

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Authoritarianism

Milan Zafirovski

The Protestant Ethic and the
Spirit of Authoritarianism
Puritanism, Democracy, and Society

 Springer

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Puritanism was not merely a religious doctrine, but corresponded in many points with the most absolute democratic and republican theories.

Alexis Tocqueville

Few bodies or parties have served the world so well as the Puritans.

Ralph Emerson

Puritanism and democracy have worked together [and America] is a lineal descendent of Puritanism.

Edward Ross

Puritanism [has] the anti-authoritarian tendency.

Max Weber

Puritanism was a cutting edge which hewed liberty, democracy, humanitarianism, and universal education out of the black forest of feudal Europe and the American wilderness.

Samuel Morison

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Introduction

As both sociologists and economists will certainly notice, the title of this book is deliberately analogous to and inspired by that of Max Weber's famous work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. However, what Weber would call substantive or sociological differences from his work lie beneath this deliberate analogy or terminological near-identity. The "spirit of authoritarianism" is particularly indicative of these differences, not only substituting for (and coined after) another term ("capitalism"), but also proposing a different substantive, mostly noneconomic concept to be examined, too, in relation to the original explanatory factor or correlate, Protestantism. In a nutshell, exploring the relations between Protestantism and authoritarianism is substantively different from, though formally similar to, Weber's analysis of those of the Protestant ethic to capitalism; so the difference is more than replacing a single term by another.

Hence, this is *not* still another study elaborating, revising, criticizing, or reinterpreting Weber's ever-controversial analysis, but a relatively novel and perhaps even more controversial endeavor to reexamine a problem that he and other sociologists and economists have somewhat sidestepped, underestimated, or unsatisfactorily (spuriously) solved. Generally, this is the problem of contemporary political-social authoritarianism in association with Protestantism, as substantively distinct from, though often related to, that of the modern capitalist economy in its Weberian elective affinity with the Protestant ethic. This basic sociological distinctiveness of "authoritarianism and Protestantism," as a non- or secondary Weberian problem compared to that of modern capitalism and the Protestant ethic, makes this work and its main argument substantively distinct from Weber's well-known thesis in his famous work, in spite of the almost identical title. In short, like any other, this book should not be judged by its "cover" (title).

As well-known but instructive to recall, Weber explicitly posits, emphasizes, analyzes, and documents essential affinities or intimate connections between Protestantism, especially Puritanism or Calvinism, and modern capitalism as an instance of what he calls the "degree of elective affinity between concrete structures of social

action and concrete forms of economic organization.”¹ By contrast, Weber’s sociological theory only implies, de-emphasizes, and underanalyzes such affinities and links between Puritanism or Protestantism as a whole and authoritarianism, though he provides some seminal insights on the matter to be recognized and incorporated as foundational and inspiring into the present work. For illustration, he refers to the “unexampled tyranny” of Puritanism, Puritan “authoritarian moral discipline,” Calvinist “absolutely unbearable” church control, and the like. By analogy to those between Calvinism and modern capitalism, Weber could describe the affinities of Puritanism with authoritarianism as an instance of the “degree of elective affinity between concrete structures of social action and concrete forms of *political* organization.” In Weber’s framework the actual or possible affinity of Puritanism with authoritarianism or alternatively democracy, as a social–political system, is secondary and submerged to its assumed primary link with modern capitalism as an economic structure.

Moreover, Weber assumes and emphasizes what he calls the “anti-authoritarian tendency of Puritanism” an assumption that hence assumes way or rules out the alternative problem of Puritan authoritarianism. Such assumptions² are in extension the likely reasons for the assuming away, omitting, or neglecting the possible connection of Puritanism and authoritarianism by most orthodox economists as well as many Protestant sociologists in the Weberian tradition³ (Zaret 1989) in the economic and sociological literature. In particular, Parsons (Alexander⁴ 1983;

¹ For reasons of space and economy of exposition, references for Weber and other classical sociologists and economists are not provided assuming that their main ideas and works are fairly familiar to most readers.

² In particular, Weber remarks that in England Puritanism probably both transformed the calculating spirit that “is in truth essential to capitalism, from a mere means to economy into a principle of general conduct,” and “enabled its adherents to create free institutions and still become a world power.” Thus, he suggests that Puritanism had the “effect of political freedom,” so promoting a “sense of responsibility” in politics, just as affecting the “calculating spirit of capitalism”. In passing, this is in some tension with Weber’s description of the 1640s–1950s Puritan Revolution, e.g., the rule of Cromwell’s “Parliament of Saints,” as abortive and thus transient, as well as his observation that the “direct influence” of English-American Puritanism “had paled considerably in the meantime,” e.g., since Franklin. If so, then it is dubious to attribute such durable effects of “political freedom” and even the “spirit of capitalism” to Puritanism. To be sure, one can distinguish the temporary success or failure from the enduring legacy or influence of the Puritan Revolution in England, but this is also questionable, given that Puritanism was not only defeated but also largely discredited or neglected in the aftermath of the Civil War in favor of eventually restoring the pre-Revolutionary fusion of the Anglican Church and the Monarchy.

³ McLaughlin (1996:248) comments that, according to Freudian–Marxian sociologists or social psychologists like Erich Fromm, the “Weberian theoretical tradition ignores Luther’s and Calvin’s emphasis on the fundamental evilness and powerlessness of men,” as a sort of Protestant theological–historical conduit to modern authoritarianism, including fascism.

⁴ Alexander (1983:132) suggests that Parsons’ “complex relation to the Puritan heritage is evident.” More explicitly, Giddens (1984:273–274) objects that Parsons’ claim that “half a million years of human history culminate in the [Puritan-based] social and political system of the United States [is] more than faintly ridiculous.”

Mayway 1984) and other Weberians embrace Weber's assumption of the anti-authoritarian, just as pro-capitalist, tendency of Puritanism, thus effectively assume away the problem of Puritan authoritarianism. Parsons (1967:53) contends that the "primary source" of modern European individualism,⁵ so liberalism, including the Enlightenment,⁶ and democracy resides in Protestant, distinguished from Catholic, Christianity, notably the "immediacy of the individual soul to God, inherent in" Protestantism, including both Lutheranism and Calvinism or Puritanism.

Weber's omission⁷ of or de-emphasis on the problem of Puritanism and authoritarianism is curious and dubious. This holds true insofar as the potential affinity between Puritanism and authoritarianism is no less pertinent for contemporary society and sociological theory than that between the Protestant ethic and modern capitalism as what he calls the "most fateful force in our modern life," which, incidentally, reflects his economic background or Marxian–Austrian residues, with almost "absolute power" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1993). He could also describe authoritarianism or totalitarianism as the most "fateful" or rather fatal force in contemporary society if he lived longer to witness the authoritarian or totalitarian destruction of liberal democracy or democratic capitalism in interwar Europe, including his Germany, and the ensuing destructive global war.⁸

⁵ Also, Elias (2001:161–162) suggests that seventeenth century English Puritans possibly first made a distinction between "what is done individually and what is done collectively," as a "preliminary to the further development" of the concept of the individual or "individualism" versus "collectivism" and "socialism."

⁶ Weber comments that the relations of the "whole English Enlightenment," exemplified by Locke, and so liberalism to Puritanism "have often been set forth," but does not say if this assumed link is historically valid.

⁷ Possible reasons for Weber's neglect of the elective affinity of Puritanism or Calvinism with authoritarianism can only be assumed *ex posteriori* by hazarding a guess. One reason is treating this affinity or connection as secondary and impertinent by comparison to that of Puritanism with modern capitalism. Another reason is the general economic and nondemocratic bias, due to his initial training in economics and the respective influences of both Marx and Menger, an early Austrian marginalist economist, manifested in the preoccupation with capitalism or the market economy while relatively neglecting political democracy or its obverse, authoritarianism. Still another reason is assuming that such affinities are logically nonexistent on the implied equation or intrinsic link, like in apologetic economics, between modern capitalism and democracy as the supposed capitalist outcome or "epiphenomenon," as well as historically or empirically absent, specifically that Protestantism has been democratic rather than authoritarian in history and reality. Such a reason is also expecting that Puritan "authoritarian moral discipline" or "tyranny" is harmless or inconsequential to a democratic polity and free civil society. A last likely reason is Weber's Protestant background and likely distaste for Marxian atheism and anti-Protestantism, even though hardly being an orthodox, let alone fanatical, Protestant. And, these particular reasons are probably intertwined and mutually reinforcing.

⁸ In a sense, WWI that Weber witnessed might have provided the grounds for such a description of authoritarianism. This, like the next, war was in essence an authoritarian enterprise or product, but perhaps his lingering economism, i.e., obsession with modern capitalism analytically equated or favored to liberal political democracy, and in part German nationalism prevented him from doing so.

