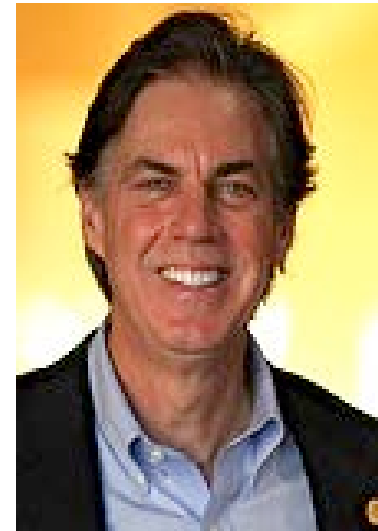


In Conclusion . . . *It's all about networks . . .
and networks are all about connections . . .
and connections are all about relationships*



We will present our work on the Social Organization Theory of Community Action and Change, including recent work with US military families to model and empirically examine social psychological mediators between structure and action.



Dr. Jay A. Mancini
Haltiwanger
Distinguished Professor

Dr. Gary L. Bowen
Kenan
Distinguished Professor



The University of Georgia

Department of Human Development and Family Science



UNC
School of Social Work

THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at CHAPEL HILL

The “Best Place”

- Where is the best place you have lived during your adult life?
- What are three characteristics making it the “best”?
- Which of the three characteristics is most significant?

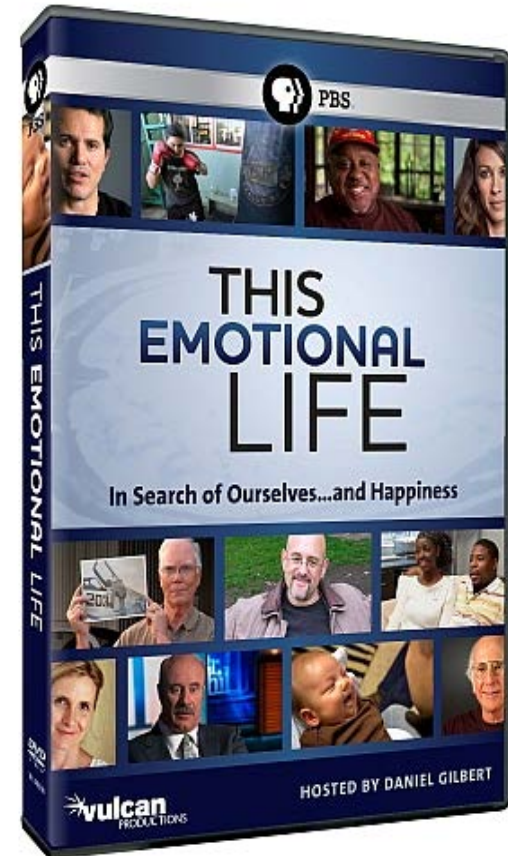


The Power of Social Connections

"In the end, these social connections, these bonds, are what it is all about. When they are strong, we are happy; when they are threatened, we worry; when they disappear, we suffer. . .

Whether we like it or not, our happiness is in each other's hands."

Daniel Gilbert, Host

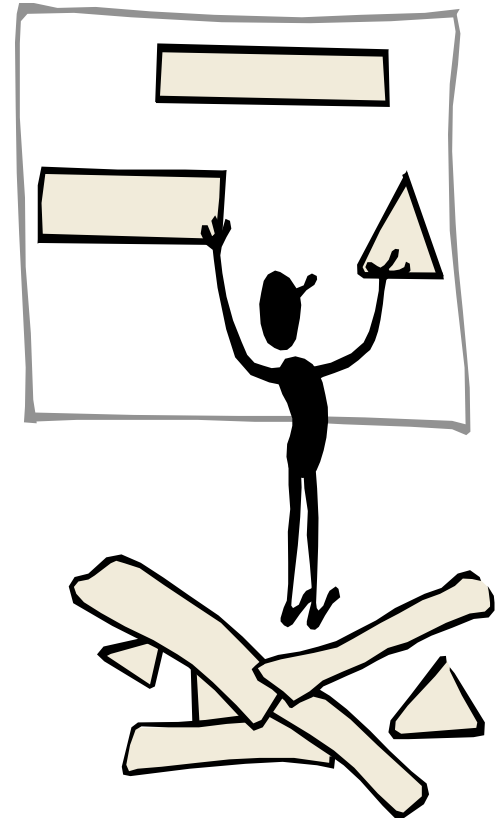


<http://www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/>

Funding provided by PBS and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and program contributions provided by the DOD.

Focus

- Discuss our work over the last 15 years to develop the Social Organization Theory of Community Action and Change
- Present key assumptions and concepts from the theory
- Comment on the yin and yang of theory building
- Highlight the results of a recent empirical analysis, incorporating sense of community as a mediator
- Discuss next steps in our work



SOCIAL ORGANIZATION THEORY

Conceptual Articles and Chapters

- Mancini, J.A., & Bowen, G.L. (2013). Families and communities. In G. Peterson & K. Bush (Eds.), *Handbook of marriage and the family* (3rd edition, pp. 781-813). NY: Springer.
- Bowen, G. L., Martin, J. A., & Mancini, J. A. (2013). The resilience of military families: Theoretical perspectives. In M. A. Fine & F. D. Fincham (Eds.), *Family theories: A content-based approach* (pp. 417-436). New York: Routledge (Taylor & Francis).
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- Mancini, J.A., Martin, J.A., & Bowen, G. (2003). Community capacity. In T. Gullotta & M. Bloom (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of primary prevention and health promotion* (pp. 319-331). New York: Plenum.
- Bowen, G., Martin, J., Mancini, J.A. , & Nelson, J. (2000). Community capacity: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Community Practice*, 8, 1-21.

Early Publications: 2000 & 2005

Family Relations 54 (December 2005) 570-582. Blackwell Publishing, Printed in the USA.
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Community Capacity: Antecedents and Consequences

Gary L. Bowen, PhD
James A. Martin, PhD
Jay A. Mancini, PhD
John P. Nelson, PhD

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

Gary L. Bowen is Kenan Distinguished Professor, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

James A. Martin is Associate Professor, School of Social Work and Social Research, Bryn Mawr College.

Jay A. Mancini is Professor, Department of Human Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

John P. Nelson is affiliated with the Air Force Family Advocacy Division.

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Special appreciation is expressed to Barbara Rudin, Deborah Levin, David Wolpert, and Kathleen Coolbaugh of Caliber Associates who provided critical feedback on earlier drafts of this manuscript. The authors wish to acknowledge the support of the U.S. Air Force Family Advocacy Program. Although the contributions and feedback from these individuals are recognized, the authors assume sole responsibility for the contents of the article.

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Community Social Organization: A Conceptual Linchpin in Examining Families in the Context of Communities*

Jay A. Mancini

Gary L. Bowen

James A. Martin**

Abstract: The concept of social organization provides an important framework for understanding families in the context of communities and focuses our attention on norms, networks, and associated processes that typify community life. We discuss the significance of community for understanding family outcomes, discuss challenges in defining community context, define social organization and frame several of its associated components and their linkages, and assess research designs that inform the study of social organization. We conclude by suggesting implications for theory (elaborating social organization community processes), research (incorporating designs and measures that reflect collective processes), and practice (maximizing efforts generated by informal and formal networks in communities).

Key Words: communities, community capacity, families, social organization.

Community context factors, including transactions with other families and institutions, are significant elements in understanding and strengthening families. The work of family science scholars increasingly recognizes that families are surrounded by community forces that influence both their everyday life experiences and their individual and collective life trajectories. Teachman and Crowder (2002) evidence a central aim of exploiting rather than simply trying to control contextual noise in family functioning models. Sprey (2000) notes that layered approaches to human sociability provide a level of understanding otherwise unattained, and Scanzoni (2001) calls for a "reconnection"—linking households and communities via small household social support networks at the neighborhood level.

Family life practitioners are finding increasing leaseage in strengthening families through community-centered interventions. These interventions range from the community-building efforts of Family

Service America to strengthen families (Sviridoff & Ryan, 1997) to the promotion of community capacity in the U.S. Air Force as a strategy for preventing family violence (Bowen, Martin, & Nelson, 2002). Family program professionals increasingly are working with community members as allies in support of families and are mobilizing families to exert greater control over their own lives (Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, & Vidal, 2001; Doherty & Carroll, 2002). Turner (1998) contends that practitioners are rediscovering the "Holy Grail" of community, and Sampson (2002) uses the term *dhair* when describing the promise some see in community-oriented interventions.

Community context should have a more prominent place in thinking about families. However, greater elaboration is needed in the conceptualization and measurement of community-level processes as independent variables in family research. Such advances enhance the study of families and

*We appreciate the thoughtful assistance of Gabriel Grant and Sandra Sapp Grant.

