Original Paper

The Reconstruction of Social Order in Drug-stricken Communities

Jingzi Han[1], Wenjuan Zhang[1] & Bin Wei[2]

[1] Jingzi Han, Associate Professor of Lanzhou University of Finance and Economics, Lanzhou, China. Ph.D in Anthropology of Lanzhou University. Postdoctoral researcher of Anthropology, Department in McGill University. Research field: drug policy

[1] Wenjuan Zhang, School of Marxism, Lanzhou University of Finance and Economics; Major: Studies on Fundamental Issues of Modern and Contemporary Chinese History

[2] Bin Wei, Master of Marxist Theory Research, Assistant Professor of Sichuan Minzu College, Ganzi, China

Abstract

Society is like a large, fast-spinning wheel. When the center rotates rapidly, it spreads social sediments to the edges and leads residents in outlying areas to become victims of social transformation. Originally an urban phenomenon, drug problems emerged in and struck some vulnerable rural regions after that. To research how these communities reconstructed the social order, I did my field work in the City of M for 13 years. Analyzing the complicated social ecology of this area, this paper applies the theory of community proposed by Christie W. Kiefer to discuss the contribution of grassroots organizations and elites to the reconstruction of the social order. Taking C village as a successful example, I argue that the communities I studied also encounter some challenges: community fragmentation, the erosion of traditional authority, and the fragility of rural livelihoods. These difficulties show that the communities must coordinate and cooperate on a large scale with the broader society. With support from society as a whole and from every level of the social hierarchy, these communities can be extricated from their drug-afflicted situation and achieve order reconstruction.

Keywords

Grassroots, Reconstruction, Social ecology, Social morbidity

Introduction

A community is a large collective formed by social groups or organizations gathered in a certain area where the lives of people are highly interrelated. It is the most basic unit of social organization and a microcosm of the larger society. Sociologists have proposed more than 140 definitions of the term "community". Despite their differences, the definitions are basically consistent in describing the core elements of a community. It is generally believed that a community should include a certain number of people, a certain range of regions, an infrastructure of a certain scale, a certain type of organization, and a culture with specific characteristics. In other words, a community is a social group of people inhabiting a particular region and sharing a lasting and tangible common life. Some communities, however, such as the ones studied in this paper, may also experience significant social morbidity. Therefore, I define a community according to the American anthropologist Christie W. Kiefer (2007), who believes that a community is a group of people who share certain problems and work together to discuss and solve them. In general, this group of people has one or two of the following characteristics: its members live in close proximity in their village or city neighborhood and have a high level of mutual understanding because of their common culture, race, religion, social class, and history. People with these characteristics often treat one another as possible friends or allies and thereby experience similar social problems. These problems affect the development of the community, for example, its air quality, water quality, housing, climate, transportation, health care, employment, crime rates, drug abuse, etc.

This paper is based on my 13 years of field work (2012-2025) on drug-stricken communities in City of M. The traditional communities have a common culture, religion, and history and share the same or a similar status in the social hierarchy. At the same time, these communities have faced pathological social behaviors such as drug abuse and drug crimes as the result of social transformation. In order to reconstruct the social order, grassroots organizations, elites, and families of victims have actively participated in the process of finding solutions to the social problems and promoting positive development.

The social ecology of these drug-stricken communities has both the common characteristics of traditional communities and specific characteristics because of illegal drugs. Especially since the 1980s, when these communities became drug-stricken area, not only the victims' families but the entire community has been affected by illegal drugs. The perception of illegal drugs has formed relatively obvious social boundaries because of different interpretations of drug use by different people. Given the weakened social order, how to rebuild this relatively peaceful community is a question that concerns most community residents. Both grassroots organizations and elites, the central figures in the community's reconstruction, have made a significant and positive contribution to restore a harmonious and stable social order after the drug problems appeared. Nevertheless, for various reasons, the community also faces challenges in reconstructing social order.

In addition to leading the villagers to become wealthy through hard work and to stay away from the temptation of drug crimes, the grassroots organizations and the elites have implemented anti-drug publicity and education in places such as schools and temples, which gradually make the villagers

understand the harm of illegal drugs and jointly guide them to reconstruct the social order in the drug-stricken communities. This article takes C village, which has undergone major changes, as an example: the anti-drug awareness of the villagers has increased significantly; the reputation of the community has gradually improved; the living standards of the residents have risen; the number of people sentenced for drug offences has been dramatically reduced. However, in the process of accelerating urbanization, drug-stricken communities have also encountered certain dilemmas in reconstructing the social order: community fragmentation, the weakening of traditional authority, and the fragility of rural livelihoods. These difficulties demonstrate that the communities must coordinate and cooperate on a large scale with the broader society. With support from society as a whole and from every level of the social hierarchy, the communities can be extricated from their drug-afflicted situation and achieve order reconstruction.

