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

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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.”<sup>1</sup> 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 assumptions<sup>2</sup> 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 tradition<sup>3</sup> (Zaret 1989) in the economic and sociological literature. In particular, Parsons (Alexander<sup>4</sup> 1983;

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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,<sup>5</sup> so liberalism, including the Enlightenment,<sup>6</sup> 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 omission<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> 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."

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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),<sup>10</sup> the unproblematic

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<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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),<sup>11</sup> that may or may not be linked with a democratic polity and culture, though problematic for others since, for example, Sombart's critique<sup>12</sup> of Weber's thesis from the *Protestant Ethic*. Simply, the derived Weberian problem is one of Puritanism and political-social authoritarianism or even tyranny<sup>13</sup> (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-

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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.

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

<sup>12</sup> 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."

<sup>13</sup> 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)<sup>14</sup>. 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),<sup>15</sup> 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"<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> 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."

<sup>15</sup> 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."

<sup>16</sup> 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 Emerson<sup>17</sup> 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,<sup>18</sup> including

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<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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 democracy<sup>19</sup> (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

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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.

<sup>19</sup> 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,<sup>20</sup> 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.

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<sup>20</sup> 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."