

**<sup>1\*</sup>Chazbijewicz S., <sup>1</sup>Zukowski A., <sup>2</sup>Bekbolatuly Zh.**

<sup>1</sup>University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland, Olsztyn,

<sup>2</sup>Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Kazakhstan, Almaty,

\*e-mail: teleboga@wp.pl

## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL MESSAGE OF ISLAM AND EUROPE

Samuel Huntington's geopolitical vision of the clash of civilizations, that is of the European and American with the Islamic civilization, belongs, in fact, to one of the viewpoints on the relations between West and Islam. Of course, as usual, there exist two extreme camps opposing each other. One claims that the relations and mutual influences cannot and do not exist, and that they have never existed. The other tries to prove the opposite by writing and speaking of the fusion between Europe and Islam. Nowadays, we witness the domination of the first camp. It draws a thick line between the two civilizations and assumes that their ideas, historical past, values and hierarchy of values have absolutely nothing in common. Arnold Toynbee, excellent English historian and philosopher of history, wrote that in the past when Europeans were militarily opposing Muslims, Europe let the Islamic civilization ruin itself by attacking Balkans, Hungary and Austria and walked, one could say, the Islamic civilization around by imposing itself in Yemen, Africa and India.

**Key words:** Europe, Islam, civilization, protestantism, orthodoxy, Ottoman empire, turkish tribes, Poland, polish and lithuanian tatars.

<sup>1\*</sup>Хазбиевич С., <sup>1</sup>Жуковски А., <sup>2</sup>Бекболатұлы Ж.

<sup>1</sup>Ольштындағы Вармиа-Мазур университеті, Польша, Ольштын қ.

<sup>2</sup>Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті, Қазақстан, Алматы қ.

\*e-mail: teleboga@wp.pl

### Ислам және Еуропаның тарихи және мәдени Жолдауы

Самюэль Хантингтонның өркениеттер қақтығысы, яғни еуропалық және америкалық өркениеттің ислам өркениетімен қақтығысы жөніндегі геосаяси тұжырымы сайып келгенде Батыс пен Ислам арасындағы қарым-қатынасқа деген көзқарастың бір пайымы болып табылады. Әдетте бір-біріне кереғар, бір-бірінен алшақ екі топ болады. Біреулері өзара қарым-қатынас пен ықпал ешқашан болған жоқ, болуы да мүмкін емес, деп түйін жасайды. Басқалары керісінше тон пішіп, Еуропа мен Исламның кірігуі жөнінде сөз қозғайды. Қазіргі таңда біз бірінші топтың үстемдігіне куә болып отырмыз. Ол екі өркениет арасын жуан сызықпен бөліп, бұлардың идеяларының, тарихи өткенінің, құндылықтары мен құндылықтар жүйесінің бір-бірімен ортақ ешнәрсесі жоқ, деп санайды. Ағылшынның танымал тарихшысы әрі тарихи философы Арнольд Тойнби бұрындары, еуропалықтар мұсылмандарға әскери тұрғыда қарсылық көрсеткенде, Еуропа ислам өркениетіне Балқанға, Венгрия мен Аустрияға шабуыл жасап, өзін-өзі күйретуіне жол берді деп жазады. Және, сонымен қатар, Йеменге, Африкаға және Үндістанға ислам өркениетін таңуының арты осыған әкеліп соқты.

**Түйін сөздер:** Еуропа, Ислам, өркениет, протестантизм, православие, Осман империясы, түркі тайпалары, Польша, польшалық және литвалық татарлар.

<sup>1\*</sup>Хазбиевич С., <sup>1</sup>Жуковски А., <sup>2</sup>Бекболатұлы Ж.

