

Researching livelihoods and
services affected by conflict

Livelihood trajectories in Afghanistan:

Silent violence in Kandahar Province

Working Paper 55

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- Livelihood trajectories and economic activity under conflict

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Acronyms

ALP	Afghanistan Local Police
ALT	Afghanistan livelihood trajectories
ANA	Afghan National Army
AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
CDC	Community Development Council
FHH	Female Household Head
HH	Household
HHH	Household head
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRVA	National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PKR	Pakistani Rupee
SLRC	Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium
WG	Wealth Group

1 Introduction

This study on livelihood trajectories in Kandahar is part of the third round of a panel survey tracking the fortunes of rural Afghan households. The household panel was established in 2002, with a second survey carried out in 2009-10 (Kantor and Pain, 2011).¹ Funded by the European Commission, this third panel survey focuses on the provinces of Herat, Kandahar and Sar-i-pul, and forms part of a cross-country research programme on livelihoods under conditions of insecurity being led by the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC). This paper explores the context of Kandahar, and is the second of a set of three papers on household trajectories in Afghanistan (see also Huot et al, 2016 and Huot and Pain, 2016).

The three study sites provide contrasts in terms of levels of reconstruction funding and conflict, as well access to public goods, poverty rates, and levels and types of inequality (Huot et al., 2016). In Herat, we returned to 25 households in three villages and found that, despite what might be seen as an area of high agricultural potential, there was little evidence of agricultural growth and employment. Agricultural incomes were secure for a few households with sufficient land, but for most there was limited work and so remittances from household members and *walwar* or dowries for daughters were key sources of income (ibid.). In contrast Sar-i-pul is a rainfed and agriculturally marginal province and the 24 household in 2008 were suffering the effects of a drought, selling assets and in economic decline. By 2015 matters had improved helped in part by the re-emergence of opium poppy cultivation but also by increased outmigration to work in the brickfields of Mazar.

The two survey villages in Kandahar are located within the Arghandab River basin, an area of irrigated agriculture, and therefore along with the study sites of Herat provide an opportunity to test assumptions around an agricultural growth model for Afghanistan (World Bank, 2014a). Yet the villages are also close to the major urban centre of Kandahar City, which has been central to the power dynamics of post-2001 Afghanistan, the battle against the Taliban, the opium economy and the reconstruction effort. Supported by powerful political connections and fuelled by major disbursement of reconstruction funds, Kandahar City has been a boom town since 2003 with strong economic growth driven by services, reconstruction funds and drug money.

The second panel survey in Kandahar in 2009 (Pain, 2010) found three distinct household trajectories. For the landed elite with inherited or acquired social position (or those connected to them), the political economy of Kandahar provided enormous opportunities for them to prosper through agricultural assets, off-farm employment for sons and a share of rents from the reconstruction economy. The rise in disposable incomes provided opportunities for a second group of households – those without land but with energy and skills to undertake diverse labour-intensive activities and access informal credit – to find footholds in the less remunerative parts of the economy. A third group of households struggled to survive and commonly lived in dependent relationships with the large landlords of the villages.

Kandahar stands out from Afghanistan's 32 provinces (World Bank, 2014b) for its high level of reconstruction funding and conflict, and relatively low levels of consumption inequality (in terms of the Gini index).² But it is also notable for its relatively poor attendance ratio of girls to boys in primary education (65.1%, ranking 21 out of 32 provinces), and lack of antenatal care for women, both of which likely reflect Kandahar's more conservative cultural environment.

¹ See Huot and Pain (2016) for a more detailed background to this study.

² 'The Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of consumption among individuals differs from an equal one. A value of 0 represents absolute equality with everyone consuming the same amount, a value of 100 absolute inequality where all consumption is concentrated in one person' (World Bank, 2015:19).

This third panel study examines the performance of village institutions (see Pain, 2016) and household navigation of economic life in Kandahar, with a specific focus on the street vendor market (Minoia and Pain, 2016). These, in turn, are then linked to a broader understanding of provincial level political dynamics, and a further study on the politics and governance of Kandahar (Jackson, 2016). We consider the following questions:

- What are the livelihood trajectories and welfare outcomes of the Afghan case households over the last twelve years? How do gender, socio-economic position, community and the broader context differentiate these?
- Under diverse contexts of conflict, what practices have these households implemented in relation to market choices and use of social and human capital to cope with insecurity? To what extent have these practices mitigated or reproduced insecurity, and contributed to or undermined resilience? How has insecurity affected household strategies and welfare outcomes?
- What do these livelihood trajectories tell us about the meaning of local informal and formal structures, and how households and contrasting communities have adapted to and engaged with government, aid agencies, markets and the private sector? What does this tell us about the nature of resilience, its scope, reach and the inclusiveness of its mechanisms?
- To what extent do trajectories of change reflect path dependency determined by pre-existing structures, or reflect the capacity of individuals or communities to bring about changes through collective action? If there have been shifts, where, for whom, and how has it been possible?
- How do village institutions (both customary and introduced) perform in relation to public-good provision, and how do they relate to and engage with district and provincial authorities and external interventions?

Three key findings emerge. First, the effects of the economic downturn in Kandahar (Minoia and Pain, 2016) have been strongly felt by most households, and those without land have been particularly affected with reduced food security. Not only have opportunities in the margins of the urban economy diminished, but there is also little agricultural work to be found in the villages. In contrast, no households in Herat reported any member migrating out of the country for work, and the use of dowries as a strategic source of household funding was much less commonly reported (Huot et al., 2016).

Second, the Kandahar study villages are characterised by major land inequalities, with the village elite acting largely in their own interests. There is a striking dearth in the provision of public goods, and education for girls is notably absent. As found in a companion SLRC study on elite behaviours and public good provision (Pain, 2016), those households in dependent relationships with landlords are subject to significant forms of structural or 'silent' violence (Boyce and Hartmann, 1983).

Thirdly, and related, social structures have two strong fault lines in Kandahar: a) class structures based on land ownership; and b) women are almost totally excluded from the public sphere, are scarcely present in the economic realm, and are systematically denied access to basic public goods (with some exception for health care).

This paper proceeds by briefly presenting our methodology, followed by an account of Kandahar province and the specific context of the study district and villages. We then explore in detail the contrasting trajectories – improving, declining and coping – across the case study households before concluding. As noted earlier, this paper is the second in a series of three reports on household trajectories in three contrasting provinces. Together these will provide the basis for a forthcoming synthesis report, and accordingly the emphasis in each case study is on the specific provincial findings rather than the broader implications.

2 Methodology

This research is a livelihood trajectory study (Huot and Pain, 2016), and closely follows the methodology of the second panel study in 2008-10 (Pain, 2010). Field work was conducted in Dand district, immediately south of Kandahar City, in two of the original three villages selected in 2002. Between October 2015 and January 2016, three rounds of interviews were conducted, one preliminary interview with all the original sample households in each village and two in-depth interviews with a sub-sample of 8 households in village A and six in village B. A full account of the interview methods is detailed in Annex 1.

Sixty households, 20 in each of three villages, were interviewed originally in 2003. By 2009, one of the villages was too insecure for a return survey. From the original 20 households in each of the two remaining village, a subsample of eight households was selected to form the Kandahar study site (Grace and Pain, 2004). This was also the case in this third round.

By 2009, five of the original 20 study households in village A had moved out and could not be found. In 2015, 13 of the remaining 15 households were located by the field team with one declining to participate further. Of the two remaining households that could not be found, one was part of the sub-sample selected in 2009 and was headed by a widow living rent-free in a house owned by her brother, with four young sons working as petty traders in Kandahar city. Our assumption is that they had moved to the city. The second was a large joint household of 19 poor landless people, of which the men worked as casual labourers and petty traders in the city.

In village B, four households had moved on by 2009 and a further one could not be found by the interview team in 2015. A further four of the households refused to be interviewed again in the third wave, and two participated in the initial interview only and did not have follow up interviews (one did not allow the women of the household to be interviewed and failed to keep appointments for subsequent interviews; the second refused further interviews). As a result, of the eleven preliminary interviews conducted, only seven of the eight subsample households from 2008-09 were interviewed in village B, and only six of these had follow up second and third interviews.

In all cases the households that had moved on were those without land, and most had settled in the two villages relatively recently. The Kandahar village interviews were considerably more difficult to undertake than those in Herat, largely due to a reluctance by the head of the household to allow women be interviewed (or women refusing to be interviewed), but also due to evident hostility among the elite towards the new government and those potentially associated with it, as well as because of the effects of the economic downturn. An additional view voiced quite often was that many aid agencies had come and gone from the village with promises that had not been met, and so the households were fed up with outsiders coming to the village offering few benefits.

Fifteen households were selected for the in-depth study with contrasting economic fortunes and wealth. The relative wealth group of each household was based on land and asset ownership, debt, and household composition. The wealth groups ranked from 1 (high to relatively wealthy) to 4 (low to relatively impoverished). The wealth group criteria largely corresponded to land ownership, with large and medium land owners in the higher wealth groups (1 and 2), and small and landless households comprising the lower wealth groups (3 and 4). These wealth groups are relative to a specific village, and are not absolute measures. Information on household size and whether the household was joint (J) or single (S) is also indicated.

Table 1: Summary of household wealth groups

Wealth group	Village A Household code (household size, joint/single)	Village B Household code (household size, joint/single)
1	A10 (22*, J)	B40 (17, J)
2	A05 (29, J) **A02 (15, S)	B42 (17, J) B57 (18, J)
3	A01 (19, J) A03 (10, J) A16 (11, J)	***B44 (8, S) B46 (16, J) B50 (20, J) B56 (7, S)
4	A00 (7, S) A12 (11, J)	

Notes: *Agreed only to a first interview; ** A02 substituted for A19; *** B44 substituted for B58.

3 Background

3.1 The context of Kandahar

It has been said that whoever controls Kandahar also controls Afghanistan – and the city and province have been the power base of President Karzai (Jackson, 2015: 6). Since 2001, Kandahar has come to exemplify the fault lines of post-2001 Afghanistan. It has been a core operational theatre for military intervention seeking to beat back the Taliban, fight a war on terror and bring to heel the opium economy. But as Jackson has observed (ibid), this truism may also work in reverse – controlling Kandahar is central to controlling Afghanistan.

The rise of elite men in the province can be seen from a wider perspective of seeking and giving state legitimacy, while at the same time acquiring resources to build and maintain patronage networks. Into this mix, international intervention has offered military support as well as an unprecedented flow of financial resources to support the creation of both the political and economic marketplace. Not surprisingly, this has created a high degree of violent competition among the elites (Jackson, 2015), which may explain the ‘structural violence’³ exerted on the less powerful that many informants of this study describe.

Resource flows from reconstruction funds, coupled with the capture of border revenues, have created a cash-rich rentier economy in the city. While the political elite captured the higher reaches of the economy through construction, trade and security provision (Minoia and Pain, 2015), spending power trickled down to create opportunities for others without political connections or land to improve their situation (Pain, 2010). In Kandahar’s prosperous years, the city attracted the dispossessed and landless from the rural hinterland, and fuelled an avaricious bureaucracy who sought their share of the resource flows:

‘When I was working in [the] custom department, the commission workers were the key people who were involved in corruption and fraud. One person was very famous ...he was the link with all employees in the custom house and he was paying a share to them. When a businessmen had a full truck full of commodities it did not matter what kind of commodities, he was taking the document to the custom office and instead of one truck, the custom officer was writing half a truck of commodities and the commission worker was paying half truck tax to the government. The second method was when a businessman was importing a rug from Iran. Of course the price of the rug is more and the businessman needs to pay a large amount of money as tax, but this commission worker changed the name of commodities from rug to carpet. In this case the businessman had to pay the tax for carpet not rug which is much less. (HH B57, male informant, interview 3)

Increasing insecurity in Kandahar’s districts and the gradual drying up of resource flows since 2011 has caused a severe economic downturn, which has affected players at all levels (Minoia and Pain, 2015). One informant commented on its consequences, pointing to the limits of village economies to provide agriculture-based employment:

‘Now the labor market has come down and about 65% of people at the village level are free and they are not able to find work for themselves. About 8 years ago, this percentage was about 10%, and these 10% people were busy in agriculture activities at the village level. The other 90% of people were busy in work outside of the village.’ (HH B40, male respondent, interview 2)

Evidence from the World Bank confirms Kandahar as a major recipient of financial flows from both international military and development funds. At peak levels in 2010, the US was reported to have

³ The ways in which highly unequal social structures characterised by land inequalities, gender inequalities and poverty, systematically cause harm and lasting damage (Galtung, 1969; Farmer, 2004).

spent about US\$650 for each Kandahari, three times the per-capita annual income in Afghanistan (Minoia and Pain, 2015: 11). This level of funding, combined with natural resources endowments (a major irrigated agricultural plain) and being a trading city close to a border, have meant that Kandahar is one of Afghanistan's richest provinces with poverty rates the second lowest in the country (Farah has the lowest). But in two other measures – girls' attendance at primary school and access to skilled antenatal care – Kandahar is one of the most deprived provinces, with a deeply conservative culture that confines women to the home (see Table 2).

