

COMPADRAZGO IN PITUMARCA, PERÚ: THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE TINKERBELL WATCH

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Abstract

Godparenthood, an institution where a family seeks sponsorship for their child established through a religious ritual, can be analyzed on several levels. On one level, it is a form of alloparenting, an adaptive strategy that ensures better survival of one's child by creating an alliance with a biologically non-related person. On the sociological level, it is a strategy for forging inter-family alliances. Godparenthood can also be instrumentalized to promote political goals through reciprocal exchanges. In this paper I argue that this is achieved on the cognitive level by metaphorical extensions of kinship terminology to unrelated individuals through the use of the universal linguistic feature of markedness. I analyze compadrazgo in the town of Pitumarca, Perú, as a test case of all three aspects of godparenthood.

Introduction

The human universal of kin recognition includes not only ideas about procreation, whether or not biologically accurate, but also behaviors that determine relationships among relatives. One of the

distinct features of a kinship terminology, the linguistic labels associated with genealogical kin-types, is the uniquely human ability to transform strangers into relatives through extension of the scope of kinship terms. In addition to extending the scope of kinship terms through consanguinity and affinity, godparenthood widens the network of support through kinship relations. I argue here that this cognitive capacity has an enormous adaptive value.²

Fictive or ritual kinship, an umbrella term for forms of non-biological kinship ties, involves culturally established relationships enacted ritually, with mutual obligations analogous to those of kin relationships and includes a modified kinship terminology. I argue here that godparenthood, a form of sponsorship established at a religious ritual, is a form of alloparenting that contributed to human demographic success. Parenting help, an important adaptation in the human evolutionary history, is conducted by non-genetically related individuals and is made possible through the extension of the scope of kinship terms by taking advantage of the human capacity for analogical thinking and the linguistic production of metaphors. The universal linguistic feature of markedness provides the cognitive tool that turns non-biologically related persons into relatives.

Unlike kinship based on procreation, ritual kinship involves a choice. Ritual sponsorship, described and studied under the labels of “godparenthood” and “*compadrazgo*” in the European Christian and Latin American cultures, is an institution whereby a family seeks an adult person to fill the role of a child’s sponsor referred to as “godfather” or “godmother.” The godparents are not only responsible for the spiritual well-being of the sponsored child but are also obliged to take over the parental responsibilities if the parents are unable to do so.

Ritual kinship can be analyzed on several levels. At the adaptive level as a form of alloparenting, it is a strategy that leads to a higher survival rate for children. At the cognitive level, it involves a metaphorical extension of a kinship terminology to unrelated people. At the sociological level, it can be a strategy for making inter-family alliances. Godparenthood is also instrumental for promoting political objectives. I argue that the cognitive aspect, based on the human capacity to produce metaphors, makes the adaptive, sociological, and political functions possible. I analyze *compadrazgo* in Pitumarca, Perú as a test case for this claim.

The Evolutionary Perspective

Humans are described as being “cooperative breeders” as early as *Homo erectus* (Hrды 2009). Hrды contrasted human cooperative breeding with the breeding practices of the other great apes. Alloparenting refers to the help that mothers receive in raising their offspring, a widely observed behavior in human ethnographic societies where individuals aid in caring for children other than their own. Sharing childcare with non-related individuals in foraging societies allows mothers to shorten birth intervals to 3-4 years in comparison to other great apes with 6-8-year intervals. It has been credited as being one of the most successful behaviors resulting in the increase of human demographic success (Kramer 2015). Shorter birth intervals, lower level of juvenile dependence, later dispersion age, and higher survival fertility have been associated with maternal help in the course of human evolution (Kenkel, Perkelbile, and Carter 2017).

While chimpanzee mothers rarely allow others to approach their infants, Bădescu et al. (2016) found the association between alloparenting, reduced maternal lactation and faster weaning in wild chimpanzees. Human fertility is directly affected by the sharing of childcare. According to Hrды, the selective pressure for this behavior also promotes shared intentionality and Theory of Mind in human infants’ early development (Tomasello 2019).

Godparenthood is a form of alloparenting expressed through the use of kin terms for non-genetically related individuals. I situate ritual sponsorship within the broader context of the question of human demographic success. It has been proposed that fictive kinship is an adaptive mechanism developed in the course of human evolution. Qirko (2011) suggests that the use of kin terms for genetically non-related individuals psychologically induces a measure of altruism. Thus, genetically not related individuals could be manipulated by kinship terms to perform altruistic acts towards the non-genetic kin. This can be also extended to institutions that might require self-sacrifice from their members. According to this evolutionary perspective, induced altruism, particularly in a non-reciprocated form, thus brings an additional dimension to the expression of fictive kinship.

