Towards a theory of cultural transmission in minorities

Irina Mchitarjan and Rainer Reisenzein

Ethnicities 2014 14: 181 originally published online 28 October 2013
DOI: 10.1177/1468796813505553

Article

Ethnicities
2014, Vol. 14(2) 181–207

DOI: 10.1177/1468796813505553
etn.sagepub.com

Towards a theory of cultural transmission in minorities

Irina Mchitarjan
Institute of Educational Science, University of Greifswald, Greifswald, Germany

Rainer Reisenzein
Institute of Psychology, University of Greifswald, Greifswald, Germany

Abstract

We outline a theory of cultural transmission in socio-cultural minorities in a foreign cultural environment. The explanatory focus of the theory is on the educational activities of minorities and on the educational policies of the majority towards them. The theory comprises two components referring to, respectively, the proximate psychological mechanisms and the distal cultural–evolutionary processes that underlie minority–majority interactions. The first theory component is an action–theoretical model of the interaction between majorities and minorities in the educational domain. A central assumption of this model is that socio-cultural groups have a culture-transmission motive, i.e. a desire to maintain and transmit their culture. The second component of the theory consists of a set of assumptions about the evolution of socio-cultural groups that provides an enhanced understanding of the basic goals and strategies of minorities and majorities in cultural-transmission situations. It is argued that the theory allows an explanation of several findings that pose difficulties to existing theories, in particular, the frequently observed stability of cultural traits in ethnic minorities.

Keywords

Cultural transmission in minorities, educational activities of minorities, educational policy towards minorities, action–theoretical model of group interaction, theory of cultural evolution, culture-transmission motive

1. Introduction

In recent years, in the wake of increasing international migration, the question of how majority societies deal with linguistic and cultural, ethnic or religious

Corresponding author:
Irina Mchitarjan, Institute of Educational Science, University of Greifswald, Franz-Mehring-Straße 47, 17487 Greifswald, Germany.
Email: irina.mchitarjan@uni-greifswald.de

minorities, and relatedly, the issue of cultural transmission in minorities living in a foreign cultural majority environment, have become focal topics in several branches of social science, including sociology, psychology, and educational science (for summaries, see e.g. May, 2005; Schönpflug, 2009; Zick, 2010). The present article focuses on the *pedagogical aspects* of cultural transmission in minorities. By these, we mean the educational activities of minorities in a foreign cultural environment, and the policies of the majority towards them. Our aim is to explain these social phenomena by outlining a theory of the mechanisms that underlie them.

Despite the importance of the topic, no theory specifically designed to explain cultural transmission in minorities has as yet been formulated. Instead, researchers have tried to apply existing broader theoretical frameworks (mostly taken from sociology) to the explanation of the social phenomena at issue, in particular assimilation theory (e.g. Alba, 1990; Esser, 1980), transnationalism (e.g. Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Vertovec, 2009), and Bourdieu's (1986) theory of cultural capital. However, in part simply because these theories were not originally developed to explain cultural transmission in minorities, they provide, in our view, at best partial explanations. In contrast, the theory of cultural transmission in minorities proposed in this article is tailored to the social phenomenon in question. Although this theory takes up ideas from existing accounts, it extends them with important additional assumptions (see the last part of the article for a systematic comparison). As a consequence, we argue, the theory is able to explain several findings that pose difficulties to existing theories, in particular the frequently observed stability of cultural traits in ethnic minorities (e.g. Bisin and Verdier, 2011; Mchitarjan and Reisenzein, 2013a). In addition, the theory suggests refined answers to scientific as well as political questions surrounding minority–majority relations, such as: What are the reasons for, and the conditions that aid or hinder, cultural transmission in minorities in a foreign cultural environment? Which factors determine the educational policies of a majority society towards a particular minority? Under what conditions can the integration of minorities succeed, and when will it fail?

In what follows, we first clarify the intended scope of the theory of cultural transmission in minorities, using both historical and contemporary examples. Second, the theory is described in detail. Third, we summarize the results of a first, small-scale, direct empirical test of the theory. Finally, we compare the theory to previous accounts of cultural transmission in minorities.

2. Scope of the theory

The starting point of the present theory is the observation that cultural transmission in minorities by means of educational activities is a frequent social phenomenon. Numerous examples from history and the present document that sociocultural (linguistic, cultural, ethnic, religious) minorities[1] living in a foreign cultural majority environment very often found educational institutions or engage in other forms of educational activity that serve, at least among other purposes, the transmission of the 'cultural heritage' to their offspring, and thus the preservation

of culture. This phenomenon is regularly seen when a sociocultural group comes into the sphere of influence of a – linguistically, culturally, ethnically, religiously – different, more powerful group, and tries to transport its culture to the next generation under these special circumstances (e.g. Mchitarjan, 2006, 2010). This social situation can arise for two reasons: First, as the result of voluntary or forced migration; and second, as the result of a shifting of the borders of the territory under the control of a group; for example through the acquisition of new territory by war, or the attainment of national autonomy.

Some examples from European history may serve as illustrations. An early example of educational activities in emigrants are the Huguenots, who, to escape religious persecution, fled from France at the end of the sixteenth century to, among others, the German states, where they founded their own schools (Lachenicht, 2007; Thadden and Michelle, 1986). More recent examples are the educational activities of the Russian emigrants after the Russian October revolution of 1917 (Mchitarjan 2006, 2009; Raeff, 1990) and those of the German emigrants after the establishment of the Nazi regime in 1933 (Feidel-Mertz and Hammel, 2004; Mchitarjan, 2010). Both emigrant groups established extensive educational networks in exile. A similar phenomenon is seen in many cases of voluntary migration. An example from recent German history are the parent organizations of the Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese immigrant workers, whose aim, among other things, is the maintenance of their culture of origin and its transmission to the next generation (Boos-Nünning and Karakaşoğlu, 2006; Fürstenau, 2004; Hopf, 1999; Thränhardt, 2005).

In Germany and other countries, own schools also exist for some autochthonous ethnic minorities. In Germany, for example, the Danes in the state of Schleswig-Holstein and the Sorbs in Saxony and Brandenburg have their own schools. These groups became ethnic minorities in Germany as the result of a shifting of national borders (Hansen and Wenning, 2003; Knabe, 2000; Mellor, 1963). In the same way, the resident groups of Germans and Russians in Poland became indigenous minorities in Poland after the restoration of the previously divided Polish state in 1918. After 1918, both minority groups struggled for the implementation of their contractually guaranteed rights to education in their mother tongue, albeit with little success (Mchitarjan, 2006). A similar situation exists today for the Russians living in the Baltic States, especially in Estonia and Latvia, who became minorities as a consequence of the attainment of independence of these states in 1991 (Adrey, 2005; Hughes, 2005; Reubold, 2003).

These and many other historical and contemporary cases that could be cited suggested two basic assumptions of our theory of cultural transmission in minorities as inductive generalizations. First, linguistic–cultural, ethnic or religious minority groups desire to maintain their culture in the foreign cultural majority environment, and to pass on their cultural heritage to their offspring. Second, the cultural transmission activities taken up by a minority, and their success or failure, strongly depend on the (educational) policy of the majority towards them (see also Hansen and Wenning, 2003; Mchitarjan, 2006, 2009).

3. A theory of cultural transmissions in minorities

The theory of cultural transmission in minorities proposed in this article builds directly on the results of the described educational and sociological research on minorities and migrants. The explanatory focus of the theory is on the educational activities of minorities and the educational policies of the majority for them. On the side of the minority, the theory seeks to explain in particular the initiation of educational activities by minorities, the specific form that these activities take, their success or failure, and the change of these processes over time. On the side of the majority, the theory seeks to explain the (educational) policies of majorities towards immigrant and autochthonous minorities. These two social processes – the described actions and action outcomes of the majority and the minority – are considered simultaneously in the theory because they are closely intertwined and mutually affect each other. In particular, the perceived attainability of the educational goals of the minority, the nature of its educational activities, and the success of these activities, strongly depend on the (educational) policy of the majority.

The explanation of these social phenomena by the theory of cultural transmission in minorities targets two connected explanatory levels: the level of the proximate psychological mechanisms that underlie the actions of minorities and majorities in cultural-transmission situations; and the level of the historical–cultural development of these mechanisms. Corresponding to these two levels of explanation, the theory comprises two components: (a) an action–theoretical model of minority–majority interactions in the domain of education; and (b) a set of assumptions about the evolution of sociocultural groups that provides an enhanced understanding of the basic goals and strategies of minorities and majorities in cultural-transmission situations.

