

## On Uighur Wedding Traditions and Change

*Uygur Düğün Gelenekleri ve Değişimi Üzerine*

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### **Abstract**

The wedding event, which constitutes one of the important transition periods of life, brings happiness to the family. It also brought a variety of cultural structures among the Uighur Turks. In the article, " Uighur wedding traditions and contemporary Uighur wedding culture change," 'mehir' revolution was discussed by sociological methods. Also, it includes comparing the wedding customs in Turkey and the capital city of the Uighur autonomous region, Urumqi, for example. The modern transformation of Uighur society has accelerated with the continuous progress of the modernization process. Some customs are now shortened at wedding ceremonies. Moreover, *toyluq* is also on rise therefore some people make it difficult to make a wedding.

**Keywords:** Uighur Culture, Marriage, Customs, Wedding Ceremonies, Mehir, Toyluq

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## Öz

Yaşamın önemli geçiş dönemlerinden birini oluşturan düğün olayı aileye mutluluk getirir. Ayrıca Uygur Türkleri arasında çeşitli kültürel yapılar getirmiştir. Makalede, "Uygur düğün gelenekleri ve çağdaş Uygur düğün kültürünün değişmesi", "mehir" devrimi sosyolojik yöntemlerle tartışıldı. Ayrıca, Türkiye'deki düğün geleneklerini ve örneğin Uygur özerk bölgesinin başkenti Urumçi'yi ele alarak çağdaş Uygur düğün adetleri içerildi. Uygur toplumunun modern dönüşümü, modernleşme sürecinin sürekli ilerlemesiyle hızlanmıştır. Düğün törenlerinde artık bazı gelenekler kısaltılmasına rağmen üstelik toyluq da artmaktadır. O yüzden Uygur toplumunda düğün yapması gitikçe zor olduğu makalede söz konusudur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Uygur Kültürü, Evlilik, Örf-adet, Düğün töreni, Mehir, Toyluq

## Introduction

The founders of sociology, particularly Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, looked at the grand sweep of history, searching for an understanding of how and why societies change. Many contemporary sociologists continue to be intrigued by these “big questions” (Michael Hughes, Garolyn J.krohler 2013:433). The major sociological perspectives on social change, which affect the reason and change in Uighur marriage ceremony, fall into these categories: evolutionary perspectives, cycling perspectives, functionalist perspective.

In a culture, a nation’s value judgment, pleasure, thinking, beliefs are found (Adem Aydemir 2013). Even if the culture and belief of Turkish kinsmen are the same, we see that they have different traditional customs according to regions. The elements of culture, show some changes by obeying the conditions of time and space (Sibel Turhan Turna 2006). The functional meaning of a science field that makes evaluations about folk culture, with the development of social economics is lost. Some of our habits have been eliminated and some of them are continued.

The German scholar Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) contended that culture passes through the same stages of growth, and decline as individuals which is a period of development. This is followed by maturity, eventual decline, and death. Based on his examination of eight cultures, Spengler said that each culture possesses a life span of approximately 1000 years. Western culture has emerged about A.D 900, and therefore is close at hand (Michael Hughes, Garolyn J.krohler 2013:433).

There are three ceremonial ceremonies in Turkish folklore: birth, wedding and death (Adem Aydemir2013). The wedding event, which constitutes one of the important transition periods of life, brings happiness to the family. It brought a variety of cultural structure among the Uighurs. In the presence of the family, marriage and wedding traditions from past to present, are important matters in the Turkish world.

The concept of marriage is actually thought to be the beginning

of sexual life and raising children. One of the cases that lead individuals to have different status is defined by different thoughts. The concept of marriage for women in the town of Tarim<sup>1</sup> means to establish a family. The family, which is the smallest organization of society, is a result of marriage between two young people.

We know that the marriage is different in all countries and societies. In order to bring two young people in Uighur Autonomous Region, the two families make weddings under the testimony of their relatives and friends. The fact that the wedding traditions have different traditions, the *Toyluq*<sup>2</sup> is getting higher. In the past, due to the lack of good economic situation, there were incidents of kidnapping. Nowadays, these events are very few. One of the oldest marrying traditions in Turkish culture is to kidnap girls. Especially in the old Turks, marriage and girl abduction were in the form of looting. Even in legitimate marriages among Altay and Yakut Turks, kidnapping was also occurred (Tezcan 2013, Filiz Göven 2016).

