

The Role of Local Customs and Traditions in Maintaining Social Stability: A Case Study of Nubian Weddings in Egypt

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to evaluate how the wedding traditions of the Nubian community in Egypt preserve cultural identity and sustain social stability in the face of globalization pressures. These traditions encompass rites such as restrictions against marrying non-Nubians, engagement ceremonies, and henna applications, expressing the collective ideals of the community. This study uses a library research method to examine pertinent material using four important functions—adaptation, goal accomplishment, integration, and pattern maintenance—are assessed in the study using Talcott Parsons' AGIL theory. Thematic data from sociological and ethnographic sources pertaining to Nubian cultural activities were analyzed using a literature review methodology. The findings show that the role of adaptation is represented by the prohibition on marriage with non-Nubians, which tries to preserve the integrity of cultural identity. Customary agreements during engagement ceremonies, which improve interfamily connections, demonstrate goal accomplishment. Collective rituals that strengthen community cohesion, like group prayers, are one way that integration is demonstrated. Pattern maintenance is accomplished by symbolic parts of rituals, such as the application of henna, which ensures that traditional values are passed down through generations. These results support the idea that wedding customs serve as a means of maintaining social harmony and cultural continuity in the globalization era.

Keywords: AGIL Theory, Cultural Identity, Marriage Traditions, Nubi Tribe, Social Rituals

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INTRODUCTION

A community's cultural identity and values are reflected in the social institution of marriage. The Nubian people view wedding customs as ways to preserve ancestral traditions and foster social cohesion in addition to marking important turning points in individual lives (Starostin, 2021). The importance of weddings in preserving the social order and cultural continuity of the Nubian society is shown by customs like the ban on marrying non-Nubians, the use of henna, and the symbolic act of planting trees after marriage. This study seeks to explore how the Nubian people sustain their cultural identity amidst such challenges, with a particular focus on their wedding practices. In the context of globalization and external influences, understanding how this community preserves its traditions through a value-based social structure is crucial. One intriguing aspect of this tradition lies in how Nubians manage their marriage customs, forming the central focus of this research. By applying Talcott Parsons' AGIL framework, the study aims to analyze how social structures, particularly those related to marriage, function to sustain social and cultural stability within Nubian society (Moghazy & Kaluarachchi, 2021; Aly et al., 2023).

The Nubian community is distinguished by its unique language (Abuoaf & Osman, 2022; Taha, 2019), culture (Saleh, 2023), and history (Starostin, 2020; Jakobi, 2020; Wilson, 2023; Quintana, 2024). They are descendants of the Nubian region along the Nile River, spanning present-day Sudan and Egypt (Janmyr, 2016). Historically, the Nubians established prominent kingdoms, such as the Nubian Kingdom, which played a significant role in the history of ancient Egypt and North Africa (Lemos et al., 2023). Known for their deep respect for traditions, strong kinship systems, and reverence for cultural rituals and symbolism, the Nubians continue to uphold many aspects of their heritage despite the influence of globalization (Syanawi, 2023). However, preserving the authenticity of their culture amidst modernization and integration with global society remains a significant challenge (Dzierzbicka & Danys, 2021; Martin et al., 2024).

One of the most important aspects of maintaining their social cohesion is the Nubian wedding customs, which continue to be a pillar of their cultural identity (N. M. Khalil, 2020). The marriage process is characterized by rituals infused with profound symbolic value, such as limitations on intermarriage with non-Nubians, engagement ceremonies, public marriage announcements, and dowry exchanges—all of which are fundamental parts of their social structures (Nassar, 2022; Budka et al., 2023; Adams, 1977). Marriage is seen as a way to strengthen social cohesion within the community rather than only as the marriage of two people. In this context, Talcott Parsons' AGIL framework provides a pertinent lens to examine how these traditions fulfill essential social functions, including adaptation to modernity, achieving collective goals through marital agreements, fostering social integration via community participation, and

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ensuring cultural continuity through the intergenerational transmission of traditional values (Rilly, 2021; Moghazy & Kaluarachchi, 2021).

