

# Study on the Long-Term Prevention and Control Mechanism of Evil Forces in Villages

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**Abstract:** The existence of evil forces in rural areas undermines local social stability and economic order, brings tremendous harm to people's life and personal safety, and also threatens the achievement of the whole goal of a peaceful China. Since the launch of the special struggle against evil forces, China has achieved remarkable results in combating evil forces in rural areas, but improvements are still required. This paper attempts to summarize the dilemmas in the fight against evil forces in rural areas and put forward targeted suggestions for the establishment of a long-term prevention and control mechanism for evil forces in rural areas, so as to provide theoretical references for the realization of the normalization of the fight against evil forces.

**Keywords:** Rural Governance, Long-term Prevention and Control, Peaceful China, Grassroots Governance.

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## 1. Introduction

In the 14th Five-Year Plan, the concept of "Peaceful China" was first explicitly proposed. Peacefulness is a basic prerequisite for the prosperity and stability of the country, and a fundamental requirement for the happiness and well-being of the people. The State's inclusion of the pursuit of peace and security in its development programme reflects its concern for the unchanging desire for peace in the world in the collective consciousness [1], and its approach to solving social conflicts at their sources. In practice, the promotion of the construction of a "Peaceful China" includes the resolution of conflicts and disputes, daily patrols and many other specific tasks to promote the overall consolidation of the security front.

Peaceful Village is a structural force for Peaceful China, and once problems arise in the security defences of the villages, the national, social security prevention and control system is extremely vulnerable to challenges. The Opinions of the State Council of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Key Work of Comprehensively Promoting the Revitalization of the Countryside in 2023 [2] states that the mechanism of multi-dimensional prevention, mediation and resolution of social conflicts and disputes should be improved. The existence of evil forces is a cancer that destroys social stability and harmony and economic order in rural areas, which not only brings tremendous harm to people's life and personal safety, but also adversely affects the achievement of the overall goal of a peaceful China. Under China's current "Tiao-kuai" political and legal management system, it is difficult for the rural authorities to reach the grassroots. Village governance is a long-standing problem in national governance, and if village committees are subject to pressure from criminal gangs in their work, or even involved in crime, it will threaten the state.

It is obvious that it is too scattered to focus on "rural security", so this article takes the perspective of "fighting evil forces" to sort out the efforts made in this regard over the past period and draw out the experiences and weaknesses.

## 2. Review

### 2.1. The Evolution of the Fight Against Evil Forces in the Villages

In the 1980s, the fight against the evil mainly continued the mass line of the collectivization era, relying on the people to maintain law and order. [3] During the same period, when China was entering the stage of industrialization and urbanization, the "local resources" [4] of the rural society still had a strong restraint on the evil forces, who did not dare to be too unscrupulous in the village due to family restraint. In 1983, the first "tough-on-crime" campaign was carried out, and the campaign-style governance was gradually developed.

After 1990, when the village alliance was formed and village security was not as strong as it could be, the mass route mainly referred to approaching the people, while "specialized work" such as security associations and informers progressed, "physical governance" and "moral governance" failed. This has led to a dilemma in the fight against the evil forces.

In 2012, China entered the stage of population urbanization, a new type of urbanization, with the main feature of "citizenship of the mobile population and urbanization in the local area". Since the 18th National Congress of the Party, special operations have been carried out one after another to combat the evil, with the main tasks of "treating the symptoms", "treating the causes" and "treating the root" being carried out in phases. A typical example is the "Cloud Sword" operation, which uses Internet cloud services and cloud platforms as swords to catch suspects. This is accompanied by the emergence of a variety of effective governance models such as "Internet + governance" and "grid-based services and management". Wuzhishan insists on implementing eight governance projects as a general grasp, promoting the integration of self-governance, moral governance and rule of law, giving full play to the role of four teams, including grid members, police and security joint control teams, grid service commando teams and grid volunteer teams, in enhancing citizens' legal literacy and promoting the practice of governance in accordance with the law, and promoting the construction of a peaceful village by improving the quality of people. In 1996, China carried out its second large-scale "tough-on-crime" campaign.

