Replication package for "Rethinking Propaganda: How State Media Build Trust Through Belief Affirmation"

This document provides a description of the files in the replication folder. The included code replicates the latest revised version of the manuscript submitted to the Journal of Politics (submission date: 9/9/2023). This latest version of the paper is also included in the replication folder (see below).

General description of the folder and files

The folder contains data files, R scripts to produce the results reported in the paper, and the files necessary to compile the paper PDF.

R scripts

main.r needs to be executed to produce all the results. This script automatically launches the following additional scripts (before running main.r, set the replication folder as the working directory or create an RStudio project in the folder):

- **main_load_data.r**, **OMI_load_data.r**, and **Levada_load_data.r** are used to load the data sets (for the main study, the OMI study, and the Levada study, respectively) and perform additional variable transformations necessary for the analysis.
- **functions.r** contains three custom functions used to run the regression models for the paper.
- **results.r** produces most of the results in the paper—all the main figures and related figures and tables in the appendix. The script is organized based on the order of sections in the main text and includes references to these sections.
- **main_text_additional_numbers.r** produces additional numbers mentioned in the main text (besides figures and tables). This script is also organized following the structure of the manuscript.

Data files

- **Data/main_resp_data.rds** includes respondent-level data for the main study.
- **Data/main_stories_info.csv** contains information (metadata) on news stories evaluated in the main study.
- **Data/main_stories_data.rds** is story-level data for the main study (evaluations of specific news stories and related variables).
- **Data/levada_resp_data.rds** contains respondent-level variables from the Levada survey.
- **Data/levada_stories_data.rds** contains story evaluations from the Levada survey.

- **Data/omi_resp_data.rds** contains respondent-level data from the OMI survey.
- **Data/omi_stories_data.rds** contains story evaluations from the OMI survey.
- **Codebook.pdf** includes the descriptions of the variables in the data sets.

Manuscript and related files

- **Shirikov_trust_propaganda_revised_Sep_2023.rmd**: the latest version of the manuscript in RMarkdown.
- **Shirikov_trust_propaganda_appendix_2023_JOP.rmd**: the online appendix for the manuscript in RMarkdown.
- **Shirikov_trust_propaganda_revised_Sep_2023.pdf**: a compiled version of the manuscript (also includes the online appendix).
- **masterbib_JOP.bib**: bibliographical references used to compile the manuscript.
- **exp_vignette_sample_eng_pope.png**: an example of the experimental vignette from the survey, reproduced in the online appendix.

Reproducing the results

There are two ways of reproducing the results:

(1) Recreate the entire manuscript from the source code:
    a. Run main.r. The executed code will create figures, LaTeX tables, or CSV files with estimates. Created figures are placed in the subfolder "Figures," and regression tables are placed in the subfolder "Tables." The folder "Estimates" will contain the numbers needed to reproduce all the figures and other (non-regression) tables in the paper.
    b. After the script is executed, compile the RMarkdown document "Shirikov_trust_propaganda_revised_Sep_2023.rmd", which will create a PDF containing the manuscript and the appendix. The RMD file automatically pulls all the estimates produced via main.r from "Estimates" or "Tables," except for the numbers in main_text_additional_numbers.r. (Note that the figures are created directly within the RMD file, not pulled from "Figures.") The newly created PDF can then be compared to the provided latest version of the paper, Shirikov_trust_propaganda_revised_Sep_2023.pdf.
    c. Main.r will also automatically run main_text_additional_numbers.r, which outputs all the additional numbers reported in the main text to R console. The console output can be manually compared to the results in the paper.

(2) Run code block by block and compare the results and output to the provided PDF Shirikov_trust_propaganda_revised_Sep_2023.pdf.
    a. Run everything in main.r before executing results.r (everything up to and including "functions.r").

b. Open results.r and run the code block-by-block, manually comparing the created figures or tables against the paper. The names of saved documents will include figure/table numbers (e.g., “Table_B4_main_treatment_effect.tex”).
c. Run main_text_additional_numbers.r in a similar fashion (the script includes the relevant quotations with the numbers from the text).