

*Rural-to-Urban Labor
Migration: A Study of Upper
Egyptian Laborers in Cairo*



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**Rural-to-Urban Labor Migration: A Study of Upper Egyptian
Laborers in Cairo**

by

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted, either in the same or different form, to this or any other university for a degree.

Signature:

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Abstract

This thesis is about rural–urban migration in Egypt. Its key aim is to analyze the rural–urban mobility strategy chosen by young men from villages in Upper Egypt (the southern part of the country) who move to Cairo. The empirical base of the study is made up of 242 questionnaire-based interviews with Upper Egyptian labor migrants in Cairo, supplemented by 20 more detailed interviews of such migrants and a period of fieldwork in selected villages of origin. Widespread use is also made of Egyptian census data to derive the quantitative estimates of the phenomenon; however the usefulness of this exercise is only partial given that not all rural–urban movement is actually recorded by the census.

The phenomenon of rural–urban mobility is examined within a broader set of macro-scale issues which are of concern to the Egyptian government as well as to social researchers. These issues include: the rapid but uneven nature of Egyptian modernization and urbanization given the socio-economic disparities between Lower and Upper Egypt; the hyper-growth of Greater Cairo with its 24 million inhabitants; the nature of Egyptian employment trends and the informal economy; and the long-term demographic trends of a country whose distribution of population remains uniquely spatially concentrated, and whose annual rate of population growth (2.1 percent), though falling, is still high.

The results of the study show that the motives for migrating are overwhelmingly economic and linked to the support and survival of the family base in the village. Key migration factors are unemployment, very low incomes, lack of rural job opportunities, landlessness and bad living conditions in rural Upper Egypt. Cairo offers higher wages, more regular work, a more exciting life (for some) and, most important of all, the chance to remit cash in order to support family members at home in the village. Migration thus improves the material quality of life for rural families and contributes to poverty alleviation, at least in part. For many rural laborers working in Cairo, migration is a waiting game until they can find permanent and more secure job opportunities in their villages, especially in the public sector. However, for many, such hopes are illusory and hence to-and-fro migration will continue. Meanwhile the construction sector in Cairo is crucially dependent on Upper Egyptian laborers who provide a cheap and flexible source of labor for this burgeoning activity.

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To each Upper Egyptian migrant laborer in Cairo. To those who sacrifice their own expediency to help their families in the village and to ensure a decent life for them.

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List of Acronyms and Appreviations

CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, Egypt
CPR	Contaceptive Prevalence Rate
EDHS	Egypt Demographic and Health Survey
GCR	Greater Cairo Region
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labor Organization
INP	Institute of National Planning, Egypt
IOM	International Organization of Migration
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LDCs	Less Developed Countries
LE	Egyptian Pound (Livre egyptiane)
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
SIS	State Information Services
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UAE	United Arab Emirates

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

What is the role of the rural–urban migration process in the modernization and development of a rapidly-transforming society such as that which is found in Egypt? This is the main “macro-question” which this thesis aims to investigate. It does so, however, by breaking down the question into a series of more specific objectives, which are matched with the structure of an empirical research investigation which is outlined in this introductory chapter. The empirical core of the study is a questionnaire/interview survey of 242 male migrant workers from rural Upper Egypt who are living and working in Cairo, together with longer interviews with a further 20 migrants. From this empirical core the research links both upwards to the bigger questions of Egyptian modernization, such as population control, unemployment, uneven development; and, at a more disaggregated scale, downwards to an exploration of migrants' experience of, and perceptions on, work, housing, health, income, and demographic issues, both in Cairo and in their villages of origin.

1.1 Justification for the study

Most indicators of Egyptian socio-economic well-being show a double dualism: between rural and urban areas, and between Upper and Lower Egypt. Hence the development contrasts are greatest between rural Upper Egypt on the one hand, and the Greater Cairo Region (GCR) on the other. At the human level, these “quality-of-life” differences are most keenly felt in terms of living standards, including health, income and housing, and access to different types of employment. Providing Egypt’s youth with productive job opportunities is undoubtedly one of the major challenges facing the Egyptian government. High rates of population growth have resulted in large numbers of young people entering the labor force each year. In order to accommodate these large numbers of young persons of employable age, Egypt needs to create hundreds of thousands of job opportunities every year for new entrants to the labor force.

Coupled with large numbers of young people entering the labor force each year is growing unemployment. The 1986 census reported that 12 percent of the labor force were unemployed (up from 7.7 percent in 1976), with a large proportion of the unemployed concentrated among educated youth. For example, 90 percent of unemployed were less than 30 years old in 1986 (CAPMAS, 1989) and nearly three-quarters of the unemployed in 1986 were graduates of university or intermediate schools (Shaker, 1990). According to the 1996 census results, the unemployment rate had decreased to 9 percent of labor force, but the total number of unemployed population nevertheless increased due to overall population growth (CAPMAS, 1999), and there remains the statistically unmeasured phenomenon of underemployment or disguised unemployment, which is widely recognized to be huge.

Clearly, in a large, complex, and rapidly growing society such as Egypt, there are many themes that could be explored when discussing issues relating to labor markets, unemployment, education, young people, and migration. Egypt's long-standing problem of graduate unemployment has led to a tradition of "brain-drain" with Egyptian academics, professionals, and business-people scattered worldwide, especially in the Arab World. Egyptian labor migration to the Gulf and to Iraq and Libya has been considerable – one estimate suggests that by 1983 some 2.5–3.0 million Egyptians were working in these countries, representing more than 20 percent of the Egyptian labor force at that time (quoted in Winckler, 1999: 107). In this thesis, however, I will concentrate on internal migration of males from rural to urban districts of the country, and specifically to Cairo. I will explore the many-faceted dimensions of the living and work experiences of these rural–urban migrants, and study how their migration contributes to the various processes of change in their rural home areas, and to their changing behavior and perspectives with regard to fertility. In choosing to focus only on males I am aware that I am introducing a rather restricted perspective; however, in the rural Egyptian context of labor migration, it is overwhelmingly the men who are the migrants.

In choosing to research rural–urban migration within a large developing country, I seek partly to revive academic interest in the study of internal migration in the less-developed world. Since the 1980s, and even more during the 1990s, studies of migration have

become weighted towards its international dimension. This recent boom in scholarly interest in international migration (which also reflects regional and global geopolitical concerns) has somewhat sidelined the study of internal population mobility, especially in developing countries: a point I shall elaborate on in detail in the next chapter. It is worth remembering that in such contexts, rural–urban migration continues to relocate mass numbers of population; far larger numbers, in fact, than are ever likely to be involved in international migration. As a simple illustration of this last point, IOM’s most recent estimate for the total number of international emigrants worldwide – 150 million – is probably exceeded by the number of internal migrants who have relocated in China in the last couple of decades (IOM, 2000).

In developing and in semi-developed countries, those with low-to-middle incomes within the global ranking, rural–urban migration is very much driven by, or at least related to, the uneven geography of employment, income, opportunities or just plain survival (Skeldon, 1990). Rapid population growth, especially in rural areas, provides an important demographic backdrop to these rural–urban population shifts. The Egyptian case – quite apart from my own personal interest in it as a citizen of that country – is highly relevant for at least three reasons. First, Egypt is a rapidly modernizing society and economy which, like many other states bordering the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, has aspirations of soon becoming a middle-income and more highly-developed state. Second, the vast size of the country and its sharply-etched divisions between urban and rural districts makes it a suitable case-study of the phenomenon of internal migration. And third, like North Africa and the Middle East in general, it has scarcely been studied by population geographers and migration specialists in recent decades. Again, this is a point I shall return to in the literature review section of Chapter 3.

Given the growing and well-known difficulties that face the overall Egyptian population in finding productive employment, it is important to study the characteristics of laborers who migrate from rural to urban areas. Youth in rural areas, where the economic base is largely dependent on agriculture, face a different set of employment problems than do young people in urban areas, where the economic base is more varied. It is also important to examine what strategies rural young men and women (in the Egyptian case

it is mainly men) pursue when they are faced with limited economic opportunities. Do they migrate? Do they attempt to acquire new and/or different skills through formal or informal education? Do they adopt a “waiting strategy”? If they migrate, what are their “migration fields”? And what are their intentions with regard to length of stay, return, etc.? For those who are moving back and forth, are we dealing with true “migration” or perhaps some other human mobility phenomenon such as “commuting” or “circulation” etc.?

A further set of questions relates to the village context. What are the distinguishing characteristics of those who migrate from the village to Cairo compared to those who stay or to those who migrate elsewhere – for instance more locally on the one hand or, on the other hand, abroad? What are the effects of these migrations on the villages of origin? How do villages cope with the departure and absence of a portion of the young, male population? What are the effects of remittances on village life and economy? And what roles are played by returnees in the village modernization process?

These are some of the key research questions addressed by the research carried out in this thesis, and which will be listed in more systematic fashion later in this introductory chapter. Some of the research questions mentioned above will be confronted with quite specific quantitative data, either derived from secondary sources or more importantly, from field survey. Other questions will be answered at a more intuitive or interpretive level, drawing on qualitative impressions derived either from field work or interpretations of my questionnaire data. I will also employ census data as a partial control sample in order to exhibit the differential patterns of behavior – economic, demographic, spatial etc. – of the migrant laborers whom I have surveyed.

I would justify the originality of this research in the following terms. Its first claim to the production of original knowledge will be the results of the empirical research on rural–urban laborers in Cairo. This will provide the latest and most up-to-date survey data on a phenomenon which is well-established in Egypt but which has not been researched in-depth before, and especially not so recently. In fact, this will be the first large-scale questionnaire and interview survey of its kind in Egypt. Both the questionnaire survey and the somewhat more detailed biographical case-studies will provide detailed socio-

economic profiles of the migrants, their motivations for migrating and their aspirations for the future, whilst village-based fieldwork will enable a rare and much-needed perspective on migrants' roles in local, rural development to emerge. In addition, as stated in the introductory summary in the first paragraph of this chapter, this empirical heart of the project will link to large-scale questions relating to the scale of the migratory movement, its impact on the labor market and economy of specific sectors of Cairo, and the potential for remittance-led development in the villages of migrant origin in Upper Egypt.

A further important and original aspect of my findings will be a contribution to understanding the process of fertility decline. This process is seen as key not only in Egypt but throughout North Africa and beyond in hastening the completion of the demographic transition towards a stable and demographically balanced population (Sutton, 1999). Hence, I will ask, does the removal of male workers from rural areas lead to deferred marriage and lowered fertility; and are ideas about family size revised downwards by the urban migration experience? If this is the case, then rural–urban migration can be identified and perhaps promoted as a strategy for accelerating fertility decline, although clearly other considerations about the nature and balance of Egyptian spatial development have to be taken into account.

These primary research findings, based on my own field survey research, will be supported by two types of “desk” research which also can lay claim to some originality – especially the second one. The first is the review of literature on rural-urban migration in earlier times in Egypt and some comparison with research results from other rural–urban migration studies in comparable countries elsewhere in the world. This comparison has had to be kept deliberately restricted; otherwise it runs the risk of becoming an unwieldy account of rural–urban migration in many dozens of less-developed countries, diverting our focus away from the Egyptian case study. The second, more original, type of secondary data analysis is a statistical study, based on successive censuses (including access to the tapes of the still unpublished 1996 Census), of rural–urban and inter-regional migration patterns for the country over the past century. The possibility of modeling this migration in respect of several hypothetical socio-economic independent

variables will be explored. This type of analysis has not been done on recent census data for Egypt before.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main aim of this study is to analyze one strategy that is chosen by young rural men who face limited economic opportunities in their villages: that is, rural-to-urban migration. As stated already, this migratory phenomenon is examined within a set of wider macro-issues which include the rapid but uneven nature of Egyptian development and urbanization; the hyper-growth of Cairo; the nature of Egyptian employment trends, especially as regards the informal economy; and the long-term demographic trends of a country whose rate of population growth, though falling, is still high and whose distribution of population remains uniquely spatially concentrated.

The empirical objectives of the study can be grouped under four main headings as follows.

1. To study the processes of rural–urban mobility in Egypt:
 - What are the motivations and migration choice strategies of Upper Egyptians who migrate to Cairo, and how do these migrants differentiate themselves from non-migrants who stay in the village, and from migrants who go to other destinations, for instance abroad?
 - What are the mechanisms and networks of migration, e.g. in terms of village origins, social and family networks, modes of travel, and migratory types (seasonal, circulatory, long-term, return visits, etc.)?
 - What are the basic demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Upper Egyptian laborers in Cairo?
2. To investigate living conditions and experiences of work of rural labor migrants to Cairo:

- What are migrants' experiences of the urban labor market, both in structural terms (e.g. their role in the informal economy) and in terms of individuals' job mobility and socio-economic progress?
 - What are the migrants' working conditions, including occupational safety, in their work environment, and how do these compare with working conditions in their home villages and with other, non-migrant workers in comparable sectors of the Cairo labor market?
 - What are the migrants' housing and living conditions in Cairo, and how do these compare with their homes and lives in their villages of origin?
3. To investigate the impact of rural–urban migration on Egyptian demography:
- What are migrants' attitudes towards family size and the upbringing of their children?
 - What methods of contraception do migrants use and are they aware of?
4. To examine economic aspects of rural–urban migration, with particular reference to the villages of origin, national development plans, and migrants' views of the future:
- What incomes do migrants earn, and how is this capital directed and deployed in their communities of origin?
 - What is the overall social and economic impact of migration, and returned migrants, on rural villages in Upper Egypt?
 - What attitudes and knowledge do migrants have about various new national development projects?
 - What are migrants' short- and long-term plans for their future?

These objectives and research questions will be mainly addressed via a questionnaire/interview survey of rural–urban migrant workers in Cairo, which is the main research instrument of the thesis, and by supplementary field work in a selected district of Upper Egypt. Further details on methodology are given in Chapter 4.

I should stress here at the outset – and this caveat will be reinforced later wherever appropriate – that I will not be able to supply concrete and thorough answers to all these individual research questions listed above. Some questions will indeed be confronted by precise data; in other cases the light that my research will shed will be dim or somewhat out of focus, for the evidence will be partial or inconclusive. My research strategy and results are not unique in this regard, but are illustrative of a broader dilemma characteristic of many social scientific investigations, including those in population geography and demography: whether to focus on a narrow set of questions and run the risk of either stating the obvious or producing disappointing results; or to select a broad range of questions which are intuitively more interesting but in turn run the risk of not being able to be convincingly answered with data spread too thinly or unevenly. If I have erred in the latter direction, I hope the reasons are (or will become) clear. Naturally, I return to this key point of research strategy in the conclusion to the thesis.

I should also make it clear in this introductory statement that I do not intend to survey all types of rural-urban migrants from Upper Egypt to Cairo. As will become clearer later, my focus is on present-day poor labor migrants; I do not survey the more wealthy, middle-class or elite migrants such as those who go to Cairo for business or educational purposes, nor do I analyze the old-established poor migrant communities which have been settled in Cairo now for two or three generations. My reasons for narrowing the focus of my study in this way are largely practical and have to do with the amount and variety of fieldwork I could realistically do for my thesis. Because of this, and because of my overriding concern with issues of poverty and demography, I decided to concentrate on the poorest status migrant groups.

In the remainder of this brief introductory chapter I provide an overview of the structure of the thesis, chapter by chapter, in order to demonstrate to the reader at the outset how the study “hangs together” and how the research proceeds through a series of logical steps.

1.3 Organization of the thesis

After this introductory chapter, the study will be organized in eight chapters. A summary outline of the study and of the thrust of each chapter is as follows.

Chapter 2 provides a brief description of Egypt, its society, population, labor force, urbanization, and rural/urban migration. This gives the essential background information against which the research questions are addressed, and results interpreted. The chapter comprises four sections. The first describes Egypt in general terms. The second focuses on social, economic, and cultural differentials between Upper and Lower Egypt. A discussion of regional differentials and trends in urbanization is presented in the third part; and the final section is devoted to a description of trends in the labor force structure.

Chapter 3 is a statistical and literature review of rural–urban migration in Egypt and other developing countries. It will include firstly a statistical analysis of the internal migration phenomenon in Egypt and the most recent estimates of internal migration streams using as yet unpublished data from the 1996 Census. Direct and indirect demographic techniques will be used, employing birthplace and residence calculations and migration residual methods. Second, a review of the existing studies on rural–urban migration in Egypt, highlighting the most significant findings and insights, will be made. From this will emerge some significant gaps in knowledge about Egyptian internal migration, which this thesis will aim to fill. Theories of rural–urban migration in developing countries will then be reviewed in the third part of this chapter, and the most suitable conceptual and theoretical frameworks which appear most promising to a study of rural–urban mobility in Egypt will be elaborated. Although a wide range of approaches will be briefly reviewed, particular attention will be reserved for three conceptual frameworks which may be hypothesized to hold particular relevance for analysis of the Egyptian case: the Todaro model of rural–urban migration (Todaro, 1969; see also Harris and Todaro, 1970), a modified version of the Mabogunje (1970) system-based model of rural–urban migration, and a grouping of concepts related to circular migration (Chapman and Prothero, 1985), household economics and “survival” strategies (see Hugo, 1998; Stark, 1991).

Chapter 4 is about methodology. It starts with a fuller presentation and discussion of the research questions and the objectives of the study, elaborated in greater detail than the introductory listing in Chapter 1. Then the methodology and research instruments will be described. This includes a full description of the data collection methods that were followed, the field questionnaire and the qualitative and the quantitative methods employed in the study, and the techniques of data manipulation and analysis. Although the questionnaire (administered via face-to-face interview) constitutes the main research instrument of the thesis, particular attention is given in the latter part of this chapter to the in-depth interviewees, and a brief pen-portrait is provided of each of the interviewees in order to introduce these informants and provide a bridge to the main empirical chapters which then follow.

Chapters 5 through to 8 constitute the empirical heart of the thesis. Chapter 5 asks: Who are the migrants and why do they migrate? It presents data and analysis of the background characteristics of the migrants (age, education, origin, marital status, etc.), and the reasons and strategies behind their migration to Cairo, including some preliminary perspectives from the villages of origin. It also offers some preliminary perspectives on theorizing Egyptian rural–urban migration.

In Chapter 6 I turn to the work status and experiences of migrants including occupation, type of work (contract, daily basis, or task-based), number of working days per week, number of working hours per day, and other related work aspects. An analysis of occupational safety, health insurance coverage, and injuries related to work conditions is also incorporated in this chapter. Reference is made to published survey data for Cairo districts and to fieldwork on non-migrant laborers, in order to provide a comparative frame of reference for the migrant surveys.

Living conditions of the migrants in their origin (Upper Egypt) and destination (Cairo) are the subject of Chapter 7. This will include detailed reference to housing conditions, household ownership, availability of public services (piped water, electricity, sewage disposal, etc.), and land ownership in the rural places of origin. Urban–rural linkages will then be explored. These include various types of contact and travel, but particular attention will be given to the economically important mechanism of remittance transfer

and allocation. Survey findings from fieldwork in selected villages in Upper Egypt round off the analysis of this chapter.

Chapter 8 addresses family and related demographic issues, as well as plans for the future. The account will 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, knowledge of family planning and contraceptive methods. Again comparisons will be made with non-migrant populations in villages of origin. Migrants' plans for the future will be discussed, both with regard to their own personal aspirations, and with regard to their thoughts and knowledge about national development plans and priorities. This line of analysis will include their plans for staying in Cairo, their economic and investment plans of their income, what are their thoughts about return migration to their villages, or about migration elsewhere, and their main aims in life long-term.

Finally, conclusions and policy implications of the research will be presented in Chapter 9, which will also summarize key findings and contributions to knowledge, as well as suggested areas for future research and a critical evaluation of the research strategy employed in the thesis.

Chapter 2

THE EGYPTIAN SETTING

This short chapter provides a brief description of Egypt, its society, population, labor force, and urbanization. The aim is to give essential background information in the light of which the research questions are addressed, and, later, the research results are interpreted. The chapter has four sections. The first describes Egypt in general terms. The second part introduces the fundamental social, economic, and cultural differentials between Upper and Lower Egypt. Further discussion of regional differentials and trends in urbanization is presented in the third section. The final part of the chapter is devoted to a description of trends in the labor force. The chapter is kept deliberately concise in order to provide only essential background information for the study of Egyptian migration, and in order to leave maximum space within the thesis word limit for the presentation, discussion and interpretation of results.

2.1 Egypt: a general description of its geography and population

Egypt occupies the north-eastern corner of Africa, bounded to the north by the Mediterranean, to the east by the Red Sea, Israel and the Palestinian Authority, to the south by the Sudan, and to the west by Libya. The Sinai Peninsula, which is located in the north-eastern corner of Egypt, is part of the Asian continent. Egypt lies between parallels 22 and 32 and meridians 24 and 37. The dominant geographical feature of life in Egypt is the River Nile which flows through the country for 1800 kilometers from south (Upper Egypt) to north (Lower Egypt). The River Nile represents the main source of water necessary for agriculture, and consequently is a major determinant of the spatial distribution of population, agriculture, and economic life in Egypt. Not without reason did Herodotus say that Egypt is the “gift of the Nile” (Beaumont *et al.* 1976: 471).

The history of Egypt is very long, stretching back to at least 5000 BC. By about 3500 BC, the many tribes living in the Nile Valley coalesced into the kingdoms of Upper

Egypt and Lower Egypt. By about 3100 BC, King Menes (Mena) united the kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt. By about 3000 BC, the plow and developed agriculture existed in Egypt. During the next 3000 years, there was a succession of about thirty dynasties. The Guiza pyramids on the outskirts of Cairo, which symbolize the ancient Egyptian civilization, were built in the Fourth Dynasty, lying in the period between 2686 and 2181 BC (SIS, 1999).

From the sixth century BC until 1952 Egypt was ruled by foreign conquerors attracted by the agricultural wealth as well as by the geographic location of the country. Such foreign powers include the Persians, 525–333 BC; Greeks, 333–30 BC; Romans, 30 BC–284 AD; Arabs, 642–1260; Ottoman Caliphate, 1517–1914; French, 1798–1801; and finally the British, 1882–1952 (Osheba, 1988). In 1952, the Egyptian revolution led by Nasser put an end to the British control of Egypt, the colonial exploitation of its resources, and the monarchy, and established a more equitable national government. The Nasser administration implemented fundamental changes, including the introduction of state ownership, land reform, the “Egyptianization” of many assets, and the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company (SIS, 1999).

These development initiatives were, however, fundamentally conditioned by the unique geography of Egypt, in particular its brutal contrast between the densely-settled Nile Valley and Delta regions, and the sparsely inhabited or almost completely uninhabited remainder of the country. Within the valley and delta of the Nile, the physical environment is highly favorable to agriculture of a highly intensive kind. Crops can be grown virtually all year round because of the warmth of the climate, high levels of insulation, constant (though highly rationed) supply of irrigation water, and the high fertility of the river-deposited alluvial soils. Moreover the nature of the valley, enclosed by scarps rising sharply from the valley floor, enables the river to flow without major losses by seepage and evaporation, and in the past has allowed but contained the annual flooding regime which was essential to lay down and create the fertility of the alluvium (Beaumont *et al.*, 1976).

The fertility of the Nile Valley contrasts in the most dramatic way imaginable with the aridity of the surrounding deserts, although the abruptness of this contrast becomes less in the north of the country where the delta, defined as a triangle with corners at Cairo,

Alexandria and the Suez Canal, spreads out and where rainfall along the coastal strip attenuates the desert climate. In fact, dry farming is possible all along the northern coast from the Libyan border to northern Sinai. South of this littoral, and away from the Nile Valley, lithosols – soils based on parent rock – are widespread on the vast remainder of the national territory which is desert. Rock outcrops are common, and slopes are often steep. Possibilities for the expansion of agriculture and human settlement were traditionally thought to be very limited beyond a scatter of oases in the western desert – Siwa, Bahariya, Farafra, Dakhla and Kharga – and some lateral extensions to the Upper Nile Valley below Aswan and to the Delta area (for a map of these projects see Beaumont *et al.*, 1976: 477). However the discovery of important mineral resources – oil, iron ore, manganese and phosphates – has changed somewhat the economic perception of Egypt's peripheral areas. Recently there has been the growth of tourist settlements along the Red Sea Coast. Other major new development projects – the Toshka scheme, the East Oweinat project, East Port-Said and the Gulf of Suez – are described in Chapter 8 in the context of their role in the overall development of Egypt and possible associated migration patterns. The significance of these, and earlier projects lies in the spatial polarization of the Egyptian population which, although growing rapidly, faces a more or less fixed, or at least very highly constrained, resource of cultivable and habitable land (Esfahani, 1987).

Rapid population growth is considered to be one of the crucial problems which hinders development efforts in Egypt. While the doubling of Egypt's population between 1897 (9.7 million) and 1947 (19 million) took 50 years, the next doubling took less than 30 years, from 1947 to 1976. In 2000 Egypt's population total approaches 65 million. The annual population growth rate increased from 1.5 percent in the beginning of this century to approximately 2.5 percent in early 1960s. During the period 1960–1976, the growth rate slackened but it rose again to 2.8 percent for the period 1976–1986. The annual growth rate then dropped to 2.1 percent for the period 1986–1996 (CAPMAS, 1999). Further fertility falls can be confidently predicted, but because of the persistence of the structural over the behavioral component of fertility (i.e. total fertility rate will fall but the very young age structure of the population gives a high proportion of reproductively-active young adults), population growth momentum will remain substantial for quite some decades yet. Rural–urban variations are also highly significant. Fertility rates are still at a high level in rural areas versus urban areas.

Although considerable progress has been made (more details on this will be presented in Chapter 8, section 8.1.2), the 1995 Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) documents areas of continuing concern for the family planning program in Egypt. One is the large variation in fertility and family planning use by type of area and residence. At current fertility levels, a rural woman will have an average of 4.5 children, almost two more than the total fertility rate of a woman living in an urban area (2.7 births per woman). Nearly 60 percent of urban women use family planning compared with less than 40 percent of rural women. Regional differences are also great. Total fertility rates are much higher in Upper Egypt (5.5 births per woman) than in Lower Egypt (3.8 births per woman) or the Urban Governorates (2.5 births per woman). Likewise, family planning use varies from only 31 percent in Upper Egypt to 54 percent in Lower Egypt and 59 percent in the Urban Governorates (National Population Council, 1997). As noted above, the problem of rapid population growth is further complicated by the fact that Egypt's cultivable land is extremely scarce relative to its numbers of people. Over 95 percent of Egypt's 1996 population, estimated at 60 million persons, is crowded onto around 5 percent of the total land area of one million square kilometers: the narrow ribbon of settlement, dense population and agriculture which follows the course of the Nile. The remaining 95 percent of the land area is arid desert. Although it can be seen as a kind of "natural response" to the geography of economic opportunity, migration to large cities has undoubtedly contributed to the further imbalance of Egypt's population distribution.

My concentration in the previous paragraph on fertility rates and behavior reflects partly the demographic research interests of this thesis, as spelt out in the research questions which were introduced in Chapter 1 and which will be further elaborated in the next chapter. However, there are other elements of population change which have to be briefly acknowledged here, including some social and quality-of-life aspects. External migration from and to Egypt plays a minor role in overall national population change. Immigration is negligible and emigration, although well-established, is not quantitatively on a large scale compared with Egypt's large population; moreover, as we shall see later, emigration tends to be selective and not to involve so much the very poorest rural dwellers.

Population increase has been mainly produced by the rapid decline in death rates, rather than by changes in birth rates. Until the fairly recent past, rural health was very poor and death rates due to disease and poor nutrition and health standards were extremely high. The agricultural and settlement regime, with rural people crammed together in small mud-built villages with their animals, exposed to water-borne diseases through the dense network of irrigation channels, constituted a particular feature of the Egyptian rural environment which was conducive to high rates of disease and mortality. Studies of Egyptian rural life carried out in the early and middle decades of the twentieth century (Ammar, 1954; Blackman, 1971 – originally published 1927) portray these problems in all their harsh detail and leave little doubt that “the Egyptian village was one of the most insanitary places in the world to live” (Hance, 1964: 119).

Moreover population pressure can be expressed in various ways. Whilst it is true that Egypt’s strong population growth, when set against an inelastic supply of agricultural land, presents a rather pessimistic scenario, this is only part of the story. Within limits the cropped area can be extended both “horizontally” by developing new areas for cultivation (obviously this is expensive in Egypt) and “vertically” by intensifying productivity and increasing the number of crops per year on the existing cultivated area (this too is difficult because of already-high levels of intensity). Furthermore, rural–urban migration relieves at least some of the impetus of rural population growth and pressure on rural land. Data assembled by Beaumont *et al.* (1976: 476) demonstrate that while crude measures (cultivated area divided by total Egyptian population) show a decline of two-thirds in the ratio of cultivated area per capita between 1897 and 1970, a more sophisticated measure (cropped area divided by rural population) shows a decline of only one third (the cropped area is larger than the cultivated area because of multiple cropping, which has been increasing because of agricultural intensification).

In the last forty years or so since independence, Egypt has realized respectable socio-economic progress. The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita increased from \$237 in 1960 to \$338 in 1970, and then to \$590 in 1980. By 1995, GDP per capita reached \$726 (UNDP, 1998). Life expectancy at birth (e_0) increased from 46.1 years in 1960 to 64.8 in 1995. Infant mortality rates decreased from a very high level in the 1960s (179 per thousand) to 57 in 1996. The illiteracy rate is still high at a level of 39.4 percent, but

it decreases gradually; enrollment rates in schools are increasing. A comparison between Egypt and neighboring countries in Northern Africa with respect to some selected demographic and socio-economic indicators is given in Table 2.1. This comparison sheds some light on the regional similarities and dissimilarities between Egypt and its neighbors. It shows, by and large, that Egypt has demographic and economic profile variables which are quite typical of adjacent countries. The country it most resembles is Morocco; whereas Tunisia, for example, is more advanced in its pathway to economic and demographic development, and Sudan lies some way behind Egypt. A similar picture is given by data and graphs set out in a recent paper by Sutton (1999). Sutton uses somewhat different dates to frame his analysis (1983 and 1996), but the “typical” position of Egypt within the North African realm emerges in exactly the same way as it does in Table 2.1.

2.2 Lower and Upper Egypt

It should firstly be pointed out that, although the history of Egypt as a whole is richly documented, the literature on the regional historical experience of Upper and Lower Egypt is much slimmer. The historical uneven development of Lower and Upper Egypt has led to the former being more developed than the latter. There is a dramatic contrast in the exposure of the two halves of the country to modernization. Observers have commonly noted the disparity between the “thriving population of the Delta [Lower Egypt] and the poverty-stricken population of the south [Upper Egypt]” (Osheba, 1988).

Historically, agriculture has been more developed in Lower than Upper Egypt. Perennial irrigation and year-round cultivation have been common in Lower Egypt since the mid-nineteenth century. In Upper Egypt, on the other hand, agriculture depended on basin, or overflow, irrigation. Due to this pattern, Upper Egyptians were traditionally busy on their land in the late summer and fall but for about half a year they were entirely unoccupied, except for their inter-village feuds (Cleland, 1936). The irrigation system in Upper Egypt has developed gradually, although this development eventually culminated in the construction of the Aswan High Dam in the 1960s.

Table 2.1

Egypt and neighboring countries: demographic, economic, and social indicators

Indicators	Year or period	Egypt	Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Sudan
Demographic indicators							
Population (millions)	1999	67.2	27.9	30.8	9.5	5.5	28.9
Life expectancy	1998	67	68	70	70	71	56
Infant mortality, per 1000	1998	44	45	40	27	26	67
Natural increase (percent)	1980	2.2	1.9	2.4	2.2	2.6	2.1
	1998	1.8	1.8	2.2	1.4	2.4	2.1
Total fertility rate	1980	5.1	5.1	6.4	4.9	7.2	6.4
	1998	3.1	2.8	3.5	2.4	3.5	4.4
Economic indicators							
GNP per capita, US\$	1998	1250	1250	1570	2150	6660	290
Average annual growth in real GDP (percent)	1980–90	5.7	4.4	2.5	4	0.2	1.2
	1991–99	3.2	2.5	1.7	4.8	1.3	5.1
Labor force in (percent)							
agriculture	1996	36	30	14	25	8	62
industry	1996	27	40	35	56	34	11
services	1996	37	30	51	19	58	27
Social indicators							
Adult illiteracy (percent)	1998	46	53	39	32	22	45
Percent population with access to safe water	1995	64	59	78	86	90	50

Source: African Development Bank (2000)

The absence of agricultural work opportunities for about half a year in Upper Egypt stimulated a migration stream into Lower Egypt which has been more or less continuous throughout the twentieth century. Large numbers of agricultural workers were recruited from Upper Egypt by labor contractors to work in Lower Egypt, particularly in handling the shipments of crops at seaports, to carry out clearance of the canals, and other forms of heavy work. As noted in the previous chapter, Hassan (1969) estimated the net loss from the south (Upper Egypt) to the north (Lower Egypt) at about one million in the first six decades of the twentieth century, and El-Badry (1965) contends that Aswan, Qena, Souhag and Assiut governorates exported 13 percent of their combined population to other regions in Egypt during those same decades. Such

rural outmigration has continued up to the present day, as my fieldwork will show. The process can be interpreted in various ways. Some of these might include: a natural behavioral response to poverty, unemployment and limited opportunities in southern rural areas; as part and parcel of the time-honored structuring of Egyptian uneven development into its Upper and Lower Egyptian divisions; or as a process manipulated by the state in its need to guarantee cheap labor to build major infrastructural projects. This last interpretation is the thesis of James Toth (1999) whose work will be briefly referred to in the next chapter. The relevance of Toth's political economy approach to rural labor development in Egypt to my own thesis is limited because he is concerned in his empirical investigation with a village in Lower Egypt, and some of the infrastructural projects are in Upper Egypt, notably the Aswan High Dam. Nevertheless parts of his analysis are less tangential to my own work, as when for example he suggests that the accelerated movement of rural laborers to cities in the 1970s and 1980s was related to the oil price boom and the need to fill places vacated by urban workers migrating to jobs in the oil-producing states.

What is much more certain is that Lower Egypt has evolved a larger share of industry than Upper Egypt. This national pattern of industrial location may be attributed, among other things, to the easier access to raw materials, skilled labor, imported machinery, and markets. It appears, therefore, that Lower Egypt has a larger share of the national industrial location (factories, workers, and capital in factories) due to its better position with respect to those factors. It is also the case that Lower Egypt has a somewhat better quality workforce. While the illiteracy rate in Lower Egypt was 39.5 percent in 1996, it was 48.0 percent in Upper Egypt. Upper Egyptians are less educated than Lower Egyptians, with lower levels of formal education at all levels in the educational ladder up to university graduates.

The simple conclusion to be drawn from the above brief review is that Lower Egypt is considerably more developed than Upper Egypt. Lower Egyptians' customs historically varied from those of the Upper Egyptians, being more rural-based in the latter case. Even in modern times, Lower Egypt is much more industrialized, and more influenced by trade and commerce with the rest of the world.

2.3 Regional differentials and trends in urbanization

According to the Egyptian Census definition, “urban” comprises all cities and towns in a governorate (province), together with their constituents of smaller administrative units such as *kisms* (district/county) or *skiakhas* (within the district). On the other hand, “rural” includes all villages with their associated hamlets (CAPMAS, 1999). The spatial distribution of population in Egypt presents a classical example of high metropolitan primacy. According to the 1996 census, 40 percent of the total Egyptian urban population lives in two of the world's oldest cities, namely Greater Cairo and Alexandria.

Table 2.2
Rural–urban population in Egypt, 1976–1996

	Census year		
	1976	1986	1996
Total population	36,636,204	48,205,049	59,312,914
Urban population	16,036,403	21,173,436	25,286,335
Rural population	20,589,801	27,031,613	34,026,579
Urban total %	43.8	43.9	42.6
Rural total %	56.2	56.1	57.4
Urban–rural ratio	0.79	0.78	0.74

Source: calculated from Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics 1976, 1986, and 1996 Census reports (CAPMAS, 1979, 1989, 1999)

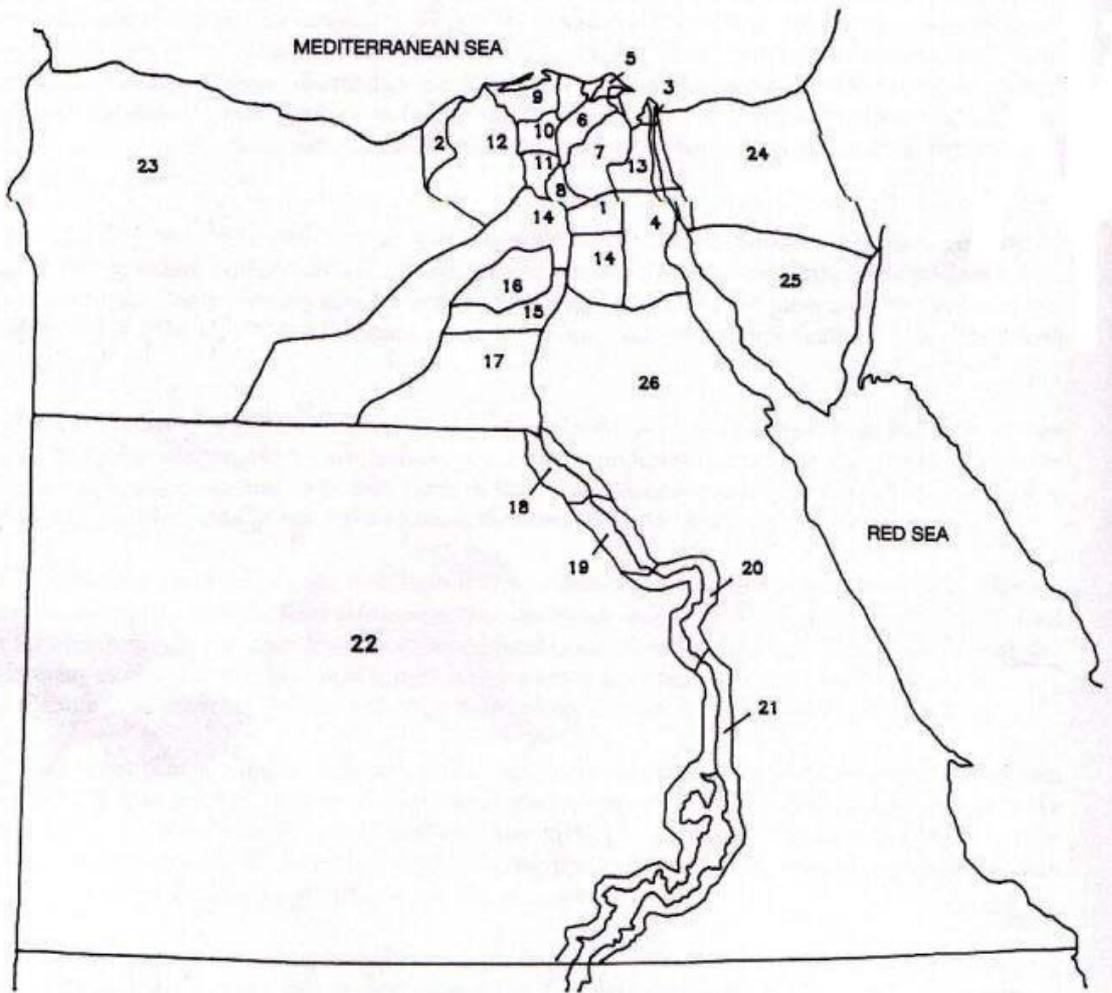
The pattern of population growth in Egypt in the last three decades shows an increase in total population from 36.6 million in 1976 to 59.3 million in 1996, i.e. by 62.0 percent. Over the same period the rural population increased by 65.1 percent, from 20.6 million to 34.0 million, i.e. by a slightly higher rate than total population growth. As Table 2.2 shows, the urban population in Egypt fluctuated around 43 percent between 1976 and 1996; rural population at around 57 percent over the same period. The urban/rural ratio decreased very slightly from 0.79 in 1976 to 0.74 in 1996. This fairly constant division between urban and rural population over the 20-year period hides differential population and migration dynamics, the implication being that the strong rural-to-urban migration currents known to exist have the

effect of canceling out, to some extent, the higher rates of natural increase in rural areas.

The Egyptian urban population is mainly concentrated in the cities of Cairo and Alexandria, as shown in Table 2.3. The most recent census shows that these two entirely urban governorates absorb two-fifths of the total national urban population. The greatest urban agglomeration is the Greater Cairo Region (GCR), which consists of three governorates, Cairo, Guiza, and Qalyoubyya (Figure 2.1). Greater Cairo is also geographically positioned at the intersection of the three blocks of governorates in Table 2.3: hence the Cairo megalopolis straddles the borders between the Urban Governorates (Cairo itself), Lower Egypt (Qalyoubyya) and Upper Egypt (Guiza). According to 1996 census data, 72.1 percent of the GCR is urban. Cairo's share in the total national urban population has decreased from 31.6 percent in 1976 to 26.9 in 1996. This trend has been compensated by increasing trends of urbanization in the two other governorates of Greater Cairo, Guiza and Qalyoubyya, which have grown as the built-up area of the metropolis has extended inexorably outwards.

Further interesting analysis of the evolution of Cairo is made in the recent paper by Sutton and Fahmi (2001), which includes a detailed discussion on the problems of defining the “true” boundaries, and hence the population trends, of the “mega-city” of Cairo. Yet the hyper-growth of Cairo is clear, although the annual rate of its population growth slowed appreciably during the last intercensal interval (1986–1996: 1.6 percent) compared to the previous one (1976–1986: 2.7 percent). Successive census totals for Cairo are 2.2 million in 1947, 3.8 million in 1960, 5.1 million in 1966, 6.8 million in 1976, 9.3 million in 1986 and 10.2 million in 1996. Publication of the 1996 figure was delayed because the authorities found it hard to accept the lower-than-expected total, suspecting undercounting of people squatting in empty buildings, cemeteries etc. Lowered fertility and a slow-down in the rate of rural–urban migration were acknowledged as more likely reasons, perhaps assisted by a series of Cairo master-plans to contain urban growth. However, the total population of Greater Cairo was estimated in 1996 to be of the order of 13.5 million (Sutton and Fahmi, 2001: 136).

Figure 2.1
Map of Egyptian Governorates



- | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|----|-------------|----|--------------|----|-------------|
| 1 | Cairo | 8 | Qalyoubyya | 15 | Beni-Sueif | 22 | New Valley |
| 2 | Alexandria | 9 | Kafresheihk | 16 | Fayoum | 23 | Matrouh |
| 3 | Port-Said | 10 | Gharbia | 17 | Menia | 24 | North Sinai |
| 4 | Suez | 11 | Menoufia | 18 | Assiut | 25 | South Sinai |
| 5 | Damitta | 12 | Behera | 19 | Souhag | 26 | Red Sea |
| 6 | Daquhlyya | 13 | Ismailia | 20 | Qena & Luxor | | |
| 7 | Sharqyya | 14 | Guiza | 21 | Aswan | | |

Table 2.3
Distribution of national and urban population by governorate, Egypt 1976–1996

Governorate	Census Year									
	1976			1986			1996			
	% of urban pop. to total urban population	Rank	% of pop. to total national population	% of urban pop. to total urban population	Rank	% of pop. to total national population	% of urban pop. to total urban population	Rank	% of pop. To total national population	% of urban population to total population in the governorate
<i>Cairo</i>	31.6	1	13.85	28.6	1	12.50	26.9	1	11.47	100
<i>Guiza</i>	8.6	3	6.60	10.0	3	7.68	10.2	3	8.07	54.1
<i>Qalyoubyya</i>	4.2	5	4.59	6.2	4	2.20	5.3	4	5.57	40.6
<i>Alexandria</i>	14.4	2	6.32	13.7	2	6.05	13.2	2	5.63	100
<i>Damitta</i>	0.9	20	1.57	0.8	18	1.54	1.0	21	1.54	27.4
<i>Daqhlyya</i>	6.3	7	7.47	6.3	5	7.24	4.6	5	7.12	27.8
<i>Sharqyya</i>	3.3	8	7.32	3.4	8	7.10	3.8	7	7.22	22.5
<i>Kafresheihk</i>	1.4	14	3.81	1.5	11	0.71	2.0	14	3.75	22.9
<i>Gharbia</i>	4.8	4	6.28	4.4	6	5.91	4.2	6	5.74	31.1
<i>Menoufia</i>	2.1	13	4.67	2.1	12	4.62	2.2	13	4.65	19.9
<i>Behera</i>	4.2	6	6.73	3.4	7	0.70	3.6	8	6.73	22.8
<i>Ismailia</i>	1.0	19	0.97	1.3	17	1.13	1.4	20	1.21	50.3
<i>Port-Said</i>	1.6	16	0.72	1.8	14	0.83	1.9	15	0.80	100
<i>Suez</i>	1.2	18	0.53	1.5	16	0.60	1.7	17	0.70	100
<i>Fayoum</i>	1.7	5	3.12	1.7	15	3.20	1.8	16	3.35	22.5
<i>Beni-Sueif</i>	1.7	15	3.03	1.7	15	2.99	1.7	18	3.13	23.5
<i>Menia</i>	2.7	10	5.61	1.7	15	5.49	2.5	12	5.58	19.4
<i>Assiut</i>	2.9	9	4.63	2.6	9	4.61	3.0	9	4.72	27.3
<i>Souhag</i>	2.5	11	5.25	2.5	10	5.09	2.7	10	5.27	21.7
<i>Qena & Luxor</i>	2.4	12	4.67	2.4	11	4.67	2.7	11	4.73	24.4
<i>Aswan</i>	1.5	17	1.69	1.5	16	1.66	1.6	19	1.64	42.6
<i>Frontier Govs.*</i>	0.8		0.72	1.5		1.17	2.0		1.38	58.7
Total (%)	100		100	100		100	100		100	42.6

Source: Calculated from Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), 1976, 1986, and 1996 Census reports

* Fronteir governorates include Red Sea, New valley, Matrouh, and North and South Sinai governorates.

Table 2.4
Percentage distribution of workers aged 6+, by industry and place of residence, Egypt, 1986–1996

Industrial classification category	Urban			Rural			Total		
	1986	1996	Change	1986	1996	Change	1986	1996	Change
Agriculture, hunting, fishing and forestry	11.9	7.7	-35.3	65.0	51.6	-20.6	41.8	31.3	-25.1
Mining and quarrying	0.7	0.6	-14.3	0.3	0.2	-33.3	0.5	0.4	-20.0
Manufacturing industries	20.1	19.2	-4.5	6.8	9.5	39.7	13.5	14.0	3.7
Electricity, gas and water	1.1	1.3	18.2	0.5	0.8	60.0	0.8	1.0	25.0
Construction	10.1	10.5	4.0	4.7	6.2	31.9	7.5	8.2	9.3
Trade, restaurants and hotels	12.0	16.3	35.8	3.6	5.5	52.8	7.8	10.5	34.6
Transportation, storage and communication	8.3	8.0	-3.6	3.3	4.1	24.2	5.9	5.9	0.0
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	3.5	6.4	82.9	0.7	3.0	328.6	2.0	4.5	125.0
Community, social, personal and repair services	32.2	30.0	-6.8	15.1	19.1	26.5	20.2	24.2	19.8
Total % (000's)	100.0 5625	100.0 7313	30.0	100.0 6522	100.0 8455	29.6	100.0 12147	100.0 15768	29.8

Source: Calculated from 1986 and 1996 Census data; CAPMAS 1989, 1999

2.4 Trends in labor force structure

The percentage distribution of the workers by employment sector over the intercensal period 1986–1996 is shown in Table 2.4, which is split into three sets of columns, for urban, rural and total workforce. Three sectors – “mining and quarrying”, “electricity,...” and “finance,...” – had a small role in absorbing the workers, with their combined share at the aggregate national level being only 3.0 percent in 1986 and 5.9 in 1996. The increase in “finance” from 2.0 to 4.5 is due to market liberalization strategies and open economic policies. The bulk of the workers are absorbed in four main sectors ranked in the same order in the two censuses, as follows: “agriculture,...”, “services,...”, “manufacturing” and “trade”. However, the relative share of the agricultural sector decreased by one fourth (or by 10 percentage points) from 41.8 percent in 1986 to 31.3 percent in 1996, whilst that of the manufacturing sector increased slightly from 13.5 percent to 14.0 percent across the two census years. Also to be observed is the increase in the relative share of “trade..”, which increased from 7.8 percent to 10.5 percent, an increase of more than one third.

In rural areas, the great majority of the workers continued to be still engaged in agricultural activities, although a decreasing trend is evident (the respective share in the two censuses was 65.0 percent and 51.6 percent). All other employment sectors experienced significant increases, ranging between 24.2 percent for the transportation sector and 328.6 percent for the finance sector. Such changes indicate that rural areas were experiencing some economic transformation during the intercensal period. However, it is important to note that the division of urban/rural here refers to the place of residence of workers rather than the place of location of the work activity concerned. And it is also necessary to point out that, with the exception of agriculture, most rural workers perform their work in nearby urban areas, to which they must commute.

With respect to urban areas, the employment structure of the workers looks more balanced than that for the rural areas. The majority of the workers belonged to the services sector in the two census years. The second largest sector was that of the manufacturing activities, although its share has decreased slightly from 20.1 percent in 1986 to 19.2 percent in 1996. The “trade,..” sector ranked third, with a share of 12 percent in 1986. This sector increased in relative importance in 1996 to 16.3 percent.

In addition to the explanation already presented earlier, it may be said that the relative share of workers other than farmers in that sector increased in urban areas.

2.5 Conclusion

This brief chapter has provided essential background data on Egypt as an appropriate context for a study of rural–urban migration. Egypt has been shown to consist of a number of sharp regional dualities: the densely-populated Nile Delta and Valley versus the almost-uninhabited desert on either side (this duality is migrationaly unimportant); the urban and the rural; and the more developed (and urbanized) Lower Egypt and the less-developed Upper Egypt. For the purposes of this research the main geographical framework is dualistic contrast between the megalopolis of Greater Cairo, located at the apex of the Nile Delta in Lower Egypt, and the seven governorates which succeed each other in the predominantly rural but densely populated Upper Nile Valley between Beni-Sueif and Aswan (Figure 2.1). In the first part of the next chapter some of the historical and statistical dimensions of this Upper-to-Lower Egypt migration are explored, thereby continuing the regional descriptive analysis presented in this chapter. It will be shown that rural–urban migration is not a merely recent phenomenon which has grown up in response to emerging regional disequilibria in Egypt’s post-independence modernization and development process. Rather, it appears to be a more deeply-embedded structural feature of Egypt’s historical development over the past one hundred years or more.