Pawlowski and Chmielińska (2022: 200) proposed “the kin-term mimicry (KTM) hypothesis.” In terms of cost and benefits, they argued that KTM is an adaptive strategy whereby the group (or individuals) who apply kinship terms to biologically non-related persons receive psychological and emotional support. This hypothesis suggests that behavior like this should be found more often in harsh environments with more dependence on the help of others. Alloparenting, according to the KTM hypothesis, also belongs to this category, including stratified societies where individuals and families of higher socio-economic status are more sought-after as fictive kin with this benefitting both sides. Pawlowski and Chmielińska (2022) point out that kin terms carry an emotional load. There are many ethnographic examples of using kin terms to elicit cohesion, loyalty, and altruism. Just (2000) recounts how the villagers from a Greek Island in the Ionian Sea refer to themselves as *ta paidiá* (the children) in contrast to all outsiders as *oi xénoi* (the strangers). Just describes *koumbaria* — the godparenthood relationship — as being highly emotional and filled with respect for godparents. Another ethnographic example comes from the Island of Hvar (Milicic 1995). Over the years, many people from the village have evoked kinship ties and have used kin terms to elicit help from professionals living on the mainland whose parents were from the village, although my genealogies show that most of them are not genetically related.

Machin and Dunbar (2015) found that people react faster when a moral dilemma refers to a person identified as a relative and not just as a friend. Moreover, this finding shows the response is equal between genetically related kin and others named as kin. Machin and Dunbar attributed this result to the influence of language on human thought, but do not elaborate on which cognitive tools made this possible.

Qirko (2011: 310) suggests that the “institutional use of kin-cues produced altruism originated with kin recognition theory that replicates natural kin contexts (particularly parent-child and sibling relationships); the use of false phenotypic matches (uniforms, emblems, hair styles, speech patterns, mannerisms, etc.); and the use of linguistic and other symbolic kin referents.” The same argument can be applied to ethnic loyalty (2011: 316). Many ethnic groups use sibling terms to highlight membership in an ethnic group or belonging to a monastic order.

Kinship terms have been used to elicit an emotional response towards an ethnic group, a nation, or a state. Patriotism, motherland, etc. are kin labels exceedingly common in state societies, enticing potential, unreciprocated acts of altruism in the form of self-sacrifice (Johnson 1987; Gary 1987). The following, well-known example, comes from the Roman Empire in Horace’s Odes III.2.13 (2003: 124): “*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*” (“It is sweet and honorable to die for the fatherland.”). This is also inscribed in the Memorial Amphitheatre at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. The quote has been used in numerous poetic forms to induce self-sacrifice.

The research like this suggests that the emotional charge of a kinship terminology can induce kin-like altruistic behavior towards non-related individuals. It can also produce self-sacrifice through the metaphoric extensions of kin terms to a social group constituting an ethnicity or a nation and metaphoric extensions are often manipulated for political goals.

The Cognitive Level: Mothers, Metaphors, and Markedness

The theory of cue-induced manipulated altruism and of kin-term mimicry do not address the underlying cognitive mechanism that allows for the application of kinship terms to non-genetically related individuals. Tomasello (2019) locates the crucial cognitive divergence between chimpanzee infants and human infants at the age of about one year, when human children begin to explore the world through triangulation, calling for the attention of a second person by pointing at objects, people, and animals. According to Tomasello, it is a manifestation of the Theory of Mind that allows humans to realize that other individuals also have psychological states that can be inferred through various cues that eventually superseded chimpanzee abilities. This cognitive leap forward also coincides with the infants' pre-linguistic phase when a child realizes that objects and people have names, and so by pointing, she can indicate that she wants to know "What is this called?" and "Who is this?". This also includes kinship terms that the child gradually acquires (Milicic 2011).

I argue here that the application of kinship terms to non-biologically related individuals is embedded in the cognitive ability to produce metaphorical extensions based on the structural similarity of relationships in two semantic domains. Markedness is a human linguistic universal. Defined as an asymmetric binary relation (Trubetzkoy [1939] 1969; Greenberg 1966; Kronenfeld 1996; Waugh 1982; Hage 1999). Markedness can be found on the three levels of language: the phonological, morphological, and semantic levels. The unmarked term is a term that is more general and more inclusive as opposed to the more specific, more limited, marked by a suffix, prefix, or semantically marked term. On the phonological level in English, the first member of the pairs *k/g*, *p/b*, *t/d* are unmarked, while the second members, that involve more effort to pronounce, are the **marked** sounds. On the level of morphology, present tense is unmarked, while past tense is marked: *work/worked*. On the semantic level, the pairs 'man/woman' and 'lion/lioness' are unmarked/**marked**, both morphologically and semantically. Unmarked term includes itself such as the term 'man' where 'man' represents the male of the species and the species including itself and the female: '**Woman**' is marked semantically and morphologically by the prefix **wo**.