Methods

It is complicated to research the reconstruction of the social order in drug-stricken communities in the City of M. It is also difficult to adopt a quantitative research method because drug crime is usually a hidden behavior. Therefore, this paper reports on qualitative research in which field work and a literature review are the main methods.

Field work is the main research method in Anthropology and the cornerstone of this paper. Like other anthropologists who research sensitive issues and need research approval from regional governments, local organizations, groups or group leaders, I obtained research permission first from the Anti-Drug Office of S Province on July 12th, 2012, after which I accumulated more than 80 months of field work over the last 13 years. Because of the risk of researching drug trafficking in the city of M and its stigma in mainstream society, I was rather fearful and uneasy when I first entered the field sites. After this "culture shock", I came to gradually understand the traditional communities in the City of M and made friends with many interlocutors and their families (Luke Lassiter, 2014), whereby I began to reflect on the social transformation and the reconstruction of the social order in the Ctiy of M. Because the drug issues are regional and social problems in the City of M, it is impossible to conduct an in-depth analysis of the whole area based only on one field site. Therefore, this research adopts multi-sited ethnography as the main methodology in which the following significant drug-stricken communities are included: community D in H County, community G in P County, Community K in W County, Community J in L County.

Field work on sensitive social issues often encounters significant challenges, but successful field work can be the basis and emphasis of such research. In general, individuals or groups who are socially, economically and culturally marginalized always have long-term confrontational relations with mainstream society. The drug addicts and drug dealers in this paper have long been in a state of opposition to the police officers who represent the will of the country. Therefore, participant observation, the main method in Anthropology, is more suitable than quantitative analysis when we research the lives of marginalized groups and individuals. They can respond carefully and honestly to sensitive personal

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questions only when a long-term relationship of mutual trust is established between the anthropologist and the interlocutors (Bourgois, 2003). Accordingly, I spent thousands of days and nights in many field sites researching drug addicts, drug dealers and their families, their communities, the elites, and the religious leaders. I recorded their conversations and life stories using my heart, my ears, my eyes, my hands, and my voice recorder. More importantly, I became a member of their groups and participated in many of their activities: I accompanied the ex-addict MCL to sell women's clothing at D Night Market in the City of M; I was a volunteer tutor to drug addict MXL's daughter; I observed the court trial of MYZ and ZHJ and visited them afterwards in prison; I participated in the wedding of the daughter of ZHJ. Experiencing psychological confusion and physical danger during the first stage of my field work, I entered the alien regions as "the Other" and finally became a friend of the drug-stricken communities, witnessing their sorrows and joys.

The basis of field work on controversial issues in the traditional communities is respect, trust, understanding and courage, which are the key to open the hearts of the interlocutors. Some readers may believe this is an easy task, but this is not the case. It requires kindness, wisdom, tolerance and the pursuit of knowledge and truth. I was suspected of being a "reporter", "an undercover police officer" or "intelligence personnel" during the field work because the interlocutors were initially unfamiliar with my identity and the purpose of my research. I was even asked the question, "Do you have any prejudice against our City of M?" In addition, such investigations are risky: I was worried about my personal safety when I first visited a relatively unfamiliar drug addict; I did not dare to disclose myself to anyone unfamiliar in the first stage of my field work when I was researching drug problems in the hardest drug-stricken region. Nevertheless, I did not fear the risk but approached the subjects with a kind and tolerant heart to respect their life journey, trust their personality, and listen to their voices. According to these principles, I gradually entered their inner world and communicated intimately with them. I sometimes shed tears when I recalled the unforgettable stories in the field sites, even felt that I was dialoguing with them during my writing process, and looked forward to seeing them again.

It is impossible to discuss drug-related topics and elicit the true feelings of subjects by opening a forum, because drug use is illegal and drug trafficking is criminal. Consequently, in-depth interviews have become an important method in field work. The interlocutors I interviewed in the last six years included: leaders of the Narcotic Control Committee in the S Province, leaders of the Narcotic Control Office in the City of M, police officers, narcotics agents, town cadres, drug addicts and their family members, drug dealers and their family members, patients accepting Methadone Maintenance Treatment, Heads of Village Neighborhood Committees, villagers, teachers, and students. More importantly, I gained the trust and support of most interlocutors by respecting them and listening to them during in-depth interviews with some drug addicts and drug dealers. They talked to me about the confusion, suffering and hesitation that had accumulated in their hearts for many years, which led me to deeply understand the uneasiness of their internal world.

