Supporting Information for

Latent Territorial Threat and Democratic Regime Reversals

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Johannes Karreth[1], Jaroslav Tir[2], and Douglas M. Gibler[3]

[1] Department of Politics and International Relations, Ursinus College. Email: jkarreth@ursinus.edu
[2] Department of Political Science, University of Colorado Boulder. Email: jtir@colorado.edu
[3] Institute for Social Science Research, University of Alabama. Email: dmgibler@ua.edu

All data and code required to reproduce the results in this study are available in a replication package posted at https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/jkarreth.

This supporting document contains additional information and tables mentioned in the main text:

- All cases of democratic reversal contained in the analysis sample
- Details on the variables included in the model estimating latent territorial threat
- The model used to estimate latent territorial threat scores for country-years
  - Parameter estimates
  - Summary statistics
  - The ROC curve
  - Alternate estimates based on the 1816-2016 time period
- Comparing latent territorial threat and observed conflict as an indicator for territorial threat
- Details on the variables included in the models of democratic reversals
- Details of Models 1 & 2 estimating the relationship between territorial threat and democratic reversals
  - Summary statistics
  - Separation plots and ROC curves
- Estimates of the relationship between territorial threat (measured as observed conflict) and democratic reversals
- Robustness tests
  - Matched sample
  - Estimates using informed priors
  - Estimates covering the 1816-2016 time period

The table below provides more information on all cases of democratic reversal contained in the analysis sample. Some of this information is visualized in Figure 1 in the main article.

Table A1: Democratic reversals, 1946-2016.

Country	Year of reversal	Latent territorial threat at reversal (in %)	Polity score before reversal
Czechoslovakia	1947	23.9	10
Greece	1949	37.0	8
France	1958	0.9	10
Syria	1958	31.1	7
Pakistan	1958	39.2	8
Laos	1960	13.0	8
South Korea	1961	50.3	8
Myanmar (Burma)	1962	6.2	8
Dominican Republic	1963	0.1	8
Nigeria	1966	0.4	7
Uganda	1966	10.2	7
Sierra Leone	1967	0.4	6
Somalia	1969	17.2	7
Malaysia	1969	2.8	10
Lesotho	1970	3.0	9
Uruguay	1971	5.3	8
Turkey	1971	19.0	8
Chile	1973	1.9	6
Bangladesh	1974	4.4	8
Argentina	1976	1.9	6
Pakistan	1977	11.6	8
Turkey	1980	35.5	9
Ghana	1981	0.0	6
Nigeria	1984	17.7	7
Honduras	1985	7.2	6
Haiti	1991	1.0	7
Peru	1992	14.7	8
Ukraine	1993	6.1	6
Dominican Republic	1994	0.2	6
Gambia	1994	0.0	8
Belarus	1995	3.6	7
Armenia	1995	33.6	7
Niger	1996	5.3	8
Zambia	1996	6.4	6
Lesotho	1998	3.0	8
Haiti	1999	0.7	7
Pakistan	1999	47.3	7
Malawi	2001	0.3	6
Nepal	2002	0.2	6
Venezuela	2006	1.1	6
Thailand	2006	12.8	9
Russia	2007	3.6	6
Bangladesh	2007	4.5	6
Niger	2009	0.3	6
Guinea-Bissau	2012	0.0	6
Mali	2012	0.3	7
Ukraine	2014	0.4	6
Turkey	2014	1.2	9
Thailand	2014	1.0	7
Malaysia	2014	0.4	6
Burundi	2015	0.2	6
Niger	2016	0.5	6

Details on the variables included in the predictive model estimating latent territorial threat

Outcome variable. The occurrence of a fatal militarized dispute between two contiguous states, recorded as a binary variable set to 1 in each year of the dispute, is the outcome variable for the predictive model we build below. We use version 4.3 of the Militarized Interstate Dispute data collection effort (Palmer, D'Orazio, Kenwick, and McManus 2020) to identify these disputes. This version of the MID data incorporates many of the data changes suggested by Gibler, Miller, and Little (2017). However, errors remain in the data (Gibler, Miller, and Little 2020; Gibler and Miller 2021*b*). We do not expect those differences to matter much for our conclusions here, but we recommend that future uses of the latent territorial threat variable should be based on the dataset being developed by Gibler and Miller (2021*a*).

