

MARY KATHERINE SHENK

Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology
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EDUCATION

Ph. D. Anthropology, March 2005

University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

Dissertation: *The Evolutionary Economics of Marriage and Parental Investment in South India*

M. A. Anthropology, June 1996

University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

Thesis: *The Hairless Niche: A Consideration of the Thermoregulatory Adaptations of the Early Australopithecines Compared to Genus Homo*

B. A. Anthropology, Biology minor, June 1994

University of New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Professor of Anthropology

Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri
September 2014 – present

Director, Life Sciences & Society Program

Christopher S. Bond Life Sciences Center, University of Missouri
July 2014 – present

Assistant Professor of Anthropology

Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri
January 2008 – August 2014

NIH Postdoctoral Fellow

Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
January 2006 – December 2007

and

Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, University of Washington
March 2005 – December 2005

PAPERS AND PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles & Chapters

Shenk, Mary K, Hillard Kaplan, and Paul Hooper. 2016. Status competition, inequality, and fertility: Implications for the demographic transition. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 371:20150150. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2015.0150>

- Snopkowski, Kristin, Mary C. Towner, **Mary K. Shenk**, and Heidi Colleran. Forthcoming 2016. Pathways from Education to Fertility Decline: A multi-site comparative study. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 371:20150156. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2015.0156>
- Sear, Rebecca, David W. Lawson, Hillard Kaplan and **Mary K. Shenk**. Forthcoming 2016. Understanding Variation in Human Fertility: What Can We Learn From Evolutionary Demography. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 371: 20150144. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2015.0144>
- Shenk, Mary K.**, Mary C. Towner, Emily A. Voss, and Nurul Alam. Forthcoming 2016. Consanguineous Marriage, Kinship Ecology, and Market Transition. *Current Anthropology*.
- Ellsworth, Ryan M., **Mary K. Shenk**, Drew H. Bailey, and Robert S. Walker. 2015. Comparative study of reproductive skew and pair-bond stability using genealogies from 80 small-scale human societies. *American Journal of Human Biology*. [DOI: 10.1002/ajhb.22785]
- Shenk, Mary K.** 2015. "Fertility and Fecundity." In *The International Encyclopedia of Human Sexuality*, edited by Patricia Whelehan and Anne Bolin. Malden, Oxford: John Wiley and Sons.
- Shenk, Mary K.** 2015. "Parental Investment." In *The International Encyclopedia of Human Sexuality*, edited by Patricia Whelehan and Anne Bolin. Malden, Oxford: John Wiley and Sons.
- Shenk, Mary K.** 2014. Ecology, Marriage, and the Origins of Human Cultural Diversity. *Current Anthropology* 55(6):772-773.
- Shenk, Mary K.**, Mary C. Towner, Kathrine Starkweather, Curtis J. Atkisson, and Nurul Alam. 2014. The Evolutionary Demography of Sex Ratios in Rural Bangladesh. *Applied Evolutionary Anthropology*, Advances in the Evolutionary Analysis of Human Behaviour, David Lawson & Mhairi Gibson, Editors. New York: Springer, pp. 141-173.
- Shenk, Mary K.**, Mary C. Towner, Howard C. Kress, and Nurul Alam. 2013. A model comparison approach shows stronger support for economic models of fertility decline. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 110(20):8045-8050.
- Shenk, Mary K.**, Kathrine E. Starkweather, Howard C. Kress, and Nurul Alam. 2013. Does absence matter? A comparison of three types of father absence in rural Bangladesh. *Human Nature* 24(1):76-110.
- Shenk, Mary K.** and Brooke A. Scelza. 2012. Paternal Investment and Status-Related Child Outcomes: Timing of Father's Death Affects Offspring Success. *Journal of Biosocial Science* 44(5):549-569.
- Shenk, Mary K.** 2011. Evolutionary Approaches to Parental Decisions: How Much to Invest in Your Offspring. In *Essential Building Blocks of Human Nature*, Ulrich Frey (Editor). Berlin: Springer.
- Shenk, Mary K.** and Siobhán M. Mattison. 2011. The Rebirth of Kinship: Evolutionary and Quantitative Approaches in the Revitalization of a Dying Field. *Human Nature* 22: 1-15.
- Shenk, Mary K.**, M. Borgerhoff Mulder, J. Beise, G. Clark, W. Irons, D. Leonetti, B.S. Low, S. Bowles, T. Hertz, A. Bell, and P. Piraino. 2010. Intergenerational Wealth Transmission among Agriculturalists: Foundations of Agrarian Inequality. *Current Anthropology* 51(1):65-83 (special section on Intergenerational Wealth Transmission and Inequality in Pre-Modern Societies).
- Smith, E.A., M. Borgerhoff Mulder, S. Bowles, M. Gurven, T. Hertz, and **Mary K. Shenk**. 2010. Production Systems, Inheritance and Inequality in Pre-Modern Societies: Conclusions. *Current Anthropology* 51(1):85-94 (special section on Intergenerational Wealth Transmission and Inequality in Pre-Modern Societies).
- Smith, E.A., S. Bowles, T. Hertz, M. Borgerhoff Mulder, **Mary K. Shenk**, and M. Gurven. 2010. Intergenerational Wealth Transmission and Inequality in Pre-Modern Societies: Reply. *Current Anthropology* 51(1):119-126 (special section on Intergenerational Wealth Transmission and Inequality in Pre-Modern Societies).

