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Consensus and Fragmentation:

How variation in heterodox religious ideas

affected mobilisation and outcomes in the rebellions of China's

Qing era

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PhD Sociology

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Declaration

I hereby certify that the research contained within this thesis is my own work, and it has not been submitted for any other degrees or professional qualifications.

Wei Zhen

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Abstract

This thesis explores the ideational patterns characterising two types of premodern Chinese rebellions in the Qing dynasty: the Taiping rebellion (1851-1864) and the rebellions of the middle Qing era (1728-1840). Both types of rebellions were rooted in heterodox religious ideas conflicting with the orthodox ideas of mainstream Qing society, notably Confucianism and the Chinese imperial bureaucratic order. However, there are crucial differences in their heterodox ideational content, and these contributed to the development of either consensus or fragmentation among the rebels regarding their support for these ideas. This consensus and fragmentation further shaped the overall ideational processes within the rebel movements, thus influencing the outcomes of the uprisings. The argument presented here is built upon analysis of texts, primarily rebels' confessions and officials' reports, using an archival research methodology attending to how the discursive domain of these texts was constructed by different actors, including rebels, officials and governments.

My research shows that rebels of different statuses in the rebel organisations were motivated to participate in the uprisings through different mobilisation strategies reflecting their ideas about the goal of participating in the rebellions. These ideas included heterodox religious ones regarding the establishment of a new religiously-orientated order and more secular ones regarding building a new imperial dynasty modelled on previous ones. The elements of heterodox religious ideas remained consistent in texts and oral communications of the Taiping for a longer period than the middle Qing rebellions, although the persistence of other ideational elements is generally similar across both types of rebellions.

I argue that these ideational patterns were influenced by whether rebels from diverse background could forge a consensus regarding heterodox religious

ideas. In the middle Qing rebellions, this ideational content pertained primarily to the religious leaders' charismatic characteristics, drawing on shared imaginations from the Chinese cultural context about religious leaders. The leaders had to make the followers believe that they possessed magical powers and were chosen by Heaven, necessitating maintaining a distance from ordinary rebels and conveying vague religious messages to meet people's expectations of them. The limitations of such religious messages limited the potential for them to be accepted, precluding a consensus among the rebels of different organisational statuses within the rebel movement. Thus, eschewing the goal of building a millenarian religious world, the rebels pursued the establishment of a new imperial dynasty.

By contrast, the Taipings' heterodox Christian-derived religious ideas pertained more to equality and reshaping people's daily lives, primarily interactions, practices and customs. The focus on the form of life would have been straightforward for the rebels of different organisational statuses to accept, allowing a consensus regarding these religious ideas to arise. The persistence of such ideas over time within the rebel movement contributes to explaining the Taiping rebellion's so-called 'revolutionary' character.

This study provides fresh insight on the history of premodern Chinese rebellions, explaining how differences in ideational content shaped rebels' receptivity towards an understanding of heterodox religious ideas. It explains how these understandings influenced the potential for consensus on these new ideas within the movements.

Summary

This thesis explores the ideational patterns characterising two types of premodern Chinese rebellions in the Qing dynasty: the Taiping rebellion (1851-1864) and the rebellions of the middle Qing era (1728-1840). Both types of rebellions were rooted in heterodox religious ideas conflicting with the orthodox ideas of mainstream Qing society, notably Confucianism and the Chinese imperial bureaucratic order. However, there are crucial differences in their heterodox ideational content, and these contributed to the development of either consensus or fragmentation among the rebels regarding their support for these ideas. This consensus and fragmentation further shaped the overall ideational processes within the rebel movements, thus influencing the outcomes of the uprisings. The argument presented here is built upon analysis of texts, primarily rebels' confessions and officials' reports.

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Major events and regimes(dynasties)

Dynasty (Regime)			Event		
English name	Chinese name	Period of existence	English name	Chinese name	Occurrence time
Qin	秦	221 B.C.-207 B.C.	Dazexiang rebellion	大泽乡起义	around 209 B.C.
Han	汉	202 B.C. - 220 A.D.			
1.Western Han	西汉	202 B.C. - 8 A.D.			
2.Eastern Han	东汉	25 - 220	Yellow Scarf Army uprising	黄巾军起义	184-185
Tang	唐	618-907			
Song	宋	960-1279	Fangla rebellion	方腊起义	1120-1121
Yuan	元	1271-1368	Red Scarf Army uprising	红巾军起义	1351-1366
Ming	明	1368-1644	Li Zicheng rebellion	李自成起义	1629-1645
Qing	清	1636-1912	Wang Lun rebellion	王伦起义	1774
			White Lotus rebellion	白莲教起义	1794-1804
			Eight Trigrams rebellion	天理教起义	1813
			Taiping rebellion	太平天国	1851-1864
			Hui rebellions	回民起义	1856-1873
			Hui rebellions	回民起义	1862-1873
			Miao rebellions	苗民起义	1735-1736, 1795, 1855-1872
			First Opium War	第一次鸦片战争	1840-1842
			Second Opium War	第二次鸦片战争	1856-1860
Republic of China	中华民国	1911-1949	Republican Revolution	辛亥革命	1911-1912
People's Republic of China	中华人民共和国	1949-present	Cultural Revolution	文化大革命	1966-1976

Chapter 1 Introduction

China has a rich history of rebellions against imperial authority, the earliest of which can be traced back to a point over 2000 years ago. In this long history of rebellions, an abundance of texts and instances of oral communication used between the participants have been recorded and preserved, ensuring continued access to the ideas underpinning these uprisings. Many of these have had a profound impact on contemporary society. For example, it is likely that most Chinese individuals would be aware of the following three sentences:

> *Are kings, dukes, generals or ministers born with their standing?*
> *Cyan Heaven is dead. Yellow Heaven shall rise!*
> *Don't say the stoneman has only one eye. He will provoke the Yellow River and lead to the uprisings!*[1]

These three sentences are associated with the Dazexiang rebellion (209 B.C.) of the Qin dynasty (221 B.C.-207 B.C.), the Yellow Scarf Army rebellion (184-185) at the end of the Eastern Han dynasty (25 - 220) and the Red Scarf Army rebellion (1351-1366) at the end of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). The first sentence was uttered to ask potential participants to join the rebellion so that they could become individuals with royal status or officials. The phrase 'Cyan Heaven' appears in the second sentence in reference to the then-current order of the Han dynasty (202 B.C. - 220 A.D.). An 'Yellow Heaven' appears in reference to the new order that would be built by those following the religion named the Way of the Great Peace. The third sentence was uttered to refer to

[1] These phrases can be found in the Records of the Grand Historian (SJ), Book of Later Han (HHS) and Yuan History (YS), and many other historical sources. Unless specified, all direct citations from historical sources in this thesis were translated by me.

a stoneman statue, with only one eye, that the leaders of the movements secretly made, this sentence being one that was inscribed on his back. This stoneman statue was used by the leaders to persuade their followers that Heaven had used this magical form of communication to let them know that they could rise up in such a rebellious fashion.

It is clear that these three sentences were among the most influential and representative of the Chinese rebels' communication. The ideas expressed in these communications are frequently quoted on contemporary Chinese internet sites, and are used to explain not only history but also the contemporary domestic situation and ongoing international relations. At the end of this thesis, the reader may find that these three sentences reflect its research object.

These rebellion ideas' ancient origins, rich connotations and influence on modern society have led to extensive studies by a significant number of scholars. In contrast to the focus of previous studies on rebellious ideas as expressed in later periods of rebellion, this thesis focuses on these ideas as they relate to the early period of Chinese rebellions, particularly those linked to heterodox religions. Among these ideas, I especially focus on those relating to rebels' understanding of the goals of participating in the uprising and the approach to achieving these movements' aims. By considering archival documents containing rebels' confessions and government reports, this study outlines the ideational framework in two types of heterodox religious rebellions in their early stages during the Qing era (1636-1912). The definitions of such 'early periods' of each rebellion are inherently nebulous, varying according to the specifics of the period considered. Therefore, I make the specific time periods more explicit in the analysis of each rebellion. However, the use of the phrase "early period" can generally be understood to refer to the time when the process of organising the rebellions first began to the immediate period following this point, up to a period of three years. This study further discusses

how the different ideational frameworks led to different ideational processes and outcomes, aiming to offer fresh insights into the literature on contentious politics and Chinese history. The first type of the rebellions is represented by three premodern Chinese heterodox religious rebellions that were not influenced by Christianity and that occurred during the middle Qing dynasty (1728-1840). The White Lotus rebellion (1794-1804) is the main case used to analyse this subject. I also draw comparisons with the Wang Lun rebellion (1774) and the Eight Trigrams rebellion (1813). The second type of framework considered is that of the Taiping rebellion (1851-1864) in the late Qing dynasty (1840-1912). This was heavily influenced by ideas from European and American countries, especially those with strong Christian heritage. This study considers the different processes and outcomes of these two types of uprising by analysing the different foci of heterodox religious ideas within these two types of rebellions. These different foci gave rise to both consensus and fragmentation among the rebels of different organisational status who possessed varying levels of material and human resources.

Since the Han dynasty, many rebellions in China have been heavily influenced by ideas from heterodox religions. These Chinese heterodox religious ideas were formed by absorbing certain elements from various religious ideological systems, for example, Taoism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism, amalgamating these elements with Chinese culture (see e.g., Naquin, 1976, 1981; Perry, 2002; Xie and Jian, 1981). Typically, Chinese heterodox religions have demonstrated a millenarian tendency towards revolt against the regime and challenging orthodox Confucianist orders. Such efforts have also tended to be accompanied by suggestions that a new and better world with a different order could be created (see e.g., Kuhn, 1970; Naquin, 1976; Wakeman, 1977). It is for this reason that these alternative traditions have been drawn on by numerous rebellions, thus being considered heterodox by both Chinese imperial regimes as well as Confucianists.

However, although heterodox religious ideas have been very important in many religious uprisings in Chinese history, they have tended not to be adopted by the later regimes built by the rebels in the post-rebellion period. Most of these religious rebellions did not make any revolutionary changes to the old Confucianist system when they grew to a certain scale or after the establishment of a new dynasty (Goldstone, 1991a; Xie and Jian, 1981). The changes that are considered revolutionary here are those that totally or partially broke with the old Confucianist order to shape a new order. These new orders normally referred, in the imaginations of the rebels in my cases, to theocratic regimes in which the sect members could enjoy greater prosperity and equality.

Such a shift towards heterodoxy in a regime established following a rebellion is apparent in my comparison of the middle Qing and Taiping cases. In the middle Qing rebellions, heterodox religious ideas gradually disappeared from the texts and communications in the early period after the rebellion commenced. Although the rebels in these rebellions did not build a stable regime, their ideas became less religious and tended toward reinforcing the existing Confucianist order in the manner characteristic of most of the religious rebellions in Chinese history, as discussed in Chapter Five.

However, during the Taiping rebellion, this story took a different course. “Taiping” is the Chinese pronunciation of the great peace. The Taiping rebels’ heterodox religion was called ‘God Worship’ religion, which was underpinned by elements from both Christianity and Chinese culture. Although Christianity had been diffused throughout China for a long time (Standaert, 2001), the rebels mostly learnt these ideas from the European and American missionaries in the early period of the rebellion. Another source for the early-period rebels was the pamphlet "*Good Words exhorting the Age*" (Liang, 1965), which was written by a Chinese missionary based on his understanding of the Bible. This pamphlet featured a small extract from the Bible and expressed some of its content in

simplified form for the consideration of Chinese readers (see e.g., Jen, 1973; Luo, 2013; Reilly, 2004; Rowe, 2009; Shih, 1967). The Taiping's religious ideas were accepted by many rebels and retained in the Taiping texts and communications for a considerable period, ultimately leading to certain revolutionary - although more or less experimental - transformations to the society during the rebellions and the regime that the Taiping rebels developed. These changes included altering the names and structure of certain parts of their official system, establishing the heterodox religions as providing the guiding ideas of the regime, and attempting to break certain Confucian customs regarding the claim of men's superiority over women (see e.g., Kilcourse, 2016; Luo, 2000, 2013; Xia, 1992, 2006). The persistence of heterodox religious ideas and the changes these ideas engendered were different from the pattern of most premodern Chinese rebellions prior to the Taiping.

There were many similarities between the basic social context and organisational processes of the Taiping in its early period (1846-1853) and the middle Qing rebellions. For example, all these rebellions incorporated participants from across a range of occupations and social classes, such as farmers, merchants and low-level officials. Furthermore, all these rebellions relied heavily on sect networks to organise. Although there was by this point a greater level of contact between Chinese society and the European and American people during the time of the Taiping rebellion, most of the Taiping rebels had very limited knowledge about the European world during the early period of the rebellion (For the general social background, see e. g., Hung, 2009, 2011; Luo, 2013; Naquin, 1976; Shih, 1967; Tang, 2011). This gives rise to questions relating to why the Christian version of heterodox religious ideas could be maintained in the Taiping movement during its early period, encouraging the rebels' attempts to bring about changes, while the heterodox religious ideas of the premodern rebellions in the middle Qing dynasty disappeared more quickly. A number of answers to this question have been

proposed. Certain scholars (e. g., Jen, 1946; Kuhn, 1970; Spence, 1997) have suggested that military conflicts with the local militia and other forces, such as the government, strengthened rebels' belief in the Christian version of heterodox religious ideas because these ideas helped them connect with each other during these conflicts. Others have proposed that ethnic conflicts made the changes possible due to the Taiping rebellion raising support in remote areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, for example, among Hakka groups[2] (Tang, 2011; Zhang, 2016). These ethnic minorities were potentially more open to religious ideas that were not associated with traditional Chinese philosophy. At the same time, the ethnic conflicts between the ethnic minorities further shaped Taiping's religious identity (see also Ter Haar, 2019).

This study provides a new perspective on this question, presenting an argument developed through comparing the Taiping rebellion with the middle Qing rebellions and drawing on various sources for analysis. The main sources used are the trial confessions of the rebels, the texts used by the rebels, and the reports of government officials. Some of these sources were accessed in archives in Beijing and Taipei; others were taken from books containing compilations of documents relating to these rebellions. I cite these historical sources by their acronyms based on the Chinese titles of the sources, with the full name of these sources given in the dedicated section at the end of this thesis. For example, the label "NMYDL" is the acronym of the archives document "nongming yundongdang", the Chinese pronunciation of "The Grand Council Copies of Secret Palace Memorials-Peasant movement category";

[2] The Hakka people are considered as a part of the Han people by the current government of the People's Republic of China. Hakka people may also identify themselves as having Han origin. However, the overall culture of the Hakka people has many differences from the Han people, so I describe them as a distinct ethnicity here.

meanwhile, the labels starting with C, R or T, such as “C1, R1 or T1” refer to “the trial confessions of the rebels”, “the reports of government officials” and “the texts used by the rebels,” respectively. The archival documents were read in a way that was faithful to a specific archival research methodology developed based on other scholars’ studies of archives, particularly Thornton (2007) and Stoler (2002). This methodology was adopted to make it possible to pay particular attention to how the discursive domain of the archival documents was constructed by the different actors and to utilise sociological concepts to explain the identified phenomena.

Through adopting such an approach to the considered sources, I argue that it is possible to shed light on the different processes and outcomes witnessed for the different uprisings. My analysis is informed by previous studies on how ideas and culture influence the processes of contentious movements. It also considers the contribution of the ideas of the elite together with the ideational processes and interactions of a much wider range of participants, including subaltern people who are at the bottom places in the then-current social or political hierarchy. This is done on the basis that, in the early stage of China’s rebellions, most participants have not been political elites but subaltern people of this kind, and the presence of a loose organisational structure has given such individuals more significant roles in the ideational processes. Meanwhile, I also discuss in detail the ideational logic permeating through culture in terms of how this sheds light on the rebellions with respect to their purposes, the approaches taken to realise such purposes and the possible outcomes. Unlike in many previous studies on the meaning of such movements, such ideational logic emerges as being primarily shaped not by the movement’s organisers, but by the specific cultural and social conditions, such as censorship and the folk culture of China. The ideas are shown to be drawn on by the rebels in such a way that influences the action and interactions of these movements. This is shown to be particularly significant in the early stages of the movement, when,

as a result of the suppression of the government, it was difficult for the organisers to build their own ideational frameworks in a way that resonated with and inspired their followers. They can only adapt the old framework and make some changes to it.

On the basis of this approach of analysis, I consider whether the focus of the heterodox religious ideas could be accepted by, and create a consensus among, the people of different statuses of the rebellious organisation, including religious sects and military organisations. Generally, the organisational status of individual rebels is evaluated in terms of their power and position within the context of the rebellions that they participated in. This is primarily determined by the resources that they possessed, including material resources that they could offer for use within the rebellions, the potential participants that they could mobilise, and their networks with other important rebels. Organisational status is significant for comprehending the Chinese rebellions during their early period. As Naquin (1976, p39) notes, "[i]t [was] not a person's occupation or social class that determined his place in the White Lotus sect"; rather, the rebels were normally organised according to the resources they possessed. This means that if a rebel at the bottom of society had spent considerable time building a network with the leaders or many potential participants, he or she might have nevertheless retained a very high status within the organisation (see the discussion presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six).

In the middle Qing rebellions, the heterodox religious ideas centred around the leaders of these religions. In spreading these ideas, the leaders or their messengers sought to convince followers that the religious leaders had certain charismatic characteristics. In Weber (2019, p63), a charismatic leader is conceptualised as "[a] person with a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or

qualities.” In my investigation, this concept is useful for characterising the religious leaders who claimed to be destined to rule China due to their having some kind of magical power. Charismatic leaders can be considered as having shared a close link with the heterodox religious ideas because it would have been the leaders’ power that they had or obtained from the gods that would have made the participants feel that they could defeat their enemies and bring about a millenarian world to come. However, such heterodox religious ideas also had their limitations. For example, there were numerous rebels with high organisational status who were highly sceptical of the veracity of the claims that had been made. Moreover, it is unlikely that the ideas had much impact on the many low-organisational-status rebels. These individuals would have had insufficient time and knowledge to comprehend the mysterious messages regarding the claims made regarding the leaders’ supposed magical abilities. Without substantial support from the rebels, the rebellious ideas would likely have been displaced by more secular ideas relating to building a new dynasty (setting aside some religious ideas that were prominent at the start of the rebellions).

While the heterodox religious ideas of the White Lotus rebellion related most obviously to the leaders’ characteristics, the heterodox religious ideas of the Taiping rebels, signified a new way of organising everyday life. These ideas were heavily influenced by Christianity but were also shaped by other Chinese thoughts and the leaders' own creativity. The rebels connected their religious messages to a particular way of life and considered it to provide an embodiment of their religious messages. Such ideas of everyday life encouraged the rebels to transform their interactions, practices and customs according to the ideas of their heterodox religion. This transformation applies not only to the rebels' non-military lives but also to their lives as soldiers in the rebels’ army. For example, the Taiping participants were expected to pray to God at key times, such as when members were baptised to join the society when getting up and sleeping,

and when eating. It was also required for such rituals to be conducted when a family was experiencing a major event, such as a marriage, a funeral, building a house, responding to a disaster or an illness, and so on. They were also required to abide by a specific code of conduct, including the demonstration of filial piety to parents and the obligations not to commit murder, theft or robbery, or to tell untruths or demonstrate greed. It was also necessary to treat other people as if they were a member of one's own family. Compared to the middle Qing rebellions' religious messages, this type of idea would have had a greater likelihood of being understood and accepted by rebels of different statuses in this movement. Additionally, these individuals would also have been able to more directly perceive the changes that the rebellion would have had the potential to bring about because they would have been able to see that their daily life had gradually transformed. This would have highlighted the more equal relationships they enjoyed through engaging in the same forms of life practice.

In this introduction, I present an overview of the two key rebellions to introduce and contextualise the subject. First, I provide an overview of the White Lotus rebellion, illustrating the social context of the era, the characteristics of the rebels during the middle Qing rebellions, the ideas they believed in, as well as how heterodox religious ideas gradually disappeared from texts and communication between rebels in the movements. The Taiping case is then examined to explain, why, different to the middle Qing rebellions, the religious ideas could be preserved beyond the initial stage of the rebellion through the strong emphasis on rebels' everyday life and everyday practices.

Comparing these two cases, briefly here and at length across the thesis, makes it possible to discuss why the middle Qing rebellions failed to bring about a revolutionary outcome. In these rebellions, the rebels' imaginations of heterodox religious leaders' charismatic characteristics constrained the possibility of achieving a consensus of objectives. This finding sheds light on

how the social and cultural context could contribute to the understanding of the charismatic authority and leaders. This finding is also different from those of numerous previous studies on the outcome of the premodern rebellions in China (Chan, 1969; Goldstone, 1991b; Hung, 2009, 2011; Skocpol, 1979; Wakeman, 1977; Wolf, 1969). This is particularly when it comes to the question of how the uprisings were affected by the heterodox religious ideas of traditional Chinese society and the Christian concepts during the later Qing dynasty. Moreover, this analysis also makes it possible to understand how the heterodox Christian-derived religious ideas led different people to agree to collectively challenge the existing social order in the movement. This was based on a new idea that they had little knowledge of before the rebellions. It also helps to explain why similar attempts had not been made within the context of the rebellions before the Taiping. Furthermore, this analysis as proposed here also shows that a more substantial perspective has the potential to shed new light on matters in contentious politics.

As indicated by many previous accounts (e.g., Gould, 1995; Smith, 2000; Thompson, 2013), the politicisation of everyday life contributes to the existence of solidary in movements through the creation of both boundaries between groups with different ways of organising their everyday life and common identities within groups. This process of shaping a new form of everyday life also contributes to a collective consciousness among people across different classes and regions, leading to changes in the existing order. This is especially evident in relation to the Chinese communist movements (e.g., Perry, 2002, 2012). However, different from the European revolutionary experience following the industrial revolution or the later Chinese revolutions influenced by European ideas (in which events those at the bottom of society witnessed significant changes), the initial participants of the early period of the Taiping rebellion were less likely to have witnessed significant changes deriving from the European or American influences before they were taught the Taiping's ideas and became

involved in the rebellion (Luo, 2013; Shih, 1967; Tang, 2011). Moreover, it is also likely that there were rebels who were, in fact, in favour of the old order.

Nevertheless, through creating a specific way of organising everyday life, rebels across a range of occupations and social classes of different organisational statuses formed a collective understanding of promoting new types of ideas that did not reflect traditional thought with Confucianism as the orthodoxy; instead, these ideas exhibited a unique pattern of ideas belonging to the people of this rebellion. This kind of understanding did not appear in the middle Qing rebellions, in which heterodox religious ideas were more obviously related to the qualities of the charismatic leaders. I contend that contrasting these two types of cases not only enhances our comprehension of the transformation of Chinese social movements but also demonstrates how participants, who typically originate from subaltern strata of society, could achieve a consensus on their movement within a particular cultural context. Furthermore, this analysis shed light on how the cultural context shaped the understanding of these charismatic leaders and constrained the acceptance of a new idea. This also demonstrates how people's everyday life could help in promoting a new idea, especially in a movement that included people that were generally conservative regarding the old orders and many others who would not have had a high level of knowledge relating to these new ideas before their participation in these rebellions.

The heterodox religions of the Qing rebellions

There have been many different types of religions and sects grounded in heterodox ideas in Chinese history. Several of these heterodox religions influenced the rebellions in the Qing dynasty, including the rebellions examined in this thesis. The sects of these heterodox religions all had different doctrines and different names, such as the White Lotus sect, the Red Sun sect, the

Hunyuan[3] sect, the White Sun sect, the Eight Trigrams sect, and so on. Their beliefs, activities, scriptures, rituals and organisations also varied, which makes their origins and belief systems difficult to define. Because the phrase "White Lotus" often appeared in the communications of sect members, these sects were usually uniformly called the White Lotus religion by the government (Naquin, 1976, 1981; Ter Haar, 1992).

However, while these different sects had different forms, their doctrines often shared certain elements, especially during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing dynasties. They usually took the Eternal Mother as their main deity and worshipped other local folk gods. They also drew on concepts from the religions that the government considered orthodox, such as Buddhism and Taoism. Furthermore, adherents of these religions believed that the world's history could be divided into three major periods, and that the *klapa* (the great disaster that would destroy the world) would come at the end of each period. During this period of destruction, good would clash with evil, and the orthodox practices of the religions would replace those that were more heterodox. In relation to this, the rebels considered the doctrine of their religions as being orthodox and the other ideas, such as some of those from Confucianism, as heterodox. After the *klapa*, a better new world would be created (e.g., Chan, 1969; Chuang, 2002; Wakeman, 1977).

Unlike the apocalyptic elements witnessed for other religions, in which it is often asserted that the disaster will come at a specific historical moment and that it is therefore virtuous to wait patiently for its arrival, followers of these heterodox religions believed that they could actively trigger this event through violence

[3] It is difficult to identify an English word that is an exact translation for "Hunyuan." Hunyuan refers to the start of the world, at which point all matter is mixed up in a nevertheless stable manner, with no opposition between different materials and concepts.

(Chuang, 2002; Ter Haar, 2019). It was the position of those who believed in such heterodox religions that when the *klapa* was to come, the Eternal Mother (or, in some cases, what was referred to using the general term “Heaven”) would send holy messengers, normally the Maitreya Buddha[4], to the world to save the believers. The messengers would come to the human world in the form of ordinary people, sometimes through reincarnation but also potentially in many other ways.

These messengers were often depicted or regarded as bearing special symbols or as making prophecies to reveal their identity. The meaning of symbols and prophecies, including the rebels’ communications regarding these meanings, were characterised by ambiguity and vagueness and would have been difficult for ordinary people to understand. These messengers usually claimed that they possessed superhuman and magical powers and could summon the gods. By passing such powers to their disciples, teaching them to summon gods through the mantra to protect their believers from the *klapa*, the messengers would serve as the means by which to lead the followers to trigger this event.

Followers of the heterodox religions also believed that the Eternal Mother’s believers would rule the new world and build a new order after the existing world was destroyed at the end of the *klapa*. The new order was usually envisaged as a theocracy in which heterodox religious ideas played a central role. It was also regarded as a world in which people, especially the believers of the religions, could enjoy greater prosperity and equality.

One interpretation is that the heterodox religious ideas in these rebellions related to the obligation to fight off eschatological threats, which were threats

[4] Or the Supreme Purple Star as the Taoist version of the Maitreya Buddha. Although the Supreme Purple Star was generally considered as the Polaris, it has been characterised as a deity with a human appearance.

that were claimed could end the human world, using exorcist techniques, and a protective mantra to call in the aid of divine armies. From the perspective of scholars such as Ter Haar (2006, 2019), this paradigm of the heterodox religions is best treated as having come from the same repertoire as Taoist exorcist ritual traditions and also as being historically related to the latter. Ter Haar suggests this is different from the more Buddhist-inspired messianic traditions studied by Overmyer (1986) and Naquin (1976); in these traditions, the threat of apocalypse is dealt with by changes in the individual's lifestyle, such as keeping vegetarian fasts and meditating. However, it should also be pointed out that, in some of the cases considered, such as the Eight Trigrams rebellion, the rebels were still admonished to follow certain rules in their daily life, some of which prohibited such everyday activities as smoking and drinking. However, these kinds of activities were also promoted by the mainstream Chinese society during the Qing dynasty. As a result, it would have been difficult to distinguish the sect members' life from the others. Furthermore, these precepts regarding their lives were mentioned only occasionally and were not the focus of the rebels' communication.

Because of the violent and revolutionary nature of these heterodox religions, they were prohibited by the ruling regime. To avoid investigation by the government, these heterodox religions were usually spread by teachers to disciples, and believers usually learned such religious doctrines at home rather than in a specific central location. (Regarding the general content of these beliefs, also see e.g., Chuang, 2002; Gaustad, 1994; Naquin, 1976; Ter Haar, 1992; Wakeman, 1977).

Government repression may also explain why sect members used ambiguous symbols and prophecies in the manner that they did. However, another important reason for this ambiguity might relate to the rebels' fear of revealing Heaven's will. In China's heterodox religions and folk culture, those who stood

against or revealed Heaven's will would be punished. This kind of reasoning is evident in many literary works, such as "*Water Margin*" (SHZ), a novel that the Qing government identified as being carried by many rebels of the Qing rebellions (Chuang, 2002; Ter haar, 2006). Another influential example is the *"Creation of the Gods"* (FSYY), which is a book describing how some of the gods that the rebels believed in had previously been humans.

Chinese premodern rebellions are sometimes characterised as primitive rebellions in which the rebels had not yet found a specific language to express their aspirations about the world. This type of rebellion is often characterised as being reformist or even conservative in nature, and members of such rebellions are often regarded as having clung to the old-world order rather than being revolutionary in terms of having any desire to bring about a new order (Hobsbawm, 1971; Perry, 2002). However, while the heterodox religious messages were usually unclear, if these scattered and ambiguous messages are combined and interpreted through the lens of the common points summarised above, these rebellions may not be so readily perceived as primitive as has been previously argued. These religious messages did, in fact, show awareness, as well as the will to effect certain political changes. They related to providing a place where everyone could enjoy happiness, prosperity, health, peace and equality, which were promised by the Eternal Mother and governed by her messengers and the people in the religious sects. It may have been considered that this kind of world was also promised by the other gods, as there were usually differences between versions of these heterodox religious ideas in different rebellions. This kind of place was very different from the society of imperial China, where the rebels actually lived. In relation to this, there are several religious scrolls (or 'precious scrolls' as they were known among the rebels in the Qing era. Such scrolls are a form of telling and singing religious documents/books.) from the Ming and Qing dynasty described what the world was like. These scrolls can be found in many sources such as Chuang

(1979). A significant level of fragmented discussions on this topic is also present in the archival documents that I consider in the present study. There are vivid differences with, for example, the religious cases considered by Hobsbawm (1971), who considers the rebellions in Monto Amitat. In this movement, the rebels had neither a clear picture of the millenarian world that the religions promised to them, nor knowledge of know how to gain entry to this world. However, the heterodox religious ideas in premodern Chinese rebellions can be regarded as having painted a clearer picture of the sought-after world. They also detailed a more straightforward way to fulfil it, namely, by following the religious leaders, triggering the *klapa* and using the leaders' power to win the fights of the rebellions. Although the powers that they believed in did not in fact exist, this does not mean that their actions were not motivated by a level of political consciousness.

The religious texts considered here do shed light on the political aspirations of the people in the subaltern of the society in a manner different to what is seen with the Confucianist thinking of the political elites. However, it is important to adopt a cautious approach in concluding that these ideas represent the collective consciousness of the peasant class or the subaltern people, which is an assumption made in some studies of the premodern rebels (e.g., Guha, 1983; also see, Shneiderman, 2009; may also refer to Scott, 1979). While such consciousness might have existed, it would still have affirmed the authority of the Eternal Mother and her messengers. In other words, even though it might appear that people could have achieved equality in the new world order, the leaders – who could come from the peasant class or the most subaltern status in society – would still possess extraordinary power as representatives of the Eternal Mother, and they could share this power with others. It can also be seen from this and much of the previous discussion that religious leaders played a very important role and enjoyed a much higher status in the religious system, demonstrating the existence of hierarchy. For example, those who joined the

given sect at a later point would have been expected to kowtow to those who preceded them. However, such hierarchical structures did not reflect any individual person's previous social status; rather, the people who possessed resources that the rebellious organisations needed would have been more likely to achieve a higher status in the hierarchy of the rebellious organisations that they joined.

The puzzle of the ideational changes in the middle Qing rebellions

While the ideas of heterodox religions played a significant role in many Qing Chinese rebellions, my investigations of the three middle Qing rebellions show that these ideas gradually disappeared from the rebels' texts and communications. The three rebellions of the middle Qing dynasty that I investigated are very significant ones in terms of the influence these heterodox religions exerted. Another reason for my selection of these rebellions for analysis is that they are detailed by a very rich body of sources, more so than for other rebellions during the Qing era. Generally, the era of the middle Qing dynasty is considered to refer to a period when the country was ruled by three emperors, these being Qianlong (1736-1795), Jiaqing (1796-1820) and Daoguang (1820-1850). During this era, China experienced a shift from great prosperity to the beginning of a recession. From the 1680s to the 1820s, which was the majority of the time between the early Qing dynasty (1636-1728) and the middle Qing (1728-1840), China's economy grew rapidly, benefitting from the gradual stabilisation of the political order. Furthermore, the mounting European demand for Chinese products and the subsequent influx of American silver into China fuelled the commercialisation of the Chinese economy to a very significant extent (Hung, 2011; Naquin and Rawski, 1987; Rowe, 2009). Although some scholars (Rowe, 2009) take the view that China's economy had shown signs of recession since around 1800, the economy had not faced a

significant crisis before the 1820s (see Hung, 2011). After the 1820s or even later, China's economic problems became serious.

Furthermore, both the control wielded by the state over society and the state's legitimacy decreased ahead of the economic recession (Hung, 2011). During this period, although China's overall economic performance was steady, the financial affairs of the Qing government were under intense pressure. This pressure was caused by factors such as inflation stemming from the continuous inflow of silver and the constant wars embarked on by the emperor. As a result, it was common for the revenue of local governments to run behind their expenses, leading to such local governments lacking sufficient financial resources to control their local areas.

Seeking to gain wealth, some local officials collected surtax privately to turn over financial resources or to maintain their expenditure through corruption and bribery. This problem was so widespread that the central government acquiesced and, to a certain extent, even promoted this behaviour in pursuit of its own financial goals. This aggravated the conflict between government officials and the people, giving rise to important challenges to the moral legitimacy that was so important for maintaining regime rule in the political system of imperial China (Guo, 1989; Zelin, 1984). As observed by Hung (2011), the decline of government authority and moral legitimacy likely played a part in fostering the incentive and political opportunities for violent movements, even though the rebels may not have comprehended the concepts, such as moral legitimacy.

The study focuses on three crucial cases of the turbulent period under examination. The historical evidence suggests that the religions of the three different rebellions had some consistency in the core content of their ideas and that some participants in the later rebellions may have inherited the legacy of disciples of the earlier rebels (see Chuang, 1994; Gaustad, 1994; Naquin, 1976,

1981). All three rebellions were heavily influenced by heterodox religions and shared some of the common elements of the religions mentioned above.

The earliest case is the Wang Lun rebellion. It occurred in 1774 in Shandong province, an area with many planes that would have made transportation convenient. This rebellion was led by Wang Lun, who claimed to be the reincarnation of Maitreya and who was destined to become Emperor of China. Wang Lun built a sect called the “Pure Water sect” through his religious teaching, recruiting thousands of followers before and during the rebellion. The rebels captured three small cities and laid siege to the larger city of Linqing, a strategic location on the north-south Grand Canal transportation route not far from Beijing, the capital of Qing China. However, these efforts lasted little more than a month before the rebels were suppressed by the Qing government.

The second case is the White Lotus rebellion, which is the most significant among the three cases considered, lasting for the longest time. This rebellion is also selected as the main case for consideration in this investigation of the middle Qing era. The White Lotus rebellion took place between 1796[5] and 1804, arising in the mountainous region separating Sichuan province from Hubei and Shanxi provinces. This rebellion was initially planned by the leaders of heterodox sects. Their plans were discovered by the Qing government, which led to a large-scale hunt for the members of the heterodox sects that the government called the White Lotus sects. However, the Qing court‘s suppression led to larger-scale uprisings across several locations, and intensive military conflicts took place in the three provinces. Although it was initially difficult for government armies to defeat the rebels at the beginning of the uprising, after the third year of the rebellion, the Qing army won some important victories. This was facilitated by the Jiaqing emperor addressing

[5] The official outbreak of the White Lotus rebellions is usually considered to start from 1796 by the Qing government although the planning, hunting and resistance had already started a few years earlier.

problems relating to corruption and conflicts within the Qing government. However, it was not until the eighth year of the rebellion that the Qing armies were able to suppress all the rebel armies.

The Eight Trigrams rebellion broke out in 1813 in the capital of Beijing and the adjacent plain lands of Zhili, Henan and Shandong provinces, the core areas of the Qing Empire. The Eight Trigrams sect is also known as the sect of Heavenly Order. The leaders of the Eight Trigrams rebellion – Lin Qing, Li Wencheng and Feng Keshan – declared themselves the King of Heaven, the King of Man and the King of Earth, respectively and planned to bring about a rebellion across different locations. The believers in Beijing gathered more than 200 people and rushed into the Forbidden City, the seat of the imperial palace. The rebellion in Beijing lasted only one day and was quickly suppressed. However, the insurgencies outside Beijing lasted longer. After four months, the Eight Trigrams rebellion was completely suppressed.

A significant number of rebels were involved in the three rebellions examined in this study. In the material considered for this study, most of the rebels in the three rebellions were situated firmly at the bottom of society and did not receive formal education. It is unlikely that they had much knowledge of the Confucianist classics of that era. These rebels had a range of occupations and social classes. For example, according to Naquin's (1976) statistics on 200 to 300 members of a sect involved in a rebellion of the middle Qing era, 4 percent were ranked at the level of officials or title holders; 14 percent had lower-status positions in service to the government, 19 percent earned at least part of their income through undertaking hired agriculture labour; 19 percent gained income through land ownership; 32 percent likely earned money through agriculture; and the remaining 12 percent made their living from providing a variety of crafts and services, with such individuals including peddlers and sellers of products such as windowpanes and food, household servants, weavers, cart drivers,

stonemasons, brick-factory workers, cooks and so on. A number of other occupations that Naquin did not mention also emerged in my materials of the three rebellions, such as messengers and household servants of Manchu nobles (R1 in QSL).

It should be noted that only a few rebels were able to progress through the Qing government's imperial examinations. Within the materials considered, most of the rebels who passed the martial imperial examinations for military candidates. The examination that such individuals would have had to pass had lower requirements regarding the individual's understanding of Confucianist literature but higher requirements regarding military strategies and skills. Although it is hard to confirm the actual number, it seems that most of the rebels were illiterate. According to the confessions, only a small number of the rebels could read during the rebellions. Therefore, the other rebels had to rely on those who could read to help them understand the government's posters (C1[6] in BLJZL; Gaustad, 1994; Lona, 2004; Naquin, 1976).

The ethnicity of the rebels in the middle Qing rebellions was such that the participants were mostly Han people, although a large number of ethnic minorities might also be included. This especially applies to the White Lotus rebellions. The White Lotus rebels set up many of their bases in the area inhabited by many Tujia people, a local ethnic minority in the mountainous areas (Piao, 1983). Given that the rebels continued to recruit or force people around them to join their rebellious cause, it is likely that there were many rebels of this ethnicity.

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[6] This is an example of citing sources. The label "BLJZL" is the acronym of the archives document "bailianjiaoziliao", the Chinese pronunciation of "Materials of the White Lotus Rebellion in Five Provinces in the Mid-Qing Dynasty"; meanwhile, C1 refer to the first confessions, which are listed in the dedicated section.

In the archival documents of the middle Qing rebellions, especially in the confessions of the rebels with diverse backgrounds in the White Lotus rebellion and the Eight Trigrams rebellion, it can be seen that rebels occupying different organisational statuses in their secret society were mobilised to participate by means of different strategies. To some extent, these strategies reflected the motivation underpinning their participation in this rebellion. Some people with high-organisational status participated because they were told that the *klapa* was coming; only by following the true leader could they avoid the current disaster and enter a new world. Others were told that the rebels would build a new imperial dynasty and that they would receive benefits or even an official post, a prospect that would have been far out of reach for people who had not received a Confucianist education. Many people with low-organisational status were told that the other people around had rebelled, and so they should also join in the efforts. In addition, many people joined because of their relationship with family or friends or because they were told that they were of adverse interest to the government. These individuals would likely have believed that if they did not rebel, they would eventually be killed by the government. The confessions also highlight several other sources of motivation for mobilisation, although these are less prominent. Because of the large number of confessions within this body of text, this pattern of the rebels of different statuses being mobilised by different ideas is very clear in the data relating to the White Lotus rebellion and the Eight Trigrams rebellion.

However, further enquiry into the processes of the ideational change of the White Lotus rebellion shows that the religious element decreased significantly in the texts of rebels' communications in the first to the second years after the outbreak of the White Lotus uprising, even when the rebels still enjoyed certain some military advantages over the government's army. Furthermore, it is also clear that the true power of the heterodox religion shifted from the religious leaders who led the sects to the other leaders who were less involved in religious affairs before the start of the rebellions. Similar processes can also be seen for the Wang Lun rebellion and the Eight Trigrams rebellion, although these processes of ideational change are less clear than in the White Lotus rebellion. This is because these two rebellions lasted for only a short time,

forestalling ideational changes.

These findings are consistent with what is known about other rebellions in premodern China. One of the most significant cases is the Red Scarf Army rebellion (1351-1366) at the end of the Yuan dynasty. During this rebellion, the power of the rebels' army shifted from the religious leader Han Ling'er, also known as the "Small Luminous King[7]" to the more secular leader of Zhu Yuanzhang, who became the first emperor of the Ming dynasty[8] (1368-1644). Several scholars (e.g., Chan, 1969; Goldstone, 1991b; Wakeman, 1977) have questioned why the rebels in the heterodox religious rebellions abandoned their religious ideas notwithstanding that these religions would have given rise to a millenarian theocratic regime if adopted to their logical conclusions. In the view of some of these scholars (Chan, 1969; Chesneaux, 1973; Skocpol, 1979), one reason why China's rebellions did not result in revolutionary changes to their societies relates to the structure of late imperial China's state and society, in which the state controlled the Confucianist-educated gentry and the gentry controlled the peasants. In such a situation, the rebels would have had to rely on the gentry to rule. They would therefore have needed to engage in a certain level of compromise on ideational matters. From the ideational point of view, some scholars (Chan, 1969; Goldstone, 1991b; Miyazaki, 1981; Wakeman, 1977; Yang, 1961) argue that there is a historical consciousness of the cyclical change of dynasties among the Chinese in the imperial era. The millenarian believers would have considered that the restoration of the previous dynasty after the rebellion would have ultimately been a realisation of this cyclical change. Furthermore, the rebels would also have considered political stability and the restoration of the worldly order as having the potential to fulfil their

[7] I translate directly according to the Chinese characters. However, the actual meaning of this name is "Luminous King, the second".

[8] There were no completely secular leaders in imperial China, but Zhu Yuanzhang was more secular than Han Ling'er in terms of his political ideas (e.g., Yuan History (YS), Ming History (MS)). Owing to constraints relating to space, their stories are not described in detail here.

beliefs. This would have resulted in the belief that restoring the original political system would have been a heavenly mandate (Regarding the Chinese thinking on how the Heavens choose the rulers, see e.g., Perry, 2002; Zhao, 2009). Although such arguments are conceptually sound, they focus primarily on the later periods of the rebellions, when the regimes would have been built. The sources considered for this study, however, show that the heterodox religious ideas had already started to decrease by the early period of the rebellions, which indicates that additional research is required to explain the patterns that can be seen for this period (see, e.g., C2 in NMYDL; C3 in BLJZL).

The social context and ideas of the Taiping rebellion

As discussed above, the middle Qing rebellions are associated with a common pattern, with texts and communications from the early period of the rebellions showing that heterodox religious ideas decreased. However, the Taiping rebellion in the later Qing dynasty demonstrated a reversal of this trend.

The Taiping rebellion, the first element of which means “Great Peace” in Chinese, is considered the most significant rebellion in Qing China. The Taiping’s leaders began to organise this rebellion in 1844. During this time (i.e., after the First Opium War, lasting from 1840 to 1842), China’s economy faced greater challenges. Although the Qing dynasty briefly restored the state’s power and legitimacy after the White Lotus rebellion by taking certain measures, such as combatting official corruption, the First Opium War between China and Britain gave rise to significant challenges with respect to the state’s power and its legitimacy. Many people attributed the failure of the First Opium War to the weakness of the Qing government rather than to problems rooted in modern science, technology and institutions. They believed that a large-scale war was needed to defeat the “Western barbarians” and drive them out of China. The presence of such sentiments also posed a challenge to the Qing government (Mao, 2005).

Compared to the rebels in the middle Qing rebellions, those in the Taiping rebellion faced greater economic crises. After the 1820s, the formerly

prosperous Qing dynasty fell into decline as silver began to flow out from the country due to the growing opium trade. This situation became more severe after the First Opium War. The rise in silver prices devalued copper money, increasing the burden of taxation on small landlords and causing many small landowners to lose their property. Economic issues also led to an increase in the tax burden on ordinary people, making their lives more difficult. As a survival strategy in which the allocation of resources per person was decreasing, some people became social bandits by joining secret societies such as the Triads or participating in the armed local militias that had lost the support of the government (Rowe, 2009).

It was at this point that the main Taiping leader of Hong Xiuquan was exposed to Christian ideas from a Christian missionary pamphlet, "*Good Words exhorting the Age*" (Liang, 1965). Inspired by the story in this pamphlet, he claimed that he was the brother of Jesus and subsequently founded the "God Worship" religion. Hong Xiuquan also visited a church in Hong Kong, staying there for a period of just under three months. However, notwithstanding his efforts, it seems that he was not able to gain more comprehensive information on Christianity (see, discussions of Jen, 1977). The main doctrine of the religion that he created combined his understanding of Christianity and some content from Confucianism and the Chinese heterodox religions, and the God Worship religion was viewed as a heterodox religion by both the government and Confucianist academics.

The Taiping rebels believed that God was universal not only in the western world but also in the east. However, in the eastern world, especially China, the name of God had been hidden by the given ruler since the Qin (221 B.C.-207 B.C.) and Western Han (202 B.C. - 8 A.D.) dynasties. The Taiping rebels believed that God had sent Hong Xiuquan to restore the belief of the Chinese people. Influenced by Christian ideas as he understood them, Hong Xiuquan argued that worshipping the one true God meant that, in turn, other gods could not be worshipped. Meanwhile, to restore the worship of God, the God Worship religion also urged followers to change their everyday life such that they engaged in certain practices, customs and relationships and abstained from

others in a way that Hong claimed was approved by God. It was argued by the Taiping rebels within the God Worship religion that people could have harmonious and prosperous lives by following such doctrines. These ideas were developed further after the rebellion began in 1851, with the rebels claiming that they needed to restore belief in God by moving against the Chinese emperor. The Taiping rebels asserted that only through fighting for their beliefs could they enter Heaven in the afterlife. However, they also claimed that a 'small Heaven' could be built in the current life. The Taiping rebels described this small Heaven as a place of peace, equality and prosperity in which everyone there would follow the correct way of organising their everyday life. Furthermore, compared to the Middle Qing rebellions, the ideas of the Taiping rebellion demonstrate a more significant tendency towards the promotion of equality. However, it is notable that, while the Taiping rebels sought to promote a greater level of equality among the people of their regime, the leaders actually had more privilege than those of the Qing court (see, e.g., C4 in LXC; C5 in XJQSSL) (Discussion of the ideas of the Taiping rebellion can be found in, e.g., Jen, 1973; Luo, 2013; Reilly, 2004; Rowe, 2009; Shih, 1967).

The processes of ideational changes in the Taiping rebellion

The society of the God Worship religion, also known as the God Worship society, was initially formed in Guangxi province of China. Guangxi province has many mountainous areas inhabited by Hakkas, and most of the initial members of the rebellion were Hakkas. The Hakka groups were considered as Han people who had migrated from the northern area to the southern provinces of China. These people had developed their own culture in a way that meant it was different from those who had originally lived in these local areas. Because of certain geographical factors and the nature of their culture, the Hakka people rarely received Confucian education or, indeed, any other kinds of education from the outside world. At the same time, Christianity was not well known in most rural areas of China, especially locations where the Hakka participants of the rebellions were living. Although the missionaries organised several secret societies to preach, they had not absorbed believers in Guangxi before 1848

(Standaert, 2001; Kilcourse, 2016). After the First Opium War, the expats were allowed to operate at trade ports and to openly preach in China. Even so, these expats were not able to enter the city of Guangzhou, a trading port closest to the site of the Taiping rebellion, until 1850. Although foreign missionaries had taught some new Chinese missionaries in Hong Kong, it was until 1848 that these Chinese missionaries could enter the Guangxi province and build their stations in Guangxi.

Hong Xiuquan and his friends absorbed many believers from the Hakka people from Guangxi province before the Chinese missionaries entered. Furthermore, after their society became larger, they also absorbed people from other ethnic groups, including the Han people. At this time, the set of Taiping rebels consisted of people from different ethnicities and the occupations of these individuals were similarly diverse, including charcoal-burner workers, farmers and boatmen, soldiers, merchants and Taoists. There were also officials, and even foreigners who joined the rebellion. However, most such individuals participated in the rebellion after the Taiping rebels had established a stable regime (i.e., after 1853). In general, having regard to the time and location of the Taiping rebellion, the Taiping's rebels were very diverse, indeed, they were possibly more diverse than those who participated in the middle Qing rebellions.

With this expansion of power, the tensions between the God Worship society and the Qing government also deepened, which led to the leaders' decision to oppose the Qing dynasty in 1851. The God Worship society then adopted a position as a rebellious army. The rebels named their regime "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" and engaging in a continuous period of warfare with the Qing armies. The rebels initially achieved military success and were able to build up a stable regime in Southern China. However, internal conflict and the local militia weakened the force of the Taiping, following which it was ultimately suppressed (see e.g., Jen, 1946; Luo, 2013; Mao, 1991; Michael, 1971; Reilly, 2004; Spence, 1997).

Although there is less data available that bear on the question of why the rebels of the Taiping participated in this rebellion, it is still clear from the content of the sources that the reasons for the Taiping rebels' participation are broadly similar

to those relevant to the middle Qing rebellions. Many people, especially those of high-organisational status, participated in the rebellion because they sought a position as an official or believed in the Taiping's religion. Individuals of low-organisational status mostly participated because they were coerced by the rebellious organisation, followed their families or were threatened with government investigations.

However, the content of the archival materials relating to the Taiping rebellion demonstrates that discussions of Christian-derived heterodox religious ideas increased in the texts and oral statements at the early stage of the rebellion. The other evidence of rebels' activities also shows that many rebels became more devout believers, potentially providing space for Taiping's leaders to develop these Christian-derived religious ideas further and use them to expand their power. During the later period of the rebellion, the Christian-derived ideas were sufficiently powerful as to lead the rebels to carry out large-scale social transformation in the region they ruled. For example, they altered the names and structure of certain parts of their official system; they confiscated private property and deposited it in the state treasury to serve God and God's Taiping agents; they also encouraged women to leave family home and even seek official posts. These kinds of changes are not commonly associated with historical rebellious regimes in China. However, this transformation resulted in the society of the Taiping rebels being very different from the society of the Qing dynasty and the other imperial dynasties that accepted Confucianism as their mainstream ideology. This reveals that the ideational change processes and outcomes of the Taiping rebellion were very different from previous rebellions.

Why were the trajectory of ideational change and the outcomes of the Taiping rebellion different from the middle Qing rebellions? Some scholars (e.g., Boardman, 1952; Luo, 2013) consider that foreign influences, including the soldiers and missionaries from the European and American countries, had changed the overall social context of the movements. More specifically, the leaders of the Taiping absorbed many ideas from the missionaries or other foreigners. This change in the ideological environment led to their Christian-derived version of heterodox religious ideas showing a different pattern of

change from other heterodox religious ideas in premodern Chinese rebellions.

This explanation sheds light on the reason for the maintenance of Taiping's heterodox religious ideas. The Second Opium War (1856-1860) shocked Chinese society, and these effects were compounded by the interaction between the Taiping's leaders and missionaries during the later period of the Taiping rebellion, which influenced the rebellion's overall ideas and practices at that time (see e.g., Mao, 1991; Xia, 1992, 2006; Wong, 1998).

However, the Taiping's leaders lacked significant information on European and American thought at the early ages of the Taiping rebellion (from around 1846 to 1853). Most of Hong Xiuquan's knowledge of the Christian was obtained from the Christian missionary pamphlet previously discussed and possible interactions between a few Taiping leaders and missionaries in Hong Kong. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that Hong and other important leaders involved in the making of ideas had obtained knowledge of Christianity from elsewhere prior to the rebellion. Hong Xiuquan spent most of his life in Guangxi Province before visiting Guangdong Province and engaging in interactions with the missionaries. However, although there were still considerable numbers of Christian believers in China, most were in Guangdong, Fujian, Sichuan, Zhili and Jiangsu provinces. There seem to be no records of any Christian activities in Guangxi Province. Therefore, even if Hong had had knowledge of Christianity before this point, he would not have had much (Standaert, 2001).

In addition, the basic social context of the areas in which the Taiping rebellion arose does not appear to have been different from those in which the other premodern rebellions considered in this study occurred. It is not likely that most of the initial participants had much knowledge of people from European and American countries nor about the form of Christianity they believed in before Hong Xiuquan and his assistants entered the area they lived (Jen, 1973).

Some scholars (Jen, 1946; Kuhn, 1970; Spence, 1997; Tang, 2011; Zhang, 2016) argue that the Taiping rebellion arose in areas with ethnic conflicts between the Hakka people and local Han people as well as those with small

military conflicts between the local people and bandits. Compared with the Han people, who had been influenced by traditional Confucianism for a long time, the Hakka people that lived in the mountainous areas received less Confucian education. The ethnic minorities may therefore have been more open to new religions not associated with traditional Chinese Confucianism. At the same time, this ethnic minority often engaged in conflicts with other local residents (generally those of Han and Miao descent), local militias and bandits. Such patterns would have made them more willing to integrate into the group based on the God Worship religion, which would have shaped the collective identity of rebel groups.

