

Subject : The aim of the study is to describe and analyse the effects of labour migration on marriage and family life. The study was conceived as an attempt to gain information both about the transformation of attitudes and norms and the accompanying stresses related to migrancy. We set out to explain the ways in which a territorially defined community has adapted to a set of constraints which limit their access to material resources and at the same time involve circumstances which demand that they need an increasing volume of resources to meet rising expectations in education and quality of life generally. To meet these new needs certain values must be compromised or even abandoned. Also, the radical changes in the pattern of marriage as well as family relationships are to a large extent the result of labour migration.

In considering this subject it is well to remember that there are other major factors which have operated directly and indirectly in bringing about changes in marriage and family life. One cannot overlook, for instance, the far-reaching effects of forces like Christianity, education and political domination which have been felt in every part of South Africa. Migrant labour, therefore, is only one of the agents of change although it is undoubtedly one of the most important factors which have contributed to the overall process.

Fieldwork: The fieldwork on which this study is based began in Burnshill in the district of Keiskammahoek in October 1976 and continued for a period of 7 months. The village was visited again at the end of 1978 for two weeks to fill in gaps and elaborate inadequate accounts. The investigation commenced with a census, seeking information on the number of homesteads in the various sections of the village, educational standard and ethnic affiliation of the homestead heads. This was followed by an intensive study of a random sample of 53 homesteads representing a one-in-six sample of the entire village. For material concerning migration and the various aspects of marriage the method used was that of obtaining genealogies of the homesteads in the sample. Information was solicited about each person appearing in these genealogies concerning the date of birth, educational status, migration history, details concerning marriage as well as the number and whereabouts of their children.

Settings: Burnshill Village : The village is inhabited by Xhosa and Mfengu as well as a few people whose clans are of Mpondo and Thembu origin. It was settled de novo by Mfengu and Xhosa during the second half of the past century and, largely on this account, it lacks the homogeneity and the continuity of cultural tradition which are predominant features of long-established communities. Also, Burnshill is a stratified community including people who vary a great deal in terms of economic standing, educational achievement and in their association with Christianity.

- (a) Firstly, there are old-established residents (54%) most of whom own land either on Quitrent or Freehold tenure. The majority of them are the descendants of the first group of Mfengu who were settled in Burnshill soon after the Xhosa were expelled from the area during the 1850-53 war. It was their close association with the missionaries which enabled them to acquire land and education, factors which are primarily of economic importance at present. Also, they have been associated with Christianity for several generations.
- (b) Secondly, the village includes a large number of people (46%) who immigrated into the village from 1945 when the S.A. Trust form of land tenure was introduced in the area. Most of them are Xhosa who lived and worked on farms (mostly white-owned farms) as landless people for many generations. 34% of them own land under the S.A. Trust and the rest are landless. Besides, this section of the community has relatively recent contact with schooling and Christianity. Only a few of them are affiliated to the 'mission' churches in the village and most of them are active members of the Zionist and Apostolic churches established in Burnshill within the past few decades.

The phenomenon of labour migration: Although a large number of men and women leave Burnshill and settle permanently in the urban areas, the majority of the <sup>60</sup>people continue to follow an oscillating pattern, going out to the towns and returning home in between work spells. In respect of a considerable number of men and women the motivating factor in going out to work is economic necessity - lack of money to support themselves and their families, etc. Generally the people cannot earn sufficient money at home to satisfy their needs for cash. These cash needs have increased while in most cases the remittances from migrant workers are destined for immediate consumption. Soon after his arrival, the migrant's economic resources become exhausted and he has to go out again for another work spell which usually involves a long absence from home. Also, the spread of consumer goods generates

additional wants and new opportunities for spending create new needs which only more migrant labour can satisfy.

Other factors which account for the movement of the people from the rural areas are of a social and personal nature. A large number of the people (especially among the old residents) migrate because they have skills which equip them for employment outside the village. Only a few of the people with professional qualifications can be employed locally; others go out to try their luck in towns. Education, also, is important in cases where people migrate for reasons other than employment. Many children go out to further their education outside the village, some in the urban areas. On the completion of their educational careers they normally find employment in the towns and other rural areas.

