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R. BELLAH'S CONCEPT OF "CIVIL RELIGION": IDENTIFICATION FEATURES AND MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

The article examines the nuances in the definition of "civil religion" as posited by American sociologist Robert Bellah. The situational drivers for its emergence include: a) the necessity for a theoretical framework while elucidating the dynamics of religion and politics in the US to Japanese students, and b) addressing the societal challenges the US faced due to the Vietnam War. R. Bellah's ideological foundation for reshaping "civil religion" is attributed to: drawing inspiration from the works of J.-J. Rousseau, and integrating theories from A. de Tocqueville, E. Durkheim, and S. Mead. The study proposes the existence of five methodological strategies discernible in Bellah's three publications: "Civil Religion in America" (1967), "Broken Covenant. American Civil Religion in Time of Trial" (1975), and "Religion and Legitimation of the American Republic" (1978). A comprehensive critique of Bellah's five distinct interpretations of civil religion is presented, evaluating their substantive coherence. The underlying reasons for shifts in Bellah's delineations of civil religion are outlined. This paper underscores the conceptual fragmentation and the aspiration for functional refinement in Bellah's portrayal of "civil religion". Reasons for Bellah's subsequent discontinuation of the term "civil religion" from the mid-1980s are also explored.

Keywords: civil religion, Robert Bellah, interpretations of civil religion, American civil religion, religious nationalism.

In the winter of 1967, the interdisciplinary journal "Daedalus" of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences released an issue in Boston. This issue featured an article titled "Civil Religion in America" by Robert Bellah, then a professor at Harvard University. This piece was later reprinted in the commemorative editions of "Daedalus" marking its thirtieth (1988) and fiftieth (2005) anniversaries. For this discussion, we reference the 2005 reprint of "Civil Religion in America." Additionally, we consult Bellah's "The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial" (1975) and the chapter "Religion and the Legitimation of the American Republic" (1980). These sources illuminate the evolution of five pivotal strategies in Bellah's interpretation of civil religion (henceforth denoted as BCR). Notably, our analysis centers on the revived concept of "civil religion" that the American sociologist reintroduced after a prolonged hiatus. Instead, we do not take into account modern modified interpretations of this concept, which can be found in the works of followers or critics of R. Bella.

The release of "Civil Religion in America" marked a pivotal moment for its author. Indeed, from that point on, Bellah's reputation as a sociologist became deeply intertwined with the notion of civil religion. Concurrently, the article's publication ignited spirited debates, especially concerning the delineation of "civil religion". Marcela Christie detailed these tumultuous episodes within the American scholarly community in her book "From Civil to Political Religion" (2001) [7].

Notably, sociologists like Andrew Greeley, Robert E. Stauffer, and Richard Fenn, religious scholars such as Conrad Cherry and Martin E. Marty, theologians including Russell E. Richey, Donald Jones, John A. Coleman, Richard John Neuhaus, and Will Herberg, along with political scientist Roderick P. Hart, partook in these discussions.

Additionally, it's pertinent to highlight the comprehensive work of American historian Raymond Haberski, "God and War: American Civil Religion since 1945" (2012). In it, R. Haberski delves into the trajectory of American civil religion, spotlighting unsettling tendencies

tied to significant historical challenges like the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and the war on terror. R. Haberski compellingly demonstrates how U.S. military involvements—from World War II to the events in Iraq and Afghanistan—have both shaped and skewed expressions of civil religion.

In Ukrainian religious studies, scholars such as Leonid Kondratyuk, Maksym Parashchevin, and Anna Slubska have attempted to analyze civil religion. These researchers primarily sought to elucidate the principal tenets of R. Bellah's civil religion concept. Of these, only M. Parashchevin provided a nuanced assessment, describing it as "... the most evident case of the undue application of the 'religion' label to inherently secular phenomena" [19, p. 7].