Table 2: Relative ranking of study sites according to aid spending, conflict status and poverty outcomes

	National	Kandahar	Herat	Sar-i-Pul
High-conflict high-spending		✓		
High-spending low-conflict			✓	
Low-spending high-conflict				
Low-spending low-conflict				✓
Poverty rates (%)	35.8	13 % (2)	35.3 (14)	59.1 (28)
Depth of poverty (%)	8.4	1.6	8.8	16.9
Calorie deficiency (%)	34.7	29.0 (16)	22.1(10)	56.4 (25)
Gini index (%)	31.6	21.6 (8)	34.8 (32)	27.2 (20)
Underemployment (%)	18.6	10.9 (8)	15.7 (10)	16.1 (12)
Girls to boys net attendance ratio, primary (%)	67.4	65.1 (21)	103.6 (1)	83.7 (11)
Girls to boys net attendance ratio, secondary (%)	56.2	29.6	97.9	48.1
Access to skilled antenatal care (%)	51.3	26.5 (27)	64.9 (9)	73.2 (6)
Safe drinking water (%)	45.5	46.6 (10)	52.8 (9)	(25)

Notes: Ranking out of 32 Afghanistan provinces given in brackets.

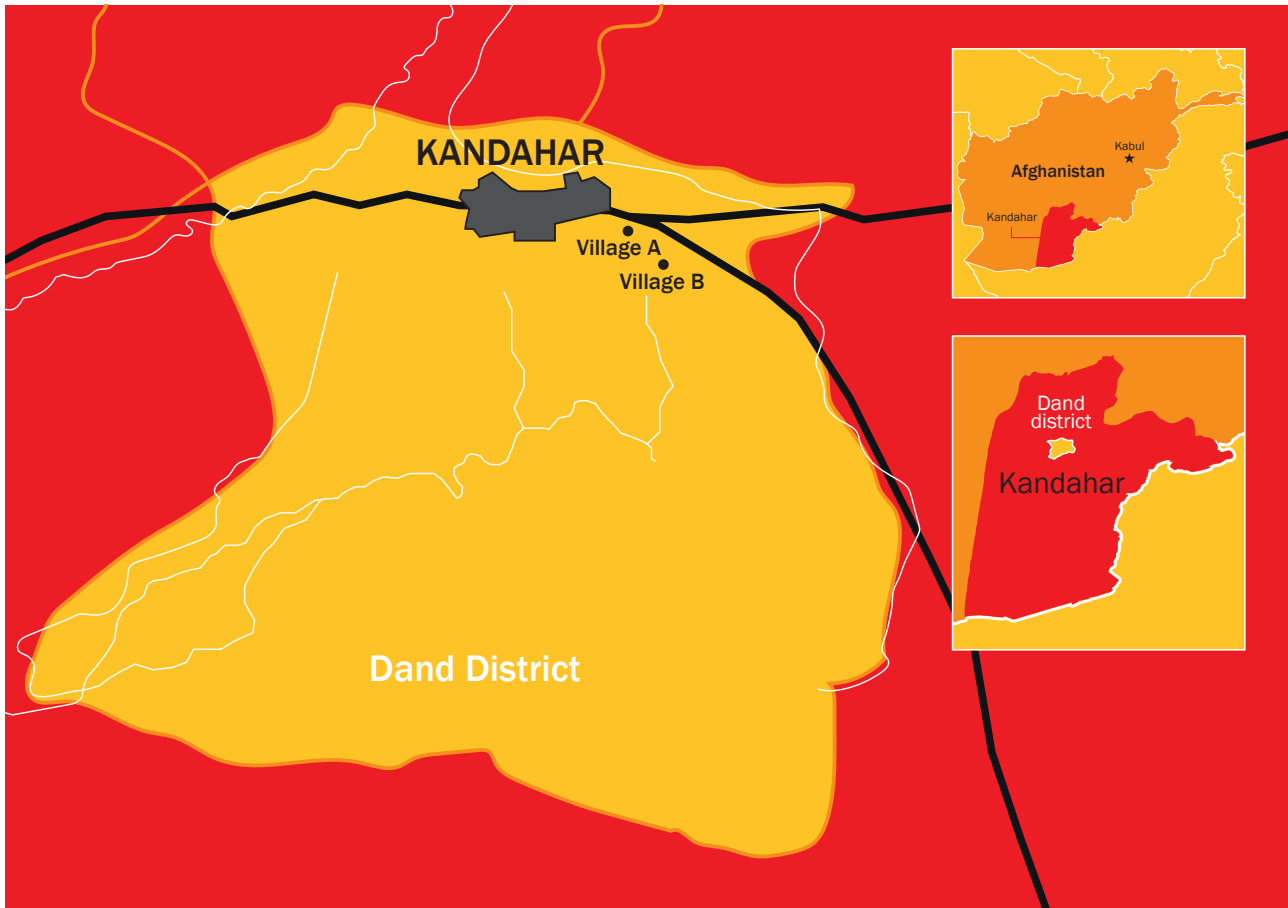
Sources: World Bank (2015: 11), (2014b).

3.2 Dand district

The two study villages A and B lie in Dand district, which borders on the southern edge of Kandahar city. It was created in 2001 (Pain, 2010: 9), and its landed elite have close ties to the major political players in Kandahar as well as at the national level (see also Jackson, 2015). As apparent from informant accounts, and consistent with Jackson's observation (2015: 24), the provision of public goods such as roads, health care and schooling has been limited in the district due to lack of interest from the village elite.

The agricultural economy of the district is poorer in comparison with neighboring Arghandab and Panjwal districts, largely as a consequence of poor water supply. In the past, this has meant that agricultural labourers have often migrated to the grape gardens of the two others districts to find work, however lack of security has long meant that this is not now possible. Instead, the somewhat greater security of Dand district and its proximity to Kandahar have pulled much of the working population into the margins of the urban and peri-urban economy, particularly during the boom years of 2003 – 2010. However for many, this work is no longer available either.

Figure 1: Dand District



3.3 Power relations and economic opportunities in the villages

The agrarian economy of the two study villages is characterised by major inequalities regarding land (Table 3). In Village A and B, respectively 85% and 64% of the households in these large villages are landless. In addition, in each village there is a small population of *hamsaya*⁴ households who work as servants for the major landowners and are tied in dependent relationships (including two of the case study households in village A). Although the district is physically secure, structural violence is pervasive, whereby the power of the land-owning elite is wielded over the poor: if household members want to work in agriculture, they have to work as labourers or sharecroppers for the big landlords. These are highly insecure arrangements and the greatest risk for the poor is that they may lose this employment at any moment, thus tying them into dependency to the landlord (Pain, 2010).

⁴ *hamsaya* ... literally means “common shadow” but also carries the connotation of “neighbour”. The word is used euphemistically about the kind of tenants who do not pay rent in money but in the form of services’ (Olesen, 1994: 107).

Table 3: Land size (jiribs) and distribution in the two study villages

Landowners	Village A		Village B	
	N	Land-holding range (j)	N	Land-holding range (j)
Very large	1	500		
Large	10	30-40 (50-100)	4	220 – 240
Medium	15	10-15 (20-30)	10	90-120
Small	60	1-5 (5-10)	100	10-20
Landless	425		206	
Hamsaya	20		30-40	
Total irrigated arable	800		3200	
Total irrigated grapes	200		1000	
Total rainfed land	1500			
Total households ^a	500		320	

Notes: a) Excluding *hamsaya* households.

3.3.1 Village A

A description of the power structure in village A offered in 2009 is worth repeating:

'In the villages of Dand, you will not find such a village where the whole land belongs to three families ...in other villages it is the malik system [head of village] but in our village [the main landowner] is the landlord and head of shura [village council]. There is another village ...and they also have a powerful head of village. He also solves the problem of people and is very powerful in the village. But [he] is not the only landowner in [the other village] like [our landowner].'

(Quoted in Pain (2010: 10), focus group discussion, February 2009)

The informants went on to comment how the landlord had acquired his land (by unclear means from previous landowners in the 1990s), his control of the village and the Community Development Council (CDC) to which he appointed himself and others, and how whatever external aid had come to the village had been directed to his benefit. It was absolutely clear that many feared the landlord, and little has changed. When a key informant was asked in 2009 why they had not elected other people to the CDC he replied:

'Do not ask this question elsewhere. If he hears this, he will kill you. He doesn't want others to be elected for the shura. I know that you people are just asking, but if he hears this, he will think something else about this question. We can't do [anything] against powerful people. When an organization comes, it gives help to the maliks and elders. Only the government can change the way it works. The government should remove his soldiers and should not allow him to do whatever he wants. This road was only graveled for his cars. We are far from that road and don't have access to that road.' (Interview with son of HH A19, February 2009 (Pain, 2010: 11))

The malik still has his bodyguards, although now they appear to have been legalised as the Afghanistan Local Police (ALP). They, along with his sharecroppers and dependent *hamsaya* households, constitute an essential part of his security arrangements. It was evident in 2009 that those who worked for him were there for his protection. When one informant was asked what would happen if they did not inform the malik if they saw anything suspicious he responded:

'What do you mean? If we don't inform him, then one day he will find out and then he won't leave us alone and will say that we had links with insurgents. He is a very smart person because he searches for farmers who don't have any income, are very weak, and can't do other work. He searches for a person who will always accept what he says.' (HH A01, male informant, February 2009, (Pain, 2009:12)

In 2009 it was found that literacy rates in the households were low, with only 3% of men aged 18 or over being literate and 56% of boys between age 5 and 17 years attending school. No women over 18 were literate, and no girls aged between 5 and 17 were found to attend school. Little has changed in the third study wave. Those households who can afford to take their sons to school in the city do so, and, in fact, there are case households (e.g. A03) where this investment in education has been deliberate. However, the position remains that almost no girls attend school, aside from one interesting exception where a poor widow (A00) has flouted custom to get her girls in school and keep them single until they are educated. According to both male and female respondents, it is not customary for girls to go to school, or if so only to the age of 8 or 9 years. They would then go on to say there was no girls' school in the village for them to go to.

There is also no basic health provision within the village, and most households reporting use of the Chinese-funded hospital in the city. If this wasn't possible, both men and women went to Quetta in Pakistan for treatment. Household electricity supply was unreliable and far from universal in its coverage, although many households have acquired solar power over the last five years.

The village had two potential sources of water: firstly the main canal from Dahla irrigation dam that goes through Kandahar city, and a small secondary canal for the village. However, for many years there has been no water in the main canal and so those who own or cultivate land have dug wells, or irrigate their land through solar-powered pumps or the electricity supply.

With access to land and water, villagers can grow two crops in a year, with a main crop of wheat and a secondary vegetable crop. As one informant made clear (A16), this is now a better option in terms of making a living than working as a casual labourer or a street trader in the city. However, if the landlord provides all the inputs, sharecroppers in village A in Kandahar receive a lower share (a 20% share for main wheat crop) than in village B (30% share) as well as village A and C in Herat (40% share). The justification for this is that the landlord provides the land, water, inputs and ploughing, and the sharecropper only provides the labour. In the case of vegetables, the division is 50:50 between the sharecropper and landlord.

3.3.2 Village B

Village B is about 15 km from Kandahar city and close to Kandahar airport. As with village A, in the past Hindus were the main landowners (Pain, 2010: 13), but by whatever means this land was acquired by new landlords. As is seen below in the case of respondent B10, there is still some dispute as to ownership and how it was transferred. The main irrigation source for the village is a canal from the Arghandab river, which provides water for about 5 months. The substantial area of grape gardens are irrigated from wells and pumps powered by solar power or electricity.

As the data in Table 3 shows, land ownership is not as concentrated as in village A, but nevertheless the landed elite are a small and tight group. In 2009, authority in the village lay under a head *Malik* (the former head of household B40), his assistant and four sub-*Maliks*. Although there was a CDC, it was clearly reported that the power lay with the *Maliks* and other members on the CDC were there for show only (Pain, 2010: 13). The head *Malik* died in 2012, but while he was alive he was seen to have enormous authority and connections.