The Puritan–authoritarian affinity is also assumed way and omitted by supposing, as most economists explicitly do, and Weber occasionally implies, a sort of equivalence of capitalism and the inverse of political–social authoritarianism, i.e., liberal democracy and free civil society.⁹ On this supposition, since capitalism *is*, or necessarily leads to, a system of liberal democracy and a free civil society, Puritanism’s elective affinity with this economic system also means an intimate link with democracy as a political regime, which logically or empirically makes that with authoritarianism a nonissue or spurious problem. This in part accounts for the omission or neglect by Weber and most orthodox or Protestant economists of the factual or possible affinity of Puritanism and authoritarianism. In turn, so long as the association of modern capitalism with political democracy and a free civil society is not inherent and unequivocal but rather admittedly problematic (Friedman and Friedman 1982), the assumed away, neglected or submerged link between Puritanism and authoritarianism reappears or reinforces itself as an analytical and empirical problem to be reexamined. Let us designate this missing link or affinity between Puritanism and authoritarianism, as moral–religious and social–political systems, respectively, the derived or pseudo-Weberian problem. The latter recognizes that Weber implies or intimates, but, for various reasons, does not explicitly assume and systematically examine the problematic nature of Puritanism and Protestantism overall in relation to political democracy and a free civil society. This is in contrast to, for Weberians (e.g., Parsons),¹⁰ the unproblematic

⁹ To do justice to Weber, he recognizes, seemingly echoing Marx, that authoritarian–hierarchical relations “actually exist in the capitalist enterprise” and even that in the latter, “authoritarian constraint not only continues, but, at least under certain circumstances, even increases.” Apparently, this is the recognition of what contemporary observers call the “factory of authoritarianism” or lack of industrial democracy in the capitalist economy rather than of an authoritarian or undemocratic political system within modern capitalism. Overall, a sort of conventional wisdom, especially among conservative–libertarian US economists like Mises, Hayek, and Friedman as well as politicians, is that authoritarianism within “free enterprise” or the absence of industrial democracy, including lack of worker participation and union organization, can or should coexist and is even compatible with political democracy as well as a free civil society in American capitalism. Though more sophisticated and moderate than these economists, Weber in part contributed toward establishing this view by apparently assuming that “authoritarian constraint” in capitalist enterprise can correspond to, rather than contradict or undermine, as Marx implies, formal political democracy in terms of “legal–rational” authority or legitimation via “free elections,” for example.

¹⁰ Parsons (1975:667–678) suggests that the “economic behavior which [Weber] focused on the Puritans was both economically rational in the traditional sense and an attempt to implement a value commitment independent of considerations of personal advantage, notably in the utility of commodities. Weber [analyzed] how the religiously pious Puritan was motivated in economically productive activity.” In particular, he comments that in the *Protestant Ethic* Weber “asserted the independent influence of religious orientations and values relative to economic and political interests” in a sharp “methodological break with the historical schools, including Marxism,” though in his general comparative sociology of religion, as his “most important area of relations between society and cultural systems,” stressed the “interdependence of religious and other social phenomena” (Parsons 1965:175). Further, he complains that Weber’s theory of the relationship between ascetic Protestantism and capitalism is “persistently criticized in terms utterly inapplicable to [it]” (Parsons 1967:19).

association of Puritanism with contemporary capitalism as an economic system, including modern science and technology (Merton 1968),¹¹ that may or may not be linked with a democratic polity and culture, though problematic for others since, for example, Sombart's critique¹² of Weber's thesis from the *Protestant Ethic*. Simply, the derived Weberian problem is one of Puritanism and political-social authoritarianism or even tyranny¹³ (Bendix 1977:55–57), by analogy to Weber's original problematic of Calvinism and modern capitalism or a free market economy.

This study effectively begins where Weber essentially leaves, with some pertinent insights and premonitions, after arguing and substantiating the thesis of an elective affinity between ascetic Protestantism and modern capitalism, as do, for similar or varying reasons, most conventional economists as well as many Protes-

Also, in apparent reference to Weber, Dahrendorf (1959:186) invokes the "role of a particular interpretation of Calvinism for early English capitalists" as the case of an available ideology functioning as a program for social groups. In turn, Bendix (1977:51–52) comments that "Weber's particular thesis—that Puritan ideas had influenced the development of capitalism—was a concept he contrasted with another type of economic activity [i.e.] 'traditionalism.'" Also, Habermas (2001:139) comments that Weber "develops his famous argument of an affinity between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism to explain the motivational basis of the elites who support these new institutions." Similarly, Loader and Alexander (1985:6) remark that Weber "generally conceived of [value-rationality] as relating to rationalized forms of religion, like Puritanism, which were precursors of truly 'modern' rational action." However, in his later writings Alexander (1998:171–172) admits that "if the Italian capitalists of the early modern city states [manifested] the capitalist spirit [then], the Weber's correlation between capitalists and Puritans is based on a restricted sample and fails to substantiate his theory." Some early US sociologists also note that both Puritanism and the American capitalist philosophy (old and new) of success "recognized the law of prosperity as a cardinal statute" (Griswold 1934). Lastly, Boudon(1988:758) admonishes that the "correlations between Puritanism and capitalism are also due to a number of well-identified historical and social factors to which Weber devoted little attention." More important to the present study, one can add that Weber, also devoted little attention to, though intimated, the second "correlations" between Puritanism and authoritarianism in favor of the first.

¹¹ Collins(1985:116) refers to the Weber "thesis" on Puritanism and capitalism and the "Merton thesis" on Puritanism and science.

¹² Sombart writes in his book *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* (published in 1911) that "only recently Max Weber demonstrated the connexion between Puritanism and Capitalism. In fact, Max Weber's researches [*in the Protestant Ethic*] are responsible for this book." Sombart's counterargument is that the "dominating ideas of Puritanism which were so powerful in capitalism were more perfectly developed in Judaism, and were also of course of much earlier date."

¹³ Bendix (1977:55–57) perhaps comes most closely to identifying the Weberian second problem of Puritanism and authoritarianism by citing Weber's expression the "unexampled tyranny of Puritanism," cited as "Protestantism." Yet, he seems, like Parsons, to understand this "tyranny" as a metaphor or hyperbole not to be really taken at face value rather or less than a useful concept and working hypothesis. Also, similar to Parsons, Bendix focuses on Weber's demonstration or thesis of the elective affinity of Calvinism, explained by its "ascetic tendency," and the spirit of capitalism rather than authoritarianism or "tyranny." Similarly, Habermas (2001:139) comments that Weber "develops his famous argument of an affinity between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism to explain the motivational basis of the elites who support these new institutions."

tant sociologists (e.g., Parsons 1966)¹⁴. The study attempts to retrieve and reestablish Weber's assumed away, subdued or "buried" affinity between Puritanism or Calvinism and authoritarianism in Western societies, including American society. This attempt is undertaken against the background of, besides Weber's classic problem of Calvinism and capitalism, the sociological and economic literature in which such an affinity is also downplayed, subdued, and even reversed via the assumed opposite link of Puritanism with political democracy and a free civil society, as in part a dubious Weberian theoretical legacy.

Further, the Weberian assumed anti-authoritarian, i.e., pro-democratic and libertarian tendency, of Puritanism and Protestantism overall, so its link with democracy and a free civil society rather than authoritarianism, has become a sort of conventional wisdom or paradigm, even a venerable mythology in the scientific literature and beyond. This is in conjunction with and even by derivation from the assumed affinity between Puritan Protestantism and modern capitalism, as another Weberian legacy, theoretical paradigm and even "beloved myth" (Delacroix and Nielsen 2001) in the literature and Western Protestant societies. Moreover, the second paradigm has been more questioned and subject to doubt and rejection, and increasingly so during recent times (Lachmann 1989),¹⁵ since its original formulation by Weber than the first usually taken as granted as a self-evident axiom by most Western, especially Protestant social scientists, with rare or more silent dissenting voices. Thus, that Puritanism or Protestantism generally has been historically associated with Western, especially American, liberal democracy and a free civil society is perhaps even more categorically and widely assumed and accepted than its Weberian connection with modern capitalism, including science and technology (Becker 1984), in the scientific literature and beyond to the point of becoming a near-universal, deep-seated, and cherished belief in Puritan-based societies like America. As some contemporary sociologists note, since its beginning "in sociology, key elements of liberal-democratic ideology are seen as secular extensions of Protestant (especially Puritan) ideas" (Zaret 1989:163).

For example, early US sociologist Edward Ross argues that "Puritanism and democracy have worked together," though his remark that democracy has thus provided its own "antidote" and his warning about what he calls "Puritan tyranny"¹⁶

¹⁴ In Parsons' (1966: 79–80) view, the main elements of Weber's ascetic Protestantism are, alongside asceticism, "a drive for active mastery over worldly things and interests, 'rationality', ethical universalism, and functional differentiation and specialization."

