'Urfi marriage, an Egyptian Version of Cohabitation?**

우르피 결혼, 이집트 식 동거인가?

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Key words: 'urfi, muta'h, ishuhar, i'lan, maudhun

1) This paper is based on fieldwork conducted from September 2001 to August 2002 to ascertain "how global consumerism influenced the marriage pattern among young middle- and upper-class Muslims in contemporary Cairo". My special thanks go to the Institute for Gender and Women's Studies at the American University in Cairo (AUC), where I was affiliated as a research fellow. This paper, which is an integral part of my PhD thesis, was revised after presentation in the conference organised by Korean Association of Middle East Studies (KAMES) in May 2004 at KunKuk University in Seoul. Many thanks go to commentators.
I. Introduction

'Urﬁ1) marriage, which refers to "customary" marriage in Arabic, has always existed in Egypt. Even though its literal meaning refers to customary marriage, the term 'urﬁ marriage is more likely to be perceived as "secret" marriage from the contemporary Egyptian socio-cultural context.

According to Abaza,2) 'urﬁ marriage was traditionally carried out for practical purposes as it enables widows to remarry while keeping the state pension of their deceased husbands. Or, sometimes, 'urﬁ marriage serves the function of matchmaking men and women across classes. By marrying in 'urﬁ way, men from upper-class can marry a second wife who belongs to lower-class. In this way, men satisfied their sexual desires but retained their honour by preserving the marriage to their first wife and the community where he belongs to, and keeping their second marriage secret. It is possible to maintain the secrecy of 'urﬁ marriage, not only because it is formally unregistered in the courts, but also because the couple typically do not establish a joint home when they are involved in this type of marriage. Rather, they live in their respective houses, and are bound to each other as husband and wife through the unregistered marriage contract and sexual intercourse.

In Egypt, currently, there is a looming assumption that 'urﬁ marriage is getting popularity especially among the educated young Egyptians who face economic difficulties at the time of marriage due to inflation and unemployment. It is also said that 'urﬁ marriage are chosen by the young Egyptians who want to negotiate between the pressures to keep their respectable image as Muslim and to follow the waves of "liberal" westernisation.

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1) Transliteration of Arabic basically follows the ALA–LC Romanization manual. However, in order to preserve the Cairene pronunciation of Arabic, I replaced j with g and dropped the pronunciation of q. I also omitted diacritics except 'ayn. All Arabic words, except for proper names and standard English forms are italicised.

The aim of this paper is to explore whether 'urfi marriage is legitimate or illegitimate, and it will be analysed from the Islamic legal perspective. In addition, by introducing similar customs of marriage practiced in Saudi Arabia and Iran, I will illuminate gender-specific notion of 'urfi marriage. Finally, I will also analyse the reasons why 'urfi marriage is prevailing among the young people in contemporary Egypt, and it will be discussed in the context of politico-economic situations that the young people face today.

In order to explore the practices of 'urfi marriage among the contemporary young people in Egypt, I conducted unstructured in-depth interview with 54 people from younger generation and 11 people from parents' generation who belong to upper- and middle-class Muslims in Cairo. Among the 54 young people, 23 are males and 31 are females, whereas five are males and six are females from the parent's generation. For young people, the age range varied from the late teens (mostly students at the AUC, Cairo University or 'Ain Shams University) to people in their early thirties who are working after having completed their university education. As for the parent's generation, they had married in the late 1960s or the early 1970s and had experience of working following a university education.

II. Conditions of legitimate marriage: from the Islamic legal perspective

Marriage, divorce, and inheritance in Egypt are governed not by the Civil Code but by Shari'a (Islamic law), as codified in the 1920 and 1929 Laws of Personal Status. Islamic law stipulates the "fundamentals" of marriage and "preconditions" for its validity. These include the existence of syghah (form), consisting of ijab (response) and qbul (acceptance); the principles regarding the prospective husband and wife; and the existence of a legal guardian, the wali.
at the wedding. Few religious leaders accept that a woman can marry on her own. Rather, the position of the majority religious leaders is that "no marriage is valid when contracted by a woman on her own behalf." Islamic law stipulates that the wali should be one of her paternal Muslim male relatives (usually the father), sane, mature, and 'adl (of good character), and not be in ihram (state of ritual consecration of the Mecca pilgrim) for the hajj (pilgrimage) or 'umrah (a lesser pilgrimage).