'He was the influential person of our village, everyone respected him and he was the Malik of this village since the Zair Shah Government. About 4 years ago he passed away and right now we can't

count on the other influential people of the village. Currently, we have three people who are the elders of the village. However, they are not as talented as he was in the governance of the village and the resolving of conflicts as well as linking with elders at district level and provincial level.' (HH B56, male informant, interview 2)

There was a general feeling that the village had lost its powerful connections since the *Malik's* death. The *Malik's* son had not been able to maintain them, and as a result the village was losing out in terms of access to projects and investments. There was also widespread agreement that most of the aid that had come in the past had not been distributed to those who needed it, however, and that it had been kept by the elite:

'All the aid which come to this village, it was distributed among those people who were not needy people. In my opinion the aid which came to our village was not beneficial to poor people. One NGO was distributing fertilizer, another project was distributing cows, chicks, chicken, but none of us received this help. There was a project of seed distribution, but we just heard that the seed was distributed; I do not know who took that seed and who did not take it. In a village when the aid is distributed like, how could it be beneficial to other people?' (HH B57, male informant, interview 2)

A wife of one of the households recounted the specific experiences of her husband:

'I'm talking about the Malik, when he was alive he kept the aid for himself or gave to his family, relatives and close neighbors. He never counted us poor people, this is why we have never got any aid. Five years ago my husband went to his place because he needed help and because some NGO had brought a lot of oil and wheat to his house. The Malik showed only one barrel of oil and some sacks of wheat and said "there is very little oil and wheat if I'm going to give that to one or two people the rest of village would claim and want that too, this why I have keep that from the eyes of others because it would be create a lot challenge and problems for me". After that my husband had returned and came back home and never went to face any more, rich and powerful people who never pay value to poor people. From the past these powerful people and rich people have been keeping their link and relationship with each other, which has continued and I don't know much longer it will continue into the future.' (HH B46, female informant, interview 2)

While there is a road to the village, access to education and health has remained poor. In 2009 even fewer boys (21%) were in school in village B compared to in village A, and no girls were being educated. One informant was critical of the fact that the village was under the management of an elite who only thought about their own interest and did nothing for village development and education:

'I will give you the example of girls' school or education in our village. If there is a request from the government to build a girl school in our village there will be no one to give land for the school. If the government wants to find about the view of the white beards, for sure they will block having a girls' school in our village. Instead of encouraging me for taking a step to get a school, they will create problems for me and say bad things about me and my family. In my opinion they are saying that we are the elders of the village and mostly we are involved in all those conflict resolution which take place at this village level. We do not ask any help or money from anyone at the village, therefore the aid that come to our village, we have to have extra rights compare to other people.' (HH B57, male informant, interview 3)

In 2009 it was reported that the *Malik* had commandeered a literacy project funded by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) by moving it to his house so that his wife could obtain the salary. As his wife was not educated, the NGO closed the class (Pain, 2010: 15).

As mentioned previously, sharecroppers in the village received slightly better terms and conditions than in village A, with a 30% share of the harvest and a 50% share of any second crop.

4 Changes in household composition

Not surprisingly, there have been major changes in household composition over the 13-year study period (2003-2015) as a result of births, deaths and marriages. Other key factors that affect the household economy relate to the availability of labour and consumption demand, two household-specific variables that change as a household ages. Table 4 summaries the changes in household composition of the case study households since 2009. The final column categorises changes in terms of deaths (D), movement out through separation or marriage of daughters (O), births (B) and marriage into the household (M). The figures for household size reported across the years are often not consistent with the reported deaths, births, and marriages in and out of the household, probably due to lack of precision in the exact dates when household changes occurred. Where possible and appropriate, the figures reported in column 7 ('Changes since 2009') have been adjusted for consistency with the data provided in column 6 ('No. of HH members, change since 2009') (Pain, 2010).

In common with Afghan custom, many (11) of the 15 study households are joint households with up to 4 married couples within them, and a total of 30 or more members (see A05 and A10 for which only details on the male members were provided). It is not entirely surprising, therefore, that some individuals (e.g. children, and particularly girls) might get overlooked, and that information from male and female informants differs.

Table 4: Changes in household structure (2003-2015)

(a) Village A

Wealth group	Household (HH) code	Sex of HH head (HHH)	Age of HHH (2015)	No. of married couples (2015)	No. of HH (2003)	No. of HH members (changes since 2009)a	Breakdown of changes since 2009			
							-D	-O	+B	+M
1	A10b	M	52	4	23	22 men(?)	1	0	6	1
2	A02	M	50	1	8	15 (+4)	1	2	3 c	4
	A03	M	65	2	7	10 (+1)	0	2	2	1
	A05	M	54	3d	18	29 (+16)	0	4e	16	4
3	A01	M	70	3	14	19 (+3)	1	5f	7g	2
4	A00	F	48	0	7	7 (-1)	1	1	1	0
	A12	M	37	3	7	11 (+2)	0	2	3	1
	A16	M	38	2	12	11(-1)	2	6h	5	2

(b) Village B

	Household (HH) code	Sex of HH head (HHH)	Age of HHH (2015)	No. of married couples (2015)	No. of HH (2003)	No. of HH members (changes since 2009)a	Breakdown of changes since 2009			
							-D	-O	+B	+M
1	B40	M	45	2	14	17 (-10)	1	21	11	1
2	B42	M	65	3	14	17 (+2)	1	4i	6	1
3	B56	M	48	1	2	7 (+3)	0	0	3	0
	B50	M	40	3	13	20 (+1)	1	1	2	1
4	B44	M	47	1	5	8 (+1)	1j	0	2	0
	B46	M	65	3	12	16 (+5)	0	2k	6	1
	B57	M	33	2	18	18(+2)	1	4	5	2

Notes: a) It should be noted that there were inconsistencies between the household size reported in 2009, and those reported in 2015, and the changes through movement in and out of the household. The household size in 2015 has been adjusted to fit with the reported changes since 2009, and these values are often not consistent with those reported in 2009; b) Women were not allowed to be interviewed, so information for this household is incomplete; c) The HHH's brother joined the HH with his family – three children born (under nine years) are the brother's; d) The second son has two wives; e) Eldest son, wife and two children separated from the HH ten years ago; f) Eldest son and wife separated, two daughters married, and 1 sister-in-law who was listed in 2008 gone; g) Grandson died two years ago from pneumonia at age three (this is the one death indicated); h) Eldest son separated eight years ago from his wife and two children, two eldest daughters married out; i) Two daughters married out, one grandchild married out, one brother separated; j) Son died five days after birth; k) One son separated, one daughter married out.

Two specific changes in household composition are illustrated here. First, it is not uncommon (see for example A01, A05, A16 and B40) for married sons to separate out of households. The reasons for doing so usually relate to conflict between sisters-in-law, or between a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law, or the unwillingness of an elder son to support a larger household since income and expenditure are shared in joint households. Although the moving out of a son and his family implies a separation of economies into two new households, they commonly move to separate rooms within the household compound, and therefore effectively remain under the authority of the father (as A05 made clear). Equally, if households separate when their father dies (as in B40), or there are complicated household structures because a man has had several wives (in this case 4), it does not necessarily mean a severance of ties between the new households. As informant B40 made clear, their father's assets were separated in such a way to minimise conflict, and the separate households or step brothers maintain a mutually supportive role. The separation of an income-earning son (or brother) out of a household can have negative consequences, however, as A01 shows. In the case of A16, the elder income-earning brother moved out, but he then hit hard times and his brothers who remained in the household ended up supporting him.

The role of the joint household in providing livelihood security should not be overlooked, and it should be noted that it is not always the paternal household. A case in point is informant B56, whose father remarried after his mother died and essentially ejected him from the household. B56 went to live with his mother's relatives, who have supported him since that time.

5 Household trajectories

The following section examines the household trajectories in more detail, to compare households that have improved or maintained their wealth, those that have declined, and those that have coped economically relative to their 2009 position. The primary basis on which these assessments have been made are on reports from households reported, as well as analysis of changes in land holdings. Wealth groups are a relative and subjective measure; accordingly, shifts in wealth group have only been used as an approximate indicator.

Analysis of household livelihood changes reveals varying degrees of asset loss and gain, and declining security. Shocks or stresses that tipped households into decline included a major health event or a costly social event, such as the marriage of a son or brother. However, for many, the more general economic downturn in the economy of Kandahar is what affected them most. Labour, social connections and land (for those who have it) have buffered households from shocks and a failing economy. For those without these assets, survival depends on obtaining and maintaining a dependent relationship with a more powerful individual, which allows them to survive their current situation but offers little hope for the future. Indeed, given the exclusionary behaviour of the village elite and the lack of investment in public goods (notably education for girls and boys), it is difficult to be optimistic for the future of many of the study households.

5.1 Prospering (or wealthy) households

Three of the eight households in village A, and three of the seven households in village B can be considered to have remained relatively prosperous or to have improved their prospects since 2008 (see Table 5, divided according to ownership of land). However, they have each come from very different starting points in terms of asset ownership, and have faced various challenges.

Table 5: Prospering households: assets and major drivers of change

Household	Land asset changes since 2008	Primary reason for change	Secondary reason for change	Tertiary reason for change
Group 1: Those with land				
A10	Father had 150 <i>jirib</i> (j) ^a arable land and 15 j vineyards 4 years ago	Inherited land	Social connections	Diverse income sources
B40	Inherited 50 j of land from father, including 7 j grape garden	Division of 328 j of father's land between 4 wives and families	Lack of labour so only cultivates 16 j of wheat and 5 j of grape garden	HH lost influence and connections of father, who brought CDC projects
B42	Bought 2 j garden one year ago; total holdings 15 j garden	Land ownership	Social connections leading to diverse income sources for sons	Marriage of 5 daughters collecting substantial bride price
Group 2: Those without land				
A05	No land	Leases land from A10 and his relatives	Well connected and acts as agent for A10	Diverse income sources and 3 working sons
B56	No land	Obtained salaried employment in construction company 5 years ago	Leased 10 j land from uncle (landlord) 4 years ago	Small family and few dependents
A03	No land	Increase in male labour and income	Small business owner	Long-standing sharecropper of major village landlord

Note: A *jirib* (j) is a unit of land measurement, approximately one fifth of a hectare.

5.1.1 Group 1: land-owning wealthy or prospering households

Household **A10** has remained wealthy on account of their irrigated landholdings. The father of the current head was the second biggest land owner in the village (Landlord 2) in 2009, and at that time it was a large joint household of 28 people, including 5 married sons and their family. The family had become prosperous by 2009 through the cultivation of opium poppy on their land and, with an estimated income of one million Afghani (Afs) per year from its vineyards, it had diversified into brick making, the development of a cattle market, and construction of a slaughter house. One of the sons was employed by a key local politician, indicating that the household was well connected to local power structures (Pain, 2009: 18).

The father of the current household head (HHH) died four years ago, and the household is now headed by his elder son who studied to class 8. Three of his brothers live with him, along with their families, and the household has increased significantly in size. The new HHH reported the names of 22 male members but not female members: since he did not allow the women of the household to be interviewed, no data was collected on change in the female composition of the household. The HHH proved to be a difficult man to interview, and refused any additional meetings beyond the initial one. The interview notes record that the informant appeared to be in complete charge of all matters, and when a younger brother was asked a question he responded that he did not have any information on expenses, agricultural lands or income.

There is some doubt as to the accuracy of the information that the HHH provided. It was clear that the household had not divided its lands after their father died, but the HHH reported that they had only 40 *jiribs* (j) of land, seven of which were vineyards, that this was the land that they had inherited from their father, and that they had not sold any. He also stated that they had no other sources of income, directly contradicting the information that had been provided in 2009. Yet, by his own account, they had spent some 5-6 million Pakistani Rupee (PKR) (US\$50,000-60,000) on a new guesthouse five years ago, 1 million PKR (US\$10,000) on his father's funeral and death ceremony, 1.4 million PKR (US\$14,000) on his son's wedding three years ago, and US\$7,000 on a Toyota car 4 years ago. These expenditures alone amount to over US\$90,000, suggesting income sources over and above the sale of wheat and grapes, which he claimed to be his sole source of income.

Despite this expenditure the HHH complained that in recent years the market for the household's agricultural products was not good and had led to a decline in income, which he linked to the new government:

'It is worth mentioning that the government of national unity under the leadership of Ashraf Ghani ... has badly affected the work conditions all over Afghanistan. Unemployment has increased and there is no demand for our agriculture products in the market.' (HH A10, male respondent, interview 1)

All the sons of the household were either at school or were too young to go to school. The informant's three eldest sons were at university, two in Afghanistan and one in Russia. On education for girls he was clear 'we do not let the girls go to school'.

According to one informant, however, the HHH had been unable to maintain the authority and influence that his father had. As the wife of A05 stated, 'in the past [his father] was in our village and he was an influential person in the village. Since [he] died his two sons act and speak as if they are influential and have authority in the village, which is their own perception of themselves. But people do not take account of them'.⁵

⁵ HH A05, female respondent, interview 2.

In 2009 **B40** was a large joint household of 62 members made up of 4 families. It was headed by the village *Malik*, who had had four wives (two died, one divorced, and one who lived with him). A wealthy household with land and six working sons, it had substantial on-farm and off-farm income sources. By 2015 the HHH had died, and the household had divided into four, on the basis of each wife. The elder son was interviewed as he had inherited his father's position of *Malik*. He now heads a joint household of 17 members, made up of his own family of eight (although one of his sons had married and lives separately), a brother's family of eight, and one unmarried brother. The new HHH's mother had died 17 years ago.