Chapter 3

RURAL–URBAN MIGRATION IN EGYPT AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: A STATISTICAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of a number of diverse parts. Firstly, I will present a statistical analysis of the internal migration phenomenon in Egypt and the most recent estimates of internal migration streams and volumes, using data from the 1996 Census. Standard demographic techniques are used, including place of last and current residence calculations. A review of the existing studies on rural–urban migration in Egypt, highlighting the most significant results and insights, constitutes the second section of this chapter. The standard theories of rural–urban migration are reviewed in the third section: this review ranges widely, but inevitably cursorily in parts, over a number of conventional disciplinary and other conceptual approaches. Next, taking a preliminary cue from some aspects of the to-and-fro nature of Egyptian rural–urban migration, the fourth section looks at broader typologies of human mobility and labor circulation. Some case-studies are briefly discussed, and then the most suitable conceptual and theoretical frameworks that appear most promising for a study of rural–urban migration/mobility in Egypt are elaborated. In contrast to the previous two chapters, both short, this one is long and has a complicated structure: its overall purpose is to present a wide range of essential background statistical, literature review, and theoretical material, in order to lay the foundations for the remainder of the thesis.

3.1 Rural–urban migration in Egypt: the statistical picture

3.1.1 The old picture

The internal migration of people has a remarkable impact on population redistribution in Egypt. Although Egypt has been, traditionally speaking, an area of international

migration (migration from the eastern and the north-eastern Mediterranean countries to Egypt), it has always been an area of internal migration. In the past, foreigners were coming to Egypt, from other parts of the Arab world especially, while Egyptians rarely migrated abroad till the mid 1950s, but on the other hand Egyptians were migrating internally regularly and extensively.

As per the 1947 census data, the total number of internal migrants (based on recording prior residence) was 1.7 million. Out of this number, 1,416,000, representing 82 percent of the total number of migrants, were directed to the following four administrative regions or governorates: Cairo, Alexandria, Suez Canal, and Damitta. These are all located within the main urban part of Lower Egypt (see Figure 2.1). Migrants to these governorates numbered 1,194,000 while migrants from these governorates were only 222,000, which means that the loss represents only 18 percent of the gain. Even at that early time in Egypt's modern migration history, then, most of the migrants headed towards Cairo.

As for the place of origin, the pattern was simple, traditional and spontaneous: people migrated from the high-density and more rural governorates. On top of all governorates we have Menoufia, which has the highest density and is also the nearest to Cairo. Menoufia exported more than one fifth of its population (22.1 percent) to the other governorates of Egypt and especially to the capital. Aswan ranked second, exporting one fifth of its population, mainly to Cairo and Alexandria. Qalyoubyya in the Delta region ranked third, followed by Assiut, Gerga (known now as Souhag) and Qena in Upper Egypt.

In the 1966 population census data, migration to Cairo increased. Out of the total number of migrants to Cairo, which was 1,181,000, migrants from the Nile valley were about 1,129,000 and the rest headed towards the border governorates. Migrants from the Delta were 683,000 or 61.9 percent, while migrants from Upper Egypt were 446,000 or 37.6 percent. Menoufiya still had the leadership in out-migration as it contributed 209,000. After Menoufia, came Assiut and Souhag from which the number of migrants was 100,000, which represents 8 percent of the migrants to Cairo. It is noticeable that Aswan lost its leadership in exporting migrants to Cairo. This is due to the High Dam

project, which was a pull factor for internal migration to Aswan.

3.1.2 The recent picture

An overview of inter-governorate (inter-province) migration for urban and rural areas by rural/urban origin or destination for the last three censuses – 1976, 1986, and 1996 – may be obtained from Table 3.1. It is important to make explicit the way migration is measured in Table 3.1 and subsequent census-based tables: migration is recorded by comparing present residence with previous residence in a different governorate, without any time limit on the inter-governorate residential move. Hence the move could have taken place one year before the census date or twenty or more years; in the latter case the same persons are likely to be recorded as being migrants across successive censuses, until they die or make another move across a governorate boundary. This is a rather specific way of measuring migration and the nature of this measurement must be borne in mind when interpreting the statistics in Table 3.1 and in successive tables.

Table 3.1

Urban/rural migration by type of movement, Egypt, 1976–1996*

	Census Year		
	1976	1986	1996
Urban–Urban	2,577,959 (64.3%)	3,003,054 (72.9%)	2,535,864 (60.4%)
Rural–Urban	984,469 (24.6%)	540,933 (13.1%)	562,471 (13.4%)
Urban–Rural	260,295 (6.5%)	422,955 (10.3%)	949,489 (22.6%)
Rural–Rural	186,724 (4.7%)	152,296 (3.7%)	147,611 (3.5%)
Total	4,009,447 (100%)	4,119,238 (100%)	4,195,435 (100%)

Source: Calculated for the 1976, 1986, and 1996 census data (CAPMAS, 1979, 1989 and 1999)

*Place of current residence vs. place of previous residence

Two further background notes must be borne in mind for the following discussion. First is the way the governorates are divided into “urban” and “rural” areas. In most governorates, the “urban” consists of the governorate capital, plus the smaller “district” capital settlements, whilst the “rural” consists of villages, scattered rural settlements (satellite villages and hamlets) and Bedouin encampments (in the frontier governorates only). Frontier governorates include The New Valley, Matrouh, North and South Sinai, and Red Sea Governorates. They comprise only about one percent of Egypt’s total population. However, four governorates are entirely urban – Cairo, Alexandria, Port-Said, and Suez. The second point to note is the map of the governorates – Figure 2.1 – which shows their very uneven size and unusual configuration, dictated by Egypt’s unique geography and population distribution.

Rural to urban migration decreased as a proportion of total migration from 24.6 to 13.1 percent between 1976 and 1986, while the percentage shares in 1986 and 1996 were about the same, but the volume of movement slightly increased, in view of overall Egyptian population growth. In contrast, urban to rural migration increased from 6.5 to 10.3 percent of the total inter-governorate flows between 1976 and 1986, then to 23 percent in 1996. Urban to urban migration (inter-urban) is the largest. It fluctuated from 64.3 to 72.9 then to 60.4 percent between 1976, 1986, and 1996 respectively. Rural to rural migration was the least important type of movement, around 4 percent at each census.

Urban to urban migration is, almost certainly, greatly dominated by inter-urban migrations between the big urban governorates – Cairo, Guiza, Qalyoubyya, and Alexandria. Statistical proof of this would need disaggregation of all the inter-governorate migration data for each pair of governorates, in order to determine the fraction of “metropolitan” inter-urban migration from all other inter-urban movement. This could theoretically be done, but it would take a lot of effort. Given the widely-questioned accuracy of the census data, and the fact that my own research is on rural to urban moves (many of which are any way probably not picked up in the census because of their “hidden” nature), this piece of extra analysis was not deemed to be worthwhile.

A few other key points can be drawn out of the interesting aggregate data on Table 3.1. The first feature is the remarkable constancy of the total migration recorded in each of the three censuses – a little over 4 million. Whilst this continuity is indeed remarkable, it is partly explained by the built-in stability of the method of measuring migration whereby the same individual migrant and his/her single migration is recorded at each census as long as that individual does not make a further move across a governorate boundary. On the other hand, the disaggregation of migration types – urban to urban, rural to urban etc. – shows that these disaggregated flows are indeed changing. Hence total migration remains curiously constant, whilst the individual components of that mobility are markedly shifting. The figures speak for themselves but two noteworthy trends can be highlighted: the sharp fall of rural to urban migration between 1976 (984,000, 25 percent) and 1986 (541,000, 13 percent), and the equally sharp rise of urban to rural migration between 1986 (423,000, 10 percent) and 1996 (950,000, 23 percent). At first sight this “reverse urbanization” trend seems to negate the very rationale for doing this thesis on rural–urban migration, but the real situation is undoubtedly more complex, and probably very different, than the statistical picture. First, long-distance rural–urban migration to Cairo from Upper Egypt is a long-standing phenomenon in Egypt, traceable to the first census around a hundred years ago. Second, much of the increase in urban–rural migration between 1986 and 1996 is probably explained by return migration of retired rural–urban migrant workers back to their home villages, these rural-origin migrants having migrated to the cities in earlier decades. Third, my personal and professional demographic knowledge of the Egyptian situation leads me to strongly suspect that the bulk of rural laborers to Cairo are not officially registered by the census as rural–urban migrants because of their continuing de jure residence in rural areas. Yet another factor is the fact that a significant percent of migrants from rural to urban areas – especially to Cairo – tend to hide their rural origin and to claim that they are not migrants from rural areas. And finally some rural–urban migrants may escape census counts because of their “hidden” residence as squatters with no fixed abode.

3.1.3 Inter-governorate rural–urban migration

More details about the four types of rural–urban in- and out-migration streams are given, in relative terms, at the governorate level in Table 3.2. In this and subsequent tables in this chapter, I have highlighted the three governorates which make up the Greater Cairo,

and the seven which comprise the migrant sending areas of Upper Egypt along the Nile valley. In Table 3.2 “urban to urban” refers to in-migrants from urban areas of other governorates to urban areas of the given governorate, or out-migrants from urban areas of the given governorate to urban areas of other governorates. The same is true for “rural to rural” streams after replacing urban by rural. “Urban to rural” refers to in-migrants from urban areas of other governorates to rural areas of the given governorate or out-migrants from urban areas of the given governorate to rural areas of other governorates, and “rural to urban” refers to the reverse streams. The magnitude of the various streams in absolute numbers is given in Table 3.3. The criterion for recording migration – the simple fact of a cross-boundary change of residence at some unspecified time in the past – remains the same for Tables 3.2 and 3.3, as it was in Table 3.1. The flows recorded in these tables are simple gross migration moves. For the boundaries and location of the governorates, refer back to Figure 2.1.

From Table 3.2 it is clear that the “urban to urban” in-migration stream is the largest not only at the national level but also for the most significant streams. The proportion of “urban to urban” stream is higher than the national average in Port-Said, Cairo, Suez, Alexandria, Luxor, and Guiza. The dominant role of inter-urban flows amongst the major metropolitan centers of Greater Cairo etc. should be remembered here, as was pointed out above. The “rural to urban” stream’s proportion is above the national average in 17 governorates out of 27. The “urban to rural” flow is the second largest stream, but its size is about one third of the “urban to urban” stream. Its proportion is above the national average in 18 governorates. The highest was found in Damitta governorate while the lowest was found in North and South Sinai. The last and the smallest is the “rural to rural” in-migration stream which constitutes less than 5 percent of all in-migrants. Behera, New Valley, Kafresheihk, and Matrouh have significantly higher proportions for this type of movement.

The proportion of relative distribution of out-migrants among the four types of rural/urban migration streams indicates that the “urban to urban” stream is the largest one in all governorates with no single exception. The second largest stream is “urban to rural” with the highest percent in Guiza and Ismailia. The third largest stream is “rural to urban”. It represents 22.6 percent of all out-migrants. Its proportion

Table 3.2

Percentage distribution of inter-governorate in and out urban–rural migration streams, place of previous residence data, Egypt 1996

<i>Governorate</i>	In-migration				Out-migration			
	Urban to Urban	Rural to Urban	Urban to Rural	Rural to Rural	Urban to Urban	Urban to Rural	Rural to Urban	Rural to Rural
<i>Cairo</i>	89.0	11.0	NA	NA	69.1	30.9	NA	NA
<i>Guiza</i>	64.4	6.1	28.1	1.4	44.8	44.5	8.7	2.0
<i>Qualyoubyya</i>	50.7	10.1	36.1	3.2	51.7	26.4	17.8	4.1
Alexandria	83.7	16.3	NA	NA	76.4	23.6	NA	NA
Damitta	9.8	11.1	68.0	11.1	60.4	30.0	8.1	1.5
Daquhlyya	18.7	27.2	48.8	5.2	56.1	17.4	17.7	8.8
Sharqyya	29.4	28.5	35.5	6.7	56.0	20.6	18.2	5.2
Kafresheihk	16.7	22.9	45.2	15.1	43.5	29.4	21.5	5.7
Gharbia	24.1	32.6	38.8	4.5	54.4	21.3	19.8	4.4
Menoufia	26.5	30.4	38.4	4.7	62.4	10.9	21.5	5.2
Behera	12.6	7.5	62.2	17.8	46.9	31.7	17.0	4.4
Ismailia	52.4	6.8	30.1	10.7	55.2	36.8	6.1	1.9
Port-Said	91.1	8.9	NA	NA	84.4	15.6	NA	NA
Suez	87.0	13.0	NA	NA	87.0	13.0	NA	NA
Fayoum	26.0	26.6	42.1	5.3	67.6	15.2	13.9	3.3
<i>Beni-Suif</i>	27.2	22.8	41.0	9.0	67.1	14.9	15.1	2.9
<i>Menia</i>	17.2	30.8	45.7	6.2	56.4	18.5	22.3	2.7
<i>Assiut</i>	30.3	37.7	28.9	3.1	62.9	12.7	19.7	4.7
<i>Souhag</i>	21.9	30.0	44.4	3.6	62.9	12.1	20.2	4.8
<i>Qena</i>	27.5	18.0	49.3	5.2	59.9	11.4	23.6	5.2
<i>Aswan</i>	49.8	20.8	23.0	6.4	71.4	16.8	10.2	1.6
<i>Luxor</i>	74.0	7.6	12.7	5.8	77.3	13.4	6.5	2.8
Red Sea	50.7	31.4	12.2	5.8	66.0	25.1	5.6	3.3
New Valley	34.4	28.7	20.1	16.9	50.1	13.9	34.0	2.0
Matrouh	47.8	8.9	29.0	14.3	60.9	27.7	10.7	0.8
N. Sinai	58.4	24.0	9.6	8.0	43.5	35.4	10.0	11.1
S. Sinai	57.1	29.2	9.9	3.8	57.6	29.3	12.1	1.1
Total Egypt	60.4	13.4	22.6	3.5	60.4	22.6	13.4	3.5

Source: Calculated for the 1996 census data (CAPMAS, 1999)

Table 3.3

Volume of inter-governorate in and out urban–rural migration streams, place of previous residence data, Egypt 1996

<i>Governorate</i>	In-migration				Out-migration			
	Urban to Urban	Rural to Urban	Urban to Rural	Rural to Rural	Urban to Urban	Urban to Rural	Rural to Urban	Rural to Rural
<i>Cairo</i>	716,640	88,556	NA	NA	593,648	266,004	NA	NA
<i>Guiza</i>	567,778	53,727	247,312	12,719	98,722	98,217	19,166	4,470
<i>Qualyoubyya</i>	243,275	48,407	173,048	15,167	84,833	43,261	29,247	6,722
<i>Alexandria</i>	231,524	44,975	NA	NA	77,167	23,797	NA	NA
<i>Damitta</i>	5,771	6,542	40,058	6,512	65,725	32,606	8,796	1,667
<i>Daquhlyya</i>	17,687	25,722	46,102	4,949	197,213	60,998	62,088	30,979
<i>Sharqyya</i>	40,553	39,259	48,931	9,209	194,184	71,444	63,005	17,917
<i>Kafresheihk</i>	10,835	14,807	29,274	9,789	40,935	27,714	20,215	5,339
<i>Gharbia</i>	28,580	38,722	46,068	5,323	136,387	53,459	49,751	11,080
<i>Menoufia</i>	16,403	18,798	23,740	2,920	177,208	31,052	61,010	14,707
<i>Behera</i>	18,697	11,098	92,621	26,423	85,039	57,500	30,850	7,980
<i>Ismailia</i>	122,662	15,810	70,470	25,065	24,205	16,144	2,668	853
<i>Port-Said</i>	190,639	18,603	NA	NA	17,585	3,238	NA	NA
<i>Suez</i>	166,139	24,749	NA	NA	27,494	4,111	NA	NA
<i>Fayoum</i>	6,041	6,172	9,763	1,220	72,114	16,189	14,786	3,559
<i>Beni-Suif</i>	9,143	7,688	13,797	3,018	67,246	14,930	15,106	2,866
<i>Menia</i>	9,617	17,193	25,520	3,453	80,946	26,631	32,059	3,938
<i>Assiut</i>	12,868	15,998	12,276	1,320	138,289	27,857	43,229	10,369
<i>Souhag</i>	10,694	14,641	21,673	1,775	178,304	34,327	57,159	13,504
<i>Qena</i>	6,876	4,505	12,344	1,303	100,566	19,115	39,582	8,731
<i>Aswan</i>	28,944	12,118	13,358	3,749	45,151	10,631	6,429	1,015
<i>Luxor</i>	2,895	297	495	225	16,101	2,784	1,362	575
<i>Red Sea</i>	20,337	12,576	4,881	2,306	3,849	1,461	327	192
<i>New Valley</i>	6,742	5,629	3,942	3,306	6,266	1,736	4,254	245
<i>Matrouh</i>	14,592	2,709	8,835	4,371	2,643	1,201	464	35
<i>N. Sinai</i>	21,370	8,787	3,501	2,918	3,353	2,731	773	855
<i>S. Sinai</i>	8,562	4,383	1,480	571	691	351	145	13
Total Egypt	2,535,864	562,471	949,489	147,611	2,535,864	949,489	562,471	147,611

Source: Calculated for the 1996 census data (CAPMAS, 1999)

NA = Not applicable (Cairo, Alexandria, Port-Said, and Suez have no rural areas)

is higher for New Valley, Qena, and Menia, while significantly lower for Luxor, Ismailia, and Red Sea governorates. The last stream, “rural to rural”, includes 3.5 percent of out-migration only.

3.1.4 Governorate migration indices

When the streams are grouped by type of destination for in-migrants and by type of origin for out-migrants, one may throw some light on in- and out-migration for urban and rural areas. Instead, it is more informative and convenient to study in-, out- and additionally net-migration for urban and rural areas from the available data as presented in Table 3.4.

The first striking fact revealed by Table 3.4 is that urban areas are net losers in the majority of non-urban governorates of Lower and Upper Egypt. Thus, the 387,018 net loss is the net balance of considerable net gains in some of these areas and net losses in others. The major net gains in non-urban governorates are those of urban areas in Guiza and Qalyoubyya, mainly those within the Greater Cairo Region. In the meantime, the 387,018 net gain to rural areas represents the balance of net gains of 648,956 in these areas in a number of governorates and 261,938 net losses in the remaining areas.

Again, the major net gains in non-urban governorates are those of rural areas in Guiza and Qalyoubyya, mainly those within the GCR. Migration from rural Egypt to rural areas in these two governorates comprises 60 percent of the net gain to rural areas (388,641 out of 648,956). I may assume, with a high degree of confidence, that this is an implicit rural to urban migration. This may be attributed, in part, to the housing problem in Cairo, so that migrants tend to prefer to live in the peri-urban villages, slum areas, and suburban districts where housing is less expensive than in the old and planned areas in Greater Cairo. This trend is confirmed by mappings of Cairo’s census districts (*kisms*) in Sutton and Fahmi (2001), which show consistent decline, sometimes over several censuses, in center-city *kisms*, and rapid growth in outer districts. These peripheral areas are considered in the census as rural areas. It is important here to refer to the definition of rural areas in Egypt, which mainly depends on administrative definition of urban and rural areas, rather than their “objective” rural or urban character,

Table 3.4
Migration streams by governorates and urban–rural categories, Egypt 1996

Governorate	Volume						Indices (per 1000 population)					
	Urban			Rural			Urban			Rural		
	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net
<i>Cairo</i>	805,196	859,652	-54,456	NA	NA	NA	119	127	-8	NA	NA	NA
<i>Guiza</i>	621,505	196,939	424,566	260,031	23,636	236,395	242	77	165	119	11	108
<i>Qualyoubyya</i>	291,682	128,094	163,588	188,215	35,969	152,246	218	96	122	96	18	78
Alexandria	276,499	100,964	175,535	NA	NA	NA	83	30	53	NA	NA	NA
Damitta	12,313	98,331	-86,018	46,570	10,463	36,107	49	393	-344	70	16	55
Daquhlyya	43,409	258,211	-214,802	51,051	93,067	-42,016	37	220	-183	17	31	-14
Sharqyya	79,812	265,628	-185,816	58,140	80,922	-22,782	83	276	-193	18	24	-7
Kafreshaihk	25,642	68,649	-43,007	39,063	25,554	13,509	50	135	-84	23	15	8
Gharbia	67,302	189,846	-122,544	51,391	60,831	-9,440	64	180	-116	22	26	-4
Menoufia	35,201	208,260	-173,059	26,660	75,717	-49,057	64	380	-316	12	34	-22
Behera	29,795	142,539	-112,744	119,044	38,830	80,214	33	157	-124	39	13	26
Ismailia	138,472	40,349	98,123	95,535	3,521	92,014	387	113	274	270	10	260
Port-Said	209,242	20,823	188,419	NA	NA	NA	444	44	400	NA	NA	NA
Suez	190,888	31,605	159,283	NA	NA	NA	459	76	383	NA	NA	NA
Fayoum	12,213	88,303	-76,090	10,983	18,345	-7,362	27	198	-171	7	12	-5
<i>Beni-Suif</i>	16,831	82,176	-65,345	16,815	17,972	-1,157	39	188	-150	12	13	-1
<i>Menia</i>	26,810	107,577	-80,767	28,973	35,997	-7,024	42	168	-126	11	14	-3
<i>Assiut</i>	28,866	166,146	-137,280	13,596	53,598	-40,002	38	218	-180	7	26	-20
<i>Souhag</i>	25,335	212,631	-187,296	23,448	70,663	-47,215	37	314	-276	10	29	-19
<i>Qena</i>	11,381	119,681	-108,300	13,647	48,313	-34,666	22	232	-209	7	25	-18
<i>Aswan</i>	41,062	55,782	-14,720	17,107	7,444	9,663	99	135	-36	31	13	17
<i>Luxor</i>	3,192	18,885	-15,693	720	1,937	-1,217	19	115	-95	4	10	-6
Red Sea	32,913	5,310	27,603	7,187	519	6,668	291	47	244	218	16	202
New Valley	12,371	8,002	4,369	7,248	4,499	2,749	181	117	64	99	61	38
Matrouh	17,301	3,844	13,457	13,206	499	12,707	148	33	115	140	5	135
N. Sinai	30,157	6,084	24,073	6,419	1,628	4,791	215	44	172	63	16	47
S. Sinai	12,945	1,042	11,903	2,051	158	1,893	483	39	445	82	6	75
Total Egypt	3,098,33	3,485,353	-387,018	1,097,100	710,082	387,018	123	139	-15	32	21	11

Source: Calculated for the 1996 census data (CAPMAS, 1999)

which may of course change over time. Also, due to the tendency to limit public expenditure and to protect agricultural land, the government of Egypt tends to keep the rural/urban split as it is.

3.2 Studying rural–urban migration in Egypt: a limited literature

It is remarkable that the “international” literature on internal migration in less-developed countries pays so little attention to Egypt, or to the Middle East in general. Studies on Latin America, tropical Africa and Asia thoroughly dominate this literature. Let me take some examples from the library shelves of well-known texts to make this point. Kosinski and Prothero’s (1975) edited volume *People on the Move* contains 23 chapters and 400 pages, with studies on internal migration from all parts of the world except North Africa and the Middle East. Brown and Neuberger (1977) is another edited volume which purports to be “a comparative perspective on internal migration”. It has 24 chapters, more than 500 pages, but again nothing on Egypt or any Middle Eastern country. Richmond and Kubat (1976) is yet another edited book which compares internal migration in various countries around the world: 13 chapters, 320 pages, nothing on Egypt or the Middle East – the nearest is a chapter on urbanization and migration in Addis Ababa (Palen, 1976). Jorge Balan’s *Why People Move: Comparative Perspectives on the Dynamics of Internal Migration* (1981) likewise skirts the Middle East, with just one contribution out of its 16 chapters on rural migration and agrarian change in Turkey. Another very well-known text is Prothero and Chapman’s *Circulation in Third World Countries* (1985) which contains 20 chapters, nearly 500 pages, and again nothing on rural–urban movement in the Middle East. Likewise Skeldon’s (1990) detailed analytical overview of internal migration in developing countries contains no single reference to Egypt nor any North African or Middle Eastern country, drawing most of the empirical material from Peru, Papua New Guinea, India, China and Japan. Finally, even texts about mobility in Africa tend to assume “Africa” means sub-Saharan or “Tropical” Africa (see for instance van Binsbergen and Meilink, 1978). Where studies do focus explicitly on the Arab and Middle Eastern area (see Shami, 1993, 1994), the focus is on forced displacement and resettlement rather than on “natural” migration; or, as in the case of two fairly recent papers by Boukhemis and Zeghiche (1988, 1990) on the Algerian city

of Constantine, the analysis is limited to rather straightforward presentations of census data.

Yet the importance of internal migration in Egypt is clear from the statistical review undertaken in the earlier part of this chapter. We saw that internal migration is responsible for the redistribution of nearly 25 percent of Egypt's population, and for the rapid growth of Egyptian cities – especially Cairo and Alexandria. A review of the existing studies on rural–urban migration in Egypt, highlighting the most significant insights, is now presented in this section. The plan of this review is first to describe the regional flows and then to look at certain key migration topics, such as the characteristics of internal migrants, the decision-making processes bearing on migration, the modes of adjustment followed by migrants, and the general macro-scale causes of internal migration as presented in the Egyptian literature. My account updates and depends heavily on an earlier study by Ibrahim (1982), where he reviewed some dozens of studies related to internal migration in Egypt, most of them, however, of small-scale significance and published in Arabic.

3.2.1 Trends and directions of internal migration

Internal migration in Egypt has generally been: a) from South to North; b) from South and North to the Canal Zone; c) from all of Egypt's hinterland to Cairo and Alexandria; and, d) from Egypt's center to its peripheries. As numerous studies have shown, the biggest convergence of migration streams culminates in the Greater Cairo Region which includes Cairo, Guiza, and Qalyoubyya governorates (Adams, 1986; Aldakhil, 1999; Burden, 1973; El-Boraey, 1984, 1986; El-Kurdy, 1974; Ibrahim, 1986; Nassef, 1985; Sharaa, 1964; Sharnouby, 1968; Shoieb *et al.*, 1994).

a) Migration from South to North

By South in the present context, we are referring to the governorates of Middle and Upper Egypt, i.e., south of the Greater Cairo Region. Hence South includes Fayoum, Menia, Beni-Sueif, Assiut, Souhag, Qena, Luxor, and Aswan. These governorates represent a relatively narrow strip of green land on both sides of the Nile. As a function of limited opportunities for either vertical or horizontal agricultural expansion (i.e.

intensification of the already highly intensive agricultural regime or expansion of cultivation to new areas), mounting population pressure has been markedly felt for the last hundred years. One response to this pressure has been a steady stream of out-migration to the north.

Souhag, Qena, Aswan, and Assiut have been the major suppliers of out-migrants to the North – to Cairo, Alexandria, and the Suez Canal governorates. Hassan (1969) estimated the net loss from the South to the North at about one million over the first six decades of this century. Of course, this figure is very much lower than the volume of internal migration recorded in recent decades, but it must be remembered that the total Egyptian population was itself much lower in the past – in 1947 for instance it was only 19 million. El-Badry (1965), after elaborate calculations, contends that the four southernmost governorates exported a net 13.0 percent of their combined population to other regions in Egypt during these same decades. In the last four decades, 1960s to the 1990s, the same trends continued but with some noted variations. Aswan, for example, is now more of a population exchanger, having seen a marked decline in its net loss.

b) The Suez Canal Zone

Until the 1947 census, this area was administratively divided into two governorates: the Canal (which comprised the two cities of Port-Said and Ismailia) and Suez. By the following census (1960) the Canal was sub-divided into two separate governorates known at present as Port Said Governorate and Ismailia Governorate – with the latter incorporating substantial rural areas. The inflow of migrants to the three governorates began immediately with the opening of the Suez Canal in the 1860s. The two neighboring governorates of Daquhlyya and Damitta accounted for most of the supply to Port-Said. Sharqyya provided most of the inflow to Ismailia. Qena, in the deep South, contributed the largest share of the net migration gain of Suez.

After the 1967 Arab–Israeli war, the three cities of Port-Said, Suez, and Ismailia were evacuated; over 60 percent of their respective populations became “forced temporary migrants” to other parts of the country. But starting in 1974 after the 1973 Arab–Israeli war, most of them returned.

c) Migration from the hinterland to Cairo and Alexandria

The two largest Egyptian cities have been the greatest magnets of migration streams. Beside their net population imports from the South, noted above, the two cities attracted similar streams from the Delta. We look briefly at each city.

About two thirds of the scholarly studies on Egyptian migration have concentrated on the capital city of Cairo. Over the long term, Cairo's net gain from the South averages about 40 percent of its total in-migrants. The Delta governorates contributed the balance of 60 percent during the twentieth century. Most of this hinterland contribution to Cairo's population has come from Menoufia, Daquhlyya, and Gharbia (Abdel-Hakim, 1966, 1968, 1974 and 1975; Aldakhil, 1999; Nassef, 1985). Cairo has long been a net population importer, with the biggest suppliers being Menoufia, Souhag, Assiut, Gharbia, Daquhlyya, Qalyoubyya and Qena. Only in very recent years does the momentum of (recorded) population arrival seem to be slackening.

Unlike Cairo, Alexandria has not been focused on as frequently by students of Egyptian migration – although it is the second largest city in the country and it displays many of the same demographic dynamics. Alexandria has been a net migration gainer since the turn of the century, although at a rate smaller than Cairo. Like Cairo, the city of Alexandria received most of its migrants from Menoufia in the Delta, and from Souhag, Qena, and Aswan in the deep South. But there are additional major supplies from the Delta – notably Behera, Gharbia, and Kafresheihk.

d) The Frontier governorates

A minor stream of migration has operated from the center to the Red Sea and Sinai areas from the late 1930s on. (Naturally, the flow to Sinai was interrupted during the years of Israeli occupation – 1967–84). Although very small in absolute volume, it looms large in relative terms vis-à-vis the low total population of these areas. The main suppliers of the in-migrants to the frontier areas were Qena, Souhag, and Cairo itself. The expansion of the Red Sea and south Sinai coastal resorts will probably stimulate further migration to these developing coasts – as long as the tourism industry remains buoyant, which it hardly is at present.

3.2.2 One-step versus multi-step migration

The Western experience of rural–urban migration was to a great extent one of a multi-step process. Unfortunately, Egyptian census data do not enable us to answer this question with respect to this country. There are, however, a few old small sample surveys that shed light on this point (Hegazy, 1971; Ouda, 1964; Saad, 1976). The available evidence reveals that the overwhelming majority of migrants to Cairo, for example, have come to it directly from their communities of origin – bypassing small and middle-size towns. In one sample survey one-step migrants accounted for 78 percent of the total (Saad, 1976). Another sample survey indicated that only 13 percent of the migrants had engaged in more than one move between the point of origin and the point of destination, the rest (87 percent) having engaged in one-step migration (El-Kurdy, 1974). The nature of the spatial distribution of population, transport, and settlement structures in Egypt, plus the long establishment of rural–urban migration flows, probably accounts for the lack of a stepwise migratory process in Egypt.

3.2.3 Characteristics of internal migrants

Studies of Egypt’s internal migrants have in various ways helped to portray their characteristics. Most have concentrated on their age and sex composition from a statistical point of view; a few tried to describe their occupational, educational and socio-economic profiles. The overall conclusions in these respects are: the very strong dominance of males over females; the dominance of young over old age groupings; and the lack of a markedly explicit “selection process” as regards migrants’ socio-economic characteristics. As to the latter point, however, studies tend to show that the migrants are of relatively higher educational and occupational background than their average counterparts at the point of origin, but lower than the counterparts at the point of destination (Attiya, 1976; CAPMAS, 1989). We shall find out later on whether the rural–urban migrants to Cairo studied in my own survey match these profile characteristics.

One of the strongest factors in Egyptian internal migration is the search for better work opportunities than those existing (if indeed there are any) at points of origin. Despite the prominence of this factor, only a few studies of Egyptian migration reviewed in this section have focused specifically on it. One such is the study that was carried out by Toth (1999), which I briefly mentioned earlier. Toth conducted anthropological research in Kafresheihk governorate in the lower Delta region to study migrant farm workers; his fieldwork took place in 1980–82. Toth described a composite migrant labor process out to work sites on the perimeter of Egypt's northern Delta region. He examined why poor village farm laborers migrate to work in non-agricultural activities. Seasonal unemployment and the region's underdevelopment were the two main reasons that were mentioned by Toth, but his analysis also incorporated a powerful political economy perspective which linked rural migrant workers to state control of labor resources in the context of public infrastructural and development projects during the 1960s and 1970s.

3.2.4 The migration decision-making process

Few studies among those reviewed in this section have focused on the decision-making process of migration. Reviewing this limited literature, I would say that *communication*, *inducement* and *facilitators* seem to be three key variables which make the difference in the decision to migrate among all those rural Egyptians who otherwise would appear to have similar socio-economic and psychological profiles. Let us take each of these three elements in turn. Two rather dated empirical studies (Ouda, 1974; Saad, 1976) revealed that actual migrants had first- or second-hand knowledge about the chosen destination while still at the point of origin. Pre-migration visits to the former were common, so the destination was not entirely strange to them. Those who had made prior visits to the target destination had learned about it from friends, relatives, or the mass media. Serving in the army was also a way of getting acquainted with several urban areas. The inducers of migration were either direct persuasion from relatives and friends, or indirect through emulation of others from the home community. The facilitator variable refers to actual or expected help upon migrating to the new community, where kin, friends and co-villagers facilitate their arrival and settlement – housing, work, and so on. This aspect is dealt with in the next subsection.

3.2.5 Modes of migrants' adjustment

Most of the studies bearing on migrant adjustment in Egypt have been pioneered or inspired by the work of Janet Abu-Lughod (1961, 1969). Some researchers have dealt with rural migrant adjustment in urban areas in general (Hegazy, 1971; Ouda, 1974). Others have focused on the adjustment of a particular type of migrant. The common features of the adjustment pattern among migrants are seeking help from blood-kin or folk-kin in the new community. The help takes the form of finding residence, employment, and smoothing the acquaintance with the new community. The new migrants often reside with or close by older migrants from their original community. This tends to create concentrated pockets of migrants from closely-related backgrounds in an otherwise impersonal urban world. These clusters also assist in finding employment nearby and/or in places where relatives, friends, and people of similar provincial background are employed (Guhl and Abdel-Fattah, 1991). Again, my own study will provide further evidence for this.

3.2.6 Causes of internal migration

Many of the studies on Egypt's internal migration have pointed to several factors causing or facilitating this migration. Consistently they all mention the following causes as push factors.

a) Mounting demographic pressure

This factor is often inferred from the rising density resulting from rapid population growth in the twentieth century (Abdel-Hakim, 1966, 1975; Ismail, 1990; Nassef, 1985; Sharnouby, 1967, 1968). Demographic pressure, as reflected in high population density, is not of itself an intrinsic cause of migration; it only becomes a causal factor when mediated through a relationship with economic or livelihood resources such as employment, income, land etc. In Egypt high population density is assumed to be in relation to cultivable land in the areas of origin. As the pressure increases, a population increment which cannot live off the land has to go somewhere; migration thus acts as a "safety-valve".

b) Declining economic opportunities

This is singled out and elaborated in the case of rural areas in terms of a) the increasing number of landless families; b) the increasing fragmentation of land-holdings because of inheritance, thus making it progressively more difficult to support one's family from ever-diminishing land; and c) the low level of wages for those who may find permanent or intermittent local employment (Abdel-Rahim, 1971; CAPMAS, 1973; Fadil, 1978; INP-ILO, 1968; Magdoub, 1972; Toth, 1999).

Adams (1986) confirmed what is well-known in Egypt – that internal migration from rural to urban areas in Egypt is one of the strategies that the rural poor use to survive. During the winter months (December to March), when there is limited demand for agricultural laborers anywhere, poor peasants were found to temporarily migrate to Cairo in search of unskilled work. With the recent boom in the construction industry in Cairo, many of these poor peasants have been able to find temporary employment as brick-carriers, cement-mixers, general laborers, and porters. Almost anyone who lives in Cairo is aware of this movement; what my own survey will do is to add precise knowledge and interpretations to this established but little-researched phenomenon of “survival migration”.

A more recent study by Aldakhil (1999) suggested that low income levels in Egyptian rural governorates tend to encourage people to move toward high-income governorates; theoretically this should mean that inter-governorate wage differentials in rural areas have been narrowed by migration, although statistical evidence to verify this hardly exists. The unemployment rate variable was found by Aldakhil to be a major determinant of the individual's decision to migrate in Egypt. Although the official estimate of rural unemployment (by the Ministry of Manpower) is 11 percent, this figure probably hides a great deal of underemployment and disguised inactivity. Higher rates of unemployment at origin undoubtedly tend to encourage migration from rural and urban areas. Migration to urban areas is more responsive to unemployment than migration to rural areas. The response of each migration flow to population at the origin is inelastic and migrants are more attracted to urban areas and to governorates that have large populations which generate extra employment openings than those in rural areas. The study by Aldakhil suggested carrying out micro-level research to include smaller places in order to account

for some variable biases. My own study responds to this suggestion.

c) Scarcity of services and other social amenities

Here several authors have collected data to show the relative deprivation in some areas of Egypt with regard to educational and health services (e.g., purified water, electricity, culture, recreation, etc.). The greatest differentials are obviously between rural and urban Egypt. But it is also noted that even among urban centers, Cairo and Alexandria have a disproportionate share at the expense of provincial capitals and smaller towns (Abdel-Hakim, 1975; CAPMAS, 1989, 1999; El-Kurdy, 1974; Fadil, 1978; Ibrahim, 1977;).

If the push factors underline the decision to leave the community of origin, it is the pull factors which determine where to go. Most studies of Egyptian migration have highlighted one aspect or another of the tremendous concentration of production, employment opportunities, services, wealth, and political power in Egypt's major urban areas, especially Cairo and Alexandria. This concentration has made them unrivaled magnets of the country's internal migrants from both rural and other smaller urban areas (CAPMAS, 1973; El-Kurdy, 1974; Farag, 1970; Hegazy, 1971; Hussein, 1988; INP-ILO, 1968; Saad 1976).

3.2.7 General characterization of the literature on Egypt's migration

The frequency of writing on a given topic broadly reflects the degree of awareness and concern among scholars and policy-makers. The writings on Egypt's internal migration before 1960 were very few. The greatest concentration of studies dealing with the topic was started in the 1960s. The Egyptian censuses have been the main source of data for most of the literature reviewed. Few works have relied on other sources of data, such as questionnaire or interview surveys, or qualitative/ethnographic field research. The types of variables used in the existing studies of Egypt's internal migration were therefore determined by their respective source of data. Those relying solely on the census used strictly demographic-geographic variables – such as age, sex, mortality, fertility, and administrative residence. The sample surveys used a broader range of socio-economic variables in addition to the demographic-geographic ones; but most sample studies have been too small in scale to be regarded as definitive or rigorous.

Most of the published work on Egyptian migration in the last two decades has been fairly strictly quantitative, analyzing migration from a statistical and demographic perspective. A kind of “closed cycle” can be observed by which only statisticians and demographers have carried out this research, using the statistics provided by censuses and other official sources. Such studies, like nearly all the literature reviewed in this section, seem to have made very little use of the vast international theoretical literature on migration. The scarcity of theoretical orientation leaves the field of Egypt’s internal migration dominated by descriptive statistical studies. The scarcity of theory utilization has undoubtedly affected the overall quality of the existing research on Egypt’s internal migration. The pattern has been for one author to make an original contribution of fairly high quality and then for about ten others to repeat, duplicate, or follow suit adopting an approach which is neither critical nor with much additional revelation. My own task is now to respond to this theoretical deficit by surveying some of the key conceptual literature in migration studies, notably that which relates to internal migration within a developing world context, and integrate what is relevant in this theoretical literature to my own empirical investigation. I take up this challenge in the remainder of this chapter, starting at section 3.3. As a bridge to this theoretical and conceptual literature, the next subsection (3.2.8) sets out a threefold typology of migrations from Upper Egypt to Cairo.

3.2.8 Typology of Upper Egyptian movements to Cairo

As we saw from the earlier historical account, Upper-to-Lower Egyptian migration is a long-standing phenomenon, statistically traceable to the first population census in 1897, but probably in existence before that date too. One can distinguish two main phases of this long-distance migration: pre-modernization and post-modernization. The Egyptian revolution led by Nasser (1952) and the independence from British colonization (1956) make the boundary between the two migration eras.

The pre-modernization phase was characterized by a low but consistent migration stream from Upper Egypt to Cairo, in which migrants were mainly motivated by the search for better health services, education for their children, and other amenities, which were all

lacking in Upper Egypt. Migrants of this type and time established typical migration selectivity rules: they tended to be more open-minded and ambitious, and with better education (and, therefore, aspirations for more education), than the norm for the Upper Egyptian population. Most of these migrants settled permanently with their families in Cairo, keeping, at least initially, strong contacts with their extended families in Upper Egypt. With successive generations, however, these contacts became less strong until they reached a minimal, symbolic level – perhaps by burying their dead in the village.

Not all the migrants to Cairo before the 1950s were of the above type. Other, poorer segments of Upper Egyptian population were also migrating at that time. Whilst the Cairo construction sector was not big enough to absorb many migrant workers, most of the servants, private drivers, and porters in Cairo did originate from Upper Egypt – especially from Aswan governorate. Before the building of the Aswan Dam in the 1960s, many peasants in Upper Egypt used to work in agriculture seasonally and “circulate” for the rest of the year under what was known as the “*taraheel*” system (for more details on this see Toth, 1999). Rural-based subcontractors, who had prior contacts with the main contractors involved in public works and civil engineering schemes, were specialized in hiring unskilled rural laborers (usually in village groups of about 20-50 workers) to work on projects such as paving roads and cleaning and digging new canals in Lower Egypt. This system started with the building of the Suez Canal in the 1860s. Labor circulation and *taraheel* work afforded a minimum level of living for the poorer peasant families of Upper Egypt, and can be seen as a kind of historical antecedent of the less organized and more informal contemporary circuits of labor migration that I am studying in this thesis.

The post-modernization era saw a profound change in the social and economic geography of Egypt. Nasser’s “industrial revolution” moved Egypt from an agricultural society to a partially modern industrial society; heavy industrial zones were established, mainly in and around the capital, notably at Helwan in the southern part of Cairo and Subra-el-Kheima in the northern part of the city. Tens of thousands of unskilled laborers migrated from all parts of Egypt to work in the new factories, enjoying both a secure job and a housing unit. This period – the late 1950s and the early 1960s – can be called the “golden age of migration” in Egypt. However, some of those who moved during this

golden age – the less qualified – failed to get access to the public sector industrial jobs; they settled in Cairo doing unskilled work in services and general laboring.

By 1975, when Anwar Sadat announced an open-door economic policy (Nasser had restricted international migration as part of his socialist revolution), massive numbers of Egyptians migrated on a temporary basis to the Arab Gulf countries. In the early 1980s another major emigration took place to Iraq to replace the local workers who were engaged in the Iran-Iraq War. By this time, the building boom had started in Cairo, fueled by two factors: remittances from Egyptian workers in the Gulf; and the construction of satellite towns surrounding Cairo, such as the “6th of October” and the “10th of Ramadan” settlements. This construction boom stimulated a large and constant, yet unorganized, stream of unskilled laborers, mainly from Upper Egypt, who migrated on a circular basis, replacing the old *taraheel* system. This migration stream has been sustained and reinforced by many factors – land fragmentation and agricultural rent increases, overpopulation of rural areas, the return of hundreds of thousands of Egyptian workers from Iraq and Jordan after the Second Gulf War, and the size and centralization of economic activities in Cairo, as well as the dynamism of the informal sector and its ability to absorb very large numbers of rural laborers.

Concluding this survey, Upper Egyptians in Cairo today can be classified into three main groups according to their migration history and the type of their movement:

- “Old migrants”, and their descendants, who are totally integrated into Cairo’s social and economic life. With the passing of time these migrants, who were a kind of “upper class” of rural migrants who migrated for educational and related reasons, have tended to fade in numbers, since better education, including more than ten new universities in different regions of Egypt, and improved health services have become widespread in Upper Egypt.
- “Established migrants” who have kept their Upper Egyptian identities. Such migrants arrived in Cairo mainly in the early Nasser era as “left-overs” from the industrial migration system, staying on to do very low-status jobs in the informal

urban economy. They settled in, and developed the expansion of, poor, degraded areas of the city, including occupying the city's cemeteries. These unplanned, often peripheral districts have kept links to the village and district origins, with the result that these migrants have not managed to fully integrate into Cairo's social fabric. Some of their settlements, including the cemetery, are regarded as "risky" areas for outsiders to wander around. These migrants are less educated and less privileged than the first group. Given their time of arrival, since the late 1950s, they are now into their third generation.

- "Circular" migrants who spend most of their working lives in Cairo but retain family and socio-cultural bases in their home villages in Upper Egypt. Basically, these to-and-fro migrants represent the rural poor and have replaced those who in earlier decades moved as *taraheel* workers. This is the group my research mainly focuses on.

I shall comment later on in my thesis about the (lack of) social contacts between these migrant groups, but it can be noted briefly here that some inter-group social links are minimal, surprisingly so given the overlapping of origins in Upper Egypt. For instance, relationships between the "old" and the "established" migrants (the first and the second groups above) are always maintained for one generation (the "first" generation who initiated the migration process to Cairo), but are then weakened by the full integration of the second generation of the first group into Cairo social life, together with the socio-economic and cultural "gap" between these two groups – the first of markedly higher status than the second. The relationship between the first and the third groups is almost nil, given their separation in class and in time. As for the social links between the second and the third groups, again there is a temporal disjuncture which to some extent "disconnects" the people involved in each group. Nevertheless, as we shall see, some contacts are maintained, mainly for those "circular" migrants who originate from villages which have, at an earlier stage, set up "established" communities of their permanent migrants in geographically-defined areas of Cairo.

3.3 Theories of rural–urban migration: a review

For some decades, various disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches have been trying to analyze and provide fundamental understanding for the phenomenon of migration. There are multitudes of theoretical as well as empirical studies, which are concerned with the determinants both of international and of internal migration. In this next important section of the chapter I present a review and critical evaluation of the main existing theories of migration, with special reference to rural–urban movement in those developing countries with some similarities to Egypt. I deal first, and briefly, with four main discipline-based approaches to the study of internal migration; then, more importantly, I review and evaluate the more consolidated theoretical approaches, most of which have their roots in economic or behavioral principles. It will eventually be seen that “conventional” theories of rural–urban migration as a discrete, “closed” process are not fully adequate to “explain” much rural-urban movement in Egypt and elsewhere: hence in the subsequent section, 3.4, I open up another avenue of conceptual enquiry into “circular” migration.

3.3.1 Disciplinary approaches

A variety of disciplinary approaches exist purporting to explain how migrant decisions are made (Oberai and Bilsborrow, 1984). I will briefly present the cases of sociology, economics, geography, and anthropology, in that order. In each case, I will summarize and evaluate the contribution of each discipline to the study of rural–urban migration in contexts like the Egyptian case.

a) Sociology

Although economists and geographers might contest the claim, it can be argued that the study of migration has traditionally been more the domain of sociology than of any other discipline. The reason for that is clear: migrants are social beings, migration is a social process, with effects on both the societies of origin and destination, and of course on the migrants themselves (Jackson, 1986; Jansen 1969). Since the early days of the Chicago School, sociological analysis has also examined the social class aspects of migration, the

notion of “competition” between immigrant groups, and the impact of migration on social and urban structures. Sociologists have considered a wide range of factors influencing individual and household migration decisions, including demographic factors such as age, sex, education, race, household size and composition; geographical factors such as distance; social-psychological factors such as desires for so-called amenities; economic factors such as income and occupation; and attitudinal factors such as aspirations for improving one’s economic status and income, being close to friends and relatives, and so on. Virtually all of these decision-making factors have relevance to a study of Egyptian internal migration.

While the field of sociology has clear ties with geography in its recognition of the importance of distance, and with economics in its recognition of the primacy of economic factors in determining migration movements, its very eclecticism has confounded attempts to develop a coherent theory of migration. Sociology’s primary concerns with the sociology of immigrant assimilation (e.g. Schmitter Heisler, 2000), or more recently with globalization and migration (Cohen, 2000; Urry, 2000), have veered the discipline away from a close engagement nowadays with rural–urban migration. Nevertheless the social aspects of my study of Egyptian rural–urban migration will be a fundamental part of my analysis. This analysis will not necessarily engage heavily with sociological theory, but will pay close attention to the social origins of migrants, their roles in the societies of both Cairo and their villages, their social networks, aspirations and so on.

b) Economics

Economists have naturally concentrated on economic factors influencing migration. The focus in neo-classical models has traditionally been on aggregate factors, especially wage, income, and unemployment levels. It has had a clear policy orientation (implicit if not explicit) from the beginning (i.e. how can migration be integrated into economic planning), which in retrospect appears often to have been unrealistically exaggerated because of the exclusion of non-economic variables and the failure to analyze how migration decisions are usually made. More recently, economists have begun to focus on factors influencing individual migration decisions – the micro-scale “costs and benefits” of migration (Sjaastad, 1962). Though still focusing on economic variables, this

framework includes age, sex, education, and even the presence of relatives as factors influencing migration. This latter focus, incorporating family and household structures, and retreating from neo-classical dominance of wage and employment variables, has been called “the new economics of migration” (Massey *et al.*, 1998: 125), or the “household strategies perspective” (Wood, 1982). This perspective characterizes the domestic unit as a group that ensures its maintenance and reproduction by generating and disposing of a collective income, resource and labor fund. The unit reacts to internal and external changes, such as changes in land availability or labor supply, through a series of dynamic “survival strategies”. Migration, of the whole unit or of some of its members, is one option which may be adopted as a strategy by which the household “actively strives to achieve a fit between its consumption necessities, the labor power at its disposal, and alternatives for generating monetary and non-monetary income” (Wood, 1982: 312). An extension of this approach recognizes that a household may not act as a cohesive unit and may in fact contain diverse and often conflicting interests and values amongst its members, frequently split along generational or gender lines defined by traditional normative roles such as “the breadwinner”, the “dutiful son”, the “home-based mother” etc. The relevance of this particular interpretative approach to the Egyptian case will become clear later in the thesis, as will the variable relevance of the more obviously economically-based principles mentioned above. I will also comment later on regarding the common economic assumption that (economically motivated) migrants are “favorably selected” with respect to human capital qualities like ambition, ability etc. (see Chiswick, 2000). Although there is much more that could be said here with regard to economic approaches to the study of rural–urban migration, it is best that this discussion is postponed for just a few pages until I address some of the key general theories of migration which are founded on economic principles.

c) Geography

The field of human geography includes a long-standing concern with the physical movement of people dating back at least to the 1880s and the statistical geographer Ravenstein whose so-called “laws of migration” are one of the foundation-stones of migration theory (see next sub-section). The traditional focus of geographers has been not so much on who migrates or why, or on the consequences of migration, but on identifying spatial patterns and directions of movement (Lewis, 1982). Geographers have

tended to model migration based on economic determinants – the relative economic attractiveness of places as defined by wages, job opportunities, dynamic growth etc. – but more recently social and cultural geographers have developed a strong interest in migration, alongside existing research operating from more economically-rooted population geographers (Boyle *et al.*, 1998). The distance factor is inherent in geographic research and figures prominently in the well-known “gravity” model, in which migration between places is directly proportional to their mass (e.g. city size) and inversely proportional to the distance between them, and in the notion of “step migration” by which migrants move along a settlement hierarchy in stages. These gravity and hierarchical models are thought to be especially applicable to low-income and less educated migrants. In this context the importance of the accessibility and availability of transportation and communications networks to facilitate and encourage movement is readily seen. The close linkages between the geographic and economic approaches to migration are also seen in the focus of geographic research on the role of differences in economic opportunities and government investment on population redistribution across areas or regions.