This literature review examines prior studies on the Nubian community, renowned for preserving their cultural and social traditions despite significant external challenges. The current research positions itself at the intersection of existing scholarship by employing Talcott Parsons' AGIL framework to analyze marriage as a social mechanism that reinforces cohesion, tradition, and stability in Nubian society. Unlike earlier studies that focus on archaeology, linguistics, or ecology, this research provides a novel perspective by exploring the sociocultural function of marriage within the Nubian community, highlighting its critical role in navigating modernity and globalization. Studies by Moghazy and Kaluarachchi (2021) underscore the adaptive capacity of Nubians in Egypt's Western Desert to environmental challenges, emphasizing their resource management strategies in sustaining agriculture and livelihoods. These findings align with insights from Aly et al. (2023) and Khalil et al. (2024), who detail the community's reliance on the Nubian aquifer as a cornerstone of social and economic stability. Meanwhile, Rilly (2021) and Dzierzbicka and Danys (2021) explore Nubian identity through linguistic and archaeological lenses, demonstrating how Meroitic language and cultural artifacts reflect a history of resilience and adaptation. These studies collectively affirm the community's ability to maintain cultural integrity while adapting to external influences. Further dimensions of Nubian society are explored by Gerhards (2021) and Wilson (2023), who investigate the interplay between Christianity and political structures, revealing their enduring impact on Nubian social and cultural patterns. Complementing this, Stark et al. (2021) examine religious and monastic practices, showcasing their role in ecological and social adaptation, while Schrader (2022) analyzes the colonial legacy and its implications for Nubian social structures. Łaptaś (2024) adds depth by exploring symbolism in Nubian art and rituals, illustrating the cultural continuity embedded within these traditions.

This study bridges historical and contemporary perspectives by addressing a critical gap in the literature: the sociological significance of marriage as a cultural institution within the Nubian community. It contributes to the understanding of how traditional societies preserve their cultural identity and social cohesion amidst external pressures, providing both theoretical and practical insights into the mechanisms that sustain cultural continuity. By focusing on the sociocultural function of marriage, the research offers a fresh lens to analyze the enduring resilience of Nubian traditions in the face of globalization.

This study seeks to address two central research questions: (1) How do Nubian wedding practices influence the social structure and fulfill social functions within the framework of Parsons' AGIL theory? (2) How do the Nubian people sustain their wedding traditions while navigating social and environmental changes, as conceptualized through the AGIL framework? By focusing on the Nubian community, this study contributes to a deeper

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understanding of how traditional societies employ cultural mechanisms to navigate the pressures of modernity and globalization. It emphasizes the broader implications of preserving cultural practices as a means of sustaining social stability and resilience in the face of rapid global changes.

By shedding light on the continued significance of marriage as a social institution, the research findings are anticipated to enhance cultural and social anthropology, especially with regard to traditional societies in Egypt. Beyond scholarly contributions, the results are universally relevant because they provide useful frameworks for comprehending how indigenous traditions around the world might be maintained and incorporated into modern social circumstances. This study emphasizes the value of cultural heritage as a worldwide resource, encouraging diversity appreciation and cultural sustainability tactics in an increasingly interconnected world.

METHOD

For the purpose to find out more about the social structures and cultural practices of the Nubi community, this study uses a library research method to examine pertinent material. Because it gives access to a wide variety of resources, such as books, scholarly journals, scientific papers, and historical documents, this approach is especially appropriate. These resources provide the theoretical interpretations necessary for a thorough analysis in addition to empirical data. The qualitative character of the study, which focuses on Nubi marriage customs and structural analysis utilizing Talcott Parsons' theory, justifies the choice of the library research technique. This method makes it possible to analyze sociological evaluations, anthropological research, and ethnographic literature in great detail.

With the goal collect data, a methodical review of the relevant literature is conducted using specific keywords such "traditional social structures," "Nubi marriage practices," and "AGIL analysis in Talcott Parsons' theory." Because of how well it retrieved and arranged a variety of qualitative data, this approach was selected. This approach has the advantage of being able to gather information on a wide range of topics, including social involvement among the Nubi community, economic redistribution mechanisms, and cultural rites.

The gathered information was grouped according to predetermined categories, such as prohibitions on marriages with non-Nubi people, ceremonial symbolism, wedding economics, and group community participation. This approach guarantees a methodical and thorough examination of the body of literature, enabling a more sophisticated comprehension of the interaction between social structures and cultural activities (Sciortino, 2015; Izadi et al., 2020; Sciulli, 2015; Treviño & Staubmann, 2021).

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This study employs Talcott Parsons' AGIL framework (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency) as the primary analytical lens (Trotsuk, 2024; Sciortino, 2015; Duhamel & Niess, 2024). The AGIL model provides a comprehensive tool to analyze the social functions of cultural practices, making it particularly suitable for understanding the stability and sustainability of social structures within the Nubi community. Talcott Parsons' theory is chosen for its systemic approach to social analysis, which emphasizes the interdependence of societal components in maintaining equilibrium (Trotsuk, 2024; De Nardis, 2020; Sciulli, 2015).