The original HHH's land had been divided following his death and, as had been suspected in 2009, there had been considerable under-reporting of land holdings. Instead of the 50 j of irrigated land the then head claimed, the informant revealed that his father had inherited about 328 j when his grandfather died. His father had clearly sold some of this land, since by the time it was divided following his death, he only owned about 160 j of irrigated land. The father had also acquired some additional land, however, and there were rumors that this had been acquired through non-legal means from departing Hindu landowners (Pain, 2010: 31). Indeed, the informant reported that after his father died, a claim was made against these lands but with the informant's connections to the Provincial Governor's office, these claims were effectively dismissed. The eldest son described the process of land division:

'After my father's death, all his sons sat together and they divided the land among the four wives. The original plan was to divide the land among wives, brothers and sisters but we did not do this. We decided to divide the land equally between [the families of] his four wives and after this division, each son would get his property from his mother. I have two [immediate] brothers and my mother's right was 40 jiribs of land. When my brother wants to ask for his share of the land, I have to give him from the share of my mother. The reason for dividing this way was that it would be very complicated to divide the land on the basis of brothers and there would be conflict over the land distribution and none of us wanted such conflict.' (HHB40, male respondent, interview 2).

Although the land was divided and separate households created, each with responsibility for their own income and expenditure, the brothers agreed that they should continue to support one another. The respondent gave the example of a step brother who had failed in his business in Dubai, for which his father had supplied US\$100,000 starting capital and had accumulated debts of US\$55,000. All the brothers had agreed to pay off that debt between them.⁶

The informant is only cultivating about 16 j of his land for wheat, and they also have 5 j of grape garden. This land is sharecropped out to five farmers with whom they have been working for a long time, and he stated that he was not interested in sharecropping out the remainder of the land to people he did not know. The landlord's share of the wheat is sufficient for their household needs, and they sell half of their share of the grape harvest. The main source of household income is from non-farm activities. Prior to his father's death the informant was working as a raisin trader in the city, but he then assumed the responsibilities of *Malik* of the village. However, through personal connections and his father's reputation, he was offered a salaried post in the governor's office where he now works full time. The household also owns a brick factory, which his second brother runs and, until last year, they also had a fuel contract with Roshan mobile (a major telecommunications company in Afghanistan) to supply fuel for their communication stations in four southern provinces. The household lost this contract last year but are looking for another. The third brother has his own tailoring shop in the city.

As discussed in section 4, the head of the household has stepped into his father's shoes as a *Malik* and has also been appointed as head of the village CDC. But he clearly does not have his father's influence and, according to the informant, projects have gone to other villages that his father would have been able to secure.

⁶ HH B40, male respondent, interview 2.

The informant's sons go to school, but in common with most other households in the village, his daughters only receive religious education at home – a position that his wife supports. The wives in the household did not report any independent income, work only in the domestic sphere, and appear to rarely go outside the household compound. For the head's wife, the most beneficial changes for her had been the household separation, and the fact that she did not have to live with her step-mother-in-law anymore and enjoys good relations with her sister-in-law. She was also proud of the fact that her husband had now become the head of the village.⁷

The third of the landed prosperous households is **B42**. This household is certainly not as rich as B40, but it had built its position through social connections and by acquiring low-cost land during the Taliban time. There were suggestions that this land had been bought cheaply from departing Hindu owners, but the key to the household's economic rise was the securing of salaried employment for his sons with provincial- and national-level politicians, notably a brother of the former president Hamid Karzai. With a household of 17 people in 2009, there have been some fairly major changes in household composition since then, although the household still has 17 members. The household head's wife had died, three daughters had married out on dowries (ranging from US\$5,000 to \$8,000), one son had separated from the household with his family, and the father had remarried a non-literate woman 35 years younger than him (at a bride price of US\$3,000) and had three children. The head of the household remains a deputy *Malik* for the village. In 2014 he bought 2 j of grape garden (from the step-brothers of household B40), increasing his holdings to 15 j and he does not have land on which he grows wheat or other crops. He hires casual labour from the village at the daily rate of PKR 500 (US\$5) to work on the pruning, land management, harvesting and processing of the grapes.

The household income remains good for B42. Some income (about US\$5,000) comes from the informant's vineyards, but he also has a grocery shop in the city that two of his sons run, as well as sons employed in the army, in the presidential security guard, and in teaching. He reported his own income as between US\$6-7,000 per year, and the combined salaries of his sons as US\$10-12,000 per year. The household remains debt free despite expenditures on building a new house (US\$10,000), medical expenses (US\$15,000) for his late wife and himself, funeral costs of US\$2,000 in recent years, and wedding costs over and above the received bride price.

Two of the HHH's elder sons have been through school (the teacher studied to class 14, and the son employed in the Presidential Palace Security to class 8), and some but not all of his male grandchildren are in school. In common with other households, girls do not attend school 'as it is against our customs and traditions for girls to go any distance to school'.⁸ The informant felt there would be less of a problem if there was a school in the village, a view that his daughter-in-law shared.⁹

The death of the former *Malik* appears to have increased the role and authority of B42's new HHH in the village and his status as an elder. As a *Malik* and village elder, he is active in district and provincial affairs, attending weekly meetings at the District Governor's house. As he noted:

'this has increased my relations in the village for which I have more expenses, but this has many benefits for the reputation of the family too. If I ask any of the villagers to work for me, they will come and help and if I ask for money, anyone who has will give.' (HH B42, male informant, interview 2)

In contrast, women of the household remain totally confined to the domestic sphere with limited possibilities for external contact. When asked about whether she had a mobile phone or not, the daughter-in-law (who as the next eldest woman in the house assumed the responsibilities of her deceased mother-in-law), replied:

⁷ HH B, female respondent, interview 2.

⁸ HH B42, male informant, interview 2.

⁹ HH B42, female informant, interview 1.

'one of my youngest brothers-in-law asked my husband to buy a mobile phone for me, as I am the older woman in the household. He told my husband that sometimes no one (i.e. male) is at home and there should be a mobile phone at home... My husband just looked at him and said "you are my brother otherwise I would get angry; never say such a thing as to buy a mobile phone for women of this family".' (HH B42, female respondent, interview 2)

5.1.2 Group 2: landless prospering households

Three households – A05, B56 and A03 who do not own land but live in the two case villages – have either remained prosperous or improved their circumstances since 2009. The routes by which they have done this differ, however, and A05 is undoubtedly the better off. Household A05 is an example of a household that is in a position of secondary inclusion: it has gained its economic security through upward connections, providing a stronger base from which to continue to accumulate resources for itself (Kantor and Pain, 2012: 170). B56, on the other hand, is related to the most powerful man in the village (its HHH is the *Malik's* nephew), but has no social connection to him. The case of A03 is somewhat different, with its HHH having pursued a more independent path.

Household **A05** migrated to the village in the early 1990s. The HHH's social connections, many of which appear to have been forged during the Mujahedeen period, enabled him to prosper from the position of a street trader of plastic sandals in Quetta to becoming an agent for landlords 1 and 2 within the village (1 being the biggest landowner), possibly through connections that his father had. Through these connections he was able to secure construction contracts in 2001, buy tractors for haulage, use his sons as drivers, lease agricultural land from landlord 1 and hire farmers to work on it. His household has increased in size from 18 members in 2009 to 29 in 2015, including three married sons and their families. One of his sons recently took a second wife, another son married four years ago and now has three daughters, and a third son separated from the household in around 2009 with ten members of his family.

The size of the son's family was one reason for the separation, although there was also conflict within the large household. The father certainly saw the separation of income and expenses for his son's household as an advantage to him, and so the son lives in separate rooms within the father's compound. The head was clear that his son remained under his authority, however: 'I have control of him as well as I have control of other members of the household'.¹⁰

In contrast to household A10, few of its male members have had schooling, the head is illiterate, and his sons have only received *Madrasa* education. The HHH said he was not against education, and that some of his grandchildren – both boys and girls – are now going to the primary school. However, his wife was more equivocal about education: 'we are illiterate people and do not have much interest in schooling'.¹¹ She was less in favour of girls going to school, and if they did only up to the age of eight or nine years.

While the head of the household is a member of what he called the 'elders *shura* of the village', he does not see himself as an influential person with connections outside of the village, and certainly not having the connections of the family of landlord 1 with which he has strong ties and regularly visits.

In the last few years a downturn in construction work has forced the HHH of A05 to cut back. The sale of two of his trucks was partly due to lack of work, but also to pay for the wedding of his son and to construct additional rooms for the house. One son continues to operate a car wash, another has a shop, and with one tractor and truck there are still transport contracts to be found although fewer than before. Accordingly, agricultural income has become more significant. A combination of the increase in

¹⁰ HH A05, male respondent, Interview 2.

¹¹ HH A05, female respondent, Interview 2.

household size and declining income has made it 'difficult to eat meat even weekly'.¹² In common with other households, the head of the household attributed the economic downturn to the arrival of the new government:

'You know that the reduction of work availability is due to the international forces leaving and insecurity as well as a change in the government. Since the coming of Ashraf Ghani, insecurity has increased and people who wanted to invest in this country have either left the country or stopped the work.' (HH A05, male respondent, Interview 2)

All the land that A05 works is leased. He has built three shops on 4.5 j of land that is uncultivable, and also has seven *Kochi* (nomad) families living semi-permanently in tents for which they pay rent. The second irrigated area of 80 j is in a neighbouring village, which he also rents. Half is under vineyards and half is cultivated with wheat. He shares the lease with a second person, and employs male members of the *Kochi* families on a daily basis as his labourers.

The second household that has no land is **B56**, who is related to the primary elite but has little to do with them. The household head's paternal uncle was the deceased *Malik* and HHH of B40; he had few good words to say of him, commenting (Pain, 2009: 40) 'we don't have time to keep connections with rich people [like my uncle]. Rich people are very haughty. Think about my paternal uncle; if I say "Salaam" to him, he will not answer'. His father remarried following his mother's death and, finding relations with his step mother and brothers difficult, he left to go and live with his maternal uncles. Relations with his father remain distant although he is respectful of him, and he made clear that he has not received anything from his father in terms of support. For a period after he married he went back to live in his father's compound with his new wife, but his step mother was, as his wife put it, 'like a hard enemy ...and created a lot of problems and used to verbally fight with me', so after one year they moved out to live with her parents.¹³

Lacking land but with access to credit from his maternal uncle, the HHH of B56 graduated from petty trading to running a taxi, to working as a sharecropper for two relatives of his wife, with additional sheep-trading on the side. In 2009, at the age of 33, they were a small family of four, with neither parent having any education and with two children. The family has now increased to seven with the birth of an additional son and two daughters, with the two older sons in school. He commented that he would like to be able to send his daughters to school in time if they had a school in the village, but he noted 'it should be remembered that nobody has paid attention to the girls in our village to make a school for them, and this shows that influential people do not have a good attitude towards girls' education.'¹⁴

B56 continued to improve his income and gave up his taxi. He leases land for cultivation, and has had a labouring job for the last five years with a road construction company, with a monthly salary of US\$200. He found the job through a connection of his maternal uncle, and now supervises the mixing of cement and sand.¹⁵ His wife is also active, working primarily as an embroiderer earning a modest amount of around Afs 1,000 (US\$20) per month, although she does not know how to sell outside the house.¹⁶

At a cost of about US\$3,000, B56 has been able to build a house on a plot of land in the village lent to him by his late uncle, and part of 3 j of leased land. He renewed the contract with the sons of his late uncle for a three-year period at PKR 35,000 (US\$350) per year, but from which he could deduct the cost of constructing the house. His relations with his uncle's sons are not easy, however, and he suspects that when the lease is up they may not wish to renew it or only at a higher rate. He also has a

¹² HH A05, male respondent, Interview 1.

¹³ HH B56, female respondent, interview 3.

¹⁴ HH B56, male respondent, interview 2.

¹⁵ HH B56, male respondent, interview 2

¹⁶ HH B56, female respondent, interview 2.

second lease on a plot of 7 j, which combined with his other lease, provides the grain for their household needs, as well as a surplus of wheat and vegetables that he sells. In his assessment, the household food security has improved and they are now able to eat meat twice a week. He made clear that he had not been affected by the declining availability of work.

Like B56, the third HHH, that of **A03**, has also made his way largely through his own efforts and has a modest household economy that has been gradually built up over the years. He lost his father at an early age and was brought up by his uncle in the village, who was himself a sharecropper (Pain, 2010: 21). He fought with the mujahedeen, where landlord 1 was one of the commanders, but he was wounded and found it difficult to work directly in agriculture when he returned to the village. His relationship with landlord 1 allowed him to lease land and supervise hired labour, and with income from this he started a shoe business in Kandahar. Having moved into livestock trading, he was able to buy land and construct a house. He had prioritised education for his children, particularly his sons, and ensured that they could go to school in Kandahar city.

