

The Local Drug Economy: The Case of Hashish  
Production in a post-Soviet Kyrgyz Village

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## Contents

<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>List of Figures and Plates.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Abbreviations and Acronyms .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Glossary .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Research Questions .....	7
Conceptual Framework .....	9
Outline of the Thesis .....	12
<b>Chapter One. Literature Review on Drug Markets .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Introduction .....	19
The Global War on Drugs .....	20
Illegal Drug Markets.....	25
Illegal Drug Markets: Diversification of Income Generating Activities .....	29
The Political Economy of Drug Markets.....	32
Socio-cultural Embeddedness of Drug Markets.....	36
Conclusion .....	42
<b>Chapter Two. Illegal Drug Markets in Kyrgyzstan: The Local Context .....</b>	<b>44</b>
Introduction .....	44
Changes in Post-Soivet Everyday Life .....	45
Neoliberalization: The Case of Kyrgyzstan .....	46
Shock therapy.....	47
Privatization of the agricultural sector.....	49

Further liberalization of economy.....	51
Problems in the agricultural sector .....	52
Impoverishment of the population .....	54
Illegal Drug Markets in Kyrgyzstan.....	57
The opium drug market: Soviet period .....	58
The cannabis drug market: Soviet period .....	62
Heroin Drug Market: post-Soviet period .....	64
<i>Drug use</i> .....	68
The cannabis drug market: post-Soviet period .....	69
Drug Control.....	72
Conclusion.....	77
<b>Chapter Three. Market and Moral Economies: Concepts Guiding the Study .....</b>	<b>79</b>
Introduction .....	79
Social Embeddedness.....	80
Neoliberalization of the Economy.....	81
Moral Economy .....	85
The moral economy concept in criminological research.....	88
Later Developments of the Social Embeddedness Concept.....	91
Conclusion .....	95
<b>Chapter Four. Researching Illegal Hashish Production in Toolu.....</b>	<b>99</b>
Introduction .....	99
Epistemology and Research Design .....	100
Research Methods .....	102
Ethnography .....	105
<i>Entering the field</i> .....	105
<i>Choosing the location</i> .....	105
<i>Developing trust</i> .....	106
<i>Challenges of conducting an ethnographic fieldwork</i> .....	111
Following an Abductive Research Strategy .....	114

Survey .....	115
Research Ethics.....	119
Danger and risks .....	120
Reciprocity.....	125
Data Analysis.....	126
Conclusion .....	129
<b>Chapter Five. Illegal Hashish Production as a Source of Economic Security in Toolu.....</b>	<b>131</b>
Introduction .....	131
Illegal Hashish Production.....	132
Farm Insolvency .....	137
Land as the main means of production.....	138
Uneven price distribution.....	142
Uncertainty and irregularity of incomes.....	144
Hashish as a source of economic security.....	145
Diversification of Income Generating Activities.....	149
Small-scale Trade and Hashish as Cash.....	155
Problems with Crediting and Illegal Hashish Production .....	160
Conspicuous Consumption.....	163
Conclusion.....	168
<b>Chapter Six. Moral Economy of Illegal Hashish Production in Toolu .....</b>	<b>173</b>
Introduction .....	173
The Moral Economy of Hashish Production.....	174
Corrupted elite .....	178
Inconsistent governance.....	181
Hidden Resistance?.....	191
Interpretive Denial: Shifting the Meaning of Hashish and Hashish Production .....	197
Hashish as <i>kara-koi</i> .....	198
Hashish as work.....	200

Hashish as <i>Kumtor</i> .....	201
Informal Social Control.....	202
Conclusion .....	205
<b>Chapter Seven. Illegal Hashish Production as a Source of Social Security .....</b>	<b>208</b>
Introduction .....	201
Social Celebrations in a Kyrgyz Village .....	210
Different types of feasts .....	211
The revival of tradition.....	214
Prestige and status .....	215
Reciprocal Relationships in a Kyrgyz Village .....	217
Monetization of Social Networks.....	222
Contractual Forms of Social Relationships.....	229
Conclusion.....	232
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>236</b>
Contributions .....	239
Policy Implications .....	245
Limitations of the Study and Further Research .....	247
<b>Appendix I .....</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>Appendix II .....</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>263</b>

## Abstract

This multi-method study is about small-scale illegal production of hashish in a mountainous village in north-eastern part of Kyrgyzstan. It demonstrates that drug production in Toolu is the result of a combination of factors: 1) economic transformations undertaken during the 1990s in most of the post-Soviet countries and the difficult conditions under which the agricultural mountainous economy operated as a result; 2) the legitimization of hashish making by drug producing community due to perceived injustice towards people who had to survive without any state support while the elite was corrupted and governance of drug control was inconsistent; and 3) the integration of illegal hashish production to the local economy and culture.

My findings derive from extensive fieldwork based on a case study of Toolu village, located in the Tyup region of Issyk-Kul oblast. I spent nine months in Tyup, between 2009 and 2010 undertaking a mixed method study in which I collected sixty semi-structured interviews with farmers, two interviews with the representatives of law enforcement, made a participant observation of farmer's livelihoods, and conducted a survey of 147 households.

The study fills the gap in the drug market literature by presenting the case of hashish production that started as an economic necessity but was pushed into the sphere of traditional and cultural practices that helped the local population to legitimate this illegal activity. It further contributes to the debate on drug markets presenting the drug producers as farmers that deal with the economic, social and political issues as any other citizens of the country.

Hashish production was not part of the agricultural activities of the local population of the region during Soviet times but became one of a number of strategies for survival and later one of the entrepreneurial diversifications of income generating strategies. Farmers had to become entrepreneurial and diversify their income to overcome the problems encountered with farm insolvency due to the neoliberalization of the economy.

However, as farmers were not part of any organized groups they needed to legitimate their illegal activity. I argue that this was possible through claiming that they had a right to subsistence and right to protection from the state, which was denied to them following the collapse of Soviet Union. My case study also demonstrates that cases of corruption among elites deepened the distrust of the state, and lack of governance of

drug production by law enforcement contributed further to the legitimation of illegal hashish production. The moral economy of hashish production would not be possible without adopting some informal control mechanisms to drug producers.

I also argue that due to local demands to be part of the community, hashish is also used as a source of support. My findings provide detailed discussion of the use of drug money in enriching and maintaining the social community. Overall, this ethnographic study of hashish production in one of the regions of Kyrgyzstan provides rich details of how illegal hashish economy contributes to the legal agricultural economy and culture in the post-Soviet region.

## List of Figures and Plates

### Figures

Figure 1. Administrative Map of Kyrgyzstan.....	4
Figure 2. Screenshot of the Karkyra Valley located in the north-eastern part of the Issyk-Kul oblast.....	5
Figure 2.1. Poverty Level in Kyrgyzstan.....	55
Figure 2.2. Map of Turkestan region in 1938 .....	59
Figure 2.3. Map of the Northern and Balkan routes of drug trafficking from Afghanistan .....	65
Figure 2.4. Comparison of amounts of drugs considered as ‘large’ in 1998 and 2007 versions of laws on drugs.....	75
Figure 5.1. How much land does your family own? .....	139
Figure 5.2. How much livestock does your family own? .....	151
Figure 5.3. How many sheep does your family own? .....	151
Figure 7.1. <i>Yntymak</i> with close relatives according to socio-economic conditions .....	227
Figure 7.2. Could you borrow money without interest rates paid? .....	228

### Plates

Plate 2.1. Man in a poppy field .....	60
Plate 5.1. Men going to the fields in small groups .....	133
Plate 5.2. Women and teenagers making hashish in the fields.....	133
Plate 5.3. Hashish making process .....	134
Plate 5.4. Pictures of phone top-up and gasoline advertisements on the house and fence. The gasoline is stored in flagons and sold in plastic bottles.....	156
Plate 5.5. Hashish in the matchbox .....	159

Plate 5.6. Unfinished two storey addition to the house .....	166
Plate 5.7. Biscuits with the images of foreign currencies .....	167
Plate 5.8. Abundance of goods in the local shops during hashish making time.....	168
Plate 7.1. Women helping their neighbour by painting walls .....	219
Plate 7.2. Kemel's classmates and neighbours helping out with the house renovation.....	220
Plate 7.3. Boorsok cooked in Aikan's house for ashar.....	220

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

CDF	Comprehensive Development Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Kg	Kilogram
KTR	Kyrgyz State Teleradio Company
MFI	Microfinance Institution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLF	National Land Fund
RLF	Redistribution Land Fund
SPD	State Political Department ( <i>Otdel Gosudarstvennogo Politicheskogo Upravleniya</i> )
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

## Glossary

Abysyn	Wives of male siblings
Adat	Customary law
Ala-kachuu	Bride kidnapping, abduction
Apa	Mother or grandmother
Ash	One year commemoration
Ashar	A specific event organized to get help from relatives and friends in building house, making a renovation
Ashlyamfu	Noodles with a spicy souse
Ayil-ökmotü	Local government
Beshik toi	Celebration of birth of a baby
Beshmarmak	Traditional Kyrgyz cuisine dish of thin noodles cooked in broth and served mixed with meat, chopped into small pieces.
Bir-tuugan	Close relatives
Blat	Getting things done through connections
Boorsok	Small deep-fried breads
Boz-üi	Yurt
Brigada	Term used for organised criminal groups in the post-Soviet region
Chernaya kassa	Rotating saving group
Chernyi rynok	Black market
Dastorkon	It is piece of cloth spread on the floor and used for serving food
Ereje	Article
Glasnost	The policy implemented by Gorbachev
Jamaat	Local community
Juurkan	Duvet
Jyrtysh	A piece of cloth given at funerals

Kainaga	Brother-in-law, usually the older brother of a husband
Kalym	Bride price paid by the groom side to bride's family
Kara-Kuurai	Cannabis plants
Katysh	Connections
Kelin	Daughter-in-law
Kendir	Marijuana and/or hashish
Keshik	Sharing food left or brought from a big celebration to people who could not participate in it
Kiit	Specific types of gifts exchanged at the wedding by the parents and relatives of groom and bride
Kolkhoz	Collective farm
Korobochka	Match box
Köshögöö	The textile which separates the room into two. New daughter-in-laws sit behind them while relatives come to see them
Krysha	Literally 'roofing' in the meaning of protection
Küöö-bala	Son-in-law
Kuran okutuu	Commemoration feast
Lagman	Thick noodles with fried vegetables and meat
Mahalla	Neighbourhood
Manty	Dumplings – one of the Central Asian traditional dishes
Moldo	Religious leader
Moskvich	Soviet type of car
Namaz	Pray time
Nasha	Hashish
Nashakur	Hashish user
Nomenklatura	The Soviet elite
Oblast	An administrative area similar to a county in the UK
Plov	Fried meat with rice – a traditional Central Asian dish
Posledniy Zvonok	The last bell in the school
Quda	The parents of daughter-in-law or son-in-law

Raion	Administrative district within oblast
Ruble	Currency of the USSR and the Russian Federation
Sandyk	The wooden chest
Sep	Bride wealth
Sherine	Social gathering, similar to rotating-saving groups
Som	National currency of Kyrgyzstan
Sovkhoz	State collective farm
Subbotnik	Cleaning day
Süröt	Circumcision of boys
Törkülötüü	Formally taking daughter-in-law to her parent's place, which also involves feasting and exchange of gifts
Töshök	Traditional mattress for people to sit on the floor
Tushoo toi	Celebration of first steps of an infant
Tütün	Household
Tuuganchylyk	Having relationships with relatives
Uruu	Tribe
Ustukan	Pieces of meat carefully cut and distributed to guests according to their status among the people at the table
Yntymak	Literary solidarity, support that families give to each other
Zher-töshök	Mattress to put on floor for sitting
Zhiguli	One type of Soviet made car

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## Introduction

One evening during the summer of 2010 I was invited by my hostess, Aikan, to accompany her to a small, but special, gathering of her female relatives and friends. The ‘gathering’ was to celebrate the recent birth of Roza’s son. Before we set off to Roza’s home we met five other women who were joining us. Standing on the street of the village, women discussed the money they would contribute to buying a present, sweets and food for the table. After a short discussion, the figure of fifty som (seventy pence) each was agreed and three women were delegated to purchase the presents while the rest of us went directly to the house.

Roza’s home consisted of two rooms. We were taken to the second room where food had been prepared and arranged on the *dastorkon*,<sup>1</sup> which we then sat around. Roza had prepared salads, fresh bread and jam which we snacked on along with some tea. After some time, Nurgul and the two other women arrived with the presents and joined us around the *dastorkon*. The presents consisted of some clothes for the baby, which were a gift from all of us. They also brought a large bottle of lemonade and a small bag of sweets for the table. While drinking tea, the women began discussing arrangements for future gatherings; which they referred to as *sherine*<sup>2</sup> gatherings. They said that they usually organized *sherine* once a month when they would have meals together and collect money on a rotation basis. I learned that our dinner that night was also one of the *sherine* gatherings and was used as an opportunity to celebrate the birth of Roza’s long awaited son. Thus, in addition to the money for Roza’s son’s presents, they also collected their *sherine* money. However, as the

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<sup>1</sup> Dastorkon is a piece of cloth, which is placed on the floor, in the centre of the room and used for serving food, while guests sit on mattresses placed around it.

<sup>2</sup> *Sherine* is one type of rotating-savings gathering that usually only women participate in. They cook and socialise in each other’s houses in turns. At the same time they collect a certain pre-agreed amount of money from all except the host of the *sherine* on that day. With the money gathered in such a way, women usually like to buy some household items or clothes and jewellery for themselves.

cycle of *sherine*<sup>3</sup> was finishing with this gathering, the women wanted to discuss if they were to start a new cycle and was to be part of it. This discussion was necessary as the group needed to know how many women would join the *sherine* gatherings this time and therefore how much money they should collect each time.

I understood that the bigger the number of women joining the group, the more money would be collected and therefore more substantial goods could be purchased by those who were holding the feast. Consequently, *sherine* gatherings served, not only as a group for socializing but also as social-collateral group. Among the twelve women, including myself, who attended the meal, eight agreed to be part of the new cycle of *sherine*. However, all the women agreed that it would be good to have ten women giving two-hundred som (approx. three pounds) contribution each time so that they would be able to gather at least two-thousand som (twenty-nine pounds) at each dinner. However, two women, Nurgul and Zuura, were reluctant to join the *sherine* cycle this time due to financial concerns.

Nurgul's family was building a house and had taken out two different loans from different banks. She was supposed to pay back nine-thousand som (one-hundred and twenty-six pounds) to the banks each month, but neither she nor her husband had permanent jobs and had to rely on their land and livestock, which still did not provide enough income to repay the loans. Zuura, who was a teacher in the local school, simply did not have enough money to join in *sherine*, as her salary was around 1600 som (twenty-two pounds) for full time teaching at that time. However, the explanations given by Nurgul and Zuura, did not stop the other women from trying to persuade them to join the group. At one stage, they also attempted to persuade me to join them. However, when I told that I could not remain the village for ten months, they lost interest in me and returned to persuading Nurgul and Zuura to contribute. Both women tried to resist by further outlining

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<sup>3</sup> *Sherine* cycle means one round of gatherings involving all participating women or families. If there are ten women who have agreed to be part of *sherine* gatherings and they agree to meet once a month, one cycle would take ten months in total.

their financial difficulties, to which the other women joked that they should make hashish<sup>4</sup> in order to bolster their finances. While the women began to laugh in response to this suggestion, Zuura explained in a serious way that being a teacher had its own limitations as that year she was asked by the school administration to give talks to her classes on how bad making hashish was. Therefore, even though she acknowledged that she used to make hashish in the past, she now felt ashamed of going to the fields and seeing her pupils making hashish. Roza, the hostess, explained that even teachers needed money and that there would be no shame if Zuura also made hashish. Nurgul described how she had to pay a lot of money to the banks so as to repay the loans that her family had taken out and she was already searching high and low to gather enough by a certain date in order to complete the next payment. One of the requirements of the loan was that the borrowers should repay the money every month with high interest rates. Nonetheless, everyone present knew that she was one of the village hashish makers and they continued trying to persuade her to join *sherine*. At the end of the dinner, both women agreed to take part in the new cycle of *sherine*.

This conversation happened one evening during the summer of 2009 in Toolu village,<sup>5</sup> located in Tyup *raion* in north-west Kyrgyzstan. It is part of the Issyk-Kul oblast<sup>6</sup> which takes its name from the largest lake in the country. Unlike some other parts of the oblast situated on the shores of the lake (where the population heavily relies upon tourism during summer), Tyup is a region located further away and higher in the mountains. It is in the Karkyra Valley on the North-Eastern side of the lake bordering Kazakhstan to the north and China to the east. The region is in a one hour car ride from Kara-Kol city, the regional

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<sup>4</sup> Hashish is cannabis resin.

<sup>5</sup> The name of the village and other neighbouring villages, together with the names of participants have been changed.

<sup>6</sup> Administrative region similar to the UK county.

administrative centre of Issyk-Kul *oblast*, and a six to seven hour car ride<sup>7</sup> from Bishkek, the capital city of Kyrgyzstan.

**Figure 1. Administrative map of Kyrgyzstan.**



Source: The 'World Maps' website. <http://geology.com/world/kyrgyzstan-map.gif>, accessed 24.05.12

<sup>7</sup> The travel to Bishkek can take up to eight hours if travelling by public transport. The taxi ride, at the time of my research, was approximately five-hundred som, while public transport was two-hundred som (£7 and £2.80 respectively).

Figure 2. Screenshot of the Karkyra Valley located in the north-eastern part of the Issyk-Kul oblast.<sup>8</sup>



Source: Google maps

The region is also known throughout Kyrgyzstan for its wild growing cannabis plants, which if collected can produce a higher yield of highly potent hashish than other regions of Kyrgyzstan. The Karkyra Valley was officially listed as a place with large fields of wild growing cannabis plants in 1999 (Zelichenko, 2003). Although hashish and marijuana<sup>9</sup> were made in this region during Soviet times, mostly by underground groups who came to

<sup>8</sup> The region where I conducted my research is circled on the map. The circled area covers some parts of two raions' territories – Tyup and Ak-Suu. Toolu village is one of the thirty-five villages of Tyup raion and located in Karkyra Valley.

<sup>9</sup> Marijuana is dried cannabis leaves. Hashish has much higher potency than marijuana.

Karkyra mountains especially to produce the drug (Djakishev, 2004), local people living in the Karkyra valley became involved in hashish making at the beginning of the 1990s. There were small cases when the local youth were involved in the production of hashish and marijuana, but they mainly produced these for their own consumption (Korchagina, 1987). However, since the 1990s local people who used to be *kolkhoz* and *sovkhos*<sup>10</sup> workers during the Soviet-era planned economy turned to hashish and marijuana production alongside other economic activities. In the 2000s, when I conducted my fieldwork in the area, hashish making had entered everyday conversation and practice – such as described above in case of *sherine gatherings*.

In order to understand hashish production and its role in the local economy and culture, I based myself in Toolu village, one of a number of villages located in the Karkyra valley. Taking into account that during the late Soviet era, local people were not involved in hashish making and *nashakur*<sup>11</sup> were socially stigmatised, my fieldwork aimed to provide the context for understanding how ordinary people, such as Nurgul, Zuura and many others, had become part of an illegal drug market since the beginning of the 1990s; the time of Kyrgyzstan's independence and its emergence as a post-Soviet state. As the introductory passage indicates, the pressures that families in Toolu face are typically of a financial character but the explanation of hashish production does not stop there. Hashish production tells a further story entailing the challenges of agricultural farming, in borrowing money from banks, and of pressures to take part the in social life of a community that Toolu families have to face on a daily basis.

Drug production in general involves different groups, identified by law enforcement agencies as drug producers, collectors, dealers, sellers, and users (Mieczkowski, 1992: 93). In

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<sup>10</sup> *Kolkhoz* is a collective farm and *sovkhos* was a state collective farm. The difference between the two is that *sovkhos* belongs to the state and workers are paid a fixed salary for the whole year while in *kolkhoz* the salaries depend on the days that farmers worked.

<sup>11</sup> *Nasha* [hashish] user.

the present study, I identify three main groups in the local hashish economy: drug producers, middlemen and women, and militia<sup>12</sup> representatives.

However, as the focus of the study is in establishing links between illegal hashish production and the local economy, I do not study those drug dealers from outside the region who visit to buy drugs from the local population. As my primary interest rests in the local production of mainly marijuana and hashish, I do not focus on the trafficking of opium and heroin from Afghanistan, which is a widely studied phenomenon in the Central Asian region (De Danieli, 2011; Goodhand, 2000; Jackson, 2005; Madi, 2004; Marat, 2006a, 2006b; Zelichenko, 2003).

The focus on local hashish production, even though it is not produced on a similar industrial scale to hashish in Morocco (Decorte et al, 2011); or heroin in Afghanistan (CADAP, 2012: 11; UNODC, 2011: 45), enables me to concentrate on the issue of how an illegal activity becomes part of the local culture and economy which, to date, has not been the subject of research in a Central Asian country.

## **Research Questions**

The main motivation in choosing this topic was to understand how the hidden economy of hashish production involves almost the entirety of the local population in Toolu, starting from the beginning of 1990s. I first learnt about local hashish production in 2005 while writing my MA dissertation at the University of Essex. During the spring of 2005, I visited Kyrgyzstan to gather information and to talk to people about my research interests. Initially, I wanted to research drug trafficking issues in Central Asia but, during my first fieldtrip, my attention was captured by gift exchange practices among local people in one of the mountainous regions of Issyk-Kul oblast; in particular the use of matchboxes of hashish as gifts in some traditional celebrations. I became intrigued by these practices and pursued my

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<sup>12</sup> The Militia are the local police.

study further with my findings becoming part of my MA dissertation ‘The Role of Hashish in Local Gift Exchanges in Kyrgyzstan’ (2005).

In planning the PhD thesis, I decided to focus on the wider context of hashish production in the region as there was no existing study conducted on hashish/marijuana production in Kyrgyzstan. Studies of drugs in Central Asia mostly focus on aspects of trafficking, mainly opium and heroin, from Afghanistan (Cornell & Swanström, 2006; De Danieli, 2011; Engval, 2006; Fenopetov, 2006; Kupatadze, 2014; Madi, 2004; Makarenko, 2002; Marat, 2006a; 2006b; Paoli et al., 2007; 2009; Zelichenko, 2004). Such a high interest in the trafficking of heroin/opium from Afghanistan can be explained by the number of reports commissioned by law enforcement agencies in order to tighten restrictions on drug production and the global movement of narcotics influenced by the western ‘war on drugs’ (Buddenberg & Byrd, 2006; UNODC 2002). It is not surprising to see such attention paid considering the high volume of drugs trafficked – almost thirty per cent of drugs produced in Afghanistan moved through Central Asia – and the implications of this process (CADAP, 2012). In this so-called ‘war on drugs’, drugs and terrorism become linked and drug trafficking associated with the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan and Hizb-Ut-Tahrir, associating it further to terrorist activities in Central Asia (Cornell & Swantsrom, 2006; Engval, 2006). Furthermore, drug trafficking was considered as leading to the emergence of narco-states in Tajikistan and for a short period of time in Kyrgyzstan (Engval, 2006; Paoli et al., 2007; 2009). Additionally, drug trafficking was considered as one of the main threats to public health with rapidly increasing numbers of HIV infection among heroin users (EMCDDA, 2011; Murzalieva et al., 2007; SSDC, 2012).

In such a context, despite the fact law enforcement agencies hold some data about hashish/marijuana production in Kyrgyzstan, this has never led to an investigation of the local hashish market as it was not seem as particularly large in comparison to the heroin market. In the study, I pursue further research on the re-emergence and persistence of the hashish market in Kyrgyzstan as it allowed me to study how ordinary rural farmers that are

not part of criminal organizations can still be a part of illegal drug production. The following questions narrowed the focus of the study:

- How is hashish production tied up with the local economy?
- Was production of drugs the main source of income for local people?
- How were drugs linked with the everyday life of local people?
- And what was the attitude of local people toward drug production?
- What are the drug control strategies employed by the local law-enforcement agencies?
- How is Kyrgyzstan's drug control policy formed?

Each set of questions facilitate the establishment of links between hashish production and the local culture and economy of the region. My approach to hashish production argues that it should be understood not only from a law enforcement perspective, which focuses on issues of the legality of drug production and how it should be controlled. I was interested in how people perceive hashish making as part of their economic and social activity and how they reflected on their own involvement in it. The aim of this thesis is was not only to understand the local discourse on drug production but to use this as a focus for understanding economic and cultural transformations within the country. The thesis therefore presents the culmination of these research questions in an explorative investigation informed by a set of guiding concepts rather than specific theoretical models (Ragin, 1994).

### **Conceptual Framework**

In this thesis I use a set of concepts that help to frame the analysis of illegal hashish production in Toolu. The analysis of data collected during the fieldwork has suggested that illegal hashish production in Toolu should be linked and analysed through the concepts of market and moral economies.

The drug prohibition policy that is still used in most of the countries of the world has as its main premise the neo-classical understanding of illegal drug markets. It principally assumes that illegal drug markets operate according to demand and supply mechanisms; and that the participants of such markets are rational actors who will cease their involvement in drug markets if the risks become too high. On the supply side of drug markets, this assumption has been translated into strategies of the interdiction and criminalisation of drug producers. Moreover, the supply side of drug production has been targeted more than the demand side of illegal drug markets.

However, I argue that such discussion of illegal drug markets is restrictive. Drug markets are very complex and there are multiple interrelated factors that affect the emergence, re-emergence, expansion or shrinking of the cultivation of drug crops in any society (Potter, 2010; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). Economic sociology, economic anthropology, and political economy offer extensive and rich discussions of markets and their relationship with their respective societies and communities.

Thus, I use market and moral economy concepts to understand their main principles and apply them to the case of illegal hashish drug market in Kyrgyzstan. The discussion of concepts reveals that although developing profit-seeking attitudes amongst a population might be one of the main characteristics of market economies, the markets do not operate in isolation and enter complex set of relationships with societies in which they are embedded in. It is in this discussion that the moral economy concept highlights the resistance that people and organizations enact in the face of the disembedding powers of markets and how they strive for the protection and support that are provided by societies. Moral economy refers to the ideas of justice that people use based on traditional relationships within the community or with the state (Thompson, 1991a, 1991b; Scott, 1985). The notion of a moral economy provides us with a definition and interpretative framework for studying relations between people which are not purely determined by rational economic calculations but instead based on the pre-existing values and social norms of a local culture that persist in the present (Henry, 1978; Scott, 1985; Thompson, 1991a, 1991b). Therefore, in cases when the

moral economy concept has been applied to drug markets, we can recognise that some drug markets are better explained through this concept rather than that of the market economy. They can subsequently exist and persist due to ideas of justice based on traditional values (Steinberg, 2004). Simply put, drug production can be legitimated by the moral economy.

However, debate on market and moral economies does not end in highlighting their dichotomous position. Rather, market economies are also embedded in the social structures of societies in which they exist (Granovetter, 1985); markets can also be considered as moral (Booth, 1994), or markets and moral economies can enter long relationships, intertwining and blending with each other (Browne & Milgram, 2008; Zelizer, 1978, 1989, 1997, 2005), and exist in ambivalent and parallel contexts (Hass, 2012). This latest discussion on the relationships between markets and societies can offer even richer understandings of illegal drug markets.

In our review of the relationship between market and moral economies, we should also remember to include discussion of the neoliberal economy. As many drug producing communities increasingly face the realities of a neoliberal economy, rather than liberal market conditions, it is imperative to understand the main characteristics of the former. Although the neoliberal economy grew out of liberal market economy principles, it continues to have its own distinctive characteristics. While still considering that markets are the best place for regulating economies, neoliberal think-tank theorists, instead of diminishing the role of states as was central in liberal thinking, gave them more power. The state was considered as the main institution to implement the market if it is required, and also maintain the laws that regulate market competition under protection (Amable, 2011). Individual self-reliance and entrepreneurship were promoted as it this was seen to bring competition to the market (Harvey, 2005). International organizations such as the IMF and World Bank played a considerable role in promoting and implementing the market conditions in developing countries through structural adjustment programs (Harvey, 2005; Saad Filho & Johnston 2004). Neo-liberalism serves as a key concept in this thesis as

Kyrgyzstan was one of the post-Soviet countries that started implementing structural adjustments programs as part of neoliberal policies after the demise of the Soviet Union.

The main argument of this study is that illegal hashish production in Toolu is the result of a combination of factors. First, there were economic transformations undertaken in the country in the 1990s to 'free' markets from state control, in line with neoliberal policies. This resulted in difficult conditions under which the agricultural sector of the economy had fallen. An additional factor in the persistence of illegal hashish production was the legitimization of its production due to corrupted elites and the inefficient governance of drug control in the region. Finally, illegal hashish production became integrated into the local economy and culture as it was able to better respond to the problems that the agricultural community encountered with the neoliberalization of the economy.

### **Outline of the Thesis**

The thesis opens with a critical overview of the literature on global drug markets in Chapter One. I present the complex nature of drug markets that are embedded in their local context: economic, social and political. This key argument developed on an analysis of different types of illegal drug markets – opium, coca, cannabis, kava – states that they all exist and persist in the global market due to the inherent issues of specific societies. Studies from all continents of the world – Asia, Africa, Latin and North America, Europe and Australia – present notions of a hegemonic drug prohibition policy that places economic logic at their core and as only reason for production; trafficking of illegal drugs is not merely old school liberal thinking but also highly ideological. Thus, the chapter highlights the role of illegal drug crops as varying from society to society. Although there may be some uniting characteristics in why some communities produce illegal drugs crops, such as profitability of illegal drugs on the global market, there are also many characteristics that are unique to some communities and the context in which they exist. In some communities, illegal drug crop production is the main way to survive, especially in times of war, turmoil and crisis. In

others, the illegal aspect of drug production was enforced over longstanding customs and traditional ways of life where drugs were used and still play an important role in culture and religion. One of the aims of this chapter is to show that there can be multiple factors which contribute to illegal drug production in the same society.

Chapter Two provides the local economic context of the country and an historical overview of drug markets from Soviet to post-Soviet times. The first section sets up the economic context and discusses how economic ‘shock therapy’ policy, implemented in the 1990s, hit the rural population hard and was one of the major factors that caused local people to start making hashish. Market reforms in Kyrgyzstan, which was considered as a model country for all other Central Asian countries in international development discourse, were implemented almost to the letter following the rules provided by the IMF and World Bank (Satybaldieva, 2010: 230). In the second section, I provide the historical overview of the legal discourse on drugs, especially drug production in Kyrgyzstan since the end of the nineteenth century. This reveals that drug prohibition was not a new policy for Kyrgyzstan. However, since independence from the Soviet Union, the drug control strategy in Kyrgyzstan become highly linked with the wider drug prohibition regime promoted by international organizations such as the UNODC due to the trafficking of drugs from Afghanistan through Kyrgyzstan territories. I explore the legal discourse on drugs, developed in the country in recent years, and the control strategies employed by the law enforcement for hashish production in Tyup region.

The discussion of theoretical concepts that enable the situating of illegal hashish production within the debates on markets and societies in economic sociology and anthropology is provided in Chapter Three. This commences by focusing on the nature of the market economy. Karl Polanyi’s (1957) interpretation of the embedded nature of pre-market economies, and the disembeddedness of the economy from other institutions with the rise of liberal, self-regulating market economy was hugely influential among social scientists. Scholars such Edward P. Thompson (1991) and James Scott (1977, 1985), by using the term ‘moral economy’ extended arguments about embedded pre-market

economies and the disembedded market economy approach. Their studies helped in understanding the levels of resistance that may emerge in societies that find themselves in rapid transformation while implementing liberal or neoliberal policies. The moral economy approach is able to show that in situations where markets interfere with the system of protection provided to individuals by law, customary relationships where the right to subsistence was one of the main functions of societies, can result in resistance. The chapter demonstrates further that the moral economy approach was also adopted, not only in criminological studies, but also in studies on drug production. This approach helps to understand how production of drugs in some contexts can be considered as peoples' right; the right to maintaining traditional crop production and the right to subsistence.

The chapter continues by providing an overview of how the concept was developed further. In this section, I discuss how moral and market economies are no longer considered as dichotomous to each other and that markets are not completely disembedded from the societies in which they operate (Granovetter, 1985); markets can also be moral economies, but based on different sets of morals than non-market societies (Booth, 1994). Moreover, markets and structures of specific societies can co-exist in a number of different types of relationships, affecting and blending with each other. This theoretical discussion of markets and societies is significant in the analysis of illegal hashish market in Toolu.

Chapter Four discusses the multi-method research strategy and methodological considerations of the study following the critical realist approach. My fieldwork was based on a case study of Toolu village where I spent nine months between 2009 and 2010 undertaking participant observation, collecting sixty-two semi-structured interviews and conducting a short survey of one-hundred and forty-seven households in the village. The chapter discusses the decisions behind choosing a combination of ethnographic methods and survey for my study and the challenges of such data collection among hashish producers in Toolu.

Chapter Five focuses on the process of legitimation of illegal hashish production by local farmers in Toolu. I demonstrate that the impoverishment of rural populations was an important factor in their involvement in illegal hashish production in the region. I argue that the complex nature of the legitimation of hashish making, which can be based on feelings of injustice due to the withdrawal of state protection following the collapse of the planned soviet economy and with the state turning to the neoliberalization of economy. Additionally, the feeling of injustice is deepened as neoliberal reforms are carried out, and the elite capitalise on this situation for their own enrichment. The inconsistent governance of hashish production and the corruption of some representatives of law enforcement adds more fuel to the sense of injustice experienced by Toolu farmers in. This I consider as constituting the moral economy of hashish production. At the same time, the knowledge of the illegal nature of hashish production, a greater presence of law enforcement in the region, and improving economic conditions as a consequence of hashish production, do not allow them to continue to hold such a moral view of themselves. Thus, different techniques of justification were used to legitimise this illegal activity. Using techniques of interpretive denial by changing the name of hashish itself, and of hashish production, people are able to cognitively remove negative labels and connotations (Cohen, 1993, 1996). Informal social control of hashish production by the community then allows, or at least makes an attempt to, keep it on the small-scale so that it does not grow into a big business and become associated with an organized crime (Henry, 1978).

The main goal of the Chapter Six is to illustrate how illegal hashish production is embedded in the local agricultural economy. I discuss how the transformation of the economy from state-regulated to competitive brought not only challenges for the agricultural sector but also inherent tensions. First, the privatization of economic assets and land in particular was thought as creating self-reliant and competitive individuals in the market. However, despite the fact that land distributed for privatization was much bigger than that in the densely populated southern parts of the country, it does not allow all farmers to automatically become self-sufficient entrepreneurs. The size of land was still not large enough for effective market production. At the same time, we can see the emergence

of at least three different groups of farmers. The groups that were contrasted from each other through their abilities to acquire means of production in such an agricultural context – land and livestock – and had sufficient capital for starting trade. I provide a detailed overview of how, despite the fact that land was equally distributed to families, the small group of large-land holders, and also a small group of landless and a bigger group of small and medium sized land-holders, emerged. The aim here is to demonstrate how the majority of families became semi-subsistence oriented farmers while the market demanded more cash. Other factors such as uneven price distribution and price fluctuations for agricultural products also contributed to the development of farm insolvency. The response to farm insolvency developed due to the inherent characteristics of the market economy and was characterised by the diversification of income generating activities: increasing the size of livestock, selling milk, and working as builders, working in the fields and making hashish. Hashish specifically was an ideal diversification strategy as it did not require a starting up capital; while land and livestock, the main means of production in agricultural settings, needed large investments. In contrast, it allowed majority of families to keep their assets and provide cash in a cash deficit environment.

Chapter Seven continues the discussion of the role of hashish production in the agricultural community of Toolu. In this chapter attention turns to how hashish has been embedded within the social structures of agricultural community. The hashish economy supports not only the agricultural economy itself, but also sustains social relationships between families. In this chapter, I claim that it is important to understand another aspect of moral economy – that of protection provided by the community to its members. Due to social networks being created and maintained mainly at social celebrations, which demanded large investments from family budgets, they become very costly to most farmers. I show that social celebrations also become part of the national discourse for maintaining the Kyrgyz identity and that they are increasingly used for developing good social standing in the community and gaining prestige. As the agricultural economy experienced a cash deficit due to those factors discussed in the previous chapter, I suggest that hashish was used as a source of preserving social networks. I argue that despite the existence of reciprocal social

relationships between families based on social networks, two more forms also emerged. We can see how social networks, with the protective function of members, were experiencing difficulties due to the monetization of gifts. Monetization of gifts created boundaries for cashless families restricting participation in social networks which, as a consequence, extended its functions of social security only to active members. This aspect of social networks is considered as integrating both market and moral economy principles. In parallel, the study also finds that another type of relationship based on principles of self-reliance and merit promoted by neoliberal ideology also began to emerge; with wage labour conducted between the wealthy and poor minorities a result of such ideology. Thus, I show that members of the Toolu community used hashish money for acquiring their citizenship in social networks that could in turn provide support in times of need.

In the concluding chapter, I discuss the main similarities and differences between illegal hashish production in Toolu and other drug producing communities. The main similarity between illegal hashish production and other drug producing communities is that illegal drug crops are produced in agricultural communities located in remote places. Especially, in the age of globalization and neoliberalization of the economy, illegal drug markets play an important role in such communities. However, many studies, including the present one, show that production of illegal drug crops did not replace legitimate agricultural activities and was used as one of the strategies of income diversification. Moreover, this study is in line with others that reveal the importance of using drug crop money for participation in social celebrations.

There are, however, some significant differences when comparing the Toolu case with other drug markets. First, hashish was made from wild growing cannabis plants while the majority of drug producing communities in developing countries cultivate drug crops. Second, as hashish production was not linked to the traditional culture, or social and religious rituals, and started in order to satisfy economic needs, people also use different strategies to legitimise their involvement in illegal activity. I argue that drug production can be legitimated in communities where drugs are not embedded in local traditions. Thus,

Toolu locals use ‘interpretive denial’ strategies that help them to reinterpret hashish making and hashish itself. By doing this they are able to push hashish making outside of the boundaries of illegality to a more comfortable ‘grey zone’ where activities are stripped of from their illegal meaning and acquire a new, conventional one.

I discuss further how these findings contribute to the literature on drug markets that does not take the law-enforcement stand and provides the farmers’ perspective on hashish production. The study also helps to reveal how small-scale drug production can be embedded within local economies and society. Accordingly, this thesis contributes to the debate on drug markets by presenting the farmers involved in hashish production as comparable to any other citizen that cope with pressing economic, political and social issues in the country. At the close of the chapter, I indicate some policy implications of my findings and suggest possibilities for avenues of further research in the future.

## Chapter One

### Literature Review on Drug Markets

#### Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on illegal drug markets in different parts of the world. I focus mainly on the production of drug crops such as cannabis, opium and coca and some other less well-known drugs such as *kebat and kava*. The purpose of this review is to facilitate the situating of illegal hashish drug production in Toolu among other studies of illegal drug markets.

First, I introduce the policies of prohibition developed in a global war against illegal drugs. I show how the interests of one country, the United States, were absorbed into a global prohibition regime that still dominates policies on drug markets (Keefer & Loayaza, 2010). As prohibition regime uses the neo-classical approach to drug markets, I explore its main premises. This approach focuses on the market's logic of supply and demand and how this is replicated in the production and sale of drugs (Griffiths & Dylan, 2011). This line of argument has specific policy implications as it considers drug producers as rational profit seeking individuals. Thus, the policies are designed to deter them from producing drugs by making it more costly and risky to cultivate or sell illegal drugs. Similarly, the policies also aim to deter drug users from buying illegal drugs by increasing the costs and risks on the side of demand (Dwyer, 2009).

Following this, I introduce literature that argues that illegal drug markets can be very complex and embedded in the local socio-economic and political contexts of the societies in which they operate. I show that although illegal drugs crops can be cultivated for profit, in many drug producing communities the farmers are not motivated by greed but by need (Hobbs, 2004; Steinberg, 2004).

The third section of the chapter explores the political economy of illegal drug markets. This approach argues that the context of farmers' survival within wider contexts of war and conflict must be considered in understanding features of the illegal drug markets (Allan, 2004: 143; Hobbs, 2004: 298). In some other cases, studies highlight the contradictory policies of the neoliberalization of the economy, on the one hand opening up borders for trade and promoting entrepreneurship and on the other prohibiting drug markets that follow the same market economy principles (Andreas, 1995; Keefer & Loayaza, 2010; Sanabria, 1993). Moreover, impoverishment of populations and increased inequality are exacerbated by implementing neoliberal policies in many developing countries (Steinberg, 2004; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). Another issue introduced by this perspective concerns the involvement and protection of illegal drug markets by high state officials and law-enforcement officers (McCoy, 2004: 30-31; Mieczkowski, 1992: 95; Ruggiero & Vass, 1992: 280); and the use of revenues from illegal drug production by the secret service (Singh, 2007, Watt & Zepeda, 2012).

The necessity to study the socio-cultural aspects of illegal drug markets is discussed in the final section. Here, I first present the case that illegal drugs, as global commodities in the globalised world, were traditionally made for the local consumption and played an important role in religious, socio-cultural rituals of communities that have used them for centuries. Moreover, this suggests that illegal drugs can be important objects for identity development and prestige within the community (Pellegrini, 2013, Sanabria, 1993, 2004). This line of argument is important for policymaking purposes as it presents the socio-cultural reasons for production of drugs in both non-western and western societies.

### **The Global War on Drugs**

In this section I focus specifically on prohibition policies for illegal drugs. Drugs such as cannabis, opium and coca were not always prohibited and were consumed for centuries in many parts of the world. Moreover, they were acceptable commodities for free trade on an

international level until becoming the focus of prohibition policies at the beginning of the twentieth century. The aim of prohibition policies was to first reduce the trade, followed by prohibition on a global level.

Cannabis is produced in almost all countries of the world, with cannabis resin production concentrated in North Africa, Middle East and South-West Asia (Singh, 2007: 203; UNODC, 2013). Cannabis can be grown in the wild or cultivated outdoors and indoors (Potter, 2010; UNODC, 2013). This means that large amounts of cannabis can be produced domestically in any country for local consumption (UNODC, 2013). Coca is produced mostly in the Andean region, in such countries as Bolivia, Peru and Columbia. Opium production, which is currently dominated by Afghanistan which supplies ninety per cent of world opium consumption, has a long history of cultivation in many other different countries, including India, Thailand, and Burma. *Khat* and *kava* are drugs produced and used locally in some African countries and Pacific Ocean societies respectively.

Drug prohibition policies are based on the idea that certain drugs should never be legally produced, sold or consumed, with the role of the state being to enforce this. There are two major strategies that are used to prohibit drugs: reduction of demand and reduction of supply (Griffiths & Dylan, 2011: 2). The former focuses on consumers of drugs, for example by prosecuting drug users, and/or preventing drug dependence through educational programs providing medical treatment for those with dependency. The drug supply prohibition policies focus on fighting drug production in the countries where they are produced. Their aim is to stop the production and trafficking of illegal drugs. In general, the reduction of supply strategy always had and still has predominance over the reduction of demand of drugs strategy (Ibid, 2011: 2).

As drug prohibition policies mostly rely on the neo-classical approach to illegal drugs, we should look in detail what this entails. According to the neo-classical approach, illegal drug markets are considered to share a similar logic to formal markets and drug producers are perceived as simply rational maximizers of utility (Allan, 2004; Craig, 1983;

Dwyer, 2009; Singh, 2007). In this approach, making money and increasing profit is the main reason for farmers producing illegal crops. Therefore, if costs and risks are increased for the drug producer s/he will stop producing drug crops. Similarly, on the demand side of drug markets, making it difficult and costly for buyers to obtain illegal drugs was thought as the best means of deterring use (Dwyer, 2009: 30-31). Based on the economic model of supply and demand, policymakers assumed that interdiction of illegal crops in supply countries and prosecution of producers and traffickers would increase the price of illegal drugs and consequently the demand for drugs would decline (Weatherburn et al., 2003).

It is undeniable that many farmers in different parts of the world cultivated and sold drugs purely for the economic reason of making a profit. For instance, the case study of opium cultivation in Laos conducted by Westermeyer (2004) provides evidence for such argumentation. Farmers in Laos became opium growers in some regions and could easily adopt other economic activities while abandoning their drug crop if these proved more lucrative, less difficult and less risky. Examples reveal how farmers living near the towns of Sam Thong and Leng Cheng, began cultivating poppies, yet when the population of the towns increased and therefore needed more food, turned to more conventional agricultural practices such as vegetable growing and animal husbandry (Westermeyer, 2004: 119-120).

A comparative analysis of the prices of opium and wheat, for example in Afghanistan, also provides valuable insights into the economic reasons underpinning profit seeking behind the cultivation of opium. 'Financial returns on opium are relatively lucrative for the cultivator. The income to the cultivator from 1 hectare (2.4 acres) of opium is \$1500 to \$3 500, which is three to four times as much as wheat can accrue from a similar-sized plot of land' (Allan, 2004: 147). In 2006, Deepali Gaur Singh (2007:190) reported that the gross income from opium per hectare was already almost nine times higher than annual gross income for wheat (\$4600 and \$530) in Afghanistan. Cultivation of opium allowed the farmers to achieve thirty-six per cent higher annual income compared to non-growing farmers in 2005 (Ibid, 2007).

At the same time, drug prohibition policies frequently utilise the rhetoric of public health. Proponents of this policy claim that if drugs were not actively fought through prohibition then not only would the number of drug users increase but it would lead to an increase in crime (Husak & de Marneffe, 2005; Keefer & Loayaza 2010: 10; Seddon, 2008: 717). This strategy against drugs started at the beginning of the twentieth century with the U.S. becoming one of the main players and enforcers of a very strict, prohibitionist approach to drugs not only on domestic but also on an international level (Keefer & Loayaza, 2010). Despite resistance from some European countries, which became involved in the drug trade through their colonies at that time, the U.S. was able to push such an agenda through refusing to join regulatory policies and making bilateral agreements with other countries. China also played a considerable role in forming a state discourse on opium addiction among Chinese drug users during the Opium Wars (Coomber, 2006) and supported the U.S. agenda in prohibiting drugs. Through persistence, the U.S. was able to bring the prohibitionist approach into domination. ‘Consequently, the drug control framework that evolved reflected the core values of the U.S. and the Internationalization of prohibition oriented ideas and approaches that were culturally unique to that country’ (Keefer & Loayaza, 2010: 79).

The policy towards restricting the trade of opium in Asia began in 1907 when British and Chinese governments signed a treaty at the Shanghai Opium Commission in 1909 (Carrier & Klantschnig, 2012:3). From the outset of the twentieth century, nine different conventions forming the drug control regime were signed by different countries. In 1961 all were consolidated into a single convention designed to tighten criminal sanctions for those countries that supply drugs and required the development of domestic legislations that would prohibit nonmedical use of opium, cocaine and cannabis. It was amended in 1972 with the aim of addressing the demand of drugs. The 1971 Convention introduced a similar control regime to new psychotropic substances such as amphetamines and psychedelics. The final 1988 convention was against the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (Keefer & Loayaza, 2010: 61-91). It was the direct result of intervention by the U.S. and its president Ronald Reagan, who started the ‘war on drugs in the second half of

the 1980s and aimed to strengthen international cooperation in the field of policing, prosecution and punishment of drug offences' (Carrier & Klantschnig, 2012: 4). Law enforcement was chosen as the primary way of dealing with drug supply while other alternative means of providing medical assistance, educational support and developing socio-economic infrastructures of production and supply were secondary (Ibid, 2012: 4).

The conventions made the emergence of a licensing system for transactions in domestic drug markets possible, whereby states have to report medical consumption, manufacture and trade in opiates, cocaine and cannabis to a UN body called the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). In addition to the INCB, the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was involved in the implementation of prohibitionist policies and had a network of field offices in most countries considered as 'drug hotspots' (Carrier & Klantschnig, 2012: 4-5). As Carrier and Klantschnig (2012) argue, unlike the INCB which followed only the prohibitionist approach to drugs, the UNODC policy was not uniform in this case. The main rationale of decriminalization was to end the criminalization of drug users whilst continuing to punish producers and sellers of drugs (Husak & de Marneffe, 2005).

Although the spread of AIDS among intravenous drug users was one of the main reasons for advocating decriminalization, prohibition policy was subject to other criticisms. The critique of prohibition policy raised issues of increased violence and corruption among police and state representatives. Prison overcrowding due the incarceration of drug users was another main critique hastening the advance of an alternative approach to drug control in some countries (Inciardi & Harrison, 1999: 3).

If the 'harm-reduction' strategy was a softer alternative to criminalization, some advocated for the complete legalization of drugs with inefficiency of the global prohibition regime as one of the main reasons (Carrier & Klantschnig 2012: 8; Husak & de Marneffe, 2005, Nadelmann, 1989). On the one hand, the costs of prohibition were higher than any benefits it brought, whilst on the other, prohibition restricted individual freedom

(Nadelman, 1989: 939). In general, the legalization approach to drugs differed from the decriminalization approach by focusing not only on the user side of drug markets but also production and supply, which no country has implemented so far.

However, after the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks on sites in the U.S in 2001 the war against drugs as a public health threat, linking criminality with violence, became absorbed into the war against terrorism, with drug production linked to funding terrorist activities in Afghanistan (Carrier & Klantschnig, 2012, Steinberg et al., 2004). The rhetoric of a terrorist threat to certain Western countries added even more power to the argument against drugs because state-security issues were now considered to be at stake.

In short, moral entrepreneurship against certain drug use started at the beginning of the twentieth century and was conducted within a few countries, particularly the U.S. and some European countries (Nadelmann, 1990). The prohibitionist regime, focused on eradication of drugs in supply countries before they reached consumer countries, was initially formed by Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century (Keefer & Loayaza, 2010). Initially, they were able to create a moral panic in the U.S. Federal Government towards drug use in the Philippines (Ibid, 2010). Afterwards, the moral crusade on drugs launched by the U.S. was turned into a global prohibition regime with stereotypes initiated by powerful groups in the U.S. becoming transformed into the international prohibition regime of drugs.

### **Illegal Drug Markets**

Opponents of drug prohibition forwarded a number of different reasons why the policy of total control of illegal drug markets was not possible and resulted in failure. As many argued, the prohibition of drugs should be better understood as a moral entrepreneurial activity based on moral judgements rather than on evidences and knowledge (Nadelmann, 1990; Keefer & Loayaza, 2010).

Despite the long history of drug production and implementation of a global prohibition regime, the latter continued to operate with a limited knowledge of the contexts of drug production (Browne et al., 2003; Vellinga, 2004; Weisheit 1998). There was little information on the motivations and circumstances of drug production within peasant households; its links with the formal economy and macroeconomic impact in agricultural countries (Vellinga, 2004: xi); and especially how connected it was to daily struggles people faced in both industrialized and developing countries (Green, 1998). Such lack of information created problems for adequately defining policies (Vellinga, 2004: xi).

If policymakers were informed about the struggles that people involved in the drug trade face, they could focus on policies other than criminalization. Policymakers should first and foremost focus on what causes people to be involved in drug markets, and their needs. If this was done, it would be possible to reveal the ‘complex world of political economy, the capitalist ideals of profit and competition, divisions between the developed and underdeveloped worlds and the basic hardships of those at the bottom struggling to survive in the late twentieth century’ (Green, 1998: 180-181). The main problem of criminalizing drug production was that it was unable to offer any solutions to address these needs (Ibid, 1998: 181).

For instance, the neo-classical economic approach to illegal drug markets, based on supply and demand factors adopted by the criminal justice system, in practice failed to bring the expected results. It did not stop communities from cultivating illegal drug crops and drug users from consuming drugs and getting treatment or move to other legal drugs. Instead, the result was that demand for drugs remained unchanged with price fluctuations and users still found ways to pay high prices, revealing the inelastic demand for drugs (Dwyer, 2009: 31). The convenient location(s) of drug producing countries and commonly the demand from outsider countries are important factors in the emergence of drugs as global commodities. Demand was driven by changing economic conditions in the west, with increasing affluence and leisure time acquired by youth since the 1950s.

In drug producing countries, inelastic demand for illegal drugs meant that the prohibition of drugs on national, regional or even international levels did not result in the cessation of production, making their financial returns much higher than for other, legal, crops. The production of marijuana and coca in Mexico as well as other Latin American countries can be linked with the growing number of drug users in the U.S., where most drugs were trafficked to (Craig, 1983). Examples include opium and cannabis in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Allan, 2004; Singh, 2007), coca in Bolivia, Peru and Columbia (Sanabria, 1993; Steinberg, 2004), *kehat* and cannabis in some African countries. This was one of the main reasons why farmers in three different continents decided to cultivate such illegal cash crops on some or all parts of their land.

In Bolivia, where coca was a local traditional drug, a new era of drug production began when more land was given over to the cultivation of coca due to high international demand for cocaine. Although, the intensification of coca crop cultivation should be understood not only as the result of cocaine demand, but convergence of three different conditions (Sanabria, 1993). As Sanabria (1993: 58; 2004: 155) argues, the factors for increased cultivation of coca in Bolivia in the mid-1970s were: 1) economic development policies that displaced peasants from highlands to lowlands creating a capitalist agribusiness class interested in obtaining more profits than traditional peasants and landless migrants; 2) favourable environmental conditions for growing coca plants and; 3) increasing international demand for cocaine. Due to such factors, the agribusiness class was able to acquire entire shares of land for coca cultivation, after a new way of processing coca into coca paste was invented.

Thus, the inelastic nature of demand for illegal drugs together with changeable drug economies, which could adjust and adopt according to the policies of prohibition, can actually be said to stimulate the production of illegal drugs. When prohibited in one place the production can ultimately move to other places. This occurred in U.S. attempts to halt the production of drugs at source countries between the 1960s and 1990s (Friesendorf,

2007). Even in cases when interdiction was successful in one district of the country, or even whole country, new fields of drug crops started emerging either in other regions or in countries which were not previously involved in the illegal economy. These areas might have had the appropriate 'political, legal and economic conditions for an expansion of an illegal crop' as happened in southern Belize where marijuana production moved when it was targeted in Columbia (Steinberg, 2004: 173). Lenient enforcement, with small fines and an insignificant number of convictions, created a context where, for instance, marijuana production could expand in places where it had no traditional roots (Steinberg, 2004: 173).