Predictors. The predictors of territorial threat in this model are selected based on previous work on interstate conflict. They include variables capturing past interstate relations over territory and conditions that affect the occurrence of militarized disputes.

First, prior work shows that territorial claims with greater salience are most likely to produce fatal MIDs (Hensel and Mitchell 2005). To account for this, we use an indicator for the salience of a territorial claim from the ICOW project (Hensel, Mitchell, Sowers, and Thyne 2008) in predicting fatal MIDs between neighbors.

The occurrence of a militarized interstate dispute over territory in the past, as well as counts of peaceful and violent territorial transfers within the dyad in the past, all capture the past relationship between two states over territory. These variables are derived from version 4.3 of the Militarized Interstate Dispute data collection effort (Palmer et al. 2020) and from the Territorial Change data, version 6.0 (Tir, Schafer, Diehl, and Goertz 1998). The age of the border between two states is included as an indicator for the duration of dyadic territorial relations, addressing the idea that territorial conflicts may become less likely as states have had more time to settle such conflicts. The historical legacy of colonization, sometimes resulting in conflicts between states whose borders were drawn arbitrarily by colonizers, is captured by a binary indicator for dyads that once shared the same colonial power, based on the Issue Correlates of War Colonial History data set (Hensel 2014).

For neighborhood influences on the prevalence of militarized disputes, we add a binary variable for ongoing civil wars in any neighboring state to account for potential spillover effects, defensive responses, or diversionary conflict initiation. Civil war instances are based on the Correlates of War list version 4.0 (Sarkees and Wayman 2010) and the UCDP-PRIO data (Allansson, Melander, and Themnér 2017). States might be more hesitant to engage in conflict in environments with more potential opponents; therefore, we include the larger count of neighbors of each dyad member. A binary indicator for dyads that have current defense pacts with all neighbors captures pacifying influences of security institutions. This variable is derived from the Correlates of War alliance data, version 4.1 (Gibler 2009). Conversely, a measure of militarization in the dyad addresses the level of military readiness of the dyad members, where higher values presumably express a higher propensity to use the military. This variable is operationalized as the higher value of the share of military personnel in the total population and derived from version 5.0 of the Correlates of War National Material Capabilities data set (Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey 1972). Lastly, we account for time dependence by including the count of years since the last militarized dispute between the

dyad members and its squared and cubed terms.

Estimation. We fit a logistic regression model using Bayesian estimation via Stan (Stan Development Team 2019; Goodrich, Gabry, Ali, and Brilleman 2019). We use Cauchy priors with center 0 and scale 2.5, following the recommendation in Gelman, Jakulin, Pittau, and Su (2008). With four Markov chains and 5000 iterations each, conventional diagnostics suggest convergence of the chains. We then save the full posterior distribution of $\widehat{\Pr(y = 1)}$ for the next step as described in the main manuscript.