Lakoff (1990) shows how the principle of centrality can structure a semantic domain. However, a focal or central term is also unmarked. For example, in the semantic domain of color, RED is focal, central, and unmarked while **cherry** red and **brick** red are marked by the more specific description of red. In the semantic domain of kinship, the focal, central, or unmarked term 'mother' gains extended meanings through marking:

MOTHER (unmarked, central, focal) term

biological mother

adoptive mother

mother **superior**

grandmother

godmother

stepmother

surrogate mother, etc.

Metaphor, from Greek *metaféro*, to carry over, to transfer, is one of the basic cognitive tools of human thought. It is a cognitive operation where the meaning of an easily understood concept from one semantic domain is carried over to another semantic domain to describe a more difficult, usually abstract concept. Metaphors are based on the human ability to use analogy to show the similarity of relations (Milicic 2018). Two semantic domains may overlap but are never completely identical. If they were, there would be no metaphor. In the above ‘mother’ example, the marked forms are kinds of mother. They all share some features of motherhood but not exactly the same features. The marked forms of ‘mother’ as kinship terms carry an emotional load, but each is somewhat different. The production of metaphors, based on analogy, also makes it possible to carry over some parts of the meanings of the kin terms transferring kinship terminology to the socio-political arena where the implied reciprocity becomes the most important feature of the kinship terms.

From Spiritual Sponsorship to the Socio-political Use of Godparenthood

Historical records reveal the importance of godparenthood from early modern Italy (Alfani 2009; Vidali 2022) to early English baptism records (Niles 1982; Haas 1989). Vidali (2022) explores the connection between baptismal godparenthood and diplomatic ties in Venice strengthening the diplomatic relations among Italian states, but also extending them to European royal houses. As a source of great prestige for Venetian aristocracy, godparenthood was used to forge ties with military leaders, including an invitation to a Transylvanian ruler. The Venetian godparenthood often included multiple godfathers for the same child who could be from several professions and trades that might prove to be useful to the child as she or he matures. Godparenthood was used to create spiritual kinship with a variety of artisans, including jewelers, hairdressers, leather workers, dress-makers, manufacturers of tableware, boat pilots, shoemakers, boat builders, wine carriers, furriers, fruit retailers, painters, carpenters, and hatters. The Venetian noble families extended their ties of godparenthood across the Adriatic Sea to the semi-independent communes of the Dalmatian archipelago, which was a part of the Venetian maritime empire (Vidali 2022: 435). The Venetian Council of Ten limited the legal number of godparents to six and banned the practice among the noblemen because its association with incest posed a serious obstacle to finding a spouse.

Kueh (2013) reconstructs from baptismal books the *compadrazgo* and *padrinazgo* relationships that arose in the late 17th C. Spanish colonial Manila among the Catholic Chinese as well as indigenous people and in non-Catholic Chinese communities to secure alliances sealed through ritual sponsorship of families assumed to have traditionally superior social status. These relationships were used for non-spiritual purposes.

Ethnographic examples, ranging from Australia to the Balkan peninsula, to the Mediterranean, to the Philippines, and to Latin American indigenous, colonial, and post-colonial societies, show how ritual sponsorship creates reciprocal obligation as a form of kinship, but also how it can be instrumentalized for political ends. In an ethnographic example from Australian aborigines, Shapiro (1988) argues that spirit-finding is a form of ritual kinship similar to godparenthood in many Christian churches, where ritual lodges are pseudo-procreative corporations comparable to the Roman Catholic Church.

The rich sources found in the ethnographic literature on godparenthood in the Christian Mediterranean and in Latin America abound from the mid-20th C. on. Examples of manipulating godparenthood for political goals across cultures is well documented in the Mediterranean (Pitt-Rivers 1971) and the Balkans (Hammel 1968; Du Boulay 1974; Just 2000) where access to power is sealed between two families with the ritual of baptism implying reciprocal rights and obligations.

Researchers of godparenthood found symmetrical ties between two families of the same socio-economic standing, while in a vertical, hierarchical variant the godparents from unequal social strata stand in a relationship of patronage to each other. Schneider and Schneider (2004) describe godparenthood as political capital in Sicily where the mafia creates clientilistic social relationships between Palermitan impoverished working class and mafia families. The mafia *padrino*, godfather, provides jobs and support while the working class reciprocates by not only running various errands for the patron, but also votes for candidates that are either connected to, or supportive of the mafia. A number of highly positioned Italian politicians have been put on trial for their connections with the mafia, including two prime ministers, Berlusconi and Andreotti.