The social and personal factors regarded as relevant here refer to domestic relations as well. Migration may enable a young married woman to escape from the control of her husband's relatives, a boy may leave home for work in the towns to avoid ill-treatment at home, etc. Apart from this, influences which ultimately lead to migration may emanate from the wider society, especially the peer group. In many instances the boys leave their homes because their age mates are doing so.

While it is difficult for most men and women to support themselves at home, it is also not easy for them to settle permanently in the towns. Influx control regulations control the entry and residence of workers in the urban areas. The migrant must acquire a permit from his local authority at home and thereafter the labour bureaux in town must be satisfied that labour conditions justify the migrant's entry in the area. Besides, a migrant can achieve the status of a 'permanent resident' in the towns only by fulfilling stringent conditions, viz. by showing proof of 10 years' continuous employment with one employer or 15 continuous years of employment with different employers. (Urban Areas Act Section 10 ) Also, the legislation which came into effect in April 1968 prohibited married men who work in town as contract workers from bringing their wives into the urban areas. (Natives Urban Areas Act, *ibid.*) These legal restrictions are of exceptional proportions in South Africa as compared to other countries in Africa- largely because of the efficiency with which they are implemented and the scale of the operation is due to South Africa's well developed urban mining and industrial sector. This makes the South African migrant labour situation very different from many other cases discussed by anthropologists in Africa.

There are several physical constraints, too, which encourage people to return home and not settle in town. Apart from the workers who are accommodated by their employers (e.g. the mine and domestic workers) it is with great difficulty that the married men are able to find suitable accommodation for their families in the urban areas where the municipal houses are normally allocated to the 'permanent residents'. Besides, the man who takes his family to town may lose his job and his accommodation as well. Also, in the past black urban residential areas have included a large number of overcrowded shanty towns. In 1955, for instance, the East Bank location in East London was inhabited by 45,000 people living on 127,9 hectares. (Reader 1961: 103) Although most of the shanty towns have now been demolished, they have not been replaced with an equivalent number of urban houses and shortage of suitable accommodation in town is still a problem. Other difficulties are related to the unhabitability of the urban environment generally, especially the problem of bringing up children in the towns.

The country, on the other hand, offers a greater measure of social security, independence and a lower cost of living. In the country people are able to build their own houses and a few are still able to supplement their earnings by cultivation and the rearing of stock. Also, there is a role and status for old people in the country. They are the custodians of the young family members and look after the homes and property of the absent relatives. There is also a romantic view of the rural areas as havens of peace. Although this attitude characterises first generation urban dwellers in particular, it is noticeable among established urban dwellers as well. A similar response to urban living is found among many other middle class English and other South Africans who dream of retiring to a home by the sea or in a rural area. Many actually realise that ambition.

Although the majority of the people return home at the end of their working lives, a significant proportion of the people from Burnshill emigrate permanently. In the majority of cases it is the old residents of Burnshill who leave the village to settle permanently in the towns and they do so for various reasons. Very few people can make a living in the country under present conditions. Also, the difficulties of oscillating between the towns and the country force many men to abandon the country completely. Apart from this, it seems the permanent emigrants include most of the people who qualify for 'permanent residents' by long employment in one particular town. This enables

them to qualify for family accommodation in the towns in which they work. Some are able to find accommodation for their families in the Ciskei townships. Although the ownership of land in the country enables a large number of people to return home eventually, it is not entirely decisive. Some of the people who inherit land in the village (especially under Quitrent tenure) sell their land and settle completely in town.

Male migration: Since the Keiskammahoek Rural Survey male absenteeism has increased from 53 to (59 per cent). The change over a quarter of a century is not startling but the trend of continual townward movement can still be seen. The 72 men found at home included 53 men who lived permanently in the country. Most of them were no longer migrating either on account of old age or physical disability. The men found at home also included 5 migrants who were at home temporarily and intended to go back to work shortly, 12 men employed locally and 4 able-bodied men who had been at home for a number of years and could continue staying at home or go out again to look for work. One of them was a self-employed builder. Apart from 8 young men and boys without labour migration experience, the sample included only one elderly man, a relatively wealthy Freehold land owner, who had never been a wage earner and depended on his land for his living.