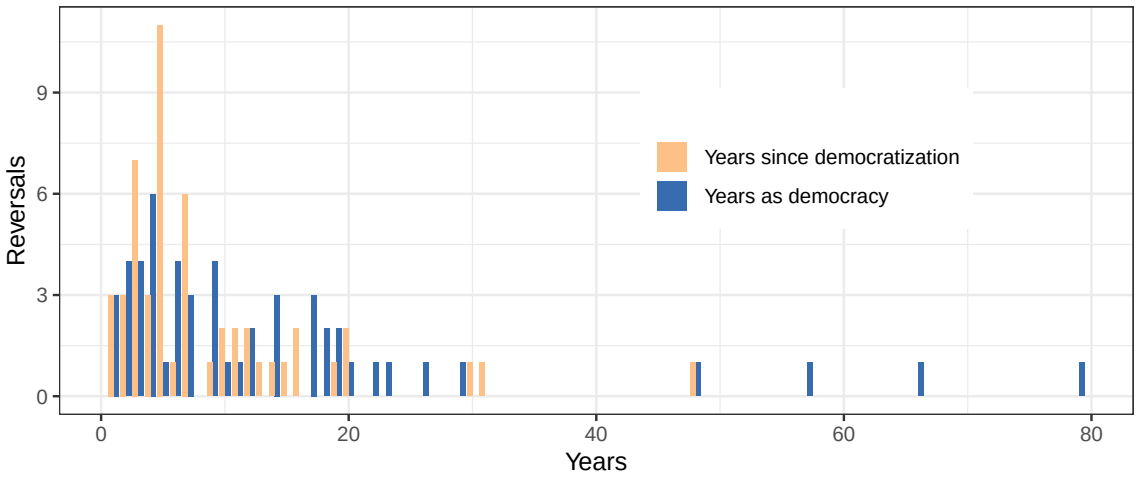


Figure A1: Time since democratization and as democracy (total) at each case of democratic reversal in the data examined in this study.

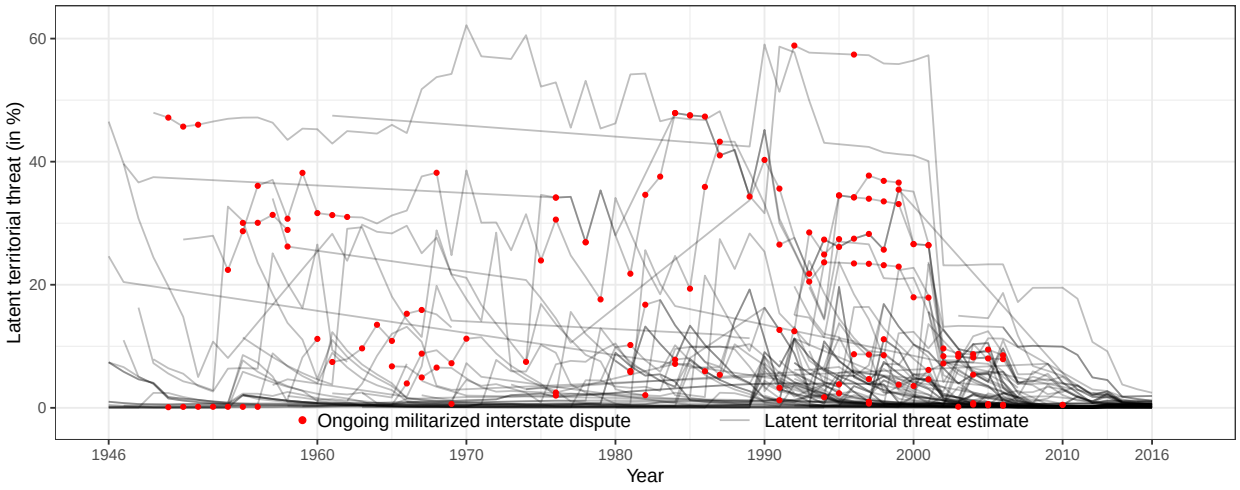


Figure A2: Latent territorial threat and militarized interstate disputes, 1946-2016. The figure shows the difference between latent territorial threat and binary measurements of threat based on observed conflict. Red dots indicate country-years in which a country was involved in a MID over territory; gray lines show countries' latent territorial threat scores over time.

Table A2: Summary statistics for models of fatal MIDs between contiguous dyads, 1946-2016.

	Mean/Proportion	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.	N (dyad-years)
Fatal territorial MID in given year	0.03	0.17	0	1	16489
Border age (logged)	3.46	1.1	0	5.3	16489
Defense pact	0.16	0.37	0	1	16489
Territorial MID (last 5 years)	0.2	0.4	0	1	16489
Civil war (any neighbor)	0.17	0.37	0	1	16489
Max. militarization (logged)	-4.44	0.87	-8.57	-2.33	16489
Same colonizer	0.3	0.46	0	1	16489
Violent territorial transfer (past)	0.39	1.06	0	6	16489
Peaceful territorial transfer (past)	0.68	1.54	0	16	16489
Max. neighbors	7.13	3.54	1	20	16489
ICOW claim salience	1.42	3.27	0	12	16489
Peace years	22.49	28.09	0	206	16489

Table A3: Posterior estimates from the predictive model used to generate the latent territorial threat measure. Outcome: Fatal militarized interstate disputes between contiguous countries, 1946-2016.

	Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)[†]
Border age (logged)	0.177*	0.07	100%
Defense pact	−1.29*	0.27	100%
Territorial MID (last 5 years	0.485*	0.22	99%
Civil war (any neighbor)	0.25*	0.11	98%
Max. militarization (logged)	0.277*	0.07	100%
Same colonizer	0.327*	0.11	100%
Violent territorial transfer (past)	0.101*	0.04	99%
Peaceful territorial transfer (past)	−0.093*	0.03	100%
Max. neighbors	−0.08*	0.02	100%
ICOW claim salience (given year)	0.144*	0.01	100%
Peace years	−0.479*	0.04	100%
Peace years (sq.)	0.015*	0.00	100%
Peace years (cu.)	−0.0001*	0.00	100%
Intercept	−1.675	0.41	100%
N (dyad-years)		16489	

* indicates that the relationship is in the direction of the median estimate, with a probability of 95% or higher.

† Pr(Estimate) is the posterior probability that the estimated parameter is in the same direction as its median.

Cell entries summarize posterior draws from Bayesian logistic regression estimates.

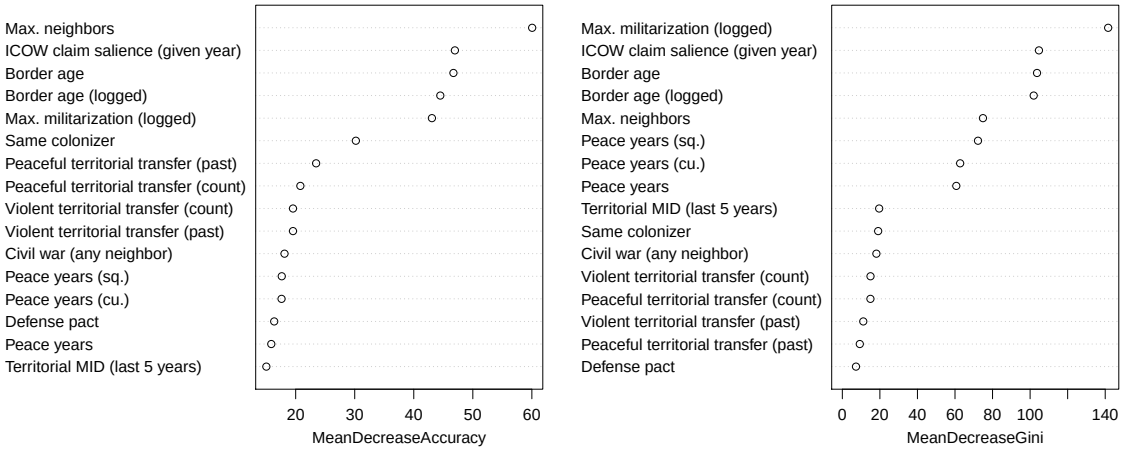


Figure A3: Variable importance plot summarizing the random forest classifier of fatal MIDs, 1946-2016. Each of the two measures expresses the contribution of each variable to correct classifications of the outcome (fatal MIDs). For background, see Breiman (2001).

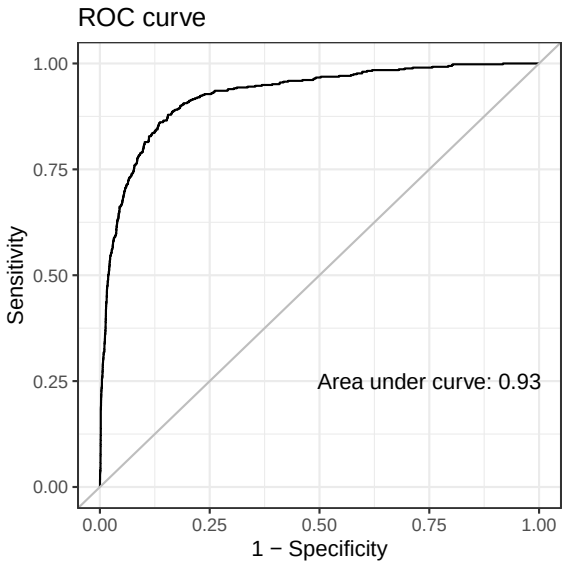


Figure A4: Receiver Operating Characteristic curves for the model estimating the latent territorial threat variable (Table A3).