**Jay A. Mancini is a Professor in the Department of Human Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24062 (jmanca@vt.edu). Gary L. Bowen is a Kenan Distinguished Professor of Social Work at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. James A. Martin is an Associate Professor of

Concept of Community

- Geographic locations or spatial settings—places where individuals and families live and work
- Community boundaries may be expanded or reduced depending on the initiative
- Individual and family memberships, identifications, and relationships may extend beyond any particular geographic locations

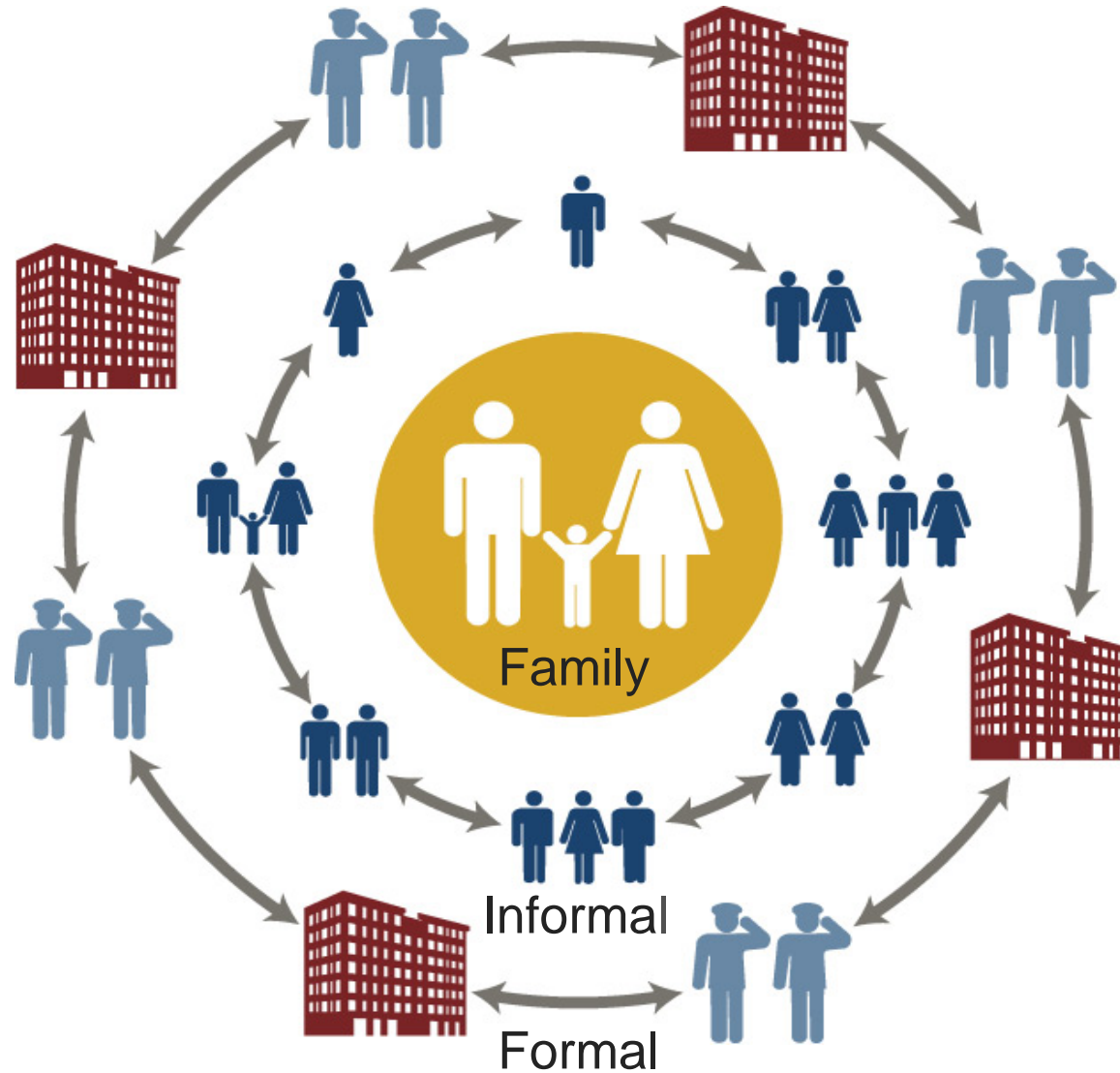
Mancini, J. A., Bowen, G. L., & Martin, J. A. (2005). Community social organization: A conceptual linchpin in examining families in the context of communities. *Family Relations*, 54, 570-582.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS AND CONCEPTS

Key Assumptions

- Locally anchored community forces surround families and mediate between social structure and individual/family results.
- These forces influence both their everyday life experiences and the way in which the individual and collective lives of their members unfold over time.
- Individuals may not be aware of the ways in which these forces shape and inform their experiences and their health and well-being.

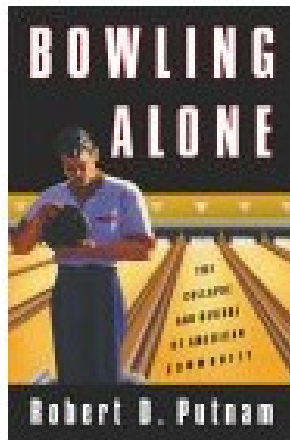
Community Forces



The Power of Networks



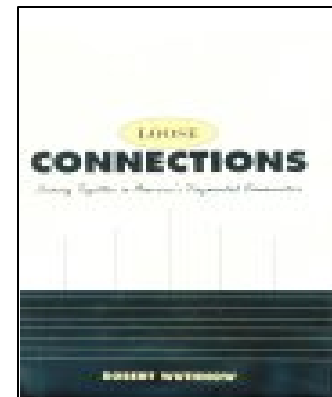
Robert Putnam



Communities can become high quality places when connections exist at multiple levels, are frequent, and are meaningful and purposeful.



Robert Wuthnow



Key Concepts

- Social Structure
- Social Organization
 - Formal Systems
 - Informal Networks
 - Social Capital
 - Community Capacity
- Individual and Family Results

Social Organization

- Values, norms, processes and behavior patterns within a community that *organize, facilitate, and constrain* interactions among community members
- Process by which communities achieve their desired results for individuals and families, *including the ability to demonstrate resilience in the face of adversity and positive challenges*
- Social organization includes *networks* of people, the *exchanges and reciprocity* that transpire in relationships, accepted *standards and norms* of social support, and *social controls* that regulate behavior and interaction

Mancini, J.A., Martin, J.A., & Bowen, G. (2003). Community capacity. In T. Gullotta & M. Bloom (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of primary prevention and health promotion* (pp. 319-331). New York: Plenum.

Community Capacity

- The extent to which formal systems and informal networks:
 - (a) demonstrate a sense of shared responsibility for the general welfare of the community and its members, and
 - (b) demonstrate collective competence in taking advantage of opportunities for addressing community needs and confronting situations that threaten the safety and well-being of community members.

Bowen, G. L., Martin, J. A., & Mancini, J. A., & Nelson, J. P. (2000). Community capacity: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Community Practice*, 8(2), 1-21.

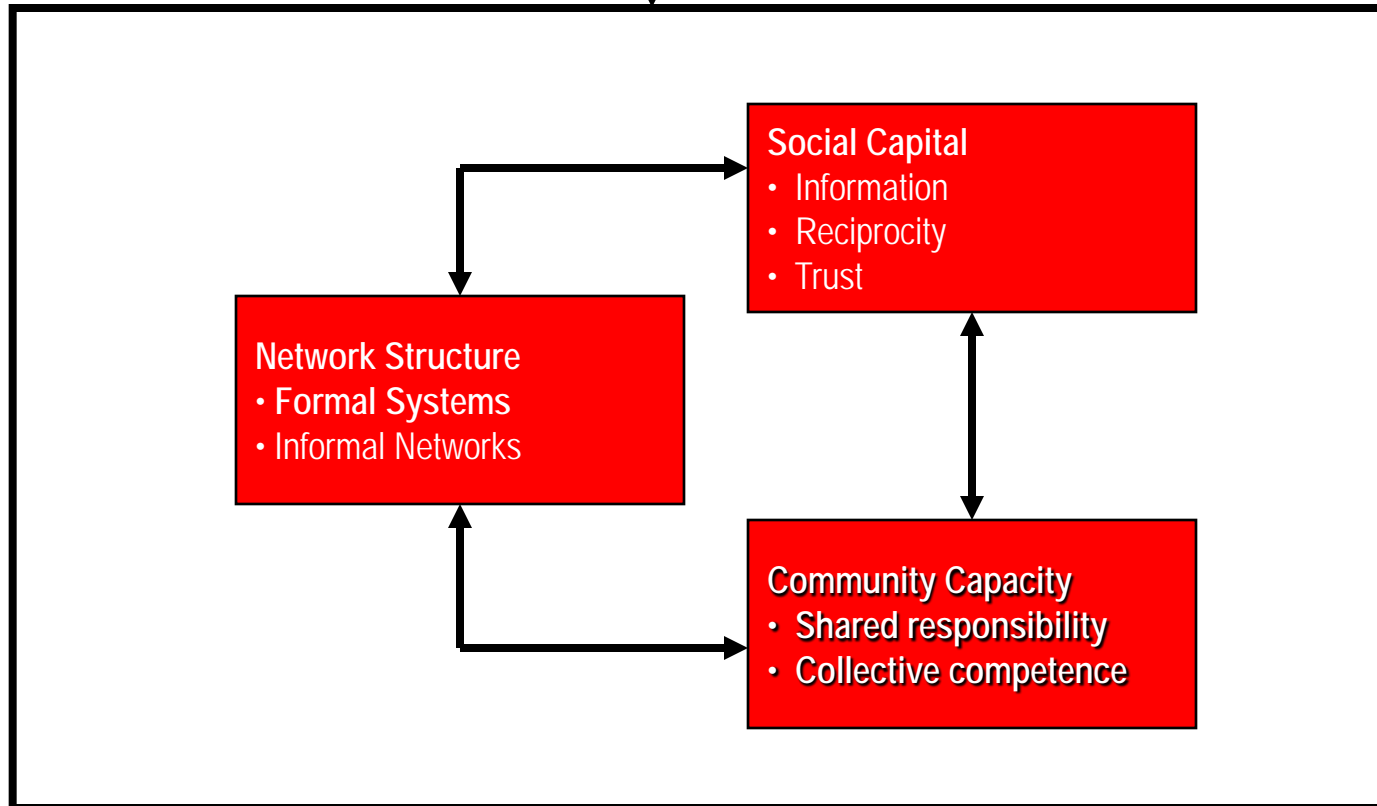
Social
Structure



Social Organizational
Processes



Individual/Family
Results



Adapted from Mancini, J.A., Bowen, G.L., & Martin, J.A. (2005). Community social organization: A conceptual linchpin in examining families in the context of communities. *Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Science*, 54 (4), 570-582.