Borgerhoff Mulder, M., S. Bowles, T. Hertz, A. Bell, J. Beise, G. Clark, I. Fazio, M. Gurven, K. Hill, P.L. Hooper, W. Irons, H. Kaplan, D. Leonetti, B.S. Low, F. Marlowe, S. Naidu, D. Nolin, P. Piraino, R. Quinlan, R. Sear, **Mary K. Shenk**, E.A. Smith, and P. Wiessner. 2009. Intergenerational Transmission of Wealth and Dynamics of Inequality in Pre-Modern Societies. *Science* 326:682-688.

Shenk, Mary K. 2009. Testing Three Evolutionary Models of the Demographic Transition: Patterns of Fertility and Age at Marriage in Urban South India. *American Journal of Human Biology* 21:501-511.

Shenk, Mary K. 2007. Dowry and Public Policy in Contemporary India: The Behavioral Ecology of a Social 'Evil.' *Human Nature* 18(2):242-263.

Shenk, Mary K. 2005. Kin Networks in Wage-Labor Economies: Effects on Child and Marriage Market Outcomes. *Human Nature* 16:81-114.

Shenk, Mary K. 2004. Embodied Capital and Heritable Wealth in Complex Cultures: A Class-Based Analysis of Parental Investment in Urban South India. *Research in Economic Anthropology* 23:307-333 (special issue on *Socioeconomic Aspects of Human Behavioral Ecology*).

Working Papers

Shenk, Mary K. 2005. How Much Gold Will You Put on Your Daughter? A Behavioral Ecology Perspective on Dowry Marriage. University of Washington Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology (CSDE) Working Paper Series, Publication 2005-07.

Book Reviews

Shenk, Mary K. 2009. Rewriting the Book on Human Female Sexuality: New Thinking on Old Questions. *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* 7(2009)2, 185–189.

News Articles

Mattison, Siobhan M., **Mary K. Shenk**, and Raymond Hames. 2012. Evolutionary Approaches to Kinship and Family. *Anthropology News*.

Shenk, Mary K. 2006. To Split or Not to Split? Departmental Models for the Future of Anthropology. *Anthropology News*.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Research Awards

National Science Foundation Senior Research Award “Collaborative research: A multidimensional investigation of the dynamics of market transition and social change in rural China and Bangladesh.” \$417,000 total; MU portion \$139,157. National Science Foundation Award ID Number BCS-1461522. Awarded August 15, 2015. Role: PI.

University of Missouri Research Board Grant for *Psychological Mechanisms of Fertility Decision-making* awarded December 29, 2015 in the amount of \$54,000. Role: PI.

University of Missouri Research Council Grant for “Cross-Cultural Analysis of Jealousy” awarded October 9, 2014 in the amount of \$9,727. Role: PI.

NESCent Working Group funding awarded March 2013 and October 2014 by National Evolutionary Synthesis Center for five on-site meetings for 10-15 collaborators to be held 2013-2015 in Durham, North Carolina. Funds cover costs of travel, food, and lodging for all collaborators for all meetings, plus supplemental funds, totaling approximately \$50,000. Proposal title “Integrating Evolutionary Models of Human Fertility Change.” Role: PI, Co-PIs Rebecca Sear & Daniel Hruschka.

Funding for **Research Team Short Seminar** awarded October 2011 by the **School for Advanced Research** (SAR) in Santa Fe, NM (funding provided in part by the National Science Foundation) for on-site research planning meeting to be held June 18-20, 2012 for 10 scholars

from the US, UK, and Bangladesh. Funds cover costs of travel, food, and lodging for 10 participants; total approximately \$12,000. Proposal title: “The Evolutionary Demography of Fertility: the Influence of Social Networks.” Role: PI, Co-PIs Rebecca Sear & Daniel Hruschka. https://sarweb.org/index.php?research_team_short_seminar_demography_of_fertility-p:2012_seminars

National Science Foundation Senior Research Award No. BCS-0924630 entitled “Collaborative Research: Evolutionary and Comparative Models of the Demographic Transition” for three years of research support including fieldwork in Matlab, Bangladesh. This award was funded jointly by NSF’s Cultural Anthropology and Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics Programs. Awarded January 15, 2010, in the amount of \$285,000. Role: Principal Investigator.