Whilst the relevance of these geographical frameworks based on distance, settlement structure and spatial economic disparity to the Egyptian case is immediately apparent, it is also true that geographers (and not just geographers) appear to have lessened their interest in migration in Africa and the other less-developed continents. It is rather remarkable how, for instance, geographers’ work on rural–urban and circular migration in Africa seems to terminate with Prothero and Chapman’s volume in 1985. Possible reasons for this might be practical difficulties of fieldwork access to many countries, and a declining interest in rural–urban migration within the context of greater attention paid to other types of migration (international migration, refugee movements, mass internal displacement due to famine or war etc.) and to other paradigms for migration study (e.g. world systems theory, globalization etc.).

d) Anthropology

In recent decades anthropologists have engaged very actively with the study of migration. In fact the roots of an anthropological interest in migration go back further, for instance to the well-known Chicago School of Sociology and Anthropology in the

1920s and 1930s, when some remarkable studies were done on European and other migrants in American cities and on “source areas” such as Sicily and Mexico. More recently, since the 1960s, anthropologists have rediscovered migration through their studies of “peripheral societies”, for instance in rural southern Europe, the west of Ireland, or Pacific islands. Much of their attention has been focused on questions of culture, community and identity thrown up by international migration, and anthropologists have played a leading role in the current academic discourse on “transnational communities” (Brettell, 2000). They have, however, paid much less attention to internal migration, although their interest in the shape and behavior of migrant social networks, based on kin or community ties, has relevance to my own study.

3.3.2 Theories of migration with potential relevance to Egypt

In this sub-section I describe some specific theories of the determinants of migration, focusing on those that explain rural-to-urban migration, especially this form of migration in developing and semi-developed countries. As I go through each section and each theory/model, I will make backward connections to the review of the existing literature on Egyptian migration which I presented earlier in this chapter (see 3.2), and forward connections to the research strategies and questions which I examine in my own research in this thesis.

a) Ravenstein's laws of migration

Theoretical explanations of rural-to-urban migration have a long history, dating from at least the 1880s when Ravenstein first proposed his “laws of migration”. Ravenstein's laws (1885, 1888) were formulated partly in the context of international migration, including transatlantic mobility, but also covered other generic types of migration. According to these laws, migrants move from areas of low opportunity to areas of high opportunity. The choice of destination is regulated by distance, with migrants tending to move to nearby places, often in a staged process leading eventually to longer-distance moves to bigger cities: in other words, step-migration. Ravenstein further observed that each stream of rural–urban migration produces a counter-stream of return migration back to the rural areas. He hypothesized that urban residents are less migratory than rural people, and that migration accelerates with the

expansion of trade and industry. Ravenstein's basic laws have since been systematized and expanded by many investigators and the importance of the economic motive in the decision to migrate, the negative influence of distance, and the process of step-migration have been generally supported by empirical evidence, at least in some countries.

As far as Egypt is concerned, there are very clear echoes of Ravenstein's principles in the recent and current migration picture. Although the evidence for the "distance control" and for step-migration is patchy if not non-existent, we know from established literature reviewed earlier, and from common knowledge of the Egyptian situation, that migrants move from areas of low opportunity (e.g. Upper Egypt) to places of better opportunity (e.g. Cairo); and we know that reverse or counter-stream migration occurs, for instance when rural-urban laborers become older and go back to their villages to farm or retire. Further evidence on step-migration (or the lack of it), economic opportunity structures, and ties to villages of origin will be presented from my own empirical work later in the thesis.

b) Lee's theory of migration

Building on Ravenstein's laws, Lee developed a "general schema into which a variety of spatial movements can be placed" (Lee, 1966). He divided the forces exerting an influence on migrant perceptions into "push" and "pull" factors. The former are "negative" factors tending to force migrants to leave origin areas, while the latter are "positive" factors attracting migrants to destination areas in the expectation of improving their conditions. Lee hypothesized that factors associated with origin area conditions would be more important than those associated with destination areas. These factors associated with the areas of origin and destination are governed by personal factors "which affect individual thresholds and facilitate or retard migration" (Lee, 1966: 51). The final element in Lee's model is the notion of "intervening obstacles" interposed between origin and destination. These constitute "friction" in the migration process (transport costs, migration controls etc.) and may reduce or retard migration, or even (in the case of a law) prevent it altogether. Lee's approach is reflected in a broad range of studies, particularly sociological studies dealing with migrant selectivity. It is actually not a theory but rather a conceptual framework for classifying factors in migration decisions.

It is worth spelling out some of the key propositions or hypotheses arising from Lee's refinement and further development of Ravenstein's "laws". I have rephrased these slightly (but not changed the basic meaning) to make them more consistent with the Egyptian case.

- The volume of migration within a given territory (such as a country) varies directly with the degree of geographical diversity (regional economic contrast).
- The volume of migration is inversely related to the difficulty of overcoming intervening obstacles.
- Both the volume and rate of migration increase over time.
- Migration tends to take place largely within well-defined streams (Lee elaborates this as from rural regions to regional towns and then towards major cities, in other words step-movement).
- For every major stream, a counterstream develops.
- The magnitude of net migration (stream minus counterstream) will be directly related to the weight of "minus" or "push" factors at origin.
- Migration is selective, i.e. migrants are not a random sample of the population of the place or region of origin.
- Migrants responding primarily to the "pull" factors at the destination will tend to be positively selected (more educated, more ambitious etc.), whereas those who respond predominantly to "push" factors from the origin will be negatively selected (less educated, poorer etc.).

Again, it does not need a great imaginative leap to realize that "push and pull" factors are fully relevant to the Egyptian case, where the historical record, both from statistics and literature, shows that migration is stimulated, at least at the macro level, by push factors of rural poverty, unemployment and lack of opportunity, and pull factors of urban employment, higher wages and at least the chance of better social and cultural facilities. Moreover the Egyptian case shows that migration does in fact take place in well-defined streams, but not, by and large, via step-migration. The more personal and behavioral interpretations of these potential push and pull factors will be investigated later by my field research, as will issues of migrant selectivity and counterstream/return.

c) The dual economy model of development and migration

The first well-known economic model of development to include as an integral element the process of rural–urban labor transfer was that of Lewis (1954), later extended by Fei and Ranis (1961) with the result that it is often referred to as the Lewis-Fei-Ranis or LFR model (Todaro, 1976). One version of this model considers migration as an equilibrating mechanism which, through transfer of labor from the labor-surplus to the labor-deficit sector, eventually brings about wage equality in the two sectors. The LFR model is based on the concept of a dual economy, comprising a subsistence, agricultural sector characterized by underemployment, and a modern industrial sector characterized by full employment.

In the subsistence sector the marginal productivity of labor is zero or very low and workers are paid wages to their cost of subsistence, so wage rates in this sector barely exceed marginal products. Because of high productivity or labor union pressures, wages in the modern urban sector are much higher. With such differences in wage rates, migration occurs from the subsistence to the industrial sector. This increases industrial production as well as the capitalists' profit. Since this profit is assumed to be reinvested in the industrial sector, it further increases the demand for labor from the subsistence sector. The process continues as long as surplus labor exists in the rural areas and as long as this surplus is reflected in significantly different wage levels (Lewis maintained that the urban wage needed to be at least 30 percent higher than the rural one for rural–urban migration to take place). It might continue indefinitely if the rate of population growth in the rural sector is greater than or equal to the rate of growth of demand for labor out-migration, but it must end eventually if the rate of growth of demand for labor in the urban area exceeds rural population growth. In a variant of the LFR model applied to Southern Europe, King *et al.* (1997) demonstrate how this “exhaustion” of the supply of internal rural labor migrants was the trigger for stimulating a fresh supply of labor migrants from abroad, specifically from much poorer countries where wages are much lower, and labor surpluses abundant.

Despite the appeal of the dual economy model, particularly in countries with markedly uneven sectoral and spatial development, most observers have found it unsatisfactory because of a number of shortcomings (see for instance Dasgupta, 1981; Meilink, 1978;

Todaro, 1976). First, migration is not induced solely by low wages and underemployment in rural areas, although these are undoubtedly important influences. Second, the assumption of near-zero marginal productivity and surplus labor in agriculture has been widely criticized on empirical grounds (Dasgupta, 1981). Third, the LFR model assumes a high rate of expansion of employment opportunities through continuous investment of the rural capital surplus (via migration) in the urban sector. In fact, the rate of growth of employment in the modern industrial sector has generally not been sufficient in developing countries to absorb the increasing labor supply resulting from both natural population increase in the urban sector and net rural–urban migration driven by rural population growth. As a consequence, the net effect of rural–urban migration has instead often tended to have been to shift underemployment from the rural to urban sector. Fourth, there is the possibility that urban capitalists might invest their industrial profits in new technology and labor-saving machinery, thereby killing the demand for further rural labor transfers. Finally, the assumption of a modern industrial sector in a Third World city may be somewhat false: rural–urban migrants might not be entering the industrial sector but picking up low-productivity and still quite low-paid jobs in the informal economy of the city – for instance as street-hawkers, casual laborers or construction workers. Dasgupta (1981) is quite clear that “urbanization today ... is less correlated with the progress of the industrialized sector than with ... the ‘informal’ sector, where entry is easy but remuneration is low and unstable, and unemployment ... is widespread”. Hence it seems that, whilst the LFR model has the virtue of being simple and intuitively attractive, and whilst it does seem to be in rough conformity with the historical experience of economic/industrial growth in the West, it has some characteristics, noted above, which are at variance with the realities of development processes and rural–urban migration in many Third World countries (Todaro, 1976: 23).

However, from what has been said already in this chapter and in the previous two chapters, it is not difficult to appreciate the at least partial relevance of the dual sector model in the Egyptian case. Egypt has a highly uneven spatial development, most clearly articulated around urban/rural, Lower/Upper Egypt dualities. Yet it is not really true to say that rural–urban migration takes place between the labor-surplus agricultural sector and the labor-deficit modern urban sector. Cairo and other large cities also suffer from unemployment, and we have to seriously question whether the laborers from Upper Egypt are really entering the

“modern” high-wage sector when they migrate to Cairo. Further empirical findings on this key question will follow later in this study.

d) Sjaastad’s human investment theory

Sjaastad (1962) advanced a theory of migration which treats the decision to migrate as an investment decision involving an individual’s expected costs and returns over time. Returns comprise both monetary and non-monetary components, the latter including changes in “psychological benefits” as a result of location preferences. Similarly, costs include both monetary and non-monetary costs. Monetary costs include costs of transportation, disposal of property, wages foregone while in transit, and any training for a new job. Psychological costs include leaving familiar surroundings, adopting new dietary habits and social customs, and so on. Since these are difficult to measure, empirical tests in general have been limited to the income and other quantifiable variables. Sjaastad’s approach assumes that people desire to maximize their net real incomes over their productive life and can at least compute their net real income streams in the present place of residence as well as in all possible destinations; again the realism of these assumptions can be questioned since “perfect information” is not always the case, by any means.

As for the realism of the “migration as human investment” hypothesis to the Egyptian case, just a few preliminary remarks can be made at this stage. From what has been said already, the character of the Egyptian population shift from Upper to Lower Egypt is perhaps more of a “survival” strategy than an “investment” strategy. It seems that migrants go because there is no future for them in an agrarian system that is overburdened by labor, rapid population increase and extreme land fragmentation, and where the “fixed resource” of land is defined by topography, hydrography and climate. Questionnaire and interview data will further elaborate this issue of “survival versus investment”, and will shed further light on questions of earnings in Cairo as a return to the “investment decision” to migrate, and of psychological and other non-monetary costs and benefits. For instance, it will be interesting to see to what extent the psychological costs of dislocation etc. are cushioned by social networks and other forms of social solidarity amongst the rural laborers in Cairo.

e) *Todaro's model of rural–urban migration*

Undoubtedly one of the most influential frameworks for understanding the driving forces behind rural–urban migration in developing countries is the model developed by Michael Todaro. Todaro's model has been proposed, and refined, in a series of papers (see Todaro, 1969 and 1977; Harris and Todaro, 1970) and a monograph (Todaro, 1976). Todaro's initiative was stimulated by his observation that “throughout the developing world, rates of rural–urban migration continue to exceed the rates of job creation and to surpass greatly the capacity of both industry and urban social services to absorb this labor effectively”. Todaro realized, along with many others, that rural–urban labor migration was no longer a beneficent or virtuous process solving simple inequalities in the spatial allocation of labor supply and demand. “On the contrary, *migration today is being increasingly looked on as the major contributing factor to the ubiquitous phenomenon of urban surplus labor and as a force which continues to exacerbate already serious urban unemployment problems caused by growing economic and structural imbalances between urban and rural areas*” (Todaro, 1976: 2, emphasis in original text).

Todaro suggested that the decision to migrate includes a perception by the potential migrant of an “expected” stream of income which depends both on prevailing urban wages and on a subjective estimate of the probability of obtaining employment in the modern urban sector, which is assumed to be based on the urban unemployment rate (Todaro, 1969; 1997). From this very preliminary description, we can see that Todaro's model is both an extension of the human capital approach of Sjaastad and an attempt to accommodate the more unrealistic assumptions of the LFR model as regard Third World cities.

According to the Todaro approach, migration rates in excess of the growth of urban job opportunities are not only possible, but rational and probable in the face of continued and expected large positive urban–rural income differentials. High levels of rural–urban migration can continue even when urban unemployment rates are high and are known to potential migrants. Indeed Todaro (1976: 31) outlines a situation in which a migrant will move even if that migrant ends up by being unemployed or receives a lower urban wage than the rural wage: this action is carried out because low wages or unemployment in the

short term are expected to be more than compensated by higher income in the longer term as a result of broadening urban contacts and eventual access to higher-paid jobs. The approach therefore offers a possible explanation of a common paradox observed in Third World cities – continuing mass migration from rural areas despite persisting high unemployment in these cities.

Todaro's basic model and its extensions consider the urban labor force in developing countries as distributed between the relatively small modern sector and a much larger traditional sector (Harris and Todaro, 1970). Wage rates in the traditional sector are considered not to be subject to the partially non-market institutional forces that maintain high wages in the modern sector but to be determined competitively. As a result, they are substantially lower than those in the modern sector, but still significantly higher than in the traditional rural subsistence sector. Most urban in-migrants are assumed to be absorbed by the traditional sector while they seek better employment opportunities in the modern sector.

Apart from the methodological and conceptual problems of estimating expected incomes and their differentials for particular origin and destination areas, a major weakness of Todaro's model is its assumption that potential migrants are homogenous in respect of skills and attitudes and have sufficient information to work out the probability of finding a job in the urban modern sector. Despite the refinement of "expected" incomes, the model remains one based on the notion of "rational" and "well-informed" decision-making. It also rests on an underlying assumption that the migrants aspire to become permanent residents in the city, and ignores other forms of migration or mobility, including to-and-fro movement. Moreover, both the Todaro and the human investment models do not consider non-economic factors and abstract themselves from the structural aspects of the economy. A better understanding of the causes of migration requires an analysis of the macro-economic and institutional factors that generate rural–urban differentials. A distinction is needed between socio-economic structural factors and the specific mechanisms (unemployment, wage differences, etc.) through which the structural factors operate. These questions are addressed more directly towards the end of this chapter, in section 3.5.

Others have made more trenchant criticisms of the Todaro model, and Skeldon (1990) summarizes some of these negative views. According to the outspoken Oded Stark (1978), Todaro's work "left the field beset with loss of direction (and) grave confusion", whilst Standing (1984) denigrated the triteness of Todaro's logic – "people move because they think it better for them to move, and we know that they thought it was so because they moved". Meanwhile, Chapman and Prothero (1985: 19) point out that the Todaro model, despite its original empirical concern with unemployment in Kenya, is strangely silent about the vast circulation of labor which occurs across rural Tropical Africa – although it is also true to say that circulatory migration between peripheral rural communities and centers of employment in towns and mining areas has given way to more permanent rural–urban migration in Africa (van Binsbergen and Meilink, 1978: 11). The relevance of this penetrating remark by Chapman and Prothero for Egyptian case will emerge in the pages that follow. Undoubtedly the Todaro model is somewhat removed from the dynamic reality of migration behavior as observed in most parts of the developing world. It seems to imply that the rural worker considers migrating only once, and once the decision is made, it assumes this to be irrevocable (Gallup 1997: 3). As we shall see in the Egyptian case, reality is rather different, perhaps somewhere between the continuous circulation of the classical studies of Tropical African mobility and the urbanization processes fed by family-based rural–urban relocation. Migration decision behavior may change because of a whole range of non-economic variables. As Skeldon (1990: 129) concludes, "migration simply does not work the way Todaro says it does".

Nevertheless, and despite these strong criticisms, I do feel that the Todaro model has something to contribute to a portrayal of the Egyptian case, if only sometimes to act as a mirror to reflect what does not happen. The preliminary information I have already discussed in the Egyptian literature review suggests that migrants to Cairo do indeed enter the traditional, not modern, sector of the city's labor market, and that their incomes, whilst significantly higher than those that might derive from agriculture and other uncertain rural activities, are not those of the modern urban wage sector. My research on working conditions, social networks and types of information will later confirm and elucidate the extent to which migrants' perceptions of the urban employment environment and "expected" income streams are realistic assessments of the outcomes which actually take place. I will also explore the extent of occupational mobility, first

between the village and Cairo, and then within Cairo, to test or refute the Todaro hypothesis of a possible subsequent transfer of migrant work from the traditional urban to the modern urban sector (Harris and Todaro, 1970; Krieg, 1997).

f) The “new economics of migration”: families, households and segmented labor markets

As foreshadowed in my earlier account of economic approaches to migration (see section 3.3.1), the neoclassical view of migration has been challenged by a “new economics of migration” which posits that migration is less determined by isolated individuals than by other social units, especially families and households, but also potentially larger social aggregates such as communities, lineages etc. where social norms regarding migration behavior may be deeply embedded. This approach has been pioneered by Oded Stark in a large quantity of writings: see for instance Stark (1978) for an early but empirically detailed formulation, and Stark (1991) for a later and more theoretically elaborated synthesis. According to Stark, and others who have summarized his arguments (e.g. Massey *et al.*, 1998: 21–28; Skeldon, 1997: 22–23), migration must often be seen as a family or group decision which seeks to minimize risks and diversify resources rather than to maximize cash income alone. This strategy, akin to a “portfolio investment” of the labor of the various members of the family in various “niches” in the origin region and elsewhere (abroad, or a town or city in the home country), involves widening the focus of the investigation away from the single, individual migrant. The emphasis is on channeling investment and consumption goods back to the home village rather than (as in the neoclassical model) on the economic progress of the migrant in the destination.

Although such “new economics” approaches have generally been applied to the international migration context (reflecting the dominant concern in migration studies with this form of movement in recent years), the principles apply almost equally well to internal migration fields, especially within large developing countries which are sharply differentiated internally (as Egypt). In fact, Massey *et al.* (1998: 21–22) explicitly recognize this when they state that “households ... can easily diversify income by allocating various family workers to different geographically discrete labor markets: some may undertake productive activities in the local economy; others may work

elsewhere in the same country (for example, in a distant urban area); and still others may work in a foreign country”.

Reverting briefly to the Egyptian case, we can see the relevance of the strategy of combining income maximization with risk aversion, especially within the context of a crop-based rural economy. The sending of a family member (who may well be the male household head) to Cairo acts not only as a way of generating vital income but also as an integrating mechanism by which other household resources (crops, local work, etc.) are balanced and insured against failure or loss. Naturally, further details on this will follow later in the thesis.

The contextualization of an individual’s migration within a multi-member, multi-role household has some parallel to the way in which, at a larger scale, labor markets are increasingly theorized as being *segmented*. By this is meant the fragmentation of the labor market into two or more segments with essentially different entry requirements, conditions of work, wage levels etc. Whilst at one level this can be seen as a simple extension of Lewisian dual sector theory described above, the more recent elaboration of segmentation leads to new theoretical positions deriving from pioneering analyses made of international migration into advanced industrial societies, initially by Piore (1979), and later by theorists such as Portes and Mingione working respectively in North America and Europe (see for example Mingione, 1992; Portes, 1990; Portes and Bach, 1985). In this line of analysis, urban labor market segments or niches are essentially closed off, non-competing, and draw on different sources of labor supply differentiated by class, educational background, gender and above all ethnicity and geographical origin. Migrant workers will always be needed for those lowest-status jobs which are rejected by local workers; and within a large, highly differentiated developing country, or within a globalized international migration market, supplies of willing migrants will always exist, from Upper Egypt or wherever.

g) Rural–urban migration as a system, and the role of social networks

The next theoretical rationale conceives of migration as a system linking rural and urban areas. For the case of Egypt, the model of Mabogunje (1970), developed to explain

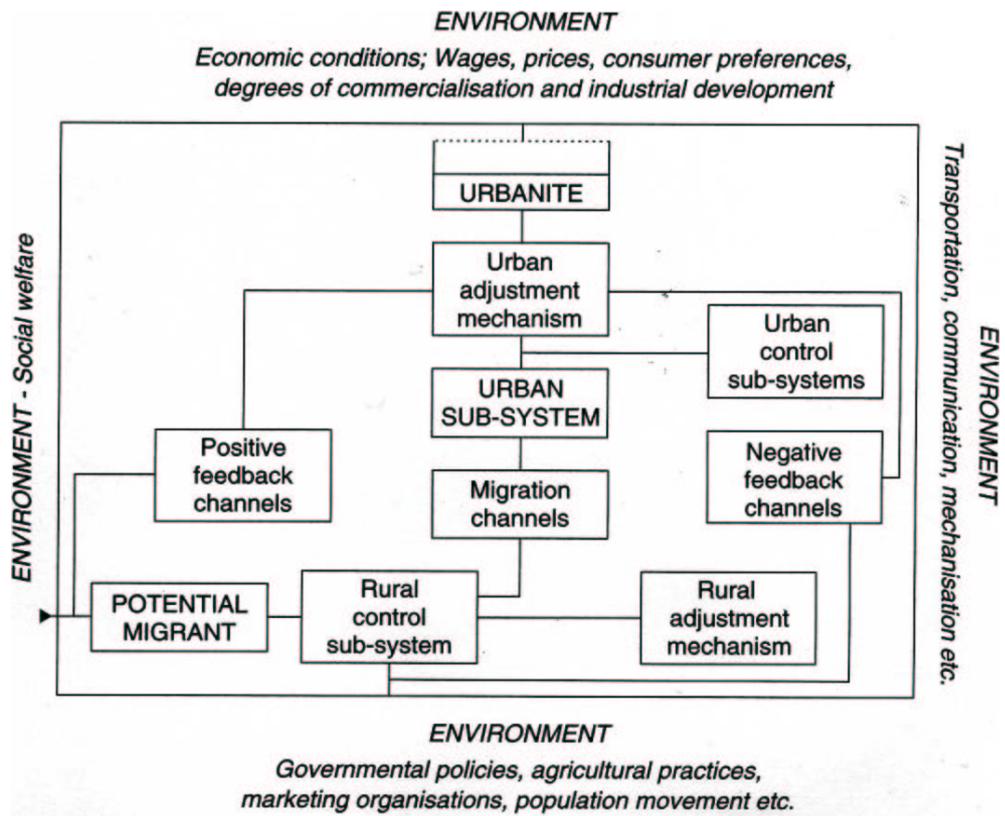
rural–urban migration in West Africa, would appear to have some relevance. The model is best set out as a diagram (Figure 3.1) and consists of a flow chart along which the migrant moves. In contrast to the more simplistic conceptualization of rural–urban migration as a uni-directional, push-pull, cause-and-effect movement, the Mabogunje model sees migration as circular, interdependent and progressively complex; a self-modifying system in which there are several interrelated linkages (Mabogunje, 1970: 16).

The model consists of four system components: the environment; the migrant; control subsystems; and adjustment and feedback mechanisms. Feedback can be either positive, encouraging the system to produce further migration, or negative, causing migration to decline. The rural control subsystem and adjustment mechanisms involve family/household relationships and reallocation of tasks (work, family responsibilities etc.) when the migrant departs; they also comprise landholding factors which may “expel” migrants due to landlessness or land fragmentation. Urban subsystems and control mechanisms include social networks, neighborhoods, means of accessing work and living space, the nature of work opportunities (informal labor markets, methods of recruitment etc.). Perhaps partly because of its African origin (albeit a very different part of Africa), Mabogunje’s model is on the face of things attractive for my Egyptian case study. The surprise, perhaps, is that the model has not been applied more widely in the more than 30 years since it was published. Probably this is because of the lack of detailed migration data in most developing countries, and the difficulty of collecting enough types of data to operationalize all of the model. Nevertheless the model is capable of being simplified and/or used in partial versions, as we shall see later.

Although Mabogunje saw his model as deriving from general systems theory, subsequent work in migration studies has emphasized the relevance of social networks and social capital in helping to explain how some of the details of the model might work. There is now a very extensive literature on social networks, social capital and allied, overlapping concepts such as chain migration, migration channels etc., but there is no space to explore this literature

Figure 3.1

The systems approach to rural–urban migration by Mabogunje



Source: Mabogunje, A.L. (1970) “Systems approach to a theory of rural–urban migration”, *Geographical Analysis*, 2(1): 1–17.

here, not least because their potential relevance to my thesis presupposes a much more anthropological investigation than the one I have carried out. However, I shall make occasional use of these concepts from time to time, and will make further reference to literature when the time comes.

h) Survival migration

The economic explanations of human mobility treat the decision to migrate as an investment decision involving an individual's expected costs and returns – monetary and non-monetary – over time (Sjaastad, 1962). This approach assumes that migrants have access to precise information about the economic conditions at both ends of the migration process, which is not always the case. An alternative model (Todaro, 1976) suggests that the decision to migrate is built on a perception of an “expected” stream of income which depends on urban wages and the probability of obtaining employment. However, Todaro assumes also that most urban in-migrants are able to upgrade and move from the informal or traditional sector to the modern sector. Despite its popularity and its applicability to some types of movements – mainly the more permanent rural–urban migration – the model fails to explain or even to acknowledge the circulatory migration of laborers within rural areas and between rural and urban areas (Chapman and Prothero, 1985). I pick up this argument in section 3.4.

The expansion of temporary mobility – including circulation – in developing countries cannot be explained in terms of conventional neoclassical economic theory, but it is readily understood from the household or family perspective (Hugo, 1998). Labor circulation permits the family to maintain control over the migrant and the income that he or she generates. Hugo sees rural-urban circulation as a survival strategy through which families in rural areas allocate family labor units to off-farm and on-farm tasks (in the village or in urban areas) in a way that both maximizes the production and income of the family and, at the same time, and more crucially, minimizes the risk of failure or disaster (Hugo, 1982, 1998). Minimizing the risk is vital to rural families in order for them to survive and to alleviate poverty. So, families plan or try to adopt survival strategies that involve the allocation of family labor to a range of tasks carried out at a variety of locations, rural, urban and perhaps also international.

As is clear from Hugo's work, this approach can be regarded as a continuation or empirical elaboration of Oded Stark's "new economics of migration" (Stark, 1991); both authors see that the migration decision is a family/household decision rather than an individual one. Hugo also notes that the cost of allocating one or two family members to work outside the village is likely to be less expensive than relocation of the whole family to a city. Parnwell (1993) also notes that population mobility in the Third World is more often a "survival strategy" than it is a mechanism for economic improvement.

This approach in explaining migration decision-making factors seems to be rather closely relevant to the Egyptian case, especially regarding the explanation of the specific segment of population under study. Indeed, the concept of survival migration and the notion of family decision-making in migration seem to have more relevance than the more individual, mechanistic Sjaastad and Todaro models. The relevance of survival migration to my study may become more evident after explaining different types of movements through time – migration, circulation, and mobility – in the next section.

3.4 Migration, circulation, and mobility

Population movements fall into a wide range of categories depending on the amount of time the movers spend away from their home communities, and the frequency and durations of their returns. These different types of movement may involve very different kinds of people in very different personal circumstances, or alternatively may involve people at different stages of their life span. The temporal dimension of population movement is very important in the sense that it tells us a great deal about the circumstances which may underpin the decision to migrate (Parnwell, 1993). In this subsection I shed further light on the different types of population movement with a special focus on circular migration in developing countries. The links to Egypt will become clear both immediately, and later throughout various sections of the thesis.

3.4.1 Typology of human mobility

The measurement of population movement is the most difficult and problematic aspect among the three aspects of population change, the others being fertility and mortality (Skeldon, 1990). Bearing in mind the measurement difficulties, population movements can be differentiated by their temporal and spatial dimensions. Temporal dimensions include “circulation” and “migration”, although the difference between the two is often blurred in practice. Circulation encompasses a variety of movements, usually short-term and cyclical and involving no long-standing change of residence. Migration involves a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. Circulation can be subdivided into daily, periodic, seasonal, and long-term (Gould and Prothero, 1975). Daily circulation involves leaving a place of residence for up to 24 hours. Periodic circulation may vary from one night to a year, although it is usually shorter than seasonal circulation. Seasonal circulation is a type of periodic circulation in which the period is defined by marked seasonality in the physical or economic environment. This type of circulation involves persons or groups who are absent from their permanent homes during a season or seasons of the year. Long-term circulation, defined by Gould and Prothero as absence from home for longer than a year, affects groups such as wage laborers and traders, who maintain close social and economic ties with their home area and intend to return.

Migration is therefore just one form of the broader phenomenon of human mobility, while others include for instance short and long-distance commuting, shuttle migration, and circulation. Figure 3.2 summarizes the temporal and spatial dimensions of human mobility. The spatial dimension of population movements is divided into two categories, internal and international. Internal movements occur within the borders of a specific country while international movement means crossing the borders of one country to another country. Four types of mobility can be identified in the internal movements of population: urban-to-urban (intra-urban), urban-to-rural, rural-to-urban, and rural-to-rural (intra-rural). These were the types of population transfer which were used to elaborate and document internal migration in Egypt from the available statistics (see section 3.1 in this chapter). With respect to the time-span of population movement, it varies widely from a very short period of absence to a very long period of many years which may – or may not – end with permanent residence in a new destination.

Figure 3.2
Typology of human mobility

Permanent Mobility	Local Migration (Intra-regional)	Inter-regional Migration	International Migration
	Commuting	Circulation/Seasonal	Long-Distance Commuting
Temporary Mobility	Short-Distance Mobility		Long-Distance Mobility

Source: Adapted from Malmberg (1997)

3.4.2 *Circular migration in developing countries*

Circular migration can normally only be detected in specialized surveys. It can not be captured by census data since circulation does not imply a change in the usual residence. Labor circulation, an even more specific type, is the process in which people periodically leave their permanent places of residence in search of wage employment at places too far away to enable them to commute daily (Mitchell, 1985). Labor circulation means that laborers do not change their usual or legal place of residence in the village but are absent at an urban – or other rural – destination for periods longer than a single day. Such movement can actually be associated with permanent full-time employment at the destination, but usually involves non-permanent work in the informal sector of the urban economy (Hugo, 1982). The importance of this non-permanent form of mobility has been shown in a number of general studies (Abu-Lughod, 1975; Bedford, 1973; Chapman and Prothero, 1985; Parnwell 1993; Prothero and Chapman 1985; Standing, 1985). Country case studies by Hugo (1975, 1982, 1985, 1998) and Spaan (1999) on Indonesia, Skeldon (1985, 1990) in Peru, and Roberts (1985) in Mexico have demonstrated the scale and importance of non-permanent forms of mobility in developing countries.

The theories of migration discussed in a previous part of this chapter (section 3.3) explored these theories in general terms as they apply to migration – with the latter implicitly defined as permanent and semi-permanent relocation. However, some of the

concepts reviewed incorporate a powerful explanation of labor circulation. The “new economics of labor migration” (Stark, 1991) and “survival migration” (Hugo, 1998) explain the relation between circular migration and socio-economic changes, cultural retention, poverty alleviation, income maximization, and risk aversion. In the next few paragraphs I explore some of these dimensions of circulation of relevance to my study.

a) Circulation and risk minimization

As I mentioned above, the “new economics of labor migration” argues that households diversify the allocation of household labor across different labor markets in order to minimize risk and maximize income (Massey *et al.*, 1998). By carefully allocating available labor through circulation, families can achieve a difficult dual target – maximize income and avoid risk. Rural households in developing countries with a high prevalence of extended, rather than nuclear, families in the village can circulate or commute surplus labor elsewhere – to other neighboring villages or to urban areas – in order to supplement household income, while the remaining members of the family can do the limited village-based work in agriculture or in any other non-agricultural labor.

The findings of Hugo’s important research on circulation in Java, Indonesia (Hugo, 1982) reveal that risk aversion is the most important motive behind circulation. Many of Java’s rural residents circulate, and they do this as a “survival strategy”, and as a risk minimization mechanism, rather than aiming at income maximization as the overall “economic” objective.

b) Circulation and social networks

The development of social networks plays a vital role in the absorption of newcomers to the destination areas, which in turn facilitates the process of labor circulation, allowing migrants to retain their primary social allegiance to their home areas of origin. Social networks provide information, shelter, and ease the absorption of new arrivals by introducing them to the labor market and the available opportunities. Social networks are regarded as a form of social capital which may diminish the risks and costs of migration and mobility. It is important to recognize that such networks are not just located in the place of destination to which a migrant moves, or confined to the place of migrant origin, but can stretch between the two, and thus provide the spatially elongated

links that enable to-and-fro circulation to take place, and be maintained through often extended periods of time – such as a lifetime. Networks, then, are sets of interpersonal ties that connect movers, former movers, and non-movers in places of origin and destination through social ties. Their specific relevance for studies of circular migration has been emphasized more recently by Faist (1997: 193) when he says that human mobility has moved from being “a linear, unidimensional, push-and-pull, cause-effect movement” to “a circular and interdependent” phenomenon which is closely affected by, and in turn affects, a variety of social networks that are embedded in the mobility process.

c) Circulation and labor market

Circular migrants usually join the urban informal sector. The term "informal sector" is also known by many other names such as parallel economy, micro-economy, submerged economy, unorganized sector, and other terms. In very simple terms, the informal sector is how people cope with hard times and represents a hand-to-mouth existence for many people and their families in developing countries. The informal sector does not exist in isolation from the formal sector; on the contrary it is an essential part of so-called modern patterns of production and rooted into the economy of many countries both developed and developing. The competition to reduce labor costs and to find more "flexible" production methods has resulted in a restructuring of the formal sector by subcontracting part of its production and trade to the informal sector.

The modern workforce is divided into “core” and “periphery” sections, sometimes also referred to as “primary” and “secondary” labor markets (Piore, 1979). While the core is made up of well-trained and well-paid permanent workers, the peripheral workforce comprises casual and part-time workers who are hired during busy times and then laid off, without any obligation on behalf of the employer, when they are not needed. The informal sector is yet one step further away from the core, squeezed out of the formal labor force and placed on the outer periphery. This outer periphery may of course be spatially as well as functionally distant from the urban location of these kinds of employment, with rural workers circulating in and out of the urban informal sector. While their work may be linked to the activities of the formal sector, they are not formally engaged by any enterprises. Thus the informal sector provides jobs, income and livelihood for masses of workers who would otherwise have no alternatives. Through

their social networks and circulation pathways, laborers from rural areas can survive and find work in the urban informal sector.

d) Circulation and division of labor

When the families/households take the decision to send one or more of their members – most probably males in the Egyptian case – they are aware of the restructuring and re-allocation of workload in- and/or off-farm in the village. Long-term circulation has pushed many older members of the family and women to work to substitute the absence of young men who circulate elsewhere (Standing, 1985). This line of argument seems to be consistent with the Mabogunje's (1970) rural control subsystem and rural "adjustment mechanisms" which involve family/household relationships and the re-allocation of workload and responsibilities when one or more of the family members departs. In this situation, women are often found to take more responsibility and have more control in the absence of their husbands. Findings from an Egyptian study (Brink, 1991) suggest that women's status within the family increases when their husbands migrate to look for work. Cases are cited of women becoming more active in farming, wage labor, dealing with government agencies, and generally taking over the husbands' roles as family decision-maker. Other research in Egypt (Nawar and Mostafa, 1990; Taylor, 1984) suggests similar findings, namely that women's status within the family increases when their husbands migrate/circulate to look for work. Later in this thesis, I will bring my own research findings to bear on these issues in the Egyptian context.

e) Circulation and remittances

The importance of remittances is attributed to a number of factors: first, the scale and pace of rural–urban migration/circulation; second, the magnitude and the consistency of urban-to-rural remittances; third, the widespread interest in transfers of incomes and in mechanisms that generate changes in income distribution; and fourth, the impact of remittances on the resource constraint in the economy at large where savings are suboptimal and, in particular, in the agricultural sector, especially with respect to technological change in agricultural production (Stark and Lucas, 1988). Remittances are an important form of migrants' support to their families at home. For the poorest migrants and circular movers, remittances can be a large proportion of their total

income.

The impact of remittances on recipient families in rural areas has been a subject of considerable debate, centering around the distribution of use between consumption and investment. For poorer sending families, remittances are part of a “survival strategy”. They can support immediate basic consumption needs such as improved diets. But this means that little or nothing is left over for productive or innovative investment: this is the case for most circular migrants, who can barely survive. The flow of remittances that is associated with international and national permanent and semi-permanent types of migration is generally more stable than that of circular laborers. As a consequence, the effect of and the allocation of remittances may vary among the various migrant groups. While remittances of long-term migrants are directed more to investment rather than consumption, the remittances of circular migrants are directed more towards fulfilling the basic needs of their families in the village and place of origin. We return once again to the survival strategy behind labor circulation (Hugo, 1998).

f) Circulation and modernization

Zelinsky (1971) has proposed a well-known model called the hypothesis of the “mobility transition”, in which various types of migration, including circulation, play a role. In this model, Zelinsky theorizes that mobility generally increases with modernization. The model as proposed by Zelinsky consists of five phases to describe the relation between mobility and the level of development of the society as follows. First, there is *the pre-modern transitional society* with limited circular movement. Second comes *the early transition society* with massive movement from countryside to cities, colonization movement, and circulation. This is succeeded by *the late transition society* with slackening, but still major, movement from rural to urban areas, a lessening flow of migrants to the frontiers of colonization, and continuing and even increasing circulation. Fourthly, there is *the advanced society* where rural-urban movements decrease, urban-urban movements increase and societies are increasingly urbanized. International migration and circulation increase in the forms of in-migration of unskilled and semi-skilled workers internally, and emigration of highly-skilled labor and professional persons internationally. Finally we have *the future super advanced society* in which Zelinsky hypothesized a decline in the level of residential migration and a deceleration in some

forms of circulation as better communications systems are instituted. Intra- and international circulation persists but international movements are restricted and controlled.

Of course Zelinsky's model, like so many models of national socio-economic change, is largely predicated on the historical experience of the Western, developed countries. Furthermore, one can easily take issue, with the benefit of hindsight, over the final stage. It seems that "super advanced modernity" has been accompanied not by a deceleration of migration and mobility, but by an increase of a whole range of mobility types in the developed world – including new forms of circulation, long-distance commuting etc. which derive from new lifestyles, new geographies of economic and other opportunities, and new life-stage factors (youth travelers, retirement migrants etc.). Moreover these new mobility forms are facilitated (rather than repressed or replaced) by new modes of fast transport and communications (King, 2002). However, what interests us here are less the new forms of migration in Europe and elsewhere, and more the potential relevance of the Zelinsky model, including its repeated reference to circulation, to the developing world in general and to Egypt in particular.

Skeldon (1990) has assessed the wider validity of Zelinsky's model on the basis of contemporary and historical examples. He shows that the model, with its five phases, is useful but needs to be modified to extend its applicability to the developing world, since the model is built on the experience of the developed world. The adjustments pertain particularly to the role of the cities and the relationship between development and the various types of mobility: that is, parallel with development there is a sequence of change in the importance of primate and intermediate urban centers, and in the changing sex composition of migration flows. Initially there is intra-urban migration directed at the primate city, after which during the phase of *intermediate transitional society* both the primate city and small urban centers grow rapidly with accelerating rural-urban movement from the direct hinterland. Finally, in the *late transitional society* the intermediate cities are "short-circuited" and the primate city becomes the main destination (Skeldon, 1990, p. 111). Furthermore, while the sequence progresses male-

dominated migration evolves toward a greater female participation and the sex composition of migrants is almost balanced.

The value of Zelinsky's model and Skeldon's modified version is that it pays attention to the links between phases in development and different forms of population movements and does not limit itself only to internal migration flows. Instead it shows that in the different phases of development different forms of mobility take place – e.g. rural–urban circulation and movement across international borders. Skeldon advocates to build an explanation of population mobility on two different levels, the spatial and temporal structure of mobility, in order to uncover the specific social networks of migration and their evolution and to place them within a macro political-economic context, the framework of which is provided by world systems analysis. He acknowledges the existence of mobility patterns before the onset of capitalism in the Third World but asserts that with capitalist development society is transformed and patterns of mobility are modified. Yet again, these issues will be picked up for further comment later in my thesis.

3.5 Rural–urban migration in developing countries

After this long theoretical excursus, let us now return more pragmatically to the rural environment of out-migration and examine some of the key factors and processes at work which are driving rural-to-urban mobility in countries such as Egypt. In many developing countries rural poverty manifested in low agricultural incomes, low productivity and underemployment is pushing many migrants out of rural areas towards areas with greater (perceived) employment opportunities. Several recent studies in a range of developing countries have observed increasing unemployment in rural areas and a further widening of the gap between rural and urban incomes (see, as examples, Bhattacharya, 1993; Cashin and Sahay, 1996; Gedik, 1985; Iyoha, 1975; Kim, 1982; Stern, 1984). The pressure of population in terms of higher people/land ratios has been hypothesized as an important cause of increasing poverty and of rural out–migration: with given technology, there is only a certain proportion of the labor force which can be absorbed by agriculture, and indeed as technology advances, demand for rural labor may

diminish, thereby creating further unemployment. As the population grows, increasing numbers of people must move to the urban centers for employment opportunities, unless difficult-to-imagine radical improvements can be made in agricultural intensity and rural systems. In fact, population pressure is not the only nor even the principal cause of the increasing unemployment and poverty of the rural population; at least as important are the low rate of investment in agriculture, fragmentation of land ownership, inequalities in the distribution of land and other productive assets, and a pattern of production where investment and technological change are biased against labor. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that much farm technology is imported from labor-scarce countries and favors the use of capital relative to labor (Lucas, 1997).

Due to the over-population problem in most developing countries, especially in Africa, and the continuing high levels of demographic fertility, the pool of landless and near-landless increases from generation to generation. Progressive fragmentation of land has pushed many of the landless and near-landless to move to cities in search of non-agricultural jobs.

While these factors have led to rural–urban migration among the very poor, the creation of schools in rural areas has also stimulated out-migration by providing children, especially those of the rural middle and upper classes, with education and an awareness of the economic and social opportunities available in urban centers; some migrate to further their education while others migrate as they become dissatisfied with the prospects of rural life. A number of studies (e.g. Alatas, 1993; Kim, 1982) clearly support the hypothesis that migrants are attracted to cities in search of better social services (better educational facilities for their children, better health services, and cultural and entertainment outlets). In addition, a number of factors such as having sources of contact in urban areas to provide information and initial assistance (friends and relatives) accelerate the process of rural–urban migration. The mass media constitute another source of information that motivates migrants (Iyoha, 1975).

The concentrated growth of industrial infrastructure in the cities in developing countries after independence has encouraged migration streams from rural regions by providing job opportunities for those migrants. Until recently, governments have also favored a policy of concentrating public and social services investments in urban areas, particularly

major urban areas. Similar investments in the rural areas have been neglected. In most of the developing world, migrants from rural to urban regions target primate cities. This phenomenon is due to the concentration of services, industrial zones, and other socio-economic and cultural services in primate cities and large metropolitan regions. Clear examples of this are Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt, Khartoum in the Sudan, and Addis Ababa in Ethiopia (on this last case see Palen, 1976): in all these cases, most of the migrants from rural areas migrate to these cities.

The development of transport systems has been found to reduce the role of distance on inhibiting migration in developing countries (Greenwood *et al.*, 1981). Transportation and communication systems not only reduce the cost of migration but also lessen the psychological and cultural gap between the origin and destination areas, thus making migration easier. In the case of Egypt, the existence of transport systems along the Nile Valley has obviously facilitated the movement of Upper Egyptian laborers to Cairo, and their subsequent to-and-fro return visits to their villages, as we shall see in more detail later.

3.5.1 Country case studies: introduction

Here I present three short country case studies by referring to some other key literature on Syria, Morocco and Turkey. I choose these countries based partly on available literature and partly on the criterion of providing a selection of countries located within the same “world region” as Egypt. Syria, Morocco, and Turkey lie within the same broad Mediterranean/Middle Eastern region as Egypt: these four countries possess some similarities as regards their low to intermediate levels of development, their geographical and demographic structure, and their rapidly transforming and modernizing economies and societies. I acknowledge that this rather intuitively-selected “grab sample” is limited, and the case-studies are brief: nevertheless I suggest that the exercise has some illustrative value in the face of the impossibility of a complete review of rural–urban migration in all developing and semi-developed countries of the world.

3.5.2 Syria

In contrast to Egypt, in which the acceleration of the urbanization process began in the late 1930s and early 1940s, in Syria rapid urbanization started almost two decades later,

in the late 1950s. From the late 1950s and early 1960s onward, urbanization in Syria accelerated, and during the years 1960–70 the percentage of the urban population within the total Syrian population increased from 36.9 to 43.5 percent. During 1970s and 1980s the rate of urbanization slowed down, and the urban population increased by only 6.7 percent points during these two decades (from 43.5 percent in 1970 to 50.2 percent in 1990). Further incremental growth in the urban share of total Syrian population took place in the first half of the 1990s: by 1995 it was 51.5 percent. Interestingly, much of this urban growth has been due to the expansion of smaller towns rather than the major cities (Winckler, 1999: 69). So, in Syria, in contrast to other Middle Eastern and North African countries which were also witness to a large rural–urban migration, the major proportion of the migration movement has occurred within the borders of the provinces themselves, rather than from the rural regions to the capital. In Egypt, as in most developing countries, the vast majority of the rural–urban migration has been directed to the capital or to the second largest city (Alexandria). Thus, the pattern of rural–urban migration in Syria is a rather unusual case in the Middle Eastern countries. As a result of this unique pattern, the percentage of the Damascus (the capital) population within the total Syrian population has remained stable during the last four decades: 11.6 percent in 1960, increasing slightly to 12.3 percent in 1981, and then decreasing to 10.5 percent in 1995. Two reasons can be suggested for the particular pattern of urban–rural migration in Syria: first, the spatial distribution strategy of the Syrian authorities which followed a decentralization policy in the allocation of industrial and socio-economic projects; second, the geographical structure of the country where the parts most suitable for human settlement on a large scale are not concentrated in small areas like the case of Egypt (Winckler, 1999: 70).

Due to the housing problem in urban areas in Syria, a great proportion of migrants to urban areas tend to look for job in cities without moving definitively alone or with the family to stay permanently in town. They rather prefer to leave the family in the village and move back and forth between the village and the nearby town according to labor market opportunities: the classic phenomenon of circulation described above. The housing problem in the big towns, in addition to enhancements in transportation and the availability of modern services in rural areas, has encouraged rural laborers to commute to the adjacent urban areas looking for work (Zakaria, 1987).

Otherwise, the reasons of rural–urban migration in Syria are almost the same as in Egypt and most other developing countries. Push factors have constituted the dominant reasons, while pull factors function only as secondary reasons. Push factors include scarcity of cultivated land, low level and instability of income in the rural areas, concentration of the rural economy almost exclusively on agriculture, and the gap in health care and educational services between the urban centers and the rural areas. The pull factors are mainly the desire for acquisition of higher education, industrial development in urban centers, and the generally more attractive urban work and social facilities (Winckler, 1999: 74–81).

3.5.3 Morocco

The degree of urbanization of Morocco in the twentieth century is unexceptional by Third World and North African standards. Both Algeria and Tunisia, for example, have a somewhat higher rate of urbanization. One of the unique features of Morocco's urbanization, however, is the creation of an increasing number of towns. Mining of phosphate, coal, and iron provided the necessary economic base for new urban settlements. Tourism also contributes to the expansion of urban settlements: several tourist resorts have been created along the coasts of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and on the slopes of the Atlas mountains.

