporter! (2,20_KS_US_004)

> Not really in terms of conversations, but like, I have got a friend from back home who has become quite a socialist, and she posts a lot of social media about like the issue. But, I don't think she realises how one sided and not representative it is. So, for example like some things Boris Johnson said, it was on the internet like a list of all the quotes that he said. But then there were pages and pages of quotes that weren't even in quotation marks, which obviously were not all true. So, it's little things like that that like stand out to me that shock me. It's scary to see how easily people believe things they see on social media, and how fast they can share it despite it not being totally accurate. (2,19_UK_FTV_003)

And then, echoing our earlier findings on how democratic frustration tends to endemically penetrate private spheres and disrupt citizens' relationship with their families and friends, we find from their narratives, that friends are also often on the receiving end of the hostility that stems from citizens' democratic frustration.

> My friends said we are voting Brexit, but it's not for you, it's for the others. Like, in the sense that I can stay so it's not to do with me. But, however, I still am the others. And it was difficult to you know, to convince them that the consequences of Brexit were bigger than having less Romanian or Italians working in the UK, but a lot of legislations and agreements that would have been cancelled or changed because of Brexit. It was clear that they just didn't have information. But at the time, I thought they didn't

want to listen, because emotionally they thought they were doing the best for that country. This made me very, very angry (1,56_UK_005)

I think what surprised me a lot was having conversations with people my age that disagreed. Obviously, it's fine to disagree with each other, but it was just their argument. So, I would ask for example, "okay, so you voted to leave the EU. Why". And one friend, I remember quite distinctly said, well, the answers that he was giving me felt very racist, and it was someone that I, you know, that went to school basically with me. And that was quite hurtful in a way and quite worrying for me. It was hurtful in the sense that I was very surprised as well that someone my age that was educated in a similar environment and in a similar way to the way that I was, could think and say things like that, especially to my face, because my parents are immigrants […]I think Brexit has been the only thing that I have really argued about, in terms of elections and in terms of something about with friends and with that specific friend when she told me she was voting for Brexit, so even before I heard any of her reasons, we didn't speak for about a month. I was angry. Just really angry. Yeah. really angry. I just couldn't understand (1_20_UK_032)

[**People who voted for Brexit in Wales**] And yet, they would have been saved, you know. Their parents worked over here. I mean, I, it wasn't helped, obviously, by lockdown in the pandemic and all the rest of it, but, I mean, they would've stayed. So, that particular election probably makes me the angriest, the saddest. I mean, to a certain extent, I have less respect for them. I mean, it's, it's one of those subjects, isn't it? Unless you know who you're talking to you avoid it like the plague. I mean, you don't you don't bring the subjects up. But it's, um, I do have less respect for them. Yeah. I don't think they've thought about the future. I don't think they've thought about our children and our children's lives. And the, you know, the way they are. I mean, I, my daughter's husband is half Japanese. I mean, he was born and bred in the UK, but he's half Japanese. And my other daughter lives in America, who has Croatian roots. So, you know, it's, it's different. All these cultures and enrich us all (1_71_UK_030)

All in all, qualitative narratives thus echo every single one of the attitudinal consequences of democratic frustration that I identified in my model and confirmed using quantitative evidence. Those qualitative illustrations of those consequences, however, paint a crude picture of how consequential frustration can be in individuals' real lives, including in ways that make them feel hopeless, make them question the automaticity of compliance, and on a more personal level, can create tension with fellow citizens in general and their very own friends and family members.

Conclusion: The Threat
of an Ever-More-Consequential
Democratic Frustration

Early on in this book, I pointed out that in psychology and psychiatry, frustration is considered not so much in its own right but because of and through its consequences, to the extent that many therapeutic approaches may focus on those grave and disruptive consequences alone and mostly assume the pre-existence of the underlying frustration rather than characterising it. Whilst my work oh democratic frustration, due to its social science nature, has on the contrary focused a lot on analysing and characterising democratic frustration per se, the question of its consequences remains essential. I have used political science and electoral psychology literature to consider what could be some of its most essential analytical effects, and the intersection between psychology and political science to establish democratic equivalents to the traditional withdrawal, anger, and aggression behavioural tryptic of the psychological consequences of frustration.

The results have been striking. Attitudinally, I have shown that democratic frustration citizens' democratic frustration worsens their perception of the atmosphere of elections (notably institutional and political dimensions) as well as their willingness to comply with policy decisions (political dimension) and be willing to offer newly elected leaders a "honeymoon" period of legitimacy at the start of their mandate (all three dimensions). Even more significantly, however, I have shown that democratic frustration also has a very significant impact on electoral hostility (all three dimensions). Nevertheless, the attitudinal model with the most striking—and possible most consequential—results has shown that more than anything, democratic frustration, in its ideological and political dimensions is highly likely to lead citizens to feel hopeless, an attitude which Bruter and Harrison (2020) have shown to be both highly traumatic to them, and behaviourally consequential because it serves to disinhibit citizens and make them consider paths—from abstention to extremism and sometimes violence, which they would not have considered otherwise. The hopelessness model had a particularly high R^2 of 0.46.

It is thus also logical to expect that democratic frustration will not only affect citizens' attitudes, but also their behaviour. In that section, I referred to the traditional psychological expectations of frustration

leading individuals to a combination of three types of behaviours: withdrawal, anger, and aggression. In order to test this model, I adapted those three types of consequences to pathologies of democratic crisis, including abstention, willingness to leave one's country, peaceful and violent demonstrations, extremism, and considering joining a Revolution. In order to show the power of this model, I also included a control variable in the form of voting for a moderate opposition party, which whilst being a potential response to political dissatisfaction does not fit any of the three pathological modes expected from frustration.

In the regression analysis, I showed that democratic frustration models failed to explain voting for the opposition with an R^2 of 0.07 only and no dimension of frustration statistically significant at 0.01 or better. By contrast, every single model of pathologies of frustration resulted in R^2 of 0.15 to 0.27. Whilst none of the dimensions of frustration explained engagement in peaceful demonstration, all other models had significant effects from at least one dimension of frustration, particularly institutional for abstention and political for leaving the country, violent demonstrations, and engaging in a Revolution. The ideological dimension is the least impactful but has moderately significant effects on violent demonstrations and extremist voting.

Overall, these findings are essential because they illustrate that even after controlling for key traditional demographic, social, psychological, moral, political, and electoral psychology variables, democratic frustration—in all three of its dimensions—has very significant attitudinal and behavioural consequences that nothing else seems to explain. The validation of the withdrawal, anger, and aggression model means that democratic frustration truly behaves as a form of frustration. At the same time, some of the most noteworthy attitudinal consequences—notably electoral hostility and hopelessness—make it an absolutely critical concept to understand voters' electoral psychology.

Of course, I started this book by highlighting how democratic frustration is of critical importance because it seems to relate to a number of real-life consequences—from abstention to extremism and violent demonstrations, and from electoral hostility to non-compliance and hopelessness, which are increasingly worrying in real-life democratic contexts, not least in the four countries studied in this book. Let us now precisely turn to seeing how everything we have learnt about the nature, dynamics, determinants, cycle, and consequences of democratic frustration seem to be

illustrated by four case studies of democratic frustration in those four countries, and the way that it is framed in public spheres.

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Contextualising Democratic Frustration: Unravelling Narratives of Citizens' Frustration in the US, UK, Australia, and South Africa

Societal Expressions of Democratic Frustration

I have already suggested that "frustration" is one of the most frequent references spontaneously made by citizens when referring to how they feel about their democracies. In open-ended discussions, we found citizens far more likely to express their frustration when they think of the way their democracies work than to mention dissatisfaction, boredom, apathy, or any other negative reference, let alone any positive ones. In fact, references to personal frustration often also double up as references to the same feelings being perceived as widespread within society. At the same time, "frustration" is also a ubiquitous assessment made by analysts and the media when it comes to the attitudes of the citizens of the four countries which we are exploring in this book. But how does this mood of frustration get mentioned? In which regular or exceptional moments of the democratic process is it evoked? Who is it attributed to and following what causes and sequences of events and responsibilities?

In this chapter, I move away from democratic frustration as a "personal" state to explore instead how it is also framed as a widespread—or even "default" societal context in all four countries that I study in this

book. I explore the question of societal expressions of democratic frustration by engaging in a series of four short historical case studies in a format inspired by analytic narratives (Bates et al., 1998). Each takes place in one of the four comparative national contexts at the heart of this book and occurring in recent years. In the UK, the case study pertains to expressions of citizens' frustration throughout the Brexit saga (Harrison, 2018a, 2018b). In the US, I focus on references to democratic frustration in the context a US system caught in the stand-off between President Trump and the Democrat led House of Representatives and the threats of political and administrative paralysis that ensued. In South Africa, the case study is interested in references to frustration in relation to the levels of endemic corruption that have been deplored in part of the institutional, bureaucratic, and political system following the death of Nelson Mandela and throughout the 2010s. Finally, in Australia, I explore references to frustration in the context of the management of the coronavirus pandemic and the sanitary, social, and economic crisis that has accompanied it.

Based on the model that I initially exposed in chapter 1, we note that the British example is prima facie a case centring on ideological questions. By contrast, the Australian case is one which is predominantly concerned with the question of institutions. This is clearly different from the example I chose in South Africa which fits squarely with the political dimension of democratic frustration. Finally, the American one on the border between ideology and institutional functioning. In short, the four case studies do not only cover the four countries that this book is interested in but also the three different dimensions of democratic frustration in my analytical model, as well as a range of apparent consequences that have included abstention and civic disengagement (withdrawal), demonstrations (anger), and support for radical parties and movements (aggression).

Split at Its Heart: Mutual Frustrations in Brexit Britain

Historical Setting

Of living memory, Britain has experienced no period marked by the same combination of divisions, uncertainty, and tense roller coasting as that which started with the campaign on the referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union in 2016 and is continuing to this day. For

anyone who has lived in Britain during that period, and regardless of their views on the Brexit situation, the concept of frustration will undoubtedly ring an intuitive bell and highlight one or other of the many tensions, changes, hopes, and disillusions which most people will have experienced one or many times during the period.

The historical setting is quite simple. In 2015, fearful of another hung Parliament after 5 years during which he had to govern in a coalition with the Liberal Democrats, Prime Minister David Cameron opted to focus his General Election campaign on an issue which he believed would mobilise the Conservative heartlands: Europe. He promised that if he was re-elected, he would engage in a negotiation with the European Union to modify the terms of the country's membership of the European Union and close the process with a referendum that he would organise inviting the British public to choose between remaining in the European Union under those "new" conditions or leaving the EU. The elections took place on Thursday 7 May 2015, and Cameron's Conservative party won an outright majority in Parliament (although the polls suggest that the promises of EU renegotiation and referendum were not instrumental to that victory, largely due to worries by many moderate voters about a potential Labour-SNP coalition), and the Cameron government proceeded with its plans and after a rather underwhelming "renegotiation" phase, announced a referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union.

That referendum took place on Thursday 23 June 2016 after a very tense campaign period, which frequently showed the "remain" and "leave" camps as neck and neck whilst political debates proved tense and often fractious. The Remain campaign was effectively led by the Prime Minister despite his long-standing scepticism towards European integration (including his choice to remove the Conservative party from the centre-right European People's Party group in the European Parliament which he deemed exceedingly "federalist", in favour of a group mostly made of a number of populist right Eurosceptic parties from Northern and Central Europe). The leave camp was also led by members of the Conservative parties such as Boris Johnson and Michael Gove with a separate more radical pro-Brexit strand led by UKIP and Nigel Farage. Whilst much of British democratic debate for the past 60 years had followed strict and well-ingrained partisan and left–right divisions, the Brexit debate followed an entirely different path, often creating deep lines of fractures within the two main political parties in British politics and

reinforcing, instead, other cleavage lines, notably between young and old, metropolitan areas and small towns, or along national and educational lines among others.

In the end, on the night of 23 June 2016, the UK, the EU, and the world discovered—often with some surprise on both sides—that a majority of 51.9% of voters supported Britain leaving the European Union with a national turnout of 72% despite atrocious climatic conditions in much of the country's southeast. In the aftermath of the vote, David Cameron announced his resignation and was replaced by Theresa May, the incumbent Home Secretary who had been perceived as a "sceptical remainer" during the referendum campaign. Ms May invoked article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty on the European Union on 29 March 2017 to start the formal process of the UK leaving the European Union (a process legally due to last for up to 2 years) and pledged to reunite a deeply divided country by negotiating the conditions of Britain's exit whilst proposing to encapsulate her position under the famous "Brexit means Brexit" slogan. In the period prior to it, the article 50 activation itself was challenged in courts on the basis (notably) that such a process could only stem from an Act of Parliament and not a Cabinet decision (interpretation of the "Royal Prerogative") and due to the constitutional provisions in matters of devolution. That legal theory was ultimately tested by the High Court on 3 November 2016, and the by the Supreme Court in the Miller v Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union case decided on 24 January 2017 which found in favour of Gina Miller and her legal team, thereby rejecting the Government's agreement on process and upsetting much of the pro-Brexit camp whilst being hailed by many Remainers. The Supreme Court case was adjudicated unanimously on the devolution argument and with a strong majority of 8 to 3 on the Royal Prerogative argument.

The legal verdicts (initially that of the High Court) led to vitriolic reactions in part of the media, with a few infamous front-page titles on 4 November in the Daily Mail (which pictured the photographs of three justices above the title): "Enemies of the People" and the Daily Telegraph, portraying the judges below the title "The judges versus the people".

Despite those legal difficulties, the May Government seemed to enjoy an initial period of popularity, which, paired with converse doubts surrounding the Labour leadership, and difficulties in the negotiations with the European Union led Ms May to try and ride on the wave of very

promising polls by calling a snap election to take place in June 2017—
only to find out that hopes of an unprecedented majority translated in the
sobering news of a loss of one and the return to a second hung Parliament
in 7 years as Ms May, hurt in her leadership credentials had to nego-
tiate a "confidence and supply" agreement with the Democratic Unionist
Party from Northern Ireland (i.e. no formal coalition or membership of
Government for the DUP but a pledge to support Government in confi-
dence votes, notably on Brexit and budget but not necessarily on other
regular legislative issues, against budget appropriation pledges), a small
party known both for its strong unionist line (it was founded by Ian
Paisley during the period of the Troubles and campaigned against the
Good Friday Agreement in 1998) but also for its inherent Euroscepti-
cism and its very traditionalist views on moral issues notably abortion and
same-sex marriage.

Following the election, the May Government continued to negotiate
on a possible Brexit transition that would come into place by the end
of the period afforded by article 50, but her work proved difficult and
initial directions of negotiations that her team engaged in and centred
on a Northern Irish "backstop" led to intense rebellion from both Brexi-
teers within her own party and her DUP allies who objected to what they
considered the unacceptable emergence of a "border in the Irish sea" and
a threat to the integrity of the UK. As a result of the pressure and dissatis-
faction within her own camp, Ms May moved the focus of the negotiation
away from in the direction of a country-wide backstop.

Whilst the snap election had purported to strengthen Ms May's
majority and the backing of her Brexit policy, the exact opposite
happened, and as Brexit negotiations continued and started to lead to the
first legislative votes in the Autumn of 2017 and the following months,
the Government started to suffer a string of major defeats on Brexit. The
first occurred on 13 December 2017 when an amendment to the Euro-
pean Union Withdrawal Bill was passed by a majority of 309–305 against
the wishes of the Government to give Parliament a "meaningful vote" on
the final Brexit deal with the European Union. A few months later, on 17
July 2018, a new clause of the transitional Trade Deal was voted by 305–
301 in order to enshrine the links between the UK and the European
Medicines Agency.

However, in December 2018, those two initial defeats were followed
by a far graver, far larger, and far more sustained barrage of Parliamentary
defeats for the minority Government. On 4 December 2018, a majority of

311–293 found Government ministers in Contempt of Parliament for not complying with a Parliament Humble Address. That Humble Address had been passed on 13 November 2018 to force Government to publish the "full and final" legal advice that it had received on the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement. That Humble Address was passed without division (as had a similar Humble Address a year before, on 1 November 2017, to oblige the Government to present unpublished sectoral impact assessments on the consequences of leaving the EU which promised details were revealed not to actually exist).

On 4 December 2018 again, in the aftermath of the Contempt of Parliament motion, an amendment to the withdrawal agreement debate enabling amendments to a mandatory Government motion if the Withdrawal Agreement was defeated was passed by 321–293 again against the Government's wishes. A week later, on 11 December 2018, a government emergency motion on the postponement of the meaningful vote was defeated by 299–0. On 8 January, MPs opposed to the Government's threats of hard Brexit used an amendment to the Finance bill to limit the Government's powers in the event of a no deal Brexit by 303–296, whilst the next day, another amendment to the programme motion on the EU withdrawal debate which was drafted by former Tory Minister Dominic Grieve was passed by 308–297. That amendment created an obligation for Government to respond within 3 days to alternative plans put together by Parliament should it reject the Government plans.

On 15 January, the Government suffered the largest defeat in the history of Parliament under universal suffrage when 432 MPs (vs 202) rejected a government motion on the meaningful vote. This defeat was notable not only because of its magnitude but because it found both pro and anti-Brexit Conservative MPs rebelling against Government. On 29 January 2019, The Spelman amendment rejecting the possibility that the UK leave the EU without a withdrawal agreement was passed by 318–310. On 12 March, a second meaningful vote motion led to another massive defeat of 391–242. The next day, a non-binding amendment rejecting the possibility of a no deal Brexit "under any circumstances" was passed by 312–308 followed by a motion vote passed by 321–278 against the Government.

On 26 March, an amendment enabling Parliament to take control of the agenda through a series of indicative votes was passed by 329–302 with the ensuing motion passed by 327–300. The next day, the business motion on the indicative votes themselves was passed by 331–287, and

on 29 March, a third meaningful vote motion was again rejected by 344–286. On 1 April, a second vote on a set of indicative votes was passed by 322–277, whilst on 3 April, Government suffered a string of 5 Parliamentary defeats ranging from a single vote defeat to a massive 400–220 defeat where the Government asked to be able to set a withdrawal date without Parliamentary support.

In the meantime, whilst the UK was due to leave the European Union at the end of March 2019, it became necessary to ask for extensions, first on 22 March to postpone the Brexit date till 12 April if no deal was agreed or 22 May if it was, then on 10 April (without an agreed deal) to postpone the withdrawal date to 31 October 2019, leading the country to unexpectedly organise its participation in the European Parliament elections at the last minute.

In the midst of those continuous Parliamentary rebellions and Government defeats, it is worth noting that Parliament also failed to agree on a counter-position so that "indicative votes" on proposed practical withdrawal options kept being defeated as well regardless of whether they were proposed by Remainers or Brexiteers. Government defeats continued in the Spring and Summer of 2019. The European Parliament elections organised on 23 May 2019 also saw very severe defeats for the Conservative party whilst by contrast, both hard Brexit and pro-remain forces did well. On the hard Brexit side, the new Brexit Party led by Nigel Farage and which largely occupied the ground of the UKIP party he had left in the meantime became the leading party in the election. On the remain side, however, both the Liberal Democrats and the Greens did extremely well in the election so that as a whole, the pro-Remain camp combined came top in the election (albeit in dispersed order) amid an increase in turnout.

All in all, the entire period was marked by a constant impossibility for Government to find a majority or for the Parliament to come up with a unanimous alternative. As a result, Prime Minister May concluded that her position was untenable and resigned, opening a new leadership election in the Conservative Party which was predictably won by Boris Johnson on 23 July 2019. Mr Johnson immediately became the country's new Prime Minister as a result on 24 July.

With the new Prime Minister, "Brexit means Brexit" was replaced by "Get Brexit done" and a promise to finalise deals with the European Union promptly for a Withdrawal Agreement and consequently a trade deal. The whole argument of the leadership campaign had been that

Ms May's failure to complete the Brexit process came from her being a Remainer in the referendum and her showing too much weakness to the European Union whilst a government which would show that it does not mind leaving without a deal would win concessions. However, the initial phase of support from the Conservative Parliamentary party did not last very long, and in fact, the tension between the executive and Parliament became possible even stronger than under Ms May by the end of the summer.

Came late August, relationships between Government and Parliament further soured as it emerged that on 28 August 2019, the Government asked the Queen to prorogue Parliament (effectively, suspend Parliament's activities against the Parliament's wishes) from the day of the State opening of Parliament in early September till 14 October. The request had a rather clear aim to prevent Parliament from imposing its preferences to the Government in the context of the withdrawal so that by the time it came back into session, it would not have a chance to interrupt the course to the withdrawal from the European Union due on 31 October. This process led to a series of immediate and urgent Court cases judged in early September in both England and Scotland. In England, the High Court deemed that the matter was not subject to judicial review. Whilst the Scottish court of first instance reached the same verdict, it was then overruled unanimously by the Scottish Outer court (the Scottish highest court) which ruled that the prorogation was both justiciable and unlawful. Both cases when then appealed to the Supreme Court, which ruled on 24 September 2019 (Miller v The Prime Minister and Cherry v Advocate General for Scotland). The Supreme Court unanimously upheld the verdict of the Scottish Outer House, confirming that the prorogation was both justifiable and unlawful and consequently decided to nullify the prorogation order. The Supreme Court's argument was that the use of the Royal Prerogative must meet conventions of Parliamentary sovereignty and democratic accountability which was not the case here as the prorogation would deprive Parliament of its primary constitutional functions so that it would have "an extreme" impact on "the fundamentals of democracy" without Government providing justification for the prorogation or its length.

In the meantime, Parliamentary defeats for the Government resumed. On 3 September, the Government lost an emergency motion seeking an extension in the negotiation for Government by 328 votes to 301. The next day, the Government suffers three further defeats—two further on

the question on the extension of the negotiations (329–300 and 327–299) and one effectively aiming to call a snap election, which, under the Fixed-term Parliaments Act of 2011 required a majority of two thirds (434 votes) but obtained only 298. On 9 September, the Government lost two more votes. A Humble Address was used once more to force the Government to publish documents on the "Yellowhammer" No Deal preparations which was adopted 311–302 against the Government's wish, whilst another vote on a snap election only got 293 votes, even fewer than the previous attempt a few days earlier.