¹⁵ Lachmann(1989:47), in a review of recent theories of the origins of capitalism in Western Europe, remarks that "few Weberians or Marxists have addressed the specific role of Protestantism in fostering rational economic action; instead they speak of modernization or of the rise of the West." In turn, Cohen (1980:1340) contends that "although Max Weber believed that rational capitalism developed initially and primarily under Protestantism, it was born and developed extensively in pre-Reformation Italy [so] capitalist rationality advanced under both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, and the religious factor had little effect on its early development."

¹⁶ Thus, Ross suggests that "there must a wise middle course" between "Puritan tyranny and Restoration profligacy."

may have different implications, as seen later. He describes, by assumption, democratic America *cum* the land of freedom as a “lineal descendent” of Puritanism, thus anticipating and specifying Weber’s assumption of the Puritan “anti-authoritarian tendency.” Further, Ross’ predecessor, conservative philosopher Emerson¹⁷ asserts that “few bodies or parties have served the world so well as the Puritans,” in political and other, including economic, terms. Though more ambivalent than most US or Protestant writers, French Catholic Tocqueville also notes, in reference to early Puritanism in New England, that a “democracy more perfect than antiquity had dared to dream of started in full size and panoply from the midst of an ancient feudal society [old England], including a ‘body of political laws’ that was in ‘advance of the liberties of our age.’” He regards Puritanism overall as “not merely a religious doctrine,” but also a political theory corresponding “in many points” to the “most absolute democratic and republican” theories in the Western world. Next, Durkheim implicitly subscribes to or, as Parsons would put it, converges on Tocqueville–Weber’s view of democratic tendencies in Puritanism by characterizing in his analysis of the impact of religion on suicide Protestantism by “free inquiry” that “multiplies schisms” and permits “greater concessions” as well as “less consistency,” resulting in a “less strongly integrated church,” thus more suicides, than Catholicism. However, unlike Tocqueville and especially Weber, Durkheim is less, just as Comte, concerned with distinguishing Puritanism or Calvinism from other early Protestantism, including Lutheranism as the original Protestant type.

Also, Marx, though from a different critical or radical theoretical position, specifically associates capitalist democracy with Protestantism,¹⁸ including

¹⁷ Gould (1996:215) comments that Emerson’s praise of Puritans “situates him in a more conventional cultural position vis-à-vis his Puritan ancestors” than the rarer contrary view.

¹⁸ Marx remarks that “Protestantism, by changing almost all the traditional holidays into workdays, plays an important part in the genesis of capital.” This almost admits or adumbrates Weber’s subsequent thesis about the cardinal role of the Protestant work ethic, of which “changing almost all the traditional holidays into workdays” is no doubt a particular expression or effect, in the creation of the “spirit and structure” of modern capitalism. So does in part Comte’s earlier observation about the “industrial superiority of Protestant nations.” Notably, Marx finds a connection of English Puritanism and Dutch Protestantism with “money-making” or the “cult of money” in that they all share self-denial, self-sacrifice, economy and frugality, contempt for “mundane, temporal and fleeting” pleasures in favor of the “chase after the *eternal* treasure,” spiritual (the first) or material (the second). In particular, he suggests that market free competition in England was first “conquered” by the 1640 Puritan Revolution, just as in France by the Revolution of 1789, and “everywhere” else by revolutions. In addition, Marx likens “bourgeois” political economy’s criticism of earlier economic systems like feudalism with Protestantism’s attack on Catholicism, as well as Christianity’s against heathenism. *Prima facie*, Marx’s connection, including his free-competition explanation of the Puritan Revolution, also suggest admitting or anticipating that of Weber between English Puritanism and modern capitalism whose spirit or ethos is, as he puts it, the “earning of more and more money, combined with the strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life.” Curiously, Weber, like most sociologists and economists, including Parsons, ignores or downplays these remarks that are seemingly *not* incompatible with his thesis and generally countervailing emphasis on the influence of

English Puritanism, as the “most fitting form of religion.” He considers both democracy and Puritanism, as political and religious phenomena, to be “bourgeois developments,” the effects of capitalism as an economic system, thus probably provoking Weber’s opposite, though qualified or heuristic, thesis. In turn, responding to Weber’s thesis grounding capitalism in, paraphrasing Marx, Protestant developments, Tawney (1962: 234–272) suggests that Western, specifically English and American, democracies owe more to Puritanism than any other movements, in virtue of its “enormous contribution” to political freedom and social progress, such that though its “theory had been discipline; its practical result was liberty.” In Parsons’ terms, most classical sociologists, from Tocqueville and Marx to Weber and Durkheim, evince a convergence on a voluntaristic theory of Puritanism or Protestantism as a whole as a democratic religious-political system, though with some occasional doubts and qualifications among them and their colleagues like Comte, Pareto, and Simmel. And, as hinted, following Weber and Durkheim, Parsons himself adopts and elaborates on such a voluntaristic Puritan theory.

In addition, contemporary sociologists adopt and elaborate on the theme of Puritanism *cum* voluntarism, i.e., freedom, democracy, as well as capitalism. In a view, the Puritan revolution in seventeenth century England, for example, was, alongside the French Revolution and the American Civil War, a case of bourgeois-liberal revolutions involving efforts to overcome “obstacles to a democratic version of capitalism” and create a “combination” of capitalism and parliamentary democracy¹⁹ (Moore 1993:413–415). Other contemporary sociologists suggest, referring to Parsons, that early Puritanism in England and America was an individualistic, liberal, democratic, and utilitarian ideology and politics in that it purported to rebuild polity as well as civil society or community on “more spiritual and horizontal terms” (Mayway 1984) than its predecessors or competitors in the Christian religion. This apparently associates Puritanism and utilitarianism with voluntarism or voluntaristic social action in the Parsonian sense. So does the view that the principle of voluntarism developed in American Puritanism as a “formulation of social conduct,” including the individual’s relation to government, though radical individualism is seen as “alien” to Puritan doctrine (Tiryakian 1975:24). Many other, especially US, social scientists express similar views, with some linking

religious and other ideas on economic phenomena in reaction to or reversal of Marx’s perceived one-sided causal, from-economy-to-religion, chain. Recall, Parsons maintains that Weber “brought out most sharply his methodological break” with Marxism by asserting the “independent influence of religious orientations and values” in relation to economy in the *Protestant Ethic* (and other works) as well as the “interdependence of religious and other social phenomena” in the comparative sociology of religion. However, dealing with this issue is beyond the scope of this book.

¹⁹ In this respect, Moore (1993:413–415) seems to follow Marx’s explanation of the 1640 Puritan Revolution in England, just as the French Revolution of 1789, in terms of a struggle for free competition and so capitalism. However, both overlook or downplay the fact that the “bourgeois” Puritan Revolution was ultimately, in Weber’s words, “abortive,” as witnessed by the collapse of Cromwell’s Holy Commonwealth in 1660, and thus Puritanism generally defeated, discredited, or ignored in England since this failure.

American Puritanism with English (Locke's) liberalism,²⁰ individualism and even secularism (Hartz 1963). Others argue that the American values of freedom and liberty are "related to the Calvinist doctrines of religious transcendence and human sin" (Means 1966:378), as originally transplanted and implemented in Puritan New England. In light of such views in the literature, some analysts note the prevalence of "naïve assumptions about Puritanism and liberty" (Coffey 1998:962). In this sense, the "story of the Protestant contribution to freedom is a familiar one: the doctrines of Luther, Calvin and Puritanism often have been linked to the development of modern spiritual and political freedom" (McLaughlin 1996:248).

In sum, the prevalent, though certainly not consensual and unquestioned, view in the sociological and other literature seems to be that Puritanism or Protestantism overall has been conducive to liberal democracy as a political system as well as to a free civil society, just as, in an assumed capitalist–democratic association, to contemporary capitalism as an economic mode, including modern science and technology. Therefore, this view of Western liberal–democratic ideology and practice and of capitalism as "secular extensions of Protestant ideas" assumes away, misses, or downplays the actual or possible affinity between Puritanism and the antipode of democracy and a free civil society in the form of political–social authoritarianism. This is in essence what this book argues and demonstrates, i.e., that Puritanism constitutes or engenders political and social authoritarianism and hence the antithesis or what Ross calls "antidote" (or "poison") of liberal democracy and free civil society rather than being democratic and libertarian.

