

# Populism and emotions

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# Why it is important to speak about emotions?

(In the context of populism)

- Is the voter really rational? (Downs 1957)
- Emotions as key player in decision making-process (Zajonc 1985)
- Cognition is a complex process in which the affective and cognitive components cannot be clearly separated.
- Different approaches toward study of emotions in political science



SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

What is behind the success of populism?

- Globalization and social-economic changes?
- Immigration and cultural changes?
- Unemployment?

>> subjective „sense“ of perceptions of threat and vulnerability, identity loss



Emotions and affect as key motivators to  
support populist movements

How?

# Populist political communication (in Wirz 2018)

- Reference to the monolithic group of people
- Stressing the people's virtues and achievements
- Demonstrating closeness to the people demanding sovereignty for the people  
Excluding and discrediting others
- Blaming the elite
- Denying sovereignty to the elite
- **Emphasis on the crisis**
- **Emotions as "secret ingredient"**







What emotions?

And what effect?

# Negative emotions

Populists are often outside of the political establishment; they identity and image is rooted in “anti-attitude”:

>> ANGER and RESENTMENT as emotion of protest moral disagreement and blame: anti-elitism and easy solutions

>> FEAR and ANXIETY: from information seeking and less tolerance to acceptance of conservative ideology:

repressive politics, patriotism, increased support for the head of state, resistance to an "unconventional" lifestyle, and support for protectionist policies



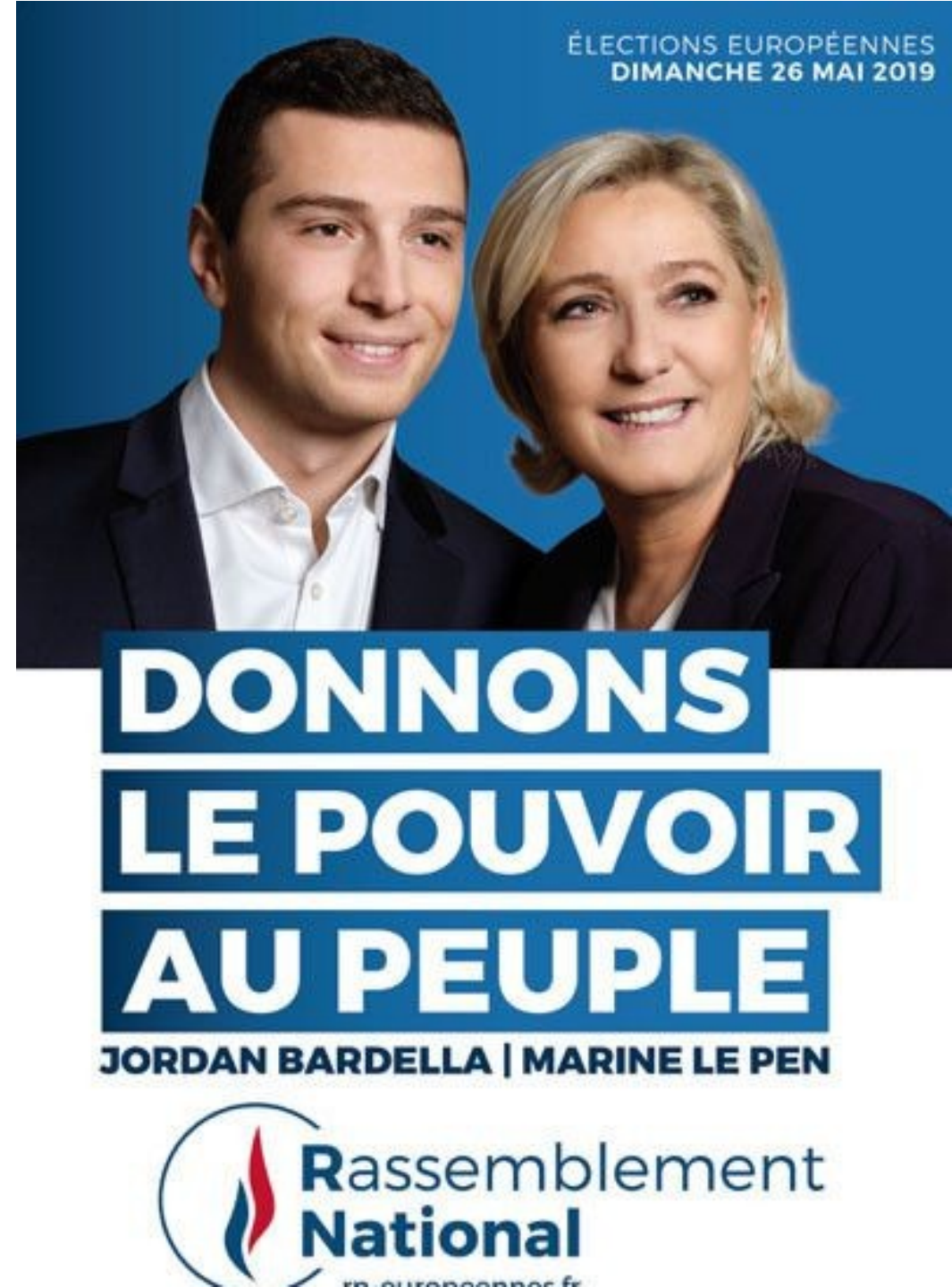
# Positive emotions

Populist as part of the “*People*”, protectors and saviors

>>Enthusiasm, joy, pride: emotions of certainty. Lack of attention.

Associated to qualities of the people, nationalism or achievements of the candidate

>> Hope: emotion oriented toward future. Connected to uncertainty > increasing interest in communicated issues



# Further literature

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