- **Collaborative Award** of \$71,500 made to Mary C. Towner at Oklahoma State University.
- **REG Supplement** awarded August 2011, \$5000, Co-PI Kathrine Starkweather, for pilot study of Shodagor river nomads of Matlab, Bangladesh.
- **REG Supplement** awarded March 2014, \$5000, Co-PI Gretchen Perry, for pilot research project titled “The ecology of parenting and alloparenting in rural Bangladesh.”
- **REU Supplement** awarded May 2014, \$4000, Co-PI Katarina Schultz, for a research project titled “Does microfinance change women’s social lives?”
- **REU Supplement** awarded June 2014, \$4000, Co-PI Emily Voss, for a research project titled “Theoretical models of consanguineous marriage trends in Bangladesh”

Center for Statistics in the Social Sciences Seed Grant entitled “Analyzing Density-Dependent Birth and Death Rates in Rural Bangladesh” for analysis, pilot field work, and support for grant writing on fertility regulation and transition in Bangladesh. Awarded January 2006 in the amount of \$16,554. Joint with Darryl J. Holman, University of Washington. Role: Co-PI.

Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award Individual Postdoctoral Fellowship, Application Number 1 F32 HD048064-01 entitled “Evolutionary Studies of Marriage and Parenting,” funded by the Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Awarded March 2005-December 2007 in the amount of \$127,926 over three years of postdoctoral research.

National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant funded by the National Science Foundation’s Cultural Anthropology Program for project entitled “Evolutionary, Economic, and Demographic Determinants of ‘Dowry Inflation’ in South India.” Awarded May 2000 (ID No. BCS-0001523) in the amount of \$11,882.

Other Awards

Faculty International Travel Grant, awarded May 2014 by the MU Research Council Committee in the amount of \$1,500 for travel to meetings at University College London and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine.

2014 Global Scholars Program (India) from December 29, 2013 to January 14, 2014. Study tour of India to universities, institutions, and businesses to develop linkages for research, education, and outreach and support faculty in internationalizing their teaching and research.

Faculty International Travel Grant, awarded October 2011 by the MU Research Council Committee in the amount of \$1,463 for travel to HBES conference in Montpellier, France, and meetings with European collaborators.

Mizzou Advantage Networking Grant entitled “Collaborative Portals for Interdisciplinary Working Groups: Evolutionary Studies and Science Studies” awarded February 2011 in the amount of \$20,000 for enhancement of the Evolutionary Studies and Science Studies working groups at the University of Missouri. Joint with Stefani Engelstein, Heidi Appel, Andre Ariew, Lynn Chiu, Noah Heringman, and Amit Prasad.

Research Leave, awarded November 2009 by the University of Missouri Research Council Committee. Leave taken Spring Semester 2010 for field research in Matlab, Bangladesh.

Faculty Development Project Award from University of Missouri for Bengali language study at Bangla Summer Institute, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Awarded summer 2009 in the amount of \$7,400.

Faculty International Travel Grant awarded May 2009 by the MU Research Council in the amount of \$1,003 for travel to EHBEA conference in St. Andrews, Scotland.

Ruby Weitzer Morris Memorial Fellowship awarded May 2000 for dissertation research on marriage change in South India in the amount of \$2,000.

Pilot Research Seed Grant awarded 1999 by the Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology at the University of Washington (funds provided by the Andrew Mellon Foundation) for pilot research on the determinants of Indian marriage change in the amount of \$3,500.

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Lectures

“Does absence matter? A comparison of three types of father absence in rural Bangladesh”
Department of Anthropology Lecture Series, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, November 3, 2014.

“Fertility Transition in Matlab: A Model Comparison Approach” ICDDR,B Special Scientific Seminar, Dhaka, Bangladesh, June 26, 2014.

“Not Enough Ethnography: The perils of quantitative research with limited cultural context, and some thoughts on what to do about it.” Presented at *But What if They Exaggerate Their Age? Language, Culture, and Language-Based Knowledge in Large Dataset Collection—A Workshop*, University College London, December 5-7, 2013.

