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Milan Zafirovski*

University of North Texas
Denton, Texas

* zafirovski@unt.edu

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Milan Zafirovski

University of North Texas
Denton, Texas

Abstract

This article investigates and identifies certain religious and related social conditions of the genesis and development of Calvinism. It therefore treats Calvinism as religiously and otherwise socially conditioned rather than, as prevalent in the current sociological literature, as solely or mostly conditioning in religious as well as political, economic, and cultural terms. The article argues and demonstrates that the religious and cognate social conditions of original Calvinism essentially consist of the *Ancien Régime* of religion, church, and society overall in Europe, and more precisely in France. It therefore identifies Calvinism as initially the product of and subsequently the attempt at reinstating the ancient religious and social *Régime*, as indicated or adumbrated by the blueprint (and title) of Calvin's key theological treatise. Specifically, the article rediscovers and reveals Calvinism in the light of being both the effect and the restoration of the medieval theocracy, called the Christian Republic and the like, as the *Ancien Régime* of religion and society, through establishing Calvinist theocratic and thus non- or quasi-democratic republics. The article intends to contribute to understanding, explaining, and predicting better the social causes, functions, and effects of Calvinism generally, particularly its religious and related conditions and outcomes.

In the sociological and related literature, Protestantism, particularly Calvinism, is the relevant cause or factor of multiple social, religious, cultural, economic, and political outcomes. Particularly since Weber (1930 [1905]) the literature posits the economic outcomes of “ascetic Protestantism,” notably its epitome Calvinism, including the latter’s “pure sect” English-American Puritanism. The major and aggregate, though arguably unintended, economic outcome of Calvinism is supposed to be the “spirit” and “practice and structure” of capitalism according to the Weber Thesis. Weber initially expounded the latter in the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and elaborated it in his later works. Various revisions, elaborations, and extensions have followed since Parsons (1967 [1937]) and Tawney (1962), yielding what Weber (1930: 186) recognizes as the “voluminous literature” of “comprehensive criticisms” and Merton (1968: 63) terms a “library of criticism.”

In addition, Hume, Weber, and other analysts suggest that the political outcomes of Calvinism, including Puritanism, involve radicalism through revolutionary ideology and action, the formation of the national and republican or constitutional state, democratic institutions, equality in politics and society, conservatism, etc. Calvinism, in particular Puritanism, is also associated with outcomes in culture such as cultural rationalism, notably the development of natural science and technology—in accordance with the Merton thesis (1968) implicit in Weber (1930:173; see also Evans and Evans 2008), strict ascetic morality depreciating the “joy of life,” the devaluation of the aesthetic arts and intellectual life (Munch 2001), and the like.

Finally and most importantly to the present study, the literature assumes a variety of religious, including theological, outcomes of Calvinism, including Puritanism. As Hume, Comte, Weber, Pareto, and other scholars posit, these religious outcomes include strict church discipline and absolute control; aggressiveness as the “Church militant” (Weber, 1930: 99); religious revolution, war, and violence or radicalism (Juergensmeyer 1994); biblical theocracy (Munch 2001; Robertson 1933) via the “Biblical Commonwealth” (Gorski 2003); theological individualism¹ (Mayhew 1984); anti-Catholicism and anti-“popery” (Goldstone, 1986: 296); evangelicalism (Heller 1986); etc.

These religious and social outcomes of Calvinism and thus the latter as the cause in this respect do not concern the present paper, however, but only form a sociological background and rationale for it. The paper is instead concerned with the opposite sociological problematic—the social, in particular religious, factors of Calvinism, including its Anglo-Saxon sectarian and hyper-moralistic subtype

¹ In an early criticism of Weber’s *Protestant Ethic* hypothesis of the emergence and expansion of modern capitalism, Robertson (1933: 120) remarks that Calvin’s theological as well as political and economic teaching “was so little individualistic,” thus anticipating Tawney’s (1962: 226) diagnosis of Calvinist-Puritan “iron collectivism.”

Puritanism. This concerned is denoted the sociological problem of societal conditioning of Calvinism, as different from and substantively and formally prior to its causing social outcomes once itself “born,” and thus just as relevant. Therefore, the present analysis considers Calvinism and generally ascetic Protestantism to be the outcome of a composite of societal factors rather than just the cause of various outcomes in society, as treated in the previous sociological and related literature.

In this respect, the paper both diverges from and contributes to the literature by addressing a relatively neglected or under-analyzed problem in the sociological analysis of Calvinism and ascetic Protestantism overall. In particular, the paper is most closely related to Gorski’s (1993; 2003) work on Calvinism and Zaret’s (1985; 1989) on Puritanism but also substantially differs from both works. The paper differs from the first by focusing on societal conditions underpinning the development of Calvinism rather than on its outcomes for society, in particular its role in the emergence of the early modern state in Europe (Gorski 2003). Hence, the paper treats Calvinism as the dependent variable, a function of societal conditions. This perspective differs from Calvinism’s treatment mostly as the explanatory factor in Gorski’s framework, thus both differing from and adding to this and related extant research. The paper also differs from Zaret’s (1985) work on the social context of the rise of English Puritanism in that it is more comprehensive by exploring the societal setting of the emergence of Calvinism as a whole, thus extending this research. Like this work, it considers the social setting to be an explanatory factor but extends the dependent variable from Puritanism in particular in England to Calvinism in general in Europe. Relatedly, the paper differs from and adds to this work by encompassing an earlier social structure and historical conjuncture given that the development of Calvinism in its original, orthodox form precedes that of Puritanism, its derivative and sequel. In sum, the paper aims to add to existing knowledge by, first, investigating the societal factors influencing the development of Calvinism in contrast to Gorski’s (2003) and related extant work centering on its effects on society, and second, by extending the research on the social context of Puritanism (Zaret 1985) in England to encompass that of its Calvinist precursor in Europe.

In general terms, the paper is consistent with the sociology of religion and knowledge, especially in Durkheim’s and Mannheim’s renditions, specifically its fundamental premise of the societal determination of religions and ideas as inherently creations of society. It reintroduces and reaffirms this primary original premise of the sociology of religion and knowledge into the sociological analysis of Calvinism, in which it has been almost forgotten (Parsons 1938) or substituted with the opposite secondary and derivative thesis of Calvinism’s causal effects on society. Like all religions and ideas, Calvinism has to be produced socially in the sense of the sociology of religion and knowledge before producing its specific

outcomes in society, including religion, economy, and polity. Like any religion and ideology according to the sociology of religion and knowledge, Calvinism is the child of certain societal conditions before becoming the father of social effects, such as the spirit of capitalism in Weber's sense, the early modern state (Gorski 2003), and so on.