Although people are attracted by the higher rates of pay in the cities and towns, they do take jobs locally when such opportunities arise. The largest employment centre in the vicinity of Burnshill is the Fort Cox agricultural college. Towards the end of our fieldwork a building contractor began erecting a water purification centre in Burnshill and provided some of the people with jobs. The chances of finding employment locally, however, are limited and most of the men have to go to the towns.

The boys who do not continue their schooling go out to look for work at a relatively early age, at about the age of 17. They seldom have special aims when they venture out to the cities for the first time and, in many instances, they do not discuss the matter with their parents and leave the village secretly. (ukuzimela). Instead, it is often the peer group which influences one's decision to leave. "I saw other boys going to the mines and decided to go." "There were no difficulties at home, it was only ubukhwenkwe (boyishness) which induced me to leave home." Also, the return of young men from the mines and towns as well as dissatisfaction with home conditions (e.g. ill-treatment and lack of interest in schooling) are some of the factors which encourage

boys to leave for work. The boys who migrate for the first time normally chose towns where their relatives work. The relatives provide the prospective worker with accommodation and assist him in looking for work. It must also be noted that many children become familiar with town life while they are still living in the village and during the school holidays they often visit their relatives in the urban areas.

After an employment experience of a few years boys save money for circumcision. Thereafter several more trips to town are undertaken before the man marries. After marriage men's economic responsibilities increase and tend to keep them in employment until very late in life, sometimes until the men are well over the age of 60. This is in sharp contrast to other areas where the fathers stop migrating altogether once their sons go out to earn money. (Mc Allister 1978: 10) Most of the elderly men in Burnshill continue working in town because they are not in a position to receive adequate support from their sons, especially when their sons are married. In many instances ill-health forces the men to retire: others die at work.

There are two main categories of employment for the men who migrate. The first includes all the contract workers employed on the mines and other enterprises which recruit workers locally. This type of employment, which is commonly referred to as ijoyini, is obtainable in Keiskammahoek and Middledrift through the labour agencies. This is the main avenue of employment for the less educated members of the community. The better educated people, on the other hand, do not normally think of ijoyini when they seek employment because they associate it with poor wages and ill-treatment of workers. The second category of employment includes workers employed in the factories and other businesses in the towns and cities. This is the main mode of employment for the better educated people. Workers in this category go out to search for work, they are not recruited in the country. Many men would prefer employment in the factories and other business undertakings in town but continue taking ijoyini because influx control regulations inhibit them from doing so. They can choose to break the law and take the risks but such attempts are not always considered worthwhile on account of the consequences.

The majority of the males from Burnshill work on the Witwatersrand and Port Elizabeth. The majority of those who work on the Witwatersrand are unskilled workers employed by the mines. Also, on account of industrialization, Port Elizabeth now attracts

the same number of male workers as the Witwatersrand. At the same time, the proportion of workers employed in Cape Town declined since the 1950s. This decline could be expected since there are now more restrictions on individuals who want to work in Cape Town. Apart from the workers who enlist for contract jobs in this centre, it is mainly the elderly men in permanent employment who still work there. Younger men who leave home and seek work in Cape Town without work permits often experience difficulties. This is shown in the case of Zinto who left for Cape Town in 1959 and remained there until 1963 moving from one temporary job to another since he could not obtain a work permit. Eventually he decided to return home and later found employment in a factory in King William's Town. East London and King William's Town are other centres which draw a substantial number of men from Burnshill.

The majority of the married men (particularly among the immigrants) leave their wives and children behind when they go out to work. This accounts for 68% of the cases in our sample. The rest reside in town with some or all the members of their families. Children left at home while their parents are away at work are normally left under the care of relatives, elderly widows especially. Some of these couples do not emigrate permanently, they establish themselves in the country while working in town and eventually return. Many of the families in this category contemplate their return to the country over many years and even start building projects at home without knowing exactly where they will settle eventually. In Burnshill there are many buildings which have been abandoned at the initial stages and some residential sites are re-allocated because their owners have left the village completely (ukufuduka).

