Readme file, Replication Data for:

"We Could Have Been Worse: 'Whataboutism' and Defensive Memory Among Perpetrator Groups" by Joe Kendall. Political Behaviour.

Overview

The replication files include several csv files and R scripts, all of which can be used to create the results, figures and tables in the article and appendix. All analyses were conducted in RStudio 2024.4.1.748.

The replication files include the following.

In the 'data' folder:

- The primary data file data_raw.csv, from which all other data files derive. This is taken directly from the Qualtrics survey, with only a few small adjustments:
    - Columns containing identifiable or irrelevant administrative data have been removed.
    - Rows representing observations who used the survey or survey company to contact the author saying that they either wished to be withdrawn from the survey (even though consent was given at the survey start), or that they made a mistake in the survey, have been removed.
- The cleaned dataset data_clean.csv, which includes the entire main sample.
- The cleaned subsets data1.csv, data2.csv and data3.csv, which correspond to the different treatment types and are the main datasets used in the analysis.

In the 'scripts' folder:

- The "Data cleaning' script, which is used to create the cleaned datasets from the raw data.
- Individual scripts for each of the figures in the main text.
- An 'appendix' subfolder, containing scripts for each of the tables and figures in the appendix.

Codebook

The table below describes every variable in the dataset data_clean.csv.

Variable	Class	Description
StartDate	Datetime	Survey start timestamp (Qualtrics metadata).
EndDate	Datetime	Survey end timestamp (Qualtrics metadata).
Progress	Numeric	Percent of survey completed.
Duration..in.seconds.	Numeric	Total time spent on survey (seconds).
Finished	Binary	Indicator for survey completion (1 = finished).
RecordedDate	Datetime	Date/time response was recorded.
UserLanguage	Categorical	Language setting of respondent session.
Consent	Binary	Consent provided (1 = yes).
Q15	Ordinal	Attention check 1
lr_1	Numeric	Left–right ideological self-placement scale.
natid_covar2_1	Numeric	Pre-treatment national identification covariate (Q2).
natid_covar1_1	Numeric	Pre-treatment national identification covariate (Q1).
Natid1_1	Numeric	National identification: importance of Britishness (0–10).
Natid2_1	Numeric	National identification: use of “we” vs “they” (0–10).

Variable	Class	Description
Natid3_1	Numeric	National identification: closeness to country (0–10).
empire_1	Numeric	Perception of the British Empire (0–10 scale).
lottery	Binary/Categorical	Lottery incentive indicator.
lottery_1_TEXT	Text	Donation amount.
prej_direct_1	Numeric	Explicit prejudice (0–10 scale).
prej_list_sen	Numeric	Items selected on sensitive list.
prej_list_nonsen	Numeric	Items selected on non-sensitive list.
comparison_1	Numeric	Agreement with whataboutism statement (0–10 scale).
attention_check_alt	Categorical	Attention check 2
rand	Numeric	Random assignment for treatment.
rand_list	Numeric	Random assignment for list experiment.
started_datetime	Datetime	Survey start time (cleaned).
completed_date_time	Datetime	Survey completion time (cleaned).
time_taken	Numeric	Survey duration (cleaned).
age	Numeric	Respondent age (years).
Country.of.Birth	Categorical	Country of birth.
Current.Country.of.Residence	Categorical	Current country of residence.
Current.UK.area.of.residence	Categorical	UK region of residence.

Variable	Class	Description
Employment.Status	Categorical	Employment status (raw).
Ethnicity	Categorical	Self-reported ethnicity.
First.Language	Categorical	First language.
Highest.education.level.completed	Categorical	Highest education level completed.
Household.Income..GBP.	Categorical	Household income bracket (GBP).
Nationality	Categorical	Nationality.
Nationality..UK.	Binary/Categorical	UK nationality indicator.
Sex	Categorical	Sex/Gender.
Student.Status	Binary/Categorical	Student status indicator.
UK.area.of.birth	Categorical	UK region of birth.
failed_1	Binary	Failed attention check 1.
failed_2	Binary	Failed attention check 2.
duration	Numeric	Survey duration (processed variable).
tooshort	Binary	Indicator for unrealistically short completion.
trt	Binary	Treatment assignment (control / identity threat only / identity threat + whataboutism). Exact treatment corresponds to which dataset is in use (data1, data2, data3).
donation_amount	Numeric	BLM donation amount (£).
donation_dummy	Binary	Donation indicator (1 = donated > 0).

Variable	Class	Description
natid_pca	Numeric	Standardised PCA index of post-treatment national identification.
list_items	Numeric	Difference between sensitive and non-sensitive list items for implicit prejudice measure.
sens	Binary	Sensitive list indicator (1 = sensitive list).
natid_covar_pca	Numeric	PCA index of pre-treatment national identification.
nat_quint	Ordinal	Quintile of post-treatment national identification index (1–5).
income	Ordinal	Recoded income measure.
education_level	Ordinal	Education category (recoded).
education	Binary/Categorical	High/low education indicator.
newjob	Binary	Recently started new job indicator.
unemployed	Binary	Unemployed indicator.
fulltime	Binary	Full-time employment indicator.
notpaid	Binary	Not in paid work indicator.
parttime	Binary	Part-time employment indicator.
female	Binary	Female indicator (1 = female).
birth_s_eng	Binary	Born in Southern England indicator.

Variable	Class	Description
birth_n_eng	Binary	Born in Northern England indicator.
birth_midlands	Binary	Born in Midlands indicator.
birth_scotland	Binary	Born in Scotland indicator.
birth_wales	Binary	Born in Wales indicator.
birth_ni	Binary	Born in Northern Ireland indicator.
residence_s_eng	Binary	Resides in Southern England indicator.
residence_n_eng	Binary	Resides in Northern England indicator.
residence_midlands	Binary	Resides in Midlands indicator.
residence_scotland	Binary	Resides in Scotland indicator.