



Family Mediation with African Couples: A Culturally Sensitive Approach

Djidjoho C. Akloubou Gnonhossou

Segbegnon M. Gnonhossou

Background



In the US

Def: Alternative dispute resolution for divorce
(Bailey, 1989)

Focus: Eurocentric

African descent: (Hairston, 1999, 2008)

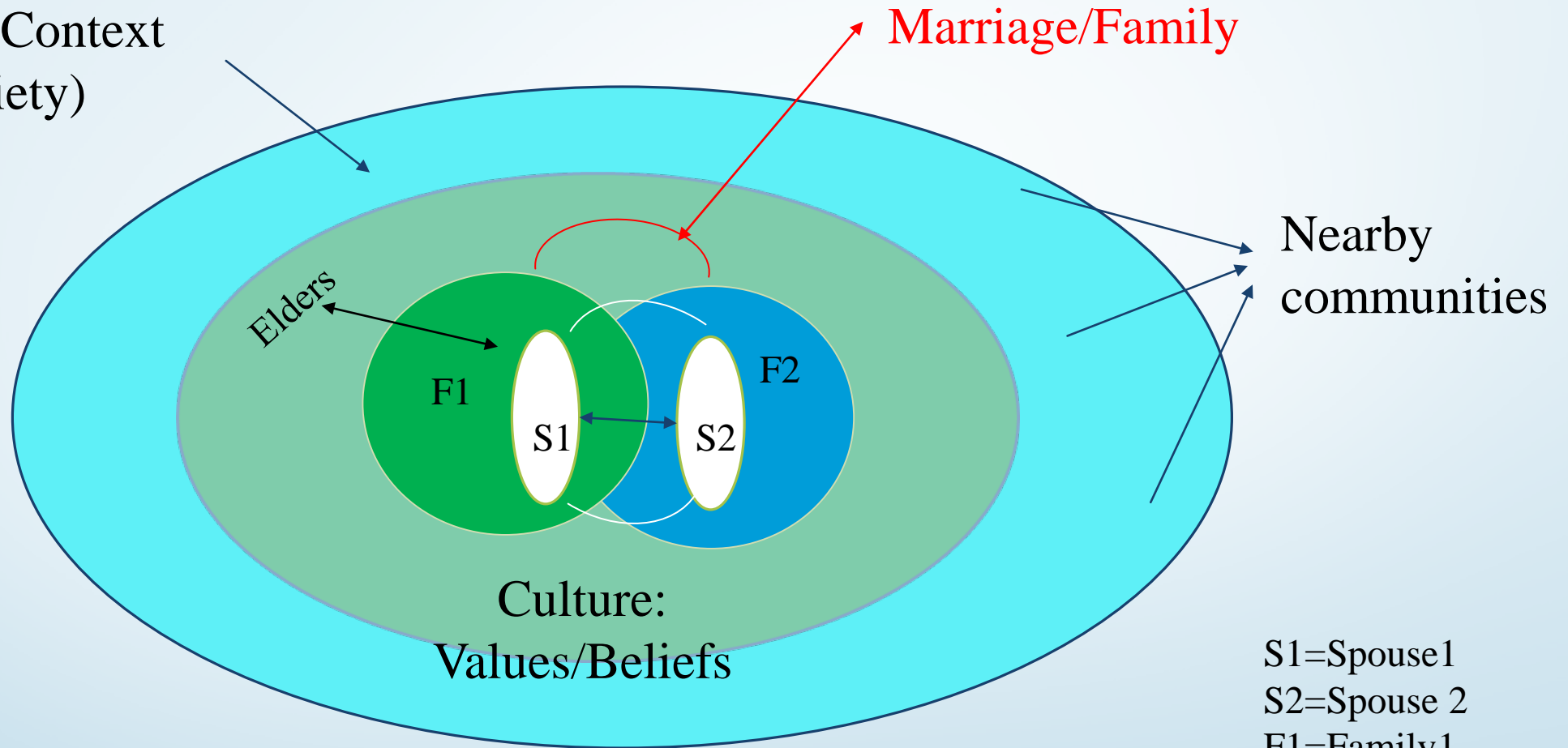


Non
western

- Japanese, Latino, Chinese ...
- **African immigrants:** Little to no work
- **In Africa:** Distinctive values

Background

Conflict Context
(Society)