The second major source of Morocco's urban growth – after the high natural population increase – is rural migration which generally accounts for one third of the overall increase of urban population. For several decades, migration to the cities absorbed around two-thirds of the annual natural increase in rural areas. Rural poverty has always tended to be the main driving force behind rural–urban migration in Morocco. In the early 1960s, about 25 percent of the families in rural areas were landless, 50 percent had less than 3 hectares, and only 25 percent of rural families had more than 3 hectares. If rural poverty has been the main push factor, urban amenities such as education, health, and cultural services have been the main pull factors in the Moroccan case (Ibrahim, 1980).

More recent trends in rural–urban migration in Morocco can be investigated based on

the 1991 Survey on Internal Migration reported in the 1995 *African Population Newsletter*. Morocco has experienced a recent rise in urban population from 29.3 percent of the total population in the early 1960s to 48.4 percent three decades later. Rural–urban migration averages 3.6 percent annually and has played a key role over the past 30 years in population redistribution. Migration during the 1980s was attributed by the Survey to deepening economic hardship in villages. Prior to 1971, migration was to the largest cities, particularly those cities on the Casablanca–Kenitra Atlantic axis. During the 1980s, migration was more to medium-sized cities such as Marrakesh, Fez, and Sale. The reasons for migration are identified as reduced water supplies, lack of arable land or degraded land, increased population pressure, and the land tenure system that ranges from fragmented plots to concentrated farms. Rural areas suffered from a lack of health and educational services and poor opportunities for educated workers. In the survey of 1991, 33 percent of migrants reported the main reason for migration as the search for better jobs or better wages, 31 percent indicated migration was in order to join a family member or spouse, and 11 percent migrated for educational reasons. Some 87.7 percent of migrants were under 30 years old at time of departure; 39.5 percent were under 15 years, 25 percent were 15–19 years, and 23.2 percent were 20–29 years old. The 1991 survey revealed that men tended to migrate for economic reasons, whereas women migrated primarily for family reasons. Most men were unmarried at the time of migration, while most women were already married. Four-fifths of migrating women did not have a formal education. About half of the men and the same share of the women were classed as unskilled. Only 7 percent sent remittances to relatives in rural areas, although 70 percent visited at least once a year.

3.5.4 Turkey

Historically speaking, Turkey and its predecessor, the Ottoman State, have been subject to intensive population movements since their inception. One can claim that the history of Turkey and the Ottoman State is a history of migration. There has been a profound change in the spatial distribution of the population within Turkey and, since the 1960s, the establishment of a large diaspora population, mainly in Germany and the other north-west European countries (Atalik and Beeley, 1993). The move into the Turkish city in the twentieth century was prompted by social disintegration in the countryside, rural

economic hardship, established traditions of migration, and some knowledge of the urban environment on the part of the rural-origin migrants. The general direction of rural migration has been from the mountains and from poor and less developed regions in the east and north-east toward the more developed, industrializing, and fertile areas in the west. The Black Sea region was traditionally the largest migrant-sending area, while the Marmara and west-central Anatolian regions were the largest migrant-receiving areas (Karpas, 1976). The factors that have traditionally motivated rural residents to migrate to urban areas mostly cluster around the diminishing possibilities of a satisfying life in the rural regions. High population growth and the increasing entries into the working-age cohort lead to continuous underemployment and unemployment in rural areas.

The results of the 1997 Turkish census show that 65 percent of the Turkish population lives in cities and towns compared to 59 percent 1990, 53 percent in 1985 and 49 percent in 1980; the equivalent figure in 1927 had been only 24 percent. This means that since 1980 the urban population of Turkey increased at an average annual rate of 4.5 percent. The corresponding figure for the non-urban rest of the country was 1 percent. These calculations of the urban versus the non-urban population are based on the 73 provincial capitals and 829 district centers – so the definition of “urban” includes hundreds of quite small towns. The 1997 population census shows that the population of the three biggest cities in Turkey, Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, plus Adana and Bursa make up 44.9 percent of the urban population in Turkey and 26.7 percent of the whole population. The largest city, Istanbul, with 10 million people and more than 400,000 new migrants from different parts of Turkey each year, has grown 20 percent within five years. As a result, one in every nine citizens in Turkey lives in Istanbul, and this megalopolis continues to face considerable migratory pressures. It is also the case that the share of medium-sized cities within the urban population is rapidly increasing while the rural population is now decreasing in absolute terms. In 1980, there were 26 cities with a population of between 100,000 and one million in Turkey. Their number increased to 32 in 1985 and to 40 in 1990. The number of smaller towns with a population of between 10,000 and 100,000 was 282 in 1980, growing to 407 by 1990.

How can we explain the rural–urban migration in Turkey? What are the pull and push factors for internal migrations? For the earlier postwar decades, Munro’s (1974)

regression analysis demonstrated the predominant power of “push” factors in determining rural–urban and internal migration; but behind these quantified indexes lay important rural policy programs. Following the Second World War a program for the modernization of agriculture was implemented in Turkey. New products and machinery were introduced, irrigation projects were carried out, and fertilizers began to be used. Modernization was accompanied by fundamental changes in property relations and employment structures in the agricultural sector. Small farmers, who had only limited financial reserves, had difficulties in paying in advance for productivity-increasing fertilizers and irrigation measures. If they were not in a position to find the necessary capital, they either had to give up their property or new sources of income had to be created. In the face of the difficult financial situation, the younger generations tended to leave their villages to look for jobs in the city. The same path was chosen also by those who worked as harvesters a couple of months every year, as they could now be replaced by the machines.

As regards pull factors, industrialization and the growth of the service sector in the cities can be named as the key influences. The need for new labor could be supported by increasing long-distance transport opportunities and the resulting mobility of the rural population. However, the decisive structural factors framing internal migrations were regional development disparities, which manifested themselves partly in the imbalanced concentration of industries and other economic sectors between regions. Unlike countries that are regionally relatively equally developed, Turkey has enormous development differences between the regions. Migrations take place either to nearby cities (intraregional migration) or to western Turkey (interregional migration) where industry is quite well established and the chances of employment are better (Koray, 1999). Although the east-west divide in Turkey is a robust generalization about the nature of regional duality, there are other patterns, including areas of out-migration and rural population loss in western Thrace and along the Black Sea coast, and areas of population gain along the touristically important south coast (Atalik and Beeley, 1993). The same authors also identify some newer characteristics of Turkish migration and social trends which reflect a more “European” than “Third World” population status. Although large conurbations continue to grow, inner-city population loss and the growth of outer metropolitan districts indicate a form of counterurbanization in progress.

Secondly, “the principal result of the massive relocation of Turks within their country since the early 1960s has been the ending of the traditionally clear distinction between urban and rural society” (Atalik and Beeley, 1993: 159). Rural–urban migration, and the modernization of villages, have eroded the traditional contrasts between townspeople and villagers. On the one hand the practice of recent rural migrants to settle in *gecekondu* squatter settlements (literally meaning “built in the night”) on the edge of big cities implies a partial “ruralization” of these cities, since such migrants retain close links with home villages and do not get fully incorporated into the urban economy or society, subsisting on casual jobs in the informal sector. On the other, improved communications, electrification and more standardized educational curricula have to some extent brought urban values and standards of living to most rural areas.

Despite Turkey’s slightly more advanced economic status, it is clear that there are many similarities between the patterns of internal migration in Turkey and Egypt. Both are big countries with large populations and they dominate the north-eastern and south-eastern quadrants of the Mediterranean Basin, respectively. In both countries there is a pronounced spatial economic duality: east and west Turkey, Upper and Lower Egypt. And in both countries migrants migrate in vast numbers from rural areas to metropolitan cities (Cairo, Alexandria; Istanbul, Ankara) motivated by regional disparities in the level of development and the high unemployment rates in rural areas.

3.5.5 *Summing up*

It is clear from the case studies presented above that the rural–urban migration trends and patterns in other Mediterranean Basin developing countries are almost the same. Rural poverty pushes millions of the surplus laborers in agriculture to urban centers and large cities. Generally, migrants aim towards the largest cities: the experience of Egypt, where most migration is to Cairo and Alexandria, is matched by most other developing countries in various parts of the world. Syria is something of an exception, where migrants tend to migrate to urban centers in their provinces rather than the capital: in this country, the decentralization and the balanced allocation of resources by region is an important factor in directing rural–urban migration away from the capital. On the other hand, Syria’s experience of rural-based circulation of labor

migrants to urban areas has, perhaps, more in common with what seem to be the predominant patterns of rural–urban mobility in Egypt, and less in common with the forms of more permanent rural–urban migration (and emigration abroad) which are characteristic of Morocco and Turkey.

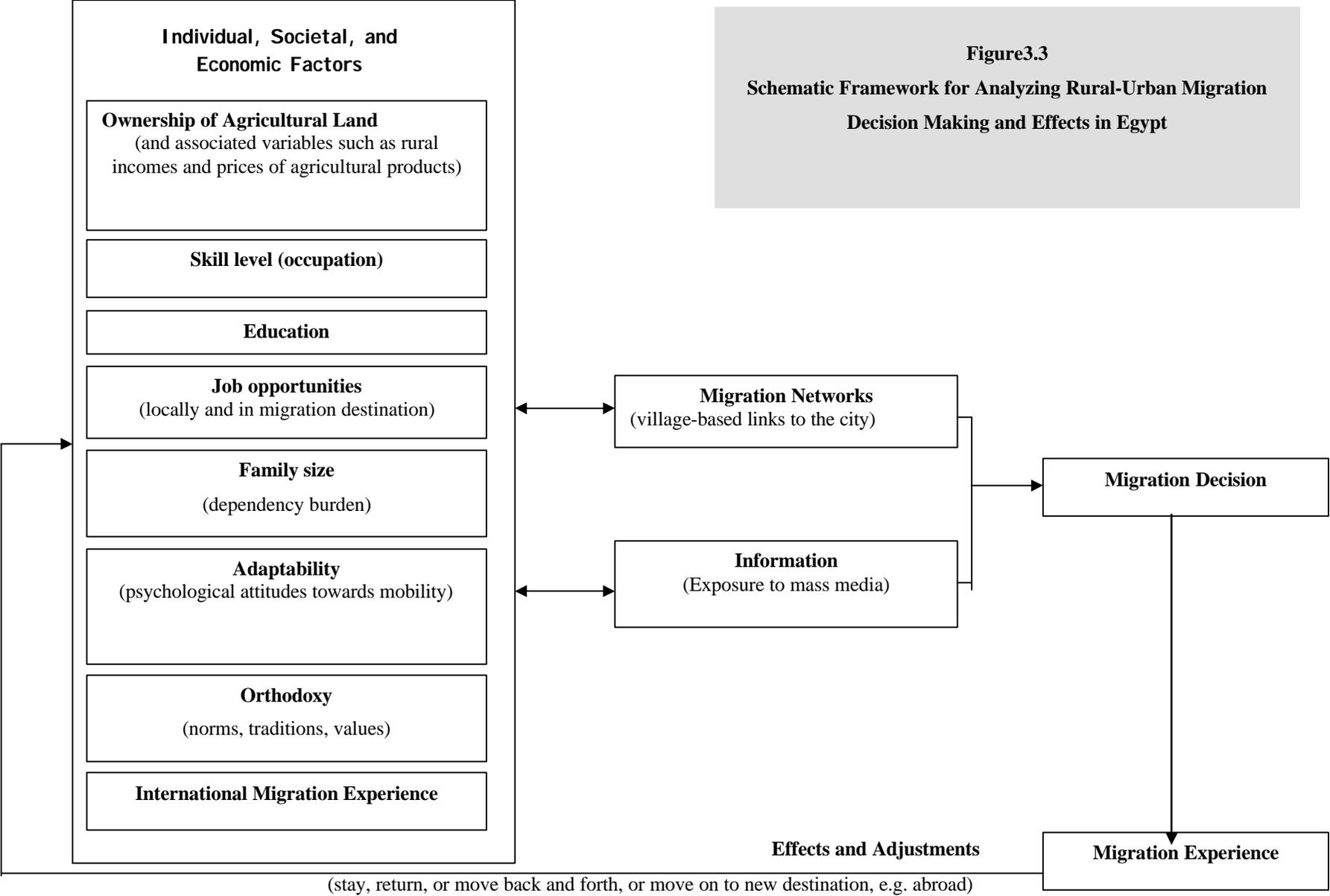
3.6 Conclusion: some pointers for a conceptual framework for studying internal migration in Egypt

Building on the research questions set out in Chapter 1, the literature review of existing studies in Egyptian migration, the review above on standard theories of migration and circulation, and the selected country-studies, I conclude this chapter by shaping a conceptual framework appropriate to my study. The skeleton of this framework is set out in diagrammatic form in Figure 3.3. This is basically a conceptual model of factors influencing the decision to migrate in Egypt, linking through channels of migrant networks and information to the decision to move to Cairo, where migration experience and adjustment mechanisms lead to feedback links to the area of origin and further migration decisions – either by the migrant “being modeled” (return migration, further migration elsewhere etc.), or by new migrants setting off for Cairo from the villages of origin. This model will be operationalized through the questionnaire which is my main data-gathering instrument and will be described in more detail in Chapter 4. As can be seen, the model integrates a number of perspectives which have been discussed in this chapter, and bears some resemblance to the Mabogunje model set out in Figure 3.1.

The factors influencing the decision to migrate can be seen to express themselves at various scales: individual, family/household, societal, and broadly structural/economic factors. They can be categorized in the following broad areas:

- Social factors based in the places of origin, including the desire of migrants to break away from the constraints of traditional social systems. At the same time, the existence of these traditional norms and values may well condition the form that migration behavior takes, shaped by social networks linking origin and destination and thereby favoring circular migration regimes.

Figure 3.3
Schematic Framework for Analyzing Rural-Urban Migration
Decision Making and Effects in Egypt



- Socio-cultural attractions of life in urban areas, including the available infrastructure and public services in urban areas – these attractions might range from the “bright lights” of the city (coffee-shops, cinemas and other entertainment) to more pragmatic facilities of modern urban life such as piped water, electricity, sewage disposal systems etc.
- High levels of unemployment and (relative) poverty in rural areas due to the seasonal nature of job opportunities in the agricultural sector, and land fragmentation and pressure due to overpopulation problems. Other aspects of the agrarian structure and rural life – such as the price of agricultural products and inputs – will also function as potential push factors for migration. The variability of some of these elements at different times of the year – e.g. seasonal unemployment – may encourage circular forms of migration, integrating farm work with urban employment opportunities.
- Following on from the above, differences in wages between rural and urban areas will be crucial, as will be the ability of the urban economy (including the informal sector) to absorb unskilled labor migrants. Migrants’ knowledge about urban wage levels, and their expectations about being able to access these higher wages (both immediately and after a spell of time in the city), will also influence the migration decision.
- Household-level factors include family size, and therefore the “dependency burden”, and the migration experiences and potentials of other family members, including, perhaps, migration abroad.
- Finally, there is a set of more individual-scale personal factors, such as education, skill level, psychological characteristics such as openness, ambition, etc., which may condition whether an individual migrates and, if they do, the character of that migration experience. Such individual factors affect and motivate individuals in rural Egypt to seek information about alternatives away from their regular place of residence. Evaluation of alternatives depends mainly on individuals’ abilities to

estimate the expected benefits in the area of destination and compare them with losses in the village setting. On the other hand, circular migration enables the migrant to have, to some extent, “the best of both worlds” – urban work and wages, and rural social and household security.

After experiencing migration and being exposed to new patterns of social behavior and urban life, it is to be expected that these experiences will affect migrants’ behavior when they return to their villages. For this reason, some village-based fieldwork is built into the research design. Changes in behavior after migration may be towards modernization and “urban” behavior (including, crucially, demographic behavior with regard to fertility); or they may conceivably work in the opposite direction if the migration experience leads to migrants reinforcing, or at least conserving, their pre-existing norms, values and customs. This latter outcome might result from the strength of rural customs, values and social/kinship networks, and could conceivably reflect a negative reaction against an “alien” urban environment. Once again, there remains the possibility that the counterposing “opposition” of the rural and the urban environments can be rationalized by the migrants by a continual movement, and hence “presence”, between the two domains, via to-and-fro or circular mobility. Questionnaire and interview data will shed copious light on these issues.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes a detailed presentation and discussion of the research questions and the objectives of the study, building on and refining the list of objectives set out in briefer fashion in Chapter 1 and integrating these with the theoretical and conceptual perspectives reviewed in Chapter 3. Then the methodology is described. This latter includes a full description of the data collection methods that I follow, the field questionnaire and the qualitative and the quantitative methods to be employed, in addition to data manipulation and analysis procedures. The final section of the chapter acts as a link to the succeeding empirical results chapters by presenting brief biographical sketches of the 20 individuals I conducted more detailed interviews with.

4.1 Objectives of the study

The main aim of my research is to explore a common strategy chosen by a certain category of young rural men in Upper Egypt who face limited economic opportunities in their villages – that is, rural-to-urban migration. As stated in the introductory chapter, this migratory phenomenon is couched within a set of wider macro-issues which include the rapid but uneven nature of Egyptian spatial development; the rapid growth of Cairo; the nature of Egyptian employment trends; and the population trends of a country whose rate of demographic growth, though falling, is still high and whose population distribution remains highly spatially imbalanced.

It needs to be re-emphasized here that the group of migrants I surveyed – poor rural-origin migrants working in casual employment in the informal sector in Cairo – are but one (albeit the most numerous) set of migrants from rural Upper Egypt, and that therefore the objectives (and, later, conclusions) which follow need to be shaped around this specific form of rural–urban migration/circulation. I did not directly interview or analyze rural-to-urban migrants who were drawn from upper strata of rural society and

who were moving to Cairo for professional, business, education or other reasons. Nor did I interview the old-established migrant communities drawn from Upper Egypt as a result of earlier labor migrations. The specific nature of my migrant sample (more details will be given on this presently) must be constantly held in mind in the analysis that follows.

I now move to a more detailed specification of the empirical objectives of my study. In the following four subsections I flesh out the four main research themes listed in Chapter 1 (see section 1.2) by including both more explicit descriptive detail and integrated reference to the relevant conceptual frameworks for migration study reviewed in Chapter 3. I both refine and narrow my objectives in the light of the existing literature on Egyptian migration, and also taking on board the preliminary conceptual indications about the relevance of “circulation” as well as migration. This discussion therefore functions strategically as a bridging point in my thesis, leading the reader from the introductory discussions on research objectives, theory, literature review, and the Egyptian context, into the empirical heart of the study which starts in the next chapter and continues to Chapter 8. Chapter 9 will then attempt to tie the research together by evaluating the extent to which the empirical findings answer the research questions and relate to the various theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 3.

4.1.1 Processes of rural–urban migration and mobility in Egypt

This first major theme connects directly to explanations of migration behavior based on economic and behavioral frameworks and to the listing of groups of migration factors made at the end of Chapter 3 and modeled in Figure 3.3. At the macro scale, we can refer to models of uneven regional economic development and of the dual economy which were outlined in section 3.3.2. At the individual level, reference can be made to various “rational choice” theories such as some of the laws of Ravenstein (e.g. “migrants move from areas of low opportunity to those of high opportunity”), the human investment theory of Sjasstad, or the Todaro model based on prevailing wage differentials and migrant expectations. Following Zelinsky, Hugo and Skeldon, we shall also take on board the relationship between stage of modernization and type of mobility/circulation, and pay particular attention to the notion of “survival migration”

and the likelihood that what we are dealing with in the Egyptian case is not so much a permanent residential relocation, but a kind of long-distance, long-term circulation of rural labor to urban areas in which the rural link is never broken. Furthermore, we also need to consider whether the migration of Upper Egyptian laborers to Cairo is basically an individually-motivated process or whether, following Stark and others, it can be set within the broader context of family and household decision-making.

Hence the basic research question which lies at the base of much of the work compiled in my empirical analysis: what are the migration choice strategies and motivations of poor rural Egyptians who migrate to Cairo?

Further questions concerning the nature of the rural–urban migration process grow out of this. How, for instance, do those who move differentiate themselves from those who do not, or from those who choose to migrate internationally? What, from the perspective of the village, is the relationship between internal and international mobility? Are these two forms of migration viewed as straight alternatives; are they the preferred options of different groups of people (distinguished perhaps by wealth or education); or are internal and international migration engaged in sequentially by the same individuals?

Picking up the topic of migrant characteristics for rural–urban movement, what are the basic demographic, educational and socio-economic characteristics of Upper Egyptian laborers who migrate and locate themselves in the peripheral, informal sector in Cairo? Are they the very poorest, or are they drawn from a modest variety of rural social and landowning backgrounds?

Next, what are the mechanisms, networks and patterns of migration through space and time? Here, the conceptual references are to the parameters of distance (the Gravity Model), to research on social networks, and to systems approaches. So, more specifically, is there a relationship between distance from Cairo and quantity of migration from various parts of Upper Egypt? What are the social and family networks which lubricate the migration flows from villages to Cairo, and how do they function at both the rural and urban ends of the migration transect? How do Mabogunje's urban and rural control sub-systems function in the Egyptian case? What are the frequencies of

movement, how does this movement back and forth take place (what transport media are used), and is there a relationship between frequency of travel to the home village and its distance from Cairo? In the absence of such movement, or as a supplement to it, what other means of communication are used to keep in touch with the village? Do some migrants tend to lose contact with their rural origins over time, or are there powerful system mechanisms which sustain the rural–urban migration chain and the pre-eminence of the village “anchor” over long periods of time? The historical evidence of established migration flows from Upper to Lower Egypt over the last hundred years reviewed in the first part of Chapter 3 would support both outcomes, since, as we saw in section 3.2.8, some earlier migrations led to permanent settlement, and others remained temporary and circular.

Here, then, is a long list of questions about the basic process and rationales of rural–urban movement in Egypt. My research will not be able to answer them all exhaustively but it will, largely through the questionnaire survey, shed light on most of them, thus creating new knowledge about the phenomenon I have chosen to investigate.

4.1.2 Living and working conditions of the migrants

I specified earlier a list of straightforward descriptive research questions under this heading, designed mainly to elicit factual information about migrants’ lives in Cairo. I will spell out the precise questions (housing, health, food, work etc.) I am interested in here in more detail later, when I outline the questionnaire. At a broader and more conceptual level, I wish to elaborate at this point on three more general questions which link to theory and to comparisons. The first comparative question compares migrants’ living and housing conditions in Cairo with conditions in their villages. Are they better off in Cairo under these respects, or do they sacrifice themselves in order to transfer their accumulated capital back to their families and villages? The second question makes the same urban–rural comparison with respect to work experiences, but expands into particular areas where I have an interest such as occupational safety and accidents. The third general question under this heading is more theoretical and links to labor market characteristics. In fact several separate issues can be picked out here. Are migrant workers confined to certain types of work, and, equally importantly, do they experience any upward occupational mobility during their time in

Cairo? To what extent are their jobs characteristic of the “traditional” or “secondary” or “informal” sectors of the urban economy (recognizing that these are a set of overlapping and not identical constructs), and therefore part of the very structuration of the urban economy of Cairo? If the migrants are not successful in “escaping” the poorest-quality jobs, can we therefore speak of a segmented labor market structure in Cairo, with powerful barriers erected between migrant and non-migrant work, such that migrants are (perhaps with exceptional cases) simply unable to move out of their designated job sectors, complemented by a situation in which local Cairo people, even those who are working class and/or unemployed, would not deign to offer themselves up to these low-status jobs?

Once again, I have to acknowledge that my research data will not enable me to furnish complete answers to all these individual questions, not least because of the rather specific construction of my sample of migrants and the way in which they were located “in the field” in Cairo. The limitation of this research design will be commented on again from time to time, in the concluding analysis to Chapter 6 on “Work” and in the final conclusion in Chapter 9.

4.1.3 Impact of rural–urban migration on demographic behavior

The third set of issues I am interested in investigating concerns demography; this is of special interest to me given my academic background as a demographer. The theoretical frameworks reviewed in Chapter 3 have little direct bearing on this question, except insofar as “modernization” experience obtained in the city, including “modern” demographic behavior (small family size, practice of contraception, gender equality etc.), might be conveyed back to the village by return visits and eventual resettlement, thereby helping to establish greater regional equilibrium in economic and population growth terms. It will be interesting to observe whether the demographic implications of rural–urban migration in Egypt extend beyond the simple temporary transfer of “surplus population” from high-fertility regions of low economic dynamism to a more modern urban economy; or whether, through the possible adoption of urban norms of demographic behavior (birth rate in Cairo being much lower than that in Upper Egypt), rural–urban migration becomes an agent of overall national fertility decline. If these

hypothesized outcomes do not occur, to what extent can this be explained by reference to a particular “model” of migration (i.e. circulation) and its assumption of the persistence of rural-based norms as regards demographic and social behavior?

4.1.4 Economic aspects of rural–urban migration

The final set of research questions I wish to spell out concern various economic implications of the particular Egyptian migratory phenomenon under investigation. In opening up these questions, I again refer where relevant to the theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter 3.

One key question here concerns the incomes migrants earn in the urban setting of Cairo, and the use of this income to sustain both themselves in the city and, important for regional development, their villages and home districts. Is rural–urban migration from Upper Egypt to Cairo purely a survival mechanism, redistributing surplus labor and enabling the rural areas to avoid sliding into even worse poverty and overpopulation? Or does the income earned by the migrants enable them to develop their villages by investing in new housing, infrastructures, and economic activities such as farming equipment or rural industries?

These questions presuppose the collection of two types of data: information on migrant incomes, expenditures and savings (via the questionnaire to migrant laborers in Cairo); and fieldwork in the villages to determine the impacts of out-migration, monetary transfers, circulation and return migration on the rural areas. This line of questioning also presumes an understanding of supra-individual scales of migrant behavior: family and kinship networks, community and ideological/religious values, and wider structural forces to do with the continuing nature of uneven spatial development in Egypt.

Migrants’ awareness of these structural forces, and more specifically of national plans for developing the country and its constituent parts, form another aspect of this investigation, and in the main interview schedule questions will be asked about respondents’ knowledge of certain government regional development plans.

Finally it is important to ascertain migrants' perceptions on their own futures: to stay in Cairo; to move on to somewhere else, perhaps abroad; to alternate periods of work in Cairo with periodic spells in the home village; or to return definitively back to the place of origin. These questions, too, link to various conceptual constructs: to Ravenstein's law of "counterstream flow"; to push and pull factors which may change over time (so that the village, once a "push" factor, exerts a "pull"); to possible changing balances in the nature of the dual economy; to various system pathways in the model of rural-urban migration outlined by Mabogunje (1970) and its variant portrayed in Figure 3.3; and to theories of circulation which posit mobility as a more-or-less permanent structural feature of certain developing societies.

4.2 Data and methods

The objectives and research questions elaborated in the previous account will be mainly addressed via the questionnaire/interview survey of rural-urban migrant workers in Cairo, which is the main research instrument of the thesis. Where necessary, comparative perspectives will be introduced by reference to two control groups: non-migrants in Upper Egypt, and non-migrant laborers in Cairo. These comparisons will be made largely with reference to secondary data rather than additional primary surveys carried out by the researcher. However, two further forms of primary data collection were carried out: more detailed (and tape-recorded) interviews to a small sample of migrant laborers in Cairo, and qualitative fieldwork in selected villages in Upper Egypt. The remainder of this chapter describes these research instruments and field methodologies in more detail. Subsections follow on the main questionnaire, the in-depth interviews, and the village fieldwork.

However, before we move to this more technical description of methodologies and research instruments, it would be useful, perhaps, at this point if I declared my own "positionality" within the research. I was born in a village in Upper Egypt (Souhag governorate) and lived there until the age of 11 years, when my father's job moved the family to Cairo. Since then, I have continued to visit the village of my childhood on average twice every year; naturally, I have many relatives still living there. I believe that my own "history" gives me a rather unique insight into both of the "poles" of the

migratory process I am researching, since I am very familiar with both the rural and the urban contexts and their respective traditions and ways of life.

4.2.1 The questionnaire

This is my main research instrument and provides the main source of primary data. To call it simply a questionnaire is slightly a misnomer as it was administered face-to-face via a brief interview, usually lasting about 20–30 minutes. Other forms of standard questionnaire distribution (postal, drop-and-collect etc.) were completely inappropriate for my target population, a high proportion of whom are illiterate and do not have stable residence in Cairo. Also, the postal, drop-and-collect methods of questionnaire data collection are not commonly used in Egypt, even among the highly educated people. Hence it is really a “questionnaire/interview” but I will refer to it as the questionnaire survey in order to differentiate it unambiguously from other, more in-depth interviews I also carried out.

My initial aim was to carry out 200–300 standardized interviews with the questionnaire, this being a sample size deemed suitable to generalize results and to study the statistical relations between variables, given the level of detail and subcategories on the questionnaire. My final total is 242. After about 150 questionnaires, I found that a consistent pattern was already firmly established, with duplication and repetition setting in, and no significant new information forthcoming. I continued for another 90–100 questionnaires, in order to ensure maximum validity and robustness of numbers for the numerical analysis.

The questionnaires were taken at different sites where are to be found rural laborers in Cairo. These included squares, parks, and coffee shops where it is well-known that laborers seeking work are gathered, and where employers looking for workers will go to hire them. Most of the questionnaires were administered either early in the mornings, before the main hiring time began, or in the evenings when laborers would gather in coffee shops in the hope of being hired for the next day. Some questionnaires were administered in the course of the day with laborers who did not manage to catch a full day employment opportunity and who were waiting for short task-based assignments,

while some others were administered in laborers' residences in Cairo. This phase of fieldwork with the questionnaire lasted from June to October 2000.

It is important to acknowledge here that the nature of the collection of the questionnaire sample rather rigidly defines the target group surveyed – more or less by definition, they are the poorest rural-urban laborers working in the most marginal and precarious employment sector in the city's labor market. As will be apparent later on, this may constrain my ability to answer a few of the research objectives set out above, since the sample design "closes off" certain possible variations and outcomes (for instance mobility to another, better segment of the labor market).

Questionnaire respondents were offered tea, cigarettes or a small monetary incentive to encourage their contribution in the survey, and to thank them for participating. No insuperable problems were encountered in the survey, once I had explained who I was, the purpose of the study (academic research for a university degree), and reassured respondents that I was not a government official. Some refusals were encountered but they were few, no more than 2 or 3 percent. It is perhaps worth pointing out here that, through my earlier researches on fertility issues amongst various sectors of the Egyptian population, I had already acquired a wide range of experience of carrying out survey work amongst laborers in both rural and urban contexts, and hence I believe I was quickly able to develop good contacts and relationships with my target population. The fact that I am myself originally from Upper Egypt was a plus factor in dealing with interviews. Being able to communicate with them using an Upper Egyptian accent – which is very rigid and strange in Cairo – and using their common expressions made me also be able to understand and elaborate on their experience more quickly and effectively.

The questionnaire was obviously constructed in such a way as to provide some data for formulating answers to many of the research questions set out in the previous section of this chapter. In drafting the questionnaire schedule I followed a "common-sense" approach based on linking the research objectives with relatively simple questions which could be readily understood by the respondents, drawing on my previous experience of

carrying out questionnaire surveys in Egypt. However I also cross-checked the design of the schedule with the very useful manual on migration surveys in low-income countries edited by Bilsborrow *et al.* (1984), especially those chapters relating to survey design (Bilsborrow, 1984), social and demographic aspects of migrant surveys (Oberai, 1984), and migrants and the labor process (Standing, 1984).

The full questionnaire can be found in an Appendix at the back of the thesis. It includes the following main groups of questions:

1. Background information:

Age, education, place of origin, marital status, number of brothers and sisters, number of sons and daughters (if ever married), etc.

2. Reasons for migration:

Consideration of alternative options; previous migration experience; relatives or other family members' migration experience, etc.

3. Information about work:

Current and previous jobs, number of working hours per day, number of working days per week, daily wage, duration of current work, health insurance, occupational safety, accidents and injuries related to work, etc.

4. Information about living conditions in places of origin and destination:

Ownership of durable goods in village of origin; access to electricity, piped water, and sewage disposal; ownership of agricultural land, livestock, agricultural machines and vehicles; duration of stay away from family for work; cost of living in Cairo; nutritional status and expenditure on food and health, etc.

5. Information about income and its disposal:

Division of income between living expenses in Cairo and savings/remittances, methods of channeling money back home, use of remitted income, and investment plans for future.

6. Information about family:

Fertility intentions, preferred level of education for sons and daughters, preferred age at marriage for males and females, awareness of the Egyptian population problem, knowledge of family planning and contraceptive methods, etc.

7. Information about the new national projects:

Knowledge about the new national projects in Upper Egypt (Toshka, The New Valley Projects) and Sinai (Assalam Canal and other projects); and respondents' willingness to work in these new projects if such work became available to them.

8. Plans for the future:

How long do respondents plan to remain in Cairo? What are their thoughts about return migration to their villages, or about migration elsewhere? What are their main aims in life long-term?

After the questionnaire survey, the questionnaire data was entered into a specially designed data entry program, and subsequently checked and cleaned using Epi-Info software package. Data processing was done using SPSS software package. Further details of the methods used will be provided when the results are presented in subsequent chapters. As one might expect for a data set of this kind, the techniques ranged from frequency tabulation of all the variables, to cross-tabulation of selected variables, to appropriate tests of association and similarity/dissimilarity.

4.2.2 In-depth interviews and village fieldwork

As mentioned earlier, and as is implicit in the listing of research questions, the study of the laborers in Cairo will be sometimes made against the background of two comparison groups: the population of the villages of origin in Upper Egypt, and non-migrant laborers doing similar or analogous jobs in Cairo. These control groups are investigated in two ways: via published survey and census data for the requisite urban and rural districts of Egypt; and through mainly qualitative fieldwork in the two research sites, Cairo and Upper Egypt. In Cairo I use targeted field investigation to make comparisons regarding working conditions and housing facilities with non-migrant laborers. In Upper Egypt I carried out fieldwork in March 2001 in a selected representative district (a group of villages where I have family connections, and hence could find accommodation, in

Souhag governorate) to explore the non-migrant, return migration, remittance and village development perspectives. This village work employed a range of survey methods, mainly of a qualitative nature, with non-migrants, the families of migrants living in Cairo, returned migrants and various key village personnel. The fieldwork was carried out in four villages. The four villages comprise what is called a local unit in the Egyptian local administration system. They consist of one main village – Seflaque – and three satellite villages – Nagaa Hermas, Yaakoub, and Nagaa Hamed. The total population of the local unit is about 60,000 inhabitants. Among the questions to be explored in this village fieldwork are the following:

- What factors help to explain who migrates and who does not?
- What are the roles of family and social networks in conditioning the migration process and in keeping contact with migrants in Cairo?
- How are remittances used?
- What do migrants do when they return?
- What are the main demographic and economic contrasts between migrant and non-migrant households?

Regarding the more detailed interviews with Egyptian laborers in Cairo, I carried out 20 in-depth interviews with key informant people and cassette-taped them. The tapes were transcribed by me both in Arabic and in English. The selection of key informants depended mainly on my experience in the first phase of data collection – the questionnaire survey – where I managed to specify the broad characteristics and hence the criteria for choosing these key informants: laborers who have more than one year of work experience in Cairo, who have engaged in many different types of work, and who have interesting and informative stories to tell. The objective of the interviews was to collect more personalized accounts of some of the key open-ended questions on the questionnaire. When I approached the groups of laborers and explained to them my research objectives, they helped me to identify good key informants. In most of the cases they referred me to someone that all of them agreed about with regard to his ability to summarize and explore their experience, in addition to his own. The in-depth interviews

took place in November and December 2000. A biographical summary of these 20 interviewees is given in the final section of this chapter.

Actually, to call these interviews “in-depth” might be an exaggeration in some cases. Rarely did these interviews last more than one hour – usually the duration was 30–40 minutes. The difficult conditions of life for migrant laborers in Cairo do not generally permit relaxed and long-winded conversations. The interviewees, whilst nearly always being perfectly willing to answer my questions, often did not elaborate in much depth or detail. They saw their lives as simple, hard, and not worthy of much detailed description or analysis. By and large they are poorly educated, simple, honest, rural folk who are perhaps unconfident about engaging in lengthy conversations with a researcher, preferring instead relatively short, straightforward answers.

4.2.3 Ethical considerations

As far as I can judge, there are no major ethical constraints on the research carried out in this thesis. Trespassing on respondents’ time was compensated by small gifts of cigarettes and refreshment. This is not unusual in survey fieldwork in such settings and no element of bribery is implied: my previous field survey experience in Egypt confirms the unproblematic nature of this and other potentially sensitive issues. Questions on family planning might be regarded as sensitive, but again I stress my prior experience of surveying in this area. I am confident that my interviewees were straightforward in their responses. In order to avoid conflict over working hours, I carried out interviews mainly early in the morning or after interviewees’ working days. Where the identity of individuals might be problematic, as with biographical case-studies or key informants, strict anonymity is preserved by the use of pseudonyms.

4.3 Introduction to the in-depth interviewees

As a way of linking these four introductory chapters to the main body of the thesis which follows and presents the main set of research results, I use the final section of this chapter to introduce the personalities of the interviewees. These 20 case-histories of migration were chosen partly for their typicality of various common migration situations

amongst my research subjects, but also need to be acknowledged as a counterface to the norm. Most of these individuals, under their pseudonyms, will make repeated, if often brief, appearances in the next five chapters, so I feel it is useful, at this point in the thesis, to give little thumbnail sketches of who they are, where they come from, and a brief note on their migration characteristics. I give each interviewee a kind of subtitle in order to personalize the biographical summaries and in order to provide a set of key characteristics of the migrants, their backgrounds and their motivations and behaviors.

Mohamed: victim of the new agricultural reform

Mohamed is from El-Gezira village in Menia governorate. He is in his mid-40s, married, with three children all in school. Since he was a young child, he worked in farming but, because his family has never owned any agricultural land, he used to work on the land of others. He then was able to hire a piece of land, but after the new agrarian reform laws which introduced a more marketized regime of farming prices, his rent for this piece of land increased from 200 to 2,000 Egyptian pounds per year (very roughly, from US\$50 to 500). He had no option but to return the land to its owner and migrate to Cairo. This was three years ago. Mohamed had no experience of construction work, but he heard about opportunities in Cairo from those in his village who have worked there. He thinks that, during his time in Cairo, working conditions have got worse. Mohamed hopes to find a job in his village in order to be able to return and live with his family.

Henein: the cement carrier

Henein is from a village which is in Mallawy district of Menia governorate. He is 28 years old, married, with one young son. He comes from a large, landless, farming family. He first came to Cairo to work when he was just 11 years old. His main job in recent years has been as a cement carrier, loading and unloading tractors and trucks. This work is very tough and physical. Henein says it is harder than just working as an ordinary builder's laborer. There is also an element of skill in handling the bags, knowing how to lift the sacks properly so they do not snag or drop. In spite of the heavy nature of his work, Henein is satisfied with his job since it gives him the means to support his family

Ibrahim: the veteran

Ibrahim left his village in Beni-Suif governorate in the 1970s. Now he is in his early 60s – he does not know his exact age. He has seven daughters, four of them married, and one son, the youngest child. He was one of the pioneering Upper Egyptian migrant laborers in the Mokattam area, on the eastern side of Cairo. He was also a migrant worker in Iraq before the Gulf War. After returning to Mokattam, Ibrahim resumed his work in construction. He has become well-known and well-respected amongst the construction workers and porters who make up the migrant labor force in Mokattam. Whilst working in Cairo, two of his daughters married two of his young migrant co-workers. Ibrahim makes many visits to his wife and remaining young children in Upper Egypt. The most important thing in his life is his son Magdy: it is his wish to do everything for him that he can afford to do.

Selim: the school drop-out

Selim migrated from the village of El-Lokka in Assiut. He is 28 years old and single. Both his parents are dead. He dropped out of school and followed his brother to Cairo. The brother introduced him to his house- and work-mates, and helped him to find work in the building sector. Since the death of his father and mother, he visits his village rather infrequently – to see his four married sisters, with one of whom he entrusts part of the money he earns in Cairo. His sisters nag him to get married. Selim wants to find a secure job in Cairo before settling down; he would like to marry a girl from his home area and bring her to Cairo when he has a better job, for instance working on a secure contract as a porter.

Nasralla: the accident victim

Nasralla is from Barsha village in Menia. He is in his late 30s, married with three sons. His wife is pregnant with their fourth child. He started working in Cairo when he was 16 years old, joining one of his relatives. His work consists of loading and unloading sacks of cement for a cement dealer. Nasralla's brother lives permanently in Cairo but he rarely visits him. Nasralla had a bad accident when he fell from a speeding tractor, and was hospitalized and unconscious for five days. His dream is to run a small business of his own, but he cannot afford to do this yet, so he carries on humping bags of cement.

Rady: the eldest son

Rady came to Cairo five years ago from El Atoush village in Menia. He is 27, married with three children. He finished the technical secondary school and then worked in agriculture but the work was very seasonal and poorly paid. His family has no land and, since he was the eldest of seven brothers, he had more or less no option but to migrate to Cairo. He works in the construction sector in the Egyptian capital. To some extent, his migration has been a success for he has been able to use part of his earnings to build a separate house in his village for himself and his family. However, he views his migration to Cairo as just a means of avoiding indigence; the only advantage lies in money and work, while the big disadvantage is that he has to live apart from his family. Rady hopes to find a permanent government job in his village so that he can return and reunite with his family.

Khairy: the pilgrim

Khairy originates from a small village in Menia. He is 24 years old, married with a young baby. He migrated to Cairo when he was 17, after finishing the secondary technical school, pushed by the lack of employment opportunities in his home district. First he worked in the building sector but then found work in a confectioner's shop and, after that, in a paint shop. In 1995 he traveled to Saudi Arabia on a pilgrimage visa and overstayed, working illegally for 10 months, before he was arrested and forced to return to Egypt. He went back to construction work, picking up his earlier contacts in the suburb of Haram. Khairy's dream is to find a more permanent job in order to enjoy some stability in his life. He would like to resettle in his home area, provided that he can find a job there.

Zaky: the child migrant

Zaky is from Diabat village in Souhag. He is 29 years old, and newly married. He is the eldest son in a large family of five brothers and four sisters. His family is very poor, with no land. He first came to Cairo when he was 14, during the school summer holidays, to look for temporary work to earn money to help his family. He continued this for a few more years, taking his summer earnings back home to his father and helping to pay for his school clothes. After he finished his high school diploma, he moved to Cairo more

permanently to work. Zaky lives in Cairo with other workers from his village, socializing only with them. He hopes to return to his home if he can find a permanent job there.

Ismail: the rubble remover

Ismail comes from Bani Gorra village in Assiut. He is 25 years old and is married. He is the eldest son in a large family of five brothers and four sisters. Like Zaky, Ismail came to Cairo for the first time whilst still at secondary school. He traveled with his father who was working in the building trade in Cairo. As a student, Ismail thought he was going to have fun in Cairo and was impressed by the liveliness of the big city. He did a summer job in a restaurant. After he finished his high school diploma, Ismail and his father got to know a man who was working in the business of clearing rubble from building sites. They worked as rubble removers for some time, but Ismail did not like this type of work because of the constant dust. He shifted to work in construction as an ordinary general laborer. Ismail lives in Cairo in a rented room with a younger brother, a cousin, and six other workers – nine people sharing one room. His ultimate goal in life is to find a permanent job in his hometown – he would take this even if it paid half the income he earns in Cairo.

Ahmed: the porter

Ahmed is from El-Badary in Assiut. He is 36 years old and is married with three children. He first came to Cairo three years ago to work in the construction sector. The village offered him no real opportunities, since he came from a large family which owned no land. He managed to improve his situation in Cairo, working first as a construction laborer and then getting a more secure job as a porter in a building he had helped to construct. The owner of the building offered him the porter's job and a room on the ground floor of the building. This enabled him to bring his wife and children to live with him in Cairo. After about a year, his wife started to share his job as a porter and cleaner of the public area of the building; she also picks up occasional cleaning work for the residents of the building within their own apartments. This gives Ahmed extra time to seek additional construction work elsewhere, so whenever he has spare working time, he goes to one of the meeting points near his block where construction workers assemble to be hired.

Dessouky: the landless migrant

Dessouky is from Mahroussa village, Qena. He is 41, married with six children. In his village he was a landless potential migrant with no trade or occupation; he found only occasional work as an agricultural laborer. Work in the village was short-term and seasonal, linked to harvesting sugar-cane, the main crop in Qena. Dessouky first came to Cairo to try his luck 15 years ago. He lives with others from his village. He has no hopes or plans for the future, resigned to take life as it is.

Mahmoud: the reluctant migrant

From Essawyya village in Souhag, Mohamed is 20 years old and newly married. After marriage, he continued to live with his parents – this is common practice in rural Upper Egypt. Mahmoud used to work in the construction sector in his home region but could not make any progress since work opportunities were very scarce. He moved to Cairo two years ago. His friends in Cairo are those from his home area. He does not like living in Cairo and feels he is forced by circumstances to stay there against his will.

Hanna: “a problem with my brother”

Hanna originated from Bertebat village, Menia. He is 35, married with three children. He first came to Cairo in 1982 after a quarrel with his brother over looking after animals at home: violence occurred and he left home and took the train to Cairo, seeking out some village acquaintances to stay with. After a week, his brother came to Cairo to take him back to the village, but Hanna continued to periodically visit Cairo for the purposes of getting short-term work; the city impressed him. Hanna also spent two periods of about a year each working in Iraq during the 1980s. At the time of the interview, Hanna was working in construction, living alone and for free in the unfinished building he is working on. When the building is finished he hopes to get a job as a porter in the building and leave the tough work of construction. At this stage he may bring his family to Cairo; or, if he can get a permanent job back home, he would reunite with his family there.

Shaaban: the aspiring businessman

From Diabat village in Souhag, Shaaban is 24 years old and engaged to be married. He has a high school commercial diploma. He is from a large family: five brothers and four sisters. Shaaban's family owns a café in the village. All of the brothers spend some time working in the café but there is nowhere near enough work to keep them occupied and so they need to seek other means of employment and income generation. Shaaban came to Cairo soon after finishing his diploma and met up with a brother and other relatives, with whom he stayed for a while. This was five years ago. He has done various jobs in Cairo. His aim is to establish a business of his own in the village.

Fakhry: more children, more education

From El-Mahroussa village in Qena, Fakhry is 32, married with five children. He wants to have more children. He has been a migrant laborer in Cairo for 15 years. He used to do casual work in farming in his village, but the work was highly seasonal and only available during the harvest. He moved to Cairo on the advice of village friends who told him about work opportunities; he traveled there and linked up with them to find work. However, his dream is to return to the village and open a small shop so he can stay with his family. Because he did not complete his own education, he is very keen to educate his own kids – for him this is the most important thing in his life.

Kamal: the computer scientist

Kamal is from Bertbat village in Menia. He is 30 years old and single. He has a high school diploma in computer science but has never been able to further that line of study in his work. He started to come to Cairo in the late 1980s whilst pursuing his secondary school studies: he needed money to buy clothes and travel to school which was in the district capital. He went to Cairo with one of his relatives. His first experience of earning money in Cairo as a teenager made a deep impression on him. He worked for 15 days in a workshop (night shift) and earned 35 Egyptian pounds (9 US\$): he went to the clothes market, got some gear for 30 and returned home to his village with 5. Next he migrated with a cousin who was a mason in Cairo, lending him a hand with the preparation of the concrete and mortar. After his father's death in 1993 he returned to the village for a while. Next, he got a construction job at Sharm El-Sheikh at the southern tip of Sinai, building a new hotel. Now he is back in Cairo, working in construction, but hoping for a permanent job in the city so he can stay there for good.

Ali: the mason

Relatively recently married and with one daughter, Ali came to Cairo from Belfia village in Beni-Sueif about five years ago. He migrated with a friend from the village, where there was a chronic lack of work. At first he found a job in a poultry shop in the Manial neighborhood of Cairo, but he did not like this type of work so he eventually quit and went back to the village for a while. His next migration was to the new town of El-Shorouk, still in the Cairo region, where he made contact with a building contractor with whom he worked as a mason for couple of years. Ali sees working in Cairo as a necessary but humiliating experience; local people look down on construction workers from Upper Egypt. He wishes he could find a decent job, perhaps working for the government, in his hometown.

Gaber: the exam failure

Thirty years old, married and with two sons, Gaber is from Beni Shoqair Village in Assiut governorate. When he first left the village to work in Cairo he was 15 years old; he came with a group of migrants from the same village who had heard about a building contractor in Cairo who was looking to hire workers. Gaber started his migratory career early because he failed in his preparatory stage examinations for secondary school. He picked up short periods of work in other places in Egypt but he found Cairo generally more profitable and successful for getting unskilled work – the only work he was qualified to do. He also had three months working in Saudi Arabia. After his return from that country he got married and migrated once again to Cairo. The thing he hates most is the instability of his situation, linked to the insecurity of his work.

Radwan: a man of experience

He is also from the village of Beni Shoqair, and was 15 when he first migrated to work in Cairo. Now he is 43 years old, married, with seven children. He first worked for a quarry company, then moved on from place to place around Cairo, always within the broad construction sector, and acquired skills as a mason. He has also worked from time to time elsewhere in Egypt. Although most of his family remains back in the village, he lives and works with his eldest son, aged 17, who has followed him to Cairo after dropping out of school. Radwan is considered a man of experience as he has worked in many jobs in different

places in Egypt. His motives for work are not only money: for him it is equally important to be treated properly by one's employer and to have good relations with one's fellow-workers.

Diab: the former railway man

Diab is from El-Mansha village in Souhag. He is 50 years old, married with four children. His first migration was to Alexandria where he stayed many years before finally moving, at the mature age of 47, to Cairo. He has several cousins who have migrated and settled in Alexandria. In Alexandria he used to work as a laborer on the railway. He came to Cairo after the laying off of many railway workers. Returning to the village was not an option because of the extreme lack of opportunities there. So he moved to Cairo to seek work in construction. At present, Diab does not have a proper place to stay; he is lodging with a friend who works as a guard. Whenever he can – which means whenever he has some money saved – he travels back home to spend time with his family.

4.4 Conclusion

The main purpose of this chapter has been to lay out the methodological framework of the thesis. I have set down my research objectives, organized under main themes and then subsidiary questions within those themes; and I have described both the structure and methodology of my two main surveys, the questionnaire/interview survey and the 20 in-depth case studies. In the final section of the chapter I have introduced the case-history biographies in the hope that these pen-portraits will bring some initial human content to what has thus far been a predominantly background, literature-based, methodological account. The biographies also provide an introductory perspective on some of the recurring themes about rural–urban migration which will resonate throughout the following empirical chapters. Amongst these recurring refrains of personal experience we can note the following: the poverty, landlessness and large family sizes of the migrants' village origins; their limited options but to migrate to Cairo where the construction and other casual-labor sectors offer them a means of survival; the insecurity, nevertheless, of their lives in Cairo, with unstable access to work, overcrowded and unsatisfactory arrangements for accommodation; the lack of opportunity to trade on any school qualifications they may have acquired; their aspirations to return to the highly unrealistic prospect of a permanent job in their home

region; and their resignation to the reality of their situation as poor, but surviving, migrant workers.