The text of the proposed Withdrawal Agreement negotiated by the EU and the UK Government was published on 17 October. It strongly resembled the early plans that were discussed by Theresa May, notably with the use of a Northern Ireland backstop before the prospect of potential trade borders between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK (the infamous "border down the middle of the Irish Sea" which "no British Prime Minister could possibly accept" were denounced by Brexiteers and later the Prime Minister herself in favour of a UK-wide backstop). After Parliament was able to sit again after prorogation was voided, the Government continued suffering defeats on a shorter prorogation request on 26 October (306–289), on an amendment to the debate on the withdrawal agreement on 17 October (287–275), on the Letwin amendment requiring Mr Johnson to request an extension of article 50 till 31 January (322–306), on 22 October on a programme motion on the same Withdrawal Agreement bill (322–308), on another attempt to organise snap elections on 28 October (299 votes in favour against 434 needed), and finally on the Creasy amendment on 29 October (312–295). However, towards the end of October, after the Government requested the extension of article 50 till 31 January, the Liberal Democrats and SNP reversed their position on a snap election. They proposed a new motion on 28 October and the Early Parliamentary General Election Act 2019 was passed by 438 votes to 20 despite Labour's scepticism with the Election Day agreed to be 12 December 2019.

The election resulted in a clear victory for Johnson's Conservative party after the Labour party realised very poor scores, notably in its traditional industrial heartlands. The Conservatives won 365 seats and an outright majority (+48) whilst Labour lost 60 seats to 202 and the Liberal Democrats 11. The other big winner was the Scottish National Party which victory in Scotland was overwhelming with 48 seats (+13). Turnout was 67%, a little down from 2017.

In the aftermath of the election, Parliament voted for the Withdrawal Agreement in January 2020 and the UK formally left the European Union on 31 January of that year whilst the EU and UK agreed a transition period that would end on 31 December 2020 by which time either a deal on the new relationship between the UK and the EU would be struck or the UK would leave on a "cliff edge" basis. During the transition period, the UK would be effectively treated as though it was remaining a Member State for most practical purposes but with a right to start negotiating its own trade deals with third countries, and conversely without any say on EU decisions.

Most of 2020 was then spent on the negotiation of that elusive post-Brexit deal with the EU whilst the unexpected health emergency relating to the Coronavirus pandemic came to the forefront of both British and European politics. Even though Government did not lose further votes in the House of Commons, tensions remained numerous, particularly when in the Autumn of 2020, the Government scheduled a new "Internal Market Bill" which Northern Ireland Protocol (part 5) created major controversy because it would breach International Law and the very Withdrawal Agreement that the Government had negotiated and supported a few months earlier. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis, openly admitted to that prospect of breaking the law though he specified that the bill would "break international law in a specific and limited way". The prospect was heavily criticised by many judges (including the former President of the Supreme Court, David Neuberger), all living former Prime Ministers (including Ms May) who worried both about the principle of Government knowingly breaking the law and the risk to the standing of Britain in the world, all living former Attorney Generals, including Geoffrey Cox who had served under Boris Johnson, by the House of Lords, and by the European Union. The bill also resulted in a number of high-profile resignations notably by the Head of the Government Legal Department, Jonathan Jones (on 8 September), and the Advocate General for Scotland, Baron Keen of Elie on 16 September.

Significant debate also remained on whether the prospect of a "No Deal Brexit" could possibly be acceptable and survivable for the British society and economy until the very end of the year. That debate was further nourished by the resignation of Mr Johnson's main advisor and former campaign director of "Vote Leave" Dominic Cummings on 13

November, shortly after Mr Cummings's close ally, Lee Cain, and just 6 weeks before the end of the transition period.

Ultimately, on 24 December 2020, the UK and the European Union announced that they finally reached an agreement on a trade and security deal just a week before the end of the transition period.

Prima Facie Democratic Frustration Among Leavers

On the face of it, one would expect the victory of Brexit in the 2016 Referendum to delight the nation's Eurosceptics, many of whom had not believed that such an outcome would be possible. The UK left the European Union on 31 January 2020, and the terms of the post-transition relationship represent, in many ways, a far less integrated relationship with the EU than most ardent Brexiteers had suggested in 2016. Nevertheless, expressions of democratic frustration in relation to Brexiteers have been almost incessantly used in both national and international media since the referendum.

A context that led to particularly emphatic references to frustration was the extension of the transition period beyond the initial date of March 2019. Thus, at the end of March, Iain Martin titled his comment article in the Times "Beware the anger of frustrated Brexiteers", whilst a few days later, the Straits Times (the main Singaporean newspaper) was reporting that "angry Brexiteers voice[d] frustration at pro-Brexit protest". Prime Minister Ms May herself, when she requested the Brexit extension to 31 October, acknowledged the situation in the speech that she gave in the aftermath of the European Council: "I know that there is huge frustration from many people that I had to request this extension".

A second field in which frustration has been evoked pertains to the shape of the Brexit process itself and how the scenarios unfolding did not really match what the victors of June 2016 had planned. This was for instance embodied by the difficulties for Britain to get deals with the EU and the conditions that did not seem to mirror the "position of strength" in the negotiation that Brexiteers were promising that Britain would hold. Thus, on 1 September, according to media reports, leading British negotiator Sir David Frost asked the EU to "drop its frustrating tactics" and referred to Britain's "frustration of trying different process routes at different stages in the negotiation" without managing to obtain what it wanted. Similarly, on 26 November, the Financial Times was publishing an article entitled "frustration surfaces as sense of urgency grows in Brexit

deal talks" referring again to the fact that Britain was not getting the upper hand even in the way deal discussion were organised and framed.

This frustration at process was largely echoed by the headlines of the pro-Brexit press vis-à-vis the different institutions seen by Brexiteers to prevent a "Brexit at any cost", notably in the context of headlines against High Court and Supreme Court judges referred to earlier in this chapter comparing judges to "enemies of the people" or referring to "judges v the people" as well as Parliament itself, seen to be denying Government hard Brexit tactics under both Ms May and Mr Johnson. In fact, the very code name for Brexiteers' disappointment about a "Brexit at any cost" not happening was the very notion that those institutions were "frustrating Brexit", perhaps not a random choice of words. Such frustration was particularly addressed at Remainers themselves, with an article in the Guardian on 23 June 2017 concluding that Brexiteers "feel frustrated that some Remainers refuse to accept the outcome" whilst on 29 March 2019, ITV were deploring Leavers' "frustration over the lack of progress around Brexit" due to Remainers and the threats of a second referendum.[1]

Finally, outcomes were as related to claims of frustration as the process itself. In an article on 13 December 2019 analysing the outcome of the election the day before and the "Get Brexit Done" slogan, the Time suggested that "Many of the people in those leave-voting northern towns, and elsewhere in the country too, were frustrated at the apparent inability of Britain's political class to make Brexit happen—and so the Conservatives did everything they could to tap into that frustration". Conversely, on 8 June 2020, the Telegraph was referring to the "frustrated tribe" made of Brexiteers dissatisfied by both what Brexit was starting to look like in practice and a sense of lack of control—the opposite of what Brexiteers promised—emphasised by a complex coronavirus situation. In December 2020, outspoken pro-remain journalist James O'Brien similarly appealed to "frustrated Brexiteers" to let go of anger.

Even after the Brexit deal was agreed, and Britain's exit from the European Union finalised as the reality that they had sought for years, references to Brexiteers' frustration remain just as rife, focusing, this time, on the Northern Ireland protocol, fishery wars in the Channel, the consequences of the loosening of British-French EU collaboration on migrants'

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[1] Frustration among Leavers and Remainers outside Westminster bubble rises as MPs fail to make Brexit progress | ITV News.

crossings, and queues at Dover or issues with exports and imports paper-work and costs. Brexiteers' frustration was directed at everyone from their own Government to the opposition, and from the European Commission to Macron, Merkel, the EU negotiator, the Irish and the Northern Irish. Those reactions directly illustrate the difference between dissatisfaction and frustration. For all practical purposes, Brexiteers won and got exactly the outcomes which they wanted after expressing severe animosity towards the EU and Britain's membership of it. However, that victory did not lead to their frustration receding, and instead, it simply morphed in its objects, discourse of victimisation, and narrative focus.

Prima Facie Democratic Frustration Among Remainers

Whilst we have seen many references to frustration that have been spontaneously made by politicians and commentators alike to describe the democratic reaction of Brexiteers towards the implementation of the outcomes which they voted for, at least as many have been suggested to describe the feelings of Remainers throughout the Brexit period.

Bruter and Harrison (2020) showed that 28% of British citizens—and 39% of those aged 18–24—reported having tears in their eyes as they discovered the results of the 2016 referendum and that proportion was even higher among Remainers. Many people reported their pain and frustration at the result itself in stark terms, highlighting a sense of devastation and even of amputation of their identity and rights. In the aftermath of that vote, however, that feeling remained a constant expressive feature of many people who were feeling worried and hurt by the Brexit process. Major anti-Brexit demonstrations were attended often by hundreds of thousands of participants across the country in July 2016, September 2016 ("March for Europe"), March 2017 ("Unite for Europe" < September 2017 ("People's March for Europe), March 2018 ("Stop Brexit march), June and September 2018 ("People's Vote Marches" and "Bin Brexit March), October 2018 ("People's Vote March"), March 2019 ("Put it to the People March"), July 2019 ("March for Change"), and October 2019 ("Let Us Be Heard March").

Similarly, two petitions on the UK Parliament Petitions website became the most supported petitions in the history of the Parliamentary Petitions process in the UK. One requesting a second referendum (paradoxically started by a Brexiteer worried that the referendum would end with a small

remain majority) received 4.2 million signatures became the largest petition ever in this process, only to be toppled by another petition to revoke Article 50 in March 2019, which exceeded 6.1 million signatures within a week and still holds the record of the most supported petition in the history of the British Parliament.

Some psychologists started drawing a parallel between the situation of Remainers and frustration syndromes directly in the days that followed the EU membership referendum, including in an article in the Guardian on 30 June which pointed to feelings of "anxiety, denial and anger" as a result of the vote[2] as well as panic attacks, sleeplessness, disrupted appetite, and low mood. Among Remainers, many references to frustration pertained to uncertainty. The references to uncertainty and mental health continued without interruption in the following years. In April 2019, a comment by Zoe Williams in the Guardian was entitled "All I hear is anger and frustration: How Brexit is affecting our mental health".[3] On 10 December 2020, an article in the London Economic was still referring to the same sense of "anger and disgust" as well as sadness, fear, and shock among Remainers.[4] Similar references to frustration about uncertainty were made by various stakeholders. On 23 September 2019, the Chair of the Confederation of Business Industries (CBI) declared that "Business frustration in Brexit is at peak level. They need more certainty". Symmetrically, on 5 September 2018, the Chair of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) was describing the "wave of frustration" felt by her members with the status quo with the Brexit situation and its uncertainties.

A second frequently mentioned source of frustration pertained to losses of opportunities. On 2 April 2019, an article in *Nature* was referring to the "fury and frustration" of scientists when it came to Brexit and the damage that the process was creating for British research and science, echoing articles in New Scientist on 27 June 2016 and in Science Magazine on 3 October 2019, both of which quoted scientists claiming "I am very frustrated at this turn of event" and "It's extremely frustrating

[2] Why remainers are finding it hard to deal with the EU referendum result | Brexit | The Guardian.

[3] "All I hear is anger and frustration": how Brexit is affecting our mental health | Brexit | The Guardian.

[4] FT warns Remainers that they "should resist Brexit gloating" (thelondoneconomic.com).

when [vision] is taken away". Similarly, an article in the Guardian on 23 June 2017 was referring to "regret and frustration" of voters, notably those feeling that the country was losing opportunities a year from the Brexit vote. Another published in Politico on 17 August 2018 spoke of a "Britain's middle-class Brexit anxiety disorder" openly inviting Remainers to "see a shrink".[5] In fact, on 9 December 2019, a South African business news channel was concluding on "the pain and frustration of being a Remainer".[6] In fact, French financial newspaper Les Echos did not only acknowledge the frustration of Remainers, but even reached the conclusion that France should become the "asylum" location of frustrated Remainers (28 November 2019).[7]

There was often an inter-personal and emotional dimension to references to the frustration of Remainers which mirrored the frustration (mentioned above) of Brexiteers towards Remainers. Indeed, in the same way that many Brexiteers accused Remainers of not accepting the result of the referendum and of trying to "frustrate Brexit", many comments pointed to the frustration of Remainers at feeling ignored in their concerns by Brexiteers and at the shape of Brexit progressively deviating from the initial claims and promises of Vote Leave, not least in terms of membership of the Single Market and Customs Union which were initially presented as an "obvious" feature of the future relationship between the UK and the European Union by most on the Vote Leave side. This sense of being ignored and despised was summarised by columnist Philip Collins on BBC's Newsnight on 9 December 2020 when he shared his frustration at Remainers being compared to the "boy who cried wolf" by Brexiteers who seemed to omit the fact that the story ends when an actual wolf attacks the boy.[8] A lot of expressions of frustration were associated with how Remainers in general and young Remainers in particular felt that they were being stigmatised and stereotyped by Brexiteers, for instance in a Guardian article of 22 June 2019.[9] Many Remainers expressed frustration at their objections being

[5] Britain's middle-class Brexit Anxiety Disorder—POLITICO.

[6] The pain and frustration of being a Remainer (businesslive.co.za).

[7] Brexit: la France doit devenir le refuge des Remainers | Les Echos.

[8] Commentator sums up frustrations with Brexit in one sentence | The New European.

[9] Don't stereotype young remainers. We fear for our futures, not our holidays | Brexit | The Guardian.

dismissed as anti-patriotic, others felt that they were accused of being spoilt or anti-democratic, and many expressed frustration at the string of neologisms used by many Brexiteers notably in the tabloid press to characterise them. Remainers have been frequently referred to as "snowflakes", "luvvies", and "Remoaners" including in articles in newspapers and accusations by pro-Brexit politicians such as an article by Mr Hannan in the Daily Express[10] entitled "Why Remoaners are stuck between anger and denial" and accused of snobbery, or another article in the Daily Mail on 29 August 2019 accusing "Remoaner luvvies" of being "hysterical",[11] "Remoaner" frequently becoming a leading hashtag on social media[12] as they were told to "suck it up" or "take responsibility" for their actions. At times, they were even told they should be jailed for treason, with a Tory MEP suggesting that the Treason Act should cover what he deemed "extreme EU loyalty" in a tweet where he compared the situation to "extreme jihadis"[13] whilst the Daily Mail suggested to "crush the saboteurs" on 18 April 2017 celebrating the announcement of a snap election.[14] This was to the point that some Remainers ended up defending themselves against the label (for instance an article by a civil servant in the Guardian on 1 October 2019 entitled: "We're not 'traitors' or 'remoaners'[15] or even attempting to humorously own it,[16] for instance in an article in the Evening Standard on 29 January 2020, just before the official date of Brexit.

[10] Brexit news: Why Remoaners are stuck between anger and denial—Daniel Hannan | UK | News | Express.co.uk.

[11] Remoaner luvvies are HYSTERICAL in their over-the-top outbursts of anti-Boris weeping and wailing | Daily Mail Online.

[12] Remoaners told to 'suck it up' after UK signs first meaningful trade deal outside of EU (thelondoneconomic.com).

[13] Tory MEP says Treason Act should cover 'extreme EU loyalty' | Conservatives | The Guardian.

[14] 'Crush the saboteurs': British newspapers react to general election | Media | The Guardian.

[15] We're not 'traitors' or 'remoaners'—but this is a dark time to be a civil servant | Civil service | The Guardian.

[16] I'm a stereotypical 'Remoaner' and hate that we're leaving the EU on Friday—but I've come to accept it | London Evening Standard | Evening Standard.

Furthermore, interestingly, symmetrically to Leavers worrying about ensuring that "Brexit should not be frustrated", the High Court[17] had to rule on whether Brexit was "frustrating" in the context of lease contracts. Once more, the reality of Remainers' frustration illustrates many aspects of our theoretical framework, not least some of the attitudinal consequences of democratic frustration, in the form of a perceived deteriorated atmosphere, heightened hostility towards fellow voters, temptation of non-compliance, and ultimately, a certain form of hopelessness, including among categories of population which had rarely been characterised as being democratically marginalised or alienated before.

Interpretation of Frustration Contexts

As we can see above, throughout the period, expressions of frustration were tied with both Remainers and Brexiteers. Most pertained to the ideological dimension of frustration, with either Brexiteers feeling that they were not getting what they had voted for as Brexit was being delayed or "frustrated", whilst many Remainers considered that their future was being sacrificed and that their concerns were being dismissed or mocked, or even that they were themselves insulted or threatened. As noted, leavers' frustration in particular is an archetypical example of frustration displacement as its object keeps changing as initial narratives of dissatisfaction have, in fact, been resolved the way unhappy citizens claimed that they wanted it to be.

An important element of the frustration model pertains to who is being openly blamed as the source of the frustration. In this specific case study, perceived causes were almost endless: Government, opposition, the European Union, or its various representatives, but also other institutions notably judges, journalists, Parliament, or sometimes specifically the House of Commons or the House of Lords or the Speaker, but also characteristically citizens themselves in a clear show of electoral hostility (Bruter & Harrison, 2020). We also note, however, that at times, the element of self-blame or defensiveness is also present in stakeholders' interpretation of the frustration process, not least when it comes to a certain form of Remainers' introspection as to whether the attitudes of those opposed to Brexit could be precipitating the very outcomes which

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[17] Is Brexit "frustrating"? The English High Court clarifies the application of frustration to lease contracts (twobirds.com).

they were hoping to avoid. In fact, the outwards blame and inwards blame are often intricately related in that much of the outwards criticism by both Remain and Brexit supporters is often articulated around the way the other group is perceived to treat the frustrated citizen. This also illustrates part of our frustration model where self-image and mirror perceptions often play a very important role as explained in chapter 2.

Another critical aspect of the formulation of the societal frustration narrative relates to its prospective element. References are to uncertainty, to what will happen, to future losses or denial of aspirations. This is also a situation that intimately matches traditional patterns of frustration in that frustration is focused on aspirations, that is not so much on an unhappy perception of a current reality but rather on a negative assessment of a hypothetical future, whereby the desire itself (the perceived route towards an idealised future) is being seen as blocked by the perceived source of the frustration.

Finally, the Brexit case study illustrates all three main hypothesised consequences of democratic frustration. Withdrawal is amply demonstrated by references to forms of politically related depression and low mood, often referred to clinically in articles written about the feelings of Remainers in the aftermath of the Brexit vote and throughout the process. Anger is similarly very present, not least through the main behavioural pattern I identify as corresponding to it: demonstrations. It is also phrased very openly in attitudinal terms by both Remain and Brexit supporters who frequently talk about their anger in very transparent terms. Finally, aggression is also frequently on display, not only in the behavioural form that I highlight in terms of support for extremist and populist parties (in this case, the Brexit Party which came top in the country in the European Parliament elections of May 2019), but also in more direct and personal forms, such as the creation of a derogative vocabulary ("remoaners", "luvvies", etc.) and explicit references to treason, talk of "enemies of the people" and even threats of jail terms for supposed "extreme support" for EU membership.

In terms of societal narrative, the Brexit case study thus appears as an excellent illustration of what democratic frustration may look like and why it is, indeed, a case of (in this case primarily ideological) frustration in terms of who it affects, the emotional and psychological reactions that it entails, perceptions of causality and blame, its projective nature, and of course its attitudinal and behavioural consequences. The period of Brexit

almost exactly corresponded to another form of tense ideological opposition on the other side of the Atlantic, as the election of Mr Trump as President of the US and his political co-existence with a Democrat House of Representatives resulted in deep frictions. Let us now consider that second case study.

A Wall of Frustration Across America: Mutual Frustration in Trump America

Historical Setting

In many ways, the 2016 Presidential election in the US resembled no other. After two consecutive mandates, President Barak Obama would leave the White House. After the enthusiasm which many felt when he was first elected in 2008, by 2016, the country was largely split as to his action, so that by the time the primary elections were properly in motion in February 2016, according to Gallup regular polling, his ratings were exactly balanced with 48% approving and 48% disapproving.[18]

This situation led to complex strategic debates on the Democrat side between those who believed that the best chance for the Democrats to stay in the White House would be to own up to the Obama legacy and those who, on the contrary, felt that a change of direction was necessary. A bitter primary election battle ensued opposing former Secretary of State (and a previous Obama rival in the 2008 primary elections) Hilary Clinton and independent Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders as most of the other declared candidates dropped out. The early primary votes in February were very tight with Ms Clinton winning Iowa by a whisker, Mr Sanders winning New Hampshire, and Ms Clinton then winning Nevada and South Carolina. Super Tuesday similarly resulted in 8 wins for Ms Clinton and 4 for Mr Sanders, and the same again in mid-March (8 further states for Ms Clinton and 4 more for Mr Sanders). At the start of the Spring, however, the situation became even more tense as Mr Sanders won 8 of the 9 votes that took place between 21 March and 10 April including important states such as Washington and Wisconsin before Ms Clinton's lead became a little clearer from mid-April onwards after her New York primary victory and her narrow California success in early June. Beyond number, however, the primary election was mostly marred by

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[18] Presidential Approval Ratings—Barack Obama | Gallup Historical Data and Trends.

fairly tough rhetoric, with Mr Sanders levying some harsh attacks on Ms Clinton's ideology, programme, and record. Mr Sanders did not confirm that he would vote for Ms Clinton over the Republican candidate until 24 June despite Ms Clinton reaching the required number of delegates nearly 3 weeks earlier, and he only endorsed her a further 3 weeks later on the 12th of July.

On the Republican side, things were even more complex, with a record 17 candidates declaring that they would seek the people's support, 11 of whom ended up competing in the primary elections, with 9 of them obtaining some primary delegates. In early months, the large number of candidates sometimes made it hard to have much visibility on the race. The first few state primaries suggested that the Republican electorate had probably become more right-wing than ever before with Donald Trump leading in three of the four February votes and Ted Cruz in the fourth (Iowa). The Super Tuesday vote confirmed the tendency. Out of 11 states in play, Mr Trump won 7 including Georgia and Virginia, Mr Cruz won three including his own state of Texas, and only Minnesota gave a majority to moderate candidate Marco Rubio. By late March, the Republican primary had become a three-man race and just as tense as its Democrat counter-part with very personal accusations of personal affairs and rumours that some delegates elected on Mr Trump's name might end up not voting for him in the end, but Mr Trump was a clear winner by May and the Presidential race between him and Ms Clinton was soon launched.