This argument constitutes a reasonable explanation for why the collective identity among the Taiping rebels could be achieved during the early period of the rebellions. However, additional work may be needed to shed light on why this collective identity was closely related to the new Christian-derived ideas. This, in turn, gives rise to the question of why the Christian-derived ideas did not disappear in the manner of traditional heterodox religious ideas in the middle Qing rebellions. It is evident that rebellions involving large groups of ethnic minorities frequently occurred throughout Qing history. However, these rebellions were usually organised around their own religions (e.g., the Hui rebellions, the rebellions in the Qing dynasty that were organised based on the Hui Muslims), or the heterodox religions involved in the middle Qing rebellions. For example, there were the Miao rebellions, organised by the ethnic Miao, in which some heterodox religious elements played a part (see Sutton, 2019; the relevant information in JBD and NMYDL). The other premodern rebellions that happened during the Taiping rebellion also involved conflicts with other groups, such as local militias. However, the heterodox religious elements of these rebellions did not last long as the Taiping rebellion. This gives rise to another question: why did the Taiping rebellion, unlike the other rebellions, feature substantial religious innovation? It is clear that further explanation is required to address this.

Research questions

Given the need to investigate the reasons for the different ideational processes and outcomes between the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion, one strategy is to ask how the different rebel groups with different goals were able to reach a consensus, especially at the early stage. Several scholars have discussed how people have achieved consensus regarding their ideas and purposes within the revolution and social movements (e.g., Brown, 1993; Gould, 1995; Markoff and Shapiro, 1985; Perry, 2002, 2012; Polletta and Jasper, 2001; Fominaya, 2010b). However, much of this discussion has centred on the coherence of elites, overlooking the significance of subaltern individuals, who constituted the majority of participants in the rebellions being investigated here. As this study will demonstrate, the subaltern individuals involved in these rebellions had their own political consciousness, albeit largely shaped by pre-existing cultural contexts.

Since the initial rebellious organisations were not well organised, it would have been difficult for a leader or a small group of leaders to make their own decision in a way that was not influenced by the desires of the other leaders and the rebellious groups (Please also refer to the analysis of general literature on social movements and revolutions, e.g., Tilly, 1978). Furthermore, as I have indicated, during the early period of the rebellions, the rebels did not need to contemplate, to a significant extent, the methods of obtaining support from the local gentry and officials outside the rebellion. This is because a person who had passed the provincial imperial examination rarely participated in a rebellion before a stable regime could be built..

Therefore, within the context of a rebellion, a goal would become a general goal of the uprising when the rebels involved achieved a certain level of consensus among their initial participants who mostly came from subaltern society.. Such a consensus could also bind the groups together so that they could minimise infighting and unite behind a common cause. This makes clear the need to investigate how the rebels could achieve consensus. Because of this, I first examine how the rebels achieved consensus among groups of participants with different goals. This can be done by studying various strategies to mobilise at

the beginning of the respective rebellions. The strategies reflected various motives behind their participation and ideas about the goal that the rebels had for their movement. Based on this kind of consideration, I analyse the content of rebellious ideas and the interaction between rebels with different organisational statuses who had different rebellious ideas.

To reflect these aims, I propose the following research questions:

How did the different foci of the heterodox religious ideas influence whether the rebels with different organisational statuses were able to reach a consensus with respect to these ideas? Furthermore, how did the consensuses that were reached lead to the different ideational processes and outcomes of the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion?

These broader questions can be broken down as follows:

1. What kinds of patterns of rebellious ideas, justifying the reasons and goals for rebellions, were presented in the two types of rebellions investigated?

2. How did the different foci of the content regarding heterodox religious ideas in the two types of rebellions - charismatic religious leadership and everyday life - and their underlying logic in interpreting the rebellions, influence the forging of consensus among rebels who had varied understandings of the goals of these rebellions across different organisational statuses?

3. How did the consensus or fragmentation among the rebels with respect to the heterodox religious ideas lead to the different ideational processes and outcomes witnessed for these rebellions?

Enquiry into the ideas underpinning the rebellions

To answer these questions, this study considers data obtained through analysis of archival sources and previous studies. As mentioned, one of the reasons that

rebels of different statuses would have had different motives for participating in the different uprisings relates to the resources that they would have had access to. Rebels with higher levels of organisational status can generally be expected to have had more resources. If this is the case, then it is also reasonable to think that they would have expected greater benefits from participating in the movements. The leaders of the movements would have also been more willing to allocate more resources that they considered valuable – resources that would have been highly sought after but difficult to access – to mobilise people with greater organisational status.

However, it is possible that this line of reasoning might simply not apply to heterodox religious ideas. This is because what the heterodox religious ideas promised was not a limited resource; rather, they presented the opportunity to be protected against the *klapa* and to enjoy the millenarian world that would follow it. However, only some people would participate in the rebellion because of this type of idea when they joined, and these people are unlikely to have been rebels with lower organisational status. This pattern is especially significant in the middle Qing rebellions considered. Furthermore, as previously stated, the heterodox religious ideas also quickly disappeared in the communications and texts relating to the movements of the middle Qing dynasty.

To explain this pattern in the relevant heterodox religious ideas, I consider the details of the content and logic of these ideas as they relate to both the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion. I argue that the heterodox religious ideas of the rebels and potential participants of the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion share both similarities and differences. One of the core differences is the focus of the content of these ideas. With respect to the middle Qing rebellions, the heterodox religious ideas centred around the religious leaders, presenting them as having certain charismatic characteristics. This echoes the findings of Ter Haar (1998, 2019) on the ideas of the premodern Chinese rebellions. Ter Haar suggests that the leaders were attached to the "messianic demonological paradigm." Although the messianic demonological paradigm has different versions, common to all of these is the idea that a

destined leader would arise assisted by divine armies. This destined leader could lead people to end the demonological disasters that (usually) accompanied the end of time as commonly conceived. This paradigm is the core of the heterodox religion of many secret religious societies of Qing China. Furthermore, as suggested by Ter Haar, it is likely that this paradigm also played a crucial role in the mobilisation and organisation of the rebellions.

However, despite their power, the heterodox religious ideas in the middle Qing rebellions also had their limitations. These religious ideas relied heavily on the charismatic leaders to mobilise the rebels and convince them that these leaders could help them make the millenarian world a reality. This vision of the millenarian world would have been characterised by equality and prosperity among religious believers. However, it would also have signified the power of the religions and the authority of the religious leaders. In other words, it would have been perceived that only through the theocracy and the perceived superhuman power of the religious leaders could the people avoid disasters, and enjoy equality and prosperity in the new world. Such an outlook would have contradicted the imperial bureaucratic order of imperial China.

These heterodox religious ideas would have been less convincing in the case of rebels of high organisational status who were very close to the leaders. Because such individuals would have had a high degree of access to the religious leaders, they would have known that these charismatic leaders were not capable of the miraculous acts that they claimed they were. This notwithstanding, such individuals would have been unlikely to leave the religious sects or the rebellious armies as the movements were not restricted to merely religious goals. Other goals would have also exerted a degree of influence, such as building an imperial dynasty.

Meanwhile, these heterodox religious ideas would also have been challenging to understand for many rebels of low organisational status. As previously indicated, the messages of the religious leaders were usually ambiguous or vague. People of the low organisational status usually lived far from, and were not trusted by, the centre of the power in the rebellions. The religious messages were always taught by word of mouth on an individual level in the secret society

of heterodox religions (see my later discussion and that by, e.g., Gaustad, 1994; Naquin, 1976, 1981). Thus, the lower-status rebels further away from the centre would have had insufficient opportunity to comprehend the mysterious and vague messages taught by the religious groups. They are also less likely to perceive a significant change that the rebel leaders might have promised in the society around them, both before the rebellions and after. Some rebels who believed in these ideas might have even lost faith in these religious ideas during the rebellion if they found evidence that the religious leaders did not actually have superhuman powers. With insufficient support from the rebels, the rebellious groups would have turned to more secular ideas in building a new dynasty and excluding certain religious ideas.

Compared to the religious messages in the middle Qing rebellions, the Christian-derived heterodox religious ideas of the Taiping rebellion, which emphasised the importance of new ways of organising everyday life, were more likely to have been understood and accepted by rebels of all statuses. The ideas of transforming everyday life were less abstract and more embedded in daily practice and would have thus been easier for a wider range of rebels to understand. Furthermore, such matters would have been easy to accept in the case of the rebels who participated for different purposes. Changing the ways of organising everyday life did not closely relate to whether the rebellions pursued religious goals or secular goals, as even those pursuing secular goals would have also been open to changing their lives. However, the rebels would have been able to build a clearer understanding of the religion through everyday life and would also have been more likely to support the religious authorities as a result. Based on this, I suggest that the experience of new ways of organising everyday life was one of the reasons that the rebels of different organisational statuses were able to achieve a consensus on a new set of ideas in the Taiping rebellion.

The consensus of the rebels in the premodern movements

As Perry (2012) suggests in her study on modern Chinese social movements,

the initial communist movements of China succeeded because their ideas were capable of uniting people from different strata of society under a common ideology. The same also applies to certain later social movements. However, before the organisation of a movement can try to mobilise potential participants of different social statuses outside this group, the members have to determine what the people within the organisation of the rebellion want to achieve.

Scholars focusing on European cases, such as the French Revolution or the formation of the English working classes, have engaged in extensive studies of how consensus and coherence can be achieved in revolutionary movements (e.g., Brown, 1993; Davies, 2012; Dunn, 1998; Furet, 1981; Hall, 2000; Lawson, 2015, 2016, 2019; Markoff and Shapiro, 1985). A high level of discussion has also arisen regarding certain Chinese cases (e.g., Perry, 2002; Stern, 1979; Su, 2011). In both the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion, the sets of rebels included diverse ranges of people with different occupations and their own reasons for participating. This is similar to what has been observed in Europe, such as the French Revolution in 1789 (e.g., Brown, 1993; Markoff and Shapiro, 1985). However, ideas from the Enlightenment and the European and American revolutions did not spread to China until much later in the Taiping rebellion period. Even the rebels' understanding of Christianity was still poor in the early period of the rebellion. This context is, therefore, different from the French Revolution, in which large numbers of people were influenced by or engaged with new ideas, such as the notion that sovereignty belonged to the people.

However, my findings suggest that rebellious organisations could create consensus and promote coherence around new ideas among not only the political elites but also the usual participants of the movements, notwithstanding that China was not influenced to any notable extent by the new changes occurring in the European and American countries after the enlightenment movements and industrial revolutions. One of the key factors that determined whether a consensus could be created, at least in the early period of the rebellions, was the content of these new ideas. The religious ideas of the middle Qing rebellions did create a certain kind of collective identity, and the rebels

recognised that they came from the same religious group (see e.g., C6 in BLJZL; C7, C8 in NMYDL. Also see e.g., Blythe, 1969; Ter Haar, 1998, 2019). However, as a result of the Chinese development of certain kinds of traditional collective imagination of leaders, these cultural contexts and people's imaginations of the charismatic leaders limited the legitimacy - the acceptance of the authority - of these leaders. Given the leaders at the centre of the content of heterodox religious ideas, this state of imagination would have further prevented the rebels from coming to a consensus on the heterodox religious ideas and a new vision of the future. Therefore, the rebels' collective identity only led them towards a more secular goal of building a new imperial dynasty rather than building the millenarian religious world promised by their religious leaders. By contrast, the religious texts focusing on the everyday life promoted by the Taiping movement helped the rebels maintain the new ideas at the early period of the rebellion, building a bridge that connected different groups and helping them to forge a consensus regarding these new religious ideas. The consensus contributed to the later social transformation project conducted by the Taiping in the region they ruled. And it was after they built a relatively stable regime that the rebels began to face greater challenges from the local gentries and had to make more compromises with the Confucian tradition. This is a situation that previous scholars (Chan, 1969; Chesneaux, 1973; Skocpol, 1979) suggest prevented the other premodern rebellions from having revolutionary outcomes. This kind of discussion regarding the consensus among the rebels in these two types of rebellions provides a high degree of historical insight into the outcomes of the middle Qing dynasty and other rebellions. It also sheds light on the mechanisms of the rebellions and revolutions regarding the roles that charismatic leadership and everyday life played. It also shows how the European and American ideologies would have been able to influence the ideational processes in the situation in which the colonists had arrived but before the people realised that their lives were about to be transformed so significantly.

Contingency, relationship, and ideas

Before commencing further analysis, there is a need to first justify some of the

choices made in the analysis presented here, together with its limitations.

There are many other cases of historical Chinese rebellions in the period under study that are not considered in any great depth here. While these cases may indeed be regarded as relevant to the mechanisms of ideational change in the middle Qing and even the Taiping cases, the findings reported here cannot be straightforwardly applied to the other premodern Chinese religious rebellions, especially those that occurred before the Qing dynasty, without further examination. As Ter Haar (1992) notes, the heterodox culture of Chinese society has changed drastically over time. For example, the culture associated with the Qing dynasty was different from that of the culture associated with the Yuan dynasty. Even in the Qing dynasty, as Ter Haar (1998, 2019) and Gaustad (1994, 2000) argue, Buddhists also engaged in discussions regarding lifestyle. Indeed, these developments influenced some of the sects that had a loose connection with those of the rebels. However, these concepts rarely appeared within the rebellions of the middle Qing era that Ter Haar and Gaustad discuss. They also did not significantly influence the cases I investigate here.

The point that the religions focused on the people's everyday life in the middle Qing era means there is some contingency in the ideational processes of these movements. Did any religious leaders also try to incorporate these Buddhist traditions into the rebellions? Alternatively, was there some factor that meant that the rebels did not want to incorporate Buddhist ideas into the rebellions? Providing answers to such questions will necessitate further study.

Furthermore, some recent scholarship (Go and Lawson, 2017; Lawson, 2016, 2019; Zhang, 2016) has considered how the dynamic interaction of different forces can influence the start, process and outcome of revolutions. For these scholars, it is the changing relations of different forces that have constrained and sustained the subsequent historical processes of revolutions and other massive social movements. The influence of the consideration of the interaction of various forces will also be evident in the analysis of cases offered here. This

analysis shows that the heterodox religious ideas were not simply abandoned by the rebels, collapsing in the middle Qing rebellions; rather, the collapse of the religious ideas in the rebellions was also caused by the interactions between different people within each rebellion. Furthermore, the other ideas behind the rebellions may also have been heavily influenced by the interactions within the rebel groups. It is possible that these kinds of intra-movement interactions had brought some other factors, which have not been covered in this thesis, that may influence the rebellions, especially the rebellions long before the Qing dynasty, in which the social contexts were very different from that of the Qing era.

The discussions of the interaction are also related to the use of the word “ideas” here. In this study, my focus is on the rebels’ ideas rather than their rhetoric, although my investigation of rebels’ ideas is still based on an enquiry into the rebels’ texts and communications. One of the reasons is that this study considers not only the ideas within the texts and oral communication but also the interactions between people who might have held a certain type of idea or at least could have potentially benefitted from such ideas.

However, there is another important reason relating to the nature of producing these texts and oral communications. The rebel leaders looked to use language with the specific aim of mobilising the rebels. It would have been hard for the leaders to participate directly in the mobilisation and later ideational processes, and this would have been due to the difficulty experienced by the rebels in terms of the transfer of information and government repression in the premodern era, as I indicated in the previous sections. As a result of this situation, the leaders themselves could only provide a general context to their messengers. The language that they used was constrained by the larger ideational system, which was itself constrained by the cultural context.

Although the rebels could draw certain repertoires from their cultural context during the language exchange within the mobilisation process, it would have ultimately been their understanding of the whole ideas that affected whether they would subscribe to such ideas. In some cases, the rebels used vague language or only referred to certain elements of the ideas, but this could be

connected to a larger ideational system that only people who were aware of its workings could understand. For these reasons, it is not possible to investigate the rhetoric in isolation. Instead, it is more reasonable to examine the different ideation indicated by the rhetoric that the rebels may affiliate to.

Outline of chapters

Following this introduction, Chapter Two presents the prior research on culture's impact on contentious politics, and how such impact affected the Qing rebellions. Additionally, it explores two ideas that are central to the thesis presented here: everyday life and charismatic leadership. Firstly, the chapter discusses the relevant literature on how culture and ideas could influence social movements and revolutions, particularly in terms of mobilising participants and establishing solidarity among them. The chapter then examines the key debates surrounding why these Chinese rebellions failed to bring about revolutionary changes to the old imperial system. It also discusses why the Taiping rebellion could bring some revolutionary changes. Investigating the ideas of the participants in these rebellions could aid our comprehension of these movements. Finally, the chapter delves into sociological theories regarding everyday life and charismatic leadership. These concepts are fundamental to the rationale behind the ideas present in the White Lotus rebellion and Taiping rebellion, which helps to elucidate the patterns identified in the case studies.

Chapter Three addresses how I chose and accessed the research sources and explains the methodologies utilised in reading and analysing the archival sources. The archival reading method used in this study was informed by the "archival turn" relating to the analysis of archival data (see e.g., De Certeau, 1988a; Stoler, 2002). These communications typically contain the ideas of rebels with respect to the purpose of the rebellions and their reasons for participating. The sources consulted here are mostly the confessions of rebels and the reports of ministers who suppressed the uprisings. Applying the methodology to the specific archival documents, I read the archival documents

from three perspectives, considering the texts themselves, their contexts and inter-text comparison of the documents, to better understand why particular oral statements were recorded and what oral statements may not have been recorded but were nevertheless made. In the conclusion section, I briefly introduce the processes of analysis that are stated in the next three chapters. This includes considering how different rebels might have had different motives to explain the processes and outcomes of the rebellions, and how the nature of the texts and oral statements made during the rebellions changed. I also consider interaction and competition between the groups and the influence of ideas on them. After that, I determine whether these ideas influenced the processes as well as the outcomes of these rebellions.

Chapter Four uses a basic quantitative analysis to reveal an association between rebels' organisational statuses and most of their ideas concerning the aims of participating in the rebellions. I argue that this association is due to the rebels allocating the most valuable resources that they had in exchange for the resources that they required the most. Similarly, potential participants with higher-organisational status would likely also have expected more benefits from participating in the rebellions.

However, I also argue that this logic regarding resource exchange cannot be straightforwardly applied in the case of people who participated in the rebellions out of an identification with heterodox religious ideas; rather, whether the rebels participated in the rebellions and followed the heterodox religious ideas is more appropriately analysed in terms of the rebels' social and physical distance from their leaders. Across all three middle Qing rebellions, the heterodox religious ideas had their limitations. The extent to which these religious ideas had influence largely depended on the potential rebels' perception of the charismatic leaders' supernatural abilities and their ability to help them avoid the *klapa* and usher in and enter the millenarian world. I argue that this phenomenon is best attributed to people's image of the leaders. A true charismatic leader in the Chinese premodern religious rebellions had to have certain specific characteristics to make followers believe that he or she was an individual they could support.

Within this context, people who were close to the leaders would have often not believed in their leaders' charismatic attributes or religious ideas because their experiences would have contradicted these. Those who were too far away from the leaders would not have been able to obtain sufficient information about the messages of the leaders due to the constrain of social and cultural context. Therefore, the heterodox religious ideas would also have been difficult to understand in the case of these rebels. Without substantial support from the rebels, the rebellious ideas would have been liable to be displaced by more secular ideas regarding the building of a new dynasty.

Based on this analysis, I outline a more general pattern of charismatic leadership in massive religious social movements within premodern China. While some studies on the role of charismatic leaders within new religious movements (e.g., Ownby, 1995, 1996; Rozell and David, 2003; Ter Haar, 1998, 2006; and many others besides) show that the people close to the charismatic leaders are likely to be more willing to believe in them, the pattern witnessed for the heterodox religious leaders in China's premodern rebellions is different. The role of the charismatic leaders may also be different from the understanding of the premodern political leaders (Bloch, 2015; Goldstein, 2017; Houle and Louis, 1988; Kantorowicz, 1957; Weber, 2019). I suggest that this may be attributable to the content of Chinese heterodox religions. I also suggest that the nature of a very large-scale social movement mobilisation in the premodern Qing era is very different to what is encountered in the current world. Therefore, we need to carefully consider the social and cultural context when investigating concepts of leadership, ideas and authority in the study of such rebellions. Moreover, although the social context has changed, some of the remaining images of the charismatic leaders in these uprisings may still affect modern eastern Asian society.

In Chapter Five, I focus on the three middle Qing rebellions. Examining and comparing the content of texts and oral communications, I argue that the heterodox religious ideas gradually decreased in frequency over time in the course of these rebellions. I also explain this shift in terms of the role of charismatic leaders in these uprisings. By analysing the interactions within rebel

organisations, I submit that there was likely competition between the religious believers and more secular rebel groups whose members did not believe or had started to doubt the veracity of the heterodox religious claims that were made. I also submit that there would have been insufficient levels of support from the rebels across the organisational statuses to make it possible to reach a consensus on the relevant heterodox religious ideas. Furthermore, some people who believed in these religious ideas would have been unable to compete with those who believed in other ideas. This situation may have further prevented the religious groups and their leaders from being able to achieve a consensus on heterodox religious ideas and heterodox religious goals. I argue that it was for this reason that the heterodox religious ideas gradually disappeared from the texts and that the overall ideas of the rebellion became closer and closer to more secular ideas regarding building a new dynasty based on the old model.

Chapter Six discusses the changing ideas in the texts and oral statements of the Taiping rebellion, which are markedly different from those made in previous Qing rebellions. I emphasise the importance of heterodox Christian-derived ideas in this rebellion. My analysis of the rebels' texts reveals that the focus of these ideas related not to charismatic leaders and the powers they claimed to have but rather to the construction of new ways of organising life for the people. These changes in everyday life would not have directly set a political purpose for the rebellion and would have been acceptable to people with a range of different political purposes. These ideas would also have been easy to communicate and understand. The communications would therefore have served both a vehicle for the transmission of ideas and a way of building a consensus that could be accepted by rebels with different political purposes. Furthermore, changing their everyday life would have meant that the rebels could feel the changes around them much more obviously. They would have been able to perceive this as some kind of fulfilment of the millenarian world that the religious leaders promised, increasing the likelihood that the rebels were more willing to accept the new ideas and follow the religious leaders. The

discussions analysed also reveal certain patterns regarding how the ideas of a new order would have been settled in a movement that a majority of people did not fully understand or were reluctant to adopt to replace the old order.

Chapter Seven summarises this study. It also reflected the area that may have space to improve. It also proposes three directions that could be further explored in future research. The first is the social network of the rebellions. Since the interrogators of the Eight Trigrams rebellion have carefully investigated the relationship between the rebels in a few villages, it is possible to use these records for analysis. Second, although this study discusses how the rebels used the potential harm and suffering inflicted by the government and the rebels themselves to threaten the rebels, this is not done in great detail. Therefore, greater discussion on this topic would be helpful. Third, this study presents preliminary work regarding the claim that the focus on everyday life and charismatic leaders influenced the processes and outcomes of the rebellions, but it is also possible to conduct further analysis of these two concepts. It would also be helpful to investigate the modern social movements in China or other parts of the world that were also influenced by these two concepts in the discursive and ideational domain.

At a general level, this study investigates and explains the histories of ideational change in premodern Chinese religious rebellions by means of both new materials and new methodologies. By telling and interpreting the histories of these ideational change processes, I develop theories of the connections and coherence between groups, the ideas of the massive revolutionary social movements, and why the Chinese rebellions were unable to bring about revolutionary changes to the imperial institution of China.

Chapter 2 Reviewing literature on ideational foci, processes and outcomes in the rebellions of the Qing era

Introduction

To pave the way for the empirical analysis, this chapter reviews existing literature covering the middle Qing rebellions and Taiping rebellions. I first present an overview of how culture and ideas are analysed in the field of contentious politics. I then review the studies regarding the heterodox religious ideas in these rebellions and the explanations from the existing literature as to why the premodern Chinese rebellions did not bring about revolutionary changes. I also consider why the Taiping rebellion did give rise to certain such changes in the areas the Taiping ruled, supplementing the claims made in the existing literature. In the final section of this chapter, I delve into two key concepts, namely, charismatic leadership and everyday life, which will be employed to illuminate the ideation underlying the two types of rebellions studied here.

In the first section, a review is presented of studies of how ideas and culture shape the overall pattern of contentious politics. Some of these studies have already been referenced in the chapter one. It is also argued that the previous studies are generally elite-focused in a way that deprives them of important insights gained by considering the experience and perspectives of the subaltern people. However, the initial rebels did have a complete logic explaining the purpose of the rebellions. This would have drawn from the cultural context, although it might not always have been clear and understood by all participants. On this view, it is these logics, rather than the rhetoric that the leaders constructed, that influenced the ideational processes.

It is from these aforementioned perspectives that I examine the middle Qing rebellions. Upon reviewing the existing literature on this topic, I argue that scholars have made substantial accounts of why China failed to produce revolutionary changes, especially in later regimes that were built by the rebels (e.g., Chan, 1969; Goldstone, 1991b; Hung, 2009, 2011; Wakeman, 1977).

However, the studies on how ideas influenced the middle Qing rebellions have addressed this question by focusing on the later period of the rebellions, by which point the rebels had normally succeeded in establishing a regime, and the rebel leaders had already engaged in frequent interaction with the Confucianist elites. Therefore, a new perspective may also be required to investigate the early period of the rebellions.

Additionally, I pay particular attention to the literature on the Taiping rebellion. It is noteworthy that although the middle Qing rebellions did not achieve revolutionary results, this generalisation is not true in the case of the Taiping rebellion. the Taiping rebellion facilitated the revolutionary changes in the regime that followed. The studies of the Taiping rebellion would also benefit from the supplementary study as a means of gaining a more detailed explanation of why the ideational processes of the Taiping rebellion are properly viewed as different from the middle Qing rebellions, notwithstanding that the social context of the early Taiping rebellion was similar to that of the middle Qing rebellions. Although some scholars may attribute this to the influence of Christianity, they did not explain in detail which detailed element of Christianity influenced the rebellions.

Consequently, it is essential to include literature on the outcomes of the Taiping rebellion for comparative purposes.

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In my studies of the following chapters, I argue that there are key differences in the ideational context of the Taiping rebellion as compared with that of the middle Qing rebellions. To wit, in the middle Qing rebellions, the core ideational elements related to the construction of a charismatic leader; in the Taiping rebellion, this related to the transformation of the participants' everyday lives.

Thus, to better understand the ideational pattern outlined above, I first investigate the relevant literature on charismatic leaders. Within the context of rebellions, it is often the case that a charismatic leader can help unite

participants, which guides them in pursuing a revolutionary goal (see e.g., Spencer, 1973; Weber, 2019). Thus, drawing on this literature is beneficial for explaining the pattern of ideas argued to exist within the context of the middle Qing rebellions.

However, there is only limited research available that discusses the role of charismatic leaders in, and the influence they had on the processes of, premodern Chinese rebellions. I, therefore, review the literature on the leaders of new religions and premodern political leaders, including emperors of China and kings of Europe (Bloch, 2015; Houle and Louis, 1988; Weber, 2019). Both such types of leaders show similarities with the leaders of the premodern Chinese rebellions. For example, the kings in Europe were usually viewed as divine figures with the power to carry out great acts that ordinary individuals could not, such as curing certain illnesses with the touch of their fingers. In the middle Qing rebellions, similarly, superhuman powers were also regarded as being indicative of the sanctity of the rebellious leaders. However, as discussed in this and the following chapters, charismatic religious leaders in the premodern Chinese rebellions were also associated with distinct features seldom seen in new religious leaders or premodern political leaders elsewhere.

Given these distinct features, I argue that the religious leaders within the premodern Chinese rebellions, while similar, also demonstrated important differences from the new religious leaders and other premodern political leaders. I present an analysis of the specific pattern characterising the charismatic leadership of the premodern Chinese rebellions. This pattern also sheds light on how the wider cultural context and the long history of the heterodox religious rebellions led by charismatic leaders shaped charismatic legitimacy in these movements. This also makes it possible to compare the association of the culture and charismatic leadership of the premodern Chinese rebellions with political leaders elsewhere in the world.

With respect to everyday life in Taiping rebellions, my study shows that one of the core differences lay in that the Taiping ideas focused on creating a different way of organising everyday life, a concept introduced in the previous chapter. Scholars have conducted a lot of studies (e.g., Hunt, 1986; Thompson, 2013;

Taylor and Whittier, 1992). While there was no coherence among the rebels in the middle Qing rebellions in terms of adherence to heterodox religious ideas, matters relating to everyday life may have helped the Taiping rebels to forge a consensus around their Christian-derived heterodox religious ideas. If this is the case, then this consensus would have contributed to the sustenance of a large collective goal of revolutionary change based on the religious ideas of mass-scale premodern rebellions. This consensus would have also incorporated a large group of diverse participants in an era in which achieving mass communication was significantly harder than is the case today.

Many studies (e.g., Fantasia and Hirsch, 1995; Fominaya, 2010a; Hunt, 1986; Haenfler, 2004; Thompson, 2013) have noticed that matters such as practices, customs and symbols in people's daily lives contribute to the creation of a collective identity. It is also noted that such matters have the potential to help participants in social movements create a consensus on the revolutionary ideas in premodern rebellions, modern revolutions and social movements. My study specifically points out that the Taiping rebellion was distinct on the basis that many participants were not set against the existing imperial institutions; rather, they were in favour of them and wished to build a similar societal order, at least in the initial stages. There were also many people who would not have interacted with these Christian-derived religious ideas before. In this way, the new everyday life thus became an important way for the rebels to maintain the idea of building a new order from such a movement, although the movement consisted of conservative people who were in favour of the old order.

Culture, ideas and their influence on the contentious politics

Many studies have been conducted by historical sociologists on contentious politics. These have covered many aspects of different movements, including structural conditions and organisation and underpinning ideologies and cultural frameworks. There has also been a significant focus on having regard to all factors relevant to multiple cases as a means of gaining insight into how these

factors jointly affect the movements under consideration (see e.g., Lawson, 2016). The study presented here shares similarities with such existing studies in that there is a strong emphasis on cultural frameworks and ideologies. In this way, it continues a tradition that has formed the basis for much of this existing scholarly discussion of contentious politics.

The famous earlier scholarship from Antonio Gramsci, for example, argued that a culture is a form of hegemony. Gramsci's (1992) argument based on cultural hegemony is that the ruling class maintains its power not only through economic and political control but also through the control of ideas and values. On this view, the ruling class uses its control of the media, education and other cultural institutions to shape the beliefs and values of the working class, thereby creating a “cultural hegemony” that serves to maintain the status quo.

Thompson (2013), on the other hand, argues that class cannot be understood unless it is conceived of as a social and cultural formation. He argues that it is through the ongoing struggle of the workers with others that the working class create their culture and their class consciousness. On this view, it is these forms of consciousness that have united and mobilised workers in these social movements.

Many of the existing authors whose work was published before the 1980s paid more attention to structure in the study of social movements and revolutions. Scholars such as Tilly (2014) and Skocpol (1979) also emphasise the role of culture. However, their earlier works mainly conceptualise culture and ideology as part of the social structure or as being constrained by social structure, without much emphasis on the influence of culture and ideology on movements at a higher level.

However, the latter scholars (e.g., Baker, 1990, Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994, 1996; Rule,1988; Selbin, 2003; Sewell, 1985) mark themselves as separate in paying more attention to conscious agency, the role of ideology and culture in

forming revolutionary mobilisation, processes and purpose and objectives, contingency in the course and outcome of revolutions, and the unpredictability of the course and results of revolutions. They view culture and ideas as relatively mutable and independent factors affecting social movements and revolutions rather than as relatively stable and as being strictly limited by social structure. This includes their elaboration on leadership identity and rhetoric. As an example of a scholar working in this vein, Sewell (1985) argues that the French revolution benefited from thinking grounded in a style influenced by the radical enlightenment in its mobilisation, while also arguing that this kind of radical thinking led to the radicalised actions in the later period of the revolution.

Goldstone (1991a), meanwhile, offers a comparison of the cultural framework in the revolutions of China, the Ottoman Empire, France and Britain. He argues that after the collapse of the state, in terms of determining the vitality of the given society, it is relevant to consider not the degree of institutional change but the ideological framework embedded in this change. In China and the Ottoman Empire, the framework embedded by the state is seen to be conservative; therefore, notwithstanding that the social structure and system changed, this was insufficient as a means of achieving more concrete changes.

On this basis, the researchers argue for the need to further consider the actors' relationships and interactions. Rather than being subject to random changes, the ideology is argued to be subject to strong constraints in the form of such interactions, which are further argued to determine cultural and other kinds of changes following the movement (see e.g., Lawson, 2016, 2019; Zhang, 2016).

The present study follows this approach in ideology and culture are conceptualised as forces influencing the rebellious processes and outcomes. At the same time, a strong emphasis is placed on the claim that ideology and culture affect movement through the interaction of different agents and that the interaction of different agents also affects the form of ideas.

Before this analysis is laid out, some views from the existing literature are first reviewed. This study takes into consideration not only elites but also subaltern people. Many scholars have used the term “elite” in their discussion of contentious politics (e.g., Goldstone, 1991b; Higley and Burton, 2012; Lachmann, 1997; Sewell, 1985; Zhang, 2016; Fominaya, 2010b). Although they offer different definitions of who the elite are, their main objects of discussion tend to be those who are in positions of power and influence, such as political leaders, military officers and wealthy landowners. The cultural influence considered by scholars is also discussed from this perspective. In the discussion of consensus and coherence, the main topic is how these matters arose in respect of the elite. Although it is typical for existing accounts to note differences between the responses of the elite to the popular groups (see, e.g., Welch, 1980; Scott, this is still mostly based on the perspectives of the elite. My research, therefore, sets itself apart in including the perspectives of subaltern people. Many of my research objects considered here are not elites. Here, there are two intended referents. The first is that there were many people who did not belong to the traditional sense of the phrase “Confucianist gentry” which typically pertains to those who received a Confucianist education. In fact, many of the individuals in question would have had no contact with such education. Many of them also do not have the great wealth that landlords of the time would have had. In this vein, some important figures of the rebellions are shown to have lacked education to the point of illiteracy. The second consideration is those who are not the leaders of the rebellions or heterodox sects, being largely insignificant at the outset and frequently remaining so till the end of the rebellions. However, it is precisely in the conversations of these subaltern people that significant diversity of ideas informed by the cultural context can be found. It is shown that it is these ideas that enabled such individuals to develop their own understanding of the political world and what the rebellions should lead to. Such consciousness is also shown to have significantly influenced the

processes and the outcomes of the rebellions. Such coherence and links among the subaltern people are seldom mentioned in the existing literature on this and similar topics, especially in those focusing on Chinese cases. This contrast is clear in the point that, in studies of Chinese cases, it is typical for scholars to argue that the premodern rebellions generally relied on the gentry in terms of their organisation and that the gentries had significant power in creating or guiding the ideas of the rebellions from the outset.

Another key point that this study is different from the previous studies is about a more detailed exploration of the cultural framework. In this respect, there is continuity in previous studies, which have tended to consider the role of the cultural framework in contentious politics. For example, Goldstone (1991b) argues that China and the Ottoman Empire lacked elements of eschatology in their ideologies, resulting in a lack of innovation. Even if some marginal elites accepted the theory of eschatology, this theory could not compete with the traditional ideas of the government and other elites. Although this interpretation does shed light on the influence of culture on movement, different cultures have been associated with different interpretations of eschatology or non-eschatology. As highlighted later, eschatology in China's heretical religion has had a great influence, but the way it has emphasised the reaching of eschatology is very different from the way that European Christianity can be seen to have related to the reaching of eschatology. The characters of China's eschatology are shown to be affected by information transmission, the high-pressure governmental policies in place at the time, and even the forms of popular entertainment. Given this, it would not be appropriate to take eschatology in its simple form as the reason for China's revolutionary developments; rather, there is a need to discuss the internal logic of the relevant cultural frameworks. Although the roots of this discussion lie in existing scholars' studies on the meaning-construction processes of contentious politics, such as tool kit, framing or discursive repertoire (Snow and Benford, 1988; Steinberg,

1998; Swidler, 1986), these concepts cannot fully explain the ideas relating to cultural frameworks considered here. This is because these theories tend to view cultural context as something that social movement organisers can manipulate or draw upon. However, they seldom acknowledge the relatively stable characteristics of these cultural frameworks in explaining the movement. Drawing upon elements from the cultural context to mobilise and maintain solidarity among participants may require the inclusion of other cultural elements from the same context - this is particularly true when the organisation and leadership of the movement are not well-established. For instance, in the Chinese cultural context, the use of the *klapa* to mobilise requires people to recognise that the Heavens constantly interfere with the human world and will send messengers to trigger the *klapa* when necessary. It is in the process of the uprising, leaders can reconstruct their text and ideas gradually, consciously or unconsciously. However, the pre-existing logic from the cultural context plays a significant role, particularly in the early days of movements or when the meaning construction processes face difficulties due to state repression or social realities. Given the richness of recorded history on rebellions and the surrounding folk culture, this is especially relevant in the context of China.

It is through this angle that the Qing rebellions are considered in this study. Chinese rebellions have long been viewed as lacking in terms of revolutionary consequences. Many scholars (see my review in the next sections) have conducted analysis from perspectives grounded in culture and ideas, informing social scientific analysis of the ideas and the outcomes of the given rebellions. However, as shown in the following review, existing studies by both historians and social scientists have either not carefully considered the thinking of subaltern people or paid insufficient attention to the political understanding and logic of ideas that these people held. It is by considering these topics that my analysis demonstrates how rebels from different backgrounds could or could not reach a consensus.

This is based on a reading of the historical materials that are conducted through a new perspective. As discussed in the following sections, the findings provide the means by which to rethink the relationships between the ideas, as well as the processes and outcomes, of the Chinese rebellions. Such finding could inform contemporary understanding of how the ideas regarding charismatic leaders and everyday life influenced such large-scale contentious movements.

Why were premodern rebellions in China not revolutionary?

Chinese history is rich with rebellions and social movements. However, despite the frequent occurrence of such movements, only seldom did premodern rebellions result in significant changes to the social system and pre-existing institutions (see e.g., Skocpol, 1979; Wolf, 1969). In their attempts to explain the outcomes of the Chinese rebellions, scholars have also provided evidence for historical sociologists to discuss the contribution of various factors to the outcomes of such movements.

As already noted, many rebellions before the later Qing period initially consisted of people who believed in heterodox religious ideas. Such ideas started with the promise of creating a new social order, normally a utopian future characterised by equality and prosperity with rules executed on the basis of the religion in question. There were successful rebellions that destroyed older, existing dynasties or stable regimes through military struggle. However, it was rare for leaders to fulfil their promises regarding altering the old imperial institution after the establishment of a stable regime. It was, instead, much more common for the leaders of the rebellions to establish a new dynasty that was nevertheless similar to what had preceded it. This is a pattern that is familiar to that already observed regarding the middle Qing dynasty.

Therefore, why did these heterodox religious ideas not directly affect the rebellion's ideological process and the later regime system? While it may have been hard for the rebels to really build the utopia they believed in, why were concrete efforts to realise such goals so infrequent? Many scholars have

proposed answers to this question. From a structural perspective, earlier accounts contend that the peasant economy in China was linked to periodic, short-term markets and trading that occurred in these markets. The economic structure was such that farmers were self-sufficient and isolated (see e.g., Fei, 1946; Skinner, 1971). Because of this, peasants had to rely on the Confucianist-educated gentry to communicate with others, and the gentry, in turn, was connected by government officials. On this view, this structure made it possible for the Chinese state to control its vast lands with success (see e.g., Chesneaux, 1973; Skocpol, 1979; Wolf, 1969).

Due to the structure in place in rural society, the more prevalent and well-organised forms of rebellion were organised by the gentry (or local elites) or at least assisted by such individuals. These rebellions were directed against local representatives of the state or the state itself. Rebellions against the gentry were generally small-scale matters of unrest and social banditry, with those involved plundering gentry property (Skocpol, 1979; Wolf, 1969). From Skocpol's (1979) perspective, the structure of late imperial China's state and society, in which the state controlled the gentry and the gentry controlled the peasants, is one reason why China's rebellions did not result in social or political revolution. Specifically, the lack of strength resulted in the peasants becoming reliant upon the gentry, who, in turn, tended to maintain the existing order to their own benefit. Furthermore, the gentry's attitudes towards the imperial system limited the revolutionary potential of the rebellions. In Skocpol's view, it was this form of social organisation that resulted in the peasants being incapable of organising full-scale rebellions. After a stable regime was built, the rebel leaders also needed to cooperate with the gentry in order to rule the local areas.

Such arguments dominated most of the early scholarship centred on explaining the outcomes of these rebellions. That being said, scholars have given consideration to the impact of ideas and culture on the results of these rebellions. Perry (2002), who still considers the rebels as primitive, investigates the impact of the economy on Chinese rebellions from the perspective of livelihood, arguing that the rebellions were sustained by poor peasants.

However, the latter only regarded the rebellions as a temporary survival strategy, a way of meeting their most basic needs. From her investigation of the historical materials, the participants did not have ambitions to achieve a higher revolutionary goal or to transform the current social order.

Furthermore, certain scholars (Wakeman, 1977; Yang, 1961; see also Miyazaki, 1981) point to the orthodox ideas of the government. They highlight that these were mostly grounded in Confucianist philosophy, and that these ideas were also associated with heterodox religious ideas, which were rooted in millenarian elements of the rebellions. They argue that the rebels considered that the restoration of the previous dynasty was ultimately a realisation of the millenarian world because political stability and the restoration of the worldly order could be regarded as the fulfilment of the rebels' beliefs; as a result, people were led to believe that restoring the original political system was somehow Heaven's mandate. However, as already discussed in relation to heterodox religious ideas in this chapter, scholars such as Ter Haar (1998) and Seidel (1983) argue that these heterodox religious ideas were not modelled on Confucianism or the thinking of the imperial bureaucratic system of late imperial China, which is the dominating ideas of the Chinese political elites. They also argue that the religious messages and the other ideas in the rebellions were not a coherent system but that the mixture of various elements was drawn on by the rebels from the context with which they were familiar. Although this does not indicate that the heterodox religious ideas and the ideas relating to rebuilding a similar imperial dynastic order of the premodern Chinese rebellions were completely separate, it is reasonable to believe that the two types of ideas did have distinct logic for interpreting the rebellions. My analysis also indicates that, while dynastic-order-related thinking and the heterodox religious ideas operative in these rebellions did influence each other, the individuals involved did not share the same political aims for the rebellion. While it was suggested by those in charge within the heterodox religions that a new social order should be established, those who believed in Confucian ideas were more interested in setting up another traditional imperial dynasty.

On the other hand, some scholars (Chan, 1969; Goldstone, 1991b; Wakeman,

1977) hold the view that there was a historical consciousness of the cyclical change of dynasties among the Chinese in the imperial era. These scholars argue that this consciousness was related to a belief that the old dynasty would be replaced by a new similar one and that the new one would also, in turn, be replaced. These scholars argue that this consciousness helped the rebels to revolt against the then-current regime but also that it also drew them back into the next cycle at the later stages of the rebellions.

Meanwhile, Hung (2009, 2011) argues that the Chinese rebellions did, in fact, have some kind of revolutionary potential. In these accounts, it is highlighted that the premodern Chinese protesters often appealed to higher-level officials or even the emperor in their collective action contending with local officials. This is isolated as one of the key reasons why later, more revolutionary movements, such as the Taiping rebellion or the Republican Revolution (1911-1912), could happen. However, for Hung, it was only when the Chinese potential integrated with “Western social thought” that the social revolution could happen. Hung’s argument that the Chinese rebellion did have revolutionary potential is compelling. However, Hung does not fully explain what elements of the Chinese thought contributed to his conclusion that the Chinese rebellion was unable to realise any revolutionary goals. There is also a need to explain what elements of “Western social thought” could have ever enabled the Chinese rebellions to have revolutionary outcomes.

From the previous discussion, it is clear that the previous studies discussed are beneficial in laying out the Chinese rebellion’s non-revolutionary characteristics. Scholars have tended to frame the ideological and structural points as constraining the revolutionary potential of the premodern Chinese rebellions. Regardless, the majority of the explanations that they provide in terms of the premodern rebellions have focused on the later periods of the rebellions, specifically the point when the rebels in question had built a primary regime and started ruling. During this period, the rebel leaders often need to cooperate with the Confucianist elites for the effective governance of their territories. Additionally, as leaders, they also had more discretion to frame or adopt the ideas that favoured their own interests. Although these accounts provide a clear

explanation of the pattern and reason for ideational changes in the later period of the rebellions, my data show that the heterodox religious ideas began to decline in the communications of the rebels in the very early period of the rebellions. Some additional analysis is likely to be required to explain the pattern of these ideas in the early periods, therefore.

In fact, some historians have already conducted such analyses and found considerable diversity in the early ideas and political understanding of the rebels. For example, Gaustad (1994, 2000) investigates the White Lotus sects, which made up the organisation that led to the White Lotus rebellion in the middle Qing. He finds that several different sects, which were nonetheless all regarded as parts of White Lotus by the government, were in competition with each other both before and during the rebellion. For Gaustad, it was the competition between the sects that decided the ideas that the rebellions ultimately subscribed to, with these being a mixture of the ideas of different groups. However, this competition also led both the ideas of the rebellions and their organisation to fragment. Furthermore, the studies (e.g., Naquin, 1976, 1981) also show that not all of the members of the sects were participating because they believed in religious millenarianism. Instead, many participants were involved because they saw it as an opportunity to obtain wealth. In addition, some others participated in the rebellions because they were hunted by the government. However, these factors were not fully considered in relation to their impact on the outcomes of the rebellions.

Nevertheless, before proceeding with an explanation for the non-revolutionary outcomes of premodern Chinese rebellions, it is important to note that some of these rebellions exhibited revolutionary traits for extended periods of time. One of the most significant examples is the Taiping rebellion. Indeed, the Taiping rebellion gave rise to a significant social transformation within the area the rebels ruled. What, therefore, enabled the heterodox religious ideas to be maintained throughout the course of this rebellion? It is with this question in mind that I turn to the literature on the Taiping rebellion.

The Christian-derived ideas and the revolutionary characters of the Taiping rebellion

As previously discussed, the Taiping rebellion gave rise to a significant social transformation within the area the rebels ruled. This can be viewed as a kind of revolutionary characteristic. This is different from the major premodern rebellions of China. Many scholars have proposed their own explanations for this transformation. Since the focus of the present study is on the early period of the rebellion, I review these accounts on the early period and discuss the ways in which my analysis supplements the findings of these studies.

One explanation that scholars (see e.g., Luo, 2013; Rowe, 2009; Wang, 1988; Xia, 2006) offer on this question is couched in the claim that the interactions between Chinese and foreign forces allowed people to witness the power of the countries of Europe and America. These accounts state that this led some Chinese people to think that these countries were more advanced than China, at least in certain respects. For this reason, they sought to learn from foreign people and began to transform the state as well as society accordingly.

The influence of European and American ideologies did indeed play a significant role in the transformation of modern and contemporary Chinese society, and these ideas continue to play an important role even today. However, as previously discussed, the Taiping leaders had a very limited understanding of European and American countries and their ideas until they officially met the missionaries in 1854. Furthermore, historical studies (e.g., Jen, 1946; Mao, 1991) show that most of the Qing people of the 1840s did not see the expats as superior to them, nor did they consider the European and American technology or culture as being more advanced. Some even believed that the foreign people from the European and American countries were barbarians with physical deformities. For example, they believed that such foreigners' legs were straight and could not be bent. Some scholars (Xia, 2006; Luo, 2013) consider

the Christian-derived ideas to be new within this context, with this provoking shock among some of the local residents, especially the Hakka people. It appears that people knew little about the expats from the European and American countries in Guangxi province, as the area where the Taiping rebellion was beginning. However, these scholars' arguments relate to why the Taiping rebellion was able to attract local people's attention rather than maintaining these ideas during the process of organising the rebellions and later military conflicts.

In addition to foreign influence from other countries, scholars have also considered the role played by other Chinese ideas. For example, Xia (1992, 2006) argues that there were influences operating on the Taiping ideas that were associated with not only Confucianism and Buddhism but also traditional heterodox religions. In Xia's view, the elements of the heterodox religions made the rebels more acceptable in the eyes of the local people, thus enabling the Christian-derived ideas to be maintained for a longer period. Weller (1994) also argues that the heterodox religious ideas of the Taiping rebellion helped the rebels in the organisation and reasoning of the potential participants. For Weller, these heterodox religious ideas had played a significant role in maintaining the solidarity of the rebels. In addition, Goldstone (1991a) highlights that the conflicts between the rapid changes of society in the later Qing dynasty and the unchanged Confucianist ideas contributed to the outbreak of the Taiping rebellion. He suggests this asymmetric transition speed assisted with the maintenance of these ideas because the Christian-derived ideas offered a better way to explain the social situation at that moment.

Another explanation put forward in the literature focuses on the class consciousness of peasants, with these typically appearing in analyses by Chinese Marxist scholars (see e.g., Luo, 2013; Teng, 1971; Wang, 1988; Xia, 2006; also see Marx, 1951). The analyses emphasise the importance of class

consciousness on the part of peasants and its potential role in moulding the shape of rebellions and the associated ideas. It is typically argued by such scholars (Luo, 2013; Mao, 1991; Wang, 1988) that, although the Taiping rebels drew on the Christian ideas in the rebellions, it was the class consciousness of the peasants that motivated the rebels. Such accounts also frame class consciousness, rather than Christian-derived ideas, as leading the rebels to engage in social transformation at the later stages of the rebellions. They suggest that the Christian elements were only the manifestation of the peasants' class consciousness regarding the change or that these elements were cultivated by leaders to promote class consciousness because these Christian religious elements would have been easier for the peasants to understand. Such an account may be viewed as, to some extent, a subaltern perspective. However, Wang (1988) adopts a different view, arguing that the Taiping ideas were not driven by class consciousness in the early period; instead, it was during a later period that the elements of class consciousness appeared in the texts of Taiping. On this view, during the early period of the rebellion, the rebels' excitement about religions occupied an important position. Jen (1973) considers that the Taiping movement engendered significant changes to the social system and the dominant ideas but does not agree that these changes were brought about by the class struggle between the peasants and landowners. Shih (1967) argues that the Taiping rebellion was not a revolution at all and argues that his investigation of the source suggests that the leaders and their followers did not demonstrate a consciousness associated with the peasant class.

Scholars have also paid attention to other factors that may help to explain the maintenance of Christian-derived ideas. Earlier research on Taiping's ideas stresses the perceived importance of the leaders' decisions in maintaining these heterodox elements. Yap (1954), for example, analyses the behaviours and ideas of the rebel leader Hong Xiuquan. He argues that Hong was, in fact,

suffering from problems with his mental health and that this led him to believe that he had actually had an experience in Heaven from a dream that he had had. He further argues that such an individual psychological factor significantly influenced the ideas of the Taiping rebellion. On this view, the leader Hong Xiuquan's insistence on his Christian-derived ideas was one of the key reasons for the maintenance of the Christian-derived ideas. However, Kuhn (1977) argues that Hong's ideas were not intrinsically political and rebellious; rather, the local ethnic conflicts between the Hakka and Han people and the economic problems of that time resulted in his ideas being accepted by the local people. In Kuhn's analysis, these local people are analysed as having further introduced a political value into the ideas and as having converted them into a weapon for their military activities. Spence (1997) also discusses the important role that Hong Xiuquan played in the formation of Taiping's ideology. He argues that the ideas of Taiping were influenced by Hong's personal experience and beliefs. However, Taiping's wider appeal, as understood by Hong, is analysed as a combination of Buddhism and his iconoclastic Christian beliefs. Similar to Kuhn, Spence (1997) argues that it was ethnic conflicts between the Han and Hakka and between the Taiping participants and the local militias, and foreign interference in southern China – that provided a space for Hong's idea to spread.

Zhang (2016), meanwhile, argues that the ideas of the Taiping rebellion were in competition with other cultural frameworks, including the orthodox ideology that the imperial government promoted and the religions that were popular within the context of the rebellion. For Zhang, it was this competition that resulted in the dominance of Christian-derived ideas. The content and influence of heterodox religious ideas also underwent a change during this process. Furthermore, scholars such as Ter Haar (2019) and Zhang (2016) suggest that the competition between the different groups also led to a collective identity arising among the rebels.

In general, it seems that there are many factors that can be drawn on to explain the maintenance of Taiping's ideas in its early period. Across these factors, the less controversial explanations are the conflict between the Taiping rebels and local residents, militias and bandits, and the mixture of Christian ideas and the ideas from Chinese culture. The scholars working in this area are slow to deny what they properly regard as the importance of these two factors with respect to the Taiping rebellion. It also seems highly probable that both the conflict and the ideas contributed to the maintenance of Taiping's ideas and that the conflict between the rebels and other groups, as well as the government, shaped some kind of collective identity. It is even possible that some primitive class consciousness was developed during these processes. However, it remains an open question whether these are the only factors that might be drawn on to explain the maintenance of the Taiping ideas. Rebellions involving large groups of ethnic minorities frequently occurred throughout the history of later imperial China, as well as the history of the country before that. However, these rebellions were usually organised around their own religions or the heterodox religions observed as being associated with the middle Qing rebellions (see Sutton, 2019). Even in the middle Qing cases considered here, the set of rebels also included significant numbers of individuals from ethnic minorities, e.g., Tujia (Piao, 1983). Meanwhile, the location of the White Lotus rebellion was also close to where the people of Miao ethnic groups resided, and we did find a record of some Miao people engaged in (Sutton, 2019; C9 in BLJZL). However, although all these rebellions that were organised based on the ethnic groups' own religions could last for a long time, only seldom were the ethnic minorities observed as having implemented their heterodox religious beliefs in the later regimes to the same extent as the Taiping rebels. Given this, additional perspectives would be helpful in further explaining this pattern.

Meanwhile, it is also reasonable to argue that Taiping's use of heterodox religious ideas helped with mobilisation. However, considering that the

heterodox religious ideas also influenced the premodern Chinese rebellions, it is important to discern which elements or logic of Taiping's ideas were different in a way that had consequences for the maintenance of their ideologies. On this basis, there is a need to compare the Taiping rebellion with the White Lotus rebellions to further demonstrate the patterns underlying these and the differences between these.

In the following chapters, it is argued that, through analysing the data sources of the rebels' accounts relating to their statuses in the rebellions and their different backgrounds regarding their understanding of the purpose of the rebellions, it becomes possible to explain the differences between the Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion in terms of the core elements of their heterodox religious ideas and the logic to explain these elements: in the middle Qing rebellions, this kind of logic was modified by the leaders only to a limited extent, while, in the Taiping rebellion, this was done more freely, with the specific cultural context also exerting a very important influence in each case.

As I have previously outlined, the core element of the middle Qing rebellions was centred on charismatic leadership, whereas the core element of the Taiping rebellion was based on everyday life. My analysis of the primary source will show that certain revolutionary goals indeed existed within the heterodox religious ideas at the beginning of the middle Qing rebellions; however, due to the Chinese cultural traditions relating to the supposedly magical abilities of charismatic leaders and the ambiguous way of writing religious texts, these magical religious ideas, especially heterodox religious ideas, could not create a consensus among the religious organisations. This led to these ideas becoming unstable, and they were ultimately unable to compete with more well-known ideas relating to the imperial dynasty.

Meanwhile, compared to the religious messages of the middle Qing rebellions, the heterodox religious ideas in the Taiping rebellion relating to the importance

of everyday life were less abstract. I also argue that the ideas regarding everyday life would have been easier to realise and understand and that this would have been important for ensuring that such ideas were maintained throughout the rebel ranks. It is my position that it was through the ideas of everyday life that the rebels arrived at a clearer understanding of the religions and were, therefore, more likely to support the religious authorities. I argue that everyday life was a key reason that the rebels of different organisational statuses were able to achieve a consensus on new types of ideas. I also consider this factor key to explaining the maintenance of the Christian-derived ideas among the Taiping rebels.

My research generated fresh historical insights into the processes and outcomes of the Qing rebellions, which were developed through my distinctive approach to scrutinising and interpreting the sources. My findings provide explanations for the observed phenomena, and they offer novel possibilities for understanding how the transition from China's premodern era to the modern era occurred, including how the ideas and forms of contentious politics transformed throughout that process. It also has implications regarding informing studies on social movements. In the subsequent sections, a review is presented of the literature on social movements and revolutions in terms of the contribution of ideational foci on the middle Qing charismatic leadership and everyday life. Although there is a wealth of studies of how charismatic leadership and participants' everyday lives have the potential to influence social movements and revolution, it is the position of the present study that the specific cultural context, together with an analysis informed by the thought of the subaltern people, sheds light on how charismatic leadership and everyday life can influence such movements.

The relationship between charismatic leadership, distance and information

Charismatic leaders constitute a significant research object in the case of studies of social movements (e.g., Baker, 1990; Gurr, 1970). Charismatic

leadership also played a significant role in the premodern rebellions considered here. With respect to these premodern Chinese rebellions, the charismatic leaders may be more readily associated with the religions than the modern revolutions (Ter Haar, 1998; also refer to Goossaert, 2008). In Chinese rebellions associated with heterodox religions, the leaders are likely to have to demonstrate many charismatic characteristics, whether these could be directly associated with the heterodox religions or not. The set of charismatic characteristics not so straightforwardly associated with heterodox religion would have included special personal characteristics. For example, in the Eight Trigrams rebellion, many rebels considered the leader, Lin Qing, to be especially proficient in the areas of debating and interpreting their religion (see C10, C11 in LAD; Naquin, 1976). However, what I focus on here are the charismatic characteristics that are more appropriately interpreted in terms of the religious context of the movements. As previously discussed, in the heterodox religion of these rebellions, the rebels would have viewed the leaders as having received power from the Eternal Mother (or other gods). Their charismatic characteristics, their alleged abilities with respect to magical power and their destiny to help people serve in the *klapa* are argued here to all have been important matters regarding the task of opening the door to the new millenarian world as well as the spiritual power that enabled them to mobilise their participants so effectively.

Many studies discuss the abilities of charismatic leaders and how they maintain people's perceptions of charisma. Early discussions on this matter can be traced to Weber (2019), who frames charisma as a "revolutionary force" that may result in a radical alteration of the central attitudes and directions of actions with a completely new orientation of all attitudes toward all forms of life and to the world. In the context of considering the charismatic religious leaders of premodern Chinese rebellions, it would be easy for an investigator to associate with the leaders of the new religious movements because of the similarities in

some of their rituals and ideas. However, scholars also point out that, although the heterodox religions demonstrate certain similarities with the new religious movements in terms of the presence of charismatic leaders, there are also differences. (Regarding the discussion on this matter, see e.g., Ownby, 1995, 1996; Rozell and David, 2003; Ter Haar,1998, 2006; and many others besides)

In these studies on the new religions, scholars (e.g., Dawson, 2006; Johnson, 1979; Sandberg and Christopher, 2015) suggest that these religious leaders were able to recruit a group of faithful believers to participate in their religion in the form of a community underpinned by their attraction to the charismatic qualities of the leader in question. These studies argue that the maintenance of the leaders' charisma is associated with impression management. They also suggest that the emotional bond between the participants (and/or between the participants and the leaders) is another core element for maintaining charismatic leadership. It is also common for leaders to seek to isolate participants away from society to prevent them from being exposed to challenges to their legitimacy from the outside world. However, as discussed in subsequent chapters, the activities of the heterodox religions of the rebellions investigated here were different from those associated with such new religions. For example, in the context of the premodern Chinese rebellions, it is less obvious that those who were involved gathered and formed a community that isolated itself from the outside world. This appears to be at least partly due to the significant pressure exerted by the government, which was engaged in efforts to hunt down these heterodox religious members. Gathering under the banner of such a movement would have likely led to the individuals involved being identified. Furthermore, people were also highly dependent on animals such as horses and donkeys or vehicles such as sailing ships to travel from one place to another. It was thus difficult and very time-consuming for the rebels to travel, making any cross-regional gathering or communication very difficult. (For further information on these factors, see C10 in LAD; C12 in BLJZL; Naquin,

1976; Rowe, 2009)

Furthermore, because of the nature of new religions in terms of their belief systems, it would have been usual for any engagement with politics to be done, but it is usually through its agency, such as professional politicians or parties (Wessinger, 2012). However, scholars such as Ter Haar argue that the religious charismatic leaders of the rebellions have had both religious and temporal roles, being both political leaders who would rule China and the sect leaders that would bring a new order to the world. Put another way, they had two roles: as human leaders selected by Heaven and as the embodiments of a supernatural god. This dual role means these leaders would engage directly in politics rather than through an agency. Therefore, the new religions' experience may not be available as a complete explanation of the pattern witnessed for the leaders of these Chinese rebellions.

It is for this reason that I also review studies on political leaders within this chapter. Certain political leaders may arguably also be associated with religions and may therefore be useful as points of comparison. However, the contexts in which modern charismatic political leaders, such as Hitler or Martin Luther King, operated were also significantly different from the premodern ones. For example, these individuals would have been able to mobilise those who followed them through more advanced forms of communication than those that were available in the premodern era. Furthermore, the movements that such individuals led were less obviously religious in their nature, albeit it must be conceded that the beliefs of them could be understood to a certain extent in terms of some kind of political religion. Given this, I focus on studies of those from the premodern era to provide a close comparison between this context and the general social context of the rebellions of the modern era. In this arena of research, Weber (2019) considers certain types of leaders whose authority stemmed from the political tradition and charismatic abilities, including kings of

Europe and emperors of China. The charismatic authority of such figures is shown as being grounded to a significant extent in religion or comparably mysterious matters. Not only did the European kings have the political authority conferred by tradition, but they were also viewed as divine figures. For example, in *'The Royal Touch'* (2015), Bloch suggests that the king's touch was considered an effective cure for diseases such as tuberculosis and lymphotuberculosis.

Anchoring his analysis in the political theology of the European Middle Ages, Kantorowicz's *'Kings' Two Bodies'* frames the royal crown as a fiction sustained both by the *corpus mysticum* and the physical body of the ruler. This is drawn on as the explanation why, when kings die, it is customary to cry, "The king is dead, long live the king". This practice is founded on the belief that while the physical body of the monarch may have perished, their divine body continues to exist through their successor. These kinds of ideas secured the perpetuation of the monarchy and the legitimate social order (Kantorowicz, 1957, p. 412).

The sanctity of the king can be viewed as a kind of charismatic characteristic and one that is useful in ensuring their legitimacy. However, it should also be noted that the European kings' charismatic characteristics have tended to be couched in their blood and identity. In other words, when each of the kings of the premodern era gained their identity as such, their charismatic charm was confirmed (although matters such as their specific deeds or the presence of rumours were also relevant, as Bloch (2015) discusses). It has been in this way that kings have been able to maintain this kind of characteristic.

In the Chinese context, however, the maintenance of such a charismatic character has been considerably more difficult for Chinese political leaders (see Weber, 2019). It was believed by the people of premodern China that the Chinese emperors (and the single empress, Wu Zetian) were not only humans who ruled the secular world but also the "Son of Heaven". However, the ruler

would also require to engage in considerable efforts to maintain people's belief regarding his or her divine orientation. Furthermore, as Weber argues, the Chinese monarch's perceived charismatic quality would depend to a significant extent on whether disasters occurred. If disasters did occur, this would be taken to indicate that the individual did not possess the requisite charismatic, God-given "virtue", depriving him or her of the perception as a legitimate Son of Heaven to rule China. Zhao (2009) provides a supplementary analysis, suggesting that Heaven bestowed the mandate upon the emperors through natural phenomena as well as moral and economic performance, in the sense of actual demonstration of efficacy and ability. It is instructive to bear in mind that, in Zhao's (2009) study, economic performance is used as a way of legitimising the current Chinese regime of the People's Republic of China (1949-present). However, from my understanding of Chinese history, economic performance and its consequences on people's welfare constitute another important matter that would have had to be considered by the premodern Chinese emperors. If the emperor did not perform well in this respect, people would believe that this individual had lost the mandate of Heaven, and rebellions may rise. After the rebellion, a new person, sometimes a rebel leader, would be considered as having Heaven's mandate to build another dynasty. However, this new ruler would also need to perform well in order to maintain his legitimacy. These kinds of descriptions of the Chinese emperor are similar to those of the charismatic aspects of the heterodox religious leaders I analyse.

Nevertheless, both the emperors in China and the kings in Europe also differed from the heterodox religious leaders considered here. As noted above, the charismatic legitimacy of the European Kings was largely affected by their blood and personal identity, a situation that would not have been consistent with Chinese tradition. In the case of Chinese emperors, their legitimacy related more with their performance in power. However, these performances were more associated with the Confucianist idea that the ruler of China was required to

maintain virtue and benefit his people. The religious elements relating to more mysterious phenomena, such as whether disasters occurred, gradually disappeared from this ideological system (also see Seidel, 1983). However, Ter Haar's (1998) and Seidel's (1983) studies of Chinese history highlight that the heterodox religious ideas, and the accompanying mixture of political and religious characteristics, were part of the same meta-system of the Chinese imperial bureaucratic system and its ideologies, with this meta-system constituting the philosophical discussion of the relationship between humans and Heaven. However, these heterodox religious ideas were not modelled on the imperial bureaucratic system and Confucianism, especially, in terms of late imperial China, neo-Confucianism. Although Heaven was only a distant source of power that was especially dominant among the educated elite in the official Confucianist interpretation of late imperial China, it was regarded as remaining very close and as showing its will constantly by means of special signs in heterodox and folk religions alike. In these religions, the power of Heaven could be shared by the largest part of the population through the religious leaders with the specific sign showing their destiny. Once the sign showed that the more secular monarch could no longer fulfil the task of rule, the religious leaders could take over in bringing peace and prosperity through theocracy. Therefore, in the heterodox religious ideas, the identities of the religious leaders of these rebellions related strongly to these enigmatic or mysterious phenomena. The leaders needed to perform in an appropriate manner to ensure that their mysterious characteristics could continue in service of establishing their legitimacy and attracting more believers. These characteristics could be conveyed through claims of having magical powers, but they could also be conveyed through mantras or riddles that potentially indicated the identity of the leaders. Such methods would have been very different to those utilised by emperors to ensure their legitimacy. (For further information, in addition to the discussion presented in the following chapters, see also Ter Haar, 2006.)

Considering these observations, there is good reason to take the view that a new perspective is required to arrive at a fuller analysis of the pattern of charismatic characteristics of the leaders in the Chinese premodern heterodox religious rebellions. The previous mentioned analyses show that these individuals' positions of leadership were maintained by the (social and physical) distance between the leaders and followers in these rebellions. Given the limited knowledge about the leaders, followers who were physically and socially distant from the leaders were more likely to believe that they possessed particular charismatic characteristics or even had supernatural powers. It would have been difficult to maintain the belief in the leaders' supernatural power and the associated heterodox religions if the latter were dispelled through acquiring more information or a reduced distance.

Although the pattern is identified in the rebellions that were influenced by the specific cultural and social context of premodern Chinese rebellions, some studies present a pattern of charismatic leadership similar to the one subscribed to here. Shamir's study (1995) investigates several charismatic leaders in terms of their distance from their followers across different fields, including leaders in politics, business and social movements. He suggests that, in the majority of the leadership-related content categories examined, there are significant differences between the images and the descriptions of close charismatic leaders and those of distant charismatic leaders. Meanwhile, studies on businesses and commercial bodies (e.g., Daft and Lengel, 1984; Howell and Shamir, 1998; House, 1971) highlight similar pattern in such organisations. Although different from the organisations associated with social movements, these studies on businesses and commercial bodies are nevertheless still valuable in terms of providing a reference point.

Meanwhile, a relationship between charismatic leaders and distance can also

be identified in more general modern Chinese (or even possibly East Asian[9]) societies. Ter Haar (1998) and Seidel (1983) argue that heterodox interpretations originated from the legacy of the Han dynasty and were gradually eliminated by the official ideational system of imperial China after the Han. However, these interpretations of the leaders still existed in the heterodox religious ideas among the people. They did not disappear even after the fall of the Qing dynasty and were partly reflected in people's conceptualisations of the new types of power holders. For example, some scholars (Zuo, 1991; Also refer to Andreas, 2007) note that many people, especially subaltern people, worshipped Mao Zedong as a real god. This phenomenon was especially significant during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), although the Communist Party of China sought to exclude religious elements from society during that period. Other political leaders, such as Sun Yat-sen, were also regarded in such a manner by individuals that were separated from him in terms of both social and physical distance[10] (Chen, 2009, may also refer to Schiffrin, 2020).

Furthermore, my study also shows that, in the case of some of the rebels who were separated from the leaders by a certain distance, it would have been difficult to secure enough information about the religion to be sufficiently confident in the charismatic leaders. This argument can further shed light on why a collective consensus could not be achieved in the context of heterodox

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[9] Consider, for example, the belief in the superhuman power of Kim's family in North Korea. Information on this is available in the book detailing the author Ye's (2008) journey in North Korea. However, it is not clear to me at this moment if there is evidence available to support the claim that he described people's belief in superhuman power.

[10] I also heard from two local people who do not know each in Taipei during my fieldwork that they had heard different versions of stories regarding Sun Yat-sen's superhuman power in their childhood before the 1990s. This may also serve as supporting evidence here.

religions.

Such an analysis complements those of previous studies (Smith, 2000) on how tradition and culture shaped the charismatic characteristics of the leaders in the Chinese heterodox religious rebellions and affected the leaders' activities. It highlights that the pattern of charismatic leadership in various individuals or regions may differ. By taking a fresh perspective to examine these rebellions, this study offers a novel insight into how charismatic authority operates within diverse situations. In general, the study could inform the understanding of charismatic authority and possibly contribute to the interaction between leadership and culture in social movements.

Participants' everyday lives and their influence on social movements

While the analysis offered here of the non-revolutionary outcomes of the middle Qing rebellions can inform contemporary understanding of charismatic leadership, the analysis of the Taiping rebellion has implications for discussions of everyday life. As previously discussed, Taiping's texts, influenced by Christianity, can be seen to focus more on reframing the rebels' original everyday life as problematic and promoting a new way of life. The relationship between everyday life and political resistance is a topic of interest to many scholars, with some (De Certeau, 1988b; Lefebvre, 1991) making the case that everyday life is one of the most important battlegrounds of political resistance. In general, scholars view politicisation and the meaning construction of everyday lives as a way of mobilisation and maintaining solidarity in contentious movements. They invite their readers to consider the realm of everyday life as an arena in which social movements are embedded. By shifting our attention to the realm of everyday life, Melucci (2013) would suggest, it is possible to identify idioms of social movement that, while seemingly "invisible" in terms of their absence from those spaces conventionally marked as public (civil society, the media, etc.), nonetheless must be recognised as forms of collective

mobilisation towards shared norms and worldly aspirations.

Snow, Benford, and Hunt offer an analysis of the dimension of the emergent norm and interpretive frameworks for resistance culture, viewing the culture around social movements as the distinct interpretive frames defined in the course of mobilising collective action (Benford and Hunt 1992; Snow et al., 1986; Snow and Benford, 1992). They argue that it is typical, given the need to mobilise participants, for the organisers of movements to need to construct frames in their discourse. The frame is a "schemata of interpretation" that allow individuals or groups "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" events and occurrences, thus rendering meaning, organising experiences, and guiding actions. In the framing processes, one possible approach that such organisers can take is to transform the interpretive frames of people's domain of life. They construe "domain" broadly to include manifold of aspects of life running the gamut from the relatively mundane, such as dietary habits, consumption patterns and leisure activities, to the more profound, such as social relationships, social status and self-perception. They argue that this involves reframing of aspects of everyday life previously taken-for-granted: by conceptualising everyday life as problematic, movement organisers can mobilise their participants to join their movements and bring about appropriate changes to their lives. It is in this way that, Benford et al. argue, movements' interpretive schemata both draw from and modify elements of the dominant culture.

However, the framing theory does not focus on the ongoing process of meaning construction that takes place once a movement is underway. While scholars would like to pay attention to not only mobilisations but also movements' solidarity during the movements. Some of the scholars studying class consciousness have paid attention to everyday life. For example, Thompson (2013). In his work, he argues that class cannot be understood unless it is

conceived of as a social and cultural formation. His understanding of this social and cultural formative process can be understood as the creation of some kinds of new ways of organising everyday life, including one's living standards and experiences, one's personal relations in the community, etc. For Thompson, this process further produces a certain consensus among the working class, promoting a perception of the need for struggle and social movements.

Steinberg (1999) also studies the movements of English workers and the class formation in the processes of these movements. He argues that class in the district he considers was well defined by shared experiences and common cultures in people's social life, including popular recreation, family ties, religion, and ideology intertwined with economic position to produce distinctive collective experiences among the mill owners, working people and shopkeepers; the accretion of these was increasingly divergent class cultures. However, he further argues that the class formation process is influenced by discourse. In terms of the specific context that he considers, it was during the struggle with their opponents that the workers further developed their discourse, which was shaped through their class culture and contributed to the mobilisations of workers' protest.

Other scholars of collective identity have long perceived practices and actions in everyday life as a means of constructing group boundaries that establish differences between a group challenging the norm and dominant groups in a way that gives rise to collective identity within the different groups. (see e.g., Fominaya, 2010a). These scholars usually focus on contemporary social movements, including the new social movements, which endorse cultural transformation and place less emphasis on state and economic issues (see e.g., Scott, 1990a). However, these scholars' arguments are also referable here, as the collective identity is more appropriately viewed as a general concept that is applicable to a wider range of challenges directed toward life politics as well as

emancipatory politics.

In their view, the collective identity is one of the core means by which the consensus of the people and the coherence of the social movements can be maintained (see e.g., Fominaya, 2010a; Polletta and Jasper, 2001). Further, as Taylor and Whittier (1992) argue, every aspect of life—where one lives, what one eats, how one dresses—can become an expression of politics and can connect to the resistance movements.

Haenfler et al. (2012) is also an illustrative example, arguing that choices regarding people's ways of life were consciously and actively utilised in the context of the movements they considered. Although the movements they considered pertained primarily to matters of private life and identity, they also note that similar everyday practices forged social connections among the participants and promoted social change.

Similar examples can also be found in the investigation of Futrell and Simi (2004) on the 'White Power' movements. They concentrate on free public spaces, arguing that the moulding of the identity of the movement's participants was facilitated by everyday interactions and practices in public spaces. Moreover, in their discussion of collective identity,

Some scholars also connect the collective identity to people's recognition of the new ideas and possible outcomes of movements and institutional change. Some argue that the practices of people in their everyday lives can be viewed as helping maintain not only solidarity but also a useful level of aspiration to promote revolutionary changes to existing institutions. For example, Fantasia and Hirsch (1995) argue that people's private lives provided a way of gaining shelter to organise revolutions in Muslim societies in the face of state suppression. They argue that this shelter helped the participants recognise the movements' ideas in such a way that influenced their outcomes.

Hunt (1986) provides a highly detailed investigation of cultural aspects of the French revolution, discussing the significance of various symbols, including costumes, coins and festivals, that could be witnessed in the social lives of the French people after the revolution. She argues that these symbols served to mark the people's recognition of and consensus of with respect to revolutionary political culture.

Similar observations can also be made in respect of other historical contexts. This includes Russia, where the symbols seen in everyday life became a form of weapon relating to the conflict between the revolutionists and the anti-revolution forces in the Russian Revolution of 1917. The symbolic war gave rise to further conflict among the societies of that era, helping to inspire revolution (Rendle, 2005). Prozorov (2022) draw on the concept of forms of life to analyse the politics of the Stalin era of the Soviet Union, particularly in relation to the state’s efforts to realise socialism in the country. In view of such accounts, this was done through the imposition of specific forms of everyday life through political movements and violence. However, Prozorov argues that, if they were to remain in the culture, the forms of life could not be imposed purely by means of violence; they had to instead be willingly accepted by the people.

With respect to the Chinese context, the importance of people’s ways of organising their daily lives is evident in relation to several revolutionary movements. Perry (2012) argues that the initial communist mobilisation taking place between the 1920s and 1930s included encouraging people to participate in weekly workers’ clubs, building schools to deliver communist education and helping people to understand communist ideas through certain rituals. Other scholars also note the importance of changing people’s everyday lives during the era of the Cultural Revolution. For instance, Han (2000) argues that the Cultural Revolution was particularly significant for changing the daily lives of people in rural Chinese villages. The daily lives of such individuals would have

included interactions and symbols as well as the social structure of the village, education and local organisations. Han argues that these changes in the daily lives of people would have spread the ideals and movement of the Cultural Revolutions across such locations. This is also argued that such methods contributed to the economic growth after the reform of the 1980s by removing certain social and cultural structures hindering the implementation of central government policies.

My study emphasises the importance of the different ways of organising people's daily lives within the focus of communications in the Taiping rebellion, considering the findings of previous studies for reference. However, I also pay attention to the differences between the findings of this study and those of previous studies, especially in relation to the Taiping rebellion. First, the present study provides evidence of how everyday life helped the rebels to understand the revolutionary ideas and to forge a consensus in the premodern Chinese context. This context included a group of diverse participants. Such participants would have had less knowledge of the ideas that people are more aware of in the modern world. Many, if not most, participants even could not read and write during these movements. There was also much greater difficulty with communication at this time. However, the consensus investigated here further contributed to sustaining a large collective goal of revolutionary change based on these religious ideas in the premodern rebellions.

There are also differences between the present study and previous ones in relation to the analysis of European revolutionary movements in which people at the bottom witnessed significant changes in society. It is possible that, in the cases considered in this study, there were more people who were in favour of the old order than was the case in the European movements. Support for this position comes from observations that the sources considered here indicated that some of the rebels received official posts or benefitted from the potential rebel regime that would be similar to the then-current imperial one. Furthermore, it is likely that the initial participants within the early period of the Taiping rebellion did not witness significant changes before they were taught the

Taiping's ideas and enrolled in the rebellion (see e.g., Standaert, 2001; Shih, 1967; Tang, 2011). Nevertheless, the study presented here indicates how the rebels politicised everyday life and how this shaped the dynamics of the movements and helped with maintaining the goal of change within the social movements during the process. This is particularly important when there were calls for alternative goals that were perceived as positive aspects of the old order.

In addition, my study also highlights the importance of everyday life in the transition from premodern rebellions to modern social movements and revolutions in China. Although the texts and oral statements of the Taiping rebellion stressed the importance of the changing ways of life, this is not identified as relevant for the middle Qing rebellions. This can be used to explain the differences between the two types of rebellions, including whether each rebellion had more revolutionary outcomes.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a review of the fields that my investigation of the Qing rebellions engages in terms of both historical and sociological literature. The account that I present here makes a historical contribution to the ideational change processes of the Qing rebellions in their early period. It also provides new insight into how charismatic leadership, as well as a type of everyday life, influenced the overall ideas and ideational processes of Chinese revolutions and rebellions. My analysis also makes it possible to highlight factors leading to the different outcomes of the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion.

The review presented in this chapter also highlighted ways that analysing the history of the Qing rebellions is likely to be valuable in the subsequent historical analysis that I presented. Furthermore, providing a sociological understanding of such topics will involve considering the history of rebellions in the Chinese premodern era. In the following chapters, I first discuss the methodology used for selecting and reading the sources considered in this account and then outline the analysis conducted with these.

Chapter 3 Methodology: the sources and how they are read

Introduction

This chapter explains methodological approach that I apply in the reading the sources, the kinds of sources accessed for this study and the specific methodologies utilised in reading and analysing these.

To read and analyse the archival sources, I developed an archival research methodology following the approach of the "archival turn". This methodology involves viewing sources through a constructivist lens and discussing how different actors would have influenced the production of these documents (see e.g., De Certeau, 1988a; Stoler, 2002). In the context of the present study, such actors would have included the interrogators, the rebels, the Qing (and later) governments and so on. This approach was selected for use in this study on the grounds that the relevant documents were not simply created by a single agent but rather via interaction between various people and institutions. These people and institutions would have influenced the information contained in the documents as a result of their diverse and competing interests, for example, the requirements of the government and their own understanding of what had happened.

My sources are mostly the trial confessions of the rebels, the texts used by the rebels, and the reports of government officials who were involved in suppressing the rebellions. These sources contain direct records of the rebels' own words, although not all. They also describe the rebellions from the perspectives of both organisers and participants. This has the benefit of making it possible to explore the understanding of the rebellions in respect of each group of individuals. These sources can be found in a specific category of archival documents known as the Qing Court Secret Palace Memorials. The Secret Palace Memorials are imperial documents that were handwritten for the reference of high-ranking officials and emperors in imperial Qing China,

covering a wide range of significant affairs (Hung, 2011). In the process of carrying out fieldwork for this study, I visited the archives in Beijing and Taipei to access these documents directly. There are also many books that detail and reprint the documents accessed here. For example, *Materials of the White Lotus Rebellion in Five Provinces in the Mid-Qing Dynasty* is such a book. It collects the materials of the White Lotus rebellion from both local sources and sources produced by the central government. These books detail some of the sources present in the archives I visited as well as including other such documents.

Applying this methodology to the sources, I consider the documents in terms of three different perspectives: the context of the documents, the text contained within the documents and inter-textual comparison. These three perspectives are inspired by the methodology proposed by Moore et al. (2017). However, I also alter this methodology in certain ways, as specified further below. These changes align with the overall approach taken to consider the specific details of the documents that I analyse.

I first consider the context of the documents. Having a thorough understanding of this context first is important because the documents were produced hundreds of years ago. Only through investigating the context is it possible to gain insight into the perspectives of the people of that era; failing to do so would result in a shallow understanding of the document from the perspective of a modern individual alone. The context generally includes such basic information as the number and classification of the documents, the procedure involved in producing them and the general historical information relevant to the era in which the documents were produced. When investigating the context of the documents, I paid close attention to whether any information could have been censored or distorted by the people who participated in the production of these documents. I also considered whether those who collected these documents might have made any changes to them, as it is possible that some collectors would have changed the category of these documents or sought to prevent

people from accessing (the content of) certain documents, especially if they had their own agenda in terms of what information they wanted to preserve or restrict access to. This is an especially important consideration given that China has a specific political culture in which there are certain sensitive issues relating to the historical view of certain regimes. It is also important given that premodern Chinese history has been used as a lens through which to interpret current affairs (see e.g., Unger, 1993). After reflecting on these aspects of the context, I considered the texts directly. This involved identifying the tone and attitude of the people who had participated in the production of the documents and identifying the conventions of recording in the task of understanding the texts. To enrich this process, several texts were read together to enable inter-textual comparisons to be drawn. Using this investigative approach, I was able to gain a basic understanding of why particular oral statements or texts were recorded and what oral statements or texts might have once existed but without being recorded. Adopting this approach also made it possible to gain an understanding of how people at the time would likely have perceived the rebellions and the associated documents.

Here it must be stressed that I present my analysis from context to the text and the inter-textual domain as a means of reflecting on the process used to consider the sources. However, this does not reflect a sequence of analysis that was conducted in such a strict sense; rather, the analytical process was iterative. For example, inter-textual analysis often led to further reflection on the analysis of the context and the texts themselves.

The general methodologies used to read and analyse the archival sources

With respect to the task of reading and analysing the primary sources, a specific approach was developed for this task. The archival reading method utilised for this study was informed by the “archival turn” of analysing the archival data. The methodology of this archival turn tends to examine archival documents from a constructivist lens. Scholars (e.g., De Certeau, 1988a; Stoler, 2002) using this methodology takes the view that archival data should be treated not

only as a source in the traditional manner of historians and social scientists but also as a subject that can be investigated in its own right.

The discursive construction of my sources, which are mostly the Chinese state documents and police documents, does not reflect the perspective of a single agent; instead, this results from myriad interactions that stem from pressures and resistance exerted by multiple agents of central authorities and local communities, including emperors, ministers and local Confucianists (see Thornton, 2007). The complexity of these struggles is part of the written historical record itself. This highlights the need to understand the process underpinning the construction of the imperial documents.

The theory and practice of the archival turn have shaped and influenced research on the documents produced by the Chinese state (e.g., Lewis, 1999; Thornton, 2007). This constructivist method of archival research has also given rise to new approaches to understand these documents, particularly in considering the long tradition of government censorship in China (see Joshua and Peter, 1997; Thornton, 2007).

Many historical studies have considered the documents regarding the rebellions. The theory underpinning the turn has clearly exerted an influence on some of these (e.g., Gaustad, 1994, 2000; Ter Haar, 1998). However, this is often the case without it being explicitly stated what the specifics of the process are. In this study, I also follow this archival turn by viewing the sources I use through a constructivist lens. I also outline specific steps that the approach of this general flavour might follow in analysing similar documents. The methodology utilised in reading the materials follows the three principles discussed below, informed by the theory of the archival turn.

Firstly, with respect to the core theoretical basis of the archival turn, I considered the sources in the archives in terms of “living history” rather than evidence of “facts.” This involved treating the documents not only as a source but also as a subject that could be investigated. This was done to better understand of how these documents were produced and to witness the truth claim and truth-making procedures forming part of the documentation process (see Ginzburg,

1989; Stoler, 2002).

Secondly, for this research specifically, I draw on the approach of reading imperial documents outlined by Guha (1983) and Stoler (2002), viewing the documents as having been produced by cultural agents of “fact” production. More specifically, I discuss how state authority, the rebels and interrogators and their needs influenced the production of the “facts” detailed in the documents.

Thirdly, I draw on the research of Lewis (1999), Thornton (2007) and Duara (1988). These scholars argue that, in imperial China, state writing was not only the result of the actions of those in the authorities, but was also subject to influence by the imaginary realm of schools, local academies and social groups, together with the dynamic competition of various political agents. Even though the state sought to monopolise the power of the written word, the discursive domain was not strictly under official control.

Based on that, there are also two practical principles that I carefully considered. To begin with, when I consult the texts, I pay attention to first identifying direct accounts with less individual judgements and information that can be cross-examined. Such information is less likely to have been constructed by the sources’ manufacturer (e.g., Naquin, 1976; Riga, 2012; Zhao, 2015). However, I acknowledge that all documents are not immune to the personal beliefs of those involved in their creation and preservation.

Therefore, secondly, I also needed to understand the social imagination of the different people involved in the production of the various documents. These people’s understandings are very important as they determine to a significant extent the characteristics of the social factors that informed the content of the documents (see e.g., Lewis, 1999; Stoler, 2002). This is especially crucial for the confessions, as these confessions were produced not only by the rebels but also by officials.

The Qing Court Secret Palace Memorials and the production of the documents

With these fundamental principles established, I turned my attention to specific sources. The majority of my sources are archival documents from, specifically, the Secret Palace Memorials. Given the rich history and intricate background information of this type of archival document, I will begin by introducing my sources.

As noted above, the Qing Court Secret Palace Memorials are imperial documents that were handwritten for the reference of high-ranking officials and emperors in imperial China (Hung, 2011). These documents are considered as the main sources for this study because they contain such a vast body of comprehensive information, more than other types of sources, such as local gazetteers. Because the imperial court of the Qing dynasty was anxious to secure its authority, it collected detailed and comprehensive information about rebellions and recorded this within the Secret Palace Memorials. Therefore, information on almost all aspects of the rebellions can be found in these categories of documents. In addition, the memorials were preserved by the central government of the Qing dynasty and by later regimes, including those of the Republic of China (1911-1949) and the People's Republic of China. Since this initial preservation process, the documents have been read by various scholars, officials, and archivists (see the introduction on the website of the National Palace Museum in Taipei; also see Chuang, 1979). Most of the documents that can be consulted are still under the supervision of the archives. Since these documents also have been read and cited by a very large number of people, even if they have been modified, it is easy to find the differences between the original documents and the citation in earlier scholarly works. Therefore, forgery or subsequent modification can be regarded as unlikely, and these documents can be considered the originals produced during the Qing dynasty. Indeed, it is for this reason that the memorials have been among the most significant sources that many scholars (e.g., Dai, 2019; Naquin, 1976, 1981; Wu, 2011) have accessed in their study of rebellions during the Qing dynasty.

The system of producing and preserving the Secret Palace Memorials - the imperial memorial system - was established after the middle of the Yongzheng

period (1678-1735). This process was undertaken to guarantee that the emperor had access to relevant information on local affairs through the secret reports contained within these texts (Chuang, 1979). The documents of the imperial memorial system gradually became the most important political documents of the Qing empire. In the most common situation, the officials wrote secret reports on issues such as harvest conditions, infrastructure and criminal investigations. These documents were then sent to the imperial court. These secret reports were normally read directly by the emperors. After the emperor read the report, he would comment on this document in consultation with the Grand Council, as one of the most important policy-making bodies of the Qing dynasty. After the secret reports were read, the Grand Council would normally make a copy of each of the reports and archive these. These documents were known as “Grand Council Copies of Secret Palace Memorials” (Grand Council Copies). Most reports were then sent back to the original drafters. The drafters were expected to read the emperors’ comments in the reports before returning the original copies to the central government for archiving in the event that the emperor had indeed made comments on these. The original copies were then sent to the imperial court for preservation (Chuang, 1979; Hung, 2011). These documents were named the “Secret Palace Memorials in the Palace Archives” (Palace Archive Memorials). It was also standard practice for the authorities across different eras to copy these documents again for their own purposes.

In both the Grand Council Copies and the Palace Archive Memorials, there are many reports by officials relating to the cases considered in this study. The reports include detailed descriptions of almost every aspect of the rebellions, such as the causes of the rebellions, the modes of organisation and military processes. They also include rebels’ communications and texts shedding light on how the rebels understood the movements of which they were part. Since the emperors sought to prevent the occurrence of further rebellion, the causes for such previous instances of rebellion were among the most important matters considered in these texts. The sources also include texts whose content derives directly from events of the rebellions such as scripts of the leaders or posters. These texts were collected by the local officials and sent to the imperial court with secret reports. These documents were normally collected to explain the

reason for the rebellions and the rebels' motivations for participation as well as their states of mind. As noted above, the emperor and the central government were eager to access this information in order to prevent such rebellions from happening again and to control dangerous ideas from spreading among the masses. The government officials also used this information to construct counter frames in order to disrupt the morale of the rebels' armies (with one example of this counter frame being a poster that the government used, see R2 in NMYDL).

The Secret Palace Memorials also contain significant numbers of confessions. These were normally sent to the emperor alongside the officials' reports. Some reports contain the citation of part or even the entirety of the rebels' confessions. In the case of many of these confessions, the full documents have been lost. Therefore, reading these reports was the way to gain information in the confessions that were recorded. In this study, I still consider the confessions cited in the reports as confessions rather than any other type of document. These are highly important documents to consider given the aims of the study. Ordinarily, when a rebel was captured by the government, this rebel would be interrogated. In the event that a rebel was captured by the government army, his first interrogation would likely be conducted by the officials of this army. In the case of other rebels who escaped or were not in the rebels' armies for other reasons, the interrogation would be conducted by local officials. These interrogations were typically conducted so that one rebel's testimony could be cross-checked with other rebels' and their oral accounts could be compared with the evidence that could be found. During this period, officials would discuss matters with each other and continue to investigate until they arrived at an understanding of the situation that they were satisfied with. In many cases, this process included the use of torture. Low-level local officials might use torture to force the rebels to confess their crimes in favour of the local interest. However, in respect of most ordinary rebels who did not lead the rebellions, there is no evidence to suggest that the low-level officials had significant conflicts of

interest with the central government. Furthermore, in the case of the rebels that were considered as important by the local officials, officials at the uppermost level of authority would monitor the interrogation processes, or these rebels would be sent to the higher level of government for interrogation. All the confessions made in this process would then be sent to the imperial court. Subsequently, if the situation allowed the rebels to be sent under escort to the capital without there being a risk of them escaping or being rescued by fellow rebels, these individuals would often be sent to the imperial court for further interrogation by the Ministry of Justice, often by the highest-ranking officials who were in many cases Grand Secretaries[11]. For the important cases, this would involve the procedure of “Joint Trial of Three Justice Departments” in which the confessed information would be checked by the Court of the Supervisory and Inspection and Court of Judicature and Revision (see the relevant information in QSG). There is a significant number of documents in both the Grand Council Copies and the Palace Archived Memorials that detail the procedure of investigation (see the relevant record in, e.g., C11 in LAD).

Although the documents in the Palace Archived Memorials are mostly original copies, the main sources considered for this study are the Grand Council Copies, supplemented with information from the Palace Archived Memorials. The strategy adopted included reading the Grand Council Copies first and then reading in detail only those documents in the Palace Archived Memorials that were not included in the Grand Council Copies but were nevertheless valuable to my research. The reasons for adopting this approach are as follows.

First, since the Grand Council Copies are copies of the original memorials, many memorials from the Palace Archived Memorials can be found in the Grand Council Copies. Moreover, while there are many duplicate documents in the Palace Archived Memorials and the Grand Council Copies, the latter documents contain more documents than can be accessed in the Palace

[11] This was highest official post within the Qing dynasty.

Archived Memorials. This is partly because many of the original copies have not been preserved in the Palace Archived Memorials; it is also relevant that the archive restricts public access to certain documents in the Palace Archived Memorials.

Second, as the Grand Council Copies contain copies of the original documents, the handwriting in these is generally clearer than is the case in respect of the Palace Archived Memorials. While the copying of the documents may have resulted in the removal of some of the information that could be acquired through studying the handwriting or other notation (a practice that is discussed further below), the handwriting in the Palace Archived Memorials is sometimes too difficult to interpret. Reading Grand Council Copies was therefore judged to be a more promising means of gaining a sharper sense of the documents' content.

Third, Grand Council Copies have a more specific classification than the Palace Archived Memorials on the topic of rebellions. For significant rebellions, the Qing authority would normally collect the documents relating to that rebellion under a specific classification. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, archivists reorganised and reclassified the documents in Grand Council Copies. This involved sorting many isolated documents that they found relating to social movements in the Qing dynasty under the specific category named peasant movements category (NMYDL). I found no similar category in the Palace Archived Memorials archives.

Both the Palace Archived Memorials and Grand Council Copies are primarily stored in the following archives: the First Historical Archives of China in Beijing, the National Palace Museum and the Fu Ssu-nien Library of Academia Sinica in Taipei. Each of these archives contains parts of whole records relating to the rebellions, and most of the sources can be viewed by the public. There are a few relevant documents that cannot be found in the archives, some of these are under restricted access to the public; others of which are preserved in other archives. However, I concluded that these complications would not influence the process of reading the relevant sources, as there would only be a small

number of documents not in the archives visited in the course of the fieldwork carried out for the present study. This number was gauged by making enquiries with archivists working in other institutions, such as Cambridge University Library. Existing studies were also consulted in relation to the approximate number of these documents (see, e.g., Naquin, 1976). In terms of these sources, in other archives, some of these can also be found in books which collect the sources together. Furthermore, it was also possible to investigate what is accessible through the archive and what is not and whether this would be likely to influence an investigation of the relevant sources. These two points are discussed in more detail below. Regarding the form of the documents, some of these documents have already been digitalised, while others are available for study in their original format or in microfilm.

Reduction procedures

There are vast numbers of memorials relating to the cases considered in this study, with a conservative estimate amounting to over 10,000. Given the magnitude of this number, it would not have been possible to isolate the actual number of the documents that one might fruitfully consider. The most useful sources were read selectively. In the case of digitalised documents, these were searched (in terms of title, year, author and so on) so that the appropriate source could be accessed. The non-digitalised documents typically did not have a title or index that one could use in electronic searches. When this was the case, it was only possible to scan non-digitalised documents quickly to find those that might be helpful to the present study. These most relevant documents included those relating to confessions, rebels' motives and the ideas underpinning the movements. Only these documents were read in detail. I did not read documents that appeared irrelevant to the research questions considered for this study. Of course, it is inevitable that taking this kind of approach risks missing certain documents containing useful information, especially fragments of confessions recorded in government reports that would not be easy to identify.

Moreover, adopting this approach only goes so far in reducing the number of documents to be considered. However, there are further ways to reduce this number. For example, there are many documents that have been duplicated in the Grand Council Copies. Moreover, in some categories, only a few documents are directly relevant to the cases considered in this study, and many of these are duplicates. For example, in the category of “Archives of the messages relating to captures and exterminations sent by the Imperial Court,” I found that only three of the 1,000 documents were likely to be relevant to the present study, and some of these were likely be found in other categories. In terms of the reason for this duplication, this relates to the history of the classification of these documents. The Grand Council Copies have been reclassified, at different times, for the various purposes of different authorities of the Qing dynasty, the Republic of China and the People’s Republic of China. While the detailed classifications of the Grand Council Copies were helpful for guiding my reading of the documents as a result of the presentation of the documents associated with the rebellions directly, the multiplicity of categories also means that some documents have been copied or photographed repeatedly. Furthermore, some are classified in ways that make their discovery difficult.

Moreover, most of the materials accessed for consideration in this study have not been digitalised. Given the topic of the present research and its considering several rebellions, it would not have been possible to peruse all the archival categories in depth in the manner of Naquin (1976; 1981), whose studies investigate only a single rebellion or are otherwise relatively small in scale. For this reason, my study considers only the following categories of the Grand Council Copies: Grand Council Copies of Secret Palace Memorials – Peasant Movement Category (NMYDL); Extermination and Capturing Archive (JBD); Archives of Wang Lun Rebellion (DAD); Archives of Lin Qing rebellion (LAD); Archives of the White Lotus Rebellion (JFD). I also use the imperial edict archives and the Grand Council Copies of Secret Palace Memorials – Legal Category (FL) where there is a significant case that is not covered by entries in the other categories. As I indicated in Chapter One, the names and abbreviated forms of these documents are listed in the references.

Other sources

In addition to the Secret Palace Memorials, I also analyse other collection of materials, being various published compilations collected and reprinted according to the primary source archival documents. Many of the materials in these collections come from the Secret Palace Memorials rather than other sources. I considered these collections of materials because the materials have been printed by machine, which makes it possible to consult them in a highly organised and systematic way. This is highly important as the materials in the archives are not well organised and there are the issues with handwriting I previously highlighted. Furthermore, as noted, these collections of materials also contain certain documents that cannot be accessed via the archive.

The collection in this type that I consider most frequently is "*Materials of the White Lotus Rebellion in Five Provinces in the Mid-Qing Dynasty"* (BLJZL) and "*Archives and Historical Materials of the Qing Government Suppression of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom"* (QZFZY). I also use certain similar types of collection of material relating to the other cases considered in this thesis. Most of the collections accessed were compiled by the archives and other institutes of the People's Republic of China. However, this set of materials also includes several collections that were compiled during the era of the Republic of China. The names and abbreviated forms of these collections are listed in the references.

There is also another type of collection of materials that were considered to contain many documents besides the Secret Palace Memorials. Within these sources, there are many documents that are not available within the Secret Palace Memorials but are instead collected by various other institutions and people, including some institutions not located in China. These people and institutions include Christian missionaries, diplomats and local people. These collections also contain some documents that are contained within the Secret Palace Memorials or their associated archives but that are also not open to the public, including the confessions. These documents were found to be valuable

sources for the present research. Such sources are especially important with respect to gaining insight into the Taiping rebellion because the Taiping rebellion brought about a new regime that itself gave rise to a lot of documents, and because of the effort of various people that enabled these to be preserved. An example is *"Books Printed by the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom."* After Taiping established its capital in Tianjing, it catalogued and printed important documents within this text, with 29 volumes. These books contain a lot of their original documents, and copies of these were given to foreign diplomats and missionaries. Many of them were also collected by non-governmental personages. While the Qing government destroyed a large number of these books, many scholars around the world collected some of the documents. Chinese scholars then recompiled a collection of these materials, choosing to retain the title of *"Books Printed by the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom"* (TPTGYS).

In addition to the Secret Palace Memorials and collection of materials, this study also refers to other types of sources such as local gazettes, diaries and literary works. However, these were accessed generally as a means of gaining further contextual or background information; most of their content is not used directly in my formal analysis.

Having sorted these sources, more than 500 confessions were used for the analysis I present, including the confessions detailed in government reports. In addition to the texts recorded in the confessions, there are over 30 documents containing texts that were produced by the rebels. The analysis I present here was put together using the content of over 1,000 government reports. However, I do not provide a more accurate number here to avoid misleading the reader, as I consulted some of these sources in detail, whereas I consulted others more cursorily.

I will then outline the more detailed methods utilised in considering the documents from my sources following the principles that I stated above. My focus remains on the confessions and the texts that the rebels used, especially those providing insight into their understanding of the rebellions. That said, the methods used for analysing other documents, especially officials' reports, are

also specified. As previously noted, the documents were considered in terms of three main perspectives: context, text and inter-text (see Moore et al., 2017). Furthermore, although I present my analysis from context to text and inter-text, I should emphasise once again that no strict sequence was followed in considering these three perspectives; rather, this was an iterative process.

Context analysis

Before considering the content of the documents directly, there is a need to understand the context in which they were produced and collected. This context includes the basic social circumstances of the time, the number and the classificatory procedure of the confessions, the process of interrogating the rebels and recording what they allegedly said that led to the production of the documents, and the process followed by the officials across the different levels of governments in reading and preserving these. The context also includes the ways of speaking and writing in place during the Qing era. All the documents within the sources considered were recorded using classical Chinese. Although the record of the confessions is similar to that used with the modern language, it is still important to pay attention to the differences in the words used. Furthermore, the context also includes diverse attitudes that are underpinned by, for example, power struggles within the governments and the rebels' activities, as well as the methods of preserving these documents. More generally, the context includes all the factors that could be gathered before reading the texts themselves in detail.

To understanding of this context, it is necessary to first specify an understanding of Chinese history and culture during the era when the rebellions happened. The materials I considered for this purpose included dedicated studies by scholars (primarily those discussed in Chapter One and Two). I also considered studies that included comments about the rebellions that were made by Confucianist academics of the Qing era, as well as comments made by other people, including officials, in their informal writings. After understanding the general context of Qing China and the specific local areas where rebellions

happened, I considered the context of the documents. There are many historical studies available that detail the Secret Palace Memorials system (see e.g., Chuang, 1979; Zhu, 1981). The website of the archives also provides information useful for this purpose. When I accessed the documents, I could also gain context information from the classifications. Most of these classifications were drawn up during the Qing era, but some were formulated at a later point. The documents also contain other information, such as the date and the name of the writer. There are also a number of interrogation guidelines. However, the information in these guidelines is not adequate for gaining a complete picture of the interrogation process used with the rebels. This is because these guidelines only specify the questions that the interrogators had to ask, the information that was necessary to obtain through investigation and a warning that obtaining this information was important. Moreover, these guidelines do not record any interactions between the investigator and the rebels or the actual interrogation procedure.

The context can provide significant information regarding how the documents were constructed. In particular, there are three points that are especially important to consider in relation to such contextual matters. These are matters on which the documents are silent, distortion of the presentation of certain matters within the documents, and modifications made by later collectors. Although addressing all these three points also requires that a detailed investigation be conducted of the documents' content, they cannot be interpreted without a full grasp of the context.

Firstly, in terms of the matters on which the documents are silent, while the documents "tell" us stories regarding the rebels and the rebellions, there are many matters that are not covered in such detail or at all. Although many of the documents were normally only read by the emperor and his ministers, the writers or the interrogators had to defer in relation to certain sensitive issues. An understanding of the context can assist with grasping this silent stratum of the documents. Therefore, when trying to understand the context, I sought to identify potential taboos when reading the histories and existing academic

works to see whether certain sensitive topics might have been avoided. Such taboo topics include but are not limited to attempts to overthrow the Qing dynasty, expelling the Manchu to establish a dynasty based on the Han majority, and rumours pertaining to the emperor. In most cases, if an individual was to mention any such matters as motivating their rebellious efforts, it is very likely that the officials would have to have considered very carefully whether they should include this information in the written records of the confessions.

If such sensitive issues were mentioned, the officials would, in some cases, use euphemistic phrases such as “commit highest treasons” or “speak the words that are the highest treason” as a way of discussing these topics without actually mentioning them. When these kinds of phrases appear in the documents, it is possible to arrive at a basic understanding of what the rebels might have said. The officials might also refer to certain matters in the reports that relate to these taboos without further explanation. Consider, for example, the discussion between the interrogators and rebels in the White Lotus rebellion regarding the Moon and the Sun and the significance of Ming. In this case, the interrogator recorded that the leader had symbols of the Sun and of the Moon on his hand. Combining these symbols results in a representation of Ming, the name of the previous dynasty. While it is not actually said that this combination of symbols would be associated with the Ming dynasty, it would have been clear to the officials and the emperors what this referred to in the confessions.

Corruption among officials is another likely candidate topic that would be taboo to mention. It is possible that certain officials would have sought to protect each other. Certain low-ranking officials are likely to have obscured details of problems affecting the local areas that they governed; high-ranking officials, meanwhile, are likely to have sought to protect low-ranking officials for their common interests. This might be the reason why topics such as rebels losing their livelihoods through official oppression or increased tax burdens are not explained in the confessions.

However, the taboos relating to corrupted officials would have applied only to low-status members; the question of official oppression or increased taxation,

which was mostly a result of corruption, was not necessarily taboo for the emperor. On the contrary, the emperor and certain high-level officials were keen to obtain information about local areas. It is possible that local or low-level officials changed the recorded reasons regarding why the very low-status rebels sought to engage in rebellions. However, although there were some officials who sought to lie to the central government about other matters, these local officials would not have been very likely to change the reasons in documents about higher-status rebels. And it is not very likely that these officials would have been able to collectively lie to the central government about topics such as the damage they might have inflicted on people's livelihoods. They knew that these rebels might be cross-examined by mutually reinforcing departments and that officials from different factions of the central government were also working in the local areas. If an individual was seen acting in a way that suggested that he or she wanted to hide the widespread corruption and problems of people's livelihood of local areas, this would likely be reported by others (see Dai, 2019; e.g., C1, C13, C14 in BLJZL; R3 in Grand Council Copies).

It is also the case that, seeking to act in a manner beneficial to themselves, rebels and officials would have been motivated to distort what they said or recorded. There is a lot of evidence of this kind of distortion in the documents. For example, in the confessions, some rebels who ranked the highest appear to have played down their role in the rebellion; some officials appear to have exaggerated the influence of these rebels in order to obtain promotion from the imperial court. However, by considering both the context and the content of the documents, it is possible to gain a sense of which procedures or elements are most likely to have been distorted. For example, in the confessions, because the highest-ranking rebels were very likely to be cross-examined by government officials at various levels, the wise course for officials would have been to avoid distorting the confessions to an excessive extent. However, the confessions of lower-status rebels would have been more likely to have been distorted, as the fact these people were unlikely to be cross-examined would give the interrogator greater freedom to lead these people to confess what they wanted to hear. At the same time, the social context in which documents were

produced might also have had effects on the form and content of the documents. Within other social contexts, the government would have had different requirements for documents. For instance, at the start point of the rebellion, the officials would have focused on investigating the reasons for the rebels' participation or military information. When it comes to the later period, however, the government is likely to have had a greater interest in where the rebels were hiding. This is a factor that would likely have affected the extent to which the content of these documents was distorted.

This last point concerns the possibility of revision by collectors. The archives of the Qing dynasty have been preserved by a diverse range of bodies as authorities of the Qing dynasty, those of the Republic of China and those of the People's Republic of China. Although collectors are unlikely to have modified the contents directly, they may have reconstructed history by classification. Furthermore, in the collection of materials considered for this study, the documents have often been re-classified. Collectors may, for instance, choose documents that place greater emphasis on recollections that reflect their own view of history and curate them to shape the "facts" that readers become aware of through these documents. This is particularly important for the Chinese context, as the governments (of both Qing and later regimes) used to view historiography as a way of governance. It has been common for regimes, both modern and pre-modern, to reinterpret and censor certain historical events to orient the public discourse and increase their legitimacy (see e.g., Perry, 2017; Spence, 2001; Wang, 2008).

Views of history have changed across these different regimes: the Qing dynasty court had a negative attitude towards the rebellions that rose against it, whereas the authorities of the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China were and have been more positive about them. The precise degree of positivity may itself be found to have changed at different times to reflect the authorities' attitudes and the political situations at hand. To understand the context of the

Qing documents, it is, therefore, necessary to understand the context in which the documents were produced. It is also necessary to understand the social context in which they were collated and collected and even the attitudes of those in charge of the institutions in which they are stored.

Textual analysis

Now that I have presented my understanding of the context. I can now turn to present the analysis of the documents in terms of their text. Before embarking on this task, however, I made sure to obtain further contextual details relating to each document. These included details such as the author, the time of writing, the title and heading, etc., and characteristics of the events in the rebellions mentioned in the documents. This information was usually found in the texts of the documents, although such details were considered with the general context-related information obtained in the analysis detailed above.

During the first reading of each document, the focus was on obtaining not a high level of detail of the content but rather an idea of some of the notation within the document. In the documents that it was possible to consult in their original form, certain styles of writing may be considered to indicate a certain attitude towards the rebels and the rebellions. Even with documents that have survived only in copy form, the font size and symbols indicating modification are also potentially reflective of the recording regulation and possibly the recorder's attitudes to the confessions detailed therein or other related facts. For example, if a person's name is marked with a cross symbol, this may indicate that he or she had been executed; if the name is marked with a circle, this may indicate that he or she was an important rebel who was being pursued.

This process having been completed, I began to read the detailed content of the documents. As noted above, the confessions of rebels and the reports of the ministers were recorded in classical Chinese, which has many differences from modern vernacular Chinese. Given this, it was important to consider information relating to how people speak and write in the process of reading

these documents. It was also important to pay attention to the meaning of any words that I felt confused about or could not understand, and to any words or grammar with meanings different to modern usage.

Such matters necessitate that attention also be paid to the conventions of recording and the attitudes of the officials, interrogators and rebels. This can assist with gaining a sense of how the writings were constructed when officials and interrogators were writing, and the rebels made confessions, as well as the normative understandings of these actors.

The important conventions of recording utilised with the archival documents considered here include but without being limited to their structure and the terms they use. The structure of the documents and the sequence of the interrogation in the confessions reflect the information desired by the state and what the state regarded itself as required to know in terms of the regulation of the officials and the interrogators. However, when certain issues are discussed in a high level of detail or the details are neglected, this may also shed light on the writers' own thoughts, and so further investigation might also be needed of the context and similar texts. At the same time, I also needed to consider the structure of the rebels' confessions and the texts used by the rebels, as these show the normative understandings of the rebels and what they would have wanted to emphasise. However, where the rebels' words are organised in an apparently deliberate way by the recorder, as was the case in certain texts, this may be regarded as shedding light on the priorities of the state regarding its attitude towards these rebels.

The use of certain terms is another of the most important ways of gaining insight into the information that the rebels might not have disclosed. Here, using the context to assist the reading of the texts is especially important. For example, consider the string "commit the most heinous crimes". This can be interpreted using the knowledge that, in Qing China, the most heinous crimes were usually associated with activities that were directed against the emperor and his imperial court.

Thus, this understanding, when this term is used to describe a rebel, this may reflect that the rebel was viewed as being of the highest status by the state, notwithstanding that his status may not be marked in any other confessions or reports (see e.g., R4 in Grand Council Copies). On the other hand, when used to describe the speech of individuals, even if the documents do not mention what was truly said, it is possible to infer that what was said was highly offensive to the authorities. When used to describe certain texts that the rebels used, even if these texts were not included in the documents or were incomplete in other ways, it can be reasonably inferred that this term is used euphemistically to refer to a sensitive subject.

It is also important to consider tones and attitudes that are demonstrated by the texts of the sources. In both the rebels' texts and the governmental reports, the use of certain mood particles often indicated what the officials and rebels considered to be the case in relation to certain topics discussed therein. In the confessions, the rebels' tones are likely to shed light on their emotion and the approach they took to construct their stories. It is likely that certain rebels who feared the prospect of being punished for their crimes and wished to beg for the mercy of the state would have sought to avoid confessing their guilt in their confessions. Rebels who did not fear death, on the other hand, are less likely to have engaged in efforts to cover up their activities, albeit it might also be the case that they sought to avoid divulging information that would have incriminated their accomplices. At the same time, the tone and the attitudes of the interrogators and officials are also very important, providing insight into their normative understanding of the rebels. For instance, if the officials considered the rebels foolish, this might indicate that their conclusions underestimated the rebels under investigation. However, when exploring the tones of the officials and interrogators, I needed to keep in mind that the attitudes of the interrogators would probably have been strongly influenced by the pre-decided outlines specified for interrogation and the attitudes of the higher-level officials.

Inter-textual analysis

Analysis of the content of individual texts can provide insights into the particular actors involved in the creation of these texts. However, only by reading different texts together can more information can be obtained. For instance, where the tone of a rebel's statement suggests that he or she might have been hiding information to avoid punishment, it might be possible to discover the nature of this information by also considering other texts.

When reading the documents, I noted and compared overlapping descriptions of the same persons or events from different documents, including the government reports and confessions, to locate points of conflict and tension between these different descriptions. This method is similar to that used in Naquin's (1976) study of the confessions produced during the Eight Trigrams rebellion. However, in addition to comparing descriptions of events and persons, I also compared the structures and tones of and attitudes expressed within different documents as a means of gaining further insight. I also compared the texts in the documents produced by the rebels and the same texts that the rebels described in their confessions and official's reports, given that it is possible that there are differences in the texts that the rebels produced and the content that the rebels recalled. Furthermore, if certain parts of the recorded texts appear several times in the rebels' confessions, this suggests that those texts were most frequently used in the process of the rebellions.

In addition to comparing the content of different documents, I also read comments made in reference to other documents within these documents. Several studies (Stoler, 2002; Wallace, 2011) stress the importance of agencies of authority regarding the organisation of information, overseeing the production of documents, determining how documents are produced and probing how documents are used to influence statecraft. Here it is necessary to clarify that in Stoler's work, she uses the word "commissions" in reference to the specific cases she discusses in a similar manner to my use of "agencies" here. These studies also advocate the practice of considering the communication of the agent's members as shedding light on the states' attitudes and ideas regarding accessing the information and the production of

the documents. Regarding the investigation of the rebellions, there were organisations that determined which documents would be publicly accessible once the rebellions had been suppressed. However, there is no evidence of any permanent or formal body that was in charge of further commissioning or censoring the documents in this way, interactions between the different levels of the state hierarchy can be viewed as some kind of agency that shaped the production of these imperial documents. The government reports associated with these interactions can be viewed as the productions of the communications engaged in for this purpose. This is because, in these documents, government officials would discuss the production of other documents and the information contained within these documents, especially the confessions. In some cases, the officials may gather prior to the interrogations to discuss the outline of the questions that should be asked in interrogation and report these to the imperial court (see e.g., C14, C15 in BLJZL). When the interrogators or higher-level officials submitted these confessions and other documents, they always reported back to the emperor regarding the topics covered in these documents and how they were produced. For example, these officials would make recommendations in terms of the accuracy and value of the documents that they had collected or what the rebels had confessed. In the case of certain, particularly important confessions, a report would be produced to detail the results of discussions among officials. The emperor would also reply to these reports when he considered it necessary. The officials would also discuss the texts for mobilisation that they had collected. It is possible for certain pointers to be inferred regarding the officials' normative understanding of certain topics in the rebels' texts and how their understanding likely shaped the topics covered within the rebels' texts.

These reports shed further light on the state's attitudes towards the confessions they elicited. They also provide a means of understanding what was constructed by the officials or rebels in question. For instance, in several cases,

it is clear that the rebels initially sought to deny their roles in the rebellion. However, a detailed investigation of the officials' reports, including details from the cross-examination of different rebels as well as the examination of material evidence found in rebels' homes, shows the officials had what they regarded as sufficient evidence to consider them leading members of the rebel organisation. In other cases, although the rebels were presented as leaders by lower-level officials, it seems clear that they made such confessions only in response to being tortured. In addition, considering the documents also involved reading the descriptions of the rebels who confessed in other documents by other rebels, interrogators and officials, with such documents shedding light on how the officials viewed this person and how the rebels viewed him or her as a fellow member of the cause. This provided an understanding of their characters and their world views, assisting with the task of decoding how a document was constructed.

Finally, documents from other sources are also useful in this task, with such documents including analyses by scholars of the Qing dynasty, certain local gazettes and even analyses by later scholars, etc. While such documents are not primary sources within the analysis, they do provide clues useful for understanding the documents consulted from the archive.

Once I had a relatively comprehensive understanding of the production of the individual documents and the information recorded within these, I then identified every oral statement and text that discussed the rebels' understanding of the rebellions. These were read together with the general information expressed in the individual documents. This was done to gain a basic understanding of why particular oral statements were recorded and what oral statements were probably made but without being recorded. Following this, I considered how and for what purpose these texts and oral statements were constructed and the nature of the language and rhetoric utilised in the construction processes based on the understanding arrived at in the previous steps.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the sources, materials and methodologies used in the analysis conducted for this study. The main sources consulted include rebels' confessions, texts and reports by officials. The methodology of reading the sources follows a constructivist lens. I read the sources with a view to gaining an understanding from three perspectives, these being context, texts and intertexts.

The methodology I adopted made it possible to gain further understanding of the messages exchanged between the rebels, which provided insight into the ideas that these rebels sought to communicate to each other. After gaining an understanding of the documents and obtaining basic information in this way, further analysis was conducted. At this stage, specific attention was paid to if different rebels could have different ideas and how their ideas possibly changed. This involved close consideration of not only the oral communications and texts produced by the rebels but also the interactions of the actors. Chapter One detailed that some recent scholarship (Go and Lawson, 2017; Lawson, 2016, 2019; Zhang, 2016) has paid attention to how the dynamic interaction of different forces can influence the start, process and outcomes of revolutions. Although the analysis presented here focuses on the ideational elements of the rebellions considered, the interaction of different actors can be regarded as having influenced the ideational processes of the rebellions, especially in the event that different actors had different ideas within the movement. Therefore, the analysis presented in the following chapters also refers to this approach and considers the interactions of the rebels in the record of the source.

In the following chapters, I detail how the sources and methodology outlined here were used to conduct the analysis. As a result of constraints relating to space, I do not present a comprehensive analysis of each document considered or the methodological approach used for this; however, with each of the sources in the following chapters, I used the methodology discussed in this chapter to gain insight into the process of their construction. Furthermore, where this is appropriate, the specific details of the methodology adopted are specified more fully in later chapters to shed light on the nature of exemplar texts or oral

statements. There are also a few methods of analysis that only apply within a single chapter. This methodology is especially significant when analysing rebels mentioned in individuals' confessions. The methodology used for such cases is discussed in the respective chapters rather than here.

Chapter 4 Where do we start? The patterns of different rebellious ideas at the start of the rebellions

Introduction

This chapter focuses on discussing the patterns among the sources of motivation underpinning the rebels' participation in the movements. These can be regarded as reflecting the ideas relating to the rebels' understanding of the purpose of the rebellions when they first came to participate in them and how they considered they might achieve these purposes. The core finding of this chapter is that it is possible to observe similarities across the rebellions in terms of these patterns of sources of motivation. These sources of motivation emerge as being associated with organisational status. However, while the sources of motivation relating to heterodox religious ideas do seem to be associated with the rebels' status, I also provide evidence that there were links to whether the rebels who held these religious motivations were (socially and physically) close to or distant from the religious leaders.

The analysis of these patterns provided a starting point for investigating the rebels' ideas reflected in their communications in terms of the purposes, processes and outcomes of the respective rebellions. Furthermore, through consideration of the sources of motivation that the rebels had, certain difficulties become evident regarding the rebels' ability to reach a consensus on the relevant heterodox religious ideas. This finding is couched in the point that the rebels who were either too far or too close to the leaders would have been unlikely to have the required confidence in the magical claims they made or the ideas associated with these claims.

The sources informing the analysis presented in this chapter are the rebels' confessions and ministers' reports. These documents record communications

that provide details of the strategies regarding the initial mobilisation of the rebellious organisations, particularly in terms of the recruitment of participants.

The analysis presented in this chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, there is a discussion of the rebels' sources of motivation and the links with the rebels' organisational status. I first introduce a taxonomy using the relevant fragment accounts by rebels in the confessions. This shows that the confessions provide records of the mobilisation strategies that the rebellious organisations used to engage potential participants. Within the relevant sources, these strategies are usually summarised by the interrogators. For example, when a rebel explained in detail what he said when his father asked him to participate, the interrogators usually recorded that the individual in question followed his father's wishes if he was not an important rebel whom they would have been especially interested in pursuing. Because of the brief summaries written by the interrogators, it is not possible to use their accounts to investigate in detail the communications between the rebels and potential participants. However, the strategies that were used to successfully mobilise the potential participants do assist in shedding light on these potential participants' motives and purpose in their participation. It can be reasonably inferred that, where a potential participant was persuaded by a particular strategy, he or she at least broadly accepted the ideas underpinning the relevant strategy. I divide the various sources of motivation underpinning the mobilising strategies into four categories: motivation based on heterodox religious ideas, motivation based on personal motivations (including sources of motivation sharing a link with the current dynastic-order-related ideas and other personal motivations), motivation relating to eliminating perceived threats, and motivation associated with relationships (between the rebels and potential participants).

The sources of motivation based on the heterodox religious ideas I analysed are related to the heterodox religions that I previously discussed. The sources of motivation based on dynastic-orders-related ideas are those that could only

have been achieved through establishing a similar dynasty after the success of the given rebellion. The source of motivation relating to the elimination of perceived threats applies in the case of potential participants who were forced to join the given rebellion through coercion by other rebels or because they thought that they were being investigated by the government. Finally, the category of relationships applies to potential participants who were mobilised to join the rebel cause through the relationships they had with others, normally family members, friends or the people who hired labourers.

I also investigate the rebels' status. The records of rebels' confessions and ministers' reports also shed light on the potential participants' status in the rebel organisations at the point of their joining. As outlined in Chapter One, the organisational status of a given rebel refers to his or her level of power and position when he or she participated in the rebellion. An individual's status was determined by piecing together information in the archival documents, such as discussions between rebels' and between officials' and the title given to the individual in the rebellious organisations. Dividing the rebels into different categories based on their organisational status is also helpful in terms of the question of whether different participants operated on the basis of different kinds of motivation. As discussed in Chapter One, the power that the rebels had, the respect they got from others and the people whom they more frequently interacted with in the organisations were not fully decided by their previous social status. In this respect, their actual status within the various rebellious organisations provides a clearer basis for distinguishing these rebels. This underpins the focus on organisation status in this chapter. My analysis categorises the rebels across four levels according to their initial status in the rebellious organisations, labelled the highest status, high status, middle status and low status.

In considering the content of the confessions and conducting analyses using cross tables, I argue that there is a general correlational relationship between organisational status and the kinds of motivation underpinning the mobilisation of people of each status. I also argue that this association generally echoes the findings of resource mobilisation theory (see, e.g., Cress and Snow, 1996). The

theory is posited that, for a social movement to enact mobilisation, there are certain resources or a certain level of resources that must be present.

Within the context of the rebellious organisations, the participants would have needed to use the resources they had in exchange for materials and human resources. Potential participants who held valuable resources are likely to have expected key benefits from participating in the movements. Those who recruited participants often mobilised these individuals using strategies such as offering them various benefits or even official posts. As previously discussed, obtaining such an official rank would have been extremely difficult for anyone who had not received a Confucianist education. Furthermore, people with access to highly sought-after resources could come to occupy an important position much more easily within the rebellious organisations, whatever their educational status. In the case of people who lacked these resources, other methods of recruitment were utilised by the rebels, including coercion through threats of violence, warning them of potential government attacks or encouraging them to join the movement to follow in the paths of their family members or friends.

There is reason to believe that theory of resource mobilisation cannot be applied to analyse the kinds of motivation relating to heterodox religious ideas in such premodern rebellions, at least not straightforwardly. It is unlikely to be appropriate to view these ideas as relating to limited resources that the rebels could use to mobilise others, as the heterodox religions of China themselves did not typically limit the number of people who could participate. To address this, I demonstrate in the second half of this chapter that these heterodox religious ideas were not only or completely associated with status; rather, they were also influenced by factors of social and physical distance between the religious leaders and the rebels. Within the set of rebels who were motivated by heterodox religious ideas, there were more rebels who were positioned at a moderate social and physical distance from the leaders than there were rebels who were far from or close to these individuals.

The social and cultural contexts of premodern China shed light on the association between heterodox religious ideas and the influence of social and

physical distance in relation to the religious leaders. As previously highlighted, the concept of the charismatic leader investigated here is slightly different from what Weber originally discussed. In Weber's (2019) argument, people consider leaders as charismatic according to their personal characteristics, which vary from person to person. However, it is my argument that leaders' charisma in the premodern Chinese rebellions is decided by whether the leaders can present certain relatively fixed elements that have already been indicated in their cultural context. In this respect, what is proposed here is closer to an extension of the Weberian definition, in the vein of work by many other scholars (Shils, 1965). In this context, the prospective ruler of China could be from any class or occupation. However, leaders would also require to demonstrate to their followers that they were chosen for this role by Heaven. One of the core elements evidencing the leader's destiny was his or her abilities with respect to supernatural powers (see, Seidel, 1983; Ter Haar, 1998; Wakeman, 1977). Such supernatural powers are not a certain personality or virtue beyond others, but genuine supernatural powers relating to the ability to, for example, summon the gods, stop a bullet or make it rain. Nevertheless, the followers around such leaders would have had a high level of ability to assess whether such leaders really had charismatic characteristics. It would have been harder for leaders to cause their followers who were close to them to trust their supernatural ability, certainly in comparison with followers who were stationed at a greater distance. This would have been especially important in Chinese religious rebellions because the religious sects and even the later armies of these rebellions had both a political goal that was more secular and a religious one that was more millenarian. The goals of the rebellions related to different results of the respective rebellions, with the political goal relating to the preservation of the old order (building a similar imperial dynasty) and the religious goal relating to challenging this order (Seidel, 1983; Ter Haar, 1998).

Those who participated in the rebellions did not need to pursue only one goal. Many of them may not have been very devout believers in the heterodox religions. However, they did not need to leave the rebellious organisation even if they did not believe in the religion. The rebellious organisations had enough scope to incorporate even such non-believers, as they were both political and

religious.

Rebels stationed at a greater distance tended to act out of kinds of motivation that did not relate closely to the heterodox religious ideas. The religious messages of the heterodox religious rebellions were typically very vague, being conveyed only through orally transmitted stories. One reason for this may be that the rebels sought to avoid government persecution; however, it is also possible to couch an explanation in the rebels' fear of revealing Heaven's will (C16 in BLJZL; SHZ; see also the description of Heaven's will in the 'precious scrolls,' found in Chuang, 2002). The vagueness of these messages would have made it hard to truly grasp the meaning of the religious ideas, particularly in such an era when the communication of information was much harder than is the case today. Given this, it is reasonable to conclude that the rebels stationed further afield would have been less easily motivated to participate on the basis of these ideas. This finding relating the religious motives and ideas is likely to tie in with one's understanding of how culture and people's imaginations have shaped and constrained charismatic legitimacy.

Categories of motivation underpinning participation in the rebellions

As previously discussed, mobilisation strategies provide a way of understanding a given rebel's motives for participating in a given rebellion. Such strategies also shed explanatory light on the ideas underpinning the goals associated with such rebellions. Although the successful use of such strategies cannot reflect all of the ideas underpinning the rebels' actions, they should be considered as at least recognising the ideas of the purpose for participating in the rebellions indicated by the strategies.

The approach by which the rebels were motivated into participation can be categorised into two groups: The first group was the rebels who participated on the basis of their own volition. The second group was those who were persuaded to participate by some external force. The external forces could have

been used to persuade the rebels in the latter group in the following ways: 1. persuasion based on their personal circumstances; 2. the existence of a close relationship with those who were already involved in the rebellion (e.g., family members); and 3. taking advantage of external forces to coerce the potential participants to become involved (e.g., making the potential participants believe that they were under government investigation and had to participate in resisting) (see the archival documents in, e.g., C17 in NMYDL; C18 in NMYDL; C19 in BLJZL).

To ensure that the analysis is presented sufficiently clearly, this chapter discusses only the range of approaches that the rebels adopted in their efforts to ensure that the potential participants joined, all of which fall into the second group. This is because it is easier to obtain direct evidence relating to this category, as such matters include communications between the rebels and potential participants. The examination of many such forms of communication also benefits from the cross-examination conducted by the interrogators, as well as my own checking of the sources. However, the first category relates purely to the rebels' own thoughts and would have been hard for the interrogators to verify. In addition, the number of rebels of the second group who reported that someone else had mobilised them to engage in the rebellion is greater than the number of rebels of the first group who did not report this to be the case.

I summarise all the forms of motivation underlying the mobilisation strategies in the analysis presented in this chapter. This is because, as highlighted above, many oral statements between the rebels and potential participants in the confessions are not the original oral statements made by the rebels themselves but rather more thematic or summary statements made by the interrogators. Therefore, it is difficult to know the detailed content of communications of every rebel mentioned in the various documents.

The rebellious organisations used many strategies to mobilise potential participants, and these mobilisation strategies drew on a wide array of different sources of motivation. I present a summary of the sources of motivation in Table 1 below. There are some sources of motivations that appear only once in the sources considered. For the cases placed in the line of “other” in the table, I do not discuss these further after this table. The first column of the table states the most general categories of these sources of motivation belong (marked in bold letters) and the label assigned to each of these (with the numerical serial number); the second provides the explanations of the sources of motivation. Hereafter, I use only the names of the sources and the additional explanations are omitted.

Table 1 Categories of sources of motivation underpinning rebels’ participation

Category of source of motivation	Explanation
Heterodox religion	
1.Religious factors	Participation for reasons relating to religion or the perception of magic (e.g., ideas about a future disaster relating to supernatural powers)
Personal motives	
--Dynastic-order-related	
1.Bureaucratic ambitions	Participation for reasons grounded in promises that the individuals would become officials or otherwise powerful in future regimes
2.Obtaining benefits	Participation for reasons relating to the promise of certain tangible benefits, such as money or farmland (but not official posts)
3.Restoration of Ming dynasty	Participation because of the belief that this would lead to the restoration of the Ming dynasty

Table 1 Categories of sources of motivation underpinning rebels' participation (continued)

Category of source of motivation	Explanation
--Other personal motives	
1.Obtaining money immediately	Participation as a way of being paid money immediately
2.Participation of others	Participation on the basis of the perception that many other people had rebelled
3.Revenge	Participation as a result of being convinced that revenge should be taken on the government for causing suffering
4.Livelihood	Participation as an approach to survive.
Elimination of threat	
1.Violent coercion	Participation in the face of violent coercion (e.g., threats from other rebels)
2.Government investigation	Participation on the basis of a perception that the government was investigating the individual to establish whether he or she belonged to any illegal organisations associated with the rebellion (and the associated perception that joining the rebellion could help with avoiding a penalty)
Relationships	
1.Persuasion by healers	Participation for the reason that someone who (was believed to have) cured an individual's illness persuaded him or her to join the cause
2.Following family members	Participation because a family member persuaded them to do so
3.Following friends	Participation as a result of a friend persuading the individual to do so
4.Following employers	Participation as a result of the individual's employer persuading him or her to do so
5.Older sect members	Participation on the basis that the individual had already been a member of a related secret society for a long time
Other	Sources of motivations appearing only once in the sources considered, which would not be further discussed

Table 1 details the 16 main types of sources of motivation underpinning the rebels' engagement, divided into four categories. Some sources of motivation require further explanation and justification in terms of the choices made regarding their categorisation. This is primarily due to the nature of classical Chinese, particularly that used in records of reports and confessions. Specifically, in such documents, classical Chinese tends to be used in a highly euphemistic manner, necessitating further enquiry as to the full meaning of such utterances.

For the sources of motivation relating to relationships, in many of the confessions, the interrogators did not record the specific forms of the words that were used to persuade the potential participants. There is also a tendency to avoid directly pointing out the specific reasons for a rebel's participation; instead, the records tend to include strings such as "someone [one or a few of the individual's family members] asked me to participate, so I participated." They also tend to state that the given person was the individual's family member, friend or employer in confessions or reports. However, where it is nevertheless clear from reading the confessions that the participant in question was influenced by his or her family members, friends or employer, these cases still fall to be considered as being due to one of the individual's relationships.

There are other situations in which the rebels were mobilised and mentioned in a way similar to the cases discussed above, namely the sources of motivation relating to the participation of others and violent coercion. Regarding sources of motivation in the former category, it is possible that the rebels did not directly mention, as recorded in the confessions, that they were motivated to participate based on others' participation. However, in his or her confession, the rebel might state that many people had agreed to participate in the rebellious cause before mentioning that he or she had also agreed to participate in this way. It seems from the texts that these people were motivated by promises of what

they could gain. For this reason, this theme is categorised as a case of a personal source of motivation.

Regarding sources of motivation categorised as violent coercion, in a small number of the confessions, the members of low status are sometimes described as having "been forced to join the rebellions (by a person or an army)." However, because these rebels were of such low status and their confessions were very short, there is often little or no record of the language used when they were forced to participate in the rebellion. Nevertheless, in the cases of people who were threatened to participate in a rebellion, they would typically need to receive certain information from others, which would make it necessary to use potentially threatening dialogue. Reading the confessions gives one the strong sense that these factors were among the most important reasons for the participation of such individuals. This is why these sources of motivation are categorised in this way.

There are certain mobilising strategies recorded in the confessions that might have been modified by the rebels or the interrogators during an interrogation process. In addition, it must be conceded that the rebels' true ideas may not always be those stated in their confessions. It must also be conceded that they might have hidden from the interrogator other ideas regarding their participation in the uprisings. This notwithstanding, as previously discussed, if most of the rebels considered were successfully mobilised by strategies utilised by those in power within the rebellions, it is reasonable to consider these individuals as having countenanced the ideas underpinning these strategies. In addition, the interrogators at the time would also have cross-checked the reasons given for certain rebels' participation. And the records relating to sources of motivation were also checked using the methodology specified in the previous chapter.

Moreover, while this chapter does consider the full range of sources of motivation underpinning the rebels' participation, I pay more attention to those

relating to heterodox religious ideas and those relating to the dynastic order within the categories of personal motives. This allows for a more thorough analysis of the ideas relating to the rebels' understanding of the goals of the uprisings in which they participated, as well as the approaches taken to achieve these movements' aims. It is also less likely that the rebels would have lied in this case because these two sources of motivation would have been very sensitive and would only lead to harder punishment.

However, it is important to acknowledge the significant roles that relationships and threats played in the mobilisation of the participants. This can be seen for around half of the rebels that are recorded in the confessions as having engaged in the White Lotus rebellion, the Eight Trigrams rebellion or the Taiping rebellion. Detailed investigation and discussion of the roles of relationships and coercive threats are a topic that could be fruitfully considered in future studies.

Following the guidelines stated above, Table 2 presents data relating to the confessions in terms of the total number of rebels that were mobilised as a result of the different sources of motivation.

Most rebels appear to have been motivated to participate by one source of motivation, although there is evidence in some of the confessions people were motivated to participate as a result of two factors; another six rebels are analysed as having been motivated to participate due to three factors. These are added together in the total number. However, the numbers that are repeated are also included within parentheses. However, in cases where the rebels are highlighted as having been motivated through more than three different strategies, these are not included in the confessions analysed. This is because the statements made by such rebels during their confessions frequently appear to be inconsistent.

In the following Table 2,4,5,6, if one confession included a group of rebels who discussed being mobilised by a single factor simultaneously, they were

considered as one person; if, on the other hand, a group of rebels or a rebel appeared to have been motivated by two different factors, they were counted as two persons. However, data are also provided regarding the number of people who are counted multiple times in parentheses. Furthermore, in the event that a rebel discusses how other participants were mobilised to participate in the confession, and these participants do not have their own confessions, the other participants are included. I do this to show how many people have more than one motivation.

Table 2 The numbers of rebels motivated to participate by each source of motivation

Source of motivation	White Lotus	Eight Trigrams	Taiping
Religious factors	24(3)	13(4)	7(1)
Bureaucratic ambitions	21(7)	12(4)	10(3)
Obtaining of benefits	7(1)	14(1)	3
Restoration of Ming dynasty	6(3)		
Obtaining money immediately		12(6)	
Participation of others	29(6)	3(1)	2
Revenge	6(2)		
Livelihood			5
Violent coercion	30(6)	44(5)	70
Government investigation	27(5)		2(1)
Persuasion by healers		5(1)	1
Following family members	13(1)	42(4)	7(4)
Following friends	10	66(2)	3(2)
Following employers	2(1)	13	2
Older sect members		7(1)	
Summary	175(35)	231(29)	112(11)

There are also 13 confessions by individuals who participated in the Wang Lun rebellion to consider, which I briefly discuss in this chapter. I also refer to a few confessions by rebels who participated in the Taiping rebellion. These do not feature in the discussion I present here, but they are discussed very briefly in

the next chapter.

Categorising levels of organisational status

It is clear that many rebels were mobilised through the use of particular strategies, suggesting that they could be motivated based on similar understandings of the rebellious causes. However, how do the strategies used to mobilise these individuals to relate to who they were as people? This question underpins my investigation of the matter of organisational status. This is done without a detailed investigation of other variables because the rebels' power appears to have been more closely linked to their organisational status than any pre-existing social status, occupation, etc., although a more detailed quantitative analysis could be conducted on these variables. To investigate links between rebels' ideas and their organisational statuses, I first explore the status of the rebels when they first joined the rebellions. This is because the source of motivation that I consider relate to the time when the rebels first came to participate in the rebellions. The motives of the rebels may well have changed (sometimes significantly) as the rebellions progressed.

It is hard to find a single way to measure the status of the individuals participating in the rebellions at the very outset. This is because neither the Qing authorities nor the rebels' organisations recorded information about these matters in the sources considered in this study. However, it is vital that I classify the rebels' status into clearer categories. This is done according to the following standard.

In this study, I divide the rebels into four groups in accordance with their organisational status. I first highlight the most influential rebels in the rebellion and define these as being of the highest status. Most of these individuals oversaw local areas. They may have also participated in the initial planning and

organisation of the rebellion at the very earliest stages. The high-status rebels, meanwhile, were the assistants of those of the highest status, and would normally have been stationed in a relatively high status of the secret societies and rebel armies. The middle-status rebels were those who were lower-level members of the secret society or who joined the rebellions as low-level officials, normally with the title of military official. The low-status rebels would have been soldiers within the rebellions, often low-status members who did not fully enrol within the rebellions. This set of individuals would have included, for example, those who agreed to enrol as low-status members but deserted the cause before they could participate to the fullest extent.

There are three ways in which I identified the status of each rebel according to the information in the confessions and the government reports. Firstly, I consulted the confessions themselves. The rebellions investigated here all grew out of one or a few secret religious societies, with these societies providing the initial foundations for the movements that would ultimately develop into the rebellious armies following the initial outbreak. Within the context of a rebellious army, the status of individuals would have been clearer. For example, there were the titles of Zongbing or Bazong. Zongbing was a title normally bestowed upon a commander of an area. Bazong referred to a junior military officer with the power to command 10 to 100 people. Both were official army posts that had explicit rankings in a way that did not apply to individuals within a secret society. There are no signs in the confessions that can be interpreted as directly revealing the status of the rebels in the secret societies. However, it is still possible to interpret some evidence to gain insight into this matter. Some of these individuals clearly played a significant role in their secret societies, for example, participating in the initial uprising and high-level meetings held in preparation for the rebellion or having access to significant material resources or to followers that would eventually become rebels. Such individuals would have been highly sought-after among those leading the cause.

The second way of gaining insight into the position of the rebels involves considering how these rebels are defined in the reports. In some reports sent to the imperial court, the rebels are described as, for example, having committed the most heinous crimes or sins that could not be pardoned at all. It is likely that such strong words would have only been used with high-status individuals in the rebellions. Other rebels might only have been considered as not deserving the death penalty. This might indicate that the rebels were of relatively low status.

The third means of ascertaining the level of a rebel was the penalty that would be imposed on him or her. For example, within the Qing Code (DQLL), there were three kinds of death penalty that could be imposed upon a condemned individual: lingering, beheading and hanging. A 'lingering death' was a truly cruel experience, involving the executioner cutting off the condemned individuals' flesh piece by piece until he or she died of shock resulting from pain or blood loss. Because of its cruelty, this method was viewed as the most severe punishment, imposed only on criminals who had committed the most serious crimes. Considering the observations regarding the correlation between the rebel's level of rank and the seriousness of his or her crime, if he or she was given a lingering death, this suggests that he or she was a high-ranking rebel. If the rebel is recorded as having received 'immediate decapitation,' by contrast, this indicates that he or she was executed instantly, usually through beheading. These individuals would not have been considered individuals to be made an example of, and would likely have been of lower status.

I apply this standard to the government reports because the prominent cases to consider are rebellions that each lasted for a long period. It is likely that government attitudes towards the rebels shifted, influencing the penalties imposed on convicted rebels as the rebellions went on. Take the White Lotus rebellion as an example. In the initial stages, when the rebellion was just

starting, the imperial court tended to apply harsh penalties to the rebels. However, when the rebellions became very large, the imperial court reduced the severity of the punishments imposed to encourage more rebels to surrender (see e.g., C20 in BLJZL; Chuang, 2002).

Of course, there are often differences between the content of different sources, and some rebels are likely to have denied their activities or even their rankings in the rebel armies when pressed for this information. In some sources, the description of the rebels may also be different. However, the methodology adopted for reading these materials (detailed in Chapter Three) is useful for checking this information when discrepancies arise. For example, the methodology I adopted makes it possible to cross-check the military level of the rebels in different confessions by different rebels and the government reports to establish the origin of any mismatches. In a few extreme cases where significant conflict appears in the information available in different sources, the data that these contain is not used unless I am able to identify an exact reason for these conflicts.

The standards used in the task of establishing a given rebel's status are useful in respect of all the rebellions investigated here, particularly in the cases of White Lotus and Taiping. However, in the case of the Eight Trigrams rebellion, another approach can also be utilised, as the Eight Trigrams rebellion was only a relatively small-scale rebellion and the major activities of the rebels only went on for a single day in the Beijing area.

During that day, according to the content of the confessions, there were eight types of activities carried out by rebels. This makes it possible to provide a short summary that is nevertheless sufficiently detailed for present purposes (Table 3).

Table 3 The organisational status of the rebels in the Eight Trigrams rebellion

Status	Type	Activity
Highest status	1	Uppermost leaders who planned the rebellions and awaited updates at headquarters
	2	The spies in the Forbidden City who helped to draw up the plans and who opened the gate
	3	The leaders of the forces outside Beijing
	4	The rebels who entered the Forbidden City
High status	5	The rebels who waited outside the Forbidden City
Middle status	6	The rebels who were stationed outside the Imperial City[12]
	7	The rebels who waited in the tea house, which was a designated location for gathering rebels
Low status	8	These who did not ultimately participate in the rebellion or who deserted the cause

It is likely that the rebels arranged their first-day activities according to the hierarchy of their organisation. For example, it is conceivable that it was arranged for the rebels with the highest status to attack the Forbidden City first, allowing them to enter before the gates were closed. However, the most important reason for using this classificatory methodology is that it reduces the extent to which one's personal judgement must be relied on. It is also less likely that the rebels would have been able to minimise the extent of their involvement as many of these activities involved large gatherings. If one rebel lied to the interrogators, he or she would be running the risk that another rebel would highlight this to an official (see e.g., C21 in NMYDL). Furthermore, using both methodologies together to gain a sense of the rebels' statuses helps with checking whether the two methods are effective.

[12] The Imperial City was a large city outside the Forbidden City.

It is possible to compare the results obtained for the rebels in the Eight Trigrams rebellion (using the methodology specifically developed for this case and the more general one used for the other rebellions). Of the 231 cases, 186 were predicted to have the same status. This suggests that the methods used to identify the status of the rebels have a high degree of validity. Although there are some differences in the predictions they make, it is important to notice that the lead rebels may not have had a strict plan to organise their activities according to status. A more tentative explanation is that they took other factors into account when organising their movements, such as each rebel's strengths and fighting skills. They might also have considered whether the rebels would follow their instructions that day, as some would likely have been apprehensive about participating to the fullest extent.

Analysing sources of motivation and rebels' statuses

Having presented my understanding of how to categorise the different sources of motivation recorded in the confessions, I now present data from the White Lotus rebellion, the Eight Trigrams rebellion, and the Taiping rebellion. Here, I consider all the sources of motivation recorded in the confessions, including those relating to eliminating a perceived threat and those relating to the relationships that the rebels had with others. However, it must be reiterated that my focus is on the rebels who participated in the rebellions due to motivation based on the desire to build a new dynastic order that is similar to the previous one and heterodox religious ideas. Therefore, these sources of motivation concerning relationships and threats are given a relatively less detailed analysis.

More than 200 confessions can be found in the White Lotus rebellion sources, with these detailing the activities of around 300 rebels. However, only 140 rebels feature directly in the analysis on the basis that confessions were

excluded from consideration in the event that they expressed conflicting information. As the previous Table 2 shows, if a group of rebels or a rebel appeared to have been motivated by two different factors, they were counted as two persons. However, data are also provided regarding the number of people who are counted multiple times in the parentheses. The following tables provide details of the number of rebels in each category of source of motivation according to their status.

Table 4 Rebels sorted according to source of motivation and status in the White Lotus rebellion

Source of motivation	Highest status	High status	Middle status	Low status	Summary
Religious factors	5	15(3)	3	1	24(3)
Bureaucratic ambitions	10(1)	8(6)	3	0	21(7)
Obtaining of benefits	0	2(1)	2	3	7(1)
Restoration of Ming dynasty	0	3(2)	3(1)	0	6(3)
Participation of others	3(1)	11(3)	11(1)	4(1)	29(6)
Revenge	1(1)	2	3(1)	0	6(2)
Violent coercion	0	0	3(2)	27(4)	30(6)
Government investigation	4	8(2)	8(2)	7(1)	27(5)
Following family members	1	9(1)	3	0	13(1)
Following friends	0	0	7	3	10
Following employers	1	0	0	1(1)	2(1)
Summary	25(3)	58(18)	46(7)	46(7)	175(35)

Regarding the motives underpinning the strategies used to mobilise the future participants within the White Lotus rebellion, the most influential members of the rebellion were more likely to join the rebellion through the promise of their being able to secure high-ranking official posts in future. The high-status rebels were liable to enticement as a result of both religious matters and the participation of others they knew. The middle-status rebels were motivated by the factor that many other people had rebelled. Participants of low status

seldom engaged in rebellious activities based on their own free will, with most of them ultimately being coerced into participation. Finally, many people participated in the rebellion because of the perceived threat of government investigations or their relationships with others. It can be seen that rebels of the highest status were more likely to be motivated to participate because of the actions of their family members rather than those of their friends.

Table 5 provides data relating to the participants in the Eight Trigrams rebellion. Note that the methodology used with these data is different from that used with those of the other rebellions.

Table 5 Rebels sorted according to source of motivation and status in the Eight Trigrams rebellion

Source of motivation	Highest status	High status	Middle status	Low status	Summary
Religious factors	10(2)	0	1	2(2)	13(4)
Bureaucratic ambitions	9(2)	1	0	2(2)	12(4)
Obtaining of benefits	4	3	1(1)	6	14(1)
Obtaining money immediately	8(4)	0	2(1)	2(1)	12(6)
Participation of others	2(1)	0	0	1	3(1)
Violent coercion	4(3)	9	10	21(2)	44(5)
Persuasion by healers	1	2	1(1)	1	5(1)
Following family members	9(1)	10(2)	3(1)	20	42(4)
Following friends	6(1)	6(1)	18	36	66(2)
Following employer	7	0	2	4	13
Old sect member	3	0	0	4(1)	7(1)
Summary	63(14)	31(3)	38(4)	99(8)	231(29)

The data in Table 5 highlight that the most influential members of the rebels were more likely to be persuaded through promises of a high-ranking official post in future as well as religious matters. Rebels of low to high status were mostly recruited on the basis of their existing relationships or as a result of being forced to participate. In addition, some rebels, especially those of high status,

participated because they were promised tangible benefits in the form of land or money. A significant number of individuals participated in the rebellion as a result of being threatened and their relationships with existing rebels.

Three matters must be clarified here. First, in the case of the Eight Trigrams rebellion, there were 36 people who did not participate on the day of the rebellion but who did accept the advice of the rebels to keep safe in their homes. They were also required to remember the argot that the rebels told them so that the rebels would not identify them as their enemies. However, they did not report their activities to the authority, and so these people are still considered as ranking among the lowest members of the rebellion. Secondly, among the rebels of low status, 20 were mobilised through family networks. However, seven of them were female. In the Qing dynasty, it was not common for female members to participate directly in the battle. Their remaining at home may be regarded as a good reason to consider them members of low status. Furthermore, there were six people who were considered too old to participate in the battle. These people were also of low status. However, if some of these female members and old members are considered not to belong to this rank, then fewer rebels remain within the category of those of the lowest status who were mobilised through their family networks. Thirdly, while there were eight people who were mobilised as a result of their religious beliefs, six of these were actually leaders of the forces outside Beijing. A dedicated discussion of this matter is presented in the next section.

Table 6 presents data relating to the Taiping rebellion. Because of factors relating to warfare and problems associated with assessing the precise categories of some documents, most of the rebels recorded in this table are the highest and lowest members of the movement.

Table 6 Rebels sorted according to source of motivation and status in the Taiping rebellion

Source of motivation	Highest status	High status	Middle status	Low status	Summary
Religious factors	3(1)	3	1	0	7(1)
Bureaucratic ambitions	5(1)	2		3(2)	10(3)
Obtaining of benefits				3	3
Restoration of Ming dynasty					
Participation of others			2		2
Revenge					
livelihood		2		3	5
Violent coercion			1	69	70
Government investigation	2(1)				2(1)
Persuasion by healers		1			1
Following family members	5(2)	2(2)			7(4)
Following friends	3(2)				3(2)
Following employer				2	2
Summary	18(7)	10(2)	4	80(2)	112(11)

However, the records selected here are nevertheless able to shed light on the situation under consideration. First, they were not likely to be selected based on the rebels' purpose with respect to their participation (Luo, 2000, 2013). Second, in respect of the documents that were collected by foreigners, there was no obvious reason to hide any specific documents for any political reasons. For the Taiping, only 112 valid samples are recorded in the archival documents, with many of these individuals appearing to have participated in response to a perceived threat. There are also rebels of the highest status who were motivated to participate as a result of other factors, such as their own bureaucratic ambitions.

Another rebellion that should be highlighted at this juncture is the Wang Lun rebellion. Only 13 confessions were found that related to the Wang Lun

rebellion, nine of which related to the members of the rebellion of the highest status. Of these 13 rebels, three participated on the basis of religious considerations; another three participated in response to their being under official investigation by the government; and a further three participated on the basis of their ambitions to secure official posts or the pre-existing involvement of their family members in the movement. Another four rebels can be categorised as having either high or low status, with these individuals being persuaded to participate by following people who cured their illness and violent coercion.

Similarities among the cases considered

The rebellions discussed above took place across a range of different time periods. The earliest rebellion happened during the 1770s and the latest during the 1850s. These rebellions also broke out in different locations across China. However, notwithstanding these differences, the strategies utilised in mobilising the rebels and the motives and ideas that underpinned their involvement can be construed as having regular features. Furthermore, there is no clear evidence in the archival documents that these similarities existed because of any orders from the government or any agreed custom. The arrangements, regulations and laws of the Qing dynasty also changed over time. This encourages the conclusion that what can be observed in respect of these different rebellions are what might be regarded as regular features of the Chinese rebellions during the Qing dynasty. Unfortunately, due to a lack of sources, it is not possible to identify differences between these features in terms of what is expressed in the confessions from each rebellion. Nevertheless, despite the limited information on the Taiping rebellion, it is possible to draw comparisons between this rebellion and the White Lotus rebellion and the Eight Trigrams rebellion.

Regarding the similar features that can be observed across all the rebellions considered here, first, promises of high-ranking official posts were mostly used to recruit rebels who ultimately attained the highest or at least high status. This mobilisation strategy appears to have been highly effective. Securing an official post in a future regime would have been a very attractive prospect to the future rebels, with such posts being associated with power, wealth and a life that was more comfortable than would have been normally possible in imperial China. Such promises would also have been especially attractive to the many rebels who were uneducated or otherwise lacked the opportunity to become an official through the usual route of taking the imperial examinations. However, the number of official posts available for promising to the rebels would have been limited. This provides an explanation as to why such promises appear to have been made with a view to attracting the most important rebels.

The limited number of official posts that would have been available can be attributed to the organisational structure of the rebellions: if too many high positions were promised to the lower-level members of the rebel forces, there would be the risk of a power struggle breaking out within the organisation. Promising too many official posts would also result in a kind of inflation with respect to the perceived value of these. Such observations can be made in respect of activities occurring in 1857, by which point the Taiping regime was declining. The rebel regimes were urged to sell official positions to bolster their financial resources and gain support among the local people. During the last few years of the Taiping regime, there were at least 62 prime ministers in the official system, and lower-level posts were even more numerous (see C22 in XJQSSL; see also Xia, 2006). Such posts were not associated with significant levels of power or wealth in the Taiping regime.

The limited availability of official posts can also be interpreted against the background of the image of the rebels with respect to both bureaucracy and

officialdom. The number of officials was very limited in the Qing dynasty and, indeed, in almost all the dynasties of China (see e.g., Herson and Lawrence, 1957). The rebels would have been able to learn about the existing bureaucratic system through various channels, for example, their daily lives or forms of activities such as opera and reading novels (see Rowe, 2009). Before the rebellions started, some rebels had already begun to consider the future bureaucratic structure of the regime (C23 in LAD; C4 in LXC). The content of many confessions makes it clear that the rebels had already started to give members of their societies' titles and military or official posts before the rebellion had begun. For example, in the confession of Wang Quanli of the White Lotus rebellion, it is mentioned that, after one month of participating in the rebellions, the leader of the rebellion "appointed me as the Zongbing of Gushan Town" (C24 in BLJZL). The confessions made during the third year of the White Lotus rebellion make evident a more standardised bureaucratic structure. For example, there is mention of Zongbing and Bazong, these being military titles very similar to those used in the Qing army.

Within the other sources of motivation underpinning the rebels' participation, those who were mobilised by obtainment of benefits normally attained a high or middle level of status. This suggests that such benefits were regarded as being less valuable than the promise of an official post.

Another common feature is the use of threats, especially in relation to rebels of middle and low status. Although such factors are not the focus of this study, there is nevertheless the need to comment on these. In this context, threats included both those made by the rebels themselves (used on other, low-status participants) and those perceived as stemming from government investigations (a factor affecting rebels of all statuses). Of course, it is possible that some of these participants were, in fact, motivated to rebel for reasons besides what would have been perceived as a compelling force, but rebels often mentioned

having been threatened as a means of avoiding harsher penalties, particularly low-status rebels. This notwithstanding, it does seem likely that making instrumental use of violent coercion and government repression was useful for mobilising rebels quickly. Several sources provide clear evidence of the extent to which violent coercion was used in this way (e.g., C18 in NMYDL; C19 in BLJZL; C25 in WXSLJ). More specific details are given regarding the destruction of land and other methods used to threaten people's livelihood and force their participation (see also R7, R8 in BLJZL; Luo, 2013; Perry, 2002; Rowe, 2009).

The third feature that applies to all the rebellions investigated here is the prominence of relationships. In both the White Lotus rebellion and the Eight Trigrams rebellion, many potential rebels participated in the uprisings because someone they knew was already involved. In this respect, relationships functioned as a tool that the rebels could wield to mobilise participants who already trusted them. Furthermore, rebels mobilised through family networks normally enjoyed a higher level of status than those mobilised through acquaintance-based networks. While scholars such as Naquin (1982) provide details of how family networks were used in the organisation of premodern Chinese rebellions, the present study provides additional data to further demonstrate the importance of family networks in social movements.

Many of these similarities are explained by resource mobilisation theory. In the cases investigated here, it was easy for the rebel organisations to gain access to resources such as making commitments to certain benefits for rebels or offering a higher status in the organisations. The most important of these human and material resources would have been participants and money, both of which would have been useful in preparatory activities and in later military conflicts (also see, e.g., Naquin, 1981). Another important resource was people who could be trusted by the rebel leaders. Given the severe punishments meted

out by the government in response to rebellious acts, the organisations would have needed to be able to select trusted people to conduct their core organisational work.

The rebel organisations needed to utilise the resources they had in exchange for greater access to these material and human resources. Potential rebels who held such access to valuable resources may well have expected key benefits for their participation. These people were mobilised through the use of strategies such as offering benefits and even official posts, rewards that would otherwise have been very hard for anyone without a Confucianist education to obtain, as previously discussed. Meanwhile, the common understanding of the imperial system in place at the time would also have caused the rebels and the potential participants to believe that such matters would constitute a valuable and limited resource. These rebels with valuable resources could also occupy positions of high status within rebel organisations, notwithstanding that they might not have had a very high social status prior to their participation. It is also possible to see similar patterns in the case of rebels who were motivated to participate through their existing relationships. Rebels who already had a close relationship with and were already trusted by the leaders were more likely to occupy higher positions. Considering that those who had kinship usually shared closer relationships in the Chinese society of the Qing dynasty, it can be concluded that such individuals would have been more likely to occupy higher positions and play more important roles in the rebel organisations.

With respect to individuals who did not have access to such resources, on the other hand, the rebels usually deployed other methods of recruitment, using violent coercion or the prospect of government investigations. It was also common to use existing familial or friend-based links to motivate such individuals to rebel.

Differences among the cases considered

The data on these rebellions also highlight certain differences in the mobilisation patterns that can be seen for each of these movements. Here, I discuss only the significant differences.

First, in the White Lotus rebellion, many people were mobilised on the basis that other people had rebelled or on the basis of threats of government investigation. In the Eight Trigrams rebellion, on the other hand, such factors were of marginal importance. Second, many participants in the Eight Trigrams rebellion engaged in these activities to follow those who employed them; only one of the rebels in the White Lotus rebellion appear to have taken part for this reason. The third point is especially important: although religious beliefs played a role in all the rebellions and were used to motivate rebels of the highest or at least high status, this strategy was applied differently in the context of each rebellion. In the White Lotus rebellion and Taiping rebellion, it was mostly high-status participants who were mobilised based on religious factors; in the Eight Trigrams rebellion and Wang Lun rebellion, this factor was most important in terms of the highest status rebels. Of course, it should be noticed again that the data on the Taiping rebellion and Wang Lun rebellions is relatively small, and can only supplement the other two cases.

Explanations for the first and the second differences highlighted above will be familiar to those who know the histories of these rebellions. Regarding the differences in the involvement of employers, one possible explanation is that those involved in the Eight Trigrams rebellion lived in Beijing and were wealthier, meaning that they were more likely to hire workers. Another possibility is that most of the rebels who participated in the attack on the Forbidden City during the Eight Trigrams rebellion were interrogated, whereas many participants in the White Lotus rebellion were not. If this is the case, then, although some of the participants would have been the employers of the other rebels in the White

Lotus rebellion, information on these participants was not included in the confessions.

Regarding the differences between factors relating to the threat of government investigation and those relating to the participation of other people, one possible explanation is that the White Lotus sect had already grown to a significant size before the rebellion started. The investigations of the government had already begun in terms of those who ultimately participated in the White Lotus rebellion. In the Eight Trigrams rebellion, before the rebellion started in Beijing, the government had not been able to discover the activities of the rebels. Hence, using existing rebels or taking advantage of the threat of government investigations to persuade others to participate would not have been feasible. (see C45 in LAD)

Geographical considerations may also have restricted the extent to which factors relating to the participation of other people could play a part. The participants in the Eight Trigrams typically lived in similar locations as each other, meaning that such individuals would have known many others with the potential to participate in the rebellion. However, in the case of the White Lotus rebellion, the participants at different locations needed to communicate by letter. As a result, the middle-status rebels would not have been able to know whether rebels from other locations had already joined the uprising if they were not informed by someone else.

In contrast to the first and second differences, however, the matter of status seems unlikely to explain the third difference concerning the religious motives. Compared to matters such as the possibility of an official post, ideas from heterodox religions were not a resource that was in short supply. It was a core tenet of these religious ideas that everyone could be protected by the gods during the *klapa* and that everyone was connected to a millenarian world in which they could enjoy a prosperous and peaceful life. Although there is still

some sense of bureaucracy in the heterodox religious ideas, there would have been no limitations in terms of anyone being able to enjoy similar happiness. This type of idea can be considered as potentially motivating people with different statuses. However, this idea was only used to mobilise a small number of people.

The difference in the heterodox religious motives of different rebellions can also be interpreted as sharing a connection with spatial matters, more specifically, the distance separating the rebels from the charismatic leaders. Rebels who were separated from their leaders by only a moderate level of social and physical distance would have been more likely to be enticed by the heterodox religious ideas expressed by these leaders. Here, it is important to emphasise that, in addition to basic geographical considerations, the distance between the followers and the leaders, broadly construed, would also have been influenced by factors such as the conditions affecting the possibility of travel as well as how information could be passed from one individual to another. This is a complex matter and so it is discussed later as a phenomenon in its own right.

Distance, access to information and the rebels' ideas

As discussed in Chapters One and Two, in the context of the premodern rebellions, charismatic leaders would have been central to the circulation of heterodox religious ideas. The rebels believed that a leader with superhuman power and the destiny to rule could help them defeat their enemies, avoid disasters, and give rise to a new millenarian world. The religions argued that the timing and nature of these disasters were decided by Heaven. However, the ordinary human was not regarded as having the ability to go against Heaven's will. Instead, the Eternal Mother, who was sometimes also referred to using the general term Heaven, was believed to send holy messengers, normally the Maitreya Buddha, to the world to save the believers. The messengers would

come to the human world in the form of the ordinary human, sometimes through reincarnation, but this could also happen in many other ways. Although he or she might manifest in the form of a human, the messengers would be able to summon the gods to protect the rebels, enabling them to defeat their enemies. They would also be given the ability to build a millenarian world, an ability that would only have been within reach because of the magical power of the gods. Those who believed in the Eternal Mother considered themselves the future rulers of the new world They also thought that they would take up the task of building a new order after the existing world had been destroyed. Within this belief, magical power was considered the key to realising these ambitions. For the potential rebels to be convinced that the heterodox religious ideas were true, it would have been critical for them to view the charismatic leaders as having such superhuman powers and the destiny to rule.

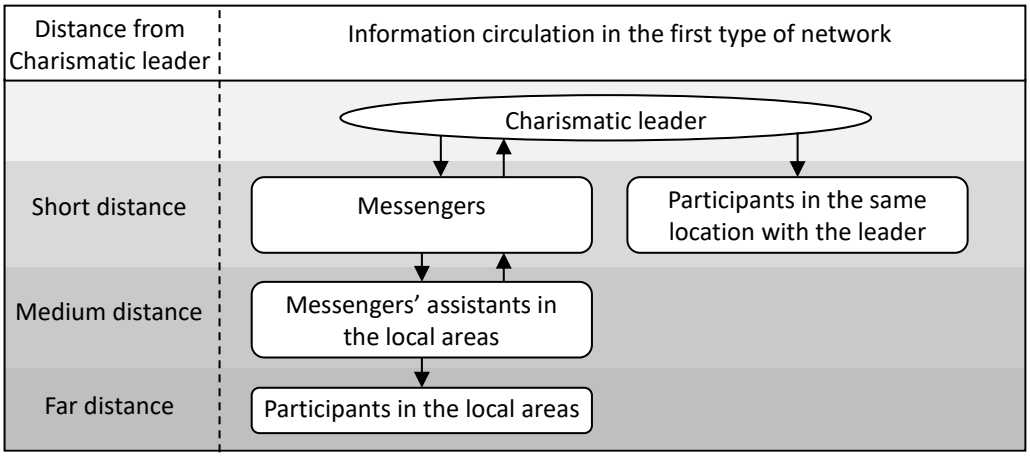
Of course, it is possible that some of the rebels were ultimately motivated to participate because of the religious sects rather than the more specific heterodox religious ideas of these sects. For example, such individuals might have been especially motivated by an emotional link they shared with the sects or the members of these. However, in the case of such potential rebels, the organisations would have been able to use other means of motivating them to participate, such as leveraging their existing relationships. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Two, the collective identity of the rebels was not created through building emotional ties through gatherings. Instead, this happened by using the mantras with similar content so that they could identify them as belonging to the same community. There is no clear evidence to support the claim that the rebels had such strong emotional connections to the sects in the way that was witnessed for the gathering and community building seen in the case of the new religions.

Unlike in the contemporary exchange of information through the use of modern

technology, transferring information about charismatic leaders would have required considerably greater effort on the part of the rebels in premodern times. Many rebels were illiterate (see e.g., C1 in BLJZL), so information would have had to be conveyed using word of mouth. To provide information on religious matters to the other participants, especially the participants who were a great distance away from their leaders, the leaders would have needed to use messengers to communicate opinions between leaders and participants and organised rebellions. These methods of message transmission can be divided into two forms, and it is my position that the existence of these two forms caused the split in the status of the rebels who were motivated by heterodox religious ideas.

The two charts below depict the two types of networks of information circulation used in the mobilisation process. Chart 1 depicts an information-circular process present in the first kind of network, which I regard as applying in the cases of the White Lotus rebellion and the Taiping rebellion. Both were large-scale movements whose participants typically lived far away from each other, making it hard for charismatic leaders to travel to the local areas. Chart 2 depicts the process operative in the second kind of network, which I regard as applying to small-scale rebellions such as the Wang Lun rebellion and the Eight Trigrams rebellion. In these movements, it is likely that the local leaders found it easier to travel to the areas where the charismatic leaders were living to communicate with the leaders.

Chart 1



The scales of the White Lotus rebellion and the Taiping rebellion were large, with considerable numbers of initial participants spread across different mountainous areas. Travelling across these areas would have been very hard, making it important for the messengers to build a bridge between the charismatic leaders and the participants to span this distance. Therefore, the charismatic leaders would usually send only a few people that they trusted to function as messengers to the local areas to mobilise people to participate. Of course, the charismatic leaders themselves might also preach, but due to the long journeys that this would entail, most of the missionary work was done by messengers. The charismatic leaders might also seek to mobilise people in their local areas. However, there are relatively fewer confessions from the people in their local areas, suggesting the number of such potential participants was relatively small. Furthermore, because these rebellions were large-scale, it is unlikely that many confessions of the local rebels were collected, as the emperors and officials may not have time to read so many confessions. There are also difficulties with preserving such a huge volume of sources.

After the messengers came to a place to preach, they normally served as the top local leaders of the religious sects in these local areas and were usually considered as having the highest status. The messengers of the charismatic leaders would also recruit local people as their assistants, who would also be

regarded as being of high status. With the help of these assistants, the messengers would recruit more people of middle and low status.

These messengers would also travel back and forth between where the charismatic leaders (and other core members) were located and the local areas to coordinate the local rebellious activities. Messengers were often the most trusted followers of the leaders, and they would typically participate in the initial planning of the rebellion. Such individuals can therefore be considered as being stationed at a short distance from the leaders, having access to a considerable wealth of information about the charismatic leaders and even participating in formulating the stories of the “superhuman” power of the charismatic leaders. They would have been aware that these charismatic leaders were mere human beings, their “supernatural powers” and legendary abilities being nothing but a ploy to attract followers.

Of course, as can be seen from some of the confessions, there still would have been some top leaders who believed that the charismatic leaders might, in fact, have had superhuman power. However, their number is limited. It should be noted that the heterodox religious sects of these rebellions were also political sects. In fact, many people who were involved in these sects did not have a strong affiliation with the heterodox religions; rather, they joined because they had other purposes, such as becoming an official, or because they were simply acting out of a desire to follow their family members. As shown in Table 4, in the data on the White Lotus rebellion, there is evidence of religious motivation in respect of only 24 of the 140 people in total (three out of 24 were counted repeatedly). Furthermore, the leaders do not appear to have restricted themselves from having selected messengers based on whether they demonstrated an especially high level of confidence in the leaders’ charismatic characteristics. There are confessions by many messengers who in fact admitted that they had participated in the rebellions merely because they

sought to obtain an official post in the future rebellious regime (see, C1 in BLJZL). Such messengers used the ideas espoused by the religious leaders purely instrumentally. However, although there may have been a very large number of messengers who did not believe in the religious ideas expressed by the leaders, due to the difficulty with actually witnessing the activities of the religious leaders, it would have been very difficult for the local people to gain knowledge of this. It would have been much more straightforward for them to believe in the specially curated images of the charismatic characters of the religious leaders. Meanwhile, the rebels of middle or low status also did not believe in the religions. The reasons for this are discussed below, together with these small-scale rebellions.

Chart 2

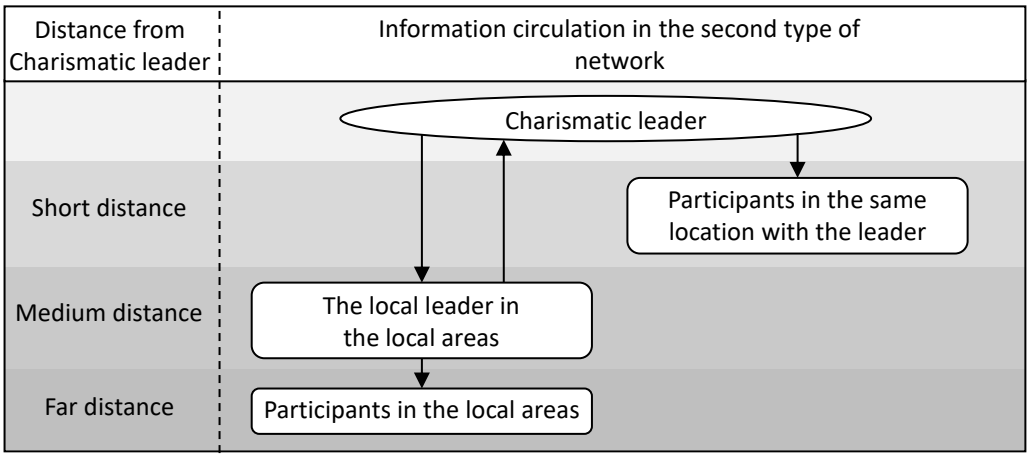


Chart 2 depicts the setup operative in small-scale rebellions, such as the Wang Lun rebellion and the Eight Trigrams rebellion. It is likely that the local leaders would have found it easier to travel to the areas where the charismatic leaders were living and communicate with the local people. The leaders of these rebellions could also directly visit the local areas if they wished to do so. These two rebellions happened in areas largely consisting of open plains (with this being a feature of the landscape that Wang (2014) highlights as relevant for the small scale of these rebellions). Travelling across these areas is likely to have been considerably less time-consuming than travelling across mountainous

regions. Furthermore, it is possible that many people lived within one location in such areas. If this was the case, then this would have meant that the leaders did not need to communicate with people across a wide range of locations that were difficult to access in the manner of the uprisings depicted in Chart 1. The charismatic leaders, therefore, would not have had to rely on messengers in the same way as described above; instead, they could directly organise the actions to be taken in the local areas through the leaders stationed there.

Despite the greater ease of communication in this setup, it should nevertheless be emphasised that there could still be difficulties affecting communication between the religious leaders and the local leaders. For example, the local leaders in these small-scale rebellions appear only to have been able to speak with the leaders for a limited time (and normally only once or twice), and they usually did not participate in the initial planning of the movement. It would, therefore, not have been easy for them to realise that the religious leaders were, in fact, mere normal people. Thus, the religious leaders would still have been able to use their religious influence to mobilise these local leaders.

These methods of conveying information explain why the rebels of highest and high status are associated with different patterns of motivation in terms of heterodox religious ideas. However, in both large-scale and small-scale rebellions, the participants of far distance, usually with middle or low organisational status, were also not motivated by religious factors, which leaves open the question of why religious factors seem not to have significantly influenced the participants of middle and low status.

In addressing this question, it is useful to bear in mind the matters of cultural context and government repression. As discussed in previous chapters, scholars have noted that the ideas expressed by the leaders were usually vague (see Gaustad, 1994, 2000; Ter Haar, 2006), the same also seems to apply to the cases considered here. For example, in the White Lotus rebellion,

Liu Shengcai, a member of heterodox religious secret societies, said, “Among those people such as Zhang Zhengmo, there is a mantra circulating. It is that ‘MuYi and MuZi are the true surnames, an immortal will appear in the MuYi’s house. The person with MaoJingDao has already been here when people can get a peaceful year!’ I asked him what the mantra meant, he said, "MuZi represents the surname Li, MuYi represents the surname of Yang and MaoJingDao represents the surname of Liu. … Li is the reincarnation of the god. He will be protected by the people whose surname is Yang or Liu and other people in the sect and will set up their great cause in Henan Province.” (C26 in BLJZL)

The mantra expressed in this confession is difficult to understand. However, it is possible to interpret at least some of it against the background of the information expressed in the rebels’ discussion and later investigations conducted by officials. It claimed that a person named Li was the true man appointed by Heaven to rule and that he would bring about peace with the assistance of other leaders. Such mantras were commonly used in Chinese culture to demonstrate Heaven’s will by dividing orthographic characters into constituent elements. For example, the surname Li (李) can be divided into the two characters of Mu(木) and Zi (子). That is why Muzi appears in the mantra. A similar analysis is also applicable in respect of the surname Yang (楊), which trough combing Mu (木) and Yi (易), Liu (劉) through combining the Mao （卯), Jing (金) and Dao[13] (刀).

In the absence of such explanations, on the other hand, such texts and oral statements would have remained difficult to understand. In the case of an individual who could not understand the writing, which would have been the usual situation in respect of the rebels, it would have been very difficult for him

[13] Note that 刀 has the same meaning as 刂 in Chinese. That is why 劉 is a combination of 卯, 金 and 刀.

to know how to parse out the words. Even in the case of an individual who understood that such symbols were surnames, the further explanation would be required to shed light on what these surnames really referred to and how this related to the rebellions. Both Ter Haar (2006) and Gaustad (1994, 2000) highlight that the participants would have struggled to understand the religious messages in the secret societies that they investigated. It is evident from the government interrogation reports that even the interrogators experienced difficulties with understanding the sentences before them (see the relevant information in various government reports and confessions, e.g., C27 in BLJZL). These kinds of difficulties would have also made it challenging for potential participants to truly comprehend the information about their future leaders that they had access to. This would have made it difficult in the local areas to form a proper understanding of the legendary stories of the charismatic leaders, their magical powers and the millenarian world that they promised to create.

There are several factors that could have caused such difficulties with understanding the religious messages of the sects. First, as discussed above, the information was conveyed by word of mouth. As a result of this, the rebels would have had to ensure that the messages they wanted to convey were neither too hard to remember nor too long. Furthermore, the government engaged in considerable efforts to investigate such heterodox secret societies. It would therefore have been important for the rebels to convey messages with meaning that was not so clear. This would also have been important in case the messages were intercepted. The final factor relates to the cultural context in which these religious messages would have been transmitted, more specifically, the rebels' fear of revealing Heaven's will, which is likely the most important reason. In China's heterodox religions and folk culture, those who stood against or revealed Heaven's will would be punished. This belief is evident in many literary works, such as *"Water Margin"* (SHZ), a novel that the Qing government found on the participants in the middle Qing rebellions (Chuang, 2002; Ter haar,

2006). Another relevant example is *"Creation of the Gods"* (FSYY), a book describing how some of the gods that the rebels believed in had previously been humans.

In any case, given the incomplete information relating to the religions and their leaders, together with the limited time available for organising the rebellions, the leaders or their messengers would only have been able to explain the religious texts to small numbers of people, the majority of whom would have been of the highest or high status. Mobilising those of middling status or low status, on the other hand, would have involved utilising other strategies involving, for example, the participation of other people or the relationships they shared with such people.

Because of this, it is possible to formulate an explanation couched in differences in how heterodox religious ideas were used in the different rebellions: rebels stationed at a moderate physical and social distance were more likely to be persuaded by heterodox religious ideas. In the large rebellions, the charismatic religious leaders communicated with their followers in the local areas through messengers. These messengers were also in charge of organising the participants in the rebellions in these areas. For this reason, these messengers would have been regarded as being of the highest status in these large-scale movements. Furthermore, as previously discussed, the messengers were usually very close to the charismatic leaders, and many participated in the careful formulation of the stories to be told. Given this proximity, it is highly likely that they were aware that their leaders did not, in fact, have superhuman powers. While those of high status were usually those recruited by the messengers in the local areas, it is possible that some of them believed in the charismatic characters of their leaders. However, in rebellions that were relatively small in scale, the leaders would not have needed messengers to communicate with the local areas; instead, they could simply

ask one of the local people to serve in this function. Therefore, the local leaders were considered to be of the highest status. Since these local leaders would not have had frequent access to the charismatic leaders, they fell to be considered as individuals stationed at a medium level of distance.

This analysis can be tested by isolating all the participants in the rebellions considered here who appear to have done participated on the basis of sources of motivation relating to dynastic order and those who appear to have participated on the basis of the power of the heterodox religious ideas. Most of the rebels isolated for this test have a status at the highest, high and medium status, and they are counted according to their distance from their charismatic religious leaders in the confessions. If they are detailed as having lived close to their leaders, they are categorised as being stationed at a short distance; local leaders who lived in another location far away from the leaders and received information from leaders or their messengers are categorised as being stationed at a moderate distance; finally, followers of the local leaders and those who lived far away from the charismatic leaders and were mobilised by the local leaders are categorised as being stationed at a long distance. Please note that the I did not include the number of people who counted for twice or three times in parentheses, as the aim of this table is to show correlations.

Table 7 Correlations between distance and sources of motivation

Distance	Sources of motivation relating to dynastic order	Heterodox religious ideas
Short distance	40	10
Medium distance	19	29
Far distance	16	8

The data in Table 7 demonstrates a clear correlation between, firstly, the numbers of rebels and the sources of their motivation to participate in the movements, and, secondly, the distance at which they were stationed from their

leaders. This provides support for the position stated above. It must be emphasised, however, that Table 7 is only a cross table, and it also combines all the cases studied here. It can only serve as one piece of the whole body of evidence. The reader should refer to the analysis provided earlier in this chapter and the one I provide in the next chapter for the qualitative evidence regarding the explanation of the existence of a relationship between distance and the sources of motivation underpinning the rebels' participation.

Here, I provide a justification for the other possibilities. For example, it is indeed likely that the local people who were selected as local leaders were usually of high social status. Therefore, a possible explanation is that their purpose in joining the rebellion is unlikely to have been the desire to secure official posts, leaving only religious belief as a source of motivation. However, there are also some people at that highest organisational status who near the leaders have a relatively high social status. Furthermore, religious belief cannot be regarded as a limited resource in the same way as official posts. The question arises as to why, if the heterodox religious ideas were able to mobilise those who were near the charismatic leaders, those near the leaders were less likely to be motivated to participate on a religious basis? Another possibility is that the interrogators changed the rebels' communications with the intention of causing the people of high status to have more religious believers. However, given that the rebellions happened across different times and geographical areas, it is unclear what benefits there would be to officials making such changes on a large scale at the time at which the rebellions broke out.

This is one of my central arguments as to why there are such observable differences in the statuses of the rebels motivated by heterodox religious ideas across the different rebellions. Further supporting evidence is provided in the next chapter in the context of the discussion on the processes of the middle Qing rebellions, primarily in the form of texts that the rebels used in their communications. It must be stressed that while it would have been easier for

those rebels situated at a moderate physical and social distance to be persuaded to participate in the rebellions based on heterodox religious ideas, this does not entail that the rebels situated close to or far away from the leaders would never believe in such heterodox religious ideas. Indeed, Table 7 demonstrates that there were some such people, albeit there were considerably fewer than the rebels situated at a moderate distance.

Chinese cultural context, charismatic leadership and distance

The analysis presented here regarding the association between status, distance and charismatic leadership is also useful for shedding light on certain aspects of existing studies. For example, consider the puzzle highlighted in previous studies relating to why the Eight Trigrams rebellion, which scholars consider to have been influenced by the White Lotus rebellion and the associated religious beliefs (Naquin, 1976; Wakeman, 1977), did not feature a significant religious component to the same extent as the White Lotus rebellion. Besides drawing on the personal characters of the leaders as a factor, historians (e.g., Naquin, 1981) adduce geography as relevant. Considering the geographical conditions of the two rebellions, it is clear that the White Lotus rebellion mostly took place in mountainous areas, in which fewer people of high social status lived. In contrast, the Eight Trigrams rebellion happened in an urban area very close to the capital, with many core rebels having ample wealth or being of relatively high social status. This makes it possible to explain why people of high social status were less likely to believe in the very heterodox religions. However, the analysis presented here, which refers to social and physical distance and the level of information about the charismatic leaders that the local people would have had access to, provides another way to answer this question. It can also be pointed out that information, as well as the way of passing information to the rebels, would have been a strong influence on the

organisational structure and ideas of the middle Qing rebellions.

This analysis also sheds light on certain aspects of the study of leadership in Chinese social movements, especially premodern Chinese rebellions (Perry, 2002). As previously discussed, the actions of the participants within these rebellions were underpinned by both religious and political ambitions and were significantly influenced by Chinese traditional cultural context as well as the difficulties associated with information transmission in that era. Therefore, in considering the role of divine figures and analysing their charismatic leadership, it would not be appropriate to apply theories of leaders of new religious movements or traditional European political leaders. Adopting such an approach would not reflect the differences in social and cultural contexts.

Thus, a new type of approach is needed to understand the activities discussed here. The analysis I propose here makes it possible to understand the acceptance of the charismatic legitimacy of the religious leaders in the Chinese rebellions. The social and cultural context of premodern China (including the transportation and transmission of the information) helped the leaders to build charismatic legitimacy because the people in this social and cultural context were more likely to believe in the claims about the charismatic leaders' magic powers. These also supported the mobilisation of certain people situated at a moderate distance from the charismatic leaders. However, it was also very difficult for the charismatic leaders to influence those situated on either side of these individuals (i.e., those situated far from and close to the charismatic leaders) to believe in the ideas of the heterodox religions.

The analysis proposed here is in some respects similar to what has been in proposed in certain studies in social psychology. Some such studies (e.g., Antonakis and Atwater, 2002; Howell and Shamir, 1998; House, 1971) suggest that the matter of whether charismatic leadership resonates with individuals is connected in intricate ways to the distance between the leader and his or her

followers: the greater the distance, the more likely that potential followers will be positively influenced by the leader's superhuman charisma. The bulk of the evidence adduced in support of this conclusion derives from investigations of businesses and commercial bodies. Scholars working in this area argue that followers in commercial organisations are more likely to judge leaders on the basis of their own image-building; this is more likely than rational assessments if they have less information about the charismatic leaders from whom they are separated by a certain level of physical or social distance. A lack of access to information about these leaders is also likely to result in followers being more willing to accept that these faraway charismatic leaders have superhuman power, as they cannot fully assess these leaders within their daily interactions.

Of course, there are certain differences between these findings and those considered here in terms of the contexts of rebellions and commercial institutions. For example, superhuman powers, which is typically considered to refer to extraordinary creativity or organisational ability far beyond that of ordinary people in commercial organisiations. For example, Steve Jobs or Elon Musk may be considered as having the intelligence that ordinary people can never possess. However, in the rebellions, this power would have been the magical power that ordinary humans did not consider they could ever have, such as the ability to summon the gods to protect people from the harm of their enemy's weapons. However, the relevant literature (e.g., Antonakis and Atwater, 2002; Shamir, 1995; Yagil, 1998) here does suggest that the pattern reported in social psychological studies can also be witnessed in contexts outside the business world.

There are also certain similarities that might explain why there should be similar patterns across very different contexts like business contexts and premodern Chinese rebellions. Both kinds of organisations feature many people pursuing political or economic goals, different from organisations or sects whose

purposes are solely religious. Furthermore, the organisation and hierarchy of rebels' organisations and commercial organisations may be large, and these organisations may be spread across different locations. This is a significant difference with the organisations of small communities associated with certain religious or political groups.

Meanwhile, the analysis regarding the rebels that have far distance from the leaders proposed here also sheds light on how the cultural context can influence people's understanding of charismatic legitimacy, supplementing other studies conducted on this (Smith, 2000).

In general, my analysis bolsters efforts made in previous studies (Geertz, 1983; Shils, 1965) to extend the concept of charismatic authority to apply to leaders in other fields of study.[14] The analysis frames charismatic leaders as they feature in people's minds as less like a real person and rather closer to an abstract representation or the product of people's collective imagination. In the context of the rebellions, anyone could theoretically perform the role of a charismatic leader. All that would be required would be the ability to convince others that the individual in question is the person they are waiting for in their imagination. This is different from Weber's descriptions of charismatic leaders. While Weber also agrees that charismatic leadership is also shaped by social context, the leader he considers is still a real person who attracts followers through his personality. However, in the cases I consider, it is a shared image. My research shows that charismatic authority and leadership and their influence on social movements can vary more significantly. This happens in a context in which there is another condition for transmitting information in a way that is different from the modern world and in a cultural context that is different from

[14] There is a different school of thought adopting the position that the concept of charisma should not be regarded as going so far, but this lies beyond what can be discussed here.

the “western” culture originating from European and American countries. This phenomenon had some influence on the movement, although this matter has not yet been considered fully in the existing accounts. This also highlights the need for more attention to be paid to the social and cultural context when investigating leaders and authority in social movements and revolutions.

This pattern of charismatic leadership and distance may also be observable in the context of the modern Asian world. In modern China, political leaders have still sometimes been associated with magical and superhuman power in civil society. For example, in the Cultural Revolution, people worshipped Mao Zedong, prayed to his picture and regarded him as a bona fide god (Zuo, 1991), This is significant, as one of the aims of the Cultural Revolution movements was to eliminate such heterodox religious ideas. Similar observations are also relevant for other leaders such as Sun Yatsen (Chen, 2009) and Kim Il-sung (Ye, 2008), as I discuss further in the next chapter.

Conclusion

In their investigations of rebellions taking place during the Qing dynasty, many scholars have confronted the following question: what was the composition of the rebels in their organisations? This has involved studying their occupations and their ages at the time of their participation (e.g., Gaustad, 2000; Naquin, 1976). However, insufficient attention has been paid to the composition of different sources of motivation underpinning the rebels’ participation.

The analysis proposed here highlights that what underpinned the rebels’ participation was influenced by their status and the levels of information to which they had access. These sources of motivation have also been shown to interact with different ideas that the rebels had regarding their purpose for participating in and outcomes of these rebellions. The analysis also highlights

the association between the different status of rebels and the different ideas that they had.

I also provided evidence that the numbers of rebels who were motivated to participate based on heterodox religious ideas were influenced by the distance between them and their leaders. I also highlighted the specific context of China as an important factor in terms of the rebels' ability to accept the accounts of the supposed supernatural power of the political leaders.

Such findings have the potential to contribute to the modern understanding of both Qing history and the study of social movements and revolutions.

Turning to the ideas of purpose and outcomes of the rebellions which indicated by the motives of rebels, the next two chapters consider further the matters of how the ideas of those participating in the rebellions changed over time. This is done through analysis of the detailed content of texts and oral statements that the rebels produced at different stages of the rebellions. I also provide more detailed consideration of group interactions, and the analysis of these interactions extends some of the discussion presented in this chapter. The analysis focuses on the rebels who held heterodox religious ideas and those who were more attracted by more secular ideas underpinning the goal of establishing a dynasty similar to previous ones; however, the ideas relating to other motives remain under consideration as contextual factors.

Chapter 5 God among us: charismatic leaders and ideational processes of rebellion in the middle Qing dynasty

Introduction

Building on the findings of the previous chapter, this chapter analyses changes in the rebels' ideas relating to the goals of the rebellion and how they could achieve these goals over the course of the middle Qing rebellions. This investigation considers textual and oral communications between the rebels detailed in the records available in the archival documents. I argue that heterodox religious ideas relating to building a new order in the world disappeared quickly in the texts and oral communications that characterised the rebellions, while the ideas relating to building a similar dynastic order were maintained for far longer. This ideational pattern is especially significant in the case of the White Lotus rebellion, the longest-lasting rebellion, as the extended timeframe allows me to present a detailed analysis of the ideational changes that took place. I suggest that the pattern of this rebellion was the result of the focus on the charismatic leaders of the heterodox religions. The rebels' conceptualisation of the charismatic religious leaders was constrained by the social and cultural context of that time and this would have made it difficult for the rebels to forge a consensus on heterodox religious ideas, weakening the power of the religious leaders.

In more detail, the analysis I presented in the previous chapter highlighted that the rebels acted based on various sources of motivation, and that there was an ideational system that underpinned their ideas regarding the purpose of their participation I provided evidence that these ideas showed what the rebels believed in terms of the political outcomes of the rebellion and how these could be achieved. These ideas were framed according to the various political aims

expressed in the texts and oral communications at the beginning of the rebellions. However, the sources of motivation discussed in the previous chapter were mostly summarised by the interrogators, meaning that the original words were not recorded. Focusing on the texts and oral communications that directly cite or contain the rebels' words in detail, I identify three main themes unpacking the aims of the rebellion: heterodox religious ideas, dynastic-order-related ideas, and the perception of threats, with particular attention being paid to the themes of heterodox religious ideas and dynastic-order-related ideas as in the previous chapter. In relation to the White Lotus rebellion, which was a protracted event, it emerges that heterodox religious ideas remained prevalent in the texts until a short time after the outbreak of the rebellion, likely a few months. However, after a few months, the communications relating to heterodox religious ideas started to disappear. Furthermore, as compared with these heterodox religious ideas, dynastic-order-related ideas remained prevalent until relatively late in the process, at least until the government was able to exert greater military force and defeat those spreading these ideas. The argument is further supported by the frequency with which these themes appear in texts and oral communications. It is also notable that, within the context of these ideational changes, some religious leaders obtained less actual power in the rebels' army, and some secular leaders obtained more. Furthermore, some people who were initially motivated to participate on the basis of heterodox religious ideas appear to have abandoned their beliefs during the course of the rebellions.

By drawing on the analysis of charismatic leaders that I presented in the previous chapter, I offer a deeper explanation for this pattern. Specifically, I argue that these changing ideational patterns might also be explained in terms of the specific Chinese cultural context within which the leaders of these rebellions were situated. As described in the previous chapter, heterodox religious ideas were heavily relied on by charismatic leaders in the task of

mobilising rebels. This often involved convincing them that the leaders' magical powers could help them avoid disaster and bring about a millenarian world to come. However, potential participants being too far from or too close to leaders made it less likely that these individuals would believe in or understand such religious messages. As a result, the initial number of participants who pursued an explicitly heterodox religious goal was limited. During the course of the rebellions considered in this chapter, the rebels did not further change the religious ideas to make this type of religious idea easier to spread through being taken up among the people. Therefore, having a pool of heterodox religious believers was insufficient for achieving a consensus across people of various statuses within the rebel organisations.

In this chapter, I demonstrated that the heterodox religious ideas were relatively impotent in terms of the goal of generating a unified point of view. This is done with further reference to the observation that some rebels gave up their belief in the magical power of the religious leaders and that the religious leaders could not directly command the armies. There might be some other possible reasons for this finding, such as the recorders specifically changing the details in the sources or the soldiers only listening to those who recruited them. However, having assessed these possibilities, it seems more plausible that heterodox religious ideas did indeed decline in importance and salience, and that religious leaders were not able to retain actual power in context of the White Lotus rebellion. Furthermore, by also assessing the other two middle Qing rebellions, I provide further evidence of this same ideational pattern within these separate uprisings.

The findings presented in this chapter could help deepen contemporary understanding of the premodern Chinese rebellions and the religious leaders of these rebellions. The leaders of the Chinese rebellions must be understood as both political leaders and religious leaders. As previously discussed, they

were different to some political leaders, such as kings of Europe, whose sacredness and charismatic characteristics were generally passed on via blood lineage (Bloch, 2015; Houle and Louis, 1988; Kantorowicz, 1957). Moreover, the Chinese cultural context influenced the legitimacy of the leaders as a result of the mediating factor that, in addition to the importance of blood lineage, there was also widespread belief in the mandate of Heaven. In Confucianist thinking, the mandate was declared according to moral and economic performance (see Perry, 2002; Zhao, 2009). Even if an emperor was a legitimate heir, he still needed to demonstrate positive performance in his role to demonstrate his destiny to rule. However, in the rebels' societies or armies, deciding whether leaders were chosen by Heaven was done using vague mantras in the form of riddles that were claimed to detail Heaven's hidden messages, leaders' magical powers, and special phenomena that were seldom seen in normal social life. Of these three, only the special phenomena were occasionally used to show the emperor's legitimacy in late imperial China (see, e.g., Chen, 1996; may also refer to Ye, 2002). The other two, in fact, the emperors sought to avoid using (see Seidel, 1983; Zhang, 2013). However, these three phenomena, especially the two that emperors generally sought to avoid relying on to demonstrate their mandate, were almost essential for the religious rebel leaders. These conceptualisations of the rebel leaders with the Heavenly mandate may have come from popular culture. Consider, for example, the rebel leader Song Jiang who appeared in the *"Water Margin*," a novel carried by the rebels, as discussed in the previous chapter. He was assisted by the Taoist masters who were thought to have magical power. Song Jiang was also the person chosen by Fairy of Ninth Heaven and who received the heavenly books from that fairy that taught him how to use magic power (see SHZ).

As discussed in the previous chapter, this method of ascertaining the veracity of the leaders' messages led to less people believing in the leaders and what they said. Furthermore, during the rebellions, in the case of some rebels, once

they recognised that their leaders did not have superhuman powers, they gave up their belief in those leaders. This was because the leaders' superhuman power and destiny to rule were regarded as the core means by which they would have been able to avoid disasters and bring about the new world specified in the heterodox religions. Therefore, such rebels would find justifications for their participation in more secular ideas, such as those relating to building a new dynasty within the current order. Lacking sufficient support from the rebels, the text and oral statement heterodox ideas gradually disappeared as the rebellions progressed. This assumption not only provides an explanation of the historical possibility but also makes it possible to understand the role that such religious leaders played in these premodern rebellions and other political and religious movements in Chinese history.

The findings presented here also provide a new perspective on the outcomes of the Chinese premodern religious rebellions, especially those of the Qing era. Many studies (Chan, 1969; Goldstone, 1991b; Hung, 2009, 2011; Skocpol, 1979; Wakeman, 1977; Wolf, 1969) have discussed why most of the premodern Chinese rebellions were unable to bring about further revolutionary changes in terms of the religious ideas underpinning them and why they were unable to ensure that certain elements of these religious ideas were reflected in later regimes. However, most of these accounts focus on the influence of the Chinese social and cultural context on these uprisings in the later period, especially after the rebellious regime was established. I argue that some revolutionary notions did exist in the heterodox religious ideas of the middle Qing rebellions. However, as discussed above, most of them disappeared from the rebels' communications in the early period rather than in the later period, and the cause of this change is the rebels' sharper understanding of the charismatic leaders and their messages. This finding provides a useful means of viewing the premodern Chinese rebellions and potentially also certain phenomena identified in later social movements in China.

The White Lotus rebellion, texts and oral communications

Although there is variation in terms of how the timeframe of the middle Qing dynasty is typically conceptualised, in this study, the middle era of the Qing dynasty is regarded as referring to the period 1728-1840. For most of this period, China's economy grew rapidly and the political order became more stabilised (as discussed previously). However, despite the improvements in the social climate, there were still many problems that hindered the rule of Qing government, including government corruption and the outflow of silver after the 1820s.

Although the focus of this study is on the three rebellions of the middle Qing dynasty, I also analyse the ideational changes of the White Lotus rebellion first so that contrasts and comparisons can be drawn with the other two rebellions of this period. This is done because the White Lotus rebellion continued for a longer period of time and its trajectory can thus reveal certain ideational changes more clearly. As outlined in previous chapters, the White Lotus rebellion was a large-scale rebellion taking place during the middle Qing dynasty. It started in 1794 when the Qing government established that the heads of the White Lotus society in Xiangyang district were planning a rebellion. Two years later, to suppress the rebellion, they started to detain the members of the White Lotus society. This operation contributed to triggering an even larger rebellion across Sichuan, Shaanxi and Hubei provinces, leading to a crisis that lasted for eight years until it was finally suppressed in 1804 (see the relevant information in QSL).

Although the Qing government discovered that rebellion was being planned in 1794, the historical evidence demonstrates that preparatory activities had been

undertaken even earlier than that by the Hunyuan and Shouyuan[15] sects (Gaustad, 2000), which were considered the “White Lotus sects” by the Qing government (Ter Haar, 1992). The rebellion mostly took place in the mountainous regions, with many people serving as the leaders of the rebel army at different times (Wang, 2014).

Most of the participants in the White Lotus rebellion were situated firmly at the bottom of society and had not received a formal education. This was the case in participants in both the religious sects and the rebels’ armies. These rebels included workers from a range of occupations, including officials, hired agricultural labourers, landowners, peddlers and merchants. As previously discussed, only a few rebels had been able to progress through the Qing government’s imperial examinations. Within the materials considered, most of the imperial examinations that the rebels undertook were those for military officials. These examinations had lower requirements regarding the individual’s understanding of Confucianist literature but higher requirements regarding military strategies and skills. However, it seems that most of the rebels were illiterate. According to the confessions, the rebels had to ask certain people who could read to help them understand the government’s materials (C1 in BLJZL; Gaustad, 1994; Lona, 2004; Naquin, 1976). Most of the rebels were of Han ethnicity. However, the White Lotus rebels set up many of their bases in the area inhabited by many Tujia people (Piao, 1983). Given that the rebels continued to recruit or force people around them to join their rebellious cause,

[15] As indicated in Chapter One, it is difficult to provide an adequate English translation of the concepts of Hunyuan and Shouyuan. Hunyuan refers to the start of the world, at which point all matter is mixed up in a nevertheless stable manner, with no opposition between different materials and concepts. Shouyuan refers to leading the human world to a return to the time point and the state of Hunyuan.

it is likely that there were many rebels of this ethnicity, albeit the precise figures on the proportion of Tujia people within the rebellions remain unknown.

The rebels within the White Lotus rebellion held different ideas regarding the processes and outcomes of the rebellions. In the previous chapter, the rebels' texts and oral communications were summarised in terms of the different types of sources of motivation and motivational strategies that they detailed. No detailed analysis was provided of the content of these texts or their structure and connotations. Thus, in this chapter, such elements of the texts are considered in more detail.

Most previous studies discussing the texts of these rebellions (e.g., Naquin, 1976; Ter Haar, 2006) focus on mantras and oral communications. While it is clear that these played important roles in the rebellion, I also consider other types of texts here. These include religious mantras used to summon gods; riddle-like mantras to indicate the identity of the charismatic leaders; folk song sentences; oral communication closely relating to religion; other forms of oral communications; posters; books; and rebels' explanations of these texts. It should be borne in mind that the riddles mentioned are those contained in the mantras, thus the term 'riddle-like mantra.' Such pieces are normally formed by splitting the characters of the surname or name of a person, as discussed in previous chapters. I also consider two representative posters. One was produced by the Qing government in an effort to discredit the heterodox religious ideas espoused by the religious leaders; the one was used to motivate potential rebels to join the rebellion. There are only two books that contain actual content, but the titles of other books are also considered to assist the analysis of the religions presented here.

The various forms of texts were circulated in different ways. The mantras (including the riddles contained within), folk songs and oral communications were normally passed through the rebel groups orally as a means of conveying

the religious elements to the lower-level members (often with a view to mobilising these individuals to participate in the rebellion). Some of the mantras were recorded by the rebels in their books but, given that not all the rebels could understand the Chinese characters at that time, the rebels had to spread these messages orally in most situations. During the interrogations, the rebels would be asked about their communications and their answers would be recorded in the confessions. While the statements that the rebels made might not always have reflected exactly what they said at the material time, it can be assumed that they would have been able to remember at least the gist of what had been said. These communications were further checked by the interrogators. For the purposes of this study, these communications were also checked by me (in accordance with the methodology detailed in Chapter Three). The posters and books were material objects. In the case of the books, these were passed by the rebels amongst themselves, normally from higher-status rebels to lower-status rebels. However, such a method of passing on messages was less frequent than oral communications. In the case of posters, however, there was no secret transmission of messages, as these were used to reach a wider and public audience.

In these texts and oral communications, most of the mantras took the form of a poem, with seven characters making up a sentence and a mixture of classical and vernacular Chinese being used. Classical Chinese was widely used at the time, but primarily for writing before the premodern Chinese times. Vernacular Chinese was a plainer form of Chinese classical language that was typically used orally and was similar to modern Chinese. The use of the vernacular in these mantras may be explained by the high numbers of people who were involved in the rebellion who had not received a formal education. Indeed, most of these rebels were illiterate. It is possible that, to fit the format of the poem, some elements were deducted. For example, there is one mantra that appears to have been the core of the rebels' texts. One of the sentences in this mantra

describes the five constant virtues and their relationship with the *klapa* as follows:

> *The klapa of the ancestors is in Five Cardinal Relations: Benevolence (humanity), Righteousness, Propriety, Wisdom, Heaven, Earth and Human.* (see C16 in BLJZL)

This sentence mentions the five cardinal relations which are among the core concepts of Confucianism. The concept refers to the following relationships: that between the ruler and the ruled; that between parents and children; that between siblings; that between husband and wife; and that between friends. It also mentions four of the Confucianist "five constant virtues," namely Benevolence (humanity), Righteousness, Propriety, Wisdom and the "three elements" that were considered to form the world, namely Heaven, Earth and Human.

Here, although the mantra mentions the five constant virtues, it includes only four of them, with final one of Honesty being left unincluded. This is likely because the sentences had to fit the rhyme scheme and the word limit for this style of poem. In addition, there are also no further explanations provided in the texts regarding as to what the concepts in the mantra were. Although the nature of many such concepts would have been very clear for people alive during the Qing dynasty, especially those who had received Confucianist education, some concepts that appeared in these texts and related to the secret religions of that time are unlikely to have been so easy to understand. One example is "Tian Yuan Tai Bao," which appears in another text (C16 in BLJZL). In this phrase, "Tian" refers to Heaven, "Yuan" to the concept of an origin, "Tai" to a state of diffusion and externality and "Bao" to a state of protection and internality. The heterodox religions used this phrase to add power to the mantra they used, and so there are differences with the orthodox religion. As a result, such messages would likely not have been very easy to understand in the case of a person who

was less educated or who had not been previously involved in the religion. In fact, there is evidence for this conclusion in that the interrogators needed to ask the rebels to explain some of the meanings of these religious concepts. For the interrogators, understanding the meaning of these sentences would have been one of their core missions, as the meaning of these sentences is a topic of discussion appearing frequently in both the confessions and the reports (e.g., C27 in BLJZL). Moreover, there is also evidence that the emperor annotated some of these meanings as important.

Besides the oral communications, most of the other texts are similar in style to the mantras. The content of these books is normally poem-like, often with highly opaque meaning. The only two texts that are significantly different from the mantra are the rebels' recruitment poster (see T1, in Grand Council Copies) and a leaflet (see T2, in NMYDL). Both these two documents feature vernacular Chinese writing, and the meaning of the text in these two documents is clearer. There are also some government posters whose meaning is clearer than the rebels' texts too.

The themes in the ideas expressed in the texts and oral communications

This section discusses the most important themes in the texts and oral statements. Because I focus on the texts and oral communications relating to the rebels' ideational world, only aspects of these sources that are relevant to these matters are discussed. For example, there is no discussion of the themes relating to military information or certain themes appearing in the early religious materials covering the core information relating to the rebellions.

Reading the materials repeatedly made it possible to identify a number of core themes, which were often interwoven. To present the themes concisely, each theme is given a name reflecting its core meaning, although there may be much

more content when the themes appear in the texts. These themes are categorised into those associated with heterodox religious ideas, those associated with dynastic-order-related ideas and those associated with perceptions of threats. For convenience, the names of these themes are used when referring to them later in the analysis. It can be seen that these broad categories of themes are similar to those associated with the sources of motivation discussed in the previous chapter. However, while the sources of motivation provide insight into the nature of the rebels' ideas, these themes provide a greater level of detail about the content of these ideas and how they changed over time.

The themes relating to heterodox religious ideas

Gods' protection: One of the most important features of the texts relates to the practice of summoning the protection of the gods by calling out their names in the mantras. The rebels believed that once they were taught these mantras, they could "not be harmed by weapons" (see C14 in BLJZL; C28 in DAD). Indeed, some rebels even believed that they would be able to "avoid the disaster of water and fire" (see C29 in NMYDL). The rebels usually told potential participants that their participation would enable them to receive the protection of the gods. These gods came from various religious traditions (e.g., Taoism, Buddhism) and included gods that were considered most powerful and as having the highest status in the heavenly bureaucracy (regarding heavenly bureaucracy, see e.g., Baity, 1977), such as Buddha. This set of beings also contained many lower-ranking gods or half-human immortals, such as the Pu'an monk, a human monk who was believed to have the power to catch ghosts (see C16 in BLJZL). However, although many gods are described in the texts, the highest gods, namely the Eternal Mother and the Buddha, were still mentioned first in these texts.

The saviours: Another key point evident in the texts relates to the saviour and the leaders of the rebellion, as discussed by many studies of the White Lotus (see e.g., Chuang, 2002; Naquin, 1976; Ter Haar, 2006). A saviour is normally described as a person with the ability to protect the participants. The saviour mentioned in these sources generally refers to the charismatic religious leaders previously discussed. However, it is notable that the rebels' communications also mentioned these 'saviours' as needing assistants who were destined for this role. These saviours were also portrayed as having magical power, usually considered representatives of the Eternal Mother or the immortals who came from Heaven. Sometimes they were considered as reincarnated immortals themselves. In the White Lotus rebellion, they were probably also associated with the project of restoring the Ming dynasty, as the dynasty that Qing replaced. This may be explained in terms of the ethnic conflicts between the ruling ethnic Manchu and the ruled ethnic Han, as most dynasties were ruled by the emperors from the ethnic Han. However, Ter Haar (2006) also raises another possibility: the rebels believed that the descendant of the emperors of previous dynasties were more likely to be chosen by Heaven.

In the oral communications of the rebels in the White Lotus rebellion, the most important saviour is Li Quaner, who is frequently described as "the reincarnation of a heavenly general" and as having a "peculiar appearance" and magic powers. He is also described as the true ruler or the true saviour (see, e.g., C26 in BLJZL) with the ability to avert the *klapa* in the future. Furthermore, the mantra was also connected to these leaders. The rebels believed that the mantra would give them the magic power of the leaders. Sometimes the leaders would also use the riddle-like mantras to convey messages about their power and destiny to rule. The "Muyi and Muzi are the true name" mantra mentioned previously is an example. However, only a few people, such as Zhang Zhengmo and Liu Shengcai, the leaders of a sect branch, said they had seen Li Quaner.

These two people functioned as saviours' assistants to deliver all such information about Li Quaner.

The *klapa*: As previously discussed, in the heterodox religious sects, the participants believed that the world's history could be divided into three major periods, and that the *klapa*, as the great disaster that would destroy the world, would come at the end of each period, after which the world would be renewed. The rebels also engaged in significant efforts to depict the *klapa* in images. *Klapa* is mostly described as a day replete with killing and death and is normally considered in conjunction with other strange phenomena, such as 'the black gale.' The discussion of the theme of *klapa* is sinister, containing elements of threats different to those used to motivate the potential rebels to participate. More specifically, *klapa* is described as a future supernatural disaster that everyone would have to face, while the other forms of threat, such as violent coercion at the hands of other rebels or looming government investigations or repression, were only ever directed against a person or group. Furthermore, the descriptions of *klapa* are closely connected to the religions, although this was only a part of the overall religious elements. It often appears in the texts with other heterodox religious ideas, with greater emphasis on the hope of securing god's protection and a chance of entering a better world at the point of the *klapa*. This is why this element is considered as appearing in the heterodox religious ideas. The *klapa* as an element was more often used to persuade the rebels to join the secret societies than to persuade them to join the rebellion. Furthermore, some rebels who were motivated on this basis to join the rebellions would have known that the *klapa* was associated with the goals of the rebellion (see C26, C30 in BLJZL).

The Eternal Mother and the teacher: As suggested, the Eternal Mother was usually considered as the highest-ranked god within the heterodox religions of Qing China. The teacher, a role played by many members of secret societies,

often appears simultaneously with the Eternal Mother in the text. Such religious teachers are sometimes described as individuals serving as the representatives of the charismatic religious leaders, with a certain authority to issue their disciples with orders. While the Eternal Mother and the religious teacher themes often appear concurrently with the themes relating to the protection of the gods, they are nevertheless listed as separate themes. There are two reasons for this. First, in the texts containing the themes relating to gods' protection, the religious teachers and the Eternal Mother are normally described as gods or important figures to whom believers prayed, typically listed at the beginning of the texts. This shows their dominance over the other gods. Secondly, many texts about the Eternal Mother are not about her protection but rather leading the person back to the 'true empty hometown.' This phrase is often used to refer to a millenarian world in the heterodox religion (see Chuang, 2002; Naquin, 1976).

Millenarianism and the potential for change: The White Lotus rebellion has long been viewed by many historians as a millenarian rebellion with the aim of building a utopian world after the *klapa* in which potential participants were mobilised through the use of this idea (e.g., Naquin, 1976; Wakeman, 1977). However, in the communications of the rebels, the millenarian worlds that the rebels sought to build are seldom directly mentioned. The phrase that appears most frequently to describe the millenarian world is "a peaceful year" (see, e.g., C26 in BLJZL), which does not describe at all what the millenarian world looks like. In this sense, it seems that the rebels were very close to the "primitive rebels" of most of the millenarian rebellions that Hobsbawm (1971) describes. In other words, the rebels did not know at all what kind of world they sought to build, and, in their minds, the millenarian world was just a version of the current world order.

However, there are also some texts that seem intended to promote an alternative value system, and probably a social system too. For example:

> *Maitreya Buddha preaches to us the orthodox way. Searching for the orthodox way, we become a family. Follow the mountain to find your real mother. Never change once you find the true orthodoxy.* (See T2 in Grand Council Copies)

The paragraph highlights “the orthodox way,” although this orthodox way has typically been translated as “the real way” or “the true way” by scholars (e.g., Kilcourse, 2016; Ter Haar, 2006). Here, I use “the orthodox way” to present a clearer division between the heterodox religious ideas and the other mainstream Confucianism-influenced ideas. Although the Qing government always considered the White Lotus to be “heterodox,” in both their ideology and practices, the White Lotus followers here asserted that what they were doing was the true orthodoxy and asked followers to adhere to this way of living. It can be seen that the “orthodox way” of the White Lotus is mentioned repeatedly in the mantras. However, although the texts do exhort the disciples to follow the orthodox way promoted by the White Lotus sect rather than what was the then-current orthodox ideology of the imperial government, it is not always fully explained what the nature of this orthodox way was or what the alternative system of values and practices promoted. However, from texts such as scriptures and precious scrolls (Examples can be found in Chuang, 1979), it is possible to glean some basic information about the world promised by the White Lotus sect. In these texts, the millennian world that is described is characterised by equality, prosperity and happiness, with people having the ability to live forever, free from any suffering. This world order is also described as being maintained by the magical power of the gods. The world is ruled by the gods and the rulers of the new world are not secular monarchs but the Eternal Mother and her gods. The religious leaders were usually considered to be messengers or reincarnated immortals, which highlights the direct connection between the rulers and the religious leaders.

In the world described in the texts, the Eternal Mother would care for the people as her own children. This observation is particularly important given the Chinese research context. The emperor of China usually ruled the country through filial piety based on Confucianism (see e.g., Hung, 2011) considering himself the father of his people. In Confucianism, people learned through their fathers, obeying their fathers' commands. Thus, a person could become an adult with the ability to follow correct moral standards. However, the texts highlight the importance of mother and baby and thus seem to call to rule out the restrictions of Confucianist etiquette as a means of calling the rebels to eliminate the authority oppressing them and follow human nature. Such discussion highlights that the rebels did have some ideas about how the new orders they wanted to build were different from the existing order.

Of course, not all the heterodox religions shared the exact same view described here. However, the basic world views of these religions do appear to have been similar. Although modern people would know that this kind of world would not be possible to build, this highlights the importance of considering such matters not from the modern perspective but rather from that of the rebels at the time. In the minds of many of these rebels, magical powers could exist in the world, and so it is natural to conclude that they would want to build a new world with the assistance of these powers.

The prophecy of success: There are many texts that discuss the path towards success in the context of the rebellions. These texts normally describe such matters in a prophetic form. These prophecies usually indicate that when a leader comes, or after a certain time, success will follow. These prophecies are also occasionally related to the *klapa* and the millenarian world that would appear. These prophecies are also often in the form of a poem similar to the mantra. Sometimes, the prophecies also contain certain elements regarding government repression. Further analysis of how the content of these

prophecies differs across the various stages of the rebellion is offered later when we analyse the ideological changes process in the later stage of rebellion.

Themes containing dynastic-order-related ideas

The Ming dynasty restoration: Although the White Lotus rebellion has been viewed as a “religious” rebellion, the restoration of the Ming dynasty is frequently mentioned in the original texts and the detailed oral communication between of the rebels. The image of the restoration of the Ming dynasty is sometimes associated with the saviours, who are normally mentioned as the descendants of the Ming royal family. However, this may not indicate that the heterodox religions were in favour of restoring an old dynasty. As I mentioned, Ter Haar’s (2006, 2019) investigation suggests that followers of the heterodox religions usually believed that the descendants of the previous dynasty’s emperors were more likely to have magical religious powers. The leaders of these rebellious religions claimed to be not only the descents of the Ming dynasty but also of other, older dynasties or previous rebellions. However, due to the passage of time and the extensive manhunts that were conducted to track down the old royal families after the regime changes between dynasties, it would have been impossible for rebels to verify most of these claims regarding people as the descents of the previous dynasty. As a result, they would have had to use other ways associated with the heterodox religions to confirm who their destined leaders were.

Nevertheless, there is another potential reason for this theme being so frequently mentioned, and this is that the rebels’ messages were usually interwoven. It may therefore have been useful for them to mention both religious messages and political messages regarding the restoration of the Ming dynasty at the same time.

This theme is sometimes also evident in the descriptions of the ethnic conflicts between Han and Manchu. This is because the ruling ethnics of the Qing dynasty were Manchu, and the ruling ethnics of the Ming dynasty were Han. The conflicts between Han and Manchu can mostly be attributed to dynastic-order-related ideas, as it is difficult to identify discussions of this kind of conflict in the religious texts.

Bureaucratic ambitions: In the last chapter, it was argued that the rebels' ambitions to enter the imperial bureaucratic system played a key part in mobilising them within the movement. This is especially clear for the higher-ranking rebels, and this is evident in the communications of the rebels before and during the rebellion. This was mostly done by promising certain official posts (see C14 in BLJZL; C31 in NMYDL). However, sometimes the rebellious organisations would not directly point out what position they promised to potential participants. Instead, they would be vaguer, stating that they would have access to a great fortune in the future. This suggests that the rebellious organisations had not decided what kind of official posts they wanted to promise the potential participants they wanted to mobilise.

Themes relating to the perception of threats

There were a lot of rebels who confessed that they dared not challenge the power of the emperor, claiming instead that they joined the rebellious organisations because of government repression or violent coercion on the part of the rebels. It is likely that this was used as an excuse to secure a lighter punishment (see C19 in BLJZL). Nevertheless, it is evident that certain rebels did indeed participate in the rebellions for other reasons, with (the threat of) government repression among these (see Dai, 2019; also see C32, C33 in BLJZL). Thus, these two themes are grouped together on the basis that these rebels might not have participated in the rebellion because of their own will but

rather because of violent coercion perpetrated others or institutional pressure. Furthermore, these two themes are not associated with a clear intention to overthrow the then-current regime, nor is there any indication as to the outcome that such rebels wanted, thus highlighting a difference with the themes relating to heterodox religious ideas and dynastic-order-related ideas.

However, it is essential to mention these themes as they appear very frequently in the rebels' communications. In the previous chapter, I showed that there were many people claiming that they were forced to join the rebellion because of the threat of government action against them or the coercion on the part of other rebels. One of the dominant slogans relating to this theme is "Officials forced people to rebel" (see C34 in BLJZL). This slogan appears frequently in the White Lotus rebellion communications. The confessions of the rebels indicate that these rebels joined the movement because they thought they were being pursued by the government. At this time, the government was seeking to eliminate the heterodox sects by arresting any people who associated with them. In most cases, these people may not have otherwise had a strong intention to rebel. However, they considered it necessary to "rebel against the government and then make plans according to the situation" (see C35 in BLJZL). It is not clear what their plans would be for their participation in most cases, if they had any. It is possible that they sought to overthrow the dynasty in the event that the rebellion was successful. It is also possible that they would await formal pardon by the emperor.

Changing ideas in the White Lotus rebellion

The previous sections outlined the main themes appearing in the recorded texts and oral statements across the period. However, during the different stages of the rebellions, the main themes that were utilised differed. In considering the process and different stages of the White Lotus rebellion, this were not stages

that were strictly based on temporality. This is because the rebellion occurred in different areas, and when the rebellion broke out in one area, it could take a long time for information to reach another area, and it would likely also take some other time for the rebels in the second area to react to this and to mobilise and organise their own followers. Therefore, instead of using a specific time or date, I consider the events described in terms of the pre-rebellion stage, the early stage, the middle stage, the later stage, and the final stage. The approximate timing of each stage is indicated in the table below, following which the discussion turns to the ideational pattern associated with each stage.

Table 8 The timeframe of each stage*of the White Lotus rebellion

	Pre-rebellion stage	Early stage	Middle stage	Later stage	Final stage
Year	Before 1788	1788-1794	1794-1796	1796-1799	1799-1804

*This is an approximate time frame.

Pre-rebellion stage

The White Lotus rebellion was organised based on the heterodox sect network labelled by the government as the White Lotus sect. It remains unclear when the sect began engaging in preparatory activities in respect of the White Lotus rebellion. However, according to the confessions and the findings of previous studies, the origin of these sects can be traced back to the 1750s, almost 50 years before the rebellion or even earlier (Chan, 1969). Nevertheless, it was not until around 1794 that the sect leaders decided to rebel and organise a rebellious army.

However, texts relating to the rebellion appeared even before the uprising. The heterodox religions in China were characterised by the presence of violent elements, including images regarding fighting against the current authorities

and challenging the existing order (Ownby, 1995; Ter Haar, 1998). However, the texts, although limited, demonstrate that, prior to the White Lotus rebellion, the potential rebels took care not to depict themselves as moving directly against the authorities. Instead, the texts mostly exhorted their sect members to follow the order of the Eternal Mother and religious teachers.

The texts also instruct members to follow the "orthodox way"; the poem including the line "Maitreya Buddha preaches to us the orthodox way" that I discussed above may be an example of this. The point that this poem was also used in the rebellion demonstrates the connection between early religious texts and the rebellions.

Furthermore, in a leaflet relating to the preaching of the religions, there are also other statements, such as "[The Buddha[16]] asks all the Guanyin and all Bodhisattvas to set up this sect. [He or she] sends the general and brings the Arhats to find people to follow the orthodoxy[17]" (T2, in NMYDL). I argue that the rebels' orthodoxy was portrayed so as to command the members to follow the way of the Eternal Mother and the teachers rather than that of the Confucianist saints or the elders.

Meanwhile, although there are no themes directly associated with the dynastic-order-related ideas that can be found in the texts during this period, the religious images in the texts do reveal a certain bureaucratic order. For example, in the precious scroll of the White lotus rebellions, it is indicated that all the gods follow the Eternal Mother and her order (T18 in NMYDL).

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[16] The Buddha should be understood as referring to the highest god, and this term may refer to the Eternal Mother here.

[17] The orthodoxy mentioned here was considered heterodox by the government. The names appearing in this sentence are all gods within Buddhism.

However, this may only indicate a possibility or a very specific sense of the bureaucratic theme, relating only to Heaven or the millenarian world rather than the real world. The bureaucratic order of the gods is a common theme appearing in many Chinese religious texts and popular novels (Baity, 1977), but it is not universally connected to insurgency.

Therefore, it was long before the rebellion started that the religious sects circulated the texts containing the heterodox religious ideas, and only a very particular sense of dynastic-order-related ideas can be detected in the relevant sources.

Early stage

However, moving through the chronologically sorted texts, with the expansion of the sect, some speeches directly related to the rebellions appear in the texts and oral communications. This can be traced back to a point as far back as around 1788, around five years before the rebellion began, at which point the sect leaders were looking for the saviour and the descendant of the Ming dynasty (Gaustad, 1994). The exuberance of the radical, rebellious speeches may be attributed to the sect leaders' aim of recruiting more followers. However, it is perhaps more plausible that this indicates that the seeds of the rebellion had start to germinated. As the sect expanded in terms of its number of members, some leaders might have begun to consider using their network to gain more power. During this period, the prevalence of both the heterodox religious ideas and the dynastic-order-related ideas increased significantly.

In terms of the heterodox religious ideas, there are texts and oral communications associated with the theme of millenarianism and change. For example:

Cutting my bones to return them to my father and mother, cutting my flesh to return it to my parents. Splitting the mountain to save the mother. That is the real man following filial piety. (See C16, in BLJZL)

This mantra was created before the rebellion and was frequently used during it. It comes from the famous Chinese mythic stories of two immortals: Nezha and Erlang Shen (or Chen Xiang, as explain below). Nezha is an immortal from ancient Chinese mythology, coming from the story named "Nezha slaughtering the son of the Dragon King."[18] In the story, Nezha kills the son of the Dragon King and violates the laws of Heaven. His father, who is angry that Nezha acted against his education and fearing further punishment from Heaven, did not want to protect Nezha from such punishment. Nezha, therefore, cuts his flesh and bones and returns them to his parents. The Buddha saves Nezha and uses a lotus to reconstruct his body, and Nazha is told to view Buddha as his father and the lotus as his mother. Erlang Shen's (or Chenxiang's) story comes from the ancient Chinese myth of "Splitting Mountains to Save Mother." Here, it is necessary to explain the various version of this story that appear across history. Although the main plots of different versions are very similar to each other, some details are different. It is well-known that the hero in "Splitting Mountains to Save Mother" is named Chenxiang in modern Chinese and that Erlang Shen is his uncle. However, in the precious scroll of Erlang, which was written in the Ming dynasty, it is Erlang Shen rather than Chenxiang who splits the mountains. Since the rebels did not mention the hero's name in the mantra, I will use Erlang Shen as the name recorded in the precious scroll. Erlang Shen is the son of a female immortal and a half immortal. His mother lives in the Lotus Palace (and, in some versions of the story, has a weapon called Lotus Lantern). She marries a mortal, which violates the law of Heaven that immortals cannot marry mortals.

[18] There are many versions of the following two stories, with some of the details may be a little bit different.

As a result, Erlang Shen's mother is pressed under Tai Mountain (in some versions, Hua Mountain). When Erlang Shen grows up, he learns supernatural powers from the Eternal Mother. Receiving protection from the Eternal Mother, he splits the Mountain and saves his mother, and they are able to return to the Lotus Palace. While the stories of the two characters are very different, they have one thing in common: both Nezha and Erlang Shen fight against the imperial court of Heaven for breaking the old unreasonable rules, and there is a common connection to the image of Lotus. Although the meaning of this paragraph is not explained clearly in the texts, there is an implication that true filial piety, as taught by the Eternal Mother, could only be achieved by fighting the rule of the imperial court and the old principles of filial piety emphasising the importance of obeying one's parents and the emperors (see e.g., Hung, 2011).

The sect leaders also began to use elements from traditional Chinese heterodox religious culture to describe the saviour. In the texts, it is claimed that the Maitreya Buddha would come to the human world, and Li Quaner is described as the reincarnation of a general in Heaven. According to the organisers of the rebellions, Li Quan'er's appearance was also different from others and the sect members who helped him could avoid suffering at the time of *klapa*.

> *A real god appeared in Pingyang Prefecture, Shanxi Province. He was born in the year of the Wu Xu*[19]*. His name is Li Quaner. He looks different from others. There are two characters, 'sun' and 'moon' on his left and right hands. His eyes look like Phoenix eyes or Dragon eyes. In the place where Li Quaner lived, a big stone suddenly broke and presented a mantra. Anyone who recites this mantra can avoid disaster.* (C30 in BLJZL)

[19] Wu Xu is the name of a year in the Chinese lunar calendar.

In the rebels' view, "*Li Quaner*" was not only the person chosen to rule but also an individual with the ability to wield magical powers. It may have been the case that the rebels considered that, by chanting the mantra learned from *Li Quaner*, they could gain access to magic power to ward off harm and enter the millenarian world that was promised by the gods.

Here, the saviour, or in other words, the charismatic leader, is given the alternative name of "Niu Ba," which has certain potentially important implications. If one combines the characters of Niu (牛) and Ba (八), this yields the name Zhu (朱), which was the surname of the emperors of the Ming dynasty (see C27 in BLJZL). It is not difficult to consider the charismatic leaders as seeking to adopt another identity as royal descendants of the previous dynasty. This could be an instance of the theme of dynastic-order-related ideas. As previously discussed, although the dynastic-order-related ideas ultimately conflicted with the heterodox religious ideas, the rebels did not have to pick a side at the start of the rebellions. Indeed, these two ideas can be straightforwardly analysed as being interwoven with each other. However, it should also be noticed that there is another potential explanation. As I described, the descendant of the Ming dynasty mentioned here might, in fact, be used to allude to the charismatic characters of the leaders rather than the leaders' royal origin within the previous dynasty. The royal descendants may be closer to the charismatic leaders described in the heterodox religions (Ter Haar, 2006). In this situation, the leader can claim to be the descendant of not only the Ming dynasty but also other dynasties or even other previous rebel leaders. For example, in the case of the leader Li Quaner, his initial surname was "Li," which was also a surname that was frequently used to describe charismatic leaders of some other religious sects (Ter Haar, 2006). "Li" could therefore be an instance of the surname of one of the top masters of these heterodox religions. It could also refer to Li Zicheng, the rebel leader who fought against both Ming and Qing forces. Alternatively, "Li" could refer to the Li royal

family of the Tang dynasty (618-907). And “Li” was also considered a surname that could indicate one’s specific identity in certain heterodox religions (see Ter Haar, 2006).

By this point, there is also textual evidence of people having started to use the slogans relating to gaining “wealth and rank” to attract people to participate in the sect. This demonstrates the appearance of the bureaucratic theme of the dynastic-order-related ideas in the texts of the rebellion (see C14 in BLJZL). It was during this time that more people who potentially believed in certain dynastic-order-related ideas were attracted to join the rebellious groups.

For example, in an interrogation record of Nie Jieren and Xiang Yaoming, one of the rebels, Nie Jieren, stated that he had paid one hundred tael of silver to the White Lotus sect, so the sect promised that he would be the Governor in the future. And they jointly confessed:

They (sect) secretly spread rumours everywhere. Some people joined the sect for fear of klapa, and some were greedy to get benefits. Therefore, many people listened to the sect. (see C14 in BLJZL)

From the analysis, three points can be concluded at this point. First, in the early period of the rebellion, the rebels had created and used both heterodox and orthodox discourse to attract their potential participants to join the sect and potentially the rebellion. Second, these dynastic-order-related ideas and heterodox religious ideas appear to have been interwoven with each other in the texts and communications. Therefore, no matter what people really believed at that time in terms of their motivation for starting or participating in a rebellion, they would have identified aspects of the texts or oral communications that would have resonated with them. Third, one of the most significant elements in the religious texts relates to the descriptions of the charismatic leaders. It can be seen that the magic power was portrayed as the means of avoiding disaster

(*klapa*), with the leaders as the source of this power and potentially the means of realising the rebels' ambitions of restoring the Ming dynasty.

However, the religious leaders, or the people close to them, did not carefully explain the aim of the rebellions, nor did they explain to the potential participants how they would prevail in their situation. Furthermore, although some of the precious scrolls they carried did provide some details of what the millenarian world would look like, they failed to do this in their oral communications with the rebels. Instead, they more frequently use the ambiguous word "peaceful year", "great peace" to describe the millenarian world in their mind. The religious leaders also failed to mention what the individuals' lives could be like in this world. Similar sects had once engaged in these kinds of practices for reshaping their members' daily lives long before the rebellion commenced (e.g., meeting regularly to preach scriptures, burning incense to worship god, teaching and learning Kungfu) (see, e.g., Gaustad, 2000). However, these practices were not used when or after the rebels began to plan this rebellion. Instead, in the domain of the ideas, the religious leaders' focus was on ensuring that the rebels believed that their leaders did indeed have access to magic powers and were destined to rule (albeit through various unclear and mysterious messages). This particular point is important, and it is discussed further below and in the next chapter.

Middle stage

During this stage, the sect leaders began to plan and organise the rebellion. However, as with many rebellions in history, their efforts were soon noticed by the government. In 1794, one member of a religious sect was arrested. He later divulged the name of his teacher as well as some of the sect's plans (Gaustad, 2000). Within a short time, the authorities were able to trace these activities to Song Zhiqing, one of the sect leaders, who was then arrested and executed.

This incident led the government to believe that a well-organised rebellion was on the verge of being launched, and so they immediately engaged in a significant operation against the heterodox sects (see, e.g., the relevant information in QSG; Dai, 2019). In this context, the sect leaders decided to mobilise the sect members and finally start the rebellion that they had planned. Initially, the rebellion commenced on a relatively small scale, involving significantly fewer participants than later on. However, this outbreak of the rebellion led the government to increase their efforts in their pursuit of the potential rebels. As a result, some of the rebels were forced to pick a side, causing the rebellion to become an uprising on a much larger scale.

In the previous chapter, various sources of motivation were discussed on the basis of what could be learned from reading the records on the confessions from this period. However, as discussed, in most cases, the interrogators did not provide a high level of detail regarding the rebels' narratives of the content of the oral communications and texts they had used. Therefore, it is not easy to investigate the themes and the ideas used in these scenarios. Thus, at this point, I only discuss oral communications and texts that are detailed in the sources.

During this period, the rebels used numerous different strategies to mobilise their potential participants. Most of the themes that were introduced previously also appear quite extensively in the sources from this period. Three themes are evident in this period.

One relates to bureaucratic ambition. The texts and oral statements that were used before the rebellion demonstrate a certain sense of bureaucratic order and some demonstrate specifically the bureaucratic ambitions of the rebels. However, it was during this period that the rebels most frequently and clearly stated their ambitions in this respect. There are many similar oral communications records that most of them sought to mobilise potential

participants to join the rebellion by promising an official post in a new dynasty. In a rebel Feng Deshi' confession (C36 in BLJZL), the rebel leader Zhang Zhengmo told other rebels:

> *He came to my home and told me that the White Lotus believers in Sichuan province rebelled. He asked me to call other followers together. If we also participated, we would certainly get wealth and rank in the future.* (see C36 in BLJZL)

Another theme is the *klapa*. Although the *klapa* already existed as a general idea in popular discourse and the heterodox religions prior to the rebellion beginning, it was when the rebellion began that these descriptions were most heavily used to mobilise potential participants. For example, in the confession of Zhang Zhengmo (C30 in BLJZL), he described the *klapa* as follows:

> *The black gale blew day and night, killing countless people. Bones piled up like a mountain, and blood flowed like the sea. (C30 in BLJZL)*

The third theme relates to the perception of threats. It is during this stage of the rebellion that discussions regarding the potential for government repression began, and the rebels used the theme of government repression as a tool to mobilise potential participants legitimise their operations. In an oral communication between a rebel and a potential participant reported in the confession of Wang Lan (C33 in BLJZL), it is reported:

> *I already had four or five hundred disciples. Wang Zhenglong and Li Changfu sent me a letter, telling me that the government wanted to arrest the people of the sect, and my name was on the list. I led my disciples to join the army of Wang Zhenglong and Li Changfu on 7 March.* (C33 in BLJZL)

As already discussed in relation to this oral communication, the most obvious aim of the people who were persuaded to join the rebellion because of threats

of government repression and violent coercion on the part of other rebels was merely to survive. However, these individuals did not seem to have a specific common idea regarding how they would achieve their success or what they wanted to do in the aftermath of this. Most of these participants only hoped that "changes could be made once they created the disturbance" so they could either be pardoned by the government or become safe in the new regime that they would build (C35 in BLJZL). In the case of participants mobilised by violent coercion on the part of other rebels, they "had to rebel" or they would risk losing their lives (C37 in BLJZL). As long as these rebels could avoid the immediate pursuit of the government or the violent coercion from the other rebels, they could be more open to the aim set by the other rebels, whether this was to build a new imperial regime or seek their millenarian world.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that, at the initial point when the rebellion broke out, the heterodox religious ideas dominated most parts of the texts. However, as time passed, content on the themes of dynastic-order-related ideas and the perceptions of threat gradually entered the texts and oral communications used to mobilise the potential rebels. One possible cause of this phenomenon was that the leading rebels sought to recruit as many potential participants as possible. Moreover, if recruited, these individuals would have also discussed their own dynastic-order-related ideas and perceptions of threats or coercion. Meanwhile, the level of heterodox religious ideas remains strong in the texts from this period, although these do appear to have diminished in importance after the rebellion started.

The later stage

As the rebellion progressed and the prevalence of heterodox religious ideas reduced in the oral statements and texts, the dominant ideas in the texts and oral communications instead became dynastic-order-related and those

concerned with the perceptions of threats and coercion. In terms of the former type of ideas, many of these related to restoring the Ming dynasty, and there is also evidence of ideas regulating to ethnic conflicts. For example, when he moved to Xing'an, Shaanxi province in May of the third year of Jiaqing (1798), Zhang Hanchao, leader of a branch of the White Lotus uprising army, issued a poster featuring the following string of text:

> *Now the emperor of destiny has appeared. I observed that the Qing dynasty's fortunes were declining, and the Qing dynasty was contrary to Heaven's will. Heaven's will have belonged to our Han ethnic. Our emperor was originally the descendant of the Ming dynasty. You all are the people of the former Ming dynasty. Why did you not recollect your origins and repay the Ming dynasty but bring your family member to flee far away with the idea of acting for personal profit?* (see T1 in Grand Council Copies)

During this period, the core rebels began to fulfil their promise to assign official posts among the rebels whom they had recruited. This distribution of official posts is made clear by the content of several of the documents from this period, including the poster above. These documents also provide details of many other rebels' official titles, highlighting the importance of the bureaucratic theme during this period. For example, the poster was published in the name of Zhang Yuemei, and his title is included at the very top of the poster:

> *By imperial order, son of Zhang Hanchao, who is Grand General of revitalising Han and destroying Manchu in the eastern land, the Grand Marshal and Governor of suppressing and whipping the northern land.* (see T1 in Grand Council Copies)

Ideas concerned with perceptions of threat also became significant during this period. For example, the rebels used the slogan of "government forces people to rebel," which appeared on their banners. Some of the rebels argued that they had been forced to rebel by the government investigations and that, otherwise,

they would not have done so (see C34 in BLJZL). However, it should also be stressed that the discourse relating to government repression started to become, to some extent, “loyal” to the central government and there was no emphasis on any perception of the need for a regime change. Rather, it was argued that it was the local governments’ oppressive practices that had caused the rebellions. (On the question of whether the rebels were targeting the central government or the local government, see Hung, 2011) At this time, the rebels might have considered that their guilt resulting from participation in the rebellion could be solved via an official pardon of the central government, albeit such an eventuality would have been a remote possibility.

However, locating texts and oral statements on the heterodox religious ideas during this period, either in the documents kept by the government or in the oral communications relating to the rebels’ confessions, is difficult. Occasionally, heterodox religious ideas are mentioned in the sources, but they tend to instead relate to the prophecy of success. When this theme is manifest in the texts, in most cases, it tends not to relate to the magic power of the charismatic leaders; rather there is an emphasis on the importance of avoiding government pursuit. I provide an example of the discussion between the rebels in the next section to demonstrate that this theme is completely associated with the hope of avoiding government persecution. The change in the heterodox religious ideas in this period is also demonstrated by two further phenomena, as outlined below. These two phenomena can also be drawn on to explain why the heterodox religious ideas gradually disappeared in the texts and oral communication, as well as within the rebel groups.

Firstly, the heterodox religious leaders were not able to contain the power of the rebels’ groups. As described, the rebellion was largely built upon the foundations of the sect network, and, at the very beginning of the rebellion, the teachers had a considerable degree of authority. This is clear from the texts

that were used at that time, highlighting the importance of following what the teachers commanded. The core head of the sects and those who planned the rebellion were generally sect leaders. However, with the outbreak of the rebellion, it is also evident that, although they were still respected by the rebels, sect leaders, whose authority was closely linked to heterodox religious teachings, often held no actual military power in the rebellious organisations. Indeed, some of these leaders left the rebel camps only a short time after they joined them.

Military power instead belonged to the more secular leaders who were often not especially high-ranking in the religious hierarchies. Indeed, sometimes they were not even the disciples of the religious teachers, but their disciples' disciples. These leaders sometimes had more disciples or personal networks, but not in all cases (see Xu and Lin, 1980). The previous studies on this topic suggest that religious teachers were seldom involved in the rebellions (see e.g., Ter Haar, 2019). However, from the archival resources, it can be seen that many of them participated in the rebels' army for only a short time and left shortly afterwards. This is evident in many confessions. For example, Liu Zhixie, who was once believed by the Qing government to be the top leader of the sect, confessed:

> *The people in camp who are believers in the White Lotus religion in the army kowtowed when they saw me. They did not dare look up at me.* (C38 in BLJZL)

However, he only stayed in the camp for a short while and had an intensive argument with its military leaders (see C38, C39 in BLJZL). Another example is Wang Tingzhao, who was believed to be another top leader of the sect. He stayed with the rebel groups until he was captured. There was a rebel who described Wang Tingzhao's activities as follows:

> *Wang Tingzhao is more like a symbolic leader rather than someone who holds actual power. There were, however, some rebels who were lower members of the sect, such as Wang Linggao, who become the leaders of the army during this period.* (see C40 in BLJZL)

Of course, these leaders might have sought to deny their role in the rebellious operations within such camps. For example, it is strongly evident from the tone and the context of the exchange in this confession that Wang Tingzhao sought to describe himself as a person without power or status in the rebel organisation. However, by comparing other confessions and other sources of evidence and exploring the records within the confessions and government reports (including exploring the marks made by the emperors and recorders), it can be seen that Wang Tingzhao was indeed an important religious teacher. This kind of textual analysis and inter-text comparison also shows that he did indeed not have the direct power to command the soldiers.

This shift in power could have been due to the change of the locus of this power, moving from the religious leaders to the other military leaders on the basis that they had more prestige among the rebels and possibly in the local areas. However, it must be understood that, at least at the initial stages, rebels in the heterodox religious rebellions were not well organised to the degree that a formal army would be. Also, they were less influenced by the local authorities in the village than, for example, the local militia. As Duara (1988) argues, they were organised based on their own sect networks rather than through the networks that were built by high-status individuals within their local villages. The rebels also exchanged members between different armies during periods of conflict. Based on this context, it is natural to conclude that the religious leaders would have been able to obtain more power if all the rebels had truly believed in them and their message.

Secondly, it is also possible to witness a change in the ideas of those who believed in the heterodox religious ideas. This is particularly evident in the case of rebels who eventually ceased chanting the mantras containing themes relating to gods' protection and saviours. The reason for this is clearly stated in the confessions of Yang Shengqian:

> *We have never seen that those two had the power to drive out ghosts and gods; we just heard them boasting. As to avoiding gun shooting, the people who came with them to Sichuan to engage in robbing and to set fires were chased and killed by government soldiers of Sichuan Province. It is very obvious that Wang Mingfeng and Chen Qiming deceived us. However, it is too late for us to regret it after participating.* (see C2, in NMYDL)

There are also other rebels' communications that contain content about the same topic (see e.g., C1 in BLJZL). In fact, as discussed in relation to later texts, similar observations can also be made about other rebellions, such as the Wang Lun rebellion:

> *He told us to recite sutras and mantras in battle so that we could avoid guns and cannons, but we were still wounded. Even our leader Wang Lun was wounded by arrows. It is clear that their statements are deceiving.* (see C41 in DAD)

A significant decrease in the use of the protective mantra in the confessions previously analysed can also be witnessed. Similar comments are also in order regarding the ideas relating to millenarianism, although unlike the theme relating to the protection of the gods, the theme of changes and millenarianism does not significantly reduce in sources from this period. However, its core meaning does change from altering the current world to goals relating to escaping from government oppression and living a happy life. Many important themes such as the *klapa* and the millenarian world disappear from the rebels'

oral communication in this period. The remaining content about millenarianism that is left can be seen to be relatively vague.

Generally, during this period, the charismatic leaders, the sect leaders and their ideas on millenarianism gradually lost the power and influence that they had had on the rebel groups. As discussed in the following section analysing the Eight Trigrams and Wang Lun rebellions, this phenomenon is not unique to the White Lotus rebellion but rather a more common pattern witnessed of the heterodox religious movements of this period. On the other hand, dynastic-order-related ideas and themes relating to government repressions gradually took up more space in the rebels' texts and oral statements, and it was during this period that these aspects of heterodoxy and millenarianism became less obvious.

This phenomenon can be conveniently explained in terms of the observation that the heterodox religious ideas failed to guide the rebels when practical military conflict occurred, eventually leading to the rebels abandoning their beliefs in heterodox religious ideas. This explanation is generally appropriate in the cases of premodern Chinese rebellion scenarios. However, it is also necessary to discuss the details of this argument. For example, why did the impractical religious messages relating to magic lead to the collapse of the entirety of the rebels' heterodox religious motivation? And why were the rebels able to turn to other goals so naturally? It is possible to draw contrasts with Hobsbawm's description of the religious rebellions in the Monto Amiata. In this rebellion, when followers of the leaders found that the Apocalypse they were waiting for would not occur, they scattered and fled, leaving only a few loyal believers to resist. This situation seems similar to the rebellions considered. However, there are also important differences. In the premodern heterodox religious rebellions of China, the rebels believed the *klapa* could be triggered and would show in the world soon after, which was the coming of rebellion itself.

Furthermore, when the participants in the rebellion found that the heterodox religious ideas they believed in were not true, most of them did not cease participation. One way to explain would be to draw on the idea of government oppression and the need to push back against this as a continuing source of motivation. However, most of the reduction in prevalence of the heterodox religious ideas and the shift in power happened in the first two years of the rebellion, which raises questions. If they had wanted only to escape from the government's pursuit, they would likely not have engaged in such a significant war as they did in the coming years. This highlights the importance of investigating what the collapse of ideas further resulted in.

This issue is taken up later in this chapter and in the following chapters to draw a comparison with the Taiping rebellion. This is a relevant case to consider given that it did not demonstrate the same patterns in ideational changes as the middle Qing rebellions. This analysis of the middle Qing and Taiping rebellion can contribute to our understanding of why these heterodox religious ideas appear to have remained salient in some rebellions, causing societal changes, while largely disappearing in others. However, prior to this discussion, it is necessary to first complete the story of the White Lotus rebellion and provide a short description of the two other premodern rebellions to set the stage for the subsequent analysis.

The final stage

The military conflict between the government and the White Lotus rebels lasted for around eight years. However, the rebels never achieved any decisive military success, even at the very beginning of the rebellion (see C42 in NMYDL, and the relevant information in QSL). After the first few years, it became increasingly difficult for the rebels to match the government troops. Although the mountainous geography in which the rebellion commenced helped the

rebels to defend against the government forces, it also severely restricted the rebels' ability to maintain connections between their sub-groups and develop their power. Meanwhile, on the government side, the Jiaqing emperor had successfully eliminated his enemies in the imperial court and was in a position of absolute power, enabling his military activities to be run much more efficiently. (On the topic of how the conflict and competition in the government institutions reduced the government's efficiency in conquering the rebel forces, see Dai, 2019). For these and other reasons, the military activities of the government yielded considerable success. After around five years of the outbreak of the military conflicts, the rebels were not able to engage in any large military conflicts with the government troops. Most of the rebel troops were only able to try to escape from the government's pursuit, often becoming bandit-like groups (see C43 in NMYDL). Some lower members surrounded to the government or otherwise escaped from the rebels' army.

There are relatively limited records of the rebels' texts and oral communications in this period, even though the government still recorded many confessions. One possible reason for this is that the interrogators did not find a high level of oral communications among the rebels that would be of interest to the imperial court; in other words, the oral communications and texts during this period might not have been perceived as indicating the kinds of political aims that would threaten the Qing regime. Indeed, what is recorded in this period lends support to this analysis. The oral communications and the texts in this period generally demonstrate two themes. One is that of government pursuit. At this point, the rebels, especially those who led the armies, were discussing whether to surrender to the government in order to plead for leniency from the authorities. The other relates to the prophecy of success, which was briefly mentioned above. Although, at most points, the prophecy can be seen to have been associated with the magical charismatic leaders protecting the rebels from harm,

as time passed, it became more closely related to the hope that the gods would assist with escaping from government pursuit.

> *Fan Renjie was afraid that the people were of different minds. He urged people not to be afraid. Once there was a prophecy that said that "After the year of Renxu and the year of Guihai, everyone could be good." Gods and Buddha will certainly not break his promise. This prophecy will surely be fulfilled. If we persevered until the ninth year of Jiaqing, it would be the year of Jiazi, which is next year-round.* (see C44 in BLJZL)

Here, Renxu, Guihai and Jiazi are all the names of the years in the Chinese lunar calendar. The Chinese lunar calendar follows a cyclical way of counting the years, with a period of 60 years being considered a cycle. As a result, if a given year is the year of Renxu, then, 60 years later, it will be the year of Renxu again. For every 60 years, the first year is Jiazi. Therefore, whenever comes the year of Jiazi, this indicates a new cycle.

Although it is not explicitly stated what "good" refers to in this context, judging by the situation and the context that is described, the rebels' plans at this point seem to have been to merely escape from government pursuit and join a bandit group in the mountainous areas.

Further evidence of my arguments regarding the ideational pattern can be obtained from the number of texts and oral statements of each type of idea. In general, such analysis supports the pattern of ideational changes presented above. Table 9 below details the number of archival documents that contain the texts or oral statements of each type of idea associated with each stage of the White Lotus rebellion. Table 10 details the number of sentences[20] that dynastic-

[20] Although there are no direct punctuation marks in the document, there are ways to divide the sentences in classical Chinese, which were created even before the Han dynasty.

order-related and heterodox religious ideas mentioned in the documents. If a document mentions dynastic-order-related ideas or heterodox religious ideas in different places and the content is different in each case, this is counted as multiple instances.

Table 9 Data on texts and oral communications mentioning heterodox religious and dynastic-order-related ideas at each stage of the White Lotus rebellion

Types of ideas	Heterodox religious ideas		Dynastic-order-related ideas	
Type of texts	Document (texts)	Oral communication	Document (texts)	Oral communication
Pre-rebellion stage	A long document (over 1,000 characters)	2	A brief mention in a long document	
Early stage		12		6
Middle stage	A small Document	12		12
Later stage		3	A long document (over 500 characters)	6
Final stage		2		1

Table 10 Data on the numbers of sentences in the texts and oral communications at each stage of the White Lotus rebellion

Types of ideas	Heterodox religious ideas	Dynastic-order-related ideas
Pre-rebellion stage	16	2 (possible)
Early stage	19	7
Middle stage	23	16
Later stage	3	13
Final stage	2	1

Table 9 and 10 show a pattern similar to that detailed in the argument made, although these data are, of course, only a partial demonstration of the claims made in this analysis. The changes in numbers do not shed any light on the content of these texts and oral statements or indicate whether these mentions are in the form of longer sentences or just a few words. These data, therefore, play only a supportive role in terms of the evidence of the ideational change presented above.

Comparison with ideational change in other mid-Qing rebellions

This section moves the focus of the analysis from the White Lotus rebellion to providing a comparison with two other rebellions, the Eight Trigrams rebellion and the Wang Lun rebellion. The Eight Trigrams and Wang Lun rebellions were small in scale, with each lasting for only a short time. As detailed above, the Wang Lun rebellion occurred before the White Lotus rebellion, in 1774, in Shandong Province, and lasted for only a month. In the case of the Eight Trigrams rebellion, which happened in 1813, the most significant conflict, which happened in Beijing, lasted for only one day before it was suppressed by the Qing government, although struggles continued for longer in locations outside Beijing. However, these two rebellions provide useful evidence that the trajectory of the White Lotus rebellion introduced previously is not an isolated case.

The development of these two middle Qing rebellions can be seen to share certain similarities with the White Lotus rebellion regarding the themes appearing in the relevant texts and oral statements. As I previously discussed, the Qing court considered all three middle Qing rebellions as having grown out of the White Lotus religion and as thus being connected. Scholars'

investigations have also provided evidence of such connections in terms of both common ideas and the presence of sect networks (e.g., Naquin, 1976; 1982). In this respect, the themes appearing in the Eight Trigrams and the Wang Lun rebellions can be seen to be very similar to those in the White Lotus rebellion.

Although there are differences in terms of their exact manifestation, all the themes proposed in this analysis to capture the nature of the sources from the White Lotus rebellion can also be seen in the rebels' texts and oral communications from the Wang Lun rebellion. For example, the rebels chanted a mantra to seek the gods' protection:

> *Thousands of hands guard me, tens of thousands of hands cover me. The Cyan Dragon and the White Tiger*[21] *protect me. When I ask Heaven for help, Heaven assists me; when I appeal to Earth, Earth shows its power. Guns and canons will be muted in front of me. Who dares to stop me!* (see C28 in DAD)

This string of text demonstrates that the mantra was used for summoning the gods; as long as the rebels chanted this mantra, they could be protected by the gods and not be hurt by guns or cannons.

Another example relates to the leader himself. The rebel Wang Jinglong confessed:

> *(Wang Lun) said that a klapa that lasted 45 days was coming, and even immortals could not avoid it. Only those who joined his sect could avoid the klapa. He also said that all 72 stars in the ecliptic are cleansing the path and are waiting for one star to Shouyuan. He is the real Supreme Purple*

[21] The Cyan Dragon and the White Tiger are both holy animals (gods) in Chinese culture.

Star in the human world, the master in charge of Shouyuan. (see C28 in DAD)

In Chinese traditional culture, various immortals were thought to correspond to stars in the sky; however, only the Supreme Purple Star could refer to a real ruler. It was believed that this ruler would completely change the world. Throughout history, there have been a lot of people claiming to be reincarnations of the Supreme Purple Star, but what Wang Lun argued was that he was the only true individual who could perform Shouyuan, which, as previously discussed, refers to returning the world back to order before its creation.

There were some slight differences in how the rebels referred to these themes in the two rebellions; for example, both teachers and the Eternal Mother appear in certain places in the texts from the White Lotus rebellion, but those from the Wang Lun rebellion focus more on the teachers. Wang Lun called himself the Supreme Purple Star but did not fully explain the relationship between the Supreme Purple Star and the Eternal Mother, although these two gods were associated with each other. Some folk regions may have considered the Eternal Mother to be the mother of the Supreme Purple Star. However, these differences do not influence the overall analysis of this rebellion.

It can be seen that the content of the themes appearing in the Eight Trigrams rebellion texts were referred to in simpler ways as compared with the White Lotus rebellion. Although the communications from the Eight Trigrams rebellion provide evidence of most of the themes in terms of dynastic-order-related ideas, they do not feature much information about heterodox religious ideas. Although it is reported that a large number of rebels once chanted the eight-character mantra “true empty hometown, the Eternal Mother,” this being a mantra that the rebels believed could help them enter the millenarian true empty hometown and

meet the Eternal Mother there, other communications regarding heterodox religious ideas are relatively scant.

Furthermore, there is almost no discussion of government repression in the Eight Trigrams rebellion because the rebels' activities had not been fully discovered by the government, although initial investigations were in progress before its outbreak (see C45 in LAD).

As I previously argued, one of the possible causes of this difference is that the Eight Trigrams rebellion, although it was significant, was also very small in scale. Most of the rebels living in the villages were located close to each other, which would have made it very difficult for the leaders to describe themselves as having magic powers and to convince the rebels of this. This may also be explained in terms of the locations where the rebellion happened, as another significant factor influencing the potential for heterodox religious ideas to spread. This matter was discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

Regarding the processes of the ideational changes of the rebellion, it is clearly shown in the sources that the rebels in the Wang Lun rebellion who were at a distance from the leaders also had a tendency to abandon their belief in heterodox religious ideas. This process seems to have happened even before the rebellion started, with rebels confessing that they started to lose their confidence in the religious leaders. More rebels started to question the power of the leaders after the military conflicts started. (see C28 in DAD, and Naquin, 1981) For example, the rebel Wang Jinglong confessed:

> *My hands and face were burned by fire. I jumped downstairs and was captured by the Qing army. I am too regretful that I believed what Wang Lun said: that he was a real Supreme Purple Star Emperor who could protect us from harm*. (C28 in DAD)

However, because the Wang Lun rebellion lasted for only around one month, the process of ideational change was very short, precluding extrapolation of what might have happened over the longer term.

In the case of the Eight Trigrams rebellion, most of the texts and oral statements were produced by rebels who participated in rebellious activities in Beijing. However, the rebellion in Beijing only lasted one day making it extremely difficult to determine whether the trajectory of ideational change within this event was similar to that of the White Lotus rebellion. However, there is evidence that some of the participants in the Eight Trigrams rebellion believed in heterodox religious ideas but questioned whether the magical power of the leaders was real before the rebellion had even started:

> *Lin Qing taught me to chant the eight-character mantra "true empty hometown, the Eternal Mother." He told me that reciting this mantra could help me out of poverty and suffering. However, I have been reciting it for two months, and it has not worked.* (see C46 in NMYDL)

This analysis shows that while there are some differences in the details, the other two middle Qing rebellions share many similarities with the White Lotus rebellion. The natural conclusion to draw from this is that it is likely that these two rebellions could have resulted in a similar process if they had been more successful and lasted for a longer time. The analysis in the following discussion section and the next chapter provides further support for the position that the ideational changes of these premodern rebellions share certain similarities.

The limitations of the heterodox religious ideas and the non-revolutionary characteristics of the middle Qing rebellions

A puzzle arising from this analysis of changes in the ideational content of these rebellions relates to why the process of change in each of these rebellions

should take place in this way. More specifically, why, in these rebellions, were the heterodox religious ideas only able to remain strong until a short time after the outbreak of the rebellion, while the dynastic-order-related ideas were able to be maintained until very late in the development of the rebellion?

While there are several competing explanations of these observations, I present here an interpretation of the pattern of heterodox religious ideas in these movements through investigating the limitations of the framework of these heterodox religious ideas. This builds on the foundations of the argument presented in the previous chapter. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, studies have provided evidence that many middle Qing rebellions were heavily influenced by heterodox religions (e.g., Chan, 1969; Chuang, 2002; Wakeman, 1977). Charismatic leaders who claimed to possess superhuman powers were a core element of people's conceptualisation of such heterodox religious matters. However, these heterodox religious ideas also had their limitations. There were numerous rebels of high-organisational status who were organising the rebellions who did not trust these ideas and instead understood that the charismatic religious leaders did not actually possess such magical powers. Moreover, the ideas are unlikely to have had much impact on many low-organisational-status rebels, as they would have had insufficient time and knowledge to comprehend the mysterious messages regarding the leaders' destiny and magic power that were being taught by the religious groups. Making some exceptions for certain religious ideas that were prominent at the start of the rebellions, without substantial support from the rebels, the religious ideas were liable to be displaced by more secular ideas about building a new dynasty.

The discussion in the previous chapter and that presented above shows that the overall number of rebels who were motivated by the religious messages was low. Furthermore, some rebels started to abandon their belief in heterodox religious ideas during the later stages of the White Lotus rebellion, by which

point they would have been fully involved in the warfare. Similar observations can be made in respect of the Wang Lun rebellion, as the rebels in this movement also noted that they started to abandon their beliefs once the rebellion grew in scale, stating that they discovered that their leaders were "deceiving" them in relation to their alleged magical abilities.

However, the conceptualisations of such abilities were central to the building of the religious leaders' charismatic legitimacy, as well as the rebels' heterodox religious beliefs within these movements. The magic power in the imagination of common people in the Qing dynasty was very powerful. The rebels believed that by, chanting their leaders' mantra, their leader's magic power would protect them or even be transferred to them. In their minds, the leaders' magic power was likely the only tool that they had to ensure that they could protect themselves from the *klapa* and be led into the millenarian world. Furthermore, the magical power would also have been regarded as a very important means of checking whether their leaders had in fact been chosen by Heaven. Usually, this kind of power, when associated with an ordinary human (rather than a Taoist master), was considered to be evidence of a reincarnation of a god or of an individual who had received instructions from the gods. As I mentioned, one possible explanation of why the rebels would believe this about the powers relates to the locations in which these rebels normally lived. These rebels were often situated far away from the religious leaders. Because of the nature of the networks for transferring information at the time of the Qing dynasty, this would have meant that they could not assess this alleged power first-hand. Therefore, these participants would have been more likely to believe in the power of the leaders. During military conflicts, some of the rebels would discover for themselves that the magic power and the victories that they had been promised meant nothing, leading them to abandon their beliefs.

However, I must emphasise that the disappearance of heterodox religious ideas from the oral statements and texts can be seen to result from not only the changes in the ideas of some of the rebels but also the changing relationships within the rebel networks.

As previously discussed, the heterodox religious ideas and the dynastic-order-related ideas were in conflict with each other. The rebels who believed in heterodox religious ideas would have been more likely to have looked to build a millenarian world with a religious-influenced system through the magic power of the religious leaders. Meanwhile, the dynastic-order-related ideas related more to defending the current system, including the rebels' ambitions regarding securing benefits or official posts in the new imperial regime. These kinds of political aims are very different from each other and would have been very difficult to integrate. Although it would have been possible to mobilise the potential participants using language alluding to heterodox religious ideas and dynastic-order-related ideas together, ultimately, at the late period or even when the regime was built by rebels, only one type of idea could guide them in the later processes of the rebellions or building the later regimes. Meanwhile, there were also some other rebels who did not have a specific political purpose in participating in the rebellions and these rebels would have been able to accept any of these goals. Therefore, if the force of the believers of heterodox religious ideas became weak or their ideas sounded less credible to the rebels but the rebellion was to continue nevertheless, they would have to turn to alternative ideas. This would have further reduced the prevalence of the heterodox religious ideas in the texts.

The analysis shows that the religious leaders gradually lost their power in the middle stage of the rebellions. This is one potential source of evidence that the power of those who believed in the heterodox religious ideas weakened. Most of the top religious leaders in the middle Qing rebellions, especially the White

Lotus rebellion, did not participate in the rebellions for religious purposes and knew that the charismatic leaders that they worshipped did not have magical power. However, they took advantage of such religious messages to recruit followers. Therefore, in addition to the rebels who joined the rebellion because of their heterodox religious beliefs, the leaders were also important figures regarding promoting these heterodox religious ideas.

However, the analysis also reveals that the religious leaders either did not have control over the rebel armies or left the movement altogether in the middle stage. One reasonable way to explain this is that their understanding of the rebellion led to conflicts with other rebels. There may be other ways to explain the religious leaders' loss of power. However, this explanation has the advantage of providing a way of accounting for how the weakness of the heterodox religious ideas affected the overall idea trajectory and aims of the rebellions.

Such conflicts between religious leaders and leaders associated with more secular dynastic-order-related ideas can be found in Chinese rebellions beyond those of the middle Qing era. Here, I use the term "more secular" rather than framing these sources of motivation as outright alternatives on the basis that the leaders would have still needed to mention religious motivations in the course of their activities. However, their positions were based on religion and magic powers to a lesser extent.

In terms of the examples from other Chinese rebellions, consider one mentioned in previous chapters: the conflict between the religious leader Han Ling'er, known as the "small luminous king", and Zhu Yuanzhang, who became the first emperor of the Ming dynasty. Moreover, in the Taiping rebellion, which is described in the next chapter, there were also conflicts between more religious leaders and the leaders that controlled more administrative affairs[22].

[22] It is difficult to define who had religious power in the Taiping rebellion. The

Here, it is important to note that there were some rebellions that had only a single top leader. For example, Wang Lun seems to have been the sole leader in the Wang Lun rebellion, with no other potential leaders in a position to challenge him. The Fangla rebellion (1120-1121) during the Song dynasty (960-1279) is another illustrative example. My position is that these types of leaders may gradually transfer themselves into leaders who were less religious and relied on the perception of magical powers to a lesser extent if these rebellions could last for longer. If this was the case, then it would be natural for their regimes to include fewer elements from heterodox religious ideas, although this point is not taken up in any further depth here.

Scholars (e.g., Goldstone, 1991b; Perry, 2002; Wakeman, 1977) have long noted the conflict between secular elements (including Confucianism and other ideas considered orthodox) and heterodox religious elements and the transformations of rebellions from heterodox religious organisations to orthodox imperial regimes similar to previous imperial regimes. These scholars have also considered that this phenomenon is associated with the question of why these rebellions were unable to bring about revolutionary changes to China's imperial system. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, most scholars have tended to pay more attention to the transformation of these ideas at relative late stages of the rebellions, by which time the rebels' regimes would have been established. Some studies (e.g., Goldstone, 1991b; Wakeman, 1977) argue that the rebels' willingness to bring about any real change were limited by these rebels' ideas and beliefs about the cyclical changes of the Chinese dynasties before the rebellion; others suggest that the establishing of the imperial dynasty could also be explained as some kind of fulfilment of the millenarian promise

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theory of Taiping religions is largely made by Hong Xiuquan rather than the other leaders (may also refer to Levenson, 1962). This will be discussed in the next chapter.

(Wakeman, 1977). My analysis has instead emphasised the processes of ideational changes in the early period of the rebellions and argued that the heterodox religious ideas had their own problem and were underdeveloped. As a result, there were limits on the total number of people who believed in these ideas and the potential to reach a consensus among the rebels' groups. These ideational changes may also have been influenced by changes in the power of the rebels who believed in different ideas at the very early period of the rebellions. If this is the case, then the changes would have caused the content relating to the heterodox religious ideas to gradually disappear from texts and communications at the time. Such religious ideas would also have been unable to influence the rebels during the later periods of the rebellions. In this way, the analysis presented here provides an alternative explanation of the non-revolutionary outcomes characteristing the premodern Chinese rebellions.

Conclusion

In this chapter, by analysing the content of the communications between the rebels in the middle Qing rebellions, I demonstrated the processes of change that affected the different types of ideas in these rebellions. This involved analysing the pattern of the ideational changes as a way of developing theories of charismatic leadership. I also showed how the analysis provided a way of explaining why the premodern Chinese rebellions could not bring about changes to the imperial social systems of the time.

The analysis in this chapter was built on the foundations laid by the previous chapter. In the last chapter, I analysed the source of motivations that reflect ideas expressed by different rebels. I argued that the initial ideas of the rebels relating to the ultimate aim of the rebellions were influenced by these rebels' status and their distance from their charismatic leaders. In this chapter, I also discussed how this phenomenon shaped the processes and outcomes of the

rebellions. The disappearance of heterodox religious ideas was also demonstrated to provide further evidence for my analysis of the effects of charismatic leaders and their influence. Combining the insights of the two chapters can show how the ideational and discursive domain was able to influence charismatic authority and leaders' activities from one perspective. It can also contribute to our knowledge of how leaders and their authority influenced the processes and outcomes of the violent movements. In this way, my study supplements and complements the existing studies (e.g., Morris and Staggenborg, 2004; Benford, 1997) to some extent.

The next chapter turns to another rebellion, namely the Taiping rebellion. While the trajectories of the ideational changes in the middle Qing rebellions can be observed as similar, the ideational changes in the Taiping rebellion present a different pattern, leading to a more revolutionary outcome. This difference is explained through comparison of the two types of rebellions.

Chapter 6 Changing lives: ideational processes of the Taiping rebellion in the later Qing period and the importance of 'everyday life'

Introduction

This chapter discusses the changes in the ideas in the texts and oral statements over the course of the Taiping rebellion in the later Qing period. The analysis focuses on the ideational changes in the detailed content of these documents in a similar mode to the analysis presented in Chapter Five. It emerges that the pattern of ideational change in the Taiping rebellion is different from that witnessed in the middle Qing rebellions, with the religious ideas lasting for a longer period and becoming more influential in the later regime than can be observed for the other rebellions. I argue that it was ideas about changing people's everyday life, including people's interactions, practices and customs, that shaped the ideational process of change in this rebellion.

The Taiping rebellion, a mass uprising taking place in the later Qing dynasty between 1850 and 1864, was a highly distinctive historical event. The ideas underpinning this rebellion were strongly influenced by Christianity but there were also more traditional ideas familiar from Chinese society. In this chapter, I organise the themes that appeared in Taiping's mobilisation and ideological texts, and oral statements, into different ideational categories. Within these categories, three specific ones are emphasised. Two of them – dynastic-order-related ideas and heterodox religious ideas – are familiar from previous chapters. The third category contains Christian-derived ideas, which are a specific type of heterodox religious idea of the Taiping rebels based on their understanding this religion. As the scholars (Ter Haar, 1998; Weller, 1994) indicated that the specific Christian-derived ideas were mixed of both Christianity, Chinese traditional thoughts and the leaders own creations.

It should be noted that the Christian-derived ideas, are intertwined with the

other two forms of ideas in the texts. Additionally, there are also elements and practices of heterodox religious ideas present in Christian-derived ideas, as rebels continually drew from different sources during the rebellion. However, for the purpose of illustrating their changes, I have separated Christian-derived ideas based on the core elements that explain their worldview and the rebellion. While it is possible that rebels constantly borrowed elements and practices from heterodox religious ideas and other sources, I will consider elements as Christian-derived ideas or assimilated by Christian-derived ideas if their core views or values are derived from Christian ideas.

As with the middle Qing rebellions, more attention is paid to the ideational changes occurring before and shortly after the Taiping rebellion started (1842 to 1853). It is also shown in this chapter that the proportion of texts and oral statements containing dynastic-order-related ideas increases in the documents as the rebellion progresses, while most elements of heterodox religious ideas can be seen to have gradually disappeared from rebels' texts and oral statements. The discussions of themes of Christian-derived ideas, however, increase in the texts and oral statements at the early stage of the rebellion, integrated with certain elements that are also evident in the heterodox religious ideas. The Christian-derived ideas were able to bring about new changes in many different aspect, leading to significant contrasts with the prior imperial system in the areas that the rebels controlled. For example, the bureaucratic system that the Taiping rebels created exhibited certain differences from the traditional imperial system of the previous dynasties. People's relationships were also different. This contrasts with the situations of the rebellions in the middle Qing dynasty. It also contrasts with the old forms of Chinese heterodox religious uprisings that happened in the same period as Taiping. The Christian-derived ideas were met with more resistance from the local people whom they ruled until a very late stage of the rebellion (see Wooldridge, 2009; Zheng, 2009). According to the sources we have, in those old forms of Chinese heterodox religious uprisings, the heterodox religious ideas were also challenged in their early stages. (see e.g., C46 in NMYDL).

Based on this trajectory of the change in ideas, this chapter discusses why the

heterodox Christian-derived ideas continued to appear frequently in the rebels' texts and ultimately led to several changes to the imperial system in the area that Taiping controlled. I especially focus on the reason for the Christian-derived ideas being established before the Taiping regime was built to inform a comparison with the middle Qing rebellions considered elsewhere in this thesis. Several previous studies have investigated this question (e.g., Kilcourse, 2016; Reilly, 2004; Xia, 2006). They investigate various issues, such as ethnic conflict,[23] economic problems and foreign interference and consider whether such factors can be used to provide an answer to this puzzle. However, by comparing the texts and oral statements from the more traditional Chinese rebellions that took place in the middle Qing era and the similar period of the Taiping rebellion, I consider a different historical possibility. Specifically, I argue that different to the rebellions occurring before or at the same time as Taiping, Christian-derived ideas were influential partly because these ideas promoted new ways of organising everyday life.

Here, everyday life is considered to contain both social and private life, including people's interactions, practices and customs. The lives of the Taiping rebels were reshaped in many different ways, and they demonstrated many differences from the other people of that era.