Empirical Support

- Adams, R. D. (2012). Strong communities, strong families: An examination of the association of community functioning with psychological resilience, psychopathology, and family outcomes in active duty Air Force members (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Kansas State University, Manhattan.
- Bowen, G. L., Mancini, J. A., Martin, J. A., Ware, W. B., & Nelson, J. P. (2003). Promoting the adaptation of military families: An empirical test of a community practice model. *Family Relations*, 52, 33-44.
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THE YIN AND YANG OF THEORY BUILDING

Jay A. Mancini and Gary L. Bowen

Gary W. Peterson
Kevin R. Bush *Editors*

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).

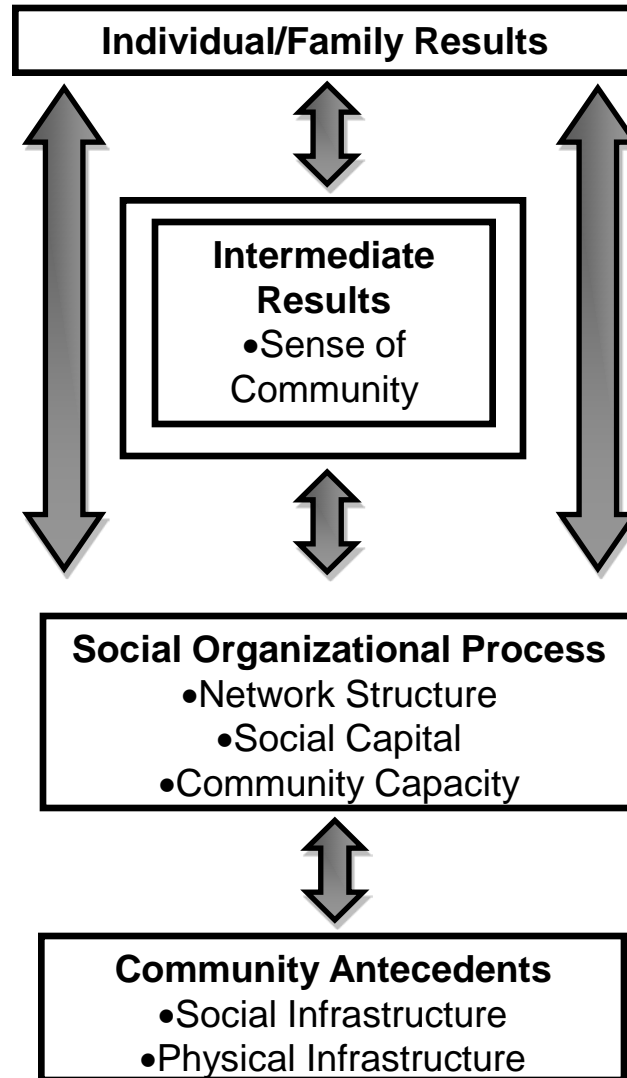
J.A. Mancini, PhD (✉)
Department of Human Development and Family Science,
University of Georgia, Dawson Hall,
Athens, GA 30602, USA
e-mail: mancini@uga.edu

G.L. Bowen, PhD
School of Social Work, The University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599, USA
e-mail: glbowen@email.unc.edu

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,

Social Organization Theory



Sense of Community (SOC): A Social Psychological Mediator

- Attempt to open up the “black box” between macrolevel social organizational processes and microlevel individual and family outcomes
- A “situational social psychology” (Zelditch, 1991)
- SOC—”the degree to which individuals feel a sense of identification, esprit de corps, and attachment with their community” (Mancini & Bowen, 2013, p. 804)

Sense of Community (SOC): A Social Psychological Mediator

- Empirically, SOC is evidenced by feelings of belonging in the community, feeling close to other community members, a feeling that one's circumstances are similar to others in the community, as well as to more behavioral indicators including making new friends, spending time with others, and showing concern for others.

Sense of Community (SOC): A Social Psychological Mediator

- Importantly, we see the operation of formal systems and informal networks as correlates, rather than indicators, of SOC.
- In the context of a high SOC, we propose that individuals and families have a greater chance of achieving results, as well as a greater motivation to act and to participate in change efforts.
- We do not propose SOC as the only potential social psychological mediator in our model.

EXAMPLE OF CURRENT EMPIRICAL WORK

Families, Army Life, and Programs Project

- Data were collected from participants ($N=273$ military families) in the continental United States. Research criterion included: (1) families have at least one active-duty military member and one adolescent between the ages of 11 and 18, and (2) all eligible family members come to the youth center on the installation to take the survey at the same time (e.g., in two-parent families, both parents and the adolescent were required to come).
 - **Adults:** 233 (85.7%) males and 45 (16.5) of females were active duty military personnel. 161 (65.5%) males and 185(69.0%) females were 31-40 years of age. 109 (44.1%) of males and 98 (36.6%) of females reported “some college” education.
 - **Children:** Equal split of males ($n = 135$) and females ($n = 138$). Ages ranged from 11-18 ($M = 14.04$, $SD = 2.08$). Most attended public schools off post ($n = 153$, 56.3%).

Community Support within the Military Environment

- Active-duty and Partner (civilian)
 - Same items with different stems (*active-duty members on this post v. family members on this post*):
 - 1) Find it easy to make connections with other families
 - 2) Are active in post-sponsored community events and activities
 - 3) Feel a sense of connection with one another
 - 4) Assume responsibility for making this post a better place to live and work
 - 5) Join together to solve problems that threaten the safety and well-being of members and families assigned to this post
 - 6) Look after and shown concern for members and families assigned to this post
 - 7) Take advantage of opportunities to support the needs of members and families assigned to this post
 - $\alpha = .90$ and $.91$ for active-duty and civilian respondents

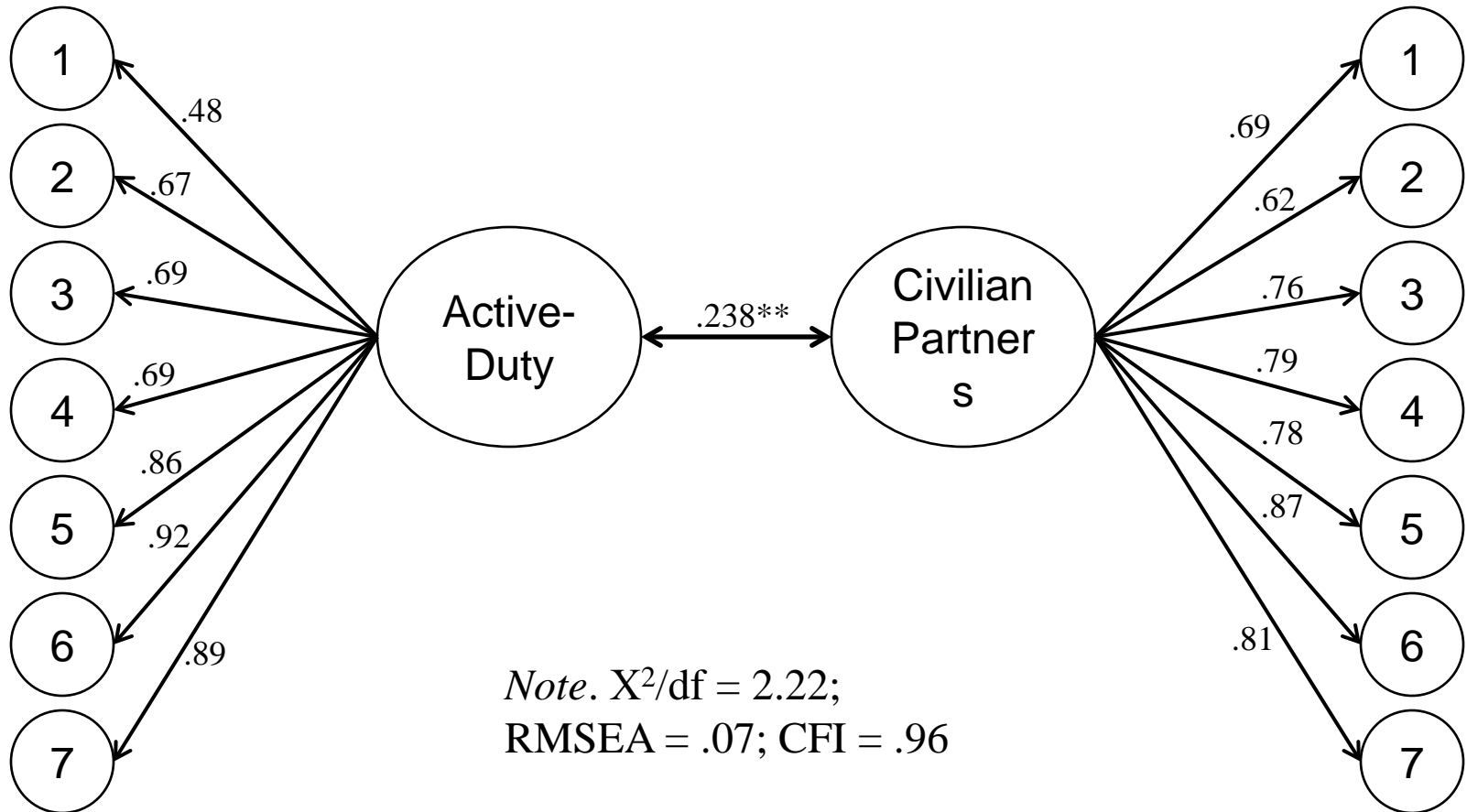
Military Community Support Measure

- Exploratory Factor Analysis
 - Indicated one factor (explained 65% of the variance for both active-duty and partner reports)
 - KMO = .878 and .904 for active-duty and civilian reports; Barlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($p < .001$)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