The present theory thus connects three research fields: educational research, specifically studies on historical and contemporary cultural-transmission processes in minorities; sociological and psychological research and theorizing on group interactions; and a theory of cultural evolution recently developed within evolutionary biology. Case studies by educational researchers, as well as sociological and psychological surveys on cultural transmission in minorities, provided the ground data on the social phenomena that need to be explained, and suggested basic assumptions of the theory as inductive generalizations. Sociological and psychological theorizing provided a simple model of the proximate psychological mechanisms that guide the interaction of minorities and minorities, construed as actors. Evolutionary biology provided a model of cultural evolution, and thereby of the distal processes that explain some of the peculiarities of the (assumed) psychological make-up of sociocultural groups – specifically, that groups are equipped with a motive to transmit their culture, as well as with evolved strategies that help them achieve this aim.

3.1 Proximate mechanisms of cultural transmission in minorities: An action–theoretical model

The conceptual foundation of the first component of our theory – which describes the proximate mechanisms of cultural transmission – is the action–theoretical model of group interaction that, in its outlines, is (implicitly) already contained in common-sense psychology (e.g. Heider, 1958; Malle, 2004). The core of this model is a theory of boundedly rational action of individual actors (see also Conte and Castelfranchi, 1995; Esser, 1999; Fazio, 1990).[2] To apply this model to groups, common-sense psychology makes the simplifying assumption that group interactions can be modeled as analogous to interactions between individuals. In our view, this model of group interaction forms the implicit background of most traditional explanations of social phenomena in historiography (e.g. Scholz, 1999), and it constitutes – again usually only implicitly – the basis of much empirical survey research in sociology (Brüderl, 2004; Goldthorpe, 2000). In agreement with this model, we assume that the educational activities of a minority and the policies of the majority towards it can be modeled as an interaction between two individuals.[3] Accordingly, we conceptualize the two involved parties – the minority and the majority – as two social actors who are equipped with particular beliefs, desires (goals), and resources (power, skills, material resources, etc.), and who attempt, by and large in a rational fashion, to achieve their goals in the area of education in the given historical situation.

The action–theoretical model of group interaction is a highly general model of the 'inner workings' (specifically the mechanism of action selection) of social actors. To become an empirically testable, explanatory theory, this model needs to be elaborated for the specific interaction situation that is to be explained (cf. Lindenberg, 1985). In the present case, the situation is the cultural transmission by a minority in a majority environment. To achieve the required elaboration, one needs to specify the psychological and situational factors that cause the participants in the interaction to choose particular actions (e.g. the foundation of a private school by the minority; the recognition of the educational qualifications of minority schools by the majority); as well as the factors that are responsible for the success or failure of these actions. On the most general level, the factors relevant for the initiation and the success or failure of actions can be divided into three groups (e.g. Conte and Castelfranchi, 1995; Lindenberg, 1985; Reisenzein, 2006): *motivational factors* (the motives or goals of the social actors, such as the educational aims of the minority and the goals that the majority seeks to achieve with its minority policy); *epistemic factors* (in particular the beliefs of the social actors about the attainability of their goals by particular actions in the given historical situation); and the *objective situational conditions* or *constraints* that apply to both parties, both conducive and obstructive (e.g. knowledge, skills, financial resources, relevant laws and political conditions). Below, we discuss the more important of

these factors, separately from the perspective of the minority and the majority in a cultural-transmission situation,

3.1.1 Cultural transmission in minorities: The perspective of the minority

3.1.1.1 The culture-transmission motive. A central assumption of our theory of cultural transmission in minorities is that socio-cultural groups have, in addition to their other motives – in particular, the motives to preserve and increase their resources and their power (Bourdieu, 2005, 2006) – a *culture-transmission motive*: an appreciation of their culture and the desire to preserve it and transmit it to the next generation. We assume that this is also true for minority groups living in a foreign cultural majority environment, at least for a while (see below).

The postulate that groups have a culture-transmission motive is a crucial point that distinguishes the present theory from other potentially relevant action–theoretical approaches to group interactions. These alternative approaches either leave the basic motives of the social actors unspecified, restrict them to highly specific goals (e.g. economic gain), or postulate a few, very broad aims (e.g. physical well-being and social approval; Esser, 1999; Lindenberg, 1985). In our view, these actor models are too simple. In agreement with more recent empirical–psychological (e.g. Reiss, 2004; Reiss and Havercamp, 1998) and evolutionary (e.g. Buss, 2007; Sober and Wilson, 1998) proposals, we believe that the motives of humans are more diverse. In particular, we assume that social actors, in addition to their other motives, typically also have the wish to transmit their culture. As argued below, the culture-transmission motive is acquired during socialization and hence is learned rather than innate. Nevertheless, we assume that once 'installed' in the members of a social group, the culture-transmission motive is, to a fair degree, functionally autonomous in Allport's (1937) sense, i.e. it functions as an independent source of motivation. Therefore, explanations of minority–majority interactions which fail to consider the culture-transmission motive are at least incomplete, and at worst severely misleading.

Our main basis for positing a culture-transmission motive is empirical and consists in particular of the case studies by educational and sociological researchers on migrants and indigenous minorities referenced in the first part of this article. Additional, more indirect evidence for the existence of a culture-transmission motive is provided by the results of survey studies that found strong identification with the culture of origin even in many second- and third-generation immigrants (e.g. Berry et al., 2006; Boos-Nünning and Karakaşoğlu, 2006; Heitmeyer et al., 1997; Isajiw and Makabe, 1997; Modood et al., 1997; Sabatier, 2008; Umaña-Taylor and Fine, 2004; Weiss, 2007; see also, Bisin and Verdier, 2011; Umaña-Taylor, 2011). The existence of a culture-transmission motive is also assumed in international minority law (e.g. Opitz, 2007; Thornberry, 2001).[4] Below, we will argue that, in addition to this inductive support, the existence of a culture-transmission motive is suggested by a recent theory of cultural evolution

(Wilson, 2002). A direct empirical test of the assumption that social actors have a culture-transmission motive is reported in the third part of this article.

3.1.1.2 What the assumption of a culture-transmission motive does not imply. Three possible misunderstandings should be avoided at this point. First, postulating a culture-transmission motive does not imply a 'primordial' nor an 'essentialist' view of culture in any strong senses of these terms (for discussions, see e.g. Bayar, 2009; May, 2005; Modood, 2007; Smith, 1998). In fact, according to our theory, culture is 'socially constructed' in at least three ways: it is socially transmitted; its core elements (including norms and values, language, and even the culture-transmission motive itself; see below) are products of cultural evolution; and it contains, in addition to objectifiable elements such as language and norms, important subjective elements including the group's self-definition. Such a view of culture naturally accommodates intra-group variations in culture and the idea that cultures are not fixed and immutable (see also Modood, 2007; in fact, we assume that the culture-transmission motive emerged precisely as a means to solve the problem of *stabilizing culture* in the face of intra-group variations and extra-cultural influences). All this is compatible with assuming that once 'installed' in the members of a group, cultural systems have powerful effects on behavior (e.g. Richerson and Boyd, 2005; Sober and Wilson, 1998; see also May, 2005).

Second, postulating a culture-transmission motive *in a group* (as we do) does not imply that this motive is necessarily strong in all group members. In some group members (e.g. educators, religious or political leaders), it is likely to be strong; in others, it may only exist in a weak form; and in some, it may even be completely absent. These inter-individual differences are to be expected if one assumes, as we do, that the culture-transmission motive is itself culturally transmitted and hence acquired during socialization.

Third, by postulating a culture-transmission motive, we do not mean to imply that this motive necessarily has the form of an explicit desire to 'maintain and disseminate one's culture'; it may also (and perhaps typically does) consist of a plurality of more specific wishes for the preservation and transmission of particular aspects of culture. For example, parents may wish that their children learn the mother tongue; that they adopt their religion or behavioral norms; that these norms are passed on by their children to their grandchildren, and so on.

3.1.1.3 Activation of the culture-transmission motive. We assume that, like other motives, the culture-transmission motive is not constantly present as a conscious desire in the minds of the members of social groups. Rather, it has the form of a latent concern of which group members become aware only under special circumstances. The most important activating condition of the culture-transmission motive is the perception, belief, or suspicion that the transmission of one's culture is endangered. This perception may occur, in particular, in the following two situations: (a) the traditional methods of cultural transmission are no longer available, at least not to the same degree as before (example: a minority is denied the right of

education in the mother tongue); (b) cultural transmission is disturbed by competing cultural influences (example: immigrant parents notice that their children adopt undesired behaviors from the majority society; see e.g. Isajiw and Makabe, 1997; Weiss, 2007).[5]

3.1.1.4 Minority cultural-transmission outcomes and the role of the majority. Following the general tenets of the action–theoretical model of group interaction, we assume that, once the culture-transmission motive has been activated, the minority appraises the historical situation in which it finds itself (its own resources, the attitude of the majority, the existing national and international laws) and on this basis, evaluates the feasibility of the different available options to transmit its culture. Depending on the historical situation, these culture-transmission methods range from enculturation in the family to 'cultural education' within a full-fledged minority school system.