Many delved deeply into the theoretical aspects of civil religion, proposing varied and even alternative interpretations. Some endeavored to classify BCR within the broader conceptual framework of "civil religion." For instance, in the preface to their interdisciplinary anthology, editors Donald Jones and Russell Ritchie pointed to "at least five broads, and to some extent interrelated meanings of civil religion" [16, p. 14] evident in myriad American academic works. These interpretations encompass folk religion, the transcendent universal religion of the nation, religious nationalism, democratic faith, and Protestant civic piety. Interestingly, they categorized Bellah's interpretation as representing a "transcendent universal religion of the nation" [16, p. 16]. Moreover, among those aligned with Bellah's view of a distinct civil religion, considerable discord arose over its precise definition and its future trajectory. R. Bellah later lamented that his proponents had stretched the "civil religion" definition "far beyond any coherent concept, or at least far beyond anything [he] ever meant by it" [5, p. 16].

Certainly, the seminal article by the American sociologist not only spurred efforts to validate the use of "civil religion" in the contemporary society but also elicited skepticism regarding the validity of such a contrived notion. American sociologist R. Fenn vehemently rejected the existence of such a concept, particularly as a social reality

of his epoch. He thus dubbed R. Bellah's civil religion paradigm a "new orthodoxy" [10, p. 160] imbued with a potentially disruptive integrative force. Further, R. Fenn contended that "civil religion is a socially constructed myth adapted to try and eliminate ethnic and religious differences" [11, p. 41].

The plethora of interpretations surrounding BCR raises a series of inquiries. Pertinent among them are: "What objectives did the American sociologist aim for when ushering the 'civil religion' concept into academic discourse?"; "What meaning did the foundational article's author embed within the proffered concept?"; "What accounted for the marked shifts in R. Bellah's civil religion portrayals in his subsequent works?" It's noteworthy that the challenge of pinpointing BCR remains a contentious issue in scholarly realms. Conversely, the matter of the underpinnings for the advent of a provocative construct, as reenvisioned by the American sociologist, seems relatively underexplored.

Thus, our research endeavor aims to discern the ideological underpinnings and situational incentives that led R. Bellah to pen an article that, with the passage of time, has been elevated to canonical status within the domain of religious sociology. Evidently, such a pronounced objective necessitates addressing the challenge of delineating the distinct attributes of the "civil religion" concept as envisioned by the American sociologist.

Let's commence by dissecting the title of R. Bellah's seminal article. Herein, the semantic weight leans heavily on the term "civil religion," with the qualifier "in America" appended for context. In the early 1960s, R. Bellah initially employed this terminology to depict the interplay between religion and U.S. political dynamics. He acknowledged utilizing the term in lectures tailored for a cohort of Japanese students [2, p. 137]. Such was one of the situational stimuli behind the inception of the BCR notion. Yet, it is crucial to underscore that this concept isn't the exclusive creation of the American sociologist.

Indeed, the origins of the concept in human intellectual discourse trace back to the work of philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, particularly in "On the Social Contract; or, Principles of Political Right" (1762). R. Bellah openly concedes in his article that he borrowed the term "civil religion" from Rousseau. Concurrently, the American sociologist elaborates on Rousseau's core tenets of "civil religion" as: "the existence of God, the life to come, the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice, and the exclusion of religious intolerance" [1, p. 43]. For Rousseau, these principles forged a unifying bond among individuals within a civil society. Yet, Bellah alludes to a semblance of this "civil religion" idea (though not expressly the term) in the writings of B. Franklin and even among the founding fathers. This prompts an inevitable query: Can one genuinely identify Rousseau's rendition of "civil religion" as the conceptual fountainhead for Bellah's analogous notion?

In our assessment, Bellah extracted merely the structural aspect of the concept from Rousseau, not its intrinsic essence. Rousseau's "civil religion" manifests as an external regulatory mechanism designed to bolster and sustain a particular political order. Essentially, the French philosopher wielded this concept as a tool to navigate the intricate nexus among religion, society, and governance. Conversely, Bellah redeploys the "civil religion" moniker to encapsulate the "internal", or more aptly, the spiritual facet of the American ethos.

Further dissecting the nuances, it's evident that the primary tenets of Bellah's civil religion starkly contrast with

those posited by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. A meticulous examination of Bellah's seminal work surfaces the following tentatively delineated principles of "civil religion":

1. Faith in a "unitarian" deity who, as described, "is on the austere side, much more related to order, law, and right than to salvation and love" [1, p. 45].
2. The assertion that human rights are divine grants.
3. Its foundation upon biblical archetypes, such as the exodus, the idea of the chosen people, the promised land, the New Jerusalem, sacrificial death, and rebirth.
4. The portrayal of America as the New Jerusalem and "the last hope of earth".
5. The vision of America evolving into a society wholly aligned with God's will and serving as a beacon for all nations.

