

Understanding Ongoing Support for the African National Congress  
amongst the Urban Poor in National Elections in South Africa:  
The Case of Mlungisi, Queenstown

by

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## Abstract

The main objective of the thesis is to understand the ongoing support for the African National Congress (ANC) amongst the urban poor in national elections in South Africa with specific reference to Queenstown. The study involved 50 residents in Mlungisi in Queenstown, the vast majority of whom are shack dwellers. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for an in-depth understanding of why people vote for the ANC. The research participants have always voted for the ANC and have no intentions of voting for any other political party.

Since 1994, the ANC has in the main pursued a neo-liberal project with a limited focus on redistribution. Because of this, most blacks living in urban areas continue to live under conditions of extreme poverty. The abject material conditions of people living in Mlungisi does not provide a strong basis for why they would vote almost unreservedly for the ANC. In seeking to offer an explanation, the thesis turns to theories of the post-colony, including the work of Frantz Fanon and Partha Chatterjee, as these theories provide an analysis of the character of the post-colonial state and the ways in which the government engages with its citizens. These macro-level theories are complemented by middle-level theories about voting and voting patterns in seeking to understand why Mlungisi residents vote for the ANC, raising questions of identity, loyalty and clientelism in the process.

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## Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CSG	Child Support Grant
COPE	Congress of the People
DA	Democratic Alliance
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
MEC	Mineral Energy Complex
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
NP	National Party
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SASSA	South African Social Security
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDM	United Democratic Movement

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# CHAPTER ONE:INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to understand why the black urban poor in South Africa, who have limited social-economic opportunities and live under conditions of poverty, still tend to vote in significant numbers for the ruling African National Congress (ANC) in national elections. Millions of urban black South Africans, despite being full citizens in constitutional terms, continue to face challenges of unemployment, limited livelihood strategies and inadequate municipal services. The eruption of service delivery protests, which are now almost a daily feature of urban spaces in post-apartheid South Africa, are concentrated in poor black residential areas. Overall, though, the ANC remains firmly rooted in the hearts and minds of many urban black South Africans (Human Science Research Council, 2006). Urban poverty and local popular protest are not being neatly translated into opposition against the ruling party at national level, though the latter bears a major responsibility for the post-apartheid failure to address inequality, poverty and marginalisation. The thesis addresses this sociological problem through a study of certain black high-density electoral wards in Queenstown in the resource-deficient Eastern Cape Province (Statistics South Africa, 2012).

## 1.2 Research Problem – ANC, the Peoples Friend or Foe?

In 1994, the first non-racial inclusive elections brought an end to apartheid, South Africa. For many South Africans, this meant political freedom and an opportunity for their socio-economic problems to be addressed. Believing that the ANC would create a new post-apartheid reality for families stuck in poverty. People overwhelmingly elected the ANC to lead them as the first post-apartheid government (Naidoo, 2012:45). Despite the ANC's failure to fulfil the socio-economic expectations of the urban – and indeed rural – poor as well as the increasingly scandalous activities of the party leadership and the repressive activities of the state's security apparatuses, the ANC remains firmly in power – though its support in urban areas is definitely on the decrease.

South Africa has a history of racial polarisation, and racially-based identities have significance for voting patterns in contemporary South Africa. Though these significant racialised voting patterns remain, voting patterns clearly cannot be reduced to racial cleavages (Habib and Naidu, 2006). The black, or black African, vote is dispersed across political parties (including the Democratic Alliance – DA – and the Economic Freedom Fighters – EFF). There

is some evidence suggesting that the black middle class is more likely to vote for parties other than the ANC and that the main ANC support base remains amongst urban (and rural) poor black communities (Human Science Research Council, 2006). Hence, voting patterns may be a reflection of the intersection between racial, class and other identities.

