Chapter 8

FAMILY, POPULATION ISSUES, AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

In this penultimate chapter, the main part of which is fairly narrowly demographic, I analyze migrants' attitudes regarding fertility intentions, ideal versus actual and desired family size, preferred level of education for sons and daughters, preferred age at marriage for males and females, awareness of population problems, and knowledge of family planning and contraceptive methods. Comparisons are made with non-migrant populations in the villages of origin. The analysis of family and population issues covers ever-married migrant laborers only. The main part of the chapter examines the hypothesis that migrants' exposure to modernization and new social patterns in urban areas will affect their awareness of family planning, the value of children, and their attitudes regarding their childbearing intentions and outcomes, and towards the upbringing of girls and boys.

In the last section of this chapter I draw out the more future-oriented and speculative aspects of migrants' accounts of themselves, their lives and their families. I examine both their personal aspirations and their thoughts about, and knowledge of, national development issues – paying specific attention to certain plans and priorities for developing the country. Drawing on a sequence of questions in the standard questionnaire/interview schedule, I first explore migrants' awareness of four key national development projects, and their willingness to get involved in these if the opportunities arose. Their willingness (or otherwise) to migrate to these new spatial development nodes is then counterweighted by an exploration of their plans for staying in Cairo, returning to their home region, or migrating abroad. In the final two sub-sections, I ask migrants to evaluate their overall migration experience in Cairo, and to share with me their long-term plans for the future.

8.1 Population policies in the Middle East and Egypt's family planning program

It is important, before exploring family and population issues of migrant laborers, to shed some light on population policies in the Middle East and Egypt's family planning program.

8.1.1 Population policies in the Middle East

The population growth rate in the Middle East was very low until the mid-1950s. Rapid growth occurred after 1950 with declines in mortality due to widespread disease control and sanitation effects. According to Omran and Roudi (1993), the Middle East countries can be grouped according to their demographic situation in the following four categories:

1) persistent high fertility and declining mortality with low to medium socio-economic conditions (Jordan, Oman, Syria, Yemen, the West Bank and Gaza);
2) declining fertility and mortality in countries of intermediate socio-economic development (Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran);
3) high fertility and declining mortality in high socio-economic conditions (Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates); and
4) low fertility and mortality in generally good socio-economic conditions (Israel).

Note that this set of national comparisons omits Egypt’s North African neighbors which, as we noted in an earlier chapter (see Chapter 2, especially section 2.1 and Table 2.1), have some close similarities to Egypt in terms of demographic and economic indicators. Probably Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia should be added to the second grouping of countries listed above, whilst Libya would join the oil-rich third group (see Clarke, 1985; Sutton, 1999).

High infant and child mortality tends to remain a problem throughout the Middle East, with the exception of Israel and the Gulf States. Contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) is low in the region, with the exception of Turkey and Egypt and among urban and educated populations (Omran and Roudi, 1993).

The fast-growing population of the region is regarded as a problem in most countries of the region except the Gulf States and Iraq. The region includes three of the largest urban agglomerations worldwide; Greater Cairo, Istanbul and Tehran contain between them 30–40 million people (depending on where the urban boundaries are drawn). Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, Oman, Jordan, and the West Bank and Gaza have an annual rate of growth of 3 percent. Iran has 60 million people, Iraq 18 million, Saudi Arabia 16 million, Yemen 10 million, and other countries in this group 22 million, totaling 126 million. Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates comprise 123 million people growing at a rate of 2–3 percent per year. Only Cyprus with less than 1 million people has a lower rate of natural increase of 1.1 percent. The total fertility rate for the region is close to 5 children. In 1992, the TFR in Yemen was 8 children; in contrast, Cyprus had 2.4. The region has a young age structure, where about half of the people are under 20. Egypt, Iran, Jordan, and Turkey have policies to lower fertility and subsidize family planning services. Yemen recently adopted a national population policy to reduce the TFR to 4.0 by 2018. Iraq, Kuwait and Cyprus want to raise fertility by providing incentives to families, such as child allowances, greater access to housing, and tax breaks. Kuwait provides cash child allowances, maternity benefits, and subsidies to families of government workers. Saudi Arabia restricts access to contraceptives by banning their advertising (Jacobson, 1994; Roudi, 1993).

From this brief description of the population trends and policies in the Middle East, and despite the relatively similar geography of the region, it is clear that population situations vary in the region from overtly pro-natal countries in the Gulf to more anti-natal countries such as Egypt and Turkey in the eastern Mediterranean basin. In the next subsection I narrow the focus of analysis to the Egyptian family planning program.

8.1.2 Egypt's family planning program

Egypt's national family planning program, in existence since 1965, has been fairly successful in increasing the use of family planning methods and lowering the population growth rate in Egypt. Governmental efforts in the field of population and family planning activities became widely noticeable in the 1950s after the establishment of the National Commission for Population Matters in 1953. The National Charter, which was

proclaimed in 1962, contained the first official government support for family planning:

> "*Population increase constitutes the most dangerous obstacle that faces the Egyptian people in their desire for raising the standard of population in their country in an effective and efficient way. Attempts of family planning deserve the most sincere efforts by modern scientific methods*".

Recently, governmental efforts to deliver family planning services have been strengthened. Political leaders frequently speak out in support of family planning and its utmost necessity for curbing rapid population growth (Osheba, 1993). The most recent development carried out by the Ministry of Health and Population is the integration of family planning services within the umbrella of reproductive health and women's status. The role of the non-governmental organizations was greatly strengthened and appreciated after the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo.

Contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) is one of the most important indicators in evaluating the success of population policies and programs. Egypt has achieved a remarkable success in promoting contraception. The percent of women using any contraceptive method, increased from only 24.2 in 1980 to 56.1 in 2000. Hence, the total fertility rate (TFR) declined from 5.3 live births per woman in 1980 to only 3.5 live births per woman in 2000. TFR was cut by about 1.8 live births within 20 years – a remarkable achievement (Zohry, 1997). Total fertility rate is a useful summary measure of recent fertility levels and is interpreted as the number of births a woman would have on average at the end of her childbearing years if she were to bear children during those years at the currently observed age-specific fertility rates.

Regional disparities in contraceptive prevalence rates and fertility level show that rural Upper Egypt has the lowest and highest, respectively, in the country. CPR in rural Upper Egypt is still rather low (40.2 percent), the lowest among all regions in the country, in fact. As a consequence, the TFR in rural Upper Egypt is the highest among all regions, 4.7 live births per woman in 2000 (it was 5.5 in 1995).

