

On April 26, The Toda Peace Institute organized and hosted a seminar on **“Resurgent Nationalism? The Future of Ethnopolitics in the 21st Century”** delivered by Professor Neophytos Loizides from the University of Kent.¹

The lecture presented evidence for and against the ‘resurgence of nationalism,’ highlighting the role of and its impacts on vulnerable groups, including refugees and displaced persons. The presentation also explored the resurgence of nationalism with majoritarian electoral systems, looking at the mechanisms linking non-consensus democracies with nationalism. Professor Loizides demonstrated how these are particularly relevant for certain countries and regions of the world particularly in the Middle East. The presentation finished with a focus on historical and contemporary remedies aimed at mitigating the most destructive manifestations of nationalism.



¹ Professor Loizides is the author of several publications including *The Politics of Majority Nationalism: Framing Peace, Stalemates, and Crises*; *Designing Peace: Cyprus and Institutional Innovations in Divided Societies*; and *Mediating Power-Sharing* (with Feargal Cochrane and Thibaud Bodson). He has also published extensively in the areas of nationalism, forced displacement and conflict regulation in deeply divided societies most recently in the *European Journal of Political Research*, the *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, and *Political Psychology*.

Professor Loizides offered three predictions for the future of ethnopolitics in the 21st century; first, that majoritarian democracies lacking institutional constraints against autocracy would be more prone to conflict, second, that there would be more refugees but perhaps fewer casualties and, finally, that the Middle East would become more radicalized due to a lack of positive regional examples.



Speaking about the lack of international norms to prevent ethnic cleansing and fewer countries willing to accept refugees, Professor Loizides suggested that host countries look at ways of helping refugees return to their home countries, and technological solutions to making their lives better during the transition period before their recognition as refugees. He argued that with better integration, it would be more likely that refugees could return to their home countries as they would have developed the skills they need to earn a livelihood after repatriating.



Professor Loizides finished his lecture with a call for the prevention of ethnic cleansing, helping refugees to return to their countries and restoring multi-ethnic societies. He suggested that this could be achieved in part by revisiting post-WWII narratives, taming populist trends through new norms with regards to refugees and IDPs, and introducing institutional means for sustaining these initiatives. The discussant, Dr. Sung Yong Lee of Otago University, pursued some of these and other points further in the discussion that followed the lecture.²

Discussion

Dr. Lee asked Professor Loizides to elaborate on the relationship between nationalism and narratives, to which he referred to his own research on how often two societies come close to war. In relation to the stand-offs between Greece and Turkey for example, he explained that the period since 1996 has been the most stable period in decades. He also focuses on parliaments as a point of analysis,

² Dr. Sung Yong Lee is a Senior Lecturer at the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand. Dr. Lee's primary research interests are in conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding processes in civil war, with a geographical focus on Southeast Asia (Cambodia, the Philippines and South Thailand) and Central America (El Salvador and Guatemala). Dr. Lee earned his PhD from the University of St. Andrews and taught at Coventry University as a lecturer/senior lecturer. He has also served as a co-managing editor of the *Journal of Conflict Transformation and Security (JCTS)* and as a regional council member of the Royal Society of New Zealand. Previously, he was engaged as a field practitioner in local peacebuilding programs in India, Afghanistan and Cambodia between 2003 and 2007.

analyzing the public records they make available online. We can see how often comments and gestures for collaboration are expressed versus those we find in more hostile or nationalist arguments. In most cases, he explained, there are some 6-7 political issues being negotiated at any given time. These can be used to identify arguments between nationalists and pacifists.



Dr. Lee closed on another topic, describing the difficulty of finding countries willing to accept more refugees. As an exception to this, he pointed out that New Zealand has recently doubled its intake from 750 to 1,500 of asylum seekers. In this case, the government and volunteers joined forces to provide housing for the migrants. In the meantime, the number of volunteers needed has declined because those who helped in the past are continuing to help in the future. He asked whether once a country has moved beyond their fear of migrants, it becomes easier to accept asylum seekers.

Professor Loizides answered that this process often ends unsuccessfully. "When the government fails, antagonism emerges," he said. He mentioned the case of Lesbos as an example of this in which public opinion was quite accepting at first, but then gradually became negative. He closed the seminar with his observation that families are easier to integrate as the children tend to go to school and the parents to work. This helps in keeping crime and violence down, and the families become more integrated. In this connection, he suggested, Japan might look at New Zealand and Canada as examples of best practice in integrating asylum seekers.