The book is organized as follows. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to Puritanism and authoritarianism by specifying the concepts. Chapter 2 analyzes the relationship of Puritanism to political authoritarianism and argues that the former constitutes or leads to the latter in the sense of an antithesis of liberal democracy or a free polity. Chapter 3 considers whether and to what extent Puritanism relates to social authoritarianism, arguing that the first entails or results in the second in the sense of an antithesis of civic liberties or a free civil society. Chapter 4 continues the analysis of the connection of Puritanism to social authoritarianism. Chapter 5 focuses on neo-Puritanism or contemporary Protestant fundamentalism in relation to authoritarianism, and proposes that it continues to contain or generate authoritarian tendencies and outcomes. Chapter 6 deals with the legacy of Puritanism in contemporary Western, especially American, society and posits that this heritage is mostly authoritarian in character, content, and form.

²⁰ In addition, historian Ashton (1965:580) remarks that English Puritanism "became a seed-bed for modern liberalism" by reason of both its "conflict with the government" (the Crown) and its "purely religious matters." He adds that in seventeenth-century England Puritanism and constitutional parliamentary and business opposition were "three intimately linked lines of attack" on the Crown (Ashton 1965:581). Overall, Ashton (1965:583) suggests that Puritanism has much wider social implications than only its impact on the bourgeoisie and the rising capitalist class," as Weber largely assumes. In particular, Kloppenberg (1998:25) contrasts what he calls "the sober Puritanism of Locke" with the "stark individualism of Hobbes."

1

Puritanism and Authoritarianism

Puritanism

General Puritanism

At this juncture, two types or meanings of Puritanism can be distinguished—general and specific. In general, Puritanism signifies an idea and practice of moral, religious, and other spiritual as well as material purity or purification: austerity, asceticism, rigor, perfection, virtuosity, holiness, sanctity and sainthood, absolutism, or totality, including total methodical control or absolute restraint of oneself and others. In the sense of methodically seeking and attaining purity or perfection in respect to human sins, vices, or evils, most ethical and religious systems are to some extent puritan, purist, or “Methodist.” This is what Weber essentially means by suggesting that the great historical systems of religion,¹ from Buddhism and Confucianism to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, “have all been religions of restraint” (Bell 1977:431) and to that extent puritan or ascetic. For example, he specifically refers to the pre-Christian Pharisees as Puritans in this sense, though compounded with an apparent attribute of ambivalence, duality, or hypocrisy, which has eventually become or perceived as their defining attribute, in respect of methodical restraint and absolute purity. Generally, Weber suggests that Puritans in the sense of religious virtuosi or saints have been common to most religions of salvation, from pre-Christian Antiquity to early, medieval, and modern Christianity to Islam.

¹ Also, Lenski (1994:8) comments that Weber focused on the “religious ideas that differentiated one region from other parts of the civilized world. For him, Puritanism, Catholicism, ancient Judaism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and modern secular rationalism each had profoundly influenced the societies in which they were dominant, and each had given rise to a unique and distinctive social and economic order.” Similarly, Inglehart and Baker (2000:19) find that the “broad cultural heritage of a society—Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Confucian, or communist—leaves an imprint on values that endures despite modernization.” For the present purpose, all these religious and cultural systems, including communism and even in part secular rationalism, can be considered (featuring) varying forms or degrees of “Puritanism.” This places its Protestant form in a comparative-historical perspective and thus makes it less new or exceptional than usually claimed both by its representatives and adversaries.

Hence, he defines Puritanism, while calling it a “highly ambiguous word,” in terms of an “ethic of virtuosi” premised on the “methodical religious doctrine of sanctification.” No wonder, a particular, initially strident, yet subsequently moderate, Protestant version of Puritanism has designated itself as “Methodism” to emphasize and even further intensify such “methodical” doctrine and practice of sanctification, purification and moral perfection or what Pareto less neutrally than Weber calls a “kind of insanity” [sic!].

The above indicates that the general meaning of “Puritanism” and “Puritans” is purism and purists, i.e., virtuosi, saints, angels, apostles, ascetics, primarily, but not solely, in moral–religious and other spiritual terms, and secondarily in a material, including economic, sense (e.g., economist J. M. Keynes refers to “financial purism” or “puritans of finance”). Thus understood, Puritanism and Puritans are found or implied in virtually all religions, theologies, moral codes, and cultures and at all times: Western and non-Western ethics and societies, both early and late Christianity, including Catholicism, Protestantism, and in part the Orthodox Byzantine Church, and non-Christianity, from pre-Christian Pharisees to post-Christian Islam, as well as during Antiquity, medievalism, and modernity. For instance, Weber registers “the puritanical sect of the Donatists in Roman Africa,” thus implying that Puritanism in general is intrinsically sectarianism, as a case of a peasant-based strict moralistic or “rational ethical” movements in Antiquity.

In general, what contemporary sociologists call “puritanical forms of biblical fundamentalism” are found in Christian as well as Islamic, Jewish, and other non-Christian religions (Turner 2002:113). Its pre- and non-Christian types include Puritanism in, for example, Confucianism (Berger and Hsiao 1993; Pocock 1962), Hinduism (Archer 2001), Buddhism (Stark 1999), Islam (Archer 2001), e.g., Islamic and counter-Islamic Puritans (Scott 1977), and ancient Greece (Calhoun 1925), notably Sparta, and Rome, including Weber’s Roman Donatists. Pre- or non-Protestant Christian Puritanism is present in, albeit in varying degrees, Catholicism, including, in Marx’s words, “the Puritans of the [Catholic] Council of Constance,”² as well as, as Weber³ suggests, in part and under external influence Orthodox Christianity. Also, Pareto notices that long before Protestant Puritanism, as well as secular ascetic religions such as socialism and nationalism, including British imperialism and American jingoism, Catholic and other medieval monks “had carried this kind of [Puritan] insanity to the utmost limit.”

Moreover, Puritanism in the sense of ascetic austerity and restraint and Puritans as moral saints and virtuosi can also assume various non- or quasireligious forms, elements, and faces, as in antireligious ideologies or secular “religions” in

² In an almost Veblenian sarcastic manner, Marx comments that “the Puritans of the Council of Constance (1414–1418) complained of the dissolute lives of the popes and wailed about the necessity for moral reform. Cardinal Pierre d’Ailly thundered at them: ‘Only the devil in person can still save the Catholic Church, and you ask for angels.’”

³ For example, Weber observes that the “passionate participation of the Byzantine army in behalf of the iconoclasts was not a result of conscious puritanical principles, but that of the attitude adopted by the recruiting districts, which were already under Islamic influence.”

Pareto's meaning and social systems. Such non- or pseudoreligious Puritan versions or proxies are exemplified by fascist, including Nazi (Kirkpatrick 1937), and communist Puritanism and Puritans (Faris 1961; Hollander 1966⁴; Kelley 1984; Meyer 1967; Wallerstein and Zukin 1989; Walzer 1963). Typically, fascism, notably Nazism, and communism tend to be Puritanism in this sense, yet with secondary (Nazis) or devoid of (communists) religious bases and sanctifications, though with some exceptions, viz. Vatican-allied Italian, Spanish, and other Catholic–theocratic fascists. These religious differences in mind, Puritanism underscores and historically predates fascism, notably Nazism, as well as communism as doctrines and systems of austerity and restraint, and Puritans are also embodied in and prefigure fascists and communists as self-proclaimed moralist saints, as elaborated later. However, within Western society since the reformation Puritanism has acquired a specific form and meaning associated with a special brand of Christianity, thus alternatively dissociated from other Christian, notably Catholicism, and non-Christian religions, in a long evolution from Weber's puritanical and hypocritical Phariseism and Donatism. Simply, these new Christian Puritans were (self-described as) special, new, reformed, or revolutionary, and so different relative to Weber's non-Christian proto-Puritan and hypocritical Pharisees and Donatists, as well as, as Pareto implies, their proxies in Christianity like early and medieval Catholic monks. In short, this introduces the Christian–Protestant revival or variant of Puritanism discussed next.

Protestant Puritanism

The specific and prevalent type and meaning of Puritanism within Christianity and Western society, starting with the protestant Reformation, encompass Puritan ideas and practices, i.e., moral purity, austerity, asceticism, rigor, perfection, virtuosity, absolutism, religious holiness or sainthood, and total methodical restraint, in Protestantism, notably Calvinism.⁵ In Weber's terms, with its methodical pursuit of moral purism, sainthood or “sinless perfection,” or simply, as one of its branches was called, perfect “methodism” in asceticism, Puritanism

⁴ Hollander (1966:357–358) finds that in the Stalinist literature the Puritanism of the hero “is not unlike the Western conceptions of the Puritan: intensely concerned with spiritual [ideological] values, minimizing the importance of self in humility to a super-personal case, constantly on guard against violations of his moral code, impatient with those violating it [and] toward himself [as] the main psychological source of self-denial.” Notably, he considers such Puritan concerns to belong to “totalitarian values and controls” in Stalinist and other countries.