### Literature Research method

In this research, Historical literature, Intercultural comparison studies, observation methods have been used. Moreover, I gathered information from the foreign research literature on the marriage and marriage customs.

The study of marriage has been developed abroad and has also been produced with the emergence of sociology. The famous sociologist Durkheim (1858-1917), wrote in his book, "Basic Forms of Religious Life," that social facts must be examined as objects. The religious phenomena are divided into two categories which are belief and ritual (Durkheim 1912). The difference between these two categories is between thought and behaviour, and discovery of religion against marriage (social life). In 1865, Scottish anthropologist J. McLennan (1827-1881) defined the concept of internal

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1 **Tarim River**, Chinese (Pinyin) **Talimu He** or (Wade-Giles romanization) **T'a-li-mu Ho**, chief river of the Uygur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang, extreme northwestern China.

2 *Toyluq* is uighur language.

and external marriage in his book "Original Marriage". It also included the proposal in marriage and family formation (Mabingli 2011:12). The problem of historical development is that robbery is a normal primitive tradition in marriage. The "Ancient Society", published in 1877, consisted number of researches with Iroquois Kızılderilileri. Based from the collection of several materials, they explained in detailed about the living environments, economic activities, family, menstruation, religion and language, especially the detailed and in-depth examination of the titles of marriages and relatives.

### Marriage way among Uighurs

Marriage refers to the most basic institutions and activities that provide human reproduction, social continuity, and the development of society. In other words, the combination of men and women, and the social system of a particular region is the relationship between traditional culture and morality as well as the identity of the local people. When we look at Kutadgu Bilg which was written in the past centuries by Yusuf Khas Hajip<sup>3</sup>, it was stated that, "if you want to get married, be very careful and find a good girl. If you are going to get married, try to get a family girl who is not touched and has not seen a man's face aside from you. And then she loves you like you and does not recognize anyone. If you are going to marry, marry a lower degree, you do not get close to your parents, and then you will be her captive. Listen to what people have experienced. If you are going to marry, marry a lower degree, you will spend your life in peace" (2,4475-4484,4486-4500,4502. beyitler, Mehmet Kara 1997). These are the reasons why all the Turkic nations consider the way to marriage is a merit. Because Uighurs people care very much about marriage, spousal choice and family formation, they choose the wife by the sense of morality.

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3 Yusuf Khas Hajib Balasaguni (Uighur: -ht11 na saw (يوسۇپ خاس ھاجىپ) morf rehposolihp dna ,reiziv ,namsetašt ,teop cikruT naisA lartneC yrutnec -nredom ni etanahK dinahK-araK eht fo latipac eht ,nuhgasalaB fo ytic eht nwonk si tahw fo štom dna giliB ugdatuK eht etorw eH .naštəkrut štəE yad ot derrefer osla si eH .krow siht ni sgnitirw nwo sih morf semoc ,mih tuoba .nigiro fo ytic sih morf devired **inugasalaB fusūY** sa

This is by choosing a wife who is clean, and therefore taking care of her family the same way as she has been raised. When young people reached a certain age of marriage, they were constantly being a topic of talk in Uighur families. The Uighur marriage is done by selecting wife, asking for girl (before wedding), and preparing ceremony for wedding. The two important stages of the wedding ceremony are: a. Nikah ceremony b. wedding ceremony.

**Wife selection:** For Uighurs, marriages in the first and second generations are endogamous. The marriage of non-Uighurs and especially girls are not welcomed. However, as a result of social policy processes, forced marriage or assimilation has emerged and they have been willing to marry other nations. However, the number of exogenous marriages in the third generation is increasing rapidly (Kasim Karama 2016). For Uighurs, they tend to choose their mates by respecting and complying with the wishes of their families. Even a calligrapher married a person who has been introduced by the family. In Uighurs, there is a proverb that uses the most in the selection of spouses: "*Ata razi, huda razi*" (Mexemet Rexim 1979). This means that if the father give consent, then "God is pleased with you". In his choices, it is not tolerated to choose those who are against their native culture and against the religion of Islam. Simply say, every young man must accept ethnic origin and the bondage of religion when he chooses a spouse. The Uighur people attach great importance to being belonging from the same ethnic group and from the same religion. In the south side of the Uighur Autonomous Region, Uighurs do not want to have a wedding with the Uighurs on the north side. Not because they do not like them, but because they do not want their daughters to go away (Dilibaer Tohtasin 2016).