Islamic law states that two witnesses must be present at the signing of the marriage contract to ensure the fitness of the conditions of marriage. They are typically selected from among the relatives or friends of each family. The role of two witnesses is to attest that there are no legal impediments to the marriage, such as, for instance, if the couple is in a blood, foster, or affinal relationship; the existence of a previous marriage or of triple divorce; social inequality in terms of class and family background; difference of religion; and temporary obstacles such as 'idda (referring to a period of waiting by the

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7) ibid., 35.

8) Chapter 4, verse 23, of the Qur'an stipulates those relations that men are prohibited from marrying: "Forbidden unto you are your mothers, your daughters, and your sisters, and your father's sisters, and your mother's sisters, and your brother's daughters, and your sister's daughters, and your foster-mothers, and your foster sisters, and your mothers-in-law, and your stepdaughters who are under your protection [born] of your women unto whom ye have gone in, but if ye have not gone into them, then it is no sin for you to marry their daughters] and the wives of your sons who [spring] from your own loins. And [it is forbidden unto you] that ye should have two sisters together, except what hath already happened [of that nature] in the past. Oh! Allah is ever forgiving, Merciful." (Pickthall, cited in Antoun, 1972: 122-3)
woman after a previous marriage and before becoming engaged in another marriage). 9)

In addition to attesting the validity of the couple's marriage, another significant role of the two witnesses is to proclaim and announce (ishuhar and il'an) the marriage to the public. According to Islamic tradition and custom, announcing the marriage to the public is a way of separating "what is permitted (al-balal) from what is prohibited (al-haram)." 10) Traditionally, therefore, there has been gunfire, ululations of women, henna patterning stained on the skin, and loud music in the home of the bride's parents to notify neighbours of the marriage. Today, in the era of globalisation when highly-advanced technologies make the interconnectedness of people ever stronger and wider, the Internet has emerged as an additional way of announcing a couple's marriage to the public among the young people. Some young people upload files of their wedding scenes on the cyberspace for those who miss the wedding.

III. 'Urfi marriage in Egypt and similar marriage patterns in the Middle East

Today Egyptian television programmes and films often deal with the theme of 'urfi marriage practiced among young people. The following paragraphs describe scenes from one soap opera that was showing on Egyptian television, and which caught my attention when I was carrying out my research in 2001.

In one scene, a woman who is lying in a luxurious bedroom, refuses to eat a meal brought for her by her mother. In another scene, a man sits alone in a humble room suffering from heartburn because he cannot meet his lover. After a long while, he suddenly stands up and rushes to get out of his humble room. He

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decides to take his lover away from her house while her mother, who opposed their marriage because of the differences in social standing, is absent. The man and the woman succeed in escaping from the house.

At the Pyramids, the young couple whisper words of love to each other in the sunset, and decide to make their relationship "official" through an 'urfī marriage.

The scene changes and a group of young men and women set off to the seaside in a rented minibus. While on the bus, they sing and drum to express their great joy. Arriving at the beach, each couple walks along the seashore exchanging affirmations of love for each another. Having their friends around and signing marriage contracts as witnesses for each other, each couple is now married. They all head for a bungalow to consummate their marriages, except for one pair who are arguing. Having signing the marriage contract, the woman is hesitant about consummating the marriage, and the man, who is angry, leaves her at last after the argument with her.

The scene changes again. After having been married that day by 'urfī style, the first couple, who are standing outside the woman's house in the dark, are reluctant to leave each other. Finally, she enters her house after making an appointment for the following day.

The story of the soap opera dramatically shows the current situation of 'urfī marriage practiced among the Egyptian young people. It is difficult to obtain an accurate sense of the prevalence of 'urfī marriage due to its clandestine nature. However, it is believed that the practice of 'urfī marriage is quite prevalent especially among university students, and it threatens what seems to be an "Islamic" or "legitimate" way of marriage.

If we analyse the scenes described in the soap opera from the legal perspective of marriage, it will be obvious that 'urfī marriage lacks some of the most important conditions required in the legitimate Islamic marriage ceremony, e.g., the existence of a legal guardian, a wali, and a registrar of marriage, maudhun. In this regard, the recent 'urfī marriage practiced among the young has raised substantial debates concerning its legitimacy.