Figure A5: Separation plot for the model estimating the latent territorial threat variable (Table A3). The observations are sorted by the predicted probability of a fatal MID derived from the model. The more red lines are concentrated in the right of the figure (where the predicted probability of a fatal MID is high), the better the model classifies the data.

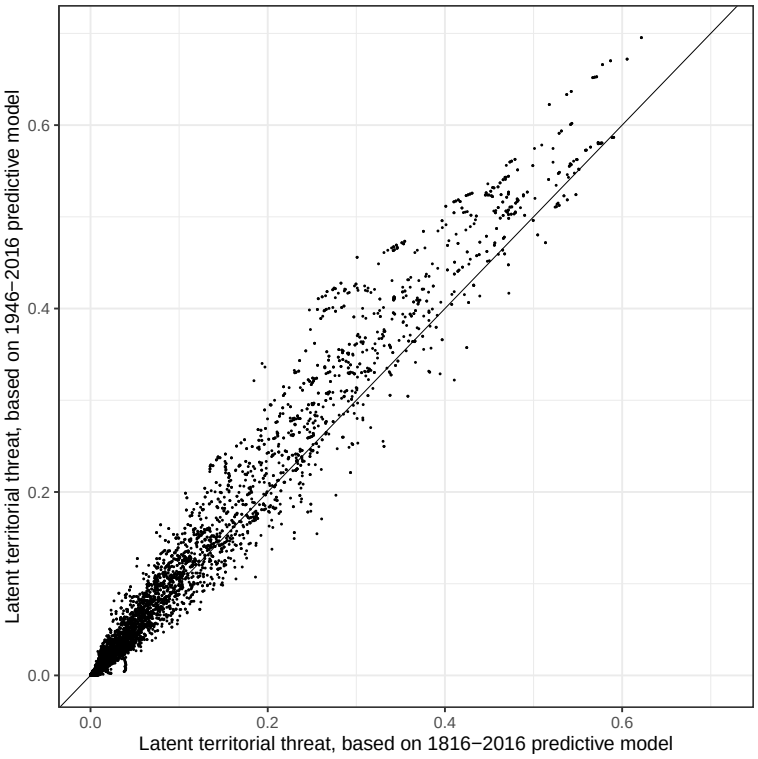


Figure A6: Comparison between latent territorial threat measures (median estimates) based on two separate models covering the 1946-2016 and 1816-2016 time period. Each dot is one country-year in the 1946-2016 time period. The correlation between the two measures is $r = 0.99$.

Table A4: Summary statistics for models of democratic reversals. *Note: all variables, except for binary variables, are means-centered standardized; we set the mean of each variable to 0 and divided it by one standard deviation.*

	Mean/Proportion	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.	N (country-years)
Democratic reversals	0.02	0.13	0	1	2972
Territorial threat (logged)	-4.55	1.99	-8.29	-0.39	2972
Territorial threat (Deciles)	4.74	2.81	1	10	2972
HSIGO memberships	0.16	0.97	-2.55	2.84	2972
Perc. democratic within 500km	0.07	0.96	-1.76	1.19	2972
Reversals in region	0.12	0.98	-1.64	1.88	2972
Perc. democratic (global)	0	0.97	-1.58	1.12	2972
Post-Cold War	0.62	0.49	0	1	2972
GDPpc (t-1, logged)	0.01	1.02	-3.52	2.08	2972
Polity (t-1)	-0.04	1.02	-1.91	0.88	2972
Previous reversals	0.08	1.04	-0.67	3.41	2972
Years as democracy (logged)	0.02	1.01	-2.98	1.86	2972
Ethnic fractionalization	0.04	1.01	-1.53	2.46	2972
Non-contiguous rivalries	0.04	1.1	-0.27	6.77	2972

Details on the variables included in the models of democratic reversals

Control variables. The influence of international and regional dynamics and potential democracy diffusion is accounted for by a country's membership in highly structured international governmental organizations (Tir and Karreth 2018; Pevehouse, Nordstrom, McManus, and Jamison 2020), the proportion of democratic neighbor states within 500 kilometers, the raw count of democratic neighbors, and the reversal rate in the country's region (expressed as the cumulative sum of reversals in the region up to the current year).