During his fieldwork in Serbia, Hammel (1968) was told “We have consanguinity, affinity, and *kumstvo*, ritual godparenthood” (1968:34). Hammel has shown that among the Orthodox Christians in Serbia, *kumstvo* relationships in a patrilineal kinship system were hereditary and corresponded to the structure of generalized exchange as proposed by Lévi-Strauss (1969). In a recent article, Doubt (2022) examines the instrumentalization of *kumstvo* in contemporary politics in Belgrade, Serbia. Godparenthood here, as in Greece, has the hereditary form binding several generations of the same families in a relationship of friendship, trust, and support and is instrumentalized for political goals.

In an analysis of godparenthood in Bulgaria and Macedonia, Hristov (2017) observes that godparenthood (*kumstvo*) is still inherited as symbolic capital in the form of right and obligations between the family kin groups of both the godparents and the godchildren in its original form of ritual exchanges of goods and services. In socialist and post-socialist Bulgaria, however, a new dimension was added to this relationship in the form of political alliances and access to power through the social networks’ ties based on godparenthood. However, unlike the hereditary form described by Hammel (1968), the networks are now rebuilt in each generation: “More and more often, ritual kinship relations are used for benefits and hierarchical ascent, similarly to nepotism. This process leads to the reformation of social networks still functions as social capital, but to each new generation. Every new family chooses different godparents, thus creating new social networks” (History 2017: 1). In Croatia, the traditional *šišano kumstvo*, the ritual first haircutting of a child, is her sponsor’s privilege (Daković 2001).

In orthodox Greece, hereditary ritual sponsorship of the institution of godparenthood prohibits marriage between the two families as incestuous, thus widening the network of support through the continuing alliance of the same families for several generations (DuBoulay 1974; Just 2004). Ritual sponsorship involves a hierarchical structure whereby a sponsor is of higher status than the godchildren’s families and, accordingly, establishes rights and obligations. One person can sponsor several godchildren, thereby increasing his/her family status by accepting the honor of sponsorship from several families. Although, according to the Orthodox church, its main purpose is the spiritual care of godchildren, godparenthood also extends into the realm of politics as the godchildren’s families support the political ambitions of their sponsors and thereby provide access to the structures of power.

In a Philippine town, Szanton (1979) has recorded both types of relationships: horizontal *compadrazgo* occurs in the upper two socio-economic strata mostly for the protection of wealth, while patronage between the older elite and capitalist entrepreneurs and the middle-high level of professional and bureaucrats illustrate the vertical dimension. Although still important for economic assistance, among the middle low level small-scale businesses and employees, researchers

of godparenthood found symmetrical ties between two families of the same socio-economic standing, while in a vertical, hierarchical variant the godparents from unequal social strata stand in a relationship of patronage to each other.

Andrade (2021) analyzed the social networks created through godparenthood in the state of Minas Gerais in the 18th century pre-independence Brazil. The most centrally positioned baptismal sponsors with the largest number of ties created through godchildren and their families in the network correlated with the researchers of godparenthood finding symmetrical ties between two families of the same socio-economic standing, while in a vertical, hierarchical variant the godparents from unequal social strata stand in a relationship of patronage to the highest positions and to the power of the elite *compadres*. At the same time, the *compadre* relationship with the elite sponsors afforded the wider population indirect access to the Governor. Andrade emphasizes the flexibility of *compadrazgo* because it provides many more ties than does marriage.

Although ritual patronage established through baptism was influenced by Spanish and Portuguese colonialism in Latin American cultures, several authors have noted that a similar form of ritual kinship already existed both in Andean as well as in Amazonian societies. Based on structural similarity of relationships between genealogical and fictitious kinship, Schiel (2018) demonstrated that Lévi-Strauss's (1969) 'atom' of kinship structure is replicated in the colonial godfatherhood and similar precolonial institutions in the American lowlands. The Croatian example of *šišano kumstvo* (Daković 2001) shows that the same ritual is not restricted to the indigenous Amerindian societies.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this overview of godparenthood. The research from a wide range of societies, historical and contemporary, suggests a common feature of godparenthood is an extension of social ties in addition to consanguineal and affinal relationships. The ban on marriage between ritually related person results in a widening network of relatives while the equation of ritual kinship with incest shifts the search for a spouse outside of spiritual kinship. Godparenthood ties, strengthened by the emotional load of kinship terminology provides support, trust, and generally social solidarity, but can also be turned into social capital. The sponsored child's family in a patronage relationship to a more powerful godparent enjoys the prestige of such a tie, while the patron's family enjoys the prestige of sponsoring multiple families' children. Due to reciprocity, patronage also supplies connections for the godchild's family and political support for the sponsor.