Chapter 5

WHO ARE THE MIGRANTS AND WHY DO THEY MIGRATE?

This relatively brief chapter commences the presentation of my survey and interview data. It contains the analysis of the background characteristics of the migrants and the reasons and strategies behind their migration to Cairo, including some perspectives from the villages of origin. The chapter therefore helps to answer the following questions: What are the basic demographic, educational and socio-economic characteristics of Upper Egyptian laborers who migrate to Cairo? What are their migration choice strategies and motivations? How do those who migrate differentiate themselves from those who do not, or from those who choose to migrate internationally? What, from the perspective of the village, is the relationship between internal and international mobility? Are these two forms of migration viewed as straight alternatives; are they the preferred options of different groups of people (distinguished perhaps by wealth or education); or are internal and international migration engaged in sequentially by the same individuals? How do Upper Egyptian rural workers envision their migration experience to Cairo while they were in their villages? Who talked to them about working in Cairo? I should stress at the outset that this chapter will not provide complete and conclusive answers to all these questions: some will be answered more effectively than others by the data that I present and have at my disposal. And subsequent chapters will also enable some more complex answers to build up to questions which the present chapter is only answering in a preliminary way. As in the chapters that follow, my data here will consist of results from my main questionnaire survey, supplemented by insights drawn from the more open interviews.

5.1 Who are the migrants?

Migration theory tells us that some people are more likely to migrate than are others. If the groups who are most likely to migrate to big cities can be identified, future urban growth, and the impact of various socio-economic changes on the volume and the direction of rural–urban movement, can be predicted to some extent.

5.1.1 Background characteristics of the migrants

In this sub-section I answer the following question: Who are those people who migrate and circulate from Upper Egypt to work in the informal sector in Cairo? What are their demographic, educational and socio-economic characteristics? The background characteristics of the surveyed sample (242 cases) are given in Table 5.1. A cross-tabulation of age of migrants by education is given in Table 5.2. About two-thirds of the migrants (65.2 percent) are between 14 and 29 years old. The highest concentration of laborers is found in the age group 20–24 years old: 34.7 percent of the surveyed population. Migrants' ages range between 14 and 54 years old, but respondents who are 50 or more years old comprise only 2.9 percent of the surveyed population (and it will be remembered that one of the 20 interviewees, Ibrahim, was over 60). The mean age of migrants (at the time of survey) is 28.9 years old. It is quite clear that in Egypt young people tend to experience rural–urban migration more than old people. This young age structure of migrants has an effect on the marital status of migrants, where I found that more than half of them are single (42.1 percent) or engaged (13.6 percent), while 43.4 percent are married. The extent to which married migrants bring their wives and families to Cairo, as opposed to leaving them in the village, will be commented on later.

The basic demographic characteristics of Upper Egyptian migrant laborers in Cairo are quite closely matched by other roughly comparable surveys (see Oberai, 1984 for some summary examples). To take just one specific example, migrants to Khartoum in neighboring Sudan had, according to Oberai (1975), an almost identical age distribution to that recorded in Table 5.1: in Khartoum 67.9 percent of all rural in-migrants were aged 15–29, compared to 65.2 percent aged 14–29 for Cairo. Further similarities were found in terms of educational background: about half of Sudanese migrants had no

formal education, and whilst there was a prevalence of primary over secondary education for the remainder, the percentage with university education (1.2 percent) was identical.

Regarding the precise figures on the educational status of migrants to Cairo, one can say that most of them (81.4 percent) belong to two educational categories: none (no education) comprise 45.9 percent, and those with a technical secondary certificate comprise 35.5 percent. The technical secondary certificate is regarded in Egypt as a final certificate that enables its holder to join the labor force. Technical secondary has many branches such as agricultural, commercial, and industrial certificates. However the technical secondary certificate is considered as a final qualification; very few of its holders may go on to university education and only under very restrictive rules. It is important to mention here that those who join the technical secondary route are preparatory certificate holders with rather minimum examination scores, while those with high scores join the general secondary, then university education. The level of technical secondary education is way below the level of general secondary education. Most of technical secondary certificate holders are not able to compete in an open (or even semi-open) market economy because of the sheer pressure of supply of labor market participants and entrants with high qualifications.

One may therefore tentatively conclude that technical secondary certificate holders have higher rates of unemployment and higher rates of migration too. Other categories – other than technical secondary and no education – comprise 18.6 percent. Only 1.2 percent of migrants are university degree holders. Of course, we do not infer from this that university graduates comprise a tiny minority of migrants to Cairo: my sample was drawn exclusively from the laboring class of migrants interviewed in ways and in settings that were elaborated in Chapter 4. So, instead, what we can conclude is that, amongst the rural–urban laboring migrants who move from Upper Egypt to Cairo, those with lower educational standards and aptitudes constitute the overwhelming majority. Finally, we can be reminded that quite a few of the interviewees mentioned at the end of the previous chapter were exam failures and school drop-outs.

Table 5.1

Background characteristics of respondents

Background characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age (in 5 year age groups)		
14–19	25	10.3
20–24	84	34.7
25–29	49	20.2
30–34	21	8.7
35–39	23	9.5
40–44	12	5.0
45–49	21	8.7
50–54	7	2.9
Mean		28.9 years
Marital status		
Single	102	42.1
Engaged	33	13.6
Married	105	43.4
Divorced	2	0.8
Highest level of schooling successfully completed		
None	111	45.9
Primary	24	9.9
Preparatory	9	3.7
Secondary General	9	3.7
Secondary Technical	86	35.5
University	3	1.2
Place of origin		
Beni-Sueif	19	7.9
Menia	42	17.4
Assiut	61	25.2
Souhag	95	39.3
Qena	18	7.4
Luxor	1	0.4
Aswan	6	2.5
Total	242	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

From where did those migrants come? They came from all Upper Egypt governorates, from Beni-Sueif in the north (100 kilometers from Cairo) to Aswan in the south (1000 kilometers from Cairo), but most of the laborers in my sample came

from three governorates that are located in the middle of the Upper Egypt region. These governorates are Souhag (95 migrants or 39.3 percent), Assiut (61 migrants, 25.2 percent), and Menia (42 migrants, 17.4 percent). The contribution of Beni-Sueif (in the north) and Qena (in the south) is about the same (19 and 18 migrants respectively). Few migrants come from Luxor and Aswan, in the far south. Is there a relation between distance and the flow of migration, according to the rationale of the Gravity Model? According to the data from my sample, the relation is very weak. This finding also contradicts one of Ravenstein's "laws" since distance control seems not to work in the Egyptian case. This may be attributed in part to the enhancement of means of transportation between Cairo and Upper Egypt governorates, and the fact that Menia, Assiut, and Souhag governorates are the highly populated governorates in Upper Egypt with the lowest levels of socio-economic development in the region. Nor do migrants from Upper Egypt engage in step-migration: almost without exception, their move to Cairo is a direct one, without any intermediate stages in intervening smaller towns.

Next, is there a relation between age of migrants and education? The cross-tabulation of age and education in Table 5.2 may answer this question. After grouping educational status into three categories (no education, technical secondary, and others) and using five-year age groups, one can say that most young-age migrants are educated (at least to the extent of having the technical secondary qualification), while most older migrants are not educated. It is clear from the table also that the number of migrants with no education increases by age, while the number of migrants with technical secondary education decreases by age. Since the minimum graduation age for technical secondary education is 17 years old, it seems that migration right after graduation is common and is regarded as a kind of waiting strategy until young males find a permanent or a long-term job related to their specialization. This strategy will be discussed later in this chapter when we explore reasons for migration and in successive chapters when we discuss migrants' future goals and aims.

Table 5.2

Cross-tabulation of age and education

Age group	Highest level of schooling successfully completed			Total
	None	Secondary technical	Other	
14–19	5 4.5%	9 10.5%	11 24.4%	25 10.3%
20–24	19 17.1%	47 54.7%	18 40.0%	84 34.7%
25–29	21 18.9%	20 23.3%	8 17.8%	49 20.2%
30+	66 59.5%	10 11.6%	8 17.8%	84 34.7%
Total	111 100.0%	86 100.0%	45 100.0%	242 100.0%

Chi Square = 69.56 $p \leq .000$

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Table 5.3

Mean family size by place of origin

Place of Origin	Mean	n
Beni-Sueif	7.4	19
Menia	8.2	42
Assiut	8.6	61
Souhag	8.4	95
Qena	7.5	18
Luxor	6.0	1
Aswan	5.2	6
Total	8.2	242

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Family size is one of the reasons that were mentioned by interviewees as a reason for migration and this too will be discussed later in this chapter. People from large family backgrounds tend to migrate to escape family problems, to relieve their burden on the family, or to contribute towards the family income. The higher the family size, the higher the likelihood of migration. The family size – that is to say the household size – of the surveyed population ranges between 2 and 25 individuals with a mean of 8.2 individuals. As Table 5.3 shows, there is some variation by place of origin. The highest mean family size is found in Assiut (8.6 individuals), followed by Souhag (8.4 individuals). Qena ranked the third with a mean of 7.5 individuals. The lowest family sizes are found in Luxor and Aswan (6.0 and 5.2 individuals respectively). According to the results of the Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2000 (National Population Council, 2001), the mean household size in rural Upper Egypt was 5.9 individuals. This means that the surveyed migrants came from larger families (on average 8.2) than the average of the sending region, although in drawing this conclusion one needs to be aware of possible age-specific and cohort effects of the survey sample when compared to the general population of rural Upper Egypt.

Another important factor that correlates with background family size is the dependency burden. This reflects the burden on working people to look after themselves and their dependent family members. The dependency burden increases when non-working family members increase. Children (as well as non-active elderly people) increase the dependency burden and therefore the pressure on the family head to seek other income generation solutions. Migration is one of these solutions.

The number of surviving children for the ever married – currently married, divorced, and widowed – surveyed population (107 cases) ranges between zero and 12 with a mean of 3.4 children. This mean is more than the recorded mean for Upper Egypt in the Demographic and Health Survey 2000, which is 2.2 living children. This means that fertility among migrants is higher than the average for the sending regions. This comparison assumes similar age structure among migrants and non-migrants and a similar mortality level and pattern among children in the two groups, which can not be assessed using the current available data. This comparison should be regarded as an approximation, therefore. The total fertility rate of the migrants can be approximately

gauged from the family sizes of the older respondents, which are around 6, again higher than the national and Upper Egypt TFR figures.

The overall mean surviving children figure hides difference among migrants according to age, which is an important factor in measuring fertility outcomes. The mean surviving children in the surveyed population increases by age – as expected – from 1.2 surviving children for the first age group (20–24), to 5.6 for migrants in the 45–49 age group, then it starts to decrease for the last age groups. This decrease may be attributed – in part – to the effect of mortality. See Tables 5.4 and 5.5 for the full set of data on family size derived from the questionnaire survey. I shall return to this important topic of fertility behavior in much more detail in Chapter 8.

Table 5.4
Absolute number of living children for ever married people

Number	Frequency	Percent
0	21	19.6
1	11	10.3
2	16	15.0
3–4	22	20.6
5+	37	34.6
Total	107	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Table 5.5
Mean number of living children for married people by age group of respondents

Age	Mean	Number of cases
20–24	1.2	9
25–29	1.4	12
30–34	2.2	12
35–39	3.2	20
40–44	5.2	12
45–49	5.6	19
50–54	5.0	7
Total	3.4	91

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

5.1.2 Age at first movement and international migration experience

Age at first movement – first migratory experience – reflects the start of the practical implementation of a set of decision-making and influencing factors. Less-skilled Upper Egyptian laborers tend to start migration early in their life span, even as early as at the age of ten, while new entrants to the world of migration continue to experience migration for the first time until the age of 44, with a wide range of 34 years. The modal concentration of cases is found between 15 and 19 years old, with the mean age of migrants at the first move being 18.9 years old (Table 5.6). Regarding the relation between age at first movement and education, it is clear from Table 5.7 that fresh technical secondary school-leavers tend to migrate immediately or soon after their graduation to work in Cairo and, as noted earlier, to use this migration to survive and earn some income whilst they are waiting for any permanent job. Less and non-educated laborers start their migration experience earlier than educated migrants, but there are also some instances of the uneducated groups starting to experience migration for the first time in middle age.

Table 5.6

Age at first movement from village for work

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
10–14	46	19.0
15–19	121	50.0
20–24	46	19.0
25–29	11	4.5
30–34	8	3.3
35–39	8	3.3
40–44	2	.8
Mean		18.9 years
Total	242	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Table 5.7**Cross-tabulation of age at first movement and education**

Age group	Highest level of schooling successfully completed			Total
	None	Secondary technical	Other	
10–14	28	15	3	46
Percent	25.2	17.4	6.7	19.0
15–19	38	55	28	121
Percent	34.2	64.0	62.2	50.0
20–24	20	16	10	46
Percent	18.0	18.6	22.2	19.0
25–29	8	0	3	11
Percent	7.2		6.7	4.5
30+	17	0	1	18
Percent	15.3		2.2	7.4
Total	111	86	45	242
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Chi Square = 39.88 $p \leq .000$

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

In the migration literature, it is well known that internal migration can often function as a catalyst for international migration (see for example Bauer and Zimmermann, 1988; Boyle *et al.*, 1998; Korcelli, 1994; White and Woods, 1980). To take two specific examples from the eastern Mediterranean, Salt and Clout (1976) have shown how many Turkish migrants to Western Europe had already migrated within Turkey to the big cities, whilst Dimitrias (1998) has argued that Greek emigration to Australia was a historical follow-on to long-established patterns of rural–urban migration within Greece. Is this the case with Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo? Before answering this question I will present migrants' international migration experience. More than one-quarter of the surveyed population have experienced international migration (64 cases, 26.4 percent). They migrated to four Arab countries, Libya (25 migrants), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

(16 migrants), Jordan (13), and Iraq (10 migrants). Migration to Libya is regarded in Egypt virtually like internal migration. After the accusation of two Libyans in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, and the international political, military, and economic sanctions against Libya, and motivated by his Arab nationalist attitudes, the Libyan leader Gaddafi opened the borders between Libya and Egypt. Thousands of new school and college graduates and unemployed people migrated to Libya, for which visas or even passports were not required. The transportation medium was the bus. A private bi-national transportation company was established for that reason. The cost was very cheap – starting from 100 Egyptian pounds (around US\$ 25) – which made it very easy and affordable to migrate to Libya and to travel back and forth.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a traditional destination for Egyptian emigrants. On average Egyptians may pay more than 5000 Egyptian pounds (henceforth LE) or US\$1,200 to employment offices for a visa for work in KSA. However, after more elaboration with my research subjects in the in-depth interviews, I found that most of the migrants to KSA did not follow the legal way of getting a visa for work there. Most of them got visas for “Umra” (an out-of-season pilgrimage to Mecca known as the “minor Hajj”) and then they stay there doing any kind of work with lower earnings than the legal migrants. One of my interviewees went for Umra, then stayed in KSA for three years.

The main flow of less costly and less restrictive international migration of Egyptians – less expensive and restrictive than the Gulf Emirates – in the last two decades has been to Iraq and Jordan. Many Egyptian young men experienced migration to Iraq and Jordan starting from the beginning of the first Gulf War between Iraq and Iran; in particular they were able to substitute the absence of great numbers of the Iraqi labor force who were enrolled in the Iraqi army. Jordan was a step towards migration to Iraq; however, it attracted a substantial proportion of Egyptian migrants to stay and work there rather than continue on to Iraq. Since migrants used to use buses between Cairo and Baghdad, Jordan was a transit stop-over in the passage between Egypt and Iraq. Many of these migrants established strong networks in Jordan and Iraq. There was usually at least one person from each village in Egypt to receive new migrants.

The duration of international migration for the surveyed population ranges between three months and 22 years. The mean duration is 3.7 years. The duration of international migration varies somewhat by country of destination. The highest mean duration is 4.9 years (Jordan), followed by 3.9 years (KSA), 3.7 years (Iraq), and 3.0 years (Libya); however the relatively small absolute numbers involved mean that these narrow differences in length of stay are probably non-significant.

Now I return to the question that I raised in the beginning of this sub-section: Does internal migration work as a catalyst for international migration in the Egyptian case? The answer seems to be no. After the second Gulf War – the Kuwait liberation war – many Egyptians were forced to return. When they returned to their villages after long periods of absence abroad they did not manage to accustom themselves to their old life in the village, so that internal migration – especially to a metropolitan area like Cairo – was the alternative. Their life in Cairo is quite similar to their experiences in Iraq or Jordan. Returned migrants from Iraq and Jordan told me that there were focal points for the Egyptian laborers to gather in the main squares and some parks in Baghdad, Amman, Aqaba, and many other cities in Iraq and Jordan, exactly the same as the gathering points in Cairo where Upper Egyptians meet to socialize and get hired for work.

The conclusion, therefore, is that, rather than internal leading to international migration, the Egyptian case is the reverse, namely that international migration worked as a catalyst for internal migration. This is due to the unexpected timing and circumstances of the return from Iraq and Jordan, and the change in lifestyle due to migration experience which made migrants less connected to their families. Living and working in a metropolitan area like Cairo was the easiest alternative to their previous migrant life in Iraq and Jordan, as well as being a sensible income-earning strategy. However, it has to be acknowledged that there is a logical flaw in my conclusion about the sequencing of internal versus international migration, since those individuals who had migrated first internally and then abroad are obviously no longer in Egypt. A further perspective on this particular question will be offered towards the end of this thesis in Chapter 8 when I consider migrants' views about their future, including the possibility of moving abroad.

5.2 Why do they migrate?

Why do unskilled Upper Egyptian laborers migrate to Cairo? In the standard questionnaire, each interviewee was given the opportunity of nominating one, two, or three reasons for his migration to Cairo. Out of the 242 interviewees, 120 gave one reason, 86 gave two reasons, and 36 gave three reasons. The total number of responses is therefore 400. The frequency of reasons and their relative percent are given in Table 5.8. The most common influencing reason – as given by respondents – is the unavailability of job opportunities at the village. This reason comprises 35.8 percent of the reasons given by respondents. It is followed by a similar reason, which is the rarity of job opportunities at the village (8.8 percent). Some of my interview respondents summed up the dire situation with regard to rural jobs as follows. “*Work opportunities are almost non-existent there – in the village. In case I find a job, it will be for five pounds a day – about one third of the Cairo rate. This will never be sufficient for my expenses and the family’s*”, said Khairy. “*I realized that there were no opportunities to work there – in the village – so I came to Cairo*” (Ali). “*We do not have jobs in my hometown and I do not have any agricultural land*” (Diab).

Let us now pause for a moment and theorize a bit on the nature of these data and interview quotes. As per the “dual economy model of development and migration” that was proposed by Lewis (1954) and later extended by Fei and Ranis (1961), migration is considered as an equilibrating mechanism which, through transfer of labor from the labor-surplus to the labor-deficit sector, eventually brings about wage equality in the two sectors. The model is based on the concept of a dual economy, comprising a subsistence, agricultural sector characterized by underemployment, and a modern industrial sector characterized by full employment. Bearing in mind the limitations of this model – as mentioned in Chapter 3 – Upper Egyptian laborers certainly do migrate to benefit from the difference in wages between rural and urban sectors. Many of the reasons given by migrants are related to the much lower incomes in the village than Cairo. “*One can find a job there in Upper Egypt, but for a lower income than here*”, said Zaky. “*Here, I can go working for 15 to 20 pounds a day according to what is available, and I might be paid an extra 5 pounds as a tip. It is much better than my hometown*” (Diab). “*On my best day, I earn 18 pounds. My daily income here is almost equivalent to my weekly income in the village*” (Henein). “*If I manage to find work in the village, I work with my*

axe on someone else's land. Anybody who needs me to work for him can hire me for 8 pounds in my hometown. It is much less than here and it is not affordable" (Nasralla). On the other hand, what does not seem to happen is any significant narrowing of the gap between Upper and Lower Egypt, the two parts of the two-sector model. This implies that the rural–urban labor transfer is not (yet) an equilibrating mechanism for wage differences, but rather a fundamental structural element of the geographically divided dual-sector economy, where the two economies remain both functionally and spatially apart yet connected by migration channels which, as we will see later, are partly circulatory but partly also very long-term. I shall return to re-analyze this important point later in the thesis.

Other reasons listed in Table 5.8 include bad living conditions in the village (7.0 percent), need for money/contribution to the family income (5.5 percent), seasonality of work in the village (4.3 percent), the temporary nature of the work at the village (4.3 percent), landlessness (3.8 percent), to lessen the burden of a big landless family (3.8 percent), work in the village does not afford enough food (3.3 percent), escape from family pressures and troubles (2.8 percent), and some other reasons such as being with no occupation, facing tough conditions at home, and disability to work in farming.

Although in Table 5.8 I have separated out quite a large number of nominated reasons, it is not difficult to appreciate that most of the reasons are basically saying the same thing: that living conditions in the village, at least for the migrants, are desperately poor, with extremely low incomes and limited access to work. Hence, and especially if migrants come from families which are landless and have many family members, there is scarcely enough to eat – as summed up in the commonly-used phrase in Arabic, “life does not afford a mouth full of bread”. What we seem to be dealing with here, therefore, is a migration for survival or, at its most extreme, “starvation migration”.

Further articulation of these reasons may be found in the interview case studies. Some quotes are here extracted. *“My family has always been in need of money in order to live. My father is a farmer. The money we get from cultivating certain crops on our land is very little, and such money is always raised over too long intervals. Yes there are other crops that can be cultivated, but their revenue is insufficient to meet our*

needs” (Rady). “It is hard to find a job there except at harvest time. One cannot buy neither flour, nor butter, nor oil. There is not any spare land to be cultivated. Had I owned a small piece of land, I would have not come to Cairo” (Ahmed). “What made me leave my town was the living standards of course. It is very difficult there; who is poor remains poor and who is rich stays rich” (Gaber).

Table 5.8

Reasons to come to Cairo to work

Reason	Frequency	Percent
No job opportunities available in the village	143	35.8
Income in the village is lower than Cairo/ Wages in the village are poor/ There is more money in Cairo	63	15.8
Job opportunities are rare in the village	35	8.8
Bad living conditions in the village	28	7.0
Need for money/ Contribution to the family income	22	5.5
Work in the village is seasonal	17	4.3
Work in the village is temporary	17	4.3
Do not own agricultural land to work in village	15	3.8
Relieve burden of a big landless family	15	3.8
Work in the village “does not afford a mouth full of bread”	13	3.3
Escape from family pressures and troubles	11	2.8
Have no occupation (not a craftsman)	5	1.3
Facing tough conditions at home	5	1.3
Cannot work in farming	4	1.0
Other reasons	7	1.8
Total	400	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Amongst the younger, unmarried migrants, some rather different reasons emerged, more to do with the attractions of Cairo and the possibilities of purchasing goods other than food for survival. *“They told me that Cairo is fascinating”* (Henein). *“Like everybody in our village, I went to my preparatory school in the same village, but the secondary school was in another bigger town. I had to have enough clothes and stuff. We do not have such things in our village. One feels down when seeing one's mates wearing better outfits. That is why I made up my mind to travel and work in Cairo. My sole goal in moving has been to get enough money for buying clothes, or even just to have some money in my pocket”* (Kamel). Hanna, from Menia, told this interesting story: *“I wanted to watch a football match between Ahly and Zamalek – the two famous Egyptian football teams. We, as villagers, often have animals to breed. I was really eager to listen to the match on the radio, so I asked my sister-in-law to feed one of our animals. I relied on her to do this, but she did not do it. I went to listen to the match, but when I went back things were bad. There was a big problem with my brother; we had a quarrel with each other and he beat me up. I made up my mind to leave the house, took my belongings, and eventually ended up here in Cairo.”*

When respondents were asked about whether they considered any other options before taking the decision to migrate to Cairo, their answers reflected the rarity of alternatives available to them. It seemed as if the decision of migration is the only solution to their unemployment – or underemployment – and all of their other problems. About 95 percent mentioned that they did not have any other options at the time of taking the decision to migrate to Cairo. *“What do you expect me to do? Migrate to Cairo or die from hunger in my village?”* said one of the respondents. Those who proposed other options are few, about 5 percent of the surveyed population. The main options were to stay in the village and accept low rates of income, or to continue to work the family's land. It seems that the motivation for migration for those who considered other options at the time of migrating was less than those who had no other options at that time. Linking those who mentioned that they had other options with their reasons for migration may explain that this group of migrants were not under pressure like the majority of migrants. *“There is more money in Cairo”, “I love freedom and want to work in Cairo”,* and *“I just want to live in Cairo”,* were some of the key factors nominated by

the subgroup of respondents who felt that they had other options apart from the sheer necessity to migrate.

The final element of the migration decision to be considered here is the question of who took the decision to migrate and who else was influential. We saw from Chapter 3 (section 3.3.2) that there is an increasing tendency in theorizing migration to focus on households, families and other small social groups rather than narrowly conceptualizing the individual migrant as the key and only decision-maker. We also saw how, under the “new economics of migration” approach, the “investment decision” of migration is often interrelated with other household strategies regarding work, place and income. Although I did not address the family-based nature of migration decision-making directly in my questionnaire, the interviews, more casual conversations and the village-based fieldwork provided some illumination on this issue. Clearly, when migration from Upper Egypt is primarily motivated by the need to ensure the survival of the rural household, other members of that household are likely to be involved in almost any discussions about potential or actual migration. In rural households in Upper Egypt, family discussions about migration take place practically all the time, and although the impression might be given that discussions and decisions are exclusively a male preserve, it would be naïve to omit the input of wives, mothers, sisters etc. This family-circle environment for discussions about migration is long-established in Egyptian rural areas. For instance, an early study of Egyptian rural–urban migration from Kharga Oasis to the Nile Valley maintained that “it is not the mere concern of the individual who migrates ... it is rather the whole family that decides on who among its members should migrate, how long a migrant should stay away...” etc. (Abou-Zeid, 1963). But it would also be naïve to assume that such discussions about migration were not without tensions within the family, and also hardships resulting from migration and separation. Hanna’s account of his argument with his brother, in which his sister-in-law was also implicated, was mentioned above; and the hardship for both the migrants and (especially) their female family members who remain behind, shouldering extra familial, household and family/working responsibilities, cannot be exaggerated. This is perhaps all the more so since separate circuits of female migration do not exist in rural Egypt, except perhaps for the further education of a select few daughters of wealthy families.

5.3 Rural knowledge of the town

How did Upper Egyptian farm workers envisage their migration experience to Cairo while they were in their villages? Who talked to them about working in Cairo? Due to the narrative nature of responses to these questions, they were not addressed to respondents in the standard questionnaire, but were included in the in-depth interviews. Selected quotes shed some light on the picture of Cairo as drawn in the mind and dreams of the migrants before the start of the migration process.

“Folks (in my village) used to travel to Cairo. They told me that Cairo is fascinating. Better than our hometown. One can find work there. So I came” (Henein). *“I talked to my brother. He had been working here before I came. I asked him whether I should come to work with him after I had finished with my schooling. Things were tough in our hometown. I asked him to take me with him, and he consented”* (Selim). *“I came here for the first time with my father. I had thought that I was going to have fun. I had thought that Cairo is a charming place,”* said Ismail. *“I heard that there was a contractor looking for some workers, so I came with him”* (Gaber). *“I came with a friend of mine. He talked me into working with him”* (Dessouky). *“My relatives who were working in Cairo gave me the chance to join them. They invited me to come”* (Shaaban). *“I heard from some people in my hometown that there are work opportunities here, so I came”* (Fakhry). *“I told a friend of mine who used to work in Cairo that I was thinking about going to Cairo. He was a neighbor of mine, and approved my plans”* (Kamal). *“I came with some fellows from my village. They were organizing group-trips and I came with them,”* said Radwan. Other quite common responses were that migrants visited their relatives in Cairo before migration; and some mentioned the experience of living in Cairo – or nearby – before migration to fulfill the requirements of obligatory military service.

From the above quotes, and my various other discussions with migrants, I noticed that most migrants were to some extent lured on by what were essentially rather exaggerated pictures arising partly from faulty communications and partly from the inability of persons unfamiliar with the town to interpret correctly the information they received. The deteriorating living conditions and rising unemployment in Upper Egypt made it

easy for potential migrants to believe or imagine better conditions in Cairo than the reality.

Worker-to-worker communication seems to be the prevailing pattern of information sharing. Team-, chain-, and family-migration prevail, and circulatory movements bring a constant stream of labor migrants in Cairo back to their villages for visits. Earlier migrants tend to guide their younger family members and relatives. It is common to find brothers, father and son, and groups of relatives all working in the same place in Cairo. It is common also to find that all occupants of a particular place of work in Cairo have come from the same village. These aspects of social and family networking will be explored in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

5.4 Theorizing reasons of migration

What is the correspondence of the Egyptian case to the theories of rural/urban migration I presented in Chapter 3? As I mentioned before, the relation between distance and the flow of migration from Upper Egypt to Cairo is very weak which means that Ravenstein's distance dimension of migration or the Gravity Model principle are not relevant to the case under study. The pull and push factors of Lee (1966) are more fully relevant to the Egyptian case, where migration from Upper Egypt to Cairo is mainly stimulated by the push factors of rural poverty and the historical isolation of Upper Egypt from national development plans and resource allocation. This situation of permanent structural backwardness has increased the unemployment rates and decreased the life opportunities in the region, which in turn has led its residents to seek pretty much any other sources of better living conditions and income generation. Drawing on my personal judgment of the survey results and my knowledge of socio-economic conditions in Upper and Lower Egypt, I can confidently say that migration is stimulated by push pressures – in origin – rather than pull factors – in destination. The knowledge of migrants about opportunities in Cairo is not, however, complete or certain, as will be discussed in the next paragraph. In sum, rural poverty is the main stimulus of migration flows from Upper Egypt to Cairo, at least for the not insignificant sample of migrants I surveyed.

Given the socio-economic and the educational background of the study population as presented in the beginning of this chapter, I can safely say that they do not have the knowledge and the degree of awareness which make them able to rigorously compare or evaluate the expected costs and returns of their migration decision over time and to study other alternatives – if there are any – of their decision to migrate. Sjaastad's human investment theory (Sjaastad, 1962) is not really relevant to the Egyptian case. The movement of unskilled laborers who represent the surplus of the agricultural sector may be explained as a survival mechanism rather than an investment strategy.

Todaro's model of rural–urban migration, which helps to explain reasons for continued migration to urban areas even with high urban unemployment rates – which is the case of Cairo – is perhaps marginally more relevant to the Egyptian case. This model helps us to understand why migrant laborers move from their villages to Cairo despite its high unemployment rate. These unskilled migrants enter the traditional, not modern, sector of the city's labor market, and their incomes, whilst significantly higher than those that are yielded from agriculture and other uncertain rural activities, are not those of the modern urban wage sector, but derive from insecure and tough unskilled labor in the marginal and informal sectors of the city's sprawling economy (more on this in the next chapter).

The systems approach of Mabogunje (1970) is a theoretically elegant and attractive model for explaining the phenomenon of rural–urban migration but it is difficult to be tested in reality. This may explain why this model has hardly ever been applied to real data. Also, the model represents a precise and rigid system that cannot be applied to human behavior with a lot of intervening factors that explain variations in the phenomenon of migration that researchers cannot control for. The model can be taken as a theoretical template for the migration phenomenon; only some parts of the framework can be usefully referred to, especially to explore migration networks and describe the control subsystems.

5.5 Conclusion

From this account of the key background characteristics of the respondents to the main questionnaire survey, supplemented by some quotes from the tapes of the in-depth interviews, the following points can be summed up.

Migrants from Upper Egypt included in my sample survey in Cairo are young, rather poorly educated, and from poor socio-economic backgrounds. The mean age of interviewees is 29 years, and 55 percent are aged 20–29. Only 10 percent are aged less than 20, but 35 percent are aged 30–35 (Table 5.1). However, as far as age at first migration is concerned, 88 percent migrated before the age of 25, with half leaving between the ages of 15 and 19 (Table 5.6). This picture compares well with the standard literature on rural–urban migration, which confirms a strong trend to depart in early adulthood: such people have fewer attachments, a longer life horizon to enjoy the expected increased income that migration to an urban area yields, and a longer time to amortize any costs of migration. However the Egyptian findings do indicate a somewhat earlier start to a migratory career than the average of other surveys and models (see Lucas, 1997: 730).

Migrants surveyed in Cairo are overwhelmingly from low-qualification school backgrounds: 46 percent have no recognized level of schooling and 35 percent have achieved only the low-status secondary technical level (Table 5.1). Older migrants have lower educational achievements than younger migrants (Table 5.2).

The evidence of both quantitative and case-study surveys tends strongly to suggest that labor migrants in Cairo come from the poorest and most disadvantaged of rural backgrounds. This finding is particularly interesting as it contradicts the conventional wisdom that rural–urban migrants in developing countries tend to be positively selected with regard to social features and educational qualifications (cf. for example Oberai, 1984; Skeldon, 1990; Todaro, 1976). However, the “self-selective” nature of my sample of poor migrant workers, heavily influenced by the field methodology I employed, must be borne in mind here; hence this finding must be qualified. Demographically the survey respondents originated from family/household sizes which are larger than the regional averages for Upper Egypt. There is a concentration of origins in the more densely-populated central governorates of Upper Egypt, namely Menia, Assiut, and Souhag.

Regarding motives for migrating, these are overwhelmingly economic and have to do with factors such as unemployment, lack of rural job opportunities, very low incomes and bad rural living conditions. Cairo offers better wages (generally around triple those in rural Upper Egypt), somewhat more regular work (and therefore regular income), more exciting life (though excitement here is a relative concept since, as we shall see later, migrants' lives in Cairo are pretty tough), and the chance to remit and support family members at home in the village.

Although the nature of the questionnaire and interview data used in this study implied an individual focus on 262 respondents (including the case-study interviewees), all male, it can be suggested that migration decisions are not necessarily taken at the individual level by only the migrant himself. Evidence exists for this being a shared decision by the family/household in which, however, male views predominate, given the nature of gender relations in villages in Upper Egypt.

Only a minority of respondents felt that they had much in the way of alternative viable options in the village. More than a quarter of respondents (64 out of 242) had worked abroad, in all cases in other Arab countries. The evidence suggests that in the Egyptian case international migration leads to internal migration rather than the reverse.

Regarding the migrants' prior knowledge of the city, one may conclude that most migrants were lured on by what were essentially rather exaggerated pictures arising partly as a result of faulty communications and partly from the inability of persons unfamiliar with the town to interpret correctly the information they received. The very poor living conditions and high unemployment rates in Upper Egypt made it easy for potential migrants to believe or imagine that better conditions existed in Cairo than were in fact the case. We shall find out later the extent of their disillusionment. We shall also find out later to what extent migrants' extremely harsh lives of sacrifice and self-deprivation in Cairo are balanced by periodic return visits and continued orientation to "the village" as the psychological base for their urban labor.

Chapter 6

WORK STATUS AND EXPERIENCES OF MIGRANTS

We saw from the previous chapter that economic reasons underpin the entire rationale of the movement of poor rural workers from Upper Egypt to Cairo. Low income, insufficient and unsatisfactory work, low-quality rural services and the need or pressure to “escape” were some of the key influences in migrants' decisions to move north. This, of course, is hardly surprising. As classic labor migrants, work defines the very essence of my research subjects' need to migrate. A brief glance back to Table 5.8 will confirm the overwhelming importance of income-related and work-dominated reasons for migration.

This chapter analyzes in more detail the work status and experiences of migrants including migrants' patterns of accommodation in Cairo and the process of looking for work. At a more specific level, I analyze occupation, type and mode of work (contract, daily basis, or task-based), number of working days per week, number of working hours per day, and other related work aspects. An analysis of occupational safety, health insurance coverage, and injuries related to work conditions is also incorporated in this chapter. Reference will be made to published survey data for Cairo districts and to fieldwork on non-migrant laborers, in order to provide a comparative frame of reference for the migrant surveys which, briefly to remind the reader, comprise the questionnaire/interview survey of 242 migrants plus in-depth interviews with 20 migrants. Much of the account will be structured – as with Chapter 5 – around a series of tables which present key data from the main questionnaire survey. I start by examining the process of arrival and of finding work and accommodation in the city.

6.1 Work search

6.1.1 Migrants' patterns of accommodation

Migrants face a whole range of urgent problems the minute they disembark in the city. The first is where to stay. The matter is important because most migrants have no job, nor even in many cases a clear idea about the labor market. Moreover, many new arrivals are very young. Typically, they are teenagers. They need a period, while looking for a job, in accommodation that is cheap, or preferably free. I asked my interview-subjects the following question: *“How did you come? When you first set foot here, where did you go? What did you do?”* Here are some answers.

“When I arrived, I immediately headed to Guiza and inquired about the Faisal neighborhood. I heard about it from many people from my village who traveled to and from Cairo. I was told that I was already in it. I got out of the microbus and walked for a while till I was here. I got to know a guy from Fayoum. He generously allowed me to spend that night staying with him; he was a doorman,” said Mohamed from Menia. *“I came with a friend of mine. He persuaded me to come with him. I sat by a fountain and waited for a working opportunity. I have not moved away from this place for 15 years”* (Dessouky). *“As for the first time, it was my brother who accompanied me. I was 15 years old at that time, and hardly knew anything”* (Henein). *“I came to this place directly. Some people talked to me about it. Some of my relatives were living here when I came. I stayed with them”* (Mahmoud).

The above-mentioned examples, which are typical of many such replies I listened to, clearly indicate that friends and relatives in Cairo – not permanent residents, but other unskilled labor migrants involved in temporary work and circular migration with links back to the villages of origin – are often able to facilitate the accommodation of newcomers from Upper Egypt. On the other hand, particularly striking is the example of Mohamed, who came without any prior knowledge, friends or relatives in Cairo and who managed to build an instant friendship with a person that he just met for the first time in his life, to the extent that the older migrant invited him to spend his first night in Cairo with him. This illustrates the good faith, good manners and solidarity of those poor, but fatalistic people. It also illustrates the importance of social networks – both those that are based on village ties and family links, and those which are capable of being forged almost instantly in the destination setting. Further details on housing and living conditions of the migrants in Cairo follow in Chapter 7.

6.1.2 Relatives in Cairo and channels of labor migration

About 65 percent of migrants interviewed in the questionnaire have relatives in Cairo; earlier-established and more or less permanently-settled migrants from their place of origin in Upper Egypt. However, in this study of unskilled laborer migration I found – perhaps surprisingly – that these permanent migrants do not by and large take an active role to facilitate the migration process. More than two-thirds of the interviewees (including the in-depth ones) mentioned that they rarely or never visit their relatives in Cairo who are permanently settled in the city. Some of them mentioned that these permanently-resident relatives do not actually know that they are in Cairo. A few of them said that they do not want them (the relatives in Cairo) to know that they are in Cairo. I shall comment later (in Chapter 7) on some reasons for this and for the surprising lack of social contact between these two subsets of migrants

So, who helped these people in their migration process? How did they find their current job? The answer to this latter question is given in Table 6.1. Almost two-thirds of the migrants found jobs through their relatives in Cairo. But “relatives” here means laborers who work in Cairo, not permanent resident relatives. Friends, in the village and in Cairo, ranked second, accounting for about one fifth of migrants. Often current jobs were found through friends from the village who used to work – or currently work – in Cairo. They provide accommodation and an introduction to the labor market. Those

Table 6.1

How did rural Upper Egyptian migrants find their current jobs in Cairo?

	Frequency	Percent
Friends	47	19.4
Relatives in Cairo*	154	63.6
Hired by employer	40	16.5
Other	1	0.4
Total	242	100.0

* Relatives in Cairo here mean laborers who work in Cairo, not permanent resident relatives

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

who are hired by employers by word of mouth while the migrants are in their villages comprise 16.5 percent of the interviewees. Laborers who are hired by employers always come for task-based activities starting on a specific date. After the completion of the task they usually stay in Cairo and join their village friends and workmates in seeking day-to-day work.

Once again, the relevance of kinship and friendship networks is confirmed – in finding work as well as initial accommodation. But we also note another interesting social phenomenon: these networks of social solidarity are largely confined to the migrant laborer class and do not extend to relatives and co-villagers who are permanently settled in Cairo. My reading of this situation is as follows: long-term settled migrants are likely to have better living conditions and more secure jobs than the recently-arrived or shuttle migrants who work only in casual laboring and who frequently have no fixed abode – hence the latter feel an element of shame because of their inferior position and are reluctant to visit their better-off relatives and village contacts.

6.2 Work characteristics of migrants

6.2.1 Mode of work

By mode of work I mean whether migrant laborers work in a contract-based, daily-based, or task-based work mode. The first of these is relatively rare. In fact, it is not surprising when talking to a group of unskilled migrants waiting for work in the street to find that not one of them works (or indeed has ever worked) in a contract-based mode. As Table 6.2 shows, most respondent migrants accept to work on a combined task-based or daily-based mode (76.0 percent). Those who prefer to work solely in a task-based mode comprise 5.4 percent only. Those who get work solely in a daily-based mode comprise 18.6 percent of the migrants. Migrants mentioned to me that the task-based work is potentially more profitable than the daily-based, but less regular. The daily-based work is for a fixed rate – usually 15 or 20 LE (4 or 5 US\$) – while the task-based work is by bargaining and may lead to double the revenues of the daily-based work. On the other hand, daily-based work guarantees a fixed income for that day. Migrants who go early to the focal points and parks to look for jobs are more likely to

Table 6.2
Work characteristics in Cairo

Work Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Mode of work		
Contract-based	0	0
Daily-based	45	18.6
Task-based	13	5.4
Task- or daily-based (combined)	184	76.0
Number of working hours per day		
5	2	.8
7	2	.8
8	156	64.5
9	59	24.4
10	15	6.2
11	2	.8
12	4	1.7
18	2	.8
Mean		8.5
Number of working days per week		
1	1	.4
2	2	.8
3	12	5.0
4	84	34.7
5	81	33.5
6	36	14.9
7	26	10.7
Mean		4.9
Current wage per day on average (Egyptian pounds)		
15	32	33.9
17	2	.8
20	124	51.2
25	24	9.9
30	6	2.5
35	2	.8
40	2	.8
Mean		19.31
Mode of receiving wages		
Daily	238	98.3
Weekly	4	1.7
Total	242	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

be offered daily-based work for that day. Building contractors in the private sector start construction work early – about 7.30 in the morning. They go to the nearest migrant gathering points and pick the number that they need. Migrants who work on daily bases guarantee themselves an average income for that day, but no other opportunity to gain more money in that day. Laborers continue working until 4.00 pm or so. However, the employers and hirers of this kind of work have a different perspective. One rather angry contractor told me in an interview: “*We have to watch the performance of those laborers since they don't have any motive to work. They always try to waste time since they are guaranteed the daily rate. They take more than one hour break at noon*”. Naturally, the migrants have a different perspective on this, stressing the tough, physical nature of construction work, often carried out in extreme heat, and the failure of the hirers to pay up properly.

It is important here to refer to a unique type of hiring that prevails among migrants who have solid family and social networks in Cairo. As I mentioned before, for some villages – or a group of villages – in Upper Egypt there are well-known permanent focal points representing a concentration of old migrants and transitional migrants who refuse to be fully absorbed by the Cairo urban system. They live pretty much as if they are in their villages, keeping the same customs, norms, daily lifestyles, and traditions. It is an example of a kind of “urban ruralization”, and has many parallels in the squatter barrios of recent migrants around Latin American cities or, closer to Egypt, the shanty-towns of Istanbul and Ankara, where “peasants without plows” bring elements of rural life into, or at least to the margins of, the city (see Skeldon, 1990 for a general overview, and Karpat, 1976 and Suzuki, 1966 for the Turkish case). In Cairo, newly-migrated unskilled laborers live together in these urban suburbs and districts, which facilitate their accommodation and the finding of work opportunities for them. Henein told me in my interview with him that “*we are about 200 people here from the same home town (Malwy in Menia governorate)... We are all acquainted with each other because we know each other back home.*” The most noteworthy examples of these migrant suburbs are *Imam Shaf'i* and *Bassateen* in southern Cairo. Thousands of families who have migrated from two village groupings in Souhag governorate – mainly Seflaque and Sawam'a villages – have settled and resided in these areas near the Mokattam

“mountains” and then established and expanded these two suburbs as a kind of model of slum areas in Cairo. About half of these families live in cemeteries (the infamous “city of the dead”) and other areas with no access to public services.

Most of the newly migrated Upper Egyptian laborers who migrate to such areas in Cairo, however, cannot be seen in the typical focal points and parks of migrants. Migrants with counterpart villages (as I may call them) sit in specific coffee shops in the evening – after 5.00 pm – and the employers come to them instead of the migrants seeking employers or work opportunities. Employers or contractors are usually old migrants from these areas – but who have now become permanent residents. They select the number of workers that they need and confirm with them their job for the following day(s). When the contract is made between the contractor and the laborers, workers sometimes receive a “*biata*”, an advance of approximately 5–10 LE, to take the work without a written contract. Oral agreements are very common in the construction sector in Egypt (Choucri *et al.*, 1978). It is worth mentioning here that these coffee shops function as highly effective means of networking among the migrant workers, where they may see each other daily, and know about the latest news of their village in Upper Egypt. Because the migrants do not have permanent residence at a recognized address and due to the fact that their living spaces in Cairo are often unplanned areas with no street names, the coffee shop plays an important role in communications. Newcomers from the village of origin come directly to the coffee shop when they arrive to Cairo. The coffee shop owner and the servers are key individuals in facilitating communication among the workers’ groups since they all know each other and most of the customers. Workers frequently leave oral messages for their workmates with them. In addition to oral messages, sometimes they leave work tools, and other things to be picked up by their co-workers. As I mentioned before, this network also greatly facilitates communications with the origin village, since there is frequent travel contact by migrants moving back and forth – a topic I shall expand on later in my account.

The remainder of migrant laborers – after the daily-based hired workers – work in the so-called task-based mode. Task-based workers work for two groups of employers: the private sector contractors, like the daily hired workers, and the family sector. In addition

to the daily-based workers, private sector contractors hire laborers in a task-based mode to do specific heavy jobs like unloading and lifting sacks of cement, sand, or loads of bricks. Migrant laborers refuse to do such work on a daily-based mode in most cases, simply because such physically demanding tasks are difficult to carry out all day long. In the family sector, families hire task-based laborer migrants to do construction and non-construction works. Construction work includes unloading and lifting packages of cement, sand, bricks, or tiles like the construction sector but for small-scale in-house works. The non-construction work includes lifting lighter loads, such as furniture and home equipment. Task-based workers are more likely to have more than one task per day. Like the contractors who hire migrant laborers on a daily basis, the family sector members who employ migrants on a task basis are not happy about them too. *“They abuse us. After agreeing with them about the cost of the task, they ask for more money. In addition they want me to offer them cigarettes and food”*, one family member said. *“I needed one laborer to lift three pieces of furniture. Three of them insisted on turning up. They rushed into my car without me permitting them. I took them all after agreeing about the deal. After they lifted the furniture, they started to bargain again with me. They started nagging at me to give them more money”*, said another person I interviewed in this capacity.

6.2.2 Working hours and wages

Before the analysis of working hours and wages of the surveyed population it is helpful to recall that government employees in Egypt work 36 hours per week over six days since the official holiday for most government agencies is only one day per week (Friday), the holy day for Muslims. In addition to the Friday holy day, Christian employees start work one hour later than their Muslim counterparts on Sunday to enable them to attend the Sunday prayer, which starts at 7.00 am in most churches. The average employee in the public sector is paid only 200 LE per month (about 50 US\$). The private sector works up to seven days per week. Private sector employees work eight hours on average per day, six days per week, with days off in rotation. Visitors to Cairo hence may not notice any difference in the daily life on Friday. This information is important to bear in mind while presenting the averages of working hours, days, and wages of migrant laborers.

Working hours per day for the surveyed population range between two and 18 hours. Migrants who work more than 10 hours represent only 3.3 percent of the total migrants (Table 6.2). The average working time is 8.5 hours per day, 2.5 hours more than the government sector and 0.5 more than the private sector. Task-based workers are likely to work more hours if they can find enough work to do. It is important here to refer to the underemployment problem in the government and the inflation of the number of government employees. The productivity of government workers in some sectors is less than one hour per day (*Al-Ahram* Newspaper, 1998). Building on my experience of observing laborers while doing their work and as reported to me by the workers themselves, their work is very hard, especially in task-based activities. Migrant workers in task-based activities try to finish the task in the shortest time that they can. This is to return back to their focal point to be ready for another task. However, in some cases, their colleagues prohibit them to go to another job if they themselves did not get any work since the early morning.

Daily work is not guaranteed. Some migrants work the seven days while some others may, if they are unlucky, work only one day per week. Reference in the questionnaire is made to the week that preceded the date of interview. Workers who work three days or less per week comprise 1.3 percent only. The average working days per week is almost five (4.9 days to be exact). Multiplying average hours per day by average days per week gives average hours per week. Average hours per week are 41.7 hours which is 5.7 hours more than the average for government employees but 6.3 hours less than the average for the private sector employees.

Most migrants receive their wage on a daily basis. Only four migrants out of my sample of 242 reported that they receive their wage weekly. Those migrants are the luckiest among all migrants since they are guaranteed work opportunities for one week in advance. Those four migrants are closely tied to a contractor who guarantees this work for them. Advance payments and installments within the week are common in this case. I interviewed those migrants in their work place, not in the focal points. They mentioned that their employer provided them with shelter in addition to their wage. He permitted them to stay in the unfinished building until they complete their task.