The eight members of household A03 in 2009 had only increased to 10 by 2015, with one daughter moving out through marriage, and the bride of his eldest son and the subsequent birth of two grandchildren adding to the household. His eldest son had reached class 12, and while his two eldest daughters did not attend school, his two younger daughters did.

The household economy experienced two challenges since 2009, with income from the shoe shop, livestock trade and leasing of agricultural land in the village (the head had moved back into this sector) remaining their main sources of income. In addition, the eldest son helped his father in the shop in the morning before going to school in the afternoon, and also had occasional work as a vaccinator. The first challenge that the household faced was raising funds to pay for the eldest son's marriage. While they had some funds in hand, and his son was married in exchange with one of his daughters, there were additional costs of about PKR 300,000 (US\$3,000) to be found. A few months before his son's marriage, he was hurt in a suicide attack in Kandahar city, and the father had to spend another PKR 300,000 (US\$3,000) on his son's medical treatment. For this he borrowed from relatives, and has been able to pay back most of the loan with only US\$500 outstanding. However the effects of having to use working capital to pay for household needs and repay debts, meant that he had to take credit from the retail suppliers for his shoe shop, which subsequently reduced his margins and income, at the same time as seeing a fall in demand due to the general economic decline.

The suicide attack that A03's son was injured in had been targeted at General Raziq, the police commander of Kandahar (Jackson, 2015). His son, along with his friend who was the son of landlord 1, had been attending a wedding party and were caught up in the attack on General Raziq's car. General Raziq sent him Afs 50,000 (US \$750) as a contribution to the medical expenses he faced. Because of the time that they had spent living in Spin Boldak, the head commented that landlord 1's family had good connections with General Raziq, along with the wider political connections discussed earlier.

A03 noted in his first interview that maintaining connections with the major landlords in the village was the only option if you wanted to find work, but that he had been careful to keep himself free of their authority. Although he leased land from them and supervised irrigation, ploughing and harvesting, most of the time he was in his shop in the city. Moreover, while noting the wider connections of the village elite and the security that they had brought to the village, he was critical of their general efforts:

'In term of security they have some role to bring security only in those areas where they have their own house. However in term of the public good, they are not very active. So far we do not have any school in our village; however landlord 1 has been able to bring electricity to our village, but as Provincial Committee member it is not enough. They should have a school in this village.'
(HH A03, male respondent, interview 1)

A03 went on to comment that when the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) came to the village, the elders selected the committee and that ordinary people were not aware of the NSP until construction work began on the culverts and paved road. He observed ‘they built some culvert, paved the road only in those places where the village elders had houses’.¹⁷

Although the head of the household did not mention it, the interview with his wife indicated that the household’s ownership of livestock – currently six cows and three calves – rested with her and that she retained the income. She went on to use accumulated savings from this income to give a loan to the father of her son-in-law (her uncle), who needed money for the medical treatment of his daughter. She mentioned a sum of Afs 120,000 (about US\$2,400), and did not tell her husband about this loan until later. She clearly regretted making the loan, however, because seven years later it has still not been repaid and she made clear she would make no further loans.

The wife was also regretful at the lack of a school in the village, and said if there was one, everyone would send their daughters to school. When asked about what changes she thought would happen with girls going to school, she went on to say ‘I don’t know, I rarely go out, I don’t know what is going on, just I know about my own familywhat should be changed here for us, I don’t know anything, what should I say?’.¹⁸

In sum, three out of six households have managed to maintain their economic position through ownership of land assets, social connections and diverse income sources, despite harsh economic times. While they are all feeling the effects of the economic downturn, the three households without land are still managing to thrive. One, A05, through his connections to the elite, has access to land through lease arrangements and contracts. The other two – who also have connections to the elite – have distanced themselves, striking out on their own and managing to find ways to be economically independent.

5.2 Declining households

Three households, all from village B (B44, B50 and B46) have suffered a decline in their economic position since 2009, but from different starting points and for contrasting reasons. One has land but the other two do not (see Table 6).

Table 6: Declining households: assets and drivers of change

	Land/asset changes since 2008	Primary reason for change	Secondary reason for change	Tertiary reason for change
B44	Lost 35 j (from 60 j) of agricultural land, but has 10 j grape garden	Drought and salinity	Lack of male labour	Decreased income from clothes shop
B50	Leases 4 jiribs of land	Death and illness costs	Marriage costs	Large family
B46	Landless but has a small share of land in a second village from which he gains some wheat	Lost sharecrop land and son killed in army	Less work for casual labourers	Drought

¹⁷ HH A03, male respondent, interview 1

¹⁸ HH A03, female respondent, interview 2

5.2.1 Group 1: Declining households with land assets

Household **B44** was not interviewed in 2009 but was selected as a replacement for household B58 that had left the village. The household of eight consists of a 47-year-old household head who studied to class 14, his non-literate wife, and six children aged 15 and under. While the two boys attend high school in Kandahar City, the four daughters do not go to school. He lives in a house inherited from his father, physically divided into two with the other half being occupied by his brother's family. Along with his three brothers, he owns 15 j of arable land which is sharecropped out, but it is not productive due to lack of water and salinity problems. They also have a 10 j grape garden. However, his major source of income is from his shop in the city, which sells fabric for women's clothes, and which he runs with the help of his eldest son.

In a good year B44's share of the wheat harvest can be just enough to meet his family's needs, but in 2015 he had to buy most of his wheat. He would like to improve the supply of irrigation water, but this needs investment to make a deep well and to buy solar panels to provide power. They are not in a position to do this.

B44's family has been running the clothes shop for nearly 40 years. First his uncle had it in partnership with another man and then the informant bought into it. In time, he and his brothers bought out his uncle, but he has been running it and has invested in the goods on sale. Four to five years ago the shop was generating a monthly income of PKR 50,000 (US\$500), but with the economic downturn he is lucky if he can now get PKR 15,000 (US\$150) in a month. Family expenses amount to about PKR 40,000 (US\$400) per month, and he is struggling to meet these from previous savings. Expenditure on food has been reduced. In addition, he has outstanding credit of PKR 500,000 (US\$5,000) on stock with the wholesalers, repayment of which is collected on a weekly basis (US\$50 every Thursday evening). He also has to pay a yearly rent on the shop of PKR 250,000 (US\$2,500). He commented that all the shopkeepers were in a similar position to him.

The absence of a school for girls in the village was the reason B44 gave as to why his daughters do not go to school and, like the head of household B56, he felt that the elders of the village had not done enough to bring a girls' school to the village. His wife agreed and wanted her daughters to become literate, but also felt that the village needed a clinic for the women given the issues they face in travelling. Her responsibilities are confined to the house, although in common with many women, she does a certain amount of embroidery that is paid on a piece rate ranging from Afs 500 up to 5,000 (US \$7.50 – 75). This she spends on herself or her daughters:

'I am just responsible for inside the house. I have to take care of my children, and guide them. As my daughters are growing, I give them some of the house chores on them to do, I help them only in baking bread in a tandoor (traditional oven). We women don't work outside the house or have a responsibility or role outside it. Just sometimes going to neighbor's house in case of any funeral and visiting patients, otherwise we don't have any work outside.' (HH B44, female informant, second interview)

The wife comes from another village, so about every 4-6 months she may go and visit a relative accompanied by either her husband or son, but it requires permission to go as do any visits within the village she lives. In contrast to the daughter-in-law of B42, she has a mobile phone and she laughed when the question was asked: 'yes, now I am going to be an old woman, who would pervert me through a mobile? Here people think that women should not have a mobile otherwise they will become depraved so in some families only old women can have them'.¹⁹

¹⁹ HH A44, female informant, second interview.

5.2.2 Group 2: Declining households with no land

Household **B50** was in economic trouble in 2009 and reported 19 members. The father had died, leaving the household with major debts and a reduced social network from which they could access credit. Although there were six sons, they had been unable to find much work and were struggling to make ends meet. They service debts through casual labour in agriculture, working in the brick fields and as an apprentice baker. By 2015, the mother had died and the household reported that it had increased in size by eight. Given its size in 2015 of 20 individuals, it is probable that some of these changes happened prior to 2009.

In total the household consists of six brothers, three of whom are married with small children. Four of the brothers work as casual labourers in farming, as a watchman, on a poultry farm, and as a shop assistant. Their father's sickness and death left them with debts of over US\$2,000, which continues to impact on the household, although they have managed to arrange marriage for one brother and one sister. The brother was married six years ago with marriage costs of PKR 750,000 (US\$7,000), and his sister three years ago for a bride price of PKR 800,000 (US\$8,000). The informant reported that the entire dowry went on wedding costs and gifts for the bride.

B50 leases 4 j of land, which provides wheat for the household. The total household cash income is probably no more than US\$400 from the four working brothers, and they still have debts of about PKR 100,000 (US\$1,000). The informant felt their life had been better before their father had died, and now it was difficult, in part because of the growing food and medical costs for their large household (one of his sisters-in-law had required medical treatment at a cost of PKR 400,000/US\$4,000). He commented that problems of low income and 'medical costs made their life very prone to risk'.²⁰

Household **B46** is one that is surviving but with difficulties, and is clearly still affected by two shocks that had happened previously. They had owned about 4 j in the past, but this was sold for the marriage of his son and daughter. In 2007, a son had been killed while working in the police – in addition to the emotional effects of this loss, the son's income had been an important source to the household, and they were unable to secure payment of his pension. As the head later found out, part of the problem was that his son joined the police against the wishes of his father and so he had not given the correct name of his father or the district from which he came. This made it difficult for his father to claim the pension. The informant commented that it could be done, 'but I do not have money and as you know most of the government people are corrupt; if you do not pay them money, they will not work for you. For this reason I have given up on my son's pension'.²¹

The deceased son had also been engaged to marry as part of an exchange agreement for the informant's daughter, and while his daughter had been married, his prospective daughter-in-law remained with her parents. Subsequently, following agreement between the two households, she married a second son in household B46.

In 2009 the sharecrop arrangement that B46 had with their landlord had been abruptly terminated after 20 years, leaving the household to struggle with whatever casual labour they could find. A joint household of 11 in 2009 with a married son and his family, had increased to 16 by 2015 with a second son now married. Household income has not kept pace with the increasing consumption demand of the household and they continue to struggle. One son works as a taxi driver with a *zarang* (three-wheel taxi) earning at best Afs 200-300 (US \$3 – 4.50) per day transporting livestock to and from a market, but he competes with many others for this work. Another took a lease with a partner on about 40 j of land to cultivate wheat and vegetables, but the land was isolated in another village, and his wife did not wish to remain there so they returned. The son had not found any land this year due to water shortage and was

²⁰ HH A50, male informant, first interview.

²¹ HH A46, male informant, third interview.

working as a casual labourer at best for 2-3 days per week on a daily wage. The head of the household also works as a casual labourer, but for the last three years had been jobless, pointing to a general lack of work and declining price for grapes:

'For three years I am jobless. There is no land or grape garden in our village which I could take for farming. In the past people were busy with work outside of the village, and we were able to find land in our village. Since the labor market has crashed, people come back to village and take land on farming and we are not able to. In the past I was sharecropping a grape garden. In our village we do not have a lot of grape gardens and people do not get a good income from their gardens. They have to spend a lot of money on irrigating the garden, applying fertilizer and other weeding, pruning the vines, making new ditches, which costs money to the garden owner. However in the harvest season the price of grape is too low and the owner cannot earn the money which they spent on their garden.' (HH A46, male informant, second interview)

The HHH of B46 had acquired eight young sheep on a 'sharecrop' basis from his nephew, which were looked after by the women of the household. The sheep were being fattened, and he would then sell them if he was lucky for a gross profit of PKR 2-3,000 (US\$20-30), depending on the costs of raising them. At the time of sale, he would repay the cost of each sheep – PKR 4,600 (US\$46) to the owner. By the time of the second interview, the informant had managed to sell five of the sheep, and had been able to repay his nephew and keep a small profit. Last year he had made an overall profit of PKR 300,000 (US\$300) from trading sheep in this way. Overall, their income and food security have declined, and they reported that they do not eat meat even once a month.

All the adult women in household B46 work – the wife spins and weaves wool to make traditional blankets, while the daughters and daughter-in-law embroider, but this is not regular work and their customers come from within the village. The total income is modest, amounting to some Afs 1,500 (US\$30) per month.

One out of three of the informant's school-age grandsons are in school, and he commented that only about 40% of the boys go to school since teenage boys need to help their fathers to earn money for the household. None of the school-age girls in the household were at school.

In sum, all three of the households in this group have suffered a combination of shocks from deaths, loss of a sharecrop arrangement, the effects of drought, and the economic downturn. All have had to reduce food consumption in order to make ends meet.