In 2021, the 13th National People's Congress voted to adopt the Anti-organized Crime Law of the People's Republic of China, which provides a legal basis for the prevention and punishment of organized crime. [5] The overall process of fighting against the crime evil became law-based as a result of the promulgation of the relevant laws.

Reviewing this process, it can be broadly observed that the overall quality of the workforce in the fight against the evil has been enhanced as a result of the changes in the security forces, gradually moving away from the original security model in which the quality of joint guards, informers and others was not high. The new governance model of dividing the village into multiple grids, which involves social forces in law enforcement, has improved the accuracy of governance, but the mass line of security and control in the village has changed from “relying closely on the people” to “approaching close to the people”. In recent years, grid members, police and security control teams and relevant departments have been on the front line of the fight against the evil, but the reform at the external level has exacerbated formalism, alienated relations between cadres and the masses, and weakened the ability of grassroots cadres to serve the masses and organizations. Social security has improved after the concentrated specific campaign, but some problems have also been revealed.

## **2.2. Results Achieved in the Fight Against the Evil in Rural Areas**

Since the launch of the special struggle against the evil, a total of 1,289 black-related organizations and 4,095 evil-related criminal groups in rural areas have been broken up nationwide, and 3,727 “village bully” have been severely punished in accordance with the law. Relevant departments have identified and cleared 42,700 village cadres who have been criminally punished, and have replaced and strengthened a number of village cadres. According to statistics, in 2022, the year in which the normalization of the fight against the evil was promoted, the national procuratorial authorities prosecuted 14,000 people for crimes involving evil, down 32.1% year-on-year. Through the specific campaign, the environment for strengthening grassroots organizations has been significantly optimized, the capacity for grassroots governance has been significantly enhanced, and the Party's foundation for governance has been strengthened. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China states that the specific campaign against the evil has achieved milestone results and the construction of a peaceful China has moved to a higher level.

Although, from the beginning of the above-mentioned process, China has achieved remarkable results in the fight against the evil, and the social security environment is generally stable, but due to the deep-rooted causes that have not yet been solved, rural evil crimes still blast off at unpredictable and irregular intervals, and rural security still faces a series of challenges.

## **3. Reflection: Promotion of Normalization of the Fight Against the Evil**

### **3.1. Powers and Responsibilities in Governance Separate**

According to the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China, the Anti-organized Crime Law of the People's

Republic of China and the Notice of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Specific Campaign against the evil, the evil forces in China's villages mainly refer to illegal organizations or individuals of a triad nature, such as local officials, civic organizations and businessmen, who are engaged in manipulating rural grassroots elections, holding grassroots power, monopolizing rural resources, embezzling collective assets, threatening the personal safety of farmers, using clan power to run one side of the village, forcing demolition and expropriation, through intimidation, coercion and enticement. These illegal organizations or individuals have long-term entrenchment in China's grassroots village administrative organizations, seriously damaging national, collective and individual interests, violating the security of the regime, and causing adverse effects on social stability and the stability of the country.

Since the launch of the specific campaign against the evil, the central as well as local anti mafia offices at all levels have played an important role in coordinating planning, coordinating all parties, supervising the investigation and handling of work by relevant departments as well as conveying and implementing the spirit of decisions and arrangements of the central, provincial, municipal and county committees. After the specific campaign has achieved a stage victory, the evil-related issues present a new trend of infiltration to the political field, expansion to new industries, and transformation to concealment, the national anti-black and evil work actually faces a more severe situation, after gradually turning to the normalization of anti-black and evil, it is more necessary to firmly support the anti mafia office from the top level to continue to play its functional role and move towards more standardization and specialization. At present, although the anti mafia offices at all levels belongs to the subsidiary units attached to the political and legal committee at the same level in terms of organizational relationship, the leading groups and offices of county, township and county member units in the fight against the evil have also been retained, however, they are still only temporary institutions, and the central government has not yet issued formal documents stipulating the scope of authority and responsibility, organizational structure, leadership and leadership relationship of the anti mafia offices. The lack of clarity in the scope of authority and responsibility will largely lead to abuse of power, redundancy in the cadre, as well as shirking of responsibilities and inefficiency among various departments.