From a religious and legal perspective, 'urfī marriage might be seen as legitimate because it satisfies some of the important requirements of marriage, such as mahr and the two witnesses. In 'urfī marriage, however, the marriage
can be completed by payment of a minimal amount of *mahr*, such as 25 Egyptian piastres\(^{11}\) which is offered by a groom to a bride as a symbolic gesture, and by the presence of two witnesses. The two witnesses do not necessarily have to attest to marriage impediments. They can, in fact, be picked at random from strangers in the street or from friends on the university campus, as the soap opera illustrated. However, most Cairenes perceive 'urfi marriage as illegitimate type of marriage because it does not publicise marriage through *ishuhar* and *i'lan* (the proclamation and announcement of the marriage), not to mention the lack of a *wali* and a *maudhun*. More significantly, as the contract is not legally binding the couple's marriage, termination of marriage can be reached through removing the contract.

From a socio-cultural perspective, many see 'urfi marriage, along with its similar counterparts of *misyar* (ambulant, shifting, travelling) and *mut'ah* (enjoyment or pleasure) marriage, practiced respectively from Saudi Arabia and Iran, as a form of "legalised prostitution."\(^{12}\) In the *misyar* pattern of marriage, no economic obligations are requested from the man. In this type of marriage, the woman waives some of the rights she would have in an Islamic marriage. *Misyar* marriage sometimes happens among women who are getting older and are finding it increasingly difficult to marry. Therefore, rather than remaining unmarried, they choose to marry a man who is not able to fulfil normal marital duties like financial maintenance, or spending adequate time with her.

As for the *mut'ah* type of marriage, it is generally practised among the Shi'ites in Iran, and refers to a conditional arrangement by which the period of marriage between a couple is limited. From historical point of view, this type of marriage was believed to prevent adultery. A mufti from an Islamic website wrote about the origin of the *mut'ah* marriage:

> It was initially permitted because the Muslims were passing through what might be called a period of transition from *jahiliyya* (the

\(^{11}\) Around five American cents and three UK pence.

\(^{12}\) There has been dispute between Shi'ites and Sunnis concerning the legitimacy of *mut'ah* marriage. While the Shi'ites legitimise the *mut'ah* marriage, the Sunnis argue that *mut'ah* is not legitimate marriage because intercourse is lawful only within the permanent marriage or slave ownership. (Haeri, 1989: 61-2)
pre-Islamic period) to Islam. Fornication was widespread among the Arabs before the advent of Islam. After Islam, when Muslims were required to go on military expeditions, they were under great pressure as a result of being away from their wives for long periods of time. Some of the believers were strong in faith, but others were weak. The weak in faith feared that they would be tempted to commit adultery, which is a major sin, while the staunch in faith, on the contrary, were ready to castrate themselves—thus *mut’ah* marriage provided a solution to the dilemma in which both the weak and the strong found themselves. It was also a step toward the final legalization of the complete marital life in which the objectives of permanence, chastity, reproduction, love, and mercy, as well as the widening of the circle of relationships through marriage ties were to be realized.13)

In discussing the ambiguity between *mut’ah* marriage and prostitution, Haeri suggests that the more educated, urban Iranian middle-classes perceive *mut’ah* as legalised prostitution, whereas the more religiously-inclined Iranians view it as an Islamic substitute for the "decadent" western style of "free" male–female association.14) Interestingly, her discussion goes further into the various male–female perceptions of *mut’ah* marriage. For instance, Iranian women confer many more meanings on *mut’ah* marriage than men do, hoping for the marriage to be long–lasting even if it does not become permanent.

Furthermore, while women view the *mut’ah* marriage as a mechanism to facilitate a transition from their "flawed" marital status, as divorced or widowed women, to a "normal" one, as married women, men on the other hand regard *mut’ah* marriage as a pleasurable sport, viewing women as provisional objects who will satisfy repressed sexual needs and will take them away from the routines of daily life. In this regard, women perceive their temporary husbands as their main source of sustenance, whereas men view women as adding to their lives. Men generally assume that a woman’s motivation for seeking *mut’ah* marriage is to benefit from her financial needs being met, while women believe that a man marries mainly for sexual satisfaction.15)

