

# **Chiba University Leading Research Promotion Program International Seminar (in English)**

## **Social Fairness and Geopolitics**

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Abstract: This is a research essay based on the transcript of the international seminar meeting entitled “Social Fairness and Geopolitics”. Dr. Cédomir NESTOROVIC (Professor of ESSEC Business School Asia Pacific, Singapore) who was well versed in geopolitics and international marketing with a specific focus on Islamic business and management, addressed the issues related to geopolitics and social fairness during his presentation. Then discussion was initiated and research ideas were exchanged afterwards within participants.

### **Moderator**

▪ **Prof. Hikari Ishido (Chiba University)**

### **Panelists**

▪ **Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic (ESSEC Business School Asia Pacific)**

▪ **Prof. Jiro Mizushima (Chiba University)**

▪ **Prof. Masaya Kobayashi (Chiba University)**

▪ **Prof. Takayuki Kawase (Chiba University)**

▪ **Assoc. Prof. Xiang Li (Chiba University)**

▪ **Dr. Xiaofang Zhang (Chiba University)**

▪ **Dr. Steve Liang Fang (Chiba University)**

▪ **Dr. Alfonso Torrero (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana)**

**Organizer: Chiba University Global Fair Society Program**

### **Introduction (by Prof. Hikari Ishido)**

This meeting is one of the serial seminars focusing on social fairness and wellbeing. The focus of our research group, **Chiba Studies on Global Fair Society** is centering on challenging and overcoming unfair practices on all scales, investigating issues such as gender inequality, widening income gaps, migration, and the collapse of regional and marginal communities, both in Japan and around the world. In doing so, we seek to identify the development, transformation, and limitations of existing welfare state models and provide empirical evidence for how a fair society can be achieved in the 21st century. Our special emphasis will be placed on “wellbeing” and values because fairness is intrinsically related to people's subjective judgement. Objective equality does not always guarantee a subjective feeling of fairness. The vision of a fair society should include both objective fairness and subjective sense of fairness. We are planning to broaden our networks of academics across the globe.

Today we will have Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic (Professor of ESSEC Business School Asia Pacific, Singapore) who has been very instrumental with geopolitics and international marketing with a specific focus on Islamic business and management. He will share about issues between geopolitics and social fairness in international society nowadays. Then we will initiate the discussion so that other participants could join in and exchange research ideas afterwards.

### **Geopolitics and Social Fairness (Presented by Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic)**

I'm very happy to be with you today in order to discuss about this topic, which seems to be unusual in a business school. But in fact, business schools, they have transformed themselves recently. In the past, it was only something like a vocational school where you are training people in finance, in accountancy, in supply chain, in whatever you want. But today the business schools have become very comprehensive and very holistic, and they cover many things. We have also Departments of Economy and Political Science. Now in business schools, we have Departments of Sociology, etcetera. It has become completely different from the thing that we used to have in the past.

When I joined business schools 30 years ago, it was not the same thing as we have today. And I am coming from school which is called the ESSEC Business School. So, in France, we have a specific path, meaning the business schools are independent schools, and they are standalone schools, not part of universities. Because the elite system in France is going to the *grande école* system which is completely separated from universities. But we are a big school in the sense that we have more than 7,500 full-time students, and we also train about 7,000 executives per year. So, it's a big machine. And we have several campuses. One big campus is in France, and we have a campus in Singapore. We are celebrating 20 years of existence next year for the campus there. And we have a small campus in Rabat in Morocco. And just for the anecdote, when I started, it was all lectures in French, and all the students were French, all the professors were French. Today we teach in English and nearly 40% of our students are also foreigners. So, in that case, we cannot do this in French anymore.

For today, we are talking about geopolitics and social fairness. Concerning myself, you can find something which is teaching and what I do as duty in the school. I'm teaching two topics, geopolitics and Islamic business. I will refer to both of them during my presentation. And I have two responsibilities, that is two programs that I have launched about 12 years ago. The first one is the program in APAC that is in Asia Pacific, launched in Singapore. And the second one is the MBA that I launched 12 years ago with the Arabian Gulf University in Manama, Bahrain. The school has recognized that geopolitics is very important. So, it is becoming one of the pillars of the school concerning the future development. We set up a center for Geopolitics and Business. I am one of the co-directors. My colleague and friend, Aurélien

Colson, he is the co-director in France. Based on the book (*Geopolitics and Business: Relevance and Resonance*) that has been published last year, I'm also giving many talks at the diplomatic academies. A diplomatic academy is the place where they train the future diplomats in various countries. I visit in the regions of Indonesia, Pakistan, but also in Europe.

Now, why do we talk about geopolitics? I will refer to Lee Hsien Loong, who used to be the Prime Minister of Singapore for 20 years, and now he is Senior Minister. And he gave a very interesting talk when he was talking about the future challenges in the world and the future challenges. According to him, there are two of them. First one is technology, and the second one is geopolitics. So, it was interesting to see how he is looking at that, from his point of view as he has extensive knowledge and experience concerning politics and business.

