

Anton Shirikov

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I am a political scientist working on media, misinformation, polarization, and trust. I also study authoritarianism and elites and institutions in post-communist countries. My research relies on surveys, experiments, network analysis, and other quantitative methods.

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science Expected Spring 2022

Dissertation: **How Propaganda Works: Political Biases and News Credibility in Autocracies**

My dissertation examines how authoritarian leaders use propaganda to maintain public support. I combine original experiments and surveys situated in Russia with large-scale cross-national data to show that autocrats such as Vladimir Putin can improve the credibility of biased state media by continually supplying their supporters with belief-consistent messages. This affirmation propaganda also undermines the power of less biased independent media. Citizens who are trapped in state media echo chambers are, consequently, less adept at recognizing disinformation. My analysis suggests when affirmation propaganda is effective and highlights that citizens are not simply victims of authoritarian brainwashing.

University of Wisconsin–Madison, M.A. in Political Science 2016

Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Candidate of Sciences in Political Science 2007

European University at St. Petersburg, M.A. in Political Science 2005

WORKING PAPERS

[“Who Trusts State-Run Media? Polarized Perceptions of News Credibility in Non-Democracies”](#)
Submitted

[“Fake News for All: Misinformation and Polarization in Authoritarian Regimes”](#) *Submitted*

[“Is Trust in Media Decreasing? Evidence from the World Values Survey”](#)

[“A Model of Censorship, Propaganda, and Repression”](#) (with Scott Gehlbach, Zhaotian Luo, and Dmitriy Vorobyev)

[“Is Postcommunism Over? What Is and Is Not Distinctive About Eastern Europe and Eurasia Three Decades After Communism”](#) (with Dmitrii Kofanov and Yoshiko M. Herrera) *Submitted*

PUBLICATIONS

PAPERS

Forthcoming. [“The Oligarch Vanishes: Defensive Ownership, Property Rights, and Political Connections.”](#) *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*. With John Earle, Scott Gehlbach, and Solomiya Shpak.

2021. [“Who Gets Ahead in Authoritarian Parliaments? The Case of the Russian State Duma.”](#) *The Journal of Legislative Studies*.

2020. [“Eurasia and Post-Communism: Weasel Words?”](#) *East European Politics and Societies & Cultures*, Vol.34, No.2. With Yoshiko M. Herrera and Dmitrii Kofanov.

BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS

Forthcoming. [“The Russian Media.”](#) In: Wengle, Susanne (ed.). *Russian Politics Today: Stability and Fragility*. Cambridge University Press. With Scott Gehlbach and Tetyana Lokot.

2022. [“Russia: Muddling Through Populism and the Pandemic.”](#) In: Ringe, Nils, and Lucio Renno (eds.). *Populists and the Pandemic: How Populists Around the World Responded to COVID-19*. Routledge. With Yoshiko M. Herrera and Valeriia Umanets.

2018. [“Sovereignty and Regionalism in Eurasia.”](#) In: Paasi, Anssi, John Harrison, and Martin Jones (eds.). *Elgar Handbook on the Geographies of Regions and Territories*. Edward Elgar Publishing. With Dmitrii Kofanov and Yoshiko M. Herrera.

2013. [“Public Administration in Russia.”](#) In: Liebert, Saltanat, Stephen E. Condrey, and Dmitry Goncharov (eds.). *Public Administration in Post-Communist Countries: Former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe, and Mongolia*. Routledge. With Dmitry Goncharov.

2010. *Anatomiya Bezdeistviya. Politicheskiye Instituty i Konflikty v Budgetnom Processe Regionov Rossii* [The Anatomy of Inaction. Political Institutions and Conflicts in the Budget Process of Russia's Regions] (in Russian). Saint-Petersburg: EUSP Press.

MEDIA

[“Russian journalists report the facts about Ukraine. Why do Russians ignore them?”](#) My article for The Washington Post.

My analysis and commentary have appeared on [PBS NewsHour](#), in [The Financial Times](#), [The Washington Post](#) ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)), [HuffingtonPost](#), [USA Today](#), [Politifact](#), [CBC](#), [Portland Press Herald](#), [Press Gazette \(UK\)](#), [The Daily Dot](#), [Christianity Today](#), and on [Wisconsin Public Radio](#).