The preceding implies two alternative, though complementary, suppositions of Calvinism as both a factor and an outcome of society, which can be represented in a simple way as follows. The explicit Weberian-Parsonian supposition that Calvinism is the explanatory factor of social outcomes such as modern capitalism and state, thus as an independent variable, is represented by the following equation:

$$Y \text{ (set of religious and other social outcomes)} = f(X) \text{ (Calvinism)}$$

The implicit reverse Weberian supposition that Calvinism is the outcome of pre-modern religious and related social factors, so the dependent variable, is represented by another equation:

$$Y \text{ (Calvinism)} = f(X) \text{ (total composite of pre-existing religious and other social factors)}$$

For further substantive specification, rather than formal statistical testing, the treatment of Calvinism as the dependent variable of pre-modernity is represented as a simple regression model, where Y signifies Calvinism in the sense of religion, church, and political ideology during its creation and survival (dependent variable); \mathbf{X} a matrix of pre-modern, preexisting religious and related factors within the total composite of social conditions and historical conjunctures (independent variables); while, as usual, \mathbf{a} is a vector of regression constants, \mathbf{b} a vector of regression coefficients for \mathbf{X} , and $\boldsymbol{\varepsilon}$ a vector of residual terms, any unknown, non-hypothesized variables influencing Y :

$$Y = \mathbf{a} + \mathbf{b} \mathbf{X} + \boldsymbol{\varepsilon}$$

The question arises as what matrix \mathbf{X} specifically comprises and thus into which vectors it is to be disaggregated. Matrix \mathbf{X} comprises, first, the pre-modern order of religion and church organization; second and as a corollary, traditional, medieval theocracy; third, related pre-modern religious variables; and fourth pre-modern cultural, political, and economic factors and historical conjunctures. Accordingly, \mathbf{X} is disaggregated into several vectors of independent variables considered in the remainder of the paper. This disaggregation yields a decomposed form of the above model from disaggregating matrix \mathbf{X} where x_1 is

the pre-modern order of religion and church organization, x2 traditional or medieval theocracy, x3 related pre-modern religious factors, and x4 pre-modern cultural, political, and economic and historical conjunctures, with the rest of the terms interpreted as above:

$$Y = a = ax_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4 + \epsilon$$

The paper focuses on x1 and x2 as the crucial pre-modern religious and related social factors of the development of the Calvinist religion and church during its creation and survival, i.e., original, orthodox Calvinism. It also mentions and touches on x3 while leaving x4 for separate analyses beyond the scope of the current analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1: Pre-Modern Religious and Related Social Factors of Original Calvinism

Matrix of pre-modern religious and related social factors and historical conjunctures of Calvinism during its creation and survival (Y)

1. the pre-modern order of religion and church organization
2. traditional or medieval theocracy
3. related pre-modern religious factors
4. pre-modern economic, political and cultural variables and historical conjunctures
5. residual, unknown variables

THE ANCIEN RÉGIME OF RELIGION/CHURCH AND CALVINISM

Within Weber's (1930: 183) "totality" of social conditions, the overarching religious condition and setting of Calvinism's genesis and early evolution involved a pre-modern preexisting order of religion and church organization pervading and dominating all French and European society. By analogy to its political, economic, and cultural conditions, this condition consisted in the French *Ancien Régime* in religious terms. In this sense, Calvinism originates within and is conditioned by the *Ancien Régime* of religion and church,² just as that of politics, economy, and culture. Following Tocqueville, the *Ancien Régime* is defined as the pre-modern condition of society with its origin in aristocratic and feudal structures, joined with coercive religious authority and monarchical political power. Similarly, contemporary writers characterize the *Ancien Régime* in particular by feudal land distribution, master-servant labor relations, and

² Walker (1937: 18) notes that the "Reformation was the product of peculiar circumstances; it could occur only against the background of Christendom" as well as other political and economic conditions.

aristocratic class dominance, combined with urban oligarchies and guilds (Acemoglu et al. 2011; Piketty 2015). In religious terms, the *Ancien Régime* comprises confessional states

based on the belief that church and state were intertwined, that kings had a divine mission to fulfil on earth, that it was a matter of vital concern to statesmen to exercise religious as well as social control over subjects and that it was highly desirable that all subjects should belong to one confession (Fitzpatrick, 1999: 46–47).

Calvinism, like Calvin, was born, imbedded in, and affected by a religious and church setting in France, as were its subsequent developments in other societies, including Weber's³ “pure sect” of “Puritanism” in England and New England (Kaufman 2008; Zaret 1985), its Scottish transplant Presbyterianism (Hillmann 2008), etc. Despite its claim to theological novelty—notably an absolute, transcendent God and divine predestination—and its radicalism via “holy” revolutions and wars, Calvinism, like Calvin, carries and exhibits the imprint of what Durkheim calls the social milieu involving definite religious, cultural, political, and economic institutions, ideas, and practices.

Like all religions and ideologies according to Durkheim-Mannheim's sociology of religion and ideas, Calvinism was originally the child of the existing social environment, including the religious context, as was Calvin himself. The social environment specifically entailed the French *Ancien Régime* of politics, economy, and culture, as well as religion and church organization. In extension, Calvinism's own variations and derivations are the children of such social environments in other societies and historical conjunctures, including the Reformed Church in Holland, Puritanism in England and New England, Presbyterianism in Scotland, etc. Consequently, like all other religions and ideologies, Calvinism does not escape and transcend the religious and societal milieu within which it originates and operates. Rather, this milieu shapes it, in this case the *Ancien Régime* of religion, economy, politics, and culture in France and Europe. Moreover, despite its self-definition as reformed, original, or orthodox, Calvinism, and notably also Calvin himself, was an offspring of the *Ancien Régime* of religion and church, along with economy, politics, and culture, and was therefore unable to transcend this preexisting religious and social system (Benedict 1999; Jong 1964).⁴

³ Weber (1968 [1920]: 1208) invokes Puritans in England (Cromwell et al.) and New England (the “Independents”) as exemplars of a “pure sect” within Calvinism and Protestantism overall.

⁴ Jong (1964: 394) observes that in late 16th century Holland, like in France and Calvin's Geneva before, “Reformed churches, emerging out of a long medieval tradition of very close relationships

INSTITUTING OF THE ANCIEN RÉGIME AND INSTITUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Notably, Calvin's theological magnum opus *Institution of the Christian Religion* essentially aimed at *instituting* and perpetuating by compulsion such as revolution or war the pre-modern religious and political *Ancien Régime* in the "purer" (Eisenstadt 1965) form of the "Reformed" church as its "only true" expression. And with its "iron consistency" as described by Weber⁵ (1930 [1905]), Calvinism succeeded to implement, although in various degrees of intensity and duration, this theological design of *Institution* of the *Ancien Régime* of religion. It did so under those religious-social environments in which it originated, survived, or expanded, and which shaped it, partly and temporarily in the Calvinist-ruled sections of France, and totally and enduringly in Calvin's Geneva⁶ during the 16th century (Eisenstadt 1965; Gorski 2003, Swidler 1986; Walzer 1965). Subsequently it continued through Puritanism, characterized with what Hume calls "unreasonable obstinacy" in the institution of the "pure" primitive religion (Goldstone 1986; Gorski 2000; Hillmann 2008; Kaufman 2008; Munch 2001) and consequently established as the "only true" church in 17th century England and New England until its disestablishment two centuries later.

The striking historical sequence and sociological continuity in *Institution of the Christian Religion* from Calvin's France through Puritan New England and perhaps beyond indicate Calvinism's path-dependence on the *Ancien Régime* of religion and society as its religious and societal origin, condition, and setting. Alternatively, Calvin's *Institution* aimed at instituting via a mix of religious persuasion and political coercion the "Reformed" religion as the "pure" and "only true" church, thus effectively establishing the religious *Ancien Régime* in the sense of medievalism.

Comte (1983 [1839]) characterizes Calvinism and the Protestant Reformation generally as a return to the "primitive church" (also, Clark 1951) and "barbarous" past, and in that sense to the *Ancien Régime* of religion encompassing medieval and biblical times. He thereby identifies its reactionary conservative character (Heller 1986; Robertson 1933; Walzer 1965) rather than, as Calvinists claim and

between church and state in one religious-social community, were working with assumptions very different from the modern American tradition of the separation of church and state."

⁵ Weber (1930 [1905]: 137) uses the phrase the "iron consistency of Calvinism" in respect of its asceticism as well as its theocratic rule by contrast to Pietism's "vacillation and uncertainty in the religious basis of its asceticism."

⁶ Gorski (1993: 273) proposes that "Calvin devoted most of his life not to theology but to building the Reformed church" and thus by implication theocracy through the latter invariably aiming at and ultimately capturing the state (Maurer 1926). Mason (1993: 28) cites an observation about Calvin in Geneva: "a preacher come from France who subjugated Geneva and made it over into his image."

often is supposed, being a religious innovation or “reform.” Notably, Comte seems to know or decipher the underlying primitive theocratic intent and meaning of *Institution of the Christian Religion* by judging, as Calvin and his followers stress, the “tree by its fruit” (Valeri 1997). Comte (1983: 132) observes that Calvinism, and Protestantism more generally, was “instituted from the beginning for perpetual subjection” by perpetuating or restoring the primitive “theocracy” and the “spirit of caste” involving “entire impunity to private oppression” of the “lower classes.” In particular, Comte (1983: 135) infers that the “forcible repression of religious liberty,” while in Catholicism “simply a consequence of its modern disorganization,” is “inherent in the very nature” of Calvinism or Protestantism “as soon as it had the power” and “for however a short time,” as in England and New England, Holland, parts of Germany, and the Calvinist-ruled parts of France, including French-speaking Geneva. Apparently, Comte knew well or discovered by judging the tree of Calvinism by its fruit what his countryman Calvin and consequently Calvinists intended and meant by *Institution of the Christian Religion* (in original French or Latin). Hume and J. S. Mill did so especially in respect of the perpetual theocratic intentions and actions of English Calvinists as self-proclaimed Puritans claiming to form the only “pure church,” what Hume called “sectaries” and Weber the “pure sect,” including only the “elect” (Friedman, 2011: 169) and excluding and ultimately exterminating the rest as the “reprobate” and the “children of Satan,” including “witches.”

In aggregate, for Calvin and Calvinists from France through Puritan England and New England, *Institution of the Christian Religion* always signified and aimed through their actions what Comte diagnosed. This goal is to institute by coercion, notably “holy” war and terror (Walzer 1963), the pre-modern religious and societal *Ancien Régime* from medievalism and biblical times in a “purer” and “reformed” shape. Calvin stipulates establishing by compulsion, including “extermination” of the “enemies of God,” the medieval or more historically primitive “City of God” and by implication the “Christian Commonwealth” (Zaret, 1989: 175). Hence, this establishment entailed the process or act of coercive—through revolution or “holy” war—institution of the medieval *Ancien Régime* of which the “City of God” in the form of a “Christian Commonwealth” was the epitome. On this account, Calvin’s *Institution of the Christian Religion* was not only a theological design and exposition of Christian theology and religion in the “Reformed” version, defined as what Hume (1983 [1778]: 127) calls the “doctrine of absolute decrees” such as an absolutely transcendent and omnipotent⁷ God, divine predestination by the double decree of salvation/election

⁷ Slack (2013: 364–65) comments that for Benjamin Franklin, Calvinism’s “God’s omnipotence negated the order of nature and the agency of man (i.e.) the capacity of human reason. Likening Calvinism to idolatry, Franklin opines: ‘Surely it is not more difficult to believe the World was

and damnation/reprobation, original sin déjà vu, and various corollary doctrines (Rawls 2010). It was also a project of revolutionary or rather counter-revolutionary reactionary political action (Gorski 2003; Walzer 1965) reinstating via compulsion the *Ancien Régime* of religion qua the “Christian Commonwealth” in the “reformed” shape, thus perpetuating its religious setting. At this juncture, original Calvinism, notably Calvin himself, appears as not really revolutionary in the sense of—to paraphrase Schumpeter’s (1950: 83) depiction of capitalism—the destruction of the old religious and other social structures and the creation of the new, simply “creative destruction” or innovation. This observation indicates that Calvinist religious and political “revolution” (Alesina and Giuliano 2015) is more accurately understood as counter-revolution in the sense of reestablishment of the “golden past” of religion and church as “paradise lost” in the form of a medieval “Christian Commonwealth,” which is a defining trait of conservatism (Mannheim 1986).

Like conservatism, of which it is a prototypical exemplar or source (Dunn and Woodard 1996; Heller 1986), Calvinism does not aim at and act on revolutionizing religious and political systems though innovation but rather restoring and reinstating them from the “dead past” (Mannheim, 1936: 96), thus resurrecting the “dead hand of the past” (Harrod, 1956: 29). Consequently, neither do Calvinism’s derivatives and later developments, including its sect Puritanism in England (Gorski 2000; Hillmann 2008), New England (Kauffman 20008; Munch 2001), and beyond. Calvinism restores and reinstates in a “reformed” form by coercion the medieval primitive biblical *Ancien Régime* of religion and church rather than creating a new modern system, least of all political democracy. Orthodox Calvinism is reportedly an anti- or pre-democratic religion and political ideology (Walzer 1965), as well as the authoritarian church (Clark 1951). Calvin and his successors (such as Theodore Beza), with rare exceptions that were eventually relegated to irrelevance and oblivion (Kingdon 1964), are what Mannheim (1967) calls anti- or pre-democratic, authoritarian minds. Conversely, Calvin’s *Institution* and thus original Calvinism did not seek or represent the institution of modern democracy in church or polity (Kingdon 1964); at most it instituted the “republic” in a medieval or primitive biblical theocratic form such as *Christiana Respublica* and thus the *Ancien Régime*. This observation casts a new light on glorified Calvinist/Puritan “republicanism” supposedly leading to the formation of early constitutional republics such as Geneva (a city-state), Holland, England, New England, and America. In Weber’s opinion, Calvinism, including “Calvinistic Baptism,” sanctimoniously denies liberty of conscience to *others*,

made by a God of Wood or Stone, than that the God who made the World should be such a God as this.”

even more and for different reasons than do other Christian confessions such as Catholicism and Lutheranism.⁸

Moreover, Weber's colleague Troeltsch (1966 [1912]: 116) draws the historical generalization that democracy is "everywhere foreign" to the spirit of Calvinism and thus in a dis-affinity with it.⁹ Reportedly, liberal-secular democracy is alien to the latter to the point that Calvinism degenerates into the "strictest theocracy" (Troeltsch, 1966 [1912]: 116) in all historically Calvinist societies (Robertson 1933). Historical examples particularly include what Troeltsch (1966 [1912]: 121) denotes as "Calvinistic Puritan States" of America denying liberty of conscience to non-Puritans as "godless skepticism" while monopolizing "Christian liberties" for Puritans (Gould 1996; Munch 2001) and descending into the medieval theocratic order, as in New England under Puritanism (Kaufman 2008; Rossel 1970). Alternatively, this empirical generalization implies that the *Ancien Régime* of religion and church vis-à-vis society and state is everywhere close to, so in an affinity with, Calvinism as its religious origin and ideal in France, including its sectarian derivative Puritanism in Anglo-Saxon contexts (Goldstone 1986; Zaret 1989).

In aggregate, the *Ancien Régime* epitomized by *Civitas Dei* or *Christiana Respublica* was in an inner relationship with Calvinism and continued to be as an ideal or "paradise lost" through "Puritanism" in England and New England and beyond in America. Alternatively, liberal democracy is, if Troeltsch is right, everywhere an alien element to the "Allegedly Reformed religion" (Scoville, 1952: 401) that degenerated into the "strictest theocracy" in virtually all Calvinist societies. These societies begin with Calvin's France, including the Huguenot-controlled regions and "Francophone Geneva" (Mansbach, 2006: 111), then continue through Holland under Calvinism, Puritan England and New England, and Presbyterian Scotland, in part Germany during its Calvinization (Gorski 2003), and so on. The sequence in Calvinist societies indicates that Calvinism entails a striking historical continuity and strong consistency in transforming democracy and any social order (Walzer 1965) into the "strictest theocracy" after the model and image of the medieval *Respublica Christiana* (Gorski 2003).

⁸ In Weber's (1968 [1920]: 1209) view, "If they are strong enough, neither the Catholic nor the (old) Lutheran Church and, all the more so, the Calvinist and Baptist old church recognize freedom of conscience for *others*. These churches cannot act differently in view of their institutional commitment to safeguard the salvation of the soul or, in the case of the Calvinists, to protect the glory of God."

⁹ Troeltsch (1966 [1912]: 116) proposes that "democracy in the strict sense is everywhere foreign to the Calvinistic spirit, and could only develop out of it where, as in the New England States, the old class-system of Europe was absent and political institutions grew directly out of those of the Church. But there, too, it developed into the strictest theocracy" and thereby effectively vanished or was perverted into a sort of "theocratic democracy" as the polar opposite to liberal democracy and an apparent self-contradiction (oxymoron).

Consequently, the sequence reveals Calvinism's persistent path-dependence on the *Ancien Régime* of religion and church as its original religious condition and context from the 16th century to later times.

In particular, Calvin's *Institution* and religious-political activity are all about reinstituting, in an "allegedly reformed" version, the *Ancien Régime* of medieval primitive religion and church and not about creating and establishing a new theological-religious, let alone political democratic, system, as his chief successor Beza admits (Walzer 1965). In this sense, Calvin's *Institution* and thus Calvinism is, first and foremost, the theological and ideological product and expression, and Calvin the true child, of the *Ancien Régime*, simply of *Respublica Christiana*, just as theologies/religions and ideologies are products of social structure, according to Durkheim-Mannheim's sociology of religion and ideas. And once thus produced, like religion and ideology vis-à-vis social structure, Calvinism serves as the mode of dogmatic perpetuation and legitimization or justification, and Calvin the defender and guardian (Heller 1986), of this preexisting order of religion and politics, though in a new "reformed" variant. The preceding intimates what the *Ancien Régime* as the old social system of religion specifically constitutes, and therefore the specific religious origin and setting of Calvinism, as specified next.

THE MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANA RESPUBLICA AND CALVINISM

As part of the social structure and context of original Calvinism, the religious *Ancien Régime* specifically constitutes or develops into medieval or earlier forms of theocracy, self-defined as a "holy," "godly" social system involving a fusion of church and state (Tawney 1962). Pareto (2000 [1901]: 86) registers the medieval Christian "Roman theocracy" resulting from the establishment and consequent mutation of the "religion of Christ" from one for the "humble and poor" into a polar opposite. In Sorokin's (1970: 426) account, this theocracy lasted from the 4th or 5th century to the 15th century, described as a "monolithic" period in the development of this religion and dominated by its ascetic "ethics of principles." The Renaissance then ruptured this arrangement with its classical-rooted, hedonistic "ethics of happiness." The preceding, pre-Calvinist medieval theocracy was established, perpetuated, and sanctified as the "Kingdom of God on Earth," "Government of God," "City of God" or "Godly Society" (*Civitas Dei*), "Christian polity" (*Christiana Politia*), "Christian Republic" or "Commonwealth" (*Christiana Respublica*), etc., as synonymous designations.

As an established "holy" religious-social order or a theological design, medieval and generally what Comte calls primitive "Christian" theocracy inspires Calvinism as an equivalent theology, religion, and church. For illustration, in the last definitive edition (French 1560) of *Institution of the Christian Religion* Calvin (1888 [1560]) uses the medieval and earlier biblical designation the "Kingdom of

God (on Earth)” no less than 64 times. He proposes waiting and searching for and ultimately instituting the “kingdom of God” as impending and approaching, involving the “remission of sins.” He postulates its “immortality” and “eternity” in order that one thousand years be deemed as one year, expressing medieval millennialism. Invoking at this juncture the biblical prophet St. Paul, Calvin contends that no one has entered—and hence stipulates no one will enter—the “Kingdom of God” unless “regenerated by an illumination by the holy Spirit,” simply true believers.¹⁰ Conversely, Calvin (1560: 311) declares that others (including adulterers) have “no part” in the “Kingdom of God” or, like those seeking “glory in the world,” would be far away from it, and on judgment day the “angels of God” will purge the latter from all sin or “scandal.”

Further, Calvin predicts that the establishment and manifestation of the “Kingdom of God” will reverse the secular appearance of this world and acts accordingly by transforming civil governments and kingdoms into the Kingdom (Walzer 1965). In short, he exalts the medieval vision and system of “government of God.” Calvin (1560: 159) states that the “government of God” extends to all of God’s works, and consequently all those who would like, as a “childish play,” to enclose and limit it thereby restrict to such narrow limits the “providence of God.” Predictably, for Calvin (1560: 104), just as for his medieval predecessors, it is certain that the “government of God” over human affairs is and will remain “constant, perpetual, and exempt from all repentance.” Evidently, this belief sets the model and precedent for other Calvinists’ unrepentance over any deeds they commit, especially the Puritans. This unrepentance includes, as Pareto (2000 [1901]: 55) put it, killing in the “name of the Divine Master” (see Juergensmeyer 2003).

Like his medieval predecessors, Calvin (1560: 102) seeks to counter those who under the “color of nature” negate “Providence” and the medieval “government of God.” In particular, Augustine’s early medieval *Civitas Dei* as an existing system or vision of theocracy crucially influences and inspires Calvin’s theology, notably his first and major theological treatise *Institution*, and also his religious-political activity in France, from Reformation Paris (Ramsey 1999) to reformed Geneva (Swidler 1986) cum the new *cit  de Dieu*.¹¹ Such an impact is so strong and pervasive that *Institution* basically represents a theological design of

¹⁰ Clark (1951: 265) implies that Calvin was closer to St. Peter than St. Paul and comments, “Protestantism had its St. Peters in people like Calvin, [though] it also had its St. Pauls.” Moreover, Calvin (1560: 192) downgrades St. Paul in the last French edition of *Institution* to the “bad expositor of the (Divine) Law” on the ground of the latter stating, “God commands us to love our enemies as well as our friends.” Calvin favors St. Augustine as his theological favorite; he treats Thomas Aquinas even more harshly, bordering to abuse and insult, than Paul.

¹¹ In the last, 1560 French edition of his magnum opus *Institution of the Christian Religion*, Calvin uses the French expression *la ville de Dieu* for Augustine’s *Civitas Dei*. (The first, 1536 edition of *Institution* was in Latin.)

reinstating via coercion Augustine's *Civitas Dei*. Calvin's own religious-political activity is, above all, a consistent endeavor to implement this medieval theocratic vision via counterrevolution and "holy" war. He partly and transiently succeeds in this crusade in France through his Huguenot sect under his direction (Benedict 1999; Hornung 2014; Squicciarini and Voigtländer 2015). He ultimately and totally succeeds during his lifetime in Geneva (Rosenblatt 1997) and beyond, including Scotland and England, by his personal training of and influence on Presbyterian and Puritan saint-warriors such as John Knox and others described as sitting at Calvin's "feet" (Foster, 1923: 6).¹² In the last edition of *Institution*, Calvin makes various invocations and proclamations of *Civitas Dei* as the medieval "city of God" (Black 1997) and of the means, typically violence and coercion and so the biblical "sword," of reinstating and perpetuating it. He enthusiastically cites Paul's pronouncement about searching for the "city of God" and proclaims the appearing and instituting of the "holy city of God" while condemning "the appearance of an image of Babylon" in Rome as the "temple of God," which he imputes to the Pope, denounced as the "Antichrist." Notably, Calvin (1560: 731) prescribes, as among "royal virtues," to raze the "wicked" from the earth so that "all iniquities be exterminated from the city of God." He invokes and sanctifies such precedents from biblical times (particularly the Old Testament), including genocide for "idolatry" (Angel 1994), which prefigures "Puritan murderousness" and the "hateful and hypocritical piety" of Puritanism (Helmets, 2015: 99).

The aforesaid of *Civitas Dei* holds for its theocratic equivalent the medieval "Christian polity" or "Christian republic," termed in Latin *Respublica Christiana* (Hopfl 2014), or more precisely, as Calvin calls it, *Christiana Respublica or Christiana Politia*. Like the first, *Christiana Respublica* critically influences and inspires Calvin et al., as "Divinely preordained" and thus a model to be implemented, instituted, and reinforced in a "reformed" way, as he and his disciples originally attempt (though fail) in France and triumph in Geneva turned into the "Christian Republic" or "Holy Commonwealth" (Gorski 2003). As with its equivalent, this influence seems so intense and pervasive that *Institution* is a theological design of instituting through compulsion a "Christian polity" (Hopfl 1982; 2014) qua *Christiana Respublica*, and Calvin's political activity is an attempt at implementing it via revolution or war with remarkable consistency, as are those of his heirs from the Huguenots in France and Geneva through Dutch Calvinists, Scottish Presbyterians, English-American Puritans, and others.

¹² For example, Foster (1923: 6) comments that the "fiery" John Knox "sat at Calvin's feet in Geneva." As it is well known, Knox then returned to Scotland to implement his French master's instructions of theocratic revolution cum "holy" civil war—incidentally against a French-linked ruler—as the only or most effective way of Calvin's "institution of the Christian religion."

Reinstitution of the Christian Polity

On this account, *Institution* means and can be understood and read simply as reinstitution of the Christian polity in its medieval primitive form, named *Christiana Respublica* or Augustine's *Civitas Dei*, and consequently of the *Ancien Régime* of biblical theocracy. As a corollary, this interpretation also holds for the religious-political activities of Calvin and Calvinists from 16th century and later French Huguenots (Hornung 2014; Squicciarini and Voigtländer 2015) to Dutch Calvinists, Scottish Presbyterians, English-American Puritans, etc. The compulsory and total institution of the Christian polity seems a main goal of most Calvinists as both theologians and religious-political revolutionaries and warriors since Calvin in France through Puritans in England and colonial New England and beyond in America. This observation reveals, as typical, Calvinism's striking historical continuity and sociological consistency in the theological design and theocratic process of institution of the "Christian polity" (Hopfl 2014) and consequently its self-perpetuating path-dependence on the *Ancien Régime* of medieval theocracy as its crucial religious source and ideal. Evidently, as the Frenchman Calvin and other early French Calvinists may say with no regret, "the more they change, the more they stay the same" in Calvinism up to the present. Among these immutable characteristics, the first and foremost is institution of the *Christiana Respublica* or *Civitas Dei* as the *Ancien Régime* of medieval primitive theocracy, thus exhibiting its strong consistency in theocratic-religious terms.

Calvin (1560: 192) takes a medieval primitive "Christian polity"—termed *Christiana Politia* in the Latin edition of *Institution* and *Police Chrestienne* in the French—as axiomatic and immutable, namely instituted by God and enacting the "Reign of God." Thus, he specifies the laws by which the "Christian polity" must be governed and which it can "piously use before God" (Calvin, 1560: 681). Calvin (1560: 624) declares that a "Christian polity" shall be governed by the universal, total "Law of God" as a "wise and good Legislator," "as revealed by Moses," and divided into three parts, i.e., moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws. Conversely, he condemns the view that a political system like a republic is well-ordered if it abandons the polity and law of Moses and instead is governed by the "common laws of other nations" as "dangerous and seditious," entirely "false and crazy," revealing his anti-democratic proclivities (Calvin, 1560: 677). Instead, he proclaims *a la* Augustine that the "earthly polity" must become a "Christian polity"; thus any republic or commonwealth shall be a "Christian republic" or "Holy Commonwealth" (see Walzer, 1965: 26), thus exhibiting his categorical theocratic anti-secularism and anti-humanism.

In this connection, Calvin (1560: 680) attacks all these earthly "barbarous and fanatical" people who would like to reverse political systems "established by God" and contends that among various countries in the world none is established

and governed “without the providence of God.” He denounces secular, “profane writers” and praises those who, like himself and his followers, in “making the laws and ordering the polity” always commence with “religion and the service to God” (Calvin, 1560: 182). Similarly, Calvin (1560: 730) condemns “flatterers” who attribute too much to the earthly political system and oppose it to the “domination of God” because Polity, including the “policy and administration of Republics,” is the “gift of God.” Also, with respect to the “Christian polity” and so *Respublica Christiana*, he dismisses the “doctrine of the Apostles” because he argues that their “intention was to teach what the spiritual reign of Christ is, and not at all to order earthly polities” (Calvin, 1560: 686). Instead, this ordering is what Calvin intends to do, and also virtually all his followers as saint-masters, from his France and Geneva through Calvinist Holland and Puritan England and New England and beyond.

Biblical Theocracy: “Paradise Lost And Found”

As the religious reinvention and intensification and the ideological-political institution of “biblical theocracy,” Calvinism, like all religions and ideologies, emerges, exists, operates, and expands only within a definite societal space and time, including a prior religious context of the medieval theocratic order in 16th century France and Europe. Alternatively, it does not function in what Parsons (1938: 652), who was characterized with Puritan heritage, calls a social “vacuum.” Even Calvin’s self-reported 1533 “sudden conversion” (Hobsbaum, 1972: 25) into the “Reformed” religion, despite being an individual experience, just as its translation into his 1536 theological work *Institution*, takes place within the context of and directly inspired by the preexisting medieval theocratic societal order and vision of a *Civitas Dei* or *Christiana Respublica*, including the “Roman theocracy.” This order provides a specific religious precedent and setting to be “purified” and “reformed,” as happens in Geneva turned the “Rome of Protestantism” and Calvin the “Pope of Protestants.” Hence, like any religious experience and theological and ideological work, it does not happen and exist in a social void.

On this account Calvinism is socially invented or conditioned by *Civitas Dei* or *Christiana Respublica* and thus medieval primitive “biblical theocracy” as a social order, and through its subsequent variations like English-American Puritanism, it reinvented by the latter. Alternatively, Calvinism, including Puritanism, does not really invent the “Christian Republic” or the “Biblical Commonwealth.” *Christiana Respublica* or *Civitas Dei* as an established theocratic social order historically precedes (Black 1997) and conditions, inspires, and contextualizes Calvinism and its design of “purer” biblical theocracy for one millennium since the establishment of Christianity and thus the “Roman

theocracy” (Sorokin 1970), just as Augustine as the crucial theological influence prefigures Calvin’s predestination theology.¹³ In brief, what Weber may call the history of biblical theocracy does not begin with Calvinism, just as the history of Christianity does not begin with the Reformation.

As Hume (1983 [1778]: 315) observes in *History of England*, Calvinism and the Protestant Reformation, initially causing “acrimony” of people against the “religion of their fathers” and “ancestors,” was born as an unwanted product of the “ancient mother church” in rebellion or protest.¹⁴ Hume thus implies that the “ancient mother church” exists and predates Calvinism and the Reformation for fifteen centuries as Pareto’s (2000: 86) “religion of Christ” for the “poor and humble,” which Calvin and other reformers monopolize via the compulsory or revolutionary institution of the Christian religion for themselves as the self-proclaimed “God’s elect.” By virtue of its millennium of biblical theocracy, the “ancient mother church” (Hume, 1983 [1778]: 315) precedes Calvinism, provides the venerable theocratic precedent and setting, and becomes the Calvinist ideal and inspiration from Calvin’s 16th century partly “Reformed” France to other parts of Europe, England, and New England.