Singapore's business will have to adapt amid a changing international environment marked by technological advancements and geopolitical tensions, said Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong. "Technology is advancing faster than ever, nations are competing to secure an edge in emerging areas like biotechnology and artificial intelligence. And there is intense geopolitics contestation especially between the US and China, and between the US and Russia, there is outright hostility," he said at the Shangri-La Singapore on September 30.

Why do we talk about geopolitics and business? It is because the question is to know who has the responsibility of ruling the society and especially concerning social fairness. Who is responsible of that? Is it the state? In that case, the state is holding the public element. Or is it the corporation? The corporation is private. The corporate responsibility is to make profits and giving taxes to the state. So, the state is in charge of the social firm. The company is private and looking for profit. But recently it was not more the case. The advance of the corporate social responsibility has changed everything. Now in the corporations and in the business schools, we also have to take into account social element, which was completely put outside, but now it is coming back. This is why we have to talk about this. And there are many stakeholders, and there are many reasons why we are doing it. One reason is that the environment of the corporation is asking the corporation to do it. Which environment? The political side. The political side is asking the corporation to have a discussion about social fairness and about the common goods. This is another term, which is very often used. So, the common good and the social fairness are the very much important elements here, which is coming from the political side.

But we also have the public opinion. The public opinion has shifted, and is taking the company accountable for what they're doing within their environment and within the community that they are serving. So, the public opinion is also very important. And finally, there is another stakeholder that we didn't talk very much about which is the employees. The young employees of the company are pushing the company. I'm teaching very young people. And I asked them where they are going to work, and if there is a company they don't want to work for? And they're saying that they don't want to work for the company which is not engaged in social fairness. It means that we have to take that into account. Many stakeholders, which are pushing the company in order to be present there. Traditionally, we have not been present there, but today we are present also in this field. Now, how geopolitics is looking at that? Geopolitics is a topic, which emerged practically at the end of the 19th century and through the whole 20th century, and it is still present today. So, the term geopolitics has been coined in 1917, so it is a relatively new term. But the topics that we cover exist for as long as humanity exists.

In the past, we had just the classical geopolitics, but today we have the critical, feminist, and business geopolitics. So, geopolitics in a nutshell is about three things: space, state and power. Let's look at how social fairness is organized according to this. The first one, which is space,

used to be called geography before, so this is where geopolitics come from. But today, because of the Internet and the outer space, we cannot use the term geography anymore. This is why we prefer to use the term of space. How is the space going with the social fairness? It is very important concerning Internet. And we have to see the Internet literacy of people. And we also have to see who has access to the Internet. Because social fairness is also about this. Who has access to the Internet? Who has access to the knowledge? Who has access to the outer world? Who has access to the political ideas? Who has access to any kind of philosophical or social ideas? These are given by the Internet. But there are countries and places where you don't have access to this, either because the technical side is not present, or because the country doesn't authorize you to be present there as they're building the firewalls, then there is a social fracture. The social fracture is between people who can have access and the people who cannot have access. This kind of social approach is quite interesting from the political point of view and for the social fairness also, because we don't give the same right, we don't give the same opportunity for people in order to access this.

Usually, the term of social fairness can go in various directions. And here we talk only about the geopolitical and the business direction. Classical geopolitics is about the space and the state. The state is the main actor that we have today. But it is not necessarily the only one. However, it is the most important one. So, we have to see who is taking charge of the social fairness. Is it the state or something else? That's classical approach. And they believe it is the state.

And there are two elements in the power, the base of power and the use of power. The base of power is where the power comes from. For instance, it can come from hard power. In that case, it will be military, money, resources, etcetera. It can be soft power. In that case, we talk about influence. What you do with power is either coercion that you are forcing someone to do something, or you are using influence. In that case, we have the state and the power. In terms of power, this is where social fairness is present. Who has access to money, who has access to education, who has access to the opportunities? All this will be in the topic about power. This is why, from the geopolitical point of view, we can also be present there. Classical geopolitics was the only one for years but we have a new one. 30 years ago, we had the critical geopolitics coming back. And critical geopolitics is referring to the critical theory. There are two schools, Frankfurt school before the Second World War and the French school after for critical theory. What is the essence of that? They are criticizing, obviously, which is what the classical approach is showing. They're using social constructivism and knowledge power network in order to explain all that. This part of geopolitics has not to do very much with economy and military. Economy and military are in the classical geopolitics, but critical geopolitics is more about philosophy and sociology. This is where they are taking the most part.

