

## The Haifa Center for German and European Studies Guest Lecture

# Do Populist Parties Increase Voter Turnout? Evidence from over 40 Years of Electoral History in 31 European Democracies

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While some consider populist parties to be a threat to liberal democracy, others have argued that populist parties positively affect the quality of democracy by increasing political participation of citizens. This supposition has hitherto not been subjected to rigorous empirical tests. The voter turnout literature, moreover, has primarily focused on stable institutional and party system characteristics – ignoring more dynamic determinants of voter turnout related to party competition. To fill this double gap in the literature, we examine the effect of populist parties, both left and right, on aggregate-level turnout in Western and Central Eastern European parliamentary elections.

Based on a dataset on 315 elections in 31 European democracies since 1970s, we find that turnout is higher when populist parties are represented in parliament prior to an election in Central Eastern Europe, but not in Western Europe. These findings further our understanding of the relationship between populism, political participation and democracy.

**Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**12:15 – 14:00**

**Room 570, Floor 5, Educational Building, University of Haifa**

The lecture will be held in English and will be open to the public

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