Which method of cultural transmission a minority eventually tries to implement in a particular majority environment, as well as the success or failure that it experiences, depend in most cases strongly on the educational policy of the majority society. Two main educational strategies of a majority towards a minority can be distinguished, both of which are also found empirically: support and non-support. The *strategy of support* includes the permission and (financial and organizational) support of the educational projects of the minority, up to their integration into the educational system of the majority society; recognition of the certificates issued by minority schools, and admission of their graduates to the local universities. Such an educational policy can greatly facilitate the cultural transmission of the minority (for examples see e.g. Hansen and Wenning, 2003; Mchitarjan, 2009, 2010, 2013a). The *strategy of non-support* of a minority in the domain of education ranges from the mere failure to support the minority's educational projects, to the active obstruction of these projects. The transition between these forms of non-support is fluent. In the first case, the minority is largely left to its own resources in its cultural-transmission efforts, but is not actively hindered. In the second case, various measures are taken by the majority to make cultural transmission more difficult for the minority, such as prohibiting teaching in the mother tongue in public schools. This educational policy can significantly obstruct the cultural transmission of the minority (e.g. Mchitarjan, 2006, 2013a).

3.1.2 Cultural transmission in minorities: The perspective of the majority

3.1.2.1 Same mechanisms, different conditions of cultural transmission. We assume that the majority has the same basic motive structure as the minority and chooses its actions according to the same principles. Nevertheless, there is an important difference between minority and majority: different from the minority, the cultural transmission of the majority is usually safeguarded, and is therefore not one of its current concerns (Mchitarjan and Reisenzein, 2013a). Accordingly, the policy (support or non-support) adopted by a majority towards the cultural-transmission

attempts of a minority is usually motivated by goals other than to promote its own cultural transmission, although pursuing these other goals (e.g. economic gain) can well have the side-effect of aiding cultural transmission (see the next section).

3.1.2.2 Reasons for support. In agreement with this prediction, studies on the educational policy of nation states towards immigrant and autochthonous minority groups suggest that a key reason for supporting the cultural transmission of a minority is the majority's hope to benefit, economically or politically, from the minority (e.g. Hansen and Wenning, 2003; Mchitarjan, 2006, 2009, 2013a). If the expected profits are sufficiently high, the majority is not only willing to interpret existing laws in favor of the minority and to supplement them with additional privileges; it is also willing to spend considerable financial and organizational resources to support the cultural transmission of the minority (an example is the extensive support of the Russian emigrants by Czechoslovakia in the 1920s; Mchitarjan, 2009). A second reason for supporting the cultural transmission of a minority can be the desire to avoid possible negative political and economic consequences of non-support (e.g. international criticism for violating minority rights, protests of the minority, ethnic unrest; see also Kymlicka, 2005).

3.1.2.3 Reasons for non-support. As to the reasons of a majority for not supporting the cultural transmission of a minority, one key motive is simply to save resources (Mchitarjan, 2006). However, this motive is insufficient to explain the *active obstruction* of the cultural transmission of a minority by a majority. Historically, an obstructive educational policy towards minorities seems to have typically occurred as part of an attempt to assimilate the minority, which in turn is frequently motivated (or at least justified) by the goals of increasing social cohesion, or of safeguarding the political stability of the state (e.g. Kymlicka, 2005; Mchitarjan, 2013a). However, as argued in the next section, an additional possible motive for an obstructive educational policy can be the majority's culture-transmission motive.

Analogous to the actions of the minority, the educational policy that a majority ultimately adopts towards a minority depends, not only on the expected costs and benefits of the different policies, but also on their perceived feasibility. For example, even if the majority is in principle willing to support the cultural transmission of a minority, it will do so only, and only as long as, it believes it has enough expendable resources (e.g. Mchitarjan, 2009).

3.1.3 Cultural-transmission scenarios. Each concrete historical case of cultural transmission of a minority in a majority environment can be described in terms of a specific combinatorial pattern of motives, beliefs, and supportive and obstructive conditions for the two social actors. Through this theoretical redescription, the concrete case of cultural transmission, as well as all other, structurally similar cases, become instances of a particular *cultural-transmission scenario*. Although the number of theoretically possible transmission scenarios is large, most historical cases of cultural transmission seem to belong to but a few basic scenarios

(Mchitarjan, 2006). Depending on the transmission scenario that is present, certain actions of the minority and majority, and certain action outcomes are more probable, whereas others are less probable. This fact can be used to probabilistically explain and predict the actions of minorities and majorities in many concrete cultural-transmission situations, and their outcomes. To illustrate, one basic cultural-transmission scenario is characterized by the following constellation of factors: (a) the minority wants to start an educational project (e.g. founding an own school), but needs the permission and financial support of the majority; (b) the majority believes it will economically or politically profit from supporting the minority to a degree that more than offsets the costs, and also believes to be able to grant the desired support; and (c) objective circumstances are favorable. In this scenario, both actors – the minority and the majority – can in principle achieve their goals of, respectively, cultural transmission and economic or political profit.

3.2 Evolutionary foundations of cultural transmission in minorities

To deepen the understanding of cultural-transmission processes in minorities, we supplement the action–theoretical model described above with a second theory component: A set of evolutionary assumptions about the historical origin and function of the basic motives and strategies of minorities and majorities in cultural-transmission situations.[6]

To elaborate this second, 'evolutionary' component of our theory, we draw on the theory of cultural evolution proposed by DS Wilson (e.g. Wilson, 2002; see also, Sober and Wilson, 1998; Richerson and Boyd, 2005). This recent evolutionary approach has not yet been utilized in the sociology of migration and education, although it is highly relevant to the concerns of these research fields, and is attracting increasing interest in other branches of social science (see e.g. Henrich, 2004; Kappelhoff, 2004; Landa, 2008; van den Bergh and Gowdy, 2009; Vromen, 2002; Wilson et al., 2007). Wilson's (2002) theory of cultural evolution is founded on *multilevel selection theory*, a modern variant of Darwinian evolution theory. The basic assumption of this theory is that selection processes operate simultaneously at different levels of the biological hierarchy (the level of genes, the level of the individual organism, and the group level) and can go in different directions at these different levels. In general, within-group selection favors selfish behavior, whereas between-group selection favors altruism (meaning here, behavior that increases the fitness of the group). The reason is that, although egoists fare better than altruists *within* a group, *groups of altruists* generally do better than *groups of egoists* (Wilson, 2002).

The relevance of multilevel selection theory to our concerns derives primarily from the fact that the theory has been applied beyond genetic evolution to cultural-transmission processes (Wilson, 2002; see also Henrich, 2004; Richerson and Boyd, 2005). According to the resultant theory of cultural evolution, certain ideological systems, such as 'religion', 'culture' or 'nation' constitute the non-biological and

cultural heritage of social groups that evolved in the course of history because it ensured the survival and reproduction of groups by allowing them to behave as adaptive units. As Richerson and Boyd put it: 'Culture affects the success and survival of individuals and groups; as a result, some cultural variants spread and others diminish, leading to evolutionary processes that are every bit as real and important as those that shape genetic variation' (2005: 4). Cultural evolution can, furthermore, feed back on genetic evolution, because the cultural environment co-determines which genes are favored by natural selection (Richerson and Boyd, 2005).

The central approach to the explanation of a social phenomenon by this theory of cultural evolution is the attempt to explain the phenomenon in question *as a group-level cultural adaptation*. In our theory, we apply this reasoning to the explanation of the phenomenon of cultural transmission of minorities in a foreign cultural-majority environment.

3.2.1 Cultural transmission as an evolutionary concern

3.2.1.1 Origin of the culture-transmission motive. To begin with, the theory of cultural evolution provides an explanation for the *existence* of the culture-transmission motive: It is a product of cultural evolution. This hypothesis can be deduced, with a few additional assumptions, from the theory of cultural evolution. Because cultural groups are defined and distinguished by their ideological systems – their norms, values, beliefs and social practices, including their language (Sober and Wilson, 1998; Wilson, 2002) – their continued existence necessarily requires the transmission of this 'cultural heritage' to a sufficiently large number of members of the next cultural generation (typically, but not exclusively, their own offspring; see e.g. Isajiw and Makabe, 1997; Sabatier, 2008). However, the transmission of human culture is not a matter of course. It requires, in many respects, planning and instruction, and it can be adversely affected by many factors (including, in some cases, the unwillingness of the offspring to accept the received culture, for example because more attractive cultural alternatives are available; see e.g. Knafo and Schwartz, 2009; ter Bogt et al., 2009). Thus, other factors constant, groups who manage to transmit their culture better than others are at an advantage.[7] As a result, one can expect that all cultural groups have evolved mechanisms that support their cultural reproduction. In other words, the transmitted culture of groups should include values, norms, beliefs and practices that promote their own cultural reproduction. The core of these mechanisms, we propose, is the *culture-transmission motive*: the appreciation of one's own culture and the implicit or explicit 'mission' to transmit it to the next generation. In addition, we propose that cultural transmission mechanisms comprise *methods for the efficient transmission of culture*, as well as *strategies to counter threats to cultural transmission* (see below).

