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MaThesis

Lutheran and Reformed Ideas about Resistance to Tyrants

A Comparative Study of Four Sixteenth-Century Texts

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Introduction

Section 1: Political Resistance and the Right of It

Political resistance refers to the disobedience by members of a body politic to state authorities or their commands for the primary sake of justice. These members' right to defend against unjust exercise of their authorities (in order to preserve the established legal order) is accordingly defined as 'the right of resistance' (Reuter 2012, 135). The idea of this right had its foundation in aspects of civil society and the church. In the societies of Western, Central and Northern Europe, this idea was founded on the three overlapping concepts: the sovereign's subjection to the established law, the sovereign's obligation to protect his vassal, and the nobility's right to resist the sovereign by arms when the latter acted unjustly. In the church, the idea of resistance was primarily founded on two of God's commands: being subject to the authorities (*Romans 13*) and obeying God rather than human authority (*Acts 5:29*) (Link 2012, 133). These commands furthermore indicated the duty of the subjects (the commoners and the magistrates) to the royal authority. That is, obeying the authority in the regular condition, but rejecting the obedience when the authority intrudes on religious conscience and justice. These subjects accordingly had the right to disobey their sovereign, which is defined as 'passive resistance', for the sake of conscience and justice. In the emergency situation, they also had the right to resist the sovereign in active manners (of self-defence), which can be nonviolent or violent (Reuter 2012, 135-136).

It is noteworthy that it had taken a long period to form the idea of 'the right of resistance' throughout history. This idea was initiated by Manegold of Lautenbach in the Middle Ages. It was later developed by Thomas Aquinas based on his theory of tyranny: active resistance was needed toward a usurper (illegitimate sovereign), while passive resistance should be launched toward the tyrannical commands (of a sovereign) that violated the natural law (Link 2012, 133). Here, the natural law refers to the law that God implanted in human nature. It has three basic precepts: "love God", "avoid harming one's neighbour", and "divide property for the sake of the common good". This law is related to the Mosaic law (especially the Decalogue), and guides a human individual to live and connect with the other individuals in a society according to its principle (MacPherson 2020, 15-16). Then, the Thomistic idea of 'the right of resistance' based on the natural law was taken over by the

Protestant communities to exert resistance within the Christian community in the Reformation period (Reuter 2012, 135). The Reformers (Protestants) set various emphases on this idea over time and across denominations. For example, Martin Luther first insisted on passive physical resistance, but later in 1530 cautiously affirmed the inferior magistrates' right to exert active resistance. In response, John Calvin argued that resistance should be justified when the magistrate(s) violated God's commandments and the natural law (Link 2012, 133). In around 1572, Theodore Beza – Calvin's successor in Geneva – rethought Calvin's theories regarding resistance to handle the newly strong collision between the state of Catholicism and the church of Protestantism (Witte 2008, 547).

The content above shows that some important elements of the idea concerning political resistance have been changed according to the different religious theories and historical contexts. These elements mainly include: the tyrant (political authority) who was resisted, the subjects who participated in resistance, the kind of resistance, and the circumstance for the justification of resistance. Important definitions of these elements seem to have emerged in the early Reformation period, namely the sixteenth century.

Section 2: Thesis Research

This thesis focuses on four theological texts about resistance in chronological order. These texts are two Lutheran treatises: Martin Luther's *Warning to My Dear German People* (1531) and *The Magdeburg Confession* (1550), and two Reformed treatises: John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559, specifically book 4, chapter 20) and Theodore Beza's *Right of Magistrates* (1574). In this thesis, I am exploring the following central research question:

What are the main similarities and differences between the Lutheran (Martin Luther, 1531; Magdeburg Confession, 1550) and Reformed (John Calvin, 1559; Theodore Beza, 1574) ideas concerning resistance to (possible) tyrants?

The exploration has three sub questions:

1. Who (which political authorities) may be resisted and by whom?
2. What kind of resistance is justified under what circumstances?
3. What are the main similarities and differences between the views of justified resistance in the four selected texts?

The first four chapters of the thesis are concerned with the respective study of the ideas on who may be resisted, by whom, by what kind of resistance, and under what conditions, that are presented in the four texts. I will launch the study of Luther's *Warning to My Dear*

German People in Chapter One, and that of *The Magdeburg Confession* in Chapter Two. Then, the studies will be focused on Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (in Chapter Three) and Beza's *Right of Magistrates* (in Chapter Four). These studies address the first two sub questions regarding the four texts. Then in Chapter Five, the relevant ideas in the four treatises will be compared and analysed to discover the main similarities and differences between them, which addresses the third sub question. Last, I will offer the conclusive answer for the central research question and evaluate the research results in Chapter Six.

Section 3: Recent Studies

To discover the development of the (changing) definitions of these important elements, some scholars have studied the relevant ideas and texts, especially those of the sixteenth century. For example, David Mark Whitford has studied the Magdeburg Lutherans' ideas about political resistance to Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire, who was perceived as a political tyrant (that attacked the gospel and the Lutherans) by them and their predecessor Luther. These Lutherans formed their ideas by primarily referring to *Acts 5:29* and *Romans 13*, and presented them in the treatise *The Magdeburg Confession* (1550). Whitford has furthermore discovered the Magdeburgian ideas' potential relation to the Lutheran four theories (Luther's theological position of preserving the gospel when it was under attack, the natural right to self-defence, the Hessian theory about the inferior magistrates' sharing the power with the superior, and the Saxon theory of "notorious injury" that an authority forfeits his jurisdiction in the area where he acts unjustly), and their further inspiration to Beza for forming his systematic theories of identifying the tyrant and justifying resistance to him in 1570s (Whitford 2005, 58-78). Also, John Witte Jr. has studied the Reformed ideas of the duties and rights of the magistrates and the common people in a well-ordered society. In such a society, the magistrates are obliged to protect their people's Godly ordained right of seeking His grace, according to the moral (natural) law (Witte 2007, 59-76). Calvin's ideas also inspired Beza. In line with the Lutheran idea about the natural right to self-defence, Beza expanded the people's right to vote for or consent to their rulers. Such rights furthermore produce the mutual obligations between people and their rulers, and between the superior and inferior magistrates (ibid., 123-133).

Whitford and Witte's studies have analysed not only the different meanings of the important elements of ideas concerning political resistance across different sixteenth-century theologians, but also their mutual dependence. These inspired my interest in exploring more details of the relevant Protestant ideas. So, based on their studies, I will launch research on

the selected texts of these theologians to further explore the differences and relations between the Lutheran and Reformed ideas about resistance to tyrants, in my Master's thesis. The research is instrumental to trace and understand the development in theological thinking that emerged in the preservation of the established order in European society. It also helps to find the theological roots (that were produced by the Protestant ideas about resistance) for the modern considerations of social regulation and human rights defence, especially in Europe. These roots have been almost forgotten or neglected by the modern European people, according to Witte (Witte 2007, 335-339).

Section 4: Methodology

First, I will learn the historical contexts and the potential theological and philosophical foundations for the primary sources (the four selected texts) by reading the relevant secondary sources. Then, the primary sources will be closely read and prudently analysed in their historical contexts by carefully referring to the relevant secondary sources, in order to answer the research questions. In this process, I will apply some of the methodological criteria for historical studies that were proposed by Michel Barnes. They are, unpacking the senses of the selected texts based on their historical contexts, identifying the general ideas that are presented in the texts by placing them in the larger "external" narratives that are primarily concerned with the authors' broad theological and philosophical foundations, and discovering the detailed ideas that may be reflected in some segmental parts of the texts (Briggman and Scully 2022, 20-21).

Since the primary sources have their own theological and philosophical foundations, and historical contexts, I will need to prudently research their ideas about political resistance based on these foundations and contexts. According to Brad S. Gregory, the researchers' preexisting knowledge (that they have learned from their own experience and contemporary literature) in the historical, theological and philosophical aspects, is prone to influence their newly gained relevant knowledge regarding the selected texts, which causes biases. So, the researchers should try their best to avoid imposing their later/personal ideas or concerns on their researches on the early sources, but do justice to the original meaning to these sources (Gregory 2009, 36-38). Thus, in the research, I will be critical about my preexisting knowledge as well as the arguments that are presented in the recent studies, and take efforts to discover the original ideas and concerns of the selected texts.

Chapter One: Luther's *Warning to My Dear German People* (1531)

Section 1: Introduction

Luther's treatise *Warning to My Dear German People* (1531) can be divided into four parts. The first part is concerned with Luther's accusation of the papal clergy of the Diet of Augsburg, because the clerical members aimed to foment war toward the Lutherans and thus would infringe upon the existing peace of the Holy Roman Empire (Luther 1971, 11-15). The second part is concerned with Luther's exhortation that the Lutherans needed to be ready for the potential self-defence against the papacy's attack on them (ibid., 15-23). The third part expresses Luther's ambivalent attitude toward the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V: Luther expected the emperor's acceptance of the papists' incitation of calling to arms against the Lutherans; but on the other hand, he was somewhat reluctant to abandon the existing respect and obedience to the emperor (ibid., 23-34). The fourth part expresses Luther's warning to the Lutherans of the potential disobedience to the emperor if he had really decided to support the papists' attack on the Lutherans (ibid., 34-55).

Luther's words in the first and second parts reflect his perception of the papacy as the devilish destroyer of peace and a firm resistance to them. The third and fourth parts together embody Luther's possible shift of his obedience to the emperor into disobedience (passive resistance) to the latter. These show two potential tyrants for resistance: the pope and the emperor, with only the latter as an obviously political one. Notably, since the research is concerned with political resistance, it is necessary to confirm whether the pope also counted as a sort of political tyrant. This will be analysed in the next section. Moreover, Luther's attitude toward (dis)obedience to the emperor was likely to be based on his ideas of (dis)obedience to political authority. The analysis of these ideas will also help to find the answers to the second sub question in the aspect of the condition for resistance.

In addition, Luther expressed his inclination of leaving the possible justification of self-defence to the jurists and to "the law" in the second part. He explained that the concern of self-defence was for the jurists, who had charge of the things of 'Caesar' (which indicated the political authority), but should not be burdened by God's people, by referring to *Matthew 22:21* (Luther 1971, 19). It indicates Luther's openness for the jurists' justification of resistance to political authority. For that, the jurists' ideas may offer the answer to the first sub question in the aspect of the subject who exerted resistance.

Therefore, in the following sections, I will first explore Luther's ideas of obedience to authority and disobedience to it. This exploration furthermore helps finding out Luther's

ideas about resistance. Then, the jurists' complementary ideas for justification of resistance will be explored. The explorations are aimed to fully address the two sub questions.

Section 2: Luther's Ideas of (Dis)obedience to (Political) Authority and Resistance

Section 2.1: Obedience to Authority

As is shown in Section 1, Luther's warning (to the Lutherans) was primarily concerning the resistance to the papacy (who destroyed peace of the Holy Roman Empire) and possible disobedience to the emperor (if he allied with the papacy). Accordingly, Luther's admiration should be the preservation of social peace and (usual) obedience to the emperor under peaceful circumstances. The two admired points are both embodied in his theory of the Two Realms, which was formed by Luther via his reading of *Romans 13* and his understanding of the relationships between God's authority, the temporal authority, and their subjects that are embodied from this biblical chapter, in 1523 (Whitford 2009, 580).

This theory is specifically concerned with the binary juxtaposing realms of God's kingdom: the spiritual realm that is governed by God's Word, and the secular realm (of government) that is ruled by the sword. The preacher, who represents the first realm, is responsible for preaching God's Words; while the magistrate, who represents the second realm, is responsible for maintaining temporal peace and justice. The magistrate has two main levels. As the *superior* magistrate of government in the secular realm, the emperor has the paramount duty to preserve and restore the Godly ordained peace. As the subjects of the emperor, the princes and municipal councils, who are the *inferior* magistrates, are obliged to obey the emperor and support his duty (Wolgast 2014, 398-400). The spiritual and secular realms are distinct though they keep mutual influence (Whitford 2009, 581). Notably, true Christians, who were defined as 'all true believers who are in Christ and under Christ' by Luther, belong to both of the two realms. They are also the subjects of the emperor in the secular realm and should be obedient to him in principle (Wolgast 2014, 399). So, as the servants of God's kingdom, the (superior and inferior) magistrates and Christian commoners corporately preserved social peace through fulfilling their respective obligations.

Notably, the preservation of social peace was also with the primary aim of preserving the (true) Christians' freedom to pursue faith. This (Christian) freedom was grounded on God's mercy in Christ. The Christians' faith would guide them to have blessed relationships with God, which fulfils the first three commandments of the Decalogue (exclusively loving God, no idol worship and no blasphemy) that were inscribed on the First Table (Andersen 2007, 714). So, the inferior magistrates were also responsible to restrict external

abominations of the gospel in their society (Wolgast 2014, 400).

Section 2.2: Disobedience to Authority

In reality, social peace was disturbed by the papacy and the emperor through fomenting a potential war toward the Lutherans (Luther 1971, 12-14). Specifically, some papists enacted the issue of the Speyer diet, which claimed that the Catholic estates (as the majority) had the dominant right to solve the religious issues by suppressing Lutheranism (as the minority), in 1529. It led the Lutherans, including Philip Melanchthon, to compose the *Augsburg Confession* to defend the Lutherans' independent government of their own estates. Then in 1530, the emperor immediately showed his tendency to launch an armed enforcement to the Lutherans, by allying with the papacy (Friedeburg 2002, 56-57). This tendency was noticed by Luther based on the evidence of the elector of Brandenburg's writing that the emperor had refuted the Lutherans' confession and the emperor's unwillingness to show the confutation (that he had secretly accepted from the papists) to the *Augsburg Confession* in public (Luther 1971, 24-29). For Luther, the papists intruded on the Lutherans' consciences (of preserving peace) with their bad consciences (of waging war) because they negated the divine, imperial, and natural laws (ibid., 12-21). Here, the divine law means the law that was offered by God in the spiritual realm, and the imperial law refers to the law that was enacted by the civic government in the secular realm. The natural law means the virtuous law that God implanted in human nature, as is described in the Introduction chapter. Moreover, Luther stated that the emperor would also violate God's divine law, his own imperial law and Godly ordained duty of maintaining social peace, if he joined in the papists' encroachment upon the Lutherans' consciences. In this case, the Lutherans should disobey the emperor for the sake of obedience to God (ibid., 30). For the emperor would touch the limit of his subjects' obedience to him if he infringed on the latter's consciences (Wolgast 2014, 401). Here, Luther primarily referred to *Acts 5:29*, which describes "We must obey God rather than men" (Luther 1971, 54).