The main election campaign was immediately acrimonious. Neither candidate had very high popularity scores among voters and over the summer, controversy emerged over some emails by Ms Clinton from her private email address whilst Secretary of State. An FBI investigation was involved which recommended that no charges should be retained against Ms Clinton, but the incident was largely used by Mr Trump whilst both candidates referred to potential foreign (notably Russian) interference in the campaign organised in favour of the other. The campaign variously focused on Mr Trump's sexism and allegations of sexual misconduct and racism, Ms Clinton's supposed authoritarianism, and both candidates' difficult relationship with the media whilst policy positions notably diverged on the implementation of Mr Obama's initiated healthcare reforms and Mr Trump's promise to build a wall between the US and Mexico to prevent illegal migration. The debates held on 26 September, 9 October, and 19 October were tense and often aggressive. Most (but

by no means all) polls suggested a lead in the popular vote by Ms Clinton but that lead always remain narrow (approximately 3–4 points throughout the campaign). Many polls also credited her with a lead—albeit an even thinner one—in most of the swing states, but typically within margins of error. Ultimately, when the election took place whilst Ms Clinton won a majority of the vote (65.8 million vs 62.9 million for Mr Trump with a turnout of 55%), she ended up losing most of the swing states and Mr Trump won in 30 of the 50 states and obtained 304 delegates as opposed to 227 for Ms Clinton. The Republicans also held both the Senate and the House of Representatives despite the Democrats improving their representation in both Chambers, thereby offering Mr Trump an ideal legislative framework to implement his policies in the first two years of his Presidential mandate.

In 2018, however, the Midterm elections had the potential to change the situation significantly as the Democrats were consistently leading in opinion polls by quite a margin. The campaign largely focused on health care as in the first part of Trump's mandate, the Republican Congress repealed much of the Affordable Care Act (often nicknamed "Obamacare") but failed in their promise to replace it by an alternative. After the disappointment of many Democrats two years earlier given Ms Clinton's dominance in most polls and the eventual victory of Mr Trump, the campaign was often febrile and tense, but in the end, the election had the highest turnout of any midterm election since 1914 (though just shy of half of eligible voters at 49.3%). On that background, the Democrats won an additional 41 seats and a majority in the House of Representatives. This is despite them suffering further losses at the Senate where the Republicans increased their majority by 2 seats. With Nancy Pelosi becoming the new Speaker of the House, the US was returning to its dominant tradition of divided Government and promises of ideological opposition between the White House and the House of Representatives.

Almost immediately, the relationship between the President and the House became extremely tense. In particular, tensions focused on Mr Trump's promise of building a wall along the southern border of the US with a declared aim to prevent illegal migration. Within his first week in power, on 25 January 2017, the new President immediately launched the process by signing executive order 13,767 to ask Government to build the wall using federal funding. However, it soon appeared that the wall plan would be a lot more expensive than planned (and that despite original promises, Mexico which opposed the plan had no intention to

participate in its funding) so that shortly before the midterm election, on 12 October 2018 then Republican-controlled Congress introduced the "Build the wall enforce the law" act.

The new Democrat majority in Congress strongly opposed the plan however and joined the Republican-majority Senate in refusing to support continuing federal funding on a wall for which the Trump administration was requesting $5.7 billion of federal budget. The appropriation bill that did not include any wall funding had been approved unanimously by the Senate in December 2018 and by the House in January 2019 when its new intake began its mandate. However, Mr Trump and some of the country's conservative media increasingly objected to the lack of wall funding. In December, the House (then still dominated by Republicans) proposed a stopgap bill to provide for wall funding, but the bill was rejected by the Senate (in part due to the Democrat minority threatening filibuster tactics—using extensive debate to prevent the vote on the law).

Tensions between the President and Congress increased dramatically, and as the two institutions could neither agree on the appropriations bill, nor on an ad hoc "continuing resolution" which would have kept federal institutions functioning until a permanent solution could be found, on 22 December 2018, the US ended up experiencing its longest ever federal government shutdown, which lasted till 25 January 2019 (ironically, the second anniversary of executive order 13,767 which launched the wall project in the first instance). A compromise bill had been prepared by the House Democrat majority to provide $5 billion for border security without any provision for wall funding, but the shutdown ended on the same day in any case after Mr Trump accepting to support a three-week funding bill.

The end of the federal government shutdown was by no means an end to the virulence of divided government. Unable to convince Congress of supporting the wall funding that he advocated, on 15 February 2019, Mr Trump declared a "national emergency" with regard to the southern border wall. On 27 February, the House passed a bill which rejected the Trump national emergency declaration, and which was also voted by the Senate on 14 March. The following day, however, President Trump decided to veto the bill (it was the first time of his presidency that he used that veto mechanism, though it is worth pointing out that at that stage, he had only experienced divided government for two months). 6 months later, in September, both houses of Congress voted to end the declaration of emergency in similar terms, but this was once more vetoed by President

Trump in October, before the declaration was in any case found unlawful in a legal case started in El Paso County (the main border city between Texas and Mexico).

Throughout the rest of the Trump presidency, the tension between the White House and the House of Representatives remained acute and almost constant. One particular aspect of it, however, saw the House being powerless in a process which mostly involved presidential nominations and Senate votes: the appointment of three Supreme Court justices who were replaced between 2016 and 2020. First, Justice Antonin Scalia passed in February 2016. Whilst this occurred well within the mandate of President Barack Obama, who nominated Merrick Garland in March 2016, Senate Republican-majority leader Mitch McConnell declared that given that the next presidential election cycle had already started, it would be against the spirit of the institutions to discuss a Supreme Court nomination made by Mr Obama and the Senate should wait for the next Presidential election winner to appoint a candidate. Whilst Mr Obama made the appointment, it simply expired in early January 2017 having remained unconsidered by the Senate throughout the period. This controversial position (which meant that the Supreme Court missed one Justice for over a year) led to Mr Trump nominating Neil Gorsuch as soon as he took office at the end of January 2017. Whilst some Democrat Senators threatened to use a filibuster in protest, their attempt was countered by the Republican majority and Mr Gorsuch was confirmed by the Senate on 7 April 2017 by 54 votes to 45.

The following year, Justice Anthony Kennedy, who had often been the "pivotal" judge in many controversial cases, retired from his Supreme Court position. As Mr Kennedy stood off in July, Mr Trump nominated Brett Kavanaugh as his choice for the Supreme Court. The nomination was opposed by many Democrats in parts on the grounds of his legal record (notably votes involving the upholding of human rights and of international law) and more importantly on the basis of accusations of sexual assault levied by four women (most prominently Christine Blasey Ford, relating to the time when they were both high school students), which led to an FBI investigation into the allegations. After initial testimonies to the Senate, the Senate Judiciary Committee progressed the nomination by 11 votes to 10, and the Senate then voted to confirm it on 6 October 2018 by 50 votes to 48.

Whilst the Kavanaugh nomination was probably the most controversial of the Trump presidency in terms of personality, a third nomination

was even more vibrantly contested in terms of fairness of process. On 18 September 2020, veteran judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a judicial hero of many liberals, died from the subsequent complications of a metastatic pancreatic cancer, having survived several colon and pancreatic cancers previously. Justice Bader Ginsburg who could have retired for many years was open about notably remaining in the Supreme Court to avoid a further Trump nomination that could upset the equilibrium between liberal and conservative judges in the highest US judicial and constitutional institution. When she passed, many on the left and the centre asked that the Scalia replacement precedent be upheld, and that if a Presidential nomination for a new Justice could not be deemed institutionally acceptable 8 months before the following Presidential election, then it should be even more inconceivable 6 weeks before it. This argument was not shared, however, by President Trump, who announced the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett a week after Ms Bader Ginsburg's death on 26 September. Neither was it upheld by Mr McConnell despite him being the leader to originally articulate the election cycle argument in 2016. Mr McConnell pushed to progress the nomination (with timing adjustments related to the coronavirus crisis) amidst outcry from the Democrats. The Judiciary Committee hearing was thus boycotted by its Democrat members. After a tense series of votes, on 26 October, the Senate voted to confirm the nomination of Ms Coney Barrett by 52 votes to 48 with one Republican senator only voting against.

Whilst the wall debate progressively moved to the judicial arena, budget issues remained important with threats of a potential new federal government shutdown at the end of 2020, and whilst the Supreme Court debates often morphed into more complex divisions within the Senate, in the last eighteen months of Mr Trump's mandate, divided government often took one last and far more personal form. However, the main evolution of the tension between President and House took the form of a progression towards impeachment proceedings.

The main setting of the impeachment inquiry surrounded accusations from a whistle-blower that President Trump may have jeopardised the country's security by illegally withholding military aid to Ukraine to force that country's authorities to investigate supposed Ukrainian interference in the US 2016 elections that would have involved former Vice-President Joe Biden and his son Hunter, so as to get rid of a key prospective re-election rival. The whistle-blower's revelations included that Mr Trump had called Ukrainian President Zelensky on 25 July to pressure him into

launching such an investigation or risk the revocation of promised military aid. The whistle-blower suggested that the move was successful and that the Ukrainian President was getting ready to announce the required investigation on CNN though the erupting scandal led to a cancellation of the programme and the launch of an Impeachment inquiry by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi on 24 September 2019.

This was by no means the first time that a possible impeachment procedure towards Mr Trump was discussed. Several proposals were made to impeach the President as early as 2017, notably based on Mr Trump's dismissal of FBI Director Mr Comey, accusations of him leaking confidential information to Russia, of Russian interference in the 2016 Presidential elections, and obstruction of justice, which led the House Judiciary Committee to consider an article of Impeachment in July 2017. The impeachment resolution was not successful. Later in that same year, and again in 2018, further Democrat Representatives announced their intention to impeach Mr Trump in response to his comments following the infamous "Unite the Right" Charlottesville white supremacist rally, which resulted in 3 deaths and 33 injuries. The President was accused of "associating the Presidency with white nationalism, neo-Nazism, and hatred" and "inciting hatred and hostility", though those efforts were also unsuccessful.

After the midterm elections, the new House Speaker Ms Pelosi initially expressed her scepticism towards impeachment procedures judged to be exceedingly divisive, but the continuing Mueller investigation into potential Russian interference, collusion, and obstruction of justice, as well as financial ramifications and the Facebook-Cambridge Analytical potential misuse of data in Trump's 2016 Presidential election campaign led several Democrat Representatives to ask her not to rule out the possibility of impeachment. Throughout 2019, tensions continued to increase, not least following the February hearing of Michael Cohen, who admitted under oath to previously lying to Congress in order to protect Mr Trump, and in the Spring, the publication of the Mueller report, which led to a new impeachment debate. Four different impeachment resolutions were proposed by various Democrat Representatives between March and July. It is, however, only in the summer that Jerrold Nadler, Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, prepared a formal impeachment resolution which was voted on 11 September 2019. On 17 September the first impeachment hearing against a sitting president in 21 years started. After three months of hearings finally agreed by the Speaker, on 18 December, the

House voted two impeachment articles against Mr Trump, and his trial by the Senate took place at the beginning of 2020. On 5 February, the Senate acquitted Mr Trump of all charges following a vote that followed partisan lines. Finally, in months that followed and throughout much of 2020, one last element of disagreement invited itself in the American divided government debate: the question of the response to the coronavirus pandemic which hit the US as it did the rest of the world and whereby partisan disagreements at the national level were only mirrored by even more obvious opposition between federal, state, and local levels of government which often supported radically diverging measures.

Throughout the period, it is worth looking at public opinion's stance on the core issues of infighting between President and House. On the Wall issue, a majority of about 60% of Americans continuously opposed the building of the wall ever since the presidential campaign. In terms of the controversial nomination of Ms Coney Barrett by Mr Trump, an Ipsos poll suggested that 62% of voters would prefer the replacement to Ms Bader Ginsburg not to be nominated until after the next President had been elected (vs 23% who believed that it should be filled immediately). At the same time, a plurality of voters supported the choice of Ms Coney Barrett per se. Finally, opinions on impeachment have been a lot more divided. In the aftermath of Mr Trump firing Mr Comey, a plurality of voters supported impeaching the President, as was the case after the President's declarations on the white supremacist march of Charlottesville. In 2019, however, a CNN poll suggested that only 39% of voters were favourable to impeachment. By the time, formal impeachment proceedings were started, several consecutive polls suggested public opinion was split almost exactly evenly between supporters and opponents of impeachment (an NPR/PBS poll found 49% in support and 46% opposed, whilst a CNN poll found 45% in favour and 47% opposed).

The November 2020 elections should have served as an emotional climax to the situation. In a way, they did. The elections proved tense, the candidates' debates extremely unruly (particularly the first), and election night proved dramatic with early results suggesting very tight situations in many states before the counting of largely pro-Democrat postal votes progressively an ever clearer lead to Democratic candidate Joe Biden over incumbent Donald Trump, and resulting in him taking a small but clear lead in most of the swing states (Pennsylvania, Michigan, Arizona, Nevada, Wisconsin, and even Georgia) whilst Mr Trump won Florida,

North Carolina and Ohio. However, the electoral climax did not coincide with a political one in that Mr Trump and his team overwhelmingly refused to acknowledge the candidate's defeat and instead suggested that the election had been "stolen" and "fraudulent". Multiple legal recourses were unsuccessfully launched, but those judicial defeats were not enough to end the electoral saga. Instead, in early January, President Trump continued to claim that he had won the election and held a rally in Washington DC on the day when Congress was due to certify Mr Biden's electoral victory on 6 January to further assert his claim that he had won the election and that his supporters should head to the Capitol. A few minutes later, in extraordinary scenes, a number of his most extremist partisans illegally forced their way inside the Capitol building forcing Representatives to flee the scene whilst the insurrectionists desecrated Parliamentary chambers, offices and artwork. This happened at the time of the planned certification which had to be delayed till the night. Representatives had had to flee the scene and protect the certification documentation from the hands of the trespassers earlier in the day.

A further case of impeachment was launched by Congress on 11 January as Mr Trump was accused of having fomented and incited the insurrection by his most radical supporters. This was the first time in US history that a President had faced two distinct impeachment procedures during his mandate. Ultimately, by the time President Biden was inaugurated on 20 January 2021, not only the tension between executive and legislative branches but also those splitting American society arguably reached unprecedented levels and divided the nation in a more profound way than ever before. This crowned a period during which, whilst tensions between the executive and legislative branches of government were at their peak, the American public was both largely unhappy with some aspect or other of the ongoing institutional situation, and—at least at times—entirely divided on who to blame for it.

Narratives of Partisan Frustration

Throughout the period, narratives of frustrations have abounded to describe the feelings of conservative and liberal supporters alike.

On the right, there have been many references to conservative supporters feeling frustration about the wall issue in late 2018 and early 2019. In September 2018, CNBC was already reporting on "frustration

over border wall funding" among Republican supporters.[19] In December 2018 in the run-up to the federal shutdown, Fox News concluded that conservative "[voiced] frustration after Trump [signalled] 'gutless' retreat on border wall.[20]" In January 2019, an article in the Washington Post described the "frustration among grassroots activists with the pace of conservative policy change" when it came to the wall.[21] A month later, the same newspaper was similarly commenting on the frustration of President Trump himself when it came to the Wall stand-off with Congress,[22] although largely blaming his own choices for it. The reference continued in the local press too after the shutdown ended. On 9 March 2019, a newspaper from Las Cruces, New Mexico, reported on a town hall meeting and indicated that "[pro-Republican] residents [vented] frustration over border security" whilst giving standing ovations to those calling to "build the damn wall".[23]

Republican frustration has similarly been commented upon in the context of impeachment procedures. On 15 November 2019, the Washington Post again titled about the frustration of Republicans with the Democrat-initiated impeachment procedure.[24] Republican Oklahoma Senator Lankford was similarly commenting on the process in January 2020 by saying: "nothing like going through three days of frustration and then cap if off with an insult".[25] At the same time, Republican Senators like Mr Wicker were also referring to the fact that "there is obviously a frustration on [Trump's] part".[26]

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[19] Trump signs spending bill to avert government shutdown (cnbc.com).

[20] Conservatives voice frustration after Trump signals 'gutless' retreat on border wall | Fox News.

[21] https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/01/25/why-trump-didnt-build-wall-when-republicans-controlled-congress/&usg=AOvVaw15_OSr8BbXIstquwyzhFgD.

[22] https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/finish-that-wall-trump-seeks-to-turn-his-failure-to-build-the-wall-into-campaign-rallying-cry/2019/02/16/3fbaebd4-3138-11e9-ac6c-14eea99d5e24_story.html&usg=AOvVaw3uaxq6OWzdfzsHKiu2O7B

[23] Republicans vent frustration at border security town hall in Deming (lcsun-news.com).

[24] https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-frustration-of-republicans-and-impeachment/2019/11/15/a721e698-06f2-11ea-9118-25d6bd37dfb1_story.html&usg=AOvVaw2YNOU-ZEyBlslj6PVihPOb.

[25] Head on a pike? Republican senators object after Schiff cites impeachment threat | Reuters.

[26] Trump disrupts Republican trial strategy—POLITICO.

As the same time, the references to frustration are just as abundant when it comes to Democrats and liberals. On 15 January 2019, an article in Vox pointed out to how "House Democrats [were] frustrated the shutdown [was] drowning out the rest of their agenda".[27] Similarly, in the third week of the shutdown, the Politico website talking to new Democrat representatives suggested that "now, as the shutdown drags into day 19, the frustration is starting to reach a tipping point for some who fear the prolonged stalemate could do real political damage".[28] The perspective is notably interesting in that it does not focus on Democrats solely blaming "the other side" but also engaging in collective self-blame questioning their own strategy as well as projecting their frustration on hypothetical future consequences rather than on the present time.

Similar references to Democrats' frustration emerged in the context of President Trump's various Supreme Court nominations. For instance, on 13 October 2020, Time Magazine noted that "since the Supreme Court confirmation hearing for Judge Amy Coney Barrett began […], you can hear the frustration, resentment, and desperation"[29] amidst Democrats unable to stop the nomination process in any way, a vision shared by the Washington Post which emphasised the same lack of control over the nomination process as a main cause of Democrats' frustration,[30] whilst NBC news used the same word to describe Democrats' sentiment.[31] This merely echoed a symmetric situation when the BBC referred to a "season of Democratic Party frustration and anger" in the context of Mr Trump's nomination of Mr Gorsuch after the Republican Senate had successfully prevented Mr Obama from pushing his own nominee.[32] Similarly, when it came to the nomination of Mr Kavanaugh in September 2018, the

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[27] The government shutdown is drowning out the House Democrats' agenda—Vox.

[28] Freshman Dems feeling the heat as shutdown drags on—POLITICO.

[29] Democrats Have No Way to Stop Judge Amy Coney Barrett | Time.

[30] https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/day-3-barrett-senate-confir mation-hearing/2020/10/14/a9cbf09e-0e46-11eb-8a35-237ef1eb2ef7_story.html&usg= AOvVaw1fydfrvPcU01RfDmkYr3Dh.

[31] Democrats protest Barrett's nomination as GOP sets Judiciary Committee vote (nbcnews.com).

[32] Democrats in dilemma over Supreme Court—BBC News.

Atlantic was emphasising that "Democratic frustration over the Supreme Court finally [boiled] over".[33]

Frustratingly Caught in the Middle

It would be wrong, however, to think that frustration only affected partisans—and was indeed solely ideological. In fact, references to the frustration of everyday Americans, including those who do not feel partisan nor care about politics have been perhaps even more striking than those relating to partisan frustration itself. Thus, a survey for National Public Radio in January 2019 overwhelmingly showed that "a majority of Americans [were] frustrated with shutdown and the state of politics in general".[34] In detail, NPR particularly focused on the opinion on independent voters who talked of "embarrassment and frustration" and suggesting that the institutional failures uncovered by the shutdown were seen "as a black mark on the country" in a sentiment that worked across party lines. Independent voters were amply confirming that "neither side comes out of this blameless", an indictment that sheds important light on the question of blame attribution which I discuss throughout the book. Concurrently, based on its readers' reactions, the Floridan local newspaper the Sun Sentinel was pointing out that "anger, frustration mounts over government shutdown" across partisan divides.[35] Of course, the sentiment of frustration was even more pronounced among those who were direct victims of the shutdown, as illustrated by discussions held by Californian ABC branch KSBW TV with federal workers.[36]

This sense of generalised frustration was not solely related to the shutdown either. For instance, it echoed an analysis on PBS which, a few weeks earlier, in the aftermath of the Midterm election, was suggesting that the "Pelosi battle [reflected] Democratic frustration over leadership

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[33] Democratic Frustration Over the Supreme Court Boiled Over in Brett Kavanaugh's Hearing—The Atlantic.

[34] Poll: Majority Of Americans Frustrated With Shutdown And State Of Politics In General: NPR.

[35] https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/fl-op-letters-saturday-20190117-story. html&usg=AOvVaw2ppS0OBEFkILL0CJcPnzJc

[36] https://www.ksbw.com/article/federal-workers-frustrated-by-back-and-forth-over-shutdown/15843344&usg=AOvVaw39EDnC_ZzkTbf5POS9qjiW.

'bottleneck'".[37] Similarly, the Washington Post compared the Barrett's hearings to a "frustrating charade" for citizens.[38] The same reference was made to the frustration of judges in some of the Supreme Court nomination processes, not least that of Mr Kavanaugh. The Omaha News claimed that it "brings out frustration on both sides",[39] whilst other media were reporting on students expressing frustration at public positions by their universities on such nomination cases, such as an article in Teen Vogue on 27 September 2018 by a student saying that she felt "frustrated by [her] school's public support of Brett Kavanaugh".[40] Finally, the Connecticut Mirror was sending both camps back-to-back on 30 September 2018 to suggest that: "the extent of the bitterness, frustration, anger and hyper-partisanship that has crystallized around the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court was on full display".[41]

More broadly, in August 2017, CBS suggested that "Americans are frustrated with Congress"[42] whilst Sky News conversely reported that "Americans react with anger, frustration, and lack of concern" towards the President when he was diagnosed with Coronavirus in October 2020.[43] As for Reuters, on 13 October 2020, it suggested that "desperate Americans" were just frustrated by both institutions, "[begging] Congress and Trump to pass economic relief bill" whilst referring to a citizen's "tears of fear and frustration".[44]

[37] How Pelosi battle reflects Democratic frustration over leadership 'bottleneck' - YouTube.