In some instances the wife who resides with her husband in town may return earlier to establish the homestead for the family and, in other instances, the wife may continue working in town when the husband is already living in the country. The latter cases refer particularly to husbands who are forced to stop working on account of illness. Also, the children who are brought up in town may continue living in town after their parents have returned to the country. This situation contributes to the family scatter which is discussed later.

The form of migration under consideration here is distinct from the seasonal migration which is common, for instance, in many parts of West Africa where the migrants leave for work abroad when agriculture does not require their presence.

(Du Toit 1975:51) The system as it applies to Burnshill involves men and women of all ages in prolonged urban residence and the time the migrants spend at home is relatively short. Workers employed in far away places like Johannesburg and Cape Town normally visit their homes during their annual leave (for about 3 to 4 weeks). Those working nearer home in places like King William's Town and East London are often at home during Christmas (for about 3 weeks) as well as during the long week-ends. Many of the important social occasions like family rituals take place during these times.

Workers employed on the mines, on the other hand, are not always at home during Christmas: they arrive at any time during the year and usually spend a month with their relatives. Some of them, however, are not able to renew their contracts immediately and remain at home for several months. The time men normally spend away from home ranges between 9 months and a year. At the same time, there are some mine workers who absent themselves from home for several years. In one case a young mine employee continually extended his labour contract and eventually returned home at the end of his third year of employment.

The question of home visits is closely connected with remittances. People who visit their homes regularly tend to support their homes as well. Similarly, those who absent themselves from home for several years send very little or nothing home. A large number of the households receive these remittances and, apart from old age pensions and disability grants, depend on them to a large extent. The money is used mostly for the purchase of food and other daily requirements like clothing. Besides, the remittances are used for the education of children, the building of houses, medical attention, etc. Generally, the people are unable to spend much on farming. Not all remittances are in cash form: some comprise clothing, furniture, building materials, groceries and radios.

The amounts remitted vary widely between individual migrants. These differences depend on variables like the wage level of the particular migrant, his position in the household and the point reached by his family in its domestic development. In some cases, for instance, the young unmarried men never send any money home while they are away. Some do, however, when the relatives have written requesting financial assistance. Married men working on the mines normally send money home after a period of two months. However, there are few wives who can rely on the receipt of regular and fixed remittances.



Apart from the short term migrants described above, the male workers from Burnshill include long term absentees who visit their homes after several years as well as those who have relinquished their links with the country altogether. Of the men in the genealogies 30% had been away from their homes for 5 years or more. The investigation also revealed numerous cases of men who left home long ago and lived in town with their families until they died. After their death, their widows and children did not return to Burnshill. The sample of male absentees included 12 (11,8%) absconders (amatshipha). 8 of them were men who left in youth, 3 were married men who deserted their wives and 1 was an unmarried 37 year old man when he left home. When people go out to work they normally send money and visit their homes from time to time. When they abscond, they neither communicate nor send any remittances home. In some instances all trace of them is lost and in others the relatives at home do get to know the whereabouts of the amatshipha through other people who work in town. People can tshipha anywhere, in East London (relatively near home) or in Johannesburg (farther away). Some of them do return eventually, especially on account of ill-health. On arrival they usually have few personal possessions and tend to depend on their relatives (and sometimes disability grants) for maintenance.

Migration of women: Though men continue to be regarded as the principal breadwinners, women in Burnshill have been going out to work in the towns for many decades. Our investigation indicates that this practice was already fairly common even in the 1920s among the old residents. Besides, there is a likelihood that some of the women became involved in wage employment in the towns before the beginning of this century. During our investigation 45 per cent of the women above the age of 16 were outside the district, most of them working in town. This represents a 6 per cent increase in female migration since the 1950s. The extent to which Burnshill is different from other relatively traditional areas where the migration of women is uncommon is illustrated by the fact that in 1976/77 there were only 4 female migrants at the Folokwe ward<sup>1)</sup> in Willowvale in the Transkei.