“Why People Have Fewer Children and What It Means for Global Population” Noel P. Gist Seminar, University of Missouri, September 12, 2013.

“Why People Have Fewer Children and What It Means for Global Population” A Taste of Arts & Science, University of Missouri, March 10, 2012.

“Why Do People Have Fewer Children?” 20/20 Columbia, Columbia, Missouri, October 4, 2011.

“Why Does Fertility Decline? Comparing Evolutionary Models of the Demographic Transition” Behavior, Evolution, and Culture Seminar Series, University of California-Los Angeles, May 16, 2011.

“How Much Gold Will You Put on Your Daughters? Indian Weddings as Costly Signals, and the Implications for Dowry Policy” Sawyer Seminar Series, Stanford University, May 6, 2011.

“Why do Indians spend so much money on their weddings? South Indian Weddings as Costly Signals.” Saturday Morning Science, University of Missouri, April 30, 2011.

“Age ki shundor din khatyatam? Perceptions of cultural change and risk in rural Bangladesh.” Indian Council of Social Science Research, Shillong, India, June 29, 2010.

Sessions Organized

Co-Organizer, “The End/s of Kinship: The convergence of ethnography and quantitative methods.” American Anthropological Association annual meeting, Philadelphia, PA, December 2009.

Co-Organizer, “Expanding Frontiers in Evolutionary Anthropology: Approaches to Complex and Modernizing Societies.” American Anthropological Association annual meeting, Washington, D.C., November-December 2007.

Co-Organizer and Chair, “Cultural Dimensions of Kin Investment: The Foundations of Kinship and Family.” sponsored by the Evolutionary Anthropology Society. American Anthropological Association annual meeting, San Jose, November 2006.

Organizer and Chair, “Social Strategies of Production and Reproduction.” American Anthropological Association annual meeting, Chicago, November 2003.

Organizer and Co-Chair, “Reproductive Effort: Trade-offs in Mating and Parenting.” Human Behavior and Evolution Society annual meeting, Amherst, Massachusetts, June 2000.

Conference Presentations

- “What beautiful days we lived in the past’: Untangling the conundrum of increased perception of mortality and morbidity risk in rural Bangladesh.” American Association of Physical Anthropologists, Atlanta, GA, April 2016.
- “What beautiful days we lived in the past’: Why do people think mortality rates are rising when they are actually falling?” European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association annual meetings, London, England, April 2016.
- “Does evolutionary anthropology need a rethink?” Roundtable held at the American Anthropological Association annual meetings, Denver, CO, November 2015.
- “Patterns and Predictors of Family-level and Population-level Child Sex Ratios in Rural Bangladesh” Bangladesh Development Initiative biannual meeting, Berkeley, CA, November 2015.
- “Is status part of the human utility function? Implications for understanding variation in fertility” Human Behavior and Evolution Society annual meetings, Columbia, Missouri, May 2015.
- “Kinship Ecology, Market Transition, and Consanguineous Marriage in Bangladesh” American Anthropological Association annual meetings, Washington, DC, December 2014.
- “The Evolutionary Demography of Sex Ratios in Rural Bangladesh” American Anthropological Association annual meetings, Chicago, Illinois, November 2013.
- “Does absence matter? A comparison of three types of father absence in rural Bangladesh” American Anthropological Association annual meetings, San Francisco, November 2012.
- “Does absence matter? A comparison of three types of father absence in rural Bangladesh” Human Behavior and Evolution Society meetings, Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 2012.
- “Fertility and Modernity: Comparing Evolutionary Explanations for Fertility Decline in Rural Bangladesh” American Anthropological Association annual meetings, Montreal, Canada, November 2011.
- “Why Does Fertility Decline? Comparing Evolutionary Models of the Demographic Transition” Human Behavior & Evolution Society annual meeting, Montpellier, France, June/July 2011.
- “Why Does Fertility Decline? Comparing Evolutionary Models of the Demographic Transition” Population Association of America annual meetings, Washington, DC, March/April 2011.
- “Circulating bodies: Labor migration, gender, and fertility in rural Bangladesh” American Anthropological Association annual meeting, New Orleans, LA, November 2010. Co-authored with Howard Kress and Mary Towner.
- “Do parents know better? Testing the evolutionary benefits of arranged marriage in urban South India” American Anthropological Association annual meetings, Philadelphia, Dec. 2009.
- “The Consequences of Paternal Investment for Child Status: A Test Case from South India.” Co-Author Brooke Scelza. Human Behavior and Evolution Society annual meeting, Fullerton, CA, May 2009.
- “On the Importance of Arranged Marriage: Testing the Evolutionary Significance of Joint Mating Decisions in South India.” European Human Behaviour & Evolution Association annual meeting, St. Andrews, Scotland, April 2009.
- “The Importance of Paternal Investment for Status-Related Child Outcomes: A Test Case from South India.” Co-Author Brooke Scelza. American Anthropological Association annual meeting, San Francisco, CA, November 2008.
- “Investment and Risk-Related Approaches to the Demographic Transition: Transitions in Fertility and Age of First Reproduction in Urban South India.” International Seminar on Trade-offs in Female Life Histories: Raising New Questions in an Integrative Framework, Bristol, England, July 2008.
- “Causes and Consequences of the Demographic Transition in Urban South India.” American Anthropological Association annual meeting, Washington, D.C., November 2007.
- “Marry Your Daughters First: Indian Weddings as Costly Signals,” American Anthropological Association annual meeting, San Jose, CA, November 2006.

