Shifts in Values, Shifts in Democracy

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What is Democratic Backsliding? + Existing Discussions

- Gradual breakdown of democratic institutions
    - Often legally done
    - But...how, and *why*, does it happen?

- Existing literature
    - Focus on polarization
    - Dysfunction/Lack of trust in institutions
    - "Counter-order movements" and theories of different *types* of backsliding
    - Domestic vs. International?

# What am I looking at, in particular?

- **How do internal values of a population influence a shift away from democracy?**
- Can we predict backsliding given people's values?

- So, let's put it to the test!
  - We'll also be confirming or denying varying literary claims!

- **Hypothesis: Shifts in values has some effect on backsliding, but it is not the end-all-be-all.**

Data/EDA

- Combining the Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) and World Values Survey (WVS) dataset
- How this data fits together

- Using Lasso for my EDA
  - Lasso: Finds the most important variables, removing those that may not be as important to the result
  - Results: Some discussions of demonstrations, focus on support for the current system, misc. values that may be correlated
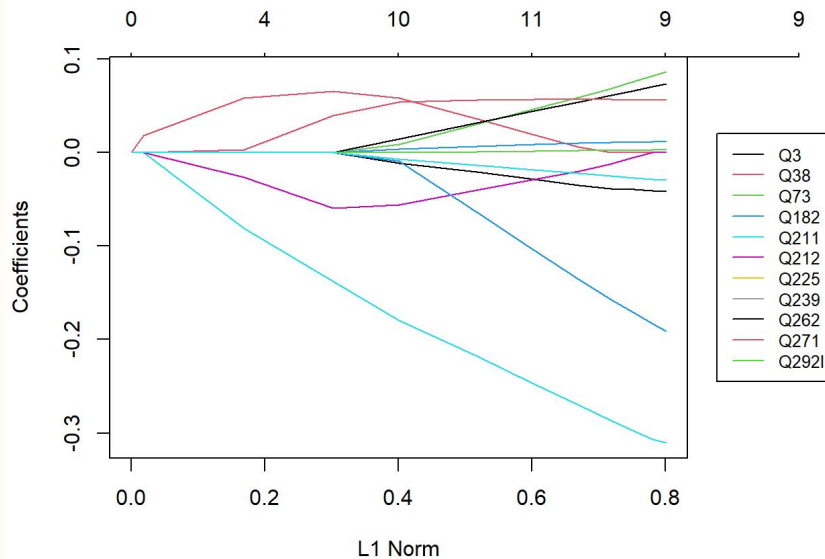
Modeling/Tests

- Using Lasso's results, I could focus on these variables
    - BUT also work with the full dataframe to see possibilities
    - Tests on electoral democracy score, differences in the score, and backsliding
        - Quantitatively defining backsliding

- RandomForest vs. XGBoosted Trees
- Tuning for learn_rate (preventing overfitting)

