

Community Capacity Building and Health in the US Military

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The Theory of Community Action and Change: Implication for Health Promotion

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Community Capacity: Antecedents and Consequences

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ABSTRACT. Traditional practice models of family support often lack a community focus. Increasingly, human service professionals who work with families focus their intervention and prevention efforts on the communities in which families live and work. The Family Advocacy Division of the United States Air Force recently revised its program standards to address community issues in an effort to strengthen families through community-based prevention activities. This article presents a basic framework designed to inform this expanded practice initiative. Key terms are defined for understanding communities as a context for family life, including community results, community capacity, and social capital. The model is considered to have implications for informing community-oriented interventions in

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Jay A. Mancini and Gary L. Bowen

Gary W. Peterson
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Handbook of Marriage and the Family

Third Edition Springer

Families are embedded in multiple contexts that reflect community structure and process. Though families influence those contexts to some degree, in the main families are the recipients of events, values, and norms that comprise community collective life. Families are rarely isolated, and their boundaries are permeable, whether by the media, neighbors, confidants, or social institutions. Community *social organization* is a comprehensive descriptor of the contexts in which families live. "Social organization is how people in a community interrelate, cooperate, and provide mutual support; it includes social support norms, social controls that regulate behavior and interaction patterns, and networks that operate in a community" (Mancini & Bowen, 2005; Mancini, Bowen, & Martin, 2004; Mancini, Martin, & Bowen, 2003). From a social action and change perspective, social organization supports building community capacity, in effect, shared responsibility and collective competence as primary situations and processes that enable communities to provide desired supports to families (Bowen, Martin, Mancini, & Nelson, 2000; Mancini & Bowen, 2009).

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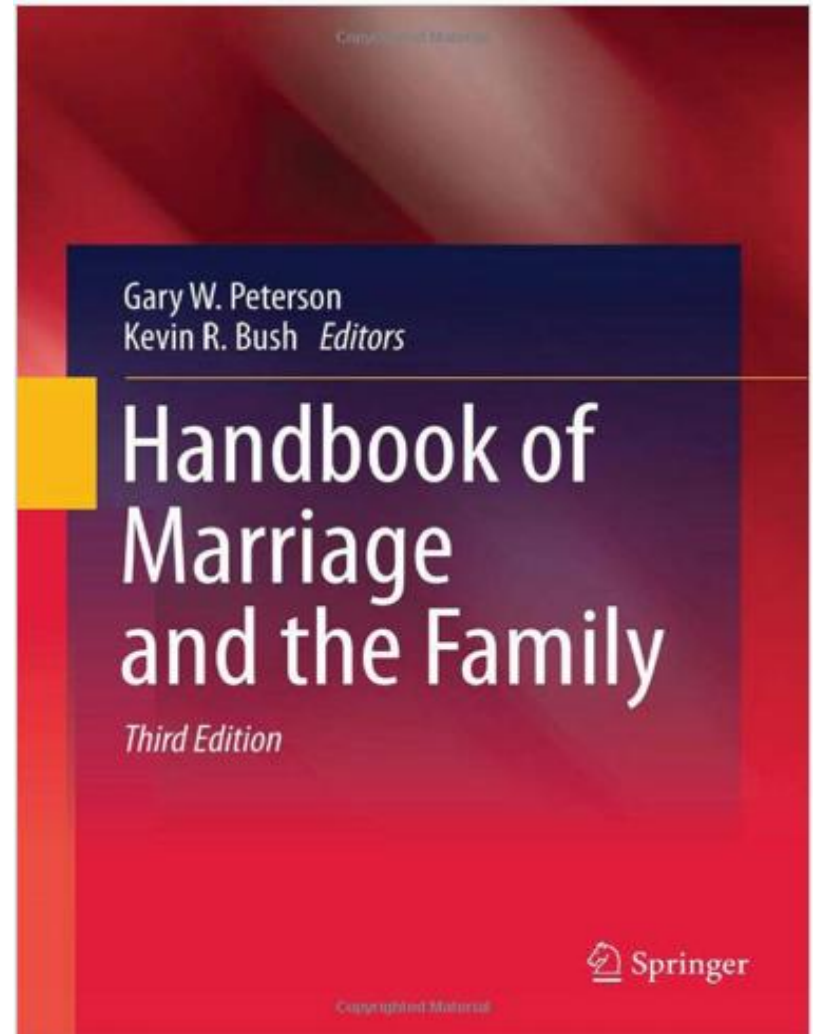
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Our focus in this expansive chapter on families and communities locates families as the pivot-point in the discussion, and assembles community structures and processes around them, mirroring what occurs in everyday life. Our discussion seeks to answer several primary questions. First, to what extent have family social scientists included aspects of community structure and process in their analysis of family-related processes and outcomes? Second, in what ways does our work inform efforts to conceptualize ways in which communities influence families? Our aim is to offer a conceptual model as a heuristic for theory development and future research efforts. Although community can be defined from multiple perspectives (Coulton, 1995; Moge, 1964), we focus primarily on community as providing a geographic context in which families function and interrelate.