- “Applying Costly Signaling Theory to Indian Wedding Costs: A Theoretical Model and Preliminary Analyses.” Human Behavior and Evolution Society annual meeting, University of Pennsylvania, June 2006.
- “(Over) Spending on a Daughter’s Future? Dowry and Public Policy in India.” American Anthropological Association annual meeting, Washington, DC, December 2005.
- “How Much Gold Will You Put On Your Daughter? An Embodied Capital Perspective on Dowry and Dowry Inflation.” Human Behavior and Evolution Society annual meeting, Austin, June 2005.
- “Parental Investment in an Emerging Wage-Labor Economy: Investigating the Relationship between Investments and Outcomes.” American Anthropological Association annual meeting, Chicago, November 2003.
- “The Evolutionary Ecology of Class Differences in Urban South India: Strategies in Relation to Parental Investment and Marriage Practices.” Human Behavior and Evolution Society annual meeting, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, June 2003.
- “The Evolutionary Ecology of Parental Investment in Urban South India: A Class-Based Analysis of Differential Investment in Sons and Daughters.” American Anthropological Association annual meeting, New Orleans, November 2002.
- “*Homo hierarchicus* meets Human Behavioral Ecology: Caste and Class-Based Marriage Strategies in Urban South India.” Human Behavior and Evolution Society annual meeting, Rutgers University, June 2002.
- “Evolutionary and Economic Determinants of Dowry Inflation.” Human Behavior and Evolution Society annual meeting, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, June 2000.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Professional Memberships

American Anthropological Association
 Human Behavior and Evolution Society
 European Human Behaviour and Evolution Association
 Population Association of America
 American Institute of Bangladesh Studies
 American Association of Physical Anthropologists

Professional Positions

President-Elect, Evolutionary Anthropology Society, 2016-2018
 Executive Board Member, Evolutionary Anthropology Society (a section of the American Anthropological Association), 2012-2016
 Contributing Editor to *Anthropology News* for the Evolutionary Anthropology Society (a section of the American Anthropological Association), October 2004 – December 2007

Service

Guest Editor, *Human Nature* Special Double Issue, Volume 22, Issues 1 & 2, 2011.
 Article Reviewer for *American Journal of Human Biology*, *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, *Cross-Cultural Research*, *Current Anthropology*, *Demography*, *Demographic Research*, *Evolution and Human Behavior*, *Evolutionary Psychology*, *Feminist Economics*, *Human Nature*, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, *PLOS One*, *Research in Economic Anthropology*, *Social Science Quarterly*, *Society Biology & Human Affairs*, and various edited volumes.
 Grant Reviewer for the U.S. National Science Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and the Wellcome Trust.

Graduate Students Advised

PhD

Christina Pomianek Dames, PhD 2012
Roslyn Fraser Schoen, PhD 2014
Jayme Cisco, PhD 2016
Ryan Begley, PhD 2016

MA

Melissa Steffan, MA 2012
Amber Cox, MA 2014
Ann Marbourg, MA 2016

Invited Workshops and Training

Wenner-Gren Symposium “Integrating Anthropology: Niche Construction, Cultural Institutions, and History,” Sintra, Portugal, October 17-23, 2014

“But What if They Exaggerate Their Age? Language, Culture, and Language-Based Knowledge in Large Dataset Collection” University College London, December 5-7, 2013

Bengali Summer Institute, June 8 - August 7, 2009, Bangla Language Institute, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

2nd Stanford Workshop in Formal Demography, August 7-18 2006, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California

12th Annual Santa Fe Institute Graduate Workshop in Computational Social Science Modeling and Complexity, July 9-22 2006, Santa Fe Institute, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Economic Demography Summer Short Course, May 15-19, 2006, Institute for Behavioral Science, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado