ABSTRACT: How do states mobilize bureaucrats as agents in response to wartime threats? Studies on state-formation suggest that rulers at war tend to intensify bureaucratization to bolster their ruling capacity, but few analysts have tackled the tension between bureaucratic control and agent autonomy called forth by a crisis of war. As exemplified by the case of the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864), Qing rulers attempted to control the battlefields and state agents dualistically by “bureaucratic mobilization” – instating, promoting, dismissing, or shuffling provincial officials into teams on battlegrounds. I view personnel arrangements not as solutions but as analytic traces of ruler-agent tensions. Following bureaucratic vacancy chains generated in wartime, I show how bureaucratic mobilization set off linked changes in official career trajectories, in turn reshaping the state bureaucracy as a whole. Wartime patterning of bureaucratic careers is analyzed to be symptomatic of ruler-agent relations critical to state-making.

INTRODUCTION

State bureaucracy affords bellicose rulers an important vessel of extraction and coercion (Tilly 1975, 1992; Finer 1975; Brewer 1989), but its organizational content cannot be reduced to mere fiscal-military functioning (see e.g., Gorski 2001, 2003). Confronting wartime threats from without, bureaucratic actors also orient their activities toward the “inner” organizational relations that make up the social institution of a bureaucracy (Olsen 2006). Comparative-historical studies on war/states interactions tend to bypass the internal dynamics of state bureaucracy, privileging instead a focus on bureaucratic output (e.g., volumes of taxation). Among the various relational dynamics endogenous to state bureaucracy, the tension between rulers and their agents seems most critical (Barkey 1994; Kiser and Cai 2003). Delegation of tasks by state principals generally involves the continuous monitoring of agents’ performance, enforcing their compliance and bridling their autonomy (Kiser 1999; Miller 2005). The problem of agency can become acute during a war crisis, when prompt actions are required but the certainty of the outcome is low. Institutional mechanisms for agent control might be relaxed to increase organizational flexibility, and agents’ horizontal integration might be dangerously encouraged to enhance the effectiveness of a military campaign – thereby revealing the dilemma of agent control induced in a war crisis. To evaluate “how wars make states and vice versa” – one of the most important theses in historical sociology (Tilly 1985) – it seems necessary for us to examine these inner organizational dynamics over the course of a war.

I propose to examine bureaucratic appointments as a way to capture the organizational dynamics made salient by warfare. These are ostensible personnel decisions to instate, promote, dismiss, demote, or shuffle state bureaucrats during wartime. Such decisions may be considered strategic from rulers’ perspectives should appointed state civil bureaucrats be crucial agents of war. This condition, admittedly, is not always fulfilled, considering the presence of other forms of state agents, such as military generals, soldiers, militias, mercenaries, or spies. But if civil servants do play an institutional role in wartime, then the arrangements and shuffling of office-holders may be viewed as the medium
through which state actors (principals or agents) can attend to battlefield exigencies, correct or preempt mistakes, and project new plans. Multiple interests tend to intervene with bureaucratic decisions, such that state principals do not always have absolute power to deploy agents. But this does not diminish the problem-solving character of bureaucratic deployment, which allows state actors to cope with battlefield experience as a collective. State histories are filled with these deployment activities, even if social scientists have only begun to link them to war/state relations (see e.g., Barkey 1994, 2008).

Bureaucratic deployment signals state-making because it offers a proxy to ruler-agent relations. State bureaucrats are the messengers, brokers, translators, or executors of state projects (Page 1985; Weber 1978). Bureaucracy as an agency mediates between a state center and a population when direct rule is difficult or impossible. Commonly, bureaucratic agents’ commitments to state projects (if known) cannot be assumed (Moe 2005). The extent of shirking duty and other moral hazards may depend on how much information agents could uphold from rulers, the tightness of top-down supervision, the clarity of output as a gauge for performance, the balance between rewards and punishments, and how the kind of organizational designs aim at suppressing collusions (Kiser 1999; Miller 2005). Bureaucratic appointment, demotion, promotion, and transfer are manifestations of ruler-agent struggles.

Warfare can amplify and mutate (otherwise routinized) agency problems. Rulers’ reliance on agent tends to increase in times of crisis. Ground agents can be empowered at the expense of principals’ interests when routine agent control gives way to organizational flexibility (e.g., Cunningham 2004). For example, resources can be concentrated in few agents at the frontlines, routine mechanisms for supervision suspended, and institutional rules broken in the name of exigency. In short, the dilemma of central control arises when routine organizational control over state agents comes to hinder a state’s war-making efforts. The appearance of such dilemma should challenge the “bellicist” thesis that war-making and state-making can mutually reinforce one another. As Centeno (2002) shows, wars can equally un-make states under particular historical and institutional conditions. Accordingly, I examine a historical case (discussed below) to show how the dual production of war-making and state-formation may be problematic, in light of the organizational process of wartime bureaucratic deployment.

Bureaucratic appointments, promotions, dismissals, and transfers are features of agent control built into the hierarchical and segmented structure of a bureaucracy. Hierarchy aims at both control and efficiency to effect accountability and a clear line of command (Weber 1978). Institutional rules generally shape agent careers and can thereby regulate agent movements across organizational strata and segments. In addition, term limits and office rotation regulate agents’ relations with their constituents and their colleagues, generally aiming to prevent collusion and excessive horizontal integration (at the expense of the vertical links between rulers and agents). A seniority system regulates career prospects, discouraging ambitious “high flyers,” though in risk of encouraging inertia. As Stinchcombe (1997) suggests, staffing is a key to understand institutional dynamics (see also Padgett 1990; Abbott 1990).

I approach bureaucratic deployment in terms of the traces of rulers’ simultaneous control over battlefields and state agents. I do not assume that the threshold of rulers’ decision-making power over personnel decisions must be high. Insofar as rulers might exert some degree of influence on bureaucratic staffing beyond rubber-stamping, such organizational activities are potentially strategic. That agents might exert their own influence on staffing decisions does not diminish the idea that
ruler-agents relations can be read from the viewpoint of distribution of bureaucratic offices among agents. A dismissal levied on an official, for example, can be read as both a response to battle failures and a change in particular ruler-agent relations (since the dismissal implies that the official is no longer a state agent). To fill a vacancy with a trusted or more capable agent—to take another example—anticipates military efficiency and simultaneously redefines the superior-subordinate relationship between agents. Deployment decisions, in effect, are always organizationally meaningful.

How do states mobilize bureaucrats in response to wars through deployment? We can examine the kinds of bureaucratic vacancies produced in wartime and the types of agents mobilized to reoccupy these vacancies. However, detecting static, more or less independent deployment outcomes cannot fully portray the organizational dynamics of war/state interactions. The analyst must take one additional step to trace the connections between organizational decisions and their ramifications throughout the bureaucratic organization. I tackle this problem by employing Harrison White's (1970) concept of vacancy chains (see also Chase 1991; Abbott 1990; Smith 1983; Smith and Abbott 1983; Stewman 1975, 1986).

The linked decisions of bureaucratic deployment can be specified by a vacancy analysis. A vacancy chain starts with the creation of a slot within an organization (or an internal labor market). An initial vacancy may arise as a result of attrition: death, retirement, resignation, or dismissal. The new appointee (or occupant) to the first vacancy may be an insider who is holding a post within the organization and must, therefore, give up that current post to fill that origin vacancy. This leads to a second slot, which may then be filled by another office-holder, who by taking the second vacancy similarly creates a third slot. The process goes on so long as new occupants hold jobs in a system and can keep only one job at a time. A vacancy chain thus consists of the number of emptied positions generated sequentially by dint of a first opening. I shall discuss the conceptual meaning of vacancy analysis in detail below.

We now see that the structuring of vacancy chains is a dual production of organizational decisions and individual career strategies (which though their weights may vary in specific chains). An individual’s career change (from one post to another) is mirrored by a vacancy “jump” (from one slot to another). This duality gives rise to a mobility structure with institutional significance. A set of institutional constraints (defined through rules and routines) tend to contour the possible pathways through which vacancies can “jump” from one position/stratum to another, thus shaping individual career trajectories at the same time. Office-holders are eligible to fill only a limited number of vacancies at a given career-time; vacancies likewise can only jump through certain types of slots. A vacancy analysis is therefore a fruitful tool to reveal how organizational strategies might intertwine with institutional constraints.

In sum, this paper focuses on processes of bureaucratic deployment and organizational vacancies generated in the context of a war-stricken bureaucracy. My goal is to show that the interaction of war-making and state-making can be traced by the sequential unfolding of bureaucratic vacancies and, dually, changes in agents’ careers. Because vacancy chains connect bureaucrats across wide organizational spaces, agents who are distant from war zones may equally be embroiled into rulers’ war-making projects. To the extent that bureaucratic deployment provides an indicator of ruler-agent relations, vacancy chains may also index where changes of political power lie. A tracing of vacancy chain allows the analyst to detect how battlefield exigencies can be translated into wider, ramifying organizational relations (if we have a reason to believe that certain vacancies are war-related). This approach thus contributes to a new way of analyzing and conceptualizing the linkage...
between wars and states, one that intertwines war-induced organizational processes and relations with structural outcomes.

A Case Study

The Qing response to the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864) will exemplify the organizational dynamics discussed above. The infamously powerful Taipings, armed with religious fervor, fought the Qing government with an ever-proliferating campaign that lasted fifteen years. In the hundreds of thousands, Taiping fighters fought across extensive territories and left their imprints in many parts of China, though not always with long-term occupations or stable administrations. The Taipings countered the Manchu oppression of the Han Chinese, a theme long adopted by different unruly groups under the Qing conquest. Ethnic grievance was perhaps made more salient by the economic strains revealed in the wake of the first Opium War (1838-1842). The Taipings emerged from a Southern Chinese context in which rural impoverishment was woven into numerous lines of social division, including local conflicts between landowning natives (the Puntis) and their neighboring migrant communities (the Hakkas). Claiming divine assistance, the Taiping King, Hong Xiuquan – who considered himself the brother of Jesus, or as Spence (1996) says, the “Chinese Son of God” – propagated a cleansing of the evilness of the world. The “devil” Hong identified was unmistakably the Manchu regime, the Qing dynasty, which had ruled China since 1644 – a little over two centuries by the outbreak of the Taiping revolt in 1851. (For a historical overview in the English language, see Boardman 1972; Hail 1927; Jen 1973; Kuhn 1970; Michael 1966; Reilly 2004; Shih 1957; Spector 1964; Spence 1996; Teng 1971; Wagner 1982).

A major goal of the Taiping millenarian movement was to establish a Kingdom of God, in which lands were to be redistributed, moral disciplines strictly enforced, and official corruption cleansed. A hint of early feminism could also be found in the movement, as Taiping women rejected foot-binding and were trained as soldiers to assist their male counterparts. Some historians thus consider the Taipings as representing a proto-modern modern social revolution, emulated by the later Republican Revolution in 1911 (Jen 1973) and the communist movement in the first half of twentieth century (Luo 1955). While these remain debatable views, there is less doubt that the Taiping Rebellion represents a watershed in late Qing history (Teng 1962). Not only did it open a floodgate of decades of social revolts, the movement also ushered in new power relations between state and society (Kuhn 1970; Michael 1966; Spector 1964). The culmination of this social reordering was the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911.

Qing response to the rebellion must be understood in terms of the severe threats the Taipings posed to the Manchu state. Starting in 1851, the group embarked on a full-fledged revolt in the southern provinces of Guangxi and Hunan, defeating government forces in dozens of counties and laying siege on several provincial capitals (the latter rarely accomplished by other rebels). Two years of vigorous campaigns pushed the Taiping soldiers toward the lower-Yangtze, the strategic waterway linked to the most prosperous region of the Chinese empire. By March 1853, the Taipings took Nanking and there built their Heavenly Capital. Settling in this critical city close to the major trading hub of Shanghai, the Taipings continuously launched ambitious expeditions, trying to capture the northern, central, and western parts of the Qing empire. Though not all of these expensive campaigns were successful, the rebels were able to sustain certain administrative structures in the lower-Yangtze and in a substantive area south of the “Long River.” The apparent weakening of state control also encouraged the rise of other revolts, most notably the Nian rebellion (1853-1868) in
north-central China, the Muslim rebellions in the northwest (1855-1873), and the Mao revolts in the southwest (1858). To Qing rulers, the 1850s and 1860s were a period of severe internal crisis.

Peking saw the Taipings’ demise as pivotal for containing all other revolts. Mounting repressive campaigns formed by regional militias with local commitment\(^1\) and foreign mercenaries, the Qing managed to reoccupy Nanking in 1864. With the suicide of Hong and the capture of another key figure, Li Xiucheng, the rebellion of “Guangxi bandits” (\(yue fei\)) finally came to an end. Apart from state repression, the weakening of the rebellion also resulted from the constant internal strife between Hong and other Taiping leaders, a lack of foreign support to the new Heavenly Kingdom, and the failure of the rebels to establish stable administrative structures in many occupied areas. The fall of the Taiping was later followed by the suppression of the Nian Rebellion in 1868 and the Muslim rebellions by 1872. For the sake of convenience, my analysis employs the term “rebellious era” to mark the crucial period between 1851 and 1868 (the latter date signaling the execution of Hong’s son, the young Taiping King) when the state’s internal crisis appeared to be most acute.

This paper examines the Qing bureaucratic deployment during the rebellious era. Civil servants under the Qing were vital in any state-led military campaigns. Whether they had combat experience or not, top provincial officials were the ex-officio leaders of local military campaigns, according to administrative statutes. As direct appointees by the emperor, high officials like provincial governors and governors-general were the first nodal connection between Peking and the battlegrounds. While these officials did not necessarily fight on frontlines (though some did), all of them were pivotal in the war organization. They were the agents through whom a range of fiscal-military objectives were made possible: imposing taxation, encouraging morale, maintaining local stability, directing local militias, and mobilizing regional and village networks for self-defense. Because agent performance and compliance were vital to the state’s survival, Peking had paid special attention to bureaucratic control. Such efforts of control depended heavily on formal sanction and bureaucratic shuffling. Battlefield failures – the loss of one’s jurisdiction to the rebels, the desertion of office, the mismanagement of resources, the refusal to cooperate with other agents, and so on – frequently led to officials’ dismissal, demotion, and transfer. Filling vacancies then led to some degrees of bureaucratic reshuffling, such that battlefield exigencies were easily entangled with the careers of not one but many officials at the same time.

Using the Taiping case to exemplify the conceptual proposal outlined previously, four points must be demonstrated: (1) Qing bureaucrats were critical state agents of war organization; (2) personnel deployment strategies were meaningful to ruler-agent relations and to agent control; (3) patterns of bureaucratic deployment during the rebellious era corresponded in some way to shifting battlefield contingencies; and (4) the interconnections of personnel decisions (via vacancy chains) have ramified effects in the bureaucracy’s mobility structure. I will elaborate on the first two points, using anecdotes from the “imperial memorials” circulated between Peking and provincial officials during the Taiping Rebellion (cited as QZZ), while the demonstration of the last two points relies on a set of quantitative data (derived from Qian 1980) to analyze official mobility patterns during the war and compare them to other periods. The nature of Qing official documents, being highly ritualistic and formulaic, does not always allow me to infer the subjective meaning or motive of particular

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\(^1\) Directed by provincial gentry (\(shisheng\)), these militias, \(tuanti\), which paradoxically unleashed a process of decentralization and imposed a different sort of threat to the Manchu power center. (To this problem I will address from the angle of state bureaucratic structuring.)

To preview the subsequent argument: First, I demonstrate that Peking sought to tighten central control in the rebellion’s first phase (the early 1850s) by dismissing ineffective provincial agents and filling top provincial vacancies with central agents more closely tied to Peking. The focal analysis targets official exits and the ways vacancies were filled. Second, I suggest that the top-down strategy was incompatible with the organizational imperatives in face of a locally mobile and flexible Taiping force. I show that by the mid-1850s bureaucratic mobilization would shift to a pattern of locally-oriented appointments, with provincial officials increasingly transferred to provinces with which they were familiar. The search for local solutions thus changed how provincial vacancies were distributed across the board.

Thirdly, I trace the rippling effects of bureaucratic mobilization through shifting forms of personnel deployment, thus showing that using central agents instead of provincial officials effectively shortened vacancy chains within the provincial bureaucracy. Shortening chains implies the decoupling of a career system. Consequently, one official’s mobility tended not to affect the mobility of another. When the state shifted to a locally oriented bureaucratic strategy, longer vacancy chains “returned” to the provincial bureaucracy; mobility opportunities were consequently retained for provincial officials in the provincial system. At the same time, these deployment shifts blocked the circulations of officials between the provincial and metropolitan spheres. The result was an apparent detachment between provincial and metropolitan bureaucracies. This, I argue, signaled the weakening capacity of the central state and showed how war-making could undermine state-making efforts.

BUREAUCRATIC MOBILIZATION

Historical social scientists tend to analyze war/state interrelations from the viewpoint of a “fiscal-military state” (see Gorski’s critique 2001; 2003). The now familiar “bellicist” thesis of state-formation suggests that warfare prompts a bureaucratization viewed in terms of instrumental processes for rulers to collect taxes, to budget, to conscript, and to suppress internal resistance (Ardant 1975; Bensel 1982; Brewer 1989; Downing 1992; Ertman 1997; Finer 1975; Rasler and Thompson 1985, 1989; Tilly 1975, 1992). Tilly (1985) further argues that war-stricken potentates “made” states by adopting organizational forms (e.g., bureaucracy) that simultaneously reproduce the power of the central state. The dual reinforcement of war-making and state-building thus depends on a viewing state bureaucracy as a vessel to state power rather than as a “social institution” (Olsen 2006), or a collection of organized relations based on formal rules, less formalized routines, and principles of legitimacy. Brewer (1989) has shown that even when using a fiscal-military framework, the analyst must attend to imagining how resources are mobilized via bureaucratic actors, whose relations often intertwine with state institutional constraints not entirely engulfed by the logic of warfare.

While a number of studies have offered accounts of war-related bureaucratic dynamics (e.g., Barkey 1994; Brewer 1989; Ertman 1997; Kiser and Cai 2003), a more common practice has approached wartime bureaucracy not in terms of process but in terms of organizational output (e.g., focusing on sizes of officialdom or volumes of tax collected; see e.g., Rasler and Thompson 1985, 1989). To be sure, positive correlations between war occurrences and bureaucratic outputs admittedly hint at a
process of bureaucratization resulting from war. Nevertheless, the ways in which war-induced bureaucratic activities may restructure bureaucratic relations remain obscured in analyses that focus only on output. Less well understood are, perhaps, the organizational mechanisms through which battlefield demands can be translated into state organizational outcomes. To capture the relational dynamics of state bureaucracy at war, I focus this analysis on “bureaucratic mobilization,” namely, the appointment, removal, promotion, and shuffling of bureaucratic agents as organizational activities in wars.

Below I discuss three aspects of bureaucratic mobilization: (1) how agency problems may be amplified in wartimes; (2) how bureaucratic mobilization may be seen as an organizational strategy to address (not necessarily overcome) the agency problems; and (3) how the interconnections of bureaucratic vacancies may link the battlefield contingencies to the bureaucratic field.²

Agency Problems in Wars

From the perspective of central power, ruling through delegation is an imperfect means of control. Where direct and tight monitoring is impossible or impractical, state agents might retain private knowledge or accrue local influence, acting in ways that deviate from rulers’ objectives or undermine the principals’ interests (Kiser 1999; Miller 2005; Shapiro 2005). Moral hazards are thus referred to agents’ behaviors, over which state principals are unable or unwilling (due to high cost) to keep in check. The mutual dependence of rulers and state agents for support and legitimacy suggests that principal-agent tensions are inherent in state organizations. Though such tensions are not always dissolvable, they nonetheless often form the substratum for strategic actions.

Warfare presents a problem-situation to rulers, though one similar to other circumstances in which agent control is vital. On the one hand, there is a target problem—the war which must be won and in which enemies must be contained. On the other hand, rulers need to motivate, coordinate, and monitor state agents who are to act on behalf of the principals. Military conflicts, however, burden state organizations more than routine problems. In wars as in other organizational crisis, prompt judgment and decisions are imperative, even if the certainty of outcomes tends to be low. Rulers might be compelled to endow agents with extra resources and discretionary power, hence diminishing the capacity of central control (Schlichte 2003).

Ruler-agent relations are not always a zero-sum game, yet certain situations may amplify the incompatible interests between the principals and their agents. In cases when rulers must depend on agents to not only gather information but also to recommend strategies to cope with crises, the agency problem manifests itself both as a challenge of supervision and as a difficulty in constructing projective action. Cunningham (2004) finds that FBI counter-intelligent agents often recommended

² While I shall focus on the civil administration, bureaucratic organization also permeates the military establishment (Weber 1978). Furthermore, in many historical polities, civil administrations do not always exclude military affairs. The idea of “civil administration” as a clear sphere from the military sphere is a later development of modern states. In most situations one finds a relatively blur boundary between the civil and the military, as in many territories are ruled under a military governors. While I comment mostly on the civil bureaucracy, the framework discussed (on agency structure and career structure) below can apply to the military organization as well. My focus on civil bureaucracy intends only to underscore a domain of state actions usually relegated to secondary importance in the literature concerning war/state duality.
projects that tend to increase the likelihood of individual success. Circumvented are projects of great
risks, even those which are more aligned with the principal’s interest in Washington. Warfare
represents a similar situation, since prompt responses to battlefield exigencies tend to be developed
from ground up, requiring agents to serve as co-participants (not just conduits) of war-making.

Another situation that widens the gap between principals and agents concerns the preexisting
routines of agent control. Regular mechanisms that bridle agents can come to contradict
organizational imperatives in wartimes. For example, the regular rotation of agents from one office
to another (see e.g., Kaufman 1967) can undermine group morale when horizontal integration and
agents’ mutual commitment to each other are determinant in winning battles. In the Taiping case,
office rotation aiming at vertical integration also deprived ground agents from local knowledge and
influence necessary to counteract the fluid, spatially scattered Taiping forces. The organizational
principles of disembedding within Qing bureaucracy, manifested in the many rules and routines of
agent control, became a hindrance to fight wars. Battlefield demands compelled Qing rulers to
forsake regularized agent control, though doing so had seemingly disrupted the state’s institutional
foundation. In short, when agent control is a built into routinized organizational designs, warfare
and state crisis can pose critical dilemmas of control.

Bureaucratic Mobilization and Agency

The structuring of bureaucratic careers is in general a key to state-making. Among its numerous
aspects, recruitment provides state rulers with the first line of control. By inscribing certain qualities
in bureaucratic recruitment (e.g., loyal, capable, docile, militaristic, etc.), the state may control the
access of bureaucratic offices and appropriate them to particular kinds of personality. Recruitment
designs can also help rulers to circumvent embedded interests (regional and nobility networks), as
Weber (1978) proposes, such that vertical integration is guaranteed. This ideal character of
bureaucracy, however, manifests itself in multifarious ways – for example, in the case of French
intendants (Gruder 1958), which was seemingly more successful than, say, the case of the Russian
elites organized by the Table of Ranks (Meehan-Waters 1980). At any rate, rulers’ activities to
control office holding, if observed, would signal a critical moment of state-making.

In addition to recruitment, states often exert another level of bureaucratic control through regulating
agents’ career mobility. Official promotion, demotion, sanctions, and transfers are organizational
decisions that effectually direct bureaucratic agents toward different career trajectories. Rulers tend
to make these decisions (if they have such a capacity to decide) based on preexisting rules and
certain justifications supported by evaluation and reportage. While abiding by existing rules may be
an important basis of legitimate authority in bureaucratic polity, the operation cost of supervision,
evaluation, and reportage can be exceedingly high. Furthermore, when agents’ task domains are ill
defined, or when bureaucratic outputs are themselves ambiguous, uncontroversial evaluations may
not even be possible. Under constraints of particularized evaluations, relatively “automatic”
manipulations of bureaucratic careers can be resorted—such as term limits, set retirement age, a
seniority system, regular office rotations, and so on. These measures tend to focus on the
interconnection of offices rather than individual performance. However, because of their relative
detachment from particularized evaluations, these “automatic” mechanisms can equally promote
individual inertia, consequently counteracting the very purpose of agent control. In short, if
bureaucratic deployment is an attempt for state principals to overcome problems of agency, its
potentiality and limitation must be equally analyzed.
To the extent that state rulers rely on state bureaucrats to fight wars (even in non-combative capacity), the appointment and shuffling of official agents can become “strategic” – that is, to address battlefield contingencies not by directing specific battle tactics, but by changing the composition of ground agents in work teams and in other work relations. We should not assume that agent deployment must lead to resolutions to the myriad agency dilemmas discussed above; nor should we presume that bureaucratic deployment is always effective to bring the interests of rulers and agents to equilibrium. My proposal is more limited: I suggest that we examine bureaucratic mobilization as one kind of organizational activity through which rulers can attend to the changing environment of the battlefields.

Bureaucratic mobilization has at least two characteristics in relation to the spatiotemporal dimension of war organization. It is concerned, first, with organizational change in place and time. Bureaucratic deployment involves the agent physically moving to, or departing from, a place where an office is located (insofar as the bureau retains its etymological root, the desk). With positional change, agents are thus re-distributed in variable distances from battlefields; consequently, the proximity of the agents to war threats also shifts. Agents closer to the frontlines are exposed to greater physical danger as well as a higher risk of sanction (if bureaucratic punishment reflects battlefield failure). These time/space relations can have direct effects on inter-agent relations. In the Taiping case, collegiate cooperation or avoidance among bureaucratic agents often depended on where the Taipings were and toward where they would advance. The placement of the agents and its effect to the quality of teamwork must be considered together with the rebels’ physical movements.

Second, bureaucratic mobilization mitigates a difficult condition when state principals do not have direct reach over agents at warfronts to effect timely judgments and actions. Personnel rearrangements respond to battlefield contingencies not as immediate interventions, but aim to address the “situation” retroactively or prospectively. It is vital that state principals attribute past mistakes to officials perceived to be inept and punish them accordingly. And by appointing presumably more capable agents to fill vacant offices, rulers can project a new course of action in anticipation of change. This helps overcome barriers of communication, suspending the need for immediate responses and emphasizing accountability and planning.

Short of advanced communications technology (the telegraph was only introduced in China in the 1870s), Qing rulers at Peking could not solely depend on direct control. Even when courier messengers were not blocked or captured by the rebels, imperial orders would take from five to ten days to reach battlefields (with the speediest couriers traveling at 250-300 km per day). Provincial agents often received delayed imperial orders that were more or less obsolete in face of a quickly changing war. Physical barriers did not necessarily stop Peking rulers from instructing their agents in details, since the imperial words remained symbolically significant. Importantly, decisions on bureaucratic deployment had served to formulate broad strategies rather than localized tactics.

Finally, an agent moving from one post to another – a simple decision of personnel deployment – can “re-wire” the organization in multiple ways. Dismissals, promotions, or transfers not only affected the careers of individual agents but also re-positioned them in the bureaucratic field and thereby altered their mutual relations with one another (structurally or interpersonally). Organizationally mobile agents carried with them both organizational knowledge and relations (Carley 1992), which can become potential resources for solving problems in different contexts, including those unrelated to war threats. The transposable interchange between agents of different
segments and task-domains of a bureaucratic field provides one way through which bureaucratic mobilization can contribute to state-making (Finer 1975).

Vacancy Chains as Mechanisms

It is not enough to treat bureaucratic mobilization as though it is a process of independent decision-making which affects only particular individuals or positions at a given time. Agent mobility is partly structured by a network of strata and positions whose links are prescribed by institutional criteria and conditions concerning retirement, resignation, promotion, demotion, or transfer. Even when they were indeed highly transposable, Qing officials could be promoted or transferred only to a certain class of positions, mainly based on the ranks and divisions which the agents occupied at the time of a career change. Top bureaucratic vacancies, for example, were predominantly filled by those who had held another provincial position of equal rank or one rank below an existing vacancy. Thus, institutional parameters for bureaucratic deployment is double-edged: formal regulations and organizational routines may reduce the cost and complexity for expansive personnel searches each time a vacancy arose, but these constraints could simultaneously limit decision-makers’ autonomy or flexibility to cope with pressing contingencies or expediencies.

We can express the interdependence of bureaucratic deployment through Harrison White’s (1970) concept of vacancy chains. In an internal labor market (of which Qing bureaucracy is a case), careers are shaped not merely by human capital or personal qualities, but also by the (limited) availability and the interconnectedness of vacancies in a given job system. Two conditions are important: (1) an agent is allowed to hold only one job at a time (i.e., a one-one job condition), such that a change of an agent’s career (e.g., promotion) necessarily triggers a vacancy for another agent to fill up; and (2) the number of vacancies available in the market is relatively stable over time, such that new vacancies are generated not by organizational expansion, but by individual attrition – death, retirement, resignation, dismissal, or other actions and events that force an agent out of the bounded system.

Figure 2 stylizes the notion of vacancy chains using the top four ranks of Qing provincial bureaucracy as an example. An initial vacancy in Example A is generated first by an official exit of a governor-general (the black dot) – the agent leaving the system with a specified boundary (the dotted line, representing the system of top four provincial jobs). The origin vacancy prompts a search for new occupants, who might come from within or without the system. If the new occupant came from without, the vacancy immediately leaves the system and has a chain length of one (as in Example B). In Example A, when the new occupant to the initial vacancy came from within the bounded system, a second vacancy (at the level of provincial governorship) will be generated. A provincial governor must give up his current holding in order to be promoted to the position of a governor-generalship, according to a “one-one job” requirement. Thus, the origin vacancy is closed at the same time a new vacancy emerges. The process goes on as long as new occupants are drawn from the bounded system. The example shows that the third and fourth vacancies are resulted. This chain ends when a system outsider is introduced to fill the “last” slot of the sequence. A chain also ends when the last vacancy is left permanently unfilled. A vacancy chain captures the dual movement of slots and persons: a vacancy jumps in one direction from one position to another, while agents change posts from the opposition direction.

Two empirical features are indicators to the organizational meaning of bureaucratic mobilization. Chain length is the number of “vacancy jumps” caused by an initial opening (including the jump that
take the vacancy out of the system). In Example A, the chain length is 4. Chain length also indicates the number of agents sequentially mobilized by an initial official exit. This measure captures the rippling effects generated from one organizational decision throughout the entire system. It is also an index of system coupling, or the degree of connectedness among persons or vacancies. Chain length shows the extent to which various organizational strata, positions, and segments are bounded together, through vacancy jumps and agent career movements. Thus, the longer a vacancy chain, the more tightly coupled is a career system.

The second feature of vacancy chains concerns the direction of vacancy flows: to where vacancies are jumping, and from where persons are recruited to occupy vacancies. In Figure 1, Chain 1 leaves the bounded system in the direction to the central administration, while Chain 2 moves toward the lower-level provincial administration. These two chains represent two different deployment strategies: one drawing agents eventually from the central government, perhaps because these are agents trusted by central rulers; and the other from a local officialdom not always reachable by distant rulers. Directions of vacancy chains thus presuppose organizational boundary, which is a result of analytical distinction and must therefore be justified. For now, we should stress that the directions toward which vacancies flow are indicative of ruler-agent relations, if organizational boundaries separating agents provide a resource for rulers to mobilize them during wars.

In sum, vacancy analysis is an analytical tool for organizational tracing. Its usefulness lies in its analytical elegance, as the measure of chain length can succinctly captures system coupling or decoupling. Through vacancy analysis, the researcher can also identify the ramification of deployment strategies. One can trace vacancy chains to detect how widely war-induced deployment can affect the rest of the state bureaucracy. This is essentially a tool to describe the mechanism by which battlefield exigencies are translated into wider organizational outcomes. Vacancy analysis thus permits a description of one such linkage between war-making and state-building.

DATA

My analysis focuses on a structural examination of how four top-most provincial positions in the Qing bureaucracy were bureaucratically mobilized during the Taiping Rebellion. In descending order of rank, the positions are: Governor-General (GG), Provincial Governor (PG), Provincial Treasurer (PT), and Provincial Judge (PJ). Routinely, Governors-General (GG) ruled two provincial jurisdictions at the same time, and in each province a PG, a PT, and a PJ were present (see Figure 2). Across eighteen provinces in China Proper, a total of 63 offices constitute the job system of the top posts. In Qing bureaucratic language, these four provincial positions belonged to the category of “dayuan,” or “high officials,” who were responsible for a province’s administration, judicial rulings, financial management and military affairs. They also supervised lower-ranking bureaucrats at the county (xian) and prefectural (fu) levels. The boundary of the job system subject to analysis is not arbitrary. All high officials were directly appointed by the throne, hence separating them from lower-ranking officials assigned on the recommendation of the Board of Civil Office (Marsh 1960, p. 120).

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3 Qing officials were divided into nine ranks, with each rank containing two levels, typically signaled by levels A and B by western scholars. An office ranked 3b, for example, was immediately below an office ranked 2a. Governor-Generals were ranked 2a. The ranks of Provincial Governor and Provincial Treasurers were also 2b. However, in all practical and formal matters PGs always acted as the superiors of PTs. Provincial Judges were ranked 3a.
Career changes of high officials were regularly publicized in the state bureaucracy via official bulletins, as bureaucrats of all ranks read personnel changes at the top echelon as signals to shifting power among factions. The organizational significance of these top positions renders them appropriate subjects for examining the relationship between bureaucratic mobilization and state-making.

Mobility data are constructed from Qian Shifu's (1980) compilation *Chronological Tables of Officeholders in the Qing Dynasty*, the most comprehensive documentation of Qing office-holding undertaken by a contemporary historian. My data include a total of 1,631 career moves related to high officials over a period of 54 years, from 1833-1886. I examine mobility patterns two decades prior to and after the Taiping Rebellion in order to evaluate the Taiping case against other historical points of reference. For vacancy chains, 786 sequences are constructed by tracing the connections between position openings and closings. I reconcile two data sets, the individual level career moves and the sequences of vacancy jumps, to make sure that person/vacancy transitions are accurate to the month of the year.4 Table 1 presents the overall transit matrix of the top provincial job system, indicating a strict job ladder, with officials being promoted mostly one step ahead or transferred laterally.

In addition to a structural analysis, I have read a set of bureaucratic correspondences known as “imperial memorials” (*zouzhe*), whose unedited forms are now published (citation using the abbreviation, QZZ). On a regular basis (sometimes daily), top provincial officials dealing with the Taiping Rebellion wrote to the throne to discuss issues such as military strategies, battle outcomes, resource mobilization, personnel changes, and any matters related to rebellion suppression. Memorials were not merely reports or means of central control and monitoring (Bartlett 1991; Wu 1970), but tools officials could use to establish personal relationships with the emperor, and vice versa (Kuhn 1990). My reading strategy emphasizes a tracing of event development, rendering a random sample of the documents less useful. Because memorials are highly formulaic documents, with very similar rhetoric structure and content across the board, it is relatively easy however for the researcher to spot when the bureaucracy was in shock, when something went wrong, when certain high officials were subject to punishment and criticism, and so forth. I use these memorials to help understand some of the bureaucratic trends observed. Once these special events are located, I trace how state actors responded to them. Routines are not ignored, however, but are noted to juxtapose moments of crisis.

Although memorials were officially “confidential” documents (*mi zou*), they were public to the extent that memorial contents were read by the emperor and an exclusive group of Grand Councilors in Peking. The emperor could also broadcast confidential information to other officials, though

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4 Not all cases are reconcilable. For example, when officials held two positions, one being an “acting” post, then a vacancy chain may be terminated without however leaving the job system. These cases are extremely rare though. There were also individual career changes without the presence of vacancy chains, or with vacancy sequences whose origins are unclear (hence cannot be considered as vacancy chains). About 48 sequences (from 1839 to 1868) were simply post-swapping, that is, two officials exchanged their post. It is impossible to identify the origins of these chains (since there is no exit). These problems imply that observations of bureaucratic mobility from individual-level data and chain-level data would be somewhat different.
sometimes with identifiable names deleted. Consequently, officials did not reveal interpersonal conflicts and personal ambitions in memorial writing. Criticisms against other officials were often couched in terms of organizational failure, such that one’s friends or allies could also be subject to criticisms (simultaneously, praises to friends and relatives must be avoided). This makes it hard for inferring the intended meanings behind specific career strategies. When necessary I rely on secondary sources from historians to evaluate strategic intention, if any, of bureaucratic mobilization (see Luo 1955; Jen 1973; Kuhn 1970; Michael 1966).

**PERIODIZATION**

The term “rebellious era” is used here to designate the eighteen tumultuous years (1851-1868) in which the Taipings and most other contemporaneous rebellious groups were active. These eighteen years are further divided into three phases. Periodization is bound to be arbitrary to a certain degree, and my treatment tries to capture roughly significant junctures in the counter-rebellion campaign.

The first phrase, 1851-56, covers from the outbreak of the rebellion up to the first major defeat of the Qing campaign in 1856, namely, the collapse of the Southern Encampment near Nanking, which resulted in the death of one of the most important Qing generals, Xiang Rong. While the Qing suffered a huge lost, the Taipings were devastated by their internal strives, in which Hong Xiuquan, the Heavenly King, ordered to kill his right-hand man, Yang Xiuqing, and thousands of Yang’s followers. This event set off a permanent split of Shi Dakai, another Hong’s right-hand man who considered Hong’s decision illegitimate. Shi would later lead his own troops, still under the banner of the Taipings, and expanded the Taiping territories to as far west as the Sichuan province.

The second phrase, 1857-62, covers a tumultuous period when both Northern (1858) and Southern Encampments (1860) experienced colossal lost. A major shift in state strategies became clearer in this period as regional gentry-led militias (tuanliens) emerged as a trusted force on which Peking depended to suppress the rebellion. This period also coincided with the intensification of the Nian and Muslim rebellions. To make it worse, the outbreak of the Arrow War (or the Second Opium War) also took place in the second phrase, starting with a diplomatic dispute with Britain in 1856 and ending in a brief foreign invasion of Peking in 1860.

Finally, the third phrase, 1863-68, represents the power consolidation of the militia movement, signified by the rise of Zeng Guofan, the most prominent high official in this time and the leader of many well-known militia forces in the lower-Yangtze. As an unprecedented decision, Peking made Zeng the commander-in-chief of troops in four major provinces in 1861 (Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, Zhejiang). By the third phrase of the rebellious era, key high offices in provincial bureaucracy would be filled by Zeng’s allies, many of them had backgrounds in the militia movement. The major event in this period was the reoccupation of Nanking in 1864, preceded by the suicide of the Hong Xiuquan. The end of the Taiping Rebellion also allowed Qing forces to focus on other revolts. The Nain Rebellion, the second major problem for Peking, was suppressed in 1868.

**TIGHTENING CENTRAL CONTROL**

This section examines the initial orientation Peking pursued to cope with the outbreak and the rapid spread of the Taiping revolt. Two bureaucratic strategies will be discussed: negative sanctions levied
against top provincial officials and a tendency to fill top provincial vacancies with bureaucrats from Peking or high-ranking military generals. Both represent a principle of tightening central control.

**Negative Sanction**

The Taipings launched a systematic campaign against local authority in Guangxi by the end of 1850. Provincial officials reported that approximately ten thousand “bandits” (fei) were involved in the initial battles (QZZ 1:118; DG30/12/8). By 1851, the rebels reached an even higher momentum, with their agenda against the Manchu government becoming clearer and open. Local government forces compelled to fight the rebels stood in stark contrast to their efficient and flexible opponents. Local authority repeated common mistakes, focusing on large-scale mobilization and confrontation rather than tackling scattered ambushes by the rebels. These initial problems reflect what Hu Linyi, later a prominent counter-Taiping official, had already observed in the late 1840s: “The rebels travel like rats and the soldiers travel like cows. You cannot use cows to catch rats” (quoted in Kuhn 1970, p.119). In less than three years, the marching rebels established mobile camps, fended off resisting forces, laid siege to county after county, and garnered an ever-expanding following. By the time they had conquered Nanking in 1853, the Taipings had swept through six provinces, receiving mostly unsubstantial resistance from government forces (except in Hunan’s capital, Changsha, where the rebels had failed to enter).

In the early half of the decade, Peking and most state officials agreed (in rhetoric) that the southern rebels could have been suppressed quickly, only if officials had been more tightly monitored and severely disciplined. The newly enthroned Xianfeng emperor saw his agents at the southern fronts largely with disappointment: “[they] claimed that the bandits outnumbered imperial troops, that the bandits are too dispersed, or that the bandits are too far to reach. Never do you find these officials contriving appropriate plans according to opportunities or executing the right plans” (QZZ 1:65; DG 30/9/27). Three months into the war, a Grand Secretariat faulted provincial governors for being too lenient toward their mid-ranking subordinates (QZZ 1:182-83; XF 1/1/27). And by the second year of the rebellion, a central official would write to the throne and recommend Peking to punish high officials not only with dismissal, but also with the most effective form of sanction: exile to Turkestan (now Xingjiang province) (QZZ 3: 320-21; XF2/5/14).

Preexisting institutional rules provided the foundation for Qing rulers to levy heavy sanctions on provincial agents. Administrative statues published by the Board of Civil Offices (Libu Zeli) stated that provincial bureaucrats be punished if they failed or refused to lead forces to fight rebels’ incursions, if they were ignorant of the rebels’ progress and whereabouts, and if they were unable to supervise their subordinates in counter-uprising campaigns (QZZ 1:182-83; XF1/1/27). Depending on the seriousness of an offense, punishment could range from execution to dismissal to demotion, or a reprimand by the Board of Civil Office. But negative sanction was not merely a form of rule-determined action. As Metzger (1973) argues, a bureaucratic “probationary ethics” allowed

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5 Entries of imperial memorials are cited using the abbreviation, QZZ, which is followed by the volume and page number of the publication by the First Historical Archives in Beijing. A semi-colon is followed by the year, month, and the date when the memorial was sent. The abbreviations of the years represent the reign of each emperor, with DG denoting the reign of Daoguang, XF that of Xianfeng Emperor (1851-1861), and TZ that of the Tongzhi Emperor (1862-74) under the stewardship of Empress Dowager, Cixi. Finally, the months and dates refer to those in the Chinese lunar calendar—the same as written on particular memorials.
bureaucrats to atone for their “guilt” (guo) through “performance” (gong), and could thereby demonstrate the emperor’s magnanimity. Several warnings (and encouragements) were usually issued by Peking prior to an actual order of dismissing a top agent, but when the latter happened it would signal a true break of a ruler-agent relation, however short-lived it might be (Guy 2000).

High officials could not be easily fired, but times of crisis usually exposed the agents to a higher risk of punishment. Table 2 shows that top officials were more likely to be dismissed in the rebellious era (1851-68) than in other times, except those of an earlier crisis, namely, the Opium War (1839-44). Although dismissal was not the most frequent cause of provincial exits, it constituted about a quarter of them during the rebellious era. Note that not all dismissals were related to the war. The proportions in parentheses of Table 2 represent dismissals directly caused by failures in the counter-rebellion efforts, as reported by the Qing official history (the *Veritable Records*). The results change little except in the second rebellion phrase (1857-62), when revolt-induced dismissals seem to have declined. This result is likely brought by the Second Opium War, which similarly generated severe sanctioning, thus reinforcing the present argument.

The high number of deaths during the rebellious era should be noted, since officials’ wartime deaths were attributable not only to battlefield defeat but also dutiful suicides that resulted from the fall of officials’ jurisdictions. Officials who had committed suicide would have been somehow punished had they survived the war. My data cannot make a distinction among natural deaths, suicides, and deaths caused by battle. Complicating the issue is how deaths were reported. To save the honor of a deceased official, reporters might highlight a fatality as a dutiful suicide over a result of military defeat. There were times when such a distinction became controversial, since posthumous titles for officials entailed significant benefits to the officials’ descendants in terms of bureaucratic advancement. At any rate, Table 2 reasonable suggests that the frequencies of negative sanctions would have been even higher should some officials have survived the Taipings’ onslaught. When combined, dismissals and deaths accounted for almost 50 percent of all provincial exits from 1851-56. In short, there is some evidence showing a positive association between wartime and increased bureaucratic sanctions.

To draw a closer link between punishment and rebellion control, the portion on the right of Table 2 examines how spatial differences affected the sanctioning process by distinguishing provinces

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6 Although rewards were undeniably part of bureaucratic mobilization, during the Taiping Rebellion they were often preconditioned by initial punishments. Frequently, rewards were granted to restore officials’ original ranks or offices from which they had been removed as punishment. Bureaucratic regulations in *Libu Zeli*, for example, prescribed the number of “military performances” (jungong) an official must complete to cancel out his punishment. In this sense, the Chinese bureaucracy was sanction-centric (cf. Kiser and Cai 2003). Accordingly, my analysis of bureaucratic mobilization focuses on sanctions rather than rewards.

7 As identifying every cause of a bureaucratic decision is practically impossible, the rest of my analysis will use historical-time and spatial-jurisdictional as a proxy to the “reasons” associated with particular bureaucratic deployments (dismissal, promotion, transfers, etc.). Different rebellion phrases thus represent the various organizational ethos based on which we can understand decisions of bureaucratic mobilization.
affected by the rebels (Taiping provinces) from those that were not (Non-Taiping provinces). Not surprisingly, in the rebellion’s first phase (1851-56), when the rebels were fiercest, officials in Taiping provinces were punished more frequently (40%) than those in Non-Taiping provinces (15%). When the rebellion approached its end by the mid-1860s, and when other uprisings such as the Muslim Rebellions emerged in the northwest and southwest, punishment also shifted to Non-Taiping provinces—an indication that waves of punishments tended to correspond to waves of revolts. These findings also imply that central control was selective and must be seen from a time-space configuration of the battlefields.

Central Replacements

Decisions to replace departing officials were perhaps more deliberate organizational actions in wielding control than the act of dismissal, which appeared to be a mere response to official failure. In addition to officials already entered into the top provincial officialdom, candidates for filling vacancies of high offices include three types of provincial outsiders: high-ranking metropolitan bureaucrats, top military generals, and previously retired, resigned or dismissed officials (the “experienced” for short). Among them, military generals and top-ranking metropolitan officials may be considered “central agents,” having stronger ties to the state center than the experienced. Table 3 indicates the fraction of provincial vacancies that were given to central agents in each phase of the rebellion. As a general principle, governor vacancies (GG or PG) were always more likely to be assigned to central agents than vacancies at the level of Provincial Judges and Treasurers (PJ or PT). This principal, which held true also in pre-rebellion years (not shown here), suggests that the main targets of state control had always been those provincial agents at the topmost level; whose vacancies were thus appropriated to the state’s closest allies during a crisis.

The early part of the 1850s was a time when central control was tightest. In the rebellion’s first phase (1851-56), vacancies at the governor level (GG/PG) in Taiping provinces received a significantly higher proportion of central replacement (35%) than those in Non-Taiping provinces (15%). Furthermore, the cause of a vacancy mattered: openings produced by negative sanctions were more likely to receive central replacements in Taiping provinces (30%) than Non-Taiping ones (0%) during the years 1851-56. This difference is not observed, however, when retirement was the cause of a governor’s exit in the same period. Central replacements were in part responses to official failure, constituting a form of tightening control by Peking.

8 “Taiping provinces” and “Non-Taiping provinces” are time-varying variables, identified by whether the Taiping and the Nian were active in a particular province given a year. It is possible that other small scale uprisings occurred in “Non-Taiping” provinces. The codes for all eighteen provinces for all eighteen years are available upon request.

9 Another strategy similar to central replacement also emerged concomitantly. As early as 1851, Peking appointed a series of special emissaries, known as Imperial Commissioners (qinchai dachen), to serve as premier field commanders unifying different forces in the counter-rebellion campaign. Imperial Commissioners were superiors of Governors-General and Provincial Governors, though these commissioners were not part of regular officialdom (yet occasionally a GG would serve the commissioner post). Among the ten commissioners dispatched between the six-year period of 1851-56, seven were dismissed (two of whom were sentenced to execution).
PROBLEMS OF CENTRAL CONTROL

Central agents did not fare well once they arrived the provincial bureaucracy. For instance, half of all central agents entering the provinces in 1851-56 (about 30 of them) would be dismissed some time later in their provincial careers (analysis not shown here). Their degree of failure can be compared to the less than 10 percent dismissal rates among those central agents entering the provinces in the pre-rebellion years (1833-1850). Historians tend to explain central agents’ poor performance by their ignorance of provincial affairs. But many of them did have prior provincial experience by means of office rotation; they were not entirely excluded from provincial knowledge. The most prominent figure in the counter-Taiping campaign, Zeng Guofeng, had spent years in Peking administration (as a Vice President of the Board of Rite), prior to his assignment to organize regional militia in Hunan. Generally, the actual relations between a central agent and his provincial networks may not be generalized from the positions he held (see Ting). The tension between centrally-linked and provincially-based officials was more subtle as illustrated below.

What seemed to be important was the potential strives created by mixing agents with various commitments to provincial affairs. Manchu military generals, for example, tended not to have the Chinese language but must cooperate with a provincial administration largely composed on Han-Chinese agents. The latter often interpreted Manchus’ lack of Chinese ability as a sign of ignorance (though this point could be made by the Han officials only very subtly in memorial writing). Peking was often unwilling to arbitrate any interpersonal conflicts among agents. By being the ultimate decision-maker the emperor was compelled to choose side, thus unleashing further interpersonal struggles. This suggests the paradox of central control.

An illustration of this problem can be seen from the best-known mutual animosity between Manchu and Han officials in Wuchang, the capital of Hubei province. During 1853, the Han governor-general Wu Wenrong and his immediate subordinate, the Manchu provincial governor Chonglun, joined hands to defend Wuchang from the second attack by the Taipings. By end of 1853, the Taipings returned to Wuchang the second time as part of the Western Expedition. Local officials were still haunted by the rebels’ first onslaught, in which the entire provincial administration was wiped out. It was at this juncture that the rift between Chonglun and Wu Wenrong widened. Each official sought an opposite course of action. Chonglun gathered support from the city’s elite and decided to set up camps beyond the city wall, claiming that he would stop the rebels from invading. Wu Wenrong interpreted Chonglun’s foray outside the city as a cunning plan to escape danger. Outraged, Wu threatened the Manchu governor with a sword, declaring “we all live or die together with the city; an official below the [Provincial] Treasurer or Judge who dares speak of going out of the city shall be killed by my sword” (quoted in Jen 1973:199).

The throne in Peking received a series of mutual accusations, in which Chonglun described his provincial team staffed with “numerous cunning and shrewd personalities” (QZZ 11:238; XF3/11/16). He continued: “The governor-general [Wu] would not dare leave the city to fight until reinforcements from the south arrived and cannons for the navy junks were made… Closing the city wall for a lengthy period has prevented the recovery of the people’s livelihood and wasted national funds” (QZZ 11:238; XF 3/11/16). Eventually Peking sided with Chonlung, the Manchu governor, and ordered Wu to fight outside the city-wall (QZZ 11:341; XF 3/11/26). Wu was killed in combat. While Chonlung survived, he was eventually dismissed in 1854. Since Wu was one of the most revered officials among Han bureaucratic networks, his death can be interpreted as an
irreconcilable rift between Manchu and Han officials. This interpretation is tentative, however, because ethnic animosity was a taboo subject in bureaucratic writing.

The implication of this illustration is that interpersonal strives among persons can be viewed as a tension between centrally-dispatched and provincially-based officials. This central/provincial distinction is not perfect, but can be indicative to understand the bureaucratic deployment patterns observed in later phrases of the rebellion. By the mid-1850s Peking retracted the center-focal strategy, as witnessed by the reduction of central replacements in Table 3. Next, I seek to understand how a shift to a provincial-focal deployment patterns may have helped the state to resolve the problem of agency.

SHIFTING TO LOCAL STRATEGY

By the end of 1853, the war spread far beyond the lower Yangtze. Taiping forces were operating in two major expeditionary movements in the central and northern part of China. Now the Taiping’s swift mobility and its proliferation posed a great challenge to local administrations. Insofar as local bureaucrats were responsible for curbing unrest only within their own jurisdictions, they had little motivation to pursue the Taipings once the rebels left the officials’ administrative purviews. Imperial edicts constantly pleaded with officials to “ignore jurisdictional boundaries,” but to little avail. As one contemporaneous observer put it, “[t]he mandarins only wish for one thing—to see the rebels gone...but what do they care; let the others suffer” (Giquel [1864] 1985, p. 101).

Existing bureaucratic control mechanisms, such as office rotation and avoidance rules, may have impeded provincial agents’ capacities to coordinate effectively. Office rotation regularly transferred agents from one post to another (usually in less than three years); avoidance rules prohibited agents to hold offices in administrations located in their hometowns, or in places where their siblings and close kins also held offices. While intended to prevent officials from accruing local power, these rules also blocked agents from forming horizontal ties and undermined their ability to accumulate strategic local knowledge for community defense. Regular control mechanism thus came to contradict battlefield demands. The contrast seemed stark. While the Taipings were fighting adeptly in rough terrains and waterways and ably allying with local bandits, provincial bureaucrats were shirking or circumventing their duties and blaming one another for military setbacks.

Peking had since the outbreak of the rebellion recognized these problems, but had initially resorted to strategies inconsequential to the state bureaucracy at large. Central rulers tended to dispatch certain special agents “bangban,” or “assistant managers,” to places where they had previous administrative experiences or where they were born and raised. These agents did not hold regular bureaucratic titles, such that their assignment did not affect the rest of the bureaucratic organization. On the military front, the state’s counter-rebellion campaign adapted itself to the rebels’ guerrilla tactics by decentralizing military control. Since 1853, Peking had begun to encourage the development of village and provincial militia forces, known as *tuanlian*, which would fight hand-in-hand with official troops (the Green Standard or Eight Banners). The emergence of *tuanlian* is a well-studied area in the Taiping historiography. As Kuhn (1970) had seminally demonstrated, militia troops at first identified themselves with particular provinces (e.g., Hunan and Anhui), and soldiers would be personally loyal to those superiors who recruited them. Emphasizing the indigenous identity of soldiers and generals, this organizational model not only tightened participants’ discipline.
and loyalty, but also utilized local knowledge for rebellion control (e.g., how to mobilize village multiplex networks to fight the rebels).

Key bureaucratic shifts emerged around the mid-1850s. Figure 3 shows one way to examine this shift by tracing the spatial patterns of office rotation. Circulating officials regularly had been a control mechanism that tried to prevent bureaucrats from accumulating local influence. In order to highlight the more subtle changes in deployment patterns, I use a three-year interval in this figure. Up until the mid-1850s, the state had clearly preferred a policy of spatial detachment by transferring bureaucrats across at least two provincial borders—that is, moving them from one province to a neighboring province’s neighbor. But by 1854-56, rotation distances started to be shortened: officials, on average, crossed only one border to a neighboring province when receiving a new appointment. Furthermore, from the rebellion’s second phase to the mid-1860s, the average number of border crossings dropped below even one, implying some officials would stay within the same province when changing posts.

To reinforce our evidence of a shift to a locally oriented mobilization, Table 4 shows that a long-standing restriction limiting intra-province promotion was gradually relaxed after 1853. Prior to this time, cross-province promotion was clearly preferred by the state, with Provincial Judges (PJ) and Treasurers (PT) receiving intra-province promotions no more than 20 percent of the time, but with the percentage rising to 60 when they crossed provinces. By 1854-56, intra-province promotion of PTs and PJs surged to 50 percent in Taiping provinces, significantly distinguishing themselves from Non-Taiping regions (18%). Only when Muslim Rebellions broke out in the northwestern and southwestern provinces in the late 1850s did intra-province promotions climb to 50 percent in Non-Taiping provinces.

Shifting to a provincially-oriented strategy, however, simultaneously violated key principles of agent control. This problem may explain why certain decentralizing trends had been “corrected” to a degree in the wake of the rebellious era. A process of retightening central control can be observed toward the end of the 1860s and the 1870s, when rotation distances were lengthened and intra-province promotion reduced. While showing a tremendous degree of organizational flexibility, this corrective process was incomplete. Despite the fact that officials in post-rebellion years were rotated across a longer distance than they were during the rebellious era, the average provincial borders they traveled across after the 1860s did not return to the pre-rebellion norm (that is, moving to a neighbor’s neighboring province). Similarly, intra-province promotions lingered at a relatively high 30 percent level after the rebellious era, indicating that temporary organizational practices aiming to cope with a crisis could remain even after a state of emergency had ended.

10 If an official moved within a province, he would almost always receive a promotion, given the hierarchical structure in Figure 1. The analysis in Table 4 focuses only on the promotion rate of Provincial Judges and Treasurers, the positions where promotion was structurally allowed. Intra-province promotion for Governor-general was structurally impossible, since GG was the topmost position in the provincial hierarchy. On the other hand, promotion for Provincial Governors was limited because the number of GG positions toward which PGs could be promoted was always smaller than the number of PG positions. Results in Table 4 did not change when PGs’ intra-province promotions were considered.
Bureaucratic mobilization involves systemic constraints, for embedded in each personnel decision is another set of decisions, bounded by a career field in which mobilities are interdependent, and where the openings and closings of organizational slots are linked in chain reactions. Let us recapitulate the basic process of a vacancy chain in the context of Qing bureaucracy. The chain begins with a “provincial exit”—that is, a departure of a high official from the top provincial bureaucracy—caused by death, retirement, resignation, dismissal, or transfer to the metropolitan administration. When another high official from the province occupies the vacancy, a new opening results, and the process continues. The linkages of a chain are formed through officials’ rippling entrances and exits, and terminate when the last vacancy of a chain is filled by someone outside the system (“outsiders” defined as bureaucrats not part of top four provincial offices, or dayuan). In this section, I examine how personnel decisions targeting the question of agent control could bring about wider reconfigurations to the Qing bureaucratic field.

**Chain Lengths and System Coupling**

Qing bureaucracy during the Taiping Rebellion produced a high volume of provincial exits, from about 80 cases in each six year period prior to the rebellious era to about 120 and 130 cases in the periods 1851-56 and 1857-62, respectively (see Table 2). Thus, despite the danger officials faced, the rebellious era presented ample mobility opportunities, potentially mitigating the career stagnation endemic to the Chinese bureaucracy (Watt 1972). Were career opportunities coupled, change of one official’s career would have been linked to the careers of many others. Figure 4 examines system coupling by the measure of average chain length, stratified by the rank-origin of a chain. To ease interpretation, chain length here will be equivalent to the number of provincial high officials mobilized as a result of a provincial exit (that is, we will ignore the terminal move that leads a vacancy out of the system). If the strict job ladder is followed (see Table 1), we may expect that chains started at the level of Governor-General—call them “GG-chains” for short—to have a length close to three; that is, an initial GG opening will lead to three other vacancies downstream, likely at the levels of Provincial Governor (PG), Provincial Treasurer (PT), and Provincial Judge (PJ). Chain length should decrease with descending rank associated to a chain’s origin.