The mechanism of crop elimination chosen as the main strategy for fighting the supply of drugs proved to be highly inefficient and was replaced in some places with crop substitution programs (Asad & Harris, 2003). Even in practice, the latter programme, although having limited positive effects in some drug producing regions, proved to be a waste of resources because it could not offer lasting, long term effects (Ibid, 2003: 108). For instance, Allan (2004) describes how the practice of crop substitution projects in Afghanistan revealed that instead of stopping or decreasing opium poppy cultivation, unintentionally increased it. In this case, regions which were not traditionally involved in poppy cultivation started sowing opium. In reality, the eradication of illegal poppy cultivation in one region opened opportunities for farmers in other regions to cultivate poppies in the expectation that they would be paid high prices for eradication as well. However, a crop substitution project was implemented only in one highland region based on the information that lowland regions were not involved in much cultivation of opium. This resulted in more opium being produced due to the lowland farmers cultivating poppies in anticipation of payment for eradication and leaving the cultivated poppy for sale when they were not paid anything (Allan, 2004). Therefore, prohibition of drugs had the opposite effect by increasing the possibilities for the involvement of communities with no previous history of drug production in drug markets.

## **Illegal Drug Markets: Diversification of Income Generating Activities**

In fact, drug markets can be characterised as ‘messy’ with a range of participants involved; including criminals, risky entrepreneurs and opportunists (Dorn et al., 1992). Among growers, manufacturers, importers, traffickers/primary distributors, smugglers, distributors, dealers, dealer-users and customers (Mieczkowski, 1992: 93), one can find people from different walks of life. There may also be criminal organizations involved in drug markets interested in turning high profits. Due to the high prices of drugs (a consequence of interdiction measures), trafficking and distributing has developed into a highly lucrative business with criminal groups becoming increasingly organised and sophisticated (Thoumi, 1995). This does not necessarily mean that all people involved in drug markets belong to criminal organizations. Illegal practices, in general, are not the monopoly of criminal elements (Heyman, 1999) and drug markets are no exception.

Although drugs can be highly profitable and generate interest among criminal organizations, the growers, especially in developing countries and who form the focus of this study, rarely receive much profit from their activity. The differences between the ‘farm-gate’ price of drugs in producing communities and the final price that the consumers pay are enormous. However, this increase in price usually occurs immediately *after* the drugs leave the farm and during their transportation to other countries. This means that criminal organizations, attracted by the most lucrative parts of the market for drugs, are less interested in the sphere of cultivation (Reuter & Greenfield, 2001).

Consequently, some farmers who are flexible to the changing economic conditions presented by illegal economies, but are not necessarily part of large criminal organizations, may also get involved in cultivation of drug crops (Steinberg et al., 2004). This is especially noticeable when illegal and legal markets co-exist in close relation to one another. In cases where the hidden economies are already interwoven with the formal economy, drugs make up just one more layer of activity (Ruggiero & Vass, 1992: 282).

The neo-classical assumption that drug producers are rational profit-seeking individuals purely interested in increasing revenues has been further criticised by a number of studies (Hobbs, 2004; UNODC, 1999). These studies were able to show that some drug producers, as happened in Bolivia in the 1970s, were not purely interested in obtaining high profits and that there were many other communities where drug cultivators were not motivated by greed (Hobbs, 2004; UNODC, 1999). Instead, such drug cultivators were interested in receiving a small but substantial profit for their hard labour and risks (Hobbs, 2004).

Thus, in many places, production of drugs is an activity for generating a supplementary income. Most farmers involved in drug production usually diversify their income by other means. ‘The cultivation of cannabis, for instance, enables the household to cope with shocks and to smooth consumption over the life cycle. Farmers in Ethiopia and Kenya treat *kebat* as a supplementary crop with coffee and tea being the major products’ (UNODC, 1999: 50). Growing cannabis plants has enabled Maya farmers in Southern Belize to address various problems of their agricultural economy. Their legal crops such as maize, rice and beans did not attract such high demand, high price and easy access to markets compared to marijuana (Steinberg, 2004: 172). As a result, drug markets were a source of sustainability for formal economies (Mieczkowski, 1992: 95).

Diversification of income also means that farmers do not cultivate the largest parts of their land in favour of drug crops. Although the situation does not remain the same everywhere, mostly drugs are either inter-cropped with other crops or cultivated on other parts of the land. As Steinberg suggests, illegal drug production cannot be stopped ‘until smallholder farmers in Belize, Colombia, Afghanistan, Burma, and other states are given economic opportunities that rival the returns provided by marijuana, coca, and poppies’ (Steinberg, 2004: 179).

Illegal drug markets also make receiving credit easier. For instance, in the case of opium production the advance sale of a future harvest enables farmers to swiftly access credit through traffickers in Afghanistan (Goodhand, 2000; UNODC, 2004).

Structural conditions are cited as important contributing factors not only for producing, but also dealing with illegal drugs. An excellent example of how marginalized, impoverished individuals struggling to find legitimate jobs are pushed into the world of drug dealing and drug use in New York City is provided by Bourgois (2003). He argues that we should see the structural problems of apartheid, marginalisation based on ethnicity and acute poverty as contexts for the persistence of drug dealing. Short-term policies implemented by the state and the prohibition of drugs make it difficult for second-third generation Puerto-Ricans living in El-Barrio, the poorest neighbourhood in New-York, to participate in the legitimate economy. Most drug dealers had difficulties in keeping entry-level jobs. In his ethnographic work, Bourgois argued that crack dealers tried to find a legitimate form of work or switch from an underground to legitimate economy. However, they were restricted either materially or administratively and were unable to enter the world of legitimate work, which could provide them with benefits, stable income and security for future. They had been unable to retain any legitimate jobs they got when they were teenagers. Bourgois revealed that the male working class cultural capital of Puerto-Rican drug dealers did not provide them with the 'right' skills and attitudes in service-sector jobs (a feminized form of work) which quickly replaced the factories that moved out from the intercity in search of cheap labour. Having macho-type cultural capital, ready to work in dirty, hard jobs at factories meant that they did not have adequate time to adjust to the new demands of service-sector jobs that required a submissive character.

As discussed above, the economic conditions in which people live and the resultant motivations to participate in illegal activities are important factors to consider in understanding drug markets. Although illegal drug market participants may continue to pursue their economic interests in gaining profits, these should be situated among other

structural conditions such as poverty, inequality and marginalization. In many cases, drug production should not be considered as solely motivated by greed, but as a response to the problems with which drug producing and drug dealing communities are faced.

### **The Political Economy of Drug Markets**

The political economy perspective to illegal drug markets highlights their complex nature, arguing that illegal drug crop production should be situated within the context of: 1) war between countries and how production of illegal drugs is sometimes the only way to preserve communities; 2) neoliberalization of economies of developing countries and the contradictory policies that are developed by neoliberals for freeing the market and simultaneously tightening control over drug markets; 3) impoverishment of populations due to economic neoliberalization; 4) involvement in and protection of illegal drug markets by high state officials and law-enforcement officers; 5) the use of revenues from illegal drug production by the secret services.

Drug crops play an important role in preserving communities or keeping communities afloat in situations of constant economic transition. Many drug crops usually produced by farmers in developing countries share similar characteristics: the ability to grow in places that might not otherwise have resources and/or sufficient amounts of land and water for cultivation of other cash crops. For instance, in some areas armed conflict intensifies the search for substantial profits especially when limited resources are available. Civil wars since the 1973 coup d'état happened in Afghanistan led to a process of conversion of opium into morphine and heroin and increased the amount of land available for cultivation of opium crops (Allan, 2004: 143). Allan describes how 'opposing factions would mine the underground irrigation aqueducts. This tactic would essentially starve out the opposing factions because they would be unable to clean out the sediment that accumulates annually in the irrigation ditches and canals' (2004: 143). Their options were either to become refugees in Iran, Tajikistan and Pakistan or grow poppy crops that did not

require much water (Allan, 2004: 143). Similarly, in other places, such as Laos, where wartime conditions did not allow for traditional forms of subsistence, drug crop cultivation was used as an alternative way of surviving for many peasants (Hobbs, 2004: 298).

A further critique focuses not only on the effects of prohibition, but how the principles of prohibition and neoliberalization policies contradict one another. One of the methods of supply reduction was either as a form of economic assistance or withdrawal of assistance if the countries were believed to be involved in supply and trafficking of illegal drugs and made no effort in interdicting them (Andreas, 1995; Keefer & Loayaza, 2010; Sanabria, 1993). As Andreas (1995) has claimed, the introduction of drug prohibition regimes was one of the requirements for developing states to gain access to development projects which countries relied upon under the advice and pressure of international organizations. At the same time, these countries also increased production of drugs for a global consumption. However, such organizations failed to recognise that illegal drug markets followed the same principles of the market economy and still insisted in prohibiting drug production, supply and trafficking. This left few choices for developing states and countries such as Peru and Bolivia who had no choice in formally agreeing to drug prohibition measures in a context where they could not actually stop drugs being produced. In reality, if they stopped illegal drug production, their economies would have collapsed (Andreas, 1995).

Neoliberalization of economies in developing countries was highlighted as one of the main factors for persistence of illegal drug markets. Implementation of neoliberal policies exacerbated the impoverishment of populations and intensified the distribution of wealth that favoured the rich (Bourgeois, 2003; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). With 'free trade' and 'open market' policies promoted further by neoliberalism, even remote villages and communities across the world become linked with global economies. However, as many studies have revealed, some of these places have faced a continued struggle to enter the globalized economy. While formal economies struggled to cope with neoliberalization policies, drug markets were able to better respond to them and flourish in transitional

economies that followed the structural adjustment processes (Keh, 1996). With the withdrawal of state support due to neoliberal policies, farmers in the agricultural areas of Mexico and Bolivia, for instance, were left with little state support (Craig, 1983:326; Watt & Zepeda, 2012: 80). Moreover, many communities had issues with a shrinking, if not already small, amount of land available to farmers (Steinberg, 2004). This meant that affected farmers attempted to yield as much profit as possible from the scarce resources they had.

The policies of the ‘free’ market and the personal entrepreneurship promoted by the state and international organizations could create, although not intentionally, ideal conditions for drug production to expand beyond a shadow economy (Andreas, 1995; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). A ‘get-rich-quick’ mentality was reported as one of the driving forces of illicit drug activity in a number of places (Marat, 2006; UNODC, 1999: 49). However, even in such cases when the drug market participants seemed to follow the ‘get-rich-quick’ mentality and pursued profit, various scholars have argued that this should not be divorced from the social and economic conditions that allowed for such mentality to flourish in the first place.

These conditions included rapid integration into a national, more commercial economy, thereby fostering a need for cash incomes, and integral social changes such as a rejection of traditional social structures in favour of more Western models (Steinberg, 2004: 168).

While we have seen that prohibition policies were not usually well informed about the conditions in which drug markets operate (Coomber, 2010) – and seldom relied on evidence-based research to tackle issues that different communities face – other studies voiced more radical opinion that prohibition itself became a precondition for global trafficking by creating highland drug lords and syndicates that control commercial activity (McCoy, 2004: 30-31). Prohibition of drugs, by increasing financial investments, also created the possibility to use bribes as informal tax payment to all involved parties such as police, politicians, and customs officers. The state only played a symbolic role in drug control

activities. When law enforcement and politicians in Sydney, Bangkok, Hong-Kong, Manila, New-York, Marseilles and Istanbul turned a blind eye to illegal drug markets, they created perfect conditions for them to flourish (McCoy, 2004: 30-31).

Politicians and police were drawn towards the easy money that trafficking represented and used their power to create institutionalised protection (Mieczkowski, 1992: 95; Ruggiero & Vass, 1992: 280). For instance, Mexican politicians were interested in promoting anti-drug policies not to stop drug production and trafficking but to increase their own profits because they were either part of the trafficking itself or took a cut from it (Watt & Zepeda, 2012: 26). Police would also protect, warn and provide information for traffickers while officially still receiving credit for fighting drug traffickers (Lupsha, 1992 cited in McCoy, 2004: 30-31; Watt & Zepeda, 2012: 45). In such a situation, states usually police the lowest level of drug markets: the growers, the poorest group that gets minimal revenue from drug crop cultivation; whereas highly organized drug traffickers who are able to launder their monies in western countries are usually not only persecuted but rarely targeted (Marez, 2004: 5).

Finally, the most powerful argument against the prohibition regime from the political economy perspective is that the main advocate, the ‘moral crusader’ of strict punishment – the U.S. government – allows drugs to be produced elsewhere and then trafficked to its own shores in its desire to win over the communists during the Cold War (Singh, 2007). The secret services of U.S. transported drugs from Vietnam and Latin American countries to finance the mujahedeen in Afghanistan (Singh, 2007). They also provided protection to drug cartels in Mexico, allied with authoritarian regimes in Latin America, and the anti-communist Kuomintang party in Burma in their fight against communists (Crandall, 2001; McCoy, 2003). With the idea that ends justify means, they went against their own policies prohibiting drugs (Watt & Zepeda, 2012).

The critical approach to the production end of illegal drug markets did not stop with highlighting the various structural conditions within which they operate. Research on

communities where drugs were cultivated around the world showed the diverse range of factors influencing why farmers in different societies grew cannabis, opium, coca and many other drug crops. Alternative accounts of illegal drug markets focus on the socio-cultural roles that they play in producing societies and thus provide evidence for the inefficiency of dominant, 'one-dimensional' drug policymaking (Coomber & South, 2004, Steinberg et al., 2004).

### **Socio-cultural Embeddedness of Drug Markets**

I now turn attention to the socio-cultural dimensions of illegal drug markets. First, those studies highlighting the socio-cultural dimensions of illegal drug markets argue that prohibition policies are entangled with an ethnocentric view of drug use while drugs are part of non-western local cultures (Coomber & South, 2004; Steinberg et al., 2004). Prohibition of use and production of illegal drugs responses did not fully consider their social and religious importance in non-western world (Coomber & South, 2004; Keefer & Loayaza, 2010: 63-65; Singh, 2007: 42; Steinberg et al., 2004). Such an approach to the use of drugs in non-western societies argued that they played 'positive, integrative and functional' rather than destructive roles in the communities (Coomber & South, 2004: 18).

Opium, coca, cannabis and many other drugs that have become illegal to produce, use and sell with the war on drugs – which started at the beginning of the twentieth century – have been part of many non-western societies for centuries (Cusicaqui, 2004; Ganguly, 2004; Sanabria, 1993; Spedding, 2004). Many places that became part of a global economy used to produce various types of drugs for local consumption for different reasons: as part of religious and social rituals, as medicine for pain relief, as food and as a substance that helped them to survive long and hard work. Opium and cannabis in India and Central Asia were traditionally smoked or inhaled, coca in the Andes and *khat* in Africa were chewed.

Cannabis, coca and opium once played an important role in religious and cultural ceremonies across the world. Coca served as a ‘medium between humans and supernatural beings’ in religious rituals in many parts of the Andes (Sanabria, 1993: 38). Writing about the role of opium in the local culture in Afghanistan, Singh notes that ‘opium, for centuries was ceremonially imbibed and also offered as a gift of dowry in weddings and funeral services and is thereby, linked to the social status in very intimate ways’ (2007: 42). Similarly, coca was also used for marriage rituals and gifts of coca were exchanged between different kin groups in Bolivia (Sanabria, 1993: 45). *Miraa*, also known as *kbat*, the local drug in some parts of the African continent (Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula) was traditionally used as part of bride price payments made by the family of the groom to the bride’s family in Kenya among Meru people, and was used as a ‘gift on important occasions and as a token of respect when settling a dispute’ (UNODC, 1992: 62).

Some drug crops were also a source of staple food in China, South and Central Asia and the Balkan region for many centuries (Keefer & Loayaza, 2010: 64). Coca, for instance, had an important role in mobilization of labour in agriculture and mining by being used as a relief from hunger (Sanabria, 1993: 38). Opium and cannabis were used as medicine in many countries of Central Asia, India, Afghanistan where they were cultivated for centuries (Latypov, 2012: 27; Mills, 2004). As Ganguly writes, opium was ‘used in war for instant pain relief from wounding but also as a home remedy to relieve child teething; for intestinal disorders, worms, convulsions, diarrhoea and even cases of mental disorder’ (2004: 84).

Even today, while being an economic source of income, coca is also a symbolic cultural source in Bolivia, providing the basis for the definition of ‘indigenous peoples’ and national identity (Pellegrini, 2013: 131). Following traditional culture, coca is chewed in Bolivia (Ibid, 2013). There are other drugs – not as well-known as global drugs like opium, coca and cannabis – such as *kava*, which have been recently promoted ‘as a means of strengthening traditional customs’ in some Pacific Ocean societies (Merlin & Raynor, 2004). *Kava* was traditionally used in ritual feasts to celebrate major seasonal crops – breadfruit and yams. As *kava* was highly respected, it was presented and prepared for meetings with chiefs

and senior lineage members, when someone was asking for favours or forgiveness, or during marriage ceremonies. At the same time, use of *kava* was strictly controlled (Merlin & Raynor 2004: 286).

Such studies suggest that due to incorporation into the social and cultural milieus of non-western societies, traditional drug consumption did not have such destructive effects as in western societies. For instance, in Brazil, the use of the psychoactive substance *ayahuasca* by religious groups was socially controlled by the religious communities and did not lead to addiction (Macrae, 2004). One such religious community imposed 'dietary and behavioural prescriptions for three days before taking the *ayahuasca* drink, control over the dosage by an experienced member of the group' (Ibid, 2004: 32). Spedding (2004) in her study on coca use in Bolivia, supports this line of argumentation by presenting the fact of how unproblematic coca use actually was in local communities, with no social pressure to chew coca first of all; and secondly, half a pound of coca leaves being chewed on an average by coca chewers.

In some societies, the socio-cultural aspect of drug production allows insight into why the cultivation of drug crops such as coca, cannabis, opium and others has been considered as a legitimate activity (rather than a criminal or immoral act) within communities (Westermeyer, 2004: 116). The socio-cultural significance of drugs has meant that people were able to resist policies of interdiction and fight attempts to halt production of drugs because their previously legitimate activities, as a consequence of global developments, became illegal (Steinberg et al., 2004). In places such as the Chapare region of Bolivia, the Yi area of China and in Mexico, farmers openly confronted law-enforcement officers so as to protect their fields from eradication measures (Sanabria, 2004; Watt & Zepeda, 2012; Youngming, 2004). Drug growers, however, became labelled as criminals for defending their local culture and traditions of producing and using drugs through various forms of colonialism (Coomber & South, 2004; Steinberg et al., 2004).

However, the processes of globalization that connected even remote regions to the global culture and economy also introduced new challenges for drug producers. Within the globalised economy, illegal drugs would be trafficked from developing, producing countries to mostly western countries, and other consumer goods would go in an opposite direction.

In this sense, drug markets offer the ways to achieve the western type of consumption for drug producers and drug dealers. The extra income from drug crops can purchase a radio, television, or motorcycle or replace a traditional thatch and dirt-floor dwelling with a modern concrete, two-story, electrified house, thus enhancing the farmer's perceived quality of life and social status (Hobbs, 2004: 300).

Similarly, acquiring western consumer goods in post-Soviet Kazakhstan was cited as one of the main reasons of involvement of dispossessed youth in illegal small-scale drug dealing especially as they aspired to buy designer clothes following the consumption patterns of rich youth, and invested their drug dealing money to go to night clubs and discos (Rigi, 2003). Even consumption of certain types of drugs can become a source of prestige. For instance, post-Soviet Russian drug markets showed evidence of the increased popularity of heroin, coca and ecstasy, while most drugs consumed during Soviet times were cannabis and opium. These new drugs were consumed more by middle-class and wealthy elements of society (Paoli, 2002). Fitzgerald (2005:570) notes that even intravenous drug use in transitional societies could be seen as the consumption of western commodities that allowed drug users to accumulate prestige through their association with modernity.

Moreover, this socio-cultural framework to drug markets also identifies the importance illegal drugs play in societies where they are neither produced nor have roots in traditional culture. Scholars are able to demonstrate that even illegal drug markets in western societies are complex and, although perhaps following economic incentives, could also be rooted in local social and cultural structures (Potter, 2010, Sandberg, 2012). Interdiction measures, together with other factors such as the development of technologies and normalization of marijuana consumption in some developed countries, also made increased

cannabis cultivation possible in consumer societies. Various studies of cannabis growers in developed countries identify different types of people who become involved in cannabis cultivation (Hough, 2003; Potter, 2010; Weisheit, 1992). Reasons vary from financial and selling to others to social – for their own and friend’s consumption; medical, growing for the therapeutic values of cannabis; or as a business challenge rather than for money; and for ideological reasons. Potter (2010) was able to identify that there were some people that produced marijuana for greed and financial necessity as are usually assumed to be the main factors for drug production by neo-classical economic theories used by prohibition policies. However, such pure financial motivations and especially motivations guided by pure greed were rare among drug producers in the UK. Importantly, he identified that drug producers grew cannabis plants because they believed that cannabis growing and its consumption should be legalized (Potter, 2010).

The findings of a study on drug dealers in Norway conducted by Sandberg (2012) support such an argument that there different motivations for becoming part of the illegal drug market. Sandberg identified three types of cannabis drug markets among drug dealers – private, semi-public and public – and argued that each could be associated with different cultures. While public ones could be more profit-oriented, and be exposed to more violence, the private market is based more on trust networks, with almost no violence involved, but with low or almost zero profits from sales. Although there are gender, class and ethnic dimensions involved, Sandberg argues that such cultural aspects could better explain the differences between markets. These markets should be understood as embedded in different cultures and therefore, whilst all operating within the cannabis market, are based on different moral grounds, values and norms (Sandberg, 2012). For instance, in the private market, trust rather than profit seeking was an essential part of any transaction. Drugs could be given free and exchanged among friends and social networks. Although the public market with open boundaries and sales taking place in the street seemed to be following the profit seeking rationale, with its frequent fighting it was also embedded in the street culture of respect, where money played a less important role (Sandberg, 2012: 1143).

Other researchers have presented that even the high level of violence usually associated with illegal drug markets is not always a requirement for their operation (Coomber, 2006). Due to drug markets being located in different social and cultural contexts, the violence also differed from one setting to another (Coomber, 2006: 116-143). Moreover, some argue that violence is usually perceived as the consequence of the drug trade being the result of the prohibition regime. The historical perspective on global prohibition regime and the changing dynamics of drug production and trafficking in Columbia, Peru and Mexico, more recently, reveal that interdiction measures, instead of stopping and eliminating the drug trade, lead to a higher organization of trade and increasing use of violence (Gootenberg, 2008; Keefer & Loayaza, 2010: 20; Perramond, 2004: 216; van Dun, 2012; Werb et al., 2011). Violence in illicit drug markets could be directly correlated to the collapse of state-sponsored protection rackets brought down by anti-corruption reforms and new players in drug markets (Snyder & Duran-Martinez 2009). Violence was part of the everyday life for crack dealers in El-Barrio (Bourgois, 2003) and many other drug dealers in New York and other big cities in the U.S. However, it is generally accepted that drug markets, even when based on the same type of drug, do not produce a similar amount and type of violence that was seen in U.S. cities (Coomber, 2006).

In general, the socio-cultural approach to drug markets raises an important critique of drug prohibition policies as it suggests that drug production and dealing cannot be explained by one economic factor alone. The approach proposes that drugs markets are highly contextual and integrated into the societies, economies and politics in which they exist. Understanding the context in which drug markets operate, therefore, is paramount for the effective implementation of policies because in every neighbourhood, city, village or country drug markets are embedded in the local socio-cultural structures that create different motivations for people to participate in illegal economies. In summary, socio-cultural approaches to drug markets reveal the importance of many other factors that are not related to economic motivations, which mostly are not taken into account when drug policies are developed.

## Conclusion

This chapter provided a review of the diverse kinds of sociological, criminological and anthropological literature on drug markets. The main point that runs throughout the literature from different parts of the world is that drug markets are complex in their nature.

Many scholars discuss the necessity to understand illegal drug markets following economic rules, but they also argue that it is not the only dimension through which it is possible to explore them (Dwyer, 2009; Dwyer & Moore, 2010; Potter, 2010; Sandberg, 2012). The liberal economic logic that was used as a key formula for understanding supply of drugs can be criticized on different grounds. This critique lets us see that prohibition of drugs, while following the economic rational approach to drug markets, is incapable of reading situations where drug production is situated in a local context. Drug markets are very complex and multiple interrelated factors can exist that affect the emergence, re-emergence, expansion or shrinking of cultivation of drug crops in any society (Potter, 2010; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). Thus, prohibition methods are frequently blind to different cultural, political, social and economic contexts, but are still followed in order to promote strategies which, in reality, can never fully eradicate drugs.

Although it was not the aim of the chapter to provide a complete list of arguments against the prohibition of drugs, the main problems identified with this policy have been highlighted and the arguments for its ineffectiveness presented. Coming from various perspectives and emphasizing different aspects of the failure of the drug prohibition regime, they make a strong case against the existing regime. Prohibition could be understood as a moral entrepreneurial activity based on ethnocentric views on drugs with actual limited knowledge of the context in which drugs are produced, trafficked and used. Some point to the economic aspects of the policy, with money being spent without any visible result. The attempt to eradicate drugs from the face of the world only displaces them from one region to another. Prohibition turns drugs into global commodities that can bring high returns for an investment of capital and therefore, creates good conditions for high level corruption

among politicians and police, as well as for the emergence of violence. However, most of the countries in the world, especially developing countries, are affected by this global policy which is aggressively promoted by the U.S. and their allies. For instance, economic assistance to developing countries is tied in with the successful implementation of drug prohibition policies.

One of the central arguments of this chapter is that illegal drug crops play different roles in different communities and societies. Although drug markets exist in many societies, they are not the same and are different everywhere, taking their own unique place within the local space. In some, they play a vital role in the survival of societies, especially in times of war, turmoil and crisis and have an economic rather than cultural importance. While in others, they are used only for religious and social purposes being part of the traditional cultures and are ingrained in the identity of drug consuming populations.

There have been many studies taking an economic stance in understanding the motives behind drug cultivation, production, trafficking and dealing on different levels. Instead of denying the importance of economic factors, we can argue that there could be a number of different factors, not only economically driven, that lead to the production of drugs in different countries. Such studies reveal the socio-economic, political and socio-cultural embeddedness of drug markets.

Another central argument of the chapter is that in most cases it is impossible to identify just one single motivating factor for drug cultivation and production because there can be a number of different factors involved. Moreover, even within one society there could be a combination of different interlinked factors that create conditions for people to take part in drug markets.

## Chapter Two

### Illegal Drug Markets in Kyrgyzstan: The Local Context

#### Introduction

This chapter provides a concise overview of the local context underpinning illegal drug markets in Kyrgyzstan. As presented in the previous chapter, the existing literature suggests that illegal drug markets are context specific and therefore diverse. Here, I discuss the convergence of different factors that contributed to the development of illegal drug markets in Kyrgyzstan.

First, I explore the post-Soviet transformation and changes people encountered in the last quarter of the century as the result of the neoliberalization of the economy. In particular, I focus on changes implemented in the agricultural sector of the Kyrgyz economy. The social costs of the ‘shock therapy’<sup>1</sup> version of neoliberalization, implemented over a very short period and the ensuing impoverishment of the local population are discussed at the close of this section. This section therefore provides the socio-economic context in which the rural population of Kyrgyzstan found itself in the aftermath of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the consequent, opening of the country to the global markets, including illegal drug markets.

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<sup>1</sup> Shock-therapy meant withdrawal of state subsidies, no control of price and currency, and privatization of state assets in order to quickly stabilize the economy. Shock-therapy is more frequently used to describe a method which had its most significant impact reforming the economy of the Russian Federation. It is less frequently used to refer to other former Soviet Republics. However, Kyrgyzstan was one the former Socialist Republics that used this version of liberalization of the economy (Belot, 1995; Bloch, 2004; Pender, 2001; Steimann, 2011).

Following this, the history of drug production in Kyrgyzstan is explored. I discuss Kyrgyzstan's opium and cannabis production during Soviet times, with the former being the result of legal poppy cultivation for medicinal purposes. Later, this fact allowed the local population to be able to legitimate hashish production in the post-Soviet period. The cannabis production served domestic users within the country and also the drug users of former Soviet Socialist Republics.

I then focus on the enduring heritage of the Soviet era in the form of corruption and beat-the-system/bend-the-law survival strategies both at the top and at bottom of the socio-political structures of the society. This is shown to be one of the contributing factors of the development of illegal drug markets in Kyrgyzstan.

### **Changes in Post-Soviet Everyday Life**

Kyrgyzstan is a country in Central Asia which, until August 1991, was part of the Soviet Union. However, immediately after gaining independence, the country, like many others in the former Soviet Union, faced huge economic transformations which affected the lives of the population.

During Soviet times, Kyrgyzstan received subsidies due to its budget deficit. Almost twenty per cent of the country's budget was subsidized from the central union budget. After the collapse of the Soviet Union these subsidies were consequently cut, with each former Soviet state becoming independently responsible for its own population (Abazov, 1999). Some of the transformations, such as allowing individuals to open small 'cooperative' private firms, had been initiated during the 'Perestroika' (reform) period of the last years of Soviet rule, but moved onto a completely new level during the early years of independence.

The economic crisis during the 1990s, in both agricultural and industrial sectors of the economy, was due to the challenges of developing an independent economy from what

had been a highly integrated Union economy; and more generally the inherent strain of a shift to a completely new economic system. Among the two sectors, only agriculture was able to return to its 1990 level by the end of the 2000s (Temirbaev, 2009). Despite some improvement in the industrial sector's share in GDP, mainly due to a significant contribution from the Canadian-owned 'Kumtor' gold mining company which started operating in 1997, the industry was never able to return to its pre-crisis level (Kudabaev, 2009: 116). In the next sections, following a short overview of the neoliberal policies implemented in Kyrgyzstan, I will discuss in more detail how the agricultural sector was hit by the economic crisis. It will help to situate developments in Kyrgyzstan drug markets in the 1990s in the second section of the chapter.

### **Neoliberalization: The Case of Kyrgyzstan**

One of the contributing factors to the persistence of illegal drug markets during the post-Soviet period in Kyrgyzstan can be identified as the shock therapy of the transformation implemented in the 1990s and its impoverishing effects on the population. In this section I provide a brief overview of the neoliberal policies and their effects on the agricultural sector in Kyrgyzstan. I focus later on the response to such policies from one of the rural agricultural communities in Kyrgyzstan.

It should be noted that some reforms had already begun before Kyrgyzstan became an independent state. During the 1980s, Yuri Andropov and Mikhail Gorbachev,<sup>2</sup> the last leaders of the Soviet Union, initiated a dialogue regarding the state of the planned economy and its shortcomings through the politics of 'Glasnost' (openness). 'Glasnost' has been read as a watershed moment in Soviet political history in terms of how it signalled a policy of openness concerning problems in Soviet society which were hidden and not previously

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<sup>2</sup> Yuri Andropov was the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from November 1982 until February 1983. Mikhail Gorbachev was the last General Secretary of the Communist Part of the Soviet Union from 1985 until 1991.

discussed (McForan, 1988). Its impetus was how to address the stagnation of the Soviet economy at the end of the 1970s. The phase of 'Glasnost' was characterised by Soviet economists and politicians at first debating and then implementing measures to encourage a change from a state-controlled economy towards a market one (Osmonalieva, 2002). This openness to debate led to the reformation of the command economy, known as 'Perestroika', initiated by Gorbachev in 1985. The initial debates resulted in formal applications to major international organizations for economic assistance which monitored the transformation of economies in many developing countries. This culminated in July 1991, with Soviet leaders applying to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) for assistance in dismantling the planned economy and implementing a market economy (Belot, 1995; Osmonalieva, 2002). After a failed coup in August 1991, the Soviet Union disintegrated as its former members declared their independence. Consequently, each country was left to apply to the IMF and World Bank individually (Belot, 1995).

The road towards the neo-liberalization of the economy was closely monitored by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Financial and technical assistance from these organizations was based on the condition of implementing 'structural adjustment programmes' (Belot, 1995; Pender, 2001). The nature of these reforms involved the freeing of prices (as opposed to the fixed prices which prevailed under the Soviet economy), opening the market to trade with other countries, eliminating state monopolies by privatizing them, and embarking on a process of what was then called 'market stabilization' (Belot, 1995).

### **Shock therapy.**

While other Central Asian states decided to adopt a 'gradual approach' to market reform and did not start dismantling the state control over the market so rapidly, Kyrgyzstan together with Kazakhstan chose to use the 'shock therapy' version of dismantling the state-controlled

economy and implementing neoliberal policies to detach the state from controlling the economic institutions (Macey et al., 2004).

Abazov's account, which cites the report submitted to the donor organization in 1990, provides an illuminating description of the ideas behind the rapid transformation of the planned economy:

A strong macro-economic stabilization programme, designed to reduce the budget deficit [was] rapidly accompanied by immediate decontrol of most prices and the start of privatization of small-scale enterprises. Output could fall sharply and unemployment would rise. A recovery from it should be able to get under way within two years or so. Unemployment would be expected to decline as the initial labour shakeout gave way to a strong recovery in employment (Abazov, 1999: 202).

It was proposed that the planned economy had to be dismantled by: (1) internal and external liberalization and decentralization of state management; (2) macroeconomic stabilization and the introduction of a national currency; (3) deregulation, privatization and restructuring of the economy (Abazov, 1999: 204).

Internal liberalization meant that ninety per cent of prices, except for bread, meat, coal and public transportation, were, from January 1992, no longer fixed. In 1993, however, the government returned to selective forms of state intervention due to a sharp decline in standards of living and production output. Yet, in 1994 international organizations such as the WB and IMF pressured the newly independent state to once again free prices. This occurred for a second time in 1994 when, following the internal liberalization of prices, and experimenting with state controlled imports, the state eliminated almost all limitations on exports from the country (Abazov, 1999: 205). In order to initiate the third stage of this transition, concerning the privatization and restructuring of economy, the government implemented two new laws; 'On Enterprises' (February, 1991) and 'On General Principles

of Privatization and Entrepreneurship in the Kyrgyz Republic' (20 December, 1991) (Abazov, 1999: 209).

Between 1991 and 1999, privatization happened in four stages. From 1991 to 1993, during the first stage of privatization, the mass sale of state assets transferred the ownership of small retail and consumer service enterprises to their workers and managers. In the second stage, from 1993 to 1996, medium and large enterprises were privatized through a voucher system. The workers of such enterprises were distributed vouchers, either for free or for a small fee, which they could use to acquire a share in state-owned enterprises. By mid 1995, during the second stage of privatization, the government had privatized more than sixty-four per cent of all state property. In the third stage, from 1996 to 1998, medium and large state-run enterprises, or their shares, were sold on auctions. In the fourth and final stage, from 1998 to 1999, basic industry sector enterprises – telecommunications, mining and energy – became privatised (Abazov, 1999: 208-209).

### **Privatization of the agricultural sector.**

Privatization of Soviet farms was important because 64.7 per cent or 3.3 million of the Kyrgyz population lived in rural areas and agriculture accounted for the largest sector of the Kyrgyz economy (NSC, 2010a). With industries stopping their work completely or shifting to partial production, agriculture became a major contributor to GDP throughout the 1990s. In the agricultural sector, 41.3 per cent of its assets were privatized in the first stage of reform (Abazov, 1999). By the end of the second stage, the agricultural sector had been privatized completely (Ibid, 1999).

The initial reforms in the agricultural sector had started even before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The government of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic passed the 'Law on Peasant Farms' to establish independent peasant farms instead of *sovkhoses* and *kolkhoses* in February 1991, whereby fifty per cent of irrigated arable land was left for the National

Land Fund (Bloch, 2004). Some of the state and collective farms specializing in livestock breeding and seed production were exempt from this process. However, the government was not satisfied with the scheme due to the fall in agricultural production (Ibid, 2004). Between 1990 and 1995 agricultural production shrank but slowly started improving in 1996 (Mudahar, 1998).

From the beginning of 1994, a second stage of reforms was introduced. A number of state and collective farms had to distribute their arable land and non-land assets to all farm residents and farm employees (Abdurasulov, 2009; Bloch, 2004). Privatization was unpopular among the population as people in rural regions did not want to see state property redistributed and preferred instead to keep distribution of land within the *sovkhoses* and *kolkhozes* (Osmonalieva, 2002). However, during this period of privatization Five-hundred and seventy-six state and collective farms were turned into 32,200 small private farms, six-hundred and eighty-seven agricultural cooperatives, seventy-three joint-stock companies and two-hundred and twenty-six farmer's associations (Abazov, 1999: 218).

At this stage, the government, with the aim of protecting the agricultural sector, did not convert the land into full ownership, but leased the distributed arable land for a period of ninety-nine years with a limit on individual family holdings of thirty hectares in pasture zones, and twenty hectares in zones of intensive agricultural production (Bloch, 2004: 18).<sup>3</sup> In October 1998, after a referendum on land, changes were made in the Constitution converting all land use certificates into ownership documents; thus initiating the third stage of privatization.

In 1999, Parliament passed a new Land Code which still withheld the right to sell and purchase agricultural land (Bloch, 2004: 18). The government was concerned that the unlimited trade of land could create inequalities between people if poorer segments of the population sold off their share lands. Consequently, the government put a moratorium on

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<sup>3</sup> Pasture zones were given only for livestock breeding and zones for intensive agricultural production were for agricultural cultivation.

the sale of land for five years. Only after a few years, again due to pressure from the IMF to lift the moratorium, the law 'On the Management of Land of Agricultural Designation' was promulgated on 11 January, 2001, giving full ownership to privatised land (Bloch, 2004: 20).

During this process, seventy-five per cent of arable land was privatised, whereas the remaining of twenty-five per cent was turned into the National Land Fund. In total, fifteen per cent of all agricultural land was privatised. The remaining eighty-five per cent,<sup>4</sup> which consisted of pastures and hayfields, was not privatised and remained state property (Lerman & Sedic, 2009). Pastures were left for animal grazing purposes by individual and communal herds, with leasing possibilities from the state (Undeland, 2008). In 2008, sixty-six per cent of pastures and hayfields still belonged to the state, thirty-three per cent were in use by collective farms and *ayil ökmötü* (local government) and one per cent belonged to farmers (Abdurasulov, 2009).

#### **Further liberalization of economy.**

In an attempt to further liberalize the economy, Kyrgyzstan joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 1998 and signed agreements that prevented protection of the national economy (Fillipova, 2009). Kyrgyzstan opened up its market for export and also the importing of goods from other countries in an attempt to liberalise its foreign trade. Certain sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, the processing industry, financial sector and telecommunications industries, were left unprotected by the government. The agricultural sector especially suffered as cheaper products from abroad started pushing local agricultural products out of the market (Galushkina, 2003). The government then signed an agreement that the budget allocated to agriculture would not be more than five per cent of the total value of agricultural sector economy (Fillipova, 2009).

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<sup>4</sup> Or fifty per cent of the whole territory of Kyrgyzstan.

### **Problems in the agricultural sector.**

Despite the fact that agricultural output began to slowly recover from 1996 on, the problems still remained. In July 1997, a survey of the representatives of large farm managers, private farmers and household plot owners revealed the most important problems they faced during the early years of transformations. The problems were: underemployment of population, unfavourable prices, difficulties in output marketing, lack of rural credit, shortage of fuel and machinery, lack of chemical fertilizers, shortage of agricultural land, problems with irrigation and water supply, lack of quality seeds, reductions in the social safety net, and high taxes (Mudahar, 1998: 6).

The number of livestock sharply decreased during the early 1990s because of mass slaughter and the sale of meat (Abdurasulov, 2009; Steimann, 2011). This was related to the fact that during the Soviet era the number of livestock that households could own was capped, with slight differences in the maximum number from region to region, from *sovkeboz* to *sovkeboz*, and that individual farmers were not ready to take on such vast numbers of livestock in a short period of time. While livestock breeding had been highly subsidised during the planned economy, individual farmers lacked resources to look after livestock distributed to them during privatization.

Inequality was by no means a new phenomenon that emerged with the collapse of the socialist economy. In general,

more than a third of the population of the Central Asian republics was estimated to have per capita income beneath conventional all-Union poverty line in 1989, compared to only 5 per cent in Russia and, on average, 7 per cent elsewhere (Falkingham, 1997: 1).

However, the stratification that existed during Soviet times sustained and increased during the transition to the market economy period (Özcan, 2010). One of the reasons for

this was the way in which land was distributed among the population. For instance, each *kolkhoz* and *sovkhoz* had to equally divide all land between their residents. This resulted in an uneven distribution of land from region to region. For example, southern regions, with a high density of population, distributed only very small share lands: 0.35 hectares per household (Ablezova et al., 2004). The population of Northern regions were able to receive from 0.78 to one hectare of land per person. According to Osmonalieva (2002), this shortcoming was discussed by the Soviet economists during the ‘Perestroika’ period. Yet leaders of the independent Kyrgyz Republic were pressured by international donor organizations to proceed with ‘shock therapy’ measures in order to accelerate reforms, and did not have time to adjust regional differences in the privatization of land (Pender, 2001).

Despite the expectations of the International donor organizations that the privatization of the agricultural sector would boost the entire economy, land privatization mostly turned agriculture into a semi-subsistence economy due to the small size of land distributed to families to make a surplus. Although privatisation helped in the employment of large numbers of people, farmers in Kyrgyzstan were supposed to consolidate each other’s resources to increase the productivity of larger areas of land because subsistence farming could not bring much benefit. According to Arapova and her colleagues (2000), farmers were required to have fifty hectares of land to be able to start yielding a surplus, while on average they only owned three to four hectares.

Additionally, corruption within local authorities led to further increase of inequality within the regions. If in the industrial sector, former directors of factories, plants and shops were able to privatize them for almost no cost through auctions or buying vouchers of the ordinary workers who found no use for them and sold them cheaply (Mikhalev, 2003), former *kolkhoz* leaders were able to acquire more and better land than was officially allowed. ‘Collective-farm administrators, who were politically connected and vested with the power to distribute resources, appropriated a disproportionate share of the land and sold equipment from dissolved farms on the black market’ (Radnitz, 2010: 105).

### **Impoverishment of the population.**

The impoverishment of populations was considered as one of the factors for many communities in the world to join illegal drug markets, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Here, I illustrate how this was also a significant factor for the population of Kyrgyzstan. In this section, I present the effects of the ‘shock therapy’ style of reforms and its high social costs (Abazov, 1999: 218).

Kyrgyzstan experienced high levels of inflation from 1991 on, when it first rose to eighty-five per cent, after which it became completely uncontrollable. In 1992, it rose to eight-hundred and fifty-five per cent and in 1993 to 1209 per cent (Abazov, 1999: 214). In 1990, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country was US\$2.6 billion, taking a place among the most impoverished nations in the world. At that time, gross national income (GNI) per capita was US\$593 in contrast to average of US\$4249 on the world level. The crisis was very acute during the period of 1990-1994, hitting the agricultural sector and industrial production (Kudabaev, 2009: 112). In 1996 and 1997 there was a slight increase in GDP compared to the level registered in 1995. However, in 1999, the GDP of the country fell to its lowest level of US\$1.2 billion. Gross national income per capita was US\$255 in comparison to the average of US\$5026 of GNI per capita in the world. Since 2000, Kyrgyzstan’s gross domestic product started gradually improving, reaching US\$2.5 billion in 2005, US\$4.6 million in 2009 and US\$6.5 million in 2012 (UNDATA, 2014).

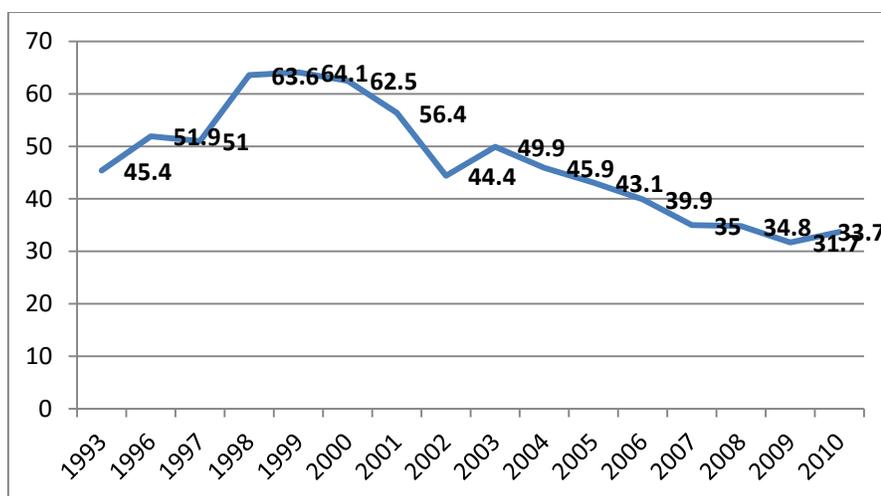
During the 1990s, rising poverty had an obvious impact on standards of living. The results of household surveys for the period between 1996 and 1999 reveal that low income families spent sixty per cent of their income on food and forty per cent on other products and services (Orozbaeva et al, 2001: 10). Vulnerable groups in the population were families with a higher than average number of members in their household (three to four for example). In particular, it was ‘households with a large number of children, particularly pre-school children that [were] often most at risk of poverty’ (Falkingham, 2003: 18). There were

also notable incidences of malnutrition among children and rural residents experienced difficulties in receiving pensions and other social benefits (Mudahar, 1998).

In Kyrgyzstan, it was the rural population which suffered most from impoverishment during the economic crisis (WB & NSC, 2005). The rural population, which consisted of two thirds of the total population, was much poorer than urban population. National statistics committee data for the period reveals that around eighty per cent of all poor in the 1990s lived in rural areas. By 2009 the situation had not altered much with seventy-five per cent of the poor coming from rural areas.

Poverty in Kyrgyzstan is also geographically concentrated. Remote regions, far from regional centres, have higher incidences of poverty incidences compared to places that are closer to cities and big markets (WB & NSC, 2005). Mountainous areas, although settled by thirteen per cent of the population, have more than half of their population under the poverty line (WB, 2011: 7). According to statistics provided by the National Statistics Committee, the highest poverty level registered was sixty-four per cent in 2000.

**Figure 2.1. Poverty Level in Kyrgyzstan**



Sources: Data from 1993 to 2001 is taken from (Falkingham, 2003), from 2002 to 2010 from the National Statistics Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC 2010c).<sup>5</sup>

Due to the impoverishment of the population, the lack of employment in rural areas, and a scarcity of land for farming many people started migrating outside of the country. The beginning of the new millennium saw a massive migration of the rural population to larger countries such as Russia and Kazakhstan. With ninety-two per cent of migrants going to Russia, this was the main country for finding jobs and better salaries than those available in Kyrgyzstan (Beishenaly et al., 2013). According to a recent survey conducted by the Eurasian Development Bank among Kyrgyzstani migrants, most worked in the construction sector and industry in Russia, and trade and agriculture in Kazakhstan (Beishenaly et al., 2013). Due to huge migration flows – around one million people out of a population of five million – migrant remittances had become one of the more important sources of income for rural families in Kyrgyzstan by 2014. Remittances make up the third of the country's gross domestic product (Nichols, 2013: 5).

To summarise, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the implementation of the 'shock therapy' version of economic neoliberalization had devastating effects that failed to swiftly stabilize the economy, and where some of the sectors were not able to recover from transformation at all. The industrial sector was never able to return to the level registered immediately before the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the economic crisis came the impoverishment of the population, especially among rural communities. The privatization of

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<sup>5</sup> However, some other sources have argued that the level of poverty would be much higher if a different method of assessment poverty was used. For instance, in contrast to the forty-five per cent reported by the National Statistics Committee, Anderson and Pomfret (2000) state that eighty-six per cent of the population lived under the poverty line in Kyrgyzstan in 1993. The national statistics committee used the minimum consumption basket, while other agencies conducted surveys based on international standards of measuring impoverishment. So, the poverty level was much higher than the maps provided by the National Statistics Committee suggest. The NSC used the local currency of *som* to estimate the minimum consumption basket for food and non-food items. Those who could not cover needs in food and non-food items were considered as in absolute poverty. Those who could not afford the minimum of daily food requirements – 2,100 calories per day per person – were identified as in extreme poverty (WB, 2011).

state properties did not result in the immediate improvement of economic performance in the agricultural sector and, on the contrary, the outcome was decline of land cultivation and shrinking of livestock numbers. Migration to Russia and Kazakhstan was one of the solutions found by the majority of families in their search for a way out of poverty. It was also a way demonstrating responsibility for the family and to earn money even in difficult situations. Other families found ways into the informal, illegal economy that could sustain them under such economic conditions.

### **Illegal Drug Markets in Kyrgyzstan**

In this section, I argue that the illegal drug markets of cannabis and opium have had a long history in the country. Together with other factors, such as the transformation of economy and its impoverishing effects on the population, this fact also contributed to the persistence of hashish drug production during the post-Soviet period. Local people were able to use this fact as a source of reference for the legitimation of current hashish production, which will be discussed in depth in Chapter Five. Here, I provide a brief history of the development of illegal drug markets in Kyrgyzstan during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

Cannabis and opium have been available throughout Central Asia for well over a century. Opium was used as a traditional medicine before the beginning of the twentieth century (Latypov, 2012). At the end of nineteenth century, however, Russian researchers perceived traditional drug consumption by the local population in Central Asia to be a form of addiction (*narkomania*) and consequently a sign that rural life was degenerate and backward compared to Russia (Latypov, 2012). During the Soviet period, the discourse on illegal drug production and its legality underwent several different stages: first, the demonization of illegal drug use by Soviet organizations in the 1920-1930s; followed by denial of existence of drugs and drug addiction at the territories of the Soviet Union by the state (Ibid, 2012). During Stalin's rule, it was a politically inspired move to claim that drug use only existed in the capitalist societies. Drug users were criminalized and many put into

prison rather than being treated medically. Although drug use did not disappear and went underground, publications on this subject were restricted, while those rare studies which were made could not be accessed by the general public. They were mainly for the use of KGB<sup>6</sup> and party leaders.

The openness about problems during the Glasnost period also made it possible for discussion of issues related to illegal drugs in the USSR, replacing the previous policy of denial of drugs and drug use. Illegal drugs in general and drug usage became widely discussed during that period with no restrictions coming from the state (Latypov, 2012). However, according to Latypov, the publications during the post-Soviet period somehow forgot or misrepresented the history of drugs in the region, therefore perpetuating the idea that the drug ‘problem’ did not exist in the USSR and Central Asia at all during Soviet times. Latypov claims that post-Soviet publications on drugs also have a restricted nature due to the limited historical approach to drugs in Central Asia, arguing that drug problems emerged only with the demise of the Soviet Union (Latypov, 2012). However, Kyrgyzstan had drug markets that existed long before the Soviet Union disintegrated, as I discuss below.

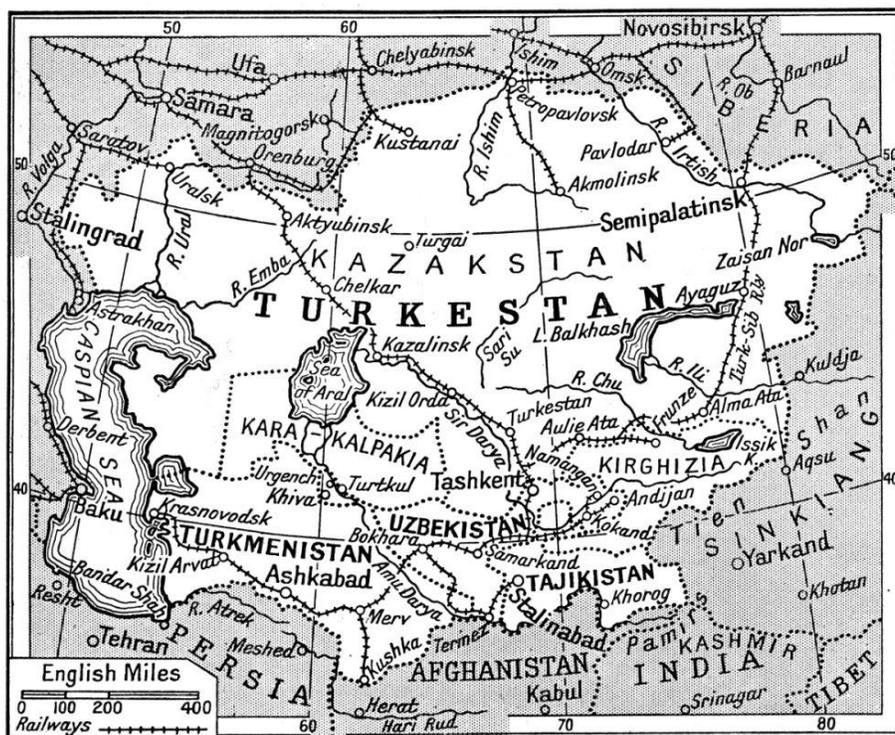
### **The opium drug market: Soviet period.**

One of the major drug markets that existed in Kyrgyzstan stemmed from production of legal opium for medicinal purposes during the period of 1916 till 1974. The territories currently identified as Issyk-Kul oblast were used for the production of medicinal opium by the state. When opium production was initiated during the First World War the territories of contemporary Kyrgyzstan were part of the Russian Empire. Due to a fall in the supply of opium from Turkey during the war, Imperial Russia urgently needed opium for medicinal purposes.

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<sup>6</sup> KGB – *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* – Committee for State Security.

Figure 2.2. Map of Turkestan Region in 1938



Source: 'The Internet Map Archive' website.

[http://www.probertencyclopaedia.com/photolib/maps/Map\\_of\\_Turkestan\\_1938.htm](http://www.probertencyclopaedia.com/photolib/maps/Map_of_Turkestan_1938.htm), last accessed on 29.08.14

However, the demand for morphine, which is made from opium, remained and the decision was taken to produce it within the territories of the Russian Empire (Djakishev, 2004). It was decided that the region of Turkistan<sup>7</sup> could be used for the cultivation of poppies.<sup>8</sup> Later, the successor of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, decided to retain the production of medicinal opium within the territory of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialistic Republic (Kyrgyz SSR) until it was stopped in 1974 (Zelichenko, 2003). Despite the state denial of

<sup>7</sup> The contemporary Central Asian region was called Turkestan during the Russian Empire.

<sup>8</sup> Poppies were cultivated in one part of the Turkistan region which later became part of Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast within the RSFSR in 1924, Kyrgyz Autonomous Republic within RSFSR in 1926, Kyrgyz Soviet Socialistic Republic in 1936 (Djakishev, 2004; Amanaliev 2004), and the Kyrgyz Republic independent from the Soviet Union in 1991.

drug use by the population, opium production was banned in 1974 due to the increase in its illegal use, as well as the illegal trafficking of opium to China (Ibid, 2003). For most of the twentieth century, eighty-eight percent of the opium produced in the entire Soviet Union, and sixteen percent of opium in the whole world, was cultivated in Kyrgyzstan, specifically within Issyk-Kul oblast (Djakishev, 2004).