3.2.1.2 Focus of the culture-transmission motive. In addition to explaining the *existence* of the culture-transmission motive, the theory of cultural evolution also allows to explain, in important part, the *contents* of this motive: the theory predicts that the culture-transmission motive should focus on those elements of culture *in the broad*

sense of the term (i.e. the totality of socially transmitted information; Richerson and Boyd, 2005: 5), that are particularly important for the preservation of culture. These cultural elements comprise, on the one hand, the values and norms of the group, and the ideology that supports them, such as beliefs about a common origin and a shared destiny. These central elements of culture (which could themselves be subdivided into more central and more peripheral ones) make up the core of the sociocultural identity of groups (see Smolicz, 1981) and are an important safeguard of their efficiency: They are the (or at least one) central mechanism/s through which selfishness within the group is kept in check, and group loyalty is achieved (Wilson, 2002; see also, Sober and Wilson, 1998). On the other hand, the culture-transmission motive is predicted to focus on group characteristics that are reliable outward signs of a person's cultural identity and thereby allow the members of the group – the bearers of the same cultural values and norms – to recognize each other. These characteristics include, importantly, the group's language or sociolect (Giles and Johnson, 1987; Richerson and Boyd, 2005; see also Bourdieu, 2006; and for supportive evidence, Rakić et al., 2010). In addition, language is of fundamental importance for cultural transmission for a second reason: it is the central channel for the transmission of cultural information. If cultural transmission is to work, this transmission channel needs to be created.

In line with these predictions, research on the educational activities of emigrants suggests that own educational facilities of emigrants are created, first and foremost, for the purpose of passing on one's language, religion, knowledge about a common origin, history and tradition to the next generation, and thereby to preserve the cultural identity of the group (e.g. Hansen and Wenning, 2003; Feidel-Mertz and Hammel, 2004; Mchitarjan, 2006; see also, Boos-Nünning and Karakaşoğlu, 2006; Mchitarjan and Reisenzein, 2013a; Weiss and Wittmann-Roumi Rassouli, 2007).

3.2.1.3 Cultural-transmission strategies. We assume that minorities in a foreign cultural environment prefer to transmit their culture using the habitual, tried culture-transmission methods of their group and therefore first try to implement these methods whenever doing so appears to be feasible (see below). Frequently, however, the situation analysis reveals that the tried methods of cultural transmission cannot be implemented to the same degree, or even not at all, in the foreign cultural environment. To counter these threats to cultural transmission, the minority can draw on a range of strategies that, we propose, are partly also culturally transmitted.

If the threat to cultural transmission consists in the obstruction of the traditional transmission methods, a central coping strategy is the attempt to implement these methods at least as far as possible. That is, the minority is assumed to turn to *alternative methods that approximate* the preferred methods of cultural transmission, such as private education in the native language or additional religious instruction. Historical and current examples of cultural transmission in minorities support this assumption (e.g. Boos-Nünning and Karakaşoğlu, 2006; Isajiw and Makabe, 1997; Mchitarjan, 2006; Sabatier, 2008; Thränhardt, 2005; Weiss, 2007).

If, on the other hand, the threat to cultural transmission stems from competing cultural influences, a main counterstrategy is the *physical or psychological screening off* of minority members; for example by restricting contact to members of the majority group or by disallowing them to learn the majority language (e.g. Otto, 1902; see also, Richerson and Boyd, 2005; Wilson, 2002). Finally, if the maintenance and transmission of the minority culture can no longer be guaranteed in the majority society, *emigration* is an option in some cases. Indeed, the non-tolerance of a socio-cultural minority by a majority is a main reason for emigration (see the first part of the article).

3.2.1.4 Stability and change of the culture-transmission motive. The existence of strategies to counter perceived threats to cultural transmission partly explains why minority cultures persist in the changed environment of the majority society – sometimes for many generations (e.g. Bisin and Verdier, 2011; Boos-Nünning and Karakaşoğlu 2006; Berry et al., 2006; Isajiw and Makabe, 1997). However, a second important reason is the stability of the culture-transmission motive itself, which can be explained by its psychological structure: it is firmly rooted, through cultural-meaning stipulations, in more basic motives. As social psychologists, sociologists and educationalist have emphasized (see e.g. Schönpflug, 2009; Verkuyten, 2005), individuals are explicitly and implicitly instructed, as part of the socialization process, that adherence to the cultural system of the group provides them with cognitive guidance, security, and the appreciation and support of the group members. One can argue that once the individual accepts this, the wish to maintain and transmit the cultural system follows naturally. However, the social learning of the culture-transmission motive can also include direct teachings of the importance of maintaining one's culture. Beyond this, the stability of the culture-transmission motive could be supported by genetic adaptations to a cultural environment, such as a disposition to be loyal to one's group (see e.g. Richerson and Boyd, 2005).

These two factors – the anchoring of the culture-transmission motive in more basic motives, some of which could be group-specific, and the availability of defenses against threats to cultural transmission – together allow to explain why minority cultures can remain stable in the midst of majority societies even when they are in some respects (e.g. in terms of access to qualified jobs) less well adapted to their environment (of which the majority group is an important part) than is the majority. However, it can be argued that, in many cases, the adherence of a minority to its culture of origin in a foreign cultural environment is entirely adaptive. This is the case particularly in the following three situations: (a) at the beginning of the stay of migrants in a foreign cultural environment. At this time, the minority often does not know much about the majority culture, or has not yet been in the position to convince itself of its advantages. In contrast, the own cultural system has allowed the minority to cope well with the living conditions in its country of origin. (b) The minority plans to return to its homeland soon (e.g. in cases of forced emigration or temporary labor migration, see e.g. Feidel-Mertz and Hammel, 2004; Mchitarjan, 2006); or it wants to gain autonomy or desires a (re-)union with an

adjacent part of the cultural group (in the case of indigenous minorities). As long as these goals are not entirely unrealistic, adherence to the own cultural system can be adaptive. (c) The minority succeeds in establishing a stable subculture in the cultural majority environment. In this case, the success of the own cultural system in the foreign cultural environment attests to its adaptiveness.

However, as research on emigrants shows, minorities in a foreign cultural environment do not cling to their own cultural system at all costs. An example of the opposite case is provided by emigrants who initially plan to return to their homeland, but who, during their stay in the foreign cultural environment, realize that a return becomes increasingly unlikely (e.g. the emigrants of the Russian revolution after 1917; Mchitarjan, 2006). In this situation, a process of psychological detachment from the culture of origin often sets in: Holding on to the own cultural system is seen as increasingly less meaningful, whereas orientation at the cultural system of the majority is experienced as facilitating coping with the new conditions of life in the country of emigration. As a result, the majority culture becomes increasingly attractive to an increasing number of minority members, particularly second- and later-generation migrants. Increasingly many of them are now willing to adopt at least some elements of the majority culture; or even to abandon their culture in favor of the majority culture (see also, Berry et al. 2006; Krentz, 2002; Sabatier, 2008; Weiss, 2007; Weiss and Wittmann Roumi-Rassouli, 2007; Mchitarjan and Reisenzein, 2013a). Viewed from the perspective of cultural evolution theory, these phenomena represent a gradual 'conversion' of minority members to the majority culture (a process that, we think, is in some respects comparable to religious conversion); or a 'deduction' of minority members by the majority culture. Apart from assimilation pressures exerted by the majority and specific assimilation strategies,[8] processes of cultural conversion are probably fostered by conformist and prestige biases, evolutionary tendencies to emulate the majority and those high in prestige, respectively (Richerson and Boyd, 2005). As a result, the role of the minority culture in the individual's motivational system is gradually taken over by the majority culture. Note that, in this process of conversion to a different cultural system, the culture-transmission motive – the appreciation of one's culture and the desire to transmit it – remains in a sense constant. What changes, is the *identity* of the 'own' culture: This identity is now being redefined, that is, its object is exchanged.

3.2.2 Educational policies for minorities from an evolutionary perspective. Earlier, two main educational policies of a majority towards a minority were distinguished: support and non-support (including active obstruction). In this section, we address the question of what – beyond all subjective goals – the *evolutionary functions* of these strategies might be.

