

Cultural Transmission, Marriage and the Evolution of Ethnic and Religious Traits

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November 1998[†]

Abstract

This paper presents an economic analysis of the evolution of religious and ethnic characteristics in a model of intergenerational transmission of cultural traits which occurs through family socialization and marital segregation decisions.

The model implies that the frequency of intragroup marriage (homogamy), as well as the socialization rates of religious and ethnic groups, depends on the group's share of the population; minority groups search more intensely for homogeneous mates, and spend more resources to socialize their offspring.

We study the implications of the model regarding the effect of the social matching technology, divorce rates and the degree of cultural tolerance between groups on the evolution of cultural traits.

Existing empirical evidence bearing directly and indirectly on the implications of the model is discussed.

Keywords: Cultural Transmission, Marriage

JEL : J12, Z11, D9

[†]Thanks to two referees and to A. Shleifer, who recommended this cut for a paper on cultural transmission, and to G. Becker, J. Benhabib, L. Linnaccone, A. Lizzeri, S. Rosen, A. Schotter, G. Topa for comments and encouragement. Thanks also to A. Casagrande and J. G. Goldberg for assistance. The financial and institutional support of the C. V. Starr Center for Applied Economics is gratefully acknowledged.