The AGIL framework's focus on functional prerequisites aligns with the study's objective to understand how Nubi marriage traditions contribute to the social stability of the community. The AGIL framework offers a detailed lens through which cultural practices can be linked to broader social. Its four functional imperatives allow for an in-depth exploration of how traditions such as marriage function within the social system dynamics (Baranowski & Kopnina, 2022; Sciortino, 2015; Duhamel & Niess, 2024): (1) Adaptation: Examining how Nubi society utilizes local resources and adapts cultural practices, such as incorporating communal rituals like planting trees and sourcing wedding materials locally. (2) Goal Attainment: Analyzing the cultural objectives embedded in traditions, including marriage restrictions aimed at preserving the purity of the Nubi identity. (3) Integration: Exploring how communal rituals, such as wedding feasts and animal sacrifices, foster social cohesion and solidarity within the community. (4) Latency (Pattern Maintenance): Investigating how symbolic rituals, such as henna application and knot-tying, uphold cultural values and norms that sustain the community's identity over time. By applying the AGIL framework, the study systematically uncovers how Nubi marriage traditions function as both cultural symbols and mechanisms for social integration, adaptation, and value preservation, thus contributing to the stability and continuity of the Nubi social structure.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that each element of the marriage traditions within the Nubi community not only strengthens social networks but also supports the continuity of cultural identity amidst the challenges of globalization. This section presents empirical data that not only corroborates established theories but also broadens perspectives on the sociocultural significance of marriage traditions in the Nubi community.

1. Prohibition of Marriage with Non-Nubi Individuals

Within the Nubi community in Egypt, the social tradition of forbidding marriage with non-Nubi people serves to maintain the continuation of practices and the purity of cultural identity (Ahmed, 2018; Dafalla, 1975; Adams, 1977). This method works as a social mechanism to

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protect the community's cultural history, language, and traditions against outside influences while also creating internal solidarity. The community's exclusive social structure, where kinship and familial relationships are essential to social organization, is clearly impacted by this heritage. By establishing a tribal-based hierarchy, this approach guarantees that the Nubi's ideals and distinctive cultural customs be passed down to future generations unadulterated by outside cultural influences.

The prohibition of marriage with non-Nubi individuals establishes a robust social system that helps the community adapt to external pressures by limiting cross-cultural unions, thereby safeguarding its cultural distinctiveness. This tradition serves as a protective mechanism, ensuring that external influences do not dilute the unique characteristics of Nubi heritage. At the same time, it aligns with the community's collective goal of preserving its cultural legacy and perpetuating its customs across generations. By consistently achieving this objective, the practice underscores the community's commitment to maintaining its identity in the face of external challenges.

Additionally, by enhancing social ties and unity among participants, this ban promotes internal cohesion. Kinship links are essential to the social structure of the society, guaranteeing mutual support and shared ideals, and it strengthens a sense of collective identity. By upholding enduring cultural norms and values, which are essential to the continuation of Nubi identity, the tradition also upholds the moral foundation of the community. By being passed down through the generations, these values preserve a feeling of historical and cultural continuity. In the end, the practice is more than just a tradition; it is a calculated tactic for social stability and cultural sustainability. By addressing both the external need to protect cultural distinctiveness and the internal imperative to maintain social cohesion, the prohibition highlights the adaptive resilience of the Nubi community, ensuring its enduring vitality in an increasingly globalized world.

2. Engagement Ceremony

As a formal forum where the groom's family communicates their honorable intentions to the bride's family, the engagement ceremony is essential to traditional marital customs. This process goes beyond simple formalities and serves as a calculated tool to improve relationships between members of the family, foster confidence, and create draft agreements on important marriage-related topics like the dowry and event dates. Families are positioned as the main mediators to guarantee that the marriage process complies with cultural norms, and the engagement ceremony serves to support traditional bargaining frameworks within the larger social structure (Dafalla, 1975; Nassar, 2022).

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There are four key components to this event. Families' ability to adjust to local conventions and make sure their practices meet cultural standards is a clear example of the adaptability component. Reaching consensus on important marital factors creates a clear framework for the upcoming union and helps achieve the goal. The development of stronger social ties between families, which promotes a feeling of belonging and respect for one another, is a reflection of the integration factor. Finally, latency is demonstrated in the preservation of traditional values, ensuring cultural continuity and reinforcing the community's moral and ethical foundation. Thus, the engagement ceremony is not merely a cultural ritual; it serves as a functional mechanism that underpins social stability and harmony. By addressing both immediate practicalities and the broader perpetuation of cultural heritage, this tradition plays a crucial role in maintaining the social fabric of the community.