The inception of the BCR notion possibly also owes inspiration to the idea of "civil religion" articulated in the two-volume treatise, "Democracy in America" (1835/1840), authored by French historian Alexis de Tocqueville. Tocqueville himself remarked on the "democratic and republican religion" he perceived during his U.S. expedition. Echoing Tocqueville's sentiments, Bellah noted, "Tocqueville spoke of American church religion as "a political institution which powerfully contributes to the maintenance of a democratic republic among the Americans" by supplying a strong moral consensus amidst continuous political change" [1, p. 50].

Drawing inspiration from the interpretations of civil religion by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Alexis de Tocqueville, R. Bellah did not aim for a comprehensive analysis of the concept within the American milieu of his era. Rather, his objective was to underscore the profound authenticity and significance of this religious dimension. He posited, "that this religion – or perhaps better, this religious dimension – has its own seriousness and integrity and requires the same care in understanding that any other religion does" [1, p. 40]. Bellah viewed the concept of "civil religion" as not only promising but also meriting rigorous scholarly examination. So, what lies at the core of this concept?

In the opening lines of his article, R. Bellah asserts: "...few have realized that there actually exists alongside of and rather clearly differentiated from the churches an elaborate and well-institutionalized civil religion in America" [1, p. 40]. This proclamation underscores Bellah's conviction regarding the presence of a distinct "civil religion" within American society of that period, which doesn't serve as an alternative to traditional religious denominations. However, it's worth noting an inherent tension in Bellah's proposition. While he delineates "civil religion" from ecclesiastical establishments, he concurrently underscores its "well-institutionalization".

Conversely, how convincingly does Bellah's proposed concept fit the parameters of religion in its traditional sense? It appears that Bellah might have been conscious of the potential ambiguity in characterizing it solely as a religion. This is evident in his remark: "...this religion – or perhaps better, this religious dimension" [1, p. 40]. Through this, Bellah underscores the essential role his concept plays, at least within the confines of American public discourse. For Bellah, it is crucial to accentuate how the term "religion" is modified by the adjective "civil". Can we deduce a functional interconnectedness between the two? The conflation of "religion" with "religious dimension" significantly influenced his initial conceptualization of BCR. Specifically, Bellah posits: "This public religious dimension is expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals that I

am calling the American civil religion" [1, p. 42]. Essentially, Bellah advocates for situating his concept within the public domain. As such, "civil religion" transcends individual expressions of religiosity. It doesn't encompass the myriad religious convictions of average Americans. Bellah elaborates: Although matters of personal religious belief, worship, and association are considered to be strictly private affairs, there are, at the same time, certain common elements of religious orientation that the great majority of Americans share" [1, p. 42]. These certain common elements, however, significantly influence the workings of American society, particularly its political dynamics.

The initial definition of BCR seems somewhat cursory in its depth, with an evident emphasis on a specific ethnic element. It's plausible that Bellah himself recognized this conceptual shallowness. Consequently, he endeavors to refine the characterization of "civil religion", highlighting its unique phenomenalism. Thus, Bellah presents a revised definition: What we have, then, from the earliest years of the republic is a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalized in a collectivity" [1, p. 46]. Yet, in the subsequent line, he adds a caveat: "This religion – there seems no other word for it – while not antithetical to and indeed sharing much in common with Christianity, was neither sectarian nor in any specific sense Christian" [1, p. 46]. Hence, Bellah exhibits uncertainty regarding labeling the concept he employs as "religion". Moreover, his very understanding of "religion" remains nebulous and semantically fluid. On one side, it refers to a "collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals" necessitating sanctification; on the other, the term, or its "religious dimension", signifies a linchpin for societal unity. From Bellah's arguments, one can infer the feasibility of the coexistence of two distinct religious forms. This implies that Bellah refrained from viewing "civil religion" merely as a surrogate for Christianity.