⁵ Urdank (1991:524) observes that early modern Calvinism and some other Protestant sects like Quakerism “generally embraced a high-tone Puritanism that greatly prized the control of affect.” This observation suggests that “Puritanism” in its general meaning, as found in Catholic Christianity and other religions, preceded and shaped Calvinism and ascetic Protestantism as a whole, but does not make it clear that in its specific and prevalent meaning Puritanism was rather a Calvinist creation, derivation, or extension originally in England and subsequently America.

thus understood represents the “staunchest” or most extreme form of ascetic Protestantism⁶ as originating or epitomized in Calvinism, in contrast to its non- or less-ascetic types, including Lutheranism and Anglicanism seen as closer to Catholicism at least in this respect.

In this respect, Weber’s implied distinction⁷ between pre-Protestant, especially non-Calvinist, and Protestant, notably Calvinist, Puritanism is basically equivalent or parallel to that between Christian asceticism or monasticism in pre-Protestantism like monastic Catholicism and Protestantism.⁸ By analogy to his general definition, he implicitly defines Puritanism in the specific sense as the Protestant ethic of virtuosos or moral saints theologically premised on the Calvinist “methodical religious doctrine of sanctification.” Hence, Puritans in the narrow sense are simply the “religious virtuosos” or “saints” of Protestantism. Ironically, none than Marx anticipates Weber by using identical terms, viz. the “sober virtuosos of Protestantism”⁹ and universal Christian asceticism overall, to describe New England’s Puritans. Specifically, to specify what he sees as a “highly ambiguous word,” Weber proposes to use Puritanism “always in the sense which it took on in the popular speech of the 17th century, to mean the ascetically inclined religious movements in Holland and England without distinction of Church organization or dogma.” Apparently, this proposal refers to original Puritanism or Calvinism in Europe but can be readily extended to its subsequent derivations and ramifications in America, notably New England, from the seventeenth century. Similarly, Simmel suggests that Puritanism or Calvinism was the “orthodox party” of Protestantism, distinguished from Lutheranism as the “liberal,” following the Protestant split, especially the “confessional controversies” between Lutherans and Calvinists (the Reformed Church) in seventeenth-century Europe.¹⁰

⁶ Referring to New England Puritanism, Weber remarks that the “inner-worldly asceticism of Protestantism” was represented in the “ancient Puritan tradition.” Also, he notes that early European Puritans or Calvinists accused Lutherans in Germany and elsewhere of a “virtual reluctance to becoming holy.” Overall, Weber incorporates Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism, and Baptism into the “forms of ascetic Protestantism.” This implies that he considers early English Puritanism essentially equivalent to or derived from Calvinism, though distinguished from Pietism as a mostly continental, especially German, phenomenon, as well as Methodism and Baptism in their initial forms, though he describes Methodist movements as the “revival” and “emotional intensification of the Puritan type,” and Baptists sects in similar terms. Reminiscent of Weber, Merton (1968:628) describes Puritanism as an “ideal-typical expression of the value-attitudes basic to ascetic Protestantism generally.”

⁷ Weber implies the distinction in remarking that “the non-Calvinistic ascetic movements, considered purely from the view-point of the religious motivation of asceticism, form an attenuation of the inner consistency and power of Calvinism.”

⁸ Strictly speaking, Weber would also distinguish “Puritan” or “Calvinist” from “ascetic” or “austere” and sectarian in the sense that while all “Puritans” or “Calvinists” may be ascetics and sectarians, the converse is not always true, as shown by pre-Christian Pharisees, Medieval Catholic, and other monks.

⁹ For example, Sombart observes that “walk with a sober pace, not tinkling with your feet,” was a canon of the Puritan rule of life.

¹⁰ This is inferred or interpreted from Simmel’s statements, first, about the “confessional controversies” between Lutherans and Calvinists (“Reformed”) during the seventeenth century, and second, that, in consequence, Protestantism split into “a liberal and orthodox

Elaborating on and evoking Weber and Marx, other analysts characterize Puritanism as “iron” (Tawney 1962:211), militant (Israel 1966:597), or radical (Coffey 1998:962; also Loewenstein 2001) Protestantism. In this sense, “Puritanism” is in essence another name for “Calvinism” also described as such a type, i.e., “orthodox party,” of Protestantism and usually, though not invariably, adopted as an interchangeable term by Weber as well as Tocqueville, Mill, Marx, Simmel, and others (Tawney 1962). Thus, Weber usually adopts and understands the term Puritanism in the sense of what he calls “radical Calvinism.” Consequently, early Puritans in Great Britain were described both by themselves and others such as Anglicans and Catholics as the radical, extreme or “hotter sort” of Protestants (Gorski 2000:1453).

Weber specifically includes among the Puritans in seventeenth-century England and Holland, for example, “Independents, Congregationalists, Baptists, Mennonites, and Quakers.” Contemporary analysts also incorporate Presbyterians, Separatists, and non-Separatists, as well as in part Anabaptists and Quakers (Sprunger 1982:ix), and distinguish Presbyterian groups as relative political “moderates” from the Independents like Cromwell et al. as “extremists” within early English Puritanism (Israel 1966:592). Virtually all these groups moved to America, specifically New England, as contrasted to Virginia as an initial destination for Anglicans, both prior (the 1620s–1630s) to and especially after, as Weber puts it, the ultimately “abortive” Puritan Revolution and rule through Cromwell’s “Parliament of Saints” and the monarchy Restoration (the 1660s–1670s). Subsequently, Puritanism comprised other ascetic Protestant movements, including notably, as Mill and Weber suggest,¹¹ Methodism to become increasingly salient as a sort of revived, emotionally intensified, modernized, and eventually mitigated Puritan form, first in England and then in America, especially the South and Mid-West. In this sense, some analysts suggest the existence of many diverse Puritanisms¹² (Kearney 1965) rather than a single and homogenous Puritanism in both early Europe and America.

In comparative-historical terms, Puritanism in this specific meaning was Calvinism derived, transplanted, or diffused from continental Europe, where, in Calvin’s

party,” respectively. Admittedly, this inference or interpretation is not the sole possible, as the opposite could be made too—viz. Calvinists as “liberal” and Lutherans as “orthodox” Protestants—but probably the most plausible, at least for the purpose at hand. This especially holds true of a Weberian framework, in which, as Weber typically implies, Calvinism or Puritanism is the orthodox, radical (“hard-core”) or staunch, and Lutheranism liberal, moderate (“soft”) or traditional Protestantism.

¹¹ J. S. Mill implicitly includes Methodists into Puritans or Calvinists, and Weber defines Methodism as the purported “revival,” notably “emotional intensification,” of Puritanism via pursuing “sinless perfection” and thus initially attempting to be morally “purer” and more “methodical” and emotional than anything else before in Protestantism.

¹² Kearney (1965:105) suggests that “Puritanism” is “analogous” to terms like “socialism” or “romanticism,” and so “there are as many ‘Puritanisms’ as are there ‘socialisms’ or ‘romanticisms.’” He cites the New England’s Puritan colonists as showing that “Puritanism of the 1630s offered a variegated appearance” and infers that the “tensions and differences that exploded after 1640 were already in existence” (Kearney 1965:107).

Geneva, it originated in the 1530s, first to England in the late sixteenth century and then to colonial America, notably New England,¹³ during the seventeenth century. That is what Weber implies by typically treating Protestant Puritanism in general as, or equating it with, radical Calvinism, and describing in particular New England's Puritans as "strict Calvinists" like those in Geneva à la Calvin et al. So does Sombart, who, alternatively, states that Calvinism "is only Puritanism." Only in the sense of an English-American seventeenth-century derivative, transplant, diffusion, and radical implementation of sixteenth-century Calvinism can one describe Puritanism as "Anglo-Saxon"¹⁴ (Mises 1966:87), with essentially European origins and prototypes, e.g., in Germany (Billings and Scott 1994), as most analysts do. Thus, Tocqueville, referring to the American Pilgrims, describes Puritanism as the "English sect" defined by the "austerity" and "rigor" of its principles theologically rooted in Calvinism. Also, Tawney (1962:198) depicts Puritanism as the "true English Reformation" crucially derived from, influenced by and continuing that in Europe, notably its radical, militant or fanatical (Walzer 1963) Calvinist, preferred to its more traditional and moderate Lutheran, movement in turn influencing Anglicanism. In short, Puritanism, to paraphrase Sombart, "is only" Calvinism, derived from and moved beyond Calvin's Geneva to England and America, just as Calvinism is merely Protestant or general Puritanism in his sense. If, as Simmel remarks, in the seventeenth century Protestantism split into "a liberal and orthodox party," as the result of the "confessional controversies" between and embodied by Lutherans and Calvinists (Reformed) respectively, then English Puritanism joined the second rather than the first group, in turn at least tacitly joined by Anglicanism.