6.2.3 Comparative perspectives

Now I compare the earnings of those migrant laborers whom I interviewed in the questionnaire survey with their equivalents in Cairo and Upper Egypt. Given the importance of the time of the survey in monetary comparisons, it is important to note that only very few studies have recently been carried out to investigate regional and sectoral disparities of wages, and even these are not very recent (see American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, 1996; Wahba, 1996). Wahba's study, carried out to investigate earnings and regional inequality in Egypt, found that the mean annual earnings for laborers in Cairo was 1703 LE (around 400 US\$), versus 1102 LE (about 250 US\$) in rural Upper Egypt. The average annual earnings in Cairo are thus more than 50 percent higher than in rural Upper Egypt. Put another way, annual earnings in Upper Egypt are about two-thirds those in Cairo. A comparison between the annual earnings of my study population and non-migrant laborers in the regions of origin and destination reveals that migrants' annual earnings in Cairo are if anything higher than that of their equivalents in Cairo and certainly far beyond average wages in rural Upper Egypt. The annual earnings of the study population may be estimated to be around 2800 LE, rather less than US\$700. This estimate is based on the calculated average number of working days per week, the mean duration of the working day, and the likely potential loss of active service due to injuries. However, it should be remembered that there is a five-year lag between my study and Wahba's study, and so comparisons have to be adjusted according to an annual inflation rate of about 10 percent, which brings the figures more in line with each other.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt (1996) carried out a field study targeted on the national, bi-national and multinational companies that work in Egypt to examine Egypt's labor force and to review recent trends in the Egyptian labor market. A comparative survey of salary levels in Egypt was provided in the study. One major defect of the study was its narrow focus on companies in Cairo and only a few other governorates. The second defect of the study was its focus on national and multinational companies in the private sector, excluding the government and the public sector in Egypt. The results however are not a surprise, at least to me. The average annual salary

of the lowest administrative level (office boys and messengers) is 6000 LE (US\$1500), which is more than double the study population's average annual income, and probably more like triple the difference if the wage inflation over five years is taken into account.

So, how to interpret these various comparisons? Wahba's data first suggest clear income disparities between Lower and Upper Egypt, something that is well-known and well-documented elsewhere. What is interesting is where the migrant laborers fit in. First, migrant laborers from my own Cairo survey appear to be earning two to three times the average levels in rural Upper Egypt: around 2800 as against 1100 LE on average. This ratio was often confirmed by interview data, including some quotes given earlier. However, some refinements to these comparisons have to be made. Given that the migrants I surveyed were drawn disproportionately from the poorer groups amongst the sending society, generally their income-earning capacities in their home villages can be assumed to be below the regional average for Upper Egypt. On the other hand, the undoubted wage contrast between Cairo and Upper Egypt has to be calibrated by the extra costs of being a migrant laborer in Cairo – accommodation, food, travel back and forth, plus of course the psychological costs of separation from family. The second comparison, between migrant and non-migrant laborers in Cairo, yields the surprising result that migrants appear to earn at least as much, on average, as the local-born laboring class. This parity is again, perhaps, more apparent than real, because of the extra living and psychological costs of the migrant workers, and their often inferior material conditions in Cairo, in particular their poor houses and meager diet (more on this in Chapter 7). Another factor to be brought in here is the nature of the work done, and the possible existence of a segmented employment structure – a point I shall return to very shortly, and again in Chapter 9. The third comparison, with the private-sector companies, needs only brief comment, since this is a favored sector as far as general income levels are concerned, and the migrant laborers are never likely to get jobs in this labor market segment.

Now I move to another, but related, comparison, which is that between the migrant laborers and their supposed equivalents from Cairo in the workspace. In my fieldwork I visited many construction sites in Cairo and I interviewed – via unstructured interviews – employers and employees from Cairo to carry out a comparison between unskilled

migrant laborers and the native Cairo unskilled laborers. The findings of my fieldwork in this respect were a surprise to me. I discovered that no Cairo-born native workers – even those with little or no educational qualifications and who come from an equivalent social background to “my” migrants – were working as casual unskilled laborers; and furthermore, that there were none who were even willing to contemplate such work nowadays. They see that unskilled laborers come from Upper Egypt – or from “other regions” as they said – *“but us, we work as masters and we are able to train our relatives to be masters too. If they are not willing to work in construction we send them to car repair workshops or any other work that they may like.”* These words are from one of the specialist tradesmen that I met on a construction site in Guiza. Another employer explained to me how Cairo residents have more options than those who came from Upper Egypt to work in Cairo: *“It is difficult for many young men in Cairo to do such harsh work. They are spoiled. They have many options other than working as ordinary laborers in this sector. If they do not have any qualification to do productive work they can work as street vendors, work in a coffee shop, or in any workshop with any of their relatives”.* Another employer whom I interviewed stressed the economic importance of unskilled Upper Egyptian laborers in the construction sector: *“These very poor people are the backbone of the construction sector in Cairo. Before, they were the backbone of the construction sector in Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia and Libya. Now, they are very important to us in this sector. We use newly developed machines and equipment but also we use Upper Egyptian laborers.”* So it is clear that hard work in the construction sector in Cairo is an Upper Egyptian specialty. It is clear also that they are more eligible than any other segment or category of laborers to do such work, physically and psychologically. I shall return to comment further on this key finding in the concluding chapter.

6.3 Work dynamics

By “work dynamics” I mean, first, the type of occupation (whether migrants have special occupations or are ordinary unskilled labor migrants); duration of working away from village; work experience in different jobs in Cairo; evolution of various jobs and professional development; work experience in other places in Egypt; and finally work experience in the village. Each of these dimensions will now be briefly analyzed in turn.

6.3.1 Occupation

About 94 percent of migrants are ordinary laborers without any specific occupation. Only 5.8 percent of migrants claimed that they have a specialized trade or occupation (14 cases out of 242 cases). I asked those 14 individuals why they generally work as ordinary laborers since they have a trade. They replied that they cannot compete with city residents since they do not have a permanent place of residence or a permanent place of work (workshop). They mentioned also that their occupations are not profitable in their villages. My personal impression is that they are not qualified for any occupation in the urban labor market. Their skill level is lower than urban residents and their work style is different, especially in occupations like painting or scaffolding. The main trades that they possessed were construction-related.

Table 6.3

Duration of working away from village

Year groups	Number of migrants	Percent
0–4	80	33.1
5–9	65	26.9
10–14	48	19.8
15–19	23	9.5
20–24	10	4.1
25–29	8	3.3
30–35	8	3.3
Mean	8.95 years	
Total	242	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

6.3.2 Duration of working away from village

Given the mean age of migrants (28.9 years) and the mean duration of working away from the home village (8.95 years), it is clear that the surveyed population has spent about one third of their life in a migratory status (31.0 percent exactly) and more than one half of their active life, given the fact that they enter labor market activities at a very young age. Duration of working away from the village ranges between less than one year and 35 years (Table 6.3). Migrants who spent 15 years or more comprise 20.2 percent of migrants. The correlation between age and duration of working away from village (0.667) is positive and highly significant; the older the age of the migrant the longer the duration of working away from village. This is hardly surprising, but it may also show that migrants are not fully decided about their aims behind migration. The migration outcomes are not clear enough to them before migration, so that they have little clear idea about the likely or probable duration of migration. Migration is not seen as a means of achieving planned long-term goals. It is a survival strategy, above all to get money to feed children and other family members left behind in the village.

6.3.3 Work experience in different jobs in Cairo

Only 25 migrants in the questionnaire survey have worked in different jobs in Cairo before; they comprise 11.8 percent of the surveyed population. Migrants have worked as car tenders, porters, masons, street vendors, and workers in car repair workshops. By and large, these individuals represent migrants who failed to adjust themselves in work other than construction. Others who succeeded to continue in such jobs are to some extent beyond the scope of this study. It is not easy to track them because they stayed and continued in their jobs in other sectors. The following interview quote from Kamal gives an example of a migrant who started in a specialized sector (a garage) but then left it. *“I traveled with a relative of mine to Cairo. He used to work in a garage in Badran neighborhood. I told him that I was thinking about going to Cairo. He was a neighbor of mine, and approved my plans. I accompanied him from our village to Menia town, and we took the train to Cairo. It was him who had a previous idea about the place, so he took me by the hand and we went to Badran neighborhood. I hardly knew anything, but reading. I went with him to the garage, and joined him in working there for 15 days.*

I was paid 25 pounds a week, in addition to the tips I got, but I was then badly treated by the job master. Moreover, working hours were too long: from 8 in the evening till 9 in the morning – all through the night shift.”

6.3.4 Evolution of various jobs and professional development

In the early stages of preparing the field questionnaire, I thought that the work turnover of migrants would be high, with migrants moving from job to job frequently. From my pre-field work exploratory investigations, however, I found that most migrants tend to stick with one type of job for a long time. The original question to measure the professional development of the migrants through moving from lower level jobs to higher level jobs was then changed to mean the conditions or performance of various earlier jobs and the current job in Cairo over time. Migrants were asked to evaluate their job conditions by selecting one statement out of the following three options: *remained about the same, got better, or got worse*. As shown in Table 6.4, almost one half of migrant laborers mentioned that their job performance conditions remained about the same. They reported that since their arrival to Cairo they are doing the same tasks without any evolution or acquisition of any new skills. About one fourth said that work conditions got better, while the remaining one quarter of migrants said that work conditions got worse. The main complaint for those who claimed that their work conditions deteriorated is the police. *“The police are after us on a daily basis. They want to force us away from this bridge. They claim we look filthy. I can guess that someone in a high place was passing by, and he looked down on us, then he must have ordered the police to move us away from here”* (Ismail). The police appear to be particularly vigilant about groups of laborers who stay in modern places in Cairo, rather than frequenting old places and newly established slum suburbs. Here is another account of a police raid on migrant workers: *“A police detective threw our tools on the ground, and took four of us together. We were driven in a car with two or three other workers. We were taken to the police station, and interrogations were carried out. We were finished in the afternoon, and taken then to a cell. It was absolutely overcrowded. More than 120 or 130 detainees were in the same cell which consisted of two small partitions and a corridor. We sat down on the floor, let alone the contaminated air and smell. We sweated heavily. It was the most horrible night I have ever spent.”*

The general question about possible improvements in job status and type needs some further comment, especially in the light of the field research strategy I adopted. By mainly targeting casual laborers and construction workers at their workplaces, hiring sites and coffee-shops, I naturally tended to exclude those who had made a qualitative shift to better kind of employment. However, from general knowledge and other conversations with informants, I know that some movement out of the construction sector has taken place – more in the past than at present. Whether this is true “upward” mobility is doubtful, since the moves which can be observed are “horizontal” into parallel informal-sector fields, such as street-vending, working in the cemeteries, or as assistants in workshops.

Table 6.4
Evaluation of various jobs in Cairo

	Frequency	Percent
Remained about the same	116	47.9
Got better	62	25.6
Got worse	64	26.4
Total	242	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

6.3.5 Work experience in other places in Egypt

Almost one quarter of migrants have had work experience in places other than Cairo and their home villages before migrating to the city (24.8 percent). Migrants have worked in Alexandria governorate (55.0 percent of this subset) in addition to other governorates such as Daquhlyya, North and South Sinai, and Ismailia – all in Lower Egypt. Their work experience and tasks were in the construction sector, like their current work in Cairo. The difference lay only in the mode of work. There, they used to work for contractors who used to hire them direct from their villages to work on given construction projects in these governorates for specific periods of time, usually 30 to 40 days. This type of work is temporary and cannot be guaranteed for a long time, since

once the contract expires, unemployment may result.

6.3.6 Work experience in the village

About four-fifths of migrants (189 cases) experienced work in their villages in the past or on their visits to their villages in Upper Egypt; most of them worked as farmers (81.0 percent), and masons (11.1 percent). About two-thirds of migrants (62.6 percent) work in their villages during their visits to their places of origin, either for others or on their own farms. The wage made per day – for the last five years as a reference period – was 7.96 Egyptian pounds on average. This village daily rate is way below (only 41.2 percent) the daily rate in Cairo (19.31 LE). In addition to the rarity and seasonality of job opportunities in rural Egypt, the wage difference is the most important factor in rural–urban migration in Egypt, as we have already seen. These findings are consistent with the earlier discussed LFR dual economy theory of rural–urban migration (Lewis, 1954; Fei and Ranis, 1961), where Upper Egyptian laborers migrate to Cairo primarily to benefit from the difference in wages between rural and urban sectors.

These findings also reinforce the social rootedness of migrants in their home villages, despite the fact that they spend the greater part of their time as migrants living and working in the city. The fact that two-thirds of respondents habitually, if occasionally, work in their places of origin, where most continue to maintain their families, means that we are dealing with a rather specific type of rural-urban migration, commonly known as circulation. The literature on the nature of circulation as a migratory form was reviewed in Chapter 3 (section 3.4.2), and I will elaborate on the Egyptian case further in the next three chapters, when appropriate.

6.4 Occupational safety

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the right of all people to just and favorable conditions of work. Yet, it is estimated that worldwide, workers suffer 250 million accidents every year, with 330,000 fatalities. The economic losses are equivalent to 4 per cent of the world's gross national product. While occupational safety and health law enforcement covers practically 100 percent of the economically active

population in the developed countries, the figure for many developing countries is close to 10 percent or less, leaving major hazardous sectors and occupations uncovered, such as agriculture, fishing, small-scale enterprises and the informal sector, and including very hazardous sectors such as construction (Alli, 2001).

First of all I have to say that all the migrant laborers – the 242 interviewees and the 20 case studies – are not covered by any type of health or even social insurance. In addition, the percentage of those who have had serious job-related injuries while working in Cairo comprises one fifth of the total migrant laborers surveyed (19.8 percent). This percentage is higher than that of the formal sector and other sectors in the Egyptian economy which is less than 5 percent (National Institute of Occupational Safety, 2001). Some of the injuries were very serious such as “*stone has fallen onto my back*”, “*A machine fell on top of me*”, “*I fell from the car while I was carrying cement*”, “*I fell from the scaffold and my arm was broken*”, and “*A lump of rubble hit my leg*”, as per some respondents' words. A more serious incident was reported to me by Nasralla in the following account: “*I fell from a tractor speeding at about 80 kilometers per hour. I went into a coma, then was taken to the hospital where I spent 5 days unconscious. When I checked out, I stayed for about 45 days jobless. Since then, I feel as if there was something wrong in my head. Sometimes while walking, I get the feeling that I am about to faint*”. Another incident was related to me by Ibrahim: “*When I was walking through a scaffold, it all collapsed. I was taken to the hospital where my head was stitched and my leg was set in a cast. It took some time till I became conscious again*”. And Selim told me: “*We were doing some demolition and a chisel dropped on my leg, badly wounding it. I had stitches and I remained jobless for 10 days.*”

About 80 percent of the injured workers went to the hospital (38 cases) while the remaining workers did not go. They just returned to their village of origin until recovery. For those who went to the hospital, who took them there? More than one half went to hospital themselves, while about one third were taken to hospital by their colleagues. Employers took only four cases to the hospital. In most cases laborers paid for their transportation and medication while employers paid only for 11 cases. After injuries, migrant laborers spent inactive periods ranging between one day for light injuries and three months for very serious injuries. Table 6.5 summarizes my questionnaire data on

this. Amongst the one in five of my sample who suffered work-related injuries, the average loss of work time due to these injuries was 24.5 days or about five working weeks.

Table 6.5
Duration of inactive period due to injuries

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 7 days	22	45.9
7 days – one month	16	33.3
More than one month	10	20.8
Mean	24.5 days	
Total	48	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

6.5 Conclusion

Work and work-related issues have constituted the main themes of this chapter. My analysis of initial accommodation, work search mechanisms, work characteristics and dynamics, in addition to the special topic of occupational safety issues, has revealed the following points.

Old and long-established migrants who reside in Cairo permanently do not appear to have any role in facilitating the migration of new unskilled laborers from Upper Egypt. However, already-present labor migrants help newly-arrived migrants and facilitate their accommodation. Almost two-thirds of the migrants from Upper Egypt to Cairo found jobs through their migrant-labor relatives in Cairo (Table 6.1).

Migrant laborers work an average of 8.5 hours per day. Daily work is not guaranteed, but they work 4.9 days on average per week. Their average daily wage is 19.3 LE, three times higher than their non-migrant equivalents in Upper Egypt (Table 6.2).

Upper Egyptian laborers who work as unskilled laborers in the construction sector in Cairo appear to have ended up by monopolizing this type of employment, with the dual result that the sector has become structurally completely reliant on this supply of labor from Upper Egypt whilst, at the same time, native Cairo workers reject this type of hard labor. Cairo residents tend to be specialized in certain trades and work as “masters” and “assistant masters”. They train their relatives to continue in their trade or profession after them. Some employers appreciate the role of unskilled Upper Egyptian laborers in the construction field in Cairo, although not a few instances were noted of complaints by employers.

The above constitutes solid evidence for the existence of a segmented labor market in Cairo, with more or less mutually exclusive components. My uncovering of village-based migration chains (to be explored in more detail in the next chapter) with their own social networks and hiring circuits in Cairo supports Skeldon’s notion of “segmented migration fields” (1990: 140–142); although the Egyptian case does not provide illustrations of specific transfers of village-based skills to the urban context, as researched by Skeldon in Lima and Peru.

The mean duration of working away from the village for the study population is almost nine years. Taking a cross-section of the surveyed population at the time of interview, migrants have spent about one third of their lives in a migratory status, but most of them do the same job and the same tasks without any professional evolution or skill development plans. As a result, about one half of migrants felt that their work conditions remained about the same over their time as a laborer in Cairo. However, it has to be pointed out that this finding is constrained by the nature of my questionnaire and interview surveys which were focused on one main type of labor migration.

Regarding migrants' work experience in other places in Egypt and in their villages, almost one quarter of migrants have worked in places other than Cairo (Alexandria, Daquhlyya, and Sinai). About 80 percent of migrants experienced work in their villages, most of them as farmers and farm laborers, thereby opening up evidence for rural–urban

labor circulation as perhaps the main migratory definition of the phenomenon under study.

On the topic of occupational safety, about one fifth of the migrants have had serious injuries related to their job while working in Cairo. The average loss of time due to work-related injuries is about five working weeks per year. Migrant laborers are not covered by any social or health insurance.

All of the above findings regarding the working lives of Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo lead towards one overarching conclusion. This is that these migrant workers, coming from another, and rather different, region in Egypt, one characterized by rural poverty and overpopulation, function as an almost entirely separate segment of the Cairo labor market. Although the evidence suggests that they are a highly important structural and functional element of that overall urban economic system, they achieve this by living and working in an almost parallel universe. They do not have access to many of the “normal” aspects of Cairo life – proper accommodation, decent health care, social welfare, workers’ rights, opportunities for social and economic advancement. There is a close correlation between their precarious (but structurally indispensable) position in the metropolitan labor market (marginal workers with no rights, low pay, tough working conditions etc.), and their precarious access to housing, social facilities and what might be regarded as “standard” rights as citizens of Egypt and Cairo. To some extent, these socio-economically marginal characteristics are imposed on them by an urban economy and society that seems to want to keep them in their allotted role as a supplier of cheap, flexible and disposable labor. But, as rural migrant laborers, their links remain, in most cases, oriented to their villages of origin in Upper Egypt. In the next chapter I turn to a more in-depth explanation of their living conditions and lifestyles in both Cairo and their rural places of origin, and an analysis of the key rural–urban linkages that are sustained both through, and in spite of, long-distance migration to the city.

Chapter 7

LIVING CONDITIONS IN PLACES OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION

The living conditions of the migrants in their origin (Upper Egypt) and destination (Cairo) are analyzed in this chapter. This analysis includes housing conditions, household ownership, availability of public services (piped water, electricity, sewage disposal, etc.), both in the village and in Cairo, and land ownership in the rural places of origin. Urban–rural linkages and the mechanism of remittance use and allocation are discussed in this chapter also, which will include survey findings from fieldwork in selected villages in Upper Egypt in addition to data from the main field survey in Cairo.

The comparison between living conditions in the places of origin and destination is both an easy and a meaningful comparison to make, since virtually all the respondents maintain close ties to their village “homes”. They may be resident in Cairo for most of the year, and may have been so for several years, even decades, but they tend to visit their place of origin regularly and still regard the village as their psychological “base” and family home. Hence they are “members of two worlds”, physically present in one place but mentally rooted in another.

7.1 Living conditions in the village of origin

Two geographical reference-points will be referred to when analyzing living conditions of migrants' households in Upper Egypt; Greater Cairo and rural Upper Egypt. Because there is a four-year lag between this study and the latest census data (1996), the results of the Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2000 are used for comparative purposes instead. The EDHS 2000 is a national survey, in which the household sample size was 16,957 households (National Population Council, 2001).

7.1.1 Housing characteristics

Most rural residents in Egypt – both Upper and Lower – live in owned houses. The case in cities is totally the opposite; here most residents live in rented houses (CAPMAS, 1999). In my main questionnaire survey, 93.0 percent of the study population live in owned houses in their villages, and only 17 cases (7.0 percent) live in rented houses. Some of those 17 cases live in houses that are owned by a relative who offers it to them for free until they manage to build their own houses.

Table 7.1
Housing characteristics of migrants and the national population

	Greater Cairo	Rural Upper Egypt	The study population	
			In Cairo	In Upper Egypt
Electricity	99.7	93.3	71.9	91.7
Piped water	99.7	75.6	64.5	29.3
Connection to public sewage disposal networks	NA	NA	61.2	Zero

Source: Cairo field questionnaire (2000); National Population Council (2001)

Table 7.1 presents the distribution of national households and the sample population by selected housing characteristics, including electricity, piped water and sanitation. The table is based on a multiple comparison which should be spelt out for clarity's sake. The study population gave answers both for their residences in their village of origin and in Cairo; hence for these two columns in the table, the same respondents are involved. The other two columns derive from the EDHS 2000 survey, based on some 17,000 households sampled in Greater Cairo, rural Upper Egypt, and other regions. The percentage of households with electricity in rural Upper Egypt (93.3 percent) is less than that of Greater Cairo (99.7 percent), according to the EDHS survey. Regarding the migrants' households in the villages the coverage is 91.7 percent, while it is only 71.9 in their accommodation in Cairo. This set of figures illustrates that, whilst electricity provision is near-universal now in Egypt, for migrants living (or, often, squatting) in Cairo, it is significantly less, reflecting their marginal accommodation situation there.

Greater Cairo households are more likely to have access to piped water than rural households in Upper Egypt (99.7 versus 75.6 percent). The situation in migrants' households in the villages is much worse, only 29.3 percent of households having access to piped water. This is a further confirmation of the earlier finding that rural migrants from Upper Egypt are selected from amongst the poorest households in village areas. About 65 percent of migrants have access to piped water while being in Cairo. As a matter of fact public sewage disposal networks do not exist in rural Upper Egypt. In general, except for electricity, migrants enjoy better services in Cairo than in their households in Upper Egypt; but migrants are notably worse off on these criteria than the rest of the Egyptian population.

7.1.2 Household possessions

Tables 7.2 and 7.3 provide information on household ownership of durable goods, means of transportation, other possessions, and agricultural land. While about nine out of ten of Greater Cairo households own a radio with a cassette recorder, only two-thirds of households in Upper Egypt own a radio, based on EDHS data. The percent drops to 55.8 in migrant laborers' households in Upper Egypt. Television is now the most prevailing mass-communication consumption good in Egypt. More than 95 percent of Greater Cairo households own a television. The percent drops to 79.1 in rural Upper Egypt and then to 69.4 in migrants' households in Upper Egypt. In spite of the current improvement and expansion of telephone services, the percent of households with telephone lines is still low. About one half of households in Greater Cairo are connected to the telephone network. The coverage of telephone services in rural Upper Egypt (8.3 percent) is very low – both in general and if compared to Greater Cairo. In the migrants' households it is only 2.1 percent. This may appear to contradict with the finding – to be discussed later in this chapter – that migrants prefer to communicate with their families in Upper Egypt using telephones. One telephone line in rural Egypt may be used by ten or more households. It is common to call your neighbors asking them to get someone from your home to come and speak to you, or to ask them to pass on a message.

Table 7.2

Percentage of households possessing various household effects and means of transportation

	Greater Cairo	Rural Upper Egypt	Study population households in Upper Egypt
Household effects:			
Radio	90.3	66.3	55.8
Television	95.3	79.1	69.4
Telephone	51.0	8.7	2.1
Water heater	63.3	8.3	Zero
Refrigerator	88.4	36.5	11.6
Gas stove	NA	NA	12.0
Means of transportation:			
Bicycle	4.0	17.0	20.7
Private car	17.3	2.7	Zero
Motorcycle	1.0	1.2	0.4
Tractor	NA	NA	Zero

Source: Cairo field questionnaire (2000); National Population Council (2001)

Table 7.3

Ownership of agricultural land in origin among migrant laborers in Cairo

	Frequency	Percent
No land	142	58.7
Less than one feddan	58	24.0
One to less than two feddans	28	11.6
Two to three feddans	14	5.8
Total	242	100.0

* Feddan = 0.42 hectare

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Urban households are more likely to have certain household possessions than rural households. For example, 63.3 percent of households in Greater Cairo own a water

heater, compared with only 8.3 percent in rural Upper Egypt. Migrants' households seem to be less than the average of rural Upper Egypt with respect to household possessions in general. With regard to means of transportation, it seems that the bicycle is the most prevailing means among migrants' households, where about one fifth (20.7 percent) of households own a bicycle. No one owns a private car and only one household owns a motorcycle. It is to be expected, given the limited land owned by migrants' households, that none owns a tractor.

About six in ten of the migrants are landless. They do not own any, even small, piece of agricultural land in Upper Egypt. Landless people in Upper Egypt are regarded as the poor of the poor. Keeping the inherited land is a tradition and selling it is regarded as a shame, unless under exceptional circumstances. Migrants' ownership of farmland ranges between zero and 3 feddans (1.26 hectares) with an average of 0.36 feddan. Those who own two to three feddans comprise 5.8 percent of the total households only. The average migrant household land ownership is less than Upper Egypt's average which is 1.16 feddans per household. This average comprises about one third of the region's average: yet another piece of evidence to support the general picture that migrants are drawn from the poorest rural households.

7.1.3 Rural adjustment mechanisms

At this point one may justifiably ask: who is working the agricultural land in Upper Egypt whilst those rural migrant laborers are in Cairo? Are they really an underemployed surplus of labor from the farming sector? Does their absence affect agriculture in rural Egypt or are there adjustment mechanisms that balance the situation there? From the Mabogunje (1970) model (see Figure 3.1) we recall the relevance of the rural control subsystem and especially “adjustment mechanisms” which involve family/household relationships and the reallocation of work tasks and family responsibilities when the migrant departs. How do these adjustment mechanisms work in the Upper Egyptian case?

First, we need to bear in mind the degree of landlessness of the migrants and their families of origin, which in all cases involves either no land at all or just a tiny holding.

Stark (1978: 18–19) speaks of the “cruel parameter” of only a small holding to sustain an often large (and growing) rural family, so that “maturing children” act as the family’s migrants, each migrating, one by one, as they reach maturity, leaving the working of the land in the hands of the older family members who are more experienced in farming. In the Upper Egyptian case, by analogy, we can envisage a “crueller parameter” of a landholding which is too small to sustain even the work of just one or two experienced family members (let alone the livelihood of an entire family unit), so that the household head is forced to migrate, probably seasonally, in order to integrate short-term urban work with farm labor. Finally, continuing the analogy, there is the “cruellest parameter” of no land at all, so that all (male) family members of working age must be considered as potential migrants. This is the reality for most of my questionnaire sample – 142 out of the 242.

Second, brief reference to the existing theoretical and empirical literature can be made. This evidence is contradictory: some studies indicating that the withdrawal of rural labor depresses agricultural production, and others demonstrating no productive deterioration (for a selection of reviews and some case studies see Connell *et al.*, 1976; Dasgupta, 1981; Griffin, 1976; Lipton, 1980; Lucas, 1997; Miracle and Berry, 1970; Todaro, 1976). Miracle and Berry (1970), for instance, note that the immediate effect of migrant laborers’ absence is “primarily a function of how long they are gone; the amount and kind of work open to them during the same period in the supplying economy had they not left; the adequacy of the labor supply in their home area after their departure; and the effect of the departure of migrants on real wages in the supplying area”. In the case of no drop in agricultural output, farm product is maintained either by other workers and family members taking over the labor input of the migrants, or by the migrant moving only seasonally so that agricultural labor is maintained at the times of the year when it is needed. Dasgupta (1981) reviews studies which show that, due to the virtually zero marginal product of rural labor in overpopulated areas, agricultural production in some parts of the developing world (Papua New Guinea and Central Africa are mentioned) would not fall until one third or even one half of the male labor is withdrawn. This introduces another parameter which is highly relevant to my Egyptian research: which is the relative balance between, and social organization of, male and female labor, and in

particular the extent to which the latter can be easily substituted for the former (assuming only males migrate – which is mainly the case in rural Upper Egypt).

To return to my questionnaire findings, the answers are quite clear for the Egyptian case. The 100 migrant laborers who have agricultural land in Upper Egypt depend on remaining family members in the village to take care of their land while they are in Cairo. Since most migrant workers come from extended family households where several generations live together, and due to the shared responsibility that household members feel towards the agricultural land that is owned by the family, most family members feel a duty, as well as an economic necessity, to substitute the absence of migrants by more participation in agricultural work. In my visits to villages in Souhag governorate I found that it is not only the male members of the family who take care of the farm, but also female household members, especially wives and older sisters. It is important here to stress that the participation of women in agriculture is common in Egypt; but the absence of a male family member tends very much to increase this participation. This latter finding is also supported by other studies of Egyptian rural society within the context of male out-migration (Brink, 1991; Khafagy, 1983; Khattab and El-Daeif, 1982).

7.2 Living conditions in Cairo

In this section I present an analysis of migrants' living conditions in Cairo. This includes migrants' type of residence in Cairo, cost of housing, cost of living and daily expenses, and food and nutrition.

7.2.1 Where do migrants stay in Cairo?

The vast majority of migrants live with each other (79.3 percent), as Table 7.4 shows. Migrant laborers seem to prefer to live together in groups in crowded and cheap places. Migrants from the same village, or sometimes the same governorate, tend to live together. I found also a few migrants from different governorates who live together. Living together makes it easy to keep the same social contacts and traditions of the village; at the same time this pattern will weaken the mechanisms through which

Table 7.4

Where do migrants stay in Cairo?

	Frequency	Percent
With other workers/friends	192	79.3
With a family	30	12.4
In the street	3	1.2
In an under-construction building	2	0.8
Other	15	6.2
Total	242	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Table 7.5
Persons (migrant workers) sharing the same room in Cairo

Number of persons (grouped)	Frequency	Percent
1–5	122	50.4
6–10	89	36.7
11–15	15	6.2
16–20	16	6.7
Mean	6.8 persons per room	
Total	242	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

migrants can learn and acquire new behavioral patterns that prevail in urban environments. It is also a defense mechanism to keep their essentially rural, Upper Egyptian identity. Living together in groups makes migrants feel safer than living alone. Thirty workers (12.4 percent) live with families. They live with permanent (old) migrants' families in slum areas and in old village-like neighborhoods in Cairo. Most of those who live with families are from Souhag governorate (20 cases). Living with permanent migrants' families eases communication with origin villages and facilitates finding work opportunities, as I mentioned before. I found three cases of my

questionnaire subjects who live on the street. They live by a bridge in the Haram area. Two other migrants reported that they live in a building which is under construction. Other modes of accommodation include living with building guards from the same village, and living in shops and offices where they have relatives or friends who work in such facilities.

The number of persons who share the same sleeping room is one of the indicators of standard of living. The higher the number of persons who share the same bedroom the lower is the standard of living and vice versa. The mean number of persons per sleeping room among migrants in my main survey in Cairo is 6.8 (see Table 7.5), which is almost double the mean of their own households in Upper Egypt (3.5 persons per room). Persons who share sleeping arrangements with six workers or more comprise one half of migrants in Cairo. Given the fact that migrants live in the cheapest and the worst accommodation in Cairo, and given this very high number of workers who share the same room, and the very poor dietary conditions – as I will mention later in this chapter – one can imagine how poor these migrants are.

7.2.2 Cost of housing in Cairo

Before analyzing the cost of housing in Cairo, it is important to shed light on the mode of payment (Table 7.6). More than one half of migrants (54.1 percent) pay rent monthly to a landlord, while 8.3 percent pay on a daily basis. The surprising finding regarding the nature of payment is that I found that 37.6 percent of the migrants reside for free. They pay nothing for housing in Cairo. After further questioning with migrants I found that they live in derelict properties and houses. Some of these places can host more than twenty migrant laborers. Migrants who live in such places have almost no luggage or personal possessions with them. Some of them have only worn-out blankets which they bought or borrowed for next to nothing. They do not cater or cook for themselves. They buy their food from street vendors. It is very cheap and rather unhealthy food with low fat and low calories. Hence its nutritional value, for a person engaged mainly in heavy manual work, is poor.

Table 7.6

Mode of payment of housing rental

	Frequency	Percent
Nothing	91	37.6
Daily	20	8.3
Monthly	131	54.1
Total	242	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

It is also important here to refer to the marginal employment opportunities that are created to meet the needs of the laborer migrants, especially the tea makers and the food sellers who have established their business in the street to serve these working migrants. Most of the tea makers position themselves near large groupings of laborers, bringing with them their primitive tea making equipment – gasoline stove, cups, tea spoons, sugar, tea, and water tank(s). The prices are half the general Cairo equivalent, but double Upper Egypt equivalents. The most important observation is that most of these vendors were former construction laborers. Most of them are old and cannot work in construction any more, but I found that some people inherited this line of business from their parents.

Daily payment for housing is between 0.50 and 1.00 LE (0.12 and 0.25 US\$) depending on the condition of the room. However, rooms are not, or only minimally, equipped. There is only one blanket for each resident, to sleep on, not to be covered with. Toilet facilities are shared – sometimes by more than 20 workers – and they are very primitive and dirty. Most of the rooms that landlords rent to such people are in the basement or the roof. The basement rooms suffer from the absence of ventilation; while the roof rooms are generally made from wood with many holes that make them very cold and draughty in winter. In the summer the roof-top rooms are very hot due to their sunny position. Workers who reside on a daily basis are less stable in their life than those who reside on monthly basis. Monthly-based rented rooms are better than rooms of daily rental. They are more equipped and vary according to the monthly rate which ranges between 8 and 65 LE (2 and 16 US\$) per migrant – depending on the number of occupants and the monthly room rate – with an average of 20 LE (5 US\$) per person

per month. Rooms with high monthly rates and a smaller number of migrants attract older migrants who seek stability. Fully equipped rooms are very rare. Out of the many rooms that I was invited to visit by migrants I found only one room with beds, table, refrigerator, and a good toilet facility.

7.2.3 Cost of living and daily expenses in Cairo

Questionnaire respondents were asked to give an approximate figure for the amount of money that they spend to live in Cairo per day in general, and then they were asked to give details of their daily expenses on food, tea, cigarettes, and other items. Table 7.7 sets out some tabulated answers to these questions. The daily expenses range from 2.5 to 15 LE (0.60 to 4 US\$) with an average of 6.34. Adding one more LE to these average daily expenses for housing makes the overall daily living cost equal to 7.34 LE (1.80 US\$). This amount of money comprises about 40 percent of migrants' average daily income (19.31 LE, 5 US\$). This means – roughly speaking – that migrants can save up to 60 percent of their daily income. Let us now exclude the cost of housing and decompose the average daily expenses (6.34 LE, 1.60 US\$) to its main components. These are food, tea, cigarettes, and other expenses. Other expenses include the cost of

Table 7.7

Minimum, maximum, and average daily expenses in Cairo by item of expenditure (LE)

Item	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Percent
Food	1.0	8.5	3.64	57.4
Tea	.0	3.0	1.18	18.6
Cigarettes	.0	4.8	1.31	20.7
Other	.0	5.0	0.21	3.3
Total daily expenses	2.5	15.0	6.34	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

transportation in most cases, and hospitality of newcomers from Upper Egypt or from other places in Cairo. Expenditure on food comprises the main bulk of migrants' expenditure while being in Cairo. Migrants' expenditure on food is widely varied. It ranges between 1 LE per day to 8.5 LE with an average of 3.64 LE. This average represents 57.4 percent of the total daily expenses.

Tea and cigarettes are also an important component of migrants' expenses. Migrants spend about one fifth of their daily expenses on tea, and the same proportion on cigarettes. This finding is not surprising in an Egyptian context. Most Egyptians drink tea, which is the most popular drink in Egypt. Upper Egyptians prefer strong tea with about four spoons of sugar per cup. One may conclude that drinking tea is an original and typical routine. Sometimes it is considered as a dessert after heavy meals for the poor. As I mentioned before, the cost of a cup of tea is very cheap. From the street tea maker – especially for migrant workers – it is 0.25 LE. Some workers drink eight cups of tea per day. With respect to smoking, I found that 67.8 percent of the migrants are smokers. They smoke cigarettes and some of them smoke the water pipe, or what is called *shisha* in Egypt. It is an oriental smoking device that uses the water to filter the tobacco. It is important here to mention that smoking cigarettes or shisha may be regarded as a kind of substitution or compensation for their low standards of living in Cairo. Migrant workers consider it as a sort of a cheap pleasure. Other expenses include transportation from their place of residence in Cairo to their work-place for those who live far from their regular work, plus – as mentioned before – hospitality for new arrivals and for visitors from the village.

7.2.4 Food and nutrition

Because of the low level of their housing conditions in Cairo and the unavailability of cooking equipment in most of rented places in Cairo, migrant laborers tend to buy ready-made food from street vendors and cheap restaurants in Cairo. I asked interviewees to list the type – and the quality and quantity – of food that they ate in the last three meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). The reason for asking such questions is not so much to achieve a precise analysis of their nutritional habits, but rather just to explore and investigate the general characteristics of their patterns of food consumption in order to

compare them with average Egyptians in Cairo and Upper Egypt.

Generally speaking, the consumption of meat is the main indicator of nutritional well-being in Egypt. As a rough estimate – from my own observations – average Cairo families eat meat about twice per week. However, meat is cheaper in Upper Egypt than Cairo, so that, despite the overall marked difference in income standards, average Upper Egyptian families purchase meat once per week and eat home-reared chicken or other birds once per week also. So, both Cairo and Upper Egypt “average” residents eat meat twice per week. The only difference is that Cairo residents purchase it twice while Upper Egyptians purchase it once. When I asked migrant laborers about the last time that they ate meat while being in Cairo, the vast majority reported that they last ate meat on the occasion of their last visit to the village, and that they do not eat meat in Cairo in order to save money. So what do they eat? The in-depth interviews with the migrant laborers may give more clarification about their eating habits. In the following quotes there is frequent reference to *falafel*, a traditional Egyptian food. Falafel were probably first prepared in ancient Egypt and, from that era, these vegetarian delights have remained the country's national food. Traditional falafel are spicy, deep-fried bean patties or balls. Their basic ingredient is ground broad beans, chickpeas, or a combination of both. They are tasty, low in price, rich in proteins and carbohydrates, and high in calories, and they make very satisfying main courses or light snacks.

“When I have enough money, I head into a restaurant. When not, I just buy falafel for 0.50 Egyptian pounds and bread. I mean that I get some beans and falafel in the restaurant. When I do not have enough money, I buy two pieces of bread, just something to eat for 0.30 or 0.40 LE. At night, I also have dinner at the restaurant if I have enough money. If not, I go eat beans. I eat meat only in my hometown because meat here – in Cairo – is expensive. Moreover, I do not have enough money to order meat at restaurants” (Mohamed). Some migrants do not eat much because they believe that they should suffer like their families in Upper Egypt. *“Before I eat anything here in Cairo, I think about those in my home. Even if my mouth waters to eat chicken, meat, or any thing else, I ignore it for the sake of my family. They are deprived from certain things at home, and I am here too”* (Henein). Some migrant laborers behave depending on income. *“It depends. I mean that when I earn some money, and after providing all*

the needs of my family, I never deprive myself from anything I need. If I do not care about myself, I will definitely be gone” (Zaki). But some are satisfied with their extremely modest eating habits. “No meat, sir. I had beans for breakfast, and get lunch for 0.50 LE. As for dinner, it is usually bread and cheese. Thank God, this is very satisfying to me” (Dessouky). “I eat meat once a month when I go back to my hometown,” said another one of the interviewees. The nature of their work is very tough, but their food is very light. “For breakfast, I usually go to a baker and get two bread pans for 0.25 LE. As for lunch, I get something not more than one pound; such as three loaves of bread, falafel, fried eggplant and stuff,” said another one. “The only way for me to get meat is to get it on a charity basis from a benevolent man, otherwise, we will never get close to it. It is exorbitantly expensive, as you can see” (Diab). It is worth mentioning that newcomers from the village and migrants returning from village visits always bring with them home-made food from the village that is to be shared by all residents of the household – most of whom, as we saw before, are likely to be from the same village or village grouping. It is a good occasion for these hard-working migrants to share short happy times and eat food which reminds them of home and their families.

7.3 Urban–rural linkages

Theoretically speaking, urban–rural linkages and social and family networks shape and condition the migration flows from rural to urban areas (Boyd, 1989; Mabogunje, 1970). What (in the Egyptian case) are the linkages between migrants in Cairo and their villages in Upper Egypt? What are the frequencies of the village visits and by which means of transportation; and what is the effect of distance on the frequency of travel to the home village? Do some migrants lose contact with their rural origins over time? An attempt is made in this section to answer these questions. When migrating to the city, very few migrants begin a new life and forget the old. For most, there are continuing links of all kinds with the village; very often the city is regarded as a kind of stopping place, and the stay there as a kind of sojourn (Caldwell, 1969), consistent with the conceptualization of their status as “circular migrants”. Linkage to the migrants' hometowns is not just visiting the origin village from time to time or sending oral or written messages to family; links also consist of monetary, family and moral obligations which are effected through

social and family networks that have their base in the village. Fawcett (1989) classified family and personal networks in a migration context into three types:

- Tangible linkages, which refer to monetary remittances, gifts and written communications among network members that flow in both directions between origin and destination;
- Regulatory linkages, which refer to person-to-person obligations among relatives, whose expression also results in family or chain migration; and
- Relational linkages, which refer to linkages that are derived from comparison of two places or conditions.

I will refer in this section of the chapter to some of these linkages that make Cairo-based rural migrants closely tied to their places of origin.

7.3.1 Visiting the village

The strongest and most obvious physical contacts that the migrant maintains with the village are his return revisits. Tables 7.8 and 7.9 present the frequency of visits to the village and the mean length between successive visits by governorate (distance), marital status, and having permanent relatives in Cairo (old migrants). The length between successive visits is positively correlated with distance between Cairo and the governorates of origin. While the mean duration is 31 days for Beni-Sueif migrants, it is 170 days for Qena migrants. (Luxor and Aswan are discarded from the statistical comparison due to the small numbers of cases). With respect to frequency of visits and marital status, married migrants seem to visit their families more frequently than single and engaged migrants. Migrants with relatives in Cairo stay in Cairo slightly longer than those with no relatives. The statistical analysis – analysis of variance (ANOVA) – revealed that only the difference associated with governorates (distance) is statistically significant. This means that the closer the region of origin to Cairo the shorter the length between successive visits; clear support for the Gravity Model principle. This principle apart, the most notable feature of these data is the great variety of behavior regarding frequency of return: whilst most seem to visit their place of origin on average every one,

two or three months (two-thirds of the total respondents), one tenth visit every two or

Table 7.8

Frequency of village visits

Frequency of village visits	Frequency	Percent
Every 15 days	14	5.8
Every 20 days	10	4.1
Every month	54	22.3
Every 2 months	63	26.0
Every 3 months	42	17.4
Every 4–6 months	32	13.2
Every year or so	27	11.2
Mean gap between visits		94 days
Total	242	100

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Table 7.9

Mean duration between successive visits to village by marital status, having relatives in Cairo, and governorate of origin (in days)

Variable	Mean	Number
Marital status		
Single/engaged	101	135
Married	84	105
Divorced	90	2
Relatives in Cairo		
Yes	96	157
No	89	85
Place of Origin		
Beni-Sueif	31	19
Menia	59	42
Assiut	83	61
Souhag	107	95
Qena	170	18
Luxor	730	1
Aswan	98	6
Total	94	242

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

three weeks, and one tenth only every year or so (Table 7.8).

The main means of transportation between the village of origin and Cairo for most migrants is the train. This is due to the well-established Egyptian railway network that covers all governorates along the Nile Valley and the fact that this medium is the cheapest among all other means of transportation. Migrants always use the third class service, which is the cheapest. The cost of an adult ticket from Aswan to Cairo (990 kilometers) is only 20 Egyptian Pounds (equivalent to 5 US\$). Migrants always use public transportation between the railway station and their place of residence. The cost of a bus ticket in Cairo – for about 20-kilometer journey – is 0.25 LE (0.06 US\$). Migrants tend to travel in groups of two or more, especially when they visit their origin, thereby making the return visit and the lengthy travel involved a more sociable occasion.

Table 7.10

Visiting relatives (permanent residents) in Cairo

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent
I live with them	11	7.0
Frequently	39	24.8
Rarely	65	41.4
Never	42	26.8
Total	157	100.0

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

7.3.2 Relatives in Cairo

As I just mentioned in the last subsection, the effect of having one or more relatives in Cairo on the frequency of visits to places of origin is not statistically significant. The difference between the two groups with respect to the frequency of village visits is only seven days (96 and 89 days). The two-thirds of migrants who have relatives in Cairo (157) were asked whether they visit them or not. The results (Table 7.10) show that the relation between newcomers to the city and old migrants – permanent residents – is very

weak. More than one quarter (26.8 percent) of the migrants do not visit their relatives in Cairo at all, while 41.4 percent reported that they visit them rarely – once a month and sometimes even less frequently. The percentage of those who frequently visit their relatives in Cairo is only 24.8. Earlier (in Chapter 6, section 6.1.2) it was mentioned that migrants generally received little or no help from “established” relatives when looking for work and accommodation. Why do migrants tend not to visit their relatives in the city frequently? There are many reasons that prevent them from doing so, some cultural and some more psychological. The cultural factors have to do with the fact that it is a custom among Egyptians (especially Upper Egyptians) when they come from their origin to visit someone of their relatives or non-relatives in Cairo to bring with them a gift – called a “visit” – that consists of home-reared or home-made food products such as chicken, pigeons or eggs. Sometimes it includes other farm products like beans, onions or garlic. Since most of these migrants come from very poor families which may not be able to afford having this gift prepared for their Cairo relatives, they prefer not to visit. The psychological factor is that newly-migrated Upper Egyptians feel that they are doing very much less-respected jobs than their established relatives in Cairo; hence, to visit these relatives would be a public acknowledgment of their inferior social and economic status, which they prefer to keep to themselves.

7.3.3 Contacts and means of communication with the village

About two-thirds of migrants to Cairo have non-physical contacts with their families in Upper Egypt while working in Cairo. The percentage of migrants with long-distance contacts to the village varies among governorates. While it is only 47 for migrants from nearby Beni-Sueif, it is 72 for migrants from far-away Qena. It appears that the longer the distance between origin and destination, the higher the percentage of migrants who have non-direct contacts with families in origin (see Table 7.11). This bi-variate relation between distance and non-physical contact with the village is also explained in light of the correlation between distance and frequency of visits as explained in the previous subsection.

What are the means of non face-to-face communication between migrants and their families? As presented in Table 7.12, the main means of communication is oral messages

with colleagues who are visiting the village as part of the “circularity” of this migration form. About 37 percent of migrants who have contacts with the village while staying in Cairo use this method to contact their family in Upper Egypt. Given the fact that migrants work and live in groups coming from the same village, and sometimes the same family, migrants who want to send oral messages to their families and friends can easily find passengers leaving for their villages almost every day or week.

As a means of communication with the village, telephone calls ranked second. In the last ten years, the telecommunication sector in Egypt has showed a great improvement, especially in rural areas. After following a waiting list strategy in allocating telephone lines, lines now are available in all destinations in Egypt without waiting. It is worth mentioning that most of my surveyed population's houses have no telephone lines. How do they communicate? As I mentioned earlier, a single telephone in a rural settlement may be used by many households. Hence, neighbors can be asked to pass on messages or bring somebody who lives nearby to the phone.

Table 7.11

Percent and number of migrants who have non-physical contacts with families in Upper Egypt while working in Cairo by governorate of origin

Governorate	Percent	Number of migrants
Beni-Sueif	47	9
Menia	62	26
Assiut	66	40
Souhag	68	65
Qena	72	13
Total	66	159

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Table 7.12**Means of communication with family while working in Cairo***

Means of communication	Frequency	Percent
Oral messages via colleagues	90	56.6
Telephone calls	85	53.5
Written messages via colleagues	2	1.3
Written messages via ordinary mail	0	0
Total**	159	

* This is a multiple response question, however only 18 respondents gave more than one response

** Total is less than the sum of responses due to multiple responses; percentages sum to more than 100 for the same reason

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Communications via written messages sent via colleagues or via the mail are almost non-existent. This is almost certainly due to the high illiteracy level among migrants and the easiness of communication via oral messages and telephone calls. It was noticed that most migrants who prefer telephone communication have telecommunication cards. Literate migrants help illiterates in using public service telephone sets and dialing the village numbers, which they keep in a piece of paper in their wallets, even if they cannot read them.

7.3.4 Losing contact with rural origins

Do some migrants tend to lose touch with their rural origins over time? In the questionnaire-based study I met a small number of workers who brought their families to live with them in Cairo. One migrant from Menia – out of the 20 in-depth interviews – had also brought his family to live with him in Cairo. Four out of those six workers completely lost contact with the village (two from Menia and two from Qena). The other two still send money to their old mothers in Upper Egypt and communicate with their village. The percentage of those who lost contact is only 1.5; this indicates that overall

the orientation to the rural village home areas remains strong. The significance of this finding will also become apparent later.

7.4 The mechanism of remittance use and allocation

In economic terms the most important aspect in rural–urban circular migration is the counter-flow of remitted money and goods that characterizes the migration stream. Such flows of wealth are undoubtedly important, not only to the families in rural areas but also to the migrants (Caldwell, 1969). Russell (1986) distinguished between three major components of the remittance process:

- the decision to remit;
- the methods used to remit; and
- the use that is made of remittances in the origin community.

In this section I discuss these three elements. This analysis depends heavily on my peer and participatory observations of migrants' households and families in a number of villages in Souhag governorate, but before starting to describe and analyze the results of my observations in Upper Egypt I present first an estimate of the percent of migrants' income that they save per month. Also I present their plans for the money that they make in Cairo and who – from their point of view – has the last word in remittances allocation.