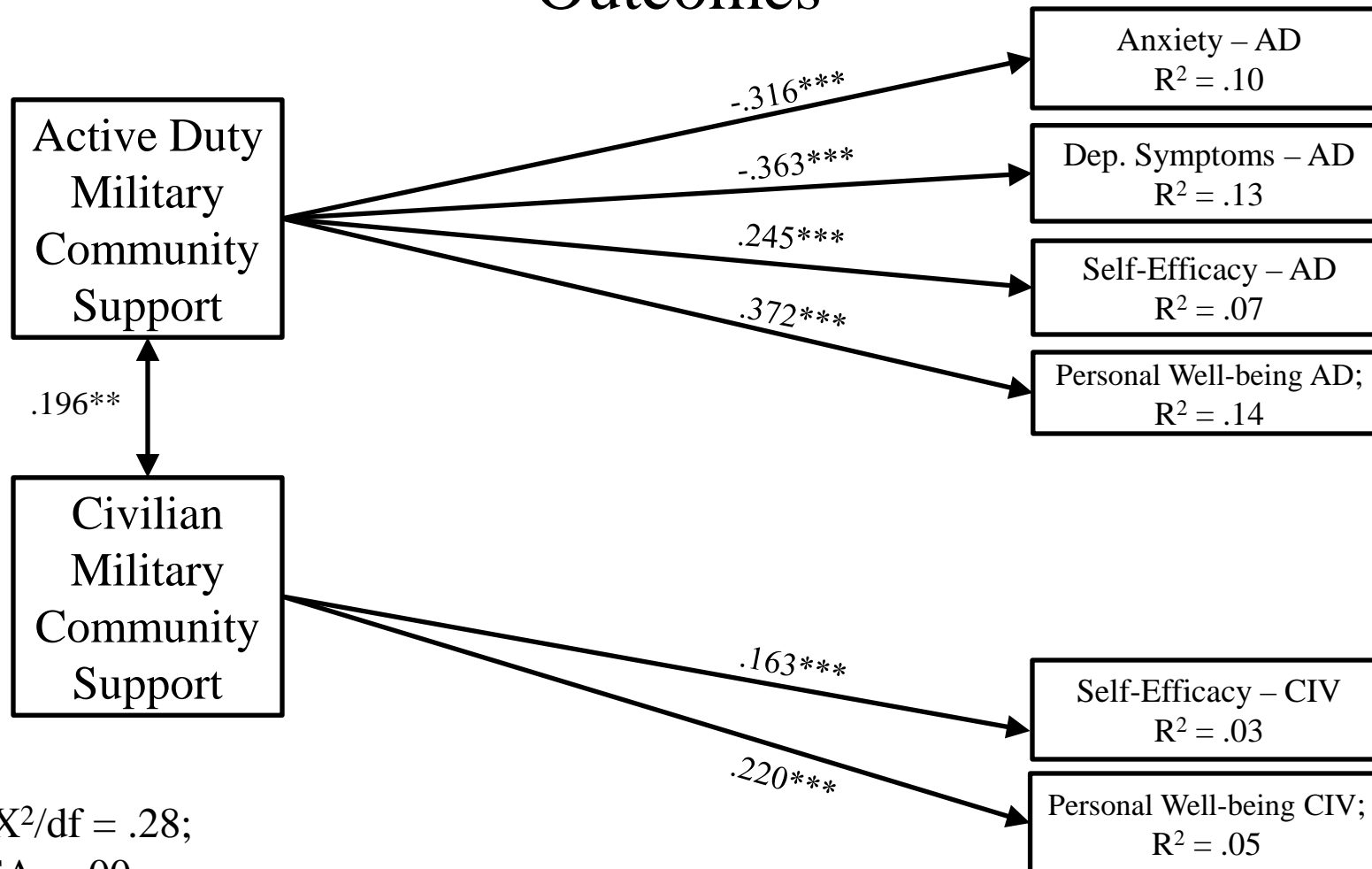
Active-Duty items

Civilian items



Note. $X^2/df = 2.22$;
RMSEA = .07; CFI = .96

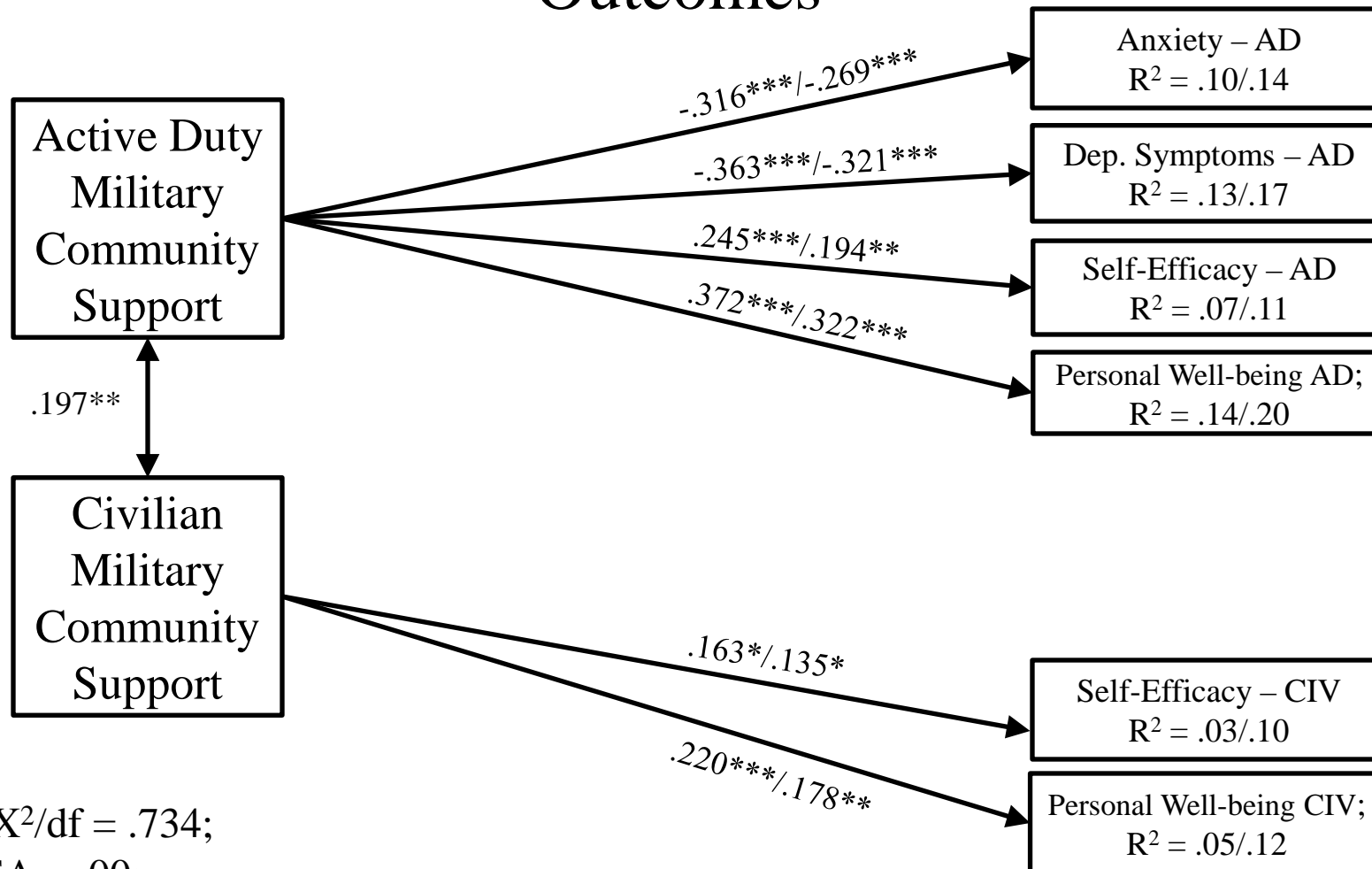
Influence of Military Community Support on Adult Outcomes



Note. $X^2/df = .28$;
RMSEA = .00;
CFI = 1.0.