**Asking for girl (before wedding):** For a man who comes to the age of marriage, his family sends a message to the suitable girl' family. There would be the presence of representatives who are deemed as respectful for the girl's side. The most important feature that the girl seeks from the male side is that he is from a noble family of Uighurs. There is a proverb that is very common among Uighurs: "*Oghul dadini doraydu, qiz annisini*" (Mexemet Rexim

1979). It means, the character of the man looks like his father, and the character of the girl resembles her mother. That is why before asking the girl, "Who is her mother?" is being asked. For Uighurs, there are thoughts that say, "How is her mother if her daughter is like this?" In the Uighur Autonomous Region, it is not welcomed to see a family with a village background to be seen as a family with a city in the same region. (Kasim Karama 2016). Uighurs take consideration in marriage preferences. The girl's parents invite her friends and relatives to decide the man's side. There is a saying among Uighur people that if the man received an initial bad impression from the representatives, the girl stays at home. She closes the way of marriage and creates thoughts that makes the marriage be difficult to be continued. The more interesting point is that there is no (*Nişan töreni*) engagement ceremony like in Anatolia. Among Uighurs, the engagement ceremony takes place (verbally) amongst themselves. Only the man's representative goes to the girl's house to discuss the wedding ceremony and the marriage date. Then the number of *toyluq* (the money given to the girl to make the wedding) can be negotiated, if one side is not satisfied, the contract may be distorted and the marriage may be withdrawn (Today, this event emerged as a problem in the civil society.) If the two sides agree, they begin preparations for the wedding.

**Preparation ceremony for the wedding:** Among Uighurs, the preparation ceremony is divided into two. One is *kichik chay* and the other is *chog chay*. This is a time of negotiation and it is a ceremony of giving gifts to both sides. Most importantly, it is the ceremony of giving *toyluq* (Bellér-Hann 2008a: 239; Rudelson 1997: 87; Dautcher 2009:119, Abdukérim Rehman et al. 2009a: 346, Rune Steenberg 2013:104). Negotiations are usually mediated by representatives of the two parties (*Wekil*) and continue after preparation ceremony (*chay üchirish*) (Abdurehim Hebibulla 2000: 242, Rune Steenberg 2013:104). Before the *kichik chay* is being done, the two sides decide for a day in which the male's mother's friends come to the girl's side to be guests. Male sides bring fabric, clothes, sweets and meals to girl's side. (In the past, the day of *kichik chay*, the cows and lamb were giving gifts.)

After *kichik chay* finished, *chog chay*'s date is decided mutually by the two sides. *Chog chay* can be a bit crowded depending on the financial situation. Some have invited from 50-100 people. *Chog chay* is connected to the male side. Because everything in *Chog chay* (hall cost) is paid by the girl. So *kichik chay* and *chog chay* are a little tedious in terms of financial costs for girls.

*Chog chay* is also one of the important stages to be passed among Uighurs. The *toyluq* is being given in front of the guests with two families being told to *Beyit* (couplet). In some areas, these stages are made on the day of the wedding. Nowadays, couplets are very common in the regions of Kumul, Turfan and Kashkar. This stage of the wedding is very interesting and makes the wedding very lively and beautiful.