<sup>1</sup>Университет Вармиа-Мазур в Ольштыне, Польша, г. Ольштын

<sup>2</sup>Казахский национальный университет им. аль-Фараби, Казахстан, г. Алматы,

\*e-mail: teleboga@wp.pl

### Историческое и культурное Послание Ислама и Европы

Геополитическое видение Сэмюэля Хантингтона о столкновении цивилизаций, а именно – европейской и американской с исламской цивилизацией, относится, по сути, к одной из точек

зрения на отношения между Западом и Исламом. Конечно, как обычно, существуют два крайних лагеря, противостоящих друг другу. Одни утверждают, что отношения и взаимные влияния не могут и не существуют, и что они никогда не существовали. Другие пытаются доказать обратное, говоря о слиянии Европы и Ислама. В настоящее время мы являемся свидетелями господства первого лагеря. Он рисует толстую линию между двумя цивилизациями и предполагает, что их идеи, историческое прошлое, ценности и иерархия ценностей не имеют абсолютно ничего общего. Арнольд Тойнби, превосходный английский историк и философ истории, писал, что в прошлом, когда европейцы сопротивлялись мусульманам в военном отношении, Европа позволила исламской цивилизации разрушить себя, напав на Балканы, Венгрию и Австрию. И, как можно было бы выразиться, навязывая в Йемене, Африке и Индии исламскую цивилизацию.

**Ключевые слова:** Европа, Ислам, цивилизация, протестантизм, православие, Османская империя, тюркские племена, Польша, польские и литовские татары.

## Introduction

Perhaps the main reason why Islam was distanced by Europe was that it did not participate in the Age of Exploration and Discovery. Indeed, the discovery of America and a sea route to India mark the beginning of the European domination. This standpoint is supported by another brilliant British scholar and orientalist, Bernard Lewis, specializing in the relations between Islam and Europe. The turning point in the struggle between the civilizations came in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the balance of power between the Islamic and European civilization was lost. This process seems to have been launched by the peace treaty of Karlowitz, according to which the Ottoman Empire, for the first time in history, ceded the conquered land to Austria and Poland. Nevertheless, one can think of other events marking the beginning of the end. In the military of political sense, it could have been the Turkish defeat at Candia on the Crete in 1572 or at Vienna in 1683. Of course, these are only guesses which help identify, more or less rightfully and precisely, the turning points in military struggle between the two civilizations. Important and visible domination of West, that is of Europe or to be more precise the Latin civilization, comes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Russia, that is the Orthodox or Byzantine civilization as some prefer, distanced the Ottomans, representing the Islamic world, as well. But one must not forget that Islamic civilization, which wasn't a monolith body, had different fazes, forms and stages. Although Europe has common Christian roots, scholars speak of at least three forms of civilization; Latin, Protestant (Nordic) and Byzantine (Orthodox, Russian). Similarly, in Islam, one can distinguish important forms of civilization as well; Arabic, Persian and Turkish. Moreover, from the diachronic point of view, they were existing in the following periods of time: Early Islamic (rule of Righteous Caliphs and the Umayyad dynasty), Middle Islamic (rule of the Abbasid and

Ottoman dynasty) and contemporary (since the end of World War I). The contemporary period could be divided into two sub-periods. The first extending itself from the end of World War I to 90<sup>s</sup>; the second encompassing the period since the war in Bosnia and Afghanistan till now. The Muslim rule in Spain and the presence of Islam in India, Indonesia and Malaya Archipelago should be treated as yet other civilizational entities, the first being purely historical, the rest both historical and modern. Still another civilizational entity can be distinguished in the Ottoman Empire since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It appeared when Europe started wielding there more clout. The turning point came in the Tanzimat period, when sultan Mahmud II introduced a series of reforms and partly europeanized the state and customs, especially of elites. The reforms, which had an impact on the whole Muslim civilization, had similar consequences to the reforms undertaken in Russia at the turn of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century by tsar Peter I. On the one hand, the Ottoman Empire was renouncing its unique identity based on social, economic, administrative and political identity. On the other hand, through the reforms, it was supposed to be strengthened in its struggle with Europe.