On the basis of the grid management model carried out one after another in various places, a linkage mechanism for grid management has been formed, including the subjects of grid officers, social workers and security guards. From the contingent point of view, the recruitment of grid officers is the responsibility of the civil affairs department, which also manages them. From a practical point of view, grid officers belong to the grid section in the streets, which corresponds to the political and legal committee, and the management of the personnel relies on the streets. The village committees, as villagers' self-governing organizations, still take on many political functions. Although the civil administration is on an equal footing with the other departments, it is often not as strong as the political and legal committee in terms of coordination, and the civil administration and the political and legal committee push each other away from the management of the grid officers.

As a result of the lack of “unified recruitment and

management”, grid officers have taken on tasks from various departments such as civil administration and the political and legal committee. At the same time, the boundaries between the duties of grid officers and social workers are blurred. In contrast, the concept of grid workers was introduced by the political and legal committee, while social workers were introduced by civil administration. In the course of implementation, although grid officers and social workers are two different positions, each recruited on a full-time basis, their duties need to be further distinguished, and the work within the grid is often done by the grid officer alone. Even though under “gridding”, village cadres serve as grid leaders and each grid is equipped with a certain number of security guards, in an attempt to increase the prevention aspect of the regular work of fighting against the evil, it is difficult to extend the law enforcement system to the villages. Whether they are grid officers, social workers or security guards, they are all workers outside the hierarchy and on the front line of rural law and order, and due to the lack of legal authority, their work is not as effective as police enforcement in deterring crime.

### 3.2. Governance Supervision Not yet Complete

In the past, the “two committees” of the village (village party committee and villagers’ committee) accounted for a certain proportion of the number of people convicted of evil crimes in the rural areas. The evil forces have a certain economic base, and the purpose of illegal crimes is mostly to seek improper benefits, and the phenomenon of power and money transactions is common.

In the context of promoting rural revitalization, many places have formulated “supervision and assessment” measures, such as stipulating that the leaders of the linked municipalities should carry out on-site supervision and guidance once every two months, but under the visiting type of supervision, villagers and village committees are still the most knowledgeable about the village situation. The information gap is difficult to bridge, and the role of the monitoring mechanism in detecting latent evil forces is minimal, especially in cases involving village cadres, who will act as umbrella for evil forces, which have held power at the grassroots level for decades. The cases of Gao Maoyi, secretary of the party of Luozhuang Village in Donghai County and Gu Zhaozhong, former secretary of the party of Nongzhuang Village in Huaiyin District, Huaian City, are all living examples of grassroots cadres involved in crime, who held great power in their hands but failed to follow up on their supervision, resulting in the misappropriation of collective interest.

The lack of supervision of power inevitably leads to corruption. The supervision and inspection of the daily work of the two village committees and the financial management audit system by the superior government and the supervisory departments are still inadequate, resulting in a failure to monitor the operation of their powers. Regulating the operation of village power and promoting the clean performance of village cadres is the necessary way to normalize the fight against evil in rural areas, and is also an inevitable requirement for strict governance of the Party to take root.

### 3.3. Governance Acceptance Belittles Depth

With the development of science and technology, the means of crime have diversified and there is a trend towards

cybercrime. The characteristics of crime have changed from violence to concealment and penetration. In April 2019, the Criminal Police Detachment of Nantong City Public Security Bureau cracked down on network gun trafficking through an online inspection and found that offender of Xingtai, Hebei Province, was selling “top-free nail guns” on a network second-hand trading platform. The substance can be converted into gunpowder guns. The investigation found that the gang behind Tian Mouqiang’s crime, gun trafficking clues throughout 32 provinces and cities.

