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Chapter 12: Study Guide, Short Answer

3. How did the concept of Protestant resistance theory reflect Protestant teachings?

What, if any, is the connection to the theories advanced in support of witch-hunting?

The concept of Protestant resistance was primarily in response to the suppression they faced from totalitarian, national rulers who enforced a single religion. Protestant resistance was rooted in their support of local and regional control, a fundamental Protestant teaching, as opposed to the teaching of centralized control supported by Catholicism. While Protestant resistance was not rooted in religious teaching, it was a result of the political realities of the time that forced marginalized Protestants to revolutionize and fight for their religious freedoms, particularly Calvinists who had their civil and religious rights denied.

Support of local control is a result of the Protestant rejection of papal authority and its support of regional rulers. When Protestantism was a minority in Europe, it supported local authority in cities such as Geneva which allowed Protestantism to thrive by the means of *cuius regio, eius religio*. Calvinism in particular adopted a presbyterian organization, where boards of presbyters, or elders, represented different congregations of Calvinists. Catholicism, in contrast, supported a strict hierarchical structure of the Church, from the pope to the individual priest, where each level expressed obedience to the level above it. It benefited from nations and monarchies that adopted Catholicism as their official religion, supporting the ideal of “one king, one law, one faith.”

Protestant resistance was not in support of the Biblical ideals on which Protestantism was based upon, however. At first, Protestants followed the rule of obedience to world authority as mandated by

the Bible, an ideal that Luther himself supported. It was the political realities of the time that encouraged Protestant resistance, exchanging the ideals of Biblical authority for the ideal of local control and the rights of every individual, as opposed to the Catholic ideal of national, centralized, and in the Protestant view, tyrannical control. Calvinist resistance was rooted in Calvin's belief that lower magistrates had the right to oppose tyrannical higher magistrates, and later expanded upon by various Protestant authors. This set the basis for Protestant resistance in Europe, rejecting the tyrannical rule of higher authorities for the impartial and fair rule of local authorities.

Modern theories in support of witch-hunting are that the hunts were employed as a tool for societal governments to find an enemy towards which the people could rally against, thus unifying the citizens under their control on some common issue. As protestant resistance was against the tyrannical control of large government, and as smaller, regional government began to take hold, they would need to unifying the people under their control through some means. In addition, Protestant beliefs had less protection against fears such as dark magic or the devil. However, as Protestant belief stated that the devil did not have much power compared to Catholic belief, and that changes in government were only one result of Protestant resistance, it cannot be said that there's any direct relation between the two.