Interestingly, Bellah's second characterization of BCR bears notable parallels with Emile Durkheim's renowned definition of religion. To cite Durkheim: "*a religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them*" [9, p. 44; emphasis preserved]. A juxtaposition of Bellah's and Durkheim's definitions reveals congruities both in terms of core elements and functional implications. For instance, Bellah echoes Durkheim's emphasis on the association with "sacred things". Thus, BCR and Durkheim's articulation of religion can be seen as contextually analogous. In this regard, R. Bellah's assessment of the ideological contribution of the author of the classic book "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life" to the intellectual thought of mankind is symptomatic. In his prefatory essay to Durkheim's Selected Writings, addressing themes of morality and society, Bellah observes: "He was a high priest and theologian of the civil religion of the Third Republic and a prophet calling not only modern France but modern Western society generally to mend its ways in the face of a great social and moral crisis" [4, p. X].

While Emile Durkheim never specifically coined the term "civil religion", he did, in his essay "Individualism and the Intellectuals" (1898), posit the notion of a distinct "religion of humanity", which he described as being "worthy of respect and sacred" [8, p. 48]. At its core, Durkheim viewed religion as a unifying societal force, a collective conduit anchoring individual to the wider community. Furthermore, for Durkheim, religion is an objective social

phenomenon. Robert Bellah appropriates this Durkheimian model of religion in his analysis of American society. However, R. Bellah diverges from the foundational tenets of Durkheimian religious sociology, particularly Durkheim's assertion that "every group has a religious dimension" [1, p. 40]. In his writings, R. Bellah employs the term "religious dimension" to refer specifically to a "set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals" [1, p. 42].

Notably, R. Bellah introduces the term "religious dimension" early on in his article. Yet, its significance appears to diminish as Bellah's exploration into the nuances of "civil religion" deepens. As R. Bellah progressively refines his conceptualization, shedding elements of idealism and overt ethnocentrism, he posits that "the civil religion at its best is a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen in or, one could almost say, as revealed through the experience of the American people" [1, p. 49]. This articulation forms Bellah's third and evolved definition of the American Civil Religion.

A pertinent question emerges: How is civil religion manifested through the experiences of the American people? R. Bellah identified three pivotal moments in American history, which appear to serve as benchmarks for the affirmation of civil religion. He associates the first period with the Revolution, where the issue of independence was paramount. The second period is set against the backdrop of the Civil War, with the slavery dilemma at its core. The third epoch, in Bellah's perspective, aligns with his contemporary times, positioning America at the helm of global accountability. To quote R. Bellah: "This is the problem of responsible action in a revolutionary world, a world seeking to attain many of the things, material and spiritual, that we have already attained. Americans have, from the beginning, been aware of the responsibility and the significance our republican experiment has for the whole world" [1, p. 53]. It's plausible to infer that R. Bellah subtly alluded to America's moral quandary stemming from the protracted Vietnam War. Did this conflict erode the American conviction in the nation's ordained purpose? R. Bellah, a staunch war critic, hinted at governmental hubris and its consequential inability to address the challenges posed by this "third trial". He poignantly remarked, "Bewildered and unnerved when our terrible power fails to bring immediate success, we are at the edge of a chasm the depth of which no man knows" [1, p. 53].

Interestingly, it was the Vietnam War that served as a pivotal impetus prompting R. Bellah's reconsideration of the concept of "civil religion" as introduced by Rousseau. It might be apt to concur with R. Khaberski's assertion that: "Bellah's chastened civil religion was born from the theological crisis precipitated by Vietnam" [13, p. 53]. However, it would be an oversimplification to magnify the significance of just one of the three "times of trial." Bellah's intent in his article could very well be to depict these trials as moments of prophetic reckoning, galvanizing Americans into remedial actions to realign their nation's trajectory. Concurrently, the Vietnam War emerged as the catalyst that reignited deliberations on the ethical obligations of the American populace (beyond just its leadership) concerning its international endeavors.

Certainly, the concept of BCR manifests itself within distinct historical and cultural frameworks, earmarking the position of the American nation within global history. Additionally, it's noteworthy to mention that R. Bellah pinpointed the three pivotal moments of civil religion's emergence in conjunction with heightened enthusiasm and

collective effervescence exhibited by Americans. It is plausible that R. Bellah drew inspiration from E. Durkheim's theory positing those religious ideas burgeon during times when social groups are particularly concentrated and exuberantly animated (effervescence). This resonates with Durkheim's assertion: "The result in the generale effervescence that is characteristic of revolutionary or creative epochs" [8, p. 213].