8.2 Migration and fertility

Three alternative hypotheses have been suggested in the literature concerning the relationship between rural–urban migration and fertility (Findley, 1982; Hervitz, 1985; Lee, 1992). First, the *selectivity* hypothesis suggests that persons who migrate are not a random sample of population at their place of origin. Since migrants have different socio-economic and demographic characteristics, such as education, occupation, age, and marital status, than those of the rural population as a whole, then it is expected that their fertility behavior and outcomes are also different – although different sub-hypotheses might be proposed about the precise nature of this difference. Second, there is the *disruption* hypothesis, which suggests that in a period immediately following a change of residence migrants would show a particularly low level of fertility, due to disruptive factors associated with the migration process or with the likelihood that women would not migrate while pregnant. Two factors of disruption usually mentioned are the physiological consequences of the stressful situation typically associated with moving, and the fairly common separation of spouses during the early stages of the migration process. The suggested drop in fertility due to disruption is temporary, and a more normal pace of fertility is expected to be resumed afterward. Third, the *adaptation* hypothesis suggests that rural–urban migrants face a new environment in their new place of residence and that this new social environment provides distinctly different prices for a number of interrelated life-cycle consumption-investment choices in urban settings. The incentives of the new urban life-style encourage women to reduce their fertility from what it would have been had they not migrated.

It is important here to bear in mind that these hypotheses are closely related to family migration in general. The temporary and/or seasonal migration of one of the spouses – husbands in this study – affects the fertility outcomes of rural wives through two main inhibiting factors, one biological and the other socio-cultural. The biological factor is that the temporary absence of the husband reduces his wife's exposure to the risk of pregnancy and therefore decreases the duration of women's reproductive span which is assumed to affect her fertility outcomes. The socio-cultural factor – as I mentioned in the introduction of this section – is the hypothesis that migrants' exposure to modernization

and new social patterns in urban areas will affect their awareness of family planning, the value of children, and their attitudes regarding their childbearing intentions and outcomes (Bongaarts and Potter, 1979). Other hypothetical impacts of temporary (male) migration on fertility are noted by Oberai and Bilsborrow (1984: 27). These include the mechanism whereby the absence of males leads to unbalanced sex ratios and delayed marriage (and hence a reduction of the child-bearing years); or that the absence of married males leads to the disruption of existing marriages – again with a probable depressive effect on child production.

Nevertheless, the theoretically expected inverse relationship between temporary or seasonal migration and fertility remains poorly documented, particularly in contemporary populations. One of few relevant studies was carried out by Yadava *et al*. (1990) to empirically test the relation between fertility and temporary migration in India. They found that the average number of children ever born to migrants in rural India was indeed lower than that for non-migrants. The percentage difference between migrants and non-migrants varied with age group with a minimum difference of 18 percent between the two groups. The effect of social caste was also clear in this study, where upper caste groups had the lowest number of children ever born for migrants and the percentage difference between migrants and non-migrants was the highest at 44 percent. Another study, by Massey and Mullan (1984), documented the effect of seasonal migration on fertility using data from a small Mexican town. The data for this study were gathered in the Mexican community of Guadalupe, a rural town of 2,621 people located in the central plateau state of Michoacan. Women in the study were classified according to the nature and the length of the separation they are likely to have experienced from their husbands because of the seasonal migration of the men to the United States. Demographic and socio-economic information on each woman; the number, age, and sex of her children; and her husband's demographic traits were collected. Results demonstrated the important impact that seasonal migration can have on fertility. About 42 percent of couples are separated for varying periods each year because the husband is temporarily working in the United States. Among these couples, fertility is considerably depressed within the central childbearing ages, and the normal age pattern of fertility is disrupted. Reductions in fertility increase the longer a couple is separated. Another similar, but more recent study by Lindstrom (1997) confirmed the findings of Massey

and Mullan. This study was carried out to examine the impact of temporary migration to the United States on fertility in a rural Mexican township in Zacatecas state. The amount of total reproductive time that was lost due to couple separation from migration ranged between 16 and 31 percent. Findings indicate that United States migration experience caused significantly wider birth intervals which clearly affect the overall fertility outcomes.

It is important here to bear in mind that in this study I examine the hypothesis of the effect of male migration on fertility as part of the potential modernizing effect of migration, as small family size and low fertility levels are regarded as one aspect of the process of modernization. However, the relation between fertility and temporary migration in my study is dependent on husbands' reporting on their family size, rather than the true birth history of their wives which might well be very difficult to accurately recall from husbands' reporting of their number of children. So that the findings of this study regarding the impact of husbands' temporary migration on fertility outcomes should be taken as proxies of the impact of husbands' temporary migration, rather than the precise measurement of the relation between the two factors.

8.3 Current fertility and fertility preferences of respondents

We saw from the first few chapters of this study that the level of current fertility is one of the most important topics in Egypt because of its direct relevance to population policies and programs. The measure of current fertility presented here comprises the number of living children by sex for ever-married migrants. This measure represents the net outcome of lifetime fertility, given the effect of mortality.

8.3.1 Number of surviving children by sex

Table 8.1 presents the mean number of surviving children by sex for my questionnaire survey of Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo. It is important to bear in mind that this number is affected by many demographic and socio-economic factors such as: duration of marriage, fecundity (natural fertility), infant and child mortality, the use of contraceptive methods, and some other factors that include the frequency of intercourse and husband's absence. I hypothesize that fertility among migrants is expected to be less

than their other counterparts in Upper Egypt. This assumption would be due to the abstinence caused by the husband's migration which decreases the wife's exposure to the risk of pregnancy, as well as the man's exposure to the urban lifestyle where smaller families are the norm compared to rural areas, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Table 8.1

Mean number of surviving children by age and education of migrant and sex of child

Characteristics	Male	Female	Total
Age			
20–24	0.7	0.4	1.2
25–29	0.6	0.4	1.4
30–34	1.1	1.6	2.2
35–39	2.0	1.4	3.2
40–44	3.6	1.7	5.2
45–49	3.3	2.5	5.6
50–54	2.0	3.0	5.0
Education			
No education	2.0	1.7	3.7
Any education	1.4	0.7	2.2
Descriptive statistics			
Mean	1.9	1.5	3.4
Minimum	0	0	0
Maximum	6	7	12

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)
Number of respondents = 107

Out of the ever-married population (107 cases), 85 percent have children while only 15 percent did not have children yet. As expected, the mean number of children increases by age (Table 8.1). It reaches its peak in the age group 45–49 which may be regarded as the completed or the cumulative fertility (5.6 living children). The equivalent mean number of surviving children for rural Upper Egypt region is 4.5 living children (National Population Council, 2001). This means that migrant laborers actually have more children than their village counterparts, which contradicts my assumption in which I hypothesized that migrant laborers would have less fertility than their counterparts in rural Upper

Egypt because of their exposure to modernization and urban lifestyle in Cairo.

Some elements of an explanation of these apparently counterintuitive findings can be quite easily found in what has already been discussed in the previous chapters. Migrants do not represent the average rural Upper Egypt residents. They are less educated than their counterparts in the village. Also they are the poorest, and it is precisely this poverty, often linked to landless and large families, which motivated them to migrate. Also, they do not live a complete social life in Cairo. They feel that they are marginalized and they re-enforce this marginalization to some extent by rejecting the urban lifestyle and trying to keep within their own networks and communities in Cairo. From the village point of view, a wife's fear of losing her husband in the urban environment perhaps encourages her to tie him with more children.