5.3 Coping households

Five households in village A (A02, A01, A16, A00 and A12) fall within the 'coping' category (see Table 7); with the exception of A02 these are all landless households, and three of them are tied in dependent relations with the village's main landlord (landlord 1). Two of them are male headed (A01 and A16), and two are female headed (A00 and A12). In addition, there is one household in village B – B57 – that has managed to maintain its status from a relatively advantaged position.

Table 7: Coping households

	Land/asset changes since 2008	Primary reason for position	Secondary reason position	Tertiary reason for position
Group 1: Coping households with land				
A02	Bought 12 j land 6 years ago in Karz and opened a poultry farm; inherited 8 j n Karz 3-4 years ago, built houses on 4 j and converted 4 j into grape garden	Invested savings 6 years ago in a poultry farm	7,000 chickens died through illness and lost most of savings; no income from poultry in last 2 years; lost 3 major buyers of eggs	Large family with no regular employment
B57	No change, still 5 j but not cultivated	Well connected; moved from job in customs to job in import office	Land not cultivated	Large household of 17 with many male members but only 2 working
Group 2: Coping households without land				
Male headed (MHH)				
A01	Landless	2 sons regularly employed	Household old and dependent on main village landlord	Large household of 20 and only 4 regularly employed
A16	Landless	Household divided but income improved	Business venture in city improved?	Had major debt from father's medical treatment
Female headed (FHH)				
A00	Landless	Semi-independent domestic labour	Assertive women supportive of daughter's education	Death of husband
A12	Landless	Dependent servant on main village landlord	Large household, One son casual income and a 2 nd a drug addict	One son opened a scrap metal shop and casual labour

5.3.1 Group 1: Coping households with land

Household **A02** was interviewed in 2009, but was not selected as one of the households for detailed study. Given the disappearance of household A19 since 2009, A02 was selected as a substitute case household.

In 2009 the household had just moved from village A, where they did not have enough space, to Sheer Shukh village where they had property. A family of 7 in 2003, they had increased to 12 in 2009. The head of the household had worked in various trades as a carpenter, mechanic and electrician, and used savings to open a poultry farm in which they invested Afs 200,000 (US\$4,000) but it has made losses. The household then moved into dealing in salt and grinding rock salt treated with iodine to supply to the Kandahar market through a shop they had in town.

By 2015 the family composed of 15 people, including the HHH's mother and a brother with his family of six children. His son was engaged last year. Two of his daughters have also been married for *walwars* (bride price) of PKR 150,000 (US\$1,500) and PKR 200,000 (US\$2,000) respectively, which was reported as having been used to provide goods for the newly married couples. The daughters now live with their husbands in Pakistan.

The head explained that they originally came from the village where they now lived, but that their house was destroyed during the revolution. They knew landlord 1, so when they first returned to Afghanistan they asked to settle in village A until they could rebuild their house in Sheer Sokh village.

Although the HHH has a small grape garden, poultry is his main business, which he runs in partnership with two others. They have ten workers to look after the chickens. One of his main customers had been in Helmand where he had a chicken farm as well, but three years earlier another businessman had sold expired eggs and that had destroyed his market. Last year they also lost 7,000 chickens to disease. These losses led the HHH to postpone the marriage of his son – he has paid half of the Afs 400,000

(US\$8,000) dowry, and is waiting for the next round of chickens to be sold so that he can pay the balance and marry his son. The head inherited 8 j of land from his father, and bought a further 12 j on which to build his poultry farm. His brother brings in a small amount of income from the rickshaw he drives, and his son also works as a vaccinator, but this is not regular work. He sees the poultry business as risky:

'This business has loss and profit. Some time we have good profit and sometime we are in loss. For 10 years I am doing this business where I can have deep losses and sometimes I have good income from it. If it is good we can earn household expenses. There are many risks in this business. The first risk is, there is no proper vaccination for these chickens once an illness hits them. Then there is no vaccination to prevent their loss. Second those medicines which are available in the market are of poor quality and most are imported from Pakistan. The third is the seasons. Even though we keep our chicks warm during winter time, sometimes cold weather hits them which kills the chicks.' (HH A02, male Informant, interview 2)

The village has long had a high school, which his sons attend. But there is still no school for his daughters to go to. The informant was critical of the quality of the school, however, and pointed to his business partner and said:

'His two sons are going to school and one son is going to the Masjid where he studies with a Mullah. The one who goes to the Masjid is better in reading and writing than the two sons who going to school. When the situation is like this, children go to school and even in the third and fourth class a child is not able to read and write his name, how could you ask the people to send their daughters to school?' (HHA02, male Informant, interview 2)

The second household head of this group, **B57**, is the first cousin of the head of B56, and thus a nephew of the former head of B40. Like the head of B56, he has not been on good terms with his uncle, and in 2009 gave an account of how his uncle had essentially taken over a shop that the informant saw as his inheritance (Pain, 2010: 35). The household had been through difficult times in the past. The HHH started his working life as a vegetable seller in Kandahar, with a small inheritance of land (5 j which the household still has, although it remains uncultivated due to lack of capital to make it productive). Social connections had secured him a job working as an agent in the customs house, and circumstances improved further with his working sons. In 2009 the household was composed of 15 people and included 2 married sons.

Sadly, in November 2015 a month before the interview, the household head died of a heart attack while visiting friends in Quetta. His eldest son became the head of the household of 17 people consisting of his own family, his mother, two brothers, his step mother, a step brother and his family, and various step brothers and sisters. His sisters had been married out so there has been quite a turnover in the composition of the household. The death of his father has meant that the number of working men in the household has reduced to two, although his father had been working less before his death so the financial effects had not been significant.

The new head of B57 had also been working in the custom house, where his father had taken him on as an assistant. Now he is a clerk for two traders in cooking oil handling the customs clearance of their imports, for which he receives a monthly salary of Afs 12,000 (US\$240) and occasional monthly bonuses of Afs 2,000-3,000 (US \$30-45). His step brother runs the family cooking and crockery business, which his father set up to respond to the demand for catering for marriages. In 2009 this business generated a greater income than working in the custom house, and the two income sources had been sufficient to maintain the household economically.

In contrast to the relations between the head of B56 and his step-brothers, it was evident that the step brothers in B57 had a good relationship,²² and a joint interest in supporting the household and maintaining the wide social network that their father appeared to have had. Their father had been an influential person in the village, and had strong views on various matters. In particular, they reported that he had been strongly opposed to the dowry system, saying that it was contrary to Islamic practice, and that it opened the bride to being accused of being traded as a good because money had been taken for her.²³ Accordingly he had married his seven daughters without a dowry. The responsibility for marrying the remaining unmarried children (4 boys and one girl) now falls to the new head, and he will need to manage the household budget to meet wedding expenses without dowry payments.

As reported in 2010 (Pain, 2010: 36) and discussed in section 3, the custom house in Kandahar was rife with corrupt practices, which the informant found distasteful:

'I worked as a commission worker in the customs for two to two and half years. I was required to make legal documents for the trucks entering Afghanistan in the customs department. I did not have specific clients and was working for different traders and helping them to formalize all their documents in custom department. I stopped working there because the customs department was always full of corruption. There were bribes and illegal money all around. As you know taking illegal money is prohibited in our religion so I left the work of commission worker in the customs department.' (HH B57, male informant, interview 2)

The new HHH's income working for the traders is less than it was in the customs house, but he is happier with it and he still had a job despite the downturn in economic conditions. He agreed that the income was not great, and they are unable to save, but following his father's practice he intends to support all his brothers to go through school and be educated like him. His position on the education of girls is consistent with other informants:

'As I told you most of the boys are attending school while there is no girl from our village who is attending school. There are various issues that have limited girls attending school. The first one is the distance problem as we don't have girls' school either in our village or nearby villages. The second issue is that of honour as other people would taunt us if we sent girls to school as there is no history of girl's education in our village and no one has ever sent girls to attend school.' (HH A57, male informant, interview 2)

The informant's step mother was rather more critical of the reasons for the absence of a school, attributing it to the failure of the *Maliks* and elders who were simply interested in their own affairs. She felt that if the government was to make a school, they should come and do it directly and not act through the *Malik* and those like him as they could not be trusted. She was literate and able to read and write *Pashto*, and was teaching literacy for girls and women who came to the house. This had been supported by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) who was giving food aid to women who completed the sixth-month course, but unfortunately this had stopped being paid and the course had ceased. She has a mobile phone, as does one of her daughters-in-law.

5.3.2 Group 2: Coping households without land

a) Male-headed households

Household **A01** was struggling to survive in 2009 (Pain, 2010: 24), and had experienced a series of setbacks in terms of failed or failing petty trading activities. The household lived in a house belonging to landlord 1 and was sharecropping land. The four sons were involved in various activities, including being a scooter driver, trading in straw, driving a *zaranj* (three-wheel scooter) and trading in wood. Investments in

²² Field observations by the interview team.

²³ HH B57, male informant, interview 2.

these activities were made on credit, some provided through guarantees by the landlord, but debts were rising, credit sources were drying up, and they were having a hard time making ends meet.

By 2009 the household consisted of 16 people, including two married sons and their family. By 2015 it had now grown to 20 people, but there have been major changes in its composition. The HHH's eldest son separated out a year ago with his family of eight members, while two sons have married and have brought their brides into the household, one on exchange (*baddal*) and the other through bride prices (US\$6,500). The decision to separate was made by the elder son, who as his father reported it felt that he was carrying more than his share of household expenditures. This has reduced the household income more than the reduction in expenditure for the smaller household.

The head had earlier been compelled to buy the land on which their house stands:

'The land where I built the house basically belonged to the father of landlord 1. One of the landlord's brothers gave this land to me for free without taking any money. When his brother died, the landlord told me to vacate this house. I told him that I have built rooms inside the house and you should have to pay the money I have spent on it. He was not agreeing and finally he told me that you should buy this land. I bought the land about 2 years ago for PKR 2,000,000 (US\$20,000). I borrowed from others and paid his money. I still have a debt of PKR 300,000 (US\$3,000) which I have borrowed from different individuals.' (HH A01, male Informant, interview 2)

The head of the household had been working as a sharecropper, which gave him a better income but proved to be too demanding as he aged. He is now managing the dairy of the landlord on a small salary equivalent to US\$5 per day, which has not increased as the burden of work has.

'When the landlord talked to me about managing the cows, I requested PKR 15,000 (US\$150) as a monthly salary. He told me that I will give you PKR 12,000 (US\$120) and with the passage of time I am going to increase your salary but he has not increased it yet. I accepted his offer and started working with him. At the beginning there were two persons working in the dairy; one was responsible for taking care of cows while I was accountable for cultivating and cutting alfalfa for cows. The other person spent only 9 days on the farm and then escaped because he didn't have enough tolerance to work in the farm as keeping and feeding cows is indeed a very difficult task. The other person was also getting PKR 12,000 (US\$120) salary and had been provided a small house for living as well. Now I am working alone in the farm and responsible for both keeping cows and cultivating and cutting alfalfa for them. In the beginning there were only 11 cows but now there are 30 cows.' (HH A01, male Informant, interview 2)

As the HHH's wife commented, not only do they fail to pay her husband's salary on time and they often have to ask for it, the landlord would become unhappy if her husband went and worked for someone else.²⁴ They are crucially dependent on the patronage that the landlord offers, as the informant explained in the account of his son's arrest:

'Once my son was working with a person who had a guest from Jalalabad. It was time when some people were kidnapped in Kandahar province. The intelligence departmentcalled the guest from Jalalabad but instead of that guest, my son talked with the intelligence department on phone. They instructed my son and the guest to come to the police station. When I got to know that my son is arrested by the police, I informed Ahmad Shah Khan and he called the police station. They released my son and the guest on the spot because the intelligence department had mistakenly called them. Later on, the real kidnappers were arrested but they have already killed the people whom they have kidnapped.' (HH A01, male Informant, interview 2)

²⁴ HHA01, Female Informant, Interview 2.

The informant's sons are variously working as a truck driver, a guard in a guest house, as a taxi driver, and as labourers on a daily wage. Household income appears to have stabilised due to their move out of petty trading and into salaried work, but none of the household members earn more than US\$120 a month. With the exception of the son who is employed as a guard, the work is seasonal so there are three months or so when the other sons do not earn any income. In the past the household budget was about US\$1,000 per month, but expenses have had to be reduced to half of that due to the reduced household income and also to allow for the repayment of debt.

According to the HHH's wife, their limited household income and the absence of a school were the reasons that none of her sons were literate and why none of the children in the household were attending school. She also commented on the effects of limited household income on their ability to arrange marriages for their sons, and the reasons (and consequences) why they entered into exchange arrangements instead:

'My sons were getting older, they had to marry. We didn't have enough money to give as walwar, so the only way was to exchange my daughters with my daughters-in-law. The last one I exchanged was too young (only 14 years old). She is pregnant now; I took her to the doctor and he was angry with me that I had made her marry at such a young age. What could I do when there was not enough money in hand to marry my son. For my son who got married recently, we gave walwar. We collected with difficulty PKR 500,000 to pay it, and other wedding costs. My husband had to get loans from many people and he still has to pay them off.'