3. The Announcement of Marriage Approval Ceremony

In the Nubi community in Egypt, the declaration of marriage permission is a crucial occasion that not only codifies the agreement between families but also fulfills an important social role as a means of societal acceptance of the marriage (Ahmed, 2009). The groom's financial and symbolic commitment to the bride is reflected in the dowry and apparel presented as symbols of approbation during this ritual, which validates the relationship within the social framework of the society. The community members' enthusiastic involvement in this event highlights the extended family's importance in creating a sense of community and belonging. The Nubi community promotes social cohesiveness, maintains the continuity of customs, and gives the recently established marital relationship social validity through this interaction.

Within the societal structure, this event serves four vital purposes. First, the community's ability to adapt to individual needs within its traditional structure is demonstrated by the way it modifies the dowry based on the family's financial situation. This adaptability guarantees the continued relevance and sustainability of traditional activities. Second, the community's endeavor to accomplish its main aim—the formalization of a valid and peaceful marriage—reflects goal attainment. This objective emphasizes how crucial marriage is as the cornerstone of social structure. Third, the event is supported by the active participation of all society levels, which promotes social solidarity and strengthens communal cohesion. In addition to enhancing interpersonal ties, the ceremony's group involvement preserves common customs and values. Last but not least, symbolic actions and rituals carried out throughout the event, such as the presenting of attire and ceremonial rites, preserve latency, or the retention of cultural patterns. By ensuring that cultural norms and values are passed down to future generations, these customs help to preserve the cultural history of the community. In summary, the announcement of the marriage approval ceremony serves as a crucial

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mechanism for preserving the Nubi community's social structure's stability, continuity, and harmony in addition to being a social event.

4. The Ritual of the Elderly Woman Carrying a Woven Plate

In Nubi wedding rituals, the custom of an older woman strolling while holding a woven plate is used to both announce the marriage to the public and involve the larger female community in the planning process (Ahmed, 2009). The elderly woman, who is frequently seen as a keeper of culture and knowledge, leads the procession in this custom. As a sign of the union and a tacit invitation for everyone in the community to participate in the festivities, she is carrying an adorned woven plate. Women who actively participate in the wedding preparations develop a sense of unity through this ritual, which is essential to the social structure. It also ensures the existence of customs that have been passed down through the ages.

This custom emphasizes how important women are to the Nubi community, as they play a key role in upholding and passing down social and cultural norms. Through community participation in these events, the ritual emphasizes the dual function of continuity and adaptation. The Nubi people continue this custom in order to preserve their cultural heritage, even in the face of outside cultural influences. The ceremony reflects a well-planned social event and accomplishes the shared objective of guaranteeing the wedding's successful announcement and community involvement. This demonstrates the achievement of group goals and the community's capacity to maintain social cohesiveness. The ritual enhances social solidarity in terms of integration, especially among women, who serve as a unifying factor in the community. The ceremony upholds traditional values and emphasizes the valued and essential role that women play in the community from the standpoint of cultural preservation. As a result, this practice serves as a tactical tool for upholding social and cultural order, going beyond its ceremonial purpose. It successfully connects the past and present, guaranteeing that customs will continue and that cultural identity will be passed down through the generations.

5. Delivery of Household Furniture

One important symbolic part in the marriage process, specially among the Nubi group in Egypt, is the delivered of household furniture from the prospective husband to the bride's family (Ahmed, 2009). This custom emphasizes the groom's economic function within the larger societal system and shows that he is prepared to take on the duties of married life. It goes beyond simply providing material things. This act is a crucial step in starting a new household and socially shows the groom's dedication to upholding his moral and material duties to the bride's family. Practically speaking, the delivery of furniture highlights the groom's role in supplying necessary resources and shows his readiness and flexibility in satisfying the material demands of family formation.

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Moreover, this practice fosters integration by strengthening the bonds between the families of the bride and groom. It builds trust and reinforces social solidarity, facilitating harmonious relationships between extended family networks. Finally, in the context of cultural continuity (latency), the delivery of household furniture serves as a long-standing norm passed down through generations. It preserves the social agreements and readiness for household formation inherent in the Nubi marriage structure. Overall, the delivery of household furniture transcends its material function, acting as a powerful social symbol that reinforces the values and structural integrity of the community. This tradition not only solidifies familial ties but also perpetuates the cultural and social frameworks that define the Nubi marriage system.