An alternative explanation for migrants' higher than expected fertility relates to the increased material well-being that migrants' remittances bring to the family "basket of resources" to sustain and reproduce itself. Given this increased financial input, migrants may feel able to have more children than they would have had without this extra income supplement.

As expected, educated migrants have fewer children than non-educated migrants (2.2 versus 3.7 children respectively). The difference is more than one live child between the two groups. However, this comparison should only be taken as an indicator of the effect of education, rather than a hard fact, due to the few numbers of educated migrants. For the same reason, calculating the mean number of children by wife's education is not possible due to the prevalence of illiteracy among migrants' wives. A further factor which compromises the significance of the educated versus non-educated figures of numbers of children is the age factor, for older migrants are the ones who tend to have both less education and (by virtue of their age) more children. Evidence for the inverse relationship between age and education was presented in Chapter 5 (see especially Table 5.2).

8.3.2 Fertility preferences

Insights into the fertility desires in a population are important, both for estimating the potential unmet need for family planning and for predicting future fertility. To obtain information on fertility preferences, ever-married migrant laborers were asked the following question: "*would you like to have (any other) children or would you prefer not to have any (more) children?*" The responses revealed that 57 percent of the migrant laborers did not reach their desired family size yet. They would like to have more children. It is important to bear in mind that the desire for more children is strongly related to the number of living children parents have. All migrant laborers who had no children at the time of the survey wanted a birth soon, but the surprising result was that several migrants who had more than three children wanted more births too. This may correlate – in part – with the well-known sex preference in Upper Egypt (Osman, 1989). Upper Egyptians tend to prefer boys rather than girls. This may be partly due to the harsh life in Upper Egypt that makes it difficult for women to be fully integrated in economic activities, and to old traditions that marginalize the role of females in income generation and taking care of family. This is clear from the migrants' responses to the question regarding the desired number of children by sex (see Table 8.2). The mean desired number of males is 3.8 versus 1.7 for females. The desired number of male children is therefore more than twice the desired number of female children. The overall desired number of children is 5.6, which is higher than the current TFR of the rural Upper Egypt region.

A summative measure of fertility preferences is the ideal family size from the respondent's perspective. The mean ideal family size for migrant laborers is 3.8. The difference between the desired and actual family size is 1.8 children (Table 8.2). In other words the actual family size is almost 50 percent more than the perceived ideal family. This conclusion is consistent with migrant laborers' desires for more children, where more than one half of them expressed their desire for more children, especially males.

Table 8.2

Actual, ideal, and desired (mean) family size by sex of child

Family size	Male	Female	Total
Actual family size	1.9	1.5	3.4
Ideal family size	2.6	1.2	3.8
Desired family size*	3.8	1.7	5.6

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)
Number of respondents = 107
* Actual children plus desired more children

Table 8.3

Ideal family size by age of migrant and sex of children

Age group	Male	Female	Total
20–24	2.0	1.0	3.0
25–29	2.2	1.2	3.4
30–34	2.2	0.9	3.2
35–39	2.4	1.4	3.8
40–44	3.8	1.2	5.0
45–49	2.8	1.4	4.2
50–54	2.7	1.4	4.1
Minimum	1	0	2
Maximum	8	2	10
Total (mean)	**2.6**	**1.2**	**3.8**

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)
Number of respondents = 107

Regarding the sex preference, again, it is clear from both the ideal and the desired family size of migrant laborers that their ideal and desired family size composition is one female to each two males (Table 8.3). As Table 8.3 shows, the ideal family size seems to vary by age of respondent. While the ideal family size is 3 children for respondents aged 20–

24, it is 5 for those aged 40–44. This means that the ideal family size is positively correlated with the age of respondent.

These findings on children and fertility preferences can now be further elaborated by brief reference to the literature on other Egyptian rural migration settings, and some extracts from my personal interviews. I asked most of my interviewees – especially those with large families – whether they wanted to have more children or not. Whilst Khairy and one or two of the others seemed to think it sensible to stop at three or four children, others expressed the wish to have more, including Diab, who wanted to add to the seven he already had. Most of the interviewees, both those with few and with many children, seemed not to appreciate the need to put any restrictions on their child-producing behavior. They believe that their family size is something very personal, the will of God, and has nothing to do with the country's population problem. Indeed a small number of children was viewed as a regrettable situation. When I asked Henein whether he was married he replied, "*Yes, I am married with a boy, although I have been married for seven years. But this is God's will.*" Other interviewees, without prompting, gave the clearest evidence for their preference for male over female children. Nasralla has three sons; at the time of the interview his wife was about to give birth to their fourth child. I asked him if he was hoping for a boy or a girl. "*I'll be satisfied with what God bestows on us. If the baby is a girl, I'll not be sad. It's all the will of God*." I asked Ali, a young man married with a young daughter, what his most fervent wish was. Without hesitation, he answered "*I pray God to grant me a good son*."

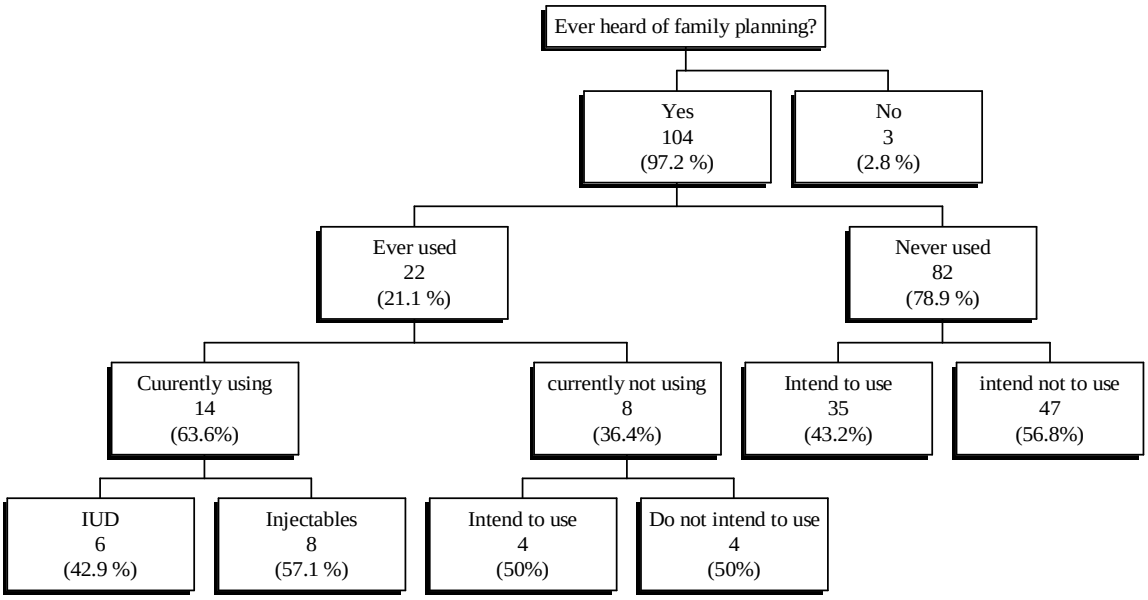
Brink's (1991) study of rural women in a Lower Egyptian village, whose husbands were temporary or long-term emigrants abroad, provides broad corroborative evidence for my own findings, despite the difference in setting and migration destination. The women whose husbands were abroad were uneducated and did not have jobs, being dependent on remittances from their husbands. On average, they had been married for ten years and had four children. None of the women used any form of birth control and they all wanted large families. This latter finding leads into my next subsection of this chapter.