Our discussion is informed by two sources of data. First, we look back in the family science literature at key discussions of families and communities, and in particular, we retrieve ideas from early theories and discussions about families. We assume that to move the discipline forward toward a more nuanced examination of families and communities, it is instructive to revisit important ideas and approaches from the past. Second, we analyze certain characteristics of the family science discipline through a focus on three pivotal professional journals and their contents from 2000 to 2009: *Journal of Marriage and Family* (JMF), *Family Relations* (FR), and the *Journal of Family Issues* (JFI). As explained in detail later,

Families and Communities: The Family Science Discipline

- Sources:
 - Handbooks of Marriage and the Family (1964, 1987, 1999, 2013)
 - Family theory volumes (1966, 1979)
 - Sourcebooks on families (1993, 2005)
 - JMF decade reviews (1960's through 2009)
 - JMF, FR, JFI journals (2000-2009)
- Conclusions



Assumptions About Communities

- As collections of individuals and families, have community boundaries that are visible, as well as those that are not
- Have a life of their own, a personality, and an ability to self-determine
- Have the raw materials for being resilient, though often fail to access those materials in productive ways
- Can dramatically influence what individuals and families experience, from despair to vibrancy, and from stasis to growth
- Exhibit considerable diversity, as well as convergence

Assumptions About Families

- Are the primary grouped social units in a community
- Are motivated to protect their individual members, particularly those who are less competent, strong, and healthy
- Have characteristics amenable to change and influence but maintain boundaries resistant to the interference of outsiders
- Determine who they will interact with, and weigh the benefits of distance vs. benefits of closeness
- Exhibit considerable diversity, as well as convergence