3.2.2.1 Non-support and interference with cultural transmission from an evolutionary point of view. The non-support or obstruction of the cultural transmission of a minority can bring several evolutionary benefits to the majority. First, the majority

saves resources that it can use for its own preservation and reproduction. Second, the majority can fend off foreign cultural influences that could potentially threaten the own cultural system. Third, the cultural reproduction of the minority is impaired. Fourth, by increasing the costs of cultural transmission for the minority, favorable conditions are created for the gradual cultural assimilation of the minority. Taken together, the strategy of not supporting the cultural transmission of the minority may thus be said to serve two superordinate evolutionary functions: first, it *protects* the economic and cultural capital (roughly as defined by Bourdieu, 2005) of the majority; second and more indirectly – by increasing the costs of cultural transmission for the minority – it serves to 'recruit' new cultural group members and thereby to *increase* the economic and cultural capital of the majority.

However, the non-support and, in particular, the obstruction of the cultural transmission of a minority by a majority also cause costs. Although the effort needed to interfere effectively with the cultural transmission of a minority is often low (e.g. it may be sufficient to apply existing educational laws in a restrictive manner), the majority must also consider the possible costs caused by protests of the minority, open or covert resistance, and appeals to third parties (e.g. Kymlicka, 2005). These counterstrategies of a minority can make the attempt to obstruct its cultural transmission too expensive. In particular, the attempt of a majority group to forcefully assimilate a minority usually meets with strong emotional and practical resistance, and is often reversed at the first available opportunity (e.g. Mchitarjan, 2006). The theory of cultural transmission in minorities makes this phenomenon understandable: Because the assimilation of the minority means its end as distinct sociocultural group, its culture-transmission motive is maximally threatened by a direct, undisguised attempt at assimilation. Indeed, some historical assimilation attempts seem to be mainly motivated by the desire to undo a 'loss of cultural territory' suffered by a preceding assimilation attempt of another group (Mchitarjan, 2006).

3.2.2.2 Support of cultural transmission from an evolutionary point of view. Whereas the strategy of non-support of cultural transmission is easy to understand from an evolutionary perspective, the support of the cultural transmission of a group by another poses a more difficult explanatory problem. With this strategy, the helping group seems at first sight to reduce its own fitness (i.e. its chances of cultural reproduction): it spends part of its resources to aid the reproduction of another sociocultural group. However, analogous to the case of altruism at the individual level (an individual supports another at the expense of its own fitness; see e.g. Sober and Wilson, 1998), this apparent puzzle can be resolved if one takes the indirect fitness gains of group altruism into account: the support of a cultural group by another can be adaptive for the helping group if the costs incurred by helping are compensated by immediate- or long-term gains. This constellation is particularly likely to arise in majority–minority relations, because supporting a minority often incurs only minor costs to the majority (e.g. when the minority is small, or if

support is limited to the granting of certain rights), whereas the potential gains can be high (e.g. in the case of skilled workers that the majority urgently needs).

How a majority can increase its fitness by supporting the cultural reproduction of a minority was already answered when describing the action–theoretical model of majority–minority interactions: the minority can provide the majority with coveted goods such as manpower, technical knowledge, or the prospect of favorable political relations with the minority's home country, now or in the future. In exchange for these benefits, the majority may be willing to assist the minority with a central concern of sociocultural groups that is particularly urgent in a foreign cultural environment: cultural transmission.

This analysis suggests that the majority should preferably support the cultural transmission of minorities who are able to provide appropriate returns. Furthermore, the majority should preferably support those educational activities of minorities from which it can directly benefit because they can be easily converted into the majority group's cultural, social or economic capital (Bourdieu, 2005). Historical studies on the educational policies of nation-states towards immigrant and autochthonous minorities support these predictions (e.g. Hansen and Wenning, 2003; Mchitarjan, 2006, 2009; see the first part of the article).

4. Testing the theory of cultural transmission in minorities

Although the theory of cultural transmission in minorities is supported by its ability to explain a variety of historical and survey data, these explanations are necessarily post hoc. In a first attempt to provide a predictive test of the theory, we conducted a small online survey of adolescents and young adults with Russian and Turkish (mostly Russian) immigrant background (1.5 and second generation) in Germany (Mchitarjan and Reisenzein, 2013b).[9] The participants ($N = 55$ volunteers recruited in the forum areas of the ethno-portals *germany.ru* and *vaybee.de*) completed a questionnaire designed by the authors to measure the culture-transmission motive and its assumed correlates. The culture-transmission motive was measured both directly, by asking the interviewees to rate (on 0–7 scales) how important their culture of origin is for them, and how strongly they wish to preserve it and transmit it to the next generation (several items); and indirectly, by assessing the participants' emotional reactions and action tendencies in hypothetical motive-diagnostic situations (e.g. 'Would you feel sorry if your children would lose the language of your culture of origin?'; 'As my husband/wife, I prefer a man/woman from the culture of origin'). Unidimensional scales with adequate reliabilities could be constructed for the three methods of measuring the culture-transmission motive (direct measurement, measurement via motive-diagnostic emotions, and measurement via action tendencies) and the total scale (the mean of all items) had excellent reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$).

In addition, the participants were asked to indicate to which degree their culture of origin fulfills a variety of social functions (e.g. 'my culture of origin gives me orientation in life'; 'it reminds me of my roots'; 'it gives me stability', 'it gives me the feeling of being able to rely on other group members and their support'), and

what they would do if cultural transmission were endangered by the absence of traditional transmission paths (e.g. 'I would teach the child the language of my culture of origin at home') or by cultural influences of the majority culture (e.g. 'I would promote contacts of my child to people from the culture of origin'). Also, the participants were asked to what extent they would like to see their language of origin considered in public education in Germany (not at all; as an optional subject; as a compulsory subject; as the instruction language with German as a compulsory or an optional subject). These and several other items ones were formulated to test six predictions derived from the theory of cultural transmission of minorities, all of which received at least partial support.

In particular, (1) clear evidence was obtained for the existence of the culture-transmission motive postulated by the theory: Most participants said that their culture of origin was highly important to them, and most expressed a strong wish to transmit it to the next generation (means between 4.6 and 6 on the 0–7 scale); (2) evidence was also obtained for the postulated focus of the culture-transmission motive on language and cultural norms: The items that asked for the importance of these specific cultural elements correlated strongly with each other, as well as with the items that measured the desire for cultural transmission in general; in addition (3) evidence was obtained for the anchoring of the culture-transmission motive in more basic motives: All of the hypothesized social functions of culture were endorsed to at least a medium degree and the strength of the culture-transmission motive could be very well predicted from them. We also found (4), that the culture-transmission motive was intra-generationally stable in our sample (correlation to length of stay in Germany was $r = -.03$, ns.) and had moderate trans-generational stability (indicated by a correlation of .47, $p < .001$, between the strength of the participants' culture-transmission motive and the reported importance of the culture of origin for their parents). Finally (5): evidence was obtained for the motivating function of the culture-transmission motive: The stronger the culture-transmission motive of the participants, the higher was their readiness to take action against the possible loss of language in their child ($r = .34$, $p < .01$) and the drifting away of the child from the culture of origin ($r = .37$, $p < .01$), and the more they desired to have the minority language considered in public schools ($r = .48$, $p < .001$).

In addition to this empirical support, the theory of cultural transmission in minorities has been found useful for elucidating the role played by the family in the cultural transmission of immigrants (Mchitarjan and Reisenzein, 2013a) and for explaining important aspects of the educational policy for minorities during Russian history (Mchitarjan, 2013a).

5. Locating the theory of cultural transmission in minorities within contemporary social science

The theory of cultural transmission in minorities presented in this article lies at the intersection of two social science research fields: (a) research on acculturation and more generally, on the interaction between majority and minority groups in

culturally heterogeneous societies; and (b) research on inter-generational cultural transmission. In this concluding section of the article, we briefly review how our theory relates to major theoretical approaches in these two research areas.

Probably the two most prominent theoretical approaches in the area of sociological acculturation research, that have also been influential in educational science, are assimilation theory (e.g. Alba, 1990; Alba and Nee, 1999; Esser, 1980) and transnationalism (e.g. Glick Schiller et al., 1992; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007; Pries, 2008; Vertovec, 2009). The present theory differs from assimilation theory in several important respects: (1) whereas assimilation theory models acculturation as the integration of *individuals* into an anonymous mainstream society, our theory conceptualizes acculturation as being, in important part, an interaction between cultural *groups*. Incidentally, this perspective agrees with recent trends in economic migration research (Hatton and Leigh, 2011); (2) in contrast to assimilation theory, our theory does not focus one-sidedly on the actions of minorities, but explicitly models its research object – according to its nature – as an *interaction* between majority and minority; (3) our theory is not limited to interactions between majorities and minorities in nation-states, but can also be applied to pre-modern societies. Nor is it restricted to immigrants; it can also be applied to indigenous minorities; (4) different from assimilation theory, our theory assumes that actors are endowed with a culture-transmission motive. This assumption allows the theory to explain several empirical phenomena that constitute difficulties for assimilation theory, in particular the finding that socio-cultural minorities often hold fast to their culture of origin even in the second or third generation, and in spite of successful social integration into the majority society (see Mchitarjan and Reisenzein, 2013a, for details[10]); (5) different from assimilation theory, our theory comprises, in addition to the action–theoretical model, a worked-out evolutionary component.