8.4 Knowledge and use of family planning

Awareness of family planning methods is crucial in decisions on whether to use a contraceptive method and which method to use, while the data on current use of family planning provides insights into one of the principal determinants of fertility and serves as a key measure for assessing the success of a national family planning program (Zohry, 1997).

Knowledge of family planning methods is more or less universal among the Egyptian population. Almost all married migrant laborers know about contraceptive methods, matching the level of knowledge recorded by the EDHS 2000 survey in rural Upper Egypt in general (National Population Council, 2001). However, despite the fact that the level of knowledge is almost 100 percent, the level of contraceptive use among migrant laborers is very low. As shown in Figure 8.1, only 22 migrant laborers – among those who ever heard about family planning and who answered this question – had ever used any contraceptive method (21.1 percent); 14 of them are currently using a contraceptive method, six are using Intra-Uterine Devices (IUDs), and eight are using injectables. All users were found to use modern family planning methods. Contraceptive prevalence rate in rural Upper Egypt is 40.2 percent, again according to the EDHS 2000 data. Hence, CPR among migrant laborers is about one half that of their counterparts in the village. Again, this indicates that migrant laborers are not a random sample of Upper Egypt's

Figure 8.1
Knowledge, use , and intentions of family planning methods among migrant laborers and their wives



rural population and that they are amongst the poorest and least educated. Also this could be related to the acknowledged fact that migrant laborers live in an environment of social isolation in Cairo, socializing only with each other.

Those who never used any method comprise 78.9 percent of married migrant laborers. These migrant laborers, and those who had ever used, but were not current users, were asked about their future intentions of using contraceptive methods for family planning. Migrant laborers who intend to use family planning methods in the future are less than one half of the total number of migrants. One may expect that contraceptive prevalence rate in the future will be a figure between the current level and the percent of migrants who intend to use family planning in the future (see Figure 8.1).

Ali, one of the interviewed migrants, explained to me why he does not intend to let his wife use any family planning method: "*Frankly speaking, I see that family planning and all that kind of gossip are nonsense. It is only God who provides us with the means of life. It is possible that the more children I have, the more I have people to depend on when I'm older. That is why I do not think too much about that issue*." Ali thus sums up in his own words one of the principal arguments for not limiting the number of children in developing world contexts – security later in life. Stark (1978: 92) sets out the rationale in more "scientific" terms. According to him children are seen to yield various direct and indirect utilities: *consumption utility* (children are a source of parental satisfaction and pleasure), *income utility* (children contribute to family wealth via their work), and *status and security utility* (a large family bestows status on the parents and secures their being looked after in the future). My own survey and interview data contain evidence for all these three forms of utility, to the extent that perhaps one can speak of a *migration utility* of children, who are able to supply extra utility for the household through their migration (either domestically or abroad) which yields cash, risk aversion, other life opportunities etc.

8.5 Family dynamics and children's education

In this section I shed some light on a variety of aspects regarding the relation between generations among migrants' households and their impact on migrants' social security

and related perspectives. This includes a discussion on children's education and gender (in)equality, the value of children through their enrollment in work at early ages, and further discussion on the expected benefits of children in the future as a means of social insurance for parents when they grow old.

8.5.1 Child labor

Child labor is considered one of the factors that weakens the family planning program efforts in rural areas in Egypt. Child labor makes children possess an economic value to the family instead of being regarded as an economic burden (El-Husseiny, 1998). In rural areas in Egypt where school drop-out rates are high, children leave schools to work in their families' farms or to work for cash in other farms or workplaces. When children work in this way, especially if they work for money, they generate income and increase the income of their families instead of being a financial burden. This encourages rural families to have a higher number of children than families in urban areas.

With respect to the study population, it is noticed that their children start work at an early age. Females start work at 9.6 years old and males start at 11.5 years old (see Table 8.4). Females start earlier than males because they work at home and help their mothers at an early age as a starting point of preparing them for marriage and household responsibilities. Males start work always on the family farm – if the family has land – or they work for cash on others' farms or workshops. Children who are enrolled in schools start work later than those who did not go to school or those who dropped out early. The percent of parents with kids who work either at home, farm, or for cash is 44.3 for male children and 42.2 for female children.

These briefly sketched data on child labor are revealing in all sorts of ways. Above all they reveal the tough lives of kids who are expected to contribute their work from an early age – even before they have reached their teens – for the good of the household.

Second, there is a gender differentiation, with young girls expected to start making their work contributions earlier. And third, there is the tension between the need to work on the one hand, and the benefits (but also the costs) of prolonging school education on the

Table 8.4

Age at which kids should start work and percent of parents with child labor cases

		Male	Female
Age at which kids should start work:	mean	11.5	9.6
	minimum	6	6
	maximum	20	15
Percent of parents with kids who work either at home, farm, or for cash		44.3	42.2

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)
Number of respondents = 107

other. This has a significant long-term impact on fertility given the well-known correlation between higher levels of education and low fertility outcomes (due partly to higher contraceptive knowledge and use). As the next subsection shows in more detail, there is a further tension here between the economic imperatives of children working and contributing to household well-being in the short term, and the migrants' often-expressed wish for their offspring to achieve good levels of education.

8.5.2 Children's education

Migrants' wishes and desires regarding their children's education may reflect the high value of education perceived by those whose own school backgrounds put them in the category of the less educated group of people. In the interviews and the case studies, I consistently felt that migrants partially attribute their unsatisfactory work experience in Cairo to their illiteracy and low level of education. As a reaction they wish to enable their own children to avoid being exposed to experiences like their own. This may explain the somewhat optimistic desires regarding their kids' education. As shown in Tables 8.5 and 8.6, more than two-thirds of migrants would like their sons to achieve technical secondary or university level education. With respect to daughters, the percent slightly decreases to about 60 percent. The uncertainty factors made about 25 percent of parents say that their children's level of education will depend on circumstances. Sex

preference made a few migrants (only 13 cases) to prefer not to educate their daughters at all. Their reasons are interesting. Seven migrants said that they are not willing to educate their daughters because of the moral corruption at schools and universities. Two respondents mentioned that they do not have money to educate females; they can educate males only. It is important to mention here that the migrants' region of origin is considered one of the most conservative and male-dominated parts of Egypt. Being exposed to modernization made a few migrants react by holding on and keeping their own norms and traditions and applying them to their families restrictively. This may be a reactive strategy to keep their identity as rural Upper Egyptians.