From the perspective of incentive compatibility, the promotion of the normalization of the fight against the evil in China mostly relies on the “Tiaokuai” system, the objectives and capabilities of the upper and lower levels are different, and the unreasonable incentive mechanism will, to a certain extent, affect the depth of governance, which is not conducive to the formation of governance synergy.

By issuing the Opinions on Cultivating Model and Advanced Villages for Rural Revitalization in the City, some regions have clearly defined the basic principles, construction objectives, basic conditions, construction requirements, construction procedures and safeguard measures for building model villages for rural revitalization, and have formulated relevant scoring rules in detail. The scores of “prosperous industry, ecological livability, civilized village, effective governance, and affluent living” account for 30%, 25%, 15%, 15%, and 15% of the total score respectively. The “presence of lawlessness among village cadres during the incubation period” and “occurrence of serious criminal cases during the incubation period” were included in the one-vote veto. It is true that a high degree of importance is attached to the prevention and control of law and order in villages, but the quantitative criteria such as “no mass incidents and no extreme individual cases in the village” in the scoring method are very likely to stimulate problems such as suppression of cases without investigation, guilt without detection and downgraded treatment under the purpose of building a model village for rural revitalization, which is incompatible with the principle of “fighting early and small, digging deep into the hidden and dormant”.

In 2019, the specific fight against the evil entered “treating the root” stage, from the original “create an atmosphere of everyone shouting to fight” to “improve the satisfaction of the public”. This has been continued by the fact that villagers’ satisfaction has been considered as an important target in the acceptance of governance performance by means of telephone interviews and statistics on the number of villagers’ complaints. The opinions related to the implementation of rural revitalization in various places have been issued, work at all levels has been standardized, and the channels for villagers to express their interests have been institutionalized and expanded, but the information passed upwards is highly filtered, and it is difficult to get a response to the real situation, while the ways to solve the problem are homogenized. Villagers call 12345 to lodge complaints, which are fed back to the village party and group service centre, and then fed back to the relevant personnel again under the assessment mechanism at different levels, and the relevant personnel go to the villages again.

### 3.4. Governance Risks Persist

The risks of urbanization. [6] Urbanization is an irreversible trend and a necessary path to national modernization, and social transformation has led to the

accumulation of endogenous risks in the village. For a long time to come, China's urbanization will be characterized by the cascading siphoning of large cities to small and medium-sized cities, small and medium-sized cities to county towns and county towns to villages, and the gradual emptying of villages. In recent years, China's high concentration of quality education, medical and other public service resources and secondary and tertiary industries in cities has steadily increased the siphoning effect on the rural young and strong labour forces, resulting in a deteriorating population structure in the village, showing a growth in the elderly population, the elimination of the urban siphoning of quality young and strong population, the return of low-quality young and strong labours to the village, and a large proportion of women and children left behind. There is a significant lack of reserve talent in village "two committees" and other grassroots governance bodies, as well as a weakening of rural grassroots organizations resulting in a continuous decline in governance capacity and level of governance, which has created a breeding ground for evil forces in rural areas. At the same time, the rapid development of urbanization has changed the social structure at the grassroots level, and the "triadic structure" between urban and rural areas has gradually emerged. Between the large and medium-sized cities and the traditional village, the real estate development industry, stimulated by the county urbanization policy, has grown rapidly, creating a "third pole" that lacks industrial support and agricultural production. Peasants living in the cities are living in a permanent state of "low income, high consumption and high debt", which on the one hand has led to a mass gathering and on the other hand has pushed young people who have failed to move to the cities to return to their hometowns. This part of the population returning to their hometowns is generally low in cultural quality, weak in legal awareness, insufficient to improve their livelihood ability, weak in ability and strong in desire, and some of them have high debts due to house purchase and business failure, combined with the weakened governance capacity of rural grassroots organizations, this part of the population has a greater risk of being involved in crime and evil.