ANC support at the national level is now beginning to decline and tumbled to its lowest level (62.1%) in the 2014 elections. In contrast, the DA (a traditionally white party) has shown significant growth, reaching 22,2% in 2014. Newer parties arising from splits within the ANC, such as Congress of the People (COPE) and EFF, have also undercut ANC support (Rivera-Alvarez, 2014). Inroads into the urban black support base of the ANC seem particularly prevalent in cities and less so in smaller urban centres, perhaps reflecting – as *The Economist* (May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014) suggests – that the ANC is losing ground amongst wealthier urban blacks (Garcia-Ravero, 2006).

Comprehensive studies of black urban support for the ANC during the 2014 elections are now beginning to emerge. Existing literature on the political economy of contemporary South Africa and of past voting patterns nevertheless are suggestive of reasons for ANC support. I detail below some of the possible conditions and causes.

The apartheid legacy left a number of inequalities along racial lines. These inequalities are visible in education, health, housing and employment. The ANC has sought to address these. It first introduced the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which sought, amongst other things, to facilitate employment creation and large-scale provision of basic infrastructure and housing. The RDP was abandoned by the ANC government and replaced by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme in 1996. This was an export-led macroeconomic strategy that included “anti-inflationary policies, including fiscal restraint, continued tight monetary policies and wage restraint” (Ozler, 2007:487). There is general agreement that GEAR was more inclined towards neo-liberalism and thus was anti-poor in its orientation (Aliber, 2003). Certainly GEAR and all subsequent neo-liberal macroeconomic programmes to date have failed to tackle massive urban poverty (Hartley, 2014). The major trade union federation (Congress of South African Trade Unions), as well as unions which have recently broken away from the Congress, have openly spoken out against neo-liberal restructuring, but this criticism has not filtered down to the grassroots level. Despite the neo-liberal thrust, the ANC government continues to pursue redistributive policies, notably the social grant system which provides direct benefits to millions of black urban poor households. Hence, while subject to conditions of poverty, the redistributive programmes of the ANC may resonate with the urban poor and influence their voting patterns.

Service delivery protests continue to dominate the urban landscape, with the protests involving primarily the urban black poor (Alexander, 2010). These protests focus on questions of service delivery and poverty but also raise concerns around local forms of democratic participation. Sometimes they entail direct attacks on inefficient ANC-controlled municipal administrations. But there seems to be a disjuncture between local popular politics on the one hand, and party affiliation and voting at the national level on the other. Some analysts argue that this arises because of anxiety amongst poor urban blacks of an alternative ruling party nationally which may undermine further their already-deficient resources and assets (Motala, 2014), or because of a relationship of material dependence which exists between the urban poor and the ANC. This disjuncture between local and national politics needs to be understood in addressing urban black support for the ANC nationally.

There are also other, almost conspiracy-based, arguments about ongoing ANC support, based on the intimacy of the relationship between state and ruling party, or the party-state nexus. Like all political parties, the ANC during election campaigns promises the world to all, and it seems to listen intently to what people have to say during these campaigns. But when election time is over, the voices of the people fade and their needs are ignored (Alexander, 2010). Simultaneously, the ANC as the ruling party has direct access to state resources and it uses this access during and outside election periods to garner support and legitimacy. The ANC at times seeks to commodify democracy by associating it with tangible benefits. For example, when the ANC went to Mgezankamba Village in KwaZulu-Natal during an earlier election, it arrived with work crews to repair the local roads, to distribute foodstuffs and to install electricity (Motala, 2014).

The significance of the party-state nexus should not be underplayed. The ANC, as the main ex-liberation movement in the country, positions itself as the party of national liberation such that individuals who break from the party or vote for other parties are portrayed as turning their back on 'the struggle' (which the ANC claims it embodies) (Mashele and Qobo, 2014). 'The struggle', in a form of reductionism, becomes discursively embodied in the movement-party and practices associated with this exist also at local levels. This scenario forms part of the ruling party's ongoing project of nationalism and nation-building and it is important to understand how the urban poor become incorporated into this state-driven process of nationalism.