In addition to the field work mentioned above, another very important research method in this paper is

the literature review. Drug problems in are historical because they were problems left over from the rise and fall of opium consumption in the early 19th century (Sandra Hyde, 2018). I systematically consulted the history of these drug problems by consulting a large number of archives and local chronicles. On this basis, standing at the intersection of longitudinal social transformation and horizontal social cooperation in the City of M, I analyzed the reconstruction of the social order in the drug-stricken communities.

Background: the social context of drug problems in the city of M

In ancient times, the city of M was called Hezhou and known as the major transportation route on the Silk Road. The Han Dynasty opened up the northwestern frontier, making it the mainstay of the southern route of the Silk Road. The Tangbo Passageway was opened during the Tang Dynasty, while the Tea-Horse Trade began during the Song Dynasty. Transportation between the East and the West was restored in the Yuan Dynasty, and the Silk Road was rebuilt in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The City of M was once a military town and trade distribution center to the western region. The residents there created frontier history, which contributed to the development of the nation for thousands of years.

The local people are good at doing business and trading, and also trafficked in opium before 1950s. During this period, the drug policies on opium were inconsistent; opium was at times legal and other times illegal, causing it to become a major social problem. In the1950s, the state and local governments implemented cautious and conservative bans on opium, including anti-cultivation and anti-trafficking laws, which led to the disappearance of this drug problem after a few years. Although there is no specific historical data on when the City of M banned opium, we can speculate that it was in 1958, according to the archive of the City of Q ban on drugs, which applied to Q and its neighbor M.

In the early days of 1980S and coupled with the influence of Western liberalization, the local perspective on life, worldview, and values became progressively diversified. As the reforms intensified, deep social contradictions grew increasingly obvious, triggering various new social problems. The initial policies advocated emancipating the mind and encouraged the reform of traditional customs and behavior, which caused the phenomenon of anomie to some extent. Both the emancipation of the mind and the pursuit of money initiated by the market economy led some people to engage in destructive, anti-social, and deviant behavior under the banner of "emancipat[ing] the mind and act[ing] aggressively", which in turn exacerbated the social anomie.

The social problems that accompanied the social trasnformation included gambling, prostitution, drug abuse, pornography, trafficking in women and children, superstitious activities, unfair trading practices, fake and shoddy goods, irrational fines, fees, illegal fundraising and political contributions, economic crimes, theft of public property, social and psychological imbalances, problems caused by accelerated population mobility, laid-off workers, an ageing population, parenting problems after a divorce, and urban transportation. Among these concerns, drug problems became serious social issues that plagued the government and people.

The main feature of drug problems is that the source of narcotic drugs is outside the country, including

the "Golden triangle", the "Golden Crescent", and Korea. The narcotics are then trafficked into southern border regions. Targeting inland cities for distribution or transit has caused the drug situation to become "surrounded on four sides, with converging, multi-headed entries from north and south, and full penetration" (Zhongyan, 2008). The Province of V has become the most seriously drug-stricken province because of its proximity to the "Golden Triangle", along with several provinces near the Province of V that have also been severely afflicted by drugs. As a result, six provinces—V,T,E,S,H,L were determined the key provinces for drug remediation by the National Narcotics Control Commission in 1999. It has been established that the flow of drugs moved gradually from the southwestern frontier adjacent to the "Golden Triangle" to the inland regions. As a landlocked area, the province of S became one of the key drug remediation provinces because drug trafficking and drug addiction in the City of M had become serious problems. Residing in a relatively fragile ecological environment, some people in the City of M were gradually influenced by the booming drug economy in the Province of S when they did business there. For example, the outflow of drug trafficking from the City of M afflicted the local economy, society, and culture, thus also destroying the social order. F County and P County of the City of M were listed as key remediation areas.

Society is like a large, fast-spinning wheel. When it rotates rapidly, social sediments are spread from the center to the edges and leads local residents to become victims of social transformation. Drug problems, for instance, which were once urban phenomena, flooded into remote areas. To a certain extent, this situation shows that these areas are vulnerable both in their ecological environments and human population. The fragility of the human population mainly refers to the relative deprivation of opportunities for human development opportunities, the inability to avoid and respond to disasters and then implement post-disaster reconstruction of the social order. In general, group fragility in ecologically vulnerable areas is more and more apparent. Therefore, facing widespread drug problems, these vulnerable areas became the most fragile and hardest afflicted regions. In the City of M specifically, the emergence of drug problems was also a product of social transformation. Moreover, the City of M is not only similar to other marginal areas but also has local characteristics which have become the concrete reasons for this problem.

