**Revision Memo**

Omar Lizardo, Rory McVeigh, and Sarah Mustillo, Editors, American Sociological Review

Re: “Measuring Stability and Change in Personal Culture Using Panel Data”

The reviewers and editors pointed out three major issues as well as a handful of more specific issues. We discuss these major issues first, and then include a detailed list of the more minor changes.

First, both the reviewers and editors were concerned that our paper was too narrowly tailored and that we were not speaking to a broad enough range of concerns and sociological theories. We agreed with that critique. In our revision, we have therefore significantly expanded the framing of our argument. We now position the settled dispositions and active updating models as underlying a number of theoretical debates in the social sciences about belief formation and public opinion change, in addition to the major debate in cultural sociology that we previously discussed. This required major revisions of our introduction, theoretical background, and discussion sections, and we create a new sub-section of our results to focus specifically on attitudes and opinions about politics, where many of these debate originate, and that we suspect some readers will be interested in. However, while this has expanded these sections slightly, we do not view these changes as “theoretical bloat.” We believe the paper maintains its cohesion despite this expansion.

This change required us to introduce a second term to our framing, *consistency*, which reflects the departure of responses from randomness (see p. 9). Existing theories of attitude change make predictions on both the level of updating and this degree of consistency. This concept was already captured in our results with the beta estimate, and we discuss these results in greater detail as well. We believe this helps us address Reviewer 3’s confusion over differences in the beta and phi estimates, and what they show. We thank the reviewer for this chance to clarify our meaning.

We believe this revised framing, specifically our connection to diverse debates in political science, political sociology, and public opinion research, addresses a key concern of Reviewer 2. We also trust that these revisions have addressed Reviewer 3’s (quite reasonable) “so what” question and now speaks more to the larger question of what causes people to hold certain beliefs.

Second, reviewers were—again, justifiably—concerned that we did not spend enough time discussing the many items that did demonstrate evidence of active updating. Altering the framing allowed us to give much more context and explanation for why we see persistent change on these items. Our framing now gives a diverse set of expectations for why we might see active updating on some items and not others, and our discussion of results interprets many items that demonstrate active updating through this lens. We note, however, that some items that demonstrated active updating could not be explained by existing theories, especially when some similar items did not demonstrate active updating. We believe this is useful for setting up interesting future research on this topic (by us and by others).

Reviewers, particularly Reviewer 3, also expressed some confusion over why we were claiming that most change must come through cohort replacement when 60 percent of items show some evidence of active updating. To strengthen this claim, we provide a detailed example of one item – support for legal abortion in the case of rape – and show that despite a comparatively high phi estimate, the actual number of people displaying evidence of active updating is very small (less than 1 percent) (Page 24). By expanding our discussion of consistency, we also show that many of the items that demonstrate evidence for active updating are so inconsistently reported as to make this updating meaningless. Again, addressing this concern helped us clarify our argument.

Third, reviewers and editors asked us to explain the value our approach compared to other approaches designed to measure public opinion change. We have expanded our discussion of our model to better defend its merits, and we include a section, “Comparison with similar approaches” that outlines why other approaches would have been insufficient for the task we outlined (p. 17). In this section, and in our conclusion (p. 40), we also discuss the issue of panel conditioning bias, what the pattern of results would look like if panel conditioning bias was a major concern, and why we do not feel that it is the major driver of our findings.

Finally, we also addressed the issue of using multiple items to address a single concept by drawing a distinction between the stability of beliefs (a latent concept) and stability of responses to a question (what we actually measure). We now highlight cases where we use common attitude scales to distinguish the first from the second (see pp. 23, 24, 38). In comparing scales to single item measures, we find only heightened consistency, but no increased evidence of greater persistence, a validation that our method allows us to detect. In other words, people change their responses to specific questions about abortion, for example, more often than they change their general views on abortion as measured by a scale, but these changes are non-persisting.

Additional Requested Revisions:

**Reviewer 1:**

* Reviewer 1 questioned the phrase “Personal Culture,” and asked us to instead use something like “Changes in Individuals’ Cultural Attitudes.” We have not changed this term in our title or throughout the paper. “Personal culture,” as outlined in Lizardo (2016) in *ASR*, is a specific theoretical term that we invoke in hopes of speaking to that debate. To address the reviewer’s concern about the term, however, we briefly define the term in the introduction and include a greater discussion later in the paper.
* Reviewer 1 also questioned the use of “active updating” to define the model. This reviewer suggests that since these questions are not “data questions,” people are not really “updating.” We retain the term in our revisions, but we note in our introduction of the model that this term simply refers to changing to a new baseline, not necessarily incorporating new or better information, as the term is sometimes used. We also hope using this term will help us make connections to other fields (e.g., political science) where this terminology is more common.
* We remove our discussion of the traveler metaphor, which some reviewers found confusing.
* We follow Reviewer 1’s suggestion and elevate to the introduction the finding that most cultural change, at least on the kinds of items we observe in this project, must come through cohort replacement (p. 3).
* We address Reviewer 1’s question about why we chose the GSS years we did by noting that the panel component of the GSS was only around for these five waves (p. 14).