Bride's mother with groom's mother saying couplet is as follows:

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| El xalayıq tola keldi,   | The whole world wanted ,   |
| Hich kishige baqmidim.   | I never looked at anybody, |
| Shunche heqler arisidin, | from all the people,       |
| Özlirige saqlidim.       | but I kept she for you.    |

(Abdurahim Ötkür 1985:310, Alimcan Nihayet 2017:4)

Then the mother of the groom (by groom's family)says:

|                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Bizmu oğul chog qilduq,  | We raised a son,                 |
| Molla- alim.             | Mullah <sup>4</sup> and scholar. |
| Jenim balam tolun ayim.  | my dear and full moon,           |
| keche-kündüz tilivalduq. | We wished day and night,         |
| Emdi berdi xudayim.      | Allah (God) gave me now.         |

(Abdurahim Ötkür 1985:310, Alimcan Nihayet 2017:4)

In this statement of couplet, beautiful wishes and expectations from new couples will be expressed. People wish the couple to early adopt a child. Bride's working hard at home in couplet. The couple is wished to live together for a lifetime.

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4 Mullah is (formerly) a Muslim scholar, teacher, or religious leader: also used as a title of respect.



**Nikah Ceremony:** The Nikah ceremony takes place at different times and forms in different regions of the Uighur autonomous Regions. In the southern regions of the Uighur Autonomous Region, Nikah is held a few days before the wedding ceremony. In some areas in the north, it is being held in the morning of the wedding day. According to Uighurs, Nikah is one of the important events of the marriage and thus indispensable step. Even if the legal wife has a relationship with her husband, she cannot enter a house without having a marriage because they are not yet Halal<sup>5</sup>. Nikah ceremony clearly stated that the wife made their husband halal. “*Dini Nikah*”(Religious marriage) is carried out by going to the girl’s house after morning prayer in witness of several people. After the Nikah ceremony is over, the bride and groom are fed with bread soaked in brine. There has some beliefs that, the one who eats the bread faster tend to have higher status in family. The meaning of bread dipped in salt water is somewhat similar to that of the groom drinking salty coffee in Turkey. In other words, the salty bread becomes too sour (hard to eat), and it is similar to the life after marriage. It has the bitterness and sweetness, and it means sharing happiness and pain to be experienced together in the family. In many parts of Central Asia, this salt ceremony has seen as the central part of the Nikah. Ismaelbekova describes the salt ceremony as the most meaningful part of the Nikah ceremony among the Uzbeks in osh in Kyrgyzstan (Ismaelbekova 2012:24-25, Rune 2013:131). After the Nikah ceremony, everyone is celebrating the bride with the groom and it is concluded by eating together. That time, the groom should give the money calls *Mexir xeqqi* (For “Uighurs” the *Mexir* is separate) to the bride. *Toyluq* (*girl goods*) are also different. Among Turkish people, they do not have *toyluq*, just have *Mehir parası*). The Imam, who made the *Mexir* money, depends on the economic situation of the place he lived. Then the groom should give it to girl.

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5 *Halal* (/hə'la:l//; Arabic: حلال *ḥalāl*, “permissible”), also spelled *hallal* or *halaal*, refers to what is permissible or lawful in traditional Islamic law. It is frequently applied to permissible food and drinks. Wife with Nikah ,halal in marriage.

**Toy (wedding) and Wedding Ceremony:** The word wedding is called “*Toy*” in Uighur language. It means “full”. The wedding day is the day for everyone to eat and drink (Ali Yakıcı, 1991:33). Wedding calls “*Düğün*” in Turkish. *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*<sup>6</sup>, written nine hundred years before us. The word “*tüğün*” means binding in *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*. It is understood that the word “*akd*” was used to connect a work in the translation of the Turkish version of Kuran before the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*. (Ali Yakıcı 1991:33)

On the wedding date, a wedding ceremony is held at both sides of the wedding hall. For people’s blessing and recognition, they invite their distant relatives and friends to share their happiness with them. They invite them to witness the big celebration in their life. The beautiful wishes of relatives and friends is the biggest gift for the groom and bride. After successfully finishing the Nikah ceremony, the bride usually goes to do makeup with “*Qoldash*” (*Qoldaş* is a bride’s female friend on the day of the wedding. The male friend of groom is together with the couple up to the end of the wedding). In general, the wedding party (girl’s party) starts at noon (12:00--13:00) and the party for the family of the male starts around five o’clock in the evening. (In the past, men’s side call their parent’s friends for lunch and also in the evening wedding. Nowadays it shortens the process and thus only do evening wedding). Other regions of the Uighur Autonomous Region such as in Kashkar, Atush, and Kumul, the wedding ceremony lasts for few days.