Table 8.5

Level of education migrants would like their sons and daughters to receive (percent)

Education	Sex of child	
	Son(s)	Daughter(s)
No education	4.1	13.3
Primary level education	0	3.1
Preparatory education	0	1.0
General secondary education	0	3.1
Technical secondary education	36.7	36.7
University education or more	29.6	21.4
Dependent on circumstances	29.6	21.4
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)
Number of respondents = 107

Table 8.6

Reasons for not educating daughters

	Frequency
I prepare her to be a housewife, no education needed	2
Because of the moral corruption at schools and universities	7
It is not part of our customs to educate girls	2
There is no money to educate females	2
Total	**13**

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)
Number of respondents = 107

Highly correlated with husband's education is wife's education. About 80 percent of husbands and wives did not receive any formal or informal education (see Table 8.7), but the percentage is 96.2 for wives. This may show again that migrants are not a random sample of their region. The percent of males with no education in rural Upper Egypt is 24.5 and the equivalent figure for females is 50.9 (National Population Council, 2001). My survey data on female education patterns cross-check quite closely with the data from Brink's study of 79 women in a Delta village. These women were all illiterate and their average age at marriage was 15. By contrast, most of their husbands were literate but poorly educated; their average marriage age was 25. The women wanted their sons, but not their daughters, to be educated; and they wanted their daughters to be married early, as they had been (Brink, 1991: 204).

Table 8.7

Migrant laborers wives' education level

	Frequency	Percent
No education	103	96.2
Primary education certificate	2	1.9
Preparatory education certificate	2	1.9
Total	**107**	**100.0**

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)
Number of respondents = 107

8.5.3 Children and social insurance

In expanded families in Upper Egypt and in rural Egypt in general, children are always expected to help their parents when they grow old. A great proportion of parents expect to live with their children when they grew old in rural Egypt (Cochrane *et al*., 1990). With respect to the population under investigation, I found that 91.8 percent of them expect their children to help them financially when they grow old, while 73.2 percent expect to live with their children when they grow old. This means that the prevailing pattern of extended families and households is expected to continue for another generation, or more, in rural Upper Egypt. Parents' expectations may also shed light on the weakness of social insurance system in Egypt. This system tends to work against the poor. Government employees and private sector employees with a regular and fixed monthly salary are obliged to participate in the social insurance system by deducting a specific percent of their salaries plus employers' obligatory contribution to their employees' share in the social insurance system. At the age of retirement – 60 years in Egypt – they are guaranteed a reasonable minimum monthly income. Social insurance for self-employed and day-by-day workers in construction, agriculture, or any other casual-work sector is not guaranteed. The Ministry of Social Affairs instead pays small monthly amounts of money for the elderly and disabled who are not eligible for social insurance benefits. The Ministry pays just 50 LE (12 US$) per month for each family. This amount of money is not sufficient for their basic needs. Given the prevalence of the norms of sharing responsibilities and solidarity in rural Egypt, living with their children is the only way to ensure a stable life in old age for parents in Upper Egypt.

8.6 Plans for the future

The narrative so far has mainly looked at various facts and facets of migrants' lives and experiences recounted retrospectively and evaluatively. In this section I explore migrants' future plans, paying particular attention to their awareness of national projects, their plans for staying in Cairo, and their overall evaluation of their migratory experience. Particularly when I deal with future plans and the return to the village, I will draw on

extracts of conversations I had with some of my interviewees.

8.6.1 Awareness of national development projects

Egypt's million square kilometers feature an encompassing desert split into two halves by the River Nile, compelling Egyptians to cluster around their only stable source of drinking and irrigation water. Around 95 percent of the 65 million Egyptians occupy no more than 5 percent of the country's total area along the Nile Valley and the Delta, as was pointed out in more detail in Chapter 2. Accordingly, economic activities, whether industrial, agricultural or services, are skewed towards the major metropolitan cities along the Delta with negligible value-added generated by the desert or frontier governorates, although recent tourist development along the Sinai and Red Sea coasts is introducing a new, albeit minor regional variation into this pattern. The dynamics of the situation are even more unbalanced with the available arable land per capita showing a marked decline and the mismatching of annual growth in the labor force with job generation capacity leading to a crisis in the form of declining marginal productivity and increasing numbers of unemployed population.

Government policy to alleviate the crisis has evolved through three overlapping phases. The first phase started in early 1950s with the large-scale land reclamation projects in areas adjacent to the Delta, successfully achieving its target by increasing the land area from 5 million feddans in 1952 to 8 million feddans in 2000. By the second half of the 1970s, a new strategy based on establishing new industrial towns in remote desert regions began to relocate heavy industries supported by government investment in infrastructure designed specially for that purpose. By 2000, the Government of Egypt has established 19 new towns and is expected to increase the number to 41 by the year 2017. Finally, since the early 1990s, based on the relatively disappointing population relocation effects of the above-mentioned policies, Egypt has been creating integrated community centers in the desert equipped with an elaborate infrastructure and utilities network so as to be capable of sustaining massive relocation. To attain this objective, four mega-projects are scheduled to be operational, adding no less than an additional 20 percent to the habitable land in Egypt (American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt,

1999). These projects are the Toshka, East Oweinat, East Port-Said, and Gulf of Suez schemes. A brief description of each follows.

Toshka is by far the most ambitious project the Egyptian government has ever embarked on. The project aspires towards adding 1 million feddans of arable land to Egypt's current 8 million feddans by the year 2017, thereby accommodating around 3 million inhabitants, and thus relieving the Nile Valley from its overwhelming population density. The project is split into two phases. In phase one, 540,000 feddans will be reclaimed in the area between Lake Nasser and the Toshka Depression. Work on this phase already started in 1997 and is expected to end by 2002. An additional 400,000 feddans will be reclaimed in the region between the phase one area and the Dakhla Oasis in the north.

The East Oweinat project aims at reclaiming 200,000 feddans over areas where there is readily available underground water. Given a superior land and water quality, the project has the potential of exporting chemical-free fresh and processed agricultural products. East Oweinat is located in the extreme south-east of the New Valley governorate. The reclamation potential in the region was discovered in the 1970s when oil companies operating in the region discovered the abundance of underground water sufficient to sustain agrarian development. The total area of arable land in East Oweinat reaches 200,000 feddans characterized by suitable and moderately suitable soil. As of early 2000, around 187,000 feddans of arable land was allocated to Egyptian private sector investors. The public sector, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, is allocated 7,000 feddans, currently being reclaimed by public land reclamation companies.

East Port-Said project derives its importance from its expected contribution to export promotion and re-structuring through upgrading national transport and transshipment logistics. By creating a competitive advantage in transshipment trade, hopefully profitable investment opportunities in both services and manufacturing industries will be opened. The ultimate objective of the East Port-Said project is to create an international distribution center that takes advantage of its unique geographical location. The work on the quay has finished in September 2000. The quay will be equipped with five giant cranes with capacity to work at a rate of 660,000 containers annually, which will rise to

1.7 million in 2007. It is expected that the direct revenues of the container port will cover the cost of the projects and the infrastructure, which is estimated at LE 1.6 billion, in less than 15 years.