The drug problems in the city of M are far less serious than in the "Golden Triangle", but they gradually evolved into local social problems in a specific historical period. With the evolution of drug problems over decades, the City of M has experienced and is still undergoing a long recovery period: the gestation stage from 1978 to 1988; the outbreak stage from 1989 to 1998; the stage of governance and remediation from 1999 to 2009; the recovery stage from 2009 to the present. The 20 years from 1989 to 2009 were periods of drugs flooding into the area as well as efforts at social reconstruction. I employed both in-depth interviews and a historical literature review to reproduce this 20-year process. Presently, drug problems are no longer the main issues in the development of the City of M, but the suffering and lingering aftermath caused by drugs will persist for a long time.

The social ecology of the drug-stricken communities

Drug addicts, drug dealers, and their families live in specific communities where a complex social ecology plays a crucial and decisive role in their behavior. Social ecology refers to the state in which people and the elements of their social system interact with the environment and have a significant impact on human behavior (Shi, 2004); some scholars believe that social ecology has natural, economic, and social characteristics (Ye, 1998). I have selected S town of G County, C Village of H Town of K County, and N Town of D County as my research focus. Analyzing the social ecology of these three socially morbid communities explains the complexity of reconstructing social order in the drug-afflicted communities.

The drug-stricken triangle communities alternating in time and space

S Town of G County, C village of H Town in K County, and N Town of D County are all badly drug-afflicted communities. In terms of the economy and trade, S Town of G County and N Town of D County are considered larger communities. Temporally, these three communities respectively illustrate the drug problems in the City of M from the 1980s to the 1990s, in the early 21st century, and in the past decade. Geographically, they form part of the three drug-stricken areas: G County, K County, and D County. Alternating in time and space, drugs have been transferred between these triangular communities. These communities are linked not only by their geography but also by the continuous circulation of drugs in these three counties because of the anti-drug activities of the public security agencies. The drug problems in S Town were brought to the surface because the chief criminal of the "89·11"exemplary case was MYH, a resident of S Town. Entering from Myanmar and transiting through V, T and S provinces and finally going to G County to leave the country, this transnational drug trafficking group formed a tight network. When the case was solved in November 1989, 221.5 kilograms of heroin were seized, along with drug money valued at USD 30,000, more than 2000 grams of gold, 3 pistols, 5 sports guns and stun guns, 10 tear gas bombs, 750g of potassium cyanide, 4 cars, 1 motorcycle, 1 tractor, and 5 mobile phones. Police officers also captured 11 foreign drug dealers from Myanmar, Hong Kong and Macao, and 60 domestic drug dealers (including 51 from S Province and the chief criminal MYH, a farmer in S Town, G County) (Local History and Chronicles Compilation Committee of S Province, 1995).

In addition, particular geographical and economic reasons caused S Town to be the first drug-afflicted area in the City of M. Attributed to the severe crackdown on the drug crimes in S Town by the public security agencies, the problems were contained at the beginning of the 21st century. Then, the towns of H and L in K County experienced a new round of drug problems due to their proximity to S Town, whereby village C in H Town became seriously affected by drugs. Compared with G County and K County, the drug problems in D County began relatively late. However, in the past two decades, D County has become the most seriously affected county in the the City of M. Towns of N, G, and D had the worst drug problems and were thus selected as the research topic to analyze.

Although drug problems do not exist only in these three counties, they are relatively serious, and both drugs and drug-related money have circulated at different times. They are not closed systems but

inextricably linked to the outside world. Accordingly, the social ecology of these three communities also displays the complex interaction among humans, the environment, and organizations, which pose many obstacles in obtaining internal and external support during the reconstruction of the social order.

The transportation network: river, road, and humans

Human civilization is inseparable from rivers, roads, and the people who connect them, all of which are woven into huge transportation networks that closely link individuals and communities. This link has both the positive function of communication and the negative function of spreading social ills. The three communities we chose, S Town, C Village, and N Town, are not only conveniently supplied by the rivers and roads but have also become highly impacted by the drug trade.

The City of M is within the Y River area. The Y River and its tributaries, such as the T River, the H River, the D River, the N River, and the G River, flow through the City of M. Therefore, the City of M belongs to the Y River civilization.

Roads are located close to rivers and mountains in the area Historically, the huge transportation routes between the south and the north, the east and the west, such as the "Silk Road", the "Ancient Tangfan Road", the "Ancient Tea Horse Road", and the "Hexi Corridor" blended various cultures and nationalities together and eventually formed the multiply-integrated civilization. The City of M, located in the Golden Belt of the ancient Silk Road, is the mainstay of the southern route of the Silk Road. The "Jiaohu" of the City of M, who relied on draft horses and donkeys for production or trade in the mountainous areas where transportation was difficult, played a significant role in cultural transmission between the south and the north beginning in the Qing Dynasty.