Abdurrehim Ötkür, the renowned author of the Uighurs, expresses the wedding ceremonies with depictions in his novel “*Iz*”. “ In the past, after the agreement between two middle-level families, the groom’s family bring some foods for wedding such as wheat, rice, oil, tea, and salt to the bride’s family. And then, wedding

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6 The Turkic scholar Mahmud Kashgari studied the Turkic languages of his time and wrote the first comprehensive dictionary of Turkic languages, the *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* (Compendium of the languages of the Turks) in 1072–74. It was intended for use by the Caliphs of Baghdad, who were controlled by the Seljuk Turks.

continues for few days. In the first day of the wedding, the guests of the groom are invited to the house of the bride. This was called “*Bash toy*”, the first wedding. The groom would come with friend for a wedding. Young men in the neighbourhood of the bride prevented the groom’s friends from entering the house by closing the door with a car wheel to carry out the “*Qiz Köriish*” (sight of the girl) customs. The groom’s friends have to open the door by taking that wheel. If they couldn’t take the wheel, the bride’s young brothers and friends would be mocked by the noise that they could not “get in”. So many lads come with the groom that day. After the Nikah, the men of the groom come and take this wheel and then hang it with a rope on a high tree. A few days later, the men of the bride would come and take the wheel.” (Abdurrehim Ötkür 1985:308-309, Alimcan inayet 2017:3)

In our contemporary Uighur wedding ceremonies, along with the improvement of the economic situation of the Uighurs, the (*toyluq*) girl’s goods are increased under the influence of space and time.

Between 1970-2000 years, we see the “*toyluq*” is changing in the capital city of the Uighur Autonomous Region, Urumqi. The way *toyluq* is being changed from nowadays. Today, it has been changed into giving a gold, car, money, and house. Some words about the wedding traditions in “*Dirwān Lughāt al-Turk*” stated that *toyluq* existed since the Kashkari periods and the these traditions are common (Abdurehim Hebibullah 2000:254, Abdürreşit Celil Qarluq 2005:38)

| Year | Toyluq(Girl goods)                                 | others |
|------|--|--------|
| 1970 | Radio, sewing maching, bicycle                     |        |
| 1980 | Electric fan, washing machine, refrigerator and TV |        |
| 1990 | Colored TV, refrigerator, washing machine          |        |
| 2000 | House, money, car, insurance                       | Gold   |

Between 1970-2000 *toyluq* changing in Urumqi (Dilibaer Tohtasin 2016)

The bride usually wears a western-style white dress in big global cities like Urumqi. In places where there are more Uighurs, like Kashkar, a western-style bridal gown contains the elements *Etles* which are seen as the traditional Uighur. After preparing the bride, she goes to her own family's wedding hall, having fun with her friends and waiting for the groom to arrive. If it is a two-story hall, the family's guests celebrate in the first floor. Young people are sitting in the second floor. The lounge tables are filled with food. They play music and dance in the hall. The groom comes to the girl side with his friends and musicians. The girls are trying to close the bride's room altogether. Bride's friends or sisters want money from the groom. Uighurs call this money "*Sanduoq puli*", (the groom is preparing the money.) If groom does not pay, they don't open the door. After the men sit a little "*Qiz Köchürüşh*" (carrying the bride) ceremony is to be held. According to the transfer of Ziya Gokalp, the bridegroom goes to the house of his future father-in-law with his friends in the Uighur Autonomous Region (Sibel Turhan Tuna 2006). The girl's father meets them at the door and takes them to home to do the ceremony (Sibel Turhan Tuna 2006). Here, the boy wraps a shawl around his neck and then gives it to the man who is in attendance. After this event, the water is brought. Bride's parents put a piece of bread in the water and present them to a couple. After this, the girl leaves her father's house and goes to her husband's house. But today, the shape of these processes has changed. In contemporary Uighur weddings, the groom and his friends come to the girl, everyone comes down to the girl's family and elders together with the bride and groom. The bride's mother wears a ring (or watch) to the groom and her daughter and she wears a red scarf on her own head to cover her face (a red scarf, as it is a symbol of happiness.) The traditional national cap of Uighurs' "*Doppa*"<sup>7</sup> is worn to the the groom by bride's mother. Then, while crying, tells her daughter to leave the family . The young women who were married in Altay Turks and