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# A tibble: 4 × 9
  wflow_id              .config       preproc model .metric .estimator  mean     n std_err
  <chr>                 <chr>         <chr>   <chr> <chr>   <chr>      <dbl> <int>   <dbl>
1 recipe_xgboost        Preprocess…   recipe  boos… rmse    standard   0.160     5  0.0266
2 recipe_xgboost        Preprocess…   recipe  boos… rsq     standard   0.583     5  0.122
3 recipe_random_forest  Preprocess…   recipe  rand… rmse    standard   0.172     5  0.0211
4 recipe_random_forest  Preprocess…   recipe  rand… rsq     standard   0.606     5  0.0954
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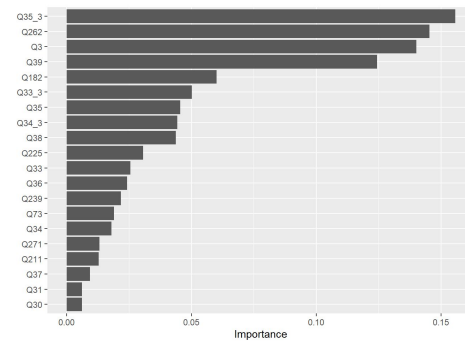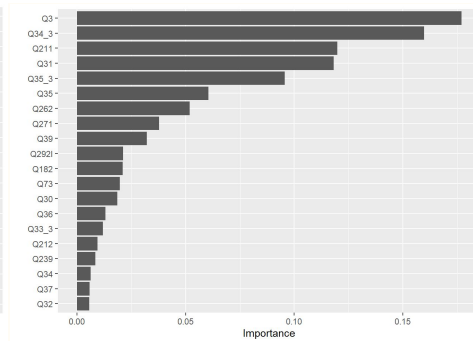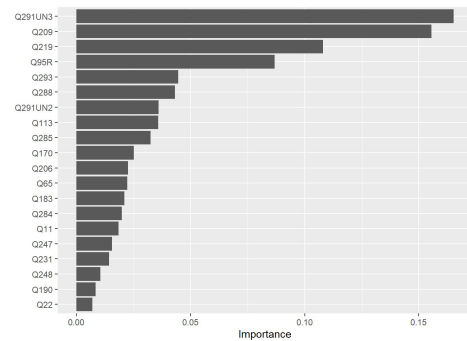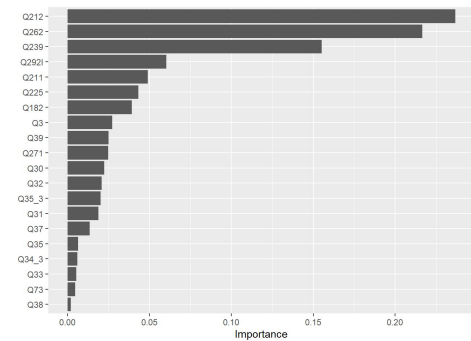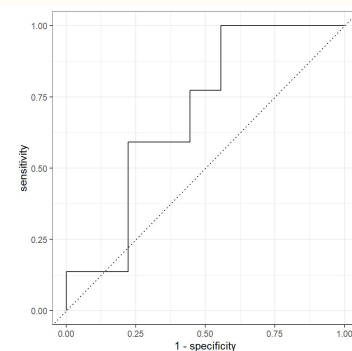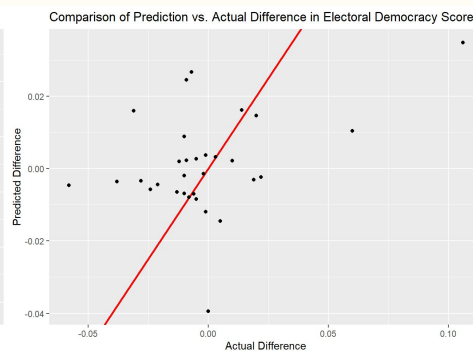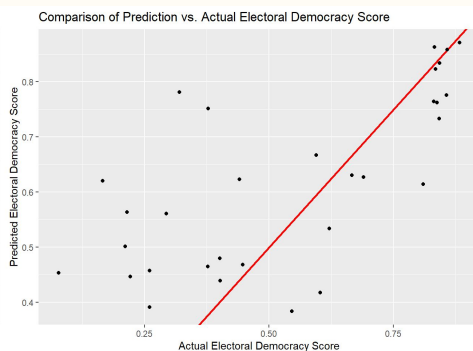
Results

Prediction vs. Accuracy and ROC/AUC curve:

ED Score (Lasso) ED Score (Full) Difference in ED Score Backsliding
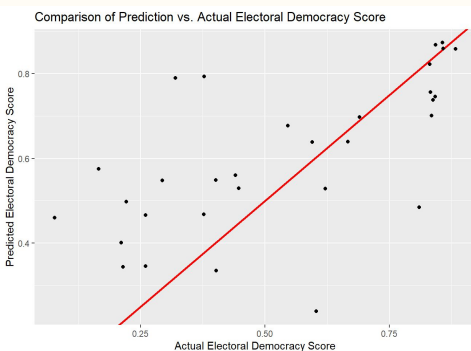
Discussion

- Initial Hypothesis: Shifts in values has some effect on backsliding, but it is not the end-all-be-all.
    - Somewhat confirmed, although somewhat refuted!
    - Gender issues seem to dominate backsliding/differences in electoral democracy score
    - Democratic activism also ranks high with government type!

- Limitation: Small sample size

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