8 Web Appendix: Predicting Democratic Reversions

In an additional set of analyses, we change the dependent variable to democratic reversions. Recall that these are instances in which the regime score dipped from democracy (6 and above on the Polity IV scale) the previous year to non-democracy in the current year. Table 3 presents our results of tests performed on the universe of post-WW II democratic countries.

We once again find confirmation for the role of territorial threat. The variable is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, and, substantively, a change of one standard deviation from the mean of territorial threat makes a democratic reversal approximately 40% more likely. This holds true in each of the three models we present and remains robust in models we analyzed separately. Democracies in threatening environments do not last.[9] Unlike the democratic transition models, we found no evidence of regional democratic environment affecting reversals. There were no statistically significant relationships when region and bordering democracies were estimated separately or jointly. Similarly, we find that system-level democracy has no effect. The level of democratic community makes no difference as to whether a regime moves from democracy to non-democracy in our sample.

For the state-level variables we find that only wealth and years as a democracy are statistically significant predictors of reversion. Poorer countries and newer democracies are more likely to suffer reversions. Both of these findings once again support the large literature on democratization that emphasizes democratic consolidation and wealth as antidotes to regime reversals (Epstein et al. 2006, Przeworski 2000).

Cumulatively, we are left with rather poor results for the democratic community variables. In none of our analyses do they matter. Meanwhile, the level of territorial threat measure we developed performs well as a robust predictor of the democracies most likely to fail.[10]

[9] We should note one caveat to this finding. Author (XXXX) found that territorial threats need not cause regime reversals, provided the democracy has a mature and independent judiciary. The mechanisms of regime reversal are built on rally-based changes within the government, and these can be stymied with counter-majoritarian institutions like strong courts.

[10] We also experimented with the change in the level of territorial variable in these models. However, in none of the models was this variable statistically significant. Further, among democracies, change in threat and overall level of threat are collinear at a much higher rate than among non-democracies, and the inclusion of the change variable renders statistically insignificant all the predictors of reversions.

Table 3: Predictors of Democratic Reversions, 1950 to 2001

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Regional Environment:			
Territorial Threat Level	11.67*	11.66*	11.89*
	(6.158)	(6.051)	(5.926)
Proportion Democratic, 500km	-1.023	-0.526	
	(1.717)	(0.863)	
# of Democracies on Border	0.160		-0.0361
	(0.360)		(0.181)
# of Borders	0.0321	0.0822	0.0976
	(0.115)	(0.121)	(0.132)
Island State	-1.440	-1.313	-1.136
	(0.927)	(0.961)	(0.993)
# Democratic Reversions, Region (lag)	-0.379	-0.370	-0.352
	(0.454)	(0.460)	(0.465)
Systemic Environment:			
Proportion Democratic, System	-3.284	-3.383	-4.443
	(9.722)	(9.581)	(8.668)
Cold War Year	-1.044	-1.063	-1.141
	(1.464)	(1.428)	(1.327)
State-level Controls:			
GDP per capita (lag)	-0.664**	-0.634*	-0.674**
	(0.250)	(0.269)	(0.247)
Polity IV Score (lag)	0.029	0.032	0.029
	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.039)
Oil State	0.254	0.266	0.222
	(0.496)	(0.521)	(0.531)
# Previous Reversions in State	-0.136	-0.185	-0.197
	(0.300)	(0.315)	(0.320)
Years as Democracy	-0.052*	-0.054*	-0.055*
	(0.025)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Constant	2.255	1.949	2.440
	(4.703)	(4.879)	(4.443)
N	1,600	1,600	1,600

Logistic regression, clustered by state with robust standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$