Compadrazgo in the Andes

In Andean cultures, with their social structure based on reciprocity in the form of exchange of labor and favors (Allen 2002), the institution of sponsorship in pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial society exists in horizontal symmetrical and vertical asymmetrical forms. The same structure is used in local politics.

Ossio (1984:120) calls *compadrazgo espiritual* "the most significant social relationship in the Andes." He demonstrates that the structure of the present-day *compadrazgo* follows the long history of spiritual sponsorship in pre-Hispanic societies. In contemporary Latin American societies Ossio enumerates four types of relationship: (1) parenthood established through birth; (2) *compadrazgo* that links people of the same generation through baptismal sponsorship of a child who use this self-reciprocal term; (3) *compadrazgo* established at marriage for yet unborn children, hence requiring that the sponsors are a married couple; and (4) *padrihnazgo* that links people of different generations who use the non-self-reciprocal terms of the superordinate *padrino* and the

subordinate *ahijado*. It is required that the sponsor and the sponsored child be of the same sex. According to Ossio (1984), this reflects the indigenous Andean system of parallel transmission of names and property. Importantly, the pre-Hispanic historical evidence shows the existence of the distinction between natural and spiritual parents in both Andean and Amazonian societies. *Compadres espirituales*, whose privilege is to introduce a child to the society, resemble the sponsors among some Amazonian Gẽ groups (Gascón 2005).

Contrary to other authors, Ossio suggests that *compadrazgo* does not serve as a substitute for the disrupted kinship system but is directly produced by kinship on the individual symmetric level and on the collective asymmetrical level. As Ossio notes, an important difference between marriage and *compadrazgo* is that the former in the Andes is monogamous, while the latter can accumulate numerous marriage ties (1984:142).

In colonial Perú, some Indians, especially *curacas* (indigenous headmen), established godparenthood relations with Spaniards that gave the *curacas* access to the Spanish economy and thereby became a source of prestige (Charney 2024).

The Spanish-introduced institution of ritual godparenthood seems to have been easily grafted onto the indigenous Andean ritual of *chukcha rutukuy* (the first haircutting) (Allen 2002). The ritual consists of the parents asking a person usually perceived as being of higher social status to cut the first tuft of hair on a toddler, thereby symbolically establishing a strong family relationship with the child and the child's parents. The same ritual is also practiced among the Andean Aymara (Ossio 1984:131). It also includes the pre-Hispanic sponsor's privilege of name giving to the child. A person of considerable wealth and influence can have many such ties.

Godparenthood implies reciprocity between the two families. The Andean practice of *ayni* (Allen 2002) is the fundamental indigenous concept of reciprocity that permeates all aspects of Andean cultures. This principle regulates social relations, work, and agricultural production. *Ayni* conceptualizes mutual obligations between people, but also between humans and the supranatural ancestors deeply entrenched in the Andean landscape. It is accompanied by many ritual exchanges of labor and goods between families, humans and animals, as well as between humans and the *apus*, the Andean mountain tops where the ancestors reside and can provide protection for the indigenous people. Meisch (2002) describes how she did first hair cutting at the ritual sponsoring of many children in Otavalo, Ecuador. A foreigner anthropologist, she was perceived as being influential and of higher status than the Otavalo *indigenas*. Miller (2022) describes the vital importance of ritual kinship reciprocity for small business firms founded by women in the contemporary Bolivian Andes. Miller (2022: 179) argues that

... it is related to the specificity of kinship organization and persistent forms of relatedness in and beyond the market. Ritual kinship is of prior importance as godparenthood (*compadrazgo*) bonds tend to offer more trustful relationships than those with members of the extended family. These ritual kinspeople, locally called *compadres* or 'political kin' (*parientes políticos*) are made at life-cycle events and cultural-religious festivities.

In the wider social context, the collective aspect of *compadrazgo* structurally resembles marriage exchange (Ossio 1984) and its existence has been confirmed by Guaman Poma's manuscript, the most important indigenous historical source from the 17th C. *Compadrazgo de respecto* creates a network of rights and obligation among all relatives in different generations of *compadres* (Ossio 2002:132). Community endogamy is common, with the rule of the ban on marriage within four-degrees of consanguinity. As described for Greece (Du Boulay 1974; Just 2004), violating the limits of this *compadrazgo* rule is equated with incest.