13) "Islamic Ruling on mut’ah/ Marriage"; http://www.islamonline.net/fatwa/english/FatwaDisplay.asp?hFatwaID=37757
   "Misyar Marriage from an Islamic Perspective" http://www.islamonline.net/fatwa/english/FatwaDisplay.asp?hFatwaID=38854
14) Haeri, 1989: 6
In Cairo, just as in urban areas in Iran, there are noticeable differences between men and women in their attitudes towards 'urfi marriage. For instance, while women deny the option of marrying in the 'urfi tradition, men are more open to the possibility. This is mainly because women in 'urfi marriages are more vulnerable to the likely termination of a marriage taking place by the removal of the unregistered contract, let alone having such legal rights as mahr muwakhar (deferred dower) bestowed in Islam. Asmaa, a 21 year-old graduate of 'Ain Shams University commented:

Two conditions are required in marriage in Islam. You must write it down in your research. It is publication (ishuhar) and announcement (i'lan). Ishuhar and i'lan mean all people should know that this man is married to this woman, and these are the most important conditions in marriage. This is the basic condition in Islam. Therefore, according to shari'a, 'urfi marriage is wrong. I object strongly to 'urfi marriage because nobody knows of the existence of a marriage except the couple, and it's done merely on paperwork. In addition, it also lacks the most important condition in Islamic marriage, which is ishuhar and i'lan. The marriage will be terminated the minute that they tear the paper up.

As Asmaa's statements indicate, women oppose to marry in 'urfi style due to its secretive nature of marriage as well as its difficulties of proving the existence of marriage in the courts should the marriage be terminated.

Men, however, are more relaxed towards 'urfi marriage. Ahmed, a 27 year-old man, a graduate of the Law Department at Cairo University who was unemployed, at the time of the interview, described his experience of 'urfi marriage:

I was once involved in an 'urfi marriage. She agreed to the 'urfi marriage because her father was in Saudi Arabia, which did not allow us to take steps toward formal marriage. We maintained this

15) *ibid.* 206-7.
16) All the name mentioned here are pseudonyms in order to protect the informants' privacy.
relationship for three months before we broke up. Two of my friends witnessed the marriage and we signed the contract, but it was over once we tore up the contract. At the time I first signed the marriage contract, I had intended to have a formal marriage with her when conditions around me had improved and would enable me to go ahead with a formal marriage. However, after I had relationship with her for three months, I wanted to break up the relationship because I thought that our personalities did not match well. When our relationship ended, I was relieved from the burden of marriage because I could escape from all of its commitments and responsibilities.

When I continued to question him about his family's reaction towards the 'urfi marriage in which he had been involved and which he had brought to an end, he said that:

> When my family found out that I was involved in an 'urfi marriage, my sister and my father were furious [his sister had taken on the role of his mother after his parents had divorced], but it was just for a short time. Usually the man's family reacts much less forcefully to this type of marriage than the woman's family.

This double standard towards 'urfi marriage appears to have originated in a gender-specific binary notion of honour and shame, as well as in the discourse on sexuality in patriarchal society. Even though it is arguable, it has been traditionally understood that the code of honour is typically associated with men, whereas the code of shame is associated with women.

El-Solh and Mabro argue that the binary notion of honour/men and shame/women is prevalent in societies where the concepts of honour and shame are central to an understanding of relations between men and women, and thus of the moral code governing society.\(^{17}\) Citing Santi Rozario's work, "Purity and Communal Boundaries: Women and Social

while in theory codes of honour and shame refer to the behaviour of both men and women, honour is seen more as men's responsibility and shame as women's. This division of honour and shame is related to the fact that honour is seen as actively achieved while shame is seen as passively defended, resulting in different expectations of behaviour from men and women.

Therefore, for women, honour was barely achievable and passively maintainable, and once damaged, was hard to regain. At the same time, it was not possible for women to acquire the same quality of honour conferred upon men.

This dichotomy seems to originate from the patriarchal perspective that the honour of women is bound inextricably to their sexuality. In this case, female sexuality itself is viewed as a potential threat to the whole male-oriented social order. Thus, social norms from the "traditional" patriarchal perspective value those women who conceal their sexuality, who stay confined in the harem, who hide their bodies through loose clothes and veiling, who are circumcised (although the tradition of circumcision is not followed in all Arab Middle Eastern countries), and those who keep their virginity until the date of consummation. Women who adhere to these social norms are seen as "respectable" and therefore, "marriageable". In this context, if the 'urfi marriage does not end satisfactorily with the formal type of marriage, some women, reportedly, will have the hymen surgically repaired.