6. The Henna Night Ceremony

Within the community's social and cultural framework, the Henna Night ceremony is crucial in Nubian marriages. Its main function as a symbolic ceremony is to give the prospective bride blessings and well wishes (Ahmed, 2009; Dafalla, 1975). As the ritual's keepers and practitioners, elder women are essential to this tradition because they help the younger generation understand the community's ideals. Their participation highlights the critical role that women play in maintaining cultural identity while also signifying respect for tradition and the social order. The social impact of this ritual lies in strengthening solidarity among community members, fostering a sense of interconnectedness through a ceremony that integrates values of unity and blessings. The Henna Night serves as a mechanism for maintaining the adaptive dimension of the community by aligning traditional practices with the needs and expectations of the younger generation. The goal attainment function is realized through the blessings imparted during the ritual, fulfilling the social objective of ensuring prosperity and success in marriage.

Additionally, the ritual enhances the integration of society by reinforcing social bonds formed during the ceremony. Through the pivotal role of women in safeguarding traditions, the practice fosters collective participation and mutual support among community members. Lastly, the ritual contributes to latent pattern maintenance by ensuring the intergenerational transmission of social and cultural values associated with marriage. This continuity safeguards the stability and cultural heritage of Nubian society. The Henna Night ceremony is essentially more than just a private affair for the bride; it is a communal mechanism that maintains balance and peace in the Nubian society. Assuring the long-lasting legacy of Nubian customs, the ceremony demonstrates the dynamic interaction between personal experiences and group identity by fusing cultural preservation with social cohesiveness.

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7. Zikir, Religious Poems, and Communal Prayers with the Extended Family and Village Community

In the wedding traditions of the Nubi ethnic group, zikir (remembrance of God), religious poetry, and communal prayers involving the extended family and the local community play a vital role in granting spiritual blessings to the bride and her family (Ahmed, 2009). These practices extend beyond mere ritual ceremonies, embodying profound social dimensions that strengthen the community's religious bonds. During the prayer sessions, the entire community participates in creating an atmosphere imbued with blessings, emphasizing the significance of spiritual relationships in social life. Symbolically, these activities convey the community's collective blessings, transforming marriage into not just a union of individuals but a bond between families and society. The social impact of these gatherings underscores the dominant role of religion in the community's social structure, fostering emotional closeness among individuals and solidifying community solidarity.

Zikir and prayer serve societal purposes that are strongly related to social theory's idea of integration. By encouraging interdependence between people and groups, this process strengthens the social fabric of the community and guarantees the upkeep of the social system. In this situation, religion serves as an integrative mechanism that binds people together in common goals, governs social interactions, and connects them through common norms. Through the transmission of religious beliefs to future generations, zikir and prayers serve to reinforce societal control throughout latency, guaranteeing long-term stability. As a result, these occasions serve both social purposes within the context of marriage and aid in the long-term maintenance of the social order in the community.

8. Bathing in the Nile River

In addition to serving as a ritual act, taking a bath in the Nile River is an important part of the local community's cultural customs and a way to foster social cohesion (Ahmed, 2009). Through the imagined holiness of submerging oneself in this historically significant river, individuals sense spiritual rebirth in this activity, which socially represents profound self-purification. As a result of the community's men's collective participation, this activity strengthens familial bonds and forges a common identity based on long-standing local customs. In this case, taking a dip in the Nile River is more than just a physical custom; it is a show of unity that strengthens the social institutions that are in place.

The adaptive function of this activity clearly demonstrates its societal importance in preserving community stability. As the community adapts to their surroundings and maintains a link to inherited cultural aspects, the ritual demonstrates how they integrate with the natural environment. From the standpoint of goal achievement, this activity acts as a means of achieving group goals like enhancing social ties and cultivating a more expansive sense of collective identity. It guarantees the relevance of ancient practices in

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modern life by raising community awareness of them. This ritual's capacity to bring people from different social backgrounds together and foster a sense of cooperation and camaraderie among male participants exemplifies its integrative function. Bathing in the Nile River is essential to maintaining traditional norms and values in terms of latency or pattern preservation. These cultural underpinnings ensure that these ideals are upheld and passed down to future generations, making them the cornerstone of social solidarity. This comprehensive examination underscores the multidimensional significance of bathing in the Nile, illustrating its crucial contribution to both the spiritual and social fabric of the community.

9. Role of Advice from Religious Teachers

Particularly for aspiring grooms, the counsel given by religious educators is crucial in forming character and preserving religious principles in the society (Ahmed, 2009). Providing fundamental understanding on religious beliefs, ethics, and social obligations that are necessary for family life is the main social purpose of such counsel. This approach fosters a deeper sense of moral and spiritual commitments in people, going beyond simple knowledge transfer. This advice has a significant influence on social structures since religious instructors emphasize their importance in shaping and guiding society life in addition to acting as spiritual mentors. By incorporating religious principles into everyday activities, their counsel enhances their standing as essential players in promoting social welfare. They also play a significant role in establishing the values required for a happy family life.