Suez governorate – which is located in the same region as Port-Said – is part of the Suez Canal region and is rich in petroleum, minerals, and other natural resources such as marble, brass, and rock. The Gulf of Suez project is a special economic zone that was initiated in an Egyptian/Chinese memorandum of agreement in 1997. Extensive surveys indicated that the new zone possesses the main components for attracting multinational corporation investments specially those with local and regional perspectives. The project's distinctive location would make it suitable to accommodate different industries, including petrochemicals, textiles and electronics. The zone covers approximately 233 km^2. By October 2000, work had already started in factories producing iron concrete and flat iron sheets, fertilizers and some other products. These factories expect to export 70 percent of their production.

Migrant laborers in Cairo were asked whether they ever heard about these projects or not, and if they had heard, from where. Also they were asked about their intentions regarding working in such projects – if job opportunities were to become available there and whether they would migrate to these areas either alone or with their family. The idea behind asking migrant laborers such questions is two-fold. First, to measure their level of awareness of national development projects in general, and therefore their awareness of other available destinations to seek work; and second to measure their willingness to change their direction from the traditional passage – from Upper Egypt to Cairo – to new available routes – from Upper Egypt to the Canal and Sinai regions, and to the south-west Egypt region (Toshka and Oweinat). Theoretically speaking, the answers to such questions may additionally measure the success – or failure – of the Egyptian government and its population and planning strategy in promoting new areas aiming at redistributing the population and lowering the population density in the Nile Valley and the Delta.

Toshka project was the most known project among migrant laborers, 94.2 percent of whom knew about it. The main sources of information were friends (42.6 percent) and

the television (41.4 percent). About two-thirds of those who had heard about Toshka expressed their willingness to work in this project if job opportunities for them are available there. Those who are not willing to work in Toshka have their own reasons. Some of them see it easier for them to seek work in Cairo, where they are acquainted with the nature of work and work relations. "*Toshka is very far from my village and there is no regular transportation between Menia – my governorate – and Toshka,*" said one migrant laborer. "*They deceive us by saying that Toshka will provide a lot of job opportunities. The government sold the land to private sector investors. They want us to work on a monthly basis for 150 pounds per month. I went to Toshka seeking work and when I found it like that I returned to my village straightaway. In addition the weather there is very hot and living conditions are very difficult"* said another migrant laborer, this one from Assiut. My general comment on migrants' reservations regarding working in Toshka is that it will take time – perhaps a decade or more – to expect that such new areas might become destinations for rural laborers' internal migration. Investment in infrastructure, especially roads and transportation, between the old valley and the new projects is very important. Improving living conditions in the new areas is also a must. Potential migrants may not go to new areas only for job opportunities, they also might expect better living conditions or, at the very least, conditions which are no worse than at home or in the traditional destinations in Cairo, Alexandria etc.

Out of those who expressed their willingness to work in new projects, only 19 percent are also willing to take their families with them. Other migrants mentioned that initially they would probably prefer to migrate alone. If conditions were then to allow taking family, they may think of bringing the family later. This pattern is common in Egyptian migration, both internal and external; the head of the family in most cases migrates alone first, then if conditions allow for bringing the family, the head of the family prepares relevant housing for his family and they may follow him after one or two months. This has been the case of many migrants to the Arab Gulf countries.

Awareness of the other three mega-projects was found to be very low, only 14.5 percent for the Oweinat project, 2.1 percent for East Port-Said, and just 0.4 percent (one case) for the Gulf of Suez project. Like the uneven development between Upper and Lower Egypt, the uneven pattern of some projects being well-known and strongly promoted,

ignoring the others, replicates the same syndrome. Mass media, especially television, has contributed to the uneven promotion of some projects, seeking more popularity and skipping over the complexity of introducing new projects – other than Toshka, which is agricultural in nature and is easily accepted by the public – that need more effort to be explained to the public.

8.6.2 Plans for staying in Cairo

When leaving the village, few migrants envisage living the rest of their lives in the city. But, with the passage of years, and with the strengthening of urban bonds the position may change. Such has certainly been the case with many international migrants who initially leave with a temporary sojourn in mind but who then end up "staying for good" – as Castles *et al*. (1987) have demonstrated for the European labor migrants of the 1950s and 1960s, only a minority of whom actually eventually returned. Some migrants who intend to return to the village may fail to do so because they postpone it for so long. For instance, less than 10 percent of migrants to cities in Ghana and Kenya intended to stay permanently, and about 30 percent of migrants were uncertain about future plans (Caldwell, 1969). Temporary versus permanent cityward migration is very important because of its eventual economic, social, and political implications. Urban economic conditions, as represented in the stability of demand for urban labor, partly determine the mix of temporary and permanent migrants. Rural factors such as social and economic conditions in agriculture may pre-commit many cityward migrants to return home sooner or later or to stay in the city for the rest of their lives. In addition, behavioral and psychological factors affect migrants' decisions regarding the length of their stay in town (Nelson, 1976). It is also important to bear in mind that migrants' intentions to stay in the city or to return home are not always realized. Plans may change, and even stable plans may not be realized, but migrants' behavior in the city is determined by their expectations, regardless of whether or not those expectations and plans are later fulfilled.

Table 8.8

Migrants' intentions to stay in Cairo or return to the village by governorate

Governorate	Total

	Stay in Cairo	Return to the village	
Beni-Sueif	5	14	19
	26.3%	73.7%	
Menia	19	23	42
	45.2%	54.8%	
Assiut	28	33	61
	45.9%	54.1%	
Souhag	37	58	95
	38.9%	61.1%	
Qena	2	16	18
	11.1%	88.9%	
Total	**91**	**144**	**235**
	38.8%	**61.2%**	**100.0%**

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

With respect to my study population and as shown in Table 8.8, 61.2 percent of them intend to return to the village, while 38.8 percent intend to stay in Cairo. When they were asked about the expected duration of their stay in Cairo, migrants who intend to return to the village failed to give time frames for their plans of return. Out of the 148 migrant laborers who intend to return, only 20 migrants set a time estimate for their return to the village. Duration before returning to the village ranges between less than one year and eight years. The remaining number of migrants gave non-numerical answers to this question, such as "*it depends on circumstances*", or said they would return after achieving specific monetary goals or finding profitable or permanent jobs in the village. My personal feeling is that migrants keep in mind the intention to possibly return as a strategy to maintain their psychological balance while being in Cairo, leaving room for hopeful improvements of economic conditions in their village or town of origin. Implementation of their plans seems, however, to be much less realistic than they may believe.