**Plate 2.1. Man in a poppy field**



Source: Personal blog TerrainKGnita, <http://terrainkgnita.kloop.kg/>, last accessed on 28.08.2012. The photograph of Kojokmatov S. was taken in 1956 in Issyk-Kul oblast.

Therefore, Kyrgyzstan had a period of legal opium production during Soviet times, which significantly accounted for the employment of a large amount of the local population. It also created an illegal market for opium which was smuggled to China, and when it became difficult to smuggle outside the country due to the tightening of drug control, it was transported to other republics of the Soviet Union (Kurmanov, 2005). To illustrate the extent of this we need only look at the enormous difference in prices set by the state and the *chernyi rynek* (black market) for opium in the 1920s: 1500 *rubles* on the black market as opposed to thirteen *rubles* and fifty *kopeek* paid by the state. Thus, it led to the development of an opium black market in the region (Ibid, 2005: 47).

As a result of this illegal trade and the smuggling of opium to China, the Communist Party leaders attempted to tighten military controls on the cultivation of poppies in Kyrgyz fields. Therefore, in 1926 the Central Executive Committee of the USSR under Stalin's rule came up with particularly restrictive mechanisms such as: 'allowing SPD (State Political Department) for six months to displace, to send to exile and imprison in camps for three years people suspected, and also found guilty in contraband smuggling of goods' (Kurmanov, 2005: 43). The SPD was allowed to punish out-of-court and immediately execute those involved in armed smuggling and showing resistance to border guards (Ibid, 2005: 243). The result of such harsh control was that, at the end of the same year, ninety-two per cent of the opium harvest was collected by the state (Ibid, 2005: 44). However, throughout this time there was no legislation that dealt with drugs specifically and the article on drugs<sup>9</sup> was introduced into the criminal code of RSFSR<sup>10</sup> (Russian Soviet Federative Socialistic Republic) in 1926 (Ibid, 2005: 45).

Closing the borders with China and implementing tough measures for smugglers did not stop the smuggling of drugs completely. Drugs were transported to other republics of the Soviet Union. On 27 October 1934, the government introduced a further decree 'About the prohibition of cultivation of the opium poppy and Indian cannabis plants,' which declared that any production of opium and cannabis drugs without state permission was prohibited (Nogoibaev, 2003). The Article 179, paragraph 'A' allowed the imprisonment, or sending to custodial work, anyone caught with drugs for up to two years with a confiscation of the crop. The production of opium was only allowed strictly on the fields of *sovkhozes* and *kolkhozes* (Ibid, 2003: 231).

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<sup>9</sup> Article 104, Part I of the Criminal Code stipulated punishment for production, storage for sale and actual sale of cocaine, morphine, ester and other intoxicating substances without permission from the state by imprisonment or custodial work for the period of one year with a confiscation of property or without it.

Article 104, Part II - the same acts conducted in conjunction with running a 'disorderly house' where drugs are sold and consumed were to be punished by imprisonment in high security prisons for a period of three years with confiscation of property (Kurmanov, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> The current Kyrgyz Republic was one of the *oblasts* of RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) until 1936 when it became Kirgizskaya SSR, one of the republics of the USSR.

According to Zelichenko (2003), drug production concealed not only the smuggling of drugs but also an increased drug use which had not been considered as a social problem by Soviet leaders, who were primarily concerned with controlling the legal production of opium for medicinal purposes. Yet according to some researchers (Amanaliev, 2004; Djakishev, 2004), in the early 1970s, the problems with drug trafficking and drug use were of growing concern and, in turn, made the Soviet leaders realize that the production of opium should be stopped. As a result, and as we have seen, opium production was banned in 1974.

### **The cannabis drug market: Soviet period.**

Similarly to opium, cannabis was present in the region for centuries. The consumption of hashish was also defined as a problem by the Russian Empire authorities; therefore, hashish, widespread in the region at the time, was banned during the second half of the nineteenth century (Amanaliev, 2004: 60). The Soviets followed the same discourse on drugs that existed during the Russian Empire.

Despite the ban during the pre-Soviet and Soviet times, wild-growing cannabis plants remained a constant feature of the Kyrgyz countryside. Some authors (such as Djakishev, 2004) argue that the cultivation of cannabis plants was introduced by the Soviet state in 1933, with hemp being used in the production of material goods such as ropes and bags. Hemp manufacture was terminated in 1965 due to widespread drug abuse among the young population and the increasing amount of criminal acts deemed to be committed by the young (Djakishev, 2004). Subsequently, the brief Soviet experiment in cultivating hemp was brought to an end.

At the same time, the harsh control of opium during the 1960-1970s led to the more relaxed control of hashish, which became one of the most smuggled and popular drugs for production and consumption from the 1970s onwards. As Djakishev (2004) has pointed out, the closure of opium production in 1974 and the strengthening of the control and

punishment for stealing, storing and trafficking of opium caused drug dealers to switch to trafficking more marijuana and hashish.<sup>11</sup> During 1973 and 1974, the amount of opium seized decreased but the amount of cannabis increased (percentage of seized hashish and marijuana in 1973 consisted of 43.6 per cent, and in 1974 – 88.4 per cent from total percentage of seized drugs). In 1974, two and half thousand hectares of wild-growing hashish were detected in the territories of Kirgiz, USSR. In 1984, the identified area increased to four thousand hectares (Amanaliev, 2004). By the end of the 1970s five-hundred kilos of hashish were seized and at the close of the 1980s and beginning of 1990s almost two tonnes of hashish were being seized each year (Isakov, 2002:10).

Tyup region, part of the Issyk-kul oblast in Kyrgyzstan, was a popular place for production of marijuana and hashish. According to some researchers, during the Soviet times '*ruchnik*'<sup>12</sup> from Tyup was produced by people from outside of the region with locals rarely involved in its production. Such activity clearly had links with the criminal underworld of the time.<sup>13</sup> Organized groups of Roma people, from the Russian city of Volgograd, were reported as coming to the Kyrgyz SSR during the summer months, making hashish and returning to the Russian Federation with the drugs. The drugs produced were sent back to their home city and other cities across Kazakhstan and Russia (Djakishev, 2004). Another group coming from the Russian Federation city of Kuibyshev was also reported to be involved in trafficking hashish from the Kyrgyz SSR and Kazakhstan using the train attendants of the Frunze-Moscow<sup>14</sup> train (Dyunina, 1988: 8). However, in the production of marijuana and hashish some of the citizens of the country were involved as well. A group coming from Tokmok, a city in Kyrgyz USSR, was found in Issyk-Kul oblast with seventy

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<sup>11</sup> 'Due to the amendments made in the decree 'Strengthening of drug control' from April 25, 1974, cultivation of poppies and production of raw opium was stopped in all territories of the USSR' (Zelichenko, 2004: 119).

<sup>12</sup> Literally meaning 'made by hand'. *Ruchnik* was one of the names for hashish among the population during Soviet times.

<sup>13</sup> Hashish making was even captured by the Kyrgyz author Chyngyz Aitmatov in his novel '*Plakba*'<sup>13</sup> published in 1986. Aitmatov (2000) described how hashish was made in the fields by small groups of people arriving from large cities to the mountains and living there in tents while making hashish.

<sup>14</sup> Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan was called Frunze during Soviet times.

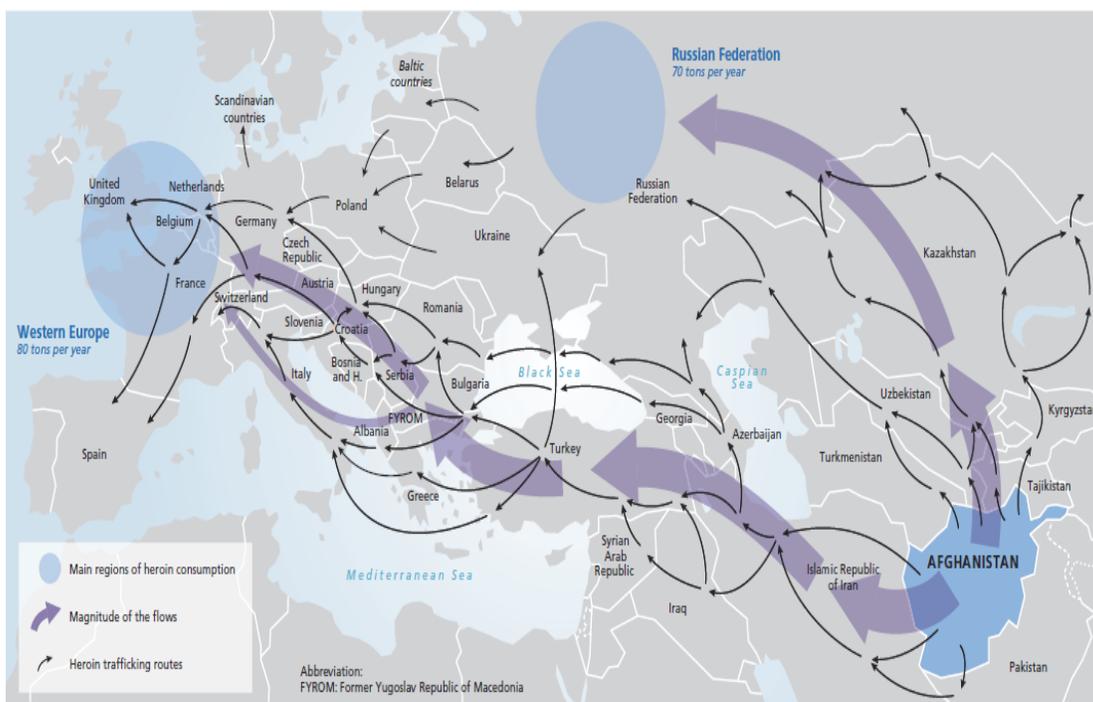
kilos of hashish and sixty-three kilos of marijuana (Musin, 1988). The similarity with the other groups was that they were also not locals from Issyk-Kul oblast, all coming from Tokmok (Ibid, 1988). There were a few cases when local youth were involved in the production of hashish and marijuana, but they mainly produced drugs for their own consumption (Korchagina, 1987).

### **Heroin drug market: post-Soviet period.**

I turn my attention now to illegal drug markets in Kyrgyzstan in the post-Soviet period. In general, I show that the heroin market was able to persist due to corruption, beat-the-system/bend-the-law survival strategies both at the top and bottom of the socio-political structures of the society. Understanding the dynamics of development of heroin market is also important for better locating the cannabis market within the complex system of drug markets.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Kyrgyzstan's independence and the transformations its economy and society underwent coincided with the increased level of drug trafficking coming from Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan has become one of the countries on the so-called 'Northern route' which starts in Afghanistan and runs through Tajikistan, enters southern Kyrgyzstan from different locations, from where it either goes to Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan, finally heading up to the Russian Federation and Europe. According to the UNODC, in 2010, sixty-three per cent of the illicit opium produced globally came from Afghanistan, nineteen per cent of which was trafficked through the Central Asia region (CADAP, 2012: 11; UNODC, 2011: 45). The proportion of Afghan drugs trafficked through Central Asia had increased to thirty per cent by 2012.

**Figure 2.3. Map of the Northern and Balkan routes of drug trafficking from Afghanistan**



Source: 'World Drug Report 2010' (UNODC, 2010).

The drugs were mainly trafficked for use within the Russian Federation and some parts of Europe. The official statistics for instance, provided by the Russian Federal Ministry of Health and Social Development, stated that there were more than half a million (517 389) of registered users of illicit drugs, 350,267 were registered as drug dependant users, 300,000 people were opiate users for the period of 2006-2007 (UNODC, 2008: 9). Experts from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation estimated that the number of illicit drug users could be around four million. Their number has increased by more than nine times in the last decade (UNODC, 2008: 10).

Many factors contributed to the trafficking of drugs through Central Asia, including the deregulation of border controls, coupled with how they were open to dispute following the disintegration of the USSR. Also of note were the effects of harsh drug prohibition regimes implemented in the Iranian Islamic Republic, which diverted the trafficking of some parts of the drugs trade from Afghanistan through its territories and the impoverishment of the population in most Central Asian countries (specifically Tajikistan which bordered Afghanistan, and where civil war during the 1990s created a state of chaos).

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the U.S. on 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 (9/11), some scholars paid increased attention to drugs issue, in particular trafficking from Afghanistan and its links to terrorism. This later led to development of further attention to drug markets in Central Asia. Drug markets and trade were understood as undermining the security of Central Asian states (Cornell & Swanström, 2006; Makarenko, 2002). Based on the case of military operations conducted by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in 1999 in Uzbek and Tajik enclaves within Kyrgyzstan's territory, narco-businesses were linked to Islamic terrorist groups (Cornell & Swantsrom, 2006). The IMU conducted two military interventions in the region. In one they took a mayor and three officials hostage in Osh oblast; and in another the commander of the Kyrgyz Ministry forces and four Japanese geologists, who were released after receipt of a ransom of US\$50 000 and US\$2 million from the Kyrgyz and Japanese governments respectively (Cornell & Swanstrom, 2006; Engval, 2006). However, some later studies are highly critical of the narco-terror discourse. For instance, according to De Danieli (2011), interventions were promoted by Western governments under the name of a 'narco-terror' aftermath of 9/11 and supported by Central Asian governments in an attempt to receive international support which would strengthen their own power. Ultimately, the military intervention conducted by IMU that occurred more than ten years ago was still used as a case to receive support from international organizations. In Tajikistan, for example, the unintended consequences of such an emphasis on a narco-terror nexus and neglect of the narco-state nexus were strengthening the power of ministries and collaboration between criminal and state representatives (De Danieli, 2011). Kupatadze (2014), also argued that in Kyrgyzstan there are contradicting views about

the involvement of radical Islamic groups in drug trafficking. While some argued for the involvement of the radical Islamic groups such as IMU and Hizb ut-Tahrir,<sup>15</sup> most police officers agreed that there was not much evidence suggesting the existence of such a link in recent years.

Therefore, most of the authors present that there is a tendency of involvement by state authorities of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in the drug business. In Tajikistan, drug business played a huge role during the civil war of the 1990s in which all parties involved in drug trafficking used revenues to finance themselves (Fenopetov, 2006; Marat 2006a, 2006b). Some researchers have argued that Tajikistan could even be considered as a narco-state (Engval, 2006; Paoli et al., 2007; 2009) due to the capture of the state by criminal narco-groups. According to Paoli and her colleagues (2007), for instance, in Tajikistan the groups involved in trafficking were able to take governmental positions and consequently use their power to ensure the smooth operation of the heroin market.

Later, even Kyrgyzstan was considered as following the fate of Tajikistan, displaying many traits of a narco-state during the mid-2000s. According to Marat (2006b), for instance, the second president of Kyrgyzstan – Kurmanbek Bakiev – was able to get into power in 2005 following violent upheavals which attracted support from those involved in the narco-business. In short, narco-business leaders, it was claimed, were able to organize massive riots in the capital city of Kyrgyzstan, where the majority of people were brought from distant rural areas and were paid for attending riots, with the help of narco-money. However, the shootings of two narco-group leaders in 2005, which were linked to Kurmanbek Bakiev, brought changes. Following these events, the state elite enjoyed less or no pressure from the illegal elites and themselves conducted illegal activities, almost turning Kyrgyzstan into a narco-state (Kupatadze, 2014; Marat 2007). During the presidency of Bakiev, his family, especially one of his brothers, was involved in drug trafficking (Kupatadze, 2014). However, with recent developments in Kyrgyzstan, when Bakiev himself was ousted with a second uprising in April 2010 and the changes it brought to the elite structure, the country is now

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<sup>15</sup> Some of its members were arrested with arms, religious propaganda and drugs in Kyrgyzstan (Kupatadze, 2014)

far from considered a narco-state. Although, some state representatives involved in the protection of narco-businesses remain, this is conducted on a completely different level from before and it is difficult to say that narco-business succeeded in capturing the Kyrgyzstan state (Kupatadze, 2014).

Kupatadze (2014) argues that the Kyrgyzstan's drug market can be understood through the concepts of upper-world and under-world, with politicians involved in the upper-world market, usually providing protection for criminal groups; and lower rank law-enforcement officials, criminal groups that might be involved in protection only, or protection, smuggling and selling of drugs consisting of the under-world. Although many criminal groups are involved in drug trafficking and also diversified their business, heroin remains the most lucrative source of income not only in Kyrgyzstan but in other Central Asian countries (Paoli, 2007; 2009).

### ***Drug use.***

Despite the fact that there have always been drug users and producers, as I have discussed above, since Kyrgyzstan's independence the consumption of drugs has taken on a different context. First of all, due to Kyrgyzstan being part of the 'Northern route' for trafficking drugs from Afghanistan, the amount of drugs and their composition changed. The drug users that were mainly consumers of local drugs such as marijuana, hashish and ephedra started switching to heroin (Madi, 2004: 251). With Kyrgyzstan located on the trafficking route, cheap heroin was readily available to drug users. This could be seen in the increase of the number of heroin users in the capital city of Bishkek and Osh city. Usually drugs would enter the country through porous borders with Tajikistan in the south, and then brought to Osh, the regional centre in the south. Osh was one of the hubs for the trafficking of opium and heroin from Afghanistan which were then moved to Bishkek from where they would be trafficked to Kazakhstan in the north. Some drugs would go from Osh to Uzbekistan (Zelichenko, 2003). The globalization of drug markets also resulted in amphetamine type

drugs becoming popular among the younger generation, which were mostly consumed in night clubs (Yusuphanova, 2008).

As a result of the last rapid-assessment survey conducted by UNODC in 2002, the number of drug users in the country was estimated at around eighty to one hundred thousand (SSDC, 2012). The majority of them were intravenous drugs users. However, such surveys still fail to provide a clear picture of drug consumption in the country.

The rapid change in the composition of drug users and prevalence of intravenous drug users, and the link between consumption of drugs and HIV infection, first-time drug consumption amongst the young (thirteen to fourteen years old) led mass media, public health organizations, law enforcement and international organizations to sound an alarm over public health issues. The country that did not have many intravenous drug users prior to the 1990s, and no registered HIV infected people before 1987,<sup>16</sup> by 2012 there were 10,705 registered drug dependant users, 4,611 HIV infected people, 2,638 of which were injecting (SSDC, 2012). Especially with the rapid increase of HIV among the vulnerable groups of intravenous drugs users, sex workers and prisoners led to the rapid expansion of the epidemic in the period between 2001 to 2006. The southern regions were reported as having the highest number of HIV infections (Murzalieva et al., 2007). Since then, due to the HIV epidemic, international organizations such as World Health Organization and United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in Kyrgyzstan, estimated that the country had become one of the seven countries in the world with the highest rates in growth of HIV infection (EMCDDA, 2011).

### **The cannabis drug market: post-Soviet period.**

If the heroin market is organized around the upper-world and under-worlds (Kupatadze, 2014), the cannabis market in Tyup region tries not to be associated with any of the criminal

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<sup>16</sup> After which HIV cases were registered in 1996 only.

worlds. Cannabis production and sometimes transportation involves local people that were never part of criminal groups.

Although main attention from the media, law-enforcement and public health organizations turned to drug trafficking from Afghanistan due to the increasing number of intravenous drug users and the HIV infection epidemic, the cannabis drug market continued to function during the post-Soviet period. In the late 1990s, a program funded by the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes) conducted a survey mapping the areas of wild-growing cannabis plants. It found 8322 hectares of wild-growing cannabis in Kyrgyzstan (Zelichenko, 2003). The largest area was found in three of Issyk-Kul oblast's *raions* – Djeti-Oguz, Tyup and Issyk-Kul – with 1931.6 hectares of cannabis plants (Ibid 2003).<sup>17</sup> Based on the seizure of cannabis, experts asserted that that Issyk-Kul oblast was one of the main producers of hashish in Kyrgyzstan in the 1990s (Mameev, 1999). 'If we take only those who have been arrested with marijuana and hashish, then we can be 90 per cent sure that the drugs are coming from Issyk-Kul oblast' (Ibid, 1999).

The Issyk-Kul region was officially recognised as the leading region of cannabis production in Kyrgyzstan in the 1990s and 2000s. At the same time, other regions became involved in local cannabis production as well. There are a number of newspaper articles that show that people in Talas, Jalal-Abad and Naryn oblasts started not only collecting wild growing cannabis but also cultivating the plants on their own plots (Ismailov, 2007; VB, 2013). According to the latest report provided by the Drug Control Agency, the population of Issyk-Kul, Djalal-Abad, Talas, Chui and Naryn oblasts produced marijuana and hashish which was distributed on the national and regional markets (SSDC, 2012)<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> In comparison with other regions, it is the largest area where cannabis grows. For example, in Djalal-Abad it is 278.1, and Talas 93.9.

<sup>18</sup> Kyrgyzstan also has wild growing shrubby horsetail ephedra fields. According to the report provided by the State Service on Drug Control there are could be around fifty-five thousand hectares with horsetail ephedra in the country (SSDC, 2012). The horsetail ephedra is used for making amphetamine type drugs.

There were different estimates for the volume of cannabis derivatives (marijuana and cannabis resin) currently being produced in Kyrgyzstan. Some estimated ten to twenty tonnes of cannabis being produced per annum (Abbosov, 2002), while those who worked for law enforcement organizations in Kyrgyzstan argued that two-hundred and thirty-four tonnes of marijuana or eight tonnes of hashish could be produced from five-hundred hectares (Zelichenko, 2003). However, except for the mapping exercise conducted at the end of 1990s, there little data was collected or research conducted on the domestic production of drugs, such as marijuana and hashish. The only official data available is the amount of drugs seized in the country. Seizures of cannabis and hashish show that they are produced, distributed inside and trafficked outside of the country. For instance, among all the drugs seized in Kyrgyzstan in 2013, sixty-one per cent consisted of cannabis plants, fourteen per cent of marijuana and 2.5 per cent of hashish.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, despite much attention paid to heroin trafficking from Afghanistan by law enforcement agencies and public health organizations, there is also a cannabis market operating in Kyrgyzstan. Cannabis plants growing wild in plots nearby to houses and in mountain fields, coupled with the demand that existed for marijuana and hashish in the local and international markets, allowed farmers to see the profits they could make from cannabis production. The interest of the local population in producing cannabis and hashish coincided with economic transformations in the agricultural areas. Cannabis production was one of the ways in which local farmers responded to their impoverishment due to implementation of neoliberal policies as discussed in the first part of the chapter. At the same time, development of mechanisms for market competition through opening up the borders for trade, freeing the prices of products, privatizing state assets and developing an ideology of self-reliance were the other characteristics of the neoliberal economy that contributed to the persistence of illegal hashish production in the Tyup region of Kyrgyzstan.

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<sup>19</sup> The remaining twenty per cent consisted of synthetic drugs, while one per cent of all seized drugs was heroin, 0.6 per cent of opium, 0.7 per cent of poppy plants.

However, there are number of differences between heroin and cannabis markets. The main difference is the price of heroin and cannabis and therefore the difference in profitability. When compared to heroin, cannabis does not yield that much of a profit. For instance, according to data provided by the State Service on Drug Control, in 2012, one gram of opium was US\$1.1-2.2, one gram of heroin could be bought for US\$12.8-14.9, whereas two-hundred grams of marijuana (one cup) was sold for US\$6.4-8.5, and twenty grams of hashish (one matchbox) for US\$42.5-53.2. When moved outside of the country, heroin and opium could also bring greater profits for traffickers. This fact raises an interesting question of why farmers were involved in hashish production rather than in cultivation of opium, as we can see from the price differences, opium could bring much more profit. The answer could lie in the fact that although farmers were short of money, they needed to be able to legitimise it as they were able to do with cannabis plants, as I discuss in Chapter Six.

The other difference is that hashish and marijuana had a larger share in the local drug market, being consumed more within the territories of Kyrgyzstan, while some would be trafficked to Russia, where hashish from the Issyk-Kul region would still be known by its brand name 'Tyupskiy ruchnik'.

## **Drug Control**

As discussed above, Soviet drug control policies in Kyrgyzstan centred on the legal production of opium and attempts to seal the borders with China due to illegal smuggling of drugs. The existence of drug consumption in the country was denied for a long time. During the post-Soviet period, due to trafficking of drugs from Afghanistan through Central Asian countries including Kyrgyzstan, more attention is paid to opiates (Osmonaliev, 2005).

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1994, the director of UNODC<sup>20</sup> Jacomelli visited Kyrgyzstan in order to ratify an agreement for financial support of half a million US Dollars for creating laboratories, training staff for the effective control of drugs and drug trafficking. He claimed that Kyrgyzstan was one of the first countries that applied for cooperation with the UNODC (SG, 1994). Kyrgyzstan joined the UN conventions in 1994 and started working on the revision of drug control strategies in order to increase the chances of fighting the traffickers and dealers. As the country's leaders followed the same discourse of a threat of narco-expansion from Afghanistan as the UNODC had, the country was not pressured to join the conventions by the international community. Moreover, the State Drug Control Committee under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic was already established in February 1993 following the internal dynamics in the country (interview with Zelichenko, September 2014). Later, it was financially and technically assisted by the UNODC in particular and was considered as one of the exemplary cases among the committees in Central Asia (interview with Zelichenko, September 2014). On 17<sup>th</sup> June 2003, the State Drug Control Committee was transformed into the State Drug Control Agency and was made responsible for organizing the work in the country to fight the narco-business.

During the last two decades, the Drug Control Agency played a considerable role in revising the legislation on drugs. With the help of the Committee, in 1994 Kyrgyzstan joined the 1961 United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, and its supplementary treaties, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Kyrgyzstan's drug legislation is unique in the Central Asian region. The country has joined the decriminalization side of debate by introducing a new law on drugs and eliminating the compulsory medical treatment of drug dependant users. The government worked on passing the national law on drugs, which, to some degree, decriminalized drug users. The first national law on drugs was passed in 1997. However, the amount of drugs considered to be 'large' by the law was so low that most drug users were still legally

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<sup>20</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

prosecuted and imprisoned. Thus, in 2007 and 2009 the law on drugs had been revised with the purpose of decriminalizing drug users and consequentially making drug control policies more effective. The main aim of this revision was to decrease the number of convicted users in Kyrgyzstan's prisons as at the time they consisted of almost eighty per cent of all those imprisoned for drug related crimes (Isakov, 2002), making available more energy and resources for fighting drug producers, dealers and traffickers.

The new law was adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2007 by the Kyrgyz Parliament, with some revisions introduced in 2009. The law ruled that drug users stopped by the police with a minimum weight of drugs would be dealt with under the administrative rather than criminal legislation. They would be fined but not legally prosecuted. Therefore, three different categories were set up to differentiate 'small,' 'large' and 'extra large' (see table 2.1.) amounts of drugs in contrast to the single category – 'large amounts' – that was used in the previous law. Ideally, the category of 'small' amounts could help to differentiate drug users, who would possess only small amounts of drugs for their own daily consumption, from the drug dealers and traffickers who would possess larger amounts of drugs for sale. According to the new law, only those who had large and extra large amounts of drugs would be prosecuted under the criminal law. This was done with the idea that law enforcement organizations could control drug production and trafficking more efficiently rather than focusing on drug users who possessed small amounts of drugs (Utyasheva et al., 2009: 100).

**Figure 2.4. Comparison of amounts of drugs considered as ‘large’ in 1998 and 2007<sup>21</sup> versions of laws on drugs**

	Before 2007 <sup>22</sup>	After 2007 <sup>23</sup> and 2009 <sup>24</sup>		
	‘Large’	‘Small’	‘Large’	‘Extra-large’
Non-dried cannabis plants	2500 g	400g	400-12000 g	12000 g
Dried cannabis plants		80 g	80-2400 g	24000 g
Non-dried marijuana	2500 g	100 g	100-3000	3000 g
Dried marijuana	500 g	20 g	20-600 g	600 g
Hashish	40 g	3 g	3-90 g	90 g
Hashish oil	50 g	2 g	2-60 g	60 g
Opium	50 g	3 g	3-90 g	90 g
Heroin	1 g	1 g	1-30 g	30 g

Legislation was thus developed to combat drug trafficking and production while assisting drug addicts through needle exchanges and methadone programs, as part of a strategy to reduce the harm suffered by drug addicts. Kyrgyzstan became the only country in the Central Asian region to develop needle exchange programmes set up for drug addicts by the ‘Soros-Foundation’ and UNDP<sup>25</sup> in 1998. In 2000, these programmes were opened in prisons as well. ‘In 2009, forty-three syringe centres were functioning in the cities of Bishkek, Jalal-Abad and Osh, as well as in the Chui, Jalal-Abad and Osh oblasts, including fourteen syringe exchange centres in the penal system (ten penal systems and one colony)’

<sup>21</sup> The 2007 version had some amendments made in 2009.

<sup>22</sup> Attachment #1 ‘The checklist of narcotics, psychotropic and super potent substances with indication of different sizes found in illegal trade or storage’ (Order #14 of the State Committee on Drug Control, 21 December, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> Attachment #4 to the Decree #543 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic from 9 November, 2007.

<sup>24</sup> In 2009, there were some revisions introduced to the categories ‘small’, ‘large’ and ‘extra large’.

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Development Programme.

(CADAP, 2012: 9). In 2002, Kyrgyzstan became the only Commonwealth of Independent States' (CIS) country to start a methadone substitution programme for opiate drug users willing to withdraw from their addiction. The services were provided in two major cities: Bishkek and Osh (Wolfe, 2005).<sup>26</sup> These developments were possible with the financial and administrative assistance of various international organizations such as UNODC, UNDP and UNAIDS, USAID (Wolfe, 2005). Although fighting with drugs was not part of the structural adjustment policies implemented, as Kyrgyzstan was not a source country, it was part of the international discourse of fighting trafficking of drugs.

Concerning cannabis, there are official programs that try to eradicate cannabis plants in the fields with local authorities taking responsibility for identification and eradication. Every year during the hashish making season, law enforcement agencies and local authorities conduct campaigns called 'Kara-Kuurai' (cannabis) that try to identify any poppy-growing areas or cannabis plants and make the owners of the field responsible for eradication. Recently, the responsibilities for checking if plants were destroyed were placed on the local authorities who would then fine landowners if the plants were not destroyed (VB, 2014).

However, such changes in legislation to fight the big traffickers and dealers was in fact undermined by the involvement of state authorities in the drug business by either providing protection to traffickers or trafficking drugs themselves. Additionally, the involvement of law-enforcement officers (known as 'werewolves in epaulettes' by mass media) in providing protection to traffickers or trafficking drugs themselves suggests that the state does not fulfill its drug control functions (Kupatadze, 2014). Drug trafficking and production are protected by law-enforcement representatives who use their legal positions and networks to participate in the drug business. According to Kupatadze (2014), officers in every branch of law enforcement organizations are involved in drug markets to some extent.

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<sup>26</sup> 'Decree No. 227 of the Ministry of Health, dated May 3, 2006, and the Agency of Drug Control, dated May 13, 2006, 'On the development of programmes for substitution treatment of opioid dependence in the Kyrgyz Republic' acknowledged substitution treatment as a programme for the therapy of opioid drug users' (Aidarov et al, 2012).

Even the work of the Drug Control Agency was undermined due to the virtual capture of the state by narco-business during the period when Bakiev was president from 2005 to 2010 (Marat, 2010). The Drug Control Agency was disbanded in 2009 and could only reopen under the new government (Kupatadze, 2014; Marat, 2010). It was renamed as the State Service on Drug Control following this (Marat, 2010).

To sum up, officially Kyrgyzstan is part of the UN conventions and legislation has been adopted to decriminalize drug users and shift attention towards controlling drug trafficking. In practice, the involvement of high official state and law-enforcement organizations on upper and lower levels promoted drugs markets in Kyrgyzstan.

## **Conclusion**

One of the aims of this chapter was to present the local context of drug production and use in Kyrgyzstan and to provide an overall picture of the transformations in the country that took place in the final decade of the twentieth and the first decade of the twenty-first centuries.

The path to independence was not an easy one for people in Kyrgyzstan as in many other post-Soviet countries. The stagnation of the planned economy turned into deep economic crises with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and implementation of new reforms that were intended to change everything almost overnight. However, the neoliberal recipe instead of curing the stagnating economy intensified the existing problems and created new ones. The social cost of neoliberal reforms was too high – an increased impoverishment of the population. The neoliberal economy also created conditions under which the markets (including illegal ones) could operate and flourish.

Another aim of the chapter was to present the situation within which drug markets exist in contemporary Kyrgyzstan. The historical context of drug markets that operated

during Soviet times was used to illustrate how Kyrgyzstan did not begin to face issues with drugs following independence as is widely suggested in much research and media. This suggests that despite limited information about the cannabis market, it had existed in Soviet times. However, the independence of the country also coincided with the opening up of borders and increased trafficking of opium and later heroin from Afghanistan. The new discourse on controlling the opium market developed during this time. This discourse on drug markets highlighted the important role of prohibition of drugs due to the links between drug markets and religious extremism and terrorism (Cornell & Swantsrom, 2006). However, the narco-terror discourse developed by many Central Asian states allowed them to increase their power and develop links with the narco-business (De Danieli, 2011). In Kyrgyzstan it led to the development of upper- and under-world drug markets in which high profile politicians are involved in the former and lower rank law-enforcement officers in the latter.

However, I have also demonstrated that drug markets in Kyrgyzstan are not only about the trafficking of heroin and there is now small-scale hashish production in the country. The cannabis drug market, as it already existed during Soviet times, continued to operate on a small-scale in comparison to the heroin market. Although it is absolutely vital to differentiate between the cannabis drug markets that operated during Soviet and post-Soviet periods, Soviet cannabis production was mainly operated by the representatives of the criminal underworld at that time and there were a very few cases of involvement of the local population. While the post-Soviet period was characterized by the fact, that the growing number of local population become involved in cannabis production. Cannabis producers also tried to distinguish themselves from the criminal worlds.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Market and Moral Economies: Concepts Guiding the Study**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed discussion of some of the key theoretical concepts focused on markets and societies. As presented in the previous chapter, despite the fact that policies of drug prohibition were rooted in a western culture and morals, the economic rationale was emphasized as the main reason for production of drug crops. However, a number of researchers (Sandberg, 2012; Dwyer & Moore, 2009) have recently noted a great need to use economic sociological analysis to understand how illegal drug markets operate. The most important reason is that economic sociology offers the tools to locate drug markets in their socio-cultural contexts. As data in my own study does not fit the neo-classical economics framework, highlighting rather the importance of socio-cultural processes in which drug markets operate, in this chapter I focus on the debate around markets and their role in society. This debate informs the analysis of hashish production in Toolu in the subsequent chapters.

In the following sections I provide an overview of relevant concepts, starting from a discussion of the social embeddedness approach, continue with a detailed overview of the moral economy perspective that grew out of this approach followed by later developments of this perspective.

The social embeddedness approach developed by Polanyi (1957), argues that societies would start to resist the disembedding, disintegrating nature of market economies and provide protection. Polanyi mainly focused on formal aspects of protection such as protectionist laws and armies that would restrict market mechanisms. While the moral economy concept remains based on the idea of social embeddedness, it emphasizes the informal sources of protection against disintegrating market economy forces. Due to eroding social ties and responsibilities between members as the result of marketisation of the economy, societies sometimes resist market forces.

Although, the moral economy concept enabled me to understand the early stages of neoliberalization, my data was suggesting that the picture of resistance drawn by classical moral economy theory was not complete, and even though communal methods of protection from the market can be glimpsed for some of the families, these are not extended to all. I argue that an approach that views moral and market economies as having various ranges of relationships – conflicting, complementing each other and co-existing – can better frame the analysis of recent practices of hashish production and its role in the local economy and culture of Toolu .

### **Social Embeddedness**

The market economy rests on the following principles: if every individual in the society can participate in and benefit from the exchange, then there is no need for institutions that provide protection. The State, with its protective mechanisms and laws, only restricts the market and therefore, is not required. The *doux commerce* tradition started from the postulate that the market had civilizing characteristics; that the self-interest of every single member of the society would be counter-checked by other members (Smith, 1986) and continued with the idea that with trade and commerce people become ethical, polite, serviceable and honest (McCloskey, 2006, cited in Fourcade & Healy, 2007: 287). Such liberal ideas emphasizing the freedom of individuals and markets led to development of the market economy in many European countries from the eighteenth century on.

Polanyi (1957), viewed traditional societies as having an economy embedded within other social institutions, while liberal markets resulted in their disembeddedness. The important aspect of this approach was that it discussed how the market challenges the governing ‘right to subsistence’ ethos, together with its norms of reciprocity. Land, labour and money, which are not actual commodities, are turned into ‘fictive’ commodities in the utopian belief that markets could self-regulate itself (Polanyi, 1944). This was based on the idea that if the market can handle and regulate itself, there was no need for a regulation from other institutions. At the same time, the market economy could not operate without changing the mentality of people. It needed to be able to operate without interference from social institutions and therefore pushed the ideology of individualism and responsibility of the individual (Ibid, 1957).

Polanyi (1957) criticized the rapid transformation of the economy and society that had destroyed old coping mechanisms and safety nets. Once the labour, land and money were turned into commodities, the society found itself in a position of needing to protect itself from the degrading effects of the free-market. Due to a self-regulating market economy being merely an ideology, societies would inevitably adapt to free markets by embedding them. Embeddedness meant that societies would create protection from the self-regulating market through laws and policies.

Most of the societies where liberal economic principles of self-regulation and no protection from the state and society were implemented found themselves caught in the ‘double movement’. Fascism, on the one hand, and socialism on the other were the responses to the liberal economy in their attempt to protect societies from its destructive forces in the 1920s. Later, the depression of the 1930s and destructive results of World War II led to the adoption of Keynesian welfare economics for the period between 1945 and 1980. During Keynesian welfare economics, the state played a strong role in the economy. Keynesianism saw free-markets as destructive for social institutions and was meant to tame their unregulated nature.

### **Neoliberalization of the Economy**

However, many countries that had developed the Keynesian economic system as a response to liberal market economies after World War II, found themselves by the 1970s favouring neoliberal principles. The assumptions that were developed by Adam Smith two centuries earlier created the basis of neoliberal policies in the second half of the twentieth century (Clarke, 2004). The key propositions of neoliberalism, following the liberal doctrine, were: rational, self-interested individuals with unique preferences and freedom from coercion. It was thought that markets could provide freedom to individuals through the price system, whereby prices should show the existing preferences and where the resources should be allocated.

Neoliberal ideas were able to replace Keynesian economic thinking due to the following factors: (1) intellectual divisions of Keynesians and therefore the impossibility to compete with neoliberal thinking; (2) existence of conservative opposition to Keynesianism in the United States which was against the social security retirement income system; (3) economic factors of rising prosperity and therefore belief among the population that all the problems were solved; (4)

cultural factors such as belief in individualism; (5) critique of Soviet-style socialism and monetarism (Palley, 2004; Saad Filho & Johnston, 2004: 2).

Although the neoliberal economy of capitalism promoted the idea of the market, it moved away from the idea that markets were natural, which was inherent in the liberal theory of market economies. Instead, markets and competition within the markets were believed to be created. The state, thus, has a huge role in developing the market conditions of competition and maintaining this order (Amable, 2011). If the countries did not have all the required conditions for a free-market system to function, states were supposed to intervene and create such conditions.

For instance, following liberal principles, in neoliberalism personal and individual's freedoms are the key, with 'each individual [...] held responsible and accountable for his or her own actions and well-being. This principle extends into the realms of welfare, education, health care, and even pensions' (Harvey, 2005: 65). Countries that developed a welfare system were expected to cut their spending on social security mechanisms such as welfare and pensions; education and health systems were to be privatized in the same manner as other institutions. If countries lacked mechanisms that allowed the market system to operate freely, without the state restrictions, some were encouraged to adopt structural adjustment programs designed to bring the system in line with the liberal ideas of the global market economy (Harvey, 2005). Where it was possible, persuasion through financial means was used, as countries were offered aid from the IMF and World Bank as an incentive. Where resistance occurred, force or threat of force was employed (Saad Filho & Johnston 2004: 3). The state was considered as the institution that could create the required conditions for free markets: 'The state must use its power to impose or invent market systems' (Harvey, 2005: 65). Thus, neoliberalism was impossible without intervention on national and international levels.

There were a number of reasons why neoliberal practices were to diversify from the orthodox theory: political, to win electoral campaigns, gain political influence in certain regions of the world; and economic, to actually protect certain economic spheres and, favour specific businesses (Harvey, 2005: 71). In such cases, neoliberalism in practice meant that some economic spheres were protected by states in developed countries but the same was denied for those that were developing.

For instance, any protection of agriculture in developing countries by way of subsidies was ruled out, while agriculture in most western countries, including the U.S. as the main proponent of neoliberalization, still received subsidies and protection (Oya, 2004). Being replicated internationally by 'globalisation', neoliberalism was almost like the dream that came true for liberal thinkers (Saad Filho & Johnston 2004: 3). The proponents of neoliberalism in developing countries assumed that 'agricultural producers were rational profit maximisers and treated them as 'competitive firms' without taking into account the historical differences in agricultural structures, technological conditions, inequality and stratification. Poor and middle-income agricultural countries were treated in the same way. History shows how neoliberalization was in essence unleashed on the agricultural economies of developing countries, bringing competition down instead of increasing it and leaving farmers to greater indebtedness. As a result, when the farmers 'failed' they had to look for alternative non-farm income sources (Oya, 2004: 130).

Again, one of the main differences between liberal and neoliberal practices was that if in liberalism the losses that may occur in business due to bad investment decisions were supposed to be taken by the lenders, in neoliberal practices the borrowers were responsible for repaying the debt (Harvey, 2005).

The borrowers are forced by state and international powers to take on board the cost of debt repayment no matter what the consequences for the livelihood and well-being of the local population. If this required the surrender of assets to foreign companies at fire-sale prices, then so be it. (Harvey, 2005: 29).

Thus, while promoting the principles of a free market based on ideas of liberalism that every individual entering the exchange does it voluntarily and enables both parties to satisfy their needs free from any coercion, the richer countries together with their minions in the poor, developing countries were able to enrich themselves (Harvey, 2005; Saad Filho & Johnston, 2004). The ruling classes in rich and even poor countries were able to (re)store their capital while the rest of the population fell into impoverishment (Dumenil & Levy, 2004).

Within the post-Soviet bloc, and with the rapid demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, many countries found themselves in new terrains of sovereignty and were advised by international organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to let 'market principles' dominate distribution and opportunity. However, similar to the 'double

movement' in Europe in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, initiated by societies to protect themselves from market forces, resistance to neoliberal reforms happened on different levels in post-Soviet countries (Collier, 2011). As Collier argued (2011), Karl Polanyi's (1957) interpretation of the disembedded nature of the liberal self-regulating market on which neoliberalism rests, fitted perfectly in understanding what was happening in the 1990s in the post-Soviet countries.

Together with Kazakhstan, in the early 1990s Kyrgyzstan chose to use the 'shock therapy' version of dismantling the state-controlled economy and implementing neoliberal policies to distance the state from intervening in economic institutions. Elsewhere, other Central Asian states decided to go with the 'gradual approach' to market reform and did not start dismantling state control over the market so rapidly (Macey et al., 2004). In Kyrgyzstan, it was assumed that 'market liberalism' would encourage entrepreneurialism and self-help among the population (Abazov 1999; Belot 1995; Bloch 2004; Osmonalieva 2002; Passas 2000). In return, the country was, alongside many others, offered aid from World Bank and International Monetary Fund as an incentive.

In the post-Soviet space, the implementation of neoliberal policies saw a return to the disembedded nature of market economies as theorised by Polanyi. Similarly to what James Scott (1977) has argued that the market challenges the norms of reciprocity on a community level, and we see how the social ties between different groups (especially between the poor and well-off) weaken in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. Some studies revealed that with the marketisation of society, the social networks of 'poor groups' shrank and included only their close relatives who, in most cases, held the same social position as them (Kuehnast and Dudwick 2004, Werner 1997, 1998a, 1998c, 2000). The networks were based on how well someone invested in a relationship and contributed gifts of money and help with feasts. The most recent study on rural Kyrgyzstan, also confirms this general trend in the post-Soviet space. Satybaldieva (2015) challenges Radnitz's (2010) argument that tribal connections allowed the poor to reach the required resources through the redistribution of wealth by rich elites. These networks were, instead, based on how well someone invested in relationships contributing with gifts, money and physical labour at feasts. The increasing inequality was due to the monetisation of some forms of relationships among the rural population, based on material success and economic capital of some of the families (Satybaldieva 2015).

## Moral Economy

The debates on moral and market economies and their effect on the social structures provide a useful framework for analyzing the transformations of social relationships in Toolu. The mainstream academic discussion on moral and market economies suggests that both exist in a dichotomous position to each other. Although the free market economy was considered to have a civilizing effect, with the self-interest of every single individual being counter-checked by other members of society (Smith 1986), the proponents of the moral economy were highly critical of market economy principles. They argued that a free and self-regulated market economy had been allowed to strip away forms of protection for the poorest and weakest that were based on ideas of justice, and traditional values of support (Scott 1977, 1985; Thompson 1991a). This approach to the moral economy emphasizes the importance and endurance of relations between people which are not purely determined by self interest but instead based on the values of support and reciprocity that enables the sharing of resources within the community through reciprocal exchange (Polanyi 1944; Scott 1985; Thompson 1991a, 1991b).

The term ‘moral economy’ was used first by E.P. Thompson (1971, 1991) while analysing the English bread riots in the eighteenth century. Thompson studied the attitudes of poor people and the values that provided legitimation for such acts. He showed how the discourses of paternalist and free market economies clashed, one being protective of the working class and poor, and the latter relying on the unrestricted nature of the market without any protection for the poor. Moral economy, in this sense, emerges in such cases of clashes between paternalist, protective systems and the ‘free market’, where people apply the values of the traditional, paternalist system to the changes brought by an unregulated market.

The concept was then applied to explain the class relationships in different contexts at different times. Scott (1977, 1985), for instance, uses the same concept to show how peasants in Southeast Asia resisted the attack of capitalism on pre-existing, paternalist relations between landlords and peasants. Scott (1985) shows that there were structural changes and huge transformations in the agricultural economy due to the ‘green revolution’ implemented by the state which were resisted and effectively ‘re-embedded’.

Scott also relates how poor and rich farmers of Sedaka in Malaysia, prior to double cropping that started with the marketization of society, had reciprocal relationships. The rich

rented land to the poor, used their labour, and provided gifts to the best workers. However, with the double cropping, the poor struggled most. This took place through the appropriation of land by some rich using scam tactics and heavy machinery for cultivation of the paddy fields instead of village labour. In their quest for more profit, they cultivated more land themselves while preventing the renting of land or renting much smaller proportions to tenants than previously; hiring fewer farmers for different types of work; reducing the payment for their work; and reducing the charity that they used to provide to the poor. The double-cropping that was initiated and implemented by the 'green revolution' brought changes not only to how much crop was produced by farmers, but also to the social structure and the dynamic of relations between rich and poor farmers. If during the period before the double-cropping the rich and poor had exploitative but still reciprocal relationships, which allowed the poor to survive, double-cropping was converting such subsistence-oriented agricultural economy into a market-oriented one.

Scott's analysis of social celebrations and gift-giving in Malay rural society in East Asia is useful to understand the processes of marketization on a micro-level. His analysis of the transformation of relationships between rich and poor farmers demonstrates how the principles of profit, and the belief that everybody is responsible for themselves promoted by the market economy, transform the traditional system of reciprocity that allowed the poor to rely on their networks. He shows how, with the introduction of double-cropping that ran in parallel to the marketization of society, the rich wanted to exclude the poor from the social structure that they created themselves for their own needs before double-cropping of the paddy began.

Scott (1985) further points out that the role of gift-giving and involvement of the poor in social celebrations was diminishing due to an increase in the profit seeking attitude among rich landholders. The trend was that the rich were becoming less charitable, did not want to provide much assistance by began referring to the fact that people were poor because they were lazy and did not want to work. The rich wanted to change the norms. This resulted in the deterioration of the position of poor people. They not only had less work and less income, but were losing their social connections with the well-to-do farmers.

Scott (1985) further developed the moral economy argument by discussing resistance as being not only an open confrontation but also a hidden one. As Scott argues, there are instances of open resistance such as protests, revolutions which happen rarely in comparison to hidden everyday resistances, masked as deference. He proposed that we can look at the hidden tactics of

gossiping, sabotage conducted off-stage as resistance to changes brought by the double-cropping market ethos that many landowners preferred to looking after the community as they used to before. This was not an open confrontation due to the poor not being able to afford it and therefore they presented a public face that suggested that they conformed to the rules, imposed by the rich, because they needed to survive and still relied on small amounts of land, work, and the little assistance provided by rich farmers. However, as Scott suggests, poor peasants were not just puppets that could be manipulated according to the wishes of the rich who decide that they do not need to support the subsistence needs of the poor any longer.

Both Thompson (1971, 1991) and Scott (1977, 1985) argue that the poor used old or 'traditional' systems of values to judge changes brought about by the market economy, which was in the process of transforming the social relationships of the poor and rich. The capitalist economy did not protect the weakest, poor workers and farmers. It was based on the values of a free market in search of a profit and on the liberal ideas that prices should not be regulated as the market would regulate itself. However, as Thompson and Scott reveal in their studies, the people did not agree with such changes. Thus the poor in England and Wales rioted and took wheat and bread from some merchants and forestallers (Thompson, 1971). In Malaysia, farmers in Sedaka village resisted the changes brought by double-cropping, believing that the demands were unjust and that the rich excluded them from social relations (Scott, 1985). These types of resistance served to overlay the market economy with a moral content effectively 're-embedding' it.

Such an idea that market economies become disembodied from the societies in which they operate and that societies need protection in the attempt to defend themselves from destruction, created many followers and schools that either completely opposed market principles or adjusted to their context. One of the main critiques of the 'moral economy' approach is that it has an idealized view of pre-capitalist societies and fails to consider the fact that hierarchy and inequality already existed in pre-market societies and the poor did not have much insurance provided to them (Popkin 1979, 1980). Popkin's main idea is that peasants, even within pre-capitalist societies, were calculative in their decisions either to provide assistance to the wider network of kin, or their close family members. They would participate in such social insurance activities only if they thought that the network could assist them in times of need.

Such an approach was also adopted by other scholars. For instance, in an attempt to show how even pre-market economies can use the calculative approach, Fafchamps (1992) proposes the idea that solidarity networks function as an insurance system in pre-industrial societies. Members of the community choose to participate in the insurance system through gift giving, labour, food transfers or credit without interest. The same system can also create patron-client relationships where the poorer members of community, who cannot equally reciprocate the gifts and assistance of the well-off members, might still be able to be part of the insurance system through other types of contributions. This would usually be through labour on the land of wealthy members. However, the same system might create a situation, usually during shocks and repeated droughts, when the well-off members of networks could exclude those that were poor. Their aim is to retain their resources as they do not consider the future contributions of some of the members as helpful for the insurance system. Therefore, Fafchamps (1992) argues that social solidarity networks also use the profit-maximising approach and do not provide the right to subsistence for everybody.

### **The moral economy concept in criminological research.**

Despite criticism of the moral economy concept, it has also been used in contexts of crime and deviance to explain how different groups resist state and market interventions in their lives. Some focused on the dissonance between the state and citizens' perspectives on certain actions, where the state perspective, based on normative understandings, would define some activities as illegal, may not coincide with citizens' understandings based on the traditional values and norms of local cultures and societies.

Henry's (1978) classic study conducted in England in the 1970s could be a good example of how criminologists look at economic crime from a moral economy point of view. For instance, Henry concludes that crime was not a series of calculable occurrences, but was based on the values and social norms of the local culture. Similarly, De Sardan (1999), applies the moral economy concept to the case of corruption in Africa. His analyses reveals that corruption persisted due to the blurred boundaries between petty and major corruption and that they were embedded in socio-cultural logics that did not concur with official norms. The conclusion is that this was considered as corruption according to official norms and not according to local practices (De Sardan, 1999).

As presented in Chapter One, some scholars apply 'moral economy' to understand cases of drug production by indigenous populations in developing nations. Their view is that the concept helps in understanding the 'responses made by traditional communities and their individual members to threatened or actual disruption of their customary way of life by dominant classes and polities' (Steinberg et al., 2004). Studies conducted by Michael Steingberg and his colleagues (2004), take a critical approach to drug markets and provide insight into farmers' understanding of drug production.

Some studies on illegal drug producing communities in developing countries also brought up the discussion about how drug markets brought some changes regarding how local communities used to operate. Some reported how drug production as part of the market economy introduced a form of wage labour into the local system of gift giving and reciprocity among Bolivian coca producers (Sanabria 1993, 2004). However, instead of suggesting that reciprocal relationships were replaced by wage labour, Sanabria argued that both forms were present at the same time and were used interchangeably. The more recent study, conducted in Bolivia among coca growers, suggests that reciprocal relationships between drug producers become infused with the market principles (Pellegrini 2013). Coca producers used reciprocal labour to help each other with harvesting, while some, more busy and wealthier farmers tended to pay someone else to fulfil their obligation to return the help.

In the post-Soviet countries, some researchers claim that the roots of illegality could also lie in the perception of law as something separate from morality and coming from the relationship between the state and citizens (Kurkchian, 2003). In a nutshell, this approach focuses on the complex nature of norms instead of seeing only one normative system that guides the behaviour of people, and suggests that official and local norms may not coincide.

Other researchers focus on the aspect of disembeddedness of market economies. For instance, Karstedt and Farral (2006) apply the moral economy concept to understand how everyday crime can be understood as a response to a disembedded market economy. In their study, which covers four different regions – England and Wales, Western and Eastern Germany – the researchers propose that everyday crime, which does not always fall into the category of illegal, should be studied within the moral economy of crime perspective. They recommend exploring how everyday crime occurs amongst the perceived law-abiding majority of population

when opportunities arise. The important factor here is the market anomie that arises through market domination of other spheres of life, when markets become disembedded from other non-market institutions. Their main argument is that when distrust of business and market institutions, fear of victimization and legal cynicism are developed, the syndrome of market anomie emerges on the individual level leading many people to take part in everyday crime (Karstedt & Farrall, 2006: 1018).

To sum up, we can see that the criminological studies focus on different aspects of the relationships between crime and moral economy. Some highlight the embeddedness of crime in the values and social norms of local culture (Henry, 1978). Others make the point that crime can be interpreted differently if looked at from the people's perspective guided by culture and traditions than would be the case if viewed from the state's perspective (De Sardan, 1999). The focus of other studies lies in the levels of resistance that people show to the state when feeling threatened with losing their customary way of life (Steinberg et al., 2004). Interestingly, some studies are able to argue that market anomie can be the result of the disembedded nature of market economies that leads to feelings of threat coming from market institutions and the subsequent distrust developed within the population. In general, such studies are able to show how people can legitimise actions defined as illegal by formal institutions. They also highlight that such moral economy could be the result of distrust that people develop due to the disruption of established ways of life either by the state or other institutions such as market economies.