The three communities of S Town, C Village and N Town are all within a relatively convenient transportation network connected by rivers, roads, and people. Transportation to S Town is extremely convenient because the L Expressway runs through the town, and G Highway, S Expressway, and K Expressway are adjacent to each other. Taking S Town as the center, one can pass through the T River to L City and D City east of S Town; one can travel along the T River to L County and K County south of S Town; one can travel through the G Valley and reach the City of M and G City west of the town; one can pass through B River and directly reach D County north of the town. N town is located west of S Town, on the coast of the B River which flows from west to east through the towns of N, Z, W, and G and empties into the G River. Transportation to N Town is relatively convenient because of the county-level BS Road that connects B Village to S Town. C Village is located along the L River which originates from T Mountain, flowing through B Township, B Township, L Township, and H Township into the C River, and finally emptying into the T River. Transportation to C Village is by the KG Road which connects K County and G County. In general, these three communities belong to the T River Basin which links them with rivers and roads.

Transportation networks are highly related to social life, which directly influences people's ideas and local development, even including the spread of illegal activities. Connected by rivers and roads, these three communities experienced fast population mobility. As a result, residents have become more active

and open to new ideas, including illicit practices such as using and trafficking in drugs. Once a new way of becoming rich is available, it will generally spread first to convenient places. For example, outflow drug trafficking appeared in G County where transportation is relatively convenient, while this problem emerged relatively late in D County because of its congestion. Furthermore, with the wide circulation of this new way to become rich, "transportation" gradually turned into deeper "transformation". In other words, when external "traffic" and "circulation" no longer restricted people, they could turn their attention to the problems of congestion, poverty, and backwardness, even by criminal activities to make money. Despite greater traffic congestion in D County, drug trafficking became a survival strategy. Although there were no roads in some villages in D County, residents cut paths to survive, including trails for the drug trade. From a broader social perspective, the main trajectory of drug trafficking is known as the "trafficking channel" and the smaller one is known as the "transaction point".

Interaction of substances: tea, food, drugs

Substances which are closely related to human survival, such as tea and food, have a social meaning, which is of great significance for understanding human history and local history. Tea was an important medium of exchange between nomadic and agricultural people in ancient times. More specifically, the tea-horse trade and the ancient tea-horse road testified to the history of the complementarity of the two groups. In addition, tea and the European-centered marine empire gradually created structural tensions from the end of the 17th century to the beginning of the 19th century. The confrontation between tea and opium appeared in trade with the silver currency of Europe and eventually triggered the Opium War (Wang, 2008). Locally, although tea did not play such an important role in world history, it literally led to the drug problems in The City of M because of the lack of food. Therefore, the social implications of tea cannot be ignored. For example, residents in the City of M traded abundant goods, including animal products, cattle and sheep, food, fur, wood, motorcycles, vegetables, and tea. However, tea was the most significant substance not only because it played an important role in people's diet but was also the turning point in the development of the City of M that triggered a series of social transformations. As such, tea clearly illustrates the social meaning of substances.

The conflict between humans and the environment is obvious; thus, people are constantly exploring means of survival in the process of adapting to and altering the environment. Under the objective conditions of residents working the land, but the land not supporting them, people had to leave their hometown to solve their food shortages by doing business or working as laborers. In addition, since local people eat meat, tea has become a necessity for digestion, and the tea of Province of V is an essential drink in the daily diet of people in the City of M. Therefore, tea has turned into a product that must be traded from V Province, thus benefitting from the convenience of the transportation network. After 1980s, with the influx of drugs from the Golden Triangle, people discovered the profitability of drugs in the process of trading tea in V Province and began to smuggle drugs.

The interaction of these substances not only reflects the adaptation of people's ideas to the environment but also the changes in people's survival strategies. Specifically, the drug problems in these three

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communities are directly related to food. A small number of people engaged in drug-trafficking only to solve the shortage of food. In 1997, for example, a resident in C Village borrowed 20 grams of drugs from his neighbor to sell on the hill because his family lacked rice, leading to his arrest by the police and a prison sentence of 15 years. In addition, the drug problems in these three communities are inextricably linked to tea. Since profits from drugs far exceed those from trading tea, some people venture to smuggle drugs. Once the consequences of drug trafficking became clear in these communities, with some drug dealers being sentenced to jail or death, other traffickers began to realize that the drug trade was high risk and turned to other businesses such as trading in gold, catering, and investing in real estate. To some extent, these activities are not only a form of money laundering, but also a survival strategy, which is an active or passive option for people trying to adapt to the environment.

The "skein of tangled grass": blood, marriage, geography, and religion

The development of any ethnic group is inseparable from the structure of a specific social organization. The local people marry mainly within the community because of the practice of intra-ethnic marriage. Therefore, their social structure differs significantly from other ethnics. By researching the local community, Youtao Bai (2005) compares the social structure of the people to roots of grass. Because the local people cannot leave the community, their internal relationships are close and complicated. Specifically, their kinship resembles entangled and rooted grass. Therefore, Bai named it the "skein of tangled grass" (2005).