[38] https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/barretts-hearings-were-A-frustrating-charade-but-they-were-still-chilling/2020/10/15/836c2f58-0f14-11eb-b1e8-16b59b92b36d_story.html&usg=AOvVaw1J63Qm3wPV0OLKVAVOcvA9.

[39] https://www.omaha.com/opinion/public-pulse-kavanaugh-brings-out-frustration-on-both-sides-critics-empty-your-refrigerators/article_a6bf4c57-3524-5806-87a3-9ab4d23267a9.html&usg=AOvVaw3xj_441XboSqZ7VTze4mAe.

[40] I'm a Yale Law Student and I'm Frustrated by My School's Public Support of Brett Kavanaugh | Teen Vogue.

[41] Kavanaugh case partisanship and rage permeates state politics (ctmirror.org).

[42] Americans are frustrated with Congress—CBS News.

[43] Donald Trump's coronavirus diagnosis: Americans react with anger, frustration and lack of concern | US News | Sky News.

[44] Desperate Americans hit by pandemic beg Congress, Trump to pass economic relief bill | Reuters.

Interpretation of Frustration Contexts

The nature of polarisation and hostility in the US in general and in the Trump years in particular means that, in public spheres perceptions, almost any form of democratic frustration will likely be tainted by partisan divisions and thus embrace an ideological dimension component. Nevertheless, in most respects, the US case study that we have just analysed also and perhaps predominantly recounts a story of institutional frustration. Stalemate between executive and legislative branches of government, governmental shutdown resulting from institutional rifts, controversies around the nomination and confirmation procedures of judges in the country's highest judicial and constitutional court are all intuitive causes of likely institutional frustration. Indeed, in many ways, the situations experienced by US citizens throughout much of the 2016–2020 period may have suggested to them that the constitutional system is so reliant on political actors collaborating and playing fair, that it is unfit for purpose and unable to cope when this does not happen. Worse, citizens may well have felt that when such deadlock occurs as a result of an institutional system unable to function under conditions of extreme disagreement between institutions and parties, both the country and themselves would always be potential hostages of the situation. On balance, arguably, the case study can thus be considered one of primarily institutional and secondarily ideological frustration.

This dual institutional and ideological nature of frustration probably explains the multi-faceted nature of frustration as reported by observers. Republicans are frustrated, Democrats are frustrated, and people who would not define themselves as either Republican or Democrat are frustrated. Blame is directed at individual politicians, at political parties, at institutions, and at regular citizens. It is leveraged at opponents but also at people's own camp and the strategies designed by their own friends and partners, whilst for many Americans, blame is firmly aimed at all actors seen as "no better than one another" and sources of frustration in their combination and interaction. In fact, in most narratives, frustration is seen as due not to a single actor or even a coherent set of them but rather at an intricate hub of actors, institutional designs, contexts, and behaviours which combination result in outcomes often perceived as largely unresolvable, so that even a positive ideological outcome will not be enough to "fix" a democratic situation largely seen as doomed to deteriorate repeatedly and perhaps perpetually.

From tense cross-comments all the way to quasi-military insurrection with the attack on the US Capitol, the US case strikingly illustrates how frustration functions with its own sliding scale of behavioural consequences. Starting from withdrawal characterised by endemically low turnout, the consequences of frustration slowly morph into anger in both discourse and radicality of positions, and ultimately into the hardest forms of aggression including attempts at revolutionary insurrection. In that sense, the US narrative also confirms our measurement model of behavioural consequences of frustration which many might have felt would be absurdly extreme in its inclusion of Revolutions a mere few years ago. Conversely, the US example also illustrates faithfully the attitudinal consequences of frustration, including fast-deteriorating atmosphere, open hostility, frequent hopelessness, and ever-increasing threats of non-compliance.

This expectation of deterioration directly plays in the projective nature of frustration, so that expressions of (and references to) frustration almost invariably focus less on the present reality than on the expectation of a projected future disaster. In the US context, democratic frustration appears as literal frustration indeed because it is never so much a state as a slippery slope, not so much a constant as a dynamic, not an incident but a mechanism of doom such that even where a partisan clan controls more or less all of the levers of power, that is not enough to make them any more immune to a sense of democratic frustration than their counterparts who control nothing.

Democratisation, Corruption, and Frustration in South Africa

Historical Setting

For much of the world, the end of Apartheid and accession to power of Nelson Mandela represented a powerful moment of hope in late twentieth-century politics. The focus on peaceful transition, truth, and reconciliation, and hopes of a revenge-free ending to one of the most openly discriminatory and unfair systems in the world was once seen as a potential ideal model of transition. Yet, soon, criticism towards South African politics not least in the context of perceived widespread corruption became fierce and at times overwhelming.

Throughout much of the world, few features of political settings attract deeper or more systematic criticism than corruption. Whilst such corruption is frequently acknowledged in the context of non-democratic regime, it creates unique dynamic in the context of democratisation whereby citizens may be both grateful at institutional transition towards democracy, and critical of what they can perceive as political misbehaviour or lack of transparency. From that point of view, South Africa is an almost ideal typical case study.

For decades, the country represented racism in the eyes of the world due to Apartheid ideology, a system of institutionalised discrimination and segregation defined in 1929 as a "state of separateness" and formally launched by Afrikaaner nationalists when the racist National Party came to power in the 1948 elections. A string of racist legislation followed—ranging from residential segregation to the prohibition of mixed marriages or even sexual intercourse between people of different ethnicities, job reservation, educational separation, and of course political and democratic disenfranchisement. In following decades, South Africa functioned as a formally discriminatory system, and many of those who tried to challenge this state (predominantly Black and "coloured" people, but also people from opposition parties or even from other minorities such as a number of Jewish people) ended up being jailed or condemned to forced labour. Perhaps the most famous of those victims of political repression, Nelson Mandela, was jailed for 27 years following the infamous 1963–64 Rivonia trial where he was sentenced alongside 14 co-defendants. It is only in 1990 that Mr Mandela (lovingly nicknamed Madiba by most South Africans) was released from jail by Frederik de Klerk and that Mr De Klerk and Mr Mandela started negotiations with a view to formally end the state of apartheid. In 1994, South Africa thus experienced its first multiracial elections, which led to an overwhelming victory for Mr Mandela and his party, the African National Congress. Nelson Mandela became president and led a wide-ranging coalition which put together a new constitution for the country, as well as a process of transition and peaceful reconciliation through the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Madiba remained President until 1999 and received, among others, the Nobel Peace Prize alongside Mr De Klerk in 1993.

In many ways, Mr Mandela was an unquestioned first leader of democratic South Africa. He had been a spiritual symbol of resistance to apartheid and a victim of it, a charismatic leader whose cause and

plight had moved millions of South Africans through decades. When his mandate ended in 1994, however, the real test of democratisation occurred as an uncontroversial hero of democratisation needed to be replaced by "regular" leaders. In 1994, Mandela was replaced as President by Thabo Mbeki who ruled the country for two consecutive mandates, but he resigned about a year before the end of his second mandate after a judge concluded that he had improperly interfered with the National Prosecution Authority notably the corruption case against his former Deputy President Jacob Zuma (the conclusions regarding Mr Mbeki were later overruled in appeal but he did not reintegrate the Presidency). Kgablema Motlanthe then served as president for the rest of Mr Mbeki's original term, after which he stepped down and was replaced by Jacob Zuma (the man whose corruption accusations were at the heart of the scandal that led to Mr Mbeki's resignation). Mr Zuma chose former interim President Mr Motlanthe as Deputy President and he himself served as President for two terms. However, about a year before the end of his second mandate, in 2018, he was forced to resign (and threatened with a vote of no confidence if he did not do so of his own accord) when he was replaced by Cyril Ramaphosa who completed the end of Mr Zuma's. Mr Ramaphosa had been the person originally anointed by Mr Mandela as his intended successor, but he had then been side-lined by the new leadership of the ANC. He was elected for a second term before being re-elected for a full term in 2019.

Mr Mandela always remained extremely popular with South Africans (his approval rating was consistently above 80%), and he was famous among South Africans for his simple and austere lifestyle, preferring much simpler homes than his successors and insisting on making his own bed. Nevertheless, the end of his tenure was affected by rumours of corruption among his immediate family, notably his second wife Winnie who was late convinced of fraud and of theft in 2003 (the couple had divorced in 1996) receiving a suspended jail sentence. As mentioned above, his successor, Mr Mbeki, was himself involved in accusations of interference with the independent judicial system which precipitated his resignation. Whilst an appeal judgement ended up clearing him of his initial condemnation, his reputation among the public had suffered significantly. A related controversy similarly affected his interim successor, Mr Motlanthe, who attracted criticism when he took office and did not reinstate the Head of the National Prosecuting Authority who had been suspended by Mr Mbeki

after a rift between the Head of the National Prosecution Authority and the Head of the Police.

However, neither of them was as controversial with the South African public as Jacob Zuma who took office in 2009. Throughout his time in power, Mr Zuma faced multiple criminal charges including several consecutive cases of corruption in 2005 (pertaining to military procurement contracts) racketeering and money laundering in 2007, new corruption, fraud, and money laundering charges in 2018 (in a case still ongoing after an arrest warrant for Mr Zuma was published in 2020), and even rape in 2005. Those legal cases were further worsened by a rather complex polygamous personal life involving several wives and mistresses and at least 20 children, assault of journalists by his bodyguards, and the involvement of some family members in dubious investments in oil fields in the Democratic Republic of Congo which were revealed by the Panama papers. In the end, when Mr Zuma resigned from office, his approval rating was merely 26%, a record low for a South African president in the post-apartheid period.

The controversies surrounding Mr Zuma's Presidency were seen as largely targeted by future president Ramaphosa when he declared in 2016 that he believed that corruption was the source of South Africa's economic failures and that removing corruption should be the absolute priority including within the ANC itself.

Expressions of Popular Frustration

In the model of democratic frustration followed throughout this book, perceptions of corruption are one of the most exemplary aspects of the political dimension of democratic frustration, typically the highest of all three (chapter 3).

Throughout the period, many of the narratives depicting public attitudes towards democratic transition and mentioning to corruption have alluded to the frustration of South Africans about the situation. In fact, this has been a recurrent theme in both domestic and international depictions.

Let us start with foreign perceptions. Whilst South Africa has often been used as an example of peaceful democratic transition and reconciliation, the corruption situation is clearly literally described as a source of frustration for the local population. A recent story by the BBC in October 2020 was referring to "Ferraris and frustration" as the "two faces of South

Africa's corruption battle".[45] In the same way, when talking about recent charges of corruption faced by Mr Magashule, Secretary General of the ANC in November 2020, the New York Times was commenting on the South African populations' sense of anger and frustration[46] at what they perceive as an "endemic situation".

In the South African media too, in August 2020, the South African Financial Mail was quoting the chair of the National Prosecution Authority as saying "I am frustrated" in reference to the difficulty in progressing anti-corruption fighting and the limited progress of the Zondo Enquiry into national corruption.[47] A month later, in September 2020, the South African Times was referring to "frustrated and concerned" Justices in view of corruption which showed no sign of slowing down.[48] Similarly, the Daily Maverick was describing South Africans as "angry, frustrated, and despondent" in view of frustration, which the newspaper described as "South Africa's oldest tradition".[49]

Often, voters' frustration at corruption has been specifically referred to how it is affecting South Africans' democratic behaviour. For instance, SABC news related the increase in support with Julius Malema's Economic Freedom Fighters with frustration at corruption.[50] Similarly, in the run-up to the 2016 local elections, Deutsche Welle was looking at how "frustrated voters [were] set to shake up South African politics", referring to corruption under the Zuma system and its effects on infrastructural and economic problems throughout the country,[51] including a lack of access to even basic services such as water and electricity for much of the population. As for the VOA news, in the context of the May 2019 Parliamentary election, it was suggesting that the rage and frustration experienced by citizens about raging corruption in the country were

[45] Ferraris and frustration: Two faces of South Africa's corruption battle—BBC News.

[46] Top A.N.C. Official Charged With Corruption in South Africa—The New York Times (nytimes.com).

[47] NPA's top corruption buster: 'I'm frustrated' (businesslive.co.za).

[48] 'No indications that corruption is slowing down,' quips frustrated Zondo (timeslive.co.za).

[49] South Africa's oldest tradition, corruption—the p... (dailymaverick.co.za).

[50] South Africans are frustrated by corruption: Malema—SABC News—Breaking news, special reports, world, business, sport coverage of all South African current events. Africa's news leader.

[51] Frustrated voters set to shake up South African politics | Africa | DW | 01.08.2016.

simply turning them off elections altogether.[52] The people interviewed were notably drawing a triangle between a lack of a realistic electoral path out of corruption, the fading dream of a "rainbow nation", and unemployment.

For several commentators, the corruption issue has now resulted in many South African citizens not only feeling frustrated towards democracy in general, but also feeding disappointment towards the entire process of democratisation. The Council of Foreign Relations was notably noting that since the end of Apartheid, many South Africans "head to polls amid frustrations with crime and corruption".[53] This speaks to our model of dynamics of frustration, which suggests that improvements in some aspects of democratic delivery (here, the iconic end of Apartheid), will not just end the potential for a democratic delivery gap, but instead soon be followed by the emergence of new, higher democratic standards and expectations (here, a decent, clean, and non-corrupt national elite).

Those analysing polls have come to the exact same conclusion, upheld notably in the Afrobarometer series[54] which noted that: "growing dissatisfaction with the country's leadership and government performance has spilled over into frustration with democracy in general". Whilst Muller and Kotzur (2019) writing for the German Institute for International and Security Affairs was pointing to a "sense of frustration" about the debate on land reform. In the same vein, in 2016, Gossel in the Conversation was referring to "public frustration with delivery and institutions of a country stuck between democratic and autocratic tendencies in its unique path to democratisation.[55] Finally, "Facing history and ourselves", a civil society organisation dating back to the depth of the Apartheid period in 1976, and which aims to public and educational reflexion on the process of the country transiting to democracy and moving beyond the fractures of apartheid also acknowledged how public "fear, frustration with the pace

[52] Rage Over South Africa Corruption Turns Off Voters | Voice of America—English (voanews.com).

[53] Democracy in Post-Apartheid South Africa | Council on Foreign Relations (cfr.org).

[54] South Africans are demanding more of their leaders, and democracy | Afrobarometer.

[55] South Africa: finely balanced between autocracy and democracy (theconversation.com).

of change, and a culture of violence" have fuelled xenophobia against migrants in the country.[56]

Interpretation of Frustration Contexts

One of the particularly important aspects of what democratic frustration in the context of the democratisation process in South Africa illustrates is that democratic frustration and democratic hope are not mutually incompatible. Of course, we defined democratic frustration as intrinsically centred on democratic desire. However, never is that reality more vividly highlighted that in a situation whereby the very political party which has largely crystallised the entire hope of generations of South Africans to finally live in a country which will be more equal, more focused on the good of the people, and more democratic, is also the source of their vibrant and bitter disappointment at the corruption of that new elite which they have put in power. Indeed, as we have seen, references to how frustrated South Africans' citizens feel are not only framed with regard to unemployment, failure of public services, or of the provision of fundamental infrastructure and utilities such as water and electricity, but also openly related to democracy, democratisation, and citizens' choice in their hard-won free and fair elections.

As discussed above, it also illustrates dynamics of frustration and specifically the asymmetric path dependency between democracy and standards of democracy. At the same time, in terms of consequences of democratic frustration, the South African example sadly illustrates the easy transition from frustration to hopelessness as well as withdrawal and anger, not least when combined with more prosaic causes such as mass poverty and inequality.

Protection and Restrictions at the End of the World? Democratic Frustration in Australia in the Age of the Coronavirus

By any standard, 2020 proved a unique year due to a tiny virus which rapidly, durably, and profoundly disrupted the entire planet, human movement, societies, and individual freedoms across the globe. Arguably,

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[56] Transition to Democracy | Facing History and Ourselves.

different regions found themselves in dissimilar situations. For instance, whilst Europe was confronted by the challenge of managing a pandemic in a context of intense regional interactions, and the US experienced the paradoxes and limitations of a federalised and localised system leading to major discrepancies in pandemic regulation, countries such as Australia and New Zealand decided to shut their borders almost entirely before major incoming human flux had brought in the virus in uncontrolled ways.

Whilst this led to a short lockdown, almost complete international closure, but largely absent virus in New Zealand, the Australian situation was a little difference, with very low overall contamination figures meeting sometimes very severe localised outbreaks, notably in the Melbourne area, and largely differentiated results (due to the federal nature of the response as in the US but also to those differences in public health situations). As in New Zealand, external borders also remained hermetically closed.

As in much of the rest of the world, the evolution of the pandemic resembled much of a rollercoaster. An apparent initial control of infection numbers was followed by severe regional outbreaks, those seemed to recede again after the few weeks only to worsen again shortly after in the same and some other regions. The question of the pandemic response also led to the same debates that occurred in much of the rest of the world. How to arbitrate between individual freedom and epidemiological control? How to balance infection management and economic, social, and educative costs? Should responses be local or general? How to prioritise measures targeting the general population as opposed to particularly vulnerable groups? Should restrictions continue to be imposed when infection figures became low?

In fact, in many ways, it may be the case that the very low level of overall infections might have made those debates even more acute, to the extent that policy decisions were sometimes not made against the same background of sanitary urgency as occurred in much of Europe and North America, but rather in the name of precautionary measures to avoid such a hypothetical outbreak. The level of severity of some of the local measures, notably in Melbourne, was also arguably higher than in most of Europe let alone the US, and only similar in intensity and rigour to what was enacted in China and some other parts of Asia.

Let us first think about the timeline of the pandemic in Australia. The first case of coronavirus confirmed in Australia was identified on 25 January 2020, affecting a man who had travelled from Wuhan to

Melbourne on 19 January. Three more cases were identified shortly after in Sydney for three men also arriving from Wuhan in January. On 1 February, arrivals from mainland China were disallowed. On 27 February, Prime Minister Scott Morrison was among the first international leaders to confirm that the coronavirus outbreak would become a pandemic. Whilst it is only on 1 March that Australia recorded her first coronavirus-related death, the scale of the pandemic became more obvious to the country around the same time as a result of the infection of many Australian passengers on the Diamond Princess cruise liner which ultimately saw over 700 passengers getting infected.

The first domestic restriction was announced in the country on 13 March. On that date, outdoor gatherings of more than 500 people were banned (starting three days later), Australians were asked not to travel abroad, and international arrivals were subjected to a 14-day self-isolation. A mere 5 days later, those measures were toughened. On 16 March, the state of emergency was declared in Victoria, the hardest hit state in the country. On 18 March, Australians abroad asked to travel back as soon as possible, and the ban on gatherings being extended to indoor events of over 100 people. On the 19th, the country's borders being closed to foreigners (except residents). On the 20th, the first social distancing measures were imposed for all gatherings. On the 21st, the famous Bondi beach closed due to overcrowding. On the 22nd, a string of school closures started. On the 24th, home working was encouraged, non-essential businesses were obliged to close, and Australians were banned from travelling overseas except with explicit governmental permission. The first internal border closures between states were also enforced. It is also around the same time that various parts of the country enforced stay-at-home orders (lockdowns).

Decisions were largely state-specific or even localised throughout the case. To focus on the most tightly managed crisis in the country, Victoria, citizens experienced several waves of tightening and easing of restrictions. A first lockdown started in the Spring and lasted two months, notably in the Melbourne area. Measures were due to be eased in June, but the sense of improvement was very short lived, and soon after the two-month lockdown ended, restrictions were tightened again from as early as June and a new very tough lockdown was decreed in 30 June albeit only for ten specific areas of the Melbourne agglomeration. Further areas were included in the lockdown in early July and the state borders were closed again with New South Wales. Ultimately, the second lockdown in the

Melbourne area lasted 112 days till 28 October, making it one of the longest of its kinds in the world.

Most restrictions were only eased in mid-October for much of the state, and on 8 November the Metropolitan Melbourne area was connected again with the rest of the state and most remaining restrictions eased.

Expressions of Popular Frustration

Throughout the period, there were multiple references to citizens' frustration in the context of the management of the coronavirus crisis and ensuring measures. This was notably the case in hard-hit Victoria in general and Melbourne in particular. In mid-July, just about 3 weeks into the second lockdown, ABC news commented on the frustration elicited by the second lockdown[57] with interviewed residents complaining that they were being "treated like [they were] actually being detained", a complaint that was frequently expressed not only in Australia but by many anti-lockdown citizens across the countries were various restrictions including lockdowns were imposed by national authorities. This echoed headlines in the Sydney Morning Herald about "fatigue and frustration" at the pandemic response and the perception that the steps taken "may do more harm than good" also in July.[58]

The country's main news channel headlines were almost exactly similar 3 months later, on 15 October, when they referred to the "frustration over Melbourne's coronavirus lockdown" mounting in view on its impact on both personal life and the state's economic situation.[59] Almost exactly at the same time, their competitors from 9 News were reaching an exactly similar conclusion referring to "Melburnians growing increasingly frustrated with lockdown measures" as the state Premier faced a vote of no confident in the state Parliament (though the vote failed, and he was thus able to remain in place).[60]

[57] 2nd COVID lockdown in Australia elicits frustration, debate over inequality—ABC News (go.com).

[58] Fatigue, frustration reveal limits of pandemic response (smh.com.au).

[59] Frustration over Melbourne's coronavirus lockdown mounts as business begs for restrictions to be eased - ABC News.

[60] Coronavirus: Melbourne lockdown frustration (9news.com.au).

Expressions of frustration were far from solely focusing on the lock-down, however. There were frequently made in the media with regard to other restrictions, but also the perceived insufficiency of restrictions by those unhappy with recurrent outbreaks. In December, the financial review pointed to the "frustration, anger and despair at border rules" expressed by many citizens affected by recurrent border closures and stringent quarantine rules.[61] Daily paper The Age was similarly referring to stranded Victorians "venting frustration" at entry restrictions between Victoria and New South Wales, claiming to feel like "refugees in [their] own country".[62]

At times, frustration was even used as the best descriptor for the feelings of those considering that the pandemic simply revealed other longstanding shortcomings with regard to other aspects of the democratic, economic, or social situation in the country Sky News was referring to the "total frustration across the [rest of] the country about the Victoria outbreak".[63] AAP news were similarly referring to people's "frustration as Australia virus death toll [jumped] in August.[64] News.com.au was even referring to Australian worked being "frustrated it took coronavirus pandemic to work from home".[65] Similarly, SBS news referred to the "frustration [of] welfare recipients told they [would] have to wait longer" for payment due to the coronavirus situation in April, unleashing broader dissatisfaction about the efficiency of the welfare system.[66]

At the same time, however, frustration was also a frequent reference in the context of testing, health provision, and vaccination opportunities. For instance, on 18 December, local Western Australia paper Perth Now referred to "huge queues and frustration" with regard to long waits for local COVID-19 clinic facilities.[67] Almost identical headlines were made

[61] Coronavirus Australia: Frustration, anger and despair at border rules.

[62] Coronavirus Victoria: 'Refugees in our own country': Stranded Victorians vent frustration over NSW border closure (theage.com.au).

[63] 'Total frustration across the country' over the Victoria outbreak | Sky News Australia.

[64] Frustration as Aust virus death toll jumps—Australian Associated Press (aap.com.au).

[65] Coronavirus: Australian workers frustrated it took pandemic to work from home (news.com.au).

[66] Frustration as welfare recipients told they have to wait longer for coronavirus supplement (sbs.com.au).

[67] Huge queues and frustration as WA's COVID clinics struggle | PerthNow.

in the local news in Melbourne about the "frustration and disappointment at huge Covid testing queues" in the Melbourne area in January.[68]

Interpretation of Frustration

The Australian case somewhat differs from the other three in at least two ways. First it pertains to an event, which by any standard in recent memory appears extraordinary if not unique. And second, part of it affected an entire population in similarly restrictive ways as opposed to reflecting political split lines with winners and losers. This makes the interpretation of perceptions of democratic frustration in the Australian COVID-19 case study quite parochial in some ways, even though the very fact that the case is such an outlier makes it in and of itself a crucial part of a more global reality that could not be illustrated without taking the resilience of democratic systems to such extreme tests.

First, we see that the Australian case study illustrates two different dimensions of democratic frustration—ideological, with profound disagreements between citizens on some aspects of COVID-19 policy and the preferred arbitration between sanitary safety and the protection of fundamental individual freedoms. At the same time, it also illustrates the institutional dimension of frustration with its test of a system's capacity to handle unique threats and extreme uncertainty.

In terms of determinants of democratic frustration, the emphasis is on the importance of electoral psychological models, and in particular the importance of projected efficacy. The Australian example uniquely illustrates what can happen when an entire population may feel unable to influence its own societal trajectory in a context of major external (in this case sanitary) threat. Few examples in recent history outside of war times can similarly encapsulate the sense of powerlessness of entire populations collectively threatened by an aggressive, lethal, and highly infection virus.

Still in the context of determinants of frustration, the Australian case study characteristically underlines the difference between dissatisfaction and frustration in democracies. In this particular case, this notably translates into largely democratically integrated parts of the population uncharacteristically feeling alienated by their democratic system and vulnerable in their relationship to it. This goes against current models that

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[68] Coronavirus: Locals fume at long testing queues in Melbourne (yahoo.com).

oppose supposedly integrated and immune parts of the populations to fragile left-behinds to show instead that parts of the population that rarely express their frustration in the most violent of terms can be exposed to it, nonetheless. Note, however, that is not unlike the case of "Remainers frustration" discussed earlier in this chapter. This can of course lead them to hopelessness and withdrawal just like any other part of the population.

Finally, the Australian case sheds light on the cycle of frustration as analysed in chapter 6. In many ways, it is indeed likely that the seeds of frustration that have affected young Australians between 2020 and 2022 will stay with them for many years to come and durably shape their relationship with their democratic systems, personnel, and institutions even when they have not necessarily fully expressed it at the time of this initial exposure to sources of democratic frustration.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the lexical reality of democratic frustration has now systematically permeated the private and public spheres of democratic debates across all four countries studied in this book.

At the private level, citizens have clear, connoted, and often incisive perceptions of what democratic frustration evokes to them, what they tend to associate it with, and indeed, who they relate it to.

In terms of public spheres, the vocabulary of frustration now provides a constant undercurrent of media observation of democratic, electoral, institutional, popular, and policy realities. Democratic frustration is not so much interrogated as taken for granted, considered part and parcel of individual citizens as well as collective democratic minds. There is almost an element of fatality or possibly acceptance of democratic frustration as an objective state of contemporary political systems.

In many ways, spontaneous open-ended lexical associations in the survey confirm the qualitative structure of how democratic frustration is shaping citizens' minds, whilst the analysis of public sphere coverage provides an implicit snapshot of how this frustration is perceived to have emerged across the four countries, what observers believe that it pertains to and how it interacts with contexts, crises (from elections to corruption and COVID-19) and fields of democratic debate and decision-making.

The four comparative case studies each echo different aspects of the analytical model proposed and tested throughout this book. They talk about the determinants of democratic frustration and how they differ

from models of political dissatisfaction. They illustrate the nature of democratic frustration and its three dimensions—ideological in the case of Brexit, institutional in the context of the US deadlock, and political when it comes to corruption in South Africa. The case studies similarly emphasise the asymmetric dynamics of democratic frustration and of its components with a long-dreamt process of democratisation in South Africa soon opening the way to higher democratic standards that the country's democratic system was largely unable to meet. We saw how the Australian and British case studies emphasise the nature of the cycle of frustration, and the gap between its late observation and expression and seeds that tend to be planted in citizens' very early democratic lives. Finally, we have seen those case studies amply illustrate our model of consequences of democratic frustration. This is true of the behaviour withdrawal, anger, and aggression model, including the slippery slope illustrated in the US case and culminating in an attempted violent insurrection, that is, our hardest measure of aggression, participating in a Revolution It is also the case, however, of attitudinal consequences, including deteriorations of electoral atmosphere everywhere, increased hostility in Britain and the US, threats of non-compliance in the US and Australia, and endemic expressions of hopelessness from the UK to South Africa.

What we have shown is that frustration does not limit itself to being a form of individual unease. Instead, it affects both individuals and societies, creates a fabric of resentment and unhappiness which goes beyond individual citizens' narratives and sometimes, seems to collectively entrap them in dangerous situations whereby whole societies face the possibility of collective suffering and the potentially tragic effects of the attitudinal and behavioural consequences of democratic frustration on the potential resilience and stability of democratic systems.

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Conclusions

This final chapter discusses the key findings that are presented throughout the book and discusses the lessons learnt. It outlines how the model and approach followed throughout this book have helped us to gain a better understanding of the pathologies of democratic frustration in four democracies among both the general population and among young people, and notably first-time voters. The chapter reflects on what going back to the original psychological concept of frustration has changed to our understanding of the current crisis of democracy, how it has impacted our understanding of who feels democratically frustrated (as opposed to democratically dissatisfied) and why, and on consequences that frustration explains in ways other models of democratic unhappiness do not. The chapter also illustrates the relevance of this research in improving our knowledge of possible mediation strategies in order to address the increasingly worrying crisis of democracy, notably trying to understand the implications of the asymmetric internal relationship between components of democratic frustration which our dynamic analysis has unveiled.

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The Bottomless Well of Democratic Frustration

Our journey exploring the nature, origins, dynamics, and consequences of democratic frustration is reaching an end, but what have we learnt? First and foremost, we have learnt that democratic frustration is not only a reality, but a frequently overwhelming one in all four countries studied in this book. Citizens feel very frustrated with their democracies, and it is this concept specifically which resonates with them.

We have also learnt that democratic frustration is not merely dissatisfaction. Instead, its most essential component is desire, and this leads to entirely different implications not only in terms of assessing the pathologies of democratic frustration, but also in terms of understanding how to address, manage, and/or resolve them. Indeed, the very nature of desire is that it is insatiable. If, and when human beings reach what they had long believed was their ultimate goal in life, they do not stop desiring but instead move the goalpost to ever more complex and more demanding horizons. The same is true of democracy and democratic provisions.

In fact, it is worth remembering that definitions of what makes a good democracy have perpetually changed over time. Whilst eighteenth-century dreamers of democratic regimes could not even imagine a world where it would reach beyond owners and males, franchise was progressively extended beyond questions of resource and gender across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And whilst liberal democracy was seen as the be-all and end-all of democratic perspectives until the mid-twentieth century, Ferrin and Kriesi (2016) have efficiently shown how in following decades, this was no longer enough for democratic citizens who also asked for the emergence of social democracy and direct democracy as well.

Any definition we give of democratic institutions at a given point in time is going to become obsolete because democratic principles themselves require that systems perpetually improve the way they offer citizens accountability, control, and engagement. That tension between ever-progressing democratic principles and static democratic institutions echoes the work of Dalton, et al., 2003 and Boston & Berman, 2017.

This is at the heart of pathologies of democratic frustration as highlighted in this book. The frustration stems from the very aspirational nature of democracy, and whilst democratic dissatisfaction could in principle seem fixable if only democratic systems were performing better, democratic frustration is explicitly not. Democratic frustration cannot be resorbed, only managed. It is a bottomless well where democratic

progress in and of itself seeds the seeds of frustrations into the temporarily pleased citizens, a little bit like many painkillers, which, whilst temporarily alleviating suffering effectively create the type of habituation which will require ever higher doses and ever better performing molecules to the point of also becoming addictive.

This is what I have shown in this book. Not only is democratic frustration real, but its dynamics are such that improving democratic delivery ultimately only serves to strengthen democratic standards and desires. Sadly, from the point of view of democratic institutions, those dynamics only happen in this positive direction, so that a lesser democratic performance will not buy them any indulgence from the point of view of citizens. This asymmetry also largely accounts for the common perception (and sense of unfairness expressed by many representatives and members of the governing elite) that their populations only seem to focus on what goes wrong with democracies and not on the many things that go right. What seems to be the case is that this is not really a question of the positive being ignored, but rather of any positive quickly becoming "the new normal" and this new norm, far more demanding than any previous one, becoming quickly what is expected by citizens.

Furthermore, the preponderance of the institutional and political dimensions of democratic frustration over the ideological one confirms that whilst candidates and parties always believe that the path towards resolving citizens' frustration lies in better matching their ideological preferences, plainly, this does not correspond to the intrinsic logic of the frustration experienced by citizens themselves.

In short, the logic of democratic frustration resembles that of a bottomless well of democratic appetite. It does not espouse the needs or preferences of democratic institutions and those elected as part of them, who wish that they would buy goodwill with positive efforts. Instead, it follows the aspirational logic of democratic values, which suggest that there is always a way of further empowering citizens, delivering better, and endlessly improving the transparency, efficiency, and performance of democratic mechanisms and channels of engagement.

Pathologies of Unhappiness

It is somewhat paradoxical that we so often try to understand situations of human unhappiness without referring to the decades of insights that have been achieved by the disciplines which very object is arguably to understand and cure human unhappiness and difficult relations with others. On many levels, according to the logic of this book, democratic dissatisfaction

is simply a particular form of unhappiness shared by a particularly large number of people towards a specific component of their human environment. It is also the obvious conscious and intuitive understanding of frequently more complex phenomena. In short, whilst the literature often seems to implicitly assume that democratic dissatisfaction is the dominant form of democratic unhappiness, in practice, it is not so much a phenomenon as an interpretation, a label which serves the interest of both analysts (because of its simplicity) and sufferers (because it diagnoses their unhappiness as the direct result of something else's fault).

In some of our recent research, many of the citizens we have talked to about this unhappiness and sense of ill fit have spontaneously used a specific word to describe it more than any others: frustration. Consequently, what this book has done is very much to seek inspiration from the way psychology deals with that particular form of unhappiness and apply it to the field of democracy. If citizens say that what they feel about their democracy is first and foremost a sense of frustration, and if the psychology literature has extensively studied frustration for the best part of a century, then the goal of this book has largely been to understand if we could take citizens' interpretation of their own unhappiness at face value and understand if what we have been witnessing across many democracies are indeed pathologies of democratic frustration. In fact, one of the questions this book implicitly asks is whether part of the reason for our very inability to make citizens feel better about their democracy in recent decades may stem from the fact that we have ignored the "frustration" hint that citizens have provided so abundantly and repeatedly over the years.

Psychologists have made immense progress in understanding what frustration is, where it comes from, how it can be diagnosed, what can be its consequences, and perhaps most important of all, how it can be most efficiently addressed. *Pathologies of democratic frustration* has made it its task to apply that knowledge to the specific context of democratic feelings and has shown that the frustration referred to by citizens is the mundane misnomer it has often been implicitly dismissed as by many. We have demonstrated that we could and should take it at face value, and that doing so opens a can of worms of significant conceptual, analytical, empirical, and practical implications that cannot be ignored.

We argue that the consequences of that question are immense, and that by taking citizens at their word that what they are experiencing is indeed a sense of frustration, the core assumptions that have been made

by many analysts and system designers alike regarding what could be done to resolve the sense of unhappiness betrayed by citizens when it comes to their democracies end up being wrong. In turn, this makes it impossible to really understand where citizens come from or how to interrupt the seemingly endless spiral of increasing negativity towards how democracies work for citizens and how to make them feel better.

Let me highlight some of the key findings which I believe could be among the most consequential to understand electoral psychology, attitudes, and behaviour and consider some of the new puzzles that have emerged as a result of the new understanding that we have reached on the nature and dynamics of current crises of democracy.

WHAT MAKES DEMOCRATIC FRUSTRATION SO DIFFERENT FROM DEMOCRATIC DISSATISFACTION?

There is little doubt that when reading the title of this book, many must have wondered why we might possibly need yet another study of democratic dissatisfaction. Throughout the work, however, I have argued that democratic frustration is fundamentally different conceptually, analytically, operationally, and empirically from democratic dissatisfaction. The fact that desire is at the heart of frustration, whilst it is at best an implicit "yardstick" in dissatisfaction models, is obviously key. This is reflected not only conceptually, but also operationally by crafting democratic frustration as a complex interactive term.

However, if this was merely an artefact, results would not follow and would simply capture a lot of "noise", which is not the case here. In fact, what we find is that in many ways, democratic frustration is proving more stable (or less volatile) than could be expected of democratic dissatisfaction using comparable measurement scales.

Furthermore, democratic frustration is also a lot less affected by the "obvious suspects" of democratic dissatisfaction models, such as self-perceived left/right ideology. In other words, whilst one is less likely to feel dissatisfied when the country is run by one's preferred candidate or party, there is no such automaticity when it comes to democratic frustration.

Consequently, and perhaps even more importantly, whilst democratic dissatisfaction can be expected to be largely cyclical, we have shown (and will discuss further in this chapter) that by contrast, frustration tends to "build up" over a citizen's lifetime and to get worse as people age. In

the next section, we will discuss how this is due to the unique nature of the dynamics of democratic frustration and in particular of the asymmetric elasticity of democratic standards (and to a lesser extent democratic desire) on perceived democratic delivery.

Importantly, whilst this perception of perceived democratic delivery can easily be construed as a proxy for democratic dissatisfaction, including it in our model precisely serves to demonstrate how there is more to the current crisis of democracy than dissatisfaction alone. Indeed, fully specified models of frustration explain a lot more in terms of their key behavioural and attitudinal outcomes than perceived democratic delivery alone, and in fact, within many models, the desire component of the interaction tends to be a far more powerful variable than the perceived democratic delivery gap.

Finally, it is also this complex nature of democratic frustration which intuitively explains its three foundational dimensions and how they differ from one another in terms of both some of their determinants and some of their consequences. Let us now turn specifically to the question of the dynamics of democratic frustration.

What Does Democratic Frustration Tell Us About Democratic Crises and the Future of Democracies?

There is no doubt that many scholars choosing to read this book have done so in the hope that it would help them understand better the nature of the current crises of democracy which have made themselves so acute and obvious across established and consolidating democracies for several decades. They may each have hoped to better understand how they could possibly be "fixed", but from the perspective of those who share such a positivist optimism about fixing democracies to resolve frustration, this book is the bearer of bad news.

From that point of view, the first and perhaps most important finding of this book is the confirmation that there is a world of difference between feeling "dissatisfied" with democracy and feeling "frustrated" by it. The key engine of democratic frustration is not the mediocrity of systemic provisions but rather the powerful and burning democratic desire which, we have shown to be so central to the civic identity of millions of citizens. Frustration relates more to the insatiable thirst than to the nature of the drink and as a result, it is also this desire which has been at the heart of much of this book's attention.

Not only have we seen that democratic desire typically exceeds what democracies can deliver and reverberates the effects of the gap between citizens' standards and the reality of what their systems currently offer them, but we have seen that this preponderance of democratic desire and the elasticity of citizens' standards results in a dynamic of ever-worsening democratic frustration.

The mechanism at stake is a simple one: every time democracies improve; citizens' standards increase too. Consequently, far from resorbing democratic frustration, democratic improvements merely increase the appetite of citizens, displace the nature of the democratic mismatch they are faced with, and ultimately rekindle rather than diminish the frustration that they experience by imposing ever harder standards and targets to reach. To make things worse, I have also shown that this mechanism is asymmetric, so that poorly performing democracies do not result in lowered standards or tamed desire.

Ultimately, citizens and scholars of democratic dissatisfaction alike typically posit that dissatisfaction would be ended if democracies improved. The findings of this book show rather compellingly that democratic frustration would not. If anything, democratic frustration is an endless well and an unresolvable mechanism for democratic institutions and systems. It represents a task of Promethean nature, a rock of behavioural unease which democratic systems are condemned to permanently try to carry up a steep hill, only for it to start falling down again every time they feel or hope that the top might finally be in sight. Everything must be done from scratch all over again, and the democracies that appeared "almost fixed" suddenly prove to still be deeply flawed in ways that had never been considered before.

When democratic systems and elites do poorly, the gap between citizens' standards and their perception of the delivery increases as does their frustration. However, when they do well, citizens' democratic desire rejuvenates, and their standards adapt so that their frustration does not recede. As a result, the only way forward for democracies is one of ever-improving democratic provisions, so that delivery perceptions keep progressing faster than the new standards that they will infallibly create in turn.

As suggested in Chapter 1, this means that democratic frustration may arguably explain the unique nature of democracies as aspirational systems rather than as a set model and fixed target that may or may not be achieved. They are condemned to perpetually do better, or else die.

As we mentioned earlier in this book, what was considered near-ideal democracies in the nineteenth century was deemed clearly insufficient by 1945, what would be considered a model of democratic development in the 1950s would be seen as highly flawed by the 2000s, and what was seen as most advanced democratic qualities in 2000 would be frowned upon are well short of standards today. It is doubtless that similarly, a system that would achieve all the requirements of what anyone could consider an "ideal" democracy today would similarly be seen as frankly underwhelming in 20 years from now, at least if democratic governance manages to survive as the default preferred model by then. This aspirational nature of democracy is not in any way a bad thing. It is the natural consequence of democracy being a principle as well as a form of institutional arrangements, and more permanent as the former than as the latter. That principle is to put citizens' sovereignty at the heart of everything, and sovereignty is precisely not limited to always being content the same thing, but rather, as befits individual and collective human nature, it leads polities to always seek to do better and aspire to permanent improvement—which in frustration terms, unfortunately works as a permanent potential for insufficiency, unmet standards, and desires that can transform into suffering.

This is all the more important that the frustration process is essentially subconscious so that citizens will not even realise that it is the very essence of new and better democratic provisions which leads them to assess their performance with more severe and demanding eyes than they would have used a few months or years earlier at a time when democracies may have done less.

A Very Consequential Frustration—and Relatively Inconsequential Ideological Gap

A second key finding is that democratic frustration is highly consequential in both attitudinal and behavioural terms.

Attitudinally, I have shown that democratic frustration notably impacts perceptions of electoral atmosphere, citizens' propensity to feel electorally hostile towards others, their willingness to comply with policy decisions, and even more so their sense of hopelessness. As seen in Chapter 8, these attitudinal consequences also make democratic frustration a full part of broader and ever-deteriorating patterns of democratic unhappiness. This is even more worrying than as shown in Chapter 3, democratic frustration

is distinct in its causality from democratic dissatisfaction. Thus, democratic frustration affects a significant part of the population in addition to (not instead of) the categories of citizens whom we often identify as likely to be apathetic or critical.

In behavioural terms, I have shown that it results in a tryptic of withdrawal, anger, and aggression, which in democratic terms translates in the likes of abstention, extremist voting, and even willingness to engage in violent demonstrations or Revolutions. In particular, I found that institutional frustration has a very significant impact on likelihood of abstention and the political dimension on temptation to leave one's country, engage in violent demonstrations, or in a Revolution.

I have also shown that those behavioural consequences constitute a sliding scale of ever-worsening consequences as illustrated by our analysis of the US case study in Chapter 8. Withdrawal, anger, and aggression are hierarchised, as are soft and hard manifestations of each of them, and it takes a certain deterioration and displacement of democratic frustration to lead some citizens to the ultimate form of aggression against a system, participation in revolutionary or insurrectional movements.

Those findings have one particularly interesting consequence for the field of political behaviour. Indeed, much current effort to understand crises of democracy have focused on ideological mismatches between citizens and parties (see, e.g., Belchior, 2010; Keele & Wolak, 2006; van de Wardt & Otjes, 2022). However, in the context of this research, I have found, instead, that of all three dimensions of democratic frustration, the ideological one is probably that which has the least severe consequences. By contrast, the political and institutional dimensions have by far the most radical effects. This is further emphasised by the fact that democratic frustration explains next to nothing to citizens' use of "within system" accountability mechanisms such as voting for the opposition when they are unhappy with the incumbent's record. This suggests that democratic frustration has less to do with parties, ideologies, or patterns of competition than with perceived elite integrity and the quality and effectiveness of constitutional, institutional, and systemic processes.

The Emergence, Causes, and Cycle of Democratic Frustration

This book has shown that the causes of democratic frustration themselves are multiple and complex, and also that they at least partly differ from the

known determinants of democratic dissatisfaction. It has also shown that there is such a thing as a "frustration life cycle" which means that democratic frustration is founded on early democratic experience, but then builds up and worsens over time as citizens' standards become increasingly demanding but also as the initial foundations of their frustration become increasingly subconscious and obscured to them.

In terms of determinants of democratic frustration, we thus find that age is a strong predictor with older citizens feeling increasingly democratic frustrated. However, psychological predictors such as conscientiousness and risk aversion perform strongly as do moral hierarchisation predictors such as a focus on family morality. Traditional political behaviour does not tend to have a strong effect, but electoral psychology ones—such as societal projection and projected efficacy do.

In many ways, when it comes to sources of democratic frustration, what does not matter is thus almost more fascinating than what does. There are virtually no differences across gender. Similarly, and perhaps even more interestingly, neither ideology nor interest in politics have effects on democratic frustration even though they do on some of their components (for instance interest in politics on democratic desire, not entirely surprisingly). In that sense, what is critical here is that democratic frustration differs yet again from many known aspects of democratic crisis and democratic dissatisfaction. It simply does not follow the route of the "usual suspects" but shows its specificity in who feels frustrated just as much as it does in terms of what that frustration means and how it is composed.

When it comes to individual components of frustration, creativity and interest in politics also matter to explain democratic desire, ideology to understand democratic standards as well as perceptions of democratic delivery. Of course, on that last point, it makes intuitive sense that the ideology of respondents will impact their assessment of how well the system—controlled by their "friend or foe" as the case might be—delivers.

What we find about the cycle of democratic frustration, however, is perhaps even more interesting and exciting. Whilst many observers have focused a lot on the critical positioning of many young people towards their democracies and their tendency to somewhat avoid traditional forms of participation such as party membership, union membership, and voting, our findings suggest that when it comes to democratic frustration itself, generational differences are likely to surprise many. In fact,

whilst it is clear—if only narratively—that democratic frustration is typically seeded during the early years of one's civic life, frustration itself clearly tends to deteriorate over time. Thus, older citizens are consistently affected by greater levels of democratic frustration than younger ones, with democratic desire and democratic standards increasing over time, and perceptions of democratic delivery declining in the same period, except in ideological terms where little difference is to be found between younger and older citizens.

This contrasts between early seed—or the inception—of democratic frustration, and the observation of the phenomenon which will often only occur many years later makes it all the more difficult to address democratic frustration reactively. Indeed, by the time the pathology becomes apparent, it is too late to fix it, and its causes have become invisible any way. By contrast, by the time the initial causes of future frustration are clear, it is its consequences which are invisible and distant, so that acting may appear unnecessary and ineffective.

This state of facts is arguably a natural implication of my findings on the asymmetric dynamics of democratic frustration which show, as discussed earlier, that in periods where democratic delivery is deemed to improve, this leads to a non-regressive increase in democratic standards, so that on the contrary, decline in perceived democratic delivery never gives citizens more tolerance for lower standards. Consequently, as citizens age, and as they have experienced at least occasional periods of what they perceive as positive democratic delivery, their standards become harder and harder to match for democratic institutions and personnel.

Thus, in a way, the formula leading to increases in democratic frustration could be summarised as "we will not feel frustrated if and only if the democratic delivery we get at any given point in time is the very best we have ever experienced", with that "very best" mechanically increasing as citizens' experience of democracy diversifies, whilst by contrast, first-time voters are inherently experiencing both the best and the worst delivery in their lives as they enter the age of citizenship since they have no other standards to compare this with.

However, interestingly, as citizens age, we also find that the cycle of frustration means that the source of their negative feelings becomes increasingly unclear and obscure to them. This subconscious element is entirely inherent to the concept of frustration, but it means that the object of the frustration is displaced and that as a result, as citizens age, they are

less and less reliably aware of the source of their state, which in turn will prove harder and harder to address and resolve.

Democratic Frustration in the Age of COVID-19

A unique aspect of this book is that it has tapped into democratic frustration—as a specific shape of the current crisis of democracy—at unique time in history: the time the world has been faced with an unprecedented sanitary crisis related to the coronavirus and which has resulted in many countries imposing rules or curbing individual freedoms in ways that have arguably been entirely unheard of in peacetime democracies. This has led to significant political debate or backlash from internal divisions of the UK Conservative party on COVID-19 restrictions to anti-COVID-19 passport demonstrations in France, and the politicisation of the COVID-19 restrictions and vaccine status and campaigns in the US.

In the chapter that looks at context, I, therefore, chose to focus on the adaptation of the frustration narrative to the handling of the coronavirus crisis in one of the found countries covered by this book: Australia. The results have been interesting and showed to an extent, whilst democratic frustration has often seemed to be focused on electoral politics, the integrity of political elites, and policy inconsistencies, the coronavirus crisis has become an underlying anchor for citizens' frustration in just the same way that the Brexit rifts have been in British politics.

To an extent, the coronavirus crisis also illustrates the difference that I highlighted throughout the book between democratic frustration and democratic dissatisfaction or indeed compliance. In other words, citizens have shown that their democratic frustration can be heightened by a major crisis such as the pandemic and its policy management even where they are accepting of the foundations and nature of that policy response and largely compliant with it.

It also dramatically demonstrates how democratic frustration can affect those very categories of population who are typically seen as the regular guarantors of democratic stability and resilience, the very citizens who normally protect and comply with the system. When democratic frustration leads them to hopelessness, this is not a very sum game and previous categories of hopeless citizens will not recover hope. Instead, the potential to disinhibit disruptive behaviours is unleashed, and democracies may face direct challenges on multiple front which critically threaten their capacity for stability and even survival.

Do Current Paths Towards Democratic Improvement Miss the Plot of Democratic Frustration?—the Example of the EU

Most democracies—be they consolidated or emerging—have spent much of the past two decades trying to invent new processes due to reconcile citizens with their democracies. However, many such initiatives seem to have had limited effect on the crisis of democracy, be they taken at national or sub-national levels, and a question exists as to whether they are bound to fail to tackle a democratic frustration in which they inherently misconstrue by looking at the work with the glasses of democratic dissatisfaction instead.

A good example is the numerous processes of deliberative democracy which have been introduced at national, sub-national, and supra-national (notably EU) levels for many years (see, e.g., John, 2000; Melo & Baiocchi, 2006). Increased citizen engagement in democratic processes is often cited as an effective response to the declining trust in democratic institutions. Proponents of models of deliberative democracy believe that integrating elements of deliberation can help to develop better policies by including citizens in a more direct and efficient manner.

To illustrate this recent development, a report produced by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) "Catching the Deliberative Wave"[1] and a European Parliament study on "practices of democracy"[2] highlight a few projects that have successfully implemented deliberative democracy initiatives, including many across the four corners of the European Union. Several European Union policies are already engaging citizens in their design and implementation. For example, within the scope of the Missions contained within Horizon Europe, citizens of various member states have been invited to engage directly in the co-design process and help with the implementation of the missions. Similarly, numerous groups of citizens have taken part in the crafting of cohesion policy (REGIO) which was co-organised with the OECD.

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[1] OECD (2020), Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/339 306da-en.

[2] Sgueo, G. (2020). Practices of Democracy. A selection of civic engagement initiatives. EPRS. PE 651.970 Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ STUD/2020/651970/EPRS_STU(2020)651970_EN.pdf.

More specifically and of interest to the Committee of the Regions, the urban green infrastructure (ENV and JRC) has been extremely successful in recruiting citizen participation in 13 different cities of the EU.

These schemes have featured the direct participation of thousands of randomly selected citizens with the aim of facilitating a more democratic style of governance styles. This demand for new forms of participatory governance was indeed echoed by President Ursula von der Leyen in the Political Guidelines of the new European Commission (2019–2024) when she stated it was a political priority to provide "a new push for European democracy" with a commitment to "strengthen the links between people, nations and institutions".

Models and adaptations of deliberative democracy have attracted the attention of citizens, activists, reform organisations, and decision-makers around the world. Forms of this type of process normally consist of organisers randomly recruiting a mini public that is representative of the general population. Panels are constructed and are presented with a series of key public policy issues (normally legislative). These panels are then asked to deliberate together by discussing each proposal in-depth until they reach a consensus or majority conclusion.

Deliberative democracy has also become a key instrument of consultation for some levels of Government. It has been used by numerous local authorities across much of Europe, and notably, many EU institutions have used this type of consultation through its series of regular citizens "dialogues".

Despite some initial enthusiasm about how it could rejuvenate traditional forms and modes of democracy, deliberative democracy has also been the subject of some level of controversy regarding its suitability as a solution to current crises of democracies.

Partisans of deliberative models believe that emulating traditional Athenian democracy, in which randomly selected citizens were invited to participate in direct law-making, could solve some of the problems of representative democracy. They point out the fact that unlike representative democracy, which is based on citizens electing representatives supposed to echo their own preferences in Parliament, there is no risk of citizens' preferences being "lost in translation". Furthermore, whilst elections are limited by turnout issues which are known to be non-random (i.e. people with lower income and lower education are less likely to vote as are younger citizens), the random selection of deliberative models avoids such issues. They also point out to a high quality of deliberation,

suggesting that even novice citizens can make positive and educated decisions on complex issues. Those are undoubtedly the strengths that have led the EU as well as many local authorities to make increasing use of deliberative democracy models over time.

However, progressively, numerous scholars also point at some serious constraints to deliberative democracy. These limitations can be categorised as the following:

1. Deliberative democracy is not as representative as it claims. Similar to the drawbacks associated with the recruitment of respondents of public opinion surveys, panels of citizens are typically recruited based on a very limited number of strictly social, demographic, and geographical criteria (typically, gender, age, region, and socio-economic status). Yet, we know that those attributes are not always very good predictors of political preferences. Indeed, they are increasingly weak predictors of such attitudes as extremism, or frustration, which is why surveys always tend to rely on the use of "corrections" to their previsions based on how wrong they typically are vis-à-vis actual results. Many political attitudes and preferences are typically much better explained by several psychological and political attributes which are rarely captured in traditional ways of constructing panels.

2. Deliberative democracy was designed to replace legislative processes, not electoral procedures. By adopting deliberative processes in consultation with the general public it can effectively weaken the impact of electoral processes that are intuitively designed to involve the whole (rather than a very small sample) of the population. In other words, deliberative democracy was never really intended to address the crisis of democracy, but rather it was meant to counteract the bias in legislative decision-making, but its implementation can often weaken the electoral linkage between citizens and the elected representatives that govern them. This deterioration of this relationship can in turn fuel citizens' frustration with their institutions and their elected representatives and may lead to lower levels of accountability.

3. Deliberative democracy is inherently sociologically, psychologically, and educationally biased. This may seem paradoxical, but there is ample research on how discussion processes are heavily unequal, not least in the methodological research on focus groups. Men tend to

dominate discussions over women, those with greater education and wealth tend to have a very significantly disproportionate weight in decisions whilst those with less money and education are far more likely to follow their lead, young people tend to be grossly under-represented in decisions. Furthermore, there are many psychological biases which add to those social, demographic, and educational ones and are emphasised by linguistic characteristics (accent, quality of expression, etc.). As a result, many studies in social science research prefer to conduct discussions such as focus groups, as representative groups tend to be openly avoided in favour of homogeneous groups which lower those biases. In fact, whilst electoral processes at least adopt the principle of "one person one vote" with no pressure from some categories of populations over others in the polling booth, this is simply not the case in deliberative settings where those biases are likely to be further emphasised.

4. Whether the substantive decisions reached by mini publics are closer to the preferences of citizens than those reached by legislators is contentious and indeed is widely debated. Furthermore, it is in fact very hard to ascertain given the inherent differences in processes and timings.

5. It is also debatable that deliberative processes fulfil one of the primary objectives of engaging the population. The general population does not tend to feel more ownership of decisions just because they are made by other "normal people" rather than elected representatives. Members of assemblies or mini publics often report very positive experiences of their own involvement, but this simply does not transfer to the rest of the general population who are not directly involved in the process. As a result, any gains in terms of legitimacy—especially after the initial novelty of participating in the process has worn off—are questionable.

Ultimately, it is indeed questionable as to whether deliberative democracy presents a feasible solution to the crisis of democracy. It helps little in the way of reducing citizens' democratic frustration, it does not improve the legitimacy of political systems, it does not result in higher turnout or efficacy from the general population, and effectively does not provide citizens with the sense of ownership that they keep demanding in what they perceived as their under-performing democratic systems.

Another example pertains to processes of direct democracy, which Ferrin and Kriesi (2016) even frame as one of the three foundational dimensions of advanced democracies. Whilst such processes have become increasingly prominent at both national and local levels from Switzerland to the US, they have generally not resulted in the ending of perceptions of failing democracy nor a reduction in the behavioural consequences of frustration that I have outlined in this book. In many ways, this could be seen as predictable given the specific nature of the three dimensions of democratic frustration. Indeed, whilst advances in direct democracy could be seen as a direct improvement to the institutional provisions of democratic delivery, it should be noted that paradoxically, reasserting the need for direct democracy as an institutional response is likely to underline the inadequacy of ideological delivery in the rest of the democratic process. In other words, asserting the need for citizens to vote directly on complex issues also serves to remind them of the limits of elected representation, whilst also emphasising majoritarianism and therefore the potential sense of alienation of the minorities of populations whose preferences will be ignored in referendum results, as illustrated by the Brexit Britain case in Chapter 8.

Finally, elites' efforts to use communication—and particularly social media—to better share information with citizens frequently exposes and awkwardly highlights the inadequacy between elites' substantive messages and citizens' expectations (Cammaerts et al., 2016). This is also illustrated by the experience of the Five Star movement in Italy. As a result, the perception by political elites that democratic improvements revolve around being better understood by citizens seems to attract their attention to what they believe is not working well instead and for which better communication removes any possibility of affording ruling elites any benefit of the doubt.

In short, all of the main avenues currently explored by political systems to offer citizens better democracy are by contrast ineffective in resolving their frustration because they are unable to square the frustration circle. In other words, measures likely to offer improvements in one specific dimension of frustration are likely to worsen another or focusing on one specific aspect of delivery ends up messing with citizens' democratic standards and desires to the point of fuelling rather than appeasing their sense of frustration.

Can Democratic Frustration Ever Be Remedied?

In this context, there is a final question that we need to raise in all its potential gloom. Can democratic frustration ever be remedied? In this book, we have evoked several key democratic initiatives and instruments that are often being considered by institutions and politicians as a response to what they perceive as the current crisis of democracy. Those models range from increased consultation to digitalisation and deliberative democracy initiatives, but do they address the nature of democratic frustration itself.

The bottom line is that the question of institutional responses to democratic frustration is grounded in a series of key paradoxes which make it both indispensable and permanently bound to insufficiency if not altogether failure.

The first element to take into account is that the inter-correlated dimensionality of democratic frustration implies that a variety of actors are all relevant in its emergence and evolution. The ideological dimension will largely respond to the behaviour of political parties and candidates and in particular those closest to a citizen's preferences, the political dimension to political personnel at large, and finally the institutional dimension to the institutional and constitutional order and practice within a democracy. This diversity may confuse and dilute responsibilities and mean that the efforts and responses of one type of actor (e.g. the institutional system as such) may be ruined by another (for instance politicians as individuals).

The second crucial reality is that evoked earlier in this chapter about the asymmetric path dependency between democratic delivery and—in particular—democratic standards, which means that any democratic improvement, ultimately serves to increase the expectations of citizens and consequently their very risk of feeling democratically disappointed and frustrated over time. Earlier in the book, I noted the contrast between democratic institutions (the idea that there is a "set formula" for what constitutes a good and effective democracy) and democratic principles which are, by nature, aspirational and instead condemn democracy to being a permanent work in progress whereby every achievement simply creates a need for further improvements and deepening. From that point of view, the model and analytical process of democratic frustration is most definitely grounded in that concept of democratic principles and a maelstrom of perpetual democratic reinvention and consolidation.

This means that political institutions and actors absolutely must invent new responses to tackle democratic frustration, or fear that democratic delivery will lag further behind citizens' standards, but also, that those very responses will instantaneously serve to add pressure on those very democratic institutions to go beyond a response condemned to be almost immediately insufficient. Democratic frustration thus resembles the quest for an ever-moving target, which can never ignore, for fear of permanently losing sight of it, but which invariably recreate distance with the state of democracy every time a system and its elites believes that they have made a genuine and effective effort to meet the desires and aspirations of their citizenries. In short, as we have seen across the data from the four countries studied in this book, institutional responses to democratic frustration are both perennially indispensable and systematically bound to fail.

In a way, this is a glass half full and glass half empty situation. On the worrying side, there is no durable solution to democratic frustration, let alone any magical formula or medication to cure it. On the positive side, however, if institutions aim and manage to react polities' permanent appeal to their betterment, and if they have at their disposal the legal, technical, and creative skills to continuously improve, then democratic frustration has the potential to be the sustainable and permanent engine of democratic progress, and the constant reminder democratic systems may need that their very *raison d'être* is to belong to the people and to deliver for them.

No democratic system could ever be content with simply delivering what previous democratic citizens considered good enough years or decades earlier, and the very democratic desire of citizens is a prerequisite to the relevance and strength of democracies. The fact that continuously changing standards mean that citizens keep infuriating—indeed frustrating—democratic institutions and elites themselves also means that they keep them on their toes, and force them to permanently reimagine their purpose, their logic, and opportunities because of the precise threat of democratic frustration.

This is perhaps the ultimate paradox of democratic frustration. It is here to remind democratic institutions and elites that they owe their existence to the sovereignty of democratic people whom they rely on, and whom institutions and elites need just as much as citizens need them. Democratic frustration is the mechanism through which that sovereignty expresses its exacting and utopian hopes for how great democracy is, but

it is also more than that. It is the reason why the very survival and stability of democracy may be conditional on its state of perpetual imbalance.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Extra Tables

See Tables 2.2, 2.3, 4.1, 6.6, 7.2A, 7.2B.

Table 2.2 Quantitative measurement strategy for components of democratic frustration

	Description	Question wording
Democratic Desire	The strength of the individual's preference to see their own government function in the way they see fit	How important is it that American democracy should make you feel the following ways? (e.g., Represented by people whose ideas are close to mine)
Democratic Standards	One's beliefs for how a well-function democracy should be run	And to what extent would you expect a typical well-functioning democracy to make you feel the following ways? (e.g., That the system creates channels that obliges politicians to listen and respond to citizens' concerns)
Democratic Delivery	And how good is American democracy at making you feel the following ways at the moment?	When you think about the political situation of our country and the way it is likely to evolve in the coming years, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (e.g., There is hope that things will get better)

Table 2.3   Manipulation examples

Ideological treatment	Institutional treatment	Political treatment
Local governments policies in democratic and republican states receive praise for meeting voters' priorities	Local government institutions in democratic and republican states receive praise for meeting voters' priorities	Local politicians in democratic and republican states receive praise for meeting voters' priorities
Key points: The world organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) praises both democratic and republican states for policies that meet the main priorities of U.S. voters The UCLG gives excellent or outstanding rating for the satisfaction of voters' top three priorities: effectiveness, inclusion and neutrality	**Key points:** The world organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) praises bureaucratic agencies in both democratic and republican states for bureaucratic efficiency in addressing constituents' needs The UCLG gives excellent or outstanding rating to government institutions for top three priorities: effectiveness, inclusion and neutrality	**Key points:** The world organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) praises politicians in both democratic and republican states for putting the interest of voters ahead of politicians' concerns The UCLG gives excellent or outstanding rating for the satisfaction of voters' top three priorities: effectiveness, inclusion and neutrality

Table 4.1 Correlation between panel changes in frustration components (overall)

	Δ Exp ID	Δ Exp IN	Δ Exp PO	Δ Sta ID	Δ Sta IN	Δ Sta PO	Δ Del ID	Δ Del IN	Δ Del PO	Δ Fru ID	Δ Fru IN	Δ Fru PO
Δ Exp ID	1											
Δ Exp IN	0.84**	1										
Δ Exp PO	0.78**	0.84**	1									
Δ Sta ID	0.66**	0.61**	0.56**	1								
Δ Sta IN	0.60**	0.69**	0.60**	0.88**	1							
Δ Sta PO	0.53**	0.58**	0.58**	0.86**	0.90**	1						
Δ Del ID	0.09**	0.02	0.00	0.21**	0.13*	0.10**	1					
Δ Del IN	0.11**	0.10**	0.03	0.24**	0.22**	0.15**	0.89**	1				
Δ Del PO	0.05	−0.03	−0.02	0.20**	0.12**	0.12**	0.88**	0.86**	1			
Δ Fru ID	0.51**	0.48**	0.46**	0.56**	0.53**	0.53**	−0.65**	−0.55**	−0.57**	1		
Δ Fru IN	0.43**	0.53**	0.49**	0.48**	0.59**	0.55**	−0.62**	−0.63**	−0.60**	0.89**	1	
Δ Fru PO	0.41**	0.51**	0.54**	0.47**	0.56**	0.62**	−0.59**	−0.54**	−0.66**	0.85**	0.90**	1

Table 6.6 Dimensions of democratic frustration and their consequences in the US—multivariate contributions

	Withdrawal		Anger		Aggression		Control
	Abstention (Soft)	Leave country (Hard)	Peaceful demonstration (Soft)	Violent demonstration (Hard)	Extremist vote (Soft)	Revolution (Hard)	Vote opposition
Ideological frustration	−0.01 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01) 0.03* (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	−0.00 (0.01)
Institutional frustration	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)	0.03* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)
Political frustration	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)		−0.04** (0.01)	−0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)
Ideological desire	0.09 (0.09)	0.24** (0.09)	0.20* (0.09)	0.14 (0.09) 0.19* (0.08)	0.17# (0.09)	0.20* (0.09)	0.18* (0.09)
Institutional desire	0.06 (0.08)	0.20* (0.09)	0.19* (0.08)	−0.04 (0.08)	0.12 (0.08)	0.22** (0.08)	0.19* (0.08)
Political desire	0.04 (0.08)	−0.03 (0.08)	0.17* (0.08)	0.27 (0.29)	0.08 (0.08)	−0.10 (0.08)	0.01 (0.08)
Ideological delivery deficit	0.22 (0.29) 0.67* (0.30)	0.58 (0.30) −0.01 (0.32)	0.39 (0.29) 0.30 (0.30) −0.06 (0.32)	0.75* 0.31 −0.10 (0.33)	0.18 (0.29) 0.62* (0.30)	0.61* (0.30) −0.28 (0.31)	0.30 (0.29) 0.47 (0.30)
Institutional delivery deficit	0.25 (0.32)	−0.17 (0.34)			−0.01 (0.32)	0.80* (0.33)	0.13 (0.32)
Political delivery deficit							
Gender	−0.04 (0.23)	0.23 (0.24)	0.30 (0.23) −0.13** (0.05)	−0.28 (0.23)	−0.05 (0.23)	−0.16 (0.23)	0.03 (0.23)
Ideology	0.07 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)	0.16** (0.05)	−0.07 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	−0.03 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)
Interest in politics	−0.02 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)	−0.02 (0.03)	0.09 (0.05) −0.03 (0.03)	0.07 (0.05)	0.05 (0.05)	−0.01 (0.05)
Income	−0.04 (0.03)	−0.06* (0.03)	1.52* (0.64)	3.09** (0.66)	−0.05 (0.03)	−0.07* (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)
Constant	3.11** (0.65)	1.74* (0.69)			2.17** (0.66)	3.23** (0.67)	2.24** (0.65)
R² (improve from baseline) [R² without control]	0.29	0.22	0.37	0.28	0.28	0.30	0.27

Table 6.6 (continued)

	Withdrawal		Anger		Aggression		Control
	Abstention (Soft)	Leave country (Hard)	Peaceful demonstra- tion (Soft)	Violent demonstra- tion (Hard)	Extremist vote (Soft)	Revolution (Hard)	Vote opposition
Significant frustration dimen- sions simplified model Ideological frustration Institutional frustration Political frustration							

Note Simplified models include the three frustration interactions but not its individual components of democratic desire and perceived delivery deficit. Classic modelling requires that when entering an interactive variable, its individual components should be included as well, but this created some level of multicollinearity which disappears where the model is rerun without those individual components. Improvement from baseline is the difference between the R^2 of the model run with full controls but no frustration independent variables. By contrast, R^2 without control includes all frustration components and interaction but no controls. In other words, the real contribution of democratic frustration will be situated between the improvement figure and the uncontrolled R^2 figure

Table 7.2A Dimensions of democratic frustration and their consequences in the US—multivariate contributions—true interaction

	Withdrawal		Anger		Aggression		Control
	Abstention (Soft)	Leave country (Hard)	Peaceful demonstration (Soft)	Violent demonstration (Hard)	Extremist vote (Soft)	Revolution (Hard)	Vote opposition
Ideological frustration	−0.03 (0.21)	0.25 (0.21)	−0.51* (0.22)	−0.11 (0.19)	−0.14 (0.20)	0.04 (0.20)	−0.07 (0.23)
Institutional frustration	−0.60* (0.25)	0.03 (0.27)	0.35 (0.28)	0.35 (0.24)	0.05 (0.25)	−0.33 (0.26)	0.11 (0.28)
Political frustration	0.22 (0.24)	−0.25 (0.25)	−0.08 (0.26)	−0.30 (0.22)	−0.08 (0.24)	0.16 (0.24)	−0.13 (0.27)
Ideological desire	0.47** (0.11)	0.33** (0.11)	0.51** (0.12)	0.36** (0.10)	0.47** (0.11)	0.42** (0.11)	0.20 (0.12)
Institutional desire	−0.02 (0.12)	0.14 (0.12)	0.61** (0.12)	0.00 (0.11)	−0.05 (0.11)	0.22* (0.11)	0.58** (0.13)
Political desire	0.01 (0.11)	0.00 (0.11)	−0.01 (0.11)	−0.01 (0.10)	0.09 (0.10)	−0.13 (0.11)	0.36** (0.12)
Ideological delivery deficit	−0.13 (0.20)	−0.25 (0.21)	0.45* (0.22)	−0.09 (0.19)	−0.09 (0.20)	−0.07 (0.20)	−0.02 (0.22)
Institutional delivery deficit	0.26 (0.24)	−0.06 (0.25)	−0.50 (0.26)	−0.55** (0.22)	−0.21 (0.24)	0.11 (0.24)	0.01 (0.26)
Political delivery deficit	−0.62** (0.23)	−0.22 (0.23)	−0.21 (0.25)	−0.20 (0.21)	−0.26 (0.22)	−0.65** (0.23)	−0.05 (0.25)
Gender	−0.23* (0.11)	−0.20 (0.12)	−0.18 (0.12)	−0.49** (0.10)	−0.36** (0.11)	−0.39** (0.11)	−0.45** (0.12)
Age	−0.05** (0.00)	−0.06** (0.00)	−0.06** (0.00)	−0.07** (0.00)	−0.06** (0.00)	−0.07** (0.00)	−0.01* (0.00)
Ideology	0.15** (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	−0.16** (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.05* (0.02)	0.07** (0.02)	−0.02 (0.02)
Interest in politics	−0.05* (0.02)	0.09** (0.02)	0.26** (0.02)	0.11** (0.02)	0.09** (0.02)	0.10** (0.02)	0.15** (0.02)
Income	−0.03* (0.02)	−0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	−0.01 (0.01)	−0.02 (0.01)	−0.05** (0.02)	0.07** (0.02)
Constant	5.46** (0.31)	5.49** (0.32)	6.35** (0.33)	5.51** (0.28)	5.46** (0.30)	5.97** (0.31)	4.68** (0.34)
R^2 (improve from baseline) [R^2 without control]	0.24 (+0.08) [0.16]	0.19 (+0.05) [0.08]	0.22 (+0.08) [0.12]	0.30 (+0.08) [0.18]	0.23 (+0.07) [0.13]	0.27 (+0.07) [0.14]	0.15 (+0.08) [0.15]

Table 7.2A (continued)

	Withdrawal		Anger		Aggression		Control
	Abstention (Soft)	Leave country (Hard)	Peaceful demonstration (Soft)	Violent demonstration (Hard)	Extremist vote (Soft)	Revolution (Hard)	Vote opposition
Significant frustration dimensions simplified model Ideological frustration Institutional frustration Political frustration	** *	**	,	* **	*	**	*

Note Simplified models (7.2B) include the three frustration interactions but not its individual components of democratic desire and perceived delivery deficit. Classic modelling requires that when entering an interactive variable, its individual components should be included as well, but this created some level of multicollinearity which disappears where the model is rerun without those individual components. Improvement from baseline is the difference between the R^2 of the model run with full controls but no frustration independent variables. By contrast, R^2 without control includes all frustration components and interaction but no controls. In other words, the real contribution of democratic frustration will be situated between the improvement figure and the uncontrolled R^2 figure

Table 7.2B Dimensions of democratic frustration and their consequences in the US—multivariate contributions—simplified model

	Withdrawal		Anger		Aggression		Control
	Abstention (Soft)	Leave country (Hard)	Peaceful demonstration (Soft)	Violent demonstration (Hard)	Extremist vote (Soft)	Revolution (Hard)	Vote opposition
Ideological frustration	−0.14 (0.10)	0.01 (0.10)	−0.15 (0.11)	−0.19* (0.09)	−0.22* (0.10)	−0.04 (0.10)	−0.17 (0.11)
Institutional frustration	−0.35** (0.13)	0.03 (0.13)	0.13 (0.14)	−0.13 (0.12)	−0.12 (0.13)	−0.15 (0.13)	0.33* (0.15)
Political frustration	−0.27* (0.13)	−0.39** (0.13)	−0.15 (0.14)	−0.44** (0.12)	−0.23 (0.12)	−0.38** (0.13)	0.06 (0.14)
Gender	−0.16 (0.11)	−0.15 (0.12)	−0.14 (0.13)	−0.44** (0.10)	−0.30** (0.11)	−0.32** (0.11)	−0.42** (0.13)
Age	−0.05** (0.00)	−0.06** (0.00)	−0.05** (0.00)	−0.06** (0.00)	−0.06** (0.00)	−0.07** (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)
Ideology	0.15** (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	−0.16** (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.05* (0.02)	0.07** (0.02)	−0.01 (0.03)
Interest in politics	−0.02 (0.02)	0.14** (0.02)	0.36** (0.02)	0.15** (0.02)	0.14** (0.02)	0.15** (0.02)	0.25** (0.02)
Income	−0.04 (0.02)	−0.07** (0.02)	−0.05* (0.03)	−0.05* (0.02)	−0.03 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	−0.12** (0.03)
Constant	4.91** (0.30)	5.18** (0.30)	5.49** (0.33)	5.24** (0.27)	4.94** (0.29)	5.11** (0.30)	4.32** (0.33)
R^2 (improve from baseline)	0.21 (+0.05)	0.17 (+0.02)	0.15 (+0.01)	0.27 (+0.05)	0.19 (+0.03)	0.23 (+0.03)	0.07 (+0.00)

Exploring Democratic Frustration—Interview Structure & Themes

The Concept

What is democratic frustration? Citizens are increasingly disillusioned and disappointed by their democratic institutions, and they become frustrated when a perceived democratic delivery deficit interacts with a strong democratic expectation or desire. In psychological terms, "frustration" has a rather specific nature, which makes the strength of an existing desire as important as an individual's sense that it is unfulfilled. That centrality of desire is of critical importance because it suggests that an individual will not feel frustrated about something that they do not care about, or to

go a little further, that the potential for frustration increases the more one cares about something. The corresponding "level" of frustration is directly related to the strength of the need. In my operationalisation of the concept, I suggest that democratic frustration comprises of three important dimensions: ideological, institutional, and political.

- Ideological—the existence of a congruent offer to respond to a citizens' substantive preferences,
- Institutional—existence of adequate processes capable of effectively and transparently achieving democratic linkage,
- Political—relates to agency, political personnel, and the integrity of their behaviour, ethos, motivations, and democratic service.

In the pilot studies I have conducted, findings reveal that these three dimensions can lead to behavioural equivalents of the psychological reactions associated with frustration; withdrawal, anger, and aggression. In political science, these responses translate into abstention (withdrawal), extremism (anger) and violent protest (aggression). If these behaviours are consequences of frustration, understanding the sources, variations, and the triggers associated with it may help us understand why seemingly uniformly disillusioned citizens may choose to abstain, decide to cast a vote for a radical party or instead engage in a violent demonstration. In this respect, it would also be interesting to understand what solutions can be proposed that would improve the situation to reconcile citizens with their democratic systems.

The aim of these interviews is to understand how democratic frustration emerges, uncover the emotions that it entails, and discover the consequences it may have on people's lives and behaviour.

The main themes to be discussed are: (1) the concept of democratic frustration (what it means, examples), (2) the history of democratic frustration (first memory, key moments or events in personal life, evolution over time), (3) emotions of democratic frustration (how it feels, what emotions it provokes), (4) dimensions of democratic frustration (institutional, ideological, political), (5) blame ascription (who, what, how about self), (6) consequences (including anger, aggression, withdrawal model), (7) what could change, improve things? The interviews will be conducted in the UK, US, Australia.

Format: 45–60 mins, semi-structured interviews conducted via an online platform such as Zoom or equivalent: general themes of questions but no strict formulation. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Participants will be recruited by the researcher and whilst it is not necessary to have any representative criteria, a diverse sample of respondents would be beneficial (age, gender, geographical location (where possible), education level, etc.). Follow the natural flow of conversation but be careful not to let the discussion stray away from the central topic by re-focusing the questions back to the main themes of the interview. All interviews will follow strict ethics guidelines and protocol.

Structure of Interview

Semi-Structured Interviews on Democratic Frustration
Principles:
- 5 big themes to go through:

    – Intuitions—when does the respondent feel frustrated and what does it mean
    – Democratic frustration in the respondent's life? (origins, occurrences, evolution)
    – Emotions and manifestations (how does it feel, does it entail, how do they react?)
    – Causes and consequences (who do they blame, how do they think it impacts them as citizens and the democratic experience of others and of the country)
    – Potential solutions and innovations (spontaneous and reactive)

- As always, within each theme, start with the more open/general question, then go specific or contextualise. For some themes, you can split the theme and do that for each part though (e.g. causes and consequences)
- The interviews are semi-structured so do pick up on relevant triggers/hints from the respondents even if they come at the wrong time. Most themes are phrased around the individual you interview, but as always, do not hesitate to switch the focus on others or society, especially last two themes.

Protocol

Introduction: I am conducting this research on the behalf of a Research team at the Electoral Psychology Observatory at the LSE that aims to understand how you experience elections. The research is fully anonymous and used for academic research only. We really appreciate your time in helping us to hopefully improve the experience of voters. Please sign the informed consent form to participate in this research project. Thank you!

THEME 1: Intuitions—when does the respondent feel frustrated and what does it mean

This first theme is the most exploratory. It aims to understand whether citizens ever feel frustrated by democracy and what they intuitively mean when they say that they do.

Possible hook: Do you ever feel frustrated by democracy in Britain? When/How/Why?

Other potential questions:

How often do you feel that way?

Can you give examples of situations when you have felt frustrated about how our democracy works?

Do you ever feel that when you vote?

How about other people you know?

How would you describe how you feel when you are frustrated in your own words?

How does it affect other aspects of your life?

THEME 2: Democratic frustration in the respondent's life? (origins, occurrences, and evolution)

This theme is narrative and historical. The goal is to understand when citizens feel frustrated, when they first experienced the feeling and how it has evolved over time.

Possible hook: If you try to think back, when is the first time you remember feeling frustrated about democracy in the UK?

Then later second hook: What's the typical occurrence of scenario when you tend to feel really frustrated about democracy?

Other potential questions:

What is you first memory of feeling frustrated about the way our democracy works? How did you feel? What was it about?

Are there any key moments or events when you remember feeling frustrated about [British] democracy?

How has your sense of frustration about [British] democracy changed over time?

Has it improved or got worse?

What have been some turning points? Moments or events which you remember as making you feel more frustrated about democracy?

Have any events ever reversed that path and made you feel less frustrated?

THEME 3: Emotions and manifestations (how does it feel, what does it entail, how do they react?)

This theme pertains to the emotions, attitudes, and behaviours of frustration. What emotions do people go through when they feel frustrated, how do they react (do they cry, shout, argue with others, not vote, post comments on Facebook, etc.)

Potential hook: How do you typically feel when democracy frustrates you? How would you describe your emotions?

Then later second hook: So how do you react when you feel frustrated? What do you do (or stop doing)?

Other potential questions:

Does it make you feel angry, depressed, withdrawn?

How long does it usually make you feel that way? What stops it?

Does it ever make you feel like crying?

Has it ever led to you having an argument with people close to you?

How do you feel towards people who make you feel frustrated about democracy? Do you feel anger, contempt, disgust?

Have the emotions you have experienced when you feel frustrated by politics changed over time?

Does it make it more likely for you to get angry about politics or on the contrary to avoid it altogether?

THEME 4: Causes and consequences (who do they blame, how do they think it impacts them as citizens and the democratic experience of others and of the country)

Under causes of frustration, an important idea is to test the "three dimensional" model of frustration (ideological, institutional, political—note that it is not necessary to "name" dimensions just to try and scenarise them), understand who they blame (including whether they feel citizens in general have a responsibility and if they individually could do something different) and re consequences, unlike the previous section, there is an element of projection about what people would consider doing in the future (again tri-dimensional consequences: anger, withdrawal, aggression, and again, no need to name but to illustrate). In this theme it is probably important to juggle between respondent and others.

Possible hook: What do you think is the main cause of so many people feeling frustrated with democracy?

Then later: So do you think that this frustration of citizens with UK democracy has consequences on our society? What are they?

Other potential questions:

Did you become frustrated with other citizens or other people close to you?

Does the existing democratic system provide you with a good sense that your interests are represented? Does the current choice of political parties provide you with adequate options?

Do you think the political elites do a good job of representing your interests?

Do you think the way institutions are organised works? Is it effective? Transparent?

When you think of the times when you feel frustrated about the way our democracy work, whom do you tend to blame? e.g. politicians, from some parties or all, journalists, how about other citizens? how about yourself, do you ever feel you could or should do things differently, etc.?

Do you think that there is anything you could do differently yourself to feel less frustrated by democracy?

In an ideal world, what would you realistically expect your democratic system to bring you?

Has it ever resulted in changes to your behaviour?

When you have felt this frustration in the past, how has it changed your behaviour?

Did you consider not voting? Voted for an opposition, radical, extremist party? participate in a demonstration? engage in a violent protest, consider leaving the country, other behaviour?

When you do those things as a result of feeling frustrated, does it make you feel better? Even worse?

How did other people that know you react to this?

THEME 5: Potential solutions and innovations (spontaneous and reactive)

Final theme is about possible solutions and innovations—both in terms of any spontaneous answers but also testing the water about some specific possible mitigations.

Possible hook: What do you think could be done to make citizens feel less frustrated with British democracy?

Other potential questions:

When you think of the times when you feel frustrated about the way our democracy work, whom do you tend to blame? e.g. politicians, from some parties or all, journalists, how about other citizens? how about yourself, do you ever feel you could or should do things differently, etc.?

Do you think it would make a difference if elections were organised differently?

LIST OTHER POSSIBLE MEASURES

Other possible questions

- Thinking about the most recent election.
- If you voted, first-time voter? how did you vote? at the polling station, postal ballot, other? If you did not vote—why? how did that make you feel?

- How did it make you feel? happy, sad, worried, anxious, excited, apprehensive, etc. who did you talk to about the election? discussions, debates, or arguments with family member, friends, colleagues, etc.?
- What could be done to change or improve things? Can you think of any special measures or procedures that would help improve your frustration?
- Any other questions or things to add
- Questions for me?

Exploring Democratic Frustration: Information Briefing Sheet

Name of Researcher: Sarah Harrison, Electoral Psychology Observatory

Name of the Interviewer:

This information sheet outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement as a participant.

1. What is the research about?

    This research project is funded the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). It explores how citizens experience elections by conducting one-to-one interviews. Discussion topics will include themes focusing on the electoral experience regardless of whether you participated or not, expectations, emotions, hopes and fears, key moments, behaviour, and perceptions.

2. Do I have to take part?

    It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you do decide to take part, we will ask you to sign a consent form which you can sign and return in advance of the interview.

3. What will my involvement be?

    You will be asked to take part in a brief interview about the experience of elections. It should take approximately 45–60 minutes.

4. How do i withdraw from the study?

    You can withdraw at any point of the study, without providing a reason for doing so. We will not be asking any personal or sensitive

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questions but if any questions during the interview make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them.

5. What will my information be used for?

These interviews are integral to the comparative academic research that is being conducted by the Electoral Psychology Observatory at the LSE on exploring the experience of voters.

6. Will my data be kept confidential and be anonymised?

The information collected will be kept securely and will be anonymised in compliance with the data protection regulations outlined by the LSE.

7. What if I have a question or complaint?

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Dr Sarah Harrison: s.l.harrison@lse.ac.uk. If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the LSE Research Governance Manager via research.ethics@lse.ac.uk. To request a copy of the data held about you please contact: glpd.info.rights@lse.ac.uk.

If you are happy to take part in this study, please sign the consent sheet attached.

Exploring Democratic Frustration: Informed Consent Form

Name of Researcher: XXX

PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY IS VOLUNTARY	
I have read and understood the study description and I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction	YES / NO
I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason	YES / NO
I agree to the interview being recorded on the online platform	YES / NO
I understand that the information I provide will be used for analysis in research publications and that the information will be anonymised	YES / NO
I agree that my information can be quoted in research outputs if anonymised with randomised identification codes	YES / NO
I understand that any personal information that can identify me will be kept confidential and not shared with anyone beyond the study team	YES / NO

Please indicate whether you agree to the following statement (please tick one box only):

__ I want the transcription of the interview to ONLY be available to the EPO team and not to be deposited in an archive accessible to others

__ I want the transcription of the interview to be deposited in a data archive so that it may be used by researchers not part of the EPO team for future research

Please retain a copy of this consent form.

Participant name:
Signature: _____   Date: _____
Interviewer name:
Signature: _____   Date: _____

If you have any questions, or would like further information regarding the research project, please contact: Sarah Harrison: s.l.harrison@lse.ac.uk.

Exploring Democratic Frustration: First-Time Voters

Duration: approx. 30–40 minutes

Please make sure you kindly ask **ALL** participants (first-time voters and all members of the family taking part in the focus group) **to complete the consent form**. Please adhere to the strict ethics guidelines and protocol.

Please keep consent forms safely secured and respect the data confidentiality of participants.

Format: semi-structured, general themes of questions but no strict formulation. Follow the natural flow of conversation but be careful not to let the discussion stray away from the central topic by re-focusing the questions back to the main themes.

These interviews aim to provide a rich insight into how young people experience democratic frustration particular focus on their first vote.

The first part will comprise of a brief one-to-one interview with the FTV focused on their individual experience, perceptions, emotions, behaviour, etc. before moving onto a discussion about shared experiences, electoral memories, traditions or habits of voting, perceptions, etc.

Introduction: I am conducting research on the behalf of a research team at the Electoral Psychology Observatory at the LSE. The project aims to

understand how voters experience elections. The research is fully anonymous and used for academic research only. We really appreciate your participation in this research project. If you are willing to take part in this interview, please sign the informed consent form. Thank you!

FTV ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEW

- **What do you remember about previous elections before you were able to vote yourself, do you remember for example,** your parents going to vote, accompanying your parents to the polling station, discussing an election with your friends or at school, discussing an election with your parents/siblings, looking at the election results, wishing you could vote?
- **When did you first start thinking about your first vote?** when I realised I could vote for the first time, when the campaign started, months before, weeks before, the week of the vote, on election day?
- **When did you decide on how to vote?** I always knew how I would vote, when I realised I could vote for the first time, when the campaign started, months before, weeks before, the week of the vote, on Election Day?
- **Was there a particularly important moment, image, event for you during the election campaign?** If so, when and what?
- **How did you vote?** pre-poll voting (AU), in-person at the polling station, postal ballot (UK, AU, USA), other?
- **The voting experience:** how did it make you feel? Emotions (happy, sad, worried, anxious, excited, apprehensive, etc.) sense of inclusion, community, etc.?
- **How did other people look?** happy, sad, worried, anxious, excited, apprehensive?
- **Comparison to other "first times"** (first kiss, first beer, first time driving, etc.)
- **The day before:** Did you think about the election or anticipate the experience the day before the election? Did you try to imagine how it would be like? Talk about it with anyone? Did you think about it when you went to bed or dreamt about it?
- **Who did you talk to about the election?** Discussions, debates, or arguments with family member, friends, colleague, anyone else) about the election today? If so, could you tell us more about what you discussed and what were the circumstances?

- **What went through your mind when you were in the polling booth ready to cast your vote?** single words or sentence is fine
- **How could the voting experience have been improved?** Positive/negative aspects, special procedures/attention for first-time voters, know other first-time voters, etc.? What could have been done to make the first electoral experience a better and more rewarding experience?
- **What do you think about the proposal of lowering the age to vote to 16?** Good idea, bad idea? If good, why? If bad, why?
- **How likely is it that you will vote again in the next elections?** If likely, why? If not likely, why not?
- **Any other thoughts about your first vote?**
- **What do elections mean**? What is the role of a voter? A duty, a right, a sense of responsibility, etc.?
- **Emotions** experienced during the vote (happiness, pride, excitement, worry, anxiety, etc.) what were the critical "moments" of the election?
- **Perceptions of election atmosphere** during the campaign & in particular that of the polling station, election night?
- **Results** How did you feel when you learnt of the result of the election?