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7 The **Doppa** ((in Uyghur)), a square or round skullcap originating in the Caucasus and worn by Kazan Tatars, Uyghurs, Tajiks, Uzbeks. The *doppa* is derived from a Turkic, more pointed, ancestral cap.

who were the daughters of another house, were no longer able to get close to the quarry of their father's house because they were considered a stranger to her home (Ögel Bahaeddin 2002: 511). For a girl who went to her husband's house, was then considered a foreigner to her house or an "extract" for her own family (Uçar Erdem 2011:1). In old Turkish, the word "separation" is a verb, which means "dying" in the sense of concept (Eren Hasan 1999: 68). So while the young woman leaves her own family as a bride, her family cries for their daughter (Feyzğöğlü Nesrin 2010: 43).

Before they say goodbye, when the bride's father prays for their happiness, through two "Nan" baked bread on their head. Those in the ceremonial hall are praying to them and wishing happiness and goodbye. Then, they go to the groom's wedding hall with the other friends (Usually the groom's wedding hall is more fun.). "Qiz Köchürüsh" bride carriage ceremony is different according to the regions in Uighur Autonomous Region. In villages, since the wedding ceremonies are taking place in the house garden, he brings the girl directly home. At this stage, a few friends of the groom take the bride on the carpet and pass her on a fire (See photo Nr. 1). A carpet called "payandas" is laid on the entrance of the house to walk over the bride. Then she enters the house through a road called "Aq yolluq", which consists of flour and cotton (Kasım Karaman 2016: 9) It is clear that the bride's passing on fire is related to the belief of "Shamanism". But now in the villages, the wedding, in consideration to the economic situation, is taking place mostly in the halls. In cities such as Urumqi (the capital city of Uighur Autonomous Region) however, these traditions were simplified.



Photo Nr,1. The groom's friends are passing the bride over the fire.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.The reasons of changes of in the 'Uighur' wedding

The social changes affecting a society in different dimensions, in different areas or at different levels, are seen as the results of economic development, technical progress and population movements. In the sociology handbook of Doğar Ergun, it can be seen that the collective change is objective and subjective, both groups criteria are shaped within the specific historical process of each society and change from one society to another (Doğar Ergun 2013: 225). Moral, religious, political, etc. changes in behaviors are given subjective criteria. (Doğar Ergun 2013: 225).

Two problems arise spontaneously in all areas of social change before the problem of social change:

1. Each of the social changes that must be followed.
2. These are the reasons why individuals or groups who are constantly facing some social changes have to comply with these social changes or they fail to do so.

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8 [https://www.google.com/search?q=%E7%BB%B4%E5%90%BE%E5%B0%94%E6%97%8F%E5%A9%9A%E7%A4%BC&rlz=1C1CHBD\\_enDE818DE818&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiX7-n3na7gAhURCu-wKHeC1ByIQ\\_AUIDigB&biw=1280&bih=685#imgrc=dJg3HIAbyB7agM:](https://www.google.com/search?q=%E7%BB%B4%E5%90%BE%E5%B0%94%E6%97%8F%E5%A9%9A%E7%A4%BC&rlz=1C1CHBD_enDE818DE818&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiX7-n3na7gAhURCu-wKHeC1ByIQ_AUIDigB&biw=1280&bih=685#imgrc=dJg3HIAbyB7agM:)

According to sociologists, we know that the factors of social change are gathered in two factors as internal factors and external factors:

- a. Internal factors are pressures and tensions that can turn into conflicts, which can be dangerous and which create groups and classes in a particular community;
- b. External factors are the activities of other societies, which can change a particular society, due to the inaccurate reasons of this particular society.

**Political factors:** Politics refers to people and groups that acquire and exercise power. We commonly think of politics as a feature of governments. But there is also politics in religious groups, and educational groups, and scientific groups--even in friendship groups, and families (Michael Hughes, Garolyn J.Krohler 2013: 285).