From the interview extracts on this issue of staying in Cairo or going back to the village or hometown, we can note two recurrent themes: a fervent hope, often unrealistic in practice, of returning and resettling in the village; and an abiding fatalism, or belief that such things are out of their hands. Ali is one of the majority who wants to return: "*I would rather go back home than stay here in Cairo. There I would be living amongst*

the people I know. I would be able to sleep safely at night. This is impossible to do here in Cairo. Even if I make some new friends here, it would not be with more than one or two." Zaky expressed rather similar views: "*I would go back. No-one can hate Cairo, but it is crowded and choking. In Upper Egypt, life is more comfortable, the weather there is pure…*" Meanwhile, Mohamed's answer to my question about staying in Cairo or returning to the village combined fatalism with pragmatism: "*Hope to do? It is God's will that shall be done. Life is neither predictable nor controllable. It is only God who distributes work and livelihood… In Cairo, at least, there is always a chance of work; one can stay jobless for two days and then work for one day…*"

Table 8.8 also breaks down the intention to return by governorate of origin. The data seem to suggest that return orientation is strongest in the two governorates that are closest (Beni-Sueif) and furthest (Qena) from Cairo, but the numbers originating from these governorates are far less than those from the other three, more centrally located, governorates in Upper Egypt where around 40 to 45 percent want to stay in Cairo. I have no categorical explanation for this pattern except to suggest that migrants from those places which are most strongly connected to Cairo through a more intense flow of labor migration are more likely to have an accurate perception of the very limited economic possibilities of a return to the village where overpopulation, poverty and unemployment are continuing structural features of rural life.

8.6.3 International migration intentions

We saw from Chapter 5 (section 5.1.2) that just over one quarter of the surveyed migrants in Cairo had earlier migrated abroad, all of them within the Arab Middle East region. International migration to the Gulf countries still remains the migratory dream that Upper Egyptian laborers hope to realize. This is so even though the objective conditions in the Gulf States have changed somewhat. After the Second Gulf War and the deterioration of Gulf economies and revenues, plus the tendency among those countries to nationalize the labor force by replacing foreigners by national workers, and the strong streams of competing migrants from Asia who were willing to accept lower wages, the opportunities that remained for Egyptian unskilled laborers became less than before. The Gulf employers tend to prefer to import unskilled laborers from Asia, and

skilled laborers from Arab countries because of the language aspect. However, the general level of education, training and skills possessed by potential labor migrants from Upper Egypt has tended to fail to measure up to what, in the post-Gulf War period, is demanded.

Recruitment agencies in Cairo that are specialized in announcing and screening applicants for jobs in the Gulf now follow much more restrictive rules than before in the selection of less skilled employees. The amount of fees and commissions that these agents take prohibit a great proportion of Egyptians from applying for jobs in the Gulf. Meanwhile, the average monthly salary for an unskilled laborer in Saudi Arabia, for example, has decreased from 3,000 Saudi Riyals to 600 nowadays. Regarding the study population, I found that more than nine-tenths (90.9 percent) of migrant laborers in Cairo are in principle eager to find any job opportunity in richer Arab countries. The preferred destination is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which 56.8 percent of laborers prefer. Kuwait ranks second with a much lower 18.2 percent, then come the United Arab Emirates, Libya, Iraq, and Jordan (see Table 8.9). However, this intention and willingness to emigrate abroad is tempered by the reality of the practical and financial difficulties of this ever happening. From the taped interviews come several expressions of this practical impossibility. In response to my question "*Have you thought of migrating abroad?*" Henein replied "*Yes I have, but how could I possibly afford it?*" Ali was more precise in his answer, giving me some calculations: "*I wish I could (go abroad), but this is difficult. The least amount of money needed for this is LE 7,000 or 8,000, and I could not guarantee that I could earn that huge amount to make it worthwhile.*"

8.6.4 Migrants' evaluation of their migratory experience in Cairo

Migrant laborers were asked to evaluate their migratory experience in Cairo. Responses were coded and the results are presented in Table 8.10. What I try to do in this table is

Table 8.9

Preferred countries for international migration by Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo

Country	Frequency	Percent
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)	125	56.8
Kuwait	40	18.2
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	15	6.8
Libya	12	5.5
Iraq	6	2.7
Jordan	6	2.7
Any country	16	7.3
Total	**220**	**100.0**

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

to categorize the most common answers that were given to this semi-open question, summarizing and paraphrasing the phrases that were often repeated across several interviews. Responses that come from the in-depth interviews are given below also. Migrants' evaluations can be divided into three groups: those who see that their migration experience is predominantly positive, those who see it as mainly negative, and those who see both the positive and the negative sides of their experience.

Among the positive responses come the appreciation of the good times that they spend in Cairo and the higher incomes that they earn there (38.8 percent of the migrants). Migrants feel that Cairo is "*better than the village and far from troubles*" in the village. Migrants appreciate their stay in Cairo because they can make their livelihood, get to know new people and be able to do their duties towards their families. Young migrants felt they learned self-reliance, saving money, and determination. When moving to the other side of the evaluation, the police and the instability of urban life come as the most common expressions of migrants' unhappiness with their stay in Cairo. However, it can

Table 8.10

Migrants' evaluation of their migratory experience in Cairo

Evaluation	Frequency*	Percent
Positive		
Good times with good income	94	38.8
Better than the village and far from troubles	61	25.2
Good because I can get my livelihood	50	20.7
Life experience by getting to know people	18	7.4
Thank God, my stay is good, I am content and work is good	11	4.5
Good period and good experience	9	3.7
Fine and doing my duty towards family	5	2.1
I learned self-reliance, saving money, and determination	4	1.7
Negative		
I don't like this experience, my experience in Cairo is awful	22	9.1
I don't like it at all and the police are after us, and we have no stability	16	6.6
Work is bad; I need a better job	15	6.2
Staying against my will	13	5.4
Days of Sadat are better than those of Mubarak	10	4.1
Humiliation	9	3.7
Work conditions are becoming worse	8	3.3
Hassles from policemen, but I have to stay	7	2.9
Cairo people have no ethics	5	2.1
These are the worst days of my life	3	1.2
If I managed to find work in the village, I would never have left it	3	1.2
Positive and negative		
Sweat, toil, and humiliation, but also achievement	24	9.9
Have to get my livelihood but I wish to return to the village as soon as I can	17	7.0
Cairo people mind their own business but living standards are expensive	15	6.2
Hard times and good times	5	2.1

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

* Numbers do not sum to 242 because of multiple responses; for the same reason the percentage column sums to more than 100.

be easily noticed from the negative evaluations of migrants' experience in Cairo that there is no overriding reason for their dissatisfaction with their stay in Cairo. Migrants mentioned that they stay against their will, and that they see their stay in Cairo as a humiliation. Work conditions are harsh and they are insulted and hassled by the policemen, but they have to stay to be able to take care of their families. One interesting response among the "negatives" of staying and working in Cairo, mentioned by five migrants, is that "*Cairo people have no ethics.*" Those who acknowledged the balance between the positive and the negative of their stay are few, but I believe that they are more realistic than those who mentioned one side of the coin only. The bottom part of the table spells out the phrases that were most often used by those who took a more middle-of-the-road view of their Cairo migration experience.