Seeking to understand the ongoing voting for the ANC by urban black poor people in national elections clearly is a complicated pursuit involving a multi-causal explanation. It also cannot be simply deduced from national processes and requires a nuanced examination of the

complexities of specific urban sites, as this thesis seeks to accomplish by offering Queenstown as a case study.

### **1.3 Theoretical Framing**

In terms of the theoretical framing for the thesis, I draw upon two sets of literature. First of all, I draw upon macro-sociological thinking about the post-colony to make sense of politics (including the politics of the ruling party) in post-Apartheid South Africa. In this regard, I draw specifically on the works of Frantz Fanon, Partha Chatterjee and Antonio Gramsci.

In focusing on Africa broadly, Fanon examines the transition from a liberation movement struggling against colonialism to a ruling party in a newly independent nation-state in Africa. He argues that the new ruling party engages regularly in an exclusive and sectarian nation-building project which involves an alliance with the comprador bourgeoisie and international capital and, in doing so, fails to address the everyday needs of the poor or wretched of the earth. While Fanon is useful in making sense of the fundamental character of the ANC government, I turn to Chatterjee and Gramsci to understand more fully why the poor would be inclined to vote continuously for a ruling party (the ANC) which has failed to engage in state programmes which significantly address poverty and inequality.

Gramsci highlights the importance of a 'passive revolution' and the hegemony of a dominant class or ruling bloc in capitalist societies. In advanced capitalist nations, a strictly bourgeois hegemony exists and this is firmly entrenched within civil society. But given the deeply intertwined class and racial history of South Africa, and the newness of the post-liberation nationalist project (still in-formation) in the country, the question of hegemony becomes much more fluid and complicated. The type of hegemony existing in South Africa, with specific relation to the so-called wretched of the earth, can be further examined in the light of the work of Chatterjee.

Though writing mainly about India, Chatterjee argues that the notion of civil society is problematic in its applicability to 'most of the world' (including South Africa). He, therefore, speaks of the existence of political society within which the urban poor live and work. He claims further that the relationship between civil society and the state (based on citizens and rights) is very different from the relationship between political society – a space occupied by the urban poor – and the state (a relationship based on communities and entitlements). An analysis of political society, as it exists in South Africa, is important in understanding the linkages between the ruling party and the urban poor.

Besides this macro-theorising, I also discuss sociological theories (main middle-level theories) which focus more directly on voting, voting preferences and voting patterns. These theories include the identity theory and the clientelism theory. Both the macro- and middle-level theories are presented in chapter two.

#### **1.4 Thesis Objective**

The main objective of the thesis is to understand and explain the ongoing support for the African National Congress amongst the black urban poor in national elections in South Africa with reference to Queenstown (in the Eastern Cape) specifically.

#### **1.5 Research Methodology**

Methodology entails a research strategy that translates ontological and epistemological principles into guidelines which show how research is to be conducted. Ontological and epistemological principles, when used consistently with each other, are thus organised into research methodologies, with different research methodologies existing within the realm of sociology (Sarantakos, 2005: 30). Ontology refers to the study of being, or what can be said to exist in the world as real. Epistemology is the study of knowledge and raises questions about how we come to know and analysis what is said to exist. According to Matthew and Ross (2010:51) ontology is “the science of what is, of the kinds and structures of objects properties, events, processes and relations in every area of reality”, whereas epistemology is “the theory of knowledge and how we know things”.

Ontologically, what is of significance for the thesis is the existence of meanings and definitions – or interpretations of – the social world. This entails, broadly speaking, a constructivist ontology which prioritises the ways in which human subjects construct or, less forcefully, interpret – the world around them. These interpretations or meanings emerge socially and historically, based on the conditions of existence and experiences of human subjects. Therefore, though the social world has meaning through interpretations, these interpretations cannot be understood purely in terms of the structural location of the interpreter. In the case of this thesis, my concern is with the ways in which poor black urban people in contemporary South Africa make sense of the polity and politics of the country. Aligned to a constructivist ontology is an interpretive epistemology.