(HH A01, female Informant, interview 2)

The second household of this group, **A16**, was a young joint household in 2009 made up of three brothers with 14 people in total. It was headed by the eldest married brother, who at the time was around 35 years old. By 2015 the elder brother had separated out with his family due to conflicts, partly between sisters-in-law but also over money and the pressures that the elder brother felt in supporting the joint household. At the time of the separation the elder brother was selling cosmetics and doing well. He was earning more than the younger brothers, and his departure had a major negative impact on the household economy. Since then the situation has reversed, with the two remaining brothers prospering by moving out of petty trading and becoming sharecroppers for landlord 1, while the elder brother struggled. The younger brothers are now in a position where they are supporting the eldest 'as he is my brother and if he needs money or other things we will provide for himthis help will not have a negative impact on us but our support can have a good impact on his life'.²⁵ Family ties thus remain strong and necessary for household A16.

Also living within household A16 is the widowed mother, who since her husband's death has been the decision-maker on marriage and other household matters. She agreed to the elder son separating out of the household, and arranged the informant's marriage:

'My mother told me that she had decided to propose me to your cousin ... I did not say anything because I would not be able to not accept her decision.' (HH A16, male informant, interview 2)

The informant's account of his rise and fall when he worked as a cosmetic trader is consistent with common risks of petty trading in Kandahar city (Minoia and Pain, 2016). He started selling cosmetics from a cart, having bought stock with a loan from a friend. At first the business was good but the market declined and his income was insufficient. He was trading in a place called Arg in the city and there was a security incidence in the area. As a result, the municipality decided to clear the area of all petty traders and he was forced to move elsewhere in the city and lost all of his customers.²⁶ Since one of the

²⁵ HH A16, male informant, interview 3.

²⁶ HH A16, male informant, interview 2.

sons was already a sharecropper with landlord 1, he joined him and feels that now the household has a much better income and they are food secure.

Household A16 clearly felt that working as sharecroppers for the landlord was the best option for them and were happy to provide him with other services when he asked for them: *'if he asks me for any kind of support ... such as taking some wheat to the mill or a damaged machine to the workshop I will do it because he is a good person ... in such kind of works if he doesn't pay I will not ask.'*²⁷

The children in household A16 are still too young to go to school, but while their mother is alive the decision will rest with her. She does not favour education for girls: *'we people do not like for our daughters to go to school because it is not useful. Women should be staying at home doing their housework'*.²⁸ Both she and her son also acknowledged that there was no school for the girls to go to in the village at present, and that the landlords are not willing to provide land for a school.

b) Female-headed households

The two remaining households in village A, A00 and A12, are both female-headed households (FHH), with both HHHs working as servants in landlord 1's household. Their attitudes and situations are rather different, however.

In 2009, household **A00** had seven members and was headed by a sick man who had worked as a sharecropper for landlord 1. He was unable to work due to an injury and so the landlord evicted him from his tied house and lands. The family found shelter in a dilapidated house while the wife continued to work as a servant for landlord 1. Their son was also sick, and the loss of land and its products led to a deterioration in their economic condition.

The family had another son in 2011, but two years later the male head of the household died. Meanwhile the eldest son remained sick and was in Pakistan for treatment. Remarkably, not only were her nine- and seven-year-old sons in school, but also her 16- and 13-year-old daughters who attended a school close to the village. Here it is worth noting that the household was located near to landlord 1, and therefore the security measures around (guards, etc.) made it possible for her daughters to be mobile. The FHH cleans houses and washes clothes, earning about Afs 3,000 (US\$60) a month. Her neighbours help her with food and clothing, but she acknowledged that they had lived better when her husband was alive. Gifts of *zakat* (Islamic taxes) have also provided money that she has put towards collecting the bride price for her son to marry. With money from her brothers and income from her eldest son's work as a taxi driver she was able to buy a small piece of land for PKR 200,000 (US \$1900) on which they have built a small house.

The informant also plays a role as an informal village-level health worker, providing vaccinations and, as she put it, 'serums', although it was not stated what these injections were for. She had started doing this when she was a child: *'I used to go with my father to the doctor with ill people. At that time I saw how the doctor had implemented injections and serums, and I have learnt how to do it. After at the age of 16 I started injections and implementing serums in my place to other people'*.²⁹ She sometimes receives small payments for this work, but more importantly it has given her a certain status and respect in the village.

Her decision to support and invest in the education of her children goes back to when her husband was alive, and their regrets at marrying a daughter who was not educated:

'We wished she was not married, and she could study. It was a pity at that time there was no school for the girls. After the death of my husband some of the people came to my house and

²⁷ HH A16, male informant, interview 3.

²⁸ HH A16, female informant, interview 2

²⁹ HH A00, female informant, interview 1.

proposed for my second daughter as well. You know I refused them all, and I told to people I don't want to marry my daughter. Whenever they complete their education they will know better to whom and when they should marry.' (HH A00, female informant, interview 1)

The informant went on to say that they realised that if they did not work hard to take care of their children and they remained illiterate, their life would not change and they would stay in the same position. She acknowledged that if she took a bride price it could solve some of her problems, but repeated her position on these matters several times during the interview:

'I am an exceptional woman in society, because most women among our tribe and most Pashtun people cannot make decisions about the marriage of their children; also my husband was an exceptional man as well. Because when he was alive I was doing the same activities in the village as now.' (HH A00, female informant, interview 1)

The decision to ensure that her daughters go to school has attracted negative comments from others. But she said that these comments go in one ear and out the other and she will continue to encourage her daughters and sons to study hard and finish school and university.

The informant first worked as an embroiderer when her husband was alive, contributing a small yet irregular income to the household. She then decided she wanted to have additional income and with her husband's agreement went to work cleaning landlord 1's house. She got paid Afs 300 (US \$4.50) per day, and was gradually able to start cleaning other people's houses, washing clothes and helping at wedding celebrations and funerals. In landlord 1's house she now uses a washing machine, but not every household has one of these. She has also found work in two hotels in the city when there are weddings: this happened because landlord 1 asked her to look after their children at a wedding in one of the hotels, and the owner then asked her to come and work there in future. She goes two or three times a month accompanied by her younger son, and earns Afs 2,500 (US\$70) each time. She was also asked by other 'rich women' who were relatives of the landlord to work for them as well, however she did not want this to be widely known within the village because it would not be seen as acceptable. She was highly critical of the attitudes in the village: *'We have very stuck, bigoted and fanatical people and they keep their women inside of the house and they never allow their women to go out from their housethey are always busy with their house chores and producing children'*.³⁰

While the informant has clearly been able to establish an independent position for herself, she is also dependent on the patronage of landlord 1 – as she put it, *'he is the employer and we the poor people are his employees'*. She has also had reason to use the landlord's connections:

'My son was doing masonry work during the construction of a house. Someone killed the owner and people had suspected my poor son. During the day the police came and arrested him and beat him a lot. Thanks God that landlord 1 went in time to the district government office and released my son. I really don't know why those people had made such a big lie against my son.' (HH A00, female informant, interview 1)

Household **A12** has long been headed by a widow with young children who has been working as a servant with landlord 1 since the late 1990s. In 2009 the household had nine members, including two sons and their families. It has now increased to 11 people, with the marriage of a fourth son and birth of a grandchild. By 2015 the eldest son had long separated out of the household with his family, and a second son who had a drug addiction was also living separately although the household paid his expenses. In addition, two daughters have married out in exchange for brides for their brothers. As described by Pain (2009: 48), the mother had entered into complex exchange agreements in order to marry her eldest son, whose wife was eight when she was bought into the household. Her own daughter was 12 when she was married out as a second wife to her new daughter-in-law's brother. On account of

³⁰ HH A00, female informant, interview 1.

providing a bride for an already married man, A12 also received a younger sister who was only 6 months at the time, and was brought into the household as a future bride for another son. There was conflict between the two households that were party to this exchange, however, and the young baby was taken back.

In 2009 the widow worked as a servant for landlord 1, baking bread and being provided food and a house in return. Two sons worked as casual labourers in the brick fields. By 2015 there appeared to have been little change in her circumstances, other than the building of a room for her second son and his wife to live in. Her daughter-in-law joined her as a servant of landlord 1. They are not paid a salary, but are given food three times a day along with the other servants of the landlord's household. She was clear about her position:

'If I do not cook their bread and my son does not graze their cow they will take that house from us. After that someone else will come and live here. Because there are a lot of people that want to have such an opportunity.' (HH A12, female informant, interview 3)

The informant's other son has casual work as a scrap dealer, buying and selling fragments of food, metal and other household equipment to bring in a limited amount of cash. He sells goods at the second-hand market, but it does not generate a good income. He admitted that they can only afford to eat meat once every two months. He offered good news that they had been able to marry his younger brother, however, and had only had to pay the bride's family to organise the wedding party rather than any bride price. This sum, some PKR 18,000 (US \$170), the informant borrowed from one of the landlord's security guards, but she was not sure when and how she would be able to pay it back. The household thus remains in a position of dependent security on landlord 1.

The informant has grandchildren of school age, with one granddaughter receiving some schooling in the mosque, but she did not envisage them receiving other education. Her son said he would want his children – including his daughters – to go to school, however.

In sum, the six households discussed in this section are all holding their own but at somewhat different economic levels. One of the two households with land has a business that, although risky, provides a profit in good years; the other has a secure and salaried job, which with care meets their expenses. The two male-headed, landless households are both tied in dependent relationships with a landlord, which has its costs in terms of independence. Both households have other male members who have separate incomes, however. The two female-headed households are also in dependent relations with a landlord, but one has managed to establish her own independence to a considerable degree while the other has not.

6 Discussion

What can we draw from this account of fifteen households in two Kandahar villages and their changing lives since 2009?

Any understanding of changes in household-specific dynamics has to be situated within the broader setting of a severe economic downturn in the economy, which has had a major knock-on effect for many, if not all, households. There is little evidence that any of the households are significantly better off than they were in 2009; rather, the evidence suggests that most have suffered an economic decline, and for those without land this has also had negative effects on food security. Even for the three households (A10, B40 and B42) with significant land holdings, the good times are over but their assets and connections have allowed them to maintain their economic position, even when there has been land division as a result of a father's death. There are also three households (A05, B56 and A03) that do not own land, but have secured access to it through social connections. This has allowed them to lease land and, combined with other income sources, has permitted them to modestly improve their circumstances.

Three households (B44, B50 and B46) have suffered a significant decline in their circumstances, but for varied reasons. The economic decline and availability of work (or shortage of male labour, as in B44) has affected them all, but costs associated with deaths and marriage have been a contributory factor. Six of the households have managed more or less to hold things together, but from rather different starting points. For two of them (A02 and B57), a risky business has provided income but having large households with many young children and limited labour opportunities have meant that they are essentially maintaining their position. For the two male-headed households without land (A01 and A16), a sufficient number of working men, balanced against the constraints of either debt or household size, have held them in check. One of these households, A01, lives in a dependent relationship with the main village landlord, as do the remaining two female-headed households of this group (A00 and A12). The head of A12 bakes bread for the main landlord's household in return for food, and is at the beck and call of the landlord. Through force of character the other, A00, has managed to carve a degree of independence for herself, allowing her to obtain work in public places elsewhere that is socially disapproved of. She has also been able to invest in her daughters' education, to the extent of resisting early marriage for them. In the light of her limited income and dependent status, hers is a remarkable story.

Three features are common to all of these households. The first is debt (see Annex 2, Table 1), which all but three of the households face. Common causes of this are marriage, sickness and death, and to some extent investments in housing, livestock and business. Many of the households speak of juggling these debts to maintain credit worthiness, and maintaining reputation and connections for future borrowing in the village (Kjiln and Pain, 2007). For dependent households, this is also a key factor that ties them to their landlords (Pain, 2010). The second striking feature, and in contrast to the Herat households (Huot et al., 2016), is the absence of household members migrating abroad to find work (although migration to Pakistan for medical treatment is common) (see Annex 2, Table 2). This tells us something about the availability of work in Kandahar in comparison with Herat, and is consistent with the lower poverty levels in the former (World Bank, 2014b).

This brings us to the question of land. A striking feature of these two villages is the extraordinary degree of inequality that exists between the few who own land and the many who do not. For those with land, it is evident that it has been a route to prosperity, not so much for the agricultural income that it generates but for the social connections that land ownership leverages and the other economic opportunities that it has opened up (Pain, 2010).