This is why the Frankfurt school and French school are the most important ones there. In terms of social constructivism, it is not up to the state to do, but the society. If the society decides equality of treatment, then it will be this. But if the society decides capitalism, it will be different. My students love critical theory because they are all in one kind of equality. They're all looking for equality, and they don't want inequalities, especially inequalities from a monetary point of view. This is a paradox. In business school, we are supposed to train people who will be interested in profits. But in fact, the young generation today want to combine profits with the society, which is new. 30 years ago, we were training people in order to become wolves of the Wall Street that are ready to sell everything for profit. But today we have a majority of students coming and telling me that profit is important, but social contribution is also very important. It means that they are very interested in the critical approach. It means we have many philosophical and sociological approaches.

The third one is feminist geopolitics which is even younger. In feminist geopolitics, there is an important element on gender and sexuality. But there is another thing from the geopolitical point of view, which is very important, and it is the emphasis on the individual and the emphasis on the community. The emphasis on the individual about individual sovereignty. Individual sovereignty is opposed to the state sovereignty. Let's take one example. In a state sovereignty, the state can impose you to something, for instance, to wear a mask or for instance, to be vaccinated during Covid. But in the great majority of cases, it was not imposed by the state. In fact, the state was telling you if you don't wear a mask or be vaccinated, then they will make your life difficult. You cannot get out of your home, you cannot go to work, you cannot travel, etcetera, but we are not forcing you to do so. This is where individual sovereignty comes up, meaning the state cannot impose you anything. And this is coming from feminism. Why is it from feminism? Because feminism was the first to use the concept, "my body, my choice", which was usually linked with abortion, social sexual freedom. And the second fight is individual sovereignty. The state cannot impose me anything. This is why we have people who are sovereignty warriors that means people who are saying the state is something, but I have my own freedom, and the state cannot impose me anything. And the second point is the minorities. The minorities mean that we are coming from the individual, and we are moving to the collective side. The collective side is a community. It's very difficult to define what the community is. It can be based on gender, ethnic or religion. This is where the social fairness from the feminist point of view is extremely important. Individuals and communities, both of them are very important for social fairness.

The question is, who has to take care of social fairness? Is it the state or is it the corporation? And the next question is, can the corporation run the state? Can the corporation be the state? People tell me that the private corporations are efficient but they cannot have an army. But we will ask that are you sure that the private corporation cannot have an army? I will give you many examples of the contrary. And people tell me that the private corporation cannot run the economy. I will ask again, are you sure? The private corporation can have its own currency and have its own economy and it can have its own monetary policy. Then we can see that the state is not necessarily the container of the social life. And it means that the state is not necessarily the organization in charge of social fairness. It can be the corporation. It is because this is the place where people spend most of their time where the social cohesion and the social interaction happens on the population. For instance, here in Japan, in Tokyo, when you go to work, you are taking the train. The train is the main thing. But you don't speak to the people in the train. You are coming to the work. You speak to the people in work. In the workplace, you don't choose the people. It is the only place where you don't choose the people you are interacting with. This is the only place where social fairness can be taken in fullness because you don't choose the people.

My other sphere of interest is Islamic business. Islamic business refers to religion. Religion is having a very big interest in social fairness. As you know, practically, all the religions are concerned with the community, where they're concerned with justice. Islam is concerning social fairness, and it is to say that all people and everything that we see is created by Allah. In that sense, it is very important for them that people like you and me here are not the owners of any materiality but the stewards. The concept of stewardship is the basic concept in Islam. It means that people are not owners of nature, or everything that we can see. We are stewards, and it means we cannot harm it. In economy, Islam has nothing against people to be rich, and people can make money. Even the Prophet Muhammad was a merchant, who is considered to be the perfect man. People can make business, and make profits. But one important element for them is to explain where the money comes from and what you do with this money. These are the two

main questions. If they are believers, they will ask during the Day of Judgment when they have to decide, going to hell or paradise, and going to purgatory or something else. The Day of Judgment is not necessarily an economic concept, but for the people, it is important because all their life is organized according to this. So, everything that we have in Islamic finance, would it be the prohibition of interest? This is part of social justice. And why? They are telling us we have something against the interest rate. Why so? Because the people who need money. On the other side, you have people who have money. Then people who have money will lend to people who don't have money, and they will charge interest. What does it mean? They will perpetuate social injustice and we have to break this. So, we have to eliminate the interest rate. This is how they're explaining it.

There is also a theological explanation, that is because only Allah is in charge of time. And the second concept is Zakat. Zakat is the third pillar of Islam which is funds giving. This is when people who have money, they're giving to people who don't have money. And it is calculated. And you have the Nisab. Nisab is the minimum that you need for life, but 2.5% above Nisab of your income during the year that you have to distribute to people. It is not the only religion doing it. In Utah of the US, the land of the Mormons, they're giving 10% of their income to the church. And the church is in charge after that of redistribution.