Moreover, Luther exhorted the Lutherans to get ready for their disobedience (passive resistance) to the emperor, as was expressed in the fourth part of his treatise. The exhortation was presented for three reasons: preserving the gospel of Christ, preventing the Lutherans from being burdened by the abominations that were committed by the papacy, and preventing from lending a hand (to the foes of the Lutherans) in ruining the good of the gospel (Luther 1971, 34-55). The first and third reasons were concerned with preserving the gospel. In the second reason, Luther primarily presented his reproach to the papacy for their religious faults: the papacy aimed to rob the earthly power via their blasphemy of the gospel, by enforcing the

Lutherans to practise Masses, which centralised the pope's representative of God but marginalised Christ. For their blasphemous attempt and acts, the papists were considered as the devils, with the pope representing the Antichrist (ibid., 38-47). Luther's reproach can be related to his argument in his early treatise *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520): the Catholic sacraments were wickedly reserving the sacrament for the priests instead of all men, presenting superfluous miracles instead of Christ's real flesh and body, and compelling the participants to focus on good work instead of faith (Lindberg 2000, 38-39). This also revealed the papists' attempt to intrude on the gospel, which essentially motivated them to disturb social peace. The analysis above shows a deeper reason for Luther's exhortation: the emperor's alliance with the papacy indicated the former's participation in the latter's attack on the gospel. So, Luther's possible disobedience to the emperor brought up his theological position of preserving the gospel when it was under attack.

Notably, in the third reason for his exhortation, Luther stressed that obedience to the alliance of the papacy and the emperor would help to rebuild the Devil's kingdom (Luther 1971, 53). This stress was related to Luther's theory of the Two Kingdoms: God's kingdom, which consists of the spiritual and secular realms, has an antagonistic conflict with the Devil's kingdom (Wolgast 2014, 398). Luther absolutely considered the papacy to belong to the Devil's kingdom, since he called the latter as the devils, as is described in the last paragraph. Concerning the emperor (superior magistrate), he was first considered as a servant that had been ordained by God in the secular realm of God's kingdom, as is described in Section 2.1. However, the emperor would become a "soldier of the pope" if he participated in the papacy's attack on the gospel (ibid., 410). This implies the emperor's potential apostasy: shifting from a servant of God to that of the Devil. In this case, he would share the pope's tyranny. Here, Luther stated the pope's tyranny (that offended true Christians) in his later treatise *On the Councils and the Churches* in 1539 (Luther 1539, 207-208). According to John Witte Jr., Luther had regarded the pope as a "spiritual tyrant", which was related to the latter's identity as the Antichrist, from the late 1510s (Witte 2007, 107). This is consistent with Luther's calling the pope the Antichrist, as has just been mentioned in the last paragraph. It also implies that Luther perceived the pope as the "spiritual tyrant", which was different from the politically tyrannical emperor. So, only the emperor was regarded as the political authority for resistance, which addresses the first half of the first sub question.

Luther's perception of the emperor's potential apostasy was likely to be the foundation for his shift from obedience to the emperor to disobedience to him. His perception and shift seemed to be cautious. In the third part, Luther even respectfully called the emperor "His

Imperial Majesty” and showed his remembrance of the emperor’s defence of the Lutheran doctrine under the incitement of some venomous Catholic princes and indication of Luther as the priests’ scourge (Luther 1971, 30-32). These words reflect Luther’s retained obedience to the emperor, which implies his doubt about the emperor’s apostasy and his shift to disobedience to the latter. This reflection is consistent with (the translator and introducer of the treatise) Martin H. Bertram’s argument: Luther still stated Christians’ obligation of suffering oppression and injustice by their imperial authority on March 6, 1530, but soon posed his new position on being against the emperor’s position in 1531 (Bertram 1971, 6-7). Similarly, W. D. J. Cargill Thompson found that Luther’s perception of the (dis)obedience to political authority had gradually shifted from ‘absolute obedience’ into ‘possible disobedience’ from the 1520s to the 1530s (Thompson 1975, 161-199). On the other hand, Luther’s exhortation for the readiness to disobey the emperor (in the fourth part) showed the sharpness of his shift, which is embodied in the analysis in the former paragraphs.

Section 2.3: Resistance

Since political disobedience is defined as ‘passive resistance’ (as is stated in the Introduction chapter), Luther’s idea of disobedience to authority already somewhat presented his idea of resistance. Moreover, Luther stated some words in the second part: “I will not reprove those who defend themselves against the murderous and bloodthirsty papists, nor let anyone else rebuke them as being seditious, but I will accept their action and let it pass as self-defence. I will direct them in this matter to the law and to the jurists” (Luther 1971, 19). These words literally express self-defence against the papacy. However, by combining them with Luther’s exhortation of the potential disobedience to the emperor, which was described in the fourth part, these words can be interpreted as Luther’s acceptance of possible resistance to both the tyrants if they cooperatively attacked the gospel. It is also noteworthy that Luther highlighted two points in these words: first, he accepted ‘self-defence’, which was usually related to active resistance (as is stated in the Introduction chapter), as the way for resistance; second, he let the jurists to justify (some sort of) self-defence.

The definition of ‘self-defence’ can be further discovered by exploring the surrounding context of Luther’s words above. In the following sentences of these words, Luther differentiated self-defence from rebellion/insurrection, which was committed by the papists. A significant difference is: rebellion/insurrection violated the divine, imperial, and natural laws; while, self-defence did not violate these laws, but served for maintaining peace (Luther 1971, 19-21). Moreover, in the sentences prior to these words, Luther urged his followers to

firmly resist the papacy by alluding to John Huss' fight and martyrdom under the persecution of the Bohemians in 1415. He also encouraged the Lutherans to fearlessly face the potential death by indicating God's blessing of those who were persecuted for righteousness' sake, with reference to *Matthew 5:10*. This indication was with his exempling of God's uprising Judas Maccabeus to revenge the Syrian king Antiochus (who persecuted the Jews) and John Zizka's revenge on the king Sigismund (who supported the Bohemians to persecute Huss and his followers) (ibid., 16-18). These sentences show that Luther's definition of 'self-defence' had two essential points: first, it did not overstep the divine, imperial, and natural laws; second, it was a sort of active resistance, which could be either nonviolent as Huss' martyrdom, or violent as Maccabeus and Zizka's armed actions. Here, Luther urged his followers to resist the papacy in nonviolent ways, but left to the jurists to justify armed resistance to the emperor. It is consistent with Bertram's argument that Luther's words above showed his endorsement of the possible defensive action (by military means) against the emperor if all peaceful means had failed (Bertram 1971, 7).

Luther's idea of resistance can also be related to his idea of the natural right to self-defence. He argued that the natural law endowed all subjects of the empire with its inherent right to self-defence (Whitford 2005, 67). Notably, since self-defence was active resistance, Luther's idea of the natural right to self-defence indicated that he regarded the right of active resistance to be based on the natural law. For Luther, this right should naturally belong to all men. However, he only affirmed this right for political resistance to the jurists, because he entirely left the justification of self-defence (to the emperor) to them. Luther's openness for the jurists' active resistance to political authority might be a new shift for him in 1531. This is consistent with Christoph Link's argument that Luther just started to affirm the governmental officials' right to launch active resistance to the political tyrant in 1530 (Link 2012, 133), as is mentioned in the Introduction chapter.

Concerning the jurists that were mentioned by Luther, they were Lutherans who possessed official ranks in the empire. These jurists mainly included Electoral Saxony, Hesse, Strasbourg, Nuremberg and Ulm, who joined in the defensive league of the Lutheran Reformation with Melancthon (Friedeburg 2002, 57). They formed their theories concerning resistance, which complemented Luther's relevant ideas and helped their justification of resistance. These theories will be described and discussed in the following section.

Section 3: The Lutheran Jurists' Complementary Ideas for Justification of Resistance

The Lutheran jurists launched the resistance along the two parallel lines: military preparedness and theoretical justification. For the military, they prepared the armies of the Schmalkaldic League, which was established by the Lutheran princes in December 1530. For theoretical justification, they needed to answer the question about whether the subjects of the emperor could defy his will. Subjects ought to resist the political tyrant for the sake of the gospel, which was in line with Luther's theological position of preserving the gospel when it was under attack, but also prevent their resisting acts (possibly with military force) from overstepping the imperial/civil law. The jurists' adjustment in aspects of theology and legitimation was also relevant to their interpretation of *Romans 13* (Whitford 2005, 63).

Jurists from the Landgraviate of Hesse first posed a solution concerning the legal and theological obstacles. They stated that the empire was actually governed together by the emperor, imperial electors, and other inferior magistrates. For this commonwealth (instead of a monarchy), these magistrates constitutionally shared the governing power. So, the inferior magistrates' resistance to the emperor should be seen as an action toward a sovereign of equal status, instead of the one against a superior (Whitford 2005, 64). Following the Hessian theory, Gregor Brück and Duke John of Saxony presented the Saxon theory of "notorious injury": the magistrate would effectively lose his jurisdiction in the matter in which he had acted grossly unjustly. In the case of Charles V, his jurisdiction was forfeited only in the matter of religion, but maintained in all other matters. For that, the emperor still had the right and duty to preserve general social order (*ibid.*, 65).

Notably, the Hessian and Saxon theories might have a shared foundation, which was posited by Johannes Bugenhagen and Philip of Hesse in 1529. Specifically, Bugenhagen argued: it was illegal for the emperor to intrude on the Lutheran religious matters by his arms because the true nature of Christian faith did not belong to the emperor's responsibility. Philip of Hesse added his interpretation of *Romans 13:4-6*: the "minister of God", who deserves the people's subjection, indicated the princes of the empire rather than the emperor. For the princes got their magistracies via heredity, whereas the magistracy of the emperor was somewhat based on election (Friedeburg 2002, 62). Based on the position of Bugenhagen and Philip of Hesse, the Saxon jurists furthermore argued that the princes, who were the inferior magistrates, were legally responsible to protect their subjects (the commoners) when the latter suffered from the attack of the emperor. This argument considerably justified the legality of the inferior magistrates' resistance to the emperor (*ibid.*). Then in 1531, a 'theological advice from Nuremberg' stated that the inferior magistrates, including the

princes and some other lower ranking officials, were instituted with their responsibility for defending the law of God (ibid., 70). These arguments above show that the Lutheran inferior magistrates would actively resist the emperor.

These jurists shared the Hessian and Saxon theories with Luther in the meeting in Torgau in 1530. According to Whitford, Luther totally accepted the Saxon theory. For the Hessian theory, Luther endorsed that the inferior magistrates were somehow equal to the emperor, though he still regarded the empire as a monarchy rather than a constitutionally organised commonwealth (Whitford 2005, 65-66). Ultimately, Luther's attitude toward the Hessian and Saxon theories helped the Lutheran jurists to develop and form the Lutheran four theories, which combined the two theories with Luther's idea of the natural right to self-defence and his theological position of preserving the gospel when it was under attack, to legally justify resistance to the emperor in the 1530s (ibid., 68-69).

Section 4: Conclusion

In his treatise, Luther harshly criticised the papacy for four main reasons: their attack on the gospel of Christ (Luther 1971, 38-47), disturbance of social peace (ibid., 12-14), intrusion on the Lutherans' consciences (ibid., 15-18), and violence to the divine, imperial, and natural laws (ibid., 19-21). For Luther, the pope, who represented the Antichrist (that served the Devil's kingdom), used tyranny to wage war and had to be resisted. So, Luther exhorted his followers to firmly resist this spiritual tyrant by self-defence (based on the natural right). Self-defence refers to active resistance that did not overstep the divine, imperial, and natural laws. Here, these Lutherans were urged to exert self-defence in nonviolent ways, which might lead to martyrdom. Moreover, Luther noticed the emperor Charles V's tendency of accepting the papacy's incitement to foment war toward the Lutherans, which indicated the emperor and the papacy's alliance of attacking the gospel. This was considered as a sign of the emperor's apostasy from God to the Devil. Under this circumstance, the emperor would become a political tyrant who should be resisted together with the pope. Luther thus exhorted his followers and adherents to disobey (passively resist) the emperor in order to preserve the gospel of Christ (with primary reference to *Acts 5:29*), which showed Luther's theological position. On the other hand, Luther aimed to entirely leave the justification of self-defence (to the emperor) to the jurists, who were also Lutherans. For he primarily argued that it was the duty for the jurists to tackle any political issues concerning the emperor, by referring to *Matthew 22:21*. It was also because Luther only affirmed the jurists to justify political resistance with the natural right to self-defence. Notably, Luther left to the jurists to theorise

about resistance to the emperor by armed self-defence, which was different from the nonviolent (spiritual) self-defence that should be used by the Lutheran commoners.

For the Lutheran jurists, it was also a big matter to figure out the legal way of justifying the potential resistance to the emperor, especially since they prepared the possible military force for self-defence. This struggle was deeply related to the theological position of these jurists: they needed to resist the tyrannically political authority (the emperor) to preserve the gospel, but on the other hand, they had to tackle the biblical scriptures concerning subjection to authority as stated in *Romans 13*. With reference to Luther's theological ideas, in 1530 the jurists ultimately formed the Lutheran four theories: the Hessian theory about the inferior magistrates' equally sharing the power with the emperor, the Saxon theory of "notorious injury" according to which an authority effectively forfeits his jurisdiction in the area where he acts grossly unjustly (the emperor's jurisdiction was forfeited only in the matter of religion), the natural right to self-defence, and the theological claim of preserving the gospel when it was under attack. The latter two theories derived from Luther's ideas, while the former two positions were formed by the jurists. Notably, the Hessian and Saxon theories might be developed based on the crucial position of Bugenhagen and Philip of Hesse: the "minister of God" who deserves the people's subjection, which is described in *Romans 13:4-6*, referred to the prince instead of the emperor. This position furthermore inspired the Saxon jurists to argue that the inferior magistrates, which primarily indicated the princes but later also included some other lower ranked officials, were instituted as the guard of the law by God. It clarified the inferior magistrates' responsibility of protecting their subjects (the commoners) under attack and their legal/natural right to resist the superior (the emperor) via self-defence.

All in all, Luther's treatise and the jurists' ideas combinedly offer the answers to the two sub questions. Specifically, the emperor Charles V, who was the political authority, may be resisted by all the Lutheran subjects of his. Concerning these subjects, the commoners should passively resist (disobey) the emperor, while the inferior magistrates (primarily the princes) should resist him in an active manner (self-defence) by using their special (natural) right to self-defence for political resistance. The inferior magistrates could thus justify self-defence (with possible military force within the regulation of the imperial law) to the emperor under the circumstance that the emperor followed the papacy's incitement to wage war (to attack the Lutherans and the gospel), which made the former join in the tyranny of the latter.

Chapter Two: *The Magdeburg Confession* (1550)

Section 1: Introduction

In 1546, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V formally made his alliance with the pope to consolidate the faith and the estates of the Empire, and soon waged war against Hesse and Saxony in 1547 (Whitford 2001, 62-63). In this war, which is called “the Schmalkaldic War”, Charles V defeated the Lutheran forces. Then in 1548, he opened the Diet of Augsburg and issued the Augsburg Interim, which reinstated papal supremacy and many of the Roman Catholic practices, including the seven sacraments and clerical vestment. However, the implementation of the Interim was refused by the Lutheran bishop and the city council of Magdeburg. They soon gathered more (exiled) Protestant pastors, teachers, and theologians in Magdeburg and composed the treatise *The Magdeburg Confession* (1550) to oppose the Interim. The authorship of the treatise is controversial. The work is mostly ascribed to either Nicholas von Amsdorf or Nicholas Gallus (Whitford 2005, 69-70).

The treatise has three parts. The first part is concerned with the Magdeburg Lutherans’ confession of the Christian doctrine. It consists of seven chapters. The first to the sixth chapters respectively describe the Lutheran ideas of the triune God, of sin, of the law, of the gospel, of the sacraments, and of the church. These chapters also show the papacy’s theological errors, its relation to the power of the devil, the Interimists and Adiaphorists’ errors that were shared with the papacy, and their tendency to attack the gospel (*TMC*, 11-40). Here, the Interimists were the supporters of the Augsburg Interim. The Adiaphorists refer to Philip Melanchthon’s followers who compromised with the pope concerning the seven sacraments and the pope’s certain distinctives in worship (*ibid.*, 7). In the seventh chapter, the Magdeburgians stated the superior and inferior magistrates’ Godly ordained duty to be in charge of politics and economy to defend their religious subjects. The subjects accordingly had their principal duty to obey their magistrates, but also a right to remove the latter from the honour of magistrate if the latter unrighteously led their charges (*ibid.*, 41-43).

The second part is concerned with the doctrine of magistrates’ resistance. The Magdeburgians argued that the magistrates, who possessed one of three orders of social power, had the duty to defend the true doctrines of God. They accordingly ought to resist the papists, Interimists and Adiaphorists (who occupied the other two orders of social power), because the latter advocated false doctrines, worshipped idols, and committed blasphemies. Within the magistrates, the inferiors ought to resist the superior (Charles V) if the latter supported the papists, Interimists and Adiaphorists to attack the true religion by arms (which

made him become a political tyrant) (*TMC*, 45-72). The third part is concerned with the Magdeburgians' exhortation to all the (true) Christians over the empire. The exhortation expressed that the enemies who persecuted the doctrine of Christ should be perceived as unity, and all the Christians ought to unitedly resist the impious emperor (*ibid.*, 73-88).

Notably, Pastor Matt Trehwella, who wrote a 'Foreword' in the modern translation of *The Magdeburg Confession*, argued that the first part of the treatise was designed to assure the inferior magistrates' rights and duties founded on the Lutheran four theories (that were formed in 1530) (Trehwella 2012, x). Also, based on his study of *The Magdeburg Confession* (as is shown in the Introduction chapter), David Mark Whitford posed a similar argument: the Magdeburgians combined the Lutheran four theories into a hybrid theory of resistance, which integrated the four theories into the words of their confession (Whitford 2005, 69). Their arguments are meaningful. Since all these four theories have turned out to be significant for the answers to the two sub questions regarding Luther's *Warning to My Dear German People*, as is concluded in Chapter One, their potential relation with the first and perhaps second parts of the *The Magdeburg Confession* is also likely to address these sub questions regarding the latter. So, I will explore the relation between the four theories and the first and second parts of the treatise in Section 2. In addition, the third part of the treatise, which describes the Magdeburgians' exhortation to perceive the enemies' group without differentiation and unify their own group of resistance to the enemies, may complementally address the first question, which is concerning the object for resistance and the subject who would launch it. This part will thus be explored in Section 3.

Section 2: The Relation between the Lutheran Four Theories and the Treatise

As is mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the Lutheran forces were conquered by the emperor Charles V in the Schmalkaldic War in 1547. Here, the Lutheran forces were likely to belong to the Schmalkaldic League, which was established by the early Lutheran princes in 1530 and led by John Frederick of Saxony and Philip of Hesse (Weinbrenner 2012, 494-495). As is described in Chapter One, Luther and the Lutheran jurists together produced the Lutheran four theories: Luther's theological position of preserving the gospel when it was under attack, the natural right to self-defence, the Hessian theory about the inferior magistrates' sharing the power with the superior, and the Saxon theory of "notorious injury" that an authority forfeits his jurisdiction in the area where he acts unjustly. The former two theories derived from Luther's ideas, while the latter two were formed by the jurists. These four theories had a relatively loose mutual connection when they were used to justify the

possible resistance to Charles V who had not yet waged his war in the 1530s. While in 1550, after the experience of being intruded by Charles V's arms, the new generation of Lutherans felt they had to reform the four theories into a more consolidated form, which would help them to express a sort of more pragmatic resistance via their confession.

Section 2.1: The Theories that Derived from Luther's Ideas

As is described in Chapter One, Luther first reproached the papacy's infringement on the gospel and the Lutherans' conscience, which made the pope be considered as the Antichrist and a spiritual tyrant that had to be resisted, in the *Warning to My Dear German People*. Similarly, the Magdeburg Lutherans condemned the pope as the Antichrist, and the Interimists and Adiaphorists for their alliance with the papacy to encroach on the gospel and the Lutheran conscience, in the first part of *The Magdeburg Confession (TMC, 11-40)*. They also exhorted to spiritually defend against the papacy, who used their tyranny to violate the divine, imperial and natural laws via their idolatrous doctrines and practices, and their allies (the Interimists and Adiaphorists), in the beginning of the second part of the treatise (*ibid.*, 47-49).

In the political aspect, the Magdeburg Lutherans stated that the subjects (mostly the commoners) had the rights to remove their magistrate from his honour if he unrighteously charged his affairs and thus failed to defend his subjects' religion based on the gospel (which made him become the ordinance of the devil), for the sake of God's Word and the subjects' consciences, even though the subjects should be principally obedient to their magistrates (*TMC, 41-43*). They furthermore stated that the inferior magistrates, who belonged to the subjects of the superior magistrate, ought to defend against the superior magistrate (Charles V) who joined in the tyranny of the papacy to persecute the subjects' religion by arms. This statement was supported with their first argument that the inferior magistrates should disobey the superior who terrorised good works and honoured evil, which depraved the latter from an ordinance of God into that of the devil, by referring to *Romans 13:3* (*ibid.*, 49-61). This argument was related to Luther's potential proposal of the emperor's apostasy from God to the Devil (based on his theory of the Two Kingdoms), which is mentioned in Chapter One. Moreover, the Magdeburgians' statements all above embodied Luther's idea of the inferior magistrates' duty to preserve the Christians' freedom to pursue their faith, and his shift from the Christians' obedience to the emperor into their disobedience to him (when he attacked the gospel), which are also described in Chapter One. They can be furthermore related to Luther's theological position of preserving the gospel when it was under attack.

Notably, the Magdeburgians stated that all the commoners and magistrates had the right to defend against the papacy, Interimists and Adiaphorists, though the right to defend against the superior magistrate specially belonged to the inferior magistrates. Since this right of self-defence was shared by all the people who were excluded from the groups of the spiritual tyrant, it was seen to be based on the natural law, according to Luther (as is stated in Chapter One). So, the Magdeburgians' statement concerning this right was related to the natural right to self-defence.

Section 2.2: The Hessian and Saxon Theories

In addition to the first argument to support the inferior magistrates' right/duty to defend against the superior magistrate who attacked the gospel and the religious subjects, which is mentioned in Section 2.1, the Magdeburg Lutherans posed their second and third arguments: second, the inferior magistrates' obedience to God should be prior to their obedience to Caesar (the superior), because Caesar and his subjects were all subjected to God's laws, which distinguishingly trump human laws; third, God ordained the inferior magistrates to punish the superior who violated His laws (*TMC*, 63-72). The second argument was related to *Acts 5:29*, which describes "We must obey God rather than men". By adding the reason that 'Caesar and his subjects shared subjection to God' for this sentence, the Magdeburgians posed this indication: the commoners and the (inferior and superior) magistrates were considered to somewhat share the equal statuses under God. It furthermore implied that the superior and inferior magistrates ought to somewhat share the governing power in the empire, which was just in line with the Hessian theory. Also, the third argument showed the inferior magistrates' Godly ordained duty to punish the tyrannical superior. This can be related to the Saxon theory that was concerned with the forfeiture of the superior magistrate's jurisdiction. With their relations to the Hessian and Saxon theories, the Magdeburgians' arguments firmly stated the inferior magistrates' duty to resist the tyrannical superior. They accordingly offer an elementary answer to the first sub question regarding the treatise. That is, the superior magistrate (Charles V) was primarily resisted by the (Lutheran) inferior magistrates.

Moreover, as is described in Section 2.1, the Magdeburg Lutherans' first argument concerning the inferior magistrates' disobedience to the tyrannical superior, which was related to the position of preserving the gospel when it was under attack, showed the general condition for the inferior magistrates' resistance to the superior: the latter attacked the Christian religion that was based on the gospel. This also implied the general definition about political tyranny: the superior magistrate who attacked the gospel and its believers. Notably,

the Magdeburgians even specified the superior's injury into four levels, which required a response by four respective kinds of resistance of the inferiors. In detail, the first level of injury is that the superior magistrate did some remediable harm to the inferiors because of his own weakness. In this case, the inferior magistrates were expected to passively resist the superior by bearing this harm (*TMC*, 58). If the superior's injury came to the second (violating the divine, imperial, and natural laws) or the third level (forcing the inferiors to certain sin), the superior would be perceived as a tyrant. For that, the inferior magistrates were obliged to use their authority to actively resist the superior's injury via self-defence (*ibid.*, 58-59). Such self-defence was likely to indicate punishing the superior magistrate by nonviolent ways (e.g., forfeiting his jurisdiction in the political process), which was related to the third argument. The highest level of the superior's injury is persecuting his subjects as well as God with guile and arms, which made the superior's office be trapped into the kingdom of the devil. In this case, everyone, including the lowest magistrate, were obliged to penalise the superior, even possibly to death (*ibid.*, 59-60). This is an indication of the inferior magistrates' armed resistance to the superior, which is consistent with Whitford's argument that armed resistance was only allowed for the fourth level of injury of the superior but ruled out for the second and third levels (Whitford 2005, 73).

The inferior magistrates' resistance to the second, third, and fourth levels of the superior's injury (concerning his irremediable intrusion on his religious subjects and the gospel) was expected to be via self-defence. This highlighted the inferior magistrates' special (natural) right to self-defence for political resistance, which was Luther's idea, as is described in Chapter One. So, the Magdeburgians' three arguments (to support the inferior magistrates' doctrine) with the nuanced description about the superior magistrate's injury and the inferiors' respective resistance well presented the essential points of all the four theories. They additionally offer a nuanced answer to the second sub question regarding the treatise: principally unarmed self-defence (punishing the superior magistrate in nonviolent ways) can be justified under the circumstance that the superior violated the laws and/or forced his subjects to certain sin, while armed resistance (punishment) can be justified only under the circumstance that the superior persecuted his subjects and the gospel via armed force. Notably, Charles V was likely to possess the fourth level of injury, because he had joined in the papacy's attack on the Lutherans with his arms.

Section 3: The Perception of Own United Group and of Enemies for Resistance as Unity

The third part of the treatise primarily describes the Magdeburg Lutherans' appeal to all the Christians (over the empire), primarily the inferior magistrates, to join in their resistance by unity (*TMC*, 77-88). It implies that some Christians might stand on the neutral position between the Magdeburgians and the alliance of the papacy and the emperor Charles V. So, they were likely to be hesitant to engage in the Lutherans' resistance. The Magdeburgians' appeal was thus with the aim of dissolving those Christians' hesitance. They highlighted the true Christians' duty of resisting the impious superior, with primary reference to *Proverbs 24:11-12*, which describes God's instruction to rescue those who are being dragged to death rather than stand by idly (*ibid.*, 80-81). This reference also implies that neutrality could not be an option when the Christians confronted the persecution of Christ, which inevitably dragged the former into a battle with the devil (Whitford 2001, 88). Notably, the Magdeburgians also cited *Acts 9:4*, which describes God's exhortation to Saul to turn from his persecution of Christians, on the front page of the treatise (*TMC*, 1). It implies that they might also have some expectation to appeal to some inferior magistrates who were originally hostile to the Lutherans (like Saul's early attitude to Christians) to join their side.

It is also noteworthy that the Magdeburg Lutherans emphasised resisting (enemies) by unity, as St. Maurice and his followers' consolidated resistance to the emperor Maximian and King Saul's followers' united disobedience to their superior's impious command (*TMC*, 78-80). This indicates that these Lutherans were likely to perceive all the Christians who had potential of joining in their group as a unity for resistance to the enemies. This perception was likely to be in line with Regius Selinus' argument in his treatise of 1547 *About Defence and Self Defence (Von der Defension und Gegenwehr)*, which confessed that all the Lutherans should defend the Holy Roman Empire as their 'fatherland' against the invasion of their enemies. Specifically, Selinus argued that the inferior magistrates, who had the right and duty to defend peace, the laws, and the common good of God, ought to justify self-defence as whole 'peoples and written constitutions' instead of separate individuals when the commonwealth (the empire) was under threat. The threat was instigated by the pope to make the 'German fatherland' become a 'Turkish monarchy'. The emperor Charles V, who followed the pope's instigation, acted like the Turkish emperor, who politically ruled over his subjects like serfs and violated the laws (Friedeburg 2002, 80-82). Selinus' argument additionally implies that he also perceived Charles V as the primary (political) object for resistance, which was consistent with that of the Magdeburg Lutherans.

Moreover, the Magdeburgians stressed that the enemies who persecuted the gospel and violated God's laws should also be perceived as unity. This unity included the traitor(s) like Judas, who had been an apostle of Christ (*TMC*, 73-77). Here, a possible example that had similarity to Judas was Philip of Hesse, who betrayed the Lutherans and surrendered to Charles V on June 19, 1547 (Whitford 2001, 63). Notably, the different individuals of the enemy group might persecute the Lutherans spiritually (with the papacy) or politically (with Charles V). Philip of Hesse was likely to be in the latter group because he had been a leader of the Schmalkaldic League, as is mentioned in Section 2. For the (Lutheran) inferior magistrates, they should thus include the individuals who joined in the political repression (with Charles V) of the Lutherans into the object for their political resistance.

So, the Magdeburg Lutherans' perception of their own united group and the united group of (political) enemies for resistance complements the elementary answer to the first sub question regarding the treatise, which is stated in Section 2. The subjects who would launch the resistance included not only the Lutheran inferior magistrates but also the other inferior magistrates who would shift their neutral or even hostile position into the side of the former. Concerning the object for resistance, it was perceived as a group that consisted of the emperor Charles V (as the centre) and the other individuals who politically persecuted the Lutherans, possibly including such traitor(s) as Philip of Hesse. Notably, this perception can be related to Luther's theory of the Two Kingdoms (mentioned in Chapter One). Specifically, this theory is fundamentally concerned with the antagonistic conflict between God's kingdom and the Devil's kingdom. Accordingly, for the Lutherans, the fight between their own united group and the united group of enemies might be seen as a conflict between the servants of the two antagonistic kingdoms. The apostasy of Philip of Hesse would thus have the same sense as that of the emperor. Namely, shifting from a servant of God to that of the Devil.