While feelings of distrust and injustice are important in the process of legitimising criminal behaviour, sometimes more than this is required for development of a moral economy. For instance, people may feel distrust towards the state and other institutions as the result of their perceived right to protection which has been denied to them. As a result, they may develop an illegal behaviour. This can be considered as the first stage in developing their moral economy. However, if the actions are not justified by local traditions and culture, and moreover have negative connotations in the local culture, people need to develop a more sophisticated process of legitimation of such actions. In this case, the concepts developed in criminological studies outside of the moral economy approach help to deal with this issue. Such concepts as techniques of neutralization (Matza, 1964; Sykes & Matza, 1957) and interpretive denial strategies (Cohen, 1993, 1996, 2001) assist people in changing the negative meaning of their actions to something

more plausible. Using such techniques, people committing crime due to feelings of injustice and distrust of state and market, can correct their own understanding of their illegal actions through transforming their local connotations. Usually symbolically renaming such acts helps people to loosen moral boundaries. This could be considered as a second stage in the legitimation of illegal activities, which overall helps people to develop a moral economy based on perceived and actual injustice shown to them by state/market and feelings of distrust towards these institutions.

### **Later Developments of the Social Embeddedness Concept**

The dualism in viewing market-oriented and non-market economies as oppositional has created different avenues in the interpretation of the interrelationship between markets and social institutions. Some researchers (Sayer, 2007) continued to focus on the importance of emotions and sentiments as the basis of moral economic relationships. Following Sayer's understanding of moral economy, Sanghera and his colleagues (2011) showed that despite the marketisation of society in Kyrgyzstan, there is evidence of provision and support among family members without expectations of reciprocity. The study highlights how family members consider it important to treat each other with respect and dignity despite unequal levels of material well-being and the inability to reciprocate. This study is a significant contribution to the understanding of the moral economy in Kyrgyzstan as it shows that social relationships between close family members do not always conform to general trends of the marketisation of society. However, one of the limitations of the study is that it focuses on the relationships of close family members and does not explore the general trends of changing relationships within the wider community.

Another approach to the social embeddedness concept is developed by Granovetter (1985) who, rather than situating markets and social institutions in an opposing dichotomous position, understands them as embedded in the overarching social relations in which they exist. Granovetter's view is that both sides of the camp provide either an over-socialized or under-socialized picture of human action, and offers instead to look at it as embedded in social institutions. Thus, he suggests that:

Actors do not behave or decide as atoms outside a social context, nor do they adhere slavishly to a script written for them by the particular intersection of social categories that they happen to occupy. Their attempts at purposive action are

instead embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social relations (Granovetter, 1985: 487).

Granovetter's aim is to ground the analysis of modern markets and societies in sociological rather than neo-classical economic theories. His idea of modern markets being rooted in social relations, with trust between groups and individuals rather than fierce competition being one of the primary sources for their development was very influential. Others also argued that the moral economy does not only include practices that are examples of pre-market economies, but rather that 'all economies, including the near-to-pervasive-market economies, are moral economies, embedded in the (ethical) framework of their communities' (Booth, 1994: 662). Liberal and consequently neoliberal market economies are different from pre-market economies, but this does not mean that they are not guided by moral principles and norms. They follow different types of moral principles such as competition and self-reliance in opposition to the moral principles of social protection in non-market societies (Amable, 2011).

Pushing further the embedded market economy approach, Zelizer (1989, 1997) argues that they can be intertwined; arguing that the processes of interaction between markets and societies are very messy and complicated than was proposed before. In her work on social insurance, Zelizer (1978) was able to show how markets can enter reciprocal relationships with social norms by reshaping the meaning ascribed to life insurance. When it was first offered to families, getting life insurance was considered as morally wrong and as going against God's will. However, in the long process of marketing and considerable cultural work, the insurance companies were able to redefine death and the role of social insurance. 'Responsible' fathers became those that left their families with adequate resources (Zelizer, 1978).

Even money that was turned into a commodity by the market economy, according to Zelizer, did not lose its social meaning. In her study on the social meaning of money in the United States from 1880 to 1930, she provides an excellent example of how market economies can operate within existing social relations and customs (1989, 1997). She analyzed the period which Simmel (1990) described as capitalistic, and the period when money, in and for itself, acquired an overriding power, transforming all relationships into calculative and monetized acts. Opposing Simmel's arguments, Zelizer claims that money in itself was a product of social relationships and therefore possessed a social meaning. How and where cash was earned, who earned it, the type of currency, and how it was spent were all important factors in the process of the earmarking of money. The earmarking of money was based on gender, social class and age

characteristics. Not only the amount of money received but also how it was spent depended on the social position of the person in the social structure. When women started earning their own salaries outside of households, their money was not considered as serious as compared to money earned by their husbands. This process of earmarking presented the case for seeing how money becomes 'subject to a set of domestic rules distinct from the rules of the market' (Zelizer, 1989: 368). Zelizer (2005) further develops her argument by showing how sentiments and economic transactions should not be put in opposition to each other, arguing that monetary transactions are used in defining social ties between people.

The emerging idea from such an approach is that morality and markets are not the same, but can co-exist and intertwine, affecting each other. The boundaries between them can be mobile, always shifting in the process of interaction. Zelizer's approach to market economies and social institutions proposes that there is not such a black and white division. Contrary to the idea of socially embedded non-market and socially disembedded market economies, this offers an understanding of how markets can be based on social relationships, and/or can transform social relationships (Browne & Milgram, 2008). Social scientists are therefore able to discern the variations in the interplay between markets and societies. Even in the case of the neoliberal economy, many social scientists see a number of different neoliberalisms rather than one – the ideal type of 'neoliberalism.' They emerge in the interplay between neoliberal policies and cultures because, firstly, the policies are implemented differently in every country; and secondly, they come into life in different societies and cultures.

But markets and moral economies do not only enter oppositional relationships, and therefore can complement each other or exist ambivalently. For instance, during the early stages of the privatization of state enterprises in Russia, the moral economy of protection was invoked. When privatization processes were newly emerged, enterprise managers feared that with new owners they might lose their authority and workers feared they would lose their jobs. This resulted in the biggest shares being bought off by the workers of the enterprises, who subsequently traded them to managers as protection from unemployment (Hass, 2012: 199). This was one of the cases where market and moral economies were entwined and embedded in each other. In explaining the third type of relationship between markets and moral economies – ambivalent co- existence – Hass (2012) explores the role money plays in post-Soviet Russia. Following Zelizer's (1997) interpretation, he discusses the existence of multiple monies, barter exchanges as following the moral economy rather than market rules. These were based on trust

among those solidarity networks that had roots in an informal economy developed during Soviet times. However, instead of looking at them as instrumental tools for achieving material gain, he proposes the importance of networks and social relationships behind bartering and special monies such as *wechsele*. The case of multiple monies, he argues, suggests how market and moral economies can remain in ambivalent relationships, and in parallel spheres, without invoking each other. Thus, he argues that markets and moral economies can have at least three types of relationships. Depending on the context, they can be complimentary, contradictory to each other or co-exist ‘ambivalently’, where ‘both economies operate through different practices or sub-contexts’ (Hass, 2012: 66-67). Hence, Hass proposes the use of the traditional approach to moral and market economies, where each exists in a dichotomy to each other, without eliminating the possibilities for an embedded market economy approach. Additionally, he argues that it is necessary to understand them as co-existing, neither reinforcing nor contradicting each other directly.

Other studies focusing on neoliberalization also confirm this argument. For instance, Hemment (2009) illustrates how, in the case of post-Soviet Russia, neoliberalism had uneven developments: on the one hand, there were liberal policies being implemented, and privatization of state assets and monetization of the welfare system occurring; on the other hand, this was paralleled with emergence of state funded youth organizations which had similarities to the Soviet youth organizations such as *Komsomol*. In Russia, the welfare system was not dismantled during the 1990s despite the IMF and World Bank’s advice. The neoliberal policies were unevenly developed for political reasons due to the good representation of the Communist party and other interest groups in the state Duma that could block the implementation of such policies. Hemment (2009), argues that later on, despite officially distancing himself and the government from the previous president Eltsin and neoliberal policies introduced by his government, Putin followed the neoliberal trajectory by monetizing social security. At the same time, the youth projects initiated by the state and some state authorities contradicted such developments. Neoliberalization was in full force, but with official dissociation from it and attempts to symbolically soften the consequences of neoliberal steps taken by the government. The latter was achieved through supporting and nurturing youth organizations that were partially taking the responsibilities of state welfare functions.

One of the useful elements of this approach is that instead of completely devaluing the concept of ‘moral economy’, we can use it to explain the early stages of implementation of

neoliberal policies in the country. In these stages, as argued by Collier (2011), the process of ‘double movement’ where societies try to protect themselves from the devastating effects of self-regulated markets are seen. However, we can also see that market and moral economies can become intertwined and interlinked, have ambivalent relationships, or exist in parallel spheres.

## **Conclusion**

A few conclusions can be drawn from the overview of market and moral economy concepts. These conclusions, in turn, will be used as a framing tool for my analysis of hashish making in Toolu, which will be presented in the subsequent chapters.

My approach to markets and societies is informed by the discussion of the complex nature of their relationships: as independent, interrelated and entangled, ambivalent and parallel. First, if we follow Polanyi’s argument on disembodied market economies and embedded non-market economies, we can recognise them as interdependent entities. However, societies will protect themselves from destruction by developing laws and organizing unions. This concept has become a useful frame for studying market and society relationships even at a much later period, especially with the new version of liberal market ideology – neoliberalism gaining its support and spreading all over the world since the 1970s. Although the neoliberal market ideology was based on some of the principles of a liberal market economy, it had some unique characteristics such as awarding immense power to the state to implement the right conditions for a competitive market, and pushing debtors become responsible for losses in front of the big money lending organizations. The principle that market exchange happens in unregulated conditions was replaced with one in which markets should be nurtured, when it is needed, by law and state. At the same time, the state was not responsible for providing protection for individuals. Neoliberal market capitalism also promoted the principle of individual self-reliance as the cornerstone of its ideology. Thus, social problems were turned into individual problems. Such changes in the relationships between states and individuals, especially in the former Soviet countries where the state used to provide social welfare and protection for citizens, was met with resistance to the market forces brought by the globalized neoliberalization movement. Following this framework, we can see that despite the interference of market economies in societies, based on principles of self-reliance and profit, people were trying to retain the networks that could provide social security.

To sum up, it can be argued that the moral economy approach provides a valuable critique of free and self-regulating markets. Polanyi's interpretation of the embedded nature of pre-market economies, and disembeddedness of economy from other institutions with the rise of the liberal, self-regulating market economy was hugely influential among social scientists. Scholars such as Thompson and Scott, by using the moral economy term, extend the arguments surrounding embedded pre-market economies and the disembedded market economy approach. The moral economy approach is able to show that the situation when markets interfere with the system of protection provided to individuals by law, customary relationships where the right to subsistence was one of the main functions of societies, could lead to some resistance.

When the moral economy concept is applied by criminologists it helps to understand the moral aspect of behaviour that is usually considered as illegal by the state. It suggests that the normative system developed by formal institutions, law and state can be in contrast to the norms and morals of societies. At the same time, it can show that illegal acts can be acts of resistance that many people undertake to counter the devastating effects of the market economy, state interventions and shrinking social support from their communities. In my understanding, this helps to see some of the illegal activities from a moral economy perspective. At the same time, it is possible to recognise minor limitations in this concept in cases where people develop a distrust of states or markets, but cannot embed them in local traditions and culture. In these cases, I argue that the concepts of techniques of neutralization and interpretative denial developed in criminological theory outside of the moral economy approach can be useful in solving this tension. People may use these to transform negative meanings, and undesirable connotations of an act in the local culture and consequently less moral tensions emerge in maintaining their moral economy based on perceived injustice towards them. This can help them to maintain the moral economy as they would not have feelings of guilt.

The second aspect of the moral economy concept supports the understanding of the socio-economic relations and transformations of social structures within the village community. By covering not only the relationships of the population to the state but also relationships between poor and rich, peasants and farmers within a community, the idea of a moral economy, is helpful in understanding micro level processes of resistance.

Despite being influential, this dichotomous approach to market and moral economies has been questioned in more recent scholarship which argue that market economies are also embedded in the social structures of societies in which they exist (Granovetter 1985). Markets and moral economies can exist continually, intertwining and blending with each other (Hass 2011; Zelizer 1978, 1989, 1997, 2005). Following the view that markets can also be considered as moral (Booth 1994), instead of glorifying the gift-exchange based societies this approach proposed that market economies are based on different but still moral grounds (Browne and Milgram 2008). In this way, the moral motivations of reciprocity and support are not always neglected in market economies, and markets can even develop further through grounding themselves in local moralities (Browne and Milgram 2008). For instance, the study conducted by Sanghera and his colleagues in Kyrgyzstan was able to show that, despite the marketisation of economy and society, close family members considered it important to treat each other with respect and dignity despite their material well-being and inability to reciprocate. Giving and supporting family members without the expectation that it be reciprocated still existed (Sanghera et al. 2011).

Therefore, I argue that the societies might adopt market principles, or vice versa the market might become rooted in social and cultural structures in which it needs to operate. This approach to moral and market economies permits the view that populations that resist the changes brought by markets start adopting market principles in their everyday routine and within social structures. However, instead of arguing that all social relationships become dominated by market principles, I am able to show that they enter complex process of interaction where some elements of the market economy are used to preserve the social networking system that provides protection to its members. The following chapters are informed by these theoretical conclusions and present the case of hashish production in Toolu as both a moral and market economic activity.

This chapter has explored the theoretical concepts of market and moral economies, and the way that they were developed in the economic sociology and anthropology literature. In the previous chapter I provided information on the local economic context of Kyrgyzstan following the demise of the Soviet Union and an overview of illegal drug markets in the country. In Chapter One, I presented the literature review on illegal drug markets around the world. These three chapters lay the basis for understanding illegal hashish production in Toolu in the remainder of the thesis. My task is to link the main themes that were identified in the literature on drug markets with the concepts developed in economic sociology and anthropology. Thus, I

use the concept of moral economy to see how hashish production, an illegal activity, has been legitimised by the local population. Using this concept I look at the perception of the elite and law enforcement officers as representatives of the state by the local population of Toolu. This helps to understand illegal hashish production as a response to the perceived injustice shown by the state.

This discussion of moral and market economies is important in capturing the transformation of social relationships between families in Toolu and locating the hashish economy within these local dynamics. I understand hashish production as one of the economic activities of the local population that has been linked to the economic conditions of the agricultural, rural economy in which they live. Thus, I explore the consequences of neoliberal policies implemented in Toolu. In the last findings chapter, I will discuss the importance of social celebrations (*tois*) in creating and maintaining social security networks followed by an analysis of how social networks are being transformed through the monetisation of gifts.

Before I turn my attention to a detailed analysis of illegal hashish production in Toolu, I present the epistemological and methodological foundations of the study that underpin the research design and data analysis in the following chapter.

## Chapter Four

### Researching Illegal Hashish Production in Toolu

#### Introduction

My research is based on a mixed method study undertaken in Tyup and Ak-Suu *raions*<sup>1</sup> of Issyk-Kul *oblast* (county) in Kyrgyzstan. During the ethnographic research, I conducted sixty-two semi-structured, informal interviews over nine months of observation. Ten interviews were conducted in five different villages in the initial stage of research. The villages were located in Tyup and Ak-Suu, two neighbouring *raions*. The remaining fifty-two were conducted in one village – Toolu – located in Tyup *raion*. Four of the interviews were collected by Azamat, a male interviewer. All of these interviews lasted between one and one and half hours. Some of the interviews, with key participants, were conducted repeatedly, three or four times after the first round of interviews. Three interviews were conducted with representatives of law enforcement. I also conducted a survey of one-hundred and forty-seven households in Toolu village focused on the socio-economic situation of the rural semi-subsistence oriented economy.

Overall it took nine months to conduct my fieldwork, visiting the main research site, Toolu village, on two separate occasions. The first fieldwork trip took place from July until December 2009, when I stayed for a period of three months at the research site with occasional short trips to the capital Bishkek. During the remaining three months I stayed in Bishkek and made week-long trips to the site throughout October, November and December. My second fieldwork trip took place in 2010, from July until September. The survey was conducted at the end of the second fieldtrip in September of 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> A *raion* is a smaller administrative region within an *oblast*.

## Epistemology and Research Design

Every research project has its own philosophical standing concerning questions of 'reality' and 'truth' (Baronov, 2012; Benton & Craib, 2011; Williams & May, 1996). In my study, I follow the critical realist epistemology which emerged in the 1970s as a reaction to criticism of positivistic and interpretive epistemologies (Benton & Craib, 2011). The main premises of this approach are that: 1) the world we study is real and it exists 'out there'; 2) it is possible to know the world through rational scientific enquiry; 3) this knowledge is, however, inescapably fallible – or imperfect – because of the researcher's time-and place-contingent agendas/non-agendas, understandings of the examined phenomena, perspectives and value-judgements (Bhaskar, 1975; Maxwell, 2012; Sayer, 2000).

Bhaskar (1978) was one of the philosophers who pioneered this alternative way of thinking about the role of social sciences. Unlike positivists, critical realists do not adhere to the rigid explanation of universal causal laws and, unlike idealists, do not believe that the role of social sciences lies in interpretations provided by social actors alone. Critical realists argue that although the social sciences cannot observe causal laws as natural sciences can, they can still search for patterns of events, which can provide a picture of mechanisms or structures (Bhaskar, 1975). According to the realist perspective, structures can exist independently of our knowledge of them. According to Bhaskar (1975), there are three different modes of reality: 'the empirical,' the reality that can be experienced; 'the actual,' the parts of reality that could occur but not always experienced; 'the real,' unobservable social structures and mechanisms of objects (Sayer, 2000: 12). These structures and mechanisms are not universal and there are different levels of reality which can interact with each other. This stratified ontology then requires critical social scientists to attempt to explain the real, the mechanisms and structures, through actual and empirical levels (Reed, 2009: 435). Another important aspect of critical realistic philosophy is the understanding of interaction between structures and agency. Although social structures and mechanisms can exist independently of our knowledge of them, they can only exist through the actions of social agents. Moreover, social actors have a power to transform social structures (Benton & Craib, 2001). Thus, critical realists consider it important to study social actors' accounts and interpretations.

Nevertheless, critical realists think that their accounts might not always show how underlying mechanisms actually work. As critical realists believe that we cannot be free of existing discourses while undertaking research, the role of social theories is not in uncovering the 'truth' but rather in improving our interpretation of reality (Blaikie, 2007: 149).

The philosophical standing on how reality is perceived and how knowledge is created are closely connected with the ways the data is collected, analyzed and presented (Crotty, 1998; Williams & May, 1996, 135-154). As epistemological standing requires certain methodological considerations (Williams & May, 1996: 135-154), I use an *abductive research strategy* that is compatible with critical realist epistemology (Danermark, 2002). Abductive inference means an iterative, cyclical approach going back and forth between data and theory during the whole period of research (Blaikie, 2007; Maxwell, 2012). One of the characteristics of this strategy is that it focuses on gaining an 'insider' view rather than imposing an 'outsider' view (Ibid, 2007: 90). Therefore, social researchers do not start from testing theories but rather gather social actors' accounts and only after reflection on and analysis of these accounts either link them to existing concepts or arrive at a new explanation: 'It is to the process of moving from lay descriptions of social life, to technical descriptions of that social life, that the notion of abduction is applied' (Blaikie, 2007: 91). This means that after collecting the initial data, there was time to analyse it and to link the emerging themes to the concepts that already existed in the literature (Maxwell, 2012). Thus, I was able to understand that the concepts such as 'neoliberalization,' 'marketization of economy and society,' 'semi-subsistence economy,' 'moral economy,' 'monetization of relationships,' 'gift giving practices,' and 'reciprocal relationships' were helpful in providing a framework for understanding illegal hashish production in Toolu. Following this analysis, a second round of fieldwork was conducted in order to see how such concepts work in the local context. Additionally, I collected the survey data that allowed me to gather information on a larger scale than my earlier fieldwork was able to provide and better comprehend general patterns in the village. The quantitative data was mostly used for descriptive statistics.

## Research Methods

I used a mixed methods approach for gathering data (Maruna, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). The combination of ethnographic fieldwork and quantitative survey data collection was chosen for the following reasons. First, it is wrong to automatically assume that qualitative and quantitative methods only correspond to constructivist and positivist epistemologies respectively because there are so many qualitative studies that follow the positivist tradition and vice versa quantitative studies that follow the constructivist/interpretive tradition (Axinn & Pearce, 2006; Bergman, 2008; Hammersley, 1998; 2008). Second, I argue that mixed methods still require consideration of personal research aims and strategies based on an epistemological and ontological grounding and careful match of the methods that could help to achieve these aims (Axinn & Pearce, 2006; Bergman, 2008).

Therefore, the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study, with epistemological and methodological considerations of each, can enhance and clarify the results of one method through the use of another, find contradictions that could help to redefine the research question, and expand the range and breadth of the research (Maruna, 2010: 127). This also allows for a triangulation of data to enhance the credibility of the research findings, by making use of an iterative, cyclical approach to the research (Denzin, 1970; Sharlene Nagy, 2010: 3; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011). Mixed methods design was used in many studies that follow the critical realist epistemology (Danermark, 2002; Dubois & Gibbert, 2010; McEvoy & Richards, 2006).

In this study, an ethnographic research was the predominant tool of data collection, and survey was used as a supportive, follow-up tool (Bryman, 2008: 607; Morgan, 2013). While ethnographic research allowed me to learn the context of hashish making, people's attitudes of the illegal drug economy which would not be possible to study through a formalised structured research survey allowed me to obtain general information on socio-economic conditions of households in Toolu and gather more information on social networks.

Ethnography is one of the main methods that researchers use in studying illegal activities, and hidden and marginalised populations (Adler, 1993; Bourgiou, 1993; Henry, 1978; Morales, 1996). Using ethnographic fieldwork for data collection, researchers can enter such groups, gain trust and develop rapport which is otherwise not possible while using other methods of data collection (Adler, 1993, Burgess, 1984; Pellegrini, 2013). At the same time, ethnographic fieldwork enables grasping the complex nature of social relations and the meanings that social actors ascribe to their world (Atkinson, 2011; Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994: 248; Dwyer, 2010, O'Reilly, 2012) by immersing themselves in the field (Emerson, 1987; O'Reilly, 2012; Wolcott, 1990). Ethnography allows the researchers to get outside of existing social theories or perspectives (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994) that especially dominate the field of drug studies to explore the phenomena from an alternative point of view (Dwyer, 2010). Thus, ethnography was suitable for the present research project as one of the aims of the study was to understand hashish production in Toolu from the perspective of the local people making hashish.

Ethnography usually combines different methods, such as participant observation, in-depth-interviews and conversations (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2003; Gobo, 2008; Lofland, 2006, O'Reilly, 2012). While observation is the predominant method of research, ethnographic interviews can complement the observations and clarify that which is not possible to observe. Whilst living in the Chong and Toolu villages and participating in social activities as much as possible, I was also able to observe my main gatekeepers' family networks by following them to small gatherings, celebrations and funerals which they attended on a regular basis. This provided me with an understanding of the role of social networks for people in the village, which were an important tool to understand hashish production in the village.

*Ethnographic interviews* usually complement the observations made during fieldwork (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; O'Reilly, 2012). In contrast to structured questionnaires which are set before the data collection stage, ethnographic interviews can be guided by a set of questions but can be also be adapted to what participants relate during interviews. In each interview, I attempted to remain sensitive to what participants were saying whilst paying attention to what was important to them. In this way I was able to see if my assumptions were working and attempting to uncover new avenues

provided by the participants. Although I used research questions prepared when submitting my research proposal, I was constantly aware of the fact that these questions might change and require modification throughout my fieldwork. I modified questions by using the probing technique and reformulating the questions and asking for clarifications (Gobo, 2008: 196-197; Kvale, 2007). Thus, I did not focus on the ideas covered in the literature alone, but instead adjusted my research to the contexts in which such themes were addressed by my participants (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994: 248).

The survey was used as a follow-up to ethnographic fieldwork and served two functions: first, to test some of the hunches developed during fieldwork. My hunches were about the changes in reciprocal relationships between families and monetization of social relationships among rich and poor families in Toolu. Second, the purpose of the survey was to provide a broader picture of the semi-subsistence oriented rural economy (Morgan, 2013: 10-13). Therefore, a follow-up quantitative survey in a largely qualitative project creates a generality of data, strengthening the qualitative findings (Morgan, 2013).

As noted earlier, my research began as an ethnographic study of a hashish making community. While in the process of my fieldwork I realized that although ethnography allowed me to gain in-depth information about hashish making itself and the livelihoods of individual families, it still limited me in obtaining wider information on the socio-economic conditions of various families in the village. An ethnographic fieldwork allowed me to learn about the importance of social networks, and the respective economic circumstances of families. However, the information which I gathered was mainly coming from the network of my gatekeeper, Aikan. Some interviews were conducted with the help of Jamilya, my second gatekeeper. So, in order to be able to see how other networks communicated and the differences in socio-economic conditions of families that live in Toolu, I decided to collect more structured information. I made a draft questionnaire and consulted with Aikan on how well the questions captured the local concepts of *yntymak* and *katysh*, the first level accounts of the second-level concept of 'reciprocity'.

## **Ethnography.**

### **Entering the field.**

Researchers can enter the field either through being affiliated with an official agency or just as social scientists (Morales, 1996: 123). When entering the field, I was aware of these different possibilities. Similarly to Edmundo Morales (1996, 123), who made an ethnographic research on drug production in Peru and chose not to enter the field with official sponsorship due to the hostile attitude toward the government in the region, I did not want to be affiliated with either law enforcement agencies or local government due to the illegality of hashish making. Any official affiliation would have prevented the establishing of trust between me (and the nature of my research) and the local farmers in the Tyup region. I decided to find someone who lived in the region and stay with a local family as personal contacts make the access to the research site easier (Reeves, 2010: 318). Kyrgyz people often say that ‘even in a completely new place after half an hour talking, someone is able to track down some relatives or at least friends of friends.’ So, this saying proved to be true, although my connection to my first gatekeeper Ainura was through a British social researcher who lived and researched in Kyrgyzstan for many years, Ainura<sup>2</sup> was from the same region where I planned to conduct my research.

### **Choosing the location.**

Ainura lived in the Ak-Suu *raion* located next to Tyup *raion*. I was very happy because I was trying to find people in one of the three *raions* of Issyk-Kul *oblast*, Tyup, Issyk-Kul or Djети-Oguz with an aim to stay more in Tyup *raion*. My choice of location was primarily determined by a set of broader questions. I was attempting not to explore an illegal act in isolation but rather to understand how an activity considered as illegal by the state was negotiated by a group when many members of a community became involved in it. This involved questioning the role of the hashish economy in the region and its links with the social-economic and political structures, in which local people were not involved in

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<sup>2</sup> Her name and names of other research participants have been changed.

production of hashish before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The three regions identified in Issyk-Kul *oblast* were appropriate places to carry out such research because they had a larger area of wild growing cannabis plants and a high involvement of local people in the drug making process (Zelichenko, 2003).<sup>3</sup>

I began my research in the Ak-Suu district because Ainura, the English language school teacher, displayed a particular willingness to help with my research when I made an initial call to her at the beginning of July 2009. I stayed with her and her family – her husband and two young children – for two weeks in Chong village<sup>4</sup> that summer. During this stay I conducted ten interviews and talked informally to different people in her village, and five other villages in the Ak-Suu and Tyup *raions* where her friends and relatives lived. After holding these initial discussions I decided to choose Toolu village, in Tyup *raion*, as my primary research site.

I had planned to gain access to Tyup *raion* through the contacts that Ainura had as it was reported to be more involved in the drug production economy than any other region in Issyk-Kul *oblast* (Zelichenko, 2003). We had visited her relatives elsewhere in Tyup *raion* where I could also have stayed and conducted my study. In Toolu, Ainura had an aunt Aikan, who was also eager to help and could provide a place to stay during my fieldwork. After two weeks with Ainura and her family, I decided to settle in Toolu for the rest of the time and moved there in the middle of July 2009.

### **Developing trust.**

Carrying out research in a rural community had its own challenges. Being accepted in rural areas is not always easy because people in such areas tend to not be readily accessible by outsiders and a researcher needs to be accepted by a community defined by tightknit networks. This is especially true when the study is conducted in a rural

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<sup>3</sup> The largest areas of wild growing cannabis plants were found in three of Issyk-Kul *oblast's raions* - Djeti-Oguz, Tyup and Issyk-Kul – with total of 1931.6 hectares comparatively to two-hundred and seventy-eight hectares in Djalal-Abad and ninety-four hectares in Talas *oblasts* (Zelichenko, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> The village names have been changed.

community where local people are involved in some illegal activities as in the case of marijuana growers in the USA (Weisheit, 1998). Despite such difficulties in conducting a study on activities that are considered illegal, the entrance to the rural community gets easier if the researcher passes the ‘test’ for knowing the rural way of life (Ibid, 1998). Similarly to Raplh Weisheit (1998) who grew up in the rural area himself and was able to ‘pass the test’ about village life, my knowledge of the local practices through being immersed in another rural community in Kyrgyzstan, where my grandparents used to live, made it easier for me to enter the rural community.

Moreover, common language shared with the research participants is one of the important aspects while conducting ethnographic fieldwork (Lofland, 2006: 28; Murray, 1991). Despite common stereotypes about city people in Kyrgyzstan, such as being only Russian speakers<sup>5</sup>, I was brought up in a Kyrgyz speaking environment and could freely speak Kyrgyz as well.

Having a gatekeeper in an ethnographic study, especially one that focuses on illegal practices of people that they try to hide from outsiders, is an important aspect of not only successful entrance to the community but also in building a rapport with participants (Adler, 1993; Dwyer, 2009; Giulianotti, 1995; Jacobs, 1998, Robben & Sluka, 2007). I learned that Aikan, who became my gatekeeper in Toolu, was thirty-three years old, had four children and, a year before, had moved with her family to her parents-in-laws’ house. In the village, Aikan was topping-up mobile phones and selling gas which her husband used to bring in from either Kara-Kol or Tyup. Her husband had a job as a chief manager in a forest reserve. In their home, I was given the guest-room (living-room) in the main house as my bedroom during the summer and early autumn.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Kyrgyzstan is a bilingual country with Kyrgyz the language of the titular group. The Russian language serves the function of lingua-franca for many different ethnic groups that live in the country. Both, Kyrgyz and Russian are the official languages of Kyrgyzstan. Most city people speak Russian while in rural areas people started losing their Russian language skills due to poor education and the out migration of most of the Russian speaking population from the beginning of the 1990s.

<sup>6</sup> The guest-room is usually not a bedroom but one of the large rooms in the house where guests are seated on the floor around *dastorkon*. When there were no guests, my room was also used as storage room for food.

I started my fieldwork by visiting Aikan's friends and relatives' houses to conduct informal interviews. She usually introduced me to her friends and relatives and explained that I was doing research on the region. In my first five or six interviews she stayed with me while I was talking to people. Later she would just take me to them, introduce me, and I would conduct the interviews by myself. However, it was not so easy to develop trust among local people as it is an intricate process which requires patience at different stages of the study (Jacobs, 1998). Good relationships with people can help to develop trust which at the same time could be undermined by events which are not always under the control by the researcher. News presented in newspapers or TV can engender the worries that participants have about the researcher in the field as being undercover police officer (Armstrong, 1993; Giulianotti, 1995). As the result, participants can mislead and do not allow access to the 'backstage' (Goffman, 1956). It then takes some time again to rebuild the level of trust in the community.

After a month in the field, I had a small incident that made my research challenging for a couple of weeks. While I was away from the village for a few days at the end of August 2009, a news report on the main national TV channel came out reporting about hashish making in Tyup *raion*. Moreover, the footage was made in Toolu, although not mentioning the exact name of the village. The report showed some men riding horses far in the distance and also the footage of someone's hands rubbing plants between their palms. The militia was also much more present in the fields and villages during this time. However, it was not only the news report but the raid made by the police in the house of Kanykei whom I had interviewed before in the earlier stages of fieldwork which led to some suspicion towards me. Immediately after the news came out, Kanykei was suspected by the militia to be helping the drug dealers and her house was searched for drugs by an armed special drug unit. Although they did not find drugs in her house, their visit remained a talking point in Toolu for some time after. My absence from the village coincided with the news report and the raid made by militia and it was rumoured that I was an informant to either national TV or even to the militia. However, good relationships already created with some of the members of community were helpful in this case. Despite such rumours, some of the participants whom I had most contact with defended and confronted the rumours in my absence. Jamilya, with whom I spent a lot of time talking, told me that she was defending me and had told some of the people: 'I was also interviewed. I was even the first one. Why no one came to my house? It is not her.' I was also told upon my return that people were already

discussing that Kanykei was probably tipped off to the police by some of the locals who felt that her one-off service as a middleperson between them and the drug dealers was not just. People talked about how the smugglers that came through her were too greedy and checked every single matchbox brought by them. Although these talks did not completely remove any suspicion from me, they were helpful to me in order to re-develop and maintain trusting relationships.

Spending more time in the village and going with Aikan to different gatherings and participating in social celebrations helped me greatly in becoming accepted by her network of friends and relatives. There were many different occasions when women gathered, for example, when a baby was born or when someone's daughter/son got married. I attended many significant and informal social gatherings or *sberines* with Aikan and Jamilya, commemoration parties, *jentek* (celebration of a child's birth), funerals, a parent-teacher association meeting, and the opening of a Mosque in the village where almost all people gathered for a formal celebration. I also contributed cash to some of the gatherings and celebrations. So, my role was not only as a non-participant observer but rather was one where, to some extent, I participated in gatherings and rituals in a way which would be expected of a neighbour or a friend. After a few months in the field, when Aikan's mother died in autumn 2009, I brought some sweets and money to her family. By the second year, women who usually saw me in their *sberine* gatherings started talking about including me as part of their network. It felt at the beginning that they were joking but as this was subsequently repeated at numerous gatherings my only concern soon became that I could not stay permanently within their circle of *sberines*. Otherwise, they were seriously considering including me in their network because they needed more people so as to gather more money each time. This acceptance into the network of friends and relatives of Aikan meant that people could trust me at such gatherings since there were many occasions when they discussed hashish making openly without hesitation. Such gatherings served an important role in creating a space for sharing the latest news and gossip. During the summer, the militia would make frequent visits to the villages and fields and on many such occasions women would share warnings about their presence in the village. They would also get information on who is collecting hashish for drug dealers and for how much someone can sell hashish at that moment.

As it happened in many ethnographic studies, some relationships that started with the help of gate-keepers grew stronger with the time spent in the village and participation in everyday practices (Powdermaker, 2012). For instance, our friendly relationship with Jamilya initiated during an interview was followed by many informal conversations in her and her friends' houses. Jamilya was also thirty-three years old and had four children. She was one of the women who made hashish regularly and therefore was able to take me to the fields to see where and how hashish was produced. I could consider Jamilya as my third gatekeeper in this research project, and she allowed me to enter her network of friends and relatives. Her network was important for my study because it was a network of women and men who made hashish on a regular basis. This relationship with Jamilya, being in her network of friends who made hashish and observing them in the field making hashish allowed me to gain even greater rapport with the people who made hashish in the village. They took me to the fields where they made hashish and let me observe how they made it from cannabis leaves. Their only worry was that I should not try to make hashish as they felt responsible for taking me to the fields in case militia officers would stop us afterwards.

There were a few advantages of conducting an ethnographic fieldwork. First of all, living with the family in the village for an extended period of time helped me to learn the economic aspects of livelihood: how people lived, see how things like food mattered for the villagers, and how food customs varied from house to house, noticing that most of the people tried to cut down on the food they bought and consumed. This is usually not possible to observe if the researcher visits the field for a short period of time, where s/he would be treated as a guest by being given the best food that host family had. In my case, by staying for a long period of time with Aikan's family I stopped being treated as a guest after a few weeks.

Second, by staying with Aikan's family in Toolu village I was able to enter the local social networks, an important social institution in Kyrgyzstan. I had started going to some social gatherings already in the summer of 2009 and continued doing so whenever I returned to the village and women were gathering for a celebration or were having *sherine*. I visited these gatherings because I wanted to get to know more people and also to have an active role within their social network. Later I realized that they were also

useful events for learning about everyday life in the village and how the villager's networks functioned and were interlinked.

Third, by participating in women's gatherings I was able to learn about the role of hashish in the village economy and the perception of hashish making even from those people who did not make hashish. Women usually did not hide the fact that they were making hashish from each other and obtained important information about when the militia would visit the village from fellow villagers. For instance, the *ayil-ökmotü* (the local government) staff were frequently called upon to check if militia were in the village as their cars would stop in the centre where their building was located.

### **Challenges of conducting an ethnographic fieldwork.**

One of the challenges of doing fieldwork was related to the illegal nature of hashish production. As many ethnographic studies focusing on drug markets report (Adler, 1993; Bourgeois, 1993; Morales, 1996), the illegal nature of drug production and dealing makes it difficult to collect data at the initial stages. However, the good relationships developed with the main gatekeepers and their close friends and relatives in later stages of the fieldwork allowed me to become accepted by the communities and observe how women could talk freely about hashish making in their everyday interactions.

While conducting ethnographic fieldwork and gaining access to Aikan and Jamilya's networks I was able to learn much about hashish making in Toolu. At the same time, using ethnography as a data collection research tool created some restrictions for me. As noted earlier, my role as a female researcher was one of the characteristics that created some gender-based boundaries between me and some of the participants (Golde, 1986; Powdermaker, 2012). Due to the changes that occurred in the ways hashish was made since the middle of 2000s and the social composition of hashish makers, production had become more segregated along gender division lines compared to the 1990s and even early 2000s. Through Aikan and more importantly through Jamiliya, I had connections with the hashish making women in Toolu. Through their networks I was also able to contact some men. However, I did not have the same level of

connection with hashish making men. The separate ways of making hashish by men and women, the exclusion of women from men's groups in going to fields further from the village on horseback did not allow me to make similar observations among men. Due to the risk (or perceived risk)<sup>7</sup> of being kidnapped for marriage, I also could not gain interviews with some young men outside of Aikan's network. This tendency was not a big obstacle to the project, but made me think about how I could obtain adequate access to young men without restricting myself only to Aikan's network. Although she provided a few contacts and asked some young men in their early twenties to be interviewed, I felt that I could do more interviews myself so as not to be limited to her network alone. On a few occasions I attempted to talk to some young men on the street. Talking to them without any introduction and without anyone with me reminded me of the gendered context (Golde, 1986) in which I had to work. I had to be careful talking to some of the young men without somebody accompanying me, as in some instances when I tried to contact them the short conversations were mainly sexualised. Despite the fact that some social researchers found this erotic dimension of their studies facilitated their fieldwork (Newton, 1993) in the sense that they were studying issues of sexualization (Schwalbe & Wolkomir 2002), this did not help in my study. It did not mean, however, that gendered relationships restricted the access to male participants during my fieldwork (Poulton, 2014, Powdermaker, 2012). The fact that social researchers have many different status markers in the interview situation (Poulton, 2014), and the location and place where the interview was conducted (Schwalbe & Wolkomir 2002) mattered a lot in minimizing the sexualization of interviews. Accordingly, the local cultural norms of being somebody's guest or somebody's sister provided me with a slightly different status marker. So, for instance, when introduced by Aikan or her husband as their guest, or as 'younger sister' to some of their male relatives and friends, I was treated differently as I was under the protection as Kemel's 'sister', whom other men were supposed to respect.

Additionally, some younger male participants did not want to be associated with drug taking and told me in the interviews that only had tried hashish and did not like it.

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<sup>7</sup> I perceived this as one of the risks due to a high number of *ala-kachnuu* (local term for kidnapping women for the purpose of marrying them) of women that occurred in Kyrgyzstan over the last twenty years. Researchers argue that numbers have increased since Kyrgyzstan became independent from the Soviet Union (Kleinbach et al, 2005; Kleinbach & Salimjanova, 2007). Although *ala-kachnuu* is practiced in the cities as well, it is a very common way of marrying in rural areas.

As I also had information from other older male participants that there were a few of younger men who occasionally consumed hashish, I did not take their representation of themselves as non drug takers for granted. Instead, I carefully matched different local representations by different groups such as young and older women, young and older men and tried to develop a sense of a local discourse. This helped me to come up with an understanding that despite the social control from the community some of the young male hashish makers are more experimental than any other groups.

However, I was still worried that in different settings I would have been able to receive different information. As many female social researchers such as Elmira Satybaldieva, Aisalkyn Botoeva, and Mehrigiul Ablezova acknowledged in informal conversations that using a male assistant greatly assisted them in getting access to and interviewing male participants in Kyrgyzstan. It made me to think about different strategies for interviewing young men and I decided to have a small number of interviews conducted on my behalf by a male interviewee. I contacted a former colleague based at Kara-Kol University to see if she could recommend a male student to conduct the interviews with young men who made hashish in the village. To my surprise, she found one senior student, Azamat, who was from Toolu village. I met him and explained the purpose of my project and my research questions. Azamat studied social work and was familiar with basic interviewing techniques. He conducted his first two interviews in Kara-Kol city with two young men, his friends, who were from Toolu village. In two days he reported that his interviewees were very co-operative and talked freely about hashish until he told them he wanted to write down what they said as part of the interview process. He explained that it was for the research purposes only and their names would remain confidential. Only after some time and reassurance that no information would be provided to law enforcement agencies, did they agreed to tell their stories. In total, Azamat conducted four interviews. After learning about his struggles to arrange interviews with young men, and careful analysis of his interviews, I understood that they were not much different from mine. This case allowed me to conclude that although a researcher's gender is an important factor to consider in ethnographic fieldwork (Golde, 1986), the sensitive nature of research where participants are concerned about their safety is much more important is much more important factor to consider.

Still, my data is gendered to some degree (Lumsden, 2009). My gender played an important role in getting access to participants. My main gatekeepers were all women and gave me access to their networks. Although I was able to conduct interviews with both men and women, I was able to observe more women outside of interview settings. As Lumsden (2009) argues, this fact does undermine the data but shows that the research process is itself part of social interaction which should be acknowledged openly. This fact is also compatible with critical realist epistemology as it does not aim at getting the 'truth' of reality but instead focuses on achieving one of the many interpretations of reality (Danermark, 2002).

### **Following an Abductive Research Strategy**

I moved to Toolu village in the middle of July 2009. By end of October I had collected forty-seven interviews. Being in the field already for three and half months, I also felt that I had reached the point of 'theoretical saturation' by getting the same type of information over and over again (Guest et al, 2006). After this I moved to Bishkek to transcribe the interviews and start analyzing the data. I finished with the initial data gathering and, while still following an abductive research strategy, needed to understand what I had learned during this time and which direction my research should take. My decision to move to Bishkek was partially based on the living circumstances in Aikan's house as well. While it was warm I was comfortable staying in the biggest room in the house, but in late autumn it became more difficult to stay in the same room. Like many families in rural areas, Aikan's family did not heat all the rooms in winter months and the room where I stayed all the time became too cold to occupy. In late autumn and winter, when I made my short visits for about a week each time, I stayed with Aikan's daughter in the small kitchen/dining room. I made three more short trips in October, November and December of 2009. As I moved towards completing my fieldwork, I also used these trips to see how family livelihoods changed during winter time and to conduct interviews with official representatives: the local authority, local militia officer and the Head of the Antidrug Unit at that time. I interviewed them to get some information on their encounters with the hashish making people in the region. In summer 2010, I returned to the same village to conduct follow-up fieldwork.

## Survey.

The ontological position occupied by critical realists in which structures can exist independently from social actors' knowledge about them and their power to affect their lives leads to a methodological position where social scientists can use random sampling techniques. However, the use of the survey method in critical realism is different from that of empiricist or positivist studies (Williams, 2003). One of the main differences is that surveys do not start from testing the theories as it would not lead to an understanding the social actors' meanings (Ibid, 2003). Critical realist surveys should not start without prior knowledge of the latter, formed in the qualitative stage of the study. Having this in mind, I designed my survey in a way that followed the ontological and epistemological positions of critical realism. The data gathered in the survey was not only supplementary to the data collected during an ethnographic fieldwork but inherently based upon it (Olsen, 2004b: 13).<sup>8</sup> Thus, the survey used the social actors' concepts derived from the fieldwork stage. To prepare the survey, at the beginning of my second fieldwork, I conducted ten interviews with a primary focus on social networks. As this emerged as a significant factor during my first fieldwork I decided to learn more about the marketization and monetization of social relationships in Toolu. My interviews were helpful in shaping the questions for the survey (Olsen, 2004b: 13). Subsequently, with the assistance of Aikan, I aimed to develop questions based on local concepts and terminology.

One of the aims of the survey was to test some of the hunches that emerged during the ethnographic fieldwork period. My interviews with participants located social networks as important for obtaining social support. They also revealed how each of them used their networks differently. However, I did not have enough data to see how different social networks operated due to my fieldwork being primarily based on a single network. The data gathered during the qualitative part of my project was more relevant to one of the social networks in the village due to the access to participants provided by Aikan and her family, which to some degree bounded my fieldwork. In order to be able to emphasise the differences between social networks and stress how they affected the lives of people in the village, as well as to collect data on various livelihoods that families

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<sup>8</sup> As in the case of the study conducted by Houston and colleagues (2002, cited in Morgan, 2013).

had, I then decided to conduct the survey. My purpose was to be able to discuss the general patterns of socio-economic relationships in different networks in the village.<sup>9</sup>

Another aim of the survey was to locate hashish production in the context of the agricultural economy of Toolu. Data analysis revealed that I had gathered considerable material on drug production itself, how it was produced and who made it, and how it was made. At the same time, my participants' stories and my observations made it clear that I should not be focusing only on the process of hashish production but also situate it in the context of everyday life in rural northern Kyrgyzstan. It was therefore important to learn more about the role of the market economy and how it affected agricultural practices in the region. As other studies on drug production highlighted, the rural household surveys and other available information not specific to the drug economy could be very useful in understanding how they operate within the rural economy (Buddenberg & Byrd, 2006: 2; Pellegrini, 2013). As there was no survey data on the region that I could use, I decided to collect my own data that would assist in locating hashish making in the Toolu economy.

My aim was not to produce a statement of statistical generality but rather to 'indicate how results are applicable beyond the context of the original set of observations' (Morgan, 2013: 180). Due to the follow-up nature of the survey compared with the primary data collection of an ethnographic fieldwork (Bryman, 1996; Morgan, 2013), the survey conducted in my project did not aim to generalize the findings to the general population of Kyrgyzstan. It was designed to show the patterns on the village level where the case study was conducted. Due to the explorative type of research design where the quantitative part of the project was needed to provide the broader picture of the rural economy, see the differences between the social networks and what kind of

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<sup>9</sup> There are some other studies that use a similar research design by starting first with qualitative interviewing, and following this up with the survey questionnaire. For instance, Houston, Harada and Makinodan (2002, cited in Morgan, 2013: 189-91) conducted qualitative interviews of Vietnamese immigrants on issues of tuberculosis. After finding out in qualitative interviews that participants distinguished between two different types of tuberculosis – psychological and physical – the team decided to apply the results within the larger community. They conducted a survey with Vietnamese respondents where their qualitative findings were confirmed. For a detailed discussion of studies that started with qualitative methods and continued with gathering quantitative data look at Olsen (2004b).

assistance they provided to different groups of people in the community, I could use a different sample from my ethnographic fieldwork (Cresswell et al., 2008: 76; Olsen; 2002; 2004b). I chose a random sampling strategy for the survey. Some critical realist studies incorporating a multi-methods design also use a random sampling technique for their surveys (Olsen, 2002, 2004a). While designing my survey each household was taken as a unit of analysis. The number of households living in Toolu village was provided by the local authorities. In total, three-hundred and sixty-five households were registered according to this information. However, during the survey I came to realize that the statistics provided by the local authorities were based on the number of plots distributed to each household and not the number of households per se. While in reality not all households lived separately from each other because some of the younger sons and their families lived together with their parents and grandparents. Bearing in mind Kandiyoti's (1999) concept of how households should be contextualized in the local culture and economy, which otherwise might lead to problems of interpretation, I decided not to base the calculation of the sample size on the figures provided by the local authorities. The local authorities figure was based on the number of registered plots rather than on actual number of households. While in practice there were younger families, especially families of youngest sons that have lived with their parents, which could not be separated as a different household.

In order to find the total number of households based on local understanding of it, with the help of Aikan and Jamilya, I made a map of the village and counted all the households where families of children could have lived with their parents. The total number of households at that time was three-hundred.<sup>10</sup> With this number of the total population, a five percent of margin error, and a ninety per cent of confidence level, I needed one-hundred and forty-three completed questionnaires,<sup>11</sup> and I had collected

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<sup>10</sup> Some of them consisted of two or three generations of grandparents, their children and grandchildren. In cases when they said that they lived together and cooked together for all of them, we considered them as one household.

<sup>11</sup> The formula for determining the sample size considering the finite population (Kothari, 2004: 179):

$$n = \frac{z^2 * p * (p-1) * N}{e^2 * (N-1) + z^2 * p * (p-1)}$$

n – size of sample

z - Z value (1.645 for 90 per cent of confidence level)

one-hundred and forty-seven in total. Since the survey aimed at providing a broader picture of the village economy, the interviews collected for the survey did not have to match the sample in the ethnographic fieldwork (Cresswell et al., 2008: 76).

The questionnaire had five sections. The first section focused on the size of families in the village. I was also interested in how families maintained connections with their relatives and friends and how they helped each other. The second section focused on families' assets: (a) how much land did they own? How much land did they cultivate? (b) did they have any livestock and how much? (c) did they own any cars, or heavy machinery. I was interested in these economic aspects of well-being in Toolu because the qualitative interviews and observations during ethnographic fieldwork indicated their link to the hashish economy. The third section was concerned with micro-credits and how many people used them. This topic was also brought to my attention during the fieldwork because many people talked about the informal ways of getting credits. Thus, I was interested in obtaining data about the number of families that took credits from formal organizations. The fourth section was built around social networking of households. Here, I was aiming to find out about connections that households have and the consequences of social networking. The final, fifth section, addressed perceptions people had about different state institutions such as local government and militia. None of the sections asked any questions about hashish and hashish making because I was aware that it would be unlikely to receive any answer to such questions in the survey.

Due to lack of time to complete all the questionnaires myself, I asked Aikan and Jamilya and two more young women<sup>12</sup> to help with conducting face-to-face structured survey interviews. In the middle of September of 2010, Aikan, Jamilya and I, along with two more young women, Nazgul and Aigul, spent half a day going through the questionnaire and making mock interviews in Jamilya's house. I asked them if they would like to work together and go around the village in pairs. However, they decided that the village was safe and that they could conduct interviews separately from each

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e- margin of error

p – standard deviation (0.5)

N- population

<sup>12</sup> Who came from Bishkek and were familiar with the survey techniques.

other. The four parallel streets of the village were randomly distributed among the four of them. The next day they started the survey interviews with an aim to gain an interview in almost every other household. We randomly chose the numbers from which they could start on their streets. So, for example, Aikan had number six, and she could start from the house with the number six, or sixteen, twenty-six, sixty-two. The same technique was employed by all the other interviewers. This was done in order to preserve the random nature of the survey. The possible problems with the survey method could be the fact that some people might have given different information about their socio-economic well-being.

### **Research Ethics**

In all types of research it is important to receive consent from all participants of the study (Madison, 2011: 129, Murphy & Dingwall, 2001). Although I had two gatekeepers in two different communities who introduced me to most of the participants at the initial stage of the fieldwork, and explained that I am collecting data for social research, I did not ask them to obtain consent on my behalf (BSA, 2002: 4). After a short introduction by the gate-keepers, I always explained the aims of the research and asked for the consent myself.

I conducted interviews with only those people who gave their consent to be part of the study. Prior to receiving their consent I explained in detail the aims of my study and that the information that they would share with me would be confidential and interviews anonymous. As informed consent should not be always be written, as they might insult, threaten some people or understood as they are cooperating with the state authorities (Madison, 2011: 129, Hammersley & Traianou, 2012: 89, Silverman, 2010: 163), I asked and received oral consent from most participants. Especially, in my study on illegal practices on hashish production people could have interpreted a signed consent as a threat to them as police could get their names and arrest them afterwards. I made sure that people did not feel under pressure and tried to explain that I am a researcher who has no affiliations with either law enforcement bodies or local authorities except my affiliation with the University of Essex. I explained that I was conducting a sociological study to fulfil the requirement for the Doctorate Degree which I am

undertaking in the UK. I also explained that the interviews I conducted with them will be analysed and some parts of it could be presented in the final thesis (BSA, 2002: 3). Although most participants consented to be part of the study, there were a few cases when people did not agree to be interviewed. In these cases I did not continue any interviews with them. Of course such a strategy meant that I was not able to get interviews from all people in the village and it affected the type of information I gathered. One of the advantages of conducting ethnographic fieldwork is that researchers have enough time to develop relationships with the people in the researched community. So, after some time, when people learned that there were no risks from my interviews, I was given consent by some people who refused to talk to me at the initial stage of the fieldwork, thus allowing me to get their consent during the process of fieldwork (BSA, 2002: 3). In some cases people were curious to either listen through the recordings, or read my transcriptions. In such cases, I allowed participants to read through the notes or listen to the interviews (BSA, 2002: 3). However, the researchers that conduct ethnographic fieldwork and observe people in their everyday lives encounter other cases when they do not always have the possibility to ask for their consent (Bourgeois, 2007). I found it sometimes difficult to keep reminding people about my research. After some time spent in the field and especially in settings when the researcher is observing a lot of people at once it becomes difficult to ask for their consent.

### **Danger and risks.**

Despite the perceived association of drugs and drug production with violence not all drug economies are involved in violent activities (Buddenberg & Byrd, 2006; Weisheit, 1998). The case of hashish making in the Tyup region in Kyrgyzstan shows that drug production is not necessarily characterized by violence. Therefore, the research project was not carried out in a situation of constant threat or danger to the researcher or participants as had occurred in other studies on drug markets with high levels of violence (Jacobs, 1998). At the same time, there were some risks that needed to be considered whilst working in the field.

Similar to many other female researchers doing fieldwork, the risk was related to my status as an unmarried woman (Warren, 1988: 13-15). The status of an unmarried Kyrgyz woman created a potential for me being 'bride kidnapped' for marriage without consent.<sup>13</sup> I tried to lower this risk by telling everyone that I was already engaged and had a fiancé at that time.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, my other statuses of being from the city and being older than most of the potential male 'grooms' narrowed, but did not eliminate completely, the possibilities of being considered as a bride and provided some protection during the fieldwork (Golde, 1986).

