Dear Sir or Madame,

having recently addressed the question of how to best empirically approach “traditionalist populism” – a variant of populism that exhibits Cas Mudde’s proposed features of the far right, we wish to participate at your summer school to critically discuss our findings. To our knowledge, scholarship studying the phenomenon of populism is still plagued with conceptual conflations between populism and the far right, leading to shortcomings in empirical analyses. We seek to disentangle these concepts, with the aim of identifying (1.) those elements that promote populism, (2.) those that promote far right attitudes and ultimately, and (3.) those that make these two phenomena interact.

We are three aspiring young researchers, currently completing the M.A. “Empirical Political and Social Research” at the University of Stuttgart (Germany) and at the Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Bordeaux (France). Having worked on a wide range of topics and equipped with versatile methodologies, we hope to contribute to the school’s goal of “bolster[ing] and promot[ing] knowledge on the theoretical, empirical, and methodological underpinnings of contemporary far-right politics”. The topical and methodological research focus that we will bring to the seminar include:

* Conceptually speaking:
  + Political extremism (esp. focus on interaction between religion and politics) – F. Votta
  + International conflict studies (esp. focus on the manifestation of left and right-wing terrorism since the 19th century in civil and international conflicts) – N. Nguyen
  + Political outcome of societal upheavals (esp. focus on the Middle East) – M. Schumacher
* Methodologically speaking:
  + Advanced quantitative methods (esp. automatic web scraping & machine learning) – F. Votta
  + Mixed methods (esp. qualitative-quantitative content analysis) – N. Nguyen
  + Advanced quantitative methods (esp. multilevel modeling) – M. Schumacher

As the summer school will assemble highly influential scholars in the field, we hope to enter into a fruitful dialogue in which both established and aspiring researchers can share their ideas. Especially the presence of Cas Mudde, whose concepts have greatly influenced our analyses, will give us the opportunity to receive feedback about the conceptual framework that we propose. This is important for us, as our aim is to genuinely understand the causes and implications of right wing populism.

On a last note, we would like to express our wish to compete for the grants offered by the ECPR, as we belong to the University of Stuttgart, an ECPR member institution. However, we understand that funding opportunities are limited. If it is not possible to compete for several grants as a team, we are willing to share the remaining costs, as long as we can seize the opportunity to be part of this thrilling learning environment.