The analysis of historical and contemporary Latin American ethnographic examples reveals a common pattern of socially vertical or asymmetrical and symmetrical co-parenting and the ban on marriage between *copadres* and their families that is deemed incestuous. Relationships between families of unequal wealth/social status in Andean cultures, especially among mestizos and indigenous people, was, and is, as common in the Christian cultures in the Mediterranean as it is in Latin America. It has been assumed that baptismal co-parenthood is a Hispanic conquest's legacy, but there are numerous examples showing that similar institutions already existed among the indigenous people.

Compadrazgo in Pitumarca, Perú

Pitumarca is a town in the district of Pitumarca, at the elevation of 11,720 ft. and located in one of the eight districts of the province of Canchis. Among the population of 8,000 (Milicic 2011), the majority in the town and in the province are Quechua speakers. Most of the inhabitants are engaged in agriculture, growing the Spanish-imported wheat and corn on lower elevations and potatoes on the terraced high elevation fields. The crops require seasonal cooperation in harvesting, terracing, and irrigation. After the agrarian reform of 1969, many families received small plots of land insufficient to feed them and many family members have migrated to Lima in search of seasonal work or permanent residence. Alpaca, llama, and sheep herding are common, partially for meat consumption, but also for the sale of wool. The town is known in the district for its weaving and mostly women weavers meet daily in the cooperative space. Their products are sold in a coop's Cuzco store organized by the energetic Quechua speaking Pitumarca mayor and his wife. A number of *comunidades* — scattered small settlements or hamlets in the district — gravitate to Pitumarca for trade and school attendance that requires frequent travel on foot and by bus on sometimes perilous roads (Milicic 2011).

Pitumarca's school, the *colegio*, is situated in the town's center. There are no Quechua lessons in the school, but all Quechua and many mestizo children are bilingual in Quechua and Spanish. The mass in the town's Catholic church is said both in Quechua and Spanish. Although the Quechua speakers attend mass regularly, the parallel system of indigenous Andean beliefs is well maintained. It is based on reciprocity between humans and the supernatural world of the ancestors that are present in the form of female and male *apus*, the mountain tops that a person encounters regularly on the way to the fields or while traveling between settlements. This reciprocity requires gifts, most often in the form of coca leaves imported from lower altitudes. Corn and *chicha*, fermented corn beer, are also offered. The rituals are re-enacted in the many dance competitions held on the clearings at higher altitudes throughout the Canchis province. There is an intense self-identification with the Inca and the nearby Inca ruins are considered to belong to the ancestors.

Fieldwork Diary Excerpts:

June 12, 2003. Pitumarca, Perú

I went to the kitchen this morning to have breakfast and found no food. Plates, pots, and pans were clean and neatly stacked on the shelves, the kitchen floor swept, and no trace of Cecilia or her kids in the house. I wonder what is going on.

June 15.

By now the household is a mess and *cuy*s [guinea pigs] are roaming around picking food scraps off the kitchen floor. Maria, Maria's daughter Ana, and her fiancé are pretending that everything is normal. Maria and Ana are cooking some pasta. I offer help, but they are adamant not to allow

it as I am considered a special guest who is supposed to be very busy with her research and therefore cannot be bothered by housework. I dare not ask what is going on as I can see that they are very embarrassed and upset by the whole situation. But what is this all about?

June 16.

The Peruvian Teachers Association's country-wide strike is now into its fourth week having cut off the communication from Pitumarca through the only road to Cusco. The President Alejandro Toledo has declared a state of emergency after the resurfaced Sendero Luminoso guerilla movement kidnapped 30 foreigners near Ayacucho. Everyone seems to be on edge. Thanks to the strike, however, the school is still out, and I can continue working on children's acquisition of Quechua kinship terminology with the groups of kids who gather every afternoon in Maria's large courtyard. But still no sign of Cecilia and her kids.

June 19.

Finally, I discover what brought this cleavage upon the household. Ana's Tinkerbell watch, an expensive object of great sentimental value to her, was missing. She spent the recent summer in California and visited Disneyland where she bought the watch. Apparently, the morning she discovered the watch was gone she accused Marcio, Cecilia's 9-year-old son of stealing it from her bedroom. Due to the teachers' strike, the kids did not attend school, but spent most of their time in Maria's household. Now deeply offended Cecilia left the house with her children, the 12-year-old Neli and Marcio.

June 23.

Cecilia is back! This morning, I found her digging buckets of muddy water in the inner courtyard. When I asked what had happened, no one wanted to talk about it at first, but then Ana hesitantly explained that everyone went to the "Indian priest" to have the coca leaf reading about the disappearance of the watch.