From a functionalist perspective, the adaptive function is evident in the efforts of religious teachers to contextualize religious teachings within the evolving social landscape. This guidance equips prospective grooms to navigate the complexities of social dynamics through relevant religious principles. The goal attainment function underscores how their advice helps individuals and communities achieve social and spiritual objectives, such as building a harmonious family (*sakinah*) and addressing life's challenges with wisdom and responsibility. The integration function highlights the role of religious teachings as a foundation for family life, fostering solidarity among individuals within the community and maintaining social harmony through the application of religious principles in daily activities. The latency function (pattern maintenance) demonstrates the essential role of religious teachers in preserving established social and spiritual norms. They ensure that these values are safeguarded and passed down to subsequent generations, contributing to the continuity and stability of social structures amidst the ongoing changes in society. Overall, the advice from religious teachers not only reinforces social structures through spiritual development but also ensures the preservation of social stability in the face of ever-evolving societal transformations.

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10. Animal Sacrifice Rituals

The symbolic ritual of animal sacrifice is ingrained in the community's social structure (Ahmed, 2009). In addition to being an expression to thank God, it also makes everyone happy and strengthens their bonds with one another. This custom, which is frequently carried out at important occasions like religious festivals or particular social gatherings, shows how deeply community members care for one another and are connected. In addition to its religious significance, the rite serves as a means of economic redistribution, especially when it comes to giving out sacrificial meat to those in need. This action fosters peaceful relationships within the community, upholds equitable social institutions, and strengthens the values of social justice.

The ritual's importance goes beyond sharing tangible possessions because it strengthens social and emotional ties, creating a wider solidarity network. It performs several vital societal roles at the same time. The ritual's adaptability is demonstrated by its capacity to provide for the material needs of the community, especially by feeding those who are less fortunate. This practice greatly enhances the general well-being of the community. In addition, the ritual symbolizes the accomplishment of social and spiritual objectives, expressing thanks as a group and strengthening horizontal relationships between people. Additionally, animal sacrifice acts as a unifying factor, bringing together disparate society components—such as those with more wealth and those in need—into a unified and mutually beneficial structure. The social fabric is strengthened by this integration, which fosters group cohesion. The ritual is also essential for maintaining cultural customs and standards. Values like thankfulness, solidarity, and sharing are ingrained in this practice and have been handed down through the years as an essential component of the community's cultural legacy. Animal sacrifice is therefore a crucial social process as well as a religious ritual. Communities can confront and adjust to a range of social and economic issues because it maintain societal stability and continuity.

11. The Distribution of Food to the Poor

Food distribution to the underprivileged is a deep social practice that highlights our shared duty for society's vulnerable populations (Ahmed, 2009). This deed is a concrete representation of equality and communal solidarity as well as a meaningful statement of social care. In some social settings, like wedding festivities, the act of sharing food among the bride and groom's family expresses a sincere desire to spread joy while also strengthening ties with the larger community. This custom creates a favorable impression of the bride and groom's family by presenting them as leaders who are devoted to helping the larger community in addition to being mindful of their welfare. Food distribution serves as a potent tool for fostering justice and balance within societal systems as well as for bolstering social networks, making it more than merely a charitable endeavor. This practice embodies a number of social roles that support societal stability and cohesiveness. The

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way the participating families pool their resources to meet the needs of less privileged community members demonstrates the adaptive nature of this ritual. By doing this, they provide a material and emotional sort of comfort, easing the financial strain on these communities.

In addition, the distribution of food symbolizes a shared desire to promote peace and strengthen ties amongst people. This common objective draws attention to the rituals' deeper function, which is to foster community cohesion and wellbeing. In addition, the act facilitates the integration of people from various social backgrounds into a single network of mutual assistance. This inclusiveness promotes a common identity that cuts across social barriers and fortifies group cohesion. The practice's contribution to the preservation of fundamental cultural values is another important aspect. Food distribution supports the moral and cultural fabric of society by encouraging values like equality, responsibility, and mutual aid. These values serve as a foundation for societal cohesion and cultural continuity, ensuring that critical norms are passed down through generations. In summary, providing food to the underprivileged has significant ramifications that go beyond its obvious financial advantages. Social continuity, cultural stability, and collective resilience are all facilitated by it. By tackling economic disparities and strengthening group values, this approach maintains the fragile balance of social structures and guarantees that links to the community are strong and long-lasting.