¹³ Foerster (1962:9) remarks that "in the fundamentals of their faith" US, like English, Puritans "usually found themselves in large agreement with the teachings of John Calvin, the French Protestant reformer of Geneva." He adds that "when the Puritans of New England agreed with Calvin, they did so not because Calvin was authoritative for them but because his teachings seemed confirmed by the Bible and experience." Moreover, he uses "Puritanism" and "Calvinism" as synonyms, viz. the "Calvinistic structure" of the Puritan "Holy Commonwealth" in New England. That these US Puritans and their modern evangelical descendents or proxies would "agree" or become identified with the teaching of a "French Protestant reformer" seems highly ironic from a historical and contemporary perspective in light of the persisting and even recently intensifying anti-French, often linked with anti-Catholic and antiforeign (Merton 1939), sentiments in Protestant fundamentalism. This sometimes reaches a sort of mass hysteria in religious-political conservatism (e.g., the "freedom-fries" episode prompted by Bible-Belt and other conservative congressmen), as happened in America during the 2000s. Overall, it is one of those supreme historical ironies that a "French" should effectively define the "spirit" of Anglo-Saxon Puritanism and to that extent, i.e., at least in respect of America's founding by the Puritans, what US religious-political conservatives celebrate as the American "national character," though less the English "soul" given the initial, counteracting, and perhaps ultimately prevailing religious influence of Anglicanism as the Puritan arch-enemy. Simply, what Weber describe as the "strict Calvinists" of Geneva (and later Holland) and New England meet, with the first apparently influencing and inspiring, thus becoming "role models" for, the second.

¹⁴ Mises' (1966:87) full statement is that "Puritanism was Anglo-Saxon, but so was the lasciviousness of the British under the Tudors, the Stuarts, and the Hanoverians."

Other analysts suggest that, historically and comparatively, Puritanism was a sort of Calvinism without Calvin.¹⁵ In this view, the development of Calvinist doctrine after his death took a “Puritan direction” (Birnbaum 1953; cf. also Hartz¹⁶ 1963), especially in old and New England and to a lesser extent continental Europe (e.g., Germany, Holland, Switzerland, France). Reportedly, after Calvin’s death, Calvinism from its birthplace Geneva “spread eastward to the Continent and westward to [England and] America among English-speaking people”¹⁷ (Sprunger 1982:458). Specifically, Puritanism emerged in England during the 1560s and “consisted of various cross-currents of thought and opinion, generally Calvinist in tone and possessing a certain continuity from [that time] to the Cromwellian period and beyond [i.e. the 1640s]” (Kearney 1965:105). Thus, the early Puritan sects and denominations in England and subsequently colonial America, as well as temporarily Holland,¹⁸ were descendents or followers of Calvinism rather than Lutheranism (Munch 1981). In this respect, the Anglo-Saxon “hotter sorts” of Protestants,

¹⁵ Bremer (1995:15) finds that in England between 1548 and 1660 “more of Calvin’s works were published than of any other author.”

¹⁶ Moreover, Hartz (1963:369) argues that American Puritanism was not only Calvinism without Calvin, but rather *with* Locke and so entwined with or transformed in English liberalism and to that extent pseudo- or even non-Calvinist. Arguably, in America “fragmentation would detach Puritanism from the European past, would elevate it to the rank of a national absolute, [yet] in secular terms: the movement of Locke from the Old World (“the depravations of Europe”) to the New, not quite the movement of Calvin.” This argument apparently overlooks or downplays New England’s theocracy Weber and others identify as the Puritan-American version or emulation of Calvinist theocracies or “state churches” in Europe. An instructive sociological critique of the assumed Puritan links with liberalism and democracy in old and New England is found in Zaret (1985, 1989).

¹⁷ Sprunger (1982:458) actually uses “Puritanism” instead of “Calvinism” but the latter is apparently a more accurate or precise designation. Specifically, Calvinism, from Calvin’s Geneva, “spread eastward to the Continent,” especially Germany, France, and Holland, generating, as Weber noted, for example, German Pietism, as well as French Huguenot movement, and westward “among English-speaking people” in England, Scotland, and America to produce “Puritanism” in the strict sense. In this sense, Europe—with the partial exception of Holland due to its Puritan exiles from England, from the late sixteenth century as well as following the restoration of the monarchy in the 1660s—did not really know “Puritanism” that was an eminently “English-speaking people” derivative Calvinist phenomenon, but only original Calvinism and its continental derivations, including Pietism. For example, following Weber’s distinction, Merton (1968:628–629) distinguishes between early English Puritanism and German Pietism as varying Calvinist spreads or derivatives in his analysis of their effects on modern science. As Sprunger (1982:458) adds, “unlike areas like Scotland or the Netherlands, where Calvinism quickly became the predominant religion, or France, where the Calvinist Huguenots were a perpetual minority, the Puritanical English Calvinists existed as a movement within the larger structure of the Church of England.” Simply, only in England, Scotland, and later colonial America, first New England and then beyond, but not continental Europe, did Calvinism become or produce “Puritanism” as specifically understood within Protestantism.

¹⁸ Weber cites the “ecclesiastic revolution of the strict Calvinists in the Netherlands during the 1580s.” Also Sprunger (1982:457) specifically explores the history of English (and Scottish) Puritan churches of the Netherlands in the sixteenth to seventeenth century and defines Puritanism as the “English Calvinist dissenting movement against established Anglican religion, dedicated to simplifying and purifying the church along Reformed lines.”

mostly within the preestablished Church of England or Anglicanism¹⁹ (Klausner 1998), created Puritanism in the specific form and meaning by embracing, transferring, and radically implementing European Calvinism in the English-American polity and society.

Consequently, original Puritanism represented in essence seventeenth-century Anglo-Saxon Calvinism (McLaughlin 1996), and the early Puritans “were Calvinists” (Bremer 1995:15), more precisely, in Weber’s words, “strict Calvinists” or even “stodgy Orthodox Calvinists” (Gould 1996:10), in England and America. In short, English and American Puritans’ “ideological loyalties were mainly to the international Calvinist movement” (Sprunger 1982:457). Predictably, their overriding aim or outcome was to purify or sanctify (and simplify), via the vision and creation of a “holy commonwealth” or “community of saints,” official English Protestantism or Anglicanism from within as well as outside the Church. Thus, Weber²⁰ observes that, like other religious sects, Puritanism *cum* a sect “adheres to the ideal of the *pure ecclesia* [church] (hence the name ‘Puritans’), the *visible* community of saints, from whose midst the black sheep are removed so that they will not offend God’s eyes.” In this sense, various English Puritanisms constituted a “growing circle of discontent both within and without the Established [Anglican] Church from the 1560s onwards,” sharing the Calvinist vision of “what the Church of Christ ought to be” (Kearney 1965:105), i.e., a *pure ecclesia* with no “black sheep.” Notably, Calvinism as a strict, post-Lutheran theology and world view “lay at the core of New England Puritanism” (Bremer 1995:225), just as of its English original transplanted or interconnected to America (Sprunger 1982).

Significantly, Weber implies that Calvinism is at the heart of Anglo-American Puritanism as a special sect in that it “resembles the sects by virtue of its aristocratic charismatic principle of predestination” and the “degradation of office charisma.” To that extent, Puritanism retrieved, realized, and intensified Calvinism’s implied or potential sectarianism to become what Weber would call the staunchest or the most radical and strict type of sectarian, just as ascetic, Protestantism in England and especially, as he implies,²¹ in America (Lipset 1996). Further, this specific

In this view, the “essence of Puritanism was a balanced combination of doctrinal Calvinist theology and intense personal piety” (Sprunger 1982:457).

¹⁹ Sprunger (1982:457) notes that “most Puritans in England before 1660 operated within the larger Church of England, hoping to reform from inside.” Also Klausner (1998:155) remarks that Puritanism, just as Quakerism, derived from Anglicanism. But it did, as hinted, as a Calvinist-style rebellion or revolution seeking to radically reform the established Anglican Church, eventually fighting against in the seventeenth-century English civil war and separating from the latter, following the Puritans’ defeat and the Restoration of the Monarchy.

²⁰ Weber adds that in Puritan sects, the individual “may be qualified as a member in various ways: by virtue of divine predestination, as in the case of the Particular Baptists, the elite troops of Cromwell’s Independents; by virtue of the ‘inner light’ or of the pneumatic ability to experience ecstasy Quakers; by virtue of the ‘struggle for penitence’ and the resulting ‘breakthrough’ [the old Pietists].”

²¹ Weber remarks that “the major domicile” of the Puritan-Protestant sects is America where the “intensity of indoctrination and the impact of exclusion are much more effective than any authoritarian ecclesiastic discipline can be.”

Protestant version continued and reinforced what seems to be inherent sectarianism and asceticism in Puritanism in general, including its pre-Christian forms, as Weber suggests by identifying some puritanical sects (Donatists) in Roman Antiquity.

