

## **Abstract**

The thesis deals with the theme of South Africa's transition from apartheid to the building of a democratic system through the African National Congress government. The party has been in power since the first all-racial elections held in 1994, but its initially high support has gradually declined. This is due to ineffective government policies aimed at reducing socio-economic inequalities caused by the apartheid regime, the enrichment of government officials from the state coffers and others. This is leading to changes in social sentiment and gradual changes in voting behaviour that may play a significant role in the future direction of the country. The first part of the paper will introduce the context of the issue. In order to understand the context, the country's modern history will be briefly presented, including key events and the government's policy documents on efforts to redress historical injustices. The second part will then provide a secondary analysis of electoral data, data from annual reports of specific policies and data from the South African census. The aim will be to assess whether the government is delivering on the promises it has made and the impact of its (non-)delivery on the socio-economic status of different social groups. Following this, the ANC's voting preference curve will be traced over time and compared to see whether the (un)success of government policies has an impact on changes in voting behaviour of South Africans. The anticipated outcome of the paper is to confirm the hypotheses, i.e. that ANC policies have not led to a reduction in inequality as much as to a polarisation of society, and that these trends are manifested in political cleavages.