But nowadays, political power has entered into the election of spouses in the Uighur Autonomous Region. Uighurs, either male or female, both sides of the family by adapting to the wishes of their families by letting them choose their spouses. In simple terms, every young man must accept ethnic origin and the bondage of religion when he chooses a spouse. According to some reports, in the Uighur Autonomous Region, it is obvious that by some pressures of political power the girl is chosen by other people .

**Social factors:** Formerly, because the economic situation of the Uighurs was not good, they had no expectations other than life, they would accept their lives quietly. At that time, 'toylyuq' disputes between families did not appear as a problem. Because everyone's economic situation is similar and the differences were very small, the parents of the two sides would want 'toylyuq' according to the economic situation of the other side. Le Bon's contagion theory depicted the crowd as characterized by a 'mob mind' that overpowers and submerges the individual. (Michael Hughes, Garolyn J.krohler 2013: 445) Because of all kinds of elements in the 'Uighur' society, sometimes in culture there are mechanisms of the contagion theory as: 1. *imitation* 2. *suggestibility* 3. *circular reaction*.



Increasingly the social system has directly affected the thoughts of people and was also affected by various folk traditions such as *mehir* (*toyluq*) and wedding ceremonies. In the context of globalization, urban 'Uighurs' was directly or indirectly influenced by western culture.

**Modernization** defines the process of transition from a society's traditional or pre-industrial social and economic arrangements to these characteristics of industrial societies (Michael Hughes, Garolyn J.krohler, 2013: 439). East Asia, including China, is the showcase of modernization theories. In this case, 'Uighur' marriage changed. For example, young people like to have a wedding on their birthday. With the rapid development of internet applications (e.g. WeChat), these events spread rapidly among the public.

**Economic factors:** Closely related to the functionalist perspective on social change is the evolutionary theory developed by sociologist Gerhard Lenski (Lenski and Lenski, 1987). Lenski said that, evolution depends largely on changes in a society's level of technology and its mode of economic production. These changes in turn have consequences for other aspects of social life, including stratification systems, the organization of power, and family structures (Michael Hughes, Garolyn J.krohler 2013: 434).

Economic is a relatively important part of material life. The economy is prone to change depending on people's requirements for quality living. The economy of the Uighur Autonomous Region, became more and more developed. The great change also slowly affected the demand for material life of the 'Uighur' people. Whether in marriage or in payment of the '*toyluq*', the economy has emerged as one of the main factors that determine the success or failure of marriage. With the development of society (under the influence of the economic situation) there have been some changes in the price of '*toyluq*'. My observation is that modern society's self-contempt is too high, and they try to raise their own value with money.

**Morality factors:** Ethical concern and moral evaluation are everywhere crucial aspects of social life. The emergence of sociol-



ogy and, more importantly, the figure of the sociologist, revealed not only the change in the field of knowledge, an epistemological change—but also changed the way a society could intervene morally and even religiously in its own ongoing existence (Bellah 1973). With the deterioration of the morality among the ‘Uighur’ society, the shape of the ‘*mehir*’ in Islam has changed and rose to ‘*toyluq*’, and instead of giving and marrying a girl, the word “selling daughter at the wedding” appeared.

## **2. The reason for the rise of ‘*toyluq*’ in marriage.**

This discussion aims to analyze the constitutive dynamics and reasons for rise of ‘*toyluq*’; as well as, expectations, perceptions and constraints emerged during the early phases of innovation and change. Therefore, this discussion enables us to understand the reasons of ‘*toyluq*’, by focusing on path dependency and change. This discussion analyzes following four aspects: (1) Effect of personal psychosocial factors; (2) Personal education factor; (3) Personal income factor; (4) Effect of media.

**a. Effect of personal psychosocial factors:** Together with the modernization and development of the ‘Uighurs’, they began to live and make cultural changes by imitating the developing countries. At the same time, they lost some of their personal and identity, and accepted some wedding culture from the West and they began to live in western style. From the beginning of the wedding until the end of the wedding, from the small wedding invitation, to the wedding ceremony, even the wedding’s honeymoon phase, phenomenon of change and new customs are observed.