Marriage/Family

Nearby
communities

Culture:
Values/Beliefs

S1=Spouse 1
S2=Spouse 2
F1=Family 1
F2=Family 2

Web of relationship among African immigrants
/ Relationship dynamic

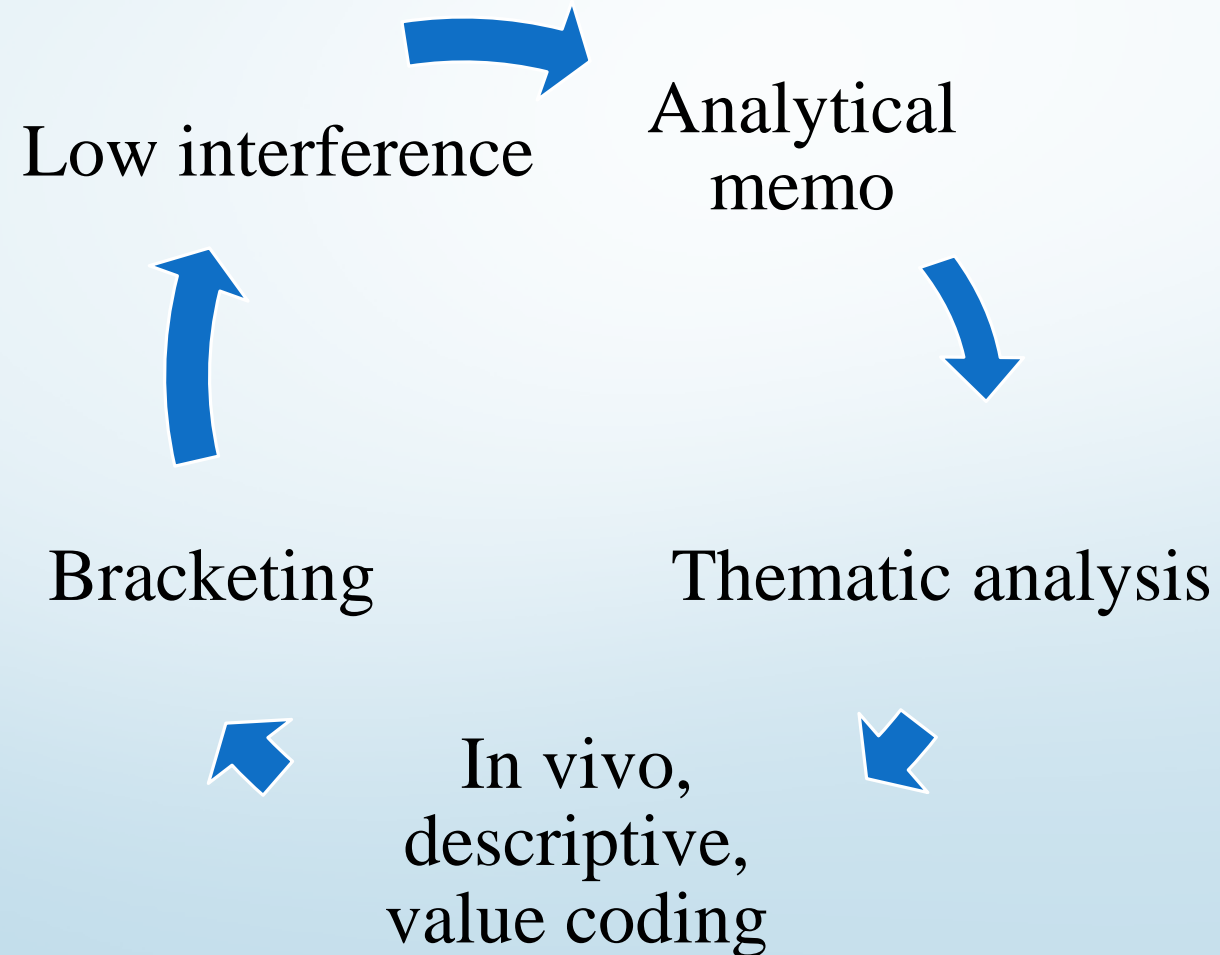
Research Questions

1. Participants' perspective regarding the use of third party
2. What are the impacts of home and host cultures?

Procedure

- In-depth interviews
- Length 58 min – 129 min
- Member checking (30mn – 75mn)
- Instrument:
 - Interview guide (11 open ended questions)
 - Researcher

Analysis: Descriptive Phenomenology



Findings

Relationship
Then and
Now



- Past network
- Absent in new context



Mediation As
A Way of Life



- Attitudes toward 3rd party (No and Yes)
- View and characteristic (go between, respected by both, role model)



Family
Mediation
Now in the US



- Culturally sensitive
- Culturally competent

Family Mediation Now in US

Culturally
Sensitive

- Familiarity, trust-worthy
- Reconciliation-driven

Dual Mediators

- American mediator
- African mediator

Culturally
Competent

- Integrate African values
- Become cultural broker

Discussion

- Narrative mediation based on story-based epistemology
- Cohere with African's narratively shaped worldview
- Components of NM suitable to participants' views;
- NM Role compatible with expected qualities
- E.g.: Name problem and resulting in Reconciliation
- E.g.: From saturated stories to alternative stories



Implications

Research

Training mediators

Family life education

Court system

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