Now I want to make a link between business, geopolitical, homo economicus. Homo economicus means that we are all rational people. And it means that we all aim for the same thing, which is to have more. In the business world, we are also teaching students about different industries. And one of the different industries is, for instance, luxury industry. What is luxury industry? Luxury industry means that you are differentiating among people. There are people who have money, and there are people who don't. This is basic element of social injustice. But at the end of the day, people like luxury and cannot go against luxury. So, there is a paradox. We are not only rational beings, and not only thinking in rational terms, but there can be something else. In my domain, when we talk about geopolitics, we have to cover everything. When we cover, it can be political science, economy, religion, or ecology, and something else. We tend to have this comprehensive view. Geopolitics is not only between countries. This is the usual thing that we have in the news. But if you take it from the critical or feminist point of view, it is not necessarily between the countries but within the country. For instance, the example of Japan, is Japan ready for immigration? Where is the immigration from where? Africa, Europe, or Asia? Then geopolitics can be seen not only between Japan and the other countries, but different communities in Japan, and the country will have to manage this. And same thing is happening in China and Singapore. Singapore has also a very low fertility rate which is below one. And Singapore needs immigration. Singapore is already a mix of three populations, Chinese 75%, Malays 14%, Indians 11%. Where will the immigration come from? Singapore is using demographic engineering or social engineering. Social engineering is when the state decides which population will be present in the state. Social engineering, as you know, has a bad connotation because it refers to Social Darwinism. And it may refer to what Hitler did, or what Japan did during the Japanese imperialism, which has bad press. But all the states are concerned with that because they have to control. And they also need to have a possibility how to ensure the future of the country.

## **Comment and Q&As**

### **Prof. Takayuki Kawase**

I have two questions about your presentation. The first one is about the Islamic business. According to Max Weber, the spirit of capitalism is deeply connected to the ethics of Protestantism but I am skeptical about it because I think capitalism is not limited inside the

domain of Protestantism. There must be Islamic capitalism or Japanese style capitalism. My hometown Shiga Prefecture is famous for the culture of entrepreneurship of Japanese style. I think the capitalism spirit is not only the Protestant but also something global. And my question is, is capitalism limited inside the religion? Is it possible to be as atheist capitalist, which is free from any kind of morality?

And my second question is about can corporation be a state or state-like government? And of course, they can have a military, they can issue currency. But I think it is very important question that if corporation can have democracy inside there? If they have to be democrat, which I think they must be, for example, kind of the socialist cooperative. I think a lot of Japanese corporations are democratic. And in my opinion, Japanese corporations are usually very communitarian. Toyota is the typical case of that. Is it universal way of thinking or not? That is my second question.

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

The first question is discussion about Islam and capitalism. When we look at the development of capitalism, starting with colonialism, and Islam has lost, which means Islam has been put in a freezer. This is why in many places, people believe that Islam has a problem with capitalism. But when we are looking from the theological point of view, this is not the case. Because capitalism is based on the private ownership of the means of production on one side and on the free market on the other side. But it's having the last influence from the state or from someone else. There are two pillars, ownership and freedom. And Islam is for both. It is for the private ownership, and it is for freedom. The problem is going with the term of innovation. This is where we have the problem. Because Islam is based on the Sharia approach, which is based on very old text, the Quran, the Sunnah from the Prophet Muhammad. It means that we are fixing it. For the Sunni Islam that is about 90% of Muslims, they reject the possibility of innovation, because innovation in Arabic can be said as bid'ah in Arabian which is like a heresy. If it is a heresy, in that case, it is very difficult to implement.

That is why they rejected Japanese cameras because they cannot take picture of human beings, and the idolatry will be rejected. And as such, they banned cameras, TV, and everything. But at the beginning, they were banning them. So, there is a problem with capitalism. I will recommend you one author called Timur Kuran. He is working very much on Islam and capitalism. He is talking about the problem of the shifting of Enlightenment that Islam did not come there or did not innovate. For instance, in terms of philosophy, they say that the door has been closed in the 12th century. So, it means from the 12th century onwards, we didn't have philosophy. But up to the 12th century, it was the golden age of Islam. Europe was completely destroyed, but Islam was the shining beckon. But they did not follow with the Enlightenment. This is why there is a problem for them.

About the second question, a private corporation is not a democracy. The shareholders decide about everything, employees, suppliers or clients. They can even close the company. They can go in another direction either. And they have full freedom. the question is, should the corporation be a democracy? Not necessarily, because we have to look at the efficiency. In Singapore, for instance, they adopt a very pragmatic view. Deng Xiaoping has one famous saying that is it doesn't matter if the cat is Black and White as much as it catches mice. And Singapore is very in favor of that. They are saying if in China something works, we take it. If in America something works, we take it. If in Japan something works, we take it. We are not bound by ideology. So, people can call it democracy, authoritarianism, or collectivism. The only question which matters is if it works.