One of my more talkative interviewees, Ali, gives a typical summary of some of the good and bad points of being in Cairo: "*Indeed, living in Cairo is fascinating. Most people here are kind, however there are also some bad people… What is good is to find a place to settle in, what is bad is that there are just too many people living in this city. I have worked for a lot of people, and sometimes when I have done with my job, they refuse to pay me my wage, so I had to keep claiming for it. What is good also about working here is that working here for three or four days a week is better than staying jobless in my village.*" Ali then went on to elucidate in his own words the Todaro hypothesis about rural–urban migration occurring despite high urban unemployment: "*In my own view, people come here because working opportunities are really scarce in their home governorates. I can say that there are almost no opportunities for work there. That is why they are forced to flock to Cairo under the illusion that Cairo is big enough to accommodate everyone. But millions of young men are jobless everywhere in Egypt, including here.*"

8.6.5 Migrants' long-term aims and goals

The aims of most migrant laborers that were surveyed are very modest. The utmost aim of migrants is to find a permanent source of income that can ensure sufficient resources to take care of family and other dependents. The methods of achieving such income vary from one migrant to another but the aim is the same. The main source of a permanent

income – as viewed by migrants – is to run their own business or project (30.5 percent). Ali, again, had clear ideas about this, although one senses that his ideas are born out of hope rather than serious expectation of success: "*Capital is the backbone to launch any business… I pray God to enable me to have my own business, such as a small grocery, or at least get employed in a permanent job. I got my high school diploma in 1990, and I want to find a proper career job… My wishes for the future include having a small business of my own, or getting employed in a civil service job in my home governorate.*" Fakhry was also dreaming of a similar outcome: "*I am dreaming of making a business of my own in my hometown, a small shop by which I can do some trading. Also building a nice house. At present I only have a very small place, with no fixed walls… its walls are made of cardboard, with no electricity.*"

Getting a state service job is another alternative to ensure a small but stable and continuous income. As I mentioned before, the average monthly income of a government employee is only 200 LE. Even some migrant laborers obtaining a higher level of income, that may even be double the government income, expressed their eagerness to get any government job for that income because of its stability. Also, working hours in the government enables employees to do other jobs or to run micro-business which can obviously help in pushing monthly income up. As previous accounts have shown, many migrants mentioned to me that if they had a government job in the village they would be able to save their expenditure of living in Cairo and also they would be able to run small activities or rear animals and livestock at home at the same time. The government salary is regarded – by migrants – as the minimum guaranteed monthly income. In addition they could get the benefit of other government services such as health and social insurance.

Migrants' aims other than – or in addition to – ensuring a permanent source of income are thus to find a job in the Gulf, build a house in the village, educate children, or just to ensure their daily livelihood. Table 8.11 sets out the basic, generalized categories of response to this question. It is important here to mention that a significant proportion of migrants did not understand what I meant by asking them about their aims in the future.

Table 8.11

Migrants' long-term aims and goals

Response	Frequency*	Percent
Run my own project	119	30.5
Live in my village in Upper Egypt	76	19.5
Getting a state service job	63	16.2
Find job opportunity in the Gulf	28	7.2
Build a house in the village	23	5.9
Educate my children	16	4.1
Live in Cairo	10	2.6
I am living like the poor, today is as tomorrow	9	2.3
According to circumstances	6	1.5
Buy land in the village	6	1.5
Get a private sector job	5	1.3
Just to get my daily livelihood	5	1.3
Vague future	5	1.3
To keep my appearance in front of people	5	1.3
Buy land in Cairo and build a house	4	1.0
My life is as it is, no change is expected	4	1.0
Take care of my family	3	0.8
Other	3	0.8
Number of responses	**390**	**100.0**

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)
* Numbers do not sum to 242 because of multiple responses

I realized that some of these people may not have long-term or even short-term plans for the future. They live their time as it is without thinking of the future and maybe without realizing that their behavior today may affect their behavior and opportunities in the future. This may be attributed, in part, to their low education level and their low status, professionally speaking. So it is important to bear in mind once again that the study population do not represent the Upper Egyptian migrants in general or in their totality, but rather the large specific proportion of that migration flow which is composed of unskilled labor migration.

8.7 Conclusion

I hypothesized that migrants' exposure to new urban social patterns in Cairo, and their more general exposure to modernization and westernization through their migratory experience, might affect their reproductive behavior, the social relations between generations, and their perspectives regarding girls' education. Instead, I found that migrants' behavior regarding the above-mentioned issues remained the same. In some cases it became more "conservative". Some migrants took a defensive action regarding the urban patterns of social relations, especially regarding girls' education and the importance to the family of work for cash. The Upper Egyptians' resistance to Cairo behavior can be seen, perhaps, as a way of protecting their identity, norms and traditions, and perhaps at a wider scale as a form of resistance to the cultural forces of globalization. This apparent lack of modernization in demographic and social behavior is reflected in migrants' attitudes towards their own future and that of their country.

The above results are also consistent with the conceptualization of the migrants under investigation as essentially (but with some exceptions) rural-based persons engaged in circular migration to Cairo. The rural orientation – reflected both in their rural family bases and their limited social contacts with Cairo residents – "explains" to a large extent their conservative demographic behavior and their home-oriented plans for the future: to return to the village, open a small business, get a local public-sector job etc. However, this main characterization of the migrants as essentially engaged in rural-based circulation is modified by two key findings: the fact that almost 40 percent intend to stay in Cairo (whether this actually happens remains to be seen, of course); and the fact that their plans for a "successful" return (with a business, secure job etc.) are also, perhaps, unrealistic in many cases.

By analyzing migrants' future plans in this chapter, I may claim that I have presented a fairly full picture of the Upper Egyptian migrant laborers in Cairo from two different, but exclusive, points of view: my evaluation of their migratory experience through the different research methods I used – the questionnaire survey, the in-depth interviews, the village fieldwork etc. – and migrants' own evaluation of their individual migratory experiences in Cairo as presented in section 8.6.4.

The self-evaluation of migrants' experience of life and work in Cairo can be summarized

in two words: it is a “love–hate” relationship between the migrant laborers and Cairo. Most migrants recognize the importance of working in Cairo as the only option that can sustain them and their families. But at the same time, they cannot hide their dissatisfaction of many aspects of their life in Cairo. Migrants' dissatisfaction is attributed to physical and psychological aspects. Amongst the physical aspects are the low standards of living conditions, malnutrition, and bother from the police. The psychological aspects include working far from the family, humiliation, and staying in Cairo against their will. On the other side, the “love” part of the “love–hate” relationship is reflected in the high percent of migrants who want to stay permanently in Cairo (almost 40 percent), and some migrants' admiration of the life experience that they have acquired while working in Cairo. In this respect, one can safely say that young, more educated, and single labor migrants tend to appreciate their experience in Cairo more than the other migrants, especially those who are older and have families back in the village.

These conclusions about the migrant laborers and the two perspectives that I just referred to above – my evaluation and their self-evaluation – will be of further concern in the last chapter of the thesis, together with a summary of key research findings, an assessment of the extent to which my various research objectives have been met, some further theoretical elaboration, pointers for policy, and possible avenues for further research.