Standardized coefficients

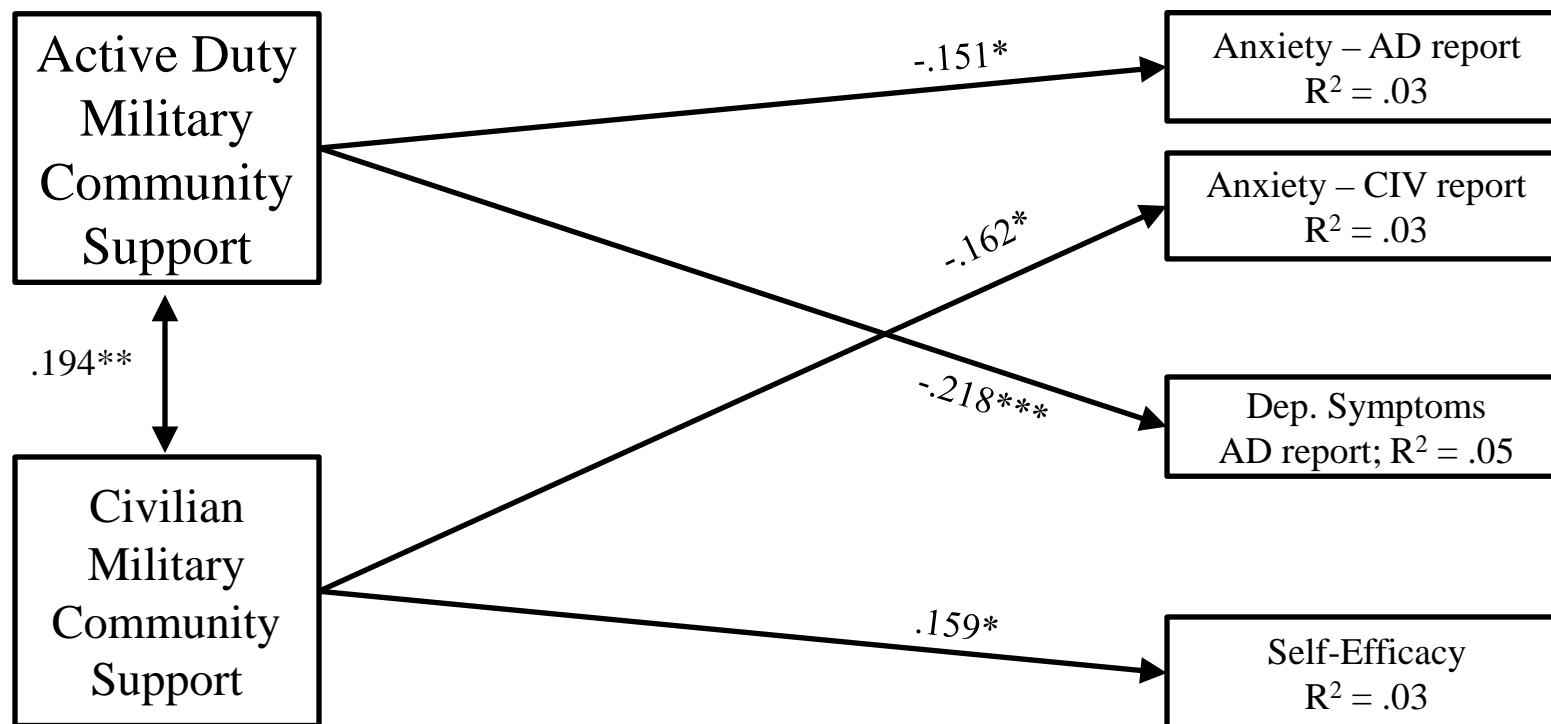
Influence of Military Community Support on Adult Outcomes



Note. $X^2/df = .734$;
 RMSEA = .00;
 CFI = 1.0.
 Standardized coefficients

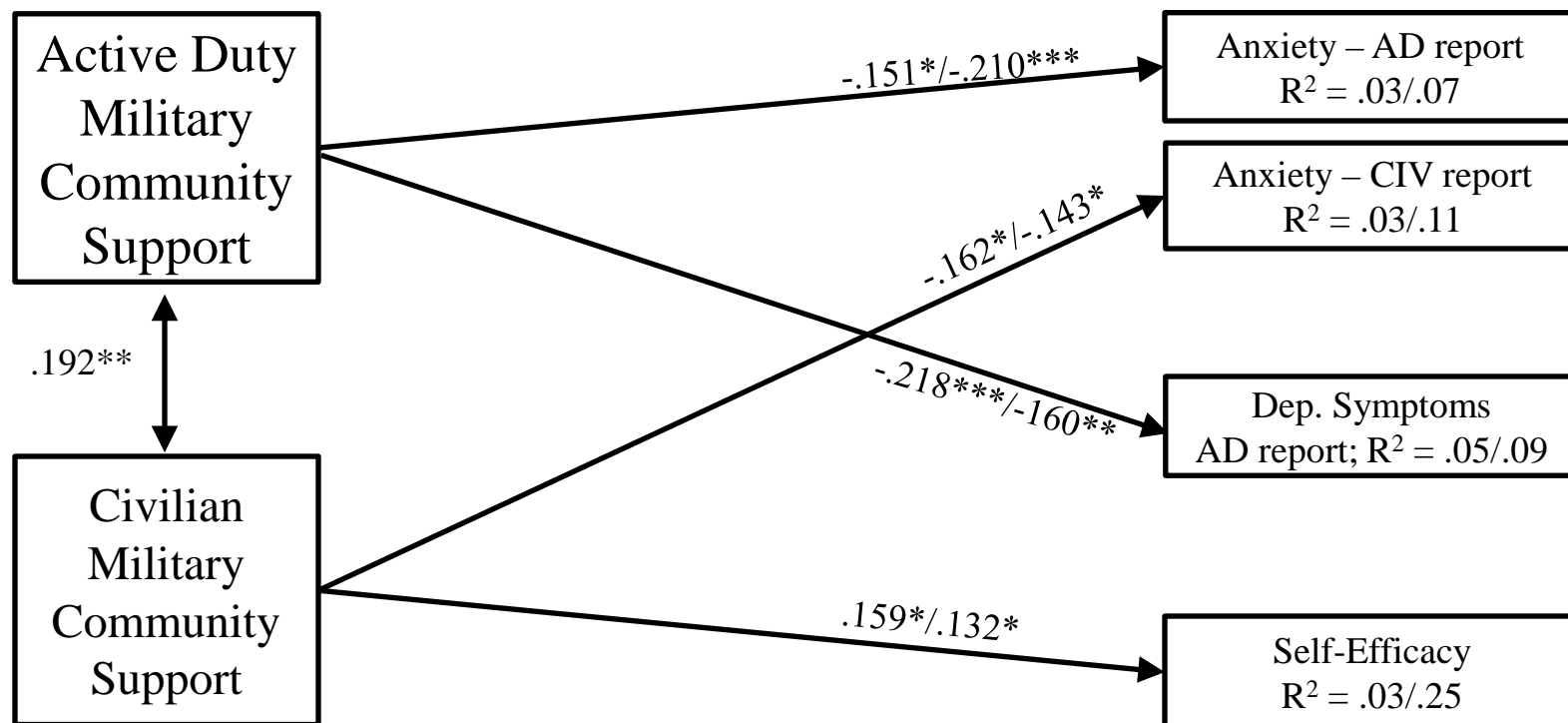
Controlling for Males' and Females' Reports of:
 Males' and Females' reports of marital quality and
 adverse childhood events