Risk of insufficient basic support (economic strength and social security). The collective economy at the village level is weak, with most administrative villages having a small scale, insufficient financial support and the problem of having no money to do things. Economic risks can induce misbehaviour, a connection that increases both the difficulty of governance for grassroots organizations and the riskiness of their own approach to governance.

Endogenous risks in rural society. In rural areas, governance risks have long-standing root causes. Due to the persistence in the village of real-life reasons such as irrational social structures, imperfect organizational structures and the low scientific and cultural literacy and public moral literacy of the masses, the vulnerability of rural society to the binding forces of the evil is revealed when they arise, making it easier to become a ground for the expansion of the evil forces and more accessible to their evil acts and threats. The impact of evil forces on rural society is mainly manifested in the disturbance of the normal political, economic and social order and stability. If a long-term mechanism is not in place to ensure the stability of the village, rural society will still suffer great damage when the evil forces resurface.

## **4. Conclusion: Path to Constructing a Long-term Prevention and Control Mechanism for the Evil**

### **4.1. Implementing Long-Term Prevention Mechanism**

#### **4.1.1. Digital Governance Empowering Grids**

The term "predictive policing" was introduced in the United States in 2009 and quickly spread to a wide range of Western countries, with the number of mainstream policing models in the US and UK rising to twelve. Among them, Hot Spots Policing, which uses crime mapping techniques to predict crime, has gradually become a core strategy for police departments. A series of Hot Spots Policing trials have flourished and quantitative evaluations have proven the effectiveness of the Hot Spots Policing model in combating and preventing crime. Predictive Policing uses algorithmic models to inform proactive crime prevention, based on information from past crime-related data. [7]

Although the national conditions are different, their methods of using data and information to achieve crime prevention can be learnt in the context of technology-assisted rural revitalization and the gradual improvement of rural probe equipment. Promoting the deep integration of grid-based social governance with software such as SPSS, AMOS and ARC- GIS, and empowering the stringing and comparison of crime clues involving crimes with big data clues can provide positive references. Adhere to long-term and permanent governance, further establish and improve long-term mechanisms such as information sharing, clue transmission, notification and feedback, and joint law enforcement with industry authorities, strengthen the connection between execution and punishment, and achieve retrospective governance to help prevent black-related crimes and prevent further growth of black-related criminal organizations.

#### **4.1.2. Cooperation and Governance of Multiple Subjects**

The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee put forward the concept of "social governance community" for the first time, urging the need to strengthen and innovate social governance, improve the social governance system and build a social governance community where everyone is responsible, everyone fulfills their responsibilities and everyone enjoys the benefits. The rural community of law and order governance is a social governance community that relies on urban and rural grassroots social fields, based on the sharing of law and order resources, with common law and order prevention and control actions as its content, and the promotion of law and order governance optimization as its goal.

The police often intervene as an external force in the village and engage in a complex dialogue with them in dealing with crimes related to the evil. Collaboration and cooperation with other social forces is conducive to dealing with the relationship between policing and villagers, villages and rural culture, and serves as a long-term mechanism for breaking down barriers and an important grip on the lack of reasonable empowerment of other front-line security staff.

It is necessary for communities and streets to have an in-depth grasp of the employment, family and ideological basics of key groups of people such as young people returning to their hometowns, so as to scientifically control them and prevent them from being attracted to the forces of evil due to

economic hardship. Strong participation of the public in grid-based social governance should be encouraged to achieve a shift from centralized specific crackdowns to regular crackdowns and remediation. Public security organs at all levels should insist on relying on the masses, activating the masses, combining the promotion and implementation of the anti-organized crime law, opening up channels for the masses to complain, mobilizing them to supervise actively and participate extensively, and then promoting specific campaigns to achieve greater effectiveness.