Section 4: Conclusion

After suffering from the emperor Charles V's armed intrusion and refusing to follow the Augsburg Interim (which coerced the Lutherans to accept the Roman Catholic practices), the Magdeburg Lutherans composed the treatise in 1550. The first two parts of the treatise shows their relation to the Lutheran four theories, which were formed in 1530 by the early Lutherans to justify the potential resistance to Charles V. In detail, these two parts first state the (true) Christian commoners and magistrates' duty/right to defend against the papacy, Interimists and Adiaphorists, who spiritually attacked the gospel and the Lutherans' conscience. This is related to Luther's theological position of preserving the gospel when it was under attack, and

the (whole Christians') natural right to self-defence (against the spiritual tyrant). Then, the Magdeburgians stated the inferior magistrates' duty/right to defend against the superior who failed to fulfil his obligation of protecting his subjects' religion that was based on the gospel, by primarily referring to *Romans 13:3*. This statement stressed the inferior magistrates' privilege of justifying political resistance with the natural right to self-defence, which was first proposed by the Lutheran jurists in 1530. To support this statement, the Magdeburgians argued that the inferior magistrates somewhat shared the equal status with the superior under God, and had Godly ordained duty to punish the impious superior. These two arguments are respectively related to the Hessian and Saxon theories.

The relation between these four theories and the first two parts of the treatise also addresses the second sub question regarding the treatise. That is, if the superior's injury was beyond the first (lowest) level, which indicated that if the superior did more than remediable harm to his subjects, the inferior magistrates were responsible to justify resistance (punishment) to the superior. The inferior magistrates ought to punish the superior via unarmed self-defence (e.g., forfeiting his jurisdiction in nonviolent political ways) under the circumstance that he violated the laws and the command of God (the second level of injury) and/or forced the inferiors to certain sin (the third level of injury). Their resistance had to be in an armed form under the circumstance that the superior persecuted his subjects and the gospel with guile and arms (the fourth level of injury). The injury of Charles V (the real superior) was considered to meet the fourth level, because he joined in the papacy's attack on the Lutherans with his arms. So, it was reasonable for the Lutherans to justify an armed resistance. Through integrating the four separate Lutheran theories into the two consecutive parts of their treatise, the Magdeburgians presented a more pragmatic form of resistance to a political tyrant compared to the work of Luther.

The third part of the treatise describes the Magdeburgians' exhortation to all the (true) Christians in the empire to join in their resistance and to perceive the enemies (to be resisted) as a united group. By combining with the relation between the four theories and (the first and second parts of) the treatise, this description completely addresses the first sub question regarding the treatise. Namely, the group of the superior magistrate (Charles V) of the empire was resisted by the Lutheran inferior magistrates and their allies by unity. Here, the group of the superior magistrate was likely to include the individuals who joined in Charles V's political repression of the Lutherans, such as the (Lutheran) traitor Philip of Hesse. The Lutheran inferior magistrates' allies mainly included the Christian inferior magistrates (outside Magdeburg) who would shift from their neutrality (with reference to *Proverbs 24:11*

-12) or even enmity (with reference to *Acts 9:4*) into the aid to or participation in the Magdeburg Lutherans' resistance. The fight between these two groups was likely to supernaturally represent the conflict between the Devil's kingdom and God' kingdom.

Chapter Three: Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559)

Section 1: Introduction

The study of Calvin's view on resistance is primarily focused on the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), book 4, chapter 20, entitled "Civil Government". This chapter consists of thirty-two sections, which can be divided into two main parts: the first part (sections 1-29) presents a society that is well ordered based on the magistrates' preservation of the people's freedom and social peace, and the (common) people's obedience to the (superior and inferior) magistrates, according to the (Godly ordained) public law (Calvin 1960, 1485-1517); and the second part (sections 30-32) is concerned with the inferior magistrates' duty to check the potential tyranny of the superior (the king) to protect the people's freedom, and the people's disobedience to the tyrannical/impious king, in which case the society had become disordered, if necessary to obey God (ibid., 1517-1521).

Here, the people's freedom seems to always play an important role in society. When society was well-ordered, the magistrates ought to maintain social order by preserving the people's freedom. When social order was disturbed by a tyrannical superior magistrate, the inferior magistrates needed to resist their superior for the sake of the people's freedom. So, the understanding of Calvin's idea of freedom is instrumental to explore his ideas of the people's obedience to their magistrates (in an ordered society) and of resistance to tyranny. Thus, in the following sections, I will first explore Calvin's idea of the well-ordered society (which concerns sections 1-29), which will furthermore bring up his ideas of the people's freedom and their obedience to the superior magistrate. Then, I will continue to explore the inferior magistrates and the people's resistance to the tyrannical superior (which concerns sections 30-32). These explorations will address the answers to the two sub questions.

Section 2: Calvin's Ideas of the Well-Ordered Society, the People's Freedom and Obedience

As is introduced in Section 1, Calvin presented a well-ordered society in the major content of chapter 20 (of book 4) entitled "Civil Government" in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Calvin 1960, 1485-1517). Notably, in the beginning of the chapter, Calvin stated that the civil government had a distinct but non-antithetical relation to the spiritual government, which is in the heavenly kingdom of Christ. This relation embraces the spiritual and civil societies in God's kingdom (ibid., 1485-1488). Calvin first introduced his idea of the twofold government in book 3, chapter 19 of *Institutes*. Specifically, the spiritual

government, which resided in men's inner mind, instructed them to reverence God in piety, while the civil government regulated men's outward behaviours by educating them with the duties of humanity and citizenship (ibid., 847). The spiritual government guided the civil government to form its order. Calvin described such order to be with a combined system of aristocracy and democracy, which was centrally ruled by the superior magistrate (the king) under the supervision of a number of inferior magistrates (censors and masters), by referring to the Israelite government established by Moses and described in *Exodus 18:13-26* and *Deuteronomy 1:9-17* (ibid., 1493-1494). In other words, the relation of the spiritual and civil governments made the civil government have a balanced order of aristocracy and democracy.

Moreover, Calvin described men's duties towards the civil government. These duties were primarily concerned with righteous behaviour, mutual reconciliation, and maintaining social peace. They were aimed to let men have sufficient space to pursue God's truth and shun idolatrous practices, which reflected the instruction of the spiritual government (Calvin 1960, 1487-1488). In his following words, Calvin specified the (superior and inferior) magistrates' duties. The magistrates were ordained by God in the civil government, as explained in *Romans 13:1-4*. So, they were responsible to maintain the Two Tables of the Law, which are primarily concerned with worship of God and the practice of justice and righteousness towards one's neighbour (ibid., 1489-1496). For Calvin, the magistrates ought to fulfil their responsibility by preserving the (common) people's freedom and social peace (equity and tranquillity) via their civic rights, including waging war and levying tribute (ibid., 1497-1502). He also stated the people's duty in the later content. That is, they ought to obey their magistrates (including the unjust ones), who were Godly ordained men, in order to fulfil their essential obedience to God and their conscience, with primary reference to *Romans 13:5* (ibid., 1509-1517). Here, Calvin referred to conscience (book 3, chapter 19). That is, conscience guided the people to approach and conform with God's law (ibid., 849).

Calvin specifically described God's law between his statements of the duties of the magistrates and the people. This law primarily concerns the moral law (the natural law that commands people to sincerely worship God and embrace men), which represents the commandments of the Two Tables. It was first revealed to Moses together with the ceremonial law (the law for servicing and reverencing God) and the judicial law (the law for the civil government to impart equity and justice), as the primary guidance for the people of Israel. Then in the Christianity, the magistrates tended to enact the public law, which was formulated according to God's law, to guide their people to live in a good order. The public law endowed the (Christian) people with the right to tackle their issues via judicial

procedures as well as the duty to maintain public equity (Calvin 1960, 1502-1509). Notably, this duty for the people can be related to men's general duty of reconciling with other men and preserving social peace. Preserving social peace was regarded as a shared duty by the magistrates and the people based on the public law. Also, Calvin stated the public law, the magistrates (who protected and guarded the public law) and the people (who obeyed the magistrates and conformed with the public law) as the three subjects of the civil government (ibid., 1488). This statement implies that a well-ordered society (with a properly functioning civil government) was run under the cooperation of the magistrates and the people according to the public law.

In addition, Calvin argued that a properly functioning civil government can preserve the people's freedom and restrain the superior magistrate's potential tyranny to the greatest extent (Calvin 1960, 1494). The people's freedom would get violated if the superior magistrate became tyrannical and spoiled the civil government. This is also related to Calvin's idea of freedom that he stated in book 3, chapter 19: freedom based on conscience (which bound the people to God's law) released the people from the power of all men who disobeyed God's law (ibid., 846). As is mentioned in the second paragraph of this section, a magistrate had the Godly ordained duty to preserve the people's freedom, which let the latter have sufficient space to worship God in unblemished ways. In contrast, a tyrannical (superior) magistrate would use his power to infringe on the people's freedom, which violated his Godly ordained duty. He thus had to be resisted by his inferiors, who were the Godly ordained supervisors to him. This is consistent with Harro Höpfl's understanding of Calvin's definition of the inferior magistrates' resistance to the tyrannical superior: the Godly magistrates' duty to resist the monarch who violated God's laws (Höpfl 1982, 170-171).

Robert M. Kingdon expressed his understanding of Calvin's specific perception of a king's tyranny of violating the people's freedom: Calvin perceived the king's coercion of his Protestant subjects to participate in idolatrous practices (e.g., Catholic Mass) as tyrannical (Kingdon 2000, 116-117). This concerns the violation of the people's right founded on the First Table. For Calvin regarded the laws of the First Table to be against worshipping other gods, idolatry, blasphemy, and Sabbath-breaking, which concern the first four commandments of the Decalogue (Witte 2007, 65). I think that Kingdon's understanding makes sense. For it fits Calvin's Protestant identity in his historical context (in the Catholic French kingdom). The Venetian Ambassador, who strongly appreciated Calvin, specially reproached the Calvinists who practised Catholic rites (e.g., attending Mass and the Divine Offices) as "disaffected individuals" in his text *The Report of the Venetian Ambassador in*

France (1561) (Lindberg 2000, 193). Calvin's detailed ideas of resistance will be further explored in the following section.

Section 3: Calvin's Ideas of Resistance to Tyranny

Section 3.1: The Inferior Magistrates' Active Resistance to the Tyrant

As is briefly mentioned in Section 1, the second main part (sections 30-32) of the treatise *Institutes of the Christian Religion* describes the inferior magistrates' duty to check the superior's tyranny and the people's disobedience to it. Notably, Calvin specified his definition(s) of the inferior magistrates in the first sub part (sections 30-31). He first described the inferior magistrates as God's agents of delivering the people from the king's tyranny in section 30 (Calvin 1960, 1517). Then in section 31, Calvin defined them as "constitutional defenders of the people's freedom", "the princes" who "broke the bloody sceptres of arrogant kings" and "overturned intolerant governments" to accomplish God's work, and God's "appointed protectors" to "restrain the wilfulness of kings (as in ancient times the ephors were set against the Spartan kings, or the tribunes of the people against the Roman consuls, or the demarches against the senate of the Athenians)" (ibid., 1518-1519). These definitions reflect that the inferior magistrates were the Godly ordained princes in the civil government. They were responsible to balance the power of their superior (the king) to preserve the people's freedom (when the civil society was well-ordered), but to resist the superior who encroached on the people's freedom. These can be related to the points concerning the magistrates' duties in the civil government, which are mentioned in Section 2.

The descriptions of the inferior magistrates also provide indications of what the tyranny of the superior magistrate consists in, namely, the encroachment on the people's freedom to serve God according to His law. By relating to Kingdon's understanding that is shown in Section 2, Calvin's definition of a tyrannical superior magistrate can be understood as: a king who intruded on the (Protestant) people's freedom of worshipping God in the right way but coerced them to do idolatrous practices. The definitions of the inferior magistrates and tyrannical superior magistrate combinedly indicate that the princes (inferior magistrates) ought to resist the (Catholic) king who infringed on the (Protestant) people's freedom of righteously worshipping God, which somewhat addresses the first sub question regarding the treatise. It is also noteworthy that Calvin wrote this concerning the "first kind of men" (inferior magistrates)'s resistance to their kings: "for the first kind of men, when they had been sent by God's lawful calling to carry out such acts, in taking up arms against kings, did not at all violate that majesty which is implanted in kings by God's ordination; but, armed

from heaven, they subdued the lesser power with the greater” (Calvin 1960, 1517). This sentence indicates that Calvin advocated the princes to resist the tyrannical king in armed ways and perceived such ways as absolutely legal because God has the supreme power. This addresses the second sub question in the aspect of the kind of resistance.

Section 3.2: The People’s Passive Resistance to the Tyrant

To the (common) people, Calvin stated “we must, in the meantime, be very careful not to despise or violate that authority of magistrates, full of venerable majesty, which God has established by the weightiest decrees, even though it may reside with the most unworthy men, who defile it as much as they can with their own wickedness. For, if the correction of unbridled despotism is the Lord to avenge, let us not at once think that it is entrusted to us, to whom no command has been given except to obey and suffer” in section 31 (Calvin 1960, 1518). This statement shows Calvin’s suggestion that the common people should never challenge the tyrannical superior magistrate by themselves but entirely leave the work of resistance to the inferior magistrates who represented God’s revengement for them on the superior. For that, Kingdon even argued: for Calvin, the people should never resist the king, as private individuals; while, the inferior magistrates should take their duty to limit the king’s power, as the representative of the people (Kingdon 1991, 205).

However, just in section 32, Calvin turned to urge the people to passively resist (disobey) the tyrannical superior magistrate (Calvin 1960, 1520-1521), which contradicts Kingdon’s argument. Notably, Calvin seemed to modify this section over the years. For he had composed five versions of the *Institutes* from 1536 to 1559, with the gradual but considerable revision in the bottom part of book 4, chapter 20 (Whitford 2009, 598). The process of revision implies the shift of Calvin’s idea. Calvin shifted from the emphasis on the people’s absolute obedience to the magistrates (which is related to the content of sections 1-29) into an openness to the people’s disobedience to the impious superior magistrate, for the content of section 31 is related to the former emphasis and that of section 32 is concerned with the latter openness.

It is also noteworthy that Calvin’s urge in section 32 had been revised into an especially strong form by adding a sentence in the latest version (1559). Ford Lewis Battles, who is the translator of the *Institutes*, gives the English version of this added sentence:

“On this consideration, Daniel denies that he committed any offence against the king when he has not obeyed his impious edict [Dan. 6:22-23, Vg.]. For the king had exceeded his limits, and had not only been a wrongdoer against men, but, in lifting up

his horns against God, had himself abrogated his power. Conversely, the Israelites are condemned because they were too obedient to the wicked proclamation of the king [Hos. 5:13]. For when Jeroboam moulded the golden calves, they, to please him, forsook God's Temple and turned to new superstitions [1 Kings 12:30]. With the same readiness, their descendants complied with the decrees of their kings. The prophet sharply reproaches them for embracing the king's edicts [Hos. 5:11]. Far, indeed, is the pretence of modesty from deserving praise, a false modesty with which the court flatterers cloak themselves and deceive the simple, while they deny that it is lawful for them to refuse anything imposed by their kings. As if God has made over his right to mortal men, giving them the rule over mankind! Or as if earthly power were diminished when it is subjected to its Author, in whose presence even the heavenly powers tremble as suppliants" (Calvin 1960, 1520).