In this sense the history of Calvinism begins with and is conditioned by medieval theocracy cum *Christiana Respublica* during the last stage of its millennial existence, the early 16th century. Thus, so to speak, in the beginning of Calvinism there was millennial medieval theocracy as the “golden” past and present, “paradise lost and found,” and consequently its religious origin and condition setting, notably its theocratic ideal and inspiration. Once conditioned and inspired by millennial medieval theocracy, Calvinism perpetuates and sanctifies it into another millennium, notably reinventing, expanding, and reinforcing it into the ostensibly new, pure, perfect form of the “Reformed” church and replacing its old, impure, deficient pre-Calvinist Catholic and Lutheran or Anglican forms. Particularly given the religious setting of medieval Europe, Calvinism seeks to reconstruct, reestablish, expand, and reinvigorate Pareto’s “Roman theocracy” in a “purer” medieval, primitive form.

Insert “Reformed” in “Roman Theocracy”

Calvinism merely changes “Roman” (i.e., Catholic)—and for that matter “Lutheran” or, via English Puritanism, “Anglican”—within the “Roman

¹³ According to Sorokin (1970: 47), the “active aspect [of Christianity] grew rapidly especially after its legalization (after AD 313 and 321).”

¹⁴ Hume (1983 [1778]: 284) states in his *History of England* that from France/Geneva to England, the “protestants, far from tolerating the religion of their ancestors, regard it as an impious and detestable idolatry; and during the late minority, when they were entirely masters, they enacted very severe, though not capital, punishments against all exercise of the catholic worship.”

theocracy.” Yet it retains theocracy, perpetuated or recreated, reinvigorated, and expanded as the only true “Reformed” church (Jong 1964) as Calvin does prototypically in Geneva, and Calvinists continue in Holland, England, and New England (Robertson 1933) and elsewhere. In this respect the birth and growth of Calvinism represents what Pareto and other economists call a process of substitution of the new “Reformed” for the old “Roman” theocracy rather than an overcoming of the medieval theocratic order. *Christiana Respublica* profoundly and permanently permeates and shapes Calvin’s theology and religious-political action from Paris to Geneva, as well as that of his followers spanning from 16th century France to later times.

Generally, once born and grown out of Hume’s “ancient mother church” and millennial medieval theocracy, Calvinism seeks and often succeeds to perpetuate and sanctify the latter in the sole “Reformed” form and thus to monopolize medieval primitive Christian theocracy as its own exclusive “Divine right.” Conversely, it condemns and replaces “Roman” and other “un-reformed” theocracies and churches, including Lutheran and Anglican, as un-Christian and the Pope as the “Antichrist.” This Calvinist pattern of monopolistic closure and sanctimonious condemnation and destruction is followed, expanded, and reinforced by Puritanism in England and New England and its successors in America. Once conditioned and established, Calvinism tries to attain what Weber (1968 [1920]) calls a “monopolistic closure” in biblical theocracy and the Christian religion generally—it is either Calvinist “Reformed” or not Christian at all. Consequently, this monopolization is essentially what English-American Puritanism does.

In sum, Calvinism is initially the product and projection of the medieval vision and order of theocracy termed *Civitas Dei* or *Christiana Respublica* and the like from the 4th through 16th century AD. Subsequently, it perpetuates and sanctifies, notably purifies, and reconstructs the latter in a “Reformed” shape and name after the model or image of Calvin and others, from Paris and Geneva through England and New England and beyond in America. The preceding can be symbolically represented as follows:

millennial medieval theocracy, “godly” social order during the 4th–16th centuries → + ← Calvinism as a theocratic theology/religion and illiberal, undemocratic political ideology

Civitas Dei, *Christiana Respublica* → + ← Calvinism as the religion and political ideology of theocratic (“Christian”), undemocratic republics (i.e. Calvin’s Geneva, Holland, England, New England, evangelical America, etc.)

The arrow ($\rightarrow +$) indicates that millennial medieval theocracy religiously prefigures and conditions Calvinism as an exemplary theocratic theology/religion and so an illiberal, undemocratic political ideology. Thus, the preexisting “godly” *Ancien Régime* of medievalism constitutes the major theocratic precedent, condition, and setting of Calvinism’s emergence and expansion. As an originally and persistently theocratic church, Calvinism was born as the child of medieval theocracy by being its natural product and projection and initially situated and operating within it as a religious and total social system. Then Calvinism developed and functioned as a “reformed” system of perpetuation through “purification” (from its “impure” Catholic and Lutheran elements), expansion, and intensification of this theocratic regime. In particular, $\rightarrow +$ indicates that *Civitas Dei* or *Christiana Respublica* as a medieval theocratic republic, polity, or commonwealth forms the specific religious-political condition, context, and model of orthodox Calvinism, notably Calvin himself. This condition thereby determines or impacts Calvinism to emerge, organize, operate, and evolve as the religion and political ideology of theocratic “Christian” republicanism, conjoined with autocracy modeled after the absolute monarchy of France, and perhaps Calvin’s own image (see Hobsbaum 1972; Mathews 1912; Walzer 1965), an aristocracy of which he is a member and/or defender, like his main associates (Benedict 1999). In short, “*respublica Christiana* prior to the Reformation” (Black, 1997: 650) inspires and renders Calvinism into “Christian” republicanism during and after the Calvinist revolution.¹⁵ Hence, Calvinism is conditioned and inspired by the preexisting ideal and system of *Christiana Respublica* as a kind of theocratic republicanism or republican theocracy, just as by absolute monarchy, before Calvin et al. impacted the formation of the modern state, in particular constitutional republics (as claimed by Gorski 2003).

In turn, the left arrow ($+ \leftarrow$) indicates that thus conditioned and inspired, Calvinism perpetuates as well as purifies, expands, and intensifies medieval theocracy as its religious-political condition, setting, and ideal. In so doing Calvinism aims and claims to recreate its own “purer” cum “Reformed” version of medieval theocracy and political order overall. It does so by seeking and eventually succeeding to substitute for pre-Calvinist Catholic and partly Lutheran or Anglican forms through religious-political revolutions and wars, starting with France¹⁶ (Benedict 1999) and spreading beyond, including Geneva, Holland,

¹⁵ Black (1997: 653) cites Calvinist “republican Christianity” in France, Geneva, Scotland, and Holland and remarks that Calvinists “replicated the model (the *respublica Christiana*) briefly established by the Council of Basel in the 1430s.”

¹⁶ Ramsey (1999: 214) observes, “Throughout Reformation Europe, wherever religious change was contemplated, the arrangements of political power and social order implicitly came under scrutiny as well... [i.e.] during a time of acute social and political conflict. The royal succession crisis in the 1580s and 1590s threatened to bring a Protestant to the throne of France....” For

Great Britain, parts of Prussia (Gorski 2003), and eventually colonial America (Rossel 1970). Thus, in all these societies, Calvinism perpetuates and reestablishes “purer” medieval theocracies in the form of what Weber (1968 [1920]: 152) calls “Calvinistic state churches,” mostly theocratic republics.

During Calvin’s lifetime and shortly afterward, Calvinism first establishes what Hume (1983 [1778]: 208) called an “empire within [the] empire,” namely a medieval theocratic state within the state (see also Benedict, 1999: 1–3) in France such as the Huguenot-controlled regions during the 16th century. In another instance, John Winthrop and company designated New England’s Puritan theocracy cum “republic” as *mixt aristocracie* (Bremer 1995) with their medievalist “aristocratic assumptions of hierarchy, deference, and order” (Gould, 1996: 213). This theocracy enforced the Calvinist “domination of all aspects of the political, social, and religious life” (Rossel, 1970: 911) since the 17th century through the 19th century and was based on and inspired by a “medieval [imposed] conception of authority” (Rossel, 1970: 907). Consequently, under Puritanism America became “a self-conscious religious experiment” inspired by and similar to “Christendom in the Middle Ages” (Stivers, 1994: 31).¹⁷ American Puritanism represents “essentially an elaborate restatement of a medieval ideal” and was “not in the least progressive” (Rossel, 1970: 907)¹⁸; in fact, it proved the “most totalitarian” subtype of Calvinism (Stivers, 1994: 23) and in that sense “more Calvinist” than Calvin. The foremost Puritan pilgrim and ruler John Winthrop proclaimed, “We go to New England...to establish a due form of government, both civil and ecclesiastical, under the rule of law and Scripture,” thus a theocratic “medieval society of status” and “no utopia of rugged individualists and transcendental free-thinkers” (Miller, 1940: 599).