## 4.2. Improve Long-term Protection Mechanism

### 4.2.1. Rural “Three Assets” Management Mechanism and Cadre Building

In the past three years, 42,700 village cadres with problems such as “village bullies” and those involved in evil were removed from the grassroots cadre team, proving that there have been serious problems in the rural cadre team for a long time. The phenomenon of contesting to become village officials during the election of rural cadres is quite common, while the cultural quality of the elected village cadres is not fully guaranteed, and the awareness of law is weak and the bureaucratic mindset is serious, so once they take up the position of village cadres, they seek personal gains by virtue of their own authority, and eventually become corrupted and evil. The most prominent cases are the illegal appropriation of rural “three assets” and the beating and intimidation of opponents and whistle-blowers. In order to reduce or even eliminate the occurrence of evil-related incidents caused by village cadres attempting to appropriate collective assets, it is necessary to carry out a two-pronged approach at the level of election, construction, improvement of the management mechanism of village cadres and the reform of the management system of rural “three assets”, so that village cadres dare not make profits, cannot make profits and have no profits to make.

In the process of electing village cadres, it is essential to take the election discipline seriously, gradually strengthen the “two committee” teams, establish a coordination mechanism at the district, town and village levels, filter those who have been involved in evil incidents such as “village bullies”, evil forces and those who have been disciplined by the party and government; set up a specific inspection team and a disciplinary and ethical supervision team for the village “two committees” to supervise the whole process of the election and prevent the election from being manipulated, so as to ensure the legitimacy and purity of the elected cadres. The construction of the village cadres must emphasize the establishment of the rule of law, and focus on the cultivation of party spirit and professional moral quality.

The first step in the reform of the management system of the “three assets” in rural areas is to establish district-level agricultural economic stations to carry the main responsibility of supervision, set up rural assets, funds and resources accounting teams and management bodies, focusing on clearing village accounts, passbooks, receipts, contracts and agreements, cash and the registration of the natural resources belonging to the collective, as well as all kinds of current and fixed assets. The second step is to improve the institutional mechanism, strengthen the role of democratic decision-making in the management and disposal of the “three assets”, and include the disposal of village collective assets and the issuance of resources in major village affairs, which are

decided collectively or by representatives, so as to maximize the collective power over the disposal of the “three assets”. The third step is to intensify the role of grass-roots supervision. On top of the existing layers of supervision, the township government takes the lead in setting up a supervisory committee for the management and disposal of the “three assets” in each village, and every expenditure proposed by the village has to be examined and approved by the supervisory committee, and major expenditures have to be reported to the township for approval. The fourth step requires rural financial auditing to empower and increase the effectiveness of rural “three assets” supervision, with municipal audit bodies directly guiding the audit work at the rural grassroots level and further replenishing the auditors at all levels to reduce the pressure on the current grassroots auditors. [8] At the same time, social auditing can be adequately introduced to reinforce the economic supervision function of the rural “three assets”, featuring a more independent external auditor. [9]

### 4.2.2. Party Leads Security Work

In May 2021, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the Opinions on Consolidating the Results of the Special Struggle by Regularly Carrying Out the Fight Against Evil, which adhered to the Party’s overall leadership in the fight against evil in all regions, departments, industries and fields. Faced with the current situation of unclear scope of responsibilities and separation of powers and responsibilities of front-line security staff in the fight against the evil, in order to consolidate the phased results and improve the long-term protection mechanism, it is necessary to have centralized and unified leadership by the party and effectively fulfill the responsibilities of the heads of various departments to grasp and manage jointly.

The normalization of the fight against the evil has an important impact on the construction of a peaceful China. We must stick to the Party’s innovative ideas as a leader in order to transform political advantages into rule of law authority and governance effectiveness, consolidate the Party’s ruling base, consolidate grassroots power, and ensure social stability and long-term national security.

## Acknowledgment

This paper is one of the results of “Study of Legal Mechanisms for a Peaceful Village” funded by Innovation and Entrepreneurship Program Training Project of Jiangsu College Students(202211287099Y).

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