### Muslim culture in the West

From a geographical point of view, the areas of confrontation between Islam and the European civilization are situated on the western, southern and eastern extremities of Europe. On the west, Muslim culture spread on the Iberian Peninsula. First was the culture of the Caliphate of Córdoba ruled by the Umayyad dynasty, after which came the culture of Granada emirate. The caliphate was founded by Abd-ar-Rahman III, who started his reign in 921 in the age of 23. He united the Muslim domain on the Iberia and proclaimed himself caliph on 16 January 926. The domain was thriving and its apogee lasted even under the rule of Abd-ar-Rahman's successors, Al-Hakam II and al Hadziba al-Mansura, who was

ruling between 977 and 1002. The 10<sup>th</sup> century was the peak of Muslim culture in Spain. It was also the century, when one of the first Islamic philosophers, Ibn Massara, lived. He was joining European and Greek philosophy with eastern and Muslim tradition. He was the founder of the first philosophical school in Muslim Spain. Ibn Massara died in 931. Our knowledge about his life comes from many sources, but in majority from the works of Ibn Hazm, another great writer and thinker. Ibn Massara tried to link the ideas of Empedocles with Muslim, or rather eastern tradition. He was almost certainly influenced by Neopythagoreanism and Neoplatonism in its late form developed by Proclus or Iamblichus. He associated the latter with the philosophy of Empedocles. Following Neoplatonism, Ibn Massara was teaching that beings are emanated. He assumed that there were six beings, two of them, the knowledge and power of God, were considered to have appeared during God's emanation. He was also supposing that after death, the journey of the soul leading to purification begins. Ibn Massara had many followers and is believed to have been the founder of the Spanish branch of Sufism, mystical philosophy in Islamic tradition. His philosophy evolved into a movement developed by his disciples, one of whom was Spanish mystic, Ibn Arabi, who is considered to have been the greatest philosopher of mysticism in Islamic world. Ibn Arabi lived in the years 1164-1249, more than 200 years after Ibn Massara. His teachings are a synthesis of Greek philosophy and Muslim doctrines, as well as of Buddhism and the tradition of Ancient East which is visible, for instance, in the remains of the cult of Mother Goddess represented by Sophia, god's wisdom, who walks the Earth as a beautiful woman whom Ibn Arabi is said to have seen once in Mecca. Ibn Arabi was teaching about the unity of existence, what could have been an influence of the Hindu concept of Atman-Brahman. The hypothesis is supported by the fact Ibn Arabi had similar to Hinduism understanding of the existence of God and the world. Apart from philosophy, Muslim Spain was developing poetry as well. Among many poets, special attention should be paid to the already mentioned Ibn Hazm, who wrote a prose poem, "The dove's necklace", which could be considered as a precursor to the canon. It speaks of courtly love, which was appraised by troubadours who were imitating the poetry of Muslim Spain. Let not forget about another Muslim philosopher from Spain, Abū 'l-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Rushd, in Medieval Europe known as Averroes. He was a doctor and a thinker continuing and reinventing the philosophy of Aristotle. Averroes tried

to reconcile philosophical discourse with a religious way of thinking. His philosophical method spread in Europe through the translations made on the court of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen. The Latin versions of his works became the foundation of Latin Averroism, philosophical school existing in 13<sup>th</sup> century in Italy. Latin Averroism became a methodological foundation of Thomism, doctrine created by Saint Thomas Aquinas. Thus, Greek and Muslim thought became the methodological cornerstone of the Catholic church doctrine.

Sicily was yet another area of both political and military expansion of Islam in Europe and of cultural synthesis. The Muslim conquest of the island was initiated in 827 by the north African dynasty, the Aghlabids, and finished in 967 by Egyptian rulers from the Fatimid dynasty. Next, in years 1061-1085, Sicily was reconquered by Normans under the lead of Roger I. His successor, tolerant and enlightened Roger II, contributed to the development of a unique culture which was the synthesis of Europe and Islam with elements of Byzantine culture. This original cultural unity was being protected by the German emperor and the ruler of Sicily, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, whom I mentioned before. The emperor's name may be associated with the great Muslim philosopher, Ibn Sab'in, who wrote *Yemenite Answers to Sicilian Questions*. This work was commissioned by Frederick II. It gives answers to basic philosophical questions raised by the emperor. The book is also a valuable period piece and a great example of ideological and philosophical discourse on the verge of Europe and Islam. The influence and synthesis of the two civilizations can be found in architecture, ornaments or literature, for example in *Kitab Rujar (The book of Roger)* commissioned by Roger II and written by Al-Idris, great Arab traveler, geographer and cartographer. The book is another example of ideological, cultural and philosophical discourse of Islamic and European tradition, expressed by intellectual elites of the time. Let me just mention that Roger II of Sicily was a protagonist of one of the best modern operas, which was created by Karol Szymanowski. In the early Middle Ages, both Spain and Sicily were a place of cultural exchange where translations of Greek philosophers, from Arab into Latin, were reentering European culture. It was also a place of theological debates.