In general, Calvinism is first inspired and conditioned by and situated in—but does not invent or discover—medieval theocracy. It then perpetuates and re-sanctifies the latter as “divinely ordained” by intensifying, “reforming,” and “purifying” it from its perceived Roman Church abuses and “perversions,” such as papal “depravity” and “corruption,” as well as various moral, notably sexual,

example in Paris “from ca. 1540 to ca. 1630...competing economies of salvation...structured late-medieval and early modern Parisian society, culture, and politics.”

¹⁷ Stivers (1994: 18–19) adds that in colonial America, the “local (Puritan) church exercised as much moral control over the individual as had the centralized Roman church (so) genuine freedom of the individual was nonexistent.” Furthermore, he observes that American Puritanism succeeded to “establish legal ‘theocracy,’” constructing its criminal code “almost word for word from the Old Testament” (Stivers, 1994: 31).

¹⁸ Rossel (1970: 907) elaborates that “New England Puritan theocracy involved a medieval conception of authority...the imposed conception of authority and system of solidarity... [plus] a strong Calvinist work ethic.” Therefore, he objects that “the common folk image of the Puritans as the epitome of the flourishing American ‘spirit’ is an inaccurate caricature” (912).

impurities (Hobsbaum 1972; Jasnow 2015).¹⁹ In particular, + ← indicates that once conditioned and inspired by the medieval *Christiana Respublica*, Calvinism perpetuates or resurrects, purifies, and sanctifies this theocratic republic as its political condition, setting, and model rather than overcoming it. It does so through the “new” Calvinist “constitutional” republics that are, however, invariably what Troeltsch (1966 [1912]) describes as the “strictest theocrac(ies),” epitomized by New England theocracy (Munch 2001) and Weber’s theocratic “Calvinistic state churches” in Europe and America.

FROM THE MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANA RESPUBLICA TO CALVINIST THEOCRATIC “REPUBLICS”

Calvinism perpetuates or recreates *Christiana Respublica* in a “purer,” “Reformed” republican form replacing its pre-Calvinist Catholic and Lutheran or Anglican forms, just as it reproduces absolute monarchy, as in France first and Prussia later (Gorski 2003). During the 1540–1560s Calvin retrieves, reinvents, and purifies the medieval *Christiana Respublica* (Black 1997; Gorski 1993) in the form of a “Reformed” theocratic republic in Geneva and becomes the strict “ruler of a small theocracy” (Swidler, 1986: 280). Furthermore, the Huguenots, the first sect under his direct leadership (Scoville 1953), temporarily do the same in parts of France by creating what Hume (1983 [1778]: 208) called an “empire within [the royal] empire” and even producing an heir apparent (prince of Navarre) to the throne (Benedict 1999). Calvin individually and the Huguenots collectively therefore set the pattern and model of Calvinist, including constitutional, republics as “Reformed” republican “strictest” theocracies or “Calvinistic state churches” in the shape of medieval-rooted pre-liberal and theocratic society rather than classical liberal-democratic Athenian republicanism (Garrard 2003).

The constitutional “Dutch Republic” is another exemplar of Calvinist “strictest theocracy” or state-church rooted in and inspired by the medieval *Christiana Respublica* or its Geneva variant. This Dutch Republic was coercively established in Holland (Gorski 2000; Kaplan 2002) through what Weber (1930 [1905]: 190) called the revolution of the “strict Calvinists” in the 1580s. Ironically, even some of Calvin’s successors in Geneva, the local prototype of strict “Calvinist theocracy” (Robertson 1933), note a “militant, intolerant

¹⁹ According to Hobsbaum (1972: 28–29), “Calvin’s creed came to fruition at the same time as syphilis began to spread over Europe. Thus he utilizes not only the youth’s fear of sex but the grown man’s fear of disease. In this way Calvin kept his people in subjection.” In turn, Jasnow (2015: 327) notes that the “legends of the sexual escapades of James V developed in a time when Scotland was infested by Calvinism, and thus looking back fondly on days of sexual freedom,” citing that “James stands for a Scotland that was free (of Union and Calvinism), well governed and joyous, and the king sets an example to his subjects by encouraging the unrestrained pursuit of sex.”

Calvinism” (Sorkin, 2005: 290) ruling and thus objectively shaping the “Dutch Republic” with its own theocratic militancy and intolerance, though counteracted and eventually neutralized by countervailing non-Calvinist religious and secular forces (Kaplan 2002). Conversely, this neutralization suggests that if the “Dutch Republic” is or eventually becomes tolerant, liberal, and democratic to the point of becoming a paradigmatic case (Kaplan 2002), this development happens in spite of and in opposition to Calvinism. Rather, this change is due to post- and non-Calvinist liberalism, notably the Enlightenment as the main source of religious liberty, tolerance, and pluralism in Holland and Europe overall (Kaplan 2002).

Hence, both Calvin’s Geneva and the glorified Calvinist “Dutch Republic,” usually, notably the second, invoked as early modern “constitutional republics,” only constitute theocratic republics or republican constitutional theocracies. Conversely, neither Geneva nor the “Dutch Republic” represent modern democracies in the sense and form of liberal democracy as the project and outcome instead of post- and non-Calvinism such as the Enlightenment and the French Revolution (Acemoglu et al. 2011; Piketty 2014). At most, they represent pre-liberal and pre-democratic, authoritarian constitutional republics. All other Calvinist republics, invidiously distinguished by Calvinists from “oppressive” Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and other pre-Calvinist monarchies, are republican theocracies modeled after and inspired by *Christiana Respublica*, from 17th century England’s brief Commonwealth to New England’s long Puritan “republic.” For instance, New England’s glorified Puritan “Republic” constitutes a paradigmatic “strictest” theocracy since Winthrop’s established and sustained rule (Munch 2001), and thus “holy” repression (Kaufman 2008), after the model of the medieval theocratic and aristocratic order (Gould 1996; Rossel 1970). Moreover, New England’s Puritan theocracy, i.e., what Winthrop exalts as theocratic *mixt aristocracie* (Bremer 1995; Gould 1996), reportedly represents the “most totalitarian” (Stivers, 1994: 23) instance among Calvinist theocracies, thus a far cry from a liberal-democratic and pluralistic republic in the modern sense (Kaufman 2008; Munch 2001). Alternatively, none of these Calvinist, including Puritan, republics, even if formally “constitutional,” were democracies in the specifically modern and genuine sense of liberal democracy (Mueller 2009).

In sum, *Christiana Respublica* impacts and inspires Calvinism to arise as the religion and political ideology of a “Christian” republic, which then perpetuates or reinvents its condition and inspiration through various Calvinist theocratic “republics” since Calvin’s Geneva. In this sense, these Calvinist “republics” are only “Reformed” variations or reconstructions of the medieval *Christiana Respublica* rather than modern republican states in the sense of liberal democracies or even classical republicanism and democracy. Both Calvin’s Geneva and Winthrop’s New England Puritan “republics” are instances of the

medieval *Christiana Respublica* perpetuated or resurrected (and even “Christian” revivals and extensions of Spartan disciplinary despotism) rather than of a modern democratic republic like those of revolutionary France and America. In short, *Christiana Respublica* constitutes both the religious-theocratic point of origin and, under “Reformed” names or versions, destination of Calvinism, so understanding Calvinist glorified “republicanism” presupposes taking account of its point of origin and destination. Table 2 summarizes and details the pre-modern religious and related social factors and historical conjunctures of original Calvinism.