Figure 4 observes such an expected order. Aside from the early part of the 1850s, chains initiated at higher ranks always led to more vacancies within the provincial system. Clearly, the rebellion’s first phase disrupted this order. Whereas two to three high officials were affected (or mobilized) prior to the rebellious era when a Governor-General departed the system, only one was likewise affected in 1851-56.  

What shortened GG-chains? Figure 5 suggests that the introduction of central agents was primarily responsible. In the years 1851-56, short GG-chains (having a length of zero or one) were

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11 In analyses not shown here, vacancy chains initiated from the Taiping provinces in 1851-56 tended to be shorter (except PJ-chains) than those initiated in Non-Taiping provinces. This finding suggests that where rebels were most active, the interconnections of official mobilities were also loosened. While suggestive, this finding is less robust since the total number of chains resulted in each type of provinces tends to be small.
composed primarily by those that terminated with the introduction of central agents (the black portion of the bar). In other words, central agents came to fill a GG vacancy either immediately after the post was opened or one step afterwards. Note that the length of GG-chains did not substantially increase in the 1857-62, when the state had shifted to a provincially-oriented strategy. This was because formerly retired, resigned, or even dismissed officials—those provincial “outsiders” with valuable field experience—had replaced central agents as a key force to shorten GG-chains. Consequently, the average GG-chain length did not increase until the third phase of the rebellious era, when the reincorporation of existing provincial officials was in full force.\footnote{A comparison of the observed average GG-chain length and the predicted length from the vacancy model also supports this finding. Generally, in the first phase of the rebellious era (1851-56), the observed GG-chain length was shorter than that predicted by the stochastic model. This deviation may indicate that a move of a vacancy on a GG-chain in this period did not just depend on its current location, but that the “history” of a GG-chain might play a role. The introduction of provincial outsiders into the GG vacancies at their early steps explains this decoupling effect. See Appendix for the predicted data.}

Because it focuses on chain termination, Figure 5 neglects the types of officials mobilized by a vacancy chain (i.e., the content of a chain). Table 5 then examines the degree to which a vacancy would move “downstream” along a bureaucratic hierarchy, asking whether a top vacancy would create career mobility for officials at relatively lower-ranks. It shows that one direct result of tightening central control was the reduction of career mobility (via transfer or promotion) for Provincial Judges (PJ) and Provincial Treasurers (PT). For instance, none of the 18 GG-chains would reach the PJ level in 1851-56, and only about 17 percent of GG-chains would move downwards to the level of Provincial Treasurers (PT)—a stark decline when compared to 40 to 70 percent downward movements among GG-chains prior to the rebellious era. Thus, the introduction of provincial outsiders into the bureaucracy decoupled the system in a second way: career opportunities were less likely to trickle down to lower-ranking officials.

Let us further focus on the effects for vacancy movements that had reached downward to the level of Provincial Judges and Treasurers. Did these vacancy movements then produce upward mobility for the officials? Table 6 examines the degree of promotion (vs. transfer) in all chain-embedded career moves for PJs and PTs. In the period 1851-56, even when vacancies trickled downwards, there remained a strong tendency for Peking to transfer Provincial Judges and Treasurers rather than promote them. Contrasted with the late 1840s, promotion among PJs in 1851-56 dropped from about 80 to 67 percent, and from 70 to 60 percent among PTs. These apparently slight drops are revealing when contrasted against the surge of promotions in the second and third phases of the rebellious era (about 90 and 80 percent for PJs and PTs, respectively). The sequential suppression and expansion of official promotion reflected strategic changes I have discussed above, changes that would bring existing provincial officials, rather than provincial outsiders, to the forefront of rebellion control.

From the perspectives of officials, however, promotion was a mixed blessing. Officials sometimes attempted to evade to take a job in the hazardous battlefields by delaying the acceptance of their new promotion, by deliberately failing to report their physical whereabouts, by requesting a...
retirement (usually for health reasons), or putting forth personal reasons to exit the bureaucracy (e.g., claiming the filial obligation to mourn one’s deceased parents for three years). Officials were at times glad they could “stay out of the [rebels’] business” (zhishen shiwai), even if that would mean dismissal (Zhang 1981). But we should not conflate these subjective feelings with the organizational meaning imbued in an award of promotion. If central replacements suggest rulers’ mistrust toward provincial agents, then mobilization strategies oriented toward the provincial officials implies the amendment of a broken ruler-agent relation. Importantly, this amendment had real effects on changing the opportunity structure for careerist bureaucrats.

Chain Directions and System Detachment

With more internal candidates being promoted to higher provincial positions, vacancies created in the provincial system were likely to be retained within the same system (and not departing from it). The shifting opportunity structure thus altered systemically the ways in which vacancies were circulated. Figure 6 focuses on the directions of vacancy chain movements, examining two kinds of chain retention: 1) provincial vacancy chains that had never migrated to the central bureaucracy by way of metropolitan officials taking provincial jobs (top two lines); and (2) metropolitan vacancy chains that never entered the provincial bureaucracy (that is, provincial officials did not assume jobs in the metropolitan administration). These two types of vacancy flows are independent from one another, as there was no formal organizational rule that would dictate, for example, that a vacancy migrating from the province to the capital must be counterbalanced by a vacancy moving in the opposite direction.

The top two line in Figure 6 shows that since the second phase of the rebellious era (1857-62) and onto the rest of the post-rebellion years, about 90 percent or more of vacancy chains (with all origins) would never migrate to the central bureaucracy. In other words, almost all provincial vacancy chains would affect no metropolitan officials and bring them no career opportunities. This degree of insulation appeared to be more dramatic for PG/GG-chains, as the level of provincial insulation had dropped to a low 60 percent level in the early 1850s, due primarily to the introduction of central agents into the provinces. The bottom dotted lines in Figure 6 show that 90 percent of the time vacancy chains from the metropolitan system would not enter the provinces by the mid-1850s; in other words, high provincial officials (as an aggregate) would take up central government jobs no more than 10 percent of the time (However, Governors-General and Provincial Governors tended to have a slightly higher likelihood in moving to the metropolitan system).

The organizational meaning of system detachment must be qualified, however, since the distinction between central and provincial officials was not clear in practice. Most top provincial officials often had substantial experience working in the metropolitan government—sometimes for two decades—before they were dispatched to the provinces as “external officials” (weiguan). Once outside of the capital, provincial officials differed from those metropolitan “internal officials” (neiguan) by their potential informal income (corruption or administrative fees) and social ties (Zhang 1970; Kiser and Tong 1992). But from the perspective of bureaucratic control, the observed vacancy insulation and system detachment were red flags for the central state, because regular official rotations between Peking and the provinces had provided Qing rulers a means to monitor agents stationed away from the capital. In light of the state’s shifting mobilization strategy during the Taiping Rebellion, system detachment amounted to a potential breakdown of the center’s monitoring system. From the 1860s,
and for the remainder of the next two decades, once officials were sent out from the capital to the province they would stay there for most of the rest of their careers.

**IMPLICATIONS ON QING DECLINE**

The above findings may address, in a limited way, some of the historiographic concerns about the role the Taiping Rebellion had played in disintegrating the Qing Empire and leading to its ultimate collapse in 1911. The dominant view by historians has focused on the decentralizing consequences that resulted in *tuanslian*, the province-based local militia managed by local gentry and supervised by provincial officials (Michael 1966; Spector 1964; see also Hickey 1991). The issue of regionalism and military decentralization has been an oft-cited cause of the Qing collapse. Specifically, historians argue that a prototype of warlordism had emerged in the wake of the Taiping Rebellion as provincial officials were permitted by Peking to autonomously command and maintain significant regional armed forces, in which soldiers and commanders strongly identified with their own provinces (Hail 1927; Spector 1964). The prime examples of these regionally identified forces are the Hunan and Anhui Army, respectively led by Zeng Guofan (the leading official in repressing the Taipings in 1864 and was later appointed as the General-Governor of Liangjiang) and Li Hungzhang (the most powerful Qing official in the post-rebellion years, ascending from a governorship to the topmost post of Grand Secretariat within a short time).

My findings qualify these arguments by stressing that the Qing state organization had been extraordinarily resilient in coping with the unprecedented threats by the Taipings. The state was able to shift between different modes of power organizations within a relatively short time frame. The cost of the Qing’s flexibility and pragmatism, I have argued, had been the wider, if unintended, shifts in the overall career system of the state bureaucracy. Admittedly, any identifiable detachment between provincial and metropolitan officials’ careers did not necessarily mean that Peking had completely lost control over provincial agents (see Bays 1970; Pong 1994; Wright 1957); nevertheless, the ramifications of dual control presented a lingering problem for rulers to solve. From the purview of the end of the rebellious era, the victorious Qing state continued to be challenged by the agency problem. The tension between rulers and state agents was thus unfinished business, and this open-ended outcome would shape and limit how the state organization could cope with a new crisis.

**DISCUSSIONS**

How do states mobilize bureaucratic agents to counteract widespread warfare? Answering this question allows us to address critical challenges state rulers must confront when trying to suppress state challengers and simultaneously keep agents in check. My findings have questioned the role of centralized control in circumstances that necessitate decentralized coordination (cf. Tilly 1992; Barkev 1994). This paper, however, strives less to derive an equilibristic solution for such organizational challenges than to identify the ramifications of rulers’ pragmatic attempts to confront their dualistic concern.

At the conceptual level, I propose to investigate certain organizationally reinforcing processes that intertwine contentious state-challenger interactions with equally contentious ruler-agent games. One fruitful analytic site, I claim, is the set of state organizational mechanisms that can link changing
conditions in the battlefields (e.g., failure in battles) to organizational outcomes that signal to ruler-agent relations (e.g., dismissal, transfers, demotion). In the case of the Taiping Rebellion, one such mechanism resided in the ways state bureaucrats (and vacancies) were controlled, mobilized, deployed, and re-shuffled in response to shifting battlefield circumstances—the process I call bureaucratic mobilization. Clearly, these processes are historically and culturally specific to the nineteenth century Chinese state. Nonetheless, we can draw several lessons from the Taiping case, as it evokes analogous dilemmas rulers often face when building states.