Among the immigrants in Burnshill this is a fairly recent development: a large proportion of the elderly women in this

1) The ward at the time was inhabited by 410 people living in 79 homesteads. (Mc Allister: 1978:5)

section of the community have never been employed in town. But at present, apart from the women who marry in the village at a relatively early age, virtually all the young women go out to work. Most of them migrate at 18 or 19 years of age, slightly later than in the case of boys. One of the reasons for this is that girls normally spend more years at school. As in the case of men, many women are forced to continue working in town up to old age. There are some instances, however, where they return home early to care for the homesteads and the children of their absent relatives, especially when the parents become too old or die. Like the men, women work in the large urban centres (Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and Johannesburg) as well as in the smaller labour centres nearer home. Apart from the small number of women whose education equips them for specific jobs, most of them find employment in the domestic service.

Generally, young women with no children go out to work for their personal needs and, in some instances, to gain the experience of working in town. The women who have children, on the other hand, go out primarily to earn money for the support of their children. The sample of 98 women who were in town at the time of the investigation included 41 unmarried women and a large number of them had left their children under the care of their relatives.

Another fairly large category of women who go to the towns are married women. This accounts for 31 (31,6%) cases in the sample. Most of the women who marry in the urban areas continue living in town after marrying. Some start their married life in the country and migrate later in order to assist their husbands meet the needs of their families (particularly the need to educate children) or simply to live with their husbands. In other instances the migration of married women is caused by domestic tensions which include mostly dissatisfaction with their husbands' support and quarrels with their husbands' relatives. Some simply decide to join their husbands and disregard their husbands' views about the matter. Others, however, solicit the approval of their husbands before leaving.

Widowhood and desertion by husbands are two of the common crises which force women to seek urban employment. Our sample included 16 separated women and 6 widows who were working in town during our investigation. In the majority of cases the separated women and young widows return to their homes or origin and leave their children with their mothers or sisters when they go out to work. Elderly widows, on the other hand, look after

of absent relatives. Also, many of them are able to qualify for old age pensions which provide them with some income.

We have already indicated that many of the women who work in town leave their children in the care of their relatives. In this respect a great deal of co-operation occurs between women, especially between mothers and daughters and also between sisters. Generally, mothers accept the responsibility of caring for their daughters' children and their daughters, in turn, are expected to contribute part of their earnings for the maintenance of their children and their homes. Similarly, where sisters live together in one homestead it is usual for one of them (often the eldest) to remain at home caring for the household and the dependants of the other working women. In many instances the relatives receive fairly regular financial remittances from the working women and this constitutes an important source of income in many families. Generally, women are more reliable than men about remittances and support. Also, there are comparatively few absconders among them - in the sample of 98 women in town only 4(4,1%) had absconded.

Apart from the material contributions that women make through their wages, labour migration enables women to maintain themselves without the help of men. For instance, the village includes a large number of unmarried women who have established their own homesteads. This is made possible by the fact that at present women can acquire land in their own right. While working in town, they provide money for the building of the houses to which they retire when they no longer work. Also, the greater measure of economic independence enjoyed by women has an important influence on the relations between the sexes.

Establishing a marriage: Among the immigrants the most common form of marriage is ukuthwala, i.e. elopement and in a few cases abduction. The ukuthwala marriages (increased) from 14,6% of all marriages in the 1920s to 18,3% in the 1930s and reached 30,3% in the 1940s. At present they constitute 55,9% of all other marriages. In spite of its widespread occurrence, this type of marriage has not yet been accepted as normal: it is still termed ukuthwala which literally means to carry. One who marries in this manner, in addition to the normal lobola, is expected to give an extra beast (inkomo yokuthwala) as a fine. The earlier form of marriage among the people who now marry by ukuthwala was the customary marriage which was celebrated by means of festivities lasting several weeks as well as by the performance of the wedding dance known as umdudo. There were some immigrants in

our sample who married in the 1920s and the early 1930s by those customary rites which have now been abandoned. Even in the past, however, there were people who married by ukuthwala.