And, can the corporation be a state? It used to be the case in the past. Starting with colonialism, that is by the year 1600, when the Europeans went to America or Africa, it was not the state. The private corporations ruled the world. And they ruled the world for 300 years. Today, it will not be the British East India Company, but maybe, Meta, Tesla or someone else will rule the world again. As a result, the corporation is not necessarily a democracy, but authoritarian and provided that it delivers results. If it doesn't deliver results, people don't take it. But this is also what is happening in Singapore.

**Prof. Takayuki Kawase**

Basically, I believe in the Francis Fukuyama that democracy must prevail in the end.

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

As you know, President Fukuyama changed his idea recently after 30 years because now he's talking about Trump and the other. Today, we live in a different world. So, we have to accept and also have to reconsider what we are talking about. One last point concerning collectivism, which is very important. I'm coming from a country, which was called Yugoslavia before. And Yugoslavia at that time didn't want to be capitalists but communist in the sense of Soviet Union. Then the third part was invented which was self-management. Self-management was extremely interesting for many people in the world because they were saying finally we have some intermediary. We have people ruling the society. It's not the state, but the people ruling the society, and it is the people ruling the corporation, and we are also giving some freedom, etcetera. It was like a laboratory. I know people coming in order to see if this laboratory work. It did not work very well. But many people were finding hope that they can do something else. We used to call these companies such as Toyota or Tribal paternalistic companies that is a company behaving like the father having children. In terms of social fairness, if all corporations do this, we don't have a problem. We don't have a problem because at that time, before the Second World War and after the Second World War, cities were built around the corporation. And the corporation was running the hospital, the school, the train station, the post office, they were running everything. It was a paternalistic concept. Over the years, we have changed this with the introduction of shareholders or investment funds, etcetera. But at the beginning, the corporation had a responsibility. It was not called corporate social responsibility, but they did it. It was a paternalistic company.

**Dr. Alfonso Torrero**

Due to the inefficiency of the state and chauvinistic culture in Mexico that regularly diminished women petition for safe workplaces, new businesses are created by feminist groups. Nowadays, you can see feminist groups selling diverse products in Mexico City downtown. The problem is bigger than unsafety workplaces. Mexico is one of the countries with more feminist sides in the world. Activist women are joining and doing collective organizations to promote their own social fairness.

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

I was in Mexico when president has been inaugurated, and it is the first female president in Mexico. And when I discussed with them, they were very proud of this because they have a female president before the United States. So, now the question is, should women's group be the only ones to promote this or should the whole society do it? Because in this case, it is feminist group selling diverse products in Mexico City downtown. I believe that it is not enough. Men must be involved in this, because without the men, they will not succeed. In a macho



society, men still hold the position of power. It means that they can say that it is a feminine problem, but it's not my problem. Then business will always be small. They will not have the big capital behind them. They will not engage the society. From my point of view, it is not a feminine issue. Feminism is not only for females, but for the whole society.

And I was teaching this when there was a group coming from Morocco. Morocco is also a mature society. And there were only men coming from one of the biggest companies in Singapore. And I told them, let's talk about feminism. And they protested. They were telling me that they were not women, why they should talk about that. But at the end, they told me they were all feminists. It means we must have men also participating in this. But now we have a problem because if we are influenced by the feminist group from the United States that feminism is taking another direction.

When it comes with the feminist issues, it's up to women to talk about them. But you as a man, you will have conscious or unconscious bias about that, so you cannot talk about that. This is where I don't agree with them, because I believe everyone should be involved in that, especially if we want to help them.

#### **Dr. Alfonso Torrero**

You explained that the actual studies in geopolitics have criticized the social unfairness and excesses of capitalism. How are geopolitics studies considering and promoting the knowledge of ecology, healthy ecology from ancient cultures, for example?

#### **Prof. Cedomir Nestorovic**

In fact, what is happening is that again. Let's take one example. For the ecological approach and we are looking at the carbon footprint, you have countries where they still use coal for energy. And among these countries, we have China. About 60% of energy produced in China of electricity is coming from coal. And after that you have India, and you have Indonesia. Now you have western groups coming to China, India and Indonesia. And they are telling them you have to decarbonize because of your contribution to the global warming and ecology. So, they're coming there and they're telling them, they have to stop. My Indonesian friends, they're telling me, they would like to decarbonize, but they cannot, because it is the cheapest energy that they have. And if they want to survive, they must use this. the Westerners, live in luxury, and in comfort zone. how can they tell Asians or Africans to decarbonize when they don't have an alternative? This is where we have a problem. My students and my colleagues who are only reading Western books, who are only reading something coming from the west, they perpetuate this kind of discourse or narrative. Until an alternative which is affordable is provided, which is sustainable in terms of money, people must continue with this. This is where we have also a misunderstanding between Western countries or between Western narratives. The Western narrative can be in Japan or in Indonesia. The Western narrative can be in any country for the people who are only looking at the Western sources or educated in America. But we live in a multipolar world where we have to accept also research that is done in Asia, Latin America or in Africa.