First, the Taiping case casts the duality of war-making and state-making in a different light. The nature of the Taiping war was such that a persistent and spatially mobile anti-government movement had not only thinned out military resources, but also amplified the ever-present tension between Peking rulers and the state’s provincial agents. Contrary to the findings on early modern Europe (Brewer 1989; Tilly 1975, 1992), state centralization and bureaucratic consolidation in a widespread war do not necessarily reinforce one another. This paper has shown that the linkage between warfare and state-making depends, first, on the size and temporal distribution of battles (cf. Centeno 2002) and, second, on the spatial and organizational impingement of wars into local (bureaucratic) administrations. Where expansive wars and local administrations intertwine, the dilemma of central control seemed most acute. Processes that lead to centralization are not always diametrically opposed to processes that lead to decentralization. Controlling agents and suppressing rebels, as I have demonstrated, requires rulers to shift between different modes of power organization. Bureaucratic mobilization is the site where the analysts can empirically trace effects of war/state interactions.

Second, my analysis highlights the institutional constraints confronting any potential resolutions to the agency problem. In addition to being a fiscal-military organ for state rule, bureaucracy is a collection of organizational relations found partly on a preexisting institutional structure (rules, routines, strata, vacancy structures, etc.). Institutional constraints can become a tool for rulers to manage state agents during crises, but I have shown the unintended consequences of such strategies. As an established organizational mechanism, shuffling personnel afforded Qing rulers the flexibility and legitimacy to indirectly control the battlefield without resorting to new organizational rules. Rotating officials, for example, was an institutionally normative practice, and Peking only needed to decide who (e.g., provincial officials or central agents) would be transferred when a vacancy opened somewhere in the bureaucracy. With these ready-made solutions, the institutional cost of bureaucratic mobilization seemed low. However, breaking away from established practices of personnel deployment—including the shortening of rotation distance and the increase in intra-province promotion—could be threatening. Tracing vacancy trajectories, we have seen a tendency in which provincial bureaucracy became detached from central power. This unintended consequence had important implications for the long-term development of state-making.

Because of its narrow focus on bureaucratic actions at the structural level, this paper is clearly limited in the ways it can address the wider ramification of war/state relations. To refine our arguments one may need to, for example, follow Barkey (1994) and examine the interactions and meanings of ruler-agent bargaining in order to deeply understand how the observed structural changes have come about. Furthermore, information about agents’ biographies and individual career trajectories—which have been downplayed in this paper—could provide a more nuanced dissection of the substantial contents of vacancy chains (Stewman 1986), a move that should capture more fully White’s central idea regarding the duality of persons and positions expressed in institutional dynamics (Mohr and White 2008, p. 490). A more specific analysis of the relationship between non-
elites and their connections to state elites may also further refine my findings. In the Qing case, for instance, there is evidence that elite bureaucracy was no longer the center of socio-political contention toward the end of the dynasty; rather the field of struggles had moved toward gentry networks at the village, county, or city levels (Polachek 1975; Rankin 1986). As Evans (1995) and Chibber (2003) have shown in other historical contexts, state bureaucracy is an institutional platform that intersects conflicting interests of state and society; state-society struggles via bureaucracy, which include those between elite and non-elite struggles, can critically shape the trajectories of a state’s development.

Despite these limitations, this paper contributes to a view of state-making as a pliable process responsive to external threats, partly anchored in the distribution and appropriation of organizational vacancies through which rulers can rearrange their internal relations vis-à-vis state agents. Bureaucratic mobilization indicates one site where state-building actions can be found, and a detailed look at vacancy movements may beneficially reveal the numerous organizational challenges and dilemmas state-builders often face. This paper, thus, intends to provide new ways to imagine the duality of war-making and state-making at the organizational level, where ruler-agent relations are revealed and expressed in the organizational dilemmas imposed by internal revolts.
REFERENCE

Archival Publications


Other Work Cited


FIG. 1.—Hypothetical Examples of Vacancy Chains.

Example A
Chain length = 4

Example B
Chain length = 1

Gov-General
Prov Gov
Prov Treasurer
Prov Judges
Lower-ranking bureaucrats

Provincial Bureaucracy

Metropolitan Bureaucracy

origin of a vacancy chain

Direction of vacancy move
FIG. 2.—Structure of Qing top provincial officialdom in the mid-nineteenth century. In the 18 provinces that composed China Proper, there were in any time point a total of 8 Governors-general (GG), 15 Provincial Governors (PG), 19 Provincial Treasurers (PT), and 18 Provincial Judges (PJ). Officials below these top positions are considered in this paper “lower-ranking officials”; they are also considered “outsiders” of the top provincial officialdom, together with all bureaucrats working in the metropolitan bureaucracy.
FIG. 3.—Spatial mobility of top provincial officials (all top positions). The vertical axis represents the average number of provincial border crossed when an official was transferred or promoted in a particular period.
FIG. 4.—Average length of vacancy chains by types of origins. Chain length here is measured by the number of connected vacancy jumps before it leaves the top provincial bureaucracy. This measure is also equivalent to the number of provincial top officials mobilized in a chain. All provincial chains starting from GG, PG, PT, and PJ levels are included here (N=786), including chains that left and then return to the provincial system.
FIG. 5.—The distribution of Governor-General Chains (GG-Chains) by chain length and termination type. Short chain length is defined by a chain length of zero and one; long chain includes lengths of two or longer.
FIG. 6.—Provincial insulation: The proportion of provincial chains that had never migrated to the metropolitan bureaucracy (top two lines), and the proportion of provincial chains that were initiated because a top provincial official went to Peking to take up a new job (bottom two lines).
### TABLE 1
TRANSITION MATRIX OF TOP PROVINCIAL SYSTEM, 1833-1886

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening</th>
<th>Vacancy Destiny</th>
<th>Governor-general (GG)</th>
<th>Provincial Governor (PG)</th>
<th>Provincial Treasurer (PT)</th>
<th>Provincial Judge (PJ)</th>
<th>Outsider</th>
<th>Total Openings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>GG</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>.489</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>---</td>
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<td>131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>373</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.669</td>
<td>.194</td>
<td>504</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.883</td>
<td>623</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

NOTES.—The table represents how vacancies move. Fractions are based on total openings at a particular level (row counts). Outsider represents one of the following types of state officials: central officials in the metropolitan (Peking), lower-ranking provincial bureaucrats, and candidates outside of the bureaucratic system (e.g., civil examination graduates or military generals).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Negative Sanction (rebellion related)</th>
<th>Death</th>
<th>Retirement, Resignation</th>
<th>Transfer to Metropolitan/Military</th>
<th>Total Exit</th>
<th>Taiping province</th>
<th>Non-Taiping province</th>
<th>t-statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Rebellion</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1833-38</td>
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<td>.711</td>
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<tr>
<td>1839-44</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>.553</td>
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<td>85</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.735</td>
<td>.072</td>
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<td>Rebellious era</td>
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<tr>
<td>1851-56</td>
<td>.289 (.240)</td>
<td>.198</td>
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<td>.099</td>
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<td>.622</td>
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<td>All yrs</td>
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<td>.595</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>786</td>
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NOTE.—Parentheses represent identified causes of dismissals from the Qing Veritable Records.

\[ p < .10, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001 \text{ (two-tailed test)} \]
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<tr>
<th>Fraction of provincial exit that was replaced by central agents</th>
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<th>1857-62</th>
<th>1863-68</th>
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<td>All provincial exits</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>1.503</td>
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<tr>
<td>PG/GG leaving</td>
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<td>...by retirement</td>
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* p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p < .01, **** p < .001 (two-tailed test)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Cross-province Promotion</th>
<th>Intra-Province Promotion</th>
<th>Promotion Within same province</th>
<th>All Career Moves by Provincial Judges and Treasures (PJ/PT)</th>
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<td>.618</td>
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NOTE.—Fractions are based on the total number of career change by Provincial Judges and Treasures if they were circulated within the provincial officialdom (hence ignored are those career changes that led the officials out of the provinces). Lateral transfers across or within provinces are not shown here; hence the first two columns do not add up to 1.

\( \uparrow \) \( p < .10 \), * \( p < .05 \), ** \( p < .01 \), *** \( p < .001 \) (two-tailed test)
### Table 5: Fraction of Vacancy Chains Reaching Downstream

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Period</th>
<th>Governor-General Chains</th>
<th>Provincial Governor Chains</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Reaching PT</td>
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<td>.700</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1863-68</td>
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<td>.500</td>
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<td>.571</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1881-86</td>
<td>.182</td>
<td>.182</td>
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</table>

**Note:** Counts include vacancies that returned to the provincial system after they had migrated to the metropolitan system.
TABLE 6
FRACTION OF ALL CHAIN-EMBEDDED CAREER MOVES THAT WERE TRANSFER VS. PROMOTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Provincial Judge (PJ)</th>
<th>Provincial Treasurer (PT)</th>
<th>Provincial Gov. (PG)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer</td>
<td>Promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Rebellion</td>
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<tr>
<td>1833-38</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>.766</td>
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<tr>
<td>1839-44</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.863</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.213</td>
<td>.787</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.074</td>
<td>.926</td>
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<td>.067</td>
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<td>Post-Rebellion</td>
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<td>1875-80</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881-86</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.914</td>
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</table>

NOTE—The unit of analysis of this table is a vacancy move (not a vacancy chain). Fractions do not add up 1 because possibilities other than transfers or promotions exist: transfers to the central metropolitan or within-provincial demotion. Unit of analysis of this table is all career moves (dually vacancy jumps) that are embedded in vacancy chains that do not immediately leave the provincial bureaucracy after the first vacancy.