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## INTRODUCTION

Do humans generalize **kinship concepts** in ways that help to manage risk especially in **unpredictable ecologies**? “Spiritual Kinship” may enhance **need-based transfers** and help individuals **pool risk** under such circumstances. We define spiritual kinship as a concern for the **welfare** of another that emerges from proximate ecological factors, such as fitness interdependence and a sense of shared fate. It is instantiated by cultural mechanisms such as **kinship terminology** (e.g. fictive kinship) and rituals that take on a religious or spiritual character, like those which establish **godparent** or **Maasai “osotua”** relationships. The establishment of such relationships may result in **intrinsic (rather than instrumental) valuation** of social partners, thus allowing individuals to overcome **commitment barriers** by attuning their concern to others’ need and prompting risk-pooling through need-based transfers. Spiritual kinship may enable a form of **social insurance** that helps individuals and groups survive when ecological conditions are unpredictable.

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**Spiritual Kinship** relationships are social insurance relationships characterized by NBTs and are religious, spiritual, or sacred nature. They entail a concern for the welfare of and **intrinsic (rather than instrumental) valuation** of social partners. This promotes a **genuine concern** for the needy person’s well-being, without expectation of repayment in kind.

**Godparenting** is a form of spiritual kinship in the Catholic Church that has existed for almost 2,000 years. Godparents are co-parents who are responsible alongside the natural parents for the well-being of the baptized child. Co-parents or “compadres” also frequently give resources to the natural parents in times of need. And in Latin America, compadre ties may be established for other purposes, such as trading cattle (Paul, 1942).



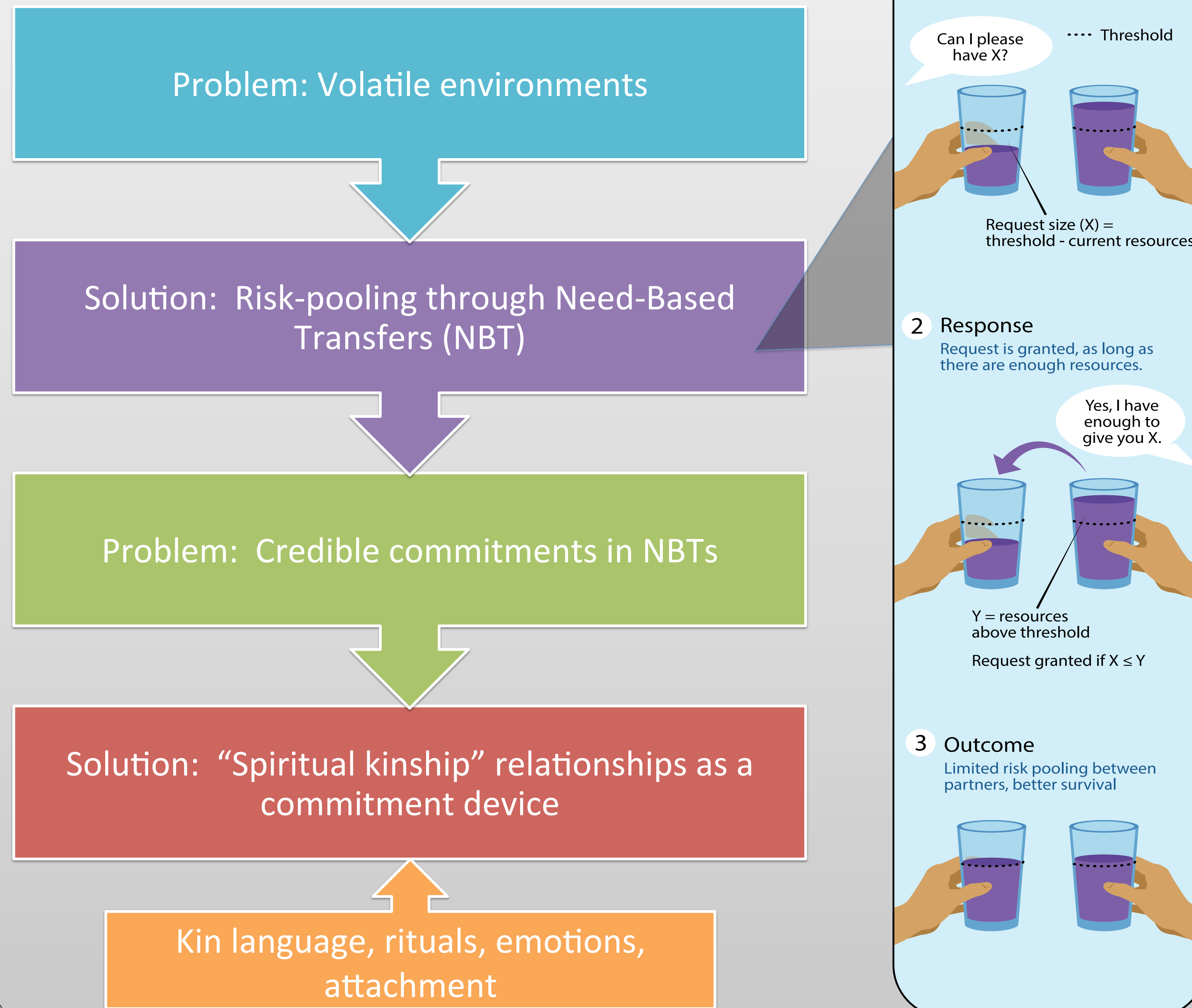
**Maasai Osotua** relationships are sacred relationships that cannot be broken and can even be passed down through generations. **Osotua** literally means “**umbilical cord**”. In osotua relationships, individuals ask for resources when they are in **need**, and give to others according to their ability when asked. Within osotua, resources transferred