12. The Implementation of the Marriage Contract Ceremony

A significant turning point in the marriage process is the solemnization of the marriage contract, which is a formal commitment observed by family members (Nassar, 2022; Ahmed, 2009; Dafalla, 1975). This custom represents the validity of the marriage in social, religious, and legal contexts. The marriage contract has deep symbolic meaning in addition to its formal role. In addition to meeting the legal witness requirement, the presence of extended family and relatives shows that the couple is accepted by society as an essential member of the larger community. Furthermore, the ceremony underscores the role of the extended family as a cornerstone in the social structure, fostering organized intergenerational relationships and hierarchies. In community-oriented societies, the marriage contract also functions as a medium to strengthen collective identity and build social cohesion through symbolic participation by community members.

The practice of the marriage contract can be analyzed through the lens of four primary social system functions. Adaptation is evident in how society adjusts its social mechanisms and cultural resources to meet the formal requirements of marriage within legal and religious frameworks. Goal attainment is reflected in the collective objective of reinforcing the family institution and legitimizing marital relationships as a foundation for social stability. Integration is apparent in the way the ritual brings individuals, extended families, and communities together into a unified system of mutual

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support, enhancing solidarity and interconnectedness. Finally, latency or pattern maintenance is embodied in the preservation of traditional values, such as respect for familial institutions, religious norms, and social responsibilities, which form the bedrock of cultural continuity and societal stability. Thus, the solemnization of the marriage contract is not merely a formal event but a significant ritual that plays a critical role in reinforcing the social and cultural order of the community.

13. The Wedding Celebration

As a communal expression of delight, the wedding celebration is an essential component of traditional marital customs (Nassar, 2022; Ahmed, 2009; Dafalla, 1975). In addition to honoring the bride and groom's happiness, the ceremony represents happiness for everyone, encouraging involvement from relatives, extended family, and the community at large. These kinds of events foster stronger social bonds throughout the community, opening doors for more intimate social contact and group cohesion. In addition to providing possibilities for blessing sharing through communal dining and togetherness, the participation of multiple parties at these events serves to further solidify the bride and groom's families' social standing within society systems. In societies that highly value communal bonds, wedding celebrations play a crucial role in fortifying social networks and preserving collective values.

These events can be analyzed through four primary functions. The aspect of adaptation is evident in the strategic management of economic and cultural resources to organize an event that involves multiple stakeholders. The goal attainment dimension reflects the collective objectives of strengthening interpersonal relationships within the community and elevating the social status of the families involved by hosting an inclusive and meaningful event. Integration is manifested through the participation of various social strata, fostering harmony and social solidarity via collective involvement. Meanwhile, latency, or pattern maintenance, is realized through the preservation of traditional values, such as respect for family, norms of sharing happiness, and collective celebration, ensuring the continuity of the community's social and cultural structures. Wedding celebrations transcend their function as mere festivities, emerging as significant social mechanisms that enhance societal stability and integration.

14. Planting Trees Together

The symbolic and ceremonial act of planting trees together at marriage ceremonies highlights the newlyweds' obligation to maintain the environment and their ties to the community (Ahmed, 2009; Adams, 1977). In terms of society, this action shows a dedication to making a lasting difference that will improve the environment and fortify social ties. The couple's decision to plant trees represents their shared ecological responsibility and their desire to support environmental conservation as a way to invest in society and culture for coming generations. Additionally,

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because it involves community participation in an event that brings the couple and the larger society together, this activity has an integrative role. In traditional communities, planting trees together fosters a sense of solidarity, strengthens collective ownership of the environment, and enhances the collective bond between the couple and the community.

The activity can be analyzed through four primary functions. Adaptation is reflected in how the couple and the community utilize environmental resources as symbols of their relationship while introducing sustainable practices. Goal attainment is evident in the effort to strengthen the couple's connection to the community and demonstrate tangible ecological responsibility. Integration occurs as the activity serves as a meeting point for community norms, wedding traditions, and sustainability values, creating social harmony in the process. Lastly, latency, or pattern maintenance, is realized through the preservation of collective values such as environmental responsibility, social solidarity, and respect for deeply rooted community traditions. Planting trees together transcends mere symbolism, functioning as a mechanism to reinforce social and ecological stability within the community. This activity integrates traditional and modern values, encouraging long-term ecological stewardship and social cohesion.

The AGIL Function in the Sustainability of Nubi Traditions

The AGIL theoretical framework, developed by Talcott Parsons, is employed to analyze the elements within the Nubi community, highlighting the four essential functions that underpin social systems. According to Parsons' AGIL theory, the Nubi society sustains its marriage traditions through various mechanisms that fulfill four main functions: adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency. An analysis of these traditions reveals how each of these functions interrelates to ensure cultural continuity and social stability within the community.