Global democratization trends are captured by the percentage of democracies worldwide in a given year.[1] The post-Cold War democratization wave and its potential impact on contemporaneous or subsequent reversals is measured as a binary variable set to 1 for all country-years after 1990 and 0 before. The democratic history of countries is accounted for by the count of previous reversals and the logged count of years the country has been a democracy in a given year. If countries that rate higher on the Polity IV scale are less likely to revert to non-democratic institutions, a lagged indicator of the Polity IV score in the previous year captures this.

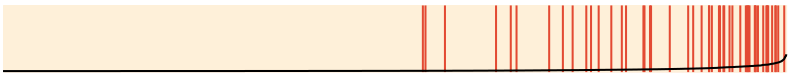
Reflecting extensive research on the stabilizing impact of economic wealth (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi 2000), we include a one-year lag of countries' GDP per capita. Ethnic heterogeneity, measured via Fearon and Laitin (2003), enters as an additional country-level indicator measuring the viability of democratic institutions under potentially heightened contestation in multi-ethnic states.

Because positional rivalries and conflicts other than territorial disputes may also impact democratic consolidation and reversals, we account for the presence of such tensions by adjusting estimates for rivalries with non-contiguous states. We use data from Thompson and Dreyer (2011) for this indicator.[2]

Estimation. We fit a logistic regression model using Bayesian estimation via JAGS (Plummer 2017). Values for the territorial threat variable with uncertainty are pulled from each observation's posterior distribution of latent territorial threat as estimated above. We use Cauchy priors with center 0 and scale 2.5, following the recommendation in Gelman et al. (2008). With four Markov chains and 10000 iterations each (after 2000 discarded burn-in iterations), conventional diagnostics suggest convergence of the chains.

[1] We calculate all democracy-related variables using the same cutoff on the Polity IV scale (Marshall and Jaggers 2009) as in our outcome variable. For regions, we follow the Correlates of War project and use 9 regions: North America, South America, Western Europe, Central & Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, Far East Asia, Oceania.

[2] Because reversals are so rare, we constructed these data with the goal of maintaining as many observations as possible. To this end, we added information on control variables from other, comparable sources where necessary. This includes using a number of indicators for GDP per capita (Gleditsch 2002; Heston, Summers, and Aten 2012; Bolt and van Zanden 2014; Teorell, Dahlberg, Holmberg, Rothstein, Hartmann, and Svensson 2015) and ethnic fractionalization (Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly, Kurlat, and Wacziarg 2003; Fearon and Laitin 2003).



(a): Model 1

(b): Model 2

Figure A7: Separation plots for Models 1 and 2 (Table I). Each red line indicates one country-year with a democratic reversal. The observations are sorted by the predicted probability of a democratic reversal derived from the model. The more red lines are concentrated in the right of the figure (where the predicted probability of a reversal is high), the better the model classifies the data.