In this sentence, Calvin exemplified Daniel's disobedience to the impious edict of King Darius and Hosea's reproach to the Israelites (of Ephraim) who embraced the superstitious edict of King Jeroboam, to exhort the people to refuse the false modesty to the impious rulers who spoiled their Godly ordained power. It is followed by (Calvin's statement of) Peter's exhortation of disobeying the impious kings in order to obey God, which is described in *Acts 5:29* (Calvin 1960, 1521). These words apparently contradict Calvin's previous argument that the people should obey the unjust kings by referring to Daniel and Jeremiah's exhortations to the Israelites to serve King Nebuchadnezzar to maintain the peace of Babylon, that are described in *Daniel 2, 5* and *Jeremiah 27* (ibid., 1513-1515), and his statement that the people should never resist the tyrannical king (which is just mentioned in the above paragraph).

According to Whitford, through adding that sentence, Calvin altered the meaning of (his statement of) Paul's exhortation from suggesting the people to passively endure the impious kings' persecution into encouraging them to resist the latter in possibly active ways (Whitford 2009, 598-601). I think that Whitford's argument might be too radical. For Calvin exhorted the people to fearlessly disobey impious kings by focusing on their redemption by Christ in the end of this chapter (Calvin 1960, 1521). This exhortation suggests the people's disobedience to the kings' impious orders without active resistance.

But on the other hand, Whitford's argument offers this inspiration: the inferior magistrates' active resistance to the tyrannical superior was likely to be in line with the people's disobedience to the superior. This likeness is reasonable. For the people's disobedience to the superior magistrate was the sign of the latter's infringement on the former's freedom. And the inferior magistrates' duty was protecting the people's freedom, as

is mentioned in the earlier paragraphs. So, under the circumstance that the people had to disobey their superior magistrate for the sake of freedom, the inferior magistrates ought to resist the superior in a possibly armed manner (which is also mentioned above). Also, as is described in Section 2, freedom is primarily concerned with the right to piously worship God. The people with freedom were thus identified as the Godly people who represented the church. This identification can be related to the identifications of Daniel and the (righteous) Israelites in the two examples of Calvin's added sentence. The addition of this sentence was thus likely to show Calvin's stress of the Godly people's participation in resistance to tyranny, while appealing to the inferior magistrates. It is consistent with Höpfl's argument that Calvin only expressed the civil government's duty to discipline the monarch who violated God's laws in the early versions of his treatise *Institutes*, but stressed the shared duty of the government and church to discipline in its latest version (Höpfl 1982, 191-192). The ideas above also indicate that the princes and the people were all the subjects for resistance to the tyrannical king, which partially addresses the first sub question.

In addition, I want to discuss the 'apparent contradiction' between Calvin's argument of the people's obedience to the unjust kings and his exhortation of the people's disobedience to the tyrannical kings. As is shown above, Calvin posed his former argument by referring to Daniel's and Jeremiah's commands to the Israelites to serve King Nebuchadnezzar, which were furthermore aimed to preserve the peace of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom (Babylon). It is also noteworthy that Nebuchadnezzar eventually exalted Daniel, his fellows (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego) and perhaps the Israelite God, even though he had aimed to persecute those men (*Daniel 1-4*). This shows Nebuchadnezzar's abandonment of his tyranny and even some repentance. Daniel and his fellows managed to restrain the wilfulness of Nebuchadnezzar, which was consistent with the inferior magistrates' first duty (as is mentioned in Section 2). It thus considerably preserved the peace of the kingdom of Babylon. In this case, the (Israelite) people should keep their obedience to the king in order to maintain social peace. On the other hand, Calvin exhorted the people to disobey the tyrannical kings by referring to Daniel's disobedience to the impious edict of King Darius and Hosea's exhortation of disobeying the impious edict of King Jeroboam. Here, Darius and Jeroboam did not withdraw their tyranny like Nebuchadnezzar did. Their impious edicts would definitely intrude on the (Israelite) people's freedom and their social peace. So, the edicts of Darius and Jeroboam had much more impious influence on the Israelites than the acts of Nebuchadnezzar. The Israelites should disobey the former but support the latter. The 'apparent contradiction' is thus dissolved. It furthermore indicates that the inferior

magistrates can launch their resistance to the superior only when they did not manage to restrain the latter's tyranny (thus causing it to violate social peace and the people's freedom), which addresses the second sub question in the aspect of the circumstance for resistance.

Section 4: Conclusion

In book 4, chapter 20, of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin wrote on the civil government. In sections 1-29, he presented his ideas concerning a well-ordered civil government, which was formed via its close relation to the spiritual government in the heavenly kingdom of Christ. In such a government, the (superior and inferior) magistrates had the Godly ordained duty to preserve social peace to maintain the people's freedom of pursuing God's truth in the right way, which is founded on the laws of the First Table. They were also responsible for educating the people to practise justice and righteousness according to the public law, which is related to the laws of the Two Tables. The people were accordingly responsible to support their magistrates' duty of maintaining social peace via their obedience to the latter, for their own conscience (that bound them to God's law). They should also tackle their issues through using their civic rights in the procedural and legal ways, to help the preservation of social peace. Moreover, the inferior magistrates (the princes) had their Godly ordained duty to restrain the possible tyranny of the superior (the king) to protect the people's freedom, which made the government be run and ordered with a compounded system of aristocracy and democracy. Calvin listed the duties of the magistrates and the people with primary reference to *Romans 13:1-5*.

In sections 30-32, Calvin described how the inferior magistrates and the people should react to the superior's tyranny, which indicates the superior's infringement on the people's freedom and social peace. (In Calvin's historical context, the tyrannical Catholic king tended to force his Protestant people to do Catholic practices, which were seen as idolatrous for the latter). The inferior magistrates should actively resist the tyrannical superior in possibly armed ways, as the Godly armed supervisors to the superior and the representative of the people. The people should passively resist (disobey) the tyrannical superior magistrate, which was in line with their inferior magistrates' active resistance, for their essential obedience to God. These points revealed in Calvin's description offer the answer to the first sub question regarding the treatise: the superior magistrate (the Catholic king) who coerced the (Protestant) people to do Catholic practices, which intruded on their freedom, should be passively resisted by the people and actively resisted by the inferior magistrates (the princes). Based on the holistic content of this chapter, the answer to the second sub question can also

be offered. That is, a potentially armed resistance should be justified by the inferior magistrates (with the cooperation of the people's passive resistance to the superior) under the circumstance that the inferior magistrates failed to restrain the superior's tyranny, which caused the latter to intrude on the people's freedom as well as social peace in his dominion.

In addition, Calvin's update of the *Institutes* from 1536 to 1559 indicates his increasing openness for the people's passive resistance to the impious superior magistrate, as is mentioned in Section 3.2. Calvin seemed to further update his relevant idea in his later life. According to Willem Nijenhuis, Calvin affirmed the people's right to actively resist the evil magistrate(s) in a sermon on 31 July 1562 (Engammare 1998, 217). These updates imply that Calvin gradually put more emphasis on the people's right(s).

Chapter Four: Beza's *Right of Magistrates* (1574)

Section 1: Introduction

In the 1560s, Calvinism became considerably influential in France, especially among the aristocracy. Millions of the French had converted to Calvinism during this period. This triggered a collision between Catholicism (the predominant religion in France) and Calvinism. This collision peaked in 1572 with the outbreak of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre – the pogrom that was started with the royal Catholic army's killing Admiral Gaspard de Coligny (a French Calvinist admiral) and proceeded with slaughtering thousands of Calvinists. The tragedy made the new generation of Calvinists question Calvin's theories, which did not seem to sufficiently take into account the collision between the state (with the major religion) and the church (with the minor religion). They had to rethink the Calvinist theories of politics, religion, law, and resistance. Among those Calvinists, Beza, who was Calvin's successor in Geneva, was greatly concerned about the Catholic authority's potential elimination of Calvinism from France root and branch (Witte 2007, 81-85). This concern seemed to have led Beza to write a treatise on the respective duties and rights of magistrates and of their subjects: his *Right of Magistrates* in 1574 (Witte 2008, 555). Notably, this treatise, originally published anonymously, has the subtitle "Very necessary treatise at this time for admonition of both the magistrates and the subjects of their duty: published by those of Magdeburg in the year 1550: and now revised and expanded by various arguments and examples" (Beza 1969, 100). This obviously indicates Beza formed his ideas concerning the rights/duties of the magistrates and people by referring to *The Magdeburg Confession*.

The treatise consists of ten sections, which can be summarised into three main parts: the first part (section I-II) expresses that the (private) people ought to principally obey their magistrates because of their essential obedience to God, but disobey the magistrates' commands that were iniquitous (violated the charity that the subjects should offer to their fellows according to their political stations) or irreligious (violated the laws of the First Table) because of their obedience to God as well as their conscience and faith (with reference to *Romans 14:23*) (Beza 1969, 101-102); the second part describes how to deal with the political collisions (between the people and the magistrates), which were primarily concerned with the illegitimate (and seditious) superior magistrate (usurper)'s tyranny to his subjects and the legitimate one's tyranny to his subjects (section III-IX) (ibid., 102-132); the third part (section X) is concerned with the resistance to the superior magistrate's religious persecution on the people (ibid., 133-135).

This structure shows that the first part distinguished two types of tyranny of the superior magistrate, which concerned enforcing the iniquitous commands or irreligious ones on the people. Then, these two types were further discussed and addressed in the second and third parts respectively. It somewhat mixed Beza's ideas of the superior magistrate's tyranny, and of remedy and resistance to tyranny. So, I will first describe and analyse Beza's ideas of (the superior magistrate's) tyranny in Section 2. Then in Section 3, Beza's ideas of (respective) remedy and resistance to (the different types of) tyranny will be explored, which will address the answers to the two sub questions.

Section 2: Beza's Ideas of the Superior Magistrate's Tyranny

As is mentioned above, Beza briefly described the superior magistrate's tyranny as enforcing iniquitous or irreligious commands on his subjects in the beginning of his text. He also regarded the tyrannical conditions as the exception for the people to disobey their superior magistrate in order to obey God (Beza 1969, 101-102). Notably, John Witte Jr. offered detailed explanations about Beza's ideas of the irreligious and iniquitous commands, and disobedience to those commands, and his other ideas that were related to the former. Specifically, irreligious commands (impious laws) refer to the commands that implied idolatry or breaking the Sabbath, which violated the laws of the First Table; and iniquitous commands (unjust laws) refer to the commands that violated the laws of the Second Table (honour of parents, and prohibition of killing, stealing, adultery, and coveting). These laws, which belong to the Decalogue, were associated with God's divine law and the natural law inside the people's hearts. So, the people had their Godly ordained duties to obey these laws. Accordingly, the laws of the First Table implied the people's rights for proper religious worship, speech, Sabbath observance, and freedom from coercion into idolatrous practices. The laws of the Second Table implied their rights to live, have property and privacy, get married, and maintain fairness and integrity (Witte 2008, 558-560). For that, the superior magistrate's iniquitous commands can be understood as the commands that infringed on the people's rights that were founded on the laws of the Second Table, which were related to their political charity to other people; and the former's irreligious commands can be understood as those that intruded on the latter's rights that were founded on the laws of the First Table.

Then, Beza moved to his descriptions of the political issues between the magistrates and the people. In section III, he stressed that the people should principally handle the political collisions with their magistrates regarding their vocations (Beza 1969, 102). Beza explained

the meaning of his stress first by exemplifying the remedies for the inferior magistrates' injury (enforcement of their iniquitous commands) on the people in section IV. Specifically, the people ought to carry out an expedient to solve the injury by legal means rather than illegal violence. This explanation was with Beza's reference to Paul's appeal to Caesar to prevent Festus' potential misdeed on him, which is described in *Acts 25* (ibid., 102-103). The story in the reference presents the vocations of Paul (the private person), Caesar (the superior magistrate) and Festus (the inferior magistrate), and their legitimate relations. The vocations and relations were founded on a set of covenants that stated the rights of all the political bodies and their duties to the other bodies. Here, Witte explained that Beza presented his theory of political covenant, which indicated that God set the political order among the magistrates and the people through enacting His covenants that stated their rights and duties, in his treatise *Right of Magistrates* (Witte 2007, 123-124). This also implies that any act that violated the Godly set order and covenants was perceived as illegal.

Based on the setting above, Beza started the descriptions of the superior magistrate's tyranny. He first described the case of an illegitimate superior magistrate (usurper) who illegally got his sovereignty and ruled over his subjects, in section V. Here, Beza identified the legitimate sovereignty of a superior magistrate as receiving his throne not only according to the legal hereditary process (with the inferior magistrates' elections) but also based on the people's consent, by arguing that a ruler was a Godly ordained guardian for his people. This argument was posed by referring to the biblical examples of Saul's receiving his throne under God's choice and the people's request (*1 Samuel 8-9*), and David's receiving his throne under God's choice, the voting of the Israelite elders and consent of the Israelite people (*2 Samuel 5:1-3*). Accordingly, an illegitimate superior magistrate was a sovereign who either usurped his throne in a manner contrary to the established laws, and was against the people's consent (e.g, Caesar who oppressed the Roman Republic), or obtained his ruling over a dominion (that had not been under him) via military occupation without the local people's support (e.g., Nimrod who conquered the neighbouring areas with his arm) (Beza 1969, 103-105). In section VI, Beza described the other kind of superior magistrate who was politically tyrannical. That is, the legitimate superior magistrate, who had received his sovereign power according to the established laws as well as based on the people's consent, but turned to enforce his iniquitous commands on the people, which encroached on the latter's political rights (ibid., 108). Last, Beza described the (legitimate) superior magistrate's tyranny of enforcing irreligious (idolatrous) commands on the people, which infringed on the latter's rights of following true (non-idolatrous) religion and religious consciousness, in section X

(ibid., 133).

According to the analysis above, the two types of tyrannical superior magistrate (that were stated by Beza) can also be described as: the one who infringed on the people's rights in political matters and the one who infringed on their rights in religious matters. The former type of tyrant can be further divided into: the illegitimate tyrant and the legitimate one. So, Beza nuancedly described three types of tyranny. The features of these tyrannies reversely reflect the assumed features of a non-tyrannical superior magistrate: getting his power according to the legal process and based on his people's consent, and maintaining the political and religious rights of his subjects. Here, Robert M. Kingdon clarified Beza's statement of a proper magistrate's duties: conserving the constituted things in the state, preserving social peace (by the public consent of the people), and maintaining the religious conscience of the people (with the magistrates being representatives of God) (Kingdon 1955, 89-91). Beza also described the respective remedies and resistances to the three types of tyranny, which will be explored in the following section.

Section 3: Beza's Ideas of Remedy and Resistance to the Superior Magistrate's Tyranny

Section 3.1: The Illegitimate Tyrant

In section V, Beza stated that the illegitimate superior magistrates (usurpers) "had no rights over the people of God" even though they were sometimes used by God to punish the people's faults. So, an illegitimate superior magistrate had to be resisted by all the legitimate magistrates and people if he violated the rights of the latter in political or even religious matters (Beza 1969, 105-106). For an illegitimate superior magistrate was not in a Godly set covenantal relationship with the legitimate magistrates and people, which is related to Beza's theory of political covenant (as is mentioned in Section 2). Then, Beza expressed his idea of resistance to an illegitimate tyrant. That is, the legitimate magistrates and people ought to resist such a tyrant according to the legal order. The people should passively resist (disobey) the illegitimate magistrate and principally appeal to their legitimate ones to launch active political resistance, but choose to exert it by themselves only if the magistrates failed to launch it. For launching political resistance was principally considered as the duty for the magistrates (ibid., 107). On the other hand, Beza showed a remedy for the tyranny of usurpation: converting the usurper into a legitimate sovereign via the guidance of the established laws and the people's public support, just like legitimating the sovereignty of Caesar (who defeated Pompey and occupied his dominion) in the Roman Empire via the guidance of the Roman Republic system and the consent of the Roman people. Notably, Beza

stressed that either remedy or resistance to this tyranny should be taken by orderly and peaceful means instead of hasty and riotous ones (ibid., 107-108). This indicates that the way of (active) resistance should be principally unarmed.