Influence of Military Community Support on Child Outcomes



Note. $X^2/df = 3.02$;
RMSEA = .09; CFI = .98.
Standardized coefficients

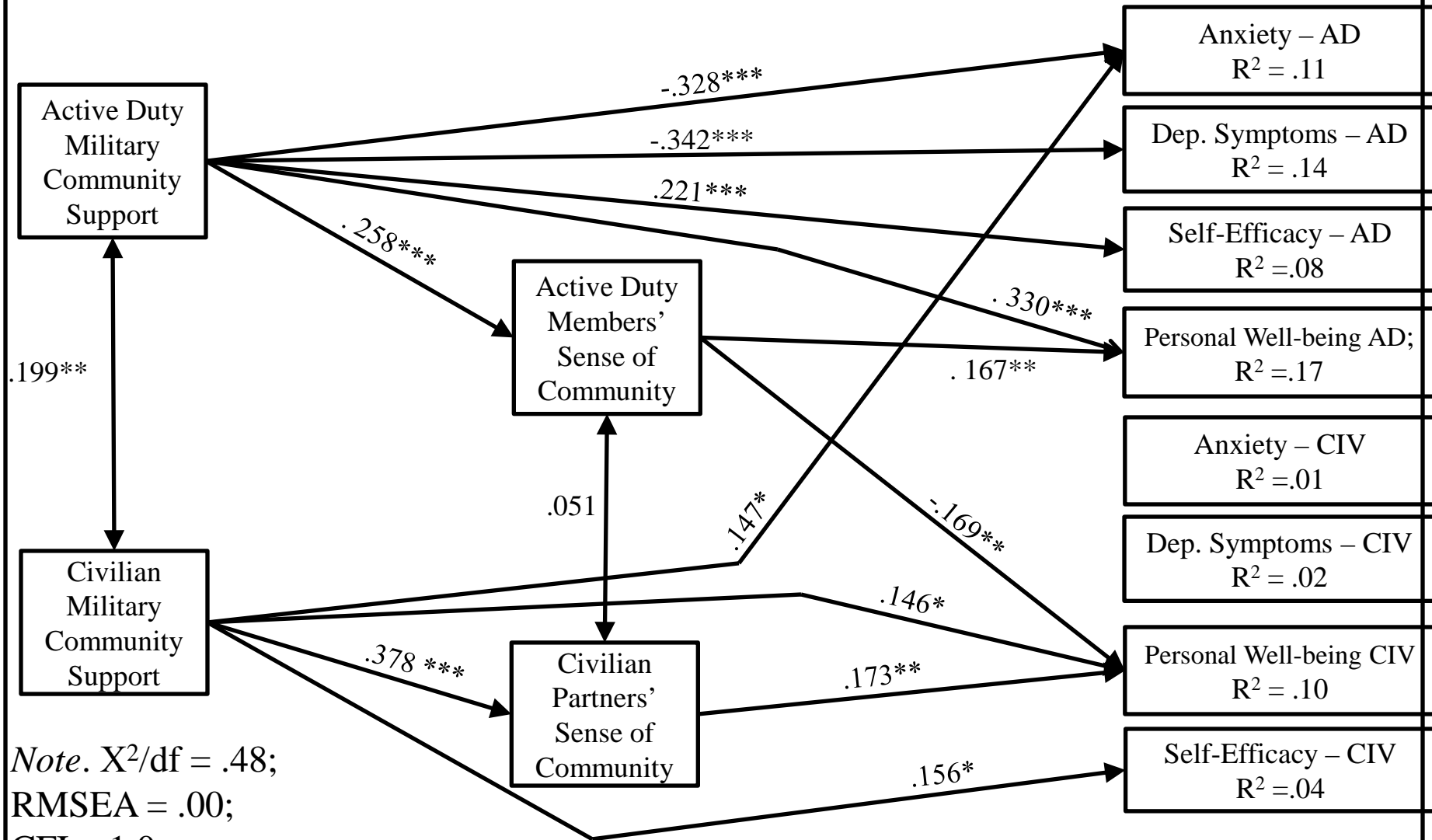
Influence of Military Community Support on Child Outcomes



Note. $X^2/df = 2.64$;
 RMSEA = .08; CFI = .99.
 Standardized coefficients

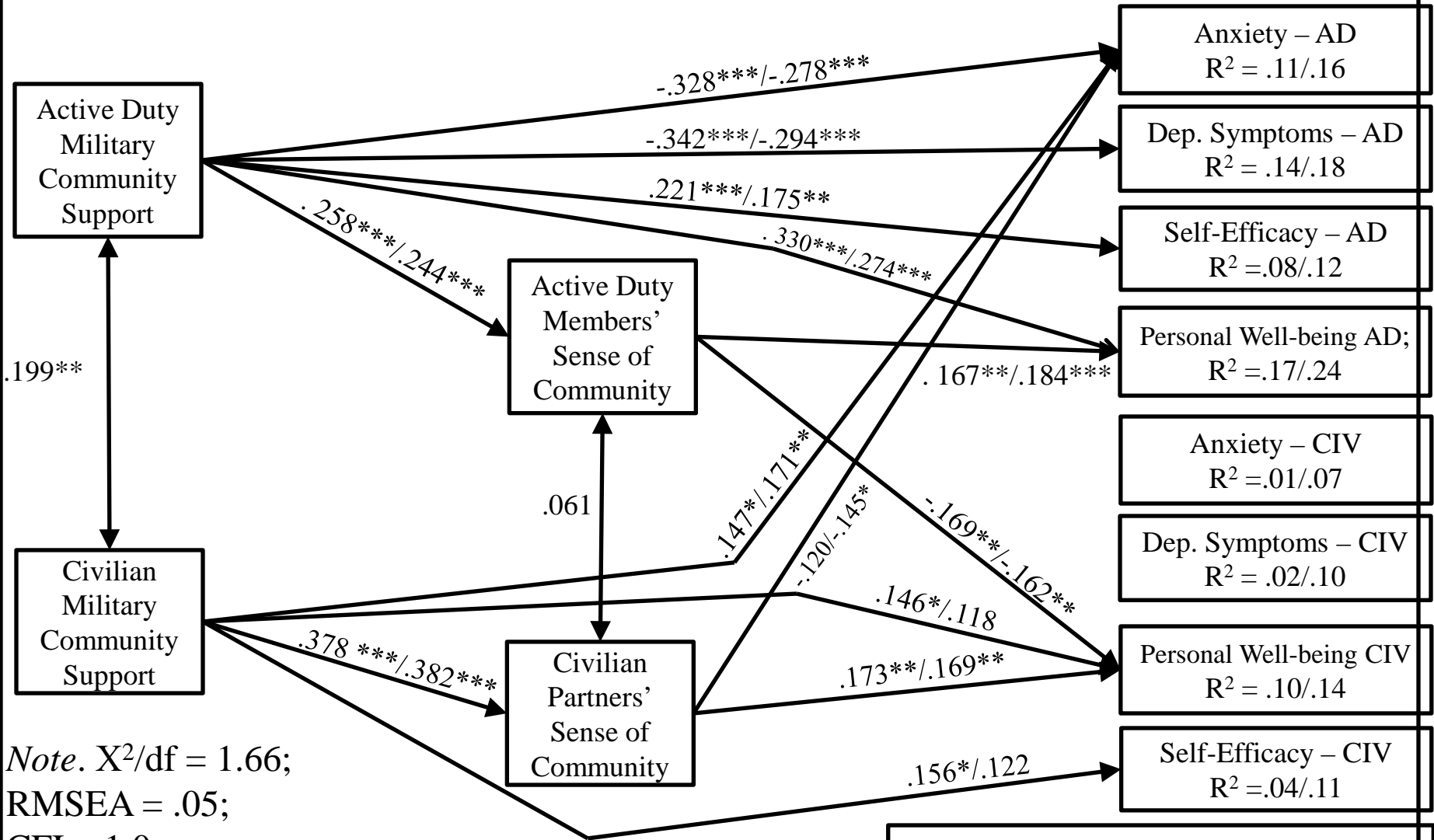
Controlling for Males' and Females' Reports of:
 Males' and Females' reports of marital quality and
 adverse childhood events

The Mediating Role of Sense of Community for Adult Outcomes



Note. $\chi^2/df = .48$;
 RMSEA = .00;
 CFI = 1.0.
 Standardized coefficients

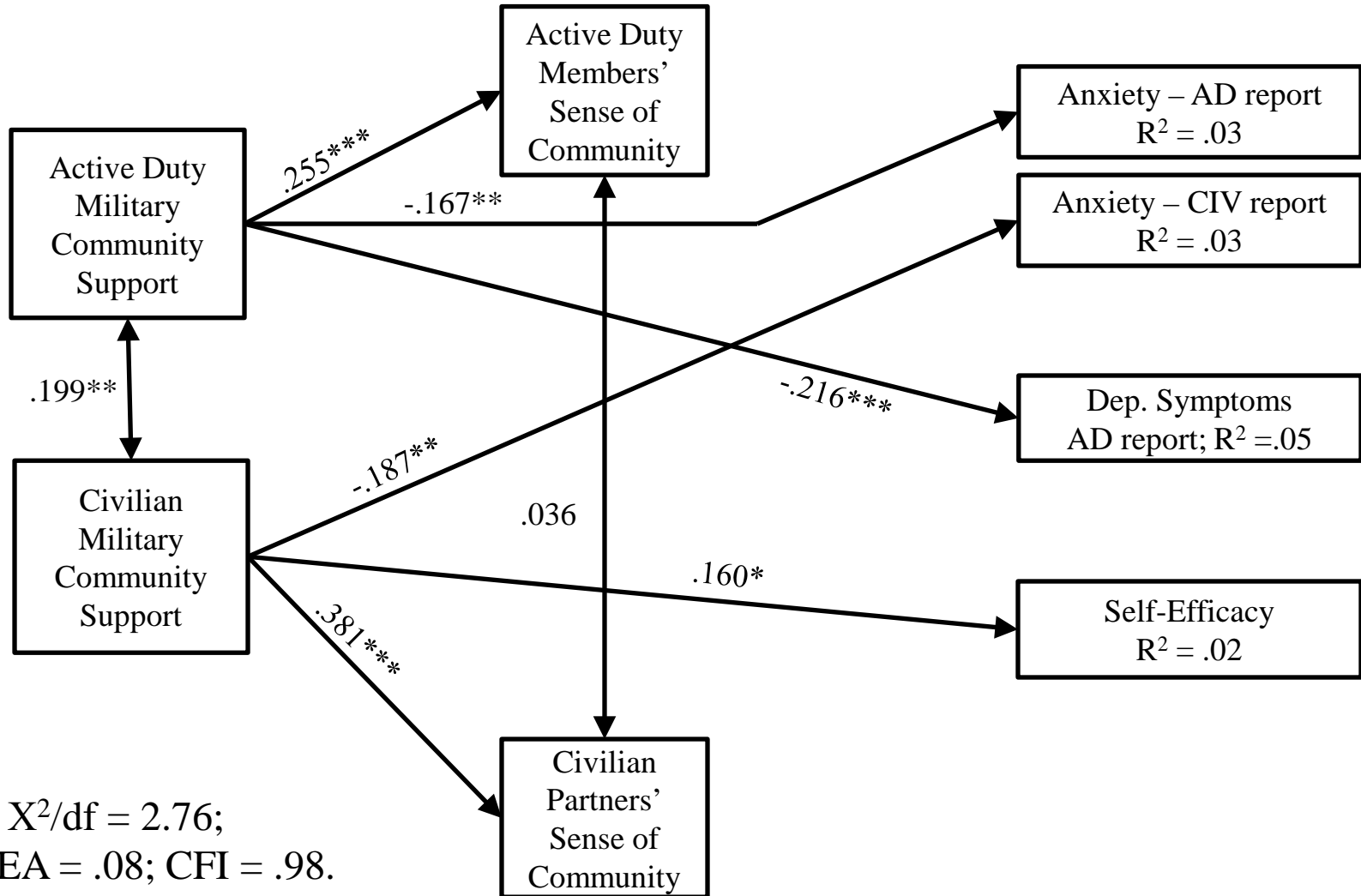
The Mediating Role of Sense of Community for Adult Outcomes