In sum, European Calvinism with its original asceticism and sectarianism, postulated by the dogma of predestination, theologically grounds and historically prefigures specifically Anglo-American Puritanism as the extreme or “hotter sort” of ascetic, sectarian and orthodox Protestantism (self-) distinguished from Protestant nonascetic, non-sectarian, or (in Simmel’s view) liberal versions such as Lutheranism and Anglicanism. In turn, Anglo-American Puritanism far from being, as its adherents claim, new or exceptional, as indicated in America’s Puritan-based supposed exceptionalism, is preceded by and in part modeled after and inspired by various Puritanical ideas, personalities (e.g., saints, virtuosi, ascetics, sects) and practices within and during, as well as outside and prior to, Christianity, from Weber’s proto-Puritan Pharisees and Donatists in Antiquity to early and medieval Catholic monks. For example, Pharisees prefigure, if not inspire, the ascetic austerity, hypocrisy, and moral rigor, and Donatist sects (also) sectarianism of Anglo-American Puritans as hyper austere, moralist, and sectarian (“hotter”) Protestants. Table 1.1 summarizes major historical developments, events, and personalities in Protestant Puritanism.

Pre-Protestant and Protestant Puritanism

In a sense, Weber’s distinction between pre-Protestant and Protestant or Calvinist Puritanism (and asceticism) coincides with, and even in part contains within itself, that between traditional prebourgeois and modern bourgeois capitalism. This holds true, given his explicit connection of Protestantism, notably Calvinism, with modern capitalism, and conversely that of non-Protestant Christianity and non-Christian religions with its traditional types.²² Both distinctions are in a

²² Weber observes that the rising bourgeoisie “not only failed to resist this unexampled tyranny of Puritanism but even developed a heroism in its defense,” while noting that in Europe, notably, England, the “Puritan Revolution was successful because of the cavalry provided by the rural gentry.” Also, he remarks that the French Huguenot and Scottish nobility “later stopped fighting for Calvinism, and everywhere the further development of ascetic Protestantism became the concern of the citizen middle classes” or bourgeoisie. Referring to colonial America, Weber notices the “specifically middle-class outlook of the Puritans” in New England in contrast to Southern Anglicans wanting to “live as feudal lords.” Anticipating Weber, Tocqueville notices that in England the “stronghold of Puritanism continued to be in the middle classes.” In turn, echoing Weber, Tawney (1962:204–210) detects the “identification” or “affinity” of business classes in the UK and the US with Puritanism as religious radicalism, commenting that the Puritan bourgeoisie “knew that against the chosen people the gates of hell could not prevail.” Similarly, Walzer (1963:87) notes that Puritanism, like other radical or revolutionary movements like Jacobinism and Bolshevism, tended to come from “educated middle classes” or “professional men of all sorts.” In turn, Rettig and Pasamanick (1961), invoking Sombart, hold that ascetic Protestantism, including Calvinism in the sixteenth century and Puritanism in the seventeenth century, was a movement of the “lower middle class.” In particular, Foerster (1962:4) notes that the US Puritans “came from the middle and lower classes.” He divides the US Puritan Pilgrims into an initial small “radical group” (founding Plymouth in 1620) of “poor and humble and

TABLE 1.1. Major historical developments, events, and personalities in Protestant (English-American) Puritanism.

Time period	Puritan development, event or effect
1510s–20s	Protestant Reformation in continental Europe begins: Luther’s movement in Germany
1530s–50s	Protestant Reformation intensifies: Calvin’s (reformed) movement in Geneva
1540	Calvin signs the Lutheran “Confession of Augsburg”
1550s–1620s	Spread of Calvinism to and birth/rise of Puritanism in Great Britain (England and Scotland)
1620–30s	First English Puritans (Pilgrims) emigrate to America (Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Virginia)
1630	John Winthrop (the first governor of Massachusetts) arrives at America and gives a speech aboard the <i>Arabella</i> (“a Shining City upon a Hill”)
1630–40s	Puritans establish an official Congregational Church in New England (“Bible Commonwealth”)
1640–42	Increasing tensions between Puritans (the Parliament) and the Crown (Anglican Church) in England
1642	English Civil War starts: Puritan Revolution against the Monarchy and Anglican Church
1645	English Civil War ends with a victory of Puritan forces (Cromwell’s Parliament-army) over the King (Charles I)
1648	Cromwell establishes the “Rump” (reduced) Parliament abolishing the monarchy and the old constitution
1649	The King executed
1653	The Act of Settlement in 1653 orders forcible transportation of Irish Catholics (more than 40% killed by Cromwell’s army) Cromwell’s army dissolves the “Rump” Parliament and establishes the “Parliament of Puritan Saints”
1655	Cromwell dissolves the “Parliament of Saints” and rules alone with the title “Lord Protector of the Realm” (replacing “Lord General of the Army”)
1658	Cromwell dies designating his son (Richard) as a successor
1650s–60s	Puritans persecute and execute Quakers in New England
1660	The Puritan Holy Commonwealth collapses and the Monarchy restored in England (under Charles II)
1692	Puritan witchcraft persecutions, executions, and hysteria in Massachusetts (Salem)
1740s	The first Great Awakening in America begins: spread of Puritan or evangelical Protestant sects (Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian) to most colonies, including the South (dominated by the Anglican or Episcopal church)

devout” (e.g., “cobblers, tailors, feltmakers, and such-like trash” according to the bishop of London) and a subsequent “large band of conservative Puritans” (the founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630) made of “landed gentry, wealthy merchants, university graduates” (Foerster 1962:2). Also, Moore (1993: xvii–xxiii) describes the Puritan as a “bourgeois” revolution leading to the English Civil War, though Goldstone (1991:413) finds a “close-knit network of gentry with Puritan sympathies” in early seventeenth-century England. Overall, Rettig and Pasamanick (1961) find a curvilinear relationship between

TABLE 1.1. (Continued)

1776	Three-quarters of Americans are Puritans (the American Revolution)
1800s	The second Great Awakening in America begins: Puritan or evangelical Protestantism (Baptism, Methodism, Presbyterianism) becomes dominant in the country, especially in the South (replacing the Episcopal church)
1833	Formal disestablishment of Puritan (Congregational) Church in Massachusetts
1860s–1920s	The US South increasingly ruled by Puritan or evangelical Protestantism (“Baptist and Methodist barbarism”)
1918	Puritanical Prohibition Constitutional Amendment ratified by all US states
1934	Prohibition repelled
1930s–2000s	Alcohol prohibition or restriction in the South continues (“dry” states and counties)
1980s	The legal drinking age raised from 18 to 21 by all US states US president condemns the Soviet Union as an “evil empire” the US government withdraws from UNESCO on Puritanical (moralistic) grounds
1980s–2000s	The “war on drugs” resumes, intensifies, and escalates to cover minor drug offenses
1990s–2000s	About 80% of (surveyed) Americans support “tough” anti-drug laws and more resources for drug (and vice) police around 70% of (surveyed) Americans support the death penalty for criminals, including drug offenders (traffickers)
1996	The US “Indecency Act” passed by Congress, yet declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court
1998	US president impeached by the House of Representatives for sexual misconduct
2000–04	US president elected and reelected on a platform of “morality” and “faith” Moral–religious (social) issues also dominate congressional, state, and local elections and referenda
2001	The “war on terror” launched as a “crusade” linked with the “war on drugs” and on illegal immigration “USA Patriot Act” passed by Congress
2002	US Congress authorizes a preemptive war against Iraq on moralist-security grounds
2003	The US and the UK attack and invade Iraq as part of the “axis of evil” The US government threatens other “evil” countries with “preemptive” (including nuclear) strikes
2004	Torture and other abuses of foreign prisoners (“terrorists”) by the US government revealed The US government fines television networks for public “indecentcy”
2005–06	Almost two-thirds of 2 million-plus US prisoners are nonviolent and minor drug offenders and other “sinners” (alcohol, prostitution, indecency, etc.) US neoconservative government allies with the Vatican Church and Islamic fundamentalists against defining “immoral” behaviors (e.g., abortion) as human rights at international conferences

Puritanism, defined as the “rigidity” or “severity of judgment on generic moral issues,” and social classes in the sense of its peaking in the lower middle class and declining in the “adjacent strata.” Following Sombart and in part Weber, they comment that low-class moral rigidity “also serves the function of expressing resentment against the higher classes” (Rettig and Pasamanick 1961:22), denounced as “immoral,” “corrupt,” or “elitist.”

way variations or reflections of Weber's dichotomy of world religions into those resigned to a passive "adaptation" or "accommodation" to the world such as pre-Protestant religious systems, including monastic²³ Catholicism, and those actively seeking a sort of total "mastery of the world," like Protestantism, notably European Calvinism and its Anglo-American derivations or escalations in Puritanism.²⁴ In a sense, this dichotomy encompasses or corresponds to Weber's between two ascetic religious types: first, other-worldly, medieval monastic asceticism as the means of what he calls "mere accommodation" to the world in Catholicism and most Oriental religions (e.g., Confucianism); second, "systematic worldly asceticism" as the instrument of its mastery in Protestantism, especially Calvinism. The dichotomy hence implies or parallels the distinction between pre-Protestant and Protestant types of Puritanism. Thus, the resignation or passive adaptation and mere accommodation to the world is the aim or result of other-worldly non-Protestant asceticism or "Puritanism," while what Parsons following Weber calls "a drive for active mastery over worldly things and interests" is one of its worldly Protestant type.