However, Beza also wrote this sentence in the first paragraph of the same section (V): “The question, then, is to see if there is some means, in accord with justice and the will of God, by which subjects may curb manifest tyranny on the part of a sovereign magistrate, by force of arms if need be” (Beza 1969, 103-104). This shows Beza’s openness for armed resistance. So, he probably meant that resistance to a usurper should be principally unarmed but might become armed if needed be. The analysis above thus offers the answers to the two sub questions concerning resistance to an illegitimate tyrant. Namely, such a tyrant ought to be resisted by all the legitimate magistrates and people. The people should start with passive resistance to the tyrant. Concerning active (political) resistance, it can only be justified under the circumstance that the tyrant failed to be converted into a legitimate superior magistrate, which means that he was not successfully transformed into a legally political covenantal relationship with the legitimate magistrates and people. It should principally be exerted by the legitimate magistrates (by the people’s consent) in peaceful manners. But if needed, the resistance could be exerted in armed manners. The people could exert active resistance only if the legitimate magistrates failed to do so.

Section 3.2: The Legitimate Tyrant Who Violated the Political Rights of His Subjects

Beza described how to handle the tyranny of a legitimate superior magistrate, which indicated a sovereign who received his power via the legal process and his people’s consent but later became tyrannical, in section VI. He first stated that the three kinds of subjects (of the superior magistrate) – the people, the inferior magistrates (who were underneath the superior) and the estates (who were established to check and bridle the superior magistrate) – should have respective ways to handle the tyranny according to their vocations (Beza 1969, 108). This indicates that all these subjects were in the (Godly set) political covenantal relationship with the superior magistrate, which can be related to Beza’s theory of political covenant again. The people were obliged to fully obey the superior magistrate since they had legitimated themselves to be the private subjects of the latter via their public consent. This was argued by Beza with primary reference to Paul’s speaking of the people’s duty to obey their rulers for conscience’s sake, which is described in *Romans 13:5* (ibid., 108-110). It implies that the people deserved passive endurance under the repression of the tyrant who had been established based on their own consent, which might be seen as God’s use of a

legitimate tyrant to punish the people's faults as His use of an illegitimate tyrant.

Concerning the inferior magistrates, they were ranked between the superior magistrate and the people to administer justice of the kingdom. These magistrates received their positions based on the voting of the people, which made them represent the rights of the latter. They played similar roles as the officers of the Republic in the Roman Empire or the leaders of the tribes in Israel. So, the inferior magistrates were responsible to resist the iniquitous commands of their superior to defend justice and the people's rights. Their resistance should be with the primary aim of correcting the superior magistrate's acts into a proper condition according to his vocation, namely, remediating his tyranny. The inferior magistrates thus ought to exert possible resistance principally in unarmed manners, but cautiously launch armed resistance if needed. Notably, as the legitimate subjects under the superior magistrate, the inferiors had no right to remove him from his throne (Beza 1969, 110-113). Then, Beza came to the description of the estates, which were established to protect the sovereign's rights and hold his duty. For Beza, since the estates received their positions to a certain degree based on the consent of the people, they had the duty to stand for the latter's rights. So, they ought to constrain the superior magistrate's tyranny (that intruded on the people's rights) by using their rights to punish the latter, including the nullification of his throne if needed, which was in line with the inferior magistrates' resistance (*ibid.*, 113-115).

After his descriptions above, Beza listed a number of examples of societies that were run under the balanced system of democracy and aristocracy, which prevented the societies from becoming too monarchical. They included the societies of Athens, Sparta, the Israelites, the English, the Spanish, and the French. These examples were taken to argue that the inferior magistrates and estates, who represented the power of both democracy (for their representatives of the people) and aristocracy (for their political vocations), had Godly ordained rights and duties to constrain the tyranny of the superior magistrate (Beza 1969, 115-124). Beza furthermore argued that a superior magistrate (a king or emperor) was obliged to perform his sovereign vocation, which was founded on the agreement between him and his subjects, according to the natural law that God put in everyone's heart and is closely connected to the laws of the Two Tables. So, he had the duty to never enforce any iniquitous or irreligious command on his people, but let them be the freedmen (who were free from any civil laws that violated God's law) by maintaining equity in his dominion. His subjects – the people, the inferior magistrates and the estates – accordingly had the obligations to supervise him to properly work in his vocation (*ibid.*, 124-127). This shows that the agreement bound the vocations of all the political bodies, especially that of the sovereign, to the natural law and

God's law. It is embodied in Witte's understanding of Beza's argument that the political covenant, which was made through imposing mutual obligations on God, the magistrates, and the people, abided the magistrates to the laws of God and nature (Witte 2008, 558).

Beza also stated that the superior magistrate should lose his dominion if he committed a felony against his vassals (the inferior magistrates and the estates), which was related to the condition for the estates to forfeit the tyrant's sovereignty. Then in section VII, Beza described more of an emergency situation: the tyrant prevented his sovereignty from being forfeited by the estates due to the connivance, fear, or wickedness of the majority of the estates. In this situation, the inferior magistrates and the people ought to orderly resist the tyrant. First, the people should passively resist the tyrant and appeal to their inferior magistrates for active resistance. Then, the inferior magistrates should not only launch active resistance to the superior by themselves but also press the estates (who were relatively sober) to exert their duties of constraining the tyrant (Beza 1969, 128-130).

It is also noteworthy that Beza firmly regarded remediating the tyranny of the superior magistrate as the first aim for resistance, even in the emergency situation. For that, resistance should be principally unarmed, and cautiously shift to armed if all the remedies did not work. Meanwhile, Beza stressed that all the subjects (the people, the inferior magistrates and the estates) should be patient of remediating the tyranny of their superior, with their prayer to God, by primarily referring to David's patience with Saul (*1 Samuel 24*), the Jews' patience with Nebuchadnezzar (*Daniel 2-4*), and Peter and Paul's prayers to the rulers (*Acts 4; 1 Timothy 2*) (Beza 1969, 130-131). This thus brings up the answers to the two sub questions concerning resistance to a legitimate (political) tyrant. Specifically, this political authority was a superior magistrate who had received his sovereignty by following the orderly political process with the people's consent, but later turned to intruding on the political rights of the people. In this situation, the inferior magistrates ought to launch active resistance to the superior magistrate, with the people's passive resistance (to the superior magistrate) and appeal (to the inferior magistrates) and the estates' work of constraining the superior's tyranny. The active resistance should be principally unarmed because it was primarily aimed at remediating the tyranny. Armed resistance could be exerted only if all the remedies failed.

Section 3.3: The Legitimate Tyrant Who Violated the Religious Rights of His Subjects

Beza especially described the (legitimate) superior magistrate's tyranny of violating the people's rights of pursuing true (non-idolatrous) religion in section X. To such a tyrant, the inferior magistrates ought to resist, because they had the duty to protect true religion and the

people's religious conscience. On the other hand, the inferior magistrates were also responsible to preserve social peace, which was initiated and maintained by the established political order. So, they should principally exert (active) resistance in peaceful ways to remediate the tyranny of the superior. Armed resistance was arranged as the last choice. The people were encouraged to patiently pray to God (to correct the tyrant) with their conscience and be ready for possible martyrdom (Beza 1969, 133-135). Thus, the answers to the two sub questions concerning resistance to this type of tyranny are: the inferior magistrates should launch active resistance to the superior who enforced the irreligious commands on the people. Resistance should be principally unarmed but could become armed if needed.

In summary, Beza always considered the (legitimate) inferior magistrates as the primary group who were responsible to exert (active) resistance to (any type of) the tyranny of the superior. His stress of the inferior magistrates' duty to resist tyranny was implicitly with reference to *Romans 13:3* (Whitford 2005, 77-78). Moreover, resistance should be principally unarmed because it was always first aimed to remediate the tyranny of the superior magistrate. Armed resistance could only be justified after all the remedies failed.

Section 4: Conclusion

In his treatise, Beza primarily described three types of tyranny of the superior magistrate (a king or emperor) and the ways for the subjects (the people, the inferior magistrates and the estates) to handle the tyrannies. The analysis of Beza's descriptions offers the answers to the two sub questions concerning the respective resistance to the three types of tyranny. In detail, (1) the first type of tyrant was the illegitimate superior magistrate who usurped his throne without the consent of the people and against the established legal process. With respect to such a superior magistrate, the subjects should first try to convert him into a legitimate sovereign (who took the responsibility of guarding the people's rights that were founded on the laws of the Two Tables) via the guidance of the established laws and the people's public support, which would remediate his tyranny. If the remedy failed, the people should passively resist the superior magistrate, and appeal to their inferior magistrates to launch and justify active resistance to him. The people could exert active resistance by themselves if the inferior magistrates failed. The active resistance should be principally unarmed, but could become armed if needed. (2) The second type of tyrant was the legitimate superior magistrate who enforced iniquitous commands on the people, which violated their (political) rights founded on the laws of the Second Table. With respect to such a tyrant, the inferior magistrates ought to launch and justify active resistance to him, with the people's passive resistance (to the

superior magistrate) and appeal (to the inferior magistrates) and the estates' work of constraining his tyranny. The active resistance should be principally unarmed because it had the primary aim of remediating the tyranny. It could become armed only if the remedies failed (in this case, the estates could forfeit the sovereignty of the tyrant). (3) The third type of tyrant was the legitimate superior magistrate who enforced the irreligious commands on the people, which violated their (religious) rights founded on the laws of the First Table and conscience of following true (non-idolatrous) religion. With respect to such a tyrant, the inferior magistrates ought to launch and justify (active) resistance, with the first aim of remediating the tyranny. Resistance should be principally unarmed, but could become armed if the remedies failed. Here, the people had no right to exert resistance, but were encouraged to patiently pray to God (to correct the tyrant). Notably, Beza emphasised that resistance to all these types of tyranny should be launched in an orderly manner but not riotously.

It is also noteworthy that Beza implicitly presented his theory of political covenant, which refers to the Godly set political order that regulated the rights and duties of the magistrates and of the people according to their vocations, in his treatise. Basically, the people had their political and religious rights founded on the laws of the Two Tables, and the superior and inferior magistrates had their Godly ordained duties to preserve these rights of the people. Such rights and duties were related to the natural law and God's law. So, the tyranny of a superior magistrate essentially indicated his violation of the Godly ordained duty according to his vocation. For that, the inferior magistrates were responsible to correct the superior into the Godly ordained standard of a sovereign's vocation via remedies and/or resistances to his tyranny, which might indicate the reason why remedies should be prior to resistances. Moreover, the inferior magistrates' right/duty to remediate and resist the superior's tyranny represents their aristocratic power. These magistrates ought to legally receive their positions and powers from the consent of the people (democracy). On the other hand, the people had the duty to obey their magistrates, and ought to orderly appeal to their inferior magistrates for possible resistance to the tyrannical superior magistrate rather than rebel against him when they suffered from the tyranny of the latter. It thus embodies a balanced cooperation of aristocracy and democracy.

Chapter Five: Comparisons

In the former four chapters, the ideas about resistance to tyrants (that are respectively presented in the four texts) have been analysed and summarised, which offer the answers to the first two sub questions regarding the four texts respectively. This chapter concerns the comparisons between these texts. The comparisons will be in four pairs: first, the comparison between Luther's *Warning to My Dear German People* and *The Magdeburg Confession*; second, the comparison between *The Magdeburg Confession* and Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*; third, the comparison between *The Magdeburg Confession* and Beza's *Right of Magistrates*; fourth, the comparison between Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and Beza's *Right of Magistrates*. These comparisons will be launched with the primary aim of discovering the main similarities and differences between the views in the four texts, which addresses the third sub question. Furthermore, the analysis of these comparisons may reveal the developments and tendencies within the Lutheran and Reformed branches of the Reformation.

Section 1: Luther's "Warning" and "The Magdeburg Confession"

Section 1.1: Similarities

First, the two Lutheran texts show the same real tyrants for resistance. Namely, the pope (the spiritual tyrant) and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (the political tyrant). For the authors of these two treatises, namely Luther and the Magdeburg Lutherans, the pope was seen as the Antichrist who infringed on God's laws and the gospel. His blasphemy (against God's laws and the gospel) furthermore intruded on the (common) people's freedom of pursuing (non-idolatrous) Christianity that related to the gospel, which was founded on the laws of the First Table (the first three commandments of the Decalogue). The emperor shared the tyranny of the pope because he joined the latter's repression of the Lutherans by his arms, which made him act as a soldier of the latter.

Second, the authors of the two texts commonly urged the Lutheran (common) people to spiritually resist the papacy via the natural right to self-defence. Such resistance was in a nonviolent active manner, which means fighting against the spirits and words of the papacy in an unarmed way. Toward the politically tyrannical emperor, the people were exhorted to disobey (passively resist) him.

Third, these authors' ideas concerning political resistance were all fundamentally related to Luther's theory of the Two Kingdoms, which is basically concerned with the antagonistic

conflict between God's kingdom and the Devil's kingdom. Specifically, they all considered the pope as a servant in the Devil's kingdom, but the emperor to be originally ordained by God as a servant in the secular realm of God's kingdom. The emperor (superior magistrate) had his Godly ordained duty to preserve the people's religious freedom, which also served for the spiritual realm of God's kingdom. Accordingly, the people and the inferior magistrates should obey the emperor to fulfil his duty that served God. However, if the emperor turned to support the pope to attack the true Christians (Lutherans), he would become a servant of the Devil. In this case, the people and the inferior magistrates ought to turn to resist the emperor, as the servants of God who should fight against those of the Devil.

Some modern scholars have studied the Lutheran ideas that related to the theory of the Two Kingdoms. For example, David Mark Whitford showed that Luther stressed the emperor's Godly ordained duty to preserve social peace, which was the condition for his subjects to obey him, by referring to the cooperative relation between the spiritual and secular realms of God's kingdom (Whitford 2009, 581-582). Similarly, Eike Wolgast founded Luther's perception of the Christian people as those who received eternal life in the spiritual realm and received social peace through obeying their magistrates in the secular realm (Wolgast 2014, 398-399). The studies of Whitford and Wolgast are both concerned with the Lutheran ideas that are related to the two realms of God's kingdom, but not with those related to the Devil's kingdom. So, my finding of the Lutheran idea about the emperor's apostasy from God to the Devil (that is related to the Devil's kingdom), which can be considered as the fundamental condition for the people and the inferior magistrates to turn to resist the emperor, can be seen as a complement to their studies.