#### **Prof. Masaya Kobayashi**

I was very surprised and inspired by your lecture today and your book because my image about geopolitics, especially in understanding Japanese academy is classical viewpoint. So, obviously, we are studying social sciences but studying geopolitics is a bit apart from that. But seeing your book and representation today, you introduced various social sciences as feminists, and also, I think study and critical approach in other places. We are very familiar with that. I'm

very interested in such kind of integration or intersection between classical geopolitics and new social sciences matters. As you know, some right-wing persons or right-wing oppositions support geopolitics and attacks major social science which are we are very close to major social sciences. I think it's very close relating to political values. So, how is the situation in your country that you're around? It's a very smooth communication or a kind of battle in that?

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

The main aim of classical geopolitical was war because they're talking about hard power, soft power, or military. One famous French author coming from the critical side authored a book by saying geography is studied in order to make war. Classical geopolitics is talking like this one. Who were the geopoliticians? Many of them were coming from military. This is why when they teach geopolitics, they must be extremist or right-wing. That's the usual approach that we have. It was the case before, today there are other approaches. Now there is practically a war between classical and critical geopolitics. Because usually classical geopolitics is associated with the right-wing, so critical is left or Marxist. This is why there are two groups of people that they don't like each other. They never talk or participate in the same symposium. People from critical geopolitics accuse the other in order to give some kind of intellectual backing for war, intellectual backing for massacres or genocide. And the classical geopolitics will accuse them of wokeism. Under the term woke, everything turns bad.

There is a war in geopolitics between the two or three branches. Feminism is the later. Feminists don't like the critical geopolitics. It is coming from the critical. but they are saying that the critical geopolitics fails to understand the feminist's point of view. And they are saying in critical geopolitics don't put very much emphasis on patriarchal society or don't put very much to men as position in authority.

**Prof. Masaya Kobayashi**

We are familiar with social science. What is the additional matter, for example, usual, critical? I know there are usual arguments. But what is difference between classical, critical and feminism geopolitics?

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

In that case, we are looking for instance at the three elements that I mentioned, space, state and power. How do they look at these three elements? Feminism will say space. From the classical geopolitics, it will be the state. From the critical geopolitics, it can be an international organization, a city, or something else. So, you are destroying the level of the state. You are using some other, as they used to call, scales.

In geography, they used very much the concept of scale. Feminism is going further, and it is saying what is the space for geopolitics. They use the concept of low politics. For example, in this place, we have seven or eight persons, and we may have different ideas, and we may have different religions or beliefs. Geopolitics is here, not only on the level of the ministry, not only on the level there. So, this is feminist's approach when they are looking at the space. Let's say, you have children, and these children vote. Do they vote the same as you? Do you influence each other? This is feminism. So, they are looking at this type of space, not only on the high level, but they believe that geopolitics is everywhere.

Another example, during the war in Iraq, Japan was sending, for example, 200 million in Iraq in order to help the local population. But in Baghdad, there was just one place where you could go. There was one hotel called Al Rashid Hotel. In this hotel, you have people from ODA, you have diplomats, military, journalists, business people, or spies. Where do they meet? In the bar

of the hotel. From the feminist's point of view, the power of parliament is more important than you. This is where you intoxicate each other. This is where you are selling information. It's not only gender. We have approach concerning the state and power.

**Prof. Masaya Kobayashi**

Global or regional committee and so on tried to introduce the idea. I think our approach is familiar with the approach that enlarge the conception of geospatial. Our approach originally concentrates on spatial and for dimension.

Between private and public, how to estimate corporations? Some scholars or theorists regards corporation as private labels. But others including myself, tries to introduce the idea of corporation as a public dimension.

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

I agree with you. The corporation has many public features, also responsibilities. Everyone is asking from the corporation to contribute. There is a push towards that. Take look at the BlackRock. BlackRock is the biggest investment company in the world and they control 10 trillion. When they come to Japan or somewhere, the Prime Minister must meet them because they represent 10 trillion, so huge amount of money. What is happening is that BlackRock has been asked by the UK government to reform. And Trump asked Elon Musk to create a completely new division, which is called DOGE, Department of Government Efficiency. All these mean that everyone now is asking the corporation to contribute. But some corporations are not ready.

**Prof. Masaya Kobayashi**

Company's already position can be in one dimension.

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

It can be the political. It can also be the public opinion. The public opinion is now shaming you as a corporation if you don't do the things well. And they will launch boycott. Or there might be a backlash on this. And at the end of the day, we are looking at money. If they are losing money, that's not good. In order to have money, they also have to be present there. It means that they are motivated in order to be there.

But I agree with you that the corporation is not only private but it has a public domain. And this is why it depends on public goods, so we have a certain number of universities those are working on this. It is usually in the courses of ethics. But we have more courses on public responsibility and especially on how they call degrowth. We should not only look at the development in terms of GDP as the success, but also something else.