will not necessarily balance out over time; **transfers do not create debt** and are not considered payments.



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## THE EVOLUTION OF SACRED RELATIONSHIPS



## BOX: UNDERSTANDING SACRED COMMITMENTS

The psychology and ecology of **sacred relationships** that characterize **spiritual kinship** may be very similar to those of **sacred values**. **Sacred values are moral imperatives which bind people together** and inspire **altruistic sacrifices** especially under conditions of **threat** (Atran & Ginges, 2012).

- Risk and volatility increase faith, strengthening religious beliefs and sacred commitments (Atran & Ginges, 2012).
- Belief in gods and miracles intensifies when people are primed with awareness of death, or when facing danger, as in wartime. (Kay et al., 2010)
- When water is in short supply, gods are seen as actively enforcing **sharing** and other prosocial norms. (Snarey, 1996)

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## KINSHIP TERMS ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES

Field	Term	Definition	Established How
Biology	Kinship as Kin Selection/ Inclusive Fitness	An evolutionary strategy that favors the reproductive success of an organism's relatives, even at a cost to the organism's own survival and reproduction (Hamilton, 1964; Maynard-Smith, 1964; Wright, 1931)	Genetic relatedness
	Relatedness	Likelihood of heritability of traits given the distribution of gene frequencies among populations (Haldane 1932/1990).	Natural selection, mutation, genetic drift, and migration
Anthropology	Affinal Kinship	A relative by marriage or relationship by marriage ties (Keesing, 1975).	Marriage to one’s spouse or the relationship between corporate groups linked by marriage between their members (Keesing, 1975).
	Consanguinous Kinship	“A relative by birth, (i.e., a ‘blood relative’)” (Keesing, 1975)	One or more instances of sexual reproduction.
	Fictive Kinship	A relationship modeled on relationships of kinship, but created by customary convention rather than circumstances of birth (Keesing, 1975)	Friendships, fraternal orders, mafia and gang relationships, co-residency, “phenotypic matching”
Psychology	Psychological Kinship	A result of those who feel “fused” with their group members; fusion predicts willingness to incur high costs to self on behalf of group (Whitehouse et al., 2014; Whitehouse & Lanman, 2014)	Dysphoric rituals that leads to “identity fusion”. Traumatic or euphoric experiences, such as warfare, natural disasters, sports victories, etc.
History	Legal Kinship	Relationships determining political succession or inheritance	Consanguinity or adoption (e.g., ancient Roman practice of Adoptio- Jussen, 2000)

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