When I started my fieldwork I tried to use a recorder in all my interviews, but later realized that it was not always possible. One of the reasons was that people felt shy when talking in front of a recorder. The general pattern of interviews conducted was that participants accepted being recorded whilst discussing general topics but when the questions touched on issues of hashish making they would either stop talking freely or ask to switch it off. Additionally, the conditions in which I had to make interviews were not always ideal for recording them due to background noises such as children playing, crying, participants cooking or us having tea. So, I decided that I would always have a tape recorder with me but would only use it in the right circumstances if the interviewee felt comfortable with it, or if there were not many people and children creating noises. I usually had my notebook with me and wrote the things which they said down, trying to do so whilst in conversation. It made our conversations a bit longer than usual but it allowed participants to be much more open about what they wanted to say and I was more flexible about where I could talk to people. Not using a tape recorder allowed me not only to gather more information about hashish making but also created an atmosphere where participants did not feel under threat by talking about illegal activities to the tape as this method of data collection is less obtrusive than using recorders (Bryman, 2008: 419). If conversations happened when I did not have my notebook with me, I made mental notes and attempted to write them down as soon as possible, usually

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<sup>13</sup> More about this practice can be read in Kleinbach, et al, (2005) and Kleinbach & Salimjanova (2007).

<sup>14</sup> Similarly, when I invited two young single women to conduct the survey interviews for me in the village, I asked them to buy some cheap fake wedding rings that no one would doubt that they were married. This strategy was better in their case because they did not stay in the village for a long time, and did not develop long-term relationships as I did.

in the evening of the same day (Lofland & Lofland, 2006). However, some data could have been forgotten or omitted.

The perceived risk for the participants was directly related to the illegality of hashish making. Due to militia using informants in identifying some hashish makers and middlepersons and then making arrests, one of the risks that people might have had after the interview was being arrested. I tried to overcome this barrier through different techniques and tactics. First of all, I explained in each interview that I was conducting research and I had no affiliations with law-enforcement. Second, in order not to create any harm for the participants, I changed the name of the village where I conducted my research and real names of participants. If the data got into the hands of some of the law enforcement representatives they could have used it for their own purposes of arresting or extorting a bribe from them. Giving different names to the villages and asking participants to tell me fictional names before starting interviews, helped me to keep the data secure so that no one who may get my notes would be able to identify the people (BSA, 2002: 5). The computer that I used for typing the observations was also password protected. By providing the fictional names of the villages, I also tried not to stigmatize the village in my later publications. By changing the names of participants I was able to keep the information confidential (BSA, 2002: 4; Hammersley & Traianou, 2012; O'Reilly, 2004: 65). However, during the survey I was able to offer anonymity to participants because neither fictional nor real names were recorded. The only interview in which the participant used his real name was with the Head of the Anti-Drug unit as he was giving an interview as an expert.

Taking into account the fact that contacting the police might jeopardize not only my research project but also some of the participants actively involved in hashish production, I decided to interview some of the police representatives when most of my data was collected. It happened at the end of the first fieldwork in November and December of 2010. I got access to one of the militia officers, who worked in the Tyup raion, through my host family in Toolu. He was one of the classmates of Kenje and met me in his house on the *sherine* gathering. Later I asked Kenje if he could arrange the meeting with him. He met me in his office in Tyup, where we talked in private. He gave some general information about hashish being produced in the region. But when

prompted about militia officers taking bribes he became very cautious about his responses and would not like to comment anything on that.

Another interview was with the local militia officer who usually patrolled Toolu and other nearby villages. He approached me when I was sitting down and talking to some women in the centre of the village. I was cautious to ask him to give me an interview as I did not want to develop suspicion toward me among women. Later when he saw me on the street again he gave his phone number and said that I could interview him. For the interview, I went to his local office which was located in the nearby village. I asked him mostly about the strategies that militia used to catch hashish makers and also the difficulties that they encounter. The third interview with the militia representative was set up through a colleague. She was a sociologist and worked as a Head of Department at the Kara-Kol University. After I explained to her my research, she promised to talk to her colleagues and find the ways to help me. Indeed, one of her colleagues also worked in law enforcement structures. He set up the interview with the Head of the Drug Unit.

The overall impression from three different interviews with the militia representatives was that they were very cautious about presenting militia officers and law enforcement in general in negative terms. Their responses followed the official discourse that the militia works hard and does not get involved in bribery and protection mechanisms. Although I was worried about power relations and if militia would use interviews for getting information from me to further enhance the criminalization of drug producers (Lumsden and Winter, 2014), none of them were interested in my data and agreed to give interview for different reasons.

Retrospectively, I understand that they had different interests in giving interviews to me. The local militia officer seemed to be interested in getting paid for the interview after he heard that I was doing my studies in the UK. I explained to him that I did not practice paying for interviews and could only take and develop pictures of his family as I did for most of my interviewees. The militia officer in Tyup agreed to talk to me as I got access to him through one of his friends and he only wanted to be polite and not let down his long lasting relationships with my host. The third interviewee, the highest in the rank of all of them, seemed used to giving interviews to journalists and used it as an

opportunity to publicise about the achievements made by his unit in terms of 'fighting the drugs'.

Despite the fact that all militia officers followed or tried to give the positive image of law enforcement that it is not much involved in corruption, the interviews with them were useful for my research for other purposes. The local militia officer, for instance, complained a lot about the salary that he and his colleagues are paid by the government. The interview with the Head of the Drug Unit was designed as an interview for the media but was still helpful in getting some useful information for the study. He explained, for instance, that his skills and expertise from his previous position as being the Head of the Drug Unit fighting with the trafficking drugs from Afghanistan also shaped the way how local hashish production become controlled since his appointment. His explanations of change of drug control strategies since 2005 coincided with the stories that many local farmers in Toolu told about militia since that time. Although people did not produce more hashish, militia started using some harsher methods than it used to do before, which was reflected in the interview with the Head of the Drug Unit. Additionally, although none of the militia officers openly discussed the issue of corruption none of them denied such facts in the interviews.

However, the moral responsibility of the researcher is bigger than just making sure that the powerful groups do not get the information about the individual participants of the study (Bourgeois, 2007). The role of the researcher is to make sure that particularly ethnographic studies with their detailed observations are not used as a source of information for more oppression. Bourgeois (2007) brings to attention not only ethical but also moral aspects of conducting studies among the communities that resist the central governments and international corporations. As he points out the researchers should be aware about the bigger structures of oppression as some anthropological and ethnographic studies have been misused and informed - in direct and indirect ways - the intelligence services in developing counterinsurgency operations towards resisting communities. The role of the researcher is to understand not only the ethics of an informed consent and anonymity but also how the study could inform the police, the army and the state. So, thinking in a similar way, I was aware about the implications of my study for not only individual participants of my research but for the whole region where I conducted the fieldwork. As my main contribution of the study to

show the ineffectiveness and inappropriateness of drug control policies in general, I did not want my study to be used as a tool for more drug control.

However, I could not disguise the name of the region as I had to justify my choice of studying there and therefore used secondary data for situating hashish production within the economic transformations. Here I see the potential for harm, if not for individual participants as their identities are not disguised, but to the whole region where the hashish is being produced, especially if law enforcement might restrict the control of drugs and arrest more people. Thus, it involved being careful about the ways to disseminate the results of the study (Hammersley & Trainou, 2012, Kvale, 2007: 30-31). One of the strategies that I try to use to overcome this harm is to delay the publication and being careful in disseminating the results of the study (Bourgeois, 2007). So, for instance, when I was approached by an international news company to make a film about hashish makers in Kyrgyzstan, after taking part at the international conference, I had to decline their offer. My decision was based on reading about this company and especially watching their film about bride kidnapping practice in Kyrgyzstan, which they presented as a 'traditional' practice of this extravagant Kyrgyz nation, while completely missing the point of social researchers, through whom they got an access to some of the Kyrgyz families, that it is not a 'tradition' at all.

### **Reciprocity.**

Following the idea of 'culturally situated' remuneration (Madison, 2011: 131), I decided to follow the local customs. In my fieldwork while going around people's houses to make interviews, I was always invited to share their tea and meals. Because I was treated as a guest I decided to respond to such generosity as a guest by taking some sweets for tea, which is a common practice in Kyrgyzstan. As remuneration can be negotiated during the research process and guided by the population itself, it also changed during my study (Madison, 2011: 131). After spending a few weeks in the field I realised that people preferred me to take and develop pictures for them because not many families had their own cameras and taking pictures would be a rare and expensive practice. This practice first started as a way of documenting my ethnographic research but soon was

transformed by the participants as a way of getting pictures for their own family albums. In some cases I spent extra time or even a session of taking pictures of all family members, or was turned into a photographer at the social gatherings. After taking pictures I usually developed them in Kara-Kol or Bishkek and returned them to families after some time. This way of reciprocating for participation in an ethnographic study was first of all useful for my study as I played a role of photographer in some occasions, that many people welcomed, and could have a chance to return to some families to give the pictures back and talk about my own research (Shanklin 1979 cited in Pink, 2007: 73). I was also able to thank them for taking part in my study with something that they appreciated and valued rather than giving them things that they would not need (Pink, 2007: 56-59).<sup>15</sup>

In the case of gatekeepers, due to my long stays with Ainura and Aikan's families my role turned to one of a relative staying with an extended family. I was helping out with household chores and doing some tasks that Aikan sometimes wanted me to do in her absence from the house. I helped them out with cooking, washing up the dishes, selling oil, topping-up phones and anything that needed to be done around the house when I was at home. Additionally to this, I paid for my stay in their houses and contributed to food by buying products from the market in Kara-Kol during my visits there. It was very important to contribute to the family's budget because, and as I explain later, the rural economy in Toolu experienced cash hunger while producing only essential food products themselves.

## **Data Analysis**

At the end of my fieldwork I had a variety of different types of data to analyze. These consisted of digitally recorded and written interviews with people, and copious

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<sup>15</sup> I purposefully decided not to reciprocate participants with cash or other things that is used in many social studies using survey methodologies. First of all, I would not be able to finance such an expensive project. Second, ethnographic studies tend to use different ways of thanking participants as researchers stay longer in the field and are able to learn other ways of reciprocating.

observation notes which were collected during the fieldwork. The survey data consisted of one-hundred and forty-seven completed questionnaires.

The data gathered was in the Kyrgyz language. The fact that interviews were conducted in Kyrgyz did not create many practical and epistemological concerns due to ethnography being focused on using interviewee's own concepts from the beginning of the project (Gobo, 2008: 197). Following this approach, I learned during interviews the local concepts and was able to use them in the analysis. During the analysis I matched them with the second-level concepts developed in the literature on drug production, rural economies and marketization of society and economy.

The digitally recorded interviews were transcribed, written notes from interviews transferred from notebooks to word processor in order to analyze them with the computer assisted program for qualitative data analysis. As the transcripts were all in Kyrgyz, the codes that I created in the NVIVO programme were in Kyrgyz as well. The choice of the computer assisted program for data analysis was determined by the fact that I was able to upload files in Cyrillic. Only after grouping the codes, comparing and contrasting them, I was able to translate the quotes into English. Working in Kyrgyz during the fieldwork, and analysis and then writing up in English created some challenges. First of all, it took a bit longer time to translate the coded texts. Second, some of the words and ideas could not be translated directly into English. So, I had to provide the as closest possible translation. Some local terms I decided not to translate and instead provided as much as possible explanations in English.

Using NVIVO 9, I was able to code first and retrieve coded data later (Dohan & Sanchez-Jankowski, 1998). I used open coding of the text, making analytic decisions about the data, followed by a focused coding, sorting, synthesizing and conceptualizing data through initial codes (Charmaz, 2003: 319; Pandit, 1996). At the first stage of analysis, the codes were the 'themes, patterns, events and actions' that helped to organize the data while reading through the transcripts (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996: 32). I have come up with the initial categories such as 'good things about making hashish', 'things about making hashish', 'coping strategies that families used' 'the effects of the transformation of economy in the 1990s and later on the families', 'the importance of social celebrations', 'the perceived role of the state' and 'the practices that militia used to

control drugs in the region'. Each of these categories were then divided into subcategories to help me to grasp the diversity of answers (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996: 36). For instance, the category 'the practices that militia used to control drug production in the region' was divided into following sub-categories: 'bribing and corruption among the militia officers', 'involvement of some of the militia officers in providing protection to middle-men and women', 'tightening of drug control in the recent years', 'good attitudes towards militia work' and 'negative attitudes toward militia'. The category that focused on 'social celebrations' was divided to into subcategories of 'the importance of presents and cash', 'importance of social celebrations in the village life', 'gift giving practices' and 'what kind of help families can have'.

In the second stage of analysis, I used axial coding (Olsen, 2012: 47; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I tried to relate the initial codes to the concepts existing in the theories, therefore linking them with the second-stage concepts as abduction research strategy requires. When all the transcripts were coded, I developed charts where all the coded segments from individual transcripts were retrieved and put under the themes that came up during the analysis and from the literature. The idea of the chart is that it helps to order and group individual cases under themes (Ritchie & Spenser, 2001: 183). For instance, I had one chart for 'practices and moralities of hashish production' where I put all the codes related to this theme in one column. Each interview (case) was put in a row that I could see how the same respondent was answering different questions. For the purposes of understanding emerging patterns, I also included the information about the perceived well-being and livelihood strategies, and if made hashish or not, right at the beginning of each case. I used the same procedure for other themes like 'survival strategies', 'relationship with the militia', 'attitudes toward the state' and 'social networking in the community'. Using several charts for different themes, I was able to compare and contrast each of them against participants' characteristics such as different economic well-being to see regularities and emerging patterns (Charmaz & Mitchel, 2001). During this process of charting I was also able to group the codes under the bigger categories related to specific theories. For instance, I was able to link the categories that looked in detail the work of the militia in the region and the attitudes that people developed about militia with the theoretical discussion already developed in criminological literature about police legitimacy. Similarly, the categories that grasped the importance of social celebrations in the community life allowed me to move to broader analytic issues (Coffey & Atkinson; 1996: 43) such as 'reciprocity' and 'transformation of

community with marketization of economy'. Overall, these charts, that contain all the coded data, allow the researcher to go back and forth between different cases and at the same time start distilling the information, think about the patterns and the structure and come up with typologies, associations and explanations (Ritchie & Spenser, 2001).

Data from the questionnaires was entered into SPSS 18 and used for understanding the well-being and socio-economic relations of families in Toolu providing the wider picture than the data collected in the ethnographic stage. As the survey was focused on collecting data on different types of assets that households had and usage of credits and assistance, I was able to see their distribution among different types of households. Getting descriptive statistics allowed depicting a bigger picture of the socio-economic situation of families in Toolu. I was able to see the distribution of assets according to different type of households and see what kind of connections they had creating different networks and how they are able to use formal and informal credits.

In the final thesis I presented the integrated and linked data from both qualitative and quantitative data sets. As mentioned above, it was possible through exploring similar themes while doing an ethnographic fieldwork and collecting survey questionnaires (Mason, 2001).

## **Conclusion**

The case study of illegal hashish production in Toolu was conducted using multi-method approach. By following the critical realist epistemology, first of all, I was able to focus on the perception of hashish making by the people living in Toolu village. Not all of them made hashish themselves but lived in the village where a hashish economy was closely linked with the local agricultural economy. Second, I was also able to collect quantitative data on the socio-economic well-being of the families in Toolu that allowed me to see more general patterns and link this data the qualitative data gathered before.

At the same time, as with any other social studies my project has a number of limitations. One of them was the gendered nature of fieldwork as discussed earlier. Although I was able to collect a diverse range of interviews both from men and women, the participant observation part of the fieldwork was mostly possible with the women.

One of the possible limitations of the survey data could be the fact that people could have given different information trying to downsize their assets. As one of the survey interviewers, Aikan, reported to me, there were a small number of cases when people made slight modifications to how many cows or sheep they owned according to her knowledge. Still, the survey data followed the well-being patterns that were discovered during the qualitative stage of research.

While the case-study approach to hashish production allowed me to gather in-depth information about its links to the local agricultural economy and society, it focused mainly on one village. Therefore, I am not able to show the socio-economic and political context for the re-emergence of hashish production in some other parts of the country and region.

## Chapter Five

### Illegal Hashish Production as a Source of Economic Security in Toolu

#### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how hashish production became embedded within the local agricultural economy of Toolu. I discuss how it emerged as a form of diversification strategy in an agricultural economy troubled by farm insolvency under economic neoliberalization. Additionally, the persistence of hashish production suggests that although creating a difficult economic environment for farmers, the market economy simultaneously encouraged conspicuous consumption patterns among the population.

First, I introduce those involved in the village's illegal hashish market followed by a discussion of the specific issues relating to farm insolvency in Toolu as a consequence of neoliberalization: a) the majority of families had small areas of land that could not produce sufficiently to satisfy the market; b) low market prices for agricultural products; c) irregular and uncertain incomes. I illustrate how hashish, in contrast to their legal crops, was not subject to annual price fluctuation. Moreover, it could be made with minimal investment and means of production.

After this, I discuss the ways in which various Toolu families endeavoured to diversify their income through innovative activities in the face of farm insolvency. Farmers experimented with raising livestock, or working for a wage as builders and harvest collectors. However, if the former activity required capital investments that few families could afford, the latter did not allow people to earn much money in their own village or even region. Thus, hashish was one of the more successful diversification strategies used by a different range of families.

The next section of the chapter explores how hashish has become embedded within small-scale trade in the village. I discuss the process of turning hashish into surrogate money due to the deficit of cash.

I argue that while the agricultural economy of Toolu was experiencing farm insolvency, farmers did not receive adequate assistance to develop their businesses. On the contrary, the harsh requirements developed by micro-credit institutions and their inability to adjust to the conditions of an agricultural economy created the context when those rare farmers that received credits had to use hashish as a means of repaying credits. Finally, I investigate how hashish was used by many families to access the goods that many perceived as status symbols and which were available on the market.

### **Illegal Hashish Production**

The most visible group making hashish in Toolu consisted of young adults in their twenties and thirties, the majority of which were men although there was a small minority of women. There were some cases of small peer groups of sixteen to seventeen year olds who also made hashish. There were exceptional cases when twelve to thirteen year olds also learned how to make hashish by going to the fields with their parents. Men mostly made hashish in the mountain fields travelling there by horse.

**Plate 5.1. Men going to the fields in small groups**



Women usually made hashish within the territory of the village or in nearby fields and typically they tried to make use of those plots which were left uncultivated that year. There were a small number of women who preferred to go to the hills outside the village to make hashish.

**Plate 5.2. Women and teenagers making hashish in the fields**



Early in the mornings, small groups of two or three people would leave for the hills to make hashish, moving from one field to another trying to find the places with a high density of cannabis plants.

**Plate 5.3. Hashish making process**

**a) Rubbing the cannabis leaves and seeds between the palms**



**b) Getting a sticky substance after some time**



**c) Gathering the substance together**



**d) Cleaning hands**



Hashish is usually made by rubbing the upper leaves and seeds of cannabis plants between the palms. Hashish makers were therefore forced to constantly move around seeking the best plants. This technique suggests that hashish makers in Toolu were unable to

produce drugs on a large scale as they still used the 'traditional', 'old style' way of making hashish (Kurtz-Phelan, 2005). This contrasts the way marijuana and hashish are made in main drug supplying non-western countries, such as Morocco for instance, where work is mechanised due to large-scale production (Decorte et al, 2011). It also contrasts with how marijuana and hashish are also usually produced in some western societies. If Toolu producers were using wild-growing cannabis plants, there is a new tendency for increasing indoor cultivated cannabis plants in western societies (Potter, 2010).

The local hashish drug economy could not perform well without local middlemen and women. The middleman/woman's job is to connect local drug makers with drug dealers usually coming from outside the region. Typically, dealers were not complete strangers to the producers and middlemen and were either former villagers who had moved out to other regions or friends/relatives of villagers. The hashish makers prefer to sell in the vicinity of the village and not be involved in transporting it to other cities. The role of local middlemen/women that earn their money through collecting hashish from local producers and preparing it for dealers to collect was relatively new for the Toolu hashish market in. In the 1990s and the early 2000s, the drug economy operated differently and transactions could be made even between complete strangers. Hashish used to be sold to any person who may arrive in the village and ask if anyone was selling drugs. Drug dealers would come in cars, knock on doors and openly ask if hashish was being sold. This situation changed with the increased presence of militia in Toolu starting from the middle of the 2000s. Due to the change of tactics by law enforcement agencies and a few arrests made during sales, local people adopted a cautious approach with regard to whom they sold drugs. Transactions between strangers became more infrequent and ceased completely after some time les would occur only among close and trusted networks of friends and relatives. As Tolubai remembers, unlike before when cars would arrive at any time of the day and ask anyone about drugs, cars of dealers started arriving only during the night time hours, visiting specific houses upon prior agreement. Dealers would quickly buy drugs and leave within the night. Therefore, dealers needed trusted middlemen/women who would help them to access drug makers. Drug makers also did not know all the dealers and therefore preferred to sell their

drugs to local middlemen/women whom they could trust. Elmira, a local woman, who used to make drugs herself a few years before, stated that:

We don't see those who come and buy drugs. For example, someone's relative or a friend might come in summer, leave the money and the local villager collects it [hashish] quickly for a friend. People don't know what time they [drug dealers] arrive, buy and leave.

Nurgul, who sometimes took the risk of working as a middleperson, explained that she had her own contacts among women who made *kara-kanurui* [hashish]. When there was a customer, a dealer, wanting a certain quantity of hashish, she just needed to tell her friends to bring drugs to her house.

Working as middlemen/women allows farmers to earn cash even quicker than making hashish. But due to the higher risks of being caught by law enforcement officers during the sales, there were less people who would work as middlepersons between hashish makers and outside dealers. There were around ten families in the village which were involved in this risky business. Some of these only worked as middlepersons once they had obtained a 'protection' from some of the militia officers, whom they were supposed to pay around ten-thousand som (£142) per month. In order to be able to make a profit in such cases they had to provide their services for dealers more frequently.

Even some of the hashish makers found the last few years to be a risky entrepreneurial activity. The increase in militia presence in the village and fields meant that more people were caught and had to pay bribes. The amount of bribes could vary from five-hundred to ten-thousand som, depending on how much hashish they had on them and if they had any connections with the militia representatives. This was considered as one of the biggest risks by the farmers who tried to earn some cash in a cash deficit agricultural economy. Despite this many people continued making hashish because it provided them

with cash. In the following sections I discuss in detail the context of the agricultural economy in Toolu and the role of hashish production in a cash deficit agricultural economy developed due to farm insolvency.

### **Farm Insolvency**

Many studies have demonstrated strong links between the harsh economic conditions that many agricultural communities experienced either due to neoliberalization of the economy or other conditions such as conflict, war and illegal drug markets (Craig, 1983; Keh, 1996; Steinberg, 2004; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). The socio-economic and political conditions in which agricultural communities operate are paramount in understanding the existence and persistence of illegal drug production in developing, non-western societies. Discussing in detail the farm insolvency issues developed due to the free and unregulated nature of the market economy, this study contributes to the literature that demonstrates the links between neoliberalization and illegal drug markets (Andreas, 1995; Bourgois, 2003; Watt & Zepeda, 2012).

After seventy years of a socialist planned economy, where the market was under state control, the beginning of the 1990s saw huge transformations that sought to liberate the market. As the result of implementation of the neoliberal policies discussed in the Chapter Two, market prices were freed from state regulation and land was privatized in agricultural regions. As a result, one of the prominent characteristics of the agricultural economy in Kyrgyzstan since the 1990s was a permanent shortage of cash. Farmers living in the mountainous region of Kyrgyzstan experienced ‘cash-hunger’ (Scott, 1977) for most of the year. Some researchers refer to the issues of cash-hunger as farm insolvency, describing how agricultural communities, although not starving as they could consume their own produce, were incapable of producing sufficient cash (Perrota, 2004). In the study of Toolu, I also found that farmers were experiencing ‘farm insolvency’ issues due precisely to the effects of the market economy on the agricultural sector.

### **Land as the main means of production.**

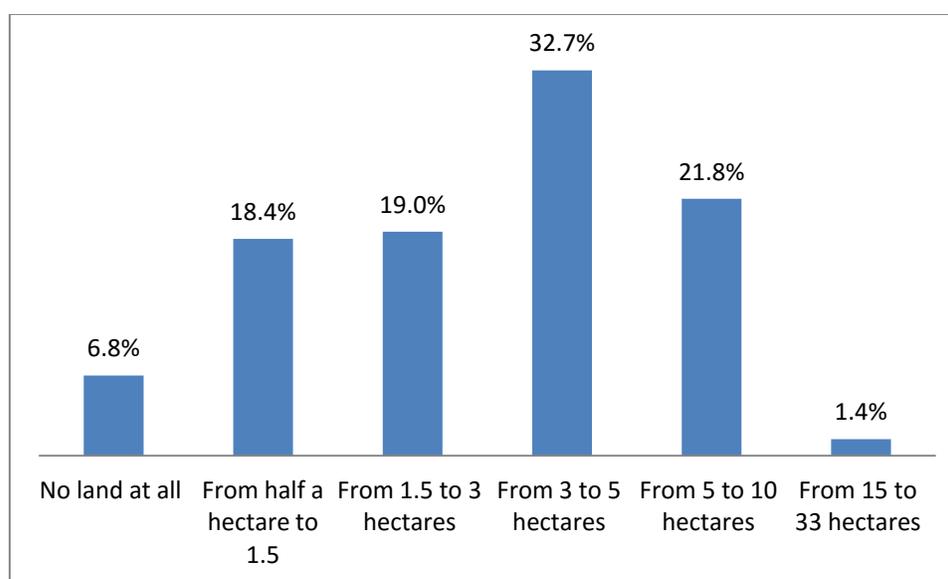
One of the neoliberal policies that was intended to dismantle state regulated, planned economy and lead the 'free economy' to governing itself, was based on the idea of 'individual property'. In order to achieve this, state assets were privatized. In Toolu, as in other villages located in the agricultural regions of Kyrgyzstan, land and many other state assets were privatized in the middle of the 1990s with five-hundred and seventy-six state and collective farms distributing their arable land and non-land assets to all farm residents and farm employees (Abdurasulov, 2009; Bloch, 2004: 18). Despite the expectations of the international donor organizations that the privatization of the agricultural sector would boost the whole economy over a short period of time, land privatization mainly turned agriculture into a semi-subsistence economy due to the small size of land shares that each family received.

During the privatization, the population of Toolu received 0.78 hectares of share land per person. Since 1996, distribution of land stopped and any families that had children after that time did not receive a share of land for them. This makes the everyday survival of young families more difficult. The reason is that the only land that they could cultivate is the land that was given to them by their parents. However, the situation of some of the families became even worse. The gendered, traditional, and patriarchal approach to land and its distribution to children by their parents makes it difficult for women to obtain their share of land when they start separate families (Ablezova et al, 2004). In some cases the only land that young couples could rely on was the plot (0.78 hectares) given by the groom's parents; although some young families were sometimes given a larger share of land.

Thus, with small shares of land as their main means of production, many farmers produced agricultural products mainly for their own consumption and only a small surplus for the market, becoming more subsistence-oriented in their agricultural activities (Gleason, 2003). As some researchers note, farmers needed fifty hectares of land to be able to start yielding surplus (Arapova, 2000). In order to reverse the effects of privatization on the

agricultural sector, the Kyrgyz government made an attempt to respond to this situation with some protective measures in the late 2000s. The aim of the project was to implement programs of large farm development. Unfortunately, the project was unable to succeed as surplus profit could be made only if the farm was located in one place, which meant that individual owners of small holdings had to agree to combine their land in practice. Individual farmers did not always agree to be part of larger farms (Abdurasulov, 2009).

**Figure 5.1. How much land does your family own?**



Source: Survey of 147 households conducted in Toolu in September 2010.

However, the market economy has not turned all families into wage-seeking labourers as only 6.8 per cent of households did not own their land in Toolu. Nevertheless, the tendency towards the development of a group that mostly rely on wage income has started as such families do not own any means of production (Marx & Engels, 1998). Some other families owned means of production in the form of cars, machinery, land and livestock.

There are 18.4 per cent of households that own between half a hectare to 1.5 hectares of land, struggling to produce much surplus product for the market as their land

shares were too small. Around twenty-two per cent of families owned from five to ten hectares and thirty-two per cent were able to cultivate from three to five hectares. Only a minority of 1.4 per cent of households had a land share of fifteen to thirty-three hectares and were able to increase the production of surplus products for the market. These families were able to increase their land share since the government, under the pressure from international organizations, allowed the full privatisation of land in 2001.

However, the uneven distribution of land among the families in Toolu did not emerge only through the full official process of land privatization. Even in the initial stages of the process, when land was distributed to families and some was sold on auctions, wealthier families were able to secure larger shares of land for themselves and their families. These were the families that most profited from privatization of state assets as they had connections with the authorities, received information about auctions and moreover had available cash at the time for purchasing land.<sup>1</sup> For instance, one such family received five hectares of land during the privatization period and also could buy an additional twenty hectares of land in auction in 1994. As Aigul, a forty-six year old woman whose father-in-law was a kolkhoz *predsedatel'* (leader) just before the dissolution of all state farms, explained:

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<sup>1</sup> Stratification already existed among rural population in Kyrgyzstan during the socialist economy (Steimann, 2011). Steimann (2011) provides a detailed account of how this happened in some villages in Naryn oblast in Kyrgyzstan. During the Socialist period, kolkhozes employed a small number of people as kolkhoz directors, accountants, technical staff, and herders with an all the year round fixed wage. While the rest of the agricultural workers, usually women, were employed on a seasonal basis and were paid, according to the time worked for kolkhozes. They had to seek other ways of sustaining themselves through breeding livestock, cultivation of plots of land next to their houses. At the same time, kolkhoz leaders, accountants and some technical staff could profit from formal (such as regular wage, premiums) and informal benefits (such as having more livestock than it was allowed, putting them together with the kolkhoz livestock for free in some cases) (Steimann, 2011: 113). Even though herders did not have good salaries they were able to make informal benefits by having more livestock than was allowed. As a result, during the privatization period there were families that had cash and connections to turn that cash into big investments.

We received five hectares of land [during privatization], and bought in an auction twenty more hectares in 1994. We bought it for cash, where we had to pay the twenty-five per cent at that moment and repay the rest over the following four years. Ten hectares were irrigated and ten hectares were not irrigated land. The land that we received for the family was three hectares of irrigated and two hectares non-irrigated land. My husband heard in Tyup that there was an auction for the land near the forest. The ten hectares were sold from the top of the hills. Each hectare of land without irrigation was 2700 som (₸38) and each hectare of irrigated land was 4800 som (₸68). First we cultivated only two hectares of land and then increased it bit by bit. Now we cultivate all this land. The fifteen hectares are cultivated with wheat and the rest with barley. We also cultivate additional land which we take for rent – about ten hectares. We rent from families that moved out from the region. We pay the taxes for the land. We started renting this land five or six years ago. We cultivate wheat there as well.

As identified in the interview with Aigul, such well-off families did not only cultivate their own land, but also rented from other families and local authorities from the National Land Fund that was left under their control and management. This is an additional but important aspect to consider in my analysis of land cultivation as it reveals that the information about land ownership fails to provide the full picture of land cultivation. There were individual farmers that could not, or did not, want to cultivate their land and therefore rented it to others. Usually these were the poor families that despite receiving land at the earlier stages of privatization were not able to cultivate it. The family history of Sonun, thirty-six year old mother of five children, provides details of how this happened. As she recounts, they could not gain much support from their parents during the 1990s because they had no assets themselves. Here is her family's story:

My father-in-law died fourteen years ago and my mother-in-law died six years ago. They had ten children. If you try to split what was left from them how much can each get? We received land during privatization but we had

neither wheat seeds nor oil to cultivate it. How we were going to cultivate it? We cultivated for the first three to four years. But after that we stopped and just lent it to people. So what? It is one-thousand som [£14] per year. Last year was very dry and no one took it from us. This year as well. We could barely cut the grass from the land for our livestock.

Therefore, while, the agricultural activities allowed for the majority of families to produce crops for their own consumption and a small amount for the market, there were two groups of families that can be located at the two extreme sides of the well-being spectrum. There was a tiny minority of 'well-off families' that owned and rented large fields of land for cultivation, producing most of the agricultural surplus coming from the village to the market. They also owned large stocks of farm animals – cows, sheep, goats and horses – wealth in a mountainous rural region. Opposed to this group, there was also a small group of 'poor families' that could barely stay afloat. Most of them did not cultivate any land and owned no livestock. They had to find ways of earning money to be able to buy food, therefore becoming wage earners. According to many people, the majority of families belonged to the third group of 'average families'. Such families still legally owned their land and could cultivate it. However, even they struggled to maintain their agricultural activities every year. Bad weather, and a poor harvest as the result of it, could basically leave them with no food and seeds for cultivation for the next year. With no cash for seeds and oil, they were forced out of agriculture for years, increasing the number of people trying to find work on the job market.

### **Uneven price distribution.**

One of the main reasons for unsustainable conditions in the agricultural economy lay in the fact that the ideology of the free-market providing for all according to their input was an idealised project. In practice, prices were unevenly distributed on the market. Similarly to other agricultural economies facing uneven price distribution for agricultural inputs and their

own products on the market (Carrier & Klantschnig, 2012: 60; Perrotta, 2002: 177, Scott, 1977: 105), Toolu farmers calculated that their products actually made very little. It should be noted that some of these agricultural communities turned to illegal drug production as a response to a similar situation (Watt & Zepeda 2012: 46).

According to Mahabat's calculations, her family needed fifty litres of petrol for cultivation and harvesting per hectare of land. They also needed to pay for cultivation services. After adding the price for cultivation, harvesting and transportation to bring the harvest from the fields, when in some years the harvest failed most of the farmers could barely cover the expenses of their agricultural inputs. However, they still tried to cultivate land at any expense as the harvest would at least be enough for food consumption. Therefore, according to the survey results only around 12.3 per cent of farmers in Toolu did not cultivate their land in 2010. Most of them cited financial constraints as the main reason.

Again, as with the case of agricultural crops, the price of livestock was not always high in comparison to the goods that farmers were supposed to purchase. The price of one sheep sold at market would be just enough to supply the clothes of one child for autumn. The families that had livestock would try to dedicate more than one sheep or a calf for winter clothes for their children. As Tolubai puts it: 'I grab a lot of cash and go to the market thinking how much I have got and when I get there it is almost next to nothing'. Similarly, many complain about the unequal distribution of prices for their agricultural and market products. Cholponkul, a thirty-three year old woman, explained that she took four thousand som to the market, which could be the price of one sheep, and could barely afford the minimum of necessary clothes for her three children to go to school. Elmira was also disappointed about the prices in the market:

We have our own wheat and potatoes but the rest is bought. For example, when we make jam we buy all the fruits. We buy apricots and raspberries. This year all our apricot trees froze in spring, so we have no apricots. We bought one bucket.

If food and clothes for children are a constant struggle, the education of older children brings even bigger expenses for parents. Giving a chance to their children to study at a university level and receive a higher education was considered as one of the parental obligations in many families in Kyrgyzstan. Indeed, since the independence of the country the number of university students quadrupled compared to the Soviet period (DeYoung, 2011). When the children first enter higher education institutions, most families feel that they cannot keep up with the tuition fees. The fees range from 15,000 to 20,000 som (£214-£285) per year and are supposed to be paid for at least four to five years of higher education.

There are further factors that prevent farmers from producing a surplus. The lack of a constant water supply, combined with harsh weather conditions in the mountainous region located at 1600 metres above the sea level, also means that farmers are prevented from increasing their harvest. Due to the harsh climate people cannot collect big yields as in other parts of Kyrgyzstan. According to the farmers, in Tyup region where Toolu is located, they can only collect a maximum of thirty tonnes, while in Chui oblast, located in the lower valley, the yields could reach seventy to eighty tonnes per hectare. The average yield in Toolu was fifteen to twenty tonnes. In addition, the lack of an irrigation supply in some areas of cultivated land can result in failure to harvest most of the yield.

### **Uncertainty and irregularity of incomes.**

The market conditions create additional factors that contribute to farm insolvency for a majority of Toolu families. The other problem faced by farmers in Toolu is the fluctuation in prices for their products. As the price is not regulated by institutions, it varies every year; and farmers' decisions to cultivate a certain product are always based on the previous year's prices. If potatoes were sold for a good price one year, than almost everybody would be cultivating potatoes the next. This would bring the price of potatoes so low that they could scarcely make a respectable profit. For instance, Dokturbek spoke of one year when

potatoes were so cheap due to overproduction that everybody decided to keep them until spring when the prices usually get better. But, the situation had not changed by the following spring. In fact, the price fell even lower and many farmers were unable to make a return on their invested money. Consequently, farmers are constantly frustrated by price fluctuations and speak of the need of support from the state; which could have assisted them through the purchase of their products at a fixed price. According to farmers, it would have helped them to feel a bit more secure and not be facing bankruptcy through trying to cultivate their own land. However, the state made no attempt to fix the prices as this would go against the principles of the 'free market' and the agreements signed when joining the World Trade Organization (Fillipova, 2009).

### **Hashish as a source of economic security.**

The findings of my study confirm the argument that not all drug producers are motivated only by profit seeking rationale (Hobbs, 2004). I argue that although farmers made profit out of making hashish, in many cases they were not greedy and made hashish just enough to cover some of their expenses.

In Toolu, as everywhere else, farmers have numerous motivations to be part of the cannabis market. Most farmers that make hashish or work as middlepersons between hashish makers and dealers try to earn that extra bit of cash that was always in deficit in the village. They only made hashish to allow them to stay afloat and help survive in hardship times. However, there were some that were clearly involved in drug making and selling, not only to cover their basic needs and to ensure economic and social security, but also to make large profits. Occasionally, there were some middlemen/women that wished to make a quick profit and therefore asked around the hashish makers if they could sell their hashish to them. I was told by Jamilya (my second gatekeeper), that her *abydyn* (her husband's brother's wife), despite owning a combine for harvesting wheat and a big truck for transportation, large land and big stocks of farm animals, wanted to buy some hashish to resell to drug dealers guided more by 'greed' than 'need' (Potter, 2012). In general, motivations guided by

greed were rare, with the majority of farmers following the motivation of a 'need' (Hobbs, 2004).

While many families struggled to produce surplus to the market, and to feel certain and secure in cultivating their land, hashish was one of the products that was on demand in the market and provided them with a stable income. Similarly, drug crops are more profitable than other legal crops in almost any drug producing community in Afghanistan, Bolivia, Mexico, Mozambique and Burma (Perramond, 2004: 211; Singh, 2007: 190; Steinberg, 2004: 179; UNODC, 1999; Watt & Zepeda, 2012: 46). Although farmers in Toolu earned less than drug dealers trafficking hashish to Bishkek and other regions as the case in many other drug producing communities across the world (Reuter & Greenfield, 2001), farmers were still able to earn a good income from making hashish.<sup>2</sup>

The advantage of making hashish, similar to other drug crops, is that the price did not fluctuate much compared to other crops (Perramond, 2004; Sanabria, 1993; Steinberg, 2004). In the summer of 2010, one matchbox could be sold for three-hundred and fifty to four-hundred and fifty som (£5-6). The price doubled up to eight-hundred som (£11) in the winter, and tripled to one-thousand five-hundred som (£21.40 p) in the spring of 2011.

However, despite the price difference between drug and agricultural crops, studies on drug production in other agricultural communities reveal that many farmers use intercropping strategies to be able to grow crops at different times (Hobbs 2004: 298; Sanabria, 1993; Westermeyer, 2004). They mainly use drug crops for gaining social and economic security and do not intend to stop cultivating other crops that do not generate as much cash.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, people involved in hashish production do not cease cultivating their

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<sup>2</sup> As in other drug economies, the drug producers earned much less than the traffickers and dealers. For instance, the retail price in Bishkek was recorded at 2000-2500 som (£28.5 - £35.7 p) per matchbox for the same period (Aidarov et al, 2012, p. 85).

<sup>3</sup> This kind of strategy was used until drugs such as coca and opium did not increase substantially in their price due to prohibition policies. The rapid price increase for an illegal drug meant that a different group of actors

land with wheat, barley and potatoes. In contrast, they do not cultivate their land with cannabis plants. Making hashish is seasonal work, as cannabis plants are ready for harvesting only in July, August and beginning of September.

As with other drug producers, whenever they have other opportunities that are less risky and more profitable, Toolu farmers are eager to abandon their hashish making activity (Westermeyer, 2004). For instance, in 2009, the price for garlic went up due to the flu epidemic in Russia. Garlic is believed to be a natural remedy for flu and as a consequence the price jumped from thirty som (40p) per kilogram in autumn 2008 to one-hundred and eight to two-hundred som (£2.6-2.9) in 2009. Those that cultivated garlic that year were able to make a good profit. However, the next year the price fell to sixty som (90p) due to the cheap garlic imported from China. Sonun, who was fortunate enough to sell her garlic for a good price the previous year, hoped to get similar revenues in 2010. But instead she had to go and pick strawberries in Chui, near Tokmok as the garlic they cultivated did not make the expected cash. The money that she earned in Tokmok, where she went with one of her daughters, allowed her family to not rely on hashish money as much. In 2010, instead of four family members – Sonun, her husband and two of their daughters – it was only Tilek, Sonun's husband, who was making hashish due to low demand for builders that year. Sonun's only daughter was also considering migrating to Russia where they had some relatives who asked her to look after their son.<sup>4</sup>

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become involved in drug markets, primarily for big profit-seeking purposes (Sanabria, 1993; Westermeyer, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> They would pay her a salary of equivalent to 10,000 som (£142). Although migration to Kazakhstan and Russia is one of the main ways of dealing with 'cash hunger' in other regions of Kyrgyzstan, especially southern oblasts of Batken, Osh and Djalal-Abad where almost every family would have at least one member working in Russia, the number of people migrating from Toolu was not very big. Migration to Russia from the village started only in the mid 2000s. Usually young men in their early twenties would migrate with the purpose of finding jobs in construction.

Some other families chose to stop making hashish when they were offered good payment for their work. However, in most cases, the higher payment was offered only outside of the region and then only through the connections they had. For instance, Elmira's husband, together with another ten men, was able to go to Chui oblast to work as a driver of a big truck. As one of the former villagers was working at the poultry factory, which needed additional workers during summer time, they were all invited there for the summer. As Elmira explains, she also went there three years earlier to collect eggs in the factory, while her husband was working as a driver. She recalled in the interview:

I did not go this year. My husband went only for one month. He only went during harvesting time. For one week they paid twelve-hundred [₸17]. He worked a bit more than a month and received six-thousand som [₸85]. They also gave a premium salary for a good work – three-thousand som [₸42]. This year the harvest was very good there. They gathered about seven-hundred tonnes of wheat. That's why they added premium money.

In comparison to what they could earn in the village and even the region, their salary was quite good. As Elmira explained, she and her mother-in-law used to make hashish a few years previously. But the temporary job that they had at the poultry factory three years before helped them to come back with enough money to start new businesses. Her husband was able to buy an old car and work as a taxi-driver on an everyday basis, transporting people and goods to Kara-Kol city and back. Their car allowed them to open a gasoline selling business as well. As a result they did not have to go to fields to make hashish.

However, not all families were able to stop making hashish because if they did not have a business that created revenues on a daily basis, the money that was earned outside of the village would dry-up after a few months and they would still have to find ways of earning money within the village, which were scarce. This happened to Saikal's family which had also travelled to Bishkek where they worked for an entire year building somebody's house. They lived with their three children on the building site in order to save money and had returned a year before with thirty-thousand som (₸428). They were then able to afford

good clothes and invest in a cow. However, after a few months in the village, their money ran out as they had no other income. Saikal's husband was forced to continue making hashish in the summer and work as a builder in winter. As other studies also reveal, attempts to shift into the legitimate economy among both drug producers and dealers can be successful but often fail (Borgious, 2003, Westermeyer, 2004: 119-120).

### **Diversification of Income Generating Activities**

As has been shown, hashish production has become one of the core diversification strategies used by the Toolu families. This is line with the findings of other studies on drug markets (Hobbs, 2004; Steinberg, 2004; UNODC, 1999). As I argued above, the majority of families in Toolu did not starve in the 2000s, but still had problems with maintaining their agricultural activities due to the inherent characteristics of the market economy and subsequently had to diversify their activities just to be able to stay afloat.

While the agricultural economy was turning into a semi-subsistence economy for the majority of those families that owned little land, it was still 'incorporated into and dependent on cash incomes and market economies' (Steinberg, 2004: 178). With the neoliberal economy dominating economic policy around the world, many agricultural communities either in South-East Asia, or Central and Latin America, found themselves operating in market economy conditions (Andreas, 1995; Scott, 1977; Steinberg, 2004; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). The policies of personal entrepreneurship promoted by the state and international organizations created, although unintentionally, ideal conditions for drug production to expand beyond a shadow economy (Andreas, 1995).

For farmers in Toolu, buying some of the food, seeds, oil for cultivation and harvesting, buying clothes for children in preparation for school, paying for their university education, or taking part in reciprocal social networks became challenges that were encountered on an everyday basis under the marketization of the economy. Due to the

prices of other products purchased on the market being constantly high, and at the same time the lack of appropriate job opportunities (Yalcin & Kapu, 2008: 195), new conditions under which people would have to be entrepreneurial and seek other ways of earning money emerged. If cultivation of land was done in order to secure food and provide a small amount of cash, farmers needed to find more substantial ways of earning money. As Weber (2002) argued, the development of modern capitalism would not be possible without a new ethos adopted by middle classes that promoted the systemic pursuit of profit.

Consequently, some attempted to increase the number of livestock they owned; others became involved in small-scale entrepreneurship; while some were forced to take on any type of manual work. Similar to rural farmers in other agricultural economies in Mozambique, Nigeria, Bolivia and Afghanistan where families had to diversify their sources of income through the production or selling of drugs (Hobbs, 2004: 298; Singh, 2007: 190; Sanabria, 1993: 45; UNODC, 1999), hashish making was one of the activities that helped families in Toolu to generate profit quickly. Before turning to the discussion of hashish production, though, I first present how farmers tried to diversify their income through other legal means.

Together with cultivation of land, livestock breeding was another important aspect of the agricultural economy. Families living in Toolu experimented with owning different types of livestock in order to have a source of cash that would secure them from lost yields due to drought, or unfavourable price fluctuations on the market, etc. Livestock was an asset against the non-food expenses that every family encountered in the market-oriented economy. Most families devoted their livestock money to bigger, non-food, expenses such as cultivation of land, winter clothes, tuition fees, and large celebrations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In 2009, the price of one horse varied from 40,000 to 70,000 *som* (£571- £1,000), one cow was in the range of 20,000 to 30,000 *som* (£285- £428), one calf could go up to 11,000 *som* (£157), while one sheep was around 4000 to 7000 *som* (£57- £100).

Figure 5.2. How much livestock does your family own? (percentage)

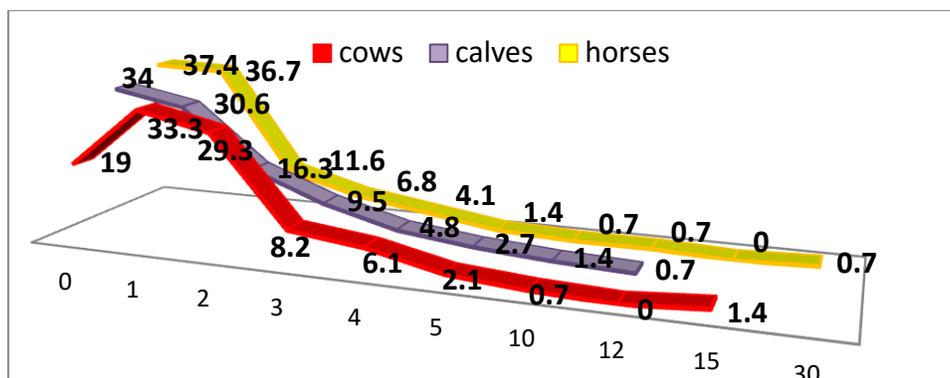
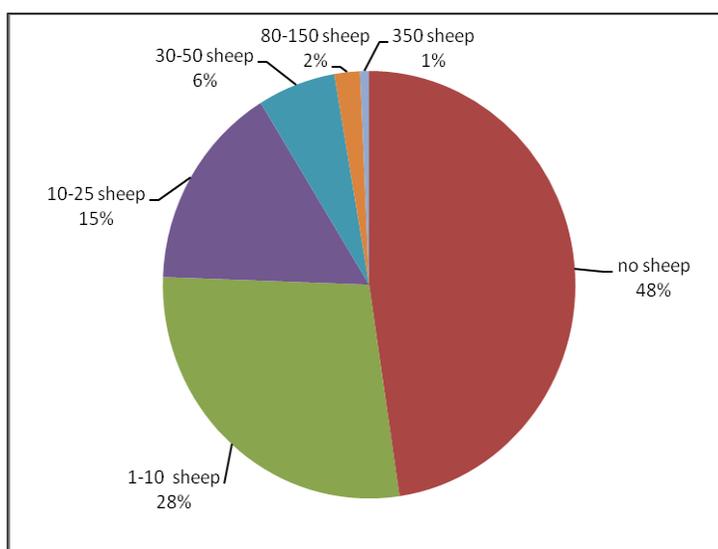


Figure 5.3. How many sheep does your family own?



Source: Survey of 147 households conducted in Toolu in September 2010.

As presented in Figure 6.2, nineteen per cent of families did not own cows. More than half, sixty-three per cent of families had one to two cows, fourteen per cent had three to four cows and only a tiny minority, around five per cent, had more than five cows in the village. Thirty-seven per cent did not own horses at all and forty-eight per cent had one to two. According to the data presented in Figure 6.3, around half of families (forty-eight per cent) did not own sheep at all, while twenty-eight per cent had between one and ten sheep, fifteen

per cent had ten to twenty-five sheep, and six per cent had thirty to fifty sheep; two per cent owned eighty to one-hundred and fifty sheep, and only one per cent had three-hundred and fifty sheep. The tendency was that the minority of well-off families would have the largest numbers of cows, sheep and horses. Usually such families were able to buy the old *sovkehoz* farms called 'BAZ' located outside of the villages and would keep all their livestock there, while employing entire families as shepherds and paying them monthly salaries. The average families that did not have large numbers of livestock would use the services of self-employed shepherds who would take cows, sheep and horses to the pastures from early summer to mid-autumn for a fee.<sup>6</sup>

Another strategy involving livestock was to breed calves and sell them at the market. For example, one of the ways of making a quick turnaround of cash was to buy young calves in the market in spring, send them to the pastures together with the rest of the livestock and when they returned in autumn take them to the Kara-Kol *baazaar* (market), the biggest in the region, and sell for a higher price. Some families breed calves during winter. Baktygul explained that they had one calf first, bred it and for the money they got for it bought two more for 7,500 som (£107) each in the autumn. After breeding these as well, they were able to sell them each for 22,500 (£321) in spring. Their investment did not stop at that and they bought a cow and two more calves with the money. One of these was then sold in order to raise money for cultivating their land. However, this type of entrepreneurship was open only to those households who possessed extra money.

The majority of families in Toolu try to have more cows than other livestock as this allows them, not only to own more expensive livestock than sheep, but also to earn additionally from their milk to meet everyday needs. Due to many factories buying milk from individual farmers, milk became a small cash commodity or one of the 'special monies' (Zelizer, 1997). Because sold milk generated some cash, most families would leave only a

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<sup>6</sup> For each sheep the owners paid twenty som and for each cow one-hundred and fifty som per month. The livestock owners would additionally pay the state taxes for sending their animals to grazing pastures.

small amount of milk for themselves and sell the rest. Each litre of milk was sold for around four to five som (5-7p) during 2009-2010. The milk of one cow sold on an everyday basis could make around five-hundred to six-hundred som every two weeks. Most families allocated the money made from milk to buying food and small household items. One of the biggest shops located in the centre of the village also collected milk for one of the factories. People found this very convenient as the shop owner could sell the products in her shop for credit. The shop owner retained information on how much each family was earning from milk and could sell her products for credit. For some families the milk money became almost virtual as they would have spent it all before actually getting paid by the factories.

The analysis of the distribution of livestock reveals how farmers employ different strategies in order to adapt to a cash deficit economy. Livestock money is used as 'special money' that farmers allocate to bigger expenses in the household; such as buying clothes, oil for cultivation of land, education and social celebrations. They try to keep their livestock as long as possible even if they need money for buying food. Cow's milk is instead allocated to selling and buying food products. Although sheep can also be sold in the market, most families that do not own many sheep try to keep them for food consumption, as a source of meat. However, not all families are capable of owning enough livestock that could be sold whenever cash was needed.

As highlighted above, some of the families that either did not own their land or could not cultivate it, and had few livestock, have to rely on their own labour to earn money. Having few means of production, they mostly turn into wage earners (Marx & Engels, 1998). Poor families usually rely on low paid seasonal and temporary work, and being able to buy adequate food and clothes is their main, often sole, concern. Zamira's husband, for example, would make clay bricks. Some men would attempt to find work as builders. Sonun and Jamilya's husbands worked as builders and could earn between two and three-thousand som (£29-43) on average. However, they earned only from six-hundred to 600 one-thousand (£9-14) depending on the type and availability of the jobs. There was not much building work going on in the village in the 2009-2010 period and these men either had to find jobs

in neighbouring villages or outside. Some were also paid for helping with transportation of hay. Some women could earn money by collecting the harvest.<sup>7</sup> Some poor women, like Cholponkul and Sonun for example, would have to offer their services at informal ‘job markets’. Cholponkul went and stayed in Kara-Kol city, while Sonun and her daughters went to Tokmok city located in Chui oblast, almost three-hundred and fifty kilometres away from Toolu, to be able to find work.<sup>8</sup>

While few families can increase their livestock and earn good wages, hashish production, although a seasonal job, could still provide families with decent revenues. As one of the interviewees, twenty-one year old Adilet explains, making hashish was more profitable than some manual work in the village:

You think of working as a builder but this [hashish making] is easier. Every year it was five-hundred som (£7) per matchbox, this year its three-hundred and fifty (£5). Last year, when it was five-hundred som, I earned two-thousand som [£28] in one day. No one pays you such money for building work.

Moreover, if marijuana, coca and opium plants in some other drug producing communities require some investment (UNODC, 1999), hashish production in Toolu requires no start-up capital from farmers because no one cultivated cannabis as they mainly make hashish from wild-growing cannabis plants. Cannabis plants that grow wild in the fields of the Karkyra Valley, and on land that was left uncultivated, provide farmers with an opportunity to earn cash in a relatively easy way. For the poor families it was an excellent source of income as they owned few assets, while for the ‘everybody else’ families it meant that they could save their livestock assets by not needing to sell for food and everyday needs. They could therefore try to increase their livestock or at least save them for meeting larger expenses.