7.4.1 Migrants' savings and expenditure

As was planned at the time of developing the questionnaire, migrants were to be asked about the percent of their income that they save. Since I found in the pre-test that migrants did not fully recognize the meaning of the term percent, I changed it to an absolute number and asked them to give an estimate of the amount of money that they save per month on average. This amount of money can then be easily compared to the average income per month in order to get the average percent of migrants' savings per month. The amount of money that migrants save per month ranges between zero – only ten cases of young migrants – and 500 LE. The average monthly saving is 198.5 LE, or

rather less than US\$50. This average represents nearly half the migrants' monthly income and is almost equivalent to the monthly salary of an average government employee, as I mentioned before. Migrants recognize the value of their savings while working in Cairo but they think that they could have been saving more money if the cost of living in Cairo were not so expensive. Hence they tend to do all they can to minimize their living costs in the city, by scrimping and saving in the ways I have already described.

Migrant laborers were asked about their plans for using and investing the savings of their work in Cairo (see Table 7.13). In addition to a pre-coded list of responses, migrants also added other plans of their own. Migrants were asked to list all of their plans (multiple response question). A great proportion of migrants' savings goes to supporting their families in Upper Egypt and satisfying their basic needs. About nine-tenths of migrants declared that the main thing that they do with money that they save is to support their families. A proportion of single migrants tend to save the money to support themselves. One of the parents in Upper Egypt said to me about his migrant son in Cairo: *"I don't need anything from him. I just want him to satisfy his own needs and prepare himself for marriage. Being responsible for his own expenses is an asset to me. God bless him."* In fact, many young migrants consider their work in Cairo or in another major city as a good opportunity to save for marriage expenses. One fourth of the migrants save money to cover – or make a contribution to – marriage expenses. Building a new house, or adding a new housing unit to the family's house, is regarded as the main catalyst to save money. One fourth of migrants save to build a house. Other plans are to educate children, buy land, buy home appliances and durable goods (Table 7.13).

7.4.2 The decision about remittances

Who has the last word in the deployment of the remittance income? The answer to this question depends on the status of the migrant within the family. If the migrant is the head of family, it is expected that he is the one who has the last word in the remittances' expenditure or investment. If the migrant is the head of household but he is an old or experienced migrant to Cairo, it is expected that his wife would take more responsibility about remittance allocation than the wives of new migrants to Cairo. Fathers and mothers (in case of father's death) have the last word in the spending of remittances for

their migrant sons in most cases. The prevalence of extended families that include more than one generation gives parents more authority within the family. These findings broadly match those of Brink (1991) who studied the impact of emigration abroad on family responsibilities of wives remaining at home in a village of Lower Egypt.

More than three-quarters of migrants (75.6 percent) send money to their relatives and families in Upper Egypt while working in Cairo. The percent of remitters is associated with distance between Cairo and governorate of origin, in that the longer the distance of governorate the higher is the percent of remitters (see Table 7.14). While the percent in

Table 7.13

Migrants' plans for the money they make in Cairo

	Percent	Number of migrants
Support family	91.3	221
Support myself	28.9	70
Coverage of (contribution to) marriage costs	24.8	60
Build a (new) house	24.4	59
Education of children	6.2	15
Buy land	5.8	14
Buy television	4.1	10
Other	2.1	5
Total	100	242

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.

Table 7.14**Percent of migrants sending money to their families while working in Cairo by governorate of origin and marital status**

Governorate	Percent	Number of migrants
Governorate of origin		
Beni-Sueif	57.9	11
Menia	69.0	29
Assiut	73.8	45
Souhag	81.1	77
Qena	88.9	16
Marital status		
Married	80.0	84
Not Married	72.3	99
Total	75.6	183

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

Beni-Sueif is 57.9 it is 88.9 in Qena. The percent among married migrants is higher than that of non-married (80 versus 72.3 respectively), which is probably what one would expect, since a working male migrant in Cairo with a wife and children in the village would have extra obligations compared to an unmarried migrant. Nevertheless, amongst more than three-quarters of the survey population, the primary objective of generating remittances indicates the overriding economic and survival motives behind migration in the first place. It should be realized, however, that in this discussion, and in Table 7.14, my definition of remittances is based solely on money being sent to the village by various channels other than the migrant himself. Therefore, the spatial relationship between distance and intensity of remittances reflects the less frequent visits migrants make to the more distant governorates. In reality, remittance-like flows also occur when migrants take their own money back when they make returning visits.

7.4.3 The method of remittance

The vast majority of migrants who send money to the village while working in Cairo send it with one of their fellow-villager passengers to the village (Table 7.15). This method is used by 77 percent of remitters. As I mentioned before, it is easy to find someone who is visiting the village, for departures are continually taking place at least every few days. This is due to the nature of migrant groups who like to work and live together in groups from the same family, village, or at least the same district or governorate. When they decide to send money they can easily find someone who is trustworthy to send money with to the village. Sending money with relatives ranked second with 13.8 percent of remitters. This medium and the previous one comprise together 90.8 percent of means of sending money to the village.

Almost for each village – or a group of adjacent villages – there is a focal point in Cairo for group taxis and/or minibuses which work continuously – without a regular timetable – between this focal point and given villages in Upper Egypt. These means of transportation sometimes work from door-to-door. Permanent migrants and visitors (rather than migrant laborers) usually use this means of transportation since it is more expensive (but more convenient) than other means of transportation such as trains. Some migrant laborers send money to the villages with the drivers of these taxis and minibuses, given the fact that the drivers know most if not all families in the village. This method of remittance is almost costless, like the previously mentioned means.

Sending money via the post office is the least frequently used medium for remitting money to the village. Only six remitters use this method. As I mentioned before, this is related to the high illiteracy level of migrants and the tendency to depend less on postal communications between migrants and their villages.

Migrants do trust each other. Sending money with a returning visitor to the village is generally regarded as the safest way. Hanna, from Menia, summarized the relationships between migrants who come from the same village in his own words: *“We are villagers, sir. Every one there knows about each other. Families are fully interrelated. When I give any person of my hometown an amount of money to deliver to my family, he goes and delivers it to them before he even goes to his own house. We look after each other”*.

Table 7.15

How migrants send money to their families and relatives in the village of origin

Medium	Percent	Number of migrants
With one of the passengers to the village	77.0	141
With relatives	13.8	27
With drivers from village	4.9	9
Via post office	3.3	6
Total	100.0	183

Source: Cairo questionnaire survey (2000)

7.4.4 Remittance use and allocation: findings from the village

My visits to migrants' houses in selected villages in Souhag governorate enabled me to see and discuss with migrants' families how they invest – in some cases spend – the remittances of their family members' migration experience. The visits shed further light also on the decisions regarding the expenditure or investment of such remittances. The following are some extracts from interviews I conducted; they show both the use of migrant remittances and also the very frugal lives of rural folk in Upper Egypt, even those receiving remittances from the city.

“The few pounds that he (the husband) sends can barely meet the needs of both the house and the children in these terrible expensive days. Can you imagine that my children are spending about three pounds a day for just buying their sweets, biscuits, and silly things?” said one of the migrants' wives. *“Suppose then that we have a few pounds saved after spending most of the money on the house and the children. That helps us buy a little goat and raise it at home, feeding it with the left-overs of our food. We can occasionally beg for some bundles of green food for the animals from the neighbors next door. We then become able to sell it and start again and buy a little goat again. Tell*

you what, the little change we get hardly makes us lead a comfortable life, let alone for a feast, an occasion, or even buying the children a uniform for the new school year,” said another wife. It is clear that the consumption patterns have changed somewhat due to the husband's migration, although the ways in which they have changed clearly differ from family to family, as the above examples show. Spending three LE per day just for children's sweets is regarded by other families in the village as insanity and a bad allocation of expenditure. On the other hand, some migrants allocate resources better than others. The family who bought a goat and raised it at home follow a common and prevailing model of animal and livestock raising, whereby families buy little animals, raise them, sell them, buy another little one, and get benefit from the price difference between the raised animal and the newly purchased ones. Here is another good example of this practice.

“We have been raising a calf over the past for two years till the time came and we sold it for 3,000 Egyptian Pounds, which we spent completely on building these two rooms by the entrance of the house as you can see,” said one of the migrants who was on a visit to the village. *“Last summer, work in Cairo was fine, my husband told me. He earned good money and bought us a fan, a color TV and some clothes for the children and me. But we are now back to the same status as if nothing happened... he is staying now in Cairo and whenever he saves some money he sends it to us,”* said another of the migrants' wives. Building a house, enhancing housing conditions, and/or purchasing housing equipment and durables are some of the main aspects of expenditure and investment of remittances, as set out in Table 7.13.

Another case-story relates to migrant investment in land: *“We used to rent three feddans which we have planted with berseem to feed the buffalo we raise at home...you know...we get milk from it for the children and sell some too, make some fat, some cheese ... My husband has just been talking to the owner of the field, and settled it with him that he would buy the field and pay by installments. He has paid a whole 4,000 LE; we have actually paid 3,000 LE and got the remaining thousand through selling my gold, the wedding gift and all he bought me three years ago.”* It is clear from this example too that families in Upper Egypt can find ways to generate income in addition to – or to substitute shortages in – migration's remittances.

“My two sons are in Cairo. Thank God, they are working well. It is true that I only see them once a month but this is better for them than staying here doing nothing. We don’t have farmland or anything here in the village, and jobs are not available, as you may know. The two of them have secondary technical school. When they send me money, I save it for them. My eldest son plans for marriage. We are preparing his flat now in the upper floor. God willing, his wedding ceremony will take place during the next religious feast” said a parent of two migrant laborers in Cairo. It is clear that one of the most important expenditure items from remittances is covering the cost of marriage, which is very expensive in Egypt. Usually, parents are responsible for the preparation of their sons' marriage. They start accumulating money to cover the marriage expenses of their sons from the money that they send. If parents in the village have enough money to cover their – and their young children's – expenses they save the whole amount that their sons send for marriage expenses; if not, they save some and spend some.

On the other hand, where families are very big and access to land is limited, even migrant remittances may not be sufficient to properly sustain the entire household, as the following testimony demonstrates. *“Conditions are not like they were in the past. My son is working in Cairo and his brothers and I are working in our field and in other peoples’ fields as we only have a small amount of land. We are not supporting my sons, their children and their wives. We are 19 persons at home. What on earth could satisfy them all? May God help us, my son”*.

The houses that I visited in the villages of my fieldwork are not markedly different from the other houses in the village. I visited very good houses, well built, with water supplies, electricity, electrical devices, fans, washing machines, refrigerators and the walls painted very nicely. On the other hand, I visited some very poor houses, with crumbling mud or flimsy hardboard walls. However, what was common among all the rural households I visited with member(s) of such families who work in Cairo is that they have something different. That “something different” consists of things which are easily observable as bought from Cairo – smarter children's clothes, or household goods and equipment.

I have also noticed that women’s status and cooperation in work have increased, as she is now representing the absent migrant husband and the rest of her family in dealing with

others, like other relatives and neighbors or representatives of government agencies. As for the families which own farmland, I observed that wives work in the family's farmland with the other male members of the family (or even without them) in order to reduce expenses and not to hire external workers. Although women have traditionally been closely involved in the integrated rural economy of the domestic household and the farm holding, it does seem that the migration of men has two effects in this regard: first it imposes extra burdens of responsibility and rural work on the women; and second it lessens the strong patriarchal control over women's behavior, decision-making, and physical movement outside the house.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has ranged widely over issues relating directly and indirectly to living conditions of migrant workers, both in Cairo and in their rural places of origin, and has also focused on rural–urban linkages of various kinds, ranging from visits and telephone calls to the pattern and utilization of remittances. Comparisons were made with published survey data on housing characteristics in the sending and receiving contexts.

Key findings can be highlighted as follows. Migrants tend to own their own housing in their origin villages, but in other respects the quality of housing – both in Cairo and in their villages – tended to be below national norms. For instance, less than 30 percent of migrants' village homes had piped water. The picture which has emerged, then, is one in which the rural background of migrants is materially deprived: about 60 percent have no access to land, and so urban migration of at least some family members is essential for the family's survival. The 40 percent who do have land have small amounts, which can be looked after by other family members, including women, whilst the migrants are working in Cairo.

Living conditions in Cairo were found to be very poor. Often 10 or 15 migrants would share the same bedroom, sleeping on blankets on the floor, with no cooking facilities and only the most rudimentary sanitary facilities. Many migrants lived in ruined buildings or buildings under construction; a few even lived on the street. Their food was of the cheapest kind, often bought from street vendors whose jobs are specially geared to

serving migrant construction workers. Part of the reason for the migrants' poor material living conditions in Cairo was their need to save and remit as much of their low wages as possible. On average, half of their incomes were sent back to the village. This urban-to-rural monetary flow is one of the key urban–rural linkages sustained by the constant and circular migration process between Upper and Lower Egypt.

Other rural–urban linkages were expressed via visits (on average one return visit to the village per month, usually by third-class rail ticket), oral messages sent via friends, and telephone calls. Some evidence of the patterning of these forms of contacts by distance from Cairo was evidenced: for instance, visits were more frequent to closer villages, whereas non-physical context (including remittances) tended to increase with distance from Cairo. Regarding the use of remittances, migrants and their families use them mainly to support themselves (especially those with children), to cover marriage expenses, and to build new houses and buy household goods. These last forms of expenditure imply building for the future, and in the next chapter I examine migrants' changing attitudes and their plans for the future, among other things.

On the whole, the findings from the present chapter strongly suggest that migrants' lives, indeed their very essence of being migrants, remain embedded materially, family-wise and psychologically in the village. Although they spend the great majority of their time physically living in Cairo, and it was here that I "captured" them in the main questionnaire and interview surveys, their mental roots are in their places of origin (except for a very few who have shifted their families to Cairo). All of this is further evidence to support the contention that the group of migrants I have chosen to research are not "conventional" rural–urban migrants whose aspirations and orientations are shifting progressively towards a more permanent engagement with the city; but rather they are rural-based migrants who go to the city out of expediency – the necessity for their families to survive in the places of origin.

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.”*

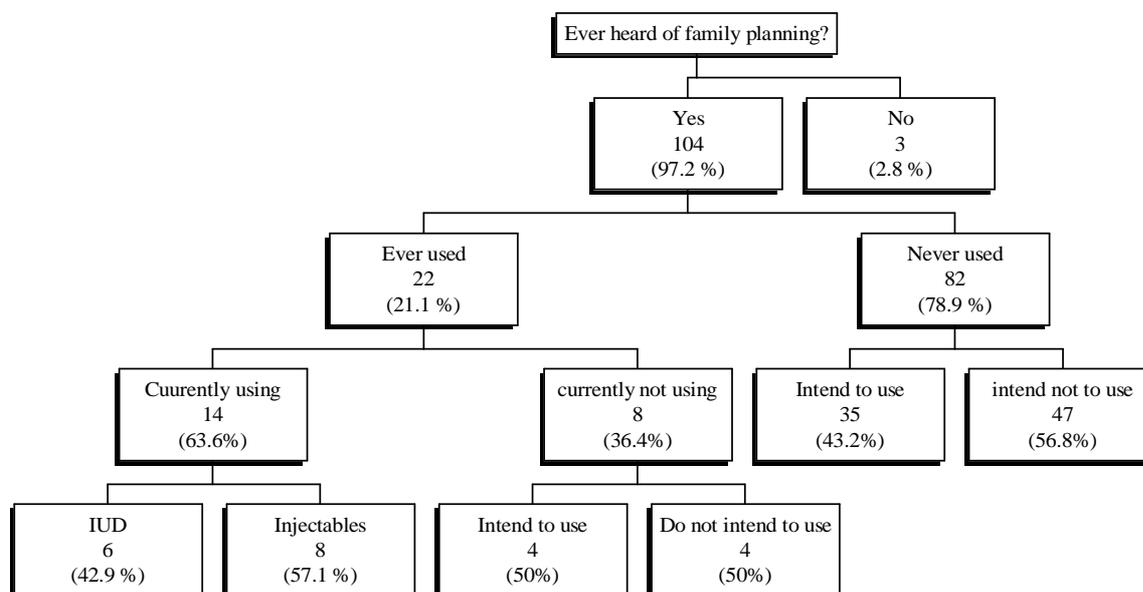
Brink's (1991) study of rural women in a Lower Egyptian village, whose husbands were temporary or long-term emigrants abroad, provides broad corroborative evidence for my own findings, despite the difference in setting and migration destination. The women whose husbands were abroad were uneducated and 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

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 grow 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 km². 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
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	Stay in Cairo	Return to the village	
Beni-Sueif	5 26.3%	14 73.7%	19
Menia	19 45.2%	23 54.8%	42
Assiut	28 45.9%	33 54.1%	61
Souhag	37 38.9%	58 61.1%	95
Qena	2 11.1%	16 88.9%	18
Total	91 38.8%	144 61.2%	235 100.0%

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.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSIONS

As I mentioned at the outset of this study, my aim in this thesis has been to analyze in depth one strategy of action that is taken by many young men in rural Egypt to deal with the harsh life and limited opportunities that they face in their villages, namely rural–urban migration. Whether to call this phenomenon rural–urban migration, or something else (to-and-fro movement, circulation, etc.) has been a continuing dilemma throughout this thesis, and this problem is related to the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of migration and mobility set out in Chapter 3. I shall return to re-examine some of these conceptual and definitional points later in this concluding chapter. What is undeniable, however, is that casual migrant labor is widespread in the developing world. Poorly paid and condemned to work in the most marginal jobs under tough exploitative conditions, migrants involved in internal migration are still surprisingly little understood in countries such as Egypt (Toth, 1999). Ibrahim (1982: 2–3) describes internal migration as Egypt’s “rural–urban symbiosis”, and stresses the lack of scholarly attention addressed to this important yet “silent revolution”. My study can therefore be seen as an attempt to fill at least part of this scholarly void, although for reasons of time and manageability my research has been rather narrowly focused on one specific migration stream, that of landless and semi-landless laborers from rural Upper Egypt to Cairo. The primary location of the research has been at the destination, where the main questionnaire and interview surveys were carried out. However, in order not to lose sight of the all-important village setting, and in order to respect the integrity of migration studies which examine both “ends” of the migration process, some fieldwork was also carried out in a cluster of settlements in Souhag governorate, typical “sending villages”. Yet conceptualizing the two poles of the migration phenomenon as “sending” and “destination” places raises the question as to the appropriateness of these labels when the pattern of movement is continuous, back and forth, and fluid.

I also pointed out in Chapter 1 that I intended to examine the phenomenon of internal migration within the context of a set of broader macro-issues which are the concern of

the Egyptian government as well as of social scientists and researchers. These issues comprise the uneven nature of Egyptian spatial development, especially within the duality between Lower and Upper Egypt; the extraordinary growth of Cairo into the largest megalopolis of the Middle East and Mediterranean Basin regions; the nature of Egyptian labor market trends, especially with reference to informal, dual and segmented employment structures; and the population which still grows each year by approximately 1.5 million people, or the equivalent of the population of a country the size of Kuwait (Khalifa, *et al.*, 2000). On this last point, whilst it is true that the absolute growth of the Egyptian population remains relatively high (2.1 percent per annum), considerable progress has been made in fertility reduction and movement through the demographic transition. But this progress remains regionally differentiated. Meanwhile, the maldistribution of the Egyptian population, where 95 percent of the population are concentrated in the valley and delta of the Nile, is still regarded as one of the main national population policy challenges (National Population Council, 1996).

Hence the need in this final chapter for further discussion on how my results shed light on these “bigger questions” of Egyptian social, economic and spatial development; as well as a reconsideration of the more micro-scale experiences of the migrants’ existence in Cairo, of their lives as migrants and as survivors.

This concluding chapter has three main sections, each divided into subsections. In the first part I confront the objectives of the study as set out in Chapter 4 with my empirical results as presented in Chapters 5 to 8. In doing this I make reference to the several theoretical frameworks that were introduced in Chapter 3; I make comparisons with other empirical studies as recorded in the literature on internal migration in developing countries; and I attempt to critically evaluate the significance of my findings in the light of the aforementioned research questions. The second section of the chapter is a broader discussion of my results in the light of broader issues connected with the nature of migration and development in Egypt; again reference back to key theoretical frames will be made here too. The third and last section of the chapter presents some policy implications of my research, critically summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, and makes some suggestions for future research.

9.1 Research questions and the empirical findings

I now attempt to match the research questions that I specified in Chapter 4 with the results of my empirical research. To remind the reader, my research objectives were grouped into four categories relating to processes of urban–rural mobility, living and working conditions of migrants, their impact on demography, and the economic consequences of their actions as migrants. I present the matching between each group of objectives and the findings of the empirical study in the following four sub-sections.

9.1.1 Processes of rural–urban migration and mobility in Egypt

The fundamental and overarching research question here concerned the migration choice strategies and motivations of a specific group of rural Egyptians who migrate to Cairo. I asked further, how do those who migrate differentiate themselves from those who do not, or from those who choose to migrate to the Gulf countries or other world destinations? Next, what is the relationship between internal and international migration? Are internal and international migration engaged in sequentially by some individuals? And if so, in which order? With respect to the targeted group of migrants, questions were asked relating to their demographic and socio-economic characteristics. I then posed questions relating to the mechanisms, networks and patterns of migration through space and time. These referred specifically to the social and family networks which facilitate the migration flows from villages to Cairo; and even more specifically to the relevance of the Mabogunje model and to his urban and rural control sub-systems and how they might function in the Egyptian case. I also wanted to know about the frequencies of movement, how this circulation back and forth could take place, and whether a relationship existed between frequency of travel to the home village and village distance from Cairo. Finally, I asked about other means of communication used to keep in touch with the village.

Most of these research questions are rather straightforward: they ask for standard empirical data which collectively build up a picture of the nature of rural–urban interaction and movement, migrants' personal characteristics, and their reasons for engaging in migration to Cairo. Some of the answers do link to theory, but much of my summary of key findings which follows in the next few paragraphs is essentially

descriptive information, although it does constitute “new knowledge” for the Egyptian case.

First, with respect to their basic personal characteristics, and in comparison with the totality of the rural population in Upper Egypt, the migrants I surveyed were young, less educated, and from low-status socio-economic backgrounds. The mean age of migrant laborers was found to be 29 years, with 55 percent aged 20–29. Upper Egyptian migrant laborers start their migratory experience early: 88 percent undertook their first migration before the age of 25, with half leaving their villages between the ages of 15 and 19. Migrants are overwhelmingly poorly educated: 46 percent have no recognized level of schooling, 35 percent only the low-status secondary technical level. Migrants in Cairo – at least those I interviewed in my surveys – were found to come from the poorest and most disadvantaged of rural backgrounds. They came from families which were larger than the regional averages for Upper Egypt, and which were hence characterized by extreme pressure on livelihood resources – particularly income and land (there was a high incidence of landlessness amongst migrant family backgrounds). There is a concentration of origins in the more densely-populated central governorates of Upper Egypt, namely Menia, Assiut, and Souhag. It needs to be stressed, however, that these characteristics are, to a great extent, “self-defined” by my decision to concentrate my fieldwork analysis on a single subset of rural-to-urban migrants, and not engage in a stratified sampling approach across all migrant subtypes.

Secondly, and regarding motives for migrating, these were found to be overwhelmingly economic: unemployment, lack of rural job opportunities, low incomes and very poor living conditions. Cairo offers higher wages (around three times those in Upper Egypt), more regular (though still casual) work and, most important of all, the chance to remit cash and hence support family in Upper Egypt. Migration to Cairo is regarded by a vast majority of migrants as quite simply the only solution for their economic and livelihood problems. Hence, my repeated characterization of it as “survival” migration.

Thirdly, my data pertaining to migration dynamics elucidated the following features. More than a quarter of Upper Egyptian migrants to Cairo had worked in Arab countries, mainly Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iraq and Jordan. Rather than internal leading to international migration, the Egyptian case seems to be the reverse, where international

migration worked as a catalyst for internal migration. This is due to the unexpected timing and circumstances of the return from Iraq and Jordan, and the change in lifestyle due to migration experience which made migrants less connected to their families and places of origin. Living and working in a metropolitan center like Cairo was the easiest alternative to their lives as migrant workers abroad, as well as being a sensible survival and income-earning strategy. However, as I pointed out, there is something of a logical flaw in this conclusion about the sequence of internal versus international migration, since those individuals who had migrated first internally and then abroad are obviously no longer in Egypt. On the other hand, my general conversations and observations with the migrants, and the question in the questionnaire about their future plans, showed that, in fact, the option of subsequently emigrating abroad was not frequently put into practice. Whilst nine in ten of my questionnaire survey respondents were willing to consider a move abroad (motivated above all by the higher wages theoretically available), nearly all were aware that this was practically impossible because of the initial costs and barriers involved nowadays in international labor migration.

Continuing the summary of my information on the dynamics of rural–urban migration, I found plenty of evidence to support the role of migration networks facilitating the migration flows from Upper Egypt to Cairo. Here, however, I found the need to distinguish between two types of networks and prior linkages to Cairo.

Established and settled migrants, who had been living in the Egyptian capital for some time, generally with their families, played almost no role in facilitating the migration of casual laborers. Respondents who had relatives and friends who had permanently settled there said that they hardly ever visited them because of feelings of shame and embarrassment. Moreover, this relationship very much depends on whether the migrants I surveyed came from rural origins which had “counterpart” villages in Cairo made up of permanently-settled migrants from earlier waves of rural–urban migration. In these cases, limited to only 30 of my respondents (one in seven of my sample), a relationship can indeed be maintained, even if it is not particularly strong. For the rest, the key networking role in promoting migration of laborers was played by other such laborer migrants who had already had some experience in the city. Particularly important here were older brothers, other relatives and co-villagers. Indeed social

networks based on kinship and village origin were seen to pattern the main features of the social geography of migrants' lives in Cairo.

In addition, migrants were found to maintain strong contacts with the village through periodic return revisits. The length between successive visits was found to be positively correlated with distance between Cairo and the governorates of origin. The closer the place of origin to Cairo the shorter the length of time between successive visits. This simple statistical finding about distance gives indirect support for the Gravity Model principle of migrant behavior. As well as village visits, migrants kept in contact with their families through other means of communication, especially oral messages sent with colleagues visiting the village. Given the fact – noted above – that migrants work and live in Cairo in groups coming from the same village and often the same extended family, migrants who want to send messages (and money) to their families can easily find trustworthy passengers leaving for their villages almost every day or week. As a means of communication with the village, telephone calls ranked second. Communication through written messages sent via colleagues or via the mail were discovered to be almost non-existent, due to the high illiteracy level among migrants and the easiness of communications via oral messages and telephone calls.

Finally, I found that migrants who have lost contact with their rural origins over time are very few. The percentage of those who appeared to have lost touch was only 1.5. This indicates that overall the orientation to the rural village home areas remains strong, and moreover that the social, kinship and village-based networks are very effective in maintaining this village-based social solidarity.

The above summarizes my main findings concerning the social background characteristics of the migrants; their motives for migrating; and their dynamics of movement from Upper Egypt to Cairo, and back and forth, and their connections to their home villages. Links to theory, at this preliminary stage of my concluding analysis, are rather elementary given the essentially factual and descriptive nature of this first set of research findings. Some moderate support was noted for the Gravity Model as regards distance-decay influences over migration and frequency of travel back and forth, but no evidence was found of step-migration or for the relevance of “intervening opportunities” for migrants to stop somewhere along the migration path

between the Upper Nile Valley and Cairo. From Luxor and Aswan to Menia and Beni-Sueif, migrants boarding the Cairo-bound train only disembark at Cairo. This pattern of migration behavior reinforces the strength of the socio-economic and geographic duality between Lower and Upper Egypt and the irrelevance, at least for the migrant, of intermediate locations and intervening economic opportunities. Hence the role of distance as a significant intervening obstacle is largely offset in the Egyptian case by sizeable income differentials.

The weakness of the Gravity Model is that it is not a model of individual migrant behavior – it does not describe the decision to migrate (Gallup, 1997: 2). On this latter point, the evidence which I collected in my surveys overwhelmingly supported the importance of economic factors in determining migration behavior, and it is not too difficult to link my empirical data to the range of economically-based theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter 3. The “costs and benefits” approach; migration viewed as an “investment in human capital”; the economically-determined “push and pull factors”; and the notion of migration existing between the two “worlds” of the dual economy (a rural world of low incomes, underemployment and limited opportunity, and an urban world of better incomes and employment opportunities) – all resonate with the information and evidence I have collected for the Egyptian case.

However, it has to be admitted that there is an element of tautology in the argument I present above regarding the overarching importance of economic factors, since my study population of labor migrants are self-defined as economically motivated by the need to migrate to search for better work and income opportunities. I shall come back to this critical point a little later. Meantime, I would just point out that, on the other hand, it is one of the basic tenets of the analysis of migration that economic motives are paramount. This remains the case in studies ranging from the “laws” of Ravenstein (1885; 1888), one of which stresses that “most migration takes place for economic reasons”, to the work of Todaro nearly a century later: “The overwhelming conclusion of almost all migration studies, both descriptive and econometric, is that people migrate primarily for economic reasons” (Todaro, 1976: 66).

The other link to an established migration model suggested by this first set of research findings on migration behavior brings in Mabogunje’s (1970) systems framework. As

noted before, in the overview of migration theory in Chapter 3, and again in Chapter 5 (see section 5.4), this is a theoretically attractive model for framing the analysis of rural–urban migration in the developing world, but it has proved difficult to convincingly demonstrate against reality as a complete analytical system. Reference back to the diagrammatic portrayal of the model in Figure 3.1 will remind us of its component parts and make us realize that much of my analysis in Chapters 5 to 8 has been based on various stages of the model, and on my adaptation of parts of the model in Figure 3.3. For instance, my discussion of migrants’ living conditions in both the village and in Cairo in Chapter 7 made explicit reference to rural control systems (land distribution, decisions on leaving etc.) and to rural adjustment mechanisms (reallocation of village labor tasks, increasing responsibilities for women left behind etc.); as well as to migration channels into the urban subsystem (the practice of living together in village groupings, means of finding work etc.). A further explicit reference to system and network approaches emerges from my account of migration decision-making in Chapter 5, and from the detailed material on urban–rural feedback linkages (return visits, other contacts, remittances, personal and family obligations etc.) contained in section 7.3 of Chapter 7. Most of these feedback links can be regarded as positive, thereby acting to sustain and promote the system of rural–urban migration in Egypt. I showed how interpersonal ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin connected migrants, former migrants and non-migrants (including potential future migrants) in both origin and destination, such that the “migration system” was, again, able to function and reproduce itself across space and time. These network connections constituted a form of social capital that migrants could draw on to gain access to various crucial resources – urban employment, a place to live, the means to remain in contact with the village and to remit savings from their urban labor.

Although the Mabogunje model seems to be based around a clear distinction between the rural and urban “worlds” and an assumption that rural–urban migration is essentially a one-way normative process, its conceptualization as a “system” made up of “networks” enables it to be linked to notions of “circular migration” advanced by authors such as Chapman, Prothero, and others. I shall pick up on these definitions and conceptual debates later in this chapter.

Meanwhile, my reference to the systems and network dimensions of migrants' living and working arrangements leads us into the second major research question, whose empirical results are now summarized in the next subsection.

9.1.2 Living and working conditions of the migrants

Under this second main research objective, I elaborated three general questions which are both empirically descriptive and link to theory and to comparisons. The first compared migrants' living and housing conditions in Cairo with conditions in their villages. Are they better off in Cairo in these respects, or do they deny themselves in order to maximize the transfer of their accumulated capital back to their families and villages? The second question makes the same urban–rural comparison with respect to work experiences. The third question under this general heading explores labor market characteristics in Cairo in more depth. What types of labor do migrants engage in and do they experience any job mobility during their time in Cairo? How are their jobs characteristic of the “informal” sectors of the urban economy, and how is their work to be interpreted in terms of the structuration of the city's labor market?

Migrant household characteristics in villages of origin yield further data confirming that migrants selected for my Cairo-based field survey are drawn from the poorest rural population strata. Average land ownership, for instance, amongst migrant households was found to be only about one third of the Upper Egyptian average (0.36 as against 1.16 feddans respectively). Comparing migrants' living conditions between place of origin and Cairo revealed mixed results: electricity provision was higher in the village than in Cairo (92 versus 72 percent respectively) whilst provision of piped water contrasted the other way (29 as against 65 percent). These comparisons, however, reflect the unequal provision of resources and services as between urban and rural Egypt more generally. Perhaps more revealing of migrant lifestyles in Cairo was the key finding regarding living density: the mean number of persons per sleeping room in Cairo was 6.8, nearly double the average figure for those same migrants' households in their home villages in Upper Egypt (3.5 persons per room).

So, living conditions of the Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo are very poor. Migrant laborers were found to live together in groups in crowded and cheap places; rooms were

minimally equipped and toilet facilities shared by up to 20 persons. Migrants from the same village, or sometimes the same governorate, tended to live together. Living together in this way undoubtedly represents an act of self-denial in order to increase the net cash income left over to send back to the home village. Yet such living behavior also makes it easy to keep the same social contacts and traditions of the village; at the same time this practice weakens the mechanisms through which migrants might acquire the new behavioral patterns that prevail in urban environments. It is also a defense mechanism to keep their essentially rural, Upper Egyptian mentality and identity; and living together in kin-based and village-of-origin groups makes migrants feel safer than living alone. Hence the role of village-based social and kin networks seems paramount in structuring the entire migratory experience of these rural-origin migrant laborers.

My data on living costs of migrant laborers in Cairo revealed further dimensions of their self-deprivation and meager existence. I found that the average daily expenditure of my sampled population was 7.34 LE (or about US\$1.80). This included an average of 0.75 LE per day for rent (but many respondents lived for nothing in derelict accommodation), and 3.64 LE for food; other items of expenditure mainly comprised tea, cigarettes and transportation within the Cairo area to and from workplaces. Because of the non-existent or very poor cooking facilities in their overcrowded rooms, most migrant laborers bought their food as ready-made snacks from street-vendors or cheap cafés. Bread, beans and falafel were their staples; they rarely or never ate meat, except on visits home to their village. In Chapter 7 I gave some interview quotes to expand the information on migrants' meager diets. Here is one more typical quote, from veteran migrant Ibrahim: *"I have a piece of bread and falafel in the morning and drink a cup of tea. In all that costs me half a pound. When God bestows on me more money at midday I buy two pieces of bread and some beans. If I do not earn any money, I wait for dinner in the evening in order to save some money."*

My findings indicate that, on the whole, both living conditions and diet tend to be better in the villages of origin: yet more evidence for the functional and psychological importance of the rural "anchor" for these circulating laborers. What is lacking there is, of course, work: and this is precisely what propels migrants to Cairo where, again on the whole (there are some exceptions, mainly single young men with few family obligations), migrants eke out a frugal lifestyle whose main objective is to maximize

work, and therefore income-earning opportunities, and to minimize their costs of living there in order, in turn, to maximize the fraction of their incomes that they can send back to the village for the maintenance of their households. The per diem calculations from the questionnaire survey responses give a simple answer to this: mean daily income was 19.31 LE (less than 5 US\$) which, when compared to mean daily expenses in Cairo (LE 7.34), leaves a “surplus” of 11.97 LE or 62 percent of income.

Next I summarize the work characteristics of the particular segment of migrants I sampled. These are centered mainly in the construction and general laboring sectors. Working hours per day for the surveyed population were found to vary between 2 and 18 hours; the average was 8.5 hours per day. Daily work is not guaranteed. Some migrants work seven days while others may, if they are unlucky, work only one day per week. The average number of working days per week is almost five (4.9 to be exact). Migrants' work is very tough and hard, especially in task-based activities. Moreover, none of the migrant laborers are covered by any type of health or social insurance, and in addition, about one fifth of the migrants in the survey had had serious injuries related to their job while working in Cairo. Nevertheless their rationale is clear: average earnings are far beyond average wages in rural Upper Egypt, by a factor of two to three times.

With respect to the evolution of various jobs and the potential professional development of migrants, my questionnaire survey showed that almost one half of migrant laborers maintained that their job type and conditions remained about the same. They reported that, since their first arrival in Cairo, they have been doing the same tasks without any progression or acquisition of any new skills. About one fourth said that work conditions got better, while the remaining one quarter of migrants, said that conditions got worse. The main complaint from those who claimed that their work conditions deteriorated was increased monitoring by the police, rather than worse treatment by employers. However, here I have to acknowledge that the way my sample was selected did not really allow me to measure upward job mobility out of the casual labor sector, since those who might have moved to more permanent jobs would not be waiting around on street-corners or in coffee-shops to be hired – or to be interviewed by me.

How do these findings compare with the lives of rural–urban migrant laborers in other parts of the Third World? What are the implications of my findings for elucidating theoretical explanations of internal mobility in developing countries? These are enormous comparative questions which can only be answered here with reference to a few chosen examples taken from the review literature. To do more than this would be to engage in literature survey of all relevant studies on rural–urban migration, something which has already been specified as beyond the scope of this thesis. Moreover, my theoretical references at this point will also be limited, given that in a later section of this chapter (9.3) I will widen the theoretical debate in the context of the relevance of the Egyptian findings to broader questions of internal migration, development, inequality and modernization.

A useful starting-point is the finding summarized (but also then rather rigidly circumscribed) in the penultimate paragraph – namely that there is no net change, or improvement, in migrants’ job experiences whilst they are in Cairo. This sheds interesting light on the Todaro model as discussed in Chapter 3, supporting some aspects but challenging others. To briefly recap, the Todaro model “postulates that migration proceeds in response to rural–urban differences in *expected rather than real earnings*”; and that “expected gains are measured by (a) the *difference in real incomes between rural and urban job opportunities*, and (b) the *probability of a new migrant obtaining a job*” (Todaro, 1976: 28–29, original author’s italicized emphases). Implicit in this formulation is the notion that the migrant can take refuge in the urban “traditional” (i.e. informal) sector whilst searching for that elusive (but ultimately attainable) “regular” job (Todaro, 1976: 33).

What I found is that migrants moving to Cairo do so in the reasonably secure knowledge that, despite some initial adjustment problems, their urban wages will significantly exceed what they could have earned as poor landless or land-hungry workers in Upper Egypt. Yet this anticipation of higher urban wages is based, by and large, not on a realistic expectation that they will ever gain access to regular, formal-sector employment, but on their knowledge of their chances in the informal sector, *where they will stay*. Despite Todaro’s hypothesis that the probability of finding regular urban wage employment increases over time as the migrant builds up and broadens his urban contacts (1976: 31), in Cairo this does not happen because the social contacts and

networks that migrants have are limited to others of their own social class and geographic origins, and do not seem to overlap into “mainstream” Cairo society. It is true that my research design did not really enable me to track upward job mobility out of the casual labor sector, but my general knowledge of the Cairo work scene, and several remarks by the migrants themselves, lead me to be fairly confident that cross-segment job mobility is rather limited.

Some illuminating parallels with my study are found in Ogura’s research on rural–urban migration in Zambia, to Lusaka and the Copper Belt towns. According to Ogura (1991), migrants always hope to get jobs in the formal sector, but most cannot. Hence they too are forced to take up jobs in the urban informal sector. Incomes from such jobs are low compared to formal sector wages. Nevertheless, and despite defraying the costs of accommodation, food and transportation (all higher in the town than they would be if the migrant stayed in the rural area), low-wage casual urban jobs furnish migrants with incomes which are at least twice the average rural level.

A somewhat different comparative perspective comes from a study of rural–urban migration in Bolivia by Pérez-Crespo (1991). Here too, in La Paz and elsewhere, many rural-origin migrants were incorporated into the urban informal sector in construction, personal services and as self-employed traders – “all activities that keep them slightly above the survival limit”. However, channels of upward mobility do here appear open, so that “as soon as they become acquainted with the way the (urban) market operates, master some urban skills, and save some capital, they move into self-employed activities”. This self-employment may well still be in the informal sector, but it does represent socio-economic progress over time, something relatively absent in the Egyptian case. However, one significant difference with rural–urban migration in Bolivia (and in Latin America in general) is that it tends to be family migration, leading eventually to a permanent rural to urban resettlement. Similarly in the Philippines Koo and Smith (1983) found that recent in-migrants to cities were especially likely to get employment in the informal sector but that, with time, they were gradually incorporated into the formal urban economy. Clearly on this particular aspect of the Todaro model, evidence differs across the developing world and general conclusions can only be applied with caution. My evidence for Egypt, taking into account in-built problems of research design as regards this question, tends to suggest that migrants engaged in

rural–urban circulation are by their very nature “condemned” to the segment of casual labor. This does not prove that other migrants do not experience upward mobility; and I have no solid evidence to prove this one way or the other. However, my suspicion remains that this is limited.

9.1.3 Impact of rural–urban migration on demographic behavior

The third set of issues as set out in my list of research questions is the relation between migration and modernization as measured by the change in attitudes towards family and children, and the use of contraceptive methods as a proxy of the modernization effect of migration. The key question here was whether migrants' time spent working in Cairo affected their demographic behavior or not. I wanted to test whether the demographic implications of rural–urban mobility in Egypt extended beyond the simple transfer of “surplus population” from high-fertility regions of low economic dynamism to a more modern urban economy; or whether, through the possible adoption of urban norms of demographic behavior, more long-lasting demographic behavioral trends were inculcated.

To my slight surprise, I discovered that migrant laborers actually had more children than their village counterparts, thus contradicting my assumption in which I hypothesized that migrant laborers would have lower fertility than their counterparts in rural Upper Egypt because of their exposure to modernization and the urban lifestyle of Cairo. As I explained in Chapter 8, this is – partially – due to the fact that migrants do not represent the average of rural Upper Egypt residents. In particular, they are less educated and poorer than their counterparts in the village. And poverty, illiteracy, lack of education, landlessness and large families all seem to be linked together in the Egyptian case. Furthermore, most of the surveyed migrants remained psychologically fixed to their villages in terms of most of their attitudes and behaviors, and hence their demographic “outcomes” were not much affected by the “urban experience”.

In addition to simple contrasts in extant family size, my questionnaire data also revealed other differences which reinforce the picture whereby migrant laborers are more

socially conservative than either the residents of Cairo or the general population of Upper Egypt from which they are drawn. Despite the fact of having an above average number of children, more than half the respondents wished for more children, especially sons. The overall mean desired number of children was 5.6, higher than the total fertility rate of Upper Egypt, which is currently 4.5. Consistent with this, the contraceptive prevalence rate among migrant laborers was found to be about half the general level of couples in rural Upper Egypt.

Further significant aspects of demographic and social behavior were noted in the realms of education and treatment of sons versus daughters. Although there was a general trend for respondents to place a high value on the education of their own children, the education of sons was favored over that of daughters in many cases. This was also reflected by the fact that, for older migrants with teenage or older children, girls had been started at work earlier than boys.

So, contrary to my initial hypothesis about the socially and demographically modernizing effects of rural–urban migration, I found the persistence, even reinforcement (as a reaction to the “immoral” aspects of city life), of socially conservative behavior patterns with regard to family size, fertility behavior and attitudes, and gender relations. This same picture came out when I asked if respondents and interviewees wanted to eventually reunite with their families in Cairo rather than continue to keep them in Upper Egypt. Although a minority considered bringing their families to Cairo as a possibility, the majority rejected this option, citing both moral and practical reasons. According to Ibrahim, “*bringing the family to Cairo is impossible because of the expense, the cost of housing*”. Diab was more emphatic: “*No, Cairo turns kids evil. They would come to know about women and the like. We come from Upper Egypt and we do not get involved in such misbehavior. I would rather continue to live here alone.*”

Further discussion on the interrelationships between migration and demography in Egypt will be picked up a little later in this chapter.

9.1.4 Economic aspects of rural–urban migration

The last set of research questions tackles various economic implications of the Egyptian rural–urban migratory phenomenon. A vital question here concerns the incomes of migrants in the urban setting of Cairo, and the use of this income to sustain both themselves in the city and their families in the villages and home districts. In Chapter 4 I asked the specific question: is rural–urban migration from Upper Egypt to Cairo merely a survival mechanism, redistributing surplus labor and enabling rural households to avoid sliding further into poverty and overpopulation? Or does the income earned by the migrants enable them to develop their villages by investing in new housing, infrastructures, and economic activities such as farming equipment or rural industries? I was also keen to explore migrants' awareness of national plans for developing the country and its constituent parts. Finally, I probed migrants' perceptions of their own futures: whether they planned to move permanently to Cairo; to move on to somewhere else; to alternate periods of work in Cairo with spells back in the home village; or to return definitively back to the place of origin.

As I have mentioned several times before, the main motives of this migration are economic. Migrants' savings are the means of life for their families in Upper Egypt. They sacrifice many of the basics of human life in Cairo in order to save money to sustain the needs of their families. I noted earlier that migrants were able to save, on average, about 12 LE per day (rather less than 3 US\$) and that this represented 62 percent of their average daily earnings, the rest going on living costs in Cairo. Working on a monthly basis, my questionnaire data revealed that migrants saved on average just under 200 LE (slightly less than 50 US\$), this being around half their mean monthly income. The difference between this proportion and the figure of 62 percent quoted above is due to the cost of return visits which nearly all migrants make on a regular basis to their families and villages. Migrants obviously recognize the crucial value of their savings while working in Cairo, since it is the very essence of their being there; but they think that they could have been saving more money if the cost of living in Cairo was not so high. Hence they tend to do all they can to minimize their living costs in the city, by sacrificing themselves in ways that were spelt out above (9.1.2) and in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

These data on migrant incomes and savings are, I believe, uniquely precise. It is well known that migrants are often extremely reluctant to divulge any details of their financial circumstances in surveys of this kind (Bilsborrow *et al.*, 1984). From her village-based fieldwork with Egyptian women whose husbands were working away Brink (1991) found that most women were not told by their husbands how much they actually earned – Brink had this information for only two of her 79 interviewees. By interviewing men in Cairo I was able to access this privileged information, and cross-check it with employers, other migrants etc., so that I can vouch for the broad accuracy of my data. The proportion of total earnings that was found to be sent back to the village – just under half – is broadly consistent with the findings of some other studies done on male rural–urban migrants in various countries of the developing world; if somewhat higher than most. For instance, studies in 16 Indian villages (Connell *et al.*, 1976) revealed that the remittances sent from towns by rural–urban migrants amounted to between 26 and 29 percent of total earnings (based on village averages). A study of 1140 working migrant males in Nairobi (Johnson and Whitelaw, 1974) found that, whilst 89 percent sent regular remittances to their families, the average amount remitted was only 21 percent of earnings. In northern Pakistan, according to a study by Mohamed *et al.* (1973), 91 percent of the rural–urban migrants surveyed remitted, sending on average 37 percent of their monthly incomes. Further discussion of comparative data on remittances is given by Stark (1978: 34–47) where the difficulties of measurement are also pointed out (in many countries remittances are sent as gifts or brought to the village as goods rather than cash).

A great proportion of migrants' savings goes on supporting their families in Upper Egypt and satisfying family members' basic needs: food, clothing, children's education etc. About 90 percent of migrants declared that the main thing they do with the money they save is to support their families. Building a new house or a new housing extension to the family's house is regarded as a main objective to save money. One fourth of migrants said that they were saving money primarily to build a house. Other plans were to devote extra resources to educate children, to buy land, or buy home appliances and durable goods, or cover the costs of marriage.

By and large, the expenditure patterns reflect a commitment to (and above all the need for) “survival” rather than investing for a more enterprising future through the

development of new businesses. Once basic needs of food and clothing were provided for, the general preference was next for improving housing conditions and purchasing household goods in order to enhance the immediate quality of life for the rural family. On the other hand, my field observations in rural areas revealed that some families allocate resources better than others. The issue of spending money on children's sweets was mentioned in Chapter 7 (section 7.4.4). Ali highlighted a similar dilemma when I asked him if he was thinking of getting a TV, though his views were pretty firm: "*No, not at all, even if I had the money. I will never think about getting such things. The only thing I think about is getting a sheep, or a calf, or some other animals. These things earn money for us, but the TV would just be a waste of our money.*" Where migrants do have plans to set up small businesses on their return to the village, such plans are expressed as vague dreams rather than practical possibilities – above all because of the shortage of capital to hand. Overall, in my village fieldwork, I found very little evidence of rural–urban circulating migrants having the wherewithal to develop their own businesses. Zaky's answer to my question about his future hopes indicates a wish to indeed do something different, but the lack of means to achieve this: "*I pray God may provide me with a lot of money in order to be able to establish a private business, or buy a minibus on installments... I want to do something different...*" Even a new house remains only a dream for many migrants: "*Every young man dreams of a private house of his own, which would be his own world, but how?*" (Henein).

9.2 Research findings as related to the processes of modernization and development in Egypt

An attempt is made in this section to relate the empirical findings of my study to the main contextual "macro-question" that I aimed to investigate, which is: what is the role of the rural–urban migration process in the modernization and development of a rapidly-transforming society and economy such as that found in Egypt? Urbanization plays an absolutely key role in the Egyptian modernization process, so I start with a consideration of this parameter and its relationship with rural–urban migration. I will then move on to a discussion of some broader theoretical aspects of my findings pertaining to the labor market, remittances and socio-economic change, and socio-demographic aspects of migration and Egyptian development.

9.2.1 Rural–urban migration and urbanization

According to the United Nations Population Fund (1995), five major factors emerge as principally responsible for the rise in urbanization and other forms of internal migration in developing countries. All of these factors relate to differences in living conditions between areas. The most common cause of rural-to-urban migration is rural unemployment, resulting from the mechanization of agricultural processes and rapid rural population growth. A second related factor is the lack of social services in rural areas, particularly education. Since secondary schools and institutions of higher education are more abundant in urban areas, students often have no other alternative than leaving the countryside for the cities in order to continue their education. Many of these students decide to remain in the city after graduation.

Lack of cultivable land in rural areas is a third cause of internal migration. Land shortages in some rural areas have attained frightening proportions, mainly due to high rural population growth. Environmental degradation further aggravates the shortage of arable land in many parts of the developing world. More and more people have to compete for less land, and this trend is expected to continue in the future. A fourth factor, which contributes to the process of urbanization and internal migration, is natural disasters, particularly droughts. Recurrent droughts in some parts of Africa and Asia have driven large numbers of people to urban centers in search of food and water. A fifth factor is civil conflicts. Internal conflicts in parts of Africa, Latin America and Asia have led to large-scale internal migration streams and mass population displacements.