R. Bellah's understanding of "civil religion" as a cultural phenomenon, which reflects the inherent needs of group members, undeniably echoes Durkheimian thought. After all, E. Durkheim, in his seminal work "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life", postulated that the essence of religion lies in crafting and nurturing sacred ideas, moral imperatives, orientations, symbols, and the like within a given society. Furthermore, he viewed religion as a vehicle for fostering unity and weaving the social fabric tighter. R. Bellah posited that "the civil religion was able to build up without any bitter struggle with the church powerful symbols of national solidarity and to mobilize deep levels of personal motivation for the attainment of national goals" [1, p. 50]. Hence, Durkheim's sociological take on religion undeniably laid the groundwork for the advent of BCR in its initial form.

R. Bellah, while refining the conceptualization of "civil religion" in his work, placed a distinct emphasis on its functional significance. Specifically, BCR emerges as a pivotal facet of the societal framework, situating the American nation in relation to loftier, transcendent principles. Moreover, it is tasked with fortifying societal unity, particularly during its most challenging junctures.

According to R. Bellah, this collection of "beliefs, symbols, and rituals" serves to harmoniously counterbalance the various religious, political, ideological, and even ethnic discourses present in American society. Consequently, the sacralization of select facets of social life is achievable through the enactment of distinct collective rituals by civil religion, leading to their ultimate legitimization. In this context, BCR functions similarly to a substitute religion, positing itself as a comprehensive elucidation of the American nation's identity conundrum.

The author elucidates the quandary of the American national identity by underscoring its distinct prophetic role. According to R. Bellah, the nation and its leaders are held accountable to a supreme authority, often symbolized by a transcendent deity. However, this emphasis on the prophetic aspect of religion was not a focal point for E. Durkheim. It's plausible that R. Bellah's advocacy for the prophetic nature of civil religion drew inspiration from historian Sidney Mead's proposition of the "religion of a democratic society and nation" [17, p. 135]. Notably, R. Bellah cites his own work, "The Lively Experiment" (1963) in his seminal article. Mead posited that this brand of religion "was articulated in terms of the destiny of America, under God, to be fulfilled by perfecting the democratic way of life for the example and betterment of mankind" [17, p. 135]. Moreover, Mead emphasized not only this religion's distinctiveness but also its overarching universality, manifest in the commitment of US citizens to a divine entity. It is noteworthy that R. Bellah culminated his piece with a prophetic appeal to employ the core ethical tenets of American civil religion in addressing contemporary political challenges, with aspirations for its potential global applicability.

So, in his seminal article, R. Bellah posited three interpretations of "civil religion," which subsequently ignited fervent debates within American academic circles.

Interestingly, the author may not have anticipated the myriad of nuanced responses regarding the viability of the "civil religion" concept post-publication.

Pertinent to this, there are two salient trends concerning the skepticism towards BCR among American scholars. Firstly, there is a pronounced dismissal of the theoretical potential of "civil religion." Secondly, some scholars have occasionally skewed the essence of BCR, especially framing it in the light of "religious nationalism."

The foremost stance embodies the perception of BCR as a subjective construct lacking empirical grounding. Notably, political scientist Roderick Hart opined that R. Bellah unveiled "not religion but rhetorical assertion" and "his civil religion was his own hypostatization of what are actually the elements of religious discourse" [14, p. 40]. Some publications have likewise challenged the empirical underpinnings of BCR. This skepticism is evident in sociologists' endeavors to rigorously scrutinize this contentious concept. For instance, in 1972, Michael Thomas and Charles Flippen embarked on a quantitative research of BCR, delving into newspaper editorials that frequently addressed the July 4, 1970 celebrations. Their analysis discerned an underlying predilection in R. Bellah's concept toward secular proclamations, casting doubts on its religious substance. M. Thomas and C. Flippen posited that "a well-defined thesis of civil religion may be more the creation (and fantasy) of the liberal political intellectual elite than active faith among the masses" [18, p. 224].