Another exchange and synthesis between the civilizations took place in Balkans, where the Muslim culture of Bosnia was born. The Ottoman culture, founded partly by the Arab and Byzantine tradition, mixed with the Slavic and Latin culture, and with Manichaeism which is the real name for Bos-

nian church tradition. The church originated from Gnostic Paulicianism, Catharism and Bogomilism. A syncretic architecture appeared. The bridge in Mostar, destroyed during the war in 90s, was its most famous example. The Old Bosina was being appraised by Ivo Andrić, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, who was describing its customs, tradition and history, and by Mesa Selimović, author of the stunning novel *Death and the Dervish*.

The south-eastern border of Europe, the Crimea Peninsula and the north coast of the Black Sea were still another area where the Islamic culture and civilization was influencing Europe. We would even suggest a hypothesis that this area is the least known since there hasn't been any great scholar of the Black Sea region civilization, who could be compared to Fernand Braudel. Its northern coast, including the Crimea, became a crossroads for different cultures, civilizations, languages and religions. The Crimean peninsula is mentioned in *Iliad* under the name of Tauri. The Greek influences date back to Homer and the Greek colonization. The Argonaut's quest for the Golden Fleece in Colchis was, in fact, a journey of Greeks to the land of today's Georgia. For almost 900 years, in the eastern and southern part of Crimea, there existed the Kingdom of the Cimmerian Bosphorus whose culture, religion and language were Greek. The later rule of Romans in the southern part of Crimea left its marks as well. Next, the peninsula was subsequently under the influence of Byzantium, Rus' and Khazars, who formed a strong Khaganate in the northern Fore-Caucasus and the Black Sea region, in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century. It had well-developed literature and material culture. Judaism, brought by Jewish merchants and accepted by the ruler, was its predominant religion. The powerful Khaganate was definitely defeated in 10<sup>th</sup> century by the army of Rus' prince, Sviatoslav. But this isn't the end of influences since Ostrogoths, representing the German civilization, were settling and forming states in Crimea since the migration period. The last state, independent Principality of Theodoro, was conquered by the Ottomans in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Since the migration period, Crimea was also settled by Turkish tribes, Pechenegs, Huns and later Kipchaks, called by old Russian chroniclers Polovtsy. Pechenegs were present in the north coast of Black Sea as well. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, their lands were invaded by Mongols. In consequence, Crimea and the Black Sea region were more and more influenced by Islam. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Golden Horde, Tatar state which appeared on the ruins of Genghis Khan's empire, gave birth to the independent Crimea Khaganate. Its culture was composed of the above-men-

tioned elements and was an original synthesis having a unique cultural value, parallel to the Bosnian culture from that time.

We would like to mention now a completely forgotten civilization of Volga Bulgarians, who were Muslims existing from 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century, till the Mongolian invasion. Their state was the first victim of the invasion. Since 10<sup>th</sup> century, the central Volga Region witnessed the rise of the Islamic culture which had contacts with the Islamic center, Abbasid Caliphate with the capital in Bagdad, and original Islamic belletristic, philosophy, law, architecture and art. The Muslim state on the southern boundaries of Europe was influencing not only Kievan Rus', but also other Eastern states, some of them indirectly, like for instance Poland. It was contemporary to the Muslim civilization in Spain during its heyday.