Regarding motives for migrating in the Egyptian case, we have seen that these are overwhelmingly economic, composed of factors such as unemployment, lack of rural job opportunities, very low incomes and bad living conditions in rural Egypt. Cairo offers better wages, more regular work (albeit in a narrow range of casual and poorly-paid jobs), more exciting life, and the most important factor of all which is the chance to remit and support family members at home in the village. So that migration from Upper Egypt to Cairo is a rational strategy chosen by many young rural men who face limited economic opportunities in their villages. For many migrants, it is a waiting strategy until they can find permanent and more secure job opportunities in their

villages, especially in the government sector. For many, however, this is a somewhat mythical hope, and so they are forced to prolong their migratory existence in Cairo.

Rapid urbanization fed by rural–urban migration appears to be a constant accompaniment of the modernization process in the developing world; whether it is an automatic natural correlate to development is a debatable point, given the range of social, economic and political variables that are part and parcel of the modern conceptualization of development. Skeldon (1997: 4) expresses the mainstream orthodox view when he states that “the migration of large numbers of workers from rural to urban areas could be seen as good for development as it leads to an equalization of wage levels, not only by slowing wage increases in the towns but also by increasing the flow of income into the rural areas through remittances”. The same author goes on to point out that “Despite their tenuous and exploited position, (the migrants) may be better off than if they had remained in their home villages” (Skeldon, 1997: 3). My own findings for Egypt pretty much echo this middle-of-the-road approach by Skeldon which, rather than seeing migration as “good” or “bad” per se, sees it as part and parcel of the development process in the Third World. However it would also be unwise to ignore the neo-Marxist contributions of writers such as Samir Amin (1974) whose basic thesis that African migration has been a sort of “gift” from the poor, rural areas to the rich cities has set the agenda for wide-ranging debates about migration as part of the structuration of (under)development (see especially the essays in van Binsbergen and Meilink, 1978), in Africa and elsewhere (see Harris, 1995 for an analogous interpretation of international migration).

Let us try to contextualize rural–urban migration, urbanization and modernization in Egypt within a broad international perspective, first by reference to some generalized statistics, and then by focusing more carefully on *types* of migration.

Lucas, in two lengthy review papers (1997, 1998), has compiled useful comparative statistics on urbanization and internal migration trends in several countries of the developing world, as well as three continents (Africa, Asia, South America), for the period 1950–2000. Overall Lucas found that less-developed-country (LDC) urban growth fluctuated fairly closely around 4 percent per annum throughout the five decades, but the African figure was somewhat higher, at around 5 percent, than the

average aggregate figures for Asia or South America. For the five successive decades (1950–60, 1960–70, 1970–80, 1980–90, 1990–2000), African annual urban growth was 4.7, 4.9, 4.8, 5.1 and 5.0 percent respectively. Meanwhile, the proportion of the total African population classed as urban rose from 15 percent in 1950 to 41 percent in 2000 (for LDCs globally it rose from 17 to 45 percent). Egypt’s urban population, 42.6 percent of the national total in 1996, is close to both the continent’s and the global LDC average; but on the other hand has been static as a percentage since the 1976 Census (refer back to Table 3.2). Moreover, *officially recorded* rural–urban migration has been declining as a proportion of total Egyptian internal migration (see Chapter 2, section 2.3 and Chapter 3, section 3.1 for details); instead inter-urban migration is the main migration component of the fourfold matrix of possibilities (rural–rural, rural–urban, urban–urban, urban–rural), as it is in most “semi-developed” countries such as South Korea and many South American states. Rural–rural migration represents less than 4 percent of Egyptian internal mobility, in contrast to many other African countries and the cases of India and Taiwan where 56 percent and 41 percent, respectively, of all internal migration was inter-rural during the 1980s (Lucas, 1998). Interestingly, out of 26 countries tabulated by Lucas (1998: 4), Egypt was one of those where the migration component of urban growth was lower than average. This may reflect the fact that rural–urban migration and urbanization in Egypt have now reached a “mature” stage, with Greater Cairo and other urban governorates so large, extensively spread and densely inhabited as to be incapable of further rapid growth by in-migration. However, it also has to be remembered that there is likely to be a large quantity of unrecorded rural–urban migration, including the migrants who are the research subjects of this thesis, and who have to endure impossibly crowded and tough lives in the interstices of the urban housing fabric.

Perhaps more important than these aggregate statistics on internal migration and urbanization trends in different Third World areas (such statistics may not reflect reality very closely anyway because of well-known deficiencies of migration data in LDCs), is a more focused discussion on *types* of migration, in order to put the Egyptian case in context. Some fairly general and instructive contrasts can be drawn between Latin America on the one hand, where “the great bulk of migrants to the cities have left the countryside permanently ... they move on to different cities and they may return to their place of origin to visit relatives and friends, but few come back to rural areas to stay”

(Nelson, 1976: 721); and the situation in Africa and Asia on the other hand, where migration is gender-select (mostly males) and temporary. Egypt obviously falls into the latter type, also as befits its geographical location astride the Africa–Asia boundary. But in other respects, as I noted much earlier, Egypt and the Middle East in general sit uneasily in these global continental comparisons, being geographically, culturally, demographically and developmentally different from Latin America, “black” Africa or South and East Asia. Moreover, the dearth of published research on other Middle Eastern countries makes it difficult to know whether Egypt is at all typical of the Middle East/Southern Mediterranean region, although some similarities with Morocco and Turkey were noted in Chapter 3.

In some senses, Egyptian rural–urban migration – at least the particular type which I have studied – represents a rather elementary form of migration: temporary, male-only, with limited social contact with the urban context, and oriented almost totally to the village as regards remittances, return visits and the ultimate permanent return. It is almost the complete opposite to Caribbean internal migration, for instance, which is characterized by a majority of female movers and involves lots of step and multiple migrations, based on case studies of Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Guyana (Hope, 1989).

It is also important not to view the Egyptian case as static. Authors writing about other African contexts have often noted the passage over time from single male migration to family-based moves. According to Caldwell (1969), seasonal migration to towns was a dominant feature of colonial Africa; later, as urban areas evolved industrial and service sectors, migration has become more permanent. Ogura (1991), researching Zambia, notes a similar development: “After ... finding a job (in the town), single male migrants go back to their home villages and find spouses. Then they return to the towns with their wives... Married male migrants are now accompanied by their families... This means that the circular migrant labor force of the colonial period has now changed very much.” In Egypt the rural–urban migration and circulation of male laborers seems an unusually stable and unchanging trend, extending back to the early decades of the previous century. I also have to acknowledge that my sample design and data collection at field sites in Cairo where laborers gather meant that I only interviewed migrant workers from Upper Egypt, and tended to leave out those who might have settled

permanently in Cairo. Of course, there has been some permanent family migration from Upper Egypt to Cairo (my own family history illustrates this), and some migrants whom I surveyed had relatives permanently resident in Cairo. And a few of my respondents were possibly planning to eventually settle in Cairo themselves. Other routes to permanent migration involve transfers from Upper Egypt for purposes of further and higher education, government employment, business migration etc. But these have not been cases of mass mobility like the labor migrants I have studied.

Finally, in this discussion of the nature of Egyptian rural–urban migration, we can refer to some standard typologies of internal migration in developing societies. Zelinsky’s (1971) celebrated “hypothesis of the mobility transition” is based more on the historical evolution of mobility types in Western societies, but it offers one or two guiding pointers, as I drew attention to in Chapter 3 (see back to section 3.4.2). For instance Zelinsky states that in “late transitional society”, when rates of population natural increase start to decline, traditional types of mobility, such as rural–urban migration, also slacken off, but various forms of circulation increase in volume and complexity. This might indicate that the Egyptian case, where “circulation” (to-and-fro movement between rural and urban areas rather than definitive migration transfers) seems nowadays to predominate, is an instance of “late transitional society”.

Pryor’s (1975) interesting discussion of migration in the process of modernization, which he builds around Zelinsky’s (1971) mobility transition model, notes that temporary moves of the type I have documented for Egypt, although they cross the “frontier between the periphery and the center” (i.e. between Upper Egypt and Cairo), are “unlikely ... to cross the traditional/modern boundary”. This, I feel, is an instructive observation, which needs spelling out in a little more detail to bring out its relevance for the Egyptian case. Rural–urban long-distance migration from Upper Egypt to Cairo *is* a significant phenomenon in that it connects the two parts of the dual spatial economy of Egypt, thereby transcending the core/periphery boundary within the country. But in another respect such migration is a “closed system” (or at least a semi-closed one) in that the migrants circulate nearly always back to their place of origin and intersect only partially with the urban environment. This interaction is restricted to a narrow range of jobs in Cairo’s segmented labor market (more on this very soon), and is paralleled by almost zero integration with the local Cairo population.

Typologically, we can try to locate rural–urban migration between Upper Egypt and Cairo within the matrix of space–time mobility types developed by Gould and Prothero (1975) and by Chapman and Prothero (1985) in their respective work on African mobility and on Third World “circulation” which I earlier briefly introduced in Chapter 3 (section 3.4). Gould and Prothero’s typological model consists of four directional forms (rural–urban, urban–rural, rural–rural and urban–urban) and a time and frequency-based division (with subdivisions) into “migration” and “circulation”. Self-evidently my research has been studying a form of rural–urban movement (with urban–rural return). The more difficult question is to decide whether it should be classed as migration or circulation, and which subtype. According to Gould and Prothero, circulation can be divided into daily, periodic, seasonal, and long-term; and migration into irregular and permanent. Clearly the Egyptian case does not conform to daily or seasonal circulation (since the essence of the latter is regular movements integrated with seasonal work in harvesting crops); nor is it permanent migration (except in those rare cases where the migrant ends up staying in Cairo for good, relocating his family there). Long-term circulation, as defined by Gould and Prothero, involves absence of more than one year, yet with the intention always to return; this too does not apply to the Egyptian case where frequent returns take place, as we saw earlier (the average frequency of return was every three months – see Table 7.8). Long-term circulation is appropriate to other African mobility contexts, notably in East and South Africa, according to Gould and Prothero (1975). Irregular migrations are described by Gould and Prothero as not permanent, in that further movement is likely in the future, but *neither the timing nor the direction* of such movement is known. This latter criterion of unknown direction removes the application of this subtype to the Egyptian case, whose directions of movement are known and fixed as Cairo and the home village. (Note that Gould and Prothero’s use of the term “irregular” refers to the unpredictable nature of this form of migration rather than its “illegal” status as in more recent discussions of international migration – see, for example, Ghosh, 1998). We are therefore left with “periodic circulation” as the most appropriate subtype in the Gould and Prothero typology: “periodic circulation may vary in length from one night away ... to one year, though it is more usual for periodic circulation to be shorter in duration than seasonal circulation” (Gould and Prothero, 1975): 43). This well describes the Egyptian regime where most labor migrants return every few weeks to their home villages, but continue

their migratory linkage to Cairo over several years, even decades. The strictly labor function of the migration I observed perhaps also leads the way open to other terminologies, such as “labor circulation” (a preferred term of Mitchell, 1969, referring to the South and East African cases) or “labor migration” (but this term is more often ascribed to international migration of the “guestworker” type). This by no means exhausts the lexicon of terms which might be applied to the Egyptian case. Chapman and Prothero (1985: 8–13) provide a useful set of tables which offer other possibilities. For instance, “shuttle migration” involves “search for work to augment meager agricultural incomes”. There is “very little financial or social investment in the city”; migrants “sleep in the open, or in group-rented rooms or employer-provided barracks”; their “social interaction (is) almost entirely with other migrants from the village”; and their “employment (is) in traditional or day-laboring sectors” (Chapman and Prothero, 1985: 12). This, too, closely describes the Egyptian situation. Skeldon’s (1977) variant of this term is “pendular migration” based on his research on migration and urbanization in Peru, and applied to absences of up to three months or so – again the norm for the Egyptian rural–urban migrants in this study.

In contrast, migration in the Egyptian case is temporary. The percent of those who lost contact with their origin is very small. This may be attributed, in part, to the gender aspect of the Egyptian labor migration which is male-dominated. Migrants' ties with their origins are strengthened by the fact that they leave their families there.

9.2.2 The labor market

When I attempted to draw a comparison between the migrant laborers and their equivalents from Cairo in the workspace I discovered that no Cairo-born native workers – not even those with limited educational qualifications who therefore come from an equivalent low-status social background to the Upper Egypt migrants – were working as unskilled casual laborers; and furthermore, that no local workers were even willing to consider taking such work nowadays. They see that unskilled laborers come from Upper Egypt (and from other peripheral Egyptian regions), but Cairo-born natives only seek better work. Cairo residents have more options than those who came from Upper Egypt to work in Cairo, and therefore they shun working as ordinary laborers in the building sector. If they do not have any qualification to do specialized work, they might

work as street-vendors, in a coffee shop, or in any workshop or trade with any of their relatives. Upper Egyptian laborers, on the contrary, are the backbone of the building sector in Cairo. They have effectively “taken over” much of the city’s huge construction sector, particularly that which operates according to informal-sector “rules” (except, of course, that these are norms of behavior rather than written or codified rules). They have made this “niche” their own, to the extent that local workers, even those with equivalently low levels of education and literacy, do not even contemplate this work, which is therefore seen as exclusively the work of migrants from the south.

The above summary of the labor market behavior of Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo provides strong support for the existence of a segmented structure, in which the construction sector is the most obvious segment which is “fenced off” for Upper Egyptian migrant labor. The strength of the barriers – wage levels, working conditions, institutional impediments, perceptions of types of work etc. – means a kind of double labor market immobility: the vast majority of migrants are simply incapable of moving out of unskilled work in the construction and casual laboring sectors, and this is complemented by the situation in which local uneducated workers would not demean to offer themselves to these low-status “migrant jobs”. This challenges the Harris and Todaro (1970) model of rural–urban migration which assumes that most urban in-migrants are initially absorbed by the traditional sector while they seek better employment opportunities in the modern sector. My research findings suggest that most Upper Egyptian migrants do not succeed in moving from the traditional to the modern labor market of Cairo, although the nature of my research design restrains me from being too confident in making this statement.

Rather than aim at integration within the modern sector of the Cairo economy (an ambition which is regarded as absolutely unattainable), most Upper Egyptian labor migrants remain firmly oriented to their home districts and villages. They constitute a kind of “rural–urban labor pool” (Nelson, 1976). “At any given time, some members of the family are in the city earning money while others remain at home to cultivate ... land and attend to other family interests. The rural base represents a permanent safe haven for those in the city who become ill, elderly, or unemployed.” (Nelson, 1976: 723). The Egyptian case matches this concept of the “rural–urban pool” rather closely, with the proviso that here (unlike many other migration contexts) males are solely the

migrants, expressing the sharp gender role differentiation that exists in rural Egyptian society (Brink 1991).

So, rather than processes of migrant socio-economic integration occurring in the urban area, rural values and networks are projected into the urban space of Cairo, conditioning virtually all aspects of migrants' lives in the city. Kinship, district of origin and common occupational networks seem to affect all social and labor market outcomes of migrants in Cairo. This has been demonstrated statistically by Assaad (1997) who found correlations between these variables, particularly as regards access or non-access to higher-status craft jobs. Such jobs were denied to Upper Egyptian migrants. The Cairo case is not unique: Ahmad (1992) found similar associations between migrant origins and ethnicity, place of residence in the city, and employment, in a study of Karachi.

The virtual "labor market apartheid" I observed in Cairo with Upper Egyptian migrants has some aspects which are not so negative, and which are supported by other empirical research and theory. Two key features stand out here: migrants' overall incomes are at least equivalent to those of other low-status groups in the city, as was pointed out in Chapter 6 (see 6.2.3); and unemployment is likewise probably no worse, and possibly better, than the Cairo average. The rationale for this can be explained as follows. Unlike local Cairo workers, migrants are prepared to do *any* jobs at whatever the going payment rate is on the informal market: thus they work longer (and so suffer less unemployment), and eventually accrue higher incomes, than many locals who are fussy about what work they do and suffer chronic underemployment. This is consistent with a growing body of evidence which suggests that "migration results in higher incomes for the migrants, labor force participation rates are higher for migrants than the average for urban areas, and the unemployment rate for migrants is lower (than that) among the urban-born" (Griffin, 1976: 359). Specific demonstrations of this have been carried out by Pérez-Crespo (1991) for Bolivia and Vijverberg and Zeager (1994) for Tanzania. Just to explore the Tanzanian findings for a moment, Vijverberg and Zeager found that rural-urban migrants initially earned lower incomes than urban natives, but this gap narrowed with time so that after ten years migrants were better-off in earnings terms. Galor and Stark (1991) hypothesize that migrants work harder in order to overcome the financial and psychological costs of migration and also in anticipation of returning to a lower wage when they go back to their home communities. Also, where "target

migrants” have a specific home-community target to strive towards (a new house, more land, the cost of a marriage etc.), they will work as much as they can in order to achieve the target as soon as possible (Skeldon, 1990: 138).

9.2.3 Remittances and socio-economic change

For Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo, and for many other groups of labor migrants worldwide, the principal economic return of migration is the remittances (Taylor, 1999). As we saw in detail in Chapter 7, remittances constitute the main material linkages between the Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo and their families in the village. The specific question here is: to what extent have these remittances contributed to the development process and the alleviation of poverty? Given that the migrants' families in Upper Egypt are striving to escape from poverty and from very low levels of socio-economic well-being, the potential effect of remittances is vital.

Family members who work in Cairo ensure a generally sustainable, semi-permanent and consistent flow of income to their families in Upper Egypt. However, it is not a surprise that the effect of these remittances is less than the effect of the remittances sent by Egyptian emigrants to the Arab Gulf countries before the Second Gulf War. Emigrants to the Gulf countries were not pushed to migrate due to the lack of job opportunities in their villages in most cases, but migrated mainly to get benefit from the very high difference between incomes and opportunities in the rural agricultural sector and the available job opportunities in the Gulf states. In other words, emigration to the Arab Gulf countries was not a survival strategy such as the current migration of the Upper Egyptian laborers to Cairo: pull factors rather than push factors predominated in the Gulf migration.

The effect of the emigrants' remittances before the Second Gulf War resulted in a building boom in rural Upper Egypt, where most returned migrants managed to build new and well-equipped houses in their villages. In addition, many of the returned migrants invested part of their remittances in non-agricultural projects in their villages. With respect to migrants to Cairo, the case is rather different, but with a few similarities. It depends also on the economic status of migrants' families. The vast majority of migrants' families – being poor – use the remitted money to sustain their

basic needs, mainly food and clothes. After satisfying these needs, a small proportion of migrants and migrants' families use remitted capital to build or extend houses or to help cover marriage expenses of a family member, most probably the migrant himself. The conclusion is that the main use of the remitted money is for consumption, not for investment. The severe need of the remitted money for sheer survival purposes lowers the probability of using it for any other purpose than satisfying the basic needs of migrants' families. Generally speaking, migration has improved the families' quality of life and contributed to rural poverty alleviation; but it has not been invested in ways that might stimulate long-term economic development in Upper Egypt, for instance in increasing the technological basis of agriculture, or in financing small-scale industries. Even the proliferation of petty services, which one notes in other return migration contexts in other parts of the world (King, 1986; 2000), where returnee savings are ploughed into shops, cafés, taxis etc., appears not to be replicated on any scale in Egypt.

The effects of rural–urban migration between Upper Egypt and Cairo, and of the remittances which derive from this migration, seem to lead to the maintenance of a curious kind of “stable disequilibrium” in Egypt. Let me explain what I mean by this, first by specifying what does *not* seem to be happening. By and large, what is not going on in rural Egypt are the outcomes which worried both Amin (1974) and Todaro (1976): namely that rural–urban migration represents a “gift” of labor and human capital from the impoverished rural areas to the rich urban centers without any compensating flow (Amin); or that internal migration entails a social cost in the form of reduced output in rural areas and increased unemployment in the urban areas (Todaro). But if the “vicious circle” of rural impoverishment and cumulative causation of spatial inequality does not seem to happen, neither too does the “virtuous circle” of the pure neo-classical economists, whereby rural–urban migration equalizes inequalities in labor supply and wage levels, with remittances and returnees redeployed to a long-term productive transformation of the Upper Egyptian sending areas (e.g. Griffin, 1976; Lucas, 1997 for overviews of these mechanisms). What seems to be happening is a kind of “half-way-house” between these two theoretical outcomes. Migrants are indeed a notional surplus labor source in rural areas, and their opportunity costs of migrating are indeed low (since they can only find very limited work at very low wages in the countryside). Their access to, and guarantees of, reasonably paid work in Cairo are by no means assured, but by using kinship, village or area-based networks they are able to

get scraps of urban work, which may or may not improve and become more regular over time. Because this work is heavily constrained within a certain niche of the segmented labor market of Cairo (that to do with manual construction labor and other casual, unskilled jobs), and because this work is rejected by Cairo-born workers, migrants' socio-economic integration and hence their "personal transformation", are extremely limited in Cairo. Therefore they remain economically, socially and culturally oriented to their home places, which they visit often, remit heavily to, and hope to return to permanently eventually. However, because of their poor initial socio-economic status and their lack of alternative sources of income (e.g. that deriving from a good-sized farm or another small enterprise), and because of the rather meager wages they are able to earn in Cairo, their remitted and saved capital is rarely on a scale to be able to do more than keep their family going, perhaps with some improved material quality of life (better or bigger rural accommodation, a few consumer goods such as a TV etc.). Hence their inability to provide a major exogenous stimulus to the economic development of Upper Egypt, so that migration (or circulation) can be conceived as "an adaptive process whose major objective is maintaining the dynamic equilibrium of a social organization with a minimum of changes and at the same time providing (some) members ways to overcome their deprivations" (Mangalan, 1968: 14).

9.2.4 Socio-demographic effects of migration

The socio-demographic effects of migration are various. Amongst these effects – in the Egyptian case – are the migrants' exposure to urban behavior, norms, and traditions; women's empowerment and involvement in economic activities as a result of husbands' absence through migration; change in fertility levels and attitudes; and shifts in valuing children's education and participation in labor force.

Migrants have generally been held to contribute to changes in group values toward migration. In the words of Skeldon (1990), "The gradual shift in attitudes is molded by accumulated information and increased awareness of the world outside the village. Tales of life in the major cities brought back by relatives and friends and photographs showing scenes of urban living decorating the walls of rural homes all help to inform village populations of conditions in other parts of the country." In the era of mass media and the arrival of TV sets in Upper Egypt, live stories play a prime role in sketching the

picture of Cairo. As I mentioned before, most migrants were attracted to migrate by stories from older migrants. Nevertheless, the empirical findings of this study have on the whole showed that the effect of migrants' exposure to urban patterns and lifestyles was not strong in changing their traditional way of life and attitudes, and in a few cases it was even negative, reinforcing their rural conservative values as an antidote to the "evil" city.

Upper Egyptian migrants in Cairo live in relative isolation, as has been pointed out many times. They do not have channels to communicate with the local population, except formal work relations. Migrants tend to live in groups from the same village or group of adjacent villages, which of course contributes to their intentional isolation. This isolation is a natural reaction that reflects their failure to comply with the general styles of urban life from their side. On the other side, it is a means to keep their own identity, norms, and traditions; a kind of micro-scale parallel to the anti-globalization movements in the developing countries. Another psychological factor that contributes to this self-isolation is the Upper Egyptian migrants' perception that they are less educated and work in low-status jobs in Cairo and that Cairo folk look down on them.

It has been well established in the literature that the labor migration of husbands has many effects on the family in rural areas (for early yet comprehensive statements on this see Gonzales, 1961; Nelson, 1976). Research in Arab countries (Brink, 1991; Dawood, 1978; Khattab and El-Daeif, 1982; Morsy, 1985; Nawar and Mostafa, 1990; Taylor, 1984) suggests that women's status within the family increases when their husbands migrate to look for work. Cases are cited of women becoming more active in farming, wage labor, dealing with government agencies, and generally taking over the husbands' roles as family decision-maker and disciplinarian. In my village visits in Upper Egypt and my interviews and discussions with migrants' families, I noticed that women's status and cooperation in work have indeed increased, as I mentioned in more detail in earlier chapters. Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that there are limits to this process of female empowerment. Egypt has an established tradition of inegalitarian sex roles, and the superiority of the husband and father is reinforced in various ways. For instance, in Egyptian family law, which is based on Islamic law, the husband's legal and economic dominance over his wife is clearly recognized (White, 1978). On a practical level, too, the Egyptian family system sharply defines gender roles, and

women are reluctant to take over all the functions of the absent migrant husband. Brink (1991) found that village women whose husbands were away were uncomfortable about dealing with banks and with construction laborers who were working on their houses, and also felt inadequate when disciplining their children. Further problems could arise, one imagines, about renegotiation of respective roles when the husband returns. These are themes that could have been explored more in-depth had longer time been spent doing fieldwork in rural areas – although my status as a man would have certainly hindered me getting full (or even partial) access to the female perspective.

The effect of migration on fertility and family planning was found to be virtually nil. Migrants' families have higher fertility rates and lower contraceptive prevalence rates than their rural counterparts. These findings can be explained in the light of four facts, all noted earlier. The first is that the rural Upper Egyptian families represented in my survey are not a random sample of their region; they have lower socio-economic characteristics than the average, which may explain – in part – why they have a higher fertility level than the average for the region. The second factor that affects fertility and family planning is the isolation of the Upper Egyptian laborers in the social geography of Cairo and their tendency not to be an active integrating social group in Cairo. This isolation has undoubtedly restricted their exposure to urban behavioral patterns and customs. Thirdly, the conventional demographic impacts of migration from the rural perspective seem not to have operated in the Egyptian case. Despite the logical expectation that the absence of male migrants from the village might adversely affect the reproduction rate, both by delaying marriage and by reducing the time that couples might stay together, my sample displayed higher than average fertility. Clearly married men returning home for short periods have been rather successful in impregnating their wives, although this is not to discount the possibility that fertility could have been even higher without migration. The fourth factor, which is more speculative, is that migrants' fertility is maintained at a high level because of the support created by extending the household resource base to the city. This is a controversial suggestion because it contravenes the general observation in LDCs that increased wealth leads to reduced fertility.

Regarding children's education, migrants' own harsh experiences have taught them that they do not want their children to suffer as they have done. This is a positive side of

migrants' experience in Cairo. With regard to migrants' expectations about future family structures, it seems that the extended family pattern may last for at least one more generation in Upper Egypt. Most migrants anticipate that they will live with their children in the same house when they grow old. This attitude is related to the norms and the traditions that prevail in Upper Egypt, supported by the weakness of the social insurance system and the housing problems in rural Egypt due to the restrictions on building houses on agricultural land.

To sum up, the pattern of male migration has had many positive effects on the villages of Upper Egypt. It has raised women's status by increasing their involvement in economic activities and by heading their families in the absence of the husbands. It has contributed to rural poverty alleviation and ensured a decent life for the migrants' families. And migration has changed migrants' attitudes positively towards their children's education. On the other hand, migration appears to have done nothing to diminish the still-high fertility levels in rural Upper Egypt. Hence my suggestion at the beginning of this study (see Chapter 1; 1.1) that rural–urban migration might be promoted as a policy strategy to help to bring about a decline in overall Egyptian fertility seems to have been misplaced. Further brief discussion on policy options follows immediately below.

9.3 Concluding the research: policy recommendations and future research avenues

9.3.1 Policy reflections

As an academic thesis, this study has not set out to have an explicit policy objective; nor, even less, is it an evaluative study of existing population and development policy. However, given the nature of the topic of the thesis, and its obvious connection to Egyptian regional development, a few reflections on policy implications are not out of place.

The relation between population movements and development is reciprocal. It is not only migration that affects development and contributes to modernization, but also development affects the nature and direction of migration streams and their magnitude.

In this respect, migration is part of the socio-economic development of any country. Considering both urban and rural areas as well as different regions in Egypt in formulating policies that affect internal migration and population redistribution is a must. To regard industrialization as the panacea of Egypt's development (as, for instance, stated in Beaumont *et al.*, 1976: 486) is no longer a credible policy stance. Nor is a strategy which seeks to resolve the problems of urbanization solely within the city's boundaries: indeed a one-dimensional approach to countering the ills of urban life by only improving the conditions of life in cities – for instance by building more homes, improving health and education facilities – may become self-defeating since rural–urban inequalities are widened and with it the stimulus to further migration (Dasgupta, 1981). Policies and plans should be formulated in order to achieve the more balanced structure that would enable residents in rural and non-metropolitan areas to get access to the benefits of socio-economic development. Rural poverty alleviation schemes will help to reduce the migration streams from rural to urban areas. They will help also to re-unite families whose historic pattern has been one of having the head of the family work in Cairo and leave the family in the village.

According to Dasgupta (1981: 56) an effective migration policy for a country like Egypt should be to ensure that migratory moves are:

- not driven by rural frustration and rural–urban inequality;
- directed towards a range of smaller and intermediate urban settlements and away from very large urban agglomerations;
- slowed down to a pace which avoids social and economic disruption, either in origin or destination; and
- shaped in such a way that migration does not have the effect of transferring a problem from one place to another.

Direct and forced measures of influencing internal migration should not be used. They are against Egyptian law and human rights. Rural development is among the key policy options that may contribute to the reduction of the potential flow of rural labor to urban areas. Rural development includes the following types of interventions:

- Rural industrialization and establishing small-scale, labor-intensive industries.
- Developing micro-credit schemes and participatory funding of labor-intensive activities and especially handicrafts.
- Supporting the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in their developing of training schemes for the surplus population of agriculture.
- Control of population growth in order to reduce the pressure on public services and to slow down the unemployment rates in the future.

Parallel to the rural development approach is the need to promote potential internal migration destinations, such as Toshka and the other new developments outlined in this thesis, and to explain to the public more effectively the potentials of these new areas with respect to job opportunities, living conditions, services and facilities.

Due to the current economic situation in Egypt and the over-population pressures on public expenditure and the high levels of unemployment in both urban and rural districts, I see that the government of Egypt is not capable in the short run to go for a massive rural poverty alleviation strategy. However, the second option in Dasgupta's listing, which is the promotion of potential alternative internal migration destinations, is more feasible. The private sector and multinational companies, besides the government, have managed to establish new communities that can absorb part of the surplus of the agricultural sector. This promotion of new urban development outside of the heavily-urbanized Nile Delta region will help to diffuse and decentralize internal migration patterns away from the main metropolitan destinations.

With respect to the future national research agenda of population studies in Egypt, it is clear that in the last two to three decades migration research was an almost missing aspect of demographic research. The study of the other two factors of population growth, fertility and mortality, gained the great proportion of research interests and funding by population scholars, sociologists and demographers. The funding priorities of the international donors directed most of the funds towards research on family planning, fertility, infant and child morbidity and mortality, and reproductive health. Population geographers' and sociologists' potential contributions to research on internal migration were neglected. After releasing the data of each population census,

demographers have produced a few research papers that skim over the internal migration issue and deal with it mathematically rather than in-depth. As is well-known, the census data on rural–urban migration usually underestimate the real volume of movement (Skeldon, 1990), so that the summary findings of demographic research do not reflect the real nature and scale of rural–urban migration in Egypt.

9.3.2 Strengths, weaknesses, and future research

It is appropriate in the final paragraphs of a thesis for the author to identify in summary form the strengths and weaknesses of the research executed and, from that, sketch out some points for further research.

I regard the main achievement of this thesis to be its empirical core of detailed and original data collected on the migration profiles of a sample of 242 rural–urban labor migrants whom I surveyed in Cairo, supplemented by 20 recorded interviews of another set of Upper Egyptian migrant laborers, and the more observational fieldwork done in some villages of origin. Together, these field data enabled me to answer, to a greater or lesser extent, the research questions set out at the beginning of the thesis. Specifically I have:

- described the basic socio-demographic characteristics of the migrants – young adult males from poor material and educational backgrounds;
- identified their motives for migrating – overwhelmingly to find work and income opportunities;
- described the means and mechanisms of their migration – they are a form of “labor circulation” or “shuttle migration” moving back and forth between their villages and Cairo over a period of many years, and heavily reliant on village-based social networks of various kinds to facilitate this process;
- documented their working lives in Cairo – as casual laborers in a variety of jobs mainly related to the construction sector, these jobs being physically tough and with a rather high risk of injury;

- provided detailed insights into earnings, costs of living and savings – their incomes are low, but nevertheless at least twice what they can earn in the village, and they save about half of what they earn;
- described their living conditions in Cairo, with special reference to housing and diet – the former overcrowded and insanitary, the latter meager;
- investigated their socio-demographic behavior and attitudes – finding that migrants are socially conservative in their demographic behavior, holding to high rates of fertility and low contraceptive use, and also to conservative views as regards gender relations and upbringing of sons and daughters;
- provided fairly detailed information on remittances and their deployment in villages of origin – mainly they are used for “survival” or “consumption” (food, clothing, children’s education, housing, consumer goods) with little left over for “productive investment” in farming or rural industries;
- described migrants’ plans for their future – generally to return eventually to the village, but with somewhat unrealistic hopes of secure jobs there, and with patchy knowledge of national development projects which might offer them alternative migration and livelihood possibilities.

A number of comparative perspectives were built into my answers to and analysis of these research questions. These included:

- comparison of the migrants’ living and working conditions in Cairo and in the places of rural origin;
- comparison of migrants and the non-migrants in the villages of origin;
- comparison of migrants with non-migrants of similar socio-educational backgrounds in Cairo.

The first of these was straightforward, since it concerned asking questions in the questionnaire to the same sample. Regarding the second and third of these comparative perspectives, my research time and scope did not allow me to set up formal control samples. Instead I used existing panel data from Egyptian survey sources. This limited the strength and rigor of the comparisons somewhat, but yielded sufficient data to enable some useful comparative perspectives to emerge.

Perhaps the greatest limitation to my study in its comparative dimension – and this is a constraint that I have repeatedly acknowledged at various points in the foregoing analysis – is its narrowly drawn sample. The “self-selectivity” of this sample as based almost entirely on poor rural-origin migrants engaged in casual labor in Cairo makes it difficult if not impossible to generalize about overall Egyptian rural–urban migration. This affected, to varying extents, my ability to answer convincingly all of my research questions. It also opens up a further comparative dimension which should have been built into the research design had time and resources allowed: this is the comparison between the mainly “circulation migrants” whom I surveyed and other categories of migrants in Cairo, notably those older-established and permanently-settled migrants who originate in many cases from the same regions of the country as “my” migrants. Practical limitations of time and resources prevented this comparative dimension being explored. I was also aware of the safety dimension: some of the slum suburbs (including the cemetery areas) are not really safe to venture into if someone does not have friends and contacts amongst those local inhabitants.

Where I experienced more of a philosophical dilemma in the research process was how far to extend the research focus in three epistemological directions: to theory; to comparisons with the literature on rural–urban migrations in other parts of the world; and to policy. Throughout the thesis I experienced unease about how far to push the analysis along each of these dimensions. Whilst on the one hand I was made constantly aware of the need to explore these aspects more thoroughly; on the other hand constrictions of time, length of the written product (the thesis), and coherence of the final narrative held me back.

Hopefully the theoretical framing of the analysis has been a sufficiently present part of the final account: foregrounded in some detail in the lengthy Chapter 3, touched on from time to time in the empirical results chapters (5–8), and revived for a concluding analysis in Chapter 9. It would be tedious at this stage to repeat all these theoretical contextualizations, since they have been dealt with already earlier in this concluding chapter. Very briefly, then, elements of Ravenstein’s laws of migration, “push–pull” theory, the Gravity Model, dual-sector and segmentation theory, systems analysis,

social networks, and both neoclassical economics and “new economics of migration” theories were all found to be more or less relevant to my analysis. I made particular use of the Mabogunje systems model of rural–urban migration; and I used the Todaro model, too, as a frequent theoretical sounding-board, although not always, I must admit, to good effect. More productive theoretical and conceptual references were those I made to the “home economics” approach, “survival migration”, and the vexed definitional issue of “migration” versus “circulation”.

My comparative references to the literature on rural–urban and internal migration could undoubtedly have been more extensive. I tended to respond to the problem of the vastness and dispersion of this literature by being selective in my choice of case studies to reference – mainly, but not exclusively, referring to the comparative work carried out in Africa and the Middle East, and relying on the useful but over-theoretically focused (for my purposes) review of writers such as Stark (1978, 1991) and Lucas (1997, 1998).

On the policy front, I have been even more restrictive. Whilst recognizing at the outset the potential policy relevance of this research, I also do not claim that this is a primarily policy-focused piece of work – hence the rather brief concluding comments in the previous subsection of this chapter.

As for further research questions and avenues, I suggest the following. Some of these are obvious extensions to the work I have done in this thesis, others derive partly from weaknesses in coverage or logic in the above account.

The first area for further research I would nominate, is to widen the focus of outmigration from Upper Egypt to other groups apart from low-status rural laborers. I mentioned already my concern that the self-definition of the migrant sample treated here has tended to limit the scope of some of the conclusions that can be drawn about the totality of migration from Upper to Lower Egypt. A wider sample, perhaps drawn on the basis of a stratification of settlements and social and landowning classes in the region of migrant origin, would enable a more comprehensive picture of internal migration in Egypt to be achieved. Widening the focus in this way, to include those who moved for study purposes and other reasons, would also probably reveal other

processes of more complete integration into the social and economic life of the city than the social marginalization of the labor migrants I have studied.

Second, more attention could be paid to international migration from Upper Egypt, and to the interactions between internal and international migration. My data are only partial on this, “capturing” migrants in Cairo who have been abroad, but “losing” those who are now abroad after first migrating internally. Although I provided some comparative indications, based on my village fieldwork, of the larger volume of savings that normally accrue from external migration compared to internal migration, more precise comparative data could be surely gathered on this – following the example of the interesting comparative study of Mexican migrants carried out by Lazano-Ascencio *et al.* (1999).

Third, I feel that further analysis of the role of social networks and social fields in Egyptian rural–urban migration would be beneficial. The nature of my questionnaire, and the relatively limiting supporting nature of my qualitative fieldwork, meant that the data I gathered on the role of social networks was useful and indicative, but not in-depth. As I briefly touched on in my theoretical review in Chapter 3, research on social networks has been an importantly growing agenda in studies of international migration and transnational communities; but they have an equally powerful potential to inform the nature of the internal migration process (Skeldon, 1990: 132). This approach would imply a more even division of field research between the urban and the rural context than I made in this investigation, which was mainly concentrated on the urban destination.

Fourth, more scope exists for a detailed examination of the precise conditions of outmigration from the source areas. Exactly what (and who) determines who should move, when, and for how long? How are inter-district and inter-village contrasts in outmigration to be documented and explained? Inspiration here derives from the classic account by J. Clyde Mitchell (1969) which distinguished the *rate* of migration (dependent on macro-economic and other structural factors) and the *incidence* of migration (which individuals, precisely, move and their migration profiles in time and space). What, furthermore, is the role of *family*-based migration discussions and strategies on migration behavior? (This last question links both to the social networks

approach mentioned above, and to the need for more gender-sensitivity, which is my next point). Once again, this implies more concentrated field research from the origin-area perspective.

Fifth, I acknowledge the need for more attention to be given to the gender dimensions of Egyptian migration. Brink (1991) has begun to do this, but her perspective is as female-biased as mine is male-biased, given that she interviewed only women, and I only male migrants (though I did talk to some women in my village fieldwork). But the whole field of gender dynamics in migration needs further exploration: What role (if any) do women (mothers, wives, sisters etc.) have in formulating the decision of male members to migrate? What views do women have about their own potential/denied migration, or about reuniting with their husbands in Cairo? What hardships do women suffer as a result of men's migration? (Brink suggests these are not as great as might be supposed). What are women's views about the extra responsibilities they are asked to shoulder as a result of the absence of their men? And what views do they have about the future of their families, households, numbers of children etc?

Finally, some bigger questions deserve attention on the part of future researchers. The first is the comparative dimension, especially within North Africa and the Middle East. Both Todaro (1976), some time ago, and Lucas (1998) more recently, have entered pleas for more comparative research on internal migration in less developed countries based on more rigorously standardized data and research criteria than hitherto; whilst Shami (1994: 4) has drawn attention to the fact that the Middle East "remains much neglected and understudied, and thus contributes little to comparative theory" in the field of migration and population development.

Another major question is to deepen understanding of population mobility on the one hand, and modernization and development on the other. Shami (1994: 9) maintains that "dislocation is increasingly seen as a precondition of modernity" (let alone postmodernity); yet which types of mobility are "good" and which are "bad" for the Egyptian "modernity"? The answer to whether too much labor is being transferred to the urban sector from rural areas of Egypt is far from clear-cut. It would appear that the "skimming off" of a quota of excess rural labor from Upper Egypt to supply the construction sector in Cairo has its economic functionality, but at what cost in human

and psychological terms? And what are the long-term effects on the Egyptian economy, especially the rural economy?

And finally what is the “bigger picture” as regards the relationship between migration and demographic trends? Kubat (1976: 19–20) makes the point that too many studies of African migration treat lightly the problem of the wider demographic context. My results were, in one sense, inconclusive on this point, due largely to the migrant laborers’ continuing rural orientation and mentality. But this inconclusiveness raises other questions, about other migration strategies which might have a more profound demographic impact – permanent family-based rural–urban migration, or external migration, might depress fertility more effectively. Or should a policy of rural modernization and diversification be employed in order to be able to reallocate rural labor resources more efficiently in the Egyptian countryside? And what fertility implications might this have, given that fertility decline assessments for Egypt (and for the North African region as a whole – see Sutton, 1999) have been increasingly optimistic in recent years?

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SUSSEX
AT BRIGHTON

**University of Sussex at Brighton
Centre for the Comparative Study of Culture, Development
and the Environment (CDE)**

**Field Questionnaire
on**

**Rural-to-Urban Labor Migration: A Study of Upper Egyptian
Laborers in Cairo**

by

Ayman Gaafar Zohry

**Data for this survey are confidential and will be used only for scientific
research purposes in Ph.D. study by the researcher**

Place of interview: _____

Name: _____ Date: / / 2000 Serial Number

Record time: :

SECTION I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
101	How old are you now?	years	
102	What is your current marital status?	1. Single 2. Engaged 3. Married 4. Divorced 5. Widowed	
103	What is the highest level of schooling which you successfully completed?	1. None 2. Primary 3. Preparatory 4. Secondary (General) 5. Secondary (Technical) 6. University	106
104	Are you currently attending school?	1. Yes 2. No	106
105	Which level of schooling are currently attending?	1. Primary 2. Preparatory 3. Secondary (General) 4. Secondary (Technical) 5. University	
106	Can you read and understand a letter or a newspaper?	1. Yes 2. No	
107	Can you write a letter?	1. Yes 2. No	
108	Do you have an occupation or you are an ordinary laborer?	1. Have an occupation 2. Ordinary laborer	110
109	What is your occupation?		
110	From where did you come? From which governorate, district, and village?	Village: District: Governorate:	

SECTION II: INFORMATION ABOUT WORK AND LIVING CONDITIONS IN CAIRO:

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
201	Do you have a long-term contract with a company or do you work on daily basis?	1. Contract 2. Daily basis 3. Task-based	203 203

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
202	How long is your current contract?	Months Years	
203	Number of working hours per day? (Reference to the last week)	Hours	
204	Number of working days per week? (Reference to the last week)	Days	
205	How often do you receive your wages?	1. Daily 2. Weekly 3. Monthly 4. Occasionally	
206	What is your current wage per day on average?	Egyptian pounds	
207	How long at current job?	Months Years	
208	How did you find current job?	1. Friends 2. Relatives in Cairo 3. Hired by employer 4. Other: _____	
209	How long have you been working away from your village?	Months Years	
210	How many times per month (year) do you visit your village?	Per month Per Year Each days	
211	At what age did you first leave your village for work?	Years old	
212	Why did you come to Cairo to work?		
213	Did you consider any other options at the time?	1. Yes _____ 2. No	
214	Have you worked in different jobs in Cairo before?	1. Yes 2. No	216
215	What were your previous jobs in Cairo?		
216	On the whole, would you say that your various jobs in Cairo have over time:	1. Remained about the same? 2. Got better? 3. Got worse?	
217	Did you work in other places in Egypt before? (e.g., Port Said, Alex., etc.)	1. Yes 2. No	219
218	Where did you work?	1. _____ 2. _____	
219	Did you work in your village?	1. Yes 2. No	223
220	What was your job in your village?		

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
221	What was the last wage you made per day in your village?	Egyptian pounds	
222	When was that?	Years ago	
223	Have you ever traveled abroad to work?	1. Yes 2. No	226
224	Where (what country)?		
225	Duration?	months years	
226	Do you have relatives in Cairo?	1. Yes 2. No	228
227	Do you visit them?	1. I live with them 2. Frequently 3. Rarely 4. No	
228	Are your friends in Cairo mainly people from your village, or are they friends which you have made since coming to Cairo?	1. From my village only 2. From Cairo or other villages	
229	What social activities do you engage in in Cairo?	1. No social activities 2. _____ 3. _____	
230	Where do you stay in Cairo?	1. With other workers 2. With friends 3. With a family 4. Other: _____	
231	How many persons are sharing the same room?	persons	
232	Does your place of residence in Cairo have electricity?	1. Yes 2. No	
233	Does your place of residence in Cairo have piped water?	1. Yes 2. No	
234	Is your place of residence connected to the sewage-disposal network?	1. Yes 2. No	
235	How much do you spend on housing in Cairo?	Per day Per week Per month	
236	How much do you spend to live in Cairo per day?	Egyptian pounds	
237	How much money do you spend on these items per day?	Tea Cigarettes Food Others	
238	What did you eat for breakfast today?		
239	What did you eat for dinner yesterday?		
240	What did you eat for lunch yesterday?		

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
241	What is the percent of your income that you save?	Percent	
242	Do you send money to your family while you are here?	1. Yes 2. No	244
243	How do you send the money to your family?		
244	Do you have contact with your family while working in Cairo?	1. Yes 2. No	246
245	How do you contact them?	1. Written messages via ordinary mail 2. Written messages via colleagues 3. Oral messages via colleagues 4. Telephone calls	
246	Are you covered by any type of health insurance?	1. Yes 2. No	
247	Have you had any health problems while working in Cairo?	1. Yes 2. No	250
248	What type of problem?		
	Did you go to a doctor (pharmacy)?	1. Yes 2. No	
249	How much did that cost? (i.e., for doctor, medication, etc.).	Egyptian pounds	
250	Have you had any serious injuries related to the nature of your job while working in Cairo?	1. Yes 2. No	301
251	What was the injury?		
252	Did you go to the hospital?	1. Yes 2. No	255
253	Who took you to the hospital?	1. I went myself 2. My colleagues 3. My employer	
254	Who paid for transportation and medication?	1. I paid myself 2. My colleagues 3. My employer	
255	When did you return back to work after this injury?	after days	

SECTION III: INFORMATION ABOUT LIVING CONDITIONS IN PLACE OF ORIGIN:

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
301	Where does your family live?	Village: District: Governorate:	
302	Family size and composition:	Brothers Sisters Father Mother Wife Sons Daughters Others	
303	Do you own a house or an apartment?	1. Yes 2. No	
304	Do you own agricultural land?	1. Yes 2. No	307
305	How many Feddans?		
306	Who is working in the land while you are in Cairo?		
307	Do you have any of the following items at home:	1. Television? 2. Refrigerator? 3. Gas stove? 4. Radio? 5. Water heater?	
308	Do you have any of the following items:	1. Tractor? 2. Motorcycle? 3. Car? 4. Bicycle? 5. Telephone?	
309	Does your home have electricity?	1. Yes 2. No	
310	Does your home have piped water?	1. Yes 2. No	
311	Is your home connected to the sewage-disposal network?	1. Yes 2. No	
312	How many bedrooms in your home?	bedrooms	

**SECTION IV: INFORMATION ABOUT FAMILY LIFE:
(For ever-married laborers only)**

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
401	Do you have children?	1. Yes 2. No	403
402	How many?	Male Female Total	

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
403	Would you like more children?	1. Yes 2. No	405
404	How many?	Male Female Total	
405	What would be your ideal family size?	Male Female	
406	What is the age at which sons should start to offer useful assistance at home, on the land, or at work?	Years old	
407	Do your sons work either at home or in the village?	1. Yes 2. No	
408	What is the age at which daughters should start to offer useful assistance at home, on the land, or at work?	Years old	
409	Do your daughters work either at home or in the village?	1. Yes 2. No	
410	How many years of education would you like your son(s) to receive?	Years	
411	How many years of education would you like your daughter(s) to receive?	Years	
412	If no education for daughters. Why?		
413	How many years of education did your wife complete?	Years	
414	When you grow old, do you expect your children to help you financially?	1. Yes 2. No	
415	When you grow old, do you expect to live with your children?	1. Yes 2. No	
416	Have you ever heard of family planning?	1. Yes 2. No	
417	Has you or your wife ever used a family planning method?	1. Yes 2. No	420
418	Are you and your wife currently using a family planning method?	1. Yes 2. No	420
419	What type of family planning methods?		
420	Are you planning to use a family planning method in the future?	1. Yes 2. No	

SECTION V: AWARENESS OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
501	Have you ever heard of Toshka project?	1. Yes 2. No	505

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
502	From where?		
503	If a job opportunity for you is available there, will you be willing to go?	1. Yes 2. No	
504	What do you know about it?		
505	Have you ever heard of East of Port-Said project?	1. Yes 2. No	509
506	From where?		
507	What do you know about it?		
508	If a job opportunity for you is available there, will you be willing to go?	1. Yes 2. No	
509	Have you ever heard of East Oweinat project?	1. Yes 2. No	513
510	From where?		
511	What do you know about it?		
512	If a job opportunity for you is available there, will you be willing to go?	1. Yes 2. No	
513	Have you ever heard of Gulf of Suez project?	1. Yes 2. No	517
514	From where?		
515	What do you know about it?		
516	If a job opportunity for you is available there, will you be willing to go?	1. Yes 2. No	
517	Will you take your family with you? (in case of hearing about any Project)	1. Yes 2. No	

SECTION VI: PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:

Serial Number	Questions	Coding Categories	Skip to
601	Would you like to live in Cairo permanently or would you like to return to your village to live?	1. Live in Cairo 2. Return to village	603
602	For how long do you plan to stay in Cairo before you return to your village?	Months Years I don't know	
603	Would you like to travel outside Egypt for work?	1. Yes 2. No	605
604	To where (which country)?		