CONFERENCES

APSA Annual Meeting (2020, 2021); MPSA Annual Conference (2018, 2019, 2021); ASEEES Annual Convention (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021); NYU-CESS Conference (2021); Political Economy in a Changing World (HSE, Moscow, 2021); Wisconsin Russia Project Young Scholars Conference (2018, 2021); Communication Crossroads (UW–Madison, 2020); Studying Russia and the Postcommunist World (Columbia University, 2019); Regime Evolution, Institutional Change, and Social Transformation in Russia: Lessons for Political Science (Yale University, 2018); The Annual Meeting of the Society for Political Methodology (2017)

INVITED TALKS

[Smith College](#), 2022; [University of Chicago](#), 2022; [University of Helsinki](#), 2021; [Kyiv School of Economics](#), 2020

PUBLIC LECTURES

“Who Believes Propaganda? Media and Politics in Russia” (A lecture for the Participatory Learning and Teaching Organization at the Division of Continuing Studies at UW–Madison) 2020

“Russia’s Strategies in Foreign Elections: What Does the Kremlin Want?” (A workshop for Wisconsin educators) 2020

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Facebook Foundational Integrity and Impact Research Grant (\$50,000, with Yoshiko Herrera, Mingcong Pan, and Yiming Wang). Project: **“Understanding the Effects of Digital Restrictions on Affective Polarization”** 2021

Summer Dissertation Scholarship from the Department of Political Science at UW–Madison 2021

ASEEES Summer Dissertation Writing Grant (\$6,000) 2020

Summer Initiative Award from the Department of Political Science at UW–Madison 2021, 2020, 2019, 2017, 2016

Graduate student research award from the Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia at UW–Madison (\$4,000) 2020

Harriman Institute Research Grant (\$16,000; joint with Georgiy Syunyaev). Project: **“Learning about Bias: An Experiment on News Consumption in Russia”** 2020

Harriman Institute Research Grant (\$10,245). Project: **“Perceptions of Media Credibility in Non-Democracies: Evidence from Russia”** 2019

University Fellowship, UW–Madison 2015–2016, 2019–2020

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant for Yoshiko Herrera (UW–Madison) 2021–2022

Research Assistant for Kathryn Hendley (UW–Madison) Spring and Summer 2021

Research Assistant for Nadav Shelef (UW–Madison) Summer 2020

Research Assistant for Scott Gehlbach (UW–Madison) 2016–2018

TEACHING

University of Wisconsin–Madison

Instructor, **Math Camp** for incoming graduate students in political science 2021, 2020, 2019

Teaching assistant, **PS170: Research Methods in Political Science** (Prof. Jessica Weeks) 2020, 2018

Lab instructor, **PS919: Intro to Machine Learning** (Prof. Adeline Lo) 2020

Teaching assistant, **PS120: Politics Around the World** (Prof. Nils Ringe) 2019

SERVICE

Peer reviews of manuscripts for *American Journal of Political Science*, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *Problems of Post-Communism*, *East European Politics*

Co-organizer of the **Comparative Politics Working Group** for graduate students (UW–Madison) 2019–present

Graduate student coordinator for the **Comparative Politics Colloquium** (UW–Madison) 2018–2019

Graduate student coordinator for the **Political Economy Colloquium** (UW–Madison) 2018–2019

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Political Science Association; Midwest Political Science Association; Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES)

SOFTWARE

R, Python, Stata, SQL, LaTeX, RMarkdown, HTML, Shiny, Plotly, Git, Qualtrics

OTHER EXPERIENCE

I have extensive experience of working as a journalist and editor in Russian independent media. For several years, I have served as deputy editor-in-chief and editor-in-chief at Slon.ru, and as opinions editor at the RBC news agency. I have also worked as editor at McKinsey & Company (all in Moscow, Russia).

REFERENCES

Yoshiko M. Herrera, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin–Madison, yherrera@wisc.edu

Scott Gehlbach, Department of Political Science and Harris School of Public Policy, University of Chicago, gehlbach@uchicago.edu

Rikhil R. Bhavnani, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin–Madison, bhavnani@wisc.edu