Regarding well-being, who is in charge of well-being? Is it the state or the corporation? Again, people spend their life in the corporation. This is where they notice if there is a change or an improvement. The state is far away, but the corporation is there every day that they are looking at. For instance, after the COVID, we don't use remote anymore. When I asked them where they are going to work, and they're telling me they want to work in a company, which is permissive to work 2 days in a week remotely because they feel more comfortable at home. This is the well-being that we are talking about. They prefer the company which is offering them you have 1 or 2 days working at home. In that sense, well-being is about corporation, it's not the state. But I am looking at the state side. There are geopolitics of sports, religion and everything. Certainly there is geopolitics of well-being.

**Assoc. Prof. Xiang Li**

I actually worked in business before, and it's really new for me to know the relationship between the business and geopolitical information, which is really innovative and wonderful I would say. You talked about strategic planning using the example of immigration, used to talk about self-management. I'm just wondering because different ages usually have different topics. For example, in the 90s, the topic of the society focused on the IT. And when the ages enter in the 2020, things started to become different such as SNS. And nowadays people start with focusing their eyes on AI, and you talk about the power state and the space. And how does the topic of the society influences?

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

When we talk about the Internet or AI, etcetera, people will ask who is doing this. Is it the state or the private corporation? If the state is doing it, the state may have a goal in order to do it. Let's imagine that the goal is democratization, well-being or social fairness. But the state can have another goal to control the population. The state can have different goals. We have to see what is the goal of that.

For the private corporation, we also have to see what is the goal of that. We can have people who are only interested in profit or the visionaries. For example, Elon Musk is a visionary who is not interested in profit but changing the society, with moving people to Mars, having neural link. We have to see what is the objective that we have and all that. When we look at the mission of the company, in the past it was to make profits, but now when you're looking at the mission of the company, they will say they are here to serve people, to make people better. The first thing they want is making profits, but they are using this as an excuse. However, they have this promotion. In order to completely answer the question, we can create virtual communities. So, as to virtual communities, we are going back to the concept of tribe. When I go to Bahrain, I have my participants from Saudi, Kuwait and Bahrain. And I asked them, do you know what is the tribe you are part of? And they said they knew. Now the question is, can you marry people from another tribe? They said they can and they had to choose the tribe they are married with. And we have modern tribes. There is a type of tribe that is saying a tribe needs only two things, a means of communication and a leader. Internet is providing you a means of communication. I believe we are all here on a certain tribe because we are all using social media. We are part of a lot of tribes because the platforms permitted you to be part of these tribes. We are part of many tribes at the same time because we interested in a lot of things such as art, business, or academia. But this is provided by the private companies, not by the state. Can the private company push some tribes? Yes. With the algorithm that they're using, the company can push for some tribes and the company can to some extent manipulate that. I would say, be careful, since the company is not a democratic company, they don't need to push for the democratization. They can push for tribes that you don't even know that you are part of. Today with the IT and the Internet, we have new tribes and new communities.

**Prof. Hikari Ishido**

Which kind of tribes do the private corporation push? Do they have any standard of the selection other than the profit?

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

Take an example of a company called Ben & Jerry's which is competing with Häagen-Dazs. Ben & Jerry is a very interesting company because the founders had a social mission from the very beginning as they were sourcing milk from the local farmers and they're doing everything sustainable, also giving part of the profit. They are saying that they were selling the business to

a giant of Unilever afterwards, but they were still keeping the social mission within Ben & Jerry's. What is the problem? The problem is the war in Gaza. Ben & Jerry's is Jewish but they don't support the state of Israel. And in Israel, they stopped selling Ben & Jerry's franchises as they believed that this money was going to the military. It means that within the corporate world, we have fractures on this field.

Now concerning the tribes that we talk about here, will you push for some tribes? Ben & Jerry's have their own tribe. This is the people who love not only ice cream, but also the social mission. They will never buy Häagen-Dazs because Häagen-Dazs doesn't have a social mission. They will always go for the other one. This is how they are making a differentiation even the product quality is the same.

**Assoc. Prof. Xiang Li**

You talked about religious prior to innovation for Islam. Different organizations, maybe take different business strategies in organization. To overcome the barriers, it's important to take inclusive approach. For example, Islam people cares about the God issues. So, from their perspective, using their behavior psychology and from tactic approach, using specific religious perspective is better to entering in the market of their world. Is it true?

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

We have two ways to answer the question. The first one is that Islam always recognizes that it is the third in the monophase. The first One is Judaism, the second one is Christianity, and Islam is the third. They respect the prophets, and they respect everything. For them, it is natural to be inclusive in this way. They are not exclusive in the sense that they reject Christianity and Judaism, but they consider that the Quran is the third and the last revelation. It means after this one, there is no more revelation. In that sense, they consider that it is the perfection of the first two monophase. This is why they think there is no need to change.