### Culture of Polish and Lithuanian Tatars

The southern edge of Europe, from the west to the east, was surrounded by Islamic cultural and civilization centers forming the crescent. But there was still one more Muslim culture of a small Islamic community from the Central-Eastern Europe which was shining like a star in the middle of the crescent. We mean here the culture of Polish and Lithuanian Tatars. They were living within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which later became the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The federation was marked by high levels of ethnic and religious diversity and had unique on the European scale culture containing elements of eastern cultures. The Muslim influence is visible in material culture since the rule of king Stephen Báthory in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Stephen Báthory was Hungarian prince of Transylvania and even in the choice of gowns we may notice that he was assimilating the Ottoman tradition which later on he implemented in Poland and Lithuania. The so-called traditional dress of Polish noble class, Szlachta, in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century is almost a true copy of Turkish gowns. The only exception is the headwear. The difference is visible on portraits from that time. Even in military tactics and choice of weapons, Szlachta was accepting the Ottoman culture. In 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, Poland was also under the influence of Persia, what is visible especially in material culture.

In 600 years of their existence in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Tatars created a priceless endemic, as biologists would say, culture typical only to the Tatars living in the Duchy (Jakób Szykiewicz, 1935). It was a fusion of the Eastern (Muslim) and Western culture. We would like to say a few words about this culture. Although scholars

conduct more and more researches dedicated to Tatars, vast audience have no knowledge of it. Tatars were living far from Islamic cultural centers and from the vivid Turkish culture to which they ethnically belonged. They were creating substitutes for Islamic spirituality and a Muslim way of living. Throughout hundreds of years of their persistent cultivation, they became separate entities of spiritual and material culture. Having lost the fluency in Tatar language in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, Polish Tatars were founding their spiritual culture on the unique literature in which Islamic tradition was described in Polish local dialect of Kresy or in Belarusian and written down in manuscripts in the Arabic alphabet (Ali Woronowicz, 1935).

The Golden Horde, whom I have already mentioned, was creating its literature in Chagatai language. It was a Turkish dialect spoken in Central Asia, which was ruled by the second son of Genghis Khan, Chagatai. High Turkish culture was thriving especially in two cities, Samarkand and Bukhara, which are ancient civilization centers. The culture was radiating to the Volga region, Crimea and partly to Anatolia. It was also reaching the lands of the Great Duchy of Lithuania through Tatar elites, who were using its literary patterns (Ali Woronowicz).

The conditions of living in Poland and Lithuania forced Tatars to develop defense mechanisms which guaranteed the continuity of self-awareness. In the same time, they showed great capacity of assimilation and adaptation, one of which was total and quick assimilation of language. Tatars lost the ability to speak their mother tongue, Kipchak language from the Turkish language group, already in 16<sup>th</sup> century in favor of Polish or Ruthenian language. The main element constituting self-awareness was, therefore, literature which substituted language and folklore (Czesław Łapicz, 1986). The manuscripts concerned mainly Islam and some of them were created in absolute isolation from Muslim cultural centers. The literary tradition was based on a Muslim manuscript created in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. When the Tatar literature was forming, it was absorbing elements of the Golden Horde culture, and therefore also of the older tradition of Khwarezm, ancient Sogdiana and a mosaic of Silk Road cultures (Klucz do raju. 2000). Some of the literary themes created by the Golden Horde were common to all Muslims cultures. In such a form, after being adapted to the Old Polish reality, they existed in the literature of Polish Muslims. The literature was manifesting itself in different forms which were existing till 20<sup>th</sup> century. These were, for instance, so called *Tasfirs* which are commentaries to Qur'an (Ibrahim

B. Konopacki, A.I. Smolik, 2000). In the Tatar tradition, they were written in manuscripts covered with leather. They were containing subsequent texts from Qur'an written with saffron ink under which were commentaries and translations written in italics in Polish, or more often in Belarusian language (Galina Miszkiniene, 2001). *Tajwids* were another genre present in Tatars literature. They are rules which govern how Qur'an should be read. They contain information about proper intonation, pauses, ways of recitation, articulation of Arabic phonemes, as well as phonetic and musical value of Qur'an's form. The most important genre of Tatars' culture were *Kitabs* (Katalog., 2005). The word >kitab< stands in Arabic for >a book<. *Kitabs* contained, therefore, many different moral parables, stories from the life of Muhammad and other prophets, religious lore and legends, poems, magical recipes, deeds of Tatar rulers, commentaries to dogmas and religious rules, prayers, as well as local parables, legends and stories. Another important genre were >hamā'ilī< as called in Arabic (Paul Suter, 2004). The word itself means >what one has with him<. They are prayer books containing the most common prayers divided according to the five periods of a day, supplication prayers called *dua*, and explanations of the most common religious rituals. *Hamā'ilī* contained hints about the ceremony of marriage and funeral, as well as about the ritual of naming a child.