Weber thereby indicates and emphasizes various pertinent differences between non-Protestant and Protestant Puritanism and asceticism overall. Yet, he considers, unlike perhaps Protestant Puritans, the latter a peculiar comparative-historical, English-American and sixteenth to seventeenth century, variation on Puritanism in general defined by the ethics of virtuosos or moral saints and religious dogma of "sanctification." Following the conventional use in the Weberian sociological literature, this study adopts the specific and prevalent meaning of Protestant or Calvinist (Hudson and Coukos 2005) Puritanism as the Anglo-American derivative, transplant, substitute, or residue of European Calvinism (Stivers 1994), distinguished from its other Christian and non-Christian meanings and forms.

To avoid ethnocentric or inverse implications—depending on its evaluation as "superior" or "inferior" in its nature or political-social effects—it is to be reiterated

²³ However, Veblen implicitly contradicts Weber's thesis of passive adaptation or mere accommodation by Catholicism and other pre-Protestantism, by observing that the members of the Catholic and other medieval orders of monks "actually labored to some useful end." In particular, Collins (1997) emphasizes the significance for the "breakthrough to capitalism" of Catholicism through its "activist monastic movements" in the Middle Ages, as well as Buddhism in medieval China and Japan, prior to Protestantism, and downplays Weber's "emphasis on the content" of the latter.

²⁴ Tocqueville anticipates Weber's idea of the Puritan mastery of the world by noting that the piety of the early American Puritans was not "merely speculative" but took strong "cognizance [and control] of the course of worldly affairs." Like his connection between Protestantism and capitalism, Weber's distinction between the Protestant-Puritan mastery of the material world and the non-Protestant, including Catholic, spiritual adaptation to it has been often questioned. For example, MacKinnon (1988) implicitly does so by contending that, like Catholicism and even Lutheranism, in Puritanism or Calvinism the "spiritual calling leads down the path of righteousness," so the "adaptation" to the material world, rather than the "temporal calling" or "earthly toil" as an instrument of its mastery, contrary to Weber's view.

that Protestant, including American, Puritanism, is far from entirely new or exceptional²⁵ in this respect, viz. the ethic of moral virtuosi or saints, as its advocates as well as critics often assume. Rather, it is a particular subspecies of general religious and other Puritanism in the form of seemingly perennial Puritan ideas, forms, personages, and practices in most religions and cultures both prior and subsequent to Protestantism, Christianity, or Western civilization, as Weber implies citing Pharisees as arch-Puritans and puritanical Donatists as protosectarians predating sectarian Protestant Puritans. In this sense, Protestantism, notably Calvinism, did not, strictly speaking, invent through some sort of theological or sociological creationism but rather “embraced a high-tone Puritanism that greatly prized the control of affect” (Urdank 1991:524). Instead, Puritanism thus understood had been already and virtually always “out there,” both within Christianity such as monastic ascetic Catholicism and Orthodoxy and non-Christianity, including, alongside Weber’s hypocritical pre-Christian Pharisees and ancient Roman Donatists, Plato’s Sparta. For instance, Spartan²⁶ proto-Puritanism, expressed in strict moral discipline, asceticism, simplicity, as well as brutality and cruelty, apparently was embraced by, or provided a sort of model and inspiration to, the US Puritans’ (Samuel Adams’) project of a “Christian Sparta” (Kloppenber 1998:28–32), as, what master Puritan Pilgrim John Winthrop called “Shining City upon a Hill” in America. This was the case originally in New England and subsequently the entire country as the “biblical garden,” notably the ante bellum and later the post-civil-war South qua the “Bible Belt” since its religious “Great Awakenings,” especially the second starting in the 1800s.

In this respect, it seems as if nothing were ever new “under the sun”²⁷ of perpetual or recurring Puritan ideas, movements, persons, and practices generally in virtually all religions, societies, and times, since at least ancient Greece and Rome and perhaps before (e.g., Pharisees). This is what some early US sociologists

²⁵ Gould (1996:37) finds Puritan exceptionalism in another respect, viz. a “consensual [hierarchical] order of politics” based on the “Puritan fears for a Bible commonwealth.” In historical terms, one wonders if this is truly Puritan exceptionalism, since the blueprint or reality of a “consensual order of politics” or “Bible commonwealth” has been a constant in pre- and post-Protestant Christianity, notably official Catholicism in the Vatican church-state as the putative realization of such an order and community at least in the Middle Ages, as Weber suggests using the term “bibliocracy” as the perennial Christian ideal. So has it been *mutatis mutandis*, viz. Bible-proxies, in most pre- and non-Christian religions, perhaps most manifestly, persistently and militantly in fundamentalist Islam establishing a Koran-based commonwealth, as also Weber implies in his comparative-historical analysis of world religious systems.

²⁶ Sprunger (1982:460) notes that early Puritanism in America and England had a “Spartan simplicity.”

²⁷ This is what generally Comte suggests by noting that the Protestant-Lutheran revolution “produced no innovation, in regard to discipline, ecclesiastical orders or dogma [and Luther’s] success was mainly due to the ripeness of the time.” In particular, he asserts that the Protestant dogma of free inquiry, emphasized both by Durkheim and Weber (though for different analytical purposes), was “a mere sanction of the pre-existing state” in most Christian nations.

suggest by describing the “whole ethic” of both Plato and English ascetic authors Ruskin and Carlyle as the “natural Puritanism of a ‘pain economy’ [sic!]” (Calhoun 1925:53). This makes Protestant Puritanism a sectarian and revivalist or fundamentalist religious–political movement, and early English and subsequently American Puritans sectarians and revivalists or fundamentalists (Bremer 1995:233), in the sense or virtue of attempting to restore and realize the old foundational or “natural” Puritan ideals in Christianity and beyond. Within Christianity, it represents the English-American seventeenth-century variation on various moralist, to paraphrase Weber, bibliocratic, or evangelical revivals, awakenings or restorations since its rise, by seeking to reestablish in old and especially New England and eventually America as a whole a “Bible Commonwealth” (Bremer 1995).

In view of its history, Protestant and other Puritanism can be described and predicted as being in the state of constant revival, restoration, awakening, resurrection, or a sort of permanent revolution. Thus, Weber remarks that the Calvinist doctrine of predestination “formed the battle-cry of great new awakenings” by Puritanism in England and especially America during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, just as “served as a rallying-point to countless heroes of the Church militant.” His case in point is Methodism as the “aspired” revival, especially “emotional intensification,” of original English Puritanism as well as the two Great mostly Puritan-inspired Awakenings in colonial and postrevolutionary America, and their various subsequent reenactments, reflexes, or proxies, including the ante bellum and post-civil-war South, up to the 1980s–2000s. In turn, its revivalism or fundamentalism in the form of evangelicalism or a “Bible Commonwealth” renders Puritanism typically militant, uncompromising and intolerant, and so radical or revolutionary, in relation to established religious–political institutions like Catholic and Anglican church-states condemned and destroyed as the impediment to the Puritan revival, restoration or “recuperation” (Gould 1996:28) of these ideals of a “Godly society” and pure Church. This was witnessed during England’s seventeenth century Puritan-provoked civil war or revolution against Anglicanism and the Monarchy, as well as Puritanism’s ensuing victory and brief harsh rule through Cromwell’s “Parliament of Saints.” In this sense, Protestant and perhaps all Puritans tend to be not only conservative, traditionalist, revivalist, orthodox or fundamentalist in respect to the “natural Puritanism of a pain economy.” They are also radical, rebellious, revolutionary, heterodox or nihilist, as often described, with regard to existing non-Puritan religious and political powers and values, as diverse and often mutually hostile as Catholicism, Anglicanism and English royal absolutism, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, liberalism, pluralism, rationalism, secularism, liberal democracy and modernity. In short, Puritanism tends to be in the state both of constant revival of pure foundations and of permanent revolution or, to use Schumpeter’s term, “creative destruction” against subsequent “impurities.” This is another way to say what Simmel and Weber (also Tawney 1962) do respectively, viz. that Puritanism is both an orthodox–conservative and radical–revolutionary type of Protestantism, depending on specific “power constellations,” viz. Puritan political dominance over non-Puritans or opposition to non-Puritan dominant powers.