According to Kandela, Egypt is becoming an Arab centre for performing illegal operations for the repair of hymens. Women from various Arab Gulf

18) Virginity is a recurrent theme in debates surrounding gender and sexuality in the Middle East, as it strikes at the very core of the ideology of honour and shame in Islam. However, even though both men and women are supposed to avoid violating the virginity of an unmarried woman, there is a far greater leniency shown to man's sexuality.

countries who have lost their virginity flock to Egypt for hymen operations so as to be able to marry without the risk of a scandal or to avoid shaming their families by their misconduct before marriage. Women pay from US$100 to US$600 for the hymen to be restored, with the prices differing according to their social status as well as to the place of operation (i.e., depending on whether it is done in a clinics or in a private house). During the operation, a gelatine capsule containing a blood-like substance is stitched into place so that on the wedding night when it bursts during intercourse, the groom will be convinced of the bride’s virginity.

Religious opinion in Islam with regard to hymen repair surgery is divided. One party states that repairing the hymen is not permissible at all, mainly because (a) it could lead to the mixing of heredity if a woman should become pregnant from a previous liaison, then marry another man after having the operation; (b) it would cause the individual to commit ‘awrah by showing and exposing parts of her body to others; (c) it makes it easy for women to commit zina (adultery and fornication), since they know that they can have their hymen repaired afterwards; and (d) it is a kind of deceit that is forbidden in Islam.20 The other view is more flexible, saying that if a woman is innocent of any immoral behaviour, it is permitted for her to have the operation in order to remove any suspicions about her chastity and morality.

IV. Why selecting urfi marriage?

The alleged prevalence of urfi marriage is understandable in the context of the severe socio-economic problems that affect young Egyptians. These include the high and increasing rates of unemployment; the escalating economic burden of marriage expectations as a result of high standard of living expectations, as well as the pressure and desire to maintain high marital living standards; lack of affordable accommodation; the accessibility of sexually-explicit material on the Internet, satellite television, and videotapes

20) "Hymen Repair Surgery": http://www.islamonline.net/fatwa/english/FatwaDisplay.asp?fatwalID=55455
that coexists with the hostile environment toward expressive sexuality in the Islamic context; the absence of parents, who may have migrated to the Gulf area; or parental opposition to the partner chosen by their children.

According to Abaza,21) 'urfi marriage arises as a compromise solution for young people who negotiate between what is required by Islamic norms and sexual tensions. However, economic constraints are probably the factor that is most responsible for the growing prevalence of 'urfi marriage. As for the supposedly widespread 'urfi marriage phenomenon prevailing among Cairenes, Abu Fatima who was married in the 1960s commented that:

'Urﬁ marriage is widespread among university students. It's because they lack economic opportunities. In our generation, we did not need to have 'urfi marriage. We used to go through the marriage process step by step. It was simpler in the past. We were engaged, rented an apartment, and then got married. However, when the young people want to marry nowadays, they are expected to buy an apartment, a car, and they also should bring extra things which all require money. But they have nothing. They want to have it all, but they cannot afford to.

As the informant suggests, the desire for and expectation of a high living standard is inseparable from the growing prevalence of 'urfi marriage. In addition to economic constraints, the university setting also influences the decision of young men and women to marry. According to interview, students at the American University in Cairo are less keen to marry in the 'urfi' marriage style. An attitude common among many AUC students is: "we don't need it, but it's very common in the Egyptian universities because they have less freedom than we have." The comment of a student implies that oppressive environment towards liberal expression of sexuality is one of reasons that foster 'urfi marriage in Egypt.

Far from negligible, too, are the patterns of 'urfi marriage practised between foreigners and Egyptians, especially at tourist and resort destinations such as Luxor, Alexandria, and Sharm al–Shaikh. This type of 'urfi marriage is particularly noticeable among western women who are less restricted from

expressing their sexual desire, and young Egyptian men who are not financially ready for marriage and are therefore unable to make a formal proposal to an Egyptian woman. However, it needs further research with regard to the 'urfi marriage practiced between foreign women and Egyptian men.

V. Conclusion

In this paper, I analysed the current phenomenon of 'urfi marriage practiced among Egyptians, especially focusing on the Cairene youth, from such various aspects as legal, economic, and socio-cultural frameworks. This paper has discussed whether the current 'urfi marriage is legitimate or illegitimate from the perspective of Islamic legal framework, as well as explored gender-specific notion of 'urfi marriage. It also analysed the reasons why 'urfi marriage is prevailing among the young people in contemporary Egypt.