An example of adaptation in action is the ban on marrying non-Nubi people, which shows how Nubi society adjusts to outside pressures that can jeopardize their cultural identity. This restriction promotes exclusivity in social ties, internal cohesion, and the preservation of the integrity of regional customs and language. For example, this marriage law serves as a safeguard against the effects of globalization in addition to influencing societal standards. The community can preserve its cultural identity in a constantly shifting environment thanks to the system.

In the aspect of goal attainment, traditions such as engagement ceremonies and the announcement of marriage approval underscore the importance of sustaining customs and building harmonious families as collective goals. During the engagement, negotiations between the families of the bride and groom regarding aspects such as the dowry demonstrate a concrete effort to reach an agreement aligned with cultural norms. These rituals reflect not only individual goals but also societal objectives, ensuring that marriages are conducted according to tradition and contribute to

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community stability. This success highlights the social function of marriage customs as a tool for achieving social harmony.

The integration dimension is clearly reflected in collective rituals such as the application of henna or communal dhikr. The active participation of community members, including extended families, strengthens social networks and fosters solidarity. Traditions like the communal bathing in the Nile River further enhance social bonds among men within the community, demonstrating how customary rituals act as social glue. Through this integration, the community's norms and values are reinforced, thereby creating essential cohesion within the social structure of the Nubi people.

Finally, the function of cultural preservation (latency) is realized through the symbolism and traditions passed down, such as the gifting of clothing during marriage announcements or advice from religious teachers (guru ngaji). These traditions ensure that noble values, such as respect for family and spiritual beliefs, are preserved and transmitted across generations. Rituals like planting trees together symbolize the commitment of newlywed couples to both environmental and social sustainability, ensuring that collective values remain an integral part of community life. By integrating these symbols, the Nubi people ensure that societal changes do not erode their cultural stability.

In addition to being long-standing, Nubi marriage practices are essential for maintaining social cohesion and continuity through the four AGIL functions. These elements are connected to one other in complementary and interdependent ways. In order to help achieve goals, the adaptation function makes use of local resources that embody the tribe's identity. At the same time, integration—which involves the entire community—is the only way to achieve these aims and guarantee that the customs are widely accepted. In the end, these roles all cooperate to maintain social and cultural norms through latency, which serves as the cornerstone of the Nubi people's cultural sustainability. Together, these four roles demonstrate how marriage customs serve as a harmonic mechanism for preserving the Nubi community's social stability, cultural sustainability, and sense of collective identity. Participation in these activities as a group strengthens an egalitarian social network, guaranteeing that everyone feels accepted and included in their social structure.

As a result of this analysis, the Nubi marriage tradition plays a central role in preserving cultural identity and social stability. The analysis, based on the AGIL framework, demonstrates how each function interrelates to support the continuity of both tradition and social structure. In this context, Parsons' theory provides a profound understanding of how traditional societies, such as the Nubi people, maintain harmony between individuals, communities, and the environment. Marriage traditions are not only cultural manifestations but also the foundation that strengthens solidarity, resource redistribution, and intergenerational continuity of values.

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CONCLUSION

This study found that the marriage tradition of the Nubian community in Egypt plays a central role in preserving cultural identity, social stability, and the continuity of traditional norms. Through the application of Talcott Parsons' AGIL framework, the research demonstrates that the function of adaptation is reflected in efforts to protect customs, such as the prohibition of marriage with non-Nubians. Meanwhile, goal attainment is evident in various rituals, such as engagements and wedding announcements, which emphasize the importance of family and community harmony. The integration dimension is manifested through collective activities, such as joint prayers and the use of cultural symbols like henna, while pattern maintenance is reinforced through rituals and values passed down across generations, such as the role of religious teachers in guiding the community's morality.

The primary contribution of this study to the AGIL theory lies in applying the concept of structural functionalism to explain how marriage traditions serve as mechanisms for adaptation and stabilization within the context of a traditional society facing globalization challenges. Unlike previous studies that focused on linguistic or ecological aspects of the Nubian community, this research provides a novel perspective by demonstrating how marriage institution's function both as tools for cultural preservation and as a medium for social integration. This study underscores the relevance of the AGIL framework in understanding the complex social functions in both modern and traditional societies.

However, the study has limitations, particularly in the scope of empirical data, which is largely based on literature analysis without direct fieldwork through interviews or observations. Future research could expand on this study by employing qualitative, field-based methods to explore individual experiences of marriage traditions and analyze the dynamics of tradition change among the younger generation of the Nubian community. Additionally, cross-cultural studies could be conducted to compare similar social mechanisms in other communities, thereby enriching the perspective on the relevance of local traditions in a global context.

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