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<sup>7</sup> They were paid two-hundred som per day.

<sup>8</sup> They did any hard physical work and were paid two-hundred and fifty to three-hundred som (£3.60 p - 4.30 p) per day in Kara-Kol and up to five-hundred som (£7.20 p) in Tokmok.

### Small-scale Trade and Hashish as Cash

Outside the agricultural activities of land cultivation and livestock breeding, some families in Toolu are able to become involved in small-scale trade as a way of diversifying their income generating activities. Small scale trade is mainly related to the average families who held some assets and cash to start their own businesses. This form of trade could not be started without initial capital and also required their own means of transportation to travel to the big markets in Kara-Kol city, as public transport does not exist and private taxis are expensive and infrequent.

Despite these requirements, some families were able to open small shops and kiosks where they sold products brought from Kara-Kol city on a daily basis. There were seven shops in the village, the largest three scattered around the centre of the village. The others were small and located on side streets further away from the centre. There was also one family which sold medicine, serving as an informal pharmacy in the village. There were also some families which were interested in becoming involved in trade but could not afford to open and run a shop from day-to-day. Such people will only sell clothes and household items on an 'on-and-off' basis. Aikan, who was my hostess, topped up mobile phones for a small charge. There were a few more families which also provide such a service.<sup>9</sup> As many people in the villages begin to use mobile phones this is considered a good small business that brings equally good revenues.

Aikan and Elmira's families, along with another five families in the village, sell gasoline all the year round. This kind of business especially requires their own means of transportation as they need to travel to Tyup or Kara-Kol most days. Elmira's husband is a taxi driver and combines his passenger trips to Kara-Kol with buying gasoline and bringing

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<sup>9</sup> They charged five som (7p) per each top up and earned 4.5 som (6p) out of one transaction.

it to the village. Aikan's husband brings gasoline from Kara-Kol where he works as a meat trader in the main cattle market.<sup>10</sup>

**Plate 5.4. Pictures of phone top-up and gasoline advertisements on the house and fence. The gasoline is stored in flagons and usually sold in plastic bottles.**



However, even the trade business does not create sufficient cash in the hands of entrepreneurs. Each seller had a book with the names of people and how much money they owed to the shop. Diana, one of the shop owners complained that it was difficult to have a

<sup>10</sup> In summer 2009 they would buy gasoline for thirty som and sell it for thirty-four som (43 pence and 49 pence respectfully) making four soms (0.06 pence) profit from each litre of gas.

quick turnaround because people would buy products for 'virtual money' written down in books and it would take a lot of time and energy to get the real cash out of them.

Diana also explained that that she did not practice payment by 'hashish money' in her shop. However, in some cases when buyers had not repaid their debt for a long time, they would come to the shop claiming that they could not sell a particular box of hashish and persuade the shop owner to take hashish instead of cash. Diana explained that she had no other opportunity to get her money back from these buyers if she did not take the hashish and that was why she would accept *korobochka*. The following case with Meerim shows in detail how this can occur.

I was talking to Meerim and at that moment her daughter came and said 'Apa [mum], there is someone who came for you, there is a woman who is looking for you.' When Meerim asked her 'Who is it?' the woman said loudly 'It's me!' When Meerim looked out to see who it was, the woman said 'Why do I need to run after you like this' and entered the house. 'I don't have the cash, the buyers [drug dealers] are not coming [to the village],' said Meerim. 'Give it to me in korobka [a matchbox] then. I will take like that,' said the woman. Meerim came back from the entrance room to the second room of the house where I was sitting and walked to the mattresses and duvets piled at the further end of the room and tried to find something in between the duvets. She took out one matchbox. At that time the lady entered the room, saw me and quickly left. She started speaking with a lower voice. After that Meerim came back to the room and told me that the lady had got a bit scared because of me as she had seen me writing something down. Anyway, the lady took the matchbox from Meerim and left. Meerim also explained to me after that she had bought a jumper and a skirt a year ago from that lady. However, Meerim did not have money and did not pay back for her purchase for almost a year. So, the lady had to accept hashish instead of cash.

As the above example illustrates, the cash deficit creates a context whereby traders are expected to be flexible and to accept the payment in 'hashish money' if they wanted to

continue their trade. Therefore in summer, hashish making time, this means that people can return their credit in a form of cash or at least in hashish as a form of surrogate money. Summer and early autumn, when hashish was made, is the time when traders and creditors return the informal credits and boost the sales in shops. It was not unusual for shop owners, credit-givers or one-off traders, to go around the village asking people to repay their debts. In early autumn of 2009, my hostess Aikan went around the village requesting that people repaid their debt for gasoline that she sold them earlier in summer for credit. She explained that she needs to make the most of the moment when people have cash as she started getting paid in large notes of a thousand som (₮14) for topping up phones and for a couple of litres of gasoline priced at thirty-four som (50p) per litre. This, she explained to me, was hashish money.

The history of the drug crops reveals that some parts play the role of cash in drug producing communities. For instance, coca was used as cash in some parts of the Andes by drug producing communities (Mayer, 1988 cited in Sanabria, 1993). As many drug crops play a main role as cash crops, not all are used as ready cash. While in the case of hashish, farmers do not always need to sell it, they can use it as ‘surrogate money’ (Anderson, 2000; Seabright, 2000)<sup>11</sup> by paying for goods in the shops.

The process of turning hashish into surrogate money began by placing it into a matchbox, called *korobochka*, which could contain around twenty grams of hashish. Through this, people are able to calculate how much they had made and, most importantly, how much money they can expect to earn on it.

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<sup>11</sup> The early stages of neoliberalization of the economy created a context of cash hunger not only in agricultural communities, and surrogate monies such as wechsels were used a lot in other post-Soviet countries as well (Anderson, 2000).

**Plate 5.5. Hashish in the matchbox**



Some shops and individual sellers accept hashish in *korobochka* as a payment for goods. For instance, in September 2010 Zamira told me that her husband was trying to make enough hashish to buy a horse for fifty matchboxes from somebody who was willing to accept hashish as payment. That year, if each matchbox was sold for four-hundred and fifty som (£6.4) in autumn, fifty matchboxes would make 22,500 som (£321). The price would almost double in winter to 40,000 som (£571) and triple in spring to 75,000 som (£1,071) hitting the highest price for the horse that a seller can get if he sold hashish at that time. Zamira's husband had already made thirty-six matchboxes by the end of August. He wanted to buy the horse, as he usually rented one for one *korobochka* for every three days in order to go to the fields.

However, this remains surrogate money because despite the fact that the matchbox frame for hashish provided its easier calculation and allowed people to know how much it could cost, hashish did not become a conventional means of exchange in every transaction. People need to consider who they were giving 'hashish money' to and if they had trustworthy relationships with them. Furthermore, people cannot openly go and spend their 'hashish money' in all the shops or sell to everybody in the village.

## Problems with Crediting and Illegal Hashish Production

Moreover, hashish making also allows people to get informal credit in different forms from their fellow villagers (UNODC, 1999). In a way, this responds to most of the pressures that the market economy has created for any agricultural community. While the agricultural sector was placed under the restraining conditions of a market economy, there was little assistance for farmers to rely on. According to neoliberal ideology, assistance, in the form of subsidies and protection, is considered as running against free market principles. Instead, giving credit to a population so that they can help themselves rather than rely on social security and welfare was promoted as the neoliberal solution (Rankin & Shakya, 2007).

In practice, few families in the agricultural sector have access to credit systems. Although in 2009, in total there were five large microcrediting organizations, 248 credit unions and 264 microcredit organizations and agencies operating in Kyrgyzstan (NSC 2010c: 72), the percentage of farmers from rural areas obtaining credits was very low. Only 4.3 per cent of farmers (12-16 thousand out of 321 856) received credits in 2008 in Kyrgyzstan (Abdurasulov, 2009). The problems of obtaining credits were related to tough terms of repayment period (Abdurasulov, 2009), lack of credit sources, high interest rates and red tape that many entrepreneurs in Kyrgyzstan faced (Yalcin & Kapu, 2008).

First of all, despite the need of farmers for financial assistance, it took a long time until banks and finance unions arrived in rural areas – opening branches only at the beginning of the 2000s. The first step in this direction was to make microfinances available to the population. One of the state banks, Agroprom Bank, was transformed into the Kyrgyz Agricultural Finance Corporation (KAFC) in 1997. It was subsidized by four international donor funding programs and other organizations until 2006.<sup>12</sup> It won a banking license in 2006 and was renamed as the AiyI-Bank. It aimed at targeting rural areas by providing credit for agricultural and non-agricultural activities (Ngo, 2008: 16). While other

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<sup>12</sup> The international organizations were World Bank's International Development Association, Asian Development Bank and United Nations Development Programme.

institutions preferred to finance mostly trade-related activities, with eighty-one per cent of loans provided for livestock breeding, Aiyl-Bank was also the one that supported agricultural development (Ibid, 2008: 17). In Toolu village, people started taking credit in 2005. According to the survey results, there were two families in my study that received credit in 2005 and 2006. By 2010 there were twenty-two families that were in receipt of credit.<sup>13</sup>

Second, the interest rates on credit were very high starting from twelve to eighteen per cent at the Aiyl-Bank, going up to twenty-six per cent in Bai Tushum, forty-eight per cent in Kompanion, and sixty per cent in Finca (Ibid, 2008). Most farmers in Toolu found the interest rates for credit too high and as the main reason not to take it from such organizations.

Third, although the Aiyl Bank tried to be flexible enough to reach different groups of the population and therefore had two different ways of lending money – individual and group loans – it still encountered problems in reaching all the population. The individual loans were those for which credit receivers were supposed to provide collateral; mostly houses, cattle and machinery. However, as poor families could not get loans through such collateral, group loans were designed to increase the access rate for the poor. For such group loans, the group played the role of collateral as members were expected to take responsibility if some members could not pay back the money to the credit organization.

Despite the attempt to reach the poor parts of the population through the group collateral system, only 4.4 per cent of all loans provided by the Aiyl-Bank during August 2006 were given to self-help groups with group loans (Ngo, 2008: 24). Such groups also had a high percentage of closures in the northern part of the country, where seventy-one per cent of all existing self-help groups had ceased to exist. In total, fifty-four per cent of self-

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<sup>13</sup> Out of those who took credits, thirty-one per cent did so to buy livestock, twenty-seven per cent to buy seeds, gas and pay for the cultivation of land, twelve per cent to build houses or make some renovations, and ten per cent, while experiencing financial difficulties, had to buy food or clothes. Three per cent purchased large farm machinery.

help groups closed throughout the country due to repayment and group discipline problems (Ngo, 2008: 32). These problems arose as some of the poorer members of self-help groups spent their money on food and meeting other necessities rather than using the money for agricultural production or business and therefore were not being able to pay back their share of loans (Ibid, 2008: 30). Thus, most of the poorer population could still not acquire credit as they were unable to provide collateral for individual loans and group loans would exclude the poor who were in fear of meeting repayments.

Furthermore, the requirement to pay the micro-crediting organization every month guaranteed that the financial organizations would receive their money, but in practice it served to create a barrier that prevented farmers from being able to access credit. For instance, due to such a requirement most of the families in Toolu, additionally to the requirement of having a property for collateral, also had to have monthly payments in the form of salaries and state pensions.<sup>14</sup> Although pensions and salaries were not *big* enough, they were still *good* enough to provide cash every month so that the families that were in receipt of loans could pay the interest rates. Some families that did not have such stable sources of cash experienced many problems in paying the interest every month. The agricultural conditions meant that the majority of families could not rely on regular incomes throughout the whole year as they depended on harvesting their agricultural products in the autumn.

All the problems with the delivery of financial assistance by micro-finance institutions, promoted by the neoliberal thinkers as the main mechanism for self-help (Rankin & Shakya, 2007), could only mean that in practice it was not designed to help. Their high interest rates, slow and careful entrance into the agricultural regions of the country, ignoring the fact that farmers had problems with repaying the money every month, showed that they were first of all business-making enterprises that calculated their earnings and losses. For the majority of Toolu farmers, this meant that the neoliberal economy left them

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<sup>14</sup> Salaries that teachers received from the local village school were about 1600 (₹22). The average pensions were about 2000-2500 som (₹28-₹35) per month.

under unequal conditions compared to other sectors of the economy, with a lot of pressures to stay afloat, keep cultivating their land, and to keep breeding livestock.

Among those who took out loans from micro-finance organizations, the schedule of repayments, once a month, and high interest rates were the main contributing factors for making and selling hashish. As formal microfinance institutions did not consider the specificities of the agricultural economy, where farmers could not sell their crops all year round and would be in 'cash hunger' in some seasons, people felt trapped by the harsh requirements. For instance, Nurgul, who made hashish regularly and also worked occasionally as a middlewoman, explained that her family had taken out a loan from microfinance institutions two years previously to build a small house consisting of two rooms. They had difficulties in finding money to pay back the credit, and therefore they could only think of getting another loan to be able to pay the first one. At the time of interview, they had three different loans to repay. Their solution was not only to make hashish, but also working as middlepersons between the hashish producers and dealers so they could make even more money. There were other families in similar situations that used hashish money for paying back their loans.

### **Conspicuous Consumption**

If farm insolvency worked as a push mechanism for diversifying agricultural activities, increasing 'conspicuous' consumption among the people in Toolu can be considered as a pulling mechanism. Despite the difficult economic conditions created by the market economy, this also brought new commodities and new desires to Toolu. As had happened in other drug producing communities, a global market economy that allowed farmers to sell their drug cash crops for a good price also allowed them to gain access to the goods the market was offering. Whether these were metallic pots for cooking, silver and iron in Laos (Westermeyer 2004: 121), or televisions, motorcycles or modern, two-story houses (Hobbs,

2004; 300), such goods were used as status symbols. Illegal drugs crops were therefore used as a source of consuming modern and western goods in many societies.

Well-off families, not only in Toolu but in general throughout the post-Soviet region, became models for the consumption of new status symbol products and services by sending their children to prestigious universities and buying expensive imported cars (Rigi, 2003). As status symbols, such products were mostly associated with foreign designer clothes, travelling abroad, and spending leisure time publically by going to restaurants (Ibid, 2003: 38). Cynthia Werner (1997) explains the desire to purchase imported, western goods in the early 1990s in southern Kazakhstan as a conspicuous consumption of elite groups (Veblen, 2007), which try to maintain their status-quo as it allowed them to differentiate themselves from other groups (Bourdieu, 1984). However, it was not only the wealthy that were subject to 'conspicuous consumption' patterns as even those who could not afford expensive items would still desire them as they wanted to imitate the fashion (Simmel, 1957).

Desire for the consumption of goods that were not easily accessible and were imported from the west and traded by black marketeers had already existed during Soviet times (Handelman, 1995; Ledeneva, 1998). With the neoliberalization of the economy and opening up of the market to the rest of the world through globalization, the population was promised Western standards of consumption (Burbach et al, cited in Passas, 2000: 29).

The media played a huge role in changing the consumption patterns of the population. In the first decade of independence, TV in general alongside films promoted an American Dream of material success and money (Passas, 2000). In the 2000s, together with western films, post-Soviet cinematography, especially Russian, promoted not just material success stories but stories of a post-Soviet Mafia (Kirmse, 2000). Such films provided the points of reference for young generations which imitated their styles. In the 2000s, the new locally produced Kyrgyz films also started popularising the ideology of material wealth and success.

However, the reality was that neoliberalization did not bring equal access to goods to all people. Even poor populations in developed countries such as the U.S. and UK were economically excluded while being socially included (Young, 2003). Social inclusion meant inclusion of the poor population into a cultural sphere dominated by consumerism. The economic exclusion meant that they could never earn sufficient money to participate in all the consumer ideals that were promised by the American dream.

The transformations that were brought to Kyrgyzstan by neoliberalization also indicate that there are some emerging patterns of this dual system of economic exclusion and social inclusion. In Toolu, for example, Ainakan's family, which was one of the well-off families, had two cars for different purposes. As Ainakan explained: "The Zhiguli"<sup>15</sup> was used for moving around the village and 'the Toyota' for going somewhere else. We used to have a 'Mers'<sup>16</sup> but it is too low for the village roads'. Such families use two different cars, as one provided them with transportation on difficult, local roads that have not seen much renovation in the last twenty years and the other car for going outside of the region. The old Soviet models were perceived as more durable and reliable on bad roads, while being easily repairable and less expensive than imported cars. Still, well-off families wanted to retain their imported cars solely as a status symbol, using them mostly for going to big celebrations and outside of the region where the roads were better. Some of the families also started holding celebrations in restaurants in Kara-Kol city (whereas the majority of people still hold celebrations in their own homes). Such wealthy families were the role models for the rest of the villagers and would set up high standards of consumption, which some average families tried to copy.

'Average' families, did not always succeed in following the consumption patterns of well-off families. For instance, the two story houses became a symbol of material success and some of the average families tried to build such houses for themselves or add a second floor to the already existing one. But not all could accomplish their goals. Due to a shortage

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<sup>15</sup> A Soviet car brand.

<sup>16</sup> The local name for 'Mercedes-Benz' cars.

of cash, they were not always able to finish the second floors and therefore they would stay unfinished and locked for some years. For instance, Aikan's neighbours decided to improve their housing conditions by building a two story addition to their small house but had not been able to finish it in the last seven years.

**Plate 5.6. Unfinished two storey addition to the house**



Werner (1997) gives a similar account of the imitation of the consumption patterns of well-off families by those which were not completely poor and sat between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'. In her study, conducted in the early 1990s, in southern Kazakhstan consumption of powdered drink mixes by wealthy groups was imitated by the middle groups (who added much more water than was required) (Ibid, 1997: 12).

Usually, 'average families' try to copy the well-off families in the decoration of houses, clothes that they buy, and food that they serve to guests. Ainura, my first gate-keeper, told me that the types of salads served to guests had changed recently. This was an important indicator of conspicuous consumption. It is traditional in Kyrgyz culture to provide the best food to guests. But over recent years, Ainura claimed, it had also become a matter of the high value of expensive ingredients. As Caroline Humphrey (2002) explains,

the predominant factor in consumption becomes a price, the higher it is the more prestigious the food becomes. Subsequently, according to Ainura, it had become considered as disrespectful towards guests if salads were made from cheap ingredients, such as potatoes, carrots, or beetroots which were common in the region and used to be popular ingredients in Soviet-type salads. The new market system made different types of products and ingredients available to the people. New types of salads were prepared with many more expensive ingredients, which could only be bought in Kara-Kol shops or markets (like grilled chicken, or sausages). This would be copied later by other people.

Although, poor families struggle the most in their attempts to imitate the buying patterns of the well-off and even ‘average’ groups, they are still subject to conspicuous consumption. Despite the fact that poor families do not have enough resources and cannot afford basic food and clothes, they also have the desire to imitate the buying patterns of the well-off and some of the ‘average’ families as these allow them to increase their social status. For their benefit, the market provides many types of products, including those that use cheap ingredients but which enhance the symbolic value by other means. For example, the following image shows biscuits with signs of various foreign currencies which were served at one big celebration attended by Aikan’s mother-in-law.

**Plate 5.7. Biscuits with the images of foreign currencies**



The biscuits in the picture were cheaply made yet their 'value' was raised simply through its depicting of foreign currencies. The 'currency' biscuits in the pictures cost fifty soms (70p) per kilogram while some other expensive biscuits could cost around three-hundred soms (£4.30 p) per kilogram.

Hashish production was one of the ways through which some poor and average families can try products that would not have access to at other times. With the money from hashish, people may be tempted to buy the more expensive food, alcohol and clothes offered in shops. They can buy school clothes for their children.

**Plate 5.8. Abundance of goods in the local shops during hashish making time**



They are able to purchase good vodka and some food that is usually not usually sold in local village shops at other times. They can invest their hashish money for preparing small feasts. However, only in rare cases are the hashish makers able to purchase large and expensive items.

**Conclusion**

This chapter on the nature of the market economy and its effects presents how hashish production is embedded within the local agricultural economy. The main argument of the

chapter is that the economic conditions of the rural agricultural economy can be considered as important contributing factors to the persistence of drug production in Toolu. This finding is in line with other studies that discuss the relationship between harsh economic conditions in which agricultural communities in developing nations operate and the associated illegal drug markets (Craig, 1983; Keh, 1996; Steinberg, 2004; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). Specifically, by highlighting the importance of economic transformation from state-planned to neoliberalism alongside farm insolvency issues in Toolu that developed as a consequence, I am able to contribute to the literature that discusses the links between neoliberalization of economies in developing countries with large agricultural sectors and illegal drug markets (Andreas, 1995; Watt & Zepeda, 2012).

First of all, the privatization of land that was one of the main elements of turning a planned economy into a market one, and that was to provide employment for the rural population, resulted in most of the farmers able to produce only enough for their own consumption. Although the amount of land distributed among the population in Toolu, as in other northern regions of Kyrgyzstan, was larger than in the southern regions with high population density, it was still not enough to produce large surplus for the market. It should be noted that a shortage of land in agricultural communities was reported as one of the main reasons for cultivation of illegal drug crops in other agricultural communities, as drug crops could generate much more profit even on a small piece of land compared to other legal crops such as wheat, maize and potatoes (Allan, 2004).

Additionally, as a central principle of neoliberal economies is market competition, farmers from the villages were expected to compete with other producers of goods and services. However, in reality they face uneven price distribution for agricultural inputs and their final products on the market (Carrier & Klantschnig, 2012: 60; Perrotta, 2002: 177, Scott, 1977: 105). Other studies reported similar cases of farmers turning to drug production, simply because marijuana, opium or heroin can generate bigger profits than legal crops from the same amount of land (Allan, 2004). In Afghanistan, for instance, the

income from opium is three to four times higher than from the wheat harvested from a similar-sized piece of land (Ibid, 2004: 147).

Third, similar to a study in Bolivia that discussed the importance of considering local socio-economic processes, especially the development of unequal relationships among the population of the Chapare region following the coca boom in the 1970s (Sanabria 1993; 2004), I have also provided details of how privatization of land contributes to the exacerbation of inequality among the rural population in Toolu. Rural elite families were able to acquire the main means of production – big shares of land, large numbers of livestock and the large machinery needed for cultivation and harvesting. This enabled them to remain in a comfortable position even during difficult years compared to other families. The majority of families struggled throughout the 1990s and by the end of first decade of the new millennium, some families were able to improve their well-being and consider themselves as ‘average’. Such families cultivated their land but were still unable to generate much income due to the small size of land. A small group of families were unable to improve their well-being, and either lost ownership of their land, or were forced to rent it out, having no resources for cultivation means having no control over the means of production. Although both ‘average’ and ‘poor’ groups experience ‘cash hunger’, poorer families become more dependent on a ‘cash economy’ due to the inability to produce crops for their own consumption. In these cases, all need to find ways of earning cash in a cash deficit economy.

In sum, crops such as wheat and potatoes can be used as cash crops. However, different factors such as the size of land, weather conditions and cultivation expenses do not allow many farmers to produce surplus products for the market. The market economy interferes further with the functioning of the agricultural economy. Price fluctuations for agricultural products create the context of risk when farmers cannot ensure a good profit for their invested hard work and money. A good price for a crop in one year may lead many farmers to cultivate it again the following year, but the results are often in the form of lower prices.

Their response was in the diversification of income generating activities by increasing the size of livestock, selling milk, working as builders, or working in the fields and making hashish. Livestock and cow's milk have their own place within the agricultural economy, playing a role of 'special monies'. If milk was mostly sold for extra food that families bought from the local shops or markets, big livestock is devoted to bigger expenses such as winter clothes, education, and social relations. Hashish takes its own place within this system. There other studies that also report that agricultural communities in Mozambique, Nigeria, Bolivia and Afghanistan diversify their sources of income through production or selling of drugs (Hobbs, 2004: 298; Singh, 2007: 190; Sanabria, 1993: 45; UNODC, 1999).

Hashish is sometimes used as surrogate money assuming the role of the cash that was in deficit in the village. Due to hashish never losing in its price and becoming more expensive over a period of a few months after the harvesting season, it turns into a cash crop. The difference of hashish production in Toolu from drug crops in other communities is that it is still produced in the 'old' and 'traditional' way (Kurtz-Phelan, 2005) by rubbing the leaves between the palms. Marijuana and hashish, for instance, produced on a large scale require the mechanisation of production as was the case in Morocco (Decorte et al, 2011). Moreover, in the case of hashish production, farmers do not require capital investment as cannabis plants grow wild in the mountains and are not cultivated by them as happens in most of the drug producing communities in developing countries (Steinberg, 2004; Watt & Zepeda, 2012; Sanabria, 1993, 2004). It also does not require the people to own any means of production, such as land. The only expense associated with hashish making is the bribe that some have to pay when caught by militia. Therefore, hashish as cash allows different types of the farmers, poor and average, to become active actors in the market. However, the farmers are not becoming greedy and follow the similar strategy of intercropping that farmers in other parts of the world employ (Hobbs 2004: 298; Sanabria, 1993; Westermeyer, 2004). They mainly use drug crops for ensuring social and economic security and do not intend to stop cultivating other crops that do not generate as much cash.

In general, hashish plays the important role of surrogate money in an economy with great cash hunger. Hashish is sold for cash and used as cash in some transactions, assisting not only the farmers who make it, but also those who work as middlemen/women between producers and dealers, shop owners and one-off traders. It allows small-scale trade to function in a semi-subsistence oriented agricultural economy. It also assists farmers in the harsh crediting system which does not adapt to the conditions of an agricultural economy. Hashish money is used to repay formal micro-finance institutions for the loans taken.

Illegal hashish production also allows the Toolu villagers to consume goods that they cannot have access to at other times as they would be too expensive and simply not available in the village shops. Again, as other farmers in drug producing communities use their drug crops for obtaining status goods (Hobbs, 2004; 300; Westermeyer 2004: 121), Toolu villagers try to enjoy small treats during the hashish making season. For some, this may simply be sweets and food, or expensive alcohol, while for others clothes for themselves and children, phones and DVD players. Only in rare cases are the hashish makers able to purchase large and expensive items.

The story of other countries whereby illegal drug markets are able to better respond to community issues than legal economies in the neoliberal era was repeated in Toolu. However, as with other drug producers, whenever they have other opportunities, less risky and more enumerative, farmers in Toolu are eager to abandon their hashish making activities (Westermeyer, 2004). Still, it remains difficult to become legitimate without many livestock assets, plots of land or a regular job in the village.

## Chapter Six

### The Moral Economy of Illegal Hashish Production in Toolu

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I argue that illegal hashish production should be understood ‘as a special kind of moral economy that helps producers to regulate their relationships to drug markets and toward society at large’ (Hakkarainen & Perälä, 2011: 76). People in Toolu do so by stating their non-compliance with the law due to the weakened legitimacy by the post-Soviet state as people had to survive without any state support (Thompson, 1991a, 1991b) and due to an inconsistent governance of hashish production by law enforcement representatives in illegal hashish markets (Tyler, 1994, 2004). However, Toolu farmers’ involvement in the illegal hashish production creates a moral dilemma as they do not consider themselves as part of criminal groups or culture. In order to solve this tension, while simultaneously carrying out an illegal action and continuing to uphold their moral identity, the community of hashish makers become engaged in moral neutralisations and justifications.

In the first section I discuss how hashish production can be located in the context of a general feeling of betrayal as people who were raised during Soviet times and exposed to the Soviet welfare system could not believe that the state would no longer provide the services that it used to do. If that state was not going to provide such support anymore and that improving their livelihood would take some time, then farmers realised that they had to survive with no state support coming. If this was the case, they reasoned, then it could not punish them for taking part in illegal activities that insured their own livelihoods. This historical distrust of the state underpinned the neutralization techniques they would subsequently apply to hashish making activities.

Additionally, the lack of legitimacy undermined the state’s moral impact over the population (Tyler, 1990). The high level of corruption among the elite contributed to the

feeling of injustice and therefore further legitimation of hashish making. The taking of bribes by some militia officers in the process of apprehending people with drugs, providing protection to middlemen/women for a fee, and sometimes offering trafficking opportunities to drug makers were all contributing factors in the de-legitimation of law enforcement and, as a consequence, of the state as well (Tyler, 2004).

In the second section, I move to a discussion of how illegal hashish production was turned into a moral activity. By changing the name of hashish and hashish making process, people were able to symbolically neutralize the negative meanings within the local culture. One of the ideas running through the chapter is that the way farmers were able to legitimate hashish making did not remain the same and was constantly revised and refined reflecting the changes that were happening in the community and wider society.

In the third section, I discuss the role of informal social control as one of the elements of the hashish moral economy. Informal social control ensured that hashish making was not transformed into a completely different type of drug market and farmers could still use the justifications of their involvement in this illegal but moral activity.

### **The Moral Economy of Hashish Production**

Many studies have shown that local drug production has been a significant part of many non-western societies (Cusicaqui, 2004; Ganguly, 2004; Pellegrini, 2013; Sanabria, 1993; Spedding, 2004; Steinberg, 2004). These have argued that drugs were commonly used for religious and social rituals (Sanabria, 1993: 45); or used as food and medicine for many centuries in China, South and Central Asia and the Balkan region (Keefer & Loayaza, 2010: 64). Coca had an important role in the mobilization of agricultural labour and mining and used as a relief from hunger (Sanabria, 1993: 38). Opium and cannabis were used as medicine in many Central Asian countries, India, and Afghanistan where they were cultivated for centuries (Latypov, 2012: 27; Mills, 2004). Opium was also used in local

wedding and funeral services in Afghanistan as it was a symbol of high social status (Singh, 2007: 42). Coca played a culturally symbolic role in Bolivia, providing the basis for the definition of 'indigenous peoples' and national identity (Pellegrini, 2013: 131).

However, unlike studies that argue that moral justification and legitimation was possible due to the traditional production and use of drug crops for social, religious ceremonies before they become illegal under global prohibition policies promoted by western societies (Steinberg et al., 2004), I show that drug production may be legitimated in communities where drugs are not embedded in local traditions. I argue that hashish production is possible as part of a special kind of moral economy.

The 1990s, when local farmers become involved in the hashish drug market, could be considered as times when people mainly perceived the state as responsible for the economic crisis that predominated throughout the years of transformation and consequently for their impoverished situation. During the Soviet period, *kollehozes* were part of the socialist planned economy, where the state provided welfare and protection to its citizens. Therefore, many Toolu farmers referred to the fact that local people became involved in making hashish at the beginning of the 1990s when the state withdrew all support and resources. In a short period of time the state, which used to provide all the work for the population and associated social benefits, pursued neoliberal policies which recalibrated its functions from protective to creating and integrating a competitive environment for the market economy.

In these years, hashish making could be interpreted in light of a 'moral economy' concept, which refers to the idea of justice based on the laws made by a protectionist state, or traditional values of support in rural communities (Scott, 1985; Thompson, 1991a). As part of this moral economy, people could refer to their right to work in order to provide subsistence for themselves when the state withdrew protection.

Although hashish was used for centuries in the Central Asian region, the strict control and criminalization of drug production and consumption during Soviet times was able to break the links between the drugs and their role in the local cultures and societies. People only remembered the production of opium in the region during the Soviet period and used this fact as a historical reference. During my research, traditional cultivation and use before this time were mentioned by no one. However, in relation to becoming involved in hashish production, they referred to their right to subsistence and work that they once had and the fact that they were left with no jobs after the privatization of *kolkhoz* and *sovkhos* assets and distribution of land to the rural population.

Most people, except those belonging to the wealthiest families, referred to the beginning of 1990s as the most difficult years for their families. Kalys, for example, remembered that '[t]he most difficult years were when we separated from the *sovkhos*. We did not have seeds. The government distributed twenty-six kilograms of wheat seeds for one hectare of land, while it needs two-hundred and fifty kilograms'. People referred to hashish making as a form of providing subsistence during these times of hardship. Tolubai, a man in his thirties, recalled hashish making at the beginning of 1990s, stating that 'people started to make it [hashish] in 1994-1995, when the Soviet Union collapsed. I think for two years some were making it secretly and in 1994 everyone started to make it openly'.

It should be stressed that this was not simply a form of making extra-money 'on the side', but as a vital form of income for surviving those years when the whole country was experiencing transformation at a rapid speed (Fitzgerald, 2005: 567-568). The government of Kyrgyzstan was frequently held responsible for being unable to provide or create jobs. People frequently claimed that, in the post-Soviet period, the government should have opened factories or other types of workplaces. Nurgul shared her views on this: 'We also think that it would be good if there were jobs opened for us. It would be good if something interesting [in terms of jobs] for the youth was opened. If it continues like this I don't know what might happen to the destinies of young people'.

The logic of legitimation then became simple; if the government did not support its own population by opening new workplaces then the claims that drug production was illegitimate became questionable in the eyes of ordinary people. They had to survive on some form of income, but the means by which they did this was a separate matter. The farmers in Toolu village were not alone in adapting to the harsh situations during the transformation times. People from across many countries in the post-Soviet region were surviving in any way they could. In Russia, during the 1990s, supplementing the low salaries of workers with covert earnings was widespread (Birdsall, 2000). Tolubai also shared his experience of making hashish in the 1990s:

It seems like every job has its own timeframe. Our parents used to work on opium, which was then switched for beetroot and potatoes afterwards. Now *kendir* [the local name for cannabis plant] emerged, coinciding with our own time. When it was the time of potatoes and beetroot, even school pupils were paid for their work. They had an interest [to work]. No one paid any attention to it [*kendir*]. At those times if we saw Russian men we would call them *nashakur* [*nasha* or hashish taker] and be scared of them. And now we are going to become *nashakur* by ourselves. But it is possible to change this situation as well.

Tolubai was referring to the fact that his grandparents and parents used to have work that was secured by the state and his generation was denied it. It was not just Tolubai, but almost everyone I talked to that explained hashish production by referring to the absence of jobs in the village; the fact that people had to earn money without many options available to them and most importantly the perceived responsibilities of the state in providing the jobs.

In general then, the expectations or *mentalité* of population as Thompson (1991a) puts it, was that the state did not provide assistance as it was supposed to. Farmers shared their opinion that instead of supporting its own agriculture, and providing good prices for the wheat produced in Kyrgyzstan, the state did nothing. People thought that the prices for their products were too low, while the government was buying agricultural products from

other countries such as Kazakhstan and Russia. The general perception was that the government could be more proactive and provide protection from the 'free-market' instead of leaving agricultural production unprotected.

### **Corrupted elite.**

Corruption on the higher levels of power created a situation where people felt that it was not just to judge them as criminal while everyone, especially those in power, kept violating the law. Discussing drug dealing in Italy, for instance, Ruggiero and South (1995) demonstrate a similar process of legitimation that was used by people involved in this illegal drug business. When authorities were corrupt, the assumption guiding the moral reasoning of drug dealers was that everyone could be involved in illegal activities (Ruggiero & South, 1995: 162). A similar logic guided the farmers making hashish in Toolu.

Therefore, the moral economy concept could be used in explaining how people felt that what happened to them was unfair when they compared their situation to the situation of the elite. As was happening in many other countries in the world, the marketization of the economy brought more benefits for the elite, rich sections of the Kyrgyzstan population. People usually referred to the rich on a national level, as an elite that sat in Bishkek and misused resources. Mass protests in 2005 and 2010 both resulted in presidents Askar Akayev and Kurmanbek Bakiev fleeing the country. This revealed how people across the entire country were eager to openly confront the elite and the fact that they were getting richer and expropriating the scarce resources that the country had. Both of these 'revolutions' were the result of agitated responses to growing publicity surrounding the corruption, and particular the nepotism of political elites, who used their political power to take over the running of many businesses in the country (Cummings, 2008; Temirkulov,

2010). During this period, it was not uncommon to hear jokes and gossiping about elites which would implicate their corrupt nature.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, even recent events that happened around *Kumtor* mining showed how the elite were implicated in corruption and how people felt that it was not just. The ‘Kumtor Gold Company’ was a subsidiary of Cameco Gold International owned by owned by the Canadian Cameco Corporation, which started working in Kyrgyzstan since 1994.<sup>2</sup> ‘Cameco acquired a one-third interest in the Kumtor Gold Company, the owner of the mine. Kyrgyzaltyn, the state mining company, received the remaining two-thirds interest’ (Gullette & Kalybekova, 2014). The mine was located in the Issyk-Kul oblast and contributed up to ten percent of Kyrgyzstan’s gross domestic product before 2011 (Kronenberg, 2012).

Mining in *Kumtor* became a source of protests and conflicts since 2012. Some people in Issyk-Kul oblast had organized picketing and riots that started in 2012 and continued until summer 2013. They had different demands. Some started as complaints directed to the corrupt nature of the hiring process and the fact that not many local people were given jobs in the company; but these continued with demands to provide economic and social support to the villages located in the Issyk-Kul region. Protests were finalised in further demands to nationalise the company as the state owned only thirty-three per cent of the share as the result of perceived corruption in the previous government in 2009. The picketers closed the roads leading to the mine, cut off the electricity and there were incidents of violent opposition with the militia. The agreement between Centerra Gold Inc and the government signed in 2009 under the presidency of Bakiev had been already been a topic of heated discussion in parliament and within the government since 2012. These discussions were

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<sup>1</sup> Although, some high level state authorities were either directly involved in drug trafficking of heroin from Afghanistan or provided protection for easy transportation within and outside of the country (Kupatadze, 2014; Marat, 2006) local people in Toolu did not discuss this aspect of elite corruption due to no knowledge of it.

<sup>2</sup> ‘In 2004 Cameco Corporation transferred its gold related shares and loans to Centerra Gold Inc.’ (Gullette & Kalybekova, 20014: 5).

centred on the loss in shares in Kumtor from sixty-seven and instead investment in Centerra in 2009 due to alleged corruption in the previous ousted government and ecological concerns around glaciers located close to the mining. The government's decision at that time was to invest in thirty three per cent of shares in Centerra Gold Inc. that had mines not only in Kyrgyzstan but in China, Mongolia, Russia and Turkey. The parliament was involved in heated debates and split between three different options. Some representatives of conservative oriented parties such as Ata-Jurt together with the general public argued for the nationalization of Kumtor mining. Some politicians argued for sixty seven per cent holding in a joint venture, leaving Centerra with thirty three per cent as it was until 2009. Some parties, such as Ata-Meken and Respublika supported taking a fifty per cent share in Kumtor in opposite of holding thirty three per cent of Centerra shares (Gullette & Kalybekova, 2014). Although the demands that people put forward could lead to different administrative, financial and political results, and rioting involved varied parties with different interests in escalating the conflict, in general they can explain why local people in agricultural areas become involved. They demand their share in natural resources that they do not, at present, have access to due to the corrupt nature of the previous governments who made unfavourable agreements with Centerra Gold Inc.

Although many people were part of the hashish production market for many years, they did not feel that could openly riot about the drug eradication measures, or militia arresting the hashish makers and sellers. However, they were able to raise their concerns about 'Kumtor' gold mining company and the need of economic and social support for population in agricultural areas. Moreover, the heated debates around Kumtor questioned the legitimacy of the state itself. If the government itself participated in corrupt agreements how could it therefore regulate other cases that were considered illegal?

**Inconsistent governance.**

Corruption of law-enforcement was a particularly essential element in many cases of drug producers being able to legitimate their illegal activities. In many other more profitable drug markets, such as opium/heroin and coca, state elites not only provide 'protection rackets' but also oversee the business on higher levels as was the case in Mexico (Watt & Zepeda, 2012) and Tajikistan (De Danieli, 2011, Engval, 2006; Paoli et al., 2007; 2009) for instance. Even in Kyrgyzstan, the heroin market was associated with the involvement of high level state representatives in the narco-business (Kupatadze, 2014). In the case of illegal hashish production, it is not common to witness such high levels of corruption and involvement of elites in this drug market. However, corruption among law-enforcement officers contributes further to the persistence of hashish making among the local population of Toolu. As Westermeyer (2004) argues, low-level corruption is as 'necessary to the drug trade as the high-level corruption' as it is considered even more crucial as it provides the basis for the corruption of the elite.

On a local level, the provision of protection (*krysha*) in Toolu by militia, as well as bribes taken in exchange for freeing and not opening files on people caught with drugs, were frequently discussed. If they were not caught themselves, people would hear such stories from friends and relatives. Drug makers were at risk of being caught almost every day during the hashish making season in summer and early autumn. Cases in which the militia were providing protection for some of the middlemen/women for a fee and taking bribes from the drug producers were not helpful in developing trust in the authorities and further legitimated the actions of local farmers. These cases therefore actually serve to enable the continuation of illegal hashish production as people could bribe to prevent prosecution.

Kalycha, a lady in her fifties, expressed her cynicism about what the militia was doing. She believed that the militia did not only take bribes but also sold on confiscated drugs instead of destroying them. The role of militia in the control of hashish making, in her understanding, was in earning money rather than standing on the protection of the law.

They don't tell us: 'Don't make it! It is harmful for your health. After you make drugs other people take it. They will take drugs and they can cause harm to you at the end. Someone will smoke or inject your drugs'. But, we don't have such explanations from militia. When they catch us they are just earning their bread. When they catch people they treat us like as a trove, a good catch. They start shouting and get excited. It is similar to hunting when hunters catch a game and become happy. They behave in the same way when they catch a boy or a man.

Do you think that militia officers are doing their work for the state when they seize drugs? Do you think they are helping people? You think they just take it and burn it in order to make it not available to drug users and not make people crazy with these drugs. You think that they want people to become better. No! There is no such intention. Militia officers want to buy clothes for their children, they want to make a living. They put crying, miserable people into their cars. They are very hypocritical. If they had good intentions that people should not really do it and that people should not break laws, may be people believed them. It is all lie that militia helps to protect me. It does not protect, I would rather say it oppresses people. Yes, it oppresses people.

The possibility that someone could actually 'buy' their freedom because they had more money does not make people believe that everyone is treated equally under the law. Instead people think that the law is only applied when someone does not have money or leverage with the authorities. The following excerpt presents Kanat's view on how law was implemented in Kyrgyzstan:

If you have money you are a nobleman. You don't have money then that's it. Then you will be treated according to the law. That's it. Probably even not according to the law. Even outside of the law, I would say. You don't have

money? Your case will be treated strictly according to the law. Sometimes, militia even tries to hang any other additional unsolved cases on you.

In most of the cases, local people know that they can bribe the militia officers. In Toolu, the militia have used at least two strategies to catch people in possession of or producing drugs. One of these was to try and catch people in the fields or nearby when they were returning to the village after making hashish. Their strategy was to arrive in unmarked cars and civilian clothes so that people would not be able to identify them as militia representatives. When the militia saw people near the fields they stopped them and searched for drugs. Those who were caught mostly tried to negotiate a bribe with the militia. In most of the cases they were successful and they were told how much money their relatives should bring to the car at a certain time, normally no more than two-three hours after they were caught. If the relatives were able and willing to pay the requested sum of cash then the person caught and held by the militia in the car would be released. The official papers that were filled out by militia officers would be destroyed so that the case would no longer stand. The amount of money that militia would ask from people varied from five-hundred to five-thousand som (₸7-71) depending on various factors, as many people shared their experiences of being caught by militia and the consequences of such arrests. One of the factors was how much drugs people had on them at the time of arrest. The more drugs they had the more money was asked by militia officers. Therefore, those who just made hashish in the fields and were coming back with a small portion made during the last hours would not be charged a large amount of money. In contrast, those who had a few *korobochka's* (matchboxes) of hashish with them for the purpose of selling to dealers were asked for much more money in order to be released with no charges. The price that drug sellers had to pay varied from five-thousand to twenty-thousand (₸71-285). Based on their experiences again, people knew that drug sellers were usually required to pay a higher bribe than drug makers. Jeenbek, a nineteen year old young man, shared his experience of being caught during a sale:

Our neighbours had some relatives staying with them. They said that will buy it [hashish]. I brought some from home to sell and was asked to come to the

car to make the deal. I was caught right after I sat in the car. I realized that they were militia only after that. My parents paid five-thousand soms [£71] and a sheep to release me. I was not taken into custody because my parents paid the money right away.

Some of the militia officers also provide *kyrysha*, protection for middlemen/women from militia raids for a certain amount of fee. For middlemen, there is a high risk of being caught with large amounts of drugs. For example, Nurgul was asked to pay ten-thousand som (£143) a month to be able to receive cover from militia. However, this was too expensive for her as she did not do such business all the time. So she refused the ‘service’ even though she knew that working as middlewoman without the militia’s backup was risky. Yet she could not resist making money when one of her old contacts came up to her asking to collect drugs for him. She told me that in 2008 militia entered her house using the different excuse that she had been ‘stealing cows and selling meat’ and searched everywhere inside and outside of the house. Nurgul spoke about her experience of being a middlewoman without cover:

I resell it [hashish]. Always buy from those women whom I know. I used to buy from everyone before. Those who buy [hashish] are registered<sup>3</sup> with the local authorities. Last year, militia came to our house with the charges that we steal cows and resell their meat in the market. They searched everywhere and dug up the yard. They were almost there but stopped just one millimetre before the place where I hid the hashish in the ground. I had seventy-five matchboxes. They did not find them. We bought them for client’s (drug dealer) money. We bought each for four-hundred and fifty som (£6.4). The person who trafficked hashish is from a different region. When I stayed with my parents after I got divorced from my first husband I used to help those who transport drugs. If everything is OK we benefit quite a lot. I am scared

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<sup>3</sup> She meant that some middlemen and women’s names were in the list made by the local authorities. The local authorities were told by militia to make such a list and know who is doing such a business.

now because we live in an open place. When we used to live within the village, in the middle, it used to be much better.

Thus, in order to eliminate such risks, those who work regularly as middlemen/women must have cover by militia and pay regularly for their services. In Mexico, for example, this is a common strategy for corrupted law-enforcement and elites to protect their own contacts and regions from raids and instead raid the regions from rival groups (Watt & Zepeda, 2012). In Toolu, due to the smaller scale of the illegal hashish market and the small territories in which hashish is produced, no rival groups have developed among corrupt law-enforcement.

The militia that have been paid a protection-fee by drug dealers do not therefore make raids on their houses and provide them with information on when other militia officers might come, or provide assistance if other militia officers arrive suddenly for a raid. Jamilya, who was approached by the militia to work as a middleperson told me:

If you would like to sell drugs all the time you would have to pay to the local militia. For example, he can say: 'Let's not go to this house'. Those people who sell drugs are able to work like that because they have *krysha*. Any ordinary person would not be able to work like that. *Krysha* could be someone from the militia, a lieutenant-colonel for example.

Moreover, local people believe that some militia representatives are also involved in the trafficking of drugs from the region to other parts of the country and beyond. Trafficking of illegal drugs usually provides easy money for corrupted law enforcement officers and elites (Craig, 1983; Lupsha, 1992; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). Suimonkul, a thirty-seven year old man, was approached by one militia representative to collect drugs for him. In the deal suggested by the militia officer, Suimonkul would only be responsible for collecting the drugs and the militia would take care of the transportation of the drug from the region:

Usually militia are also involved in trafficking of drugs. For example, if there were five kilograms of hashish seized, they put only two kilograms into the report; the rest of three kilograms would be sold for their own benefit. No one checks them because they transport drugs officially. Once I was told by a militia officer: 'Collect drugs for me, I will transport by myself'. But who believes the militia? No one believes. So, I did not work for him.

The lack of trust in the militia encourages people to be prepared in order to protect themselves. For instance, local people recounted one event when Kalycha's house was searched for drugs by militia, who arrived wearing black masks and uniforms, in August 2009. Her son told the militia that he would not allow them to enter the house unless he searched them himself beforehand. Only after the militia agreed and he searched them for drugs and found nothing were they allowed in. The militia, in turn, did not find anything in the house. At least that's how the events were represented afterwards in the community.

The low level of militia legitimacy in the region cannot only be attributed to the contacts that the local hashish makers have with officers in the fields, but also other representatives of the law enforcement system in general. For instance, even in cases when people are officially arrested and protocols dispatched to investigators, there remains the possibility of bribing the investigators and being released with fines ranging from five-hundred to five-thousand soms (₮7-71). As in the case of Cholponkul, who was caught by a militia officer and formally arrested, and was able to bribe the investigator to change the documents. Initially, when she was caught, she explained that she made hashish to buy food and clothes for her family. She was one of the people who had no connections to the militia officers and was unlucky to be picked up by them for 'statistical purposes', as they explained. Later an investigator explained to her that in line with the explanations she had given, she could be charged with drug production under the criminal code. In this case it would be treated much harsher than, for example, making hashish for personal use. The investigator himself suggested that he could change the protocols and provide a different account of her story, acknowledging that she made hashish for her own personal use and that her plea

would be filed under the administrative code and therefore treated completely differently. In this event she would only pay the fine at the end and not receive a criminal record.

Despite the development of new legislation on drug control, which attempted to decriminalize drug users but still deployed harsh treatments on producers, dealers and traffickers, in practice this policy had different results. As in other post-Soviet countries, law and its practice in Kyrgyzstan still retained the Soviet legacies of 'legally determined principles failing to translate into practice' (Beck & Robertson, 2008). The new law on drugs did not make the militia catch more drug producers and they were able to use this law for their own purposes; i.e. getting more bribes from the local people. Here, following Hobbs' (1988) approach to detectives and criminals in East London, it is appropriate to view the militia also in the context of entrepreneurial activity. According to Hobbs, detectives and criminals, groups which are formally on different sides of the law, both follow market economy rules and are entrepreneurial in their activities. For instance, detectives may 'close their eyes' in certain cases if it helps to strengthen their contacts and get them good deals (Ibid, 1988). In discussions of post-Soviet society and statehood, Volkov (2002) also adopts this approach and discusses Russian law enforcement and criminals as being entrepreneurial. Both groups follow the logic of enhancing material prosperity. Such an approach helps to see how the market economy creates the context in which the rule of law is undermined not only by the criminals but by the representatives of law enforcement. Similar tendencies in how police pursue 'money-making' activities, which are not necessarily legal, are found in other post-Soviet countries (Beck & Chistyakova, 2002; Beck & Robertson, 2009; Shelley, 1995; Levin & Satarov, 2000).

The case of corruption and involvement in informal racketeering are crucial in the process of the legitimation of hashish making. Villagers felt that if militia officers take money from hashish makers, take protection money from the middlemen/women and also become involved in selling and trafficking hashish themselves, then they are not really preserving the law and therefore everybody can be involved in some form of illegal activity. Humphrey (2002a:122) shows, for instance, that the militia's involvement in the racket

businesses in post-Soviet Lithuania, taking over some ‘protected’ stalls from the racket reinforced people’s distrust of the state in general. Studies on police involvement in illegal activities in western countries also reveals that it can lead to increased law breaking among the general population (Tyler, 1990; 2004). Corruption and the involvement of the law-enforcement in drug production, but mostly in drug trafficking by providing protection or being involved in this business themselves, was one of the main reasons why drug markets flourish in many other countries in the world (Thoumi, 2003; Watt & Zepeda, 2012; Westermeyer, 2004: 128).

At the same time, the law enforcement agencies make attempts to be seen as following the official discourse of controlling cannabis production. Again, if corrupt Mexican police officers create an ‘aura of effective enforcement’ by prosecuting drug dealers controlled/protected by groups rival to them (Lupsha, 1992; cited in McCoy, 2004: 30-31), Kyrgyz militia officers use slightly different strategies for demonstrating their ‘effectiveness’ in controlling hashish production. As such protection schemes are not fully developed, they take bribes from some and arrest others. Usually people who are unable to negotiate the price, find money, or refuse to pay to be released are taken to the local militia office. In some cases even bribes do not help them to be released without charges. This happened to Cholponkul, who was caught by militia officers and was unable to negotiate with them.

[That day] I just made one small portion and was coming back home. It [hashish] was in my sock. I was coming back like horse and foot to get home quickly. They caught me at the beginning of the street. They jumped out of the car and ran after me. I was with my daughter and my sister. They [militia] were in a green Zhiguli<sup>4</sup> with which they took us to Kara-Sai and filled the papers in. After that they took us to Tyup to the investigator. We tried to give money already here in the village. But they did not agree. They caught some other people on the same day in Tegerek village and took their money. They told us that if they catch some other people they’d release us. But they

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<sup>4</sup> Soviet type of car.

did not catch anyone else. They said we need to show results and that's why they arrested us formally.

Such a divide between the real practices of drug control and the information provided for official purposes can also be seen in the way that law enforcement agencies attempted to eradicate cannabis. According to the local people, the eradication of cannabis plants took place only in a small area with a high density of cannabis plants. Samagan, a twenty-two year old man, explained:

This year, there were militia who came to look for fields with wild growing *kendir* [cannabis]. They mapped the territories and then came and cut the hay and cannabis plants. It happened sometime in the mid August. I heard when I was in the village. We went to the fields in the car especially to see. They cut two-three hectares of land. *Kendir* usually grows on the land that was cultivated with wheat before and was left uncultivated. For example, the land that was cultivated for four-five years and then was left would definitely have cannabis plants growing. Last year, a lot of land was cultivated with wheat but because there was no rain the harvest was very small. This year much less land is cultivated because people did not have enough seeds to cultivate. That's why we have a lot of cannabis growing this year. And militia came and cut the hay on the territory of two-three hectares. They brought the mowing machine from the village. The driver of the mowing machine is my classmate and he told me before that he would go to cut the cannabis plants in the fields. He told us that it was planned but did not know the exact dates. There are more places where cannabis grows actually, in small territories. For example, there is land that also used to be cultivated in the mountains and stopped being cultivated, places of old sheep barns. We can say that it could be around fifty to a hundred hectares on this mountain, on that mountain. It used to grow in a lot of places. This year it is even more. So, they came and cut the cannabis plants. They brought TV with them. I was in the village right at that time. It was shown on 'Ala-Too' news. I felt bad when they

showed the Toolu village and people making hashish. We discussed it with friends, classmates. My friends said that there would be no results in showing it on TV. People got used to making hashish.

During my interview with him, the law enforcement representative, the Head of the Antidrug Unit in the Issyk-Kul *oblast* UVD,<sup>5</sup> only wanted to share the ‘official’ information aimed at creating the opposite image of successful law enforcement in the region.

We have done four *subbotnik* [cleaning days] raids in Tyup, Ak-Suu, Djeti-Oguz and Issyk-Kul raions. Before making these eradication raids of wild growing cannabis crops, the mappings were conducted by *raion* level units with the help of local administrations. They went to their *raions* and did full mapping of their territories. They mapped the places which were ‘contaminated’ with wild growing cannabis and how much land with cannabis should be eradicated. If there is a possibility they eradicate the cannabis crops mechanically. It means that they cut them down with tractors in places where the big machinery has access. In places where big machinery did not have an access we destroyed the crops with the help of people by organizing *subbotnik*. We just cut wild growing cannabis plants manually.