Christian-derived ideas of the Taiping rebellion related to changing people's activities in their daily lives, and the ideas of changing participants' everyday life into a new form are dominant in the surviving texts of the Taiping rebellion. The Taiping rebels considered that one of the main purposes of the rebellion was to enact change in such a way that people ruled by the rebels' leaders could follow these new ways of organising their everyday life. I argue that, in comparison with the heterodox religious ideas associated with the previous rebellions considered in this thesis and their dependence on charismatic leadership, these ideas were much easier for the rebels to accept. This is because even the people who sought to simply rebuild the imperial regime

[23] Arguably, there is a sense that the conflicts were between modern nations, although I describe these as ethnic conflicts here.

could, to some extent, accept these changes in the contexts of their own lives. The texts and statements shedding light on these ideas regarding participants' everyday life were also more easily understood by the participants or potential participants within the rebellions. More importantly, changing everyday life could help participants within the movement to experience the changes that their leaders promised were possible because they could experience for themselves that their daily lives were different. They would also have been able to experience more equal relationships with each other through their participation in the same practices. In this way, these ideas served to forge connections between different groups.

These findings provide a new understanding of why there are so many "revolutionary" elements to the Taiping rebellion. Given the high level of debate as to whether the Taiping rebellion was a revolution against the old order (see e.g., Hsü and Kachru, 1975; Kuhn, 1970; Luo, 2013; Marx, 1951), this is an important finding. This chapter demonstrates how the ideas and rhetoric of everyday life could help to build coherence among participants within a large, diverse populace in the Chinese context. It also explains how these ideas of changing forms of life profoundly impacted China's political movements. This understanding of Taiping's rebellious ideas is developed in a way that incorporates consideration of the transition point that Chinese society was undergoing during the premodern period when it was forced to gradually open to the rest of the world. During this era, the Chinese people began to come into contact with colonists and others from European and American countries. Given that topics relating to the everyday practices in life are also frequently mentioned by later revolutionaries within, for example, communist movements (see e.g., Perry, 2012), such findings have potentially greater relevance to the analysis of later social movements after Qing China.

Furthermore, several studies (e.g., Fantasia and Hirsch, 1995; Fominaya, 2010a; Hunt, 1986; Haenfler, 2004; Thompson, 2013, Ter Haar, 2006) have discussed how everyday life can contribute to the formation of a specific collective identity and a community, with such discussion including mentions of the relevance of such matters for the Taiping rebellion. This chapter also

illustrates how everyday life and identity politics were associated with such matters at a relatively granular level. It also shows how everyday life could help to maintain the overall revolutionary goal in the context of a large rebellion whose participants had a range of different understandings of the movement's goals, especially those that were not revolutionary and related to preserving the old order. This finding is novel, not having been discussed in detail by previous scholars.

The Taiping rebellion and its texts and oral communications

The Taiping rebellion, as introduced in Chapter One, was the most significant rebellion during the Qing dynasty. The word Taiping means "Great Peace" in Chinese. In the mid-19th century, the Qing dynasty suffered a series of economic problems. It was also defeated at the hands of the European powers and was forced to communicate more with the Europeans. It was during this period that an increasing number of rebellions occurred in China, with Taiping among these. As previously explained, the Taiping rebellion originated in the southern province of Guangxi, with a large group of people claiming affiliation to the God Worship religion, which was Taiping's syncretic version of Christianity. This massive rebellion swept across China from 1850 to 1864, with conflicts arising between the established Manchu-led Qing dynasty and the Taiping rebels. The wars officially started after the local officials launched a campaign of religious persecution against the members of the God Worship society. The rebels were soon able to achieve military success and took control of significant parts of southern China.

The military successes of the rebels resulted in the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The rebels set their capital in Tianjing (present-day Nanjing) after their conquest of cities such as Wuchang and Zhenjiang. After that, the Taiping regime endured a long war with the Qing government, with heavy losses

on both sides.

The civil war lasted for over ten years, with neither the Taiping Army nor the regular Qing Army being able to defeat the other outright. The destruction of the Taiping regime was finally brought about through the raising of armies whose members were recruited from the local areas, such as the Xiang Army commanded by General Zeng Guofan. After retaking certain key cities, including Suzhou and Ningbo, the Xiang Army soon captured Tianjing in 1864, eradicating most of the Taiping remnants within the next two years. (For further information on the general history of the Taiping rebellion, see e.g., Luo, 2013; Peterson, 2002; Rowe, 2009).

The composition of the Taiping rebels was very diverse. Many initial participants in the Taiping rebellion were members of the secret God Worship society. As far as the limited sources indicate, the members of this society included individuals who had received Confucianist education, labourers and peasants (C4 in LXC; Tang, 2011) and there were differences in the reasons for their initial participation (See my discussion in previous chapters as well as Spence, 1997). As indicated in Chapter Three, it is not easy to access a sufficient number of confessions to gain a full picture of how diverse these people were. However, from the sources that are available (C4 in LXC; C47 in XJQSSL; and the relevant information in Palace Archived Memorials and NMYDL; Spence, 1997; Tang, 2011), it seems that the members of the secret society in the Taiping rebellion were not much less heterogeneous than the participants in the middle Qing rebellions. Another type of participant was social bandits, who formed militarised groups who survived through robbing others. These groups were less politically motivated compared with the other participants in the Taiping rebellion, as their main goal was mainly to survive. The Taiping rebels had contacted a high number of such bandits and some of them became a part of Taiping's armies. The others kept their independence but cooperated with the

Taiping. Most of the early rebels who cooperated with the Taiping rebellion were not heavily influenced by Christianity. The ideas that they had that explained their purpose for participation and intended outcomes of the rebellions were closer to those discussed in relation to the middle Qing rebellions. The Taiping rebels also cooperated with rebels and bandits of other ethnicities, such as the Hui Muslims (see C47 in XJQSSL; C48 in WXHB; and the relevant information in Grand Council Copies; Kuhn, 1970; Zhang, 2016). With the rise of the Taiping, the rebels recruited more soldiers who had had various previous occupations, such as mining workers, traders and craftsmen, from the areas that they occupied. Furthermore, the Taiping rebels also cooperated with the elites at the local level and recruited a small number of civil and military officials from the Qing government who were willing to work with them. They also recruited people who worked for foreigners or even foreigners themselves (Lindley, 1866; Platt, 2012; Shao, 2001).

The ideas of the Taiping have long been viewed as significantly influenced by Christianity. However, there was also the influence of traditional Chinese ideas from Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and charismatic leaders, including Hong Xiuquan's own conceptualisation of these. Hong Xiuquan became acquainted with Christian ideas from a missionary pamphlet entitled "*Good Words exhorting the Age*." He also visited a church in Hong Kong, staying there for a short period of less than three months. As discussed in previous chapters, it seems that he was not able to receive more comprehensive knowledge on Christianity before the rebellion commenced or during its early stages.

The Taiping rebels believed that God was universal not only in the western world but also in the east. However, in the eastern world, especially China, the name of God had been hidden by the ruler since the Qin and Western Han dynasties.[24] This ignorance of God can be regarded as accounting for the

[24] From 221BC to 25AD.

establishment of other religions, such as Buddhism, Taoism, and the “false gods” of certain popular religions. The Taiping rebels believed that the subordinate idols had deluded the Chinese people and suppressed their awareness of the existence of God, empowering the Devil and his demonic followers.

Therefore, the Taiping rebels considered themselves as having the vital mission of restoring widespread belief in God. The charismatic leader Hong Xiuquan claimed himself to be the brother of Jesus Christ and the son of God who was sent by Him to complete this mission. The rebels claimed that only in this way could people be released from demonic influence and enter paradise in the afterlife. The Taiping rebels also claimed that the rebels would be able to build a small paradise in the present life by destroying such demons, and their everyday lives and the experience of these lives of paradise would be very similar to what they would experience in Heaven. (For a general description of the Taiping ideology, see e.g., Kilcourse, 2016; Reilly, 2004; Shih, 1967; Spence, 1997; Xia, 1992, 2006).

However, the way that the Taiping rebels restored their belief in God was not so close to the methods of the Christians, which tended to involve fewer elements related to uprisings; rather, they were influenced by Chinese cultural elements relating to achieving a millenarian world and overthrowing the old order through conflict. This is similar to what was said about the heterodox religious ideas in previous chapters.

Many scholars have discussed the shift of ideas that can observed for the Taiping rebellion (e.g., Kilcourse, 2016; Reilly, 2004; Xia, 2006). These scholars suggest that the official ideas of the Taiping rebels initially absorbed many ideas from Christianity and tended to be anti-Confucianist. More Confucianist ideas were included in the official ideas after the Taiping regime was built, especially in the last few years of the regime (Kilcourse, 2016; Xia, 2006). However, as shown in the analysis of the texts below and as argued by scholars such as Xia

(2006), the Taiping texts mention many fundamental elements of Confucianism and other traditional Chinese thought, even in the rebellion's early years, despite its tendency towards aggressive anti-Confucianism. Meanwhile, several researchers have studied the reforms that the Taiping regime enacted after 1856 (e.g., Mao, 1984; Platt 2012). These studies argue that these reforms show that the Taiping ideas had gradually started to be influenced certain secular ideas originating from Europe, such as freedom of the press.

All kinds of ideas can be found in the texts and oral communications of the Taiping rebels. In this chapter, I analyse these texts in detail. Different from most of the texts that were religiously inherited or came from rebels who were forced to confess in the middle Qing rebellions, most of the texts describing the rebels' ideas were produced by the rebels themselves. Furthermore, while the messages from the Taiping rebellion are rarely seen to contain ambiguous language, they do have more diverse forms and content.

The themes of the ideas in the texts and oral communications of the Taiping rebellion

There are many themes relating to the ideas appearing in the texts of the Taiping rebellion. The previous chapters introduced the large categories of dynastic-order-related ideas and heterodox religious ideas. In general, the dynastic-order-related ideas are those concerned with building a dynastic order, while heterodox religious ideas are those that were mostly used in the heterodox sects and concerned making changes to the old order. The label of "heterodox" originated with the Confucian scholars or mainstream society when these were compared to the ideas that were more widely acceptable to society.

In terms of the details of the Christian-derived ideas, these were still a type of heterodox religious idea. These ideas were also prevalent in the heterodox

sects, especially the sects of the Taiping rebellion. However, different from the other heterodox religious ideas that originated from Chinese folk religions and the heterodox religions, this type of idea originated from Christianity. As previously discussed, the religion that the Taiping rebels claimed to be affiliated with was called the God Worship religion, which was Taiping's syncretic version of Christianity. However, although the God Worship religion originated from Christianity, it also incorporated traditional Chinese ideas like Confucianism, Buddhism and some of the movement leaders' own ideas. These types of ideas were usually spread through secret societies before the rebellions started and ordinary people were less likely to know about them.

In this section, I introduce the themes in relation to all three types of ideas. I also provide a very brief introduction to another two types of ideas. One relates to the perception of threats, and the other to what I label "modern ideas." The perception of threats is evident in relation to potential participants being forced to join the rebellions because they were coerced by other rebels or told that they were being investigated by the government and had to join the cause to survive. Obviously, such (perceptions of) threats were a powerful source of motivation in the case of such rebels. The "modern" ideas are the secular ideas from European countries that the Taiping rebellion were exposed to in the late period, after 1858. These ideas were generally products of the Enlightenment and the industrial revolution and had rarely been considered in China before this point. They are introduced here as relating to the main types of ideas under analysis.

I should highlight here that there were numerous texts that were used for mobilisation-related or other kinds of purposes in the Taiping rebellion. Therefore, it would not be possible to present all the themes associated with these three ideas in this chapter. I only present the core themes of the ideas that appear most frequently in the Taiping's texts and oral statements,

especially those from the early period. Furthermore, I also do not count the number of times each idea is mentioned in the documents in the manner of the previous chapter. This is because the number of texts and oral statements from the Taiping rebellion is much greater than the numbers of texts and oral statements for the White Lotus rebellion. Therefore, I only present an overall sense of the pattern of the ideational changes in the texts and oral statements.

The themes of heterodox religious ideas

The themes of heterodox religious ideas that appear in the Taiping rebellion are very similar to those in appearing in the middle Qing rebellions previously investigated. The core themes of this kind of idea include the saviour, *klapa*, the protection of the gods. These also include potential harm, being protected by the gods and being possessed by the gods. There is also the theme of the prospect of being cured.

Most of these themes are similar to those outlined in the discussion of the middle Qing rebellions. The saviour was the individual who was believed to have magical powers and the ability to save the world from the upcoming *klapa*. This saviour was usually described as the messenger of the gods. Sometimes, the saviour would claim that he had the power to cure illness. Although this theme was not covered in much detail in the previous chapter, it does appear in many religious rebellions of the Qing dynasty, including the middle Qing rebellions that I examined. As previously discussed, the *klapa* was the label used for the forthcoming calamity. Protection from the gods is demonstrated in the ideas relating to drawing on the power of the gods to survive the *klapa* and harm by chanting the saviours' mantra. Similar descriptions of these themes were provided in the previous chapter (see also C4 in LXC, and the relevant information in TFTXSZ). However, some of these themes are also presented in modified form to reflect the influence of Christianity and integration with

Christian-derived ideas. These themes relate to the saviour, gaining the gods' protection and possession by the gods. These themes are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

The themes of dynastic-order-related ideas

Bureaucratic ambitions: Similar to what was observed for the middle Qing rebellions, the texts of the Taiping rebellion also contain elements of dynastic-order-related ideas. This includes bureaucratic ambitions. From the confessions of the leaders, it is clear that some of them were considering, at the beginning of the rebellion, how they might achieve their "great cause" (see, e.g., C4 in LXC). This "great cause" normally refers to founding a new regime to rule over China in the context of rebellion. There are also texts that clearly mention such bureaucratic ambitions. In "*The Imperial Edict on Recording the Merits and Crimes of Soldiers of the Taiping Army"* (T3 in HXQ), which was issued a few months after the rebellion started, the rebels set out their vision for a bureaucratic system, giving titles to different officers within this system. The edict and some other documents also urge the rebels to fight bravely to achieve their ambitions. This edict states:

> *After reaching the little paradise, we will arrange to assign the high or low positions of official posts (to the rebels). Small rewards will be given to those who have made small contributions, and large rewards to those who made great contributions. Everyone should make contributions now.* (See T3 in HXQ)

The "little paradise" refers to the later regime that the rebels sought to establish in China. In addition, the rebels in the Taiping rebellion not only used the promise or prospect of official posts to motivate people to participate but also promised them that they would have a better life in this paradise.

Ethnic conflicts: Restoring the Ming dynasty and the Mandate of Heaven is seldom mentioned in Taiping's texts. However, the theme relating to the restoration of the Ming dynasty can be viewed as being replaced by the theme of ethnic conflicts between the Han and the ruling Manchu.

For several reasons, such as its Christian orientation and the fact it had been 200 years since the Qing dynasty had been established, the Taiping rebels made no claim regarding any ambitions to restore the Ming dynasty. The Heavenly King, Hong Xiuquan, discussed the Ming restoration mission in his discussion with missionary Theodore Hamberg (T4, in HXQ, also TPTGQY) as follows:

> *But now, two hundred years have passed. We still can say that we oppose the Qing dynasty, but we cannot say that we will restore the Ming dynasty. In any case, if we can restore the rule of Han ethnic, we should establish a new dynasty.* (T4 in HXQ)

There are also several texts that discuss ethnic conflicts, which are usually associated with discourse relating to the restoration of the Ming dynasty. Most of these texts were created after the rebellion started. Before the rebellion, the rebels' target of criticism was the "Devil" and his "demonic followers." The rebels did not specifically associate such a Devil or demons with a specific group of people in the human world before the start of the uprising. However, after the rebellion started, the target of the rebels became the Manchu rulers and the emperor. They also politicised the source of their soteriological problem by claiming that the ruling Manchus had led the Chinese people to believe in the false gods by changing their hairstyles and other life practice (T5 in TPTGYS; for general information regarding the Devil and his demonic followers, see Kilcourse, 2016). It was argued in *"the Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature*" that:

After the demon barbarians[25] seized and occupied China, they induced the people to believe in demons even more profoundly. (T5 in TPTGYS)

In an imperial edict issued to the public called *The Announcement of Destroying Demon according to God's Will* (T6 in TPTGYS) made by the Taiping regime, it is also mentioned that:

Now, the Manchu demon Xianfeng[26] (1851-1861) was the origin of the barbarian slaves and the enemy of China for generations. One of his duties is to change human beings into demons. (T6 in TPTGYS)

God is the true god, and all the world is made by him. That is why China was called God's Land. What is the demon that the Manchu barbarians worshipped? They are the snake demon, the Yanlu Yao and the evil ghosts. The monster barbarians worship these demons. Therefore, it is necessary to see all the barbarians as having demonic origins. (T6 in TPTGYS)

Livelihood: Livelihood is another theme associated with the dynastic-order-related ideas. Rebels in the middle Qing rebellions were able to maintain their livelihoods relatively effectively before their participation in this movement despite potential economic issues affecting China at the time. However, many of the participants in Taiping were facing a serious economic crisis. Concerns relating to livelihood appear in a large number of the texts, so it easy to see how many of the potential participants might have been mobilised to join the rebellion as a means of securing their livelihoods. Here it is important to explain that such problems could be addressed by maintaining or changing the old order. Moreover, in many cases, it would have been possible to address this issue effectively, so the rebels may not have wanted to make significant changes to the existing order. This is shown by Perry's (2002) investigation of

[25] Baraians here refers to the Manchu.

[26] Xianfeng was the emperor of the Qing regime of that era.

the Bailang rebellion. In this rebellion, while the bandit chief came to accept the advice of the revolutionaries, the rebels viewed the military conflicts as a way of avoiding immediate poverty and starvation. When choosing between serving the revolution and returning to secure lives in their homes after their livelihood problems were solved, most bandits insisted on the latter course.

The themes of Christian-derived ideas

The saviours: As previously discussed, the themes of saviours and the protection of the gods have both heterodox religious and Christian-derived versions. This latter version appears more frequently in the texts and oral statements than the former. The leaders were not explicitly framed as saviours in the texts and oral statements associated with the Christian-derived ideas when they took the initial steps to organise the rebellion. At that time, the saviour did not normally refer to any leaders or other human beings; the saviour was usually regarded as God of the Christian version, although not entirely the same as that of Europe. The leaders, on the other hand, were usually described as messengers of God sent to communicate with the ordinary people.

However, around and after 1850, once the leaders declared the start of the rebellion, the rebels started to deify the leaders themselves and frame them as the son of God, the brother of Jesus Christ and so on, rather than as simple messengers of God (Guo, 1989; Mao, 2001). Some leaders also claimed that they were possessed by God. And there were more stories told by leaders about their alleged magical powers and divine origins. These are apparent in several of the texts, especially those from the very late periods of the rebellion. Their followers also sometimes described these leaders as having magical power (see Luo, 2000).

Being saved and protection: The Christian-derived version of the theme of

being saved is also not entirely the same as the similar theme proposed to analyse the texts of the middle Qing rebellions. Specifically, the theme proposed to analyse the Taiping texts relates to the claim that God saves people not from *klapa,* but from other dangers. In the religious texts from the early period of the Taiping rebellion, the Taiping rebels argued that this danger was the Devil and his demonic followers. However, the demons in the Taiping texts can be seen to have several different characteristics from those mentioned in the traditional heterodox religious texts. Firstly, the Devil and his demonic followers are not described as appearing only when the *klapa* comes; rather, they are described as having a long-lasting presence. As a result, the suffering brought by the Devil relates to not only immediate harm through the use of magic powers and weapons but also individuals' daily lives. For example, one text states:

> *Every inch of the poison comes from the Devil – Yanluo Yao, who has a square head, red eyes and snake-like body, and his followers. Since Qin and Han*[27] *to now for one thousand to two thousand years, so many common people's souls were suffering because of this Devil.* (See T7 in TPTGYS)

The concept of the saviour and of being saved are closely related to the afterlife. In the rebellions of the middle Qing dynasty, although the afterlife was mentioned, the saviours were described as primarily solving issues in the present life. However, in the texts of Taiping, being saved is also mentioned in the context of the afterlife:

> *They were cared for by God during their lifetime, and their souls went up to paradise to enjoy happiness in Heaven forever.* (See T7 in TPTGYS)

In addition, in the Christian-derived ideas of the Taiping rebellion, the protection

[27] These terms refer to the Qin and Han dynasties.

of the gods was not secured by summoning such gods with certain mantras; rather, this was done by transferring the belief from the traditional Chinese beliefs, such as Buddhism and Confucianism, to the Taiping version of Christianity and God, and changing their everyday life (see T7 in TPTGYS).

Millenarianism and change: Another theme appearing in the texts of the Taiping rebellion is millenarianism, which appears mostly associated with the concept of Taiping – the Great Peace. The millenarian of the Taiping's version of Christianity significantly differs from that of standard Christianity, in which millenarianism is typically regarded as a matter of waiting for Jesus to return and transform the world, with less emphasis on taking active measures to overthrow institutional power. However, the Taiping rebels argued that God had already sent the younger brother of Jesus, Hong Xiuquan, to the world; therefore, it was important for them to fight demonic forces through violence at that time so that Hong Xiuquan could help to build a utopian world. The utopian world of great peace is described in the Taiping texts as a place of equality and prosperity. The most famous slogan in the policy document "*Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty*" (T8 in TPTGYS) vividly describes this state:

> *There being fields, let all cultivate them. There being food, let all eat it.*
> *There being clothing, let all wear it. There being money, let all use it.*
> *So that nowhere will inequality exist, and every person will be well fed and warm.*

There are also many folk songs and mantras expressing similar ideas (see sources in TPTGYS).

The texts of the Taiping rebellion also demonstrate an obvious intention to promote social change. At the macro level, the rebels adopted a bureaucratic system, policies and a military system that were largely different from those of the traditional imperial system. Although there were still certain similarities (see e.g., Kuhn, 1970; Luo, 2000), these differences existed not only at the macro

level; at the micro level, individuals were also encouraged to engage in certain practices and live different ways of everyday life. Following their military success, these ways of life gradually became the laws of the Taiping regime. To exemplify this, I first introduce one of the most important practices – abandoning one's idols – before moving on to consider the other parts of everyday life that the Taiping leaders urged the participants to adopt.

Abandoning one's idols and worshipping God: The first aspect of the overall change advocated by the Taiping related to abandoning idols. This practice was apparently influenced by Christianity. In the texts, the Taiping rebels frequently discussed their mission regarding abandoning previously worshipped idols and instead turning to God. The Taiping rebels frequently discussed their missions of abandoning the idols and worshipping God in the texts. They also asked people not to worship idols but to worship God during their daily lives. Here, in the early period of the rebellion, the main focus of the God-worshipping activities is on the level of the individual (T9 in TPTGYS). Nevertheless, we do see in some early confessions that the rebels worshipped God through the ritual activities collectively (see C49 in WXSLJ). The rebels also engaged in efforts to destroy statues of the idols of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, especially in the later period of the rebellion.

This activity was coordinated with the Taiping narratives regarding the return of God. As previously mentioned, the Taiping leaders claimed that belief in God was ignored when people began to worship the idols of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism instead, and these leaders claimed that demons would be attracted if the wrong idols were not abandoned. The Taiping leaders also claimed that only by ceasing to worship and destroying the idols could people be awakened and begin to worship the true God, avoid the disasters and troubles brought by worshipping false gods, and gain fortunes both in this life and in the afterlife.

Everyday life: As discussed, the Taiping rebels called for the participants to change various aspects of their daily lives. This related to prohibitions on practices that were already viewed as being required by traditional Chinese ethics (e.g., avoiding gambling, ending prostitution). These also include new rituals, such as the daily worship of God, and customs, such as banning women from wearing dresses but asking them to wear trousers. (Such changing people's everyday practice is one of the main foci of many scholars' works, e.g., Kilcourse 2016; Xia; 2006).

These life practices were considered as ways of preventing disasters, illness and the appearance of ghosts. The rebels claimed that the old forms of everyday life that they were against were the "heterodox (or false) activities," which were "hated by Heaven (God)"; the life practices they promoted were the "orthodox (or true) activities," which were "approved by Heaven (God)" (see T9, in TPTGYS). This argument that heterodox religions were in fact the true way is similar to what was observed for the middle Qing rebellions. However, there are also differences. The discussions on the orthodox and the heterodox in the middle Qing heterodox religions focused more on changing the existing social and ethical order, such as the Five Cardinals or filial piety. By contrast, the Taiping's discussions focused on the way of manifesting their dogmas in their daily lives. The rebels argued that carrying out incorrect activities would not only have adverse effects but also lead to additional punishment from God since both such behaviours would go against God's will; by contrast, if they followed the correct life practices, they would receive benefits.

This is mentioned in one of Taiping's texts, *"The Original Way that Saves the World"*:

> *A family which often does good things will have additional benefits. A family which often does bad things will have additional suffering. Those who follow God's law will survive; those who go against it will perish. Those who*

honour God will receive glory. (T9 in TPTGYS)

The activities relating to changing the existing ways of organising everyday life incorporated both practices echoing Confucian ideas and practices that were more or less based on Christian moral precepts. There is a case to be made that the Confucian concept may have helped the rebels to spread a message that resonated with their audience. Alternatively, the rebels may have mixed their understanding of the religions they created based on Christianity. In fact, it can be seen that, in the texts of the Taiping in the early period, there were many Confucianist-like practices. For instance, in one of the core texts, "*The Original Way that Saves the World"* (T9, in TPTGYS), produced in the early period of the Taiping rebellion, most of the practices, such as stopping robbery and gambling, were already prohibited under the instruction of Confucianism.

The themes of "modern" ideas and the perceptions of threats

Themes relating to two additional types of ideas are evident in the Taiping texts and should thus be considered here.

The first relates to "modern" ideas, which are mostly evident in the reform policy following Taiping leader's Hong Rengan gaining power at the later stage of the rebellion (after 1858). The themes relating to this type of idea included freedom of the press, encouraging trade and equal international relations. Such ideas could hardly be found within the rebellions or the rebels' regimes in Chinese history before the Taiping rebellion, and these were instead associated with the import of European ideas. However, since these ideas are not so closely associated with religious beliefs or practices, I categorise them as a specific type here. I choose the label "modern" ideas to reflect that such ideas were not seen in premodern China, although it is not easy to define what the actual modern era is. Discussing this type of idea not only sheds light on the rebels'

perspective of the world but also helps to explain the adoption of Taiping ideas at the later stage of the rebellion.

The second theme relates to the perceptions of threats. This is similar to what was proposed to account for the texts of the middle Qing rebellions. Although these themes sometimes appear in the rebels' communications about topics such as ethnic conflicts and their livelihoods, due to the relatively limited number of confessions, it is not easy to see how this theme manifests in detail. Therefore, here I pay less attention to the theme of the perceptions of threat than in the previous chapter.

Changing ideas in the Taiping rebellion

Although the texts from the Taiping rebellion demonstrate various types of ideas and themes, there is also variation in frequency with which these ideas and themes are mentioned in the texts and oral statements across the different stages of the rebellions. As in previous chapters, the division of stages assumed in the analysis does not correspond strictly to specific times or dates. Rather, once again, the pre-rebellion stage, the early stage, the middle stage, the later stage and the final stage are used to describe the different points of development in this rebellion. Moreover, the exact time frame used here is different to what was used to analyse the White Lotus rebellions. For example, the middle stage of the White Lotus rebellion was taken to be the time between the start of the rebellion to the time that the rebellion became large in its scale, especially after the effects of government repression became apparent. However, I take the middle stage of the Taiping rebellion to be the time from the start of the rebellion to the time when the Taiping was able to establish a stable regime. I will provide a further explanation of what period of the rebellions each stage refers to when I discuss the ideational change in these stages.

Unlike the rebels participating in the White Lotus rebellion, the Taiping rebels were able to build a more stable regime a few years after the rebellion started. Due to the establishment of a centralised regime, the rebel groups were able to coordinate with each other and avoid fragmenting into independent armies of the sort that emerged out of the White Lotus rebellion. Therefore, the times corresponding to the stages used to analyse the Taiping rebellion are more precise than was possible in the previous chapter to analyse the White Lotus rebellion. The time periods are outlined in the following table and a detailed history of each stage is presented in each section below.

Table 11 The time frame of each stage* of the Taiping rebellion

	Pre-rebellion stage	Early stage	Middle stage	Later stage	Final stage
Year	1842-1848	1848-1850	1850-1853	1853-1856	1856-1862

*This is only an approximate time frame.

The main focus of the enquiry is the first three stages, the period before the Taiping rebels were able to build a stable oppositional regime. Only a general tendency is presented of how the ideas changed in the last two stages when the regime was built. There are several reasons for this. One of the puzzles this chapter addresses is why the Christian-derived ideas prevalent in this rebellion were maintained in the early period of the Taiping rebellion. Although the ideas changed in terms of their content and how much they could influence the rebels during in the last two stages of the rebellion, the most critical point for answering this question comes from the first three stages. It is also hard to compare the history of the Taiping rebellion after the regime was built with the middle Qing rebellions because the middle Qing rebels never established a new government. However, the latter stages are also discussed, although in less detail, as this is helpful for showing the overall ideational processes and outcomes of the rebellions. The reader is also referred to previous studies that provide careful investigations of the ideational change during the late period of the rebellion

(Luo, 2000; Platt, 2012; Xia, 2006).

The pre-rebellion stage

The Taiping rebellion was organised by members of a heterodox sect network, which first emerged as the “God Worship society,” believed to have been created in 1843 by Hong Xiuquan. In 1843, after carefully reading a pamphlet, he had received years before from a Christian missionary, Hong Xiuquan declared that, having had a dream, he now knew that he was the messenger of God. After that, he and his follower Feng Yunshan secretly founded the God Worship religion, which, as previously discussed, was Taiping’s syncretic version of Christianity.

Hong Xiuquan successfully recruited increasingly large numbers of followers before starting to organise the society into a rebel group. As in the case of many rebellions that happened before the Taiping rebellion, the government was able to detect rebellious intent and began repressing the participants. To suppress the rebellion, the Guangxi local government began to arrest the members of the God Worship Society in 1848 (T10 in HXQ, R5 in Grand Council Copies). The local militias also engaged the Taiping followers, and the increasing conflicts between the local government, militias and the members of the God Worship Society accelerated the rate at which the rebellion broke out (see Spence,1997).

The initial ideas in Taiping’s texts were a mixture of dynastic-order-related, heterodox religious and Christian-derived ideas. Some scholars (e.g., Clarke, 1973; Jen, 1946; Luo, 2013; Reilly, 2004; Xia, 1992, 2006) suggest that many Taiping leaders spent time in the Church of Hong Kong during different periods. Clarke (1973) and Reilly (2004) consider that a few early periods of rebellious leaders might have also visited Hong Kong. Nevertheless, in his detailed response to Clarke, Jen (1977) suggests that it is unlikely that many of these

early period leaders visited Hong Kong and gained knowledge about Christianity there. Instead, Jen advances the case that, among those who had learnt Christianity in Hong Kong's churches, only Hong Xiuquan participated in the initial organisation of the rebellion. On balance, Jen appears to provide a preferable account by detailing the sources leading him to his conclusion. Therefore, it seems that most of the knowledge of Christianity that the other Taiping leaders received at this stage was from the missionary pamphlet "*Good Words exhorting the Age*." – the books that wrote in the Chinese to spread the ideas of Christianity.

In the very early stages, the rebels produced texts and oral statements that contained all three ideas to mobilise their participants to join the society and the potential rebellion. For example, the rebels circulated messages detailing the theme of bureaucratic ambitions as a strategy for attracting potential followers. *The Edict of Heavenly Brother*, which was compiled after the regime had been built, recorded a detailed communication used to mobilise the father of a leader to participate in the rebellion with his son during this period. This communication stated that:

> *He goes there. You go with him. If he gets a fortune, you get a fortune. One gets a fortune. His family will all get benefits. If one is favoured by the emperor,*[28] *his whole family can be given officials' salaries.* (T11 in TFTXSZ)

Here, although it is not pointed out what official posts would be offered, it is clear that opportunities regarding official positions were leveraged to attract the leader's father to participate in the rebellion. Furthermore, despite the fact that the content was recorded after the regime was built, it is obvious that the rebels made use of this kind of strategy to mobilise potential participants, as there are also many other communications providing similar examples of this. A rebel San

[28] This refers to the leaders of the Taiping as future leaders of the regime.

Zhangxiang confessed that when they entered the secret society and became brothers with other rebels, there were such lyrics:

> *Now, we know who is the heavenly ruler. After we restored the Ming dynasty following him, we could become officials and do a great cause, and we could hold a sword (power) to build the country.* (C50 in QZFZY)

Meanwhile, the themes relating to heterodox religious ideas are also very evident as a strategy for mobilisation. For example, in the core leader Li Xiucheng's confession, it is stated that the rebels used the following oral statements frequently in their recruitment process:

> *Those who believe in God will be free from disaster; those who do not believe in God will be hurt by snakes and tigers.* (see C4 in LXC)

Evidently, this recruitment tactic related to securing the gods' protection, which is a strategy familiar from the discussion of the tactics used in the middle Qing rebellions. Furthermore, during this period, the Taiping leaders also drew on the prospect of *klapa* as something that the potential rebels would need protection from God (Xia, 2006).

Although there are similarities between these ideas and those appearing in the texts of the Middle Qing rebellions, there are additional themes that appear in the Taiping texts that cannot be observed within the Middle Qing rebellions texts. These are what I call Christian-derived ideas.

Before the rebellion started, these Christian-derived ideas were interpreted in great detail in the documents attributed to Hong Xiuquan, the leader of the Taiping rebellion. Three of his most important writings at this stage were "*The Original Way that Saves the World*" (T9 in TPTGYS), "*The Original Way that Reveals the World*" (T7 in TPTGYS), and "*The Original Way that Awakes the World*" (T12 in TPTGYS). These three pieces were written by Hong Xiuquan during an early period before the rebellions started (1845-1846) to explain his

conceptualisation of Christian-derived ideas. As previously argued, Hong Xiuquan's understanding of Christianity was limited and he likely wanted to follow the Christian religions from Europe to only a limited extent. Therefore, these pieces also combined insights from Chinese thought and Hong Xiuquan's own imagination. They were frequently used by the rebels to pass his ideas to further followers. These three pieces can be seen to address the most central ideas and themes appearing in the texts at this stage and so they are considered as examples here.

First, the core theme used in "*The Original Way that Saves the World*" relates to everyday life. This piece admonished people to avoid doing certain activities, including being "promiscuous," disobeying their parents, practicing divination, drinking and gambling.

Although this piece uses the name of God rather than Buddha or Confucius, it can also be seen that the life that Hong Xiuquan preached were very close to what was advocated in traditional Chinese society. However, there are a few differences. For example, Hong Xiuquan asked the followers not to engage in activities such as polygamy or divination. However, such activities were not prohibited by the traditional Chinese society in that era (see, Kojima, 1978; Tang, 2011). In addition to these basic changes in everyday life, Hong also highlighted the theme of idols at the start of this piece as well as providing further details of how to worship God and abandon these idols:

> *We should worship our God in the morning and at night,*
> *We should sing and praise his goodness during worship,*
> *If someone worships other gods, nothing he will get,*
> *Not only can he not get benefits, but he will also damage his body and mind,*
> *He will be obscured by ignorance and fall into the abyss of sin.* (T9 in TPTGYS)

Although this is based on the theme of abandoning the idols of Confucianism,

Taoism and Buddhism, it also shares a close connection with the theme of changing people's everyday life. In this sense, Hong Xiuquan highlights worshipping God as a practice that people needed to do. Hong Xiuquan did not ask people to destroy the representations of their idols in this piece; he only asked them not to worship them. He also did not provide detailed explanations on why the idols should not be worshipped, although this matter is taken up in his second piece, *"The Original Way that Reveals the World.*"

The second piece focuses on the importance of abandoning non-Christian idols. Hong Xiuquan reconstructs Chinese history to provide a justification as to why abandoning these idols was necessary. In this piece, it is argued, as mentioned above, that the true belief of God had been ignored and concealed by the Chinese rulers. It also admonishes people to wake up and regain their true belief. His view regarding Christianity and the world is also described.

Hong Xiuquan did not write a long text to describe the life practices that he highlighted in "*The Original Way that Reveals the World*," but he did emphasise his belief that the law of God was universal and the true kind of orthodoxy and a more explanatory way of viewing history than other outlooks popular at the time, including Confucianism. He also argued in this piece that everyone should "worship the God and worship in both day and night."

The third piece is *"The Origin Way that Awakes the World.*" This piece relates to millenarian ideas and argues that the Taiping should create a world characterised by the presence of love where all men and women could become "brothers and sisters." Although many premodern Chinese rebellions adopted millenarian ideas including the promise of an equal world, such concepts are closer to what is preached in Christianity. These concepts related to the promotion of new social relationships and ways of interaction among people, especially those living in the same neighbourhood or village.

In addition to these, another main feature of the Taiping ideas before the

rebellion started was that the leaders were not explicitly framed as saviours. As outlined above, in the very early years of the rebellion, the leaders were normally instead described as messengers of God, sent to deliver a message to the ordinary people, although they still described themselves as having magic power in many situations (see T13 in HXQ, T14 in TFTXSZ). This is different from the usual situation seen for many of the traditional Chinese rebellions, as leaders in these rebellions tended to describe themselves as deities or as having been reincarnated as these gods, claiming to have the power necessary to summon such entities. However, despite this difference, the leaders in Taiping still occasionally used mobilisation strategies by spreading the word that the potential participants could secure protection against future disasters. The highest-ranked leaders of the Taiping rebellion also avoided direct contact with the ordinary rebels in a similar manner to the distancing strategy that discussed in the previous chapter (see Xia, 2006).

Compared to the texts and oral statements of the middle Qing rebellions, the oral statements and texts from the early stages of the Taiping rebellion seem to focus neither on highlighting the significant power of the leader nor calling for the Ming dynasty to be restored to drive out the barbarous Manchu. Instead, these documents admonish people to change their previous ways of organising life in terms of both the private sphere and how they interact with others. Consider the idea that the Taiping rebellion consisted of people with various aims in the manner demonstrated for the middle Qing rebellions. In that case, it seems that the requirements relating to changing everyday life would give rise to fewer points of conflict with the other political aims held by the individuals involved. This is because it did not focus on changing the political order or even certain social values, although it was ultimately linked to such change. For example, if a person with dynastic-order-related ideas sought to become an official in a subsequent bureaucratic system, changing his ways of organising ways of life would not have any serious consequences on his ability to do so.

Such an observation may demonstrate the greater ease with which heterogeneous groups with different aims in the rebellion would have been able to accept the instructions presented in these texts and messages. Furthermore, the new ways of life could also engender new forms of equality, as there were no major differences in the practices recommended to people of different identities and positions. Although the rebels were not, in fact, equal in terms of their social standing, the uniformity of the instructions presented in the texts and messages would at least allow them to feel a sense of equality with the people around them. This would not only remove some of the heterogeneous feelings of the rebel groups but also help the rebels to feel the changes associated with the religions and movements in a more direct way in the context of their daily lives. They could perceive for themselves the changes leading to greater equality through adopting similar forms of everyday life and thus what they could enjoy in a millenarian utopian world like that promised by the leaders. This, in turn, would have made it possible for them to develop their own unique understanding of heterodox religious ideas in a more concrete way.

In general, it can be seen that a vast array of different ideas appear in the texts from this period. The rebels continuously drew on, created and utilised various approaches to not only mobilise but also construct their core ideas before the Taiping rebellion. These mobilisation strategies and ideas evidently helped the leaders to expand their forces further.

The early stage

The Taiping rebels declared an official start to the Taiping rebellion early in 1850. The prelude to this occurred in 1848, when the leader Feng Yunshan was captured by the government, and the Taiping rebels decided to increase the rate of their activities to prepare for the rebellion (see T10 in HXQ; R5, in Grand Council Copies, and the discussion in, e.g., Xia, 2006). For this reason, I regard

this event as marking the beginning of the early stage of the rebellion.

In 1850, the rebel leaders asked all their followers to gather and declared the start of the rebellion in Guangxi Province, calling themselves the “Taiping Army.” One year later, they set the name of this era as the “Taiping Heavenly Kingdom,” claiming that would build a millenarian world in which all people could be equal. The Qing government soon launched a larger suppression campaign, although the rebels were successful in their resistance. The Taiping rebels were then able to occupy more and more territories. (For a general history of the outbreak of the Taiping rebellion, see e.g., Luo, 2013; Spence, 1997)

While the rebels continued to express all three ideas discussed in this chapter so far as a means of mobilising potential participants, there were significant changes in the ideas and the texts during this period. First, Christian-derived ideas began to appear more frequently in the rebels’ texts and communications. It also became more systematic, with many new concepts evolving to explain these ideas. Evidence of the popularity of these ideas can be found in the rise of the leaders Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui around the time of the capture of Feng Yunshan.

Feng’s capture by the local government shocked many of those involved in the Taiping and many such followers, especially middle-status followers, tried to leave the secret society in the wake of this event. At this time, the God Worship Society faced a crisis of division. However, Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui were able to calm the panic and reorganise those who sought to leave. Yang’s message helped the group to achieve a clearer consensus on its goals (see Xia, 2006). The method they used was to act as though fainting and to suggest that they had suddenly been possessed by God and Jesus Christ. This was typically done while delivering religious messages regarding the heavenly order in these traditional secret societies. These messages took effect and soon enabled the secret society to transform into a more organised and militarised

group. Alongside the other evidence I consider later in this analysis (see C4 in LXC; C47 in XJQSSL; C49 in WXSLJ), the activities of Yang and Xiao constitute a powerful example of how the Christian-derived ideas could influence the rebels. It was these Christian-derived religious messages, rather than anything else, that reunited the rebel groups. There are also confessions and local gazetteers mentioning the popularity of such ideas among the rebels. For example, in the confessions of Li Jinfu (C49 in WXSLJ), it is mentioned that many participated in the sects and rebellions because they believed the words that "once [they] worship the God, [they] can enter the Heaven."

When the highest-ranking leader Hong Xiuquan returned after Feng Yunshan had been rescued, it seems that he discovered how influential the religion he had created had become. The leaders then started to further develop these religious ideas to be more coherent. They also produced several publications reflecting their doctrine of the God Worship Society so that it could be spread more widely. They also realised the urgency of what they needed to do, ultimately leading them to plan a massive rebellion with other leaders. There are some historical materials shedding light on the conversation between the Taiping leaders from these times. For example, in a discussion between the top leaders, Xiao Chaogui reportedly said:

> *Tonight, we should ask (beg) God, the Holy Father. We should ask (beg) God, the Holy Father, to let Hong Xiuquan sit in the hall of a golden dragon*[29] *as early as possible.* (T14 in TFTXSZ)

(For further details of these conversations and the rebels' understandings of the situation, see Spence,1997; Xia, 2006. There is also relevant content in, e.g., TFTXSZ, TPTGQY and LXC.)

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[29] In Chinese, "sitting in the hall of a golden dragon" is a metaphor meaning "to rule China."

The second change relates to the observation that, by this point, the heterodox religious ideas seem to be relatively less prevalent in the rebel groups. Although there are fewer documents preserved from this period, the overall trend within these documents is that themes relating to being saved or diseases being cured through magical means are less obvious than at the earlier stages.

However, some themes relating to heterodox religious ideas appear more in the texts at this point. For example, the leaders started to use, in a more significant way, claiming to be possessed by the gods as an approach to mobilisation. In claiming themselves as being possessed by God and Jesus Christ, the leaders asserted that God was ordering their followers to participate in the rebellion (Xia, 2006). In addition, the leaders also started to claim that they were saviours, such as the son of God or even God Himself, for the first time during the rebellion. However, despite the increase in the prevalence of these ideas, I argue that this should not be explained solely in terms of the old heterodox religious ideas at this stage. Whether the leaders claimed to be possessed by God or to be God Himself, these activities were clearly associated with God in the sense of Christian-derived ideas. The themes originating from the heterodox religious ideas may have already integrated with those associated with the Christian-derived ideas.

In terms of the third change evident at this stage of the rebellion, the dynastic-order-related ideas also transformed. In order to mobilise more people to participate in the rebellion, the rebels began to introduce the theme of ethnic conflict into their texts. Previous discussion highlighted that the Taiping leaders saw ethnic conflicts as a useful approach for mobilising followers while also arguing it was not necessary to rebuild the Han-ruling Ming dynasty. There is also little evidence of texts or oral statements relating to restoring the Ming dynasty being used together with the ethnic conflict themes in the vast majority of the Taiping's texts.

In general, the texts and oral statements from this period demonstrate all the different types of ideas captured thematically in this analysis. However, the Christian-derived ideas ultimately became more influential and widespread. The new theme of ethnic conflict was also introduced into the dynastic-order-related ideas. The leaders' activities and the change in ideas also suggest that the leaders had less flexibility in determining the core ideas of the rebellion. Instead, they adjusted their texts and oral statements for mobilisation in accordance with the favourability of dominant groups who were in or might be attracted to participate in the rebellion. Here, it is necessary to engage in discussion on the maintenance of the Christian-derived ideas. Why, as shown in the following section, were the Christian-derived ideas that integrated some elements from heterodox religions able to be maintained and ultimately become influential at this stage and the subsequent stage? Many studies have discussed these matters and provided potential explanations (e.g., Kilcourse, 2016; Xia, 2006; Zhang, 2016), as discussed in Chapter Two. However, most of these studies do not provide a comparison between the Taiping and other earlier Chinese pre-rebellions. This is a matter of some significance given that, if this rebellion is compared with the other rebellions investigated in this study, one significant difference emerges. That is, the texts and communications relate less to the leaders themselves and their political aims in the Taiping rebellion; rather, their focus is on promoting a new way of organising their everyday life.

Recent historical studies have argued that the everyday life of the Taiping shaped a collective identity (e.g., Ter Haar, 2019). This may explain the maintenance of the Christian-derived ideas in the Taiping rebellion. While everyday life may tend to relate to private life, this everyday life could also be understood in terms of both daily interactions and certain collective activities. For example, the potential rebels usually organised military activities against the bandit groups or worshipped as a single body (see e.g., Kuhn, 1970; Xia,

2006). I further argue that participants' everyday life would have contributed to the rebel's recognition of Taiping's millenarian goals. If we compare the millenarian ideas in the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion, it is easy to see a connection between the Taiping's promise and the millenarian world with new forms of everyday life. When the rebels made their claim about the millenarian aim, the ideas relating to changing ways of life would have been easier to understand, increasing the likelihood that people would subscribe to these. This is because changing the ways of life did not directly connect to the ways of explaining the rebellions in old heterodox religious rebellions, in which the rebels' messages had to be expressed ambiguously in order to avoid revealing Heaven's will. Furthermore, people would have been able to experience first-hand the changes in their daily lives and have a sense of the possibility of the equal millenarian utopian world that the leaders promised them. Since there were no major differences in the practices recommended to people, irrespective of their identities and even, in some cases, their positions, the equal and peaceful world that the participants sought was already, in some sense, on the way.

It is also relevant to consider that making such recommendations regarding changing the ways of life meant that the leaders did not rely only on legendary stories relating to their own magical powers at the very early start of the rebellion. In this way, the risk of the collapse of belief in leaders witnessed for the middle Qing era was effectively mitigated. Only when the rebellion was on the cusp of beginning did they begin to develop more stories regarding their own magical characters and their god-like identities. During this period, the leaders had already been away from the rebels, making it hard for the rebels to assess the claimed magical powers of these leaders.

The middle stage

After initiating the rebellion, the Taiping rebels launched several military campaigns against the Qing government forces, achieving great success in this. In 1853, the Taiping rebels were able to capture the city now called Nanjing, as previously discussed. This made it possible for the rebels to establish their regime officially. They also built a government that allowed them to rule the local area through bureaucratic rather than military means (see e.g., Luo, 2013; Lindley, 1866).

In the documents from this stage, there is evidence of how influential the Christian-derived ideas were. For example, in a report to the Qing emperor by the high-ranking minster Saishanga[30], it is stated that:

> *The Taiping rebels are different from other bandits. There were thousands of rebels who are very loyal and united. Those who followed the Taiping were not afraid of death. The rebels I caught, even if they were tortured, did not know to fear or beg for exemption from the death penalty. They would rather die than give up their faith in the heterodox religious doctrine of their Heavenly Father and Heavenly Brother.* (R6, in QZFZY)

It should be noted that this report was written a year after the rebellion had been declared to have officially started. This was after the first encirclement and suppression of the Taiping Army by the Qing central government. Given that the composition of the Taiping's participants did not change much during this period, this report can be regarded as providing evidence that the Christian-derived ideas had some influence from the early stages. Of course, it is always possible that such a report would be an instance of a minister not telling the emperor the truth in order to exaggerate the difficulty of suppressing the rebellion. However,

[30] Note that this is the Mongolian first name of this minster. Thus, the presentation of his name in this study does not follow the usual manner of stating Chinese names (family name, first name).

there are further examples of this.

The following example provides insight into this matter from a rebel's perspective. Zhang Weicheng was a low-level soldier who was coerced to join the Taiping Army while it was on its way to Tianjing. He was captured in 1853 and provided the following description of the rebels fighting together:

> *In every fight, only those who really believed in the Heavenly Father could join. The head of this army took the lead. He entered, all others entered; he retreated, all the others retreated. If we do things such as hiding money, they think we do not obey the order of the Heavenly Father and are demons.* (C51 in QZFZY)

Zhang Weicheng's confession also provides evidence that many rebels in the army believed in Christian-derived ideas and that such ideas were influential among the rebel groups.

It can also be seen that the rebels introduced more Christian-derived ideas. The Taiping rebels, especially the leaders, also sought to institutionalise and systematise these ideas through official documents, hoping to draw the fragments together and build a more coherent ideational system. They also sought to apply this to the entire rebel armies in the form of an official order. These documents demonstrate two significant changes in the Christian-derived ideas compared to those expressed during the previous stages.

First, there are more frequent descriptions of the leaders as being possessed by God or representing God than in the previous stages, as well as descriptions of the leaders as having distinct powers. These kinds of descriptions were used less in the previous stages of the rebellion. These descriptions also seem closer to the mobilisation strategy of the traditional Chinese heterodox religious rebellions, such as those of the middle Qing rebellions. The change in the descriptions may be attributed to the fact that the leaders were able to maintain

a distance from their followers at this stage, not having the need to mobilise their followers themselves. Instead, they could use documents or ask their closest followers to communicate with the middle-status rebels. According to the analysis presented in the previous chapter, due to the difficulty of the rebels witnessing the behaviour of the actual leaders themselves, it would also have been difficult for them to verify the veracity of the claims made regarding their divine origin and power. As such, they may well have had less cause to doubt the claims that they were actual gods. However, although the Taiping rebels still used these themes that more or less learn from the Chinese cultural context, relating to being possessed by God or representing God, to describe their leaders, they also connected these with Christianity. The most significant difference is that the Taiping rebels did not overemphasise the importance of leaders' magic powers in the manner of the middle Qing rebellions, in which the power were used to bring about the new millenarian world.

Secondly, there are considerably more texts concerned with the topic of life practices. For example, "*The Law of Heaven*" (T15 in TPTGYS), which was published in this period (1852), is a code of life practices. It records the instructions given to the Taiping followers to pray to God when they wake up, have dinner, go to sleep, build a house, marry, etc. (Wang, 1988). It also records the norms regarding what people should do and what people should not do in their daily lives. Many or most of these practices can be seen to have originated from Christianity, although there are still elements from traditional Chinese ideas such as Confucianism. For example, children are still instructed to follow filial piety. Another example comes from the instruction issued to people to avoid directly using the characters of the names of the most respected people. For example, they call the emperor (皇帝) "head of lords (候长)" because of their belief that the character Huang (皇) and Di (帝) as being appropriate to use only with God (the Chinese character is 皇上帝, as Taiping called him) (T16 in TPTGYS).

It should be noted that not all these practices were ‘collective’ activities. However, some could be done individually, including praying to God before sleeping. Some of these life practices were even enforced through military laws. For example, in the case of soldiers who had already become involved in the rebellion, if they did not engage in these practices, they would be punished.

In his confessions, Zhang Weicheng also briefly described their everyday practice. Describing the scene of these exercises, he said:

> *The Taiping rebels recite the scriptures of worshipping God three times a day in the morning, evening, and when it is the time to light the lamp for dinner. Or 10 or 20 people recite together, kneel to kowtow together in a tent, and then return to their camp.* (C51 in QZFZY)

This newly recruited rebel describes the Taiping rebels as being different from the common people in that era through the practice of their everyday life. (Similar discussions on everyday life can also be seen in the other sources, e.g., Xia, 2000, 2006).

These kinds of pronouncements and rules can be explained in terms of the point that the leaders found promoting the life practices to be useful or began to believe in the importance of the religions they had crafted themselves, although the former seems more likely given the content of the sources on their activities (e.g., Luo, 2000). If this is the case, then this would shed light on why they continued to encourage the adoption of these life practices. It can also be observed that, at this time, the documents began to construct the Taiping rebels as a group sharing similar characteristics who were moving in opposition to the demonic forces led by the Qing government. However, since the rebels did not seek to manage specific areas of territory, there is no substantial evidence to suggest that the rebels invested significant efforts to force the non-military followers to conduct these practices.

The construction that the Taiping moving in opposition to the demonic forces also connects to the dynastic-order-related ideas in the texts. In the texts and oral statements from this period, the theme of ethnic conflicts can be seen as increasing in its prevalence. For example, in the edicts such as "*The Announcement of Destroying Demon according to God's Will"* (T6 in TPTGYS), the rebels discuss the harshness of Manchu rule at length. As stated:

> *When floods and droughts occur, they (Manchu rulers) have no sympathy for the people. They sat there watching them starved without any cloth. Their intention is to make Chinese people fewer. Manchu rulers connived at the corrupted officials, letting them across the whole country to use the wealth made by flesh and blood of the people. It makes both men and women cry on the road. Their intention is to make Chinese people poorer through such action.*

These edicts frequently associate the Manchu with demons in the Christian-derived ideas, as illustrated previous. The edicts call on people to "rise up together" and destroy the rule of the Manchu government.