The traditional communities in the City of M, including S Town, C Village and N Town, form a complicated web of blood, marriage, geography, and religion, which are entangled to strengthen their vitality and stabilize the social structure. Based on the same culture and history, they face the same social problems and even share some important sources of information, for example, about drug trafficking, which is a criminal underground economy, but its profitability tempts a small number of residents to engage in it. Consequently, their overnight wealth spread quickly like a plague in these interconnected communities, causing relatives to become rich together. This situation has led to a tacit understanding to keep secrets and protect the family, which is reflected not only in the unity among drug dealers and drug users, but also in the complicity of their family members and relatives. In addition, neglect of the elderly and children rarely occurs in these traditional communities because of their tradition of caring for the weak and widows. Even within a drug trafficking gang, if a person is sentenced and others are lucky enough to escape legal sanctions, they will be responsible for the care of the parents and children of the prisoners.

The contribution of grassroots social organizations and elites to the reconstruction of the social order

Facing the transformation triggered by relatively shocking problems, grassroots social organizations began to play a greater role as mediators to connect society and family and serve as a link between the upper and lower classes. Simultaneously, residing in the traditional communities, the elites not only saved deviant individuals to a certain extent but also made active attempts to strengthen grassroots social norms and rebuild the social order.

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Grassroots social organizations and elites in the City of M

The grassroots social organizations in the City of M are divided into three groups: family and clan organizations, the religious community "Jammat", and the village committees (Chen, 2006).

Family and clan organizations are still relatively coherent in traditional rural communities. We can take D County's "Jiawu system" as an example of the role of family organizations in communities. With blood as the link, the Jiawu system is the tradition of the D County's people; the elders are the heads of the family based on their abilities. The Jiawu is mainly seen in cooperation between families during large-scale and high-intensity labor, such as planting and harvesting wheat, corn, and potatoes. Internal cooperation within families is more apparent during weddings, funerals, and major festivals. However, a certain degree of competition exists within the Jiawu, such as fighting for parents' property and favors, comparing the quality of life, or having a son rather than a daughter. Furthermore, various Jiawus are occasionally dominated by fierce competitions, for example, between the leader of the temple and the village Party secretary.

As a religious community, Jammat is the grassroots organization in the City of M, with the attributes and advantages of endogenous organizations, such as "self-generated and spontaneous power" and "self-organization" in a rural society (Chen, 2006). Most of the leaders of the Jammats are democratically elected, reflecting not only the election standards of ability, religious practice, and enthusiasm for public welfare, but also a new capitalist democracy that is adapting to the modern market economy. Generally, capitalist democracy and traditional justice overlap; that is, the rich, the capable, and the enthusiastic in a rural society are mostly the same people. The activities organized by the Jammats focus mainly on traditions, such as organizing religious life, building temples, and celebrating religious festivals. In addition, the Jammats also do a large amount of daily rural social work, such as assisting at weddings and funerals, helping the elderly and orphans, resolving neighborhood disputes, and presiding over the separation of property.

Under the jurisdiction of the town and elected by the villagers, the village committee is a grassroots autonomous organization, sharing the regulation of self-management, self-education, and self-service. It is composed of three to seven people who are directors, deputy directors, and committee members. The leadership team is democratically elected every three years without lifelong terms of office. No organization or individual can designate, appoint, or replace village committee members. The village committee functions as a mediator between the villagers and higher levels of government by transmitting information from and to the village, and thus facilitating the implementation of the country's various policies for benefiting farmers.

MHL, a villager from C Village at W Town in D County, said in July 2016 that these three organizations in the communities of the City of M play important roles in their respective fields:

> There are three kinds of power in our village. One is the village director. On behalf of the government, he plays the most important role in politics. Another is the leader of the temple, who plays a significant religious role. And the third is the family elder, who plays a dominant role in

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each family. In reality, one individual who has the ability and prestige often plays all three roles.
Elites with good characters, strong abilities, and high status often play multiple roles in the clan and family, the Jammat, and the village. As the significant force in the development of the community, they promote the reconstruction of social order after it has been affected by drugs. I take MLD as an example to discuss the social status of the elites in the community. Residing in the W village of S Town, MLD, who was born on June 3, 1938, had been working for the government for 52 years till his retirement in 2011. As the village branch secretary for 36 years, he is still highly respected by both villagers and government. I conducted an in-depth interview with the 78-year-old man on August 1st, 2015. With full energy, clear thinking, and rigorous logic, he is well known for his knowledge and insight. Recalling his life experience, he said:

> *The economic condition of my family was not very good when I was born. After1958, I was taken to T Ctiy for a year as a militia. And then I was selected to be a worker for four years because my personal history was innocent. After that, the production team chose me as the captain for 11 years, plus 36 years as village Party secretary, so I worked for the government and the residents for 52 years till my retirement in 2011. As a respected village branch secretary in the county, I always accompanied the leaders from different levels of the government to visit the drug addicts' homes. All the leaders of the central or local governments liked to be accompanied by me, because I played a very important role in the anti-drug war in our village.*

MLD not only organized drug rehabilitation in the village but also publicized the serious consequences of drug crimes. His commitment and contribution to reconstruction led the village to break through the dilemma caused by the drug problems.

