**Thesis idea, draft 2**

**Question**: What happens to local government institutions when populist parties gain power?

We know that a meritocratic bureaucracy seems to produce lower corruption (Dahlström, Lapuente, and Teorell 2012), as well as several other positive side effects (Nistotskaya and Cingolani 2016). We also see that the same bureaucracy often is under attack from populist parties that want to politicise the same bureaucracy.

This has two sides, one of responsiveness to the electorate and one of bureaucratic quality. On one side, populist parties have been argued to increase the responsiveness to the electorate, a good democratic value (Agerberg 2017). On the other, with the attacks on the bureaucracy from populist parties, it is easy to imagine that they have negative effects on bureaucratic quality when populist parties gain power. Drawing on a multitude of QoG-research, it is also easy to hypothesise that this effect is lower in High QoG-settings. It is yet to be tested, especially on lower levels.

Since there are few good measures of institutional quality on local level, I find inspiration in Broms et al. (2019), who uses competition in procurement as a measure of how partial the bureaucracy is – in essens a measure of low QoG.

**Hypothesis**: In low QoG-settings, populist parties gaining power will increase corruption/decrease QoG in the short term. In High QoG-settings, the institutions are so established that in short term, nothing will happen.

**Unit of analysis:** Danish or Nordic municipalities. Could maybe also be made into a multi-level analysis, if I combine municipal, regional and state levels, but I’m not versed enough in multi-level analysis to know if that is feasible.

**Method:** Panel-data regression analysis

**IV:** Dummy variable, Populist party in power or not

**DV:** Procurement data, lagged in years after populist party came to power.

**Problems**:

* Hard to find good datasets on populist parties, especially on lower levels
* Hard to establish when a populist party gains power. Do they have to be in a governing coalition, or govern by themselves?
* How to deal with “normal” parties with populist streaks?
* How to deal with governing coalitions? On local level, the “deal” is often under the table.

**Previous research:**

Agerberg (2017) argues that a perceived low QoG increases support for populist parties. However, as Manucchi & Amsler (2018) points out, populist parties not only look very different, they have different types of ideologies. But common to all populist parties, the focus is on responsiveness to the electorate, while the bureaucracy have a stronger focus on responsibility, as argued by Caramani (2017). Cornell and Grimes (2015) points to the effects on civil society, and argues that when civil society organisations do not align with the ruling party in a highly politicised bureaucracy, they get disruptive with an increase in protests as a general tactic.

**Litterature**

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