The perspective of *transnationalism* (e.g. Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007; Pries, 2008; Roccas and Brewer, 2002; Vertovec, 2009) emerged in part as a critical response to assimilation theory (e.g. Aumüller, 2009). Against assimilation theory, transnationalists emphasize the declining role of nation-states and the increasing importance of transnational social networks, and point to the fact that many migrants move easily within these networks. However, these insights are not in conflict with our theory. In fact, many of the empirical phenomena emphasized by researchers working within the transnationalist paradigm – such as the maintenance of family ties and ethnic networks across national borders, or circular migration – constitute additional support for our theory inasmuch as they are predictable by the theory. For example, the theory of cultural transmission in minorities predicts that, given access to modern means of communication and transportation, migrant cultural groups should use these means to maintain their ties to their cultural communities in their country of origin – exactly what is found. Other 'transnationalist' phenomena that can be explained by our theory include the adoption of particular elements of a culture, but not others, by members of another culture (e.g. advanced technology, but not social norms). Even the existence of people with so-called *bicultural identities* (e.g. Birman, 1994; Huynh et al., 2011) is

in principle compatible with the theory. However, as Birman (1994) emphasized, the term 'bicultural identity' covers several different cases, only one of which represents a true merging of cultures. From the perspective of our theory, the frequency of occurrence of such cases (for relevant empirical data, see e.g. Mchitarjan and Reisenzein, 2013b; Nguyen and Benet-Martínez, 2007) depends on several factors, in particular the strength of the culture-transmission motive, the compatibility of the values and norms of the 'merged' cultures, the attractiveness of the majority culture, and the pressure to assimilate.

A second social science discourse particularly relevant to the theory of cultural transmission in minorities is research on the contents and mechanisms of intergenerational cultural-transmission processes (Schönpflug, 2009). Sociological theorizing in this field is based mainly on Bourdieu (1986, 2005, 2006). Although Bourdieu's social theory was not explicitly designed by him to explain cultural transmission in minorities, it can be adapted for this purpose (Mchitarjan, 2010). At the latest when one attempts to do this, it turns out that Bourdieu's approach has quite a few similarities to the theory of cultural evolution on which the present theory of cultural transmission is partly based (Wilson, 2002). Of particular importance, both theories are concerned with the mechanisms of reproduction of social groups that are, at least in part, defined culturally (specifically in terms of their norms and values, and language). However, whereas the present theory emphasizes the importance of intentional pedagogical processes (instruction and teaching) for the transmission of culture, Bourdieu (2006) emphasizes the 'unconscious' molding of the individual in the course of socialization. And whereas we conceive of social actors as boundedly rational decision makers, Bourdieu emphasizes the role of automatic, habitual processes in action generation (Bourdieu, 2005, 2006). However, these different processes do not in our view exclude each other and a theory of social actors needs to consider them both (e.g. Esser, 1999; Fazio, 1990). More importantly, in contrast to the present theory, Bourdieu does not explicitly assume the existence of a culture-transmission motive in social actors. Finally, by referring to the theory of evolution, the present theory provides a general theoretical framework for understanding the evolution of socio-cultural groups that rests on the foundation of evolutionary biology.

Taken together, the proposed theory of cultural transmission in minorities has several features that, when taken together, distinguish the theory from existing social science approaches to the phenomenon of cultural transmission in minorities, and in our view recommend it as an explanatory framework. First, the theory combines an actor model of group interaction that describes the proximate, action-generating mechanisms of social actors, with an evolutionary model of cultural transmission that explains (part of) the special mental equipment of the actors involved in the interaction. Thereby, the theory combines the merits of the action–theoretical approach to the explanation of social phenomena (e.g. Conte and Castelfranchi, 1995; Esser, 1999) with the merits of evolutionary explanations (e.g. Wilson, 2002; see also, Kappelhoff, 2004). The two components of the theory describe two different mechanisms (Mayntz, 2002) through which social factors

influence behavior of social agents: Either directly and ahistorically (through the perception of the current situation) or indirectly and historically (through the transmission of cultural norms and beliefs). Second, the present theory explicitly models the social phenomenon 'cultural transmission in minorities', according to its nature, as an *interaction* between two groups (majority and minority), rather than focusing narrowly on the minority. Third, the theory posits that social groups are equipped with a motive to transmit their culture, and that consideration of this motive is crucial for understanding cultural-transmission processes in minorities within a majority environment. In line with this assumption, the theory emphasizes, fourth, the importance of intentional educational activities (instruction, teaching) for the transmission of culture. The significance of this cultural transmission route in humans has become increasingly clear during the past years (e.g. Csibra and Gergely, 2009). In addition to these theoretical merits, the theory of cultural transmission in minorities can claim some direct empirical support (Mchitarjan and Reisenzein, 2013b).

To conclude, we would like to note that the proposed theory of cultural transmission is not only relevant for the explanation of the educational activities of minorities and the educational policies of majorities towards them, but also for the explanation of other interactions of socio-cultural groups in which cultural transmission is a concern. For example, the theory can help to understand the politics of cultural diversity management in multinational companies (Mchitarjan, 2013b), and processes of international borrowing and lending in education (e.g. Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; see Mchitarjan, 2013c).

Notes

1. Contemporary social scientists often define minorities, not primarily in terms of characteristics such as language, religion, traditions, or even size, but in terms of their power relationship to other groups (e.g. Polm, 1995). According to this definition, a minority is a low-power subgroup of a society. The theory described in this article is compatible with this definition, but is restricted to cultural minorities, i.e. those low-power groups that have or claim a cultural (ethnic, linguistic, religious) identity.
2. Action–theoretical accounts are the dominant theories of motivation in psychology (see e.g. Reisenzein, 2006) and a strong paradigm in sociology (e.g. Esser, 1999; Lindenberg, 1985). In proposing an action-theoretical model of minority–minority interactions, we wish to remain open to different proposals about what, exactly, the mental processes of action selection look like, as long as they stay consistent with the assumption that actions are caused, by and large in a rational fashion, by mental representations of what actors take to be the case (beliefs) and what they want (desires).
3. This assumption is a simplification and idealization. Systematic considerations and historical examples suggest, however, that it is adequate for many cases of minority–majority interactions. First, in many historical cases, the minority and the majority groups have a high degree of organization and, as a result, actually interact as individual agents (through their representatives). For example, a pedagogical emigrant organization negotiates with a state authority about the founding of a school (Mchitarjan, 2006). In other cases, group actions are the result of parallel decisions of many group members reached individually. A possible example is the decision of migrant families to organize

language instruction in the mother tongue for their children. In this second case, the term 'the group' stands for 'most members of the group' or 'the typical group member' (see e.g. Tuomela, 2000). Note also that our theory allows different cultural-transmission scenarios to exist side by side on a local level, thereby taking account of the possibility that the same or different members or subgroups of a minority can be treated differently by different members or subgroups of the majority.

4. For example, according to the draft definition of "national minority" prepared for the framework convention for the protection of national minorities of the European Union, national minorities are groups that, among other things, 'are motivated by a concern to preserve together that which constitutes their common identity, including their culture, their traditions, their religion or their language' (Recommendation 1201, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 1993). Much earlier, Ernest Renan (1882; cited in May, 2005: 59) made a similar claim about nations: According to him, one of the defining features of nationhood is 'the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form'.
5. The perception of a threat to cultural transmission need not be accurate or well-founded; in fact, analogous to other evolutionary threat detection mechanisms (see the next section), one may expect it to be biased towards false alarms (Nesse, 2001).
6. Hence, in agreement with Sober and Wilson (1998) and other authors (e.g. Vromen, 2002), we assume that action–theoretical and evolutionary explanations of human behavior are compatible and complement each other. The action–theoretical model provides an explanation of behavior on the level of proximate mechanisms (the immediately action-causing, mental mechanisms), whereas evolution theory explains the historical emergence of (some) of these mechanisms (e.g. the evolution of basic motives).
7. This assumption is, of course, not meant to downplay the importance of the *content* of the transmitted culture (Wilson, 2002). However, it draws attention to the fact that no cultural system, however effective it is in getting a group to behave as an adaptive unit and to adjust well to its nonsocial and social environment, will survive unless it is transmitted to the next generation.
8. In attempting to assimilate minorities, majorities often also change (see Wilson, 2002). At least some of these changes can be seen as strategies that facilitate assimilating the minorities.
9. A more extensive survey of people with an immigrant background from many different countries is currently under way.
10. The explanatory difficulties that these findings pose to existing migration-theoretic accounts – especially to assimilation theory – have been emphasized by the authors of the respective studies themselves (e.g. Knafo and Schwartz, 2001, p. 222; Kwast-Welfel et al., 2008: 199; Sam and Virta, 2003: 226; see also, Bisin and Verdier, 2011).