Note. $\chi^2/df = 1.66$;
 RMSEA = .05;
 CFI = 1.0.
 Standardized coefficients

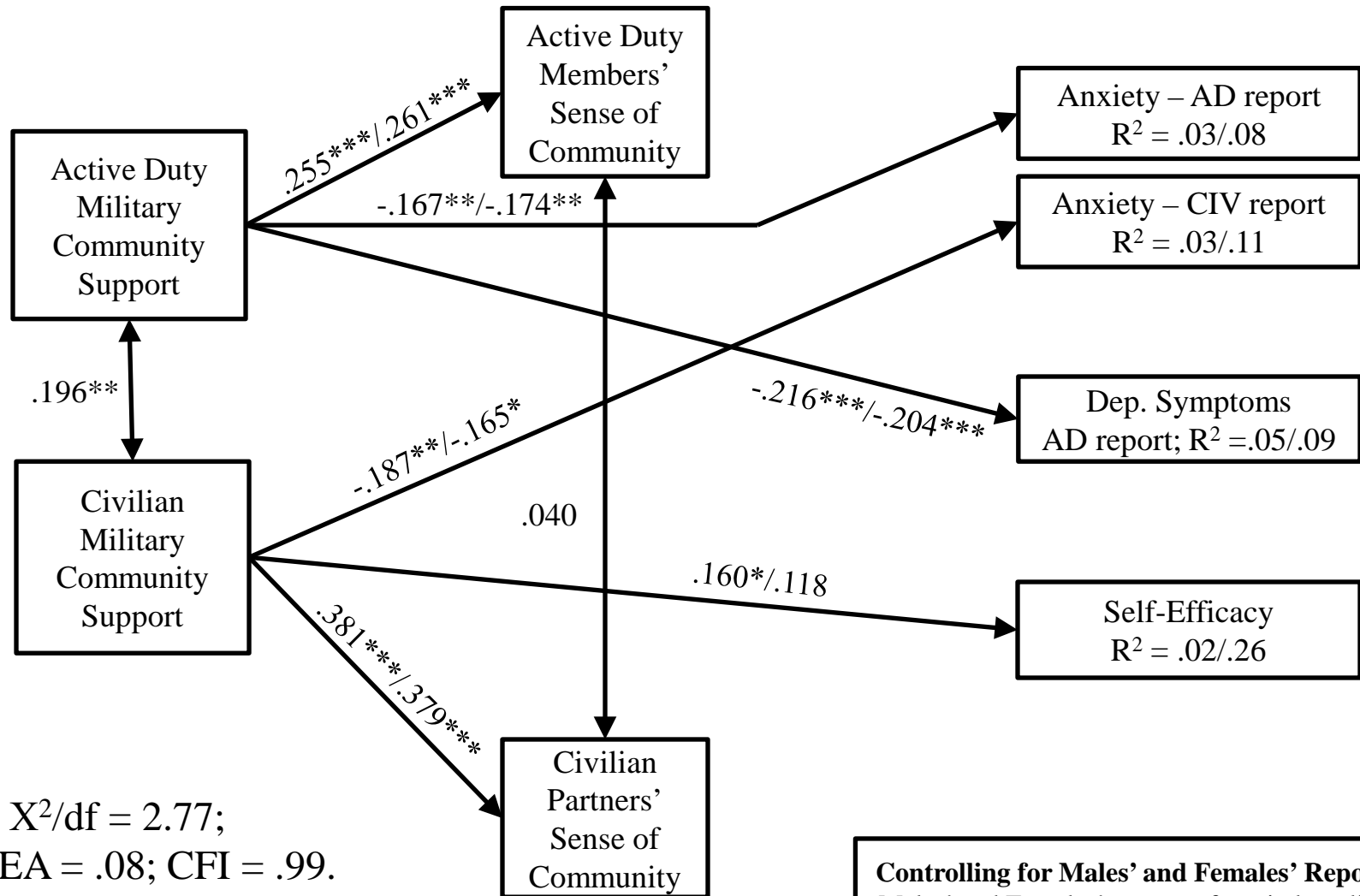
Controlling for Males' and Females' Reports of:
 Males' and Females' reports of marital quality and
 adverse childhood events

The Mediating Role of Sense of Community for Child Outcomes



Note. $X^2/df = 2.76$;
 RMSEA = .08; CFI = .98.
 Standardized coefficients

The Mediating Role of Sense of Community for Child Outcomes



Note. $X^2/df = 2.77$;
 RMSEA = .08; CFI = .99.
 Standardized coefficients

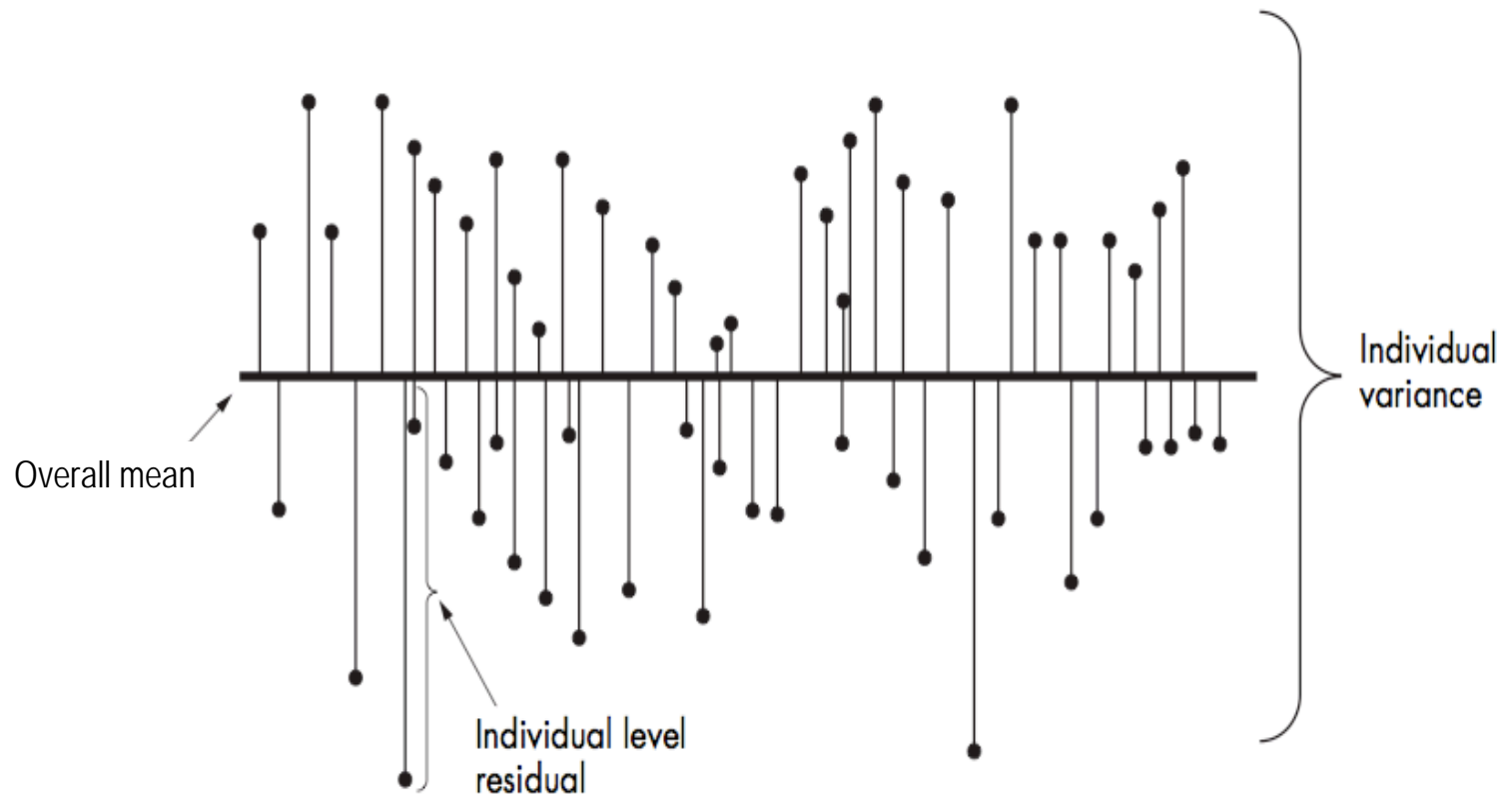
Controlling for Males' and Females' Reports of:
 Males' and Females' reports of marital quality and
 adverse childhood events