Even today this literature contains uncharted plots and themes which were often paraphrases of the Sufi tradition – Islamic mysticism – in its Middle-Asian and Anatolian variants of such Sufi brotherhoods as *jesewije*, *nakszbandi*, *bektaszi*, *hurufije*. It was functioning in Crimea as well as in Ottoman Turkey, in the Balkans, in the Volga Region and among the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars (Ahmad Czwartego., 1990). It is also worth mentioning that there is a Tatar minority in Finland. Tatar colonization began to arise there only in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The majority of the Tatars living in Finland comes from the Volga Region area. They made some contribution to defending their new homeland during the war between Finland and the Soviet Union. The Finnish Tatars created original Muslim literature, as well as the press and educational system.

From the diachronic point of view, we should mention the European-Muslim relations since the 8<sup>th</sup> century, when Muslim armies struck Europe for the first time. The attack came from the West, through the Strait of Gibraltar and Spain, as well as from the East, at Constantinople. In both cases the offensive was suppressed. At Poitiers, at Provence

and at Constantinople, Islam met defeat. After that the offensive of Christian Europe began. And this is the name we should give to crusades, beginning from the very first in 1099, when Jerusalem was conquered. Next, there was Muslim counter-offensive in 13<sup>th</sup> century led by Salahhedin, known in Europe as Salladin. It resulted in the conquest of Jerusalem and after which came the final collapse of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, which was the medieval continuation of Europe in the Middle East. The crusades and the existence of Latin state surrounded by Islam stimulated in Europe civilizational progress and resulted in many changes that finally ended with the so called contemporary «digital civilization». The Muslim offensive, started by Salaheddin, was continued by the Ottomans since 14<sup>th</sup> century at the beginning in Anatolia and later on in the Balkans. It was ultimately stopped when the Treaty of Karlowitz, which I mentioned at the beginning, was signed. Since then, the initiative has belonged to Europe. Russia had its «reconquista» as well when it was fighting with the Muslim Golden Horde and later, after the inland disintegration of the Golden Horde, with its successors – the Crimean Khanate, the Khanate of Kazan, the Khanates of Astrakhan and of Sibir. The military struggle of the Grand Duchy of Moscow, and later the Russian Empire, with the Muslim civilization, in this case embodied by the Tatars, resulted in the capture of the Volga Region, the Siberia region and the Caspian Steppes in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Next, in 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia, as well as the Polish Commonwealth, went

on the warpath with Ottoman Turkey. It ended in the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the World War I. But let not forget about Russo-Persian Wars in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries fought over Azerbaijan and Dagestan.

### Conclusion

Russian culture, or Russian civilization, as partisans of Eurasianism like Georgij Vernadski would refer to it, also adopted many elements from the Muslim civilization. Eurasianism had its roots in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the minds of exiled Russian thinkers, historians and researchers. It presented Russia as a separate civilizational entity situated between the East and the West, an entity which has both Eastern and Western elements, but at the same time displays totally separate qualities, which gives this entity the right to be perceived as an independent being and an independent quality. However, many musical airs, decorative art, elements of material culture or vocabulary and even political and administrative tradition were all taken from the Turanian civilization, Golden and Great Hordes. Today's Russia, just as Western and Central Europe, has entered the next, modern stage in the relations with the Islamic world. This stage begun in the 20<sup>th</sup> century along with the increasing role of fossil fuels like oil and natural gas in politics and economy. The fall of the colonial system as well as the emergence of neocolonialism left their mark on these relations. civilizational barricade.

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