Section 1.2: Differences

First, in the *Warning*, Luther primarily focused on the exhortation to his followers to disobey (passively resist) the emperor who might support the papacy to attack the gospel, by referring to *Acts 5:29*. Concerning the justification of (active) political resistance to the emperor, it was merely left by Luther to the jurists, with reference to *Matthew 22:21*. Luther did not mention the word "magistrate" in this treatise, even though the concept of magistrate was contained in his fundamental theory of the Two Kingdoms. However, in *The Magdeburg Confession*, the Magdeburgians prominently stated that the inferior magistrates had their Godly ordained duty/right to punish the superior (emperor) who violated his own duty and justify political resistance to him, by referring to *Romans 13:3*. Their statement was likely to be related to the Lutheran four theories (that were formed by the Lutheran jurists in 1530).

Here, the Magdeburgians used reference to *Acts 5:29* to argue that the superior and inferior magistrates somewhat shared the governing power in the empire, which was related to the Hessian theory. The potential relation between the Lutheran four theories and the Magdeburgians' statement has been shown in the studies of Whitford and Pastor Matt Trehwella, as is mentioned in Chapter Two. Also, the Magdeburgians defined four levels of the superior magistrate's injury, with the first level being remediable. The superior magistrate could be considered as a tyrant only if his injury was beyond the first level, which should be actively resisted by the inferior magistrates.

Moreover, by relating to the theory of the Two Kingdoms, Luther's exhortation to his followers was essentially aimed to urge the latter to firmly fight against all the potential servants for the Devil, including the emperor. Such a relation in both the spiritual and secular aspects was also embodied in *The Magdeburg Confession*. This embodiment was specifically in the Magdeburgians' perceptions of all the inferior magistrates who possibly joined in their own resistance as a united group (that served God), and of all the enemy individuals as a unity (that served the Devil). On the other hand, the Magdeburgians also showed a solely secular focus on the balance of power in the Holy Roman Empire. Specifically, there were three powerful orders – the papists, the Interimists and Adiaphorists, and the magistrates – in the empire. For the Magdeburgians, the magistrates also ought to use their power to balance the powers of the other two orders. However, the papists, the Interimists and Adiaphorists, and the emperor (superior magistrate) had made their alliance to attack the Lutherans by 1550. This broke the balance of social power in the empire. Under this circumstance, the inferior magistrates' resistance to the emperor would drag the latter out of his alliance with the other two orders, which may help to restore the power of magistracy and even the balance of social power in the empire. This is consistent with pastor George Grant's argument: *The Magdeburg Confession* presents the Magdeburgians' defence of the feudal relationships between different groups of the empire and their opposition against a potential centralization of hegemony (Grant 2012, xv-xxv). This secular focus was not shared by Luther.

Section 2: "The Magdeburg Confession" and Calvin's "Institutes"

Section 2.1: Similarities

First, the Magdeburg Lutherans and Calvin had the similar definition of political tyrant. That is, a superior magistrate who violated his Godly ordained duty of preserving social peace to maintain his (common) people's freedom of pursuing (non-idolatrous) Christianity that related to the gospel. They all regarded the people's freedom to be founded on the laws

of the First Table, though the Magdeburg Lutherans considered these laws as the first three commandments of the Decalogue, whereas Calvin considered the First Table to comprise the first four commandments.

Second, these authors shared similar ideas about political resistance. These are, the inferior magistrates had their Godly ordained duty to restrain the superior's tyranny and protect the people's freedom. Accordingly, they were obliged to justify active resistance to the tyrannical superior, with the cooperation of the people's passive resistance to the latter.

Third, the Magdeburg Lutherans expressed that a society should be with a balanced relation (between different powerful groups) against a potential centralization of hegemony, as is mentioned in Section 1. Similarly, Calvin described his intended society to be with a balanced order of aristocracy and democracy, which was centrally ruled by the superior magistrate under the supervision of the inferior magistrates, in the *Institutes*.

As is described in Chapter Three, Calvin had composed five versions of the *Institutes* from 1536 to 1559, only with the latest version (1559) adding the paragraph urging the people to firmly disobey the impious superior magistrate in book 4, chapter 20 (entitled "Civil Government"). According to Whitford, Calvin composed this paragraph by referring to the ideas about political resistance that are presented in *The Magdeburg Confession*. Calvin's witness of the war between the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and the Lutheran Schmalkaldic League in around 1550 and the wars of religion in France in the late 1550s pushed him to think about political resistance through reading the Magdeburg Lutherans' treatise (Whitford 2009, 598-601). Whitford's argument makes sense according to the three similar points shown above. These points embody the similar ideas about political resistance to the tyrannical superior magistrate and an intended society that were shared by Calvin and the Magdeburg Lutherans.

Section 2.2: Differences

Foremost, Calvin and the Magdeburg Lutherans had their different fundamental theories. For Calvin, his intended society was well ordered by the civil government under the guidance of the spiritual government, according to the Decalogue. The spiritual and civil governments have a collective relation in God's kingdom. This is consistent with Robert M. Kingdon's argument: the *Institutes* presents Calvin's preference for a sort of collective government. Such a government basically consists of the ecclesiastical government of the church and the secular government of the state. Both the governments are run and ordered with an anti-monarchic system, which is an 'aristocracy compounded with democracy' (Kingdon 2000,

112-116). It indicates that Calvin's fundamental theory is related to God's kingdom, which is a part of the Lutheran fundamental theory of the Two Kingdoms. Calvin left out the Devil's kingdom in his theory, especially because he did not mention any word that is related to the Devil in his text. So, for Calvin, the superior magistrate was likely to be consistently perceived as a servant of God, even though his potential faults might lead him to become tyrannical in the political as well as spiritual aspects. Such a perception is different from that of the Magdeburg Lutherans – perceiving the politically tyrannical superior magistrate, who was allied with the spiritually tyrannical pope, as a servant of the Devil.

Second, the two texts present different primary focuses. The Magdeburg Lutherans primarily focused on resistance, including spiritual resistance to the papacy, the Interimists and Adiaphorists, and political resistance to the superior magistrate, in their treatise. In the *Institutes*, Calvin primarily focused on the maintenance of a well-ordered society, which was concerned with the superior magistrate's preservation of the people's religious freedom, the people's obedience to the magistrates, and the inferior magistrates' restriction of the superior's potential tyranny. Thus, in terms of the natural law, the Magdeburg Lutherans primarily stressed the subjects' natural right to self-defence, while Calvin primarily emphasised the people's natural freedom of pursuing (non-idolatrous) Christianity.

Third, these authors had their different uses of reference to *Romans 13*. The Magdeburg Lutherans showed the superior magistrate's violation of his Godly ordained duty to preserve social peace and the people's religious freedom, to justify the inferior magistrates' political punishment to his violation, by referring to *Romans 13:3*. Based on this, they furthermore defined four levels of the superior magistrate's injury, with the inferiors' respective handlings of them. However, Calvin stressed that the magistrates and people ought to follow and fulfil their respective Godly ordained duties concerning the cooperative maintenance of the well-ordered society, by referring to *Romans 13:1-5*. On the other hand, Calvin argued the inferior magistrates and people's resistance to the tyrannical superior by referring to some other biblical texts, including *Acts 5:29*, *Daniel 6:22-23* and *Hoshea 5:11-13*.

Section 3: "The Magdeburg Confession" and Beza's "Right of Magistrates"

Section 3.1: Similarities

First, the Magdeburg Lutherans and Beza both stated the inferior magistrates' right/duty to justify political resistance to the tyrannical superior magistrate.

Second, they both divided the superior magistrate's injury into the remediable and irreparable levels, and stated that the inferior magistrates can only exert armed resistance to

the most serious (armed) irremediable injury of the superior magistrate.

Third, they both implicitly presented the intended society that is well ordered with a balanced cooperation of aristocracy and democracy. This is similar to the third similar point between *The Magdeburg Confession* and Calvin's *Institutes*, as is described in Section 2.

Section 3.2: Differences

Foremost, these two texts presented different fundamental theories. In the *Right of Magistrates*, Beza implicitly expressed his theory of political covenant: God set the political order among the magistrates and the people through enacting His covenants that stated their rights and duties. This theory is fundamental for Beza's ideas of the remedies for the (inferior and superior) magistrates' injuries and of resistance to the superior magistrate's tyranny. Compared to the theory of the Two Kingdoms, which is fundamental for the Magdeburg Lutherans' ideas about political resistance, Beza's theory of political covenant first left out the Devil's kingdom. Beza did not mention any word that is related to the Devil in his text. Moreover, Beza's theory mainly focuses on the secular covenantal relations between the magistrates and the people. This focus seems to be primarily earthly.

Second, the Magdeburg Lutherans and Beza had different perceptions of tyrant and tyranny. For the Magdeburg Lutherans, the superior magistrate was perceived as a political tyrant who (allied with the spiritually tyrannical pope) served the Devil. However, Beza perceived a tyrant as the superior magistrate who violated his Godly ordained duty according to his vocation in the covenantal relation with his subjects. The tyrant could be legitimate or illegitimate, which means whether he received his throne with the consent of the people and in the established legal process or not. Accordingly, the Magdeburg Lutherans perceived tyranny as the superior magistrate's intrusion on the people's religious freedom, which was founded on the First Table (the first three commandments of the Decalogue); while, Beza perceived tyranny as the superior magistrate's violation to the people's *religious rights founded on the First Table* (the first four commandments of the Decalogue) and/or their *political rights founded on the Second Table* (the last six commandments of the Decalogue).

Third, these authors had different primary focuses. The Magdeburg Lutherans primarily focused on resistance, including spiritual resistance to the papacy, the Interimists and Adiaphorists, and political resistance to the superior magistrate. They also stated that the inferior magistrates should politically resist the superior's injury whether it was remediable or not. However, Beza primarily focused on remedy for the superior magistrate's tyranny. To the legitimate tyrant, the inferior magistrates and people should offer resistance with the first

aim of remediating his tyranny. To the illegitimate tyrant, the inferior magistrates and people should first try to convert him into a legitimate sovereign, but turn to resist him if the remedy failed. So, in terms of the natural law, the Magdeburg Lutherans primarily stressed the subjects' natural right to self-defence, while Beza primarily emphasised the people's natural (religious and political) rights founded on the Decalogue and the magistrates' natural duty to protect the people's natural rights.

Fourth, these authors offered different ways for political resistance. For the Magdeburg Lutherans, the people should passively resist any kinds of injury of the superior magistrates. The inferior magistrates should actively resist the irremediable injury of the superior but passively resist his remediable injury. For Beza, the legitimate tyrant needed to be resisted by the inferior magistrates in active ways and by the people in passive ways, with the first aim of remediating his tyranny. To the illegitimate tyrant, the inferior magistrates ought to first exert active resistance to him, with the cooperation of the people's passive resistance. But if the inferior magistrates failed, the people would have their right to exert active resistance to the illegitimate tyrant.

Fifth, these authors differently used reference to *Romans 13*. This is somewhat similar to the third different point between *The Magdeburg Confession* and Calvin's *Institutes*, as is described in Section 2. The Magdeburg Lutherans emphasised the inferior magistrates' right to justify political resistance to the tyrannical superior, by referring to *Romans 13:3*. However, although Beza also stated the inferior magistrates' duty to exert political resistance with implicit reference to *Romans 13:3*, he primarily stressed the people's duty to obey the legitimate superior magistrate by explicitly referring to *Romans 13:5*. This stress seemed to be related to Beza's focus on remedy for the superior magistrate's tyranny.

As is mentioned in Chapter Four, Beza formed his idea about rights/duties of the inferior magistrates and people with reference to *The Magdeburg Confession*. The three similar points between Beza's *Right of Magistrates* and *The Magdeburg Confession* (described in Section 3.1) may embody Beza's reference to the latter. On the other hand, this reference might also inspire Beza to develop somewhat different ideas from the relevant ideas in *The Magdeburg Confession*, such as his further nuanced definitions of the superior magistrate's tyranny and the respective ways for the inferior magistrates and people to handle different tyrannies of the superior. This potential inspiration is consistent with the result of Whitford's study (Whitford 2005, 58-78), as is described in the Introduction chapter.

Section 4: Calvin's "Institutes" and Beza's "Right of Magistrates"

Section 4.1: Similarities

First, Calvin and Beza both presented an intended society that was run with a compounded system of aristocracy and democracy, which prevented a potential centralization of hegemony. This system was well formed according to the laws of the Two Tables. They also both primarily focused on the maintenance of such a society.

Second, based on their idea of the intended society, Calvin and Beza both emphasised the magistrates' Godly ordained duty to maintain their people's social space of pursuing (non-idolatrous) Christianity that related to the gospel, and the inferior magistrates' duty/right to supervise their superior to fulfil his duty.

Third, they also both stressed the people's obligation of obeying their magistrates to help the latter to fulfil their Godly ordained duties, by referring to *Romans 13:5*.

Section 4.2: Differences

Foremost, Calvin and Beza presented somewhat different fundamental theories. Calvin's theory is concerned with the spiritual and civil governments that have a collective relation in God's kingdom. His intended society ruled by the civil government was essentially run under the guidance of the spiritual government in the spiritual realm (of God's kingdom). However, Beza's (fundamental) theory of political covenant primarily focuses on the civil covenantal relations between the magistrates and the people, even though the relations were set by God. Compared to Calvin's theory, Beza's focus is mostly concerned with the secular realm (of God's kingdom), but less with the spiritual realm.

Second, their perceptions of the earthly reflection of the laws of the Decalogue are different. Calvin perceived the people's social space of pursuing (non-idolatrous) Christianity founded on the laws of the First Table as their religious freedom. Moreover, Calvin perceived the people's political rights founded on the laws of the Second Table to be ultimately served for preserving social peace in order to maintain the people's religious freedom in the society. However, Beza perceived the people's space of pursuing Christianity founded on the laws of the First Table as their religious rights in the civil society, which was equally weighted as their political rights founded on the laws of the Second Table. Beza's idea of the people's religious rights is somewhat different from Calvin's idea of the people's religious freedom. This difference may refute John Witte Jr.'s overgeneralised argument about the Reformed idea of the people's right of seeking God's grace (Witte 2007, 59-76), as is depicted in the Introduction chapter.

Third, they had different definitions of tyranny. For Calvin, tyranny was defined as the superior magistrate's violation of his duty to preserve the people's religious freedom. However, Beza nuancedly defined an illegitimate tyranny, which indicates the superior magistrate's usurpation of his throne without the consent of the people and against the established legal process, and two types of legitimate tyranny, which respectively indicate the legal superior magistrate's intrusions on the people's religious rights and their political rights.

Fourth, they presented different ideas about political resistance. Calvin's idea was concerned with the people's passive resistance and the inferior magistrates' (possibly armed) active resistance to the superior's tyranny in the case that the inferior magistrates failed to restrain the superior's tyranny. For Beza, the different tyrannies of the illegitimate and legitimate superior magistrates needed to be distinctly handled by the inferior magistrates and the people with respective ways of resistance, as is described in the fourth different point between *The Magdeburg Confession* and Beza's *Right of Magistrates* in Section 3.2. Here, Beza put strong emphasis on remedy for tyranny, and opened a door for the people's right to justify active resistance to the illegitimate superior magistrate.