NEXT STEPS

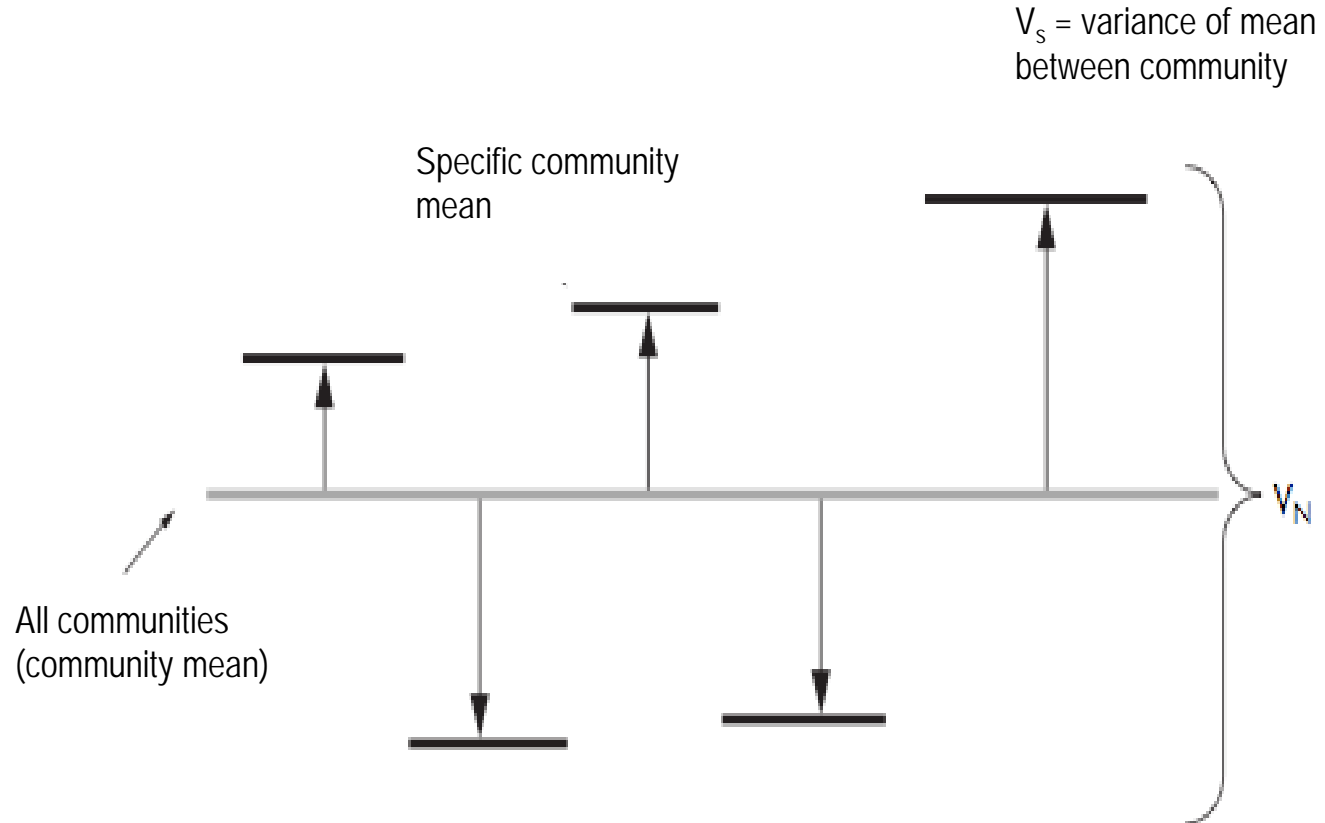
Measurement Approaches

- Microlevel: relies on the individual as the unit of analysis
- Compositional: uses proxy variables to reflect the community's physical and sociodemographic infrastructure (e.g., neighborhood poverty rate)
- Social organizational (contextual effects): incorporates group-level variables and a hierarchical data structure (Blalock, 1984)

Single Level Individual Data

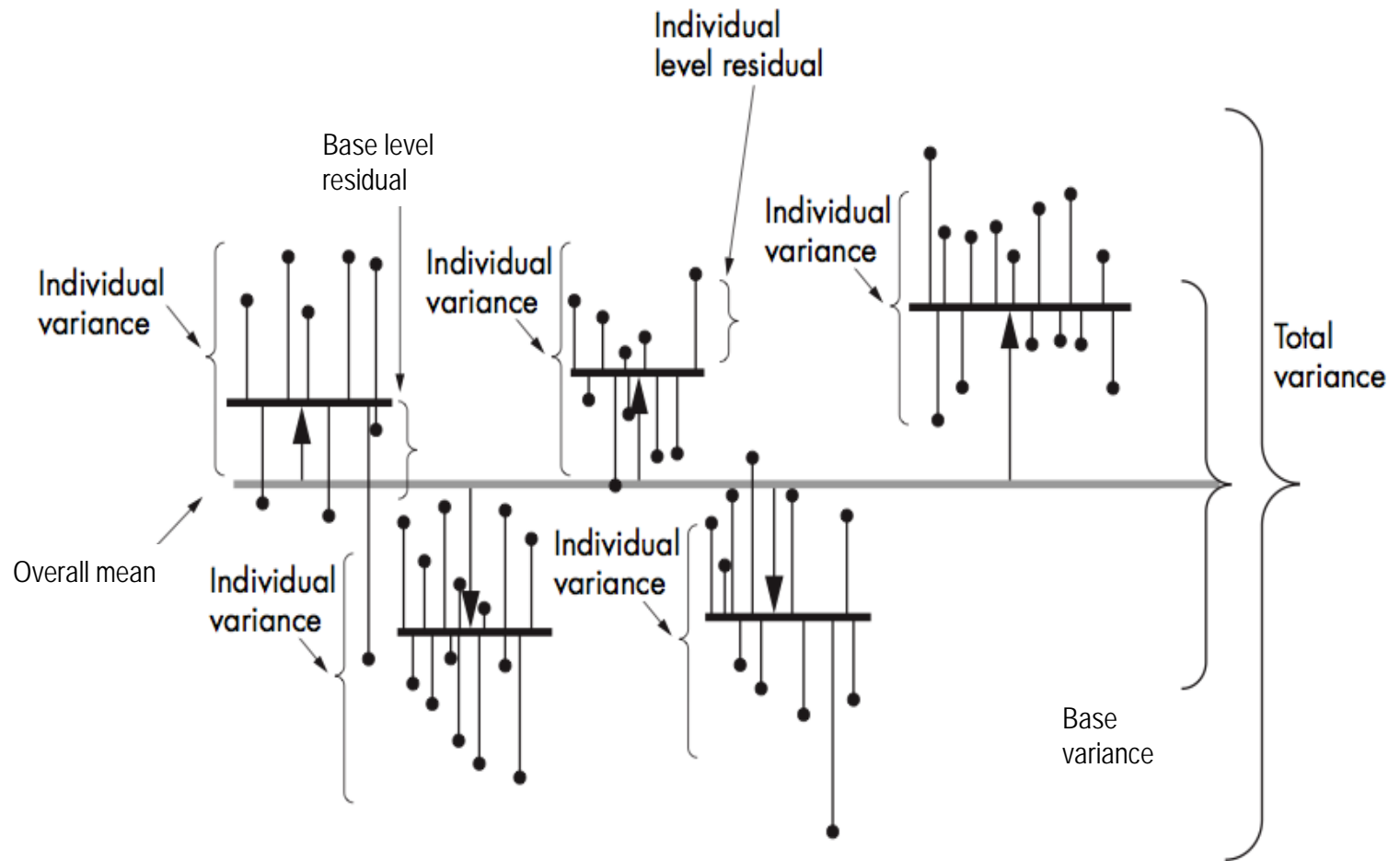


Single Level Ecological Data



Adapted from Merlo et al. (2005). A brief conceptual tutorial of multilevel analysis in social epidemiology. *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 59, p. 447.

Partitioning the Total Variance



TECHNICAL REPORT

Exploring the Association Between Military Base Neighborhood Characteristics and Soldiers' and Airmen's Outcomes

*Sarah O. Meadows • Laura L. Miller • Jeremy N. V. Miles •
Gabriella C. Gonzalez • Brandon T. Dues*

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited



Summary Points: RAND Report

- Link between neighborhood/community characteristics and indicators of health and well-being
 - These characteristics hypothesized to influence outcomes beyond individual characteristics (e.g., gender, age)
- Using zip codes, created a military neighborhood ranking index
- Findings generally supportive of social indicators research as a way to better understand life in and around military bases

In Conclusion



With thanks to.....

- Dr. James A. Martin, Bryn Mawr College
- Dr. Dennis K. Orthner, UNC-Chapel Hill
- Dr. John P. Nelson, New York University
- UGA Family and Community Resilience Laboratory
 - Dr. Catherine Walker O’Neal
- USDA NIFA Award No. 2009-48680-06069

Presenters

- **Gary L. Bowen** is the Kenan Distinguished Professor in the School of Social Work at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Contact information: gbowen@email.unc.edu; (919) 962-6542.
- **Jay A. Mancini** is the Haltiwanger Distinguished Professor at The University of Georgia, and Head of the Department of Human Development and Family Science. Contact information: mancini@uga.edu; (706)542-4844.