I argue that 'urfi marriage can be seen as an Egyptian version of cohabitation, although its approach to the practising of sexual intercourse is different from what is typically found in "western" types of cohabitation. What they have in common is the need to compromise so as to achieve a balance between meeting their sexual desires and reducing the economic constraints that confront them. However, 'urfi marriage is different from the western style of cohabitation as the young Egyptian couple try to conduct their relationships within the boundaries of what is considered to be "legitimate" marriage by Islamic standards, even though several conditions are missing. In order to meet the legal requirements of marriage, as well as escaping from the guilty feeling, young men involved in 'urfi marriage today provide women a symbolic amount of mahr and stand two witnesses who are randomly picked up among strangers. Therefore, 'urfi marriage provides a "good excuse" for young people who are trying to negotiate between their sexual desire and the legitimacy of the marriage under the name of a custom and tradition.

'Urî marriage practiced among the young people in Cairo needs further research with regard to whether it is possible for 'urîî marriage to be transferred to "legitimate" Islamic marriage, and what kinds of legal rights and
limitations the children have who are born between the couple married in 'urfi way.
Reference


http://www.islamonline.net

"Islamic Ruling on mut'ahh Marriage";
"'Itfi marriage, an Egyptian Version of Cohabitation?"

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우르피 결혼, 이집트식 동거인가?

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글자 그대로 풀이하면 우르피 결혼은 “관습 혼”, 혹은 “사실혼”을 지칭한다. “관습 혼”이 암시하듯 이집트에서 행해지는 우르피 결혼의 전통은 길다. 그러나 우르피 결혼은 부부가 결혼 계약서를 법원에 등록하지 않는다는 점과 결혼 후 그들만의 보금자리를 따로 꾸미지도 않는다는 점에서 일반적인 결혼과는 구별된다.

결혼 후 한 지붕 아래에서 살지 않는 이들을 부부로서 묶어주는 끈은 임의로 작성한, 정부에 등록되지 않은, 결혼 계약서와 성 관계뿐이다. 비록 정부에 등록되지 않는 우르피 결혼의 특성으로 인하여 그 정확한 숫자를 집계하기는 어렵지만 오늘날 이집트 일부 젊은이들 간에 우르피 결혼이 성행하고 있다고 알려져 있다. 이를 반영하듯 최근 이집트의 텔레비전 프로그램이나 영화는 일부 젊은이들 간에 행해지고 있는 우르피 결혼에 대한 주제를 종종 다루고 있다.

오늘날 일부 젊은이들 간에 행해지고 있는 우르피 결혼을 분석한 본 논문에서는 합법적인 이슬람식 결혼의 충족 요건과 우르피 결혼의 비교를 통해 우르피 결혼의 적법성 여부를 이슬람법 틀에서 토론하였다. 또 우르피 결혼과 비슷한 결혼 형태인 이란의 무타 혼과 사우디아라비아의 미스야르 혼을 소개하고, 이에 대한 남녀의 의식차이와 그 원인을 분석하였다. 마지막으로 본 논문에서는 오늘날 이집트 일부 젊은이들이 왜 우르피 결혼을 선택하고 있는지 그 이유를 분석하고, 다음과 같은 잠정적인 결론에 도달하였다.

우르피 결혼은 - 현재 이집트 사회가 직면한 경제적 악재 속에서 - 한편으로는 외부, 특히 서구의 개방 문화를 수용하고, 다른 한편으로는 보수적인 이슬람의 규범들을 준수하려는 젊은이들의 변명 선회 선택으로 해석되어 질 수 있다. 우르피 결혼은 통해 젊은이들은 이슬람에서 금지된 혼전 성관계를 맺고, 이를 통해 보수적인 이슬람 사회에서 나름대로 이성에 대한 예정과 성 의식을 표현한다. 하지만 젊은이들은 이슬람식 결혼의 필수
요소인 - 비록 상징적이긴 하지만 - 마흐르와 두 증인의 존재를 내세워 자신들의 결혼에 정통성과 정당성을 부여하고, 이를 통해 죄책감에서 해방 되려 한다. 이집트의 우르피 결혼은 비록 서구의 동거 패턴과는 다르지만, 경제 상황을 고려한 젊은이들의 애정과 성욕 해결이라는 맥락에서 이집트 판 동거로 간주되어 질 수 있었다.

[주제어: 우르피, 무타, 이슈하르, 이올란, 마우준]