Social action practices of grassroots social organizations and elites—based on a case study of C village

The three main grassroots social organizations in the City of M, namely the clan and family organizations, the religious community Jammat, and the village committee, have respectively played a positive role in the reconstruction of the social order after the drug problems appeared. The reason that some seriously drug-stricken communities finally recovered is that collaboration between grassroots organizations and elites enabled the residents to reconstruct the social order.

I take C village, "the old drug-remediation village, and now the hard-working and prosperous village" (Anti-drug Committee of K County, 2011) as an example to discuss their mutual cooperation. Due to drug crimes, there have been 11 death sentences, 5 death sentences with reprieve, 10 life imprisonments, and 94 prison sentences of 15 years or less since the 1990s, totaling 120 and accounting for 5.31% of the village population (Anti-drug Committee of K County, 2011). These drug dealers who attempted to get rich through drug trafficking did not achieve their goal but were severely punished by the law. Accordingly, many families were destroyed by the phenomenon, that is, the sentences of drug dealers, the displacement of their wives and children, the collapse of their houses, and the abandoned land. This severe problem is a disaster for the family members of drug dealers. On a large scale, relatives and friends in other villages are reluctant to communicate with them, even refusing to be involved in the media when

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their children reach the age of marriage. The "drug-trafficking village" and "widow village" became synonymous with C village at that time. The serious situation aroused great concern on the part of the K County, which identified C village as the key remediation village in March 2000. Under the leadership of these higher levels of government and key rectification work groups, the grassroots organizations and the elites in C village also took vigorous action to implement the reconstruction of social order.

To remediate the social environment, the village committee actively fulfilled its social responsibility and led the villagers in overcoming poverty and achieving prosperity, developing agricultural production, and increasing farmers' incomes. Additionally, the grassroots organizations and the elites publicized the harm of drugs and the anti-drug policy in public spaces such as temples and schools. Specifically, from the perspective of religious doctrine, the abbots in the temples announced the dangers of drugs during Buddhist festivals. For example, MWK, the leader of W temple, explained to the residents on Friday that drug abuse is suicide and drug trafficking is murder, thus educating more than 95% of residents in C village. Furthermore, the two primary schools incorporated anti-drug publicity and education into their annual teaching plan. The teachers gave a drug prevention course at least 8 hours every semester, and the students wrote essays about the hazards of drugs. They also organized an excellent essay competition on drugs more than 20 times and gave lectures 16 times on the topic "we do not need drugs to embellish our lives".

After more than ten years of reconstruction, the grassroots organizations and the elites significantly transformed C village as follows: the anti-drug awareness of villagers significantly increased; the reputation of the community gradually improved; the living standards of the residents rose; the number of people who were sentenced was dramatically reduced.

Discussion

Human beings have an instinctive preference for order. Generally, people want to live in a relatively stable society; that is, once the social order is destroyed their reaction is to rebuild it. Since communities support the material and spiritual life of the residents, good social order is directly related to their happiness index. However, the emergence of drugs in the City of M caused great damage to the benign operation of the social order. Accordingly, how communities reconstruct the social order affects not only each family but also the stability of the society because of the mediating function of communities.

Based on the case of C village and my field work in the past 13 years, I argue that this village successfully reconstructed the social order for the following reasons:

Firstly, grassroots organizations are unified and have strong leadership. They are composed of clan and family organizations, the religious organization Jammat, and the village committees. These organizations play essential roles in their respective fields, along with their complementary functions. Secondly, the elites possess rich social capital and powerful social influence. Social capital refers to the link between individuals or groups—social networks, reciprocal norms, and resulting trust, which are resources derived from their positions in the social structure. The social capital of the elites is mainly reflected in