The "Indio" said a child took the pretty watch out of curiosity, but then lost it somewhere in the water under the courtyard. That explained Cecilia's unsuccessful search in the courtyard. According to the healer, the child had no intention of stealing the watch, but eventually lost it. The coca reading brought the satisfying solution to both sides and Cecilia is back with her kids. She continues hard work, endlessly cleaning, cooking, and never joining us at the dining table. I wonder about the strange relationships in the household. What lies beneath all this?

The Household

The Mestizos

Maria, originally from Lima, is the Pitumarca school principal. Well liked, but also feared by some Quechua speakers, she is my host. Maria is authoritative, while her power and the fear she instills in some, is partially derived from her marriage to Júlio.

The elderly Júlio is Maria's husband 20 years her senior, the owner of an alpaca farm in the highlands above Pitumarca. Júlio spends most of his time on the mountain, occasionally descending to Pitumarca on his horse to sell wool to the traders from the nearby town. This mid-June the family is anxiously awaiting his arrival from the farm. The kids are almost daily claiming that they can hear Júlio's horse hoofs entering Pitumarca from the mountain along the only cobbled road. Júlio sports an explorer's hat that the local Quechua associate with the capitalist exploitation in opposition to the horizontal reciprocity of *ayni*. In the local dances the dancers use this type of hats as a part of the villains' costume identified as the "Chileans." The hat is symbolic of the mine owners exploiting the Quechua in the past. Chileans were quintessential enemies since the War of the Pacific in 1879-83. When I visited with the family and various dance competitions were held in the nearby high-altitude locations, Júlio stood out in the crowd in his explorer's hat, and was clearly unfavorably perceived, but treated with respect.

Júlio's wealthy, widowed Italian-born mother, whose portrait was oddly exposed to the sun along with some fine old furniture in the house's courtyard, was particularly fierce and hated by the indigenous people in the town. Before the agrarian reform of 1969, the family-owned substantial landholdings, scattered at different altitudes in the Pitumarca district, were a source of considerable income. In spite of the reform, Júlio's mother, through various manipulations, including making use of the *compadrazgo* ties, managed to retain a large alpaca farm at the high altitude above Pitumarca, now Júlio's only source of income. Appearing impoverished after the loss of much of their land, the family is still feared and respected in the town. Although without any political position or office, Júlio is still powerful. His business and political connections within the Canchis province are well known in the district and earn him many enemies and allies. Like his family in the previous generation, Júlio has many godchildren, *mestizo* and *quechua*, and these relationships provide considerable informal power and business ties.

Ana, a student in Cuzco, is Maria's and Júlio's eldest daughter whom I hired as my research assistant. Through family connections, Ana was able to spend several months in the United States.

The Quechua

Marco, a Quechua speaking man in his mid-30s, is Júlio's *ijahado*, godson. He is an art teacher in a community above Pitumarca. As a special favor from his godfather, he is also renting for free a barbershop in Júlio's house, a meeting place where many Pitumarca men spend time discussing politics and gossiping. Marco is also a representative at the municipal council of Pitumarca.

Cecilia is Marco's wife who works for free as a housekeeper in Maria's household as a maid, cook, and babysitter for Maria's youngest son. She also takes care of her elderly widowed mother, who lives in Pitumarca, bringing her food and clothing as occasional gifts from Maria.

With the school closed because of the Teachers' Association strike, Nelida (12) and Marcio (9), Cecilia's and Marco's children, are spending their days in the household with their mother while she works, or roam the streets and nearby fields with Maria's and Júlio's youngest son Aldo (4). Cecilia's position in the household is unclear. Although at first glance she is a member of the family, she works hard as a maid, and in fact Cecilia and her children are never allowed to sit at the same table with the family during the meals. When I brought some choice food items from Cuzco to share with everyone, Maria insisted on keeping them in my room because "the kids would eat it all." When I persistently put the ham, the cookies, the chocolate, and the cheeses on the table and invited the kids to have a share, she tacitly disapproved.

The relationships in this household are structured by consanguineal and ritual kinship. The once wealthy *padre de familia*, Júlio still possess considerable clout in the district and consequently has many godchildren, both *mestizo* and *quechua*. The reciprocal obligations explain Cecilia's position: on the one hand she has continuous access to the household and its resources, but on the other hand, because of the vertical asymmetrical *compadrazgo* relation between Júlio and her husband Marco, she is also in a subordinate position and exploited as a maid, cook, and babysitter. Marco, as Júlio's *ahijado*, has the advantage of renting free working space in the house as well as having access to Júlio's business partners while he provides information from the municipal meetings to his godfather. Through her marriage, Cecilia is also *ahijada*. Only Spanish terms are used for ritual kin. The extensions of the kinship terminology maintain this structure including the emotional charge implied by marked kinship terms of *comadrazgo*.