References

Adrey J-B (2005) Minority language rights before and after the 2004 EU enlargement: The Copenhagen criteria in the Baltic states. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 26: 453–468.

Alba RD (1990) *Ethnic Identity. The Transformation of White America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Alba R and Nee V (1999) Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration. In: Hirschman CH, Kasinitz PH, DeWind J (eds) *The Handbook of International Migration: The American Experience*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 137–160.

Allport GW (1937) The functional autonomy of motives. *American Journal of Psychology* 50: 141–156.

Aumüller J (2009) *Assimilation: Kontroversen um ein migrationspolitisches Konzept. [Assimilation: A Controversial Concept of Migration Politics]*. Bielefeld: Transcript.

Bayar M (2009) Reconsidering primordialism: An alternative approach to the study of ethnicity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32: 1639–1657.

Berry JW, Phinney JS, Sam DL, et al. (2006) Immigrant youth: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 55: 303–332.

Birman D (1994) Biculturalism and ethnic identity*: An integrated model. Focus* 8: 9–11.

Bisin A and Verdier T (2011) The economics of cultural transmission and socialization. In: Benhabib J, Bisin A, Jackson MO (eds) *Handbook of Social Economics*. Vol. 1A, The Netherlands: North-Holland, 339–416.

Boos-Nünning U and Karakaşoğlu Y (2006) *Viele Welten leben. Zur Lebenssituation von Mädchen und jungen Frauen mit Migrationshintergrund* [*Living in Many Worlds. On the Life Situation of Girls and Young Women with Immigrant Background*] (2nd ed.). Münster: Waxmann.

Bourdieu P (1986) The forms of capital. In: Richardson J (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press, 241–258.

Bourdieu P (2005) Ökonomisches Kapital – Kulturelles Kapital – Soziales Kapital [Economic capital – cultural capital – social capital]. In: Steinbrücke M (ed.) *Die verborgenen Mechanismen der Macht. Schriften zu Politik und Kultur [The Hidden Mechanisms of Power. Writings on Politics and Culture]*. Hamburg: VSA-Verlag, 49–80.

Bourdieu P (2006) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. New York: Routledge.

Brüderl J (2004) Die Überprüfung von Rational-Choice-Modellen mit Umfragedaten [Testing rational choice models with survey data]. In: Diekmann A, Voss T (eds) *Rational-Choice-Theorie in den Sozialwissenschaften [Rational Choice Theory in the Social Sciences]*. München: Oldenbourg, 163–180.

Buss DM (2007) *Evolutionary Psychology. The New Science of the Mind*, 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Conte R and Castelfranchi C (1995) *Cognitive and Social Action*. London: University College London Press.

Csibra G and Gergely G (2009) Natural pedagogy. *Trends in Cognitive Science* 13: 148–152.

Esser H (1980) *Aspekte der Wanderungssoziologie [Aspects of the Sociology of Migration]*. Darmstadt/Neuwied: Luchterhand.

Esser H (1999) *Soziologie. Spezielle Grundlagen. Band 1: Situationslogik und Handeln [Sociology: Special Foundations. Vol. 1: Situation Logic and Action]*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus.

Fazio RH (1990) Multiple processes by which attitudes guide behavior: The MODE model as an integrative framework. In: Zanna MP (ed.) *Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol 23, San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 75–109.

Feidel-Mertz H and Hammel A (2004) Integration and formation of identity: Exile schools in Great Britain. *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 23: 71–84.

Fürstenau S (2004) Transnationale (Aus-)Bildungs- und Zukunftsorientierungen. Ergebnisse einer Untersuchung unter zugewanderten Jugendlichen portugiesischer Herkunft

[Transnational paths of learning and future orientations. Results of a survey of young Portuguese immigrants]. *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft* 7: 33–57.

Giles H and Johnson P (1987) Ethnolinguistic identity theory: A social psychological approach to language maintenance. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 68: 69–100.

Glick Schiller N, Basch L and Blanc-Szanton C (1992) Transnationalism: A new analytic framework for understanding migration. In: Glick Schiller N, Basch L, Blanc-Szanton C (eds) *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration*. New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1–24.

Goldthorpe JH (2000) *On Sociology: Numbers, Narratives, and the Integration of Research and Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hansen G and Wenning N (2003) *Schulpolitik für andere Ethnien in Deutschland. Zwischen Autonomie und Unterdrückung. [Educational Policy for Other Ethnic Communities in Germany. Between Autonomy and Suppression]*. Münster: Waxmann.

Hatton T and Leigh A (2011) Immigrants assimilate as communities, not just as individuals. *Journal of Population Economics* 24: 389–419.

Heider F (1958) *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*. New York: Wiley.

Heitmeyer W, Müller J and Schröder H (1997) *Verlockender Fundamentalismus. Türkische Jugendliche in Deutschland* [Enticing Fundamentalism: Turkish Adolescents in Germany]. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Henrich J (2004) Cultural group selection, coevolutionary processes and large-scale cooperation. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 53: 3–35.

Hopf D (1999) Schulische und psychosoziale Probleme der Remigration griechischer Kinder und Jugendlicher [Schooling and psychosocial problems caused by the remigration of Greek children and adolescents]. In: Buchegger R (ed.) *Migranten und Flüchtlinge: Eine familienwissenschaftliche Annäherung [Migrants and Refugees: A Family Science Approach]*. Wien: Österreichisches Institut für Familienforschung, 139–155.

Hughes J (2005) 'Exit' in deeply divided societies: Regimes of discrimination in Estonia and Latvia and the potential for Russophone migration. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 43: 739–762.

Huynh Q-L, Nguyen A-MD and Benet-Martínez V (2011) Bicultural identity integration. In: Schwartz SJ, Luyckx K, Vignoles VL (eds) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. New York: Springer, 827–842.

Isajiw WW and Makabe T (1997) Identitätswahrung und eigenethnische Familie, Schule und Nachbarschaft: Der kanadische Kontext unterschiedlicher Migrantengruppen [Identity maintenance and ethnic family, school and neighborhood: The Canadian context of different migrant groups]. In: Nauck B, Schönpflug U (eds) *Familien in verschiedenen Kulturen* [Families in different cultures]. Stuttgart: Enke, 285–302.

Kappelhoff P (2004) Adaptive Rationalität, Gruppenselektion und Ultrasozialität. [Adaptive rationality, group selection, and ultrasociality]. In: Diekmann A, Voss T (eds) *Rational Choice Theorie in den Sozialwissenschaften [Rational Choice Theory in the Social Sciences]*. München: Oldenbourg, 79–96.

Knabe F (2000) *Sprachliche Minderheiten und nationale Schule in Preußen zwischen 1871 und 1933: Eine bildungspolitische Analyse [Linguistic Minorities and the National School in Prussia between 1871 and 1933: A Analysis of Educational Policies]*. Münster: Waxmann.

Knafo A and Schwartz SH (2001) Value socialization in families of Israeli-born and Soviet-born adolescents in Israel. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 32: 213–228.

Knafo A and Schwartz SH (2009) Accounting for parent-child value congruence: Theoretical considerations and empirical evidence. In: Schönpflug U (ed.) *Cultural Transmission. Psychological, Developmental, Social, and Methodological Aspects*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 240–268.

Krentz S (2002) Intergenerative Transmission von Erziehungseinstellungen bei Migranten aus der ehemaligen Sowjetunion in Deutschland und Israel [Intergenerational transmission of educational attitudes in immigrants from the former Soviet Union in Germany and Israel]. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialisation* 22: 77–99.

Kwast-Welfel J, Boski P and Rovers M (2008) Intergenerational value similarity in Polish immigrant families in Canada in comparison to intergenerational value similarity in Polish and Canadian non-immigrant families. In: Zheng G, Leung K, Adair JG (eds.) *Perspectives and Progress in Contemporary Cross-Cultural Psychology*. Available at: http://ebooks.iaccp.org/xian/PDFs/4_4Welfel. pdf (accessed 11 September 2013), 193–209.

Kymlicka W (2005) Identity politics in multination states. In: *Venice Commission on State Consolidation and National Identity*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. *Science and Technique of Democracy Series* 38: 45–53.

Lachenicht S (2007) Hugenot immigrants and the formation of national identities. *Historical Journal* 50: 1548–1787.

Landa JT (2008) The bioeconomics of homogeneous middleman groups as adaptive units: Theory and empirical evidence viewed from a group selection framework. *Journal of Bioeconomics* 10: 259–278.

Levitt P and Jaworsky BN (2007) Transnational migration studies: Past developments and future trends. *Annual Review of Sociology* 33: 129–156.

Lindenberg S (1985) An assessment of the new political economy: Its potential for the social sciences and for sociology in particular. *Sociological Theory* 3: 99–114.