The fact that a majority of households are landless is far from unique to these villages. In 47 villages in Nangarhar, on average nearly 65% of households are landless (Pain and Sturge, 2015: 11). The implications of land inequality are rarely discussed in agricultural policy documents (World Bank, 2014), or considered in relation to village-level governance (Pain, 2016). There is no doubt that the irrigated lands of Dand district are productive, even if they are not as well irrigated as those of other districts. However, one might wonder, given the shift to wells and pump-irrigated agriculture, how long groundwater can continue to provide sufficient water under conditions of drought. But it is true, as one informant made clear (A16), that getting access to agricultural land is a better option than seeking work in Kandahar under the current economic climate. As B40 commented, while agriculture might provide work for 10% of the landless population, there are insufficient opportunities for the remaining 65% who are without work. Increases in agricultural productivity will not alter the fundamental structural inequalities that characterise these two villages, and generate good employment for those looking for work.

Much has been written about Kandahar in terms of its overt violence and conflict (Jackson, 2015) and the roots of this. But what these accounts of village life and the struggles of the poor households present are another dimension of violence. This has been variably described as 'a quiet violence' in Boyce and Hartmann's (1983) account of life in a Bangladesh, or 'a silent violence' in Watt's analysis (2013) of the food crisis that hit the West African Sahel in the 1970s. The notion of 'structural violence' has gained currency more widely (Galtung, 1969; Farmer, 2004), referring to the ways in which institutions and practices inflict avoidable harm. In the context of these two study villages, it refers to the ways in which highly unequal social structures characterised by land inequalities, gender inequalities and poverty systematically and indirectly cause harm and lasting damage.

The almost complete absence of public goods provision in these two villages close to Kandahar has denied women access to education, and has limited the availability of health care for households. Of course deeper cultural norms are also part of this deprivation, as the evidence on women's access to mobile phones and education illustrates. Control by the landed elite, as well as capture and restriction of external resources for their benefit, is what characterises these villages. This represents a failure of the National Solidarity Programme and the wider aid effort, but also supports the case made by Pain (2005, 2016) that 'bad' elite need to be identified and addressed. As many informants made clear, while they are aware of this injustice, voice is not an option: the only route out is to escape (Hirschmann, 1970). But for a significant number they are left with loyalty in what is essentially a 'Faustian bargain' (Wood, 2003). How else can the aging household head of A01 accept low pay with an increasing work burden when another escaped, having found it intolerable? Or the female head of A12 working as an unpaid servant, knowing that the slightest resistance would have her kicked out?

7 Conclusion

On the edge of Kandahar city, in a province that has received one of the highest levels of reconstruction funding of all of Afghanistan's provinces since 2001 (World Bank, 2015), two villages remain largely devoid of public goods provision. Girls – and many boys – do not go to school, with the absence of a primary school a significant contributory factor. Basic health services are not available, while public goods that have been delivered have largely been captured by the landed elite.

Large external resource flows have contributed to contention and violence in the political sphere (Jackson, 2015) and exclusionary economic practices (Minoia and Pain, 2015). While overt violence was largely not reported in the villages, there is pervasive evidence of structural violence and the way in which it overshadows the daily lives of the landless and poor. In good times, economic opportunities allowed households a partial exit to find a better, if not exactly good, life. Many households will continue to make do but with little hope for the future – as one household member commented, she did not know how long things would continue as they are. Others, locked in dependent relationships with the powerful, have few life prospects and survive simply for the present, fearful of what tomorrow might bring.

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Annex 1: Field methods

Household interviews were undertaken by an experienced team of two male and two female field researchers, supplemented at times by additional team members. Interviews commenced in village A in October 2015, and were completed in Village B in January 2016. Three field trips were undertaken for each study village (nine in total), first for the purpose of introductory interviews with the 15 households who made up the original sample in the 2002 study and general focus group discussions. Two subsequent field trips were undertaken to conduct two rounds of household interviews, with both the male and female heads of the eight households selected for this in-depth interview stage. A period in between the two rounds of interviews was taken to review and analyse the information collected, and to ensure optimal targeting of questions, and therefore data quality, for the second interviews. The household interview procedure followed a number of stages, summarised as follows.

Household profile: In the original 2002 study the households within the villages (15 households per village) were selected out of a wealth-ranking exercise with the guidance of local elders and community leaders. The number of households selected from each wealth group was roughly proportional to the relative number of households in each wealth group in the village. This data was used in the 2009 restudy and, on the basis of the updated data of 2009, a household profile was prepared for each of the original interviewed households that summarised basic data on household composition and economy.

Introductory interviews: The AREU interview team introduced themselves to the village, holding a focus group discussion with both men (ordinarily elders) and women in order to collect general information about the village itself, and changes in livelihoods since 2002/3. A series of introductory discussions then followed with all the original sample households that were present in the village. These preliminary interviews, informed by the household profiles, explored changes that had happened in the household (in composition, economy etc.) and looked for evidence on changing household fortunes (improving, maintaining or declining). These preliminary interview transcripts were then translated and comparisons made with the 2002 base household profile.

Household selection: On the basis of the preliminary interview evidence, a sub-sample of eight households, proportional to the number of households in each wealth group in the original 15 household sample, were selected for further interviews. The criteria for the selection was first to find household contrasts in terms of changing fortunes across and within the wealth groups, and then within these to choose households of contrasting size, structure and age. This selection was made by lead researchers, informed through consultation with the field researchers.

Household interview guides: Detailed household interview guides were prepared for each household selected for interview. The interview guides identified key themes and issues to be followed up over the four interviews held – two with the responsible man and two with the responsible woman of the household. Although the content of each interview guide was structured around eight common themes,³¹ each was tailored to the specific household, drawing on changes reported by the household in the preliminary interview. Particular issues of interest, such as village histories, shopkeeper credit and NGO project activities, were followed up with relevant individuals in supplementary ‘key informant’ interviews.

Household interviews: Household interviews were carried out by the male and female teams, usually with the head of the household and the oldest woman (in the case of joint households). Occasionally,

³¹ Household composition and structure; household history; home and services; land and agricultural production; income-generating work; credit and saving; links with the state/government and informal systems; wider context.

sons, daughters or daughters-in-law were interviewed where the head of the household was away, or the intended respondent sick, and in a minority of cases one longer interview was undertaken with a respondent due to their unavailability for a second. Care was taken to ensure that interviewers for each respondent remained constant, for the sake of continuity and to build on the trust and rapport developed by interviewers with individual respondents. However, the teams rotated internally with the interviewer and note taker exchanging roles with each different household. Feedback on transcripts was provided regularly, and analytical discussions with the field teams were held at the end of each working day in the field, facilitated by the lead author.

Debriefing: Debriefing sessions were held in between field missions and at the end of data collection for each study site, for the project team to contribute to joint analysis on emerging themes based on collected information and observations made in the field. Some of the debriefing sessions involved clarification of key issues for particular households, while others involved systematic household comparisons in relation to key themes. Discussions were held regarding the meanings of particular local terms and the way in which ideas were articulated by respondents.

Annex 2

Table 8: Household debts

Village A

WG	HH code	Amount and method	When	Used for	Paid back?
4	1600	PKR 250,000 (Afs 162,650) cash borrowed from brother-in-law	No information	Married eldest son	Partially - originally borrowed PKR 400,000 (Afs 260,200) and has paid back PKR 150,000 (Afs 97,600) through charitable donations from other villagers (<i>zakat</i> - Islamic taxes)
3	1601	PKR 25,000 (Afs 16,000) owed to Nadir Khan	1 year ago	Land given to HH 20-25 years ago by Zahir Shah (Nadir Khan's brother), built house on it then; last year he bought the land from Nadir Khan for PKR 160,000 (Afs 104,000)	Partially - PKR 160,000 (Afs 104,000) originally owed for the land, paid back Afs 88,000 from his and his son's income
2	1602	Afs 200,00 of Afs 400,000 paid to son's fiancée's father (needs to pay additional Afs 200,000 so wedding can take place but cannot because of losses with poultry farm)	1 year ago	Eldest son's peshkash	N/A
2	1603	Afs 50,000 cash borrowed from relative	3 years ago	Son was injured in a suicide attack in Kandahar City (near General Raziq's house) and loan was taken for his treatment (was in hospital for one month)	Partially - borrowed Afs 300,000 and has paid back Afs 250,000
		Afs 150,000 owed to shoe trader	Every year	Buys shoes for his shop once a year and they are given to him on credit	Partially - pays the trader on a monthly basis for one year until the loan is paid
2	1605	PKR 118,000 (Afs 77,300) cash borrowed from relative	Less than 1 year ago	Bought a cow	No - plans to pay back this winter after selling the cow
4	1612	PKR 45,000 (Afs 29,500) cash lent to second son's wife's family during wedding	10 months ago	Married second son	N/A
4	1616	Total of Afs 200,000 cash borrowed and credit to cosmetics trader	-8 years ago -4 years ago -2 years ago	-Afs 80,000 on medical treatment for father before his death and funeral -Took loan of Afs 70,000 from relative for his marriage -Lost Afs 50,000 when cosmetics shop in Kandahar City closed - bought Afs 80,000 of cosmetics on credit and paid back on Afs 30,000	No - plans to pay back with income from land

Village B

WG	HH Code	Amount and method	When	Used for	Paid back?
1	1640	US\$55,000 (Afs 3.7 million) lost on HHH's brother's failed business venture in Dubai	2 years ago	HHH's brother spent US\$55,000 opening a business in Dubai	Yes – HHH and other brothers paid the debt
1	1642	PKR 1 million (Afs 655,500) cash borrowed from friends and relatives	3-4 years ago	Built house and bought land to make grape garden	Yes – paid back last year with income from garden and son's salaries
4	1644	PKR 500,000 (Afs 327,700) on clothes on credit for HHH's shop in Kandahar City	Every year	Buys clothes on credit from trader for shop in Kandahar City	Partially – pays back PKR 5,000 (Afs 3,300) per week
4	1646	Afs 24,000-32,000 borrowed from nephew	6 months ago	Bought 8 sheep to sell in bazaar for profit	Yes – paid back with money earned from selling sheep one year ago
3	1656	Afs 1,000 borrowed from neighbour	6 months ago	Took ill daughter to hospital	No – planned to pay back when monthly salary came in

Table 9: Household migration patterns

Village A

WG	HH Code	HH members who migrated and where	When	Frequency and duration	Reason
4	1600	Eldest son to Pakistan	6 months ago	Once	Medical treatment
3	1601	1. HHH from Urozgan to Pakistan 2. Pakistan to village A 3. Father to Pakistan	1. During the Soviet occupation 2. During the Taliban 3. 4 years ago	1. Once / No information 1. Once / 30 years 1. Once / Less than one month	1. Conflict 2. Met Ahmad Shah in Pakistan, offered the HHH land in village A when returning to Afghanistan 3. Medical treatment
2	1602	Entire family 1. Karz to Pakistan 2. Pakistan to Erazi (house given to him by Ahmad Shah) 3. Village A to Karz	1. During the Soviet occupation 2. 1990 3. Ten years ago	1. Once / No information 2. Once / Ten years 3. Ten years	1. Conflict 2. Met Ahmad Shah in Pakistan, offered the HHH a house in village A when returning to Afghanistan 3. Moved back to Karz to run business (poultry farm)
2	1603	- Entire family from village A to Spin Boldak (with Ahmad Shah)	Before Daud Khan	Once / six years (before returning to village A)	Moved with Ahmad Shah – worked on lands and have known him since childhood
2	1605	1. HHH originally from Sheikhan district of Kandahar, father moved to village 2. Third son to Pakistan	1. During time of Zahir Shah (?) 2. No information	1. Once / 2. Once / One month	1. Father bought house from Zahir Shah 2. Medical treatment
1	1610 ³²	No information	No information	No information	No information
4	1612	1. Family from Zharia district of KDR to Pakistan 2. Pakistan to Erazi	1. During the Soviet occupation 2. During the Taliban	1. Once / No information 2. Once / No information	1. Conflict 2. Nadir Shah gave them a house in Erazi
4	1616	1. Entire family to Pakistan from Urzgan 2. Pakistan to Erazi (Zahir gave them house)	1. During the Soviet Occupation 2. 25 years ago	1. Once / No information 2. Once / 25 years	1. Conflict 2. Zahir Shah gave them a house in Erazi

³² After having the preliminary interview HH 1610 refused to partake in the subsequent two interviews.

Village B

WG	HH Code	HH members who migrated and where	When	Frequency and duration	Reason
1	1640	HHH's father to India	2 years ago	Once	Medical treatment
1	1642	1.HHH's first wife to Pakistan 2.HHH to Pakistan	1. 9 years ago 2. 3 years ago	1. Once / No information 1. Once / No information	1. Medical treatment 2. Medical treatment
3	1646	HHH's sister-in-law (brother's wife) to Pakistan	1 year ago	Once / No information	Medical treatment
4	1657	HHH's father to Pakistan	Less than one year ago	Once / One week	Medical treatment



SLRC Working Papers present information, analysis and key policy recommendations on issues relating to livelihoods, basic services and social protection in conflict affected situations.

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