Table 2: Pre-Modern Religious and Related Social Factors and Historical Conjunctures of Original Calvinism

1. pre-modern order of religion and church organization: the religious *Ancien Régime* in France and Europe
2. traditional or medieval theocracy: “Kingdom of God,” “Christian polity” (*Civitas Dei, Christiana Respublica*)
3. related pre-modern religious factors: medieval monasticism—monastic asceticism and discipline (see Weber)
4. pre-modern economic, political, and cultural variables and historical conjunctures: feudalism, autocracy, and aristocracy, medieval irrationalism (the Middle Ages)

CONCLUSIONS

Evidently, Calvinism does not transcend in theological dogma and religious-political action the religious—just as political, economic, and cultural—*Ancien Régime*, which is simply medieval theocracy cum *Civitas Dei or Christiana Respublica*. Rather, Calvinism perpetuates or restores and purifies it in a “reformed” shape, shade, and color. Therefore, it does not think and act beyond its religious root, condition, and setting and instead has remained deeply and irretrievably imbedded in it.

Comparatively and historically, Calvinism therefore is deeply different and opposed to the Renaissance, which instead transcended the *Ancien Régime* of religion and notably culture. Also, it differs from the Enlightenment transcending of the religious, as well as political, economic, and cultural *Ancien Régime*. On this account, Calvinism is, as Comte suggests, a reactionary, retrograde, and to that extent, counter-revolutionary rather than revolutionary religion, ideology, and political movement. In essence, it is the design and practice of religious and political counter-revolution, i.e., retrogression to and restoration of a previous condition, rather than revolution in the sense of destroying the old social institutions and creating the new ones through innovation. Calvinism hardly creates, as Comte observes for Protestantism overall, anything new either in the

realm of theology/religion or politics/governance in relation to the pre-Calvinist Christian Catholic medieval religious and political order.

Therefore, Calvinism profoundly diverges from the Renaissance as a case of cultural-artistic and humanistic revolution vis-à-vis medievalism. It also differs from the Enlightenment as the ideological or philosophical and indirectly political revolution destroying or discrediting the religious and political *Ancien Régime* and creating or projecting a new social system. Consequently, Calvinism does not constitute the mode either of continuation and amplification of the artistic-humanistic Renaissance or of anticipation and initiation of the rationalistic and liberal democratic Enlightenment. Simply, it neither continues and reinforces the Renaissance nor anticipates and initiates the Enlightenment. In this respect, Calvinism on the one hand and the Renaissance and the Enlightenment on the other are distant and mutually exclusive.

In this sense, Calvinism develops as the product of the Middle Ages epitomized by *Civitas Dei or Christiana Respublica* rather than as a rebel, revolutionary force and protest against them in the sense of lightening and overcoming their theocratic, religious, political, cultural, and economic oppression, contrary to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. German Protestant theologian Ernst Troeltsch (1966 [1910]), a colleague of Weber, admits as much.²⁰ And Calvinism historically continues deeply imbedded in the Middle Ages through its subsequent developments and derivatives beyond its point of origin and initial context of France and Geneva, including Puritanism in England and New England and Presbyterianism in Scotland.

In this respect, Calvinism originates as a polar opposite to both the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, which were instead rebellions and revolutionary forces against the Middle Ages. In essence Calvinism does not represent, to paraphrase Schumpeter (1954: 919), a generalized “Copernican Revolution” of the “Dark Middle Ages” in the sense of overcoming its theocratic and pervasive societal repression. By contrast, the Renaissance first represents this revolution in artistic and in part, as via Copernicus and other scientists, scientific terms, and the Enlightenment later does so in virtually all respects, most notably religious and political. In stark contrast, Calvinism represents “totalistic” (Eisenstadt, 1965: 671) counter-revolution through perpetuation and restoration of the Middle Ages in a “purer” and “reformed” theocratic tyranny. Therefore, Calvinism reveals its profound, persistent, and thus irreconcilable incompatibility

²⁰ Troeltsch (1966 [1910]: 44–45) concedes that the “*genuine early Protestantism* of Lutheranism and Calvinism is, as an organic whole, in spite of its anti-Catholic doctrine of salvation, entirely a *Church civilisation like that of the Middle Ages*. It claims to regulate State and society, science and education, law, commerce and industry, according to the supernatural standpoint of revelation, and, exactly like the Middle Ages, everywhere subsumes under itself the *Lex Naturae* as being originally identical with the Law of God.”

with both the Renaissance and the Enlightenment as instances of a generalized “Copernican Revolution” via “creative destruction” of the Middle Ages. Not surprisingly, Calvinism, and the Protestant Reformation overall, “halted” and reversed the Renaissance and “arrested the progress of civilization” and the “freedom of thought” in “Reformed” Europe, as Pareto (1935 [1917]: 1257).²¹ Meanwhile Puritanism prevented, as Weber (1930 [1905]) implies, its artistic and humanistic creations and values from proceeding in England and especially America. Conjointly, Calvinism in a way preempts the modern post- and anti-Calvinist liberal-secular and rationalistic Enlightenment from fully developing and prevailing in historically Calvinist, as distinguished from non-Calvinist or secular, societies, spanning from post-Calvin Geneva to Puritan New England and the neo-Puritan South in America.

In aggregate, Calvinism, in particular Puritanism, appears as the religiously grounded, self-defined counter-Renaissance and a corresponding religion and political ideology.²² In addition, it is a kind, as Weber especially suggests, of pre-Enlightenment system and hence pre-rationalistic, pre-liberal, pre-democratic, and pre-modern. It seems a religious-moralistic challenger and ultimately, as in Calvinist societies, successor of the prior Renaissance and distant from and incompatible with the later Enlightenment. This outcome seems a strange destiny, if not an adverse fate, of a theology, religion, church, and political ideology and movement founded and mastered by a supposed Renaissance humanist (and Seneca scholar) with a supremely rationalistic mind. Yet as Calvin suggests, judging the “tree by its fruit,” he was nether Da Vinci nor Copernicus nor his countrymen Voltaire or Condorcet but the offspring of the Middle Ages. Therefore, Calvin over-determines Calvinists from France to America to act or appear after his model or image as depicted above.²³

²¹ Pareto (1935 [1917]: 1257) remarks that in the 12th–13th centuries, a “tide of religious feeling, welling up then as it always does from the lower classes, arrested the progress of civilization; just as a tide of religious feeling represented by the Protestant Reformation was again to arrest it, though for a brief moment, later on [which] set back for many generations that freedom of thought (Class I residues) towards which society had been advancing at the time when they occurred.”

²² Strietman (2013: 561) notes that during the Dutch Republic, Calvinism “tried to impose [strictures] on drama” and permitted “no public staging of biblical and sacred material and the suppression of the festivities, commemorations, and processional culture which Catholicism had allowed and encouraged.”

²³ German historian Leopold von Ranke states, “Calvin was virtually the founder of America” (cited in Trinterud 1955:267) in its theocratic, anti-rationalistic, and generally conservative rendition, as opposed to and in a permanent “holy” war against its liberal, secular, rationalistic, and modernist Jeffersonian alternative (Mueller 2009). Puritan John Adams, America’s second President, proclaimed, “Let not Geneva be forgotten or despised. Religious liberty owes it much respect,” (cited in Trinterud 1955:267), although it is well-known and established that the exact opposite of liberty only existed (or could exist) in Calvin’s theocracy, like all Calvinist-Puritan and any other theocracies.

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