So, we did four *subbotnik* this year. The central administrative office staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs together with the staff of the local oblast administration went twice to such *subbotnik*. Together with an oblast administration governor, all heads of departments and heads of organizations located in Kara-Kol city.

In this region Tyup and Ak-Suu raions each have two hectares of land with densely growing cannabis plants. We went there and destroyed big batches of wild-growing cannabis – as much as six to seven tons of raw cannabis. It had nationwide mass media coverage. Journalists also went with us, they

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<sup>5</sup> The *oblast* level Department of Internal Affairs.

filmed everything. They covered the Issyk-Kul oblast and the whole country through broadcasting on KTR [Kyrgyz State Teleradio Company].

However, these measures publicised by the law enforcement system on a national level did not only stop farmers making hashish but damaged their own image among the local population even further. Local people could observe the fact that the areas in which cannabis plants were eradicated were too small and this campaign was done mostly for publicity purposes rather than for real eradication measures. Such 'symbolic' eradication of cannabis plants led to the development of a cynical view of the work of militia. In such circumstances, when higher authorities were perceived to be on the wrong side of the law, people believed they had no right to stop them from making drugs, adding more strength to the hashish drug economy.

### **Hidden Resistance?**

Distrust in the elite and law-enforcement does not lead to an open conflict between the farmers of Toolu and the state, as happened in the Chapare region of Bolivia, the Yi area in China, in Mexico and many other places in the world where, for instance, drug cultivating communities openly confronted law-enforcement to protect their fields from eradication measures (Sanabria, 2004; Watt & Zepeda, 2012; Youngming, 2004). Following Scott's interpretation of moral economy (1985), in recognising forms of sabotage, gossiping and pilfering as forms of hidden resistance, some studies argue that drug producing communities can also resort to hidden forms of resistance when they cannot openly defend their rights (Mills, 2004). For instance, as in the case of British India during the colonial period of the nineteenth century, farmers used everyday forms of resistance to the state, which was collecting taxes on cultivated hemp. Instead of rioting, the cultivators basically declared smaller sizes of land as cultivated by hemp. Due to the shortage of state representatives that could actually go and count, cultivators themselves provided the information on how much

land was cultivated. Therefore, as James Mills notes 'resistance could be subtle, difficult to detect, localized and small scale' being used as weapons of the weak (Mills, 2004: 221).

On the one hand, the illegal hashish production seems to be following patterns of hidden resistance. The farmers persisted in making hashish but did not openly confront the state. Instead, they continued making hashish while not actually cultivating it themselves, using only wild-growing plants. It was local knowledge that cannabis plants would usually grow really well on land left fallow and uncultivated that year, in the fields near the village and in far away pastures in the mountains. Thus, if the militia inspected the land for cannabis, and they found a few cannabis plants there, it was easy to destroy them without any risk of losing their hashish income. They did not have to defend land with cannabis plants as the cannabis grew on land that belonged to no one. They only rubbed the leaves. For example, Nurgul and Zamir, a married couple, by appealing to a higher authority (Sykes & Matza, 1957) such as God, expressed their views towards hashish: 'God created such a thing, if you rub it like this cash just comes off on your palms. It was created by God. Some people found the way of making it and then people learned from them'.

On the other hand, we see that people still had to legitimate their participation in the illegal activities by making hashish and selling it to dealers. People tend not to associate hashish production with traditions and local culture. Thus, it was considered not only illegal but also immoral among the local population during Soviet times. Therefore, people have to neutralize their own understanding of their involvement in this activity, as neutralization usually enables breaking moral rules while simultaneously upholding them. Although people feel that the state left them unprotected, elites and law enforcement agencies were themselves corrupt and therefore they had a right to make hashish as it provided them with money for living. However, they cannot easily overcome the moral tensions surrounding hashish among themselves and need to neutralize the negative connotation that hashish itself and hashish making has among people in the region.

Therefore, the use of neutralization techniques enables them to deal with their own understanding that hashish making is not only illegal but also an immoral activity. This originates in their view that hashish itself and hashish taking especially were bad. This aspect of hashish making requires much more justifications and neutralizations. Due to the local perceptions of hashish as a drug that harms someone's health when consumed, and in general to be not a 'good' thing, people are forced to use different tactics in order to be able to continue making it. In general, when discussing with interviewees about what was good and bad about hashish, almost everyone explained that the good thing about it was that people were able to earn some money and live on it. In the same way, it is generally considered that the worst thing is that someone, if caught, has to pay a lot of money to the militia; sometimes much more than they actually earned from hashish making. Interviewees also note the negative effects hashish has on personal health, particularly that of drug users. It was common to hear interviewees say '*nashanyyn tubu jaman*' which means, when translated from Kyrgyz language, that it will not bring good results. Subsequently, it is not described as a 'good' way of making money. The following excerpt with Joldon, a young man in his early twenties, relays such views of hashish:

Gulzat: Do you think it [*nasha*] is a bad thing?

Joldon: We think it is a bad thing. We all think it is a bad thing because what goes around comes around.

Gulzat: What does that mean?

Joldon: For example, if you make it day and night, get up early in the morning, do not finish all your household jobs, and only make it [hashish], do not do anything at home, than how much you're going to get as income will be given away.

Gulzat: Why do you think like that?

Joldon: Because it is a bad thing in the end.

Gulzat: Who told you that it is a bad thing?

Joldon: Basically, the *moldo* [mullah] says that it is not good to make it. They say it is the devil's thing.

Gulzat: Do you have a moldo in your village?

Joldon: Yes, we have. He tells us not to make it but we still make it [hashish].

Gulzat: Why?

Joldon: We need it for our everyday lives [*kundoluk turmush*].

To my question: 'Do you think *nasha* is a good thing?' Damira, a sixteen year old girl, replied that: 'On the one hand it is bad, and on the other it is good. So many people die, so somehow that might affect us. But, it is money. That's why I make it. Who would want to make it if we had money?'

In order not to lose their income from cannabis, and to still retain their sense of morality, people employ different tactics and techniques to help them feel better about their activities. Here, the 'neutralization techniques' concept can help to understand this stage in the complex process of the legitimation of hashish making. This concept implies that not all who are involved in deviant or criminal activities part of the criminal culture and organizations with their own norms of behaviour and codes. The concept, developed by Gresham Sykes and David Matza (1957; 1964), is used frequently in criminological literature to explain how delinquent groups do not necessarily act against the dominant culture, and even feel some degree of guilt about their illegal or deviant behaviour. However, they are able to use different techniques to lessen the guilt and continue with their law breaking activities (Matza, 1964; Sykes & Matza, 1957). By neutralizing the sense of guilt from being part of the drug economy, farmers in Toolu do not blame themselves for making drugs that others will consume and harm themselves.

The local farmers making hashish remain concerned with the criminal aspect of the hashish drug economy. In order to distance themselves from the criminal side of hashish making and further locate hashish within a more comfortable 'grey zone', they use another strategy which can be identified as denial of responsibility (Sykes & Matza, 1957) for the drugs that they made. For instance, most farmers who make hashish do not inquire where the hashish went. They are not interested in what happens to hashish beyond the production

and sale stage in the village. This lack of interest in what happens next is unrelated to the fact that people do not have any knowledge about it. Instead, it is a way of distancing their involvement in its production from its wider results and consequences; how it is consumed and what sort of people are taking it. It is easier to deny responsibility for hashish if they have no knowledge of where it went or who used it.

This process of distancing themselves from the product allows people in Toolu village to dissociate themselves from the victims of drug usage. Even though it is difficult for the drug makers to claim that there is no victim, the fact that the victim is not present in the community is one of the important factors of justification. When I asked about where the drugs go after leaving the village, most people did not know much about it and said that they were not interested in it. Tolubai said: 'Where does it go? Probably to America or somewhere'. It seems that drug producers who are usually located at the lowest level of drug markets do not have much knowledge where drugs taken from them by dealers are going. Similar situations were also found in other parts of the world where farmers produced drugs for global consumption (Smith & Thongtham, 1992). Coca and opium growers in Afghanistan and Bolivia also did have little knowledge of where drugs are going and how they are used (Kurtz-Phelan, 2005; Smith & Thongtham, 1992).

In my interview with Zuura she reported that: 'We hear about it. Sometimes, we see it on TV. Last year, I saw it in the news. It was shown how the matchboxes, like ours, were caught and were being emptied. Then we think, aah, yeah, they went there'. According to people's perceptions the victims were somewhere in Bishkek, the capital city of Kyrgyzstan, in Russia or another country.

Suimonkul thought half of the drugs went to Russia and other countries and the other half went straight to prisons in Kyrgyzstan. In any case, it was somewhere far away and abstracted from the production process. At the same time, it was consumed by criminals in the prison with whom nobody in the village associated themselves. Keeping the distance from the drug users then helped, first of all, to not see the victim and deny moral

responsibility for making drugs. Second, it served another function as differentiating drug makers from the drug takers who, in their understanding, were related to the criminal.

In terms of their own health issues, making hashish but not smoking it was justified by the local people. Melis, a thirty-eight year old man, for instance, said: 'It is good that there is no one who smokes it in the village. The smell of it is bad for the health. It is good for some people who have coughs. It was good for one woman, she went to make *it* for about four days, and her cough stopped'. As we see from this quote, making of hashish itself was justified in some instances related to health. It is believed by some that going to the fields where cannabis grows and sometimes making hashish helps those with health problems, especially bronchitis or problems with respiratory organs. A few women were believed to be going to the fields with regular hashish makers for such reasons, to improve their asthma and bronchitis conditions.

If hashish makers are actively involved in distancing themselves from the criminal side of this activity, sometimes they or their relatives use other tactics. For example, some of the farmers and their relatives can be involved in 'literal denial' (Cohen, 1993; 2001) of hashish making. This concept is useful because it refers to the fact that in some cases instead of justification of law-breaking behaviour, as suggested by the neutralization techniques concept, we can observe literal denial of any knowledge about what was happening. This form of denial is much easier to adopt by so-called 'bystanders', than those directly involved in the process of hashish making. Some young men declare that their parents or grandparents do not allow them to make hashish. But at the same time, parents never ask where the money their sons have comes from in cases when their sons have helped them financially or never ask for money, while knowing perfectly well that earning money was difficult in the village.

### **Interpretive Denial: Shifting the Meaning of Hashish and Hashish Production**

In case of hashish, people know that it is illegal to make it but they cannot simply claim that it is ethical as it has no cultural or religious use, as is the case in India, Latin American countries and Africa where coca and opium are locally consumed and/or used as part of local religious rituals (Allen, 1999; Coomber & South, 2004; Smith & Thongtham, 1992).

In order to deal with moral tensions about illegality and the immoral character of hashish production, hashish makers mainly adopt an ‘interpretive denial’ strategy (Cohen, 1993, 1996). This strategy is used by people when they are unable to deny the fact that they are involved in an activity that is considered as illegal but instead try to give it a different interpretation. Renaming of an illegal activity is one of the main techniques of an ‘interpretive denial’ strategy as it allows for the reframing of it into something less pejorative (Ibid, 1993, 1996, 2001).

Hence, farmers in Toolu attempt to negotiate the meaning of hashish making, shifting it from an illegal sphere to a more comfortable ‘grey zone’ (Ledeneva, 2006) located outside of a legal framework. The grey zone means that it is not always the question of legality that is important to consider; some illegal acts can be considered as ethical and some can be completely legal but unethical (Ibid, 2006).

Words taken from everyday culture, without negative connotations and links to the criminal culture, are used by people to further neutralize hashish making. By substituting hashish making and hashish itself with words from the everyday lexicon or not referring to it as *nasha* (the term used by law enforcement), local people try to transform the meaning of the activity. According to Matza (1964), language is an excellent tool, not only to hide the practice of an illegal activity from other people but also to help someone to believe that the activity in which an individual is involved is not wrong. Their case was not unique, for instance criminologists have found that in some cases people involved in illegal activities would also use different terms such as ‘helping each other out’, ‘getting cheap stuff’ which

not only obscures the illegal nature of their activities but also makes them believe that they were doing nothing wrong (Henry, 1978; Hobbs, 1988).

Different names with various symbolic meanings and ways of interpreting them are ascribed to hashish itself as well as the hashish making processes. This occurred over a comparatively short period of time – the last twenty years. The names given to hashish itself and hashish making do not only hide their illegal and immoral nature but also reflect the role that hashish subsequently assumes in local economy and culture.

Hashish producers actively use this strategy in their process of legitimation of hashish production. For example, it is employed when people simply use the word *it* to talk about hashish. On a number of occasions I conducted interviews with people who made hashish and talked about it by using only the word *it*. This can be seen in a number of quotes from across the interviews; in fact, it seems that many people talked about hashish, referring to *it*, without even noticing it.

In many of my conversations people would say ‘I went to fields, I earn money by going to fields’. They would also say ‘let’s go to *Arkybet* [the other side of the hill], ‘let’s go to the mountains’ or ‘let’s go to the forest’. Aikan said that when people wanted to sell hashish they would say: ‘I want to sell a matchbox, I have a matchbox’, showing the different ways in which local people communicated with each other about hashish.

### **Hashish as *kara-koi*.**

As argued above, by locating hashish in the culturally accepted and highly valued sphere of gift-exchange people are able to remove the negative connotation attached to hashish and move it from an illegal sphere to a ‘grey zone’ (Ledeneva, 2006). This was evident during my initial research in 2005 when I observed hashish being called *kara-koi*, which can be literally translated as ‘black sheep’. It was referred to as *kara-koi* as for some time it was used as a

substitute for gifts in celebrations at the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s. As people explained, sheep or other livestock such as cows and horses are one of the main types of gifts close relatives exchange with each other at big celebrations. However, the 1990s were marked by huge transformations coupled with the majority of the population becoming concerned primarily with survival. If in the 2000s the majority of farmers were able to secure at least their food consumption, in the 1990s cultivation of land was a big issue for many as livestock numbers decreased substantially because of the widespread slaughter and sale of meat (Abdurasulov, 2009; Steimann, 2011). As a consequence and despite the faltering economy, people continued to maintain their social networks. This can be explained by a number of factors. First of all, gifts were never free and were supposed to be reciprocated (Mauss, 1970) and were therefore a source of credit. Gifts given at social celebrations would be returned sometime later. Second, people could not just forget about the received gifts and avoid reciprocation as it was this act that allowed them to retain social ties with other people and obtain social status and prestige (Ibid, 1970). Because gifts were exchanged, not just between individuals but more between families, an unreciprocated gift would taint the reputation of the whole family.

The practice of gifting hashish also coincided with the period in which traditional gifts such as livestock began to be replaced with cash. However, the importance of livestock did not deteriorate and therefore people would announce when giving cash: ‘This is the sheep that I am contributing to your celebration.’ Decisions on the quantity of money that should be given were based on the calculation of how much one sheep would cost. In order not to violate the social order and be part of social life those with no livestock and no money at hand started taking hashish to social celebrations. While giving hashish they would whisper: ‘This is my *kara-koi* as a contribution to your celebration’. By referring to it as *kara-koi* they symbolically renamed it as the conventionally expected and desirable gift.

However, this practice was not widespread and did not last long. By 2009, when I returned for further fieldwork, people stopped referring to hashish as *kara-koi* and no longer brought it to social celebrations. Monetization of gifts demanded that people should bring

money as their contribution. Nonetheless, I believe that such acts played a huge role in making hashish first acceptable to many people in the region. This highly symbolic renaming of hashish to ‘black sheep’ allowed it to enter the sphere of cultural traditions. Named as a ‘black sheep’, most importantly, it allowed for the location of an illegal activity among the culturally accepted, shifting from a ‘black and white’ division between legal and illegal and locating it in a ‘grey zone’ (Ledeneva, 2006). Therefore, they did not just make a link between hashish and the culturally highly valued *kara-koi*, but rather transformed it symbolically into *kara-koi* and hence blurred the lines between illegal and legal, illicit and licit.

In this way it initiated the process of neutralization of hashish itself and more widely hashish making in the region. Significantly, it also suggested that drugs had started to play an important role in local culture by being used in reciprocal exchange practices. This aspect of hashish production will be elaborated in more detail in Chapter Seven.

### **Hashish as work.**

If calling hashish *kara-koi* is a strategy of pushing hashish production into the ‘grey zone’ was unique for Toolu producers, referring to illegal drug production as *work* is relatively common among drug producing communities in non-western societies (Pellegrini, 2013; Sanabria, 1993). Hashish making is also referred to as *work* in many conversations between people. For instance, I frequently heard Jamilya, who made hashish, and her friends saying to each other ‘*let’s go to work*’ or asking ‘when will we *work*?’ when talking about hashish making. ‘There is nothing wrong if people are *working*. If they are not stealing, it is OK’, I was told by eighty year old *ata* [father] of Kemel, my host in Toolu. The previous quote reveals the important process of not identifying hashish making with an illegal activity, such as theft, and understanding it through a legal and highly moral activity: work. The language of independently working and not seeking money or assistance from anyone is a powerful legitimation mechanism.

This helps us better understand the nuances and the context of local hashish production because it demonstrates that despite the local population's feelings of betrayal by the state, they are also knowledgeable about this practice being illegal. Claims that it is not an illegal activity done in addition to work but a form of work in itself was used in many other situations and contexts in post-Soviet countries. Caroline Humphrey also mentions similar tendencies when a young man's involvement in *brigada*<sup>6</sup> was understood as work not only by him but also by his mother (2002b: 119).

Local people are also able to point to the fact that drug production, not necessarily hashish and marijuana but opium for instance, is not a complete novelty in the region. The memories of older villagers help in drawing parallels between hashish production nowadays and opium cultivation fifty years before in Tyup. People in Toolu are able to legitimize hashish making by asking: 'What is the difference between their work (work of parents' and grandparents' that used to make opium) and mine?' This way of linking illegal hashish production to legal opium production and creating parallels between them makes it possible to loosen the moral control of the law itself.

### **Hashish as *Kumtor*.**

With the changes in society and the economy, the way people refer to hashish has also changed. During my fieldwork in 2009-2010, I discovered that the younger generation of hashish makers started referring to the fields where they made hashish as *Kumtor* after the mining company discussed above. As Cholponkul, puts it: 'If people make money and are walking on money, they would call it *Kumtor*'. Although not all people who make hashish are able to earn a lot of money, referring to fields as *Kumtor* creates a symbolic association with gold, wealth and suggests that people desire material success. Similarly, other drug producers

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<sup>6</sup> *Brigada* is the term used for organised criminal groups which appeared mostly in Russia in the 1990s. More about *brigada* can be found in Humphrey (2002a).

become involved in illegal drug markets due to their desire to become richer and acquire wealth (Steinberg, 2004; UNODC, 1999). However, association of cannabis fields with gold mines does not only demonstrate the get-rich mentality of Toolu people. It is also a strategy of moving this activity from an illegal sphere to culturally accepted one. In this case, people feel that they can openly confront the state about the practices of the 'Kumtor' mining company as they cannot do it in case of the Karkyra Valley fields. Farmers involved in hashish making are unable to resist the state and confront in terms of the local perception of hashish; but when there are other ways of resisting the state openly, they have joined the battle.

### **Informal Social Control**

As many studies have claimed, different drug markets operate according to the local structures in which they are embedded. Thus, in some drug markets personal trust, respect in the community, are essential parts of transactions rather than the simple making of a big profit (Dwyer, 2009; Sandberg, 20120). In the case of illegal hashish production, being accepted in the community is much more important for people than just seeking profit and avoiding conformity to the norms that have developed in the community. As local Toolu farmers make considerable attempts to legitimize hashish making through employing the various tactics discussed above, some of the justifications require an informal control, or at least an attempt to control (Henry, 1978) hashish production in the community. The informal control is needed because people are able to justify hashish making by referring to it as work that enables them to fulfil their rights to subsistence. Therefore, farmers have to control, or at least to make an attempt to control, the way hashish money is spent. If someone makes hashish to improve their living conditions, other people's attitudes towards them are generally positive. As one male interviewee explained to me: 'People have different attitudes toward hashish makers. If they make it for buying food and everyday needs no one is going to say against. They just say: 'Well done, making ends meet'.

What is also accepted and sometimes even desirable is instances where farmers and their families do not rely on hashish making as the main source of income and are involved in other agricultural activities. Men are supposed to be done with their jobs in the main crop fields and women supposed to do all household chores prior to going to the hashish fields. This coincides with the way people are able to feel that they are not full-time criminals and make hashish only when it is necessary.

In the case of drug makers, people cannot fully control how much someone is making as people cannot actually see the quantity of hashish made. Yet there are rumours, especially about those who are well-off or above-average along the lines of 'What more do they need?' Rumours like these, in such a small village with close-knit connections, can spread very quickly. If someone is making too much hashish, people say that it is not good and that hashish is not going to make someone rich. Such people may be identified as becoming greedy, which they believe will not lead to anything positive. People also believe that greedy hashish makers will be punished in the end. The punishment will come in the form of the payment of a large bribe to police, or in the form of some other unexpected expense.

The community also attempts to control drug taking. Due to the justification of hashish making as a source of income for subsistence and further attempts to distance themselves from the negative effects of the drug economy, consumption of hashish is not popular in the community. Drugs that are made in the region are not supposed to be taken by the local people. Similar cases of informal social control occur in some other drug producing communities across the world. For instance, opium producers in Turkey use highly informal social control mechanisms to stop any opium intake (Henry, 1978). Consumption of opium among Pushtuns in Afghanistan, who cultivate poppy plants for external markets, are minimal as well (Allan, 2004: 139).

Hashish in Toolu is also not often used for recreational purposes as happens in some other drug producing communities (Steinberg, 2004). As discussed above, the

traditional production of drugs in non-western societies is usually associated with religious or social use and less with recreational use. However, in some non-western communities, such as the Maya community in Southern Belize, marijuana produced locally for an outside market is also consumed by the younger generations (Steinberg, 2004). In contrast, in western societies, small-scale production of illegal drugs such as marijuana and hashish is more associated to recreational use (Potter, 2010).

According to Tolubai, a man in his mid-thirties who knew everybody who made hashish in the village well, there are a few young men that consume hashish occasionally. In most of the interviews I conducted with males, who were usually better informed about young men consuming hashish, I was told that among many of the families which made hashish there were no more than five to six young men who they knew occasionally consumed hashish. Some of my interviewees also did not deny the fact that they had tried smoking it. However, they did not do this as part of a gathering that could be classed as a social activity. Rather, they hid from everyone while smoking the hashish; and according to one interviewee, he did not like the effect hashish had on him. This can be explained through the fact that vodka was instead a common feature of most social occasions in Kyrgyzstan. In some cases, young men reveal that they have made hashish and sold it for vodka, beer and other products to take to small parties. Therefore, the community of hashish makers differ from other drug producing communities where addiction to their own drugs has developed (Steinberg 2004, Westermeyer 2004: 123).

Such informal social control is possible in a closely-knit village community where everybody not only knows each other, but many families are part of kin networks. Gossiping and talking about somebody is sometimes enough to be able to control the behaviour of local men. This is in accordance with the local norms that hashish making should not jeopardize their agricultural activities and should not become the main source of income. Quite simply, it is not supposed to be taken by local people. This informal social control coming from within the community is one of the key elements of successful legitimation strategies underpinning hashish production as it allows people to continue in adopting

strategies of denial and enables them to dissociate from the illegal aspect of hashish drug production.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the strategies through which hashish production is legitimated by local farmers in Toolu. I demonstrate that despite the fact that hashish production is not rooted in traditional local culture as the case in other drug producing communities in which illegal drug crop production is legitimated through its importance in social and religious spheres before becoming illegalized by world drug prohibition policies (Cusicaqui, 2004; Ganguly, 2004; Pellegrini, 2013; Sanabria, 1993; Spedding, 2004; Steinberg, 2004). In Toolu, people are able to develop their own strategies of legitimation. Thus, I have discussed how illegal hashish production follows a special form of moral economy. It is a moral economy because people feel that they had a right to work and protection by the state. In short, they have the right to subsistence. However, state ideology has changed and taken a new direction, with the state becoming the main agent of a market economy, creating a competitive environment and thus stripping away its protective functions to citizens. Impoverishment played a vast role in the motivations for local people to join the drug economy by producing hashish and marijuana to meet the external demands for cannabis.

Cases of corruption among the elite deepen distrust in the state. While high-level elites provide protection and sometimes have even overseen other, more profitable drug markets in Mexico, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan in the case of heroin trafficking, low level corruption among law-enforcement officers still exist and contribute to the functioning of the illegal hashish market in Toolu. Low level corruption is also crucial in sustaining illegal drug markets (Westermeyer, 2004). Even at this level, there are differences between the ways corrupt officers demonstrate their effectiveness. If corrupt Mexican officers have created an 'aura of effective enforcement' by simply targeting producers and dealers protected by rival groups (McCoy, 2004), then Kyrgyz officers usually prefer to arrest some and free others,

based mainly on personal contacts and the amount of money offered to them. Those who can use their personal networks and have more money are not usually arrested. Therefore, the inconsistent governance (Tyler, 1990, 2004) of hashish production presented in cases of corrupt law enforcement officers works as another factor that helps farmers in the region legitimate their illegal activity. If the law is being broken by law enforcement officers themselves, then farmers are able to perceive hashish making as their 'right'.

In Mexico, Bolivia and the Yi area in China, producers have been able to openly resist the state and confront law-enforcement in order to protect their fields from eradication (Sanabria, 2004; Watt & Zepeda, 2012; Youngming, 2004). While analysing the strategies that Toolu hashish makers use, resorting to using wild growing cannabis plants to make hashish rather than cultivating on their land, we can see elements of 'hidden resistance': this has been the case among some drug producing communities in India (Mills, 2004). However, the duality of their own understanding of hashish, whereby people feel that it is good for making money but bad for the health of drug users, reveals that people do perceive hashish making as something that runs against their moral values.

Again, as hashish producers cannot link their involvement with illegal drug markets to traditions and local culture, they use different strategies of legitimation than other drug producing communities. For instance, the common belief that hashish is bad is approached creatively by transforming and symbolically removing the negative meaning of hashish – locating it within culturally accepted and highly valued gift giving practices. People used two techniques of denial, 'literal' and 'interpretive denial' (Cohen, 1993, 1996, 2001). If the first helps those who are not actively involved in hashish making, the latter technique is actively used by hashish makers. It allows them to rename hashish itself and hashish making in general, shifting the illegal hashish production into more comfortable 'grey zone'.

The strategy of naming hashish production as their work is common among many drug producing communities (Pellegrini, 2013; Sanabria, 1993). By referring to hashish making as 'work', Toolu farmers also make further claims on the morality of their behaviour:

if someone is working and not stealing from other people, how can this be considered immoral? This reference to work reveals further how people link hashish making to claims that the state does not provide jobs for people in the region.

Other studies on illegal drug production have shown that people in such communities develop a desire for wealth and material success (Steinberg, 2004; UNODC, 1999). Although, hashish production does not allow hashish producers to become rich, it is nonetheless used as a symbol of wealth. For instance, by referring to fields of wild growing cannabis plants as *Kumtor* people make claims for the wealth of the country – gold – that is mined in the high mountains of Issyk-Kul oblast. Both are referred to as natural resources that the country has and which should be used for the improvement of the livelihoods of the rural population and not for the enrichment of the elite.

Finally, as pointed out by some other studies, different drug markets operate according to the local structures in which they are embedded. In some drug markets personal trust and respect in the community are essential elements of transaction rather than simply desiring a big profit (Dwyer, 2009; Sandberg, 20120). In the case of the legitimation of hashish production, this would not be complete without the informal social control mechanisms applied by the community (Henry, 1978). As people value their membership in the community, they follow some of the informal rules the latter imposes. Again, here we can see the difference between hashish drug makers and other communities. Hashish is not used by all producers for recreational purposes as with domestically produced marijuana in the UK (Potter, 2010), marijuana is mainly produced for an outside market by the Maya population but still consumed by producers in Southern Belize (Steinberg, 2004). The local community makes a considerable attempt to control consumption of hashish among the local population as part of the special moral economy of hashish production. Moreover, it makes an attempt to control so that hashish making does not become their main source of income.

## Chapter Seven

### The Illegal Hashish Economy as a Source of Social Security

#### Introduction

The main goals of the previous two chapters were to show how illegal hashish production has been embedded in the local agricultural economy and how people are able to legitimate their illegal activities. I provided a discussion of hashish production as one of the diversification strategies that farmers used to overcome farm insolvency issues and to sustain the local agricultural economy of Toolu. Moreover, I argued that hashish production allowed drug producers to gain access to goods that otherwise would be beyond their reach. Lastly, I provided an account of the multiple factors that contribute to the local population's legitimation of hashish production. In this chapter, I present an additional factor that explains the persistence of illegal hashish production in Toolu. I demonstrate that the latter is not only motivated by the economic necessity of sustaining an agricultural economy, but also by social pressure to build social relationships that maintain status and identity.

As was discussed in detail in Chapter One, in many developing countries involved in illegal drug production drug crops are actually embedded in local social rituals or religious services and help to form the national identity of a population. Drugs such as coca, opium, marijuana, and kava have been part of non-western societies for centuries (Cusicaqui, 2004; Ganguly, 2004; Sanabria, 1993; Spedding, 2004). As many drugs play an important role in the social organization of society they are used as status symbols. Opium is offered as a gift at weddings in Afghanistan (Singh, 2007). *Khat*, the local drug in some parts of the Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula is also used as bride price payment among Meru people in Kenya (UNODC, 1992: 62). Coca plays a similar role in marriage rituals and is exchanged as a gift among kin groups in Bolivia (Sanabria, 1993: 45). In the Andes, coca used to play the role of a 'medium between humans and supernatural beings' in religious rituals (Sanabria, 1993: 38). Some drug crops were also source of staple food in China, South and Central Asia and Balkan region for many centuries (Keefer & Loayaza, 2010: 64). If coca has been used as a source of relief from

hunger in Latin America, opium and cannabis are used as medicine in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India (Latypov, 2012: 27; Mills, 2004). In Bolivia, coca was also important as a source of developing an 'indigenous peoples' identity more recently (Pellegrini, 2013: 131). These studies are able to demonstrate that drug markets are embedded in moral grounds, values and norms of different societies. As Dwyer (2009) argues, such critical studies present evidence that drug policy literature is mainly one-sided as it does not consider the rich social relations that local drug markets develop, and the fact that there could be alternative interests that guide people in such markets.

This chapter focuses on the embeddedness of hashish production in the local economy of Toolu in Kyrgyzstan. I explore how transformations in social relationships and the monetisation of gift giving put constant pressure on families to find cash in a semi-subsistence agricultural economy. Although not produced on an industrial scale in the community, hashish is used as a cash crop and hence, provides not only a supply of cash but also facilitates the maintenance of social security networks among local residents. I will argue that small-scale hashish production and circulation of illicit commodities in Toolu are intertwined with the practices of social support and informal crediting. Although social networks based on gift giving are being transformed by the prevalence of hashish as cash, I instead focus on how the role of social celebrations (or *tois*) has not diminished at all. In turn, I look at how factors such as status, prestige and an emergent sense of national identity effected the involvement of various strata of society in joining *tois*. The hashish economy plays an important role in maintaining reciprocal relationships between families. While agricultural activities do not provide adequate income for all families in Toolu, social celebrations play an important role in their lives, and many families need an extra source of income to take part in them. In particular, increased spending on social celebrations in the last twenty years has created challenges for many family budgets. *Tois* help families to play a part in the lives of their relatives and friends and celebrate important milestones. They are also used as a source of social and economic support in times of need. Here we can see that although monetised gifts create barriers of entry for some poor families, social networks still retain some forms of support for those who are able to secure their membership. Hashish, therefore, is used by some families as a source of retaining membership of social networks. This chapter shall proceed with a note on the theoretical framework. After that I turn my attention to the discussion of social celebrations and the recent transformations of social relationships due to monetisation of gift giving practices.

## Social Celebrations in a Kyrgyz Village

In addition to providing cash for everyday use and sustaining their agricultural activities (Botoeva 2014), hashish money was also used by many families as a means of maintaining their participation in local celebrations. The use of hashish money in local festivities started first through its use as a substitute form of gift giving during the 1990s, when people instead of bringing their contribution in the form of livestock gave instead a few *korobochka* (matchboxes) of hashish, whispering to the host that it was their *kara-koi*, replacing the old traditional gift of sheep. Later, with greater monetisation of gifts, hashish money instead of hashish itself was used for hosting the *toi*, and as a form of contribution. So, why did families in Toolu have to use illegal drug in *tois*?

Primarily this was because social celebrations require spending money that most average and poor families do not have readily available in their budgets. The case of Sairakul who was preparing for a *toi* to give her daughter's dowry is illustrative of such a situation. The family had already devoted a cow and a sheep for the purposes of this *toi*, with 50,000 som (£714) in outstanding expenses. As their harvest was not large, Sairakul's family tried to find different ways of covering all the expenses.<sup>1</sup> Her daughter's clothes would be covered by hashish money, as her three sons (in their early and late twenties) were making hashish that summer. Gifts for their in-laws and food expenses would be covered with money from the potato harvest. The contributions of 1000 som (£14) and clothes from her nine siblings would help to complete the gifts to the in-laws. Thus, families needed extra cash not only for their everyday needs but also for holding celebrations and taking part in reciprocal gift exchange practices.

On numerous occasions I heard that hashish money helped families to prepare gifts and monetary contributions for big celebrations and small *sherine* gatherings.<sup>2</sup> Jamilya, for instance used her hashish money for a wedding gift and new clothes for her husband and daughter. However, the money proved not enough for her to attend the wedding herself so it was decided

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<sup>1</sup> As she had ten children, her family owned eight hectares of land - three hectares of irrigated and five non-irrigated land. They cultivated all their land the previous year and lost all the harvest. This year they had to buy seeds and were only able to cultivate three hectares. The whole year they had to buy flour and all their food from the market.

<sup>2</sup> *Sherine* gatherings are small gatherings held once a month by different hosts on a rotation basis, where each host collects money from their guests.

that her husband should represent her. Although her family cultivated two and a half hectares of land and owned livestock (one horse, four bulls, two cows, and fifteen sheep) and considered themselves as 'average' families, Jamilya tried to make hashish as soon as her youngest son turned six months. Her main goal of making hashish was in earning a little money that could be used for everyday needs, and for participation in social rituals. The money from livestock and wheat and potato harvests were earmarked for other bigger expenses.

In 2010, Meerim *eje*,<sup>3</sup> who was a widow of a few years and brought up her six children by herself was also preparing for her first daughter to get married. She decided that her small house needed at least some cosmetic renovation in order that she did not feel too ashamed when hosting guests. Additionally, she needed money for the small celebration when her daughter and groom would arrive from the capital city, Bishkek. As she did not own any livestock and was cultivating a very small patch of land, hashish making was one of the ways that helped her to earn money for food and basic necessities for some years already.

### Different Types of Feasts

There are many reasons why families take part in gift giving practices. In most of the cases they are related to life-cycle celebrations such as *beshik toi* (celebration of the birth of a baby), *tushoo toi* (a feast celebrating the first steps of an infant), *süröt* (circumcision of boys), wedding ceremonies, sixtieth, seventieth and eightieth anniversaries, funerals, *kurán okutuu* (commemoration feast for the death of a relative), and *ash* (one year anniversary of a death of a close relative). These feasts may be celebrated on a small or large scale but some almost always involve large numbers of people. Wedding celebrations, or relevant feasts where the dowry of a bride is usually given, bride-price is paid, funerals and one year anniversary commemorations, are all examples of events where large numbers of guests are invited.

Funerals are attended by close and distant relatives, colleagues and friends of the deceased. They can also be attended by the friends and colleagues of the children of the

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<sup>3</sup> *Eje* is a term for addressing an older woman. Although Meerim *eje* owned two and half hectares of land, she preferred to rent it out for 1680 soms (£24) per year as it was too expensive to cultivate. She cultivated her small plot near the house with potatoes, which they used for own consumption and for selling. Her four children received social benefits of 1200 soms (£17) per month. They did not have any livestock. In winter she used to go Kara-Kol city for a few weeks and find some manual work.

deceased. Close relatives are given the clothes and some of the belongings of the dead, and extended family members are given *jyrtysb*.<sup>4</sup> The grieving family are never left alone and relatives stay with them in turns for forty days. For instance, when Ainura's<sup>5</sup> cousin died, all the close relatives came and provided emotional support to the family for a few weeks. Close relatives also contribute to the funeral with money, or physical help depending on their relationships with the family.

During funerals in Toolu, relatives and friends of the family will offer to host a meal at their house after the burial ceremony. People will be seated around the *dastorkon*<sup>6</sup> covered with sweets, fried bread (*boorsok*), dried and fresh fruits and are served tea. After the tea, a meal<sup>7</sup> with *ustukan*<sup>8</sup> will be served to all people attending the funeral. Horses, cows and sheep are slaughtered for this main meal during the funeral.<sup>9</sup> After the funeral, families must hold small commemoration feasts on the third, seventh and fortieth day following the burial. Usually only sheep are slaughtered for these commemoration feasts. Unlike funerals, commemoration feasts are not observed formally. Yet, the one-year anniversary feast is observed in a similar way to the funeral: number of people invited, the quantity of food prepared, and the number of animals slaughtered.

Another type of large feast in Kyrgyz culture, which involves many people, big financial resources and assistance from kin and friends, are wedding celebrations. Wedding celebrations are thoroughly prepared with both sides of the family contributing with food and, most importantly, gifts for the newlyweds as well as their respective parents and close relatives. As traditional Kyrgyz culture also requires exchanges of bridewealth and dowry, inviting the in-laws

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<sup>4</sup> *Jyrtysb* is a piece of an expensive textile, usually velvet, cut into small pieces of approximately ten to twenty cm from the large piece of material that families try to prepare much before the funerals.

<sup>5</sup> She was my first gate-keeper.

<sup>6</sup> Special cloth spread on the floor and used for serving food. People are seated on the floor, on soft mattresses [*zher töshök*], around this cloth.

<sup>7</sup> Usually *beshbarmak*, a dish made from noodles mixed with chopped meat, or *plov*, a rice dish with meat. Both are traditionally eaten with the hands and shared from a large bowl or plate.

<sup>8</sup> Pieces of meat cooked with bones carefully cut according to the old traditions and distributed to guests according to their status among the people at the table and according to their relationship to the host of the event.

<sup>9</sup> Just a gentle reminder of the livestock prices in Toolu. In 2009 the price of one horse varied from 40,000 *som* to 70,000 *som* (£571- £1,000), one cow was in the range of 20,000 to 30,000 *som* (£285- £428), while one sheep was around 4000 to 6000 *som* (£57- £85).

to the house and providing the bride's dowry is one of the biggest feasts to be held before or after the wedding itself. Sairakul, shared her experience of preparing for one such celebration:

My daughter, who is twenty-one years old, got married at the beginning of this year in January. We are planning to invite our *kudalar*.<sup>10</sup> We will give her bridewealth [*seḗ*]: two duvets [*juurkan*], one mattress to put on the floor [*ḗher-töshök*], two pillows, *köshögöö*,<sup>11</sup> the wooden chest filled with her clothes. Clothes will be gown, high boots, jumper, skirt, tights and shoes, her own clothes that she already has and a few new ones. It seems like we are going to invite them in November.

In this case, the groom's side are supposed to prepare the bridewealth, gifts to the in-laws, and bring a slaughtered sheep, sweets and alcohol. While the bride's side is supposed to prepare the bride's dowry, gifts to the in-laws and at least a five course meal for all people invited.

Along with these large celebrations, there are many different small occasions that families celebrate in the village. These can be based on special occasions such as the birth of a child (before the family sent formal invitations for the big celebration), *kuran-okutuu* (commemoration ceremony) or if someone's child has finished their school/university course. Aside from these milestones, if a family attends a large *toi* and the friends and relatives wish to hear details of it, another celebration will be arranged for them to see the gifts given and for them to try some of the food brought back from the feast.<sup>12</sup>

*Sherine* gatherings are small gatherings held once a month by different hosts on a rotation basis, where each host collects money from their guests. In Toolu, I encountered two varieties of *sherine*; those attended only by women and those attended by husbands and wives together. Most *sherine* in the village are a combination of old traditional *sherine* and *chernaya-kassa* (in Russian, literally black-counter). They can be called by either of these names and in most cases involve social gatherings where cooking and eating are combined with gathering cash for the host family.

<sup>10</sup> Parents and close relatives of the groom and bride are *kuda* to each other.

<sup>11</sup> The textile cut in a style of curtains. It is used to separate the space when the new *kelin* (daughter-in-law) is brought to her new family. New *kelin* spend a few days behind *köshögöö* and people go behind it to see the bride.

<sup>12</sup> According to Ainura, for a small feast hosts prepare at least four different types of salads followed by three main dishes.

The amount of cash gathered will be negotiated at the beginning of the cycle. However, some forms of *chernaya-kassa* do not always retain the aspect of socializing and members can simply collect money and give this to another participant in turn. For instance, a group of women who decided to hold *chernaya-kassa* gathered an agreed sum of money every month and gave it to one of them in turn. Such networks existed in Toolu but were much rarer than *sherine* gatherings. Therefore, I will refer to them, in general, as *sherine* networks. The amount of cash gathered varies from group to group from one-hundred to five-hundred som (£1.40 p - £7) from each member.

Although many families struggle to find money to participate in feasts, instead of seeing the diminishing role of social celebrations and their decrease, we see that they have become more widespread and lavish during the post-Soviet period (Werner 1998a). As similar tendencies develop in neighbouring countries, the Uzbek and Tajik governments also attempt to control the way feasts are conducted by introducing decrees on the number of guests invited to celebrations (Reeves, 2012). The Kyrgyz government also introduced a Decree named ‘About Developing Traditions’ in the late 1990s (Muraliev, 1999) which identified celebrations as being responsible for the impoverishment of the population and announced that ministries and governmental committees should work with the population on holding feasts ‘modestly’. This can be seen as an unsuccessful attempt of the first Kyrgyz government to reduce the amount of money spent on feasts and the amount of food prepared. Later, the same argument was also used by the second president, Bakiev, who came to power after the Tulip revolution in 2005 (Reeves, 2012). It became almost a tradition in itself for government officials to annually discuss these ‘impoverishing’ feasts and how they could be stopped. In the southern region, *aksakals*<sup>13</sup> and mosques also attempted to reduce funeral expenses in order to ‘prevent poor families incurring huge debts’ (Satybaldieva, 2010:110).

### **The revival of tradition.**

One of the answers to the question of why families overspend on social celebrations can be that celebrations are a vital part of cultural practices during the Soviet period. Celebrations are also used as main elements in reviving traditional culture in post-Soviet times. First of all, in Central

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<sup>13</sup> Elderly men who are respected in their communities.

Asia many traditions have not been completely erased from the cultural milieu. In the Kyrgyz Republic, during the Soviet era, it was still possible to hold funerals and one year anniversary commemorations in a lavish way by slaughtering many horses (Jacquesson 2008), as lavish funerals were used as status symbols by the new Soviet Kyrgyz elites (Ibid 2008).<sup>14</sup>

Later, in the post-Soviet period, the role and symbolism of celebrations were adapted to a state ideology of preserving tradition; which allied tradition with the new national identity. Such revivals took place throughout the 1990s in almost all Central Asian countries as they declared their independence from the Soviet Union (Tabyshalieva, 2000). Interestingly enough, the same Decree, named 'About Developing Traditions', that was declared in the late 1990s by the Kyrgyz government, calling for celebrations to be held modestly, at the same time stressed the importance of bringing back traditions which were officially suppressed during the Soviet period (Muraliev, 1999). Hence, celebrations were considered as part of the national culture that should be revived and preserved as part of national identity.

However, the feasting patterns were not simply reduced by these decrees or the responses from religious groups and village elders. Many families still slaughtered large amounts of livestock, exchanged large and costly gifts at celebrations and prepared large amounts of food. So, what was the significance of this Central Asian tradition despite its impoverishing effects? Before looking at the different possible answers to this question, I will first provide an overview of such feasting activities in Kyrgyz society.

### **Prestige and status.**

Another explanation of the existence and importance of lavish social celebrations in the everyday life of Toolu villagers has to do with obtaining status and prestige. A recent study by Alessandra Pellegrini (2013) in Bolivia, also shows how coca growers in the Yungas region use money earned from coca to organize lavish celebrations that help with creating and maintaining a high status among the villagers. Similarly, the rural population in Oceania was able to increase their

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<sup>14</sup> At the same time, even though Central Asian countries were able to retain some of their traditions, the state actually had some control on celebrations making sure that the *nomenklatura* (political elite) did not abuse their power and financial situation openly. For instance, *nomenklatura* in Kazakhstan was not allowed to hold big celebrations which would stand out from the celebrations held by average citizens (Werner, 1998).

social status through cultivating the kava plant (Merlin & Raynor, 2004). Coca and poppy producers in different parts of the world also use their money from drug crops for purchasing the goods that would increase their social status (Hobbs, 2004; Westermeyer, 2004). Drug dealers in an impoverished and marginalised neighbourhood of El-Barrio attempted to attain respect and dignity by selling drugs (Bourgeois, 2003). In general, these studies suggest that illegal drug markets can be embedded in social relationships and are often used for increasing statuses of people.

In Toolu, depending on the type of feast and also the social and economic position of a household, the number of invited guests may vary greatly. For example, a wedding celebration could include more than two-hundred to three-hundred people and a funeral could be attended by people from the region and beyond.

A recent trend in Kyrgyzstan has been that some richer families begin slaughtering more livestock during funerals, as well as on the third, seventh and fortieth day commemorations. In some funerals the number of large livestock slaughtered reached to three to four horses or cows. As horse meat is prestigious, wealthy families opt for it. Additionally, not only the type of meat but also its quality is considered as an important marker of status.<sup>15</sup>

Other occasions are also used as a status defining activities by many families. In the case of wedding celebrations, the generosity of families of the groom and bride exchange gifts (*kiii*) as an indicator of respect that in-laws display to each other. If families know that their in-laws are preparing good gifts, they will try to match these so as not to be perceived as lower in status. Sairakul eje, fifty-six year old woman, who was planning to hold a big celebration, described what she was supposed to prepare for her daughter's in-laws:

We have to buy *kiii* [gifts to the in-laws]. We have coats for the groom's parents. We should buy a golden ring for his mother. For their relatives, we should buy suits, plus shawls for women. They could cost minimum six-hundred som [£10] each. We will also slaughter one sheep for the guests that they can take with them.

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<sup>15</sup> The traditional view is that horse meat is supposed to have an extra layer of fat marking it out as highly prestigious. Such horses would be specially nurtured and sold at much higher prices than the usual horses.

It is also very important for families to show what kinds of gifts are brought by the in-law's side to their own relatives. It helps to determine and interpret the status of the family even among their own lineage and kinship networks. Sairakul eje explains:

After welcoming my daughter we will also hold a small feast [*keshik*]<sup>16</sup> by giving the meat of the whole sheep that in-laws bring and tell all details to our relatives that did not attend the feast. We will invite the whole lineage [*uruu*] – thirty households [*tütün*].

It is, therefore, extremely important for some families to hold celebrations and commemorative feasts according to other people's expectations. The more the families spend on gifts and celebrations, the higher the status and respect they will receive from relatives and friends. As many other studies reveal, gift exchange practices are used in many societies as a way of obtaining higher status by deliberately giving away gifts in a way that cannot be reciprocated by poorer members of a community (Mauss, 1990; Scott, 1977). This thereby creates a form of social 'debt' which one is unable to repay. Thus, despite of the large costs involved, social celebrations and gift giving practices cannot be understood as irrational acts of throwing away money earned through hard work and sometimes at the risk of becoming bankrupt, but as acts which play an important role in the moral economy of Central Asian populations (Abashin, 2003; Reeves, 2012).

### **Reciprocal Relationships in a Kyrgyz Village**

Social networks developed by families through social celebrations are also a resource for help and assistance when people are in need. Social networks developed through social celebrations, providing a form of assistance similar to certain Soviet era practices. In the latter case, social networking facilitated access to services and goods that were not easily available in a planned economy which was trapped in a permanent state of shortage (Ledeneva 1998; 2006; Yang 1994). During the post-Soviet period social networks became transformed by responding to a different set of needs than before. They provided 'social security in uncertain times' (Werner 1998b: 610) and helped to secure work outside the country (Reeves 2012; Rubinov 2010).

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<sup>16</sup> This includes sharing food left or brought from a big celebration to people who cannot participate in it.

Reciprocal relationships were found to be important among drug producing communities as well (Goodhand, 2000; Pellegrini, 2013; Sanabria, 1993). In her study, Pellegrini (2013) shows how growers develop reciprocal social networks to assist each other with harvesting coca. They attempt to maintain their social support networks as labour was in deficit. Goodhand (2000) notes that poppy growers in Deh Dehi village in Afghanistan still rely on community support called *hasher*.

In Toolu, due to the neoliberalization of the economy and withdrawal of state protection, the local community social networks become important sources of social and economic security. Two concepts, *katysh* and *yntymak* derived from traditional Kyrgyz customs, are central to understanding the gift giving economy of *tois* in Toolu. *Katysh* is expressed in relationships between households in the village. By saying *katyshybuž bar* people mean that they *had connections* with others based on reciprocal exchanges of gifts. *Katysh* could be based on networks of close and immediate relatives, in-laws and their lineage (*uruu*), and close friends and colleagues. *Yntymak*, means possessing a strong bond similar to ‘solidarity’ or ‘unity’. *Yntymak* with other families means that they do not only have connections (*katysh*), but also that they are duty-bound to help each other during feasts.

Close relatives are nearly always involved in all the events described above. For large celebrations they do not only provide gifts and money but assist in organizing them. Younger members of an extended family are supposed to provide physical help, while older members are expected to provide financial, organizational and emotional support. Maya eje’s network consisted mostly of her neighbours and helped her family with painting the walls and floors of a newly built house. This type of help is known as *ashar*<sup>17</sup> in Kyrgyz culture and is used by families to help each other renovate or build new houses.

I was invited by Aikan to visit her neighbour who was painting the walls and wooden floors on the first of floor of her new two storey house. When we arrived everybody was working on the first floor. There were three of Maya eje’s neighbours.<sup>18</sup> One of them was painting the walls, the other was painting the staircase, and the third was cleaning. Later Aikan also joined and

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<sup>17</sup> A specific event organized to get help from relatives and friends in building a house and/or making a renovation.

<sup>18</sup> *Eje* means an older sister but is used as a general term for older women and not only for relatives.

helped with painting the walls. They wanted to finish the second floor during that day. So, the walls and wooden panels would be painted, and floors and ceiling cleaned in two rooms.

**Plate 7.1. Women helping their neighbour by painting walls**



A year later, Aikan and her family began to renovate their old house and decided to organize *asbar*,<sup>19</sup> by inviting people to help with one day's work. As the work required physical strength they expected Kemel's male friends to come and help along with his relatives. These cases are illustrative of the support that some of the families with extended social networks can get.

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<sup>19</sup> *Asbar* is a traditional way of getting communal support. Families that have connections with others and helped them before could also organize an *asbar* event for one day, when all their relatives and friends would help them with their work. It is similar to the *Ayni* form of help that coca-growing communities in Bolivia provide to each other (Pellegrini, 2013; Sanabria, 1993) and it is based on reciprocal relationships.

**Plate 7.2. Kemel's classmates and neighbours helping out with the house renovation**



The evening before the work began Aikan started preparing food for *ashar*.

**Plate 7.3. Boorsok cooked in Aikan's house for *ashar***



Two of Aikan's relatives arrived and helped with frying *boorsok*, making *manty*,<sup>20</sup> sweet rolls and salads for the *ashar*. Again, these cases are illustrative of the many forms of support that extended social networks provide.

These cases are illustrative of the support that some families with extended social networks can get. As much as the exchange of gifts operates as a form of credit, physical help provided in *ashar* events, is also expected to be reciprocated.

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<sup>20</sup> Dumplings with meat, onions and sometimes vegetables.

Forms of reciprocity in social networks go beyond their role of safety nets during festivities. They also serve as resources that people can use in many other areas of everyday life. In Toolu being a member of a network means that there are more chances to borrow money without interest rates. In the survey, seventy-two percent of respondents reported that they could borrow money without interest rates. Among these, thirty-four percent could borrow money from their own relatives, twenty-one percent from their spouse's relatives, and approximately twenty percent from neighbours, fourteen percent from the shops, and eleven percent from friends. This kind of social reciprocity and solidarity was thought to create a moral economy among many communities (Scott 1977, Tompson 1991). Solidarity through gift-giving and networking especially provided protective functions for the community members. However, market forces brought changes and weakened the social cohesion among such communities (Scott 1977).

In Toolu, although the support provided by *uruu* (lineage) has not completely been lost, its meaning became weakened as everyone traced their *uruu in line* with market reforms. This happened not because some members of *uruu* become excluded but because their contributions were too small. For instance, I was always reminded that there were five different *uruu* that comprised one clan in the village. Members of an *uruu* are invited for festivities, funerals and commemorations. One person in each *uruu* was responsible for gathering contributions for such occasions from each household. However, the amount gathered from an *uruu* as contribution was generally very small. One of my respondents, Maksat, shared his views on this matter, explaining how difficult it is to gather enough money from an *uruu* to cover all expenses:

We help each other in the lineage. For funerals and commemorations we give one-hundred som [£1.40] from each household, for good occasions among close relatives we give two-thousand som [£28]. For other families in the lineage it is only one-hundred som. In our *uruu* we have thirty households.

This shows that assistance received from within the *uruu* is not sufficient to cover the expenses of a feast (either joyful or commemorative). Traditional *katysb* relationships based on lineage do not cover the expenses of social celebrations for costs outweigh these contributions. In cases where *katysb* contributions were increased from one-hundred to one-thousand som (£1.40 to £14), for instance, there was increased pressure on families that comprised the *uruu*.

People could not contribute such large amounts of money to the whole lineage. They had to differentiate between their *katysb* and *yntymak* relationships. Therefore, Cholpon and Meerim's families, who had few connections and did not develop a network of friends and relatives, apart from their parents and siblings, may have received modest support from their lineage in cases of large celebrations or funerals. This support covers minor expenses such as the cost of one sheep, while higher expenses would be on the shoulders of the family holding a gathering. As a result, without a wider, more close-knit social support network, it is a challenge for those less well-off to organise community events.