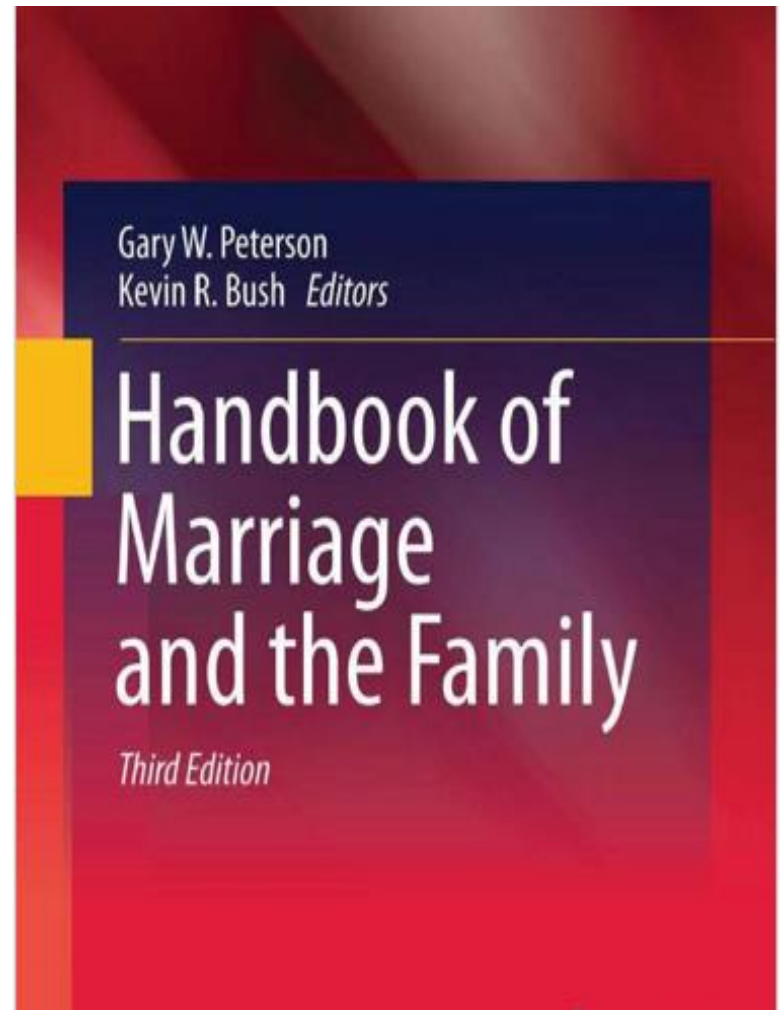
Social Organization Theory

Theoretical Underpinnings

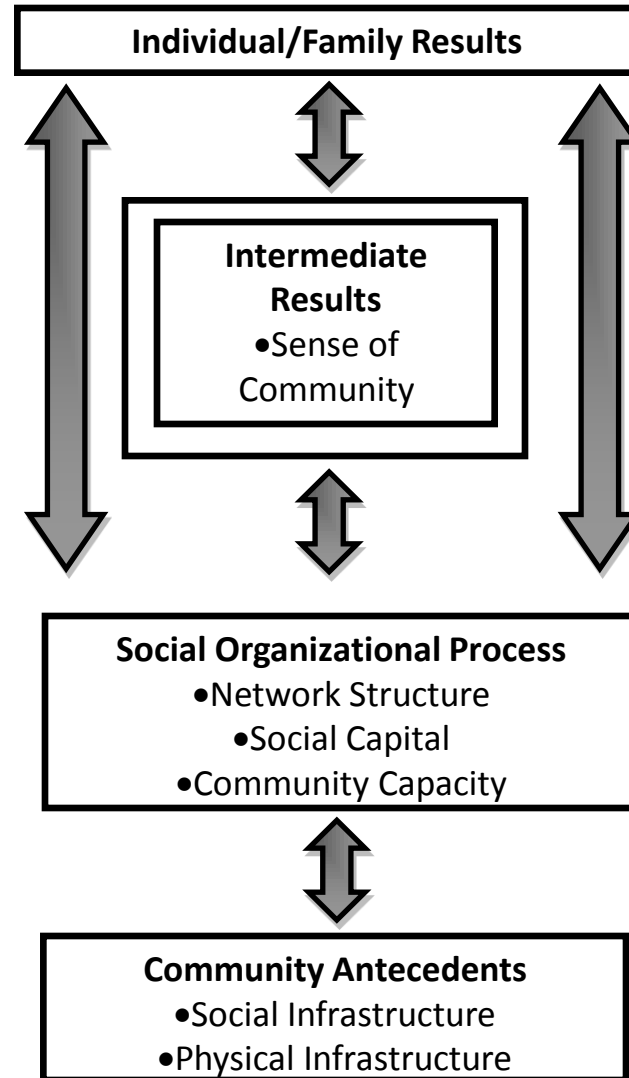
- Kretzmann & McKnight (1993). Their view of human development and of communities includes belief that we fail to account for both needs AND assets, and for vulnerabilities AND resilience.
- Bronfenbrenner (1979). His contribution to understanding human development includes specifying layers and contexts, and more importantly, the intersections of these layers and contexts.
- Weiss (1974), Russell & Cutrona (1984), and Cohen, Underwood, & Gottlieb (2000). Their guidance exhorts us to conceptualize relationships as having multiple functions, purposes, and outcomes.
- Mancini, Bowen, & Martin (2005); Mancini & Bowen (2009; 2013). Our own work explores social organization (community capacity, social capital, and formal and informal networks) as a lens for understanding contextual influences on individuals and families.
- Milroy (2009). Transitions and transformation among homeless men.

Social Organization Theory

- *Social organization is how people in a community interrelate, cooperate, and provide mutual support; it includes social support norms, social controls that regulate behavior and interaction patterns, and networks that operate in a community.*
- In neighborhoods where there is more fluidity than stability, more uncertainty than predictability, and more ambiguity than clarity, the odds of chaos increases. Knowing who to go to for assistance is very difficult because you do not know who is there.



Social Organization Theory



In Conclusion.....

- *It's all about networks.....and networks are all about connections.....and connections are all about relationships.*