Godparenthood in Pitumarca shows all the features of godparenthood enumerated for European Christian societies and grafted onto the indigenous highland and lowland South American cultures. This includes introduction of a child to the society, thereby creating horizontal but more

often vertical alliances, analogous with incestuous marriage. This is made possible by extensions of kinship terms turning non-genetically related people into a kind of relatives.

Conclusion

The adaptive role of kinship terminology cannot be underestimated. I argue here that in addition to consanguinity and affinity, alloparenting first originated in the human evolutionary past with the ability to turn non-biologically related individuals into kin by the application of extended kinship terms. These ‘kin cues’ (Qirko 2011) induce altruistic behavior that increase chances for child survival and contribute to the extraordinary human demographic success.

With the introduction of Christian baptism, alloparenting took on an additional meaning of a spiritual relationship, not only between the godparent and the child but also a form of alliance between the two families exploited for business and political goals. In addition to the Medieval Christian societies, historical and ethnographic sources record its existence in Latin American pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial cultures. Like other types of ritual kinship, spiritual parenting is established through language by extended kinship terms to persons who are previously not recognized as kin and by eliciting an emotional response that can be equated with the kind of altruism associated with kin. This is also evident in the analogy between marriage deemed incestuous between relatives as well as between ritual kin.

The cognitive tool of markedness is crucial for this act of turning strangers into kin, where the metaphoric extension is produced morphologically with a prefix, or a suffix grafted onto the kin term or sometimes by only adding the mark semantically.

In the socio-political arena, spiritual kinship can be horizontally established between socio-economically equal families or vertically between families of different social status in a relationship of patronage. In pre-modern Europe baptismal kinship was practiced between aristocracy and clergy as well as between artisans and aristocracy for economic and political advantages. This was also the case in colonial Latin America, first between the “Indios” and Spaniards, and later between the *mestizos* and indigenous people.

As described for other Andean communities (see Ossio 1984), the ritual of baptism in the Pitumarca’s Catholic church confirms the creation of *compadrazgo espiritual*, the spiritual sponsorship of a child, while the parents bear the responsibility for the child’s general well-being. But in addition to the baptism, the *compadre* also has the right and obligation to be the first to cut the child’s tuft of hair, an indigenous practice. That serves as an introduction to the society. The *compadrazgo* relationship between the two families illustrates the structure of the wider network of hierarchical positions between the *mestizos* and the subordinate Quechua speaking families. Although Júlio has lost much of his family land, he is still wealthy by the impoverished indigenous Quechua’s standards. He has *compadrazgo* ties with local politicians and business partners in the province. He also receives support from his godchildren such as Marco who has a job in the mayor’s office. His wife Cecilia works for free in Júlio’s and Maria’s household and she often brings her children over while she works. However, her subordinate position is made clear not only by the household chores, but also by the eating arrangements where she and her children are never invited to the family table. Instead, they eat in the kitchen as a maid would do. Thus, ritual sponsorship structures the household membership and relationships and reinforces the already hierarchical positioning of *mestizos* and the indigenous Quechua speakers.

The cognitive ability to conceptualize kinship through kinship terminology and its extensions makes possible both the adaptive value and the sociological value of kinship. I argue that it is the cognitive level that has this capacity of transforming one semantic domain — the domain of

kinship — onto domains of additional protection and is based on the unique human capacity to produce metaphors. The universal linguistic feature of markedness provides the tool for the extension from kinship to ritual kinship in many cultures where this institution is found.

APPENDIX

The partial list of terms for godmother:

Marked/focal/central terms with a suffix, prefix, or semantically marked

Indo-European languages

English: *godmother*

Greek: *vová* (noná)

Portuguese: *madrinha*

Spanish: *madrina* (little mother)

Italian: *madrina* (little mother)

French: *marrain* (from Latin *matrina*) little mother

Masculine: *parrein, parrin*, from medieval Latin *patrīnus* (“godfather”; Latin *pater* (father))

Norwegian: *gudmor* (godmother)

Danish: *gudmoder* (godmother)

Polish: *matka chrzestna* (cross mother)

Croatian: *krsna kuma* (cross sponsor)

Russian: *крестная мать* (cross mother)

Czech: *kmotra* (to mother)

German: *Patentante* (sponsor-aunt)

Ugro-Finnish

Finnish: *kummitäti* (sponsor aunt)

Hungarian: *keresztanya* (cross mother)

Turkic

Turkish: *isim annesi* (name mother)

Chinese: 教母 *Jiàomǔ* (compared to mother)

Further research is needed to fill the list with indigenous terms from different linguistic families so as to confirm whether the principle of markedness is widely used for alloparenting. In Pitumarca, the Quechua speakers used Spanish terms.

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