As the successor of Calvin, Beza was likely to propose many of his ideas by referring to the former's relevant ideas. The three similar points between their texts (shown in Section 4.1) may somewhat prove Beza's dependence on Calvin's ideas. Moreover, Beza might also create some of his original ideas with reference to Calvin's relevant ideas. For example, Beza's theory of political covenant might be formed based on Calvin's idea of the magistrates and people's cooperation of maintaining a well-ordered society through fulfilling their respective duties. This is consistent with Witte's argument that Beza proposed his theory of political covenant under the inspiration of Calvin's emphasis on the common duties of the state (of the magistrates) and church (of the people) (Witte 2007, 135-137). And as is described in the Introduction chapter, Beza expanded the people's natural rights to the religious and political aspects under the possible inspiration of Calvin's reference to the Lutheran idea of the natural right to self-defence, which is also shown in Witte's study (ibid., 123-133). Even Beza's openness for the people's active resistance to the tyrannical superior magistrate was likely to be with reference to Calvin's affirmation of the people's right to actively resist the impious magistrate(s) in his sermon on 31 July 1562 (as is mentioned in Chapter Three), though Calvin had not yet presented this affirmation in the *Institutes* (1559). Generally speaking, Beza put more emphasis on the people's civic rights than Calvin did.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Section 1: The Answers to the Leading Questions

Section 1.1: The First and Second Sub Questions

The analyses in Chapters One to Four offer the answers to the first two sub questions, which are “who (which political authorities) may be resisted by whom” and “what kind of resistance is justified under what circumstances”, regarding the four selected texts.

In the *Warning to My Dear German People* (1531), Luther expressed that the (common) people should passively resist (disobey) the superior magistrate (Charles V) if he supported the spiritually tyrannical pope to attack the gospel and the true Christians (Lutherans) by his arms. However, Luther left the justification of active resistance to the jurists. The Lutheran jurists accordingly complemented the notion of the inferior magistrates’ work: the inferior magistrates should justify (possibly armed) active resistance to Charles V under the circumstance that he helped the pope to attack the Lutherans.

The Magdeburg Confession (1550) offered the answers to the two sub questions by presenting the four levels of the superior magistrate’s injury, which are shown in Table 1:

	The level of the superior magistrate’s injury (from low to high)			
	The first level (doing some <i>remediable</i> harm to the inferiors)	The second level (violating the divine, imperial, and natural laws)	The third level (forcing the inferiors to certain sin)	The fourth level (persecuting his subjects and God with guile and arms)
The inferior magistrates	Passively resisting the superior magistrate	Actively resisting the superior magistrate in unarmed ways (e.g., forfeiting his jurisdiction in the political process)		Actively resisting the superior magistrate in armed ways
The people	Passively resisting the superior magistrate			

Table 1

The Magdeburg Lutherans did not literally state the level of the real superior magistrate Charles V’s injury. However, since Charles V had supported the pope to attack the Lutherans with his arms, he was likely to possess the fourth level of injury. The inferior magistrates thus should justify armed resistance to Charles V with the cooperation of the people’s passive resistance to him.

In the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), Calvin stated that the inferior magistrates should first try to restrain the (Catholic) superior’s tyranny, which indicates the

latter's intrusion on the (Protestant) people's freedom by coercing them to do Catholic practices. If the inferior magistrates failed to restrain the superior's tyranny, they should turn to justify (potentially armed) active resistance to the superior with the cooperation of the people's passive resistance to him.

Beza's *Right of Magistrates* (1574) presented his complex answers to the two sub questions, which are shown in Table 2:

	The type of the superior magistrate's tyranny	
	The <i>illegitimate</i> tyrant (usurping his throne without the consent of the people and against the established legal process)	The tyrant with a <i>legitimate</i> position (violating the people's religious and/or political rights)
The inferior magistrates	First trying to convert the tyrant into a legitimate sovereign. If failed, justifying active resistance to the tyrant. Resistance should be principally unarmed, but could become armed if necessary.	Justifying active resistance to the tyrant with the first aim of remediating his tyranny. Resistance should be principally unarmed, but could become armed if the remedy failed (with the estates' possible forfeiture of the tyrant's sovereignty).
The people	Passively resisting the tyrant under the lead of the inferior magistrates' active resistance (in principle). If the inferior magistrates failed, justifying active resistance by themselves.	Passively resisting the tyrant with the first aim of remediating his tyranny.

Table 2

Section 1.2: The Third Sub Question

This sub question is: What are the main similarities and differences between the views on justified resistance in the four selected texts? These views are shown in the comparisons in Chapter Five. They can be divided into three levels (from initiative to consequential): first, the main ideas about justifying political resistance; second, the essential elements to be preserved (the things being essentially defended through political resistance when they were violated by the tyrants); and third, the most fundamental theory. With respect to "the main ideas about justifying political resistance", all these authors endorsed the inferior magistrates' active resistance to the tyrannical superior with the cooperation of the people's passive resistance to him in the regular cases, by commonly referring to either *Acts 5:29* or *Romans 13:3*. However, they also presented their different unique cases for political resistance. Luther left 'the inferior magistrates' possible justification of active resistance' to the jurists, and later

endorsed it. The Magdeburg Lutherans added the inferior magistrates' passive resistance to the remediable injury of the superior. Calvin stressed the prerequisite for political resistance, which was the inferior magistrate's failure of restraining by other means the superior's tyranny. Beza emphasised the subjects' political resistance with the first aim of remediating tyranny, and endorsed the people's right to active resistance to the illegitimate tyrant.

These authors' ideas show different comparative conditions in the level of "the essential elements to be preserved". Concerning the most essential element to be preserved, it was commonly regarded as the people's freedom of pursuing (non-idolatrous) Christianity that related to the gospel (founded on the First Table), by the Lutheran authors and Calvin, though Calvin stressed this religious freedom's relation to the natural law but the Lutherans did not. Unlike them, Beza interpreted this freedom as the people's religious rights, and expanded the preservation of it to be together with that of their political rights (founded on the Second Table), which were also related to the natural law. Moreover, to preserve the most essential element(s), all these authors stressed the magistrates' duty to preserve social order/peace. However, unlike Luther, the Magdeburg Lutherans and the Reformed authors proposed their intended society that is well ordered with a balanced cooperation of aristocracy and democracy. For the Magdeburg Lutherans, this system was primarily concerned with the aristocratic balance between the power of magistracy and those of the papists, the Interimists and Adiaphorists, with the consent of the people (democracy). This was different from the Reformed proposed system, which was concerned with the primary balance between the magistracy (aristocracy) and the people (democracy).

With regard to "the most fundamental theory", the Lutheran authors commonly focused on the theory of the Two Kingdoms, which is concerned with the fight between the servants of God's kingdom and those of the Devil's kingdom. They saw the papacy, the Interimists and Adiaphorists, as the servants of the Devil. The emperor Charles V, who had been ordained as one of God's servants with the inferior magistrates and the people together, was considered as a betrayer from God to the Devil after he attacked the gospel and the Lutherans with his arms. On the other hand, Calvin shifted his focus into God's kingdom alone. Beza changed it into his theory of (Godly ordained) political covenant, which might be related to the secular realm of God's kingdom.

Section 1.3: The Central Question

The central question is: What are the main similarities and differences between the Lutheran (Luther, 1531; Magdeburg Confession, 1550) and Reformed (Calvin, 1559; Beza,

1574) ideas concerning resistance to (possible) tyrants? These authors' views share main similarities in the level of "the main ideas about justifying political resistance". These are, the people's duty/right to passively resist the tyrannical superior magistrate, the inferior magistrates' duty/right to actively resist the tyrannical superior, and reference to either *Acts 5:29* or *Romans 13:3*. On the other hand, their differences are mainly in the more consequential levels. In the level of the most fundamental theory, the Lutheran authors included both the kingdoms of God and of the Devil; while the Reformed ones only included God's kingdom, with Beza putting more focus on the secular realm than Calvin. The fundamental difference between the two denominations reflects a further difference between them: the Lutheran authors primarily focused on resisting the power of the Devil, while the Reformed ones primarily focused on maintaining the intended society. It is also noteworthy that Beza was the only one who stressed preserving the people's religious and political rights instead of freedom, and somewhat endorsed the people's right to active resistance.

In summary, the development of the sixteenth-century Protestant ideas about political resistance started with the Lutherans' primary focus on the fight between the power of God and that of the Devil, which was concerned with the heavenly reflection on the secular society. Later, the Reformed theologians shifted the focus into the maintenance of the secular social order. Moreover, the development was started with Luther's stress on the people's passive resistance to the tyrant. This then shifted into the latter theologians' primary emphasis on the inferior magistrates' duty to resist the tyrant, with Beza's comparatively strongest stress on the people's rights.

Section 2: Evaluation

As is described in the Introduction chapter, a prominent part of the methodology for this research is concerned with learning the potential theological and philosophical foundations for the four selected texts by reading the secondary literature. Through this method, I have discovered not only the respective contents of the four texts with regard to "the main ideas about justifying political resistance", but also concerning "the essential elements to be preserved" and "the most fundamental theory", which are fundamental for the former, as is indicated in Section 1.2. Accordingly, I form a model named "The Three-Layer Model of Political Resistance" to illustrate these three levels:

The main ideas about justifying political resistance
The essential elements to be preserved
The most fundamental theory

The Three-Layer Model of Political Resistance

With this model, it is helpful to evaluate recent studies about the four texts, which are described in the Introduction chapter and Chapters One to Five. Among the researchers of these studies, only David Mark Whitford and John Witte Jr. proposed the comparisons between the ideas that are presented in the four texts, and the potential references between them. These comparisons and references are mostly in the level of “the main ideas about justifying political resistance” and slightly in the level of “the essential elements to be preserved” (concerning the Reformed authors’ potential reference to the Magdeburg Lutherans’ idea about the intended society). This accordingly indicates that the research on comparisons in the levels of “the essential elements to be preserved” and “the most fundamental theory” is not sufficient yet. Under this circumstance, my original model may be helpful to inspire the researchers to proceed further comparisons of the ideas of these authors (of the four texts) in the relatively consequential levels, and to launch future research on the Christian ideas about political resistance in these three levels.

Moreover, the other prominent part of the methodology for this research is concerned with learning the historical contexts for the texts, as is mentioned in the Introduction chapter. The contexts for the two Lutheran texts are somewhat similar: they presented the same spiritual tyrant (the pope) and superior magistrate (Charles V) who potentially shared the tyranny with the former. But there is a prominent difference between them: Charles V’s tyranny was still indefinite when Luther composed his treatise in 1531, but had become definite (by attacking the Lutherans with his arms) when the Magdeburg Lutherans composed their treatise in 1550. This difference might be a prominent reason why Luther did not stress the inferior magistrates’ duty to resist the political tyrant but the Magdeburgians did. Calvin started his composition of the *Institutes* in 1536 by focusing on the maintenance of social peace, but complemented his ideas about political resistance in the latest version of his treatise in 1559 after he witnessed the Lutherans’ sufferings from Charles V’s tyranny and some wars of religion in France during the 1550s. Beza experienced the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre just before the composition of his treatise in 1574. This experience may have inspired Beza to emphasise remediating the superior magistrate’s tyranny through political

resistance. These examples indicate that the historical contexts did somewhat influence these authors' theological and philosophical ideas.

The evaluation above shows that a scholar's ideas about justifying political resistance are usually formed based on his consequentially theological and philosophical views and his context. Here, the scholar's context is with regard to history and culture, and is likely to affect his theological and philosophical views. This point inspires me to be curious about the ideas (about political resistance) from the Christian scholars with non-Christendom contexts and those from the non-Christian scholars. Thus, I may consider launching a future research on a historical case of a non-Christian group's political resistance in a non-Christendom context, by referring to The Three-Layer Model of Political Resistance. Such a research will broaden the contexts and foundations for the ideas about political resistance in the aspects of history, culture, philosophy, and perhaps theology. It may be instrumental to embrace the culturally and religiously diverse views in the global context.

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DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

> See explanation at the end of this document.

1. General information

NAME OF STUDENT: Yecheng Ruan

NAMES OF THESIS SUPERVISORS: Dr. Aza Goudriaan

DATE: 23-05-2022

VERSION: the first version

2. General information about research and subject of the thesis

(PROVISIONAL) TITLE OF THE RESEARCH / THESIS:

Lutheran and Reformed Ideas about Resistance to Tyrants: A Comparative Study of Four Sixteenth-Century Texts

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT AND METHOD(S):

The research topic is concerned with the analysis and comparisons of the Lutheran and Reformed ideas about resistance to tyrants in sixteenth-century Christianity. The central research question is: What are the main similarities and differences between the Lutheran (Martin Luther, 1531; Magdeburg Confession, 1550) and Reformed (John Calvin, 1559; Theodore Beza, 1574) ideas concerning resistance toward (possible) tyrants? The research project will be conducted by studying and analyzing four primary sources – Luther's *Warning to My Dear German People* (1531), *The Magdeburg Confession* (1550), Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), and Beza's *Right*

of Magistrates (1574) – and relevant secondary sources. The method consists mainly in a close reading of the primary sources, in chronological order and in their historical contexts, and answering the research questions by referring to the theological and philosophical knowledge that is presented in the relevant secondary sources.

TYPE OF RESEARCH DATA TO BE COLLECTED:

The data are all concerned with the printed sources that are borrowed from the libraries of PThU and RUG, and the digital sources that are downloaded online (mostly via the online libraries of PThU and RUG). Both kinds of sources are either primary or secondary. They are published or otherwise available in the public domain. The primary sources have been studied to a considerable extent, and the secondary sources are mostly peer-reviewed. Most of the data have been collected.

PERIOD IN WHICH THE DATA WILL BE COLLECTED:

From now until the end of 2022.

3. Technical aspects of the data storage

HARD- & SOFTWARE:

The digital sources are stored as PDF documents with the software Adobe Acrobat Reader, and the digitally written productions (the drafts and ultimate version of thesis) will be stored as Word documents with the software Word. They will be all stored on the Dell laptop of the researcher (Yecheng Ruan).

FILE FORMATS:

PDF and Word documents

SIZE OF THE DATA (ESTIMATELY IN MB/GB/TB):

70 MB

STORAGE OF DATA DURING CONDUCTION OF THE RESEARCH:

The digital sources and digitally written productions will be stored on my laptop.

STORAGE OF DATA AFTER COMPLETION THE RESEARCH:

They will still be kept on my laptop.

4. Responsibilities

MANAGEMENT OF THE DATA DURING CONDUCTION OF THE RESEARCH:

I will safely keep the printed sources by myself and store the digital sources on my laptop. They will be used for my research.

MANAGEMENT OF THE DATA AFTER COMPLETION OF THE RESEARCH:

The printed sources (that I borrowed) will be returned to their original libraries. The digital sources will be kept on my laptop.

5. Legal and ethical aspects

OWNER OF THE DATA:

Yecheng Ruan

IS THE DATA PRIVACY SENSITIVE?: YES / NO

No

IF YES: HOW WILL YOU ARRANGE SAFE STORAGE AND CONSENT OF THE PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN YOUR RESEARCH?

6. Other aspects

(The following has to be filled in by the thesis supervisor:)

Approved

Not approved, because: _____

Name _____ A. Goudriaan _____

Signature: _____ A. Goudriaan _____

Date: _____ 28 June 2022 _____