At present the ukuthwala is an informal marriage which is rarely preceded by the recognised negotiations between the two families (ukucela) or by the payment of lobola. This is one of the aspects which distinguishes it from the customary marriages which were normally preceded by several months of negotiations between the two families. At present these negotiations are almost invariably made and lobola given only after the marriage. In some cases these formalities take place a long time after the marriage itself because many men leave their homes soon after marrying. Also, the present day ukuthwala is a form of elopement in which the man invites his lover to join him at his home. In the few cases of what can still be termed abduction force is seldom used. Couples elope at night and on the following day boys are sent to the girl's home to report the ukuthwala. On this day the woman stays indoors until new clothing is made for her. It is the man's responsibility to provide the money for the purchase of the new attire which includes a long 'German print' dress, a black doek (iqhiya) and a scarf (uxakatho).

Among the old residents the ukuthwala marriages are relatively few. In the past the marriage pattern of this section of the community was strongly influenced by the Church and most of the old residents married by Church rites. Parents whose children married by ukuthwala were excommunicated. A man who worked in town would return home and perform a colourful church ceremony (umtshato) which used to last for several days. Other people who could not afford these weddings were and are still married privately by the local ministers of religion who act as marriage officers. At present the elaborate church marriage ceremonies are extremely rare because, for one thing, they are beyond the means of most people. In 1977, for instance, only two church weddings were celebrated in Burnshill. The majority of the old residents, on the other hand, marry in town mostly by civil rites.

Although the old residents generally are free to marry in the urban areas, it is expected that the relatives at home be drawn into one's marriage and, ideally, formalities like ukucela and the exchange of lobola must be performed by the kinsmen at home. Under present conditions which keep young people away from their homes for lengthy periods this requirement is difficult to fulfil. Most young people instead marry and inform their parents

later and, in the cases where the wife's home is a long way from the town, the negotiations are sometimes delayed for a number of years. Others substitute the kinsmen at home with other relatives they find in the towns.

For some people the private marriage in town is an unwelcome alternative to the marriage which they feel should be celebrated at home. For this reason they return home after marrying in town to perform the ukuhlaziya (to renew) ceremony which can be anything ranging from a colourful wedding to a small family gathering intended only for close relatives and a few friends. The ukuhlaziya includes the ukwendisa (to give a girl in marriage) by which the bride is formally handed over to the husband's family. It is during the ukwendisa that the parents who receive the lobola are able to compensate the husband by providing their daughter with her marriage goods. Before ukwendisa a mother who is a member of the amabhaso (gift) club arranges an occasion for the giving of gifts to her daughter by the other members of the club. Even if a daughter is in town, if the husband has given lobola, amabhaso are arranged for her. Today, however, the occasions for ukuhlaziya are fewer than in the past few decades.

Another change in the marriage pattern of the old residents concerns the residence of the wife after marriage. In the past a young wife was expected to live for a period of time with her husband's family and the essence of this practice (ukuhota) was to familiarise the young wife with her umzi. Today the practice of ukuhota is no longer common and many couples start their married lives in town. In some cases their first visit home is made a number of years after marriage and in other instances they never visit their husbands' homes.

It is necessary also to consider lobola under present day conditions. Although it is the giving of lobola which establishes the validity of a marriage, 25,4% of the marriages in our sample were unions in which no lobola was given. That the number of such marriages is increasing is indicated by the fact that the Keiskamdhook Rural Survey which investigated 1512 marriages did not include any marriages without lobola. Even at that time, however, the range in the number of cattle given as lobola was wide including a few marriages in which 1 head was given and others with as many as 15 head. The average lobola at that time was 7,4 head. (Wilson, M. 1952: 85,87)

This development is closely related to the weakening of parental authority and the difficulty of applying the traditional

sanctions like ukuteleka which enabled parents to remove their daughter from her husband's home and keep her until the issue concerning lobola was resolved. At present there is little the parents can do if a man fails to pay lobola for his wife. In some instances this causes quarrels between spouses mainly because women believe that they are more likely to be deserted if no lobola is given by the husband. One of these cases involved a young man who married by ukuthwala in 1975 without giving lobola to the wife's family. The man left for the mines and on his next visit home he wanted to use part of his earnings for purchasing fencing material for his father's homestead. His wife, on the other hand, had other plans for the money - she felt the fencing of the homestead was not an urgent matter and that the money would rather be used for her lobola. This caused a friction between the husband and the wife and the husband did not send any lobola to the wife's relatives.