Furthermore, the heterodox religious ideas that cannot be seen to be closely associated with the Christian elements do not appear in most of the texts. As mentioned above, most of the topics relating to heterodox religious ideas were combined with Christian-derived ideas. Some scholars (e.g., Weller, 1994) contend that activities such as frequent possession by God of certain leaders, such as Yang Xiuqing, serve as evidence that heterodox ideas still wielded lasting influence on the Taiping rebels. However, as I have previously noted, this practice, despite potentially originating from heterodox religions, still stems from the Christian-centric worldview of the Taiping rebels. Rather than being possessed by Chinese gods, the Taiping leaders, who were believed to be possessed by God, have fewer magical attributes and no claimed ability to provide protection from the *klapa*. Furthermore Yang Xiuqing's speeches

indicate that he primarily used God's possession to convey his military and administrative messages, rather than altering the fundamental aspects of the religious ideas.

Other elements, such as the protection of the gods (against weapons and the accidents), the *klapa* and dispatching the gods in their mission, cannot be observed as featuring at all in this period, almost disappearing in the texts in the following stages. (For the source of the documents used in this section, see the relevant information in WX, TFTXSZ and XJQSSL.)

In general, it can be seen in this period that the prevalence of both the Christian-derived ideas and the dynastic-order-related ideas significantly increased. The increase of the former can be regarded as a response to the followers who were strict in following the instructions relating to the Christian-derived ideas and the need to unite various groups within the rebels' army. The latter is more appropriately attributed to the need to attract more people outside the group to participate in the rebellions, as the Taiping regime needed more rebels to fight against the Qing government.

The later stage

The establishment of the Taiping's capital Tianjing, as well as the movement's success in building the regime, motivated the leaders to seek to further expand the territory under their control to the whole of China. The Taiping rebels launched northern and western expeditions in an effort to relieve pressure on Tianjing and achieve their envisioned territorial gains. However, the former expedition was a complete failure, and the latter achieved only limited success.

After the expedition, conflicts between the leaders broke out. While Hong Xiuquan was considered as the Heavenly King and also the head of the religion, the administrative power was mainly held by Yang Xiuqing. The tension

between Hong and Yang culminated in the 1856 Tianjing Incident, wherein Hong Xiuquan's followers slaughtered Yang Xiuqing and those loyal to him. During this incident, one of the most experienced military leaders, Shi Dakai, led his troops out of the capital Tianjing. This incident dramatically weakened the Taiping forces. (For the general history of this period, see e.g., Luo, 2000; Spence,1997).

During this period, it can be seen that the Christian-derived ideas were promoted in the areas that the Taiping rebels were ruling. In the previous stage, the Christian-derived ideas were reinforced by the rebels through the circulation of various documents. The rebels were encouraged to read the documents and practice what the documents told them to do. Some of the religious elements and practices were even enforced through military law, as mentioned above. However, there is no substantial evidence to suggest that the rebels invested much effort to force all (or most) of the non-military people in their territory to carry out these practices.

However, the evidence does show that, during this stage, the rebels tried to promote their ideas and practices so as to influence all people's daily lives, at least in their capital. They started to ask all citizens to follow the code of practices, including the customs, norms and rituals. They also sought to make systematic changes to the environment of their territory. For example, they painted their slogans on walls and ordered their soldiers to destroy all the statues of idols in the region (Wooldridge, 2009; Withers, 1983).

The Taiping rebels also attempted to distinguish their ideas from the version of Christianity as taught by the European missionaries and diplomats. In 1854, the British diplomatic missionaries visited Tianjing and debated with the leaders of the Taiping on religious issues. The British denied the content of the God Worship religion. For example, they emphasised that God was a pure spirit and did not have a specific image in the manner described by the God Worship

religion. Furthermore, in their view, God would not possess a human being, nor have the second son Hong Xiuquan, and Manchu were not demons. It must be stressed that such claims went directly against Taiping's Christian-derived ideas and political mission. After meeting with the British diplomats, the Taiping leaders faced a potential crisis regarding their ideas, as their understanding of Christianity was different from the story in the Bible the British diplomats gave them. Concerned that the Christian explanation of the Europeans of the Bible could weaken their authority, the leaders ordered publication of the Bible to stop and instead made changes to the Bible to build their own system of ideas on the basis of the Christian-derived ideas discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

Meanwhile, the frequency of the dynastic-order-related ideas remained consistent in the texts written by Taiping. Although the leaders tried to promote the Christian-derived ideas, they still needed to mobilise further potential members both within and outside their territories to participate in their movement. For this purpose, the Taiping rebels created many texts discussing the topic of ethnic conflicts. Furthermore, even though the leaders looked to stress the importance of their Christian-derived ideas, the mobilisation of the lower-level participants was conducted using more threatening and dynastic-order-related ideas, including promising benefits after their success. The use of the dynastic-order-related ideas and threats in this way is recorded in various confessions, as discussed in previous chapters. This use of dynastic-order-related ideas and threats against potential participants so as to mobilise them is especially noteworthy given that the rebels sought to mobilise people outside their territories (T17 in TPTGYS; C48 in WXHB).

The heterodox religious ideas were, as usual, mostly combined with Christian-derived ones. Occasionally the former type of ideas can be found without a trace of Christian influence in a few texts from this period. However, the Taiping was a very complex rebellion consisting of a wide range of various groups and

thus there were only a very small number of texts that were produced to contain a pure version of the heterodox ideas. However, this also shows a tendency of the heterodox religious ideas to re-emerge, which I discuss in the next section.

In general, this period marked not only the rebels' efforts to expand their Christian-derived ideas to a large scope but also a moment when Christian-derived ideas began to localise. The rebels sought to promote their ideas and practices among the lowest participants in the rebellion, as well as among the ordinary people in the territories they governed. However, these ideas influenced the rebels among the lowest level of the rebels and ordinary people to a lesser extent.

The sources also show that many of the Taiping's low-status soldiers and followers had not receive any detailed religious teaching before they entered the army. Instead, most of them were motivated to participate because they had been threatened or enticed by certain benefits (C25 in WXSLJ; C52 in QZFZY). It seems likely that this was because the constant military conflicts imposed a significant demand on the soldiers, which resulted in the rebels having no time to implement their ideas before recruiting new participants into their movements. For example, consider the experience of Liu Xinfa (C53 in QZFZY). He was forced to enrol in the rebellious movement on the 25th of May, following which he was sent to the battlefield only a few days later. During this period, he spent most of his time travelling from his hometown to the battlefield, and he finally arrived on the 8th of June. It is highly unlikely that he received any detailed information regarding the religions in such a short space of time.

Furthermore, studies reveal that the ideas and practices began to be met with resistance at the local level. Civilians pushed back against the Taiping ideas as a result of their differences from Confucianism. One of the most serious and sustained resistance movements followed the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom's attempt to reform the gender and family system (Rowe, 2009). Because

Confucianism required women to maintain their chastity by avoiding appearing in public, many women chose to commit suicide to resist the pressure of Taiping to let them live outside of their families. Strikingly, it is recorded that, in Taizhou, a city in Zhejiang Province, at least 127 died in this way. Data on this is available in the relevant records in *"A brief record of Taizhou' civilians' suffering by the Taiping rebellion during the period of Xianfeng emperor and Tongzhi emperor (1862-1875)"* (TZKN). From the detailed record of the activities and some women's identities, it is clear that many women committed suicide. However, it is less clear if this number reflects the overall picture and if there were any people, such as members of the gentry or women's family members, who forced these women to kill themselves. There are many other documents that record similar situations, e.g*., the poems recording the events of Xin You in Hangzhou* (HCXYJS)[31] .

There are many potential explanations as to why this would happen (Chesneaux, 1973; Rowe, 2009; Skocpol, 1979). For example, one possible explanation is couched in the observation that Jiangnan, the core area of Taiping rule, was the richest area in China, with the local people having a high level of education and recognition of Confucianism. Such people would have been very resistant to the changes being pushed upon them. Nevertheless, it is also clear that it was hard for them to implement their ideas through life practice for the civilians in some areas that put up strong resistance against having to follow these practices, while the Taiping ideas attracted a lot of followers.

Overall, when the leaders sought to expand the reach of their ideas from the direct participants to a larger scope of people, this was met with increased resistance to their radical ideas for change, with the local people preferring to cling onto the pre-existing ideas in their social context (such as Confucianism).

[31] Xin You is the name of a year in the Chinese lunar calendar.

As can be seen in the next stage, the rebels were therefore forced to make some compromises.

The final stage

The Taiping regime was able to remain relatively stable even after the Tianjing incident. However, the Taiping forces were weakened considerably during this crisis. After the incident, it was hard for Hong Xiuquan to trust his older friends and followers. In order to strengthen his power, he appointed various family members as top officials, with the individual Hong Rengan being among their number. As a result of having previously travelled to Hong Kong, Hong Rengan was more familiar with the ideas from Europe. He therefore took measures influenced by what he had learned about European countries in Hong Kong to reform the Taiping regime (Mao, 1991).

However, the reform policy that Hong Rengan adopted did not attract the favour of the European countries. The Europeans decided to stay officially neutral, though some European military advisors did serve with the Qing army (Rowe, 2009). Meanwhile, although the official Qing army was unable to achieve many victories against the Taiping force, the rise of the Xiang Army, a local army organised in Hunan province, changed the dynamic of the conflict. When fighting with the Taiping forces, the Xiang Army achieved a few decisive victories. These victories further helped the army to recruit more soldiers, who became the main rivals of the Taiping. After years of battling with Taiping rebels, the Xiang Army was able to achieve a huge level of military success, defeating the Taiping force and capturing Tianjing. After Qing forces took Tianjing back, most of the Taiping forces were eliminated.

During this period, the Taiping rebels produced various types of documents containing Christian-derived ideas. However, the Christian-derived ideas

became more similar to the heterodox religious ideas in the manner witnessed in the middle Qing rebellion. More specifically, the texts started to concentrate on the single figure of Hong Xiuquan. The surviving texts include more stories about Hong Xiuquan's magical abilities, portraying him as the most powerful god on Earth. There is also an increasing number of riddles claiming that they could indicate the destiny of the leaders (Wang, 2020). In fact, some texts are not directly associated with the Christian-derived ideas, although still only to a limited extent. This trend of re-emergence had already occurred in the previous stage.

This trend of re-emergence might be explained in terms of further resistance at the local level. The citizens of the Taiping regime resisted the Taiping's ways of everyday life, seeking to return to traditional Chinese and Confucianist ways of organising everyday life. Therefore, a lot of people escaped from the places controlled by Taiping and others organised local resistance (Liu, 2018). To appease such movements, the rebels had to take certain measures. One of these was to use the old heterodox religious ideas that could resonate with these people easier. Another was to make compromises and allow some local people, especially the members of the local gentries maintain part of the Confucianist ways of life. Facing pressure from both inside and outside, the Taiping rebels had to compromise with their citizens, leading to many traditional Chinese ways of life being readopted at the local level (Bernhardt, 1987; Rowe, 2009).

The theme of bureaucratic ambitions is also more evident in the texts of this period. According to several confessions, around "2,700 people" were awarded the title of "King," and even more were given the title of "Prime Minister" or lower-ranking titles (C22 in XJQSSL; see also Xia, 2006).

Meanwhile, it is also possible to witness specific "modern" ideas emerging in the texts that the Taiping rebels used. As previously mentioned, such ideas

about reform related to concepts such as freedom of the press. Most of these ideas had never previously appeared in premodern Chinese history. Many were brought to the country by Hong Rengan and his followers and were set into his reform plan. It is also likely that some ideas were developed in interactions between other rebels and foreigners. However, these ideas were not widely accepted in the region where the Taiping rebels governed, and most of these reform policies had never been put into practice by the local governments of the Taiping regime (see the discussion in Platt, 2012; Shao, 2001).

Generally speaking, the Christian-derived ideas became less influential during this period, with the Taiping shifting towards a more conservative position that embraced more Confucianist or other forms of orthodox thought, including those that I have analysed as dynastic-order-related ideas.

Taiping rebellion or Taiping revolution?

In light of the above analysis, I turn now to engage briefly with a longstanding historical debate in relation to whether or not the Taiping rebellion is to be regarded as revolutionary. (For previous discussion on this matter, see, e.g., Goldstone 1991a; Hsü and Kachru, 1975; Kuhn 1970; Luo, 2013; Marx, 1951; Michael, 1971).

Although many scholars have studied revolution, deciding what constitutes a revolution is not straightforward. A narrow definition could be adopted, like that proposed by Skocpol (1979, p5): “[a] rapid, basic [transformation] of a society’s state and class structures, accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below.” Alternatively, a broader definition could be adopted, like that proposed by Lawson (2019, p31): “a collective mobilisation that attempts to quickly and forcibly overthrow an existing regime in order to transform political, economic, and symbolic relations.”

The Taiping rebellion did have many characteristics marking it as different from previous ones. In terms of the ideas featured in this movement, the Taiping rebellion was the first major rebellion in Chinese history that adopted Christian ideas. The original members of this rebellion also officially set “Christianity” as the belief of the regime, although, there were many differences from the European variety of Christianity. Such adoption of non-Confucianist ideas as the ideological foundation of a rebellious regime had rarely been witnessed in Chinese history prior to the Taiping rebellion.[32]

This change in the official ideas also led to other changes that could be regarded as revolutionary. For example, the bureaucratic system that Taiping rebels created had some differences from the traditional imperial system of the previous dynasties. The top leader, self-proclaimed as the Heavenly King, bestowed certain titles on his ministers in accordance with his understanding of Christianity. Daily life and the life practices of the common people, as demonstrated in prior sections, also underwent a significant transformation in certain regards in accordance with the Christian-derived ideas.

Furthermore, the Taiping rebels also implemented a policy of reform in the later and final stages of the rebellion. Specifically, they established a policy of giving land to peasants. This policy was viewed by the Chinese communists as one of the core pieces of evidence establishing that the Taiping movement constituted a revolution (see Luo, 2000; and the books published in Mainland China before the opening reform, such as the introduction of the sources WXHB

[32] As far as is obvious, there is no research indicating the historical presence of any rebellious regimes with non-Confucianist ideas set as their ideological foundation. However, it is also hard to identify cases of uprisings whose members did not give up their heterodox affiliations after they built a (sometimes primary) regime.

and HXQ, and Mao Zedong's work, 1968). They also enacted many other policies that had rarely been previously witnessed in Chinese history (Xia, 2006). These policies constitute the strongest evidence for regarding the Taiping rebellion as a revolutionary movement. However, as previously highlighted, most of these policies were not implemented to any great extent by the local governments.

From this analysis, it seems that the Taiping rebellion demonstrated several revolutionary characteristics. However, I argue that there is no clear answer as to whether the Taiping rebellion should be regarded a revolution or not. First, as previously discussed, the Taiping rebellion was a movement involving a long process. Certain revolutionary elements would emerge within one period, with other revolutionary elements emerging in another. For example, in the middle stage of the rebellion, the rebels aggressively promoted certain life practices. However, they did not declare the reform policies in the manner witnessed for the later stages. Although, at the later stage, the rebels declared the reform policies that were partly inspired by the European ideas and institutions, they were less active in terms of promoting alternative forms of the daily lives of the common people.

Secondly, the question of whether the Taiping rebellion was a revolution is decided not only by how many revolutionary aspects the Taiping rebellion had but also by the definition of "revolution" that we choose to adopt. For example, adopting Skocpol's (1979) definition discussed above results in the conclusion that the Taiping rebellion can hardly be regarded as a revolution. Although some of the Taiping's ideas about equality and land reform clearly addressed issues relating to class, it does not appear that the Taiping rebels were conscious of this concept and did not obviously set this as one of the dominant political aims of the rebellion.

However, if we adopt the definition provided by Lawson (2019, p31), the Taiping

rebellion seems to be a stronger candidate for being considered a revolution, as part of the intention of those involved in the movement was to seek transformations in the political, economic and symbolic relations of the Chinese imperial societies. However, if this is the case, then the analysis presented here of the middle Qing rebellions also predicts these as being at least close to revolutionary movements, necessitating further discussion on such questions.

In general, the Taiping rebellion demonstrated some features that were revolutionary. However, it is hard to provide a straight yes/no answer regarding whether it should be regarded as a revolution. If we consider the ideas of heterodox religions as revolutionary to the current order, it is more reasonable to consider the Taiping rebellion as a mixture of both rebellion and revolution, with the question of what is revolutionary arising in the analysis of different aspects of this movement or different times.

Changing everyday life

The project of changing everyday life was a significant element of the Taiping rebellion. The analysis of this project in the Taiping rebellion that I presented here has the potential to make contributions to certain areas of both sociology and history.

As discussed, at the early stages of the rebellion, the Taiping rebels sought to change the ways of organising everyday life of their followers, implementing many new rituals and norms within the context of their everyday lives. These included the most private areas of daily life, such as how they woke up, what they ate, and what should be done before sleep, although these activities may not be conducted by only one individual in every situation. Instructions were also issued that pertained to interactions between family members and neighbours.

These practices did not directly demonstrate any specific political aims, such

as what government the Taiping should form, nor did they reflect who would have control in such a regime. They also did not rely on massive collective actions, such as gathering or worship. There is also an absence of evidence as to the promotion of a specific identity by the rebels in the early stages. However, it is possible that these life-changing practices connected different groups, enabling them to cultivate a set of aims as a coherent movement. Furthermore, through interaction or even observing others' activities in their daily lives, people were able to identify which group they belong to. This process created a sense of collective identity for these people from different backgrounds with different interests and identities. This process has been partly explained by existing historical accounts (Kilcourse, 2016; Ter Haar, 2019).

However, my analysis goes further in suggesting that this change in people's everyday life constituted the foundation of the subsequent revolutionary changes to the imperial system in the Taiping rebellion. The project of changing people's everyday life meant that the heterodox religious ideas and the changes that the leaders suggested could be "felt" in some basic sense. As demonstrated by the people's resistance to Taiping's reform policy in the final period of the Taiping rebellion, it was hard for ordinary people in that era to understand revolutionary slogans or theories. I highlighted similar difficulties experienced by such people in my analysis of the middle Qing rebellions and a similar analysis may be applicable to later communist revolutions (see e.g., Miao, 2017; Perry, 2012). As I have shown in the discussion of the middle Qing rebellions, the leaders of the rebels struggled to spread their heterodox religious ideas in the social movements among the lower rebels. There were several reasons for this, including difficulty in passing information between people or groups, the requirement of maintaining charismatic leadership and government repression.

In the context of the Taiping rebellion, however, it was easier for the rebels and potential participants to understand the revolutionary ideas in terms of the

practices they engaged in in the context of their daily lives. The reconstruction project of everyday life enabled the participants to witness the differences between those people who lived the traditional lives and themselves.

The living and interaction style also gave rise to certain forms of equality. Although the rebel leaders' lives differed significantly from those of the rebels, especially after the Tianjing Incident, the lower-ranking rebels would not have been able to perceive this difference. For low-level rebels, similar life practices could lead them to perceive a sense of equality, that everyone had similar financial situations and engaged in the same practices. There is a significant body of evidence shedding light on this perception of equality. For example, the policy in the *"Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty"* (T8 in TPTGYS) indicated that:

> *The ownership of the land is according to the population (of family), no matter whether it is women or men, just according to the number of people in a family. The more people it has, the more land they get. The less people it has, the less land it gets.*

For reasons such as these, this project enabled the participants to have a more tangible sense of the possibility of creating a different world reflecting millenarian utopia promised by the leaders.

More theoretically, the changing the practices of everyday life in the Taiping case provides an understanding of certain behaviours by a mass of people in a movement: even if they have different purposes and identities, it is still possible for them to cohere with each other and act collectively through their daily life practices rather than through massive collective actions. Many previous studies have discussed how cohesion in a movement or movement groups may be sustained (e.g., Brown, 1993; Davies, 2012; Dunn, 1998; Furet, 1981; Hall, 2000). Many of these provide investigations of cohesion through the concept of collective identity. Among these scholars, some connect the everyday life of movements' participants to the formation of collective identity and the cohesion of movements and revolutions (e.g., Futrell and Simi, 2004; Hetherington, 1998; Taylor and Whittier, 1992).

However, there are three major differences in my findings as compared with those of previous studies. Firstly, the lack of media in the Qing era and the high rates of illiteracy made it hard for the rebels to communicate in an efficient way beyond the local context. However, the Taiping case shows that changes to be made to individuals' and family's lives were easier to communicate and could still contribute to connecting people and sustaining a large collective goal.

Secondly, studies such as Taylor and Whittier (1992) present activities promoting alternative life forms as a way to resist or restructure existing systems of domination. And studies such as Fantasia and Hirsch (1995) and Hunt (1986) frame activities of changing people's everyday lives or the symbols in their daily lives as a means of ensuring that participants actually feel the potential for change. However, the study presented here not only provides evidence that the alternative ways of organising everyday life helped to enable the rebels feel the changes that the leaders had promised were possible; it also provides evidence that it was possible to maintain the goals of the movement in spite of the presence of people who considered that the rebellion should turn to other goals or ideas. This appears to be especially the case for highly conservative goals or ideas, for example, ideas relating to building a similar imperial dynasty rather than bringing about any more radical revolutionary changes to society.

Thirdly, the cases discussed here also highlight the transitional point when there is a coming together of two different ideas: an idea based on the old order of the local areas and an idea associated with people who are much further away. This is especially relevant given that the present analysis considers an era during which ideas that developed in Europe gradually spread to the rest of the world. Conflicts between the original ideas and such new ideas often arise, with The Taiping rebellion being just one example of this. However, it does provide insight into how people can gradually accept these new ideas even if they have a strong desire to hold onto existing ideas.

The findings presented here also contribute to our understanding of the history of Qing China. Everyday life highlighted here is relevant for explaining why the Christian-derived ideas became popular among the rebel groups in the Taiping

rebellion. Many previous studies have discussed the reason for the dominance and the long-lasting nature of Christian-derived ideas in the rebels' groups (Kilcourse, 2016; Luo, 2013; Reilly, 2004; Rowe, 2009; Spence 1997; Xia, 2006; Zhang 2016). Such previous studies have tended to attribute the persistence of such ideas to ethnic conflicts, economic problems or the introduction of European ideas. However, as argued in Chapter Two, such studies may not explain the full picture, as such reasons cannot explain the patterns witnessed for the decrease in the prevalence of heterodox religious ideas in other premodern Chinese rebellions, including the middle Qing rebellions and the rebellions associated with the Taiping. Meanwhile, scholars' discussions of factors such as European ideas and collective identity do not fully reveal the relevant mechanisms influencing the maintenance of such ideas. In this respect, the analysis presented here contributes to our understanding of such matters.

My analysis also provides more detail to explain the maintenance of these Christian-derived ideas in the Taiping rebellion from one particular perspective. This analysis regarding the forms of life is based on the comparison between the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion. These details are also useful for shedding light on the change of ideas witnessed in the early period of the Taiping rebellion, as most historical studies of the Taiping rebellion focus on the change of ideas and texts at the later stage of this rebellion (Kilcourse, 2016; Reilly, 2004; Xia, 2006. Although Spence (1997) is an exception, the focus of his research is on the top leader Hong Xiuquan rather than overall patterns of changes in the relevant ideas.)

Furthermore, the present study also highlights the importance of everyday life in the transition from premodern rebellions to modern rebellions in China. While the texts and oral statements of the Taiping rebellion stress the importance of the changing participants' everyday life, similar matters are not identified as being relevant for the middle Qing rebellions. The differences in the relative prominence of everyday life between the two types of rebellions may help explain why it is the Taiping rebellion, rather than the middle Qing rebellions, that can be observed as having more revolutionary characteristics. This finding is likely to be relevant to our understanding of the development and history of

Chinese revolutions and rebellions. The significance of everyday life in Chinese rebellions may also reveal a direction for exploring the development of revolutions and social movements in other aspects of world history more generally.

My analysis also highlights possible directions for studying religions. Theories of leadership in religious movements, especially those associated with new religions (Campbell, 1972; Richardson, 1978, 2021), have discussed whether the followers of these religions are controlled by charismatic leaders or are instead attracted to the different ethical systems and lifestyles of these. My analysis is also relevant to this discussion, highlighting the importance of everyday life in promoting certain religions. It also shows that the beliefs of charismatic leaders may not be so influential in attracting followers in my case. This may be valuable for potential explorations.

Conclusion

Presenting a comparison of the texts and oral statements from the Taiping and middle Qing rebellions, this chapter has analysed changes in the ideas that influenced the Taiping rebellion, especially in its early period. The biggest difference between the Taiping's early texts and the texts of the middle Qing rebellions is that, unlike those participating in the middle Qing rebellion, the Taiping rebels produced many texts regarding the adoption of new ways of organising their everyday life.

These findings provide a new understanding of why there were so many "revolutionary" elements in the Taiping rebellion. They also show the potential for participants' everyday life to contribute to maintaining a revolutionary goal in the context of a large rebellion. This can be done in spite of the participants potentially having very different views of the movement's goals, especially in the case where these goals are not revolutionary and in favour of the old order.

Furthermore, the analysis of Taiping is also relevant to what was observed in the previous chapter, showing how consensus or fragmentation can occur with different people of different statuses, potentially leading to revolutionary change.

The next chapter concludes the study, pointing out potential issues with the analysis presented here and possible directions for further analyses.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This study clarifies why two types of heterodox religious rebellions, the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion, demonstrated certain differences in terms of both their ideational processes and their outcomes by enquiry into how the consensus was formed among various kinds of people, including these at the subaltern level of the society and rebels' organisation. In the middle Qing rebellions, the religious ideas gradually disappeared in the texts and communications from the point after the rebellion started. However, in the case of the Taiping rebellion, the Christian-derived ideas were maintained to the point where they could influence the later outcomes. I argue that the content of the heterodox religious ideas of these different rebellions had different areas of focus. Those in a position of influence in the middle Qing rebellions sought to build legitimacy for the religious ideas through charismatic leadership, whereas the Christian-derived religious ideas of the Taiping rebellion related much more to the changing participants' everyday life. The result of this is that the different foci of these heterodox religious ideas and the logic associated with these foci in explaining the rebellions influenced the rebels' degree of consensus on these ideas in different ways, contributing to the different ideational processes and outcomes of the rebellions.

This study provides a revised perspective to understand the history of the Qing rebellions, especially in terms of their ideational domains in the early periods of these rebellions. It also contributes additional analysis of why the premodern Chinese rebellions did not have revolutionary outcomes while the Taiping rebellion did. Although such topics have already been the focus of considerable analysis, the findings here provide explanatory insight into how China's rebellious ideas consisted of heterodox ideational elements that were different from the orthodox ideational system recognised by the mainstream societies of

that time. They also shed light on how these heterodox religious ideas failed to establish a religious monarchy premised on them.

In addition, through reinterpreting the archival records in terms of this contrast between the charismatic leader and everyday life, this analysis also contributes new perspectives in terms of the study of rebellions, revolutions and social movements. It outlines how these two different forms of religious ideas influenced the achievement of consensus, supplementing existing discussion on how consensus and coherence can be achieved in revolutionary movements (e.g., Brown, 1993; Davies, 2012; Lawson, 2015). I point out how the Chinese cultural context shaped the ideas of charismatic leaders in premodern rebellions of China, and this is also likely to be a matter of relevance for studies on how the cultural context influences charismatic leadership (e.g., Smith, 2000; Willner,1984). I argue that, in this context, the charismatic leadership that the followers believed in had no single referent within the real world. Rather, it was a reflection of a person of the imagination, a symbol that the rebels proposed and reified based on the cultural context, similar to the “two bodies” of Kings described by Kantorowicz (1957): one as human and another one as the divine guardian of the crown who is unaffected by time in people’s understandings. In the Chinese religious rebellions, the leader was also defined as a normal human who was selected by the gods, being both a human and a divine figure. However, it was by performing as a charismatic leader and meeting people’s imaginations that the religious leaders could influence people to believe in their religious doctrines, including the claim that they were indeed the real leaders. This is a different situation to that of kings who were viewed as divine figures from birth. As Zhao (2009) argues, performance, in the sense of actual demonstration of efficacy and ability, has played a significant role in creating legitimacy throughout Chinese history. My discussion of rebellious religious leaders is important for understanding the effects of performance, distance and the people’s imagination on charismatic authority and Chinese rebellions.

Meanwhile, incorporating everyday life into analyses of the Taiping rebellion is essential for better understanding how revolutionary characteristics can be legitimised in social movements. Chinese historical social movements are often a mixture of many different features, including those formed over thousands of years and those newly imported into the cultural context. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how these factors competed and how a sense of coherence between the old and new ideas was achieved in these movements. My findings are also relevant to understanding such matters. The findings on the Taiping rebellion may also shed light on the subsequent Chinese social movements after the Qing period, such as the Communist revolution, as such movements are also viewed as having been influenced by both existing and new cultural norms, customs and values.

Revisiting the empirical study

This study was based on a comparison of the ideational patterns of the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion, especially in the early periods of these. For the middle Qing rebellions, the White Lotus rebellion was selected as the main case to be considered. To supplement this analysis, it was also compared with the Wang Lun rebellion and the Eight Trigrams rebellion.

The ideational world of Chinese rebels has been frequently discussed by scholars (e.g., Jen, 1973; Luo, 2013; Reilly, 2004; Rowe, 2009; Shih, 1967), but their main foci have tended to be on the later stages of these rebellions. My study has focused on the ideational process at the early stages of the rebellions. The composition of the ideas that rebels had as to the purpose of the rebellions and the changes these ideas underwent have not been fully discussed before now.

The study is based on the analysis of archival documents, including rebels'

confessions, the texts they used, and the reports of government officials. The documents of confession are especially important to the study because they make it possible to “hear,” albeit from a distance, the voice of the subaltern people in these rebellions, providing a certain degree of access to the rebels’ ideational worlds. For this study, the archival documents were read through a constructivist lens on the basis of what is recommended in existing previous studies and my own interpretation of matters. The discussion focused on how different actors constructed these documents and shaped their overall content. This was done by investigating the context and content of the texts and drawing intertextual comparisons. These different actors included the rebels of the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion, the officials, and the governments of the Qing dynasty.

This investigation has led me to reinterpret the ideas held by the different rebels as to why they participated in these movements. It has also enabled me to trace changes in the rebels’ understanding of the purpose of rebelling and the way to achieve victory in the middle Qing rebellions and the Taiping rebellion. The findings of this study indicate that the rebels participated for different reasons (i.e., sources of motivation) that legitimised their participation in the rebellions when they first engaged in them. These reflect their ideas on the purpose and outcomes of the rebellions and connected to their status in the rebellious organisations when they first joined them. However, the sources of motivation relating to Chinese-style heterodox religious ideas were affected by the variable of the participants’ distance from the leader. In this respect, the social and physical distance between the leader and their followers shaped the extent to which heterodox religious ideas influenced the rebels’ decisions to participate.

Furthermore, I also note that ideational processes in the different types of rebellions are associated with different patterns. Although the ideas that were not closely related to religion remained prevalent in the texts and

communications of both types of rebellions, the texts of heterodox religious ideas in the two kinds of rebellions show different patterns.

The heterodox religious ideas in the middle Qing rebellions usually related to a future world that was very different from the imperial system at the time. This world had strong religious elements, with the leaders promising that people could have a better life in this world. The heterodox religious ideas in the middle Qing rebellions played a significant role in these social movements. Moreover, they had some potential to create a new order. Nevertheless, it is also clear that they were only accepted by a few rebels and gradually disappeared from the texts and communications as the rebellions progressed. The rebellious ideas ultimately became less religious and instead tended towards reinforcing the existing Confucianist order.

In contrast, as a result of the influence of Christianity, the Taiping rebels formulated a new type of religious idea. I call these types of ideas “Christian-derived ideas” in reflection of their status as the Christian version of heterodox religious ideas. These ideas were derived from Christianity but absorbed many elements from the Chinese cultural context while also being influenced by some of the core characteristics of other Chinese heterodox religious rebellions. Heterodox religious ideas were retained in the Taiping texts and communications for a considerable period. Many of these ideas ultimately led to certain revolutionary transformations during the rebellions and in the regime that the Taiping rebels subsequently developed.

I argue that the differences in focus on the content of heterodox religious ideas are one of the reasons for the different ideational processes and outcomes witnessed for these rebellions. The pattern of ideational change in the middle Qing rebellions can be explained with special reference to charismatic leadership. The heterodox religious ideas in the middle Qing rebellions were associated closely with the religious leaders’ charismatic characteristics. In

these rebellions, a charismatic leader who was supposed to hold superhuman power and was destined to rule was at the centre of heterodox religious ideas. This was because people saw the magical powers of the leaders as a means – probably the only means – of gaining protection from harm and ensuring that they could pass into the millenarian world that the heterodox religions had promised was coming. As a result, the participants had a relatively fixed conception of the charismatic leader, derived from popular culture and messages expressed in novels and through oral storytelling.

I argue that the more information about the leaders the rebels got, the more likely it was that these rebels would conclude that their leaders did not in fact have superhuman power. Rebels who were at a close distance from their leaders would have been able to access enough direct knowledge at the beginning of the rebellion to conclude that the leaders did not have magic powers. Evidence for this position comes from the observation that rebels who motivated by religious elements were normally stationed at a medium level of physical and social distance from their leaders; as a result they could obtain some knowledge about their leaders but not enough to shake their beliefs in the leaders' charismatic powers. They could not form a true assessment of leaders' claims regarding their extraordinary abilities accurately due to the distance and the lack of any technology that would have enabled them to make more immediate contact. Meanwhile, in the case of the followers situated at a far distance, because they had very little direct knowledge or understanding of the religious leaders in the short time in which they were recruited before the rebellion, they were unlikely to believe in the leaders' claims. The problem of diverse views on the leaders' superhuman power also contributed to the ideological fragmentation of the rebels' religious ideas, weakening the coherence of the rebellion. Furthermore, unlike certain religious sects in which people who did not believe in the religions would try to leave the sects, the rebels often did not choose to leave the rebellious organisations because they

were pursuing another goal: to rebuild a similar imperial dynasty following the old order. This more instrumental goal may be one of the reasons that the religious leaders gradually lost power and the rebels who did not believe in the heterodox religious ideas increased in power and number. Therefore, these factors not only resulted in the less religiously committed leaders to gain more power but also further constrained the development and spread of the heterodox religious ideas. This provides a compelling explanation as to why the heterodox religious ideas in the texts and oral communications of the rebellion were prevalent only for a short time.

The Christian-derived ideas in the Taiping rebellion centred around building new ways of organising everyday life rather than shoring up an image of the leaders' charisma. Such ideas encouraged the rebels to transform their interactions, practices, and customs according to the ideas of their heterodox religion. By creating distinctive ways of organising everyday life, rebels of different organisational statuses, of various occupations and social classes, formed a collective understanding of how they were promoting new ideas that did not reflect traditional thought with Confucianism as the orthodoxy. This also served to build a bridge that connected different groups, helping the participants within the movement experience and feel the changes that their leaders urged them to adopt. On this basis, it was much easier to forge a consensus among the rebels. As a result, this group was able to sustain a large collective goal of revolutionary changes based on these new religious ideas, notwithstanding that this was a diverse group of participants in an era when communication was much harder than it is today.

The finding of this study in relation to the changes in the ideational patterns is important for understanding premodern Chinese rebellions, providing sociological contributions towards the study of large social movements. These contributions pertain to several aspects of such movements.

First, there was an association between the status of the rebels and their ideas on the purpose of the uprisings, as evidenced by the rebels' confessions. While several scholars (see e.g., Hung, 2009, 2011; Luo, 2013; Naquin, 1976; Shih, 1967; Tang, 2011) have provided a basic level of information on these rebellions, my study provides a more fleshed-out account of this ideational pattern characterising the early periods of these rebellions, in which ideas are analysed as being linked to status.

Meanwhile, the matter of whether the rebels believed in heterodox religious ideas in explaining and justifying the rebellions can also be seen to have been influenced by the distance between the rebels and the leaders. The analysis shows that belief and language in the cause of the rebellion was conditioned in a complex manner by patterns of social organisation, interaction, and religious ideologies, with the rebels demonstrating significant variation in this regard.

Studies show that despite the very different contexts in which such leadership arises, charismatic leadership has common elements in countries with similar cultural contexts (see Dennis, 1982; Willner, 1984). My study shows how the Chinese cultural context shaped the nature of charismatic leadership in these specific movements. Unlike with charismatic leaders in modern European or American history, I argue that people's understanding of charismatic leaders in these premodern Chinese rebellions was focused more on how they were located in a symbolic framework than special personal characteristics. No matter what their characteristics were, any person could claim to be a charismatic leader provided they could be perceived as embodying the special magical powers that people imagined such individuals would have. This observation brings a new perspective to studies of charismatic leadership, showing that social and cultural contexts can exert a strong influence on the forms of charismatic authority. In the premodern Chinese context, charismatic authority was associated not with a person but an image, and leaders did not

need to have many specific personal qualities or creativity to exert authority. This is different from the existing arguments (e.g., Shils, 1965) made that it is specific creativities or social order that enables leaders to hold charismatic authority. It is also helpful for understanding the role of Chinese leaders in political movements in terms of the factors constraining their abilities and perceived legitimacy (see Aminzade, et al., 2001; Zhao, 2009).

Turning to the function of everyday life in the Taiping rebellion, this has been discussed in much of the literature on revolutions and social movements. The analyses of this phenomenon (e.g., Fantasia and Hirsch, 1995; Fominaya, 2010a; Hunt, 1986; Haenfler, 2004; Thompson, 2013) tend to argue that people's daily lives often contribute to shaping a particular collective identity among movements' participants in such a way that this contributes to the unification of these people and a collective recognition of the movements' goals. My study has made a similar argument. Taiping's ideas pertained to certain activities in the participants' daily lives, including interactions, practices and customs. These ideas served to build a bridge connecting different groups, facilitating their collective identity. However, it must be borne in mind that there were also critical differences between the Taiping rebellion and the revolutions or other forms of social movement in the European and American countries. In most revolutions or movements, such as the French Revolution, a very significant proportion of participants sought to bring about something new to replace what had existed in the old order, whether via moderate reform or extreme reconstruction. Consequently, the people that supported the strict old order were more likely to oppose the revolutionaries. However, from the texts of the Taiping rebellion, it can be seen that the Taiping rebellion consisted of many people who were in favour of the old order at the outset. There were also numerous participants who had no idea about the purposes of the Taiping religion (see Xia, 2006). However, the proposed new forms of organising everyday life contributed to building consensus among the rebels and helped

them to understand the revolutionary changes promised to them. This demonstrates the supportive function of everyday life with respect to the transformational aims of a movement in the context of a transitional point from premodern to modern.

Areas for improvement

As is the case with such studies, there are aspects of my present analysis that could be developed further or improved upon. Firstly, this study presents discussions among scholars from the disciplines of both history and sociology. Trying to cover both perspectives limits the degree of engagement that is possible with each of these fields, although there are also advantages to taking such a combined view. It would be useful to present a more detailed comparison of European (or other) religious traditions and Chinese religious traditions and their effects on politics and social movements. For example, a comparison of the divine image that the people had of European kings and the charismatic leaders of Chinese rebellions would be another valuable dimension to include within such a study. A more expansive study might also consider the role of changed everyday life in European social movements and compare this with their role in Chinese ones.

Furthermore, the nature of history is not tidy, with certain details inevitably remaining unknown or incomplete. In this sense, the narrative provided here must be regarded as an assumption or a historical possibility, albeit one that is justified in terms of what the sources and existing analysis suggest. It provides a reasonable and coherent explanation of the historical evidence that I found. From my understanding of the sources, it is not very likely, at least at the moment, that more evidence will be found in the historical materials relating to the historical assumptions that I have made regarding Qing China. However, the sociological claims and the associated historical narrative that I have

proposed could be tested by investigating and comparing social movements in other periods in Chinese history or from other areas of the world.

As noted above, this study has discussed the relationships between social aspects of the rebels (in terms of both their status and their distance from their leaders), and their ideas regarding their participation in the rebellions, especially those taking place in the middle of the Qing dynasty. I found that the core element affecting the rebels' motivation to participate that related to heterodox religious ideas was distance. I also suggest that there was a correlation between the rebels' status and distance. However, this study did not investigate the distances using a precisely operationalised measure in the manner of certain other studies (Jiang, 2008, see image 2). Indeed, the analysis of this distance was conducted by simply categorising the locations in a rather broad-brush fashion from close to far on the basis of the accessible information. It would be possible to combine measures for analysing the distance and rebels' ideas or other characteristics and apply this analysis to all the cases considered. Conducting such an analysis might yield certain more precise findings or evidence, although this would necessitate a much richer knowledge base in terms of geography. In addition, the cross tables presented in this thesis to analyse the association between different ideas, levels of status and distance are very basic. A closer analysis of other variables in the confession data (such as age or occupation) might reveal further insights into how the rebels were mobilised through the use of different strategies. Therefore, a more rigorous quantitative, geographical investigation into the physical (and possibly social) distance between the rebels and the leaders and other variables may provide more evidence to support (or challenge) my findings.

Directions for future studies

Turning finally to potential directions for future studies, the first relates to social

networks in premodern rebellions. While the networks of Chinese rebellions have been discussed in several studies (e.g., Naquin, 1982), none of these studies present findings obtained through the use of a quantitative social network method. However, the sources that I found, especially in the Eight Trigrams rebellion, may be the only ones that are sufficiently detailed to provide enough detailed data to make such a social network analysis possible. Employing social network analysis in this area of study has the potential to give rise to new perspectives on these historical events and contribute to theories of social networks.

There would also be merit in studying further mobilisation strategies in terms of threats and possibly the discourse surrounding the use of such strategies. In the analysis of the rebellions considered here, I have examined in detail the sources of motivation relating to dynastic-order-related ideas and the heterodox religious ideas relating to the rebels' understanding of the goal of the rebellions and how these were to be achieved. However, there was no detailed discussion of the rebels who participated in the rebellions due to the perception of threats posed by other rebels or the government. This is an omission of some potential significance given that these rebels comprised a significant proportion of the rebels as a whole. Furthermore, even in the case of the high-status rebels, the dynastic-order-related ideas and heterodox religious ideas, when used for mobilisation, also alluded to the prospect of avoiding suffering and threats to life. For example, the *klapa* that the religious ideas depicted epitomises the idea of forthcoming suffering and threat to life. It was argued that only if the rebels participated in the rebellions could they avoid this kind of suffering. While many scholars (e.g., Dyke and Soule, 2002; Monaghan and Walby, 2012) have discussed the perception of future suffering and threats in revolutions and other social movements, an investigation on this matter in the premodern movements (which, it must be borne in mind, were replete with images of suffering and threats) would be helpful.

Thirdly, the understanding of charismatic religious leadership and everyday life in the rebellions considered here generally comes from two broad groups of cultures, namely East Asia and Europe. Although discussions of everyday life have also appeared in some Chinese religions, they have not been drawn on in studies of the middle Qing rebellions (see Gaustad, 1994). Thus, future studies might assess whether this is the case and focus on commonalities in how they have been understood and accepted by people. For example, in the middle Qing rebellions, the rebels generally did not encounter people who appeared to have 'real' magical power. The only exception may be encounters with individuals said to be magicians and wizards. Indeed, there is evidence of such individuals being present in rebellions. However, they interacted with only some groups of people in the sources of this study. This raises the question as to why such individuals were willing accept the supernatural claims of their leaders so easily? Such a question seems to share links with Philip Kuhn's (1990) famous book, *Soul Stealers: the Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*, which describes an absurd event in which rumours about someone using sorcery to steal souls spread all over China. This caused people to panic and prompted investigations by the imperial government, following the order of the emperor. The reports of sorcery were ultimately the fabrications of just a few people. Why was the superstition about magical power in China's premodern society so powerful and so closely linked to politics that investigations were directly ordered by the emperor, and there was further massive hunting of sorcerers? Kuhn provides several explanations for this in terms of bureaucratic systems and ethnic conflicts. He also provides an explanation in terms of the cultural perspectives of the beliefs expressed in some rituals regarding the supernatural powers of subaltern people in certain villages. However, were similar beliefs held by the rebels? Furthermore, were the emperors' beliefs regarding magical power similar to those of the subaltern people? Was this knowledge of the subaltern people and the emperor drawn from the same source as a part of a

shared wider culture?

In addition, across a large number of religious movements within Chinese history, it can be seen that the rebels have had at least a basic understanding of their histories, as evidenced by the use of the surnames of emperors from previous dynasties, such as the Ming and Han. However, religion only seldom played a major role in building the later imperial regimes. It has also been very rare for religious leaders to come to rule all of China, which raises the question as to why the rebels believed in such religious messages. What shaped people's collective impression of the relationship between politics and magic? Future studies could address this question.

Meanwhile, this study has considered how Taiping's ideas had a new focus on people's everyday life. This new focus may have resulted from new ideas diffused from European countries and given rise to certain changes that did not occur in the previous dynasties. It would be valuable to investigate whether and how the ideational focus on everyday life has played a role in social movements in regions outside of Europe. For example, Japan carried out similarly major reforms in people's everyday life during the Meiji period (1852-1912). Were these reforms also partly affected by the Christian religions of European and American countries, and did they have an impact on subsequent changes in this country? One of the reasons that this point may be particularly interesting is that the Japanese revolutionaries had the aim of restoring the older order of the era before the Shogunate period (generally regarded as 1192-1867), in which the emperor still held the highest power. It may also be fruitful to investigate whether the ideas of everyday life were retained in the social movements in China after the Qing dynasty and how these ideas gave rise to knowledge in the development of revolutionary elements in subsequent social movements.

The dynamics of these pre-modern social movements, especially the ideational

processes, constitute a topic of some importance for this area of history. I believe that there are likely also many other aspects of these movements that would be fruitful to consider. The investigation of the details of these movements may also contribute to a broader understanding of social patterns, possibly even to the extent that this has relevance beyond the fields of social movements and revolutions, for example, patterns in the transfer of information from charismatic leaders in relation to religious matters. In conclusion, it is my hope that this study is useful for shedding light on the patterns identified in the rebellions considered here, and, over the longer term, inspiring others to explore further areas.

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JBD: The Grand Council Copies of Secret Palace Memorials-The Extermination and Capturing Archive.

JFD: The Grand Council Copies of Secret Palace Memorials-Archives of the White Lotus Rebellion.

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C6: 张正隆供词 [The confession of Zhang Zhenglong], In [BLJZL], p76.

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C37: 腾子贵供词 [The confession of Tengzigui], In [BLJZL], p20.

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Glossary 1: Glossary of key figures in this study cited

Glossary of Key Figures

Name	Chinese name	Event (source)	Main Deed	Chapter
Nezha	哪吒	Ancient Chinese myth	An immortal	5
Chenxiang	沉香	Ancient Chinese myth	A son of a immortal and a mortal	5
Wu Zetian	武则天	Tang dynasty	The only one empress in China(690-705)	2
Song Jiang	宋江	The Water Margin	A rebel leader in this novel	5
Han Ling'er	韩林儿	Red Scarf Army rebellion	Religious leader known as the "Small Luminous King"	1
Zhu Yuanzhang	朱元璋	Ming dynasty	Secular leader, the first emperor (1368-1398)	1
Yongzheng	雍正	Qing dynasty	The fifth emperor(1678-1735)	3
Qianlong emperor	乾隆	Qing dynasty	The sixth emperor (1736-1795)	1
Jiaqing emperor	嘉庆	Qing Dynasty	The seventh emperor (1796-1820)	1
Daoguang emperor	道光	Qing Dynasty	The eighth emperor (1820-1850)	1
Xianfeng emperor	咸丰	Qing Dynasty	The ninth emperor (1851-1861)	6
Wang Lun	王伦	Wang Lun rebellion	Top leader	1
Li Quaner	李犬儿	White Lotus rebellion	Fictional most important saviour	5
Niu Ba	牛八	White Lotus rebellion	Fictional Ming descendant	5
Song Zhiqing	宋之清	White Lotus rebellion	The top religious leader	5
Liu Zhixie	刘之协	White Lotus rebellion	The top religious leader	5
Wang Tingzhao	王廷诏	White Lotus rebellion	Main leader, one of the initiators of the uprising	5

Glossary of Key Figures

Name	Chinese name	Event (source)	Main Deed	Chapter
Lin Qing	林清	Eight Trigrams rebellion	Top Leader in Beijing	1,4,5
Li Wencheng	李文成	Eight Trigrams rebellion	Top Leader in Henan	1
Feng Keshan	冯克善	Eight Trigrams rebellion	Top Leader in Shandong	1
Hong Xiuquan	洪秀全	Taiping rebellion	The initial organiser, top leader, Heavenly king	1, 2, 6
Feng Yunshan	冯云山	Taiping rebellion	The initial organise, main leader	2, 6
Yang Xiuqing	杨秀清	Taiping rebellion	Main leader	2, 6
Xiao Chaogui	萧朝贵	Taiping rebellion	Main leader	2, 6
Si Dakai	石达开	Taiping rebellion	Main leader	6
Li Xiuchen	李秀成	Taiping rebellion	Main leader	6
Sashanga	赛尚阿	Qing government	Minister who suppressed the Taiping	6
Zeng Guofan	曾国蕃	Qing government	Main general who suppressed the Taiping	6
Lindley	伶俐	Taiping rebellion	A sailer who wrote a comprehensive account on the regime of Taiping	2
Sun Yat-sen	孙中山	the Republic of China	The first president	5
Chiang Kai-shek	蒋介石	the Republic of China	The second president	2
Mao Zedong	毛泽东	the People's Republic of China	The first chairman	2

Glossary 2: Glossary of religions and sect names

Buddhism	佛教
Confucianism	儒教
Eight Trigrams sect	八卦教派
God Worship religion	拜上帝教
Heavenly Order sect	天理教派
Hunyuan sect	混元教派
Pure Water sect	清水教派
Red Sun sect	红阳教派
Shouyuan sect	收元教派
Taoism	道教
The Triads	天地会
Way of the Great Peace sect	和平道
White Lotus sect	白莲教派
White Sun sect	白阳教派
Zoroastrianism	拜火教

Glossary 3: Glossary of ethnic names

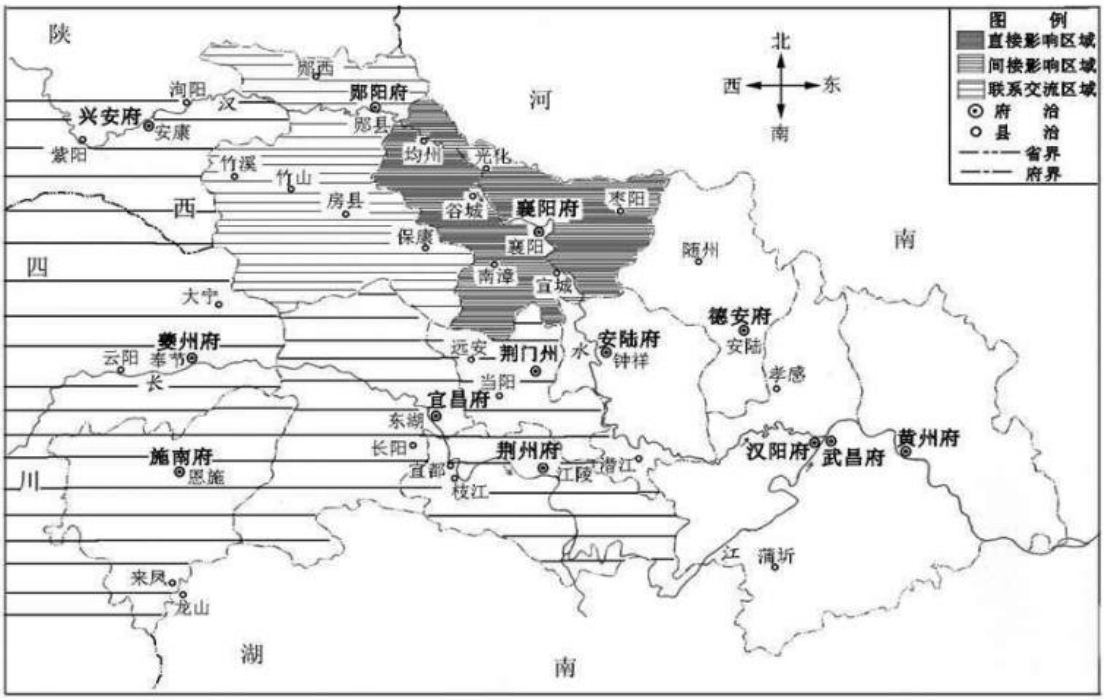
Hakka	客家族
Han	汉族
Hui Muslims	回族
Manchu	满族
Miao	苗族
Tujia	土家族

Glossary 4: Glossary of selected terms

Bodhisattva	菩萨
Buddha	佛陀
Bazong	把总
Court of the Supervisory and Inspection	都察院
Court of Judicature and Revision	大理寺
Eternal Mother	无生老母
Fairy of Ninth Heaven	九天玄女
General Arhats	罗汉将军
Grand Council	军机处
Grand Secretary	军机大臣
Guanyin	观音
Lingering death	凌迟处死
Immediate decapitation	斩立决
Imperial Examinations	科举考试
Joint imprisonment	连坐
Joint Trial of Three Justice Departments	三司会审
Klapa	劫
Maitreya Buddha	弥勒佛
Ministry of Justice	刑部
Taiping Heavenly Kingdom	太平天国
Tian Yuan Tai Bao	天元太保
Zongbing	总兵

Image 1: A schematic of the Qing's map showing the occurrence of the main cases together

Image 2: A schematic of Spatial distribution of the White lotus sect Xiangyang branch in the early years of emperor Jiaqing(1796-1800)



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