Now the second thing is Islam contributes to the Christians. They don't have an organized religion. There is no hierarchy, and there is no undisputed leader. In Orthodoxy, you will have the patriarch. In Catholicism, you will have the Pope. But in Islam you don't have the patriarch as Islam means submission. So, it means submitting to the will of Allah that you are in direct contact with Allah. Concerning Islam, there is no intercession. There are 1.7 billion Muslims in the world and they may have their own approach but there is no unique approach. When it comes to innovation, innovation will not come from the Muslim countries, it will come from the Western countries where Muslims live and they're questioning themselves if they could do the same thing where other people are talking about the blockchain or crypto. This is how they invented a new approach.

When they want to launch a product for a service, it can be Sharia based. Sharia based means they are going back to the Quran and Sunnah in order to find if it is present there. They know they cannot charge interest for finance as it is written in the Quran. But the new products that they have are not Sharia based. They are called Sharia compatible which is the invention. It is not written in the Quran, but they make it compatible. Who is making it compatible? This is the openness of every discussion because here we have the Sharia scholars. The Sharia scholars, they will say they will make it compatible or they will make it Halal, and they will make it authorized, even if it is not written in the Quran and Sunnah. This is how they are innovating.

**Dr. Steve Liang Fang**

Because my research is about the history. I am thinking the history of business and geopolitics when the company or corporation could be a state. hundred years ago, you

mentioned that the big companies like East India Company was really ruling many countries and regions all over the world. And then now it seems that the history is coming back again that big companies ruling the world is happening again. In that sense, from the historical point of view, do you think, what has changed? And has it changed to the right direction?

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

If we believe in historical cycles, it can come back again. If we believe that there are no historical cycles, then we can have several options. If we consider that corporations have a natural way, and the natural way is to be dominant and hegemonic, in that case, they will impose, and they will not accept competition, alternatives or any kind of interference. In that case, they can rule the state. If the corporation believes that it doesn't need to be hegemonic and that it can share with the others, in that case, it's a completely different approach. For instance, in the domain of intellectual property, I will keep it as exclusive property, so I will register, but not make it available, etcetera. That is what is happening. The Chinese companies don't want to register because they want it to be shared by the world, and they don't want especially poor countries to pay for that. It's a completely different approach. In that case it is not hegemonic, but something which is coming from the sharing economy.

The sharing economy has exploded recently. But there are big companies which are not willing to share. So, we have to wait all the companies coming on the market, which are willing to share. And when they are willing to share, then they don't want to rule. If you want to dominate ultimately, then you have to rule. And you will not stop at business but enter politics. In the past, we used to have this with lobbying. All the corporations used lobbying. This is not a problem to influence for that. But now with Musk, who actually wants to rule. It's completely different. We did not have this in the past. The biggest company in the world is Walmart. They're making \$600 billion a year. But the goal of Walmart, they don't want to rule the United States or the world, but Elon Musk wants.

Geopolitics is what we are provoking, and we are going further for. Don't be afraid when I'm asking those kinds of questions. If at the end of the geopolitical course, you didn't argue or you were not upset, then it was not a good question.

Elon Musk is saying if he wants to change the society, he has to take chance. The politicians will not follow. They are volatile and they want to be elected, which is the only thing that they want. If someone wants to change the society, then he needs to take charge or being ready to take charge. Therefore, it is so new and different from the British East India Company or the Dutch East India Company that used to have in Asia. They didn't care to be good at that time and no one cared about that. They were just smuggling, exploiting, and making money, killing people if necessary. That was the time. Today, they have to be clean and green.

**Dr. Steve Liang Fang**

Nowadays do ordinary people actually benefit from that?

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

They all benefit because the ordinary people are pushing towards, and they believe that some businesspeople are more efficient than politicians. Businesspeople have in mind more social fairness than politicians because many politicians are corrupt who don't care about social fairness. Politicians are careful about being re-elected, and they will do everything in order to be re-elected. Elon Musk and Zuckerberg are not elected, so they don't care about that. They have more social fairness in mind than the politicians.

**Dr. Xiaofang Zhang**

I have been reading some news from the Japanese journalism about some Japanese companies concerning to pull out their factories in China due to some political or policy reason. How do you think the business environment in China?

**Prof. Cédomir Nestorovic**

China is the country number one in manufacturing. So, in fact, no company can leave China because of two reasons. The first reason is the size of the market. There is no other market in the world, which can replace China. We all believe about India, but India cannot replace China in terms of the size of the market. The Second reason is the ecosystem. The Japanese companies have built in China for the last 40 years. Samsung or Apple need might need 2,000 companies to be around them for suppliers and components. If they leave, they have to create another ecosystem. They might need 40 years to create another ecosystem. When the Japanese company pull out of China then they may go to Vietnam and create new ecosystem. Vietnam is today half of the cost in China in terms of labor and India is two thirds. For some of the companies cannot recreate the ecosystem. Then this is what is pushing them here.