It's conceivable that R. Bellah anticipated critiques regarding the empirical foundation of his theory. As such, this American sociologist emphasized the public political rhetoric inherent in pivotal American public documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, as well as presidential inaugural speeches. Notably, R. Bellah viewed John Kennedy's inaugural address on January 20, 1961, as epitomizing American civil religion. This is particularly evident in its concluding remark: "With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own" [1, p. 41]. This statement hints at what R. Bellah perceived as the "transcendent aim" of civil religion and its pronounced prophetic undertone.

Overall, R. Bellah's content analysis of historical documents and presidential addresses serves as an endeavor to empirically validate the "civil religion" concept. Yet, one must ponder its efficacy. The query, in essence, appears rhetorical.

The second stance is epitomized by scholars such as R. Fenn and V. Herberg, who perceive the BCR concept as a distinct tilt towards "religious nationalism" or as symbolic of the veneration of the "American state." Will Herberg describes the American way of life as: "a civil religion in the strictest sense of the term, for, in it, national life is apotheosized, national values are religionized, national heroes are divinized, national history is experienced as . . . a redemptive history" [15, p. 78]. There's a possibility that R. Bellah's leanings in framing the "civil religion" bore nationalist overtones. Even Philip Gorsky, his protégé, conceded, "Bellah's definition of civil religion does have one major weakness, though: it does not draw a clear enough line between civil religion and religious nationalism" [12, pp. 16–17]. However, it's imperative to recognize that R. Bellah did not equate civil religion solely with the adoration of the American nation. This is substantiated by his assertion: "Fortunately, since the

American civil religion is not the worship of the American nation but an understanding of the American experience in the light of ultimate and universal reality" [1, p. 54].

Deeply disconcerted by the misinterpretations of his theory, R. Bellah came to acknowledge merely the utility of civil religion in American society, rather than its inherent legitimacy or cogency. Such a concession can be found in the inaugural chapter of his book, "The Broken Covenant". At a minimum, the American sociologist recognized that the "civil religion" concept had been semantically fragmented, losing the constructive essence he had originally intended for it.

It's therefore unsurprising that in "The Broken Covenant," R. Bellah undertook a re-evaluation of his concept. He elucidated, "By civil religion I refer to that religious dimension, found I think in the life of every people, through which it interprets its historical experience in the light of transcendent reality" [6, p. 3]. This marked his fourth definition of BCR, aligning closely with the third in content. Bellah perceived this interpretation as pertinent and potentially fruitful. It underscores the imperative of nurturing those sacred tenets and principles pivotal in every nation's history. Crucially, Bellah deliberately avoids an overly "American-centric" lens when defining civil religion. He even regarded instances of American exceptionalism as conspicuous examples of the "broken covenant" between the nation and its transcendent foundation. While his book traces the symbolic trajectory of American civil religion from the 17th-century Puritans through to the mid-1970s, he portrays this history as an elevated myth. For Bellah, "myth" doesn't signify a narrative detached from truth. Instead, he postulates, "Myth seeks rather to transfigure reality so that it provides moral and spiritual meaning to individuals or societies" [6, p. 3]. In this context, myth crafts a "religious dimension" within every society, framing its historical milestones in the backdrop of an overarching reality. This is true for the American narrative, as deftly delineated by Bellah.

From the introductory section of his book, it's evident that R. Bellah perceived civil religion as an aggregation of widely recognized religious and moral principles, setting them against liberal utilitarianism and an unwavering faith in science. He was resolutely of the belief that "the continued and increased dominance of the complex of capitalism, utilitarianism, and the belief that the only road to truth is science will rapidly lead to the destruction of American society" [6, p. XIV].

Undoubtedly, R. Bellah sought validation for his conceptualization of civil religion within the context of then-contemporary American society. However, a mere eight years following the release of his article "Civil Religion in America," a series of events transpired that hardly advanced the acceptance of his theory. This period witnessed the assassinations of President John Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Watts riots, street clashes in Chicago, the Watergate scandal, the surge in anti-war protests, and the eventual withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. These occurrences collectively eroded intellectual optimism regarding the actualization of civil religious values as a unifying bedrock for the nation. Notably, President R. Nixon, who endorsed "public theology" – a variant of "civil religion" – faced a disillusioned public post-Watergate, who viewed him as a betrayer, having seemingly compromised the very values he championed. Understandably, these developments left Bellah disheartened. His ensuing pessimism is palpable in his reflection: "Today the American civil religion is an

empty and broken shell. It was from the beginning an external covenant. That in itself is no fault, for external covenants are necessary... The external covenant must become in internal covenant and many times in our history that has happened" [6, p. 142].