### **Monetisation of Social Networks**

As we have seen, the mutual assistance provided by networks of friends and relatives was not eroded by the proliferation of market forces. Instead, a more intricate transformation of social networks than that proposed by a classical approach to the moral economy has been occurring in Toolu. As more recent approaches to moral and market economies show, both reciprocal and market economies can intermingle with each other and sometime reinforce one another instead of being incompatible. On the one hand, the community support did not erode and became more pronounced among some members. On the other hand, protection provided by the community was not extended to all members of community, depending upon their participation in gift giving practices. This was the outcome of proliferation of neoliberalization of economy and society discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

In an earlier study that focused on the links between illegal production of coca and local economies, and the transformation of social relationships, Sanabria (1993, 2004) demonstrates that the coca economy in Bolivia introduced wage labour to a traditional system of reciprocal relationships. However, instead of suggesting that reciprocal relationships were replaced by wage labour, he argues that both forms were present at the same time and used interchangeably. Pellegrini's (2013) study on coca growers in the Yungas region of Bolivia went even further to argue that some reciprocal forms of labour become infused with market principles. She was able to show that farmers can use the traditional forms of reciprocal labour, helping each other out with harvesting – as coca harvesting was labour intensive – by working in each other's fields with no payment involved. They would then have to return the same amount of work when the other

farmer needed to harvest. However, Pellegrini argues that due to the increasing inequality between the farmers, some of the wealthy coca producers started returning the help they received from others by hiring wage labourers to work on their friends and relatives' fields. Therefore, they are still able to use the traditional forms of communal support whilst turning them into forms of commodities that could be paid and bought. Reciprocal assistance and wage labour are therefore still used in parallel.

My findings suggest that there is a similar tendency for social networks in Toolu to go through such a transformation. Although, in the Toolu case we can see that transformation of social networks adopts a slightly different form than discussed by Pellegrini (2013) and Sanabria (2004). On the one hand, we can see gifts that are becoming more monetized alongside pre-agreed contributions and restrict access to social networks for some poor families. On the other hand, social networks created through monetized contributions retained their social support functions as well.

The concept of *yntymak*, introduced above is increasingly described as a pre-agreed type of contribution that families make towards each other's feasts. As Sairakul's case suggests, her family can rely on *yntymak* money contributions with her siblings as they have agreed on a certain sum beforehand. This means she can expect that some parts of the family expenses would be covered by those contributions. Although this type of contribution is based on the notion of gift, there are a few differences between this type of pre-agreed contribution and traditional gifts.

The notion of a gift is that it is not negotiated or pre-agreed upon (Mauss 1990). The receiver of the gift would typically be expected to reciprocate in the future. Reciprocated gifts, although generally of a similar value, can still be of a different form. In the case of pre-agreed *yntymak* contributions, where gifts are monetised, it becomes difficult for receivers' to improvise when reciprocating. Monetary gifts reinforce the expectation that the returned gift is of the same value, transforming the way how gift giving economy operated.

Yang (1994) also observed how money entered the traditional gift exchange networks during the period of market reforms in the 1970 and 1980s in China. Monetary exchanges followed the logic of commodity-based exchange (market transactions) rather than reciprocal exchange of gifts. Still, the monetisation of gifts did not erase the gift exchange relationships that helped to build different support networks. Social networks, according to Yang, were maintained

as a tactic to succeed in a rapidly developing market economy. Similarly, in Toolu, the monetisation of gifts, although involving some rational calculations, was not a product of a purely instrumental approach to social networks. By giving money, people did not want to stop their reciprocal relationships as had occurred in Chinese communities (Yang 1994). By contrast, money was given when families wanted to maintain and extend their social networks. People gave money to show support, commemorate or celebrate important life-cycle events.

However, this does not mean that there were no instrumental elements introduced into the gift giving practice. For instance, although 'traditional' types of gifts such as food, clothes and livestock were still in use, cash has turned into an expected and highly valued type of gift. I observed some families' tactics to receive cash as a contribution rather than 'traditional' gifts from their *katysh* relationships. Cash was more practical after all, and could be used to cover the expenses of the gathering. Money as a form of gift became a norm when hosts invited their guests to restaurants rather than to their house. According to Aikan, holding a *toi* in a restaurant was a new tendency in the village but the one that would be considered as prestigious and, in addition, would yield more money contributions than the one organized at home. She believed that the expenses of a *toi* organised in a café/restaurant or at home were comparable. However, more people tended to bring money for a gathering organised at a café, and subsequently the organising family could cover more of their expenses. Just a few months after this conversation, I heard that Aikan's family prepared a big *toi* in one of the restaurants of Kara-Kol city. The calculation of the incurred costs and 'earnings' from money gathered at the *toi*, therefore, introduces an instrumental element into this moral process of gift giving. Some wealthier families instead of giving away and including poorer members of community were after making money by inviting guests to restaurants.

Despite the fact that some close family members still provided help to each other without an expectation to return (as also suggested by the study conducted by Sanghera et al. 2011), many families were finding themselves in a different situation among their wider support network. Although monetised gift giving still retained some of forms of protection and support for active members, it exerted pressure on families and in turn excluded some from mutual support networks. The following case is illustrative of such a process. I was told by a number of my interviewees that in 2009, graduates of the local school organized a lavish celebration for their twentieth graduation anniversary. A group of classmates, which were mostly well-to-do, suggested that contributions from each male classmate should be five-thousand som (£71). Their

idea was to invite all the former teachers and female classmates for this occasion. This anniversary celebration turned into a three-day event in a forest reserve outside of the village. Some classmates, however, were unable to take such a large sum out of their family budgets. As the event was organised in springtime, some families were struggling to finance the cultivation of their land. As a result, seven classmates decided to organize a separate celebration with a contribution of one-thousand som (£14) each. They slaughtered one sheep and celebrated at one of the classmate's home. Subsequently, two separate groups did not attend each other's celebrations. Later that summer, members of the latter group shared the view that they felt left out. They were not only unable to attend the bigger celebration, but most importantly their non-attendance had impacted their ability to maintain their relationships with other classmates. For instance, during the big celebration, the group of classmates also agreed to begin *sberine* gatherings with their families. The second group only heard about this second-hand and were not invited.

Even among those who participated in large celebrations, there were those who did it at the expense of having less money for their more immediate needs. Tolubai, for instance, who participated in the bigger celebration, took out a loan with a twenty-nine percent interest rate from a bank, which was later paid off with hashish money. People of 'average' income, rely on micro-credit organisations for either making contributions or organising various events.

Sonun, a thirty-six year-old woman with four children, revealed how hard it is to take part in social celebrations while making ends meet.<sup>21</sup>

If some relatives are inviting in-laws, or there is a wedding celebration we have our *yntymak* and we have agreed to have a thousand som [£14] as a contribution to each other's feasts. In most of the cases we can't go. If you don't find a thousand som how will you go? You will be ashamed of going and as result stay

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<sup>21</sup> Her family cultivated only their small plot (0.1 hectares) near their house with potatoes. According to her account, their previous harvest was only 2500 som (£35). The bigger land that they own they cultivated only in the first years after privatisation and as they could not sustain it, they rented it out to other families for 1000 som per year (£14). Her husband works as a builder when there is any job available in the village or nearby villages. She usually sews *töshök*.

at home. If you don't contribute any money you will be left out in the future. No one will invite you. People start forgetting about you. Even close relatives would say 'Oh, they will not come, they don't have money'. Then you will be forgotten. If you have money, you are a relative if you don't have money you lose *katysh*. We barely have flour and just stay at home. If we get invited in spring we just can't go. We attend celebrations in autumn. When you don't have money you just pray to God that there would be no *tois*, that no one invites you to a feast. It is better not to have an invitation rather than refusing to go.

Sonun's family struggled between the social pressures of participating in *tois* and the everyday necessities of survival. In order not to be excluded from those networks of relatives and some friends, they sometimes missed an event and made their contribution later when they could find money. Their main source of cash in summer time was making hashish. Sonun, her husband and their two daughters regularly made hashish until 2010. In the summer of 2010, Sonun and two of her daughters were invited by some relatives to work outside of the region. This case also shows how money was important in keeping *katysh* networks even with close relatives.

Not only did participation in *tois* affect how families viewed their relationships, but also how much money was given as contribution. This was explained to me in one of the interviews, where Kanysh *eje* admitted that her family had differentiated between not only *yntymak* and *katysh*, but also according to how much was paid as *yntymak* between them and their friends and relatives. According to her, more money used as *yntymak*, or just given as *katysh* signalled close relationships, a form of respect that in turn leads to an intense and very supportive network. At the same time, a small amount of money signals their willingness to participate in the life of other families, but does not lead to the development of close-knit relationships. It is mostly considered as a symbolic type of contribution.

This explanation then helps to understand the following survey findings (see Figure 7.1.).

**Figure 7.1. *Yntymak* (contribution money) with close relatives according to socio-economic conditions**

Perceived socio-economic condition of the family <sup>22</sup>	50-200 som	300-500 som	1000-2000 som	3000-5000 som
Don't have enough money for food. (Group 1)	14.3%	71.4 %	14.3%	0.0
Have enough money for food but not for clothes. (Group 2)	41.7 %	8.3 %	50.0 %	0.0
Have enough money for food and clothes but not for durable goods. (Group 3)	7.8 %	25.5 %	60.8 %	5.9 %
Have enough money for durable goods but not for very expensive things as cars. (Group 4)	5.7 %	14.3 %	54.3 %	25.7 %
Have money for everything. We don't limit ourselves. (Group 5)	0.0	0.0	33.3 %	66.7 %

Source: The survey of 147 households in Toolu

According to the survey, all families tried to participate in *yntymak* relationships with other families. Although this clearly shows the different patterns of *yntymak* contributions according to the perceived well-being of families, it is noticeable that even the families that did not have enough money for their own food made attempts to give at least 300-500 soms (£4-7). In general, poor and average families would give more than they could afford. They would try to find ways to take part in big *tois* and small gatherings, either by borrowing money, or from remittances from migrant labour as was common in other regions of Kyrgyzstan (Aitieva 2015; Kapalova 2015, Satybaldieva 2015), or earning it through making hashish.

This perception of social networks given by Kanysh *eje*, explains why the monetisation of gift giving leads to difficulties that some families face in getting support. For instance, although the majority of families said that they could borrow money without interest rates, when differentiated according to the perception of their families' well-being, I could see that not all families enjoyed financial help from their relatives and friends. This finding was supported

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<sup>22</sup> These five groups refer to different categories of families according to their perceived well-being.

through in-depth interviews with some of the poor families. In most of the cases they were told by their relatives that no one had money during such times of hardship.

**Figure 7.2. Could you borrow money without an interest rate? (According to socio-economic conditions)**

Respondents' self-reported status:	Yes	No
Don't have enough money for food. (Group 1)	25.0 %	75.0 %
Have enough money for food but not for clothes. (Group 2)	52.6 %	47.4 %
Have enough money for food and clothes but not for durable goods. (Group 3)	75.0 %	25.0 %
Have enough money for durable goods but not for very expensive things such as cars. (Group 4)	85.7 %	14.3 %
Have money for everything. We don't limit ourselves. (Group 5)	75.0 %	25.0 %

As Table 2 presents, the higher their self-reported status was, the better chances they reported to have in borrowing interest-free money. When families need a large sum of money, they obtain it through selling their harvest such as potatoes and wheat (48%). Around twenty percent can still rely on their close relatives, and 16.6 percent can obtain it through micro-credit organizations. Due to difficulties encountered with borrowing even a small amount of cash, 31.6 percent of households said that sold their harvest. The results of the survey show that although a smaller proportion of families can receive support in borrowing money, a larger number of families rely on their own resources.

The monetisation of gifts is therefore a complex process that was able to combine aspects of both market and moral economies. Although still rooted in the moralities of reciprocity, this new emerging and constantly transforming system also incorporated some instrumental elements more associated with social differentiation of the market economy.

## Contractual Forms of Social Relationships

At the same time, during my study most families complained about recent changes in social relationships of support and difficulties in getting help in the village. The local discourse was that even close relatives and friends will not help much anymore.

A recent trend that started just a few years before my fieldwork was that more poor people were entering wage labour agreements for picking or collecting the harvest, or helping with the transportation of hay, etc. As poor families experience cash deficit to a greater extent than other families and are helped less in times of need, they have started asking to be paid in cash for their work within the village. While different groups enter the contractual arrangement for labour, each side does not feel obliged to assist each other outside of the contractual relationships.

Aigul eje, the wife of a rich farmer, complained in the interview that her family also started paying people to collect harvest from their fields because no one agreed to work for free anymore.

In summer we collect the harvest with the help of people. We cut the hay with the tractor. We only pay for transporting the hay from the fields. There is a crew opened up with three men. They ask six-hundred som [£8.50] for one trip. We made nine trips in total. Before it used to be that people helped for free. This year they moved to the payment system. No one helps for free. This crew was opened up by poor people.

These conditional, rather than reciprocal, relationships are promoted by a change in attitude among the wealthy families as well. According to Weber (2002), one of the main principles of market economies is not only in appropriation of the means of production by the elite and wealthy members of society, as suggested by Marx and Engels (1998), but also what occurs in the broader cultural sphere.

Similarly to the way in which rich families in South Asia became more interested in profit, material gain and explaining the poverty of their neighbours through reference to laziness

(Scott, 1985), Aigul also complained that poor people are poor because they are lazy and did not want to work. She felt very strongly that poor people have to help themselves by working hard and not asking for support from their wealthy neighbours or relatives. This trend of explaining poverty by laziness suggests that market economy principles are penetrating the local community of Toolu.

Other studies have also demonstrated that wage labour emerges in traditionally reciprocal societies due to the wealthy trying to avoid the social costs of social networks and by choosing to pay by cash and preferring to enter contractual rather than reciprocal agreements (Wilson, 1997: 190). This explanation can also be useful in understanding the changes in relationships between rich and poor families in Toolu. Even though well-off families complain that no-one helps to collect the harvest for free anymore and ask for fixed payment, it allows them not to feel indebted to such families due to existence of contractual arrangements. The tendency is that more households, especially from the two extreme sides, well-off and poor, increasingly appear to model behaviour on market relationships rather than on kin or tribal relationships of mutual help.

Cash economies that are either brought or supported by drug markets can also interfere with local reciprocal relationships. Some researchers have noticed the emergence of wage labour and monetization of social relationships due to the increased importance of a cash economy supported by drug production (Merlin & Raynor, 2004: 290). Even the study by Goodhand (2000), that noted the persistence of mutual support networks among the drug producing community in Afghanistan, reports that people are constantly talking about changes in the communities and that they can no longer rely on help as before. People are either too poor to help, while those that can provide assistance are more used to wage labour. This results in the decline of *hasber*, reciprocal activity of helping with the harvest, or building a house (Goodhand, 2000: 276).

Therefore, hashish money is used as an economic security by poor families as they cannot rely on help from the networks. Such families mostly need to earn cash as they do not have much land and livestock assets and therefore need cash in order to buy food.

The supportive function of social networks, especially when related to lending money to members, although still functioning has become more limited. A further recent trend in the

community is that if someone needs to borrow money they can do it by paying a fee. People can borrow money from either *jamaat* (local community) or private money lenders who will lend money for a fee providing an informal crediting system. The interest rates are usually much lower comparatively to the credit unions' rates and ranged from ten to fifteen percent. If the *jamaat* money lending system is based on the idea of support to needy members, the private money lenders are motivated mainly by profit making. There are around ten people that have loaned money in this way. Loaning does not depend as much on kin relationships between lenders and borrowers, but rather on the creditworthiness of the latter. This system of crediting, although informal, was provided by local villagers in a similar way to how microfinance institutions operate. They are interested in making a profit and therefore payment on time and in full is required. If someone is believed to be poor, with few assets and or social network connections, then it is extremely difficult to obtain this credit.

Here we can see the difference between the crediting system operated in other drug producing communities and in Toolu. In Afghanistan, for example, farmers that cultivate opium are able to rely on receiving credit from drug lords (Buddenberg & Byrd 2006), or people overseeing cultivation of drug crops, in Toolu credit is given by money lenders rather than drug lords. This is because people who manufacture hashish can have better chances of gaining credit due to their perceived creditworthiness among money lenders. According to the survey conducted in Afghanistan, for eighty per cent of farmers, the possibility of receiving informal credit is the main reason for cultivating poppy plants (Singh, 2007). In Toolu, for those families with literally no agricultural assets such as land and livestock, hashish has become an asset that they can use for borrowing cash. People are eager to give some products for credit knowing that these people make hashish and can sell it. Creditors are also aware that if hashish is not sold they can at least take hashish as a form of payment. Although this is more risky than simply getting paid in cash, it allows them to have better revenues. Those that are more entrepreneurial can even make extra profit by selling hashish at a higher price after the harvest season.

Some residents, again who are more entrepreneurial and have 'protection' provided by certain militiamen, use the cash deficit situation to make a greater profit. Hashish allows some traders to continue business even in times of cash deficit when people may have difficulty in obtaining cash for cultivation. Schemes of advance payments allow cashless families to get credit in spring for hashish that would be made in summer. The price would be set by the creditor and the debtor would return the credit in collected harvest. This scheme is also practiced by some

shop owners who want to boost their sales in spring and summer time when sales for non-food products fall due to scarcity of cash. Hashish helps families not only obtain cash, but also provides social collateral due to many creditors providing advance payments for hashish makers.

Hashish is also one of the agricultural products that some money lenders give advance payments for. Jamilya explained that there are a few people in the village who make advance payments in winter/spring for the future harvest of hashish. 'I bought a mobile phone in spring and took money from someone for the ten *korobochkas* to be collected by autumn. They said that they would take one matchbox of hashish for two-hundred and fifty som (£3.60 p). So, I need to make ten matchboxes to be able to return my debt'. As with other products, the price for the future harvest of hashish is far below the market price so that the creditors can make their profit on it.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I demonstrated how the production of hashish is interlinked with the changing dynamics of social relationships and how hashish money entered the complex system of gift giving practices in Toolu.

This is different from other studies on drug markets in Central Asia that mainly focus on issues of Islamic extremism and violence that undermine the security of Central Asian states (Cornell & Swanstrom 2006; Engval 2006; Makarenko 2002). Such a presentation of illegal drug markets exists in wider criminological and drug policy literature, which operate with 'black and white', 'good and evil' concepts to refer to drug market actors and the rest as 'law abiding citizens' (Dwyer & Moore, 2010, Sanabria, 1993). However, some other studies are able to highlight the embeddedness of illegal drug markets within the culture and traditions of societies. By being part of social and religious rituals for centuries, drug crops are sometimes essential elements in developing the national and cultural identities of some nations (Cusicaqui, 2004; Ganguly, 2004; Sanabria, 1993; Spedding, 2004). Embedded within social and cultural rituals, some drugs crops such as coca and opium are also used as status symbols.

My study contributes to the literature that shows how illegal drug economies are intertwined with social relationships. In doing so, I have presented how illegal hashish production is used as a source of maintaining social networks in times of transformation. Thus, illegal hashish economy supports not only the agricultural economy as presented in Chapter Five, but also sustains social relationships between families. This is because the moral economy based around social celebrations retains an important role in rural Kyrgyz society. However, the transition from a highly subsidised socialist agricultural economy towards a semi-subsistence oriented one under new capitalist market conditions created increased pressures on farmers for cash spending and increased consumption. Due to growing importance of social celebrations to develop social status, gain prestige, and maintain traditions, families sought cash to sustain such cultural practices. Thus, as I have presented here, the illegal hashish economy supports not only the agricultural economy but also sustains social relationships between families. Additionally, in the case of Kyrgyz communities in Toolu, as throughout the country, the ‘traditional’ *tois* organised as rites of passage were used as building blocks for developing a sense of national identity after the collapse of Soviet Union. The *tois* allowed the local people to combine ‘traditional’ customs with the ‘modern’ demands of market economies.

The problem that many families in Toolu faced was finding the resources to fund such excessive celebrations. This was not only a dilemma faced by people in Toolu, many regions used different strategies to be able to hold such celebrations. Hashish production helped families to sustain themselves and support the local customs without resorting to mass migration as had happened in other regions. For instance, families from southern regions used external migration as their way of subsidising lavish celebrations (Reeves 2012, Rubinov 2012).

The use of hashish money is not only associated with the lavishness of *tois* but also to the monetisation of gift giving practices and the transformation of social support networks as a result. The use of money as a gift puts a lot of pressure on families holding big *tois* as well as on those that take part in them. The fear of weakening social security networks, in turn losing status and prestige, left people searching around to find cash. Hashish money, in such a context, becomes important not only for poor families with no security networks, but also for average-income families that need continued contributions to secure their membership to reciprocal social relations. Hashish production, therefore, helps to maintain this system of social relations and keeps the families within the network of relatives and friends, which not only provides status

and prestige but also crucial support in times of need. For poor families, who cannot maintain social networks, hashish production helps to provide money for basic needs.

However, instead of arguing that market forces were able to destroy protective functions of society that were proposed by classical theories of moral economy, I want to offer a more complex conclusion. In line with the more recent studies on moral and market economies that view all markets as moral economies but based on different moral grounds from one other (Browne and Milgram 2008, Zelizer 1998), I argue that, first of all, monetisation of gift giving transforms social networks into more layered and stratified dependencies. With cash as a gift becoming a norm, social networks are shrinking and becoming limited to immediate relatives, close friends and tribe members for less well-off families that are unable to participate in feasts and reciprocate the same amount of contribution that average and well-off families can afford. Hence, monetisation of gift giving is transforming the way reciprocal networks used to work.

However, monetisation of gift giving does not automatically annihilate the emotional and supportive roles of social networks. These networks still perform their roles of social rituals and security nets. However, in most of the cases, only those, who are able to maintain the intense forms of communication and contributions, are able to reap the benefits. For others, unable to contribute at various events, their networks turn into more symbolic affiliations with no real obligations or reciprocity of support attached to them.

As the result of transformation of social networks, we can see the emergence of wage labour between wealthy and poor families, accompanied by the change in attitudes of the wealthy families to poverty, in line with the market principle that poor people should be responsible for themselves. In such cases, hashish production allows poor families, who cannot gain support through their social networks, to stay afloat. Even lending money to relatives and friends becomes part of a business based on calculations and motivated by profit. However, small-scale local hashish production in Toolu does not lead to the emergence of drug lords that provide the producers with credits as happened, for example, in Afghanistan, (Buddenberg & Byrd 2006). In Toolu credit is given by money lenders rather than drug lords. This is because hashish production increases the creditworthiness of hashish makers among the money lenders as they would be able to return credit by making hashish.

This analysis of the process of transformation of social relationships in Toolu reveals how moralities of gift giving intermingle with the spread of self-interested market economy

exchanges among households. Hashish production, therefore, helps to maintain this system of social relations and keeps the families within the network of relatives and friends, which not only provides status and prestige but also good support in times of need.

## Conclusion

This study on illegal hashish production in an agricultural community in Kyrgyzstan discusses how drug markets are embedded in the societies and economies in which they (re)-emerge. As presented in the introductory chapter, my study is informed by the following research questions: How is hashish production tied up with the local economy? Is the production of drugs the main source of income for local people? How are drugs linked with the everyday life of local people? What are the drug control strategies employed by the local law-enforcement agencies?

As the result of intensive data collection using a mixed-method approach mainly in Toolu village in the Tyup region of Kyrgyzstan for approximately nine months in 2009-2010, the findings presented in the previous chapters have answered these research questions. Throughout this study I have argued that the hashish economy is able to persist due to the central role it plays in the contemporary agricultural economy and social relations. I therefore demonstrate that illegal hashish production should be understood in its own local context: a mountainous agricultural community that is experiencing transformations due to the neoliberalization of the economy. Despite the important role that hashish plays in Toolu's agricultural economy, I argue that it has not become the main source of income. It remains one of the more successful diversifying strategies that farmers employ in overcoming the problems encountered with farm insolvency. One significant aspect of this is that the illegal drug economy cannot persist without people legitimating their activities. Hashish production has to be legitimated through the use of novel neutralization techniques and strategies of interpretive denial as it was not embedded in the local culture and religion before the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the process of legitimizing hashish production, people use forms of social control to differentiate themselves from criminals. At the same time, local perceptions of the right to work and subsistence, distrust of elites and law-enforcement agencies due to high levels of corruption, serve to develop a context whereby people can question the legitimacy of the state and develop a moral economy of hashish production. Moreover, hashish production should be

linked to the challenges that social networks encounter within the marketisation of society and the monetization of gift giving. Hashish production is used as a source of cash for assisting families in maintaining their social networks.

The thesis focuses on the local economic and social contexts of the hashish market, which is one of the areas of study that lacks attention to drug production, trafficking and distribution. The importance of this study is that it provides a detailed analysis of one of the illegal drug markets, hashish, and presents how it operates in a rural agricultural economy. As the supply-side of drug markets is an under-researched topic in the criminological literature (Browne et al., 2003) my study contributes to this area of knowledge.

This study is also unique in terms of providing the story of illegal hashish production from the farmers' perspective and not from the perspective of law-enforcement, which is still more exceptional than common trend in studies on illegal drug markets (Dwyer, 2009; Steinberg et al., 2004). Specifically, by discussing in detail how money from small-scale production of hashish is used by drug makers mostly to buy food, clothes and allow for participation in social celebrations, I shed light into how illegal drug markets play an important role in supporting the local economy and society. This differs from other studies on drug markets in Central Asia that focus mainly on issues of Islamic extremism and violence that undermine the security of Central Asian states (Cornell & Swanstrom 2006; Engval 2006; Makarenko 2002). Such presentation of illegal drug markets exists not only in Central Asian studies but also in wider criminological and drug policy literature, which operate with 'black and white', 'good and evil' concepts to refer to drug market actors and 'law abiding citizens' (Dwyer & Moore 2010, Sanabria 1993). Sanabria (1993) warns that nothing is quite what it seems in the drug war; there is no simple distinction between good and evil, black and white. In his examination of the Bolivian case, the drug war matrix is revealed as impossible to disentangle and the war's rationale fundamentally flawed. Also, Dwyer's (2009) study of drug users in Australia criticises the existing criminological literature on drug markets, together with the drug policy literature, by arguing that the aim of deterring drug use with increased penalties ignores the rich social relations that local drug

markets develop, and their operation can be sustained by alternative interests and ways of keeping them in the drug markets. Other studies argue that there can be small-scale private drug markets that are based on their own rules, and which do not always follow the rules of the industrialised type of drug markets (Sandberg, 2012).

Building on such a critical literature on illegal drug markets, my study presents the case that illegal hashish production in Toolu is one of a small-scale drug market. One of the major characteristics of this market is that hashish is made from wild-growing cannabis plants and is not cultivated by farmers. Moreover, hashish production has not replaced the agricultural activities and still remains a key source of support for an agricultural economy experiencing farm insolvency.

Thus, the study presents that illegal hashish production operates and persists due to different factors than those related to heroin trafficking that all the studies in Central Asia are focused on. My major argument is that illegal hashish production is embedded within the local settings of an agricultural community that is part of the global neoliberal market. Hashish money is mainly used for sustaining agricultural activities, which face harsh conditions under the market economy. It is used as a response to uneven price distribution for agricultural products, difficulties to produce ample surplus for the market from small land holdings that were distributed during the privatization period, while farmers were forced into self-reliance via the removal of assistance from the state. At the same time, hashish money helps to maintain the social protection functions of social networks also undergoing transformations due to the marketisation of society.

In the next sections I provide a discussion of theoretical and policy implications of the findings, followed by discussion of possible avenues for further research.

## Contributions

My theoretical understanding of drug markets is that they are based on a number of factors, socio-economic and political, that contribute to their (re)-emergence and persistence. In order to argue that illegal drug markets are context specific, my work opens up a critical, evidence based discussion of illegal hashish production in a northern part of Kyrgyzstan. In this case we can see that drug production is one of the sources of cash for an agricultural economy which is experiencing deficit of cash due to farm insolvency. The factors that contribute to farm insolvency are inherited in the market economy. The study further contributes to the debate on drug markets presenting the drug producers as farmers that deal with the economic, social and political issues as would any other citizens of the country.

My thesis demonstrates the evidence based approach to illegal drug markets and presents a multiplicity of interconnected factors for the re-emergence of hashish production in the Tyup region of Kyrgyzstan. It presents that drug production in Toolu is the result of a combination of factors: 1) economic transformations undertaken during the 1990s in most of the post-Soviet countries and the difficult conditions under which the agricultural mountainous economy operated as the result, 2) the corrupted nature of law enforcement, 3) the legitimization of hashish making by a drug producing community, 4) the integration of hashish production into the local economy and culture.

My study is able to demonstrate that there are similarities between the hashish producing community in Toolu and other illegal drug producing communities. These are mostly agricultural, rural communities located in the remote places of the world. However, remoteness does not mean that they are not connected to the wider world and the market. Such communities are therefore part of the globalized world (Steinberg et al., 2004, Watt & Zepeda, 2012).

One of the main similarities between drug markets elsewhere and the local drug economy in the Issyk-Kul region is in the effects of neoliberalization in impoverishing

populations of developing countries. The neoliberalization of economy, although not intentionally, is one of the main factors of developing drug markets in Mexico and Bolivia (Andreas, 1995; Watt & Zepeda, 2012). My study demonstrates that the shift of a local hashish economy from underground groups to the involvement of people with no criminal connections in the 1990s, was one of the unintended consequences of neoliberalization in Kyrgyzstan. Rapid impoverishment and high unemployment amongst the rural population and the withdrawal of state support were the push factors that contribute to the persistence of illegal hashish production. At the same time, opening up the borders for the trade and promoting entrepreneurship among the population, along with the development of conspicuous consumption among the population in a neoliberal economy, must be considered as pull factors for an illegal hashish production to take its place within the agricultural economy.

Thus, I first present that market economy reforms in an agricultural sphere turned most of the farming activities into a semi-subsistent oriented economy. Due to low prices for agricultural products on the market, irregularity and uncertainty of incomes in the agricultural sector of economy, large shares of land are unavailable to most of the farmers as the result of privatization, together with the harsher climate conditions than in other parts of the country means that most of the families need to diversify their activities to be able to stay afloat. Only a tiny minority of wealthy and well-off families, who own the means of production – large fields and all machinery for cultivation of land, large herds of livestock – are able to produce for the market and do not lose investments in agricultural activities.

Even after the majority of families were able to escape the poverty trap, which was exacerbated by implementation of neoliberal policies such as privatization of land and deregulation and freeing of prices on the market, the agricultural sector faced problems with an unequal distribution of prices. In this case, Toolu village shared similar experiences of earning much less on their agricultural products than they were expected to pay for other products and services as was the case in other agricultural communities in Ukraine and Latin

America (Perrotta, 2002, Sandberg, 2004). This reveals that the market economy hits hard the agricultural communities that do not have any protection from the states.

Families in Toolu, similarly to farmers in Ukraine (Perrotta, 2004) did not starve but had problems with getting good prices for their products. In the market economy, it turned out that agricultural products were always cheaper than any other products and services. In the agricultural setting, one of the solutions for this problem would be to produce more products but with privatization of land most of the families were unable to do so. Only a minute proportion of rich households with large fields, machinery and large numbers of livestock were able to produce a surplus for the market because they were able to cultivate large fields and breed large herds. The remainder of the population, including families that consider themselves as 'average' have had to diversify their income. They attempt to achieve this by increasing the number of livestock, trying to rent land from their relatives and local authorities, open small trade business by selling products in small shops in their houses or huts, work outside the region and devise many other strategies. However, even diversification of income does not always mean that families are able to generate the level of cash needed to survive in a cash deficit economy. Shops and small scale traders have to sell their goods for virtual money, for credit, and cannot always get their cash back from customers for an extended period. The livestock prices, similar to crops such as potatoes and wheat, also vary and are dependent on the fluctuations of the market. More importantly, start up capital is needed as families are unable to purchase cattle and breed it without any cash. Furthermore, poor families that are forced to turn to wage labour cannot always rely on their salaries as little manual work is available in the village. Hashish, in such harsh market conditions, turns out to be the commodity that goes for a good price in comparison to other crops. The hashish price does not fluctuate every year and often goes up, and most importantly, for poor families it does not require them to own any means of production. It also prevents average families from falling back into poverty and to retain their existing assets, harvest and livestock, and in some cases can even improve their economic situation. Cannabis plants growing wildly in the fields of Karkyra Valley provide farmers with a good opportunity to earn comparatively easily the money that they need. It provides them with

greater revenues than some manual work and does not require people to move to other regions or even countries in search of work.

Third, I argue that while people want to make money and profit, the ‘moral’ aspect of hashish making is also important for them. Therefore, they carefully balance between making a profit and maintaining the image of themselves as being moral, and not greedy drug makers. In their understanding, if they have started to make huge profits by losing their agricultural roots and forgetting their traditions, they would have become complete ‘criminals’ which is an image they do not want to be associated with. Thus, hashish production does not simply follow market economy principles. Farmers in Toolu, despite being able to sell hashish for much higher prices than other agricultural crops, do not abandon their land. It is rather, based on the combination and convergence of multiple factors stemming from market and local moral economies.

Thus, while discussing the economic constraints and opportunities that the neoliberalization of economy provides for illegal drug markets, my work contributes further to the studies that incorporate the moral economy approach to drug production. But unlike such studies that argue that moral justification and legitimation is possible due to the traditional production and use of drug crops for social, religious ceremonies before they become illegalized by global prohibition policies promoted by western societies (Steinberg et al., 2004), I present that drug production can be legitimated in communities where drugs were not embedded in local traditions.

I discuss that hashish production is possible as part of a special kind of moral economy. Hashish production that is not part of the agricultural activities of local population in the region during Soviet times becomes first, one of the strategies for survival and later, one of the entrepreneurial, diversification of income generating strategies. However, as hashish production is not rooted in the local culture or religious ceremonies and used to be considered as illegal and immoral among the local people, they needed to legitimate their illegal activity. I argue that this was possible through the claim that they had

a right to subsistence and a right to protection from the state (Thompson, 1991a, 1991b, Scott, 1985), both of which were denied to them following the collapse of the Soviet Union. As the early stages of turning the planned and state controlled economy into a market regulated economy hit the population hard, impoverishing the majority of people, they were able to refer to the protective functions of the state and the right of farmers to subsistence.

My case study also contributes to the discussion of cases of corruption among elites that deepened the distrust in the state. Moreover, issues with the governance of drug production by law enforcement agencies and the actual or perceived corruption among law enforcement representatives contributed further to the legitimation of illegal hashish production. As I discuss in the thesis, the case of illegal hashish production cannot be understood as a form of resistance to the state. Although it has elements of a hidden resistance (Scott, 1985), as in some other drug producing communities in the Chapare region of Bolivia, the Yi area in China, in Mexico (Sanabria, 2004; Watt & Zepeda, 2012; Youngming, 2004), we can see in the case of hashish production that people had to neutralize their involvement in this illegal economy. This was based on the fact that hashish itself and hashish production have a dual meaning among the population. On the one hand, people believe it to be a necessity because it provides them with money. On the other hand, the notion that hashish and hashish making harm the drug users and even some hashish makers is subscribed to. Therefore, they need to neutralize the negative connotations of hashish making, while in cases of resistance shown by drug communities to the state and law enforcement, they hold strong beliefs in the morality of their actions as related to their traditions, history and identity.

The fact that hashish production or its consumption is not part of the traditional culture can be also seen in the ‘interpretive denial’ strategies (Cohen, 1993, 1996, 2001) that farmers of Toolu use to increase the legitimacy of hashish production. By re-interpreting, giving a different name to hashish itself and hashish making, people are able to shift it into a more comfortable ‘grey zone, where activities are stripped of their illegal meaning and acquire a new, conventional one. By referring to hashish making as work and not stealing,

people are able to link it to the moral values of a community. By referring to fields with wild growing cannabis plants as *Kumtor*, people link this activity with becoming wealthy, which is also highly reputable among the community.

Furthermore, I present that the moral economy of hashish production could not be possible without adopting some informal control mechanisms to drug production. The fact that hashish, although produced by the local people over the previous twenty years, is not consumed by them and is mainly sold to an outside market. The fact that hashish production has not become the main source of income suggests that the local community make attempts to informally control it. In turn, this allows them to make the process of the legitimation of hashish making easier.

The study also argues that due to local demands to be part of the community, hashish is also used as a source of support (Botoeva, forthcoming). There are studies that have noted the importance of drug crop money for participation in social celebrations (Pellegrini, 2013; Singh, 2007). My findings contribute to these studies and provide a discussion of the use of drug money in enriching and maintaining the social community. The analysis of the shift from hashish as a substitute gift to surrogate money reveals the changes that occurred in the socio-economic relationships between local people. In a gift economy individuals could receive 'credit' in forms of gifts but never had timeframes within which they were expected to be reciprocated. However, some asset- and cash-poor people were unable to enter such gift-exchange relationships due to the long-term nature of such 'contracts'. They needed cash or goods at that moment. At the same time, gifts are usually given under specific conditions when someone is celebrating a certain occasion, or commemorating deceased relatives. Moreover, those who are unable to reciprocate and therefore lose their membership of social networks (Keuhnast & Dudwick 2004) cannot obtain 'gift credit'. Therefore, more formal contracts with specific timeframes and certain amounts of money began to be introduced. This situation has led to the development of a specific system wherein goods can be paid for by hashish money. While the agricultural economy of Kyrgyzstan became situated in market economy conditions and we can see the

increased importance of a cash economy, we can also see the parallel functioning of a moral economy.

### **Policy Implications**

The findings of my thesis, that hashish production is embedded in the agricultural economy of a rural mountainous community in northern Kyrgyzstan, have several policy implications.

I argue that the global prohibition policy of illegal drug markets needs to be revised and accustomed to different drug markets as it does not consider the context specific nature of illegal drug production. Despite the moral implications on which the global prohibition policy itself is based, it uses the market rationale as the main motivator for existence of all illegal drug markets. Thus, makes assumptions that all individuals involved in illegal drug markets are guided by market rationale only. It is however, noted from this study that illegal drug markets are embedded in their local context and can be guided by multiple interrelated – economic, social and political – factors that contribute to their existence and persistence despite the international attempts to stop them. This argument is consistent with the arguments of critical studies on illegal drug production in developing and developed countries. The studies reveal that although some illegal drug producers take part in the drug market for financial reasons, some do it for ideological, religious or cultural reasons as well, or in fact a combination of all.

Another important policy implication of the study is related to the main findings. The study was able to present the case of how market and moral economies are interlinked and intertwined, and hashish itself and hashish production play an important role in both. Hashish is used as cash for obtaining goods on the market, but it is also used in order to become part of social networks and the community of Toolu. At the same time, hashish production does not only follow market economy rules as it does not grow every year with the increased price of hashish. Farmers in Toolu do not start cultivating cannabis plants in

order to increase their profit; they do not stop cultivating their land, breeding livestock and being involved in other activities. Thus, these findings reveal that the conditions in which the drug markets operate can be very complex and do not follow the logic of supply and demand alone. In the case of hashish production, it follows the logic of market and moral economies. On the policy level this means that hashish production makes an important contribution to the agricultural sector in general. Therefore, I argue that hashish production should not be a subject of only legal control. General, economic development of the region would help farmers much better than a law enforcement approach to drug production. I support the statement by Steinberg (2004: 179) that without economic opportunities farmers in any developing country – Belize, Colombia, Afghanistan, Burma and Kyrgyzstan – are not going to stop producing illegal drug crops.

These factors provide evidence that hashish production, although is an illegal activity, cannot be automatically labelled as an ‘organized crime’. A similar suggestion is made by Bouchard and Nguyen (2011) in their study of cannabis producers in Montreal and Vancouver in Canada. Their study is able to indicate that the concept of organized crime is too rigid and does not allow us to see the categories that fall between the ‘professional’ and ‘amateur’ concepts. My stance in this research that some drug markets could be better analysed through other concepts such as the hidden economy (Henry, 1978), which cannot be defined as an organized crime as it involves many people who are not professional criminals and do not follow criminal subcultures. The moral economy is another concept that helps to see the position of drug producers from their own perspective and reveals how some illegal practices can be persistent due to perception of what ‘just’ (justice) means for them (Thompson, 1991a, 1991b, Sandberg, Scott, 1985, Steinberg et al, 2004).

Specific policy recommendations that come out of the study are related to improvement of microfinance services. The availability of microfinance loans in rural areas, adjustment of the interest rates and most importantly the payment system to the conditions of agricultural region would increase the chances of more of the population being able to take credit from formal finance institutions. It would also ensure that those that received

loans do not have to find other illegitimate ways of earning money, such as through producing hashish, to be able to pay back the interest rates of such organizations. Thus, microcrediting requirements should be adjusted to the agricultural region.

At the same time, my thesis demonstrates that over the two decades of marketisation of the economy, different types of families with different access to means of capital emerged. Therefore, hashish production is also used differently by families, depending on their socio-economic situation. For some poor families it is one of the main ways of earning money, or getting informal credit from fellow villagers. For others, it is a way of supplementing their agricultural activities. For a very small group of farmers, it is a way of increasing their profits by selling or reselling hashish to drug dealers. As other studies on drug markets have suggested, alternative development programs in some cases are not implemented on the basis of such local knowledge and therefore cannot bring good results (Vellinga, 2004). In my understanding, economic development projects should also address these variations.

### **Limitations of the Study and Further Research**

My work has its own limitations. As the goal of the project was in identifying the factors for persistence of hashish production among the local population in the Tyup region of Kyrgyzstan, I decided to collect data mainly from one village. Although, in the initial stage of data collection I travelled around five different villages, after a few weeks I decided to stay only in one. This decision allowed me to gather more in-depth information as I could develop rapport with people in the village and learn more about the socio-economic, political conditions. While I was able to collect rich data in one village, however, I could not cover other villages in the region or in other regions.

Thus, it would be interesting to study hashish production in other regions of Kyrgyzstan. According to the interview conducted with the expert in drug markets in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia, and some of the newspaper articles, in Talas and Jalal-Abad

regions hashish is not produced from wild growing plants (Interview with Zelichenko, 2014). Cannabis plants are cultivated and guarded and law enforcement officers are not allowed to enter their territories (Ismailov, 2007; VB, 2013). This means that farmers involved in hashish making do not use the same strategies of justification of their illegal activities as farmers in Toolu do. Hashish making in their case can be understood as a resistance to the state and law enforcement. This kind of research could have mapped the different parts of the country involved in hashish making and see what the other factors are that might have been involved in the persistence of drug production. This could help to gain a fuller picture of local drug production in Kyrgyzstan and understand that hashish production can vary from region to region and involve different types of people.

Perhaps significantly, recent developments on the international level and the economic sanctions implemented against the Russian Federation by western countries could hit hard the economies of remittance of dependent Central Asian countries (Trilling & Toktonaliev, 2014). This may imply that the local Central Asian population that used to rely on remittances from their migrant relatives in Russia should find alternative ways of making an income. It also may mean that more migrants might return to Kyrgyzstan after finding themselves unable to support neither themselves nor their families with their diminishing wages in Russia. In such circumstances, there could be more communities involved in illegal drug production.

Another avenue for research could be to explore how hashish is being trafficked and distributed after it was taken from the Tyup region by drug dealers. This would allow an understanding of how hashish and heroin markets are linked on the distribution level. I would be interested in following the trafficking of hashish from Tyup to Kara-Kol and Bishkek, and to Russia.

On the policy level, I would also be interested in focusing on how Russia is becoming involved in pushing drug prohibition policy further in the Central Asian region. Due to increasing drug addiction in the Russian Federation following the collapse of the

Soviet Union, the Russian state is becoming a powerful moral crusader of drug prohibition and enforcement of drug eradication policies in producing countries. This kind of study would help to see if different drug markets are being investigated in Central Asia and if the attempts of the Russian Federation to stop drug production and addiction have evidence-based platforms instead of being based on ideology and old theories.

Furthermore, the fact that Kyrgyzstan is in the process of entering the Eurasian Economic Customs Union (shortly Customs Union) at the end of 2014, developed between the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and Belorussia, will create more pressures on the local Kyrgyz economy.<sup>1</sup> In short, entering the Customs Union means that there are unified customs duties, with the possibilities of opening up the borders for import and export on the territories of member countries which eventually lead to dense economic ties and exchange between them. However, this means higher customs duties for the goods imported from any other countries, more than ten per cent in contrast to the existing five per cent at the moment as Kyrgyzstan is also a member of the World Trade Organization. Although the agricultural sector is being considered as benefiting the most from joining the Customs Union because the prices for agricultural products would go up, the economy of the whole country might suffer in the first years. According to some experts, in the first years when the country joins the Customs Union, the GDP of the country might decrease four to five times (Kabar.kg). Some are worried that Kyrgyzstan has taken a unique place at the moment in the international trade system and benefits from having an open free market system.

Although the government is aiming to improve the business conditions and bring the shadow economy into the legal sector in the long term, the fall of GDP could create pressures on the population and create additional factors for persistence of illegal drug markets in the country to generate the revenues that are lost. I assume that the hashish and

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<sup>1</sup> The president Almazbek Atambaev signed the agreement on Kyrgyzstan joining the Customs Union on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December, 2014 (Niyazova, 2014).

other drug markets being part of the globalised world economy would also respond and transform under these new conditions created in the national economy.

# Appendix I

## Interview Guide

### The Main Research Questions

Three main questions will guide this study: How is drug production linked to the local economy and culture? How has the political situation influenced drug production in Kyrgyzstan? How does the state react to the local drug production? In order to answer these questions, the following issues will be addressed:

#### Political situation

How did the political situation of the country in general make development of drug economy in Kyrgyzstan possible? What are the control strategies employed by the local law-enforcement agencies? How is Kyrgyzstan's drug policy formed?

#### The local economy

What are the survival strategies of local people? How is drug production tied up with the local economy? Is production of drugs the main source of income for local people?

#### The local culture

How are drugs linked with the everyday life of local people? What is the attitude of local people toward drug production and those who are involved in the process?

#### Hashish production

Who are the people involved in hashish production? What is the level of drug production in Kyrgyzstan in general? What is the level of production in the region? How is the process of hashish production organized?

## Introduction

- Of self and study + project
- Interview is confidential, and will be used only for the academic purposes
- Permission to conduct interviews
- The (possibility) permission to record an interview

## Warming up

- Name of the interviewee
- Age
- Marital status. Children.
- Where are you from? Have you always lived here?
- What do you work?

## 1. The local economy

### a. What are the survival strategies of local people?

- What do people do in this region, in general? What “qualifies” as being a successful/unsuccessful individual?
- How can you tell that some people are successful? And some people are unsuccessful?
- What are the reasons for success? What are the reasons for being unsuccessful?
- How much can you earn in this region?
- Is it enough for living? Is it enough to cover all living expenses?

### b. How is drug production tied up with the local economy?

- How much you can earn by making hashish?
- What is the role of drug production in the region?
- Is production of drugs the main source of income for local people?

## 2. Local culture

### a. How are drugs linked with the everyday life of local people?

- How locally produced drugs are used by local people.

### b. What is the attitude of local people toward drug production and those who are involved in the process?

- What do you think about drug production in general?
- What do you think about people who produce drugs?

### The political and legal situations

- Do you know of any policies on drug production and drug dealing?

- What do you think about these policies?
- Do you know of anyone who was caught by police? What happened to that person? How was that person caught by police?
- What does happen to a person when released from a prison?
- How does police work in this region, in particular, in relation to drug production? Does it change from time to time?
- What do you think the Kyrgyz state should do about drug production?

## Appendix II

Survey questionnaire # \_\_\_\_\_

### A. Family

A1. How many people live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

A2. Who do you live with?	A3. How old are they?

A4. Is there anyone in your household who has moved away?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question A13*)

A5. If yes, who moved out?	A6. Where did s/he (they) move?	A7. When did s/he (they) move?	A8. Do they help you?	
			Yes	No

A9. What kind of help do they provide?

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A10. How frequently do they help you?

1. Every month
2. Every quarter of a year
3. Once every half year
4. Once a year

A11. Do you help them?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question A13*)

A12. How do you help them?

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A13. Who else helps your family?

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A14. How do they help you? \_\_\_\_\_

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A15. Do you provide help to others?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question B1*)

A16. How do you help them?

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## B. Land

B1. Does your family own a share of land?

1. Yes
2. No

B2. How much land does your family own (hectares)? \_\_\_\_\_ irrigated  
 \_\_\_\_\_ non-irrigated

B3. Do you cultivate your own land?

1. Yes
3. No (*Int.: Move to the question B6*)

B4. Did you cultivate your land this year?

1. Yes
2. No (*INT: Please move to the question B6*)

B5. How much land did you cultivate this year (hectares)? \_\_\_\_\_ irrigated  
 \_\_\_\_\_ non-irrigated

B6. If not, what did you do with your land?

1. Did not cultivate at all (*INT: Please move to the question B7*)
2. Rented it out to other farmers (*INT: Please move to the question B8*)
3. Gave it to other to cultivate for free (*INT: Please move to the question B10*)

B7. Give reasons why you did not cultivate your land?

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B8. If rented out, how much do you get paid for it?

1. Land \_\_\_\_\_
2. Rent price \_\_\_\_\_

B9. If you don't have land, give reasons why not:

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B10. Do you rent land from others?

2. Yes
4. No (*Int.: Move to the question C1*)

B11. How much land (hectares)?	B12. Whom do you rent from?	B13. How much do you pay?

### C. Livestock/Machinery

C1. Does your family own any livestock?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question C3*)

C2. How many of the following?

1. Cows \_\_\_\_\_
2. Calves \_\_\_\_\_
3. Horses \_\_\_\_\_
4. Sheep \_\_\_\_\_
5. Goats \_\_\_\_\_

C3. Do you sell milk to factories?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question C5*)

C4. How much milk do you sell? \_\_\_\_\_

C5. Do you have a car?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question C7*)

C6. Which brand? \_\_\_\_\_

C7. Do you own heavy machinery?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question D1*)

C8. What kind of heavy machinery do you own?

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### D. Micro-Credits

D1. Have you personally, or has someone in your family, taken any micro-credit in the past?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question D12*)

D2. Who in your family takes the micro-credit? \_\_\_\_\_

D3. In total, how many times have you received micro-credits? \_\_\_\_\_

D4. From which micro-credit organization was it taken?	D5. How much money did you receive from them?	D6. When did you receive it?	D7. What is the interest rate?	D8. For what reason did you obtain the micro-credit?
Finka				
Bai-Tushum				
ATF-Bank				
Other ( <i>Int.: Write it down</i> )				

D9. Do you have problems with repaying micro-credits?

1. Yes
2. No

D10. Explain here what kind of problems:

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D11. How do you overcome these problems?

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D12. Where do you obtain credit in the village?

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D13. In your opinion, what are the major reasons that people take credits in the village?

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D14. What are positive aspects of taking micro-credits?

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D15. What are negative aspects of takin micro-credits?

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### E. Spending

E1. What are the main expenditures that your family has?

1. Food
  2. Clothes
  3. Celebrations
  4. University tuition fees
  5. Others (Int.: Write down the answers)
- 
- 

E2. Out of the above, can you identify which 3 you spend most on?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

E3. When you need a large amount of cash where do you obtain it from?

1. Micro-credit organizations
2. Close relatives
3. Friends
4. Neighbours
5. Community (*Jamaat*)
6. Sell potatoes, wheat
7. Other (*Int.: Write down answers*) \_\_\_\_\_

E4. In your opinion, how much is a large amount of cash?

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E5. When you need a small amount of cash where do you get it from?

1. Micro-credit organizations
2. Close relatives
3. Friends
4. Neighbours
5. Sell potatoes, wheat
6. Shops
7. Other (*Int.: Write down answers*) \_\_\_\_\_

E6. In your opinion, how much is a small amount of cash? \_\_\_\_\_

E7. Can you borrow some money without paying an interest rate?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question E11*)

	E8. From whom?	E9. How much can you borrow?	E10. For how long?
From my relatives			
From relatives of my wife/husband			
Friends			
Neighbours			
Shops			
Others ( <i>Int.: write it down</i> )			

E11. Is there anything which stops you from borrowing money from them?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E12. Do you have *jamaat* in your tribe?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question E16*)

E13. How much money can you borrow in this way?

\_\_\_\_\_

E14. What is the interest rate? \_\_\_\_\_

E15. Have you ever borrowed money from *jamaat*?

1. Yes
2. No

E16. If you need some food and do not have any cash, from where do you borrow it?

1. Close relatives
2. Friends
3. Neighbours
4. Sell potatoes, wheat
5. Shops
6. No one
7. Other (*Int.: Write down answers*) \_\_\_\_\_

E17. Are you part of a *chernaya-kassa*?

1. Yes
2. No (*Int.: Move to the question E16*)

	E18. Who do you have <i>chernaya-kassa</i> with?	E19. How much money do you contribute?	E20. Who do you have <i>katysh</i> with?	E21. How much do you contribute as <i>yntymak</i> ?
My relatives				
Relatives of my				

wife/husband				
Friends				
Very close friends				
Neighbours				

## F. The Local Authority

F1. How much do you trust in the following local authority members?

	Absolutely trust them	Trust them	Do not trust them	Absolutely do not trust them	Difficult to answer
1. President	4	3	2	1	0
2. Government	4	3	2	1	0
3. Parliament	4	3	2	1	0
4. Courts	4	3	2	1	0
5. Oblast level governor	4	3	2	1	0
6. Raion level governor	4	3	2	1	0
7. The local authorities	4	3	2	1	0
8. Militia	4	3	2	1	0
9. Parties	4	3	2	1	0
10. International organizations	4	3	2	1	0

F2. How would you assess the work of the local authorities?

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Satisfactory
4. Non-satisfactory
98. Cannot answer the question
99. Difficult to answer

F3. What informs your assessment?

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F4. Is there any kind of help/support provided by the local authorities to the population?

1. Yes, there is support
2. No, there is no support
3. I don't know

F5. What kind of help is provided to people by the local authorities?

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F6. How would you assess the work of militia?

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Satisfactory
4. Non-satisfactory
98. Cannot answer the question
99. Difficult to answer

F7. What informs your assessment?

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### **G. Social-Demographic Characteristics**

G1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

G2. Sex

1. Male
2. Female

G3. What is your level of education?

1. Primary education
2. I have not completed secondary education
3. I have completed secondary education
4. Technical education
5. I have not completed higher education
6. I have completed higher education

G4. What is your nationality?

1. Kyrgyz
2. Uzbek
3. Russian
4. Other (*Int.: Write it down*) \_\_\_\_\_

G5. Which tribe do you belong to? \_\_\_\_\_

G6. How would you describe your family's financial situation?

1. The money we earn is not enough for food
2. We have money for food but have problems with buying clothes
3. Our income is enough for food and clothes but we can't buy durable goods such as TV set, fridge
4. We can buy durable goods without any problems but have problems with purchasing very expensive things such as cars

5. We don't limit ourselves – we can buy such things as cars, summer house, can travel outside of the house
99. Difficult to answer

G7. How do you think your family's financial situation changed in the last two-three years?

1. Improved
2. Stayed the same
3. Declined

**Thanks a lot for participating in the survey!!!**

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