their strong family background, devout religious practice, better education, and success in becoming rich. Therefore, these elites can generally influence residents to solve their drug problems. Thirdly, reconstruction of the social order is deeply rooted in daily life. A dynamic and multidimensional social order is manifested not only when the macro society functions well, but also when an individual's personal life harmonizes with social norms. I found that the effects of reconstruction of the social order conducted by the elites were highly related to their attention to daily life. For example, MDF, the former village director of F Village in L Town, checked the fingers of drug addicts to see if they had relapsed. If the fingers were still yellow, they indicated a relapse. Accordingly, MDF would go to the homes of addicts every day to supervise their detoxification. MDF also applied for subsistence allowances for former drug addicts who had already been rehabilitated, thus further strengthening their determination not to relapse. Hence, order reconstruction of a community can only succeed if it is closely integrated with the daily life of the residents. Finally, residents' conscious actions are the social basis of reconstruction. For example, the women in C Village raised their awareness of preventing drugs from entering their families. Five women, including MDB, helped their misguided husbands rehabilitate by staying away from their circle of drug-addicted friends. Therefore, only when drug addicts themselves and their families are aware of the dangers of drugs and take conscious action can communities have a viable social foundation for solving their drug problems.

However, these communities still encounter certain dilemmas even if their contributions to reconstruction have been significant. These predicaments include community fragmentation, the erosion of traditional rural authorities, and the fragility of rural livelihoods.

Firstly, community fragmentation is increasingly prominent. With the gradual improvement of the market economy and the acceleration of urbanization, the social structure and social relations of cities and villages have undergone major changes. As the foundation of society, communities have gradually emerged in a fragmented state in their spatial structure, common interests, and governance framework. Due to the difficulty in forming a consensus and the lack of institutional mechanisms to integrate the demands of different interest groups, fragmented communities have not only created severe challenges for social governance but also encountered certain resistance to the reconstruction of the social order. Derived from many relatively independent interest groups, both internal and external, the fragmentation of communities in cities refers to spatial characteristics which make them difficult to integrate socially, economically, and politically (Li & Ge, 2013). In contrast, fragmentation of the community in the countryside means that values are gradually diversified, and social solidarity in response to huge social problems is declining. Specifically, as a large number of rural populations flow into the cities, the countryside becomes "hollow villages" and "left-behind villages". Meanwhile, the mobility of these populations not only weakens social norms but also imports some values from cities to rural society. These interactions have led to a series of cultural conflicts which impede reaching a consensus in the public interest and community development.

The outflow of drug trafficking in the City of M has become a special kind of "mobility", which makes

the fragmented characteristics of the traditional communities increasingly obvious. Accordingly, three interest groups exist in these communities: one group insists on diligently becoming rich and distancing itself from drug dealers; another group is approaching drug dealers to find a quick shortcut to wealth; the third group is taking a wait-and-see approach. Consequently, these conflicts made it difficult to form a true community; that is, the interest groups sometimes disagree with each other in community affairs including the reconstruction of the social order.

Secondly, traditional authorities in a rural society gradually have weakened in the process of social transformation. For example, disputes within family and between neighbors in the City of M are sometimes mediated not by the elites but by petitioning the appropriate level of government. Although these phenomena testify to the enhancement of the rights of the grassroots, they also reflect that the ability to self-resolve contradictions has been severely weakened. In other words, lacking executive power gradually lessens the influence of traditional elites.

Thirdly, the fragility of rural livelihoods continues. Due to the conflict between humans and the environment in the City of M, a large amount of surplus labor has flown into the cities to make up for the lack of agricultural income by doing business or manual labor. However, these occupations are sometimes vulnerable, as a result of the overall economic downturn. Accordingly, drug crimes in the City of M have recently rebounded to a certain degree, despite the relative success of drug remediation, because a few residents take risks and traffic drugs in order to maintain the survival of their families during an economic decline.

Finally, due to these dilemmas, these communities should coordinate and cooperate with other levels of society and obtain greater support from different ranks in the social hierarchy to reconstruct the social order.

Conclusion

As the mainstay of the southern route of the Silk Road and the Ancient Tea-horse Trade Road, the City of M has experienced a huge transformation since 1980s. With drug problems emerging in many urban and rural areas, these phenomena inevitably struck the communities which had undergone the vulnerabilities of the environment and human groups. The complexity of the social ecology in these communities accelerated the difficulties in reconstructing the social order. As a successful model of reconstruction, C village demonstrates the significant impact of grassroots organizations and elites on community affairs, despite the emergence of new dilemmas since 1980s that are still to be resolved.

It should be noted that this study has been primarily concerned with the reconstruction of social order in the drug-stricken communities in the City of M. However, the findings do not imply that all traditional communities and ecologically fragile areas experience the same drug problems. Based on my 13 years of field work, this study has clear limitations: the conflict between long-term social problems and relatively short-term personal observation, and the reliability of my interlocutors. Not with standing its limitations, this study does suggest that more research is required on the reconstruction of social order in

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these communities in order to investigate the profound interactions between humans and the environment, society and the market, and collective and individual life. It would also be worthwhile to research the current fading of the social stigma against the City of M due to the recent development in these regions.

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