The emphasis on considering the "internal covenant" within the semantics of the term "civil religion" led R. Bellah to refine its definition. In the chapter titled "Religion and the Legitimation of the American Republic," he sought to distance the concept from its heavily politicized undertones, focusing instead on its inherent religious essence. Consequently, he defined civil religion as "the worship of a higher reality that upholds the standards the republic attempts to embody" [5, p. 13]. This redefinition can be seen as R. Bellah's fifth and final effort to preserve the relevance of a concept that was widely accepted during that period.

In his subsequent book, "Habits of the Heart" (1985), he abandoned the notion of "civil religion", attributing this decision to an aspiration to grasp the core of the phenomenon rather than merely its nomenclature. R. Bellah's own admission is telling: "Today religion in America is as private and diverse as New England colonial religion was public and unified" [3, p. 220].

The year 1986 witnessed a notable shift when an American sociologist publicly disavowed the concept of "civil religion," a term that had gained traction during the 1970s. This is in reference to R. Bellah's presentation titled "Public Philosophy and Public Theology in America Today," which he delivered at the "Civil Religion and Political Theology" conference. Interestingly, he sidestepped his earlier concept without direct mention. From this point, one could argue for the conceptual demise of Bellah's version of "civil religion". Yet, within the intellectual discourse of both the USA and European nations, the notion of "civil religion" experienced a resurgence in literature from the 1990s through the early 21st century. This revival, however, is a subject more aptly suited for examining alternative conceptualizations and interpretations of "civil religion."

R. Bellah's initial optimism regarding this concept and his unbridled belief in its instrumental potential within American academic discourse later shifted to profound skepticism concerning its analytical and empirical utility. Essentially, the American sociologist became ensnared by his own conceptualization of civil religion. Despite his promising trajectory as an orientalist, R. Bellah found himself inadvertently engaged in debates over the efficacy of the resuscitated Rousseau's concept. The largely disheartening outcomes of these discussions led him to: a) publicly discontinue his use of the "civil religion" terminology and b) become frequently cited in academic works as the progenitor of "American civil religion." The latter provided a modicum of solace for a scholar of his stature.

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КОНЦЕПТ "ГРОМАДЯНСЬКА РЕЛІГІЯ" Р. БЕЛЛИ: ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ІДЕНТИФІКАЦІЇ ТА МОТИВАЦІЙНІ ЧИННИКИ

Розкрито особливості визначення американським соціологом Р. Беллою концепту "громадянська релігія". Виявлено ситуативні стимули його появи, якими стали: а) потреба понятійного оформлення у процесі роз'яснення японським студентам реалій взаємодії релігії і політики в США, б) відповідь на ситуацію кризи американського суспільства, у якій воно опинилося унаслідок в'єтнамської війни. Ідейними передумовами реконструкції Р. Беллою концепту "громадянська релігія" визнаються: запозичення форми концепту в Ж.-Ж. Руссо та його теоретизації у працях А. де Токвіля, Е. Дюркгейма, С. Міда. Запропоновано версію про наявність п'яти методологічних стратегій в осмисленні американським соціологом цього концепту, які помітними є у трьох його публікаціях: "Громадянська релігія в Америці" (1967), "Порушений завіт" (1975), "Релігія і легітимація Американської Республіки" (1978). Відповідно, надано критичний аналіз п'яти послідовних ідентифікацій громадянської релігії Р. Белли щодо їх змістової валідності. Сформульовано ті мотивації, які приводили до певних змін у визначеннях Р. Беллою громадянської релігії. Зроблено узагальнення про концептуальну розірваність і претензію на функціональну довершеність конструкту "громадянська релігія" у викладі Р. Белли. З'ясовуються причини його відмови від вживання концепту "громадянська релігія" з середини 80-х років.

Ключові слова: громадянська релігія, Роберт Белла, ідентифікації громадянської релігії, американська громадянська релігія, релігійний націоналізм.