The sociologists view the social movement as persistent and orderly effort for a relatively large number of people to change or resist change (Michael Hughes, Garolyn J.krohler 2013: 446). In the center of the concept of social movement, it is the idea that people intervene in the process of social change. The “face work” appear, rapidly change and affect ‘Uighur’ society. They work and live to prevent people from gossiping. That is why they are trying to do everything very well in front of others. Therefore, the need for girls’ goods in the wedding began to rise. Like collective behavior,

social movements often occur in times of rapid social change. It often give impetus to social change, in fact both occur outside the institutional framework that creates the daily life and breaks the known network of expectations.

**b. Personal education factor:** Human world view is different according to education. It is not difficult to agree on the '*toyluq*' (property of girls) among literate families. When we look at the 'Uighur' community, there are many people studying in cities. With the rapid development of people's economy in cities, we know that it is easy to negotiate '*toyluq*' even if it leads to globalization and modernization, and to destroy some customs in their culture. Ignorant people without religion or education, measure their values with money. In our daily life, we use a world status to refer to a person's ranking as determined by wealth influence. Some people say they can rise their status through high price of '*toyluq*'. But sociologists employ status differently. Status means a position in a group or society (Michael Hughes, Garolyn J. Krohler 2013: 55). Therefore, the personal education factor has a direct effect on the rise of '*toyluq*'.

**c. Personal income factor:** One of the important issues of personal income factor in 'Uighur' region has a direct impact on '*toyluq*'. In some families with good income, they give high amounts of money and gold to express their love and respect for the girl's family. They make the girl's goods to increase among the 'Uighur' people in this region and to have a daughter in the family by imitating him from the men, start to ask for a large amount of money for '*toyluq*'.

**d. Effect of media:** Diffusion is the process by which cultural traits spread from one social unit to another. Diffusion is a "people process" and hence is expedited or hindered by the social environment. Simply because a trait is functionally superior, does not necessarily ensure that individuals will adopt it. Much depends on the network of relationships that tie people together in patterns of meaningful communication and influence (Strang and Tuma 1993). Diffusion is facilitated by the instant flooding of information across national, class, ethnic and economic boundaries by means of the mass media.

We all know, we are living the internet cycle in the 21st century. There are sometimes harmful parties, even if the internet facilitates many of our jobs. On the internet, we begin to recognize the elements of the culture of others without knowing what they are. In 2011, Wechat started to be used in the 'Uighur' Autonomous Region. People began to share everything on 'Wechat'. However, people quickly learnt to imitate the wedding ceremony on the internet, the people in the city began to make a wedding in the western style, urbanization and modernization in the villages.

### Conclusions

As a former nation, there is a long history of Uighur and a long tradition of customs. The search for material life, with the development of society, is very evident in marriage. Many rituals were simplified in Uighur weddings and marriage traditions were more influenced by directions. The ceremony is one of the most important factors in marriage. Wedding ceremony is a social system, which includes religious factors, economic conditions, regional traditions, ethics and the absorption of foreign cultures. In this article, the removal and change of some traditions in the marriage path and wedding ceremonies of the Uighurs are discussed.

Even if it is the same among Turkish nations in every part of the world, it is understood that cultural structures are influenced by the influence of each geographic location and the religion we decide to embrace. We see that the social structure of 'Uighur' communities affected by time and space and with the modernization and development of the 'Uighurs', they began to live and make social changes by imitating the developing countries. At the same time they lost their personal identity and accepted some wedding culture from the west and started to live by following the western style. In this article, by examining the wedding traditions of the 'Uighur' people, the change of the contemporary wedding traditions, with the improvement of the economic situation, the rise of the '*toy luq*', emerge as a big problem for the families in the 'Uighur' society.

Social change confronts people with new situation and compels

them to fashion new forms of action. Many factors interact to generate changes in people's behavior and in the culture and structure of their society. Sociologists identify a number of particularly critical factors, the impact of which differs with the situation and the time and place.

One of the important issues is the personal income factor, which has a direct impact on girls' goods and causes 'toyluq' to be high. In families with some good income, they give high amounts of money and gold to express their love and respect for the girl's family. They cause 'toyluq' to rise in this region and imitate them and start asking for a high amount of money for 'toyluq' from the male side.

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