

Kelly Musick

Web Bio

Information

Biography

Biographical Statement

Kelly Musick is Associate Professor in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management at Cornell University. She received her M.P.A. in economics and public policy from Princeton University in 1996 and her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2000. She taught for several years at the University of Southern California and joined the Cornell faculty in 2008.

Musick studies contemporary family patterns with an emphasis on how they relate to social inequality and the well-being of family members. Her work has been supported by a K01 Mentored Scientist Award from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and it has been published in leading journals in sociology and population studies. She has taught classes in family demography, population, social statistics, and research methods at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Musick won a teaching award from the University of Southern California for integrating hands-on community experience into her coursework, and she continues to use service-learning in her teaching at Cornell.

Professional

Current Professional Activities

Musick is an active member of Cornell's Population Program (CPP), the Population Association of America (PAA), and the American Sociological Association (ASA). She regularly organizes sessions for the PAA and ASA meetings and has served in various administrative roles, including member of the PAA Program Committee, Council Member of the ASA Population Section, and Chair of the ASA Population Section Student Award Committee. Musick is Member of the International Nonmarital Childbearing Network organized by the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, Germany. She has worked with this group to construct a cross-national harmonized data file on family change and variation.

Research

Current Research Activities

Musick's research has focused on changes in marriage, cohabitation, and childbearing and their implications for adults, children, and—more broadly—processes of social stratification. In one line of research, she uses the intendedness of pregnancies to shed light on the meaning of nonmarital

childbearing and cohabitation. Cohabitation is found to increase the chances of intended childbearing outside of marriage, suggesting that, for some, cohabitation may be an accepted setting to have and care for children. A second line of research looks closely at the benefits of marriage for adults and children, paying particular attention to differences between marriage and cohabitation and variation across marriages. Musick finds striking similarities in associations between marriage, cohabitation, and indicators of adult well-being; moreover, where there are differences, many dissipate over time. She finds that children tend to fare better living with two married parents, but typically not when their parents frequently argue or fight. Finally, a third line of research considers the intergenerational inheritance of poverty and family structure and how it plays into population-level trends over time. Studies of social mobility in sociology and economics tend to emphasize the opportunities of individuals as they relate to labor market rewards. Musick, examining the transmission of poverty and family structure from mothers to daughters, focuses on the interdependence of socioeconomic well-being and the organization of families. This work concludes that while there are strong intergenerational links in poverty and family structure, mobility rates are high enough to have little effect on trends in poverty and single-parent families over time.

Ongoing research addresses widening education differences in marriage and fertility. For example, Musick finds that the education gradient in fertility comes largely from differences in unintended childbearing, with less educated women less likely to put off childbearing and more likely to have unintended pregnancies. Well-educated women, by contrast, are relatively successful at avoiding unintended fertility, but they often have fewer children than they wanted early in life. Why this is the case remains an empirical puzzle. The new, low fertility regime of much of the developed world has stimulated questions about the social barriers to combining parenthood and other domains of life, and research in progress addresses these issues.

Musick is also developing a project on family meals and adolescent well-being.

Adolescents who share meals with their parents score better on multiple indicators of health and well-being. The universal and routine nature of eating affords mealtime the potential to influence child behavior and development, but much of the work on this question is cross-sectional and accounts for few of the factors that may jointly affect family dinners and child well-being. In a series of papers with Ann Meier (University of Minnesota), Musick uses rich panel data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health to assess the nature of the link between family dinners and adolescent mental health, delinquency, and substance use.

Extension

Education

Courses

Courses Taught

PAM 2030 Population and Public Policy

PAM 2150 / SOC 2130 Research Methods

PAM / SOC 4470 Families and Social Inequality

Websites

Administration

Publications

Selected Publications

Musick, Kelly and Ann Meier. Forthcoming. "Assessing Causality and Persistence in Associations Between Family Dinners and Adolescent Well-Being." *Journal of Marriage and Family*. [working paper]

Musick, Kelly, Jennie Brand, and Dwight Davis. 2012. "Variation in the Relationship Between Education and Marriage: Marriage Market Mismatch?" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74(1):53-69. [published paper] [working paper]

Musick, Kelly and Larry Bumpass. 2012. "Re-Examining the Case for Marriage: Union Formation and Changes in Well-Being." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74(1):1-18. [published paper] [working paper]

Musick, Kelly and Ann Meier. 2010. "Are Both Parents Always Better Than One? Parental Conflict and Young Adult Well-Being." *Social Science Research* 39:814-830. [[paper](#)]

Musick, Kelly, Paula England, Sarah Edgington, and Nicole Kangas. 2009. "Education Differences in Intended and Unintended Fertility." *Social Forces* 88(2):543-72. [[paper](#)]

Wu, Lawrence L. and Kelly Musick. 2008. "Stability of Marital and Cohabiting Unions Following a First Birth." *Population Research and Policy Review* 27(6):713-727. [[abstract](#)]

Musick, Kelly, Judith A. Seltzer, and Christine R. Schwartz. 2008. "Neighborhood Norms and Substance Use Among Teens." *Social Science Research* 37(1):138-155. [[paper](#)]

Musick, Kelly. 2007. "Cohabitation, Nonmarital Childbearing, and the Marriage Process." *Demographic Research* 16(9):249-286. [[abstract](#)]

Musick, Kelly and Robert D. Mare. 2006. "Recent Trends in the Inheritance of Poverty and Family Structure." *Social Science Research* 35(2):471-499. [[paper](#)]

Musick, Kelly and Robert D. Mare. 2004. "Family Structure, Intergenerational Mobility, and the Reproduction of Poverty: Evidence for Increasing Polarization?" *Demography* 41(4):629-648. [[paper](#)]

Musick, Kelly. 2002. "Planned and Unplanned Childbearing Among Unmarried Women." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64(4):915-929. [[paper](#)]