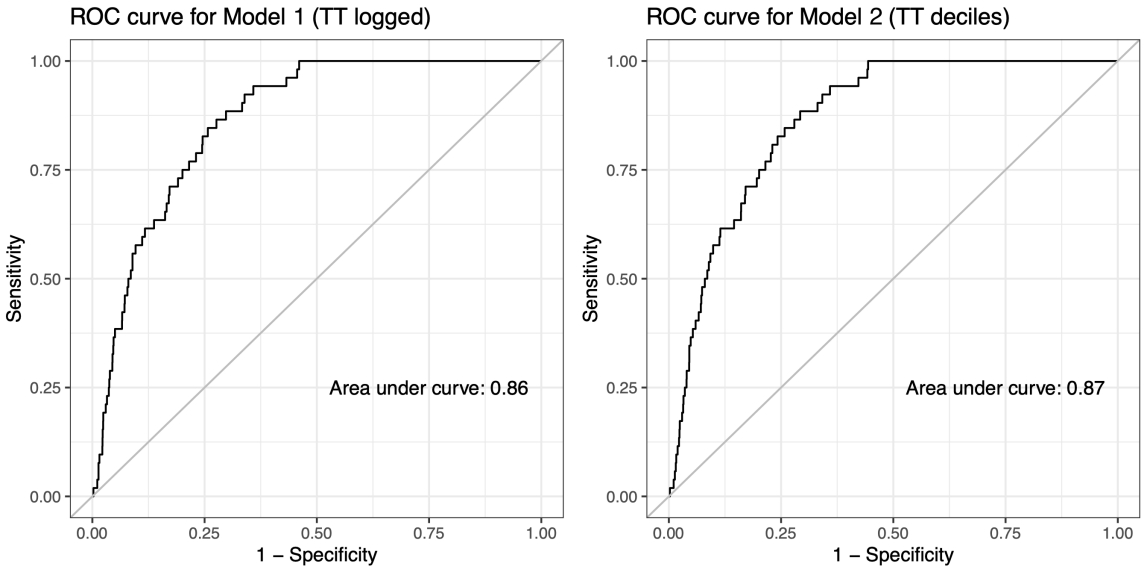


Figure A8: Receiver Operating Characteristic curves for Models 1 and 2 (Table I).

Table A5: Posterior estimates: Territorial MIDs and democratic reversals, 1946-2016.

	Fatal territorial MID in current year			Fatal territorial MID in previous year		
	Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)[†]	Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)
Territorial MID	0.661	0.59	86%	0.293	0.68	67%
HSIGO memberships	−0.317[*]	0.23	92%	−0.322[*]	0.23	92%
Perc. democratic within 500km	−0.091	0.18	69%	−0.107	0.18	72%
Reversals in region	−0.038	0.23	57%	−0.049	0.24	58%
Perc. democratic (global)	−0.582[*]	0.43	91%	−0.595[*]	0.44	91%
Post-Cold War	0.654	0.81	79%	0.691	0.84	79%
GDPpc (t-1, logged)	−0.475[*]	0.20	99%	−0.469[*]	0.19	99%
Polity (t-1)	−0.605[*]	0.19	00%	−0.587[*]	0.19	00%
Previous reversals	0.339	0.18	97%	0.346[*]	0.17	97%
Years as democracy (logged)	−0.432[*]	0.21	98%	−0.437[*]	0.21	98%
Ethnic fractionalization	0.005	0.14	51%	0.01	0.14	53%
Non-contiguous rivalries	−0.058	0.25	60%	−0.061	0.25	60%
Intercept	−5.653	0.60	100%	−5.664	0.61	100%
N (country-years)		3336			3336	

[*] indicates that the relationship is in the direction of the median estimate, with a probability of 90% or higher.
[†] Pr(Estimate) is the posterior probability that the estimated parameter is in the same direction as its median.
Cell entries summarize posterior draws from Bayesian logistic regression estimates.

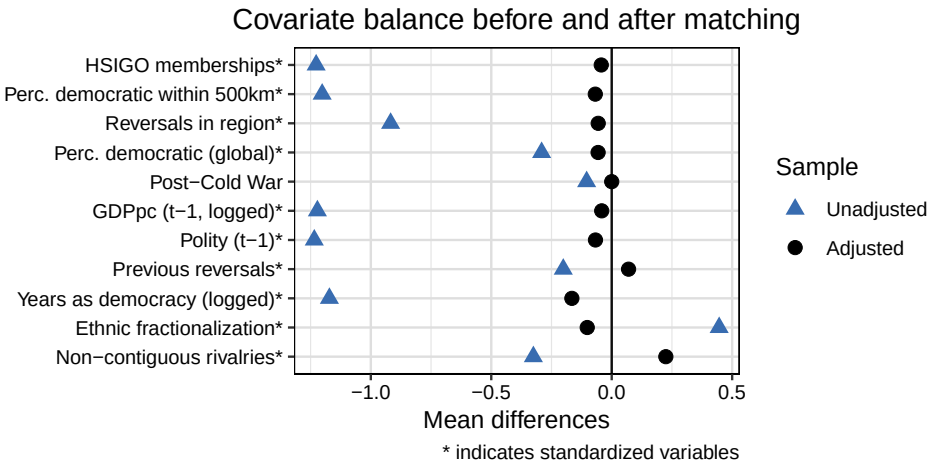


Figure A9: Balance plot for matched sample used in Table A6.