Malle BF (2004) *How the Mind Explains Behavior. Folk Explanations, Meaning, and Social Interaction*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

May S (2005) *Language and Minority Rights*. New York: Routledge.

Mayntz R (2002) Zur Theoriefähigkeit makro-sozialer Analysen [On the possibility of theories of macrosocial phenomena]. In: Mayntz R (ed.) *Akteure – Mechanismen – Modelle. Zur Theoriefähigkeit makrosozialer Analysen [Actors – Mechanisms – Models. On the Possibility of Theories of Macrosocial Phenomena]*. Frankfurt: Campus, 7–43.

Mchitarjan I (2006) *Das "russische Schulwesen" im europäischen Exil. Zum bildungspolitischen Umgang mit den pädagogischen Initiativen der russischen Emigranten in Deutschland, der Tschechoslowakei und Polen (1918–1939) [The "Russian school system" in the European exile: Educational policies for the Russian emigrants in Germany, Czechoslvakia and Poland (1918–1939)]*. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.

Mchitarjan I (2009) Prague as the centre of Russian educational emigration: Czechoslovakia's educational policy for Russian emigrants (1918–1938). *Paedagogica Historica* 45: 369–402.

Mchitarjan I (2010) Forschung zur deutschsprachigen pädagogischen Emigration: Bestandsaufnahme und Vorschläge zu einer interdisziplinären theoretischen Analyse. [Research on German educational emigration: Survey and proposals towards an interdisciplinary theoretical analysis]. *Pädagogische Rundschau* 2: 113–128.

Mchitarjan I (2013a) Educational policies for non-Russian minorities in Russia: A theoretical-historical case study. *InterDisciplines* (accepted for publication).

Mchitarjan I (2013b) Intercultural interaction in education and the economy: The perspective of the theory of cultural transmission in minorities. Manuscript, University of Greifswald, Greifswald.

Mchitarjan I (2013c). Educational borrowing and lending from the perspective of the theory of cultural transmission in minorities (in preparation).

Mchitarjan I and Reisenzein R (2013a) The importance of the culture of origin in immigrant families: Empirical findings and their explanation by the theory of cultural transmission in minorities. In: Geisen TH, Studer T and Yildiz E (eds.) *Migration, Familie und Gesellschaft [Migration, Family and Society]*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS (in press).

Mchitarjan I and Reisenzein R (2013b) The culture-transmission motive in minorities: An online survey of adolescents and young adults with an immigrant background in Germany. *ISRN International Scholarly Research Net Education* (in press).

Mellor R (1963) A minority problem in Germany. *Scottish Geographical Journal* 79: 49–53.

Modood T (2007) *Multiculturalism. A Civic Idea*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Modood T, Berthoud R, Lakey J, et al. (1997) *Ethnic Minorities in Britain: Diversity and Disadvantage*. London: Policy Studies Institute.

Nesse RM (2001) The smoke detector principle. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 935: 75–85.

Nguyen A-MD and Benet-Martínez V (2007) Biculturalism unpacked: Components, individual differences, measurement, and outcomes. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 1: 101–114.

Opitz M (2007) *Die Minderheitenpolitik in der europäischen Union: Probleme, Potentiale, Perspektiven [Minority Politics in the European Union: Problems, Potentials, Perspectives]*. Berlin: LIT-Verlag.

Otto B (1902) *Polen und Deutsche. Ein Mahnwort an die deutsche Jugend. [Poles and Germans. A Word of Warning to the German Youth]*. Leipzig: Scheffer.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (1993) Recommendation 1201 of the European Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on an additional protocol on the rights of national minorities to the European Convention on Human Rights. Available at: http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta93/EREC1201.htm (accessed 11 September 2013).

Polm R (1995) ''Minderheit'' [''Minority'']. In: Schmalz-Jacobsen C, Hansen G (eds) *Ethnische Minderheiten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ein Lexikon [Ethnic Minorities in the Federal Republic of Germany. A dictionary]*. München: Beck, 340–342.

Pries L (ed.) (2008) *Rethinking Transnationalism. The Meso-Link of Organisations*. New York: Routledge.

Raeff M (1990) *Russia Abroad: A Cultural History of Russian Emigration, 1919–1939*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rakić T, Steffens MC and Mummendey A (2010) Blinded by the accent! The minor role of looks in ethnic categorization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100: 16–29.

Reisenzein R (2006) Motivation [Motivation]. In: Pawlik K (ed.) *Handbuch Psychologie [Handbook of Psychology]*. Heidelberg: Springer, 239–247.

Reiss S (2004) The sixteen strivings for god. *Zygon* 39: 303–320.

Reiss S and Havercamp S (1998) Toward a comprehensive assessment of fundamental motivation: factor structure of the Reiss profiles. *Psychological Assessment* 10: 97–106.

Reubold S (2003) Die Minderheitenproblematik in Estland und Lettland. Der Konflikt ohne Bewegung [The minority problem in Estonia and Latvia. A conflict without movement].

In: *Europaspiegel – Das e-Journal von Europolit eV*. Available at: www.europaspiegel.de (accessed 7 October 2009).

Richerson PJ and Boyd R (2005) *Not by Genes Alone. How Culture Transformed Human Evolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Roccas S and Brewer MB (2002) Social identity complexity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 6: 88–106.

Sabatier C (2008) Ethnic and national identity among second-generation immigrant adolescents in France: The role of social context and family. *Journal of Adolescence* 31: 185–205.

Sam DL and Virta E (2003) Intergenerational value discrepancies in immigrant and host-national families and their impact on psychological adaptation. *Journal of Adolescence* 26: 213–231.

Scholz OR (1999) *Verstehen und Rationalität: Untersuchungen zu den Grundlagen von Hermeneutik und Sprachphilosophie [Understanding and Rationality: Investigations of the Foundations of Hermeneutics and the Philosophy of Language]*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann.

Schönpflug U (ed.) (2009) *Cultural Transmission. Psychological, Developmental, Social, and Methodological Aspects*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smith AD (1998) *Nationalism and Modernism*. London: Routledge.

Smolicz J (1981) Core values and cultural identity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 4: 75–90.

Sober E and Wilson DS (1998) *Unto Others. The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior*. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press.

Steiner-Khamsi G (ed.) (2004) *The Global Politics of Educational Borrowing and Lending*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Ter Bogt TFM, Meeus WMJ, Raaijmakers QAW, et al. (2009) "Don't trust anyone over 25": Youth centrism, intergenerational transmission of political orientations, and cultural change. In: Schönpflug U (ed.) *Cultural Transmission. Psychological, Developmental, Social, and Methodological Aspects*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 419–440.

Thadden von R, Michelle M (eds) (1986) *Die Hugenotten 1685–1985 [The Huguenots 1685–1985]*. München: Beck.

Thornberry P (2001) *International Law and the Rights of Minorities*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Thränhardt D (2005) Spanische Einwanderer schaffen Bildungskapital: Selbsthilfe-Netzwerke und Integrationserfolg in Europa [Spanish immigrants create cultural capital: Self-help networks and integration success in Europe]. In: Thränhardt D, Weiss K (eds) *Wie Migranten Netzwerke knüpfen und soziales Kapital schaffen [How immigrants knit networks and create social capital]*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Lambertus-Verlag, 93–111.

Tuomela R (2000) *Cooperation: A Philosophical Study*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Umaña-Taylor AJ (2011) Ethnic identity. In: Schwartz SJ, Luyckx K, Vignoles VL (eds) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. New York: Springer, 791–809.

Umaña-Taylor AJ and Fine MA (2004) Examining ethnic identity development among Mexican-origin adolescents living in the United States. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 26: 36–59.

Van den Bergh CJM and Gowdy JM (2009) A group selection perspective on economic behavior, institutions and organizations. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 72: 1–20.

Verkuyten M (2005) *The Social Psychology of Ethnic Identity*. Hove: Psychology Press.
Vertovec ST (2009) *Transnationalism*. New York: Routledge.
Vromen J (2002) Stone age minds and group selection – What difference do they make? *Constitutional Political Economy* 13: 173–195.
Weiss H (ed.) (2007) *Leben in zwei Welten [Living in Two Worlds]*. Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
Weiss H and Wittmann-Roumi Rassouli M (2007) Ethnische Traditionen, religiöse Bindungen und "civic identity" [Ethnic traditions, religions ties and "civic identity"]. In: Weiss H (ed.) *Leben in zwei Welten [Living in Two Worlds]*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 155–188.
Wilson DS (2002) *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Wilson DS, van Vugt M and O'Gorman R (2007) Multilevel selection theory and major evolutionary transitions: Implications for psychological science. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17: 6–10.
Zick A (2010) *Psychologie der Akkulturation: Neufassung eines Forschungsbereiches [The Psychology of Acculturation: Reconceptualization of a Research Field]*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.