Generally, women are in favour of lobola because they feel it enhances the status of their marriages and that to be willing to earn it is proof of a man's affection. At the same time, the custom operates in a different context. The man must earn his own lobola and can hardly hope for assistance from his family as was the case in the past. Under present conditions he cannot readily give lobola without making savings over a lengthy period during which he has to make many sacrifices. Besides, some of the men do not give lobola because they cannot be certain whether their wives will not desert their homes while the men are away at work. Some of the newly married wives return to their homes when the men have left for work and others elope with other men. These are some of the factors which have changed the attitudes of the men regarding lobola.

Stability of marriage: Marital instability is one of the major factors connected with labour migration. This trend manifests itself in the increasing rate of separations and, in a few cases, divorces. The Keiskammahoek Rural Survey showed only a small proportion of divorces: 0,3% among males 25 years and over and 0,4% among females 20 years and over. The separations, however, were found to be more frequent. There were 150 (7,5%) instances of desertion of spouses among 2,000 marriages in four villages in the district (including Burnshill). (Wilson, M. 1952: 81,91) Our investigation, on the other hand, revealed 41 (29,7%) separations among 138 marriages recorded. As in 1950 the

divorces are few. Couples simply part ways and do not normally take the matter to court.

Many marriages terminate on account of men failing to support their wives and prolonging their stay in town. Since the people are largely dependent on money for virtually all their needs, when the husband does not send money home the wife struggles to make ends meet. She may, for some time, receive assistance from her parents but such an arrangement cannot continue indefinitely. When she is convinced that the husband is neglecting her entirely, she normally returns to her parental home or go and seek work in the towns. Also, the emotional strain resulting from the neglect and the prolonged separation of the spouses leads some wives to have sexual relations with other men. Often this situation results in serious disputes which lead to the separation of the spouses. Among the older women, however, marital infidelity is hardly encountered.

Some of the married men, on the other hand, leave their families at home and live with other women (ukuhlalisana) in town. This practice, which is common among migrants in town, is amply demonstrated by a number of researchers in the urban areas. (Mayer 1961, Pauw 1961, Longmore 1959) Although a man has no legal responsibility towards the woman with whom he stays under ukuhlalisana, unless he has a child by her, he usually gives her a certain amount of economic aid. This usually happens at the expense of his family at home. Some of the men eventually abandon their families at home on account of ukuhlalisana.

The separation of the spouses has significant implications for the conjugal relationship in other contexts as well. For example, some of the women who go out to work leaving their husbands at home do not return to their rural homes. On account of her husband's illness, Nomvo was given permission by her husband to go and work in King William's Town. In King William's Town she established a love affair with another man and made it difficult for her husband to visit her. The couple separated eventually. Other tensions which dissolve marriages are of a general nature. One of these cases refers to Mbamba who parted with his wife in the early 1950s. We were told that his wife lost interest in her umzi for its conservatism. She left her husband's home secretly and joined her brother in Cape Town where she found employment. Since then she did not return to Burnshill and two of her three children have joined her. Her third child is married in Burnshill. At present Mbamba lives permanently at home and has not re-married.

Another factor which we need to take into account is the new attitude of women which portrays a revolt against established norms. There are many women who are happily married in the community. These are the women who accept their traditional role of looking after their husbands' households while their husbands go out to work. But the conflicts which result in the separation of spouses indicates the differences between men and women with regard to their attitudes to marriage. Most men are conservative in outlook and are largely unaware of the vast changes which have affected women. Among the immigrants, for instance, many young men marry with the intention of providing their parents with assistance in their household duties and, as in the past, expect their wives to depend on their parents-in-law. Women, on the other hand, seek greater freedom in marriage and do not always meet their husbands' expectations. Where these clashing interests cannot be reconciled, the separation of the spouses often occurs.