Table A6: Posterior estimates from matched sample: Territorial threat and democratic reversals, 1946-2016. Territorial threat estimates based on the 1946-2016 period. See Figure A9 for variables on which the sample was matched (with replacement).

	TT logged			TT deciles		
	Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)†	Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)
Territorial threat	0.167*	0.07	99%	0.119*	0.05	99%
Intercept	−2.322	0.29	100%	−3.65	0.36	100%
N (Country-years)		1033			1033	

* indicates that the relationship is in the direction of the median estimate, with a probability of 90% or higher.
† Pr(Estimate) is the posterior probability that the estimated parameter is in the same direction as its median.
Cell entries summarize posterior draws from Bayesian logistic regression estimates.

Table A7: Posterior estimates, based on informative prior distributions: Territorial threat and democratic reversals, 1946-2016. Territorial threat estimates based on the 1946-2016 period.

		TT logged			TT deciles		
		Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)[†]	Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)
Territorial threat	Neutral	0.123[*]	0.08	93%	0.094[*]	0.06	95%
HSIGO memberships	Neutral	−0.32	0.26	89%	−0.322	0.26	89%
Perc. democratic within 500km	Negative	−0.262	0.22	89%	−0.26	0.22	88%
Reversals in region	Positive	−0.237	0.26	82%	−0.237	0.26	83%
Perc. democratic (global)	Negative	−0.389	0.47	80%	−0.378	0.47	79%
Post-Cold War	Neutral	0.702	0.86	79%	0.679	0.86	79%
GDPpc (t-1, logged)	Negative	−0.346[*]	0.20	96%	−0.347[*]	0.20	96%
Polity (t-1)	Neutral	−0.378[*]	0.19	98%	−0.385[*]	0.19	98%
Previous reversals	Neutral	0.327[*]	0.18	96%	0.322[*]	0.19	95%
Years as democracy (logged)	Neutral	−0.551[*]	0.22	99%	−0.548[*]	0.22	100%
Ethnic fractionalization	Positive	0.01	0.15	53%	0.012	0.15	53%
Non-contiguous rivalries	Neutral	−0.098	0.26	66%	−0.086	0.25	65%
Intercept		−5.15	0.74	100%	−6.167	0.69	100%
N (Country-years)			2972			2972	

[*] indicates that the relationship is in the direction of the median estimate, with a probability of 90% or higher.
[†] Pr(Estimate) is the posterior probability that the estimated parameter is in the same direction as its median.
Cell entries summarize posterior draws from Bayesian logistic regression estimates.

Table A8: Posterior estimates: Territorial threat and democratic reversals, 1816-2016.

	TT logged			TT logged			TT deciles			TT deciles		
	Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)[†]	Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)	Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)	Median	Std. dev.	Pr(Estimate)
Territorial threat	0.208[*]	0.07	100%	0.102[*]	0.07	93%	0.131[*]	0.04	100%	0.066[*]	0.04	94%
Perc. democratic (global)				−0.409[*]	0.12	100%				−0.409[*]	0.12	100%
Polity (t-1)				−0.54[*]	0.12	100%				−0.538[*]	0.12	100%
Years as democracy (logged)				−0.531[*]	0.13	100%				−0.525[*]	0.13	100%
Intercept	−3.1	0.27	100%	−4.062	0.31	100%	−4.626	0.27	100%	−4.807	0.29	100%
N (Country-years)		3929			3929			3929			3929	

[*] indicates that the relationship is in the direction of the median estimate, with a probability of 90% or higher.
[†] Pr(Estimate) is the posterior probability that the estimated parameter is in the same direction as its median.
Cell entries summarize posterior draws from Bayesian logistic regression estimates.

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