Survey Questions: Democratic Frustration

All surveys were conducted by Opinium using online panel.

Survey 1 Conducted During UK Referendum on European Union Membership 2016

Survey 2 Conducted During UK General Election 2017 (Fieldwork 13–16 June 2017). Representative Sample of 2,004 UK Adults.

Survey 3 Conducted During European Parliament Elections May 2019 in UK (Fieldwork 22–23 May 2019) Representative Sample of 2,003 UK Adults.

Survey 4 Conducted During South African General Elections 2019 (Fieldwork conducted 08/10/2019)

Survey 5 Conducted During Australian Federal Elections 2019 (Fieldwork conducted 08/10/2019)

Survey 6 Conducted on Evening of US Presidential Elections 2020 (Fieldwork conducted 03/11/2020)

The first wave of the Hostility Barometer was conducted during the 2019 European Parliament elections and the most recent, US Hostility Barometer was launched in May 2020

UK GE 2019 – First Word
3X Open Row
O4Ask All
It is often claimed that many uk citizens currently feel frustrated with the state of democratic politics in our country. When you think of this frustration, what is the first word that comes to your mind?

1. [OPEN TEXT BOX]

USA 2020 Presidential
A3XOpen Row Split
O4 Ask All
It is often claimed that many US citizens currently feel frustrated with the state of democratic politics in our country. When you think of this frustration, what is the first word that comes to your mind?

1. [OPEN TEXT BOX]

UK GE 2019
H1 Ask All - Single Grid
Regardless of how you voted in the recent election, when you think of those who voted for your least liked party, to what extent do you feel the following things?
Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you do not feel this at all and 10 means that you feel this a lot
COLUMNS
0: I do not feel this at all... 10: I feel this a lot
ROW

1. Anger
2. Frustration
3. Sympathy

4. Hostility
5. Solidarity
6. Disgust
7. Envy
8. Contempt
9. Distrust
10. Hatred
11. Animosity
12. A sense of ever-growing distance
13. A sense of reconciliation

V7B
On Election Day
V7C
When discovering the results
COLUMNS:
[0: never felt that –- 10: felt that very often]
ROWS:

1. Happy
2. Sad
3. Hostile
4. Tearful
5. Amused
6. Angry
7. Depressed
8. Smiling
9. Frustrated
10. Anxious
11. Emotional
12. Excited
13. Hopeful
14. Hopeless

A1 ASK ALL
SINGLE GRID
Many people talk about the atmosphere of elections. Using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that the word characterises the

atmosphere of the recent election very poorly and 10 means that it characterises it very well, how well or poorly do you feel that the following words characterise the atmosphere of the recent election?

COLUMNS

0: characterises very poorly…. 5: Neither poorly nor well… 10: characterises very well

ROWS

1. Tense
2. Divisive
3. Pleasant
4. Hostile
5. Friendly
6. Toxic
7. Uncertain
8. Intense
9. Aggressive
10. Dramatic
11. Supportive
12. Frustrating
13. Exciting

UK GE 2019
F1 ASK ALL
SINGLE GRID

How important is it that the UK democracy should make you feel the following ways? Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not important at all and 10 means extremely important.

[0 = not important at all… 10 = extremely important]

ROW

1. Represented by people whose ideas are close to mine
2. That politicians are genuinely interested in listening to citizens
3. That politicians are genuinely more interested in what is best for citizens rather than what is best for themselves
4. That I have a genuine choice between a range of political alternatives
5. That politicians are transparent and honest
6. That politicians consider the long-term interest of citizens

7. That I am involved in the democratic process
8. That if citizens are unhappy with the way they are governed, they can get rid of leaders who have not performed well
9. That I feel respected by politicians

F1B ASK ALL
SINGLE GRID
And to what extent would you expect a typical well-functioning democracy to make you feel the following ways? Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not important at all and 10 means extremely important.
[0 = it would typically not do this well at all… 10 = it would typically do this extremely well]
ROW

10. Represented by people whose ideas are close to mine
11. That politicians are genuinely interested in listening to citizens
12. That politicians are genuinely more interested in what is best for citizens rather than what is best for themselves
13. That I have a genuine choice between a range of political alternatives
14. That politicians are transparent and honest
15. That politicians consider the long-term interest of citizens
16. That I am involved in the democratic process
17. That if citizens are unhappy with the way they are governed, they can get rid of leaders who have not performed well
18. That I feel respected by politicians

F2 ASK ALL
SINGLE GRID
And how good is the UK democracy at making you feel the following ways at the moment? Please use the same scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not good at all and 10 means extremely good.
COLUMNS
[0 = not good at all… 10: extremely good]

ROW

1. Represented by people whose ideas are close to mine
2. That politicians are genuinely interested in listening to citizens
3. That politicians are genuinely more interested in what is best for citizens rather than what is best for themselves
4. That I have a genuine choice between a range of political alternatives
5. That politicians are transparent and honest
6. That politicians consider the long-term interest of citizens
7. That I am involved in the democratic process
8. That if citizens are unhappy with the way they are governed, they can get rid of leaders who have not performed well
9. That I feel respected by politicians

F3 ASK ALL
SINGLE GRID
When you think about the political situation of our country and the way it is likely to evolve in the coming years, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that you completely disagree and 10 means that you completely agree.
COLUMNS
[0: completely disagree … 5 Neither disagree nor agree… 10: completely agree]
ROWS

1. Things are probably going to go from bad to worse
2. Things are so bad that they couldn't get any worse
3. There is hope that things will get better
4. The generations of our children and grandchildren will live better than our generation
5. Politics is a zero-sum game: if some people are better off, others will be worse off
6. Politics always works for the same people
7. The people of our country will grow further apart
8. Collectively, our nation usually ends up making the right decisions
9. Political debate is constructive

10. When a new leader is elected, even the people who did not vote for him/her should give him/her a chance at first as this election is the result of a fair democratic process

P10- ASK ALL

If you were unhappy with the situation in our country, how likely is it that you would consider the following reactions. Please answer on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that it is extremely unlikely and 10 means that it is extremely likely.

V12_1 Through V12_7

COLUMNS

[0: Extremely unlikely… 5: Neither likely nor unlikely… 10: Extremely likely

ROWS

V12_1 Vote for a major party which is not in power

V12_2 Abstain in elections

V12_3 Participate in a peaceful demonstration

V12_4 Vote for a radical party

V12_5 Participate in a demonstration even if it is violent

V12_6 Take part in a Revolution to overthrow the people in power

V12_7 Leave the country

USA 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

F1 ASK ALL

SINGLE GRID

How important is it that American democracy should make you feel the following ways? Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not important at all and 10 means extremely important.

COLUMNS

1. 0 – Not important at all
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5
7. 6
8. 7
9. 8

10. 9

11. 10 – Extremely important

ROW

1. Represented by people whose ideas are close to mine [ID1]
2. That the system creates channels that obliges politicians to listen and respond to citizens' concerns [IN1]
3. That politicians are genuinely more interested in what is best for citizens rather than what is best for themselves [PO1]
4. That I have a genuine choice between a range of political alternatives [ID2]
5. That I am involved in the democratic process [IN2]
6. That politicians are transparent and honest [PO2]
7. That citizens are given a range of options prioritising short-term and long-term interests [ID3]
8. That if citizens are unhappy with the way they are governed, they can get rid of leaders who have not performed well [IN3]
9. That I feel respected by politicians [PO3]

Q6B ASK ALL
SINGLE GRID
And to what extent would you expect a typical well-functioning democracy to make you feel the following ways? Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means it would typically not do this well at all and 10 means it would typically do this extremely well.
COLUMNS

1. 0 – It would typically not do this well at all
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5
7. 6
8. 7
9. 8
10. 9

11. 10 – It would typically do this extremely well

ROW

1. Represented by people whose ideas are close to mine [ID1]
2. That the system creates channels that obliges politicians to listen and respond to citizens' concerns [IN1]
3. That politicians are genuinely more interested in what is best for citizens rather than what is best for themselves [PO1]
4. That I have a genuine choice between a range of political alternatives [ID2]
5. That I am involved in the democratic process [IN2]
6. That politicians are transparent and honest [PO2]
7. That citizens are given a range of options prioritising short-term and long-term interests [ID3]
8. That if citizens are unhappy with the way they are governed, they can get rid of leaders who have not performed well [IN3]
9. That I feel respected by politicians [PO3]

Q6C ASK ALL
SINGLE GRID
And how good is American democracy at making you feel the following ways at the moment? Please use the same scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not good at all and 10 means extremely good.
COLUMNS

1. 0 – Not good at all
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5
7. 6
8. 7
9. 8
10. 9
11. 10 – Extremely good

ROW

1. Represented by people whose ideas are close to mine [ID1]
2. That the system creates channels that obliges politicians to listen and respond to citizens' concerns [IN1]
3. That politicians are genuinely more interested in what is best for citizens rather than what is best for themselves [PO1]
4. That I have a genuine choice between a range of political alternatives [ID2]
5. That I am involved in the democratic process [IN2]
6. That politicians are transparent and honest [PO2]
7. That citizens are given a range of options prioritising short-term and long-term interests [ID3]
8. That if citizens are unhappy with the way they are governed, they can get rid of leaders who have not performed well [IN3]
9. That I feel respected by politicians [PO3]

F3 - ASK ALL
SINGLE GRID
When you think about the political situation of our country and the way it is likely to evolve in the coming years, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that you completely disagree and 10 means that you completely agree.
Columns.
[0: completely disagree … 5 Neither disagree nor agree… 10: completely agree]
ROWS

11. Things are probably going to go from bad to worse
12. Things are so bad that they could not get any worse
13. There is hope that things will get better
14. The generations of our children and grandchildren will live better than our generation
15. Politics is a zero-sum game: if some people are better off, others will be worse off
16. Politics always works for the same people
17. The people of our country will grow further apart

18. Collectively, our nation usually ends up making the right decisions
19. Political debate is constructive
20. When a new leader is elected, even the people who did not vote for him/her should give him/her a chance at first as this election is the result of a fair democratic process.

FIRST-TIME VOTERS MODULE
ASK ALL FIRST-TIME VOTERS WHO VOTED
OPEN END
FT1A: What is the first word that comes to your mind when you think about your first electoral experience?
OPEN-ENDED ONE WORDS
ASK ALL FIRST-TIME VOTERS WHO VOTED
OPEN END
FT2A: Imagine that a younger brother, sister, or cousin asks you to describe what it felt like to vote for the first time. In one sentence, how would you answer them?
ONE OPEN-ENDED
ASK ALL ELIGIBLE FIRST-TIME VOTERS WHO DID NOT VOTE
OPEN
FT1B: What is the first word that comes to your mind when you think about not voting the first time when you were eligible to?
OPEN-ENDED ONE WORDS
ASK ALL ELIGIBLE FIRST-TIME VOTERS WHO DID NOT VOTE
OPEN
FT2B: Imagine that a younger brother, sister, or cousin asks you why you did not vote in your first election. In one sentence, how would you answer them?
ONE OPEN-ENDED
ASK ALL ELIGIBLE FIRST-TIME VOTERS
SINGLE GRID
FT3: Young adults experience a lot of things for the first time in both their personal and social lives.

Regardless of whether you voted or not, and regardless of whether have experienced those other first times personally or are just imagining what they are like, how would you say that one's first vote compares to those other "first" experiences.

Please answer using scales from 0 to 10, where 0 means that one's first vote is a lot less (exciting, emotional, etc.) than the other first experience, and 10 means that one's first vote is a lot more (exciting, emotional, etc.) than the other first experience. [SINGLE TABLE FOR FT3A-G—COLUMN FOR EACH ADJECTIVE, ROW FOR EACH COMPARED EXPERIENCE—drop down figures in each box?]

COLUMNS

1. [FT3A COLUMN1: 0: a lot less exciting… 10: a lot more exciting
2. [FT3B COLUMN2: 0: a lot less emotional… 10: a lot more emotional
3. [FT3C COLUMN3: 0: a lot less enjoyable… 10: a lot more enjoyable
4. [FT3D COLUMN3: 0: a lot less intimidating… 10: a lot more intimidating
5. [FT3E COLUMN3: 0: a lot less worrying… 10: a lot more worrying
6. [FT3F COLUMN3: 0: a lot less symbolic of becoming an adult… 10: a lot more symbolic of becoming an adult
7. [FT3G COLUMN3: 0: a lot less included… 10: a lot more included]

ROWS

1. First job
2. First kiss
3. First hangover
4. First sexual experience

ASK ELIGIBLE FIRST-TIME VOTERS
SINGLE
FT4:

On the whole, how would you rate your first voting experience on a scale from 0 to 10? (0 means that it was terrible and 10 means that it was fantastic)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

ASK ALL ELIGIBLE FIRST-TIME VOTERS
SINGLE GRID
FT7: Did you talk about your first vote with any of the following people?
ROWS

1. Your brother/sister
2. Your father/mother
3. Your grandparents
4. Your best friend
5. Your friends
6. Your teachers
7. Your friends you only talk to on social media
8. Other people your own generation
9. Other people younger than you
10. Other people from older generations than you

COLUMNS:

1. Not at all
2. Occasionally
3. Regularly
4. Frequently
5. N/A

ASK ALL ELIGIBLE FIRST-TIME VOTERS
SINGLE GRID
FT8: And when you talked to others about the election to what extent was it in the following contexts?
ROWS

1. To debate voting preferences
2. To debate whether to vote or not
3. To ask about the experience of voting or how it feels to vote
4. To ask technical questions

5. To talk about past memories
6. To tell what you or the other person was going to do
7. To discuss the campaign or parties' arguments
8. To try and convince someone else
9. Someone else trying to convince you

COLUMNS:

1. Not at all
2. Occasionally
3. Regularly
4. Frequently

ASK ALL ELIGIBLE FIRST-TIME VOTERS
SINGLE GRID
FT11: Consider the following ideas aiming to make the first vote special. To what extent do you feel that they would have improved your first electoral experience? Please, answer using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that it would not have improved your first electoral experience at all, and 10 means that it would have improved it a lot.
ROWS

1. A "happy hour" for first-time voters only with drinks and snacks offered in the polling station
2. Sending first-time voters an invitation to their first election with instructions on how voting is organised
3. Inviting political parties to write to first-time voters specifically about their proposals
4. A first-time voter kit handed out at the polling stations with detailed instructions about what to do and mementos about your first vote
5. Dedicated polling stations available to first-time voters only
6. A free first-time voters' party organised on Election Night for people who have voted for the first time only
7. A mentoring system where first-time voters can talk to young people who just voted once

8. Having a polling station staff member specially dedicated to answering questions from first time voters about the voting process if they have any
9. Being given a first vote certificate
10. Polling station visits organised the week before the vote for first-time voters only
11. A "selfie corner" where you can take a photo of your first polling station experience
12. Discounts offered by local shops to first-time voters

COLUMNS

1. 0 - would not have improved
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5
7. 6
8. 7
9. 8
10. 9A
11. 10 - would have improved it a lot

ASK ALL ELIGIBLE FIRST-TIME VOTERS
SINGLE
FT12: How likely is it that you will vote in the next major election. Please, answer using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you certainly will not vote and 10 that you certainly will vote.

1. 0 certainly will not vote
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5 – unsure
7. 6
8. 7

9. 8
10. 9
11. 10 – **certainly will vote**

DEMOGRAPHIC CONTROLS
D1 ASK ALL
SINGLE
What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female

D2 ASK ALL
SINGLE
Please state your age

1. Under 18
2. 18
3. 19
4. 20
5. 21
6. 22
7. 23
8. 24
9. 25
10. 26
11. [ETC. TO 80]
12. Over 80

D2B ASK ALL WHO ARE WITHIN THE YEAR OF THEIR FIRST
VOTE (D2 = 1)
SINGLE
What date were you born in?

1. 1st January 2001
2. 2nd January 2001
3. 3rd January 2001
4. Etc…

D2B ASK ALL WHO ARE WITHIN THE CRITERIA OF FIRST-TIME VOTER [FIRST-TIME VOTERS IN ANY ELECTION]
SINGLE
Thinking about the most recent election, was this the first time you were eligible to vote?

1. Yes – it was the first time I was eligible to vote and voted
2. Yes – it was the first time I was eligible to vote but didn't vote
3. No – I this was not the first time I was elidable to vote

D4 ASK ALL
SINGLE
Which constituency are you registered to vote in??

   1. Added question routed of locations and postcodes

D15 ASK ALL
SINGLE
Do you think of yourself as a member of any particular ethnic group? If you feel uncomfortable answering this question, please feel free to select "prefer not to say"
White

1. English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
2. Irish
3. Gypsy or Irish Traveller
4. Any other White background

Mixed/multiple ethnic groups

5. White and Black Caribbean
6. White and Black African
7. White and Asian
8. Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background

Asian/Asian British

 9. Indian

10. Pakistani
11. Bangladeshi
12. Chinese
13. Any other Asian background

Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

14. African
15. Caribbean
16. Any other Black/African/Caribbean background

Other ethnic group

17. Arab
18. Any other ethnic group
19. Don't think of myself as any of these
20. Prefer not to say

D5 ASK ALL
SINGLE
When it comes to politics, people often talk of "left" and "right". To what extent do you consider yourself to be more of a left-wing or right-wing person? Please, answer on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you feel very left wing and 10 means that you feel very right wing. 5 means that you do not feel either left wing or right wing.
[0: very left wing… 5 neither left wing nor right wing… 10: very right wing]
D10 ASK ALL
SINGLE
On the whole, how interested in politics would you say that you are? Please answer using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you are not interested at all, and 10 means that you are very interested.
[0: not interested at all –- 10: very interested]
D13 ASK ALL
SINGLE
What is your highest level of education?

1. No formal qualifications
2. GCSE, Standard Grades, or equivalent (e.g. BTEC, S/NVQ level 2)
3. A Level, Highers, or equivalent (e.g. BTEC, S/NVQ level 3)
4. Certificate of Higher Education or equivalent (e.g. HNC, BTEC, S/NVQ level 4)
5. Diploma of Higher Education or equivalent (e.g. HND/Foundation Degree, BTEC, S/NVQ level 5)
6. Undergraduate Degree or equivalent (e.g. BA, BSc)
7. Postgraduate Cert or Dip
8. MBA
9. Other Masters' Degree (e.g.MA, MSc, PGCE, PGDE)
10. Doctoral Degree (e.g. PhD, DBA)
11. Professional qualifications (e.g. CIMA, ACCA)
12. Prefer not to say

DISABILITY CONTROL

Do you have any long-standing physical or mental impairment, condition, illness, or disability?

"Long-standing" refers to anything that has affected you over a period of at least 12 months or that is likely to affect you over a period of at least 12 months.

Yes
No
Prefer not to say

S2 ASK ALL WHO SAID YES (S1 = 1)
SINGLE CHOICE

And does your physical or mental impairment, illness or disability limit your day-to-day activities in any way?

1. Yes, a lot
2. Yes, a little
3. No
4. Prefer not to say

D4 ASK ALL
MULTI CHOICE
What type of impairments or disabilities would you describe yourself as having? Please tick all that apply from the list.

1. Learning difficulty
2. Mental health condition
3. Physical impairment
4. Sensory impairment, such as hearing or visual impairment
5. Autism spectrum condition
6. Chronic condition
7. Behavioural impairment
8. Memory impairment
9. Other impairment(s) or condition(s) – please specify

D14 ASK ALL
SINGLE
We would now like you to think about the chief income earner in your household; that is the person with the highest income, which may or may not be yourself. Which of the following groups does the chief income earner in your household belong to?

If the chief income earner is retired with an occupational pension, please enter their former occupation. Please only enter "retired" if the chief income earner receives the state pension only.

If the chief income earner has been unemployed for a period of less than 6 months, please answer based on their previous occupation.

- Higher managerial/professional/administrative (e.g. established doctor, solicitor, board director in large organisation (200 + employees), top level civil servant/public service employee, head teacher, etc.)
- Intermediate managerial/professional/administrative (e.g. newly qualified (under 3 years) doctor, solicitor, board director of small organisation, middle manager in large organisation, principal officer in civil service/local government, etc.)
- Supervisory or clerical/junior managerial/professional/administrator (e.g. office worker, student doctor, foreman with 25 + employees, sales person, student teacher, etc.)

– Skilled manual worker (e.g. skilled bricklayer, carpenter, plumber, painter, bus/ambulance driver, HGV driver, unqualified teaching assistant, pub/bar worker, etc.)
– Semi-skilled or unskilled manual worker (e.g. manual jobs that require no special training or qualifications, apprentices to be skilled trades, caretaker, cleaner, nursery school assistant, park keeper, non-HGV driver, shop assistant, etc.)
– Student
– Retired and living on state pension only
– Unemployed for over 6 months or not working due to long-term sickness

D16 ASK ALL
SINGLE
Which, if any, of the following religions do you MOST affiliate yourself with?
1 Agnostic
0 Atheist
42 Buddhism
25 Christianity
40 Hinduism
30 Islam
10 Judaism
3 Secularist/No religion
2 Spiritualist
80 Other
99 Prefer Not to Answer
D17 ASK ALL WHO ARE RELIGIOUS
SINGLE
On average, how often do you attend religious services?

1. 1 Once a week or more
2. 3 Once or twice a month
3. 2 Several times a year
4. Once or twice a year
5. Never or very rarely
6. Prefer not to answer

D18 ASK ALL
SINGLE
What is the main language that you speak at home?

1. English
2. Polish
3. Indian
4. Pakistani
5. Other (please specify)

D19 ASK ALL
SINGLE
What is your annual HOUSEHOLD income (before taxes/deductions)? [ADAPT TO EACH COUNTRY]
Up to £10,000 a year
£10,001 to £20,000 a year
£20,001 to £30,000 a year
£30,001 to £40,000 a year
£40,001 to £50,000 a year
£50,001 to £60,000 a year
£60,001 to £70,000 a year
£70,001 to £80,000 a year
£80,001 to £100,000 a year
£100,001 to £120,000 a year
Over £120,001 a year
Prefer not to say

D20 ASK ALL
MULTI
Do you have any children or grandchildren? Please tick all that apply:

1. Children of under 10
2. Children of 10–18
3. Children of 18 or over
4. Grandchildren
5. No children or grandchildren

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