This type of epistemology is focused mainly on the quest for understanding rather than explanation. It seeks to understand and make sense of the meanings and definitions which

human subjects use to construct their world. For this thesis, I want to understand why poor black urban subjects interpret the polity and politics of post-apartheid South Africa in such a way that they continue to vote for the ruling party. In doing so, I do not seek to offer any explanations of a causal character. I recognise however that the social existence and experiences of human subjects structure the content of the meaning they give to their world and this, for example, influences their voting preferences. Hence, the interpretive epistemology used highlights the significance of both structure and meaning.

These ontological and epistemological commitments lead me to adopt primarily a qualitative research methodology, including research methods consistent with this kind of methodology. Qualitative methods allow for in-depth understandings, or thick descriptions, of the research topic, such as voting patterns. In this respect, these methods aim to answer questions about the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of a social phenomenon rather than about 'how many' or 'how much', which are answered by quantitative methods (Patton and Cochran, 2002:3). For my study, I made use of informal, in-depth interviews as my research method (see Appendix A for the interview schedule). In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea (Boyce and Neale, 2006).

The research interviews were conducted in Queenstown and specifically in Mlungisi township. Fifty in-depth interviews were conducted, consisting of twenty-one males and twenty-nine females. The research was done in July 2016. The participants were selected based on non-random purposive sampling, with the participants being chosen based on their dire living conditions. In selecting participants, the researcher thus went from shack to shack in Mlungisi township, identifying people who were willing to be interviewed. All interviews were carried out in or just outside the respective homesteads of the interviewees, which allowed for a relaxed atmosphere and place of comfort for them. Because of the relative informality of the interviews, interviewees were given the opportunity to elaborate further on relevant points of particular interest to them, such that flexibility was built into the interview process. A tape recording device was used in order to capture everything that was said and for transcribing purposes.

For the first two interviews which were conducted, I was accompanied by a friend who works at the Department of Social Development in Queenstown. The reason I asked him to accompany me was that he was from Mlungisi and knew the area well. I initially expected him to accompany me on all fifty interviews as my research assistant so that he could guide me through the township for safety reasons. After the first two interviews, my guide stopped

conducting the interviews with me without giving any reasons, and he became unreachable. My assumption was either he did not have the time or my research was potentially in conflict with his work at Social Development since voting preferences was a sensitive research topic. I was then accompanied by a friend's colleague (a local construction worker) as my research assistant for the rest of the interviews conducted. Some of my research participants struggled to understand particular English words or terms in the interview questions, so the interviews were mostly conducted in isiXhosa – I am fluent in isiXhosa. But where I struggled to find the correct Xhosa words or phrases, my research assistant assisted me.

The thesis topic, as indicated, is a very sensitive one given that it focuses on political views and perspectives. Although I explained the purpose of my research repeatedly, some of the research participants were still sceptical about the research being done and their involvement in it. The following sentiments were expressed: that the topic was too frustrating and stressful; that they were scared to put their signature on the consent form (see below) in case they became implicated in some political endeavour; and that they thought I might be affiliated with a specific political party and hence had a political agenda which might harm them. Some people refused to participate in the research, so I continued until I reached the target of fifty interviewees. Despite the sensitivity of the topic, I do believe that the respondents were honest in the views they expressed.

Before the interviews were conducted, the participants were given consent forms to read and sign (see Appendix B). The interviewees were informed about the purpose of the study and about confidentiality with reference to the use of the interviews. I explained that the work I was doing was a research project at Rhodes University and that I was a Masters student and was required to do this research to complete my studies. The tape-recordings which were done were destroyed after being translated into English and transcribed, so as to ensure the participants' confidentiality and security; and the transcribed data was only seen by me and my supervisor. The transcription did not include the participants' real name, as a numbering system was used. In this sense, and in line with standard research ethics, I sought to ensure the protection of my informants from any harm arising from the research (Flick, 2011:2150).

Immediately after the fieldwork, the recordings of interviews, as well as notes, taken during the fieldwork were typed out. The data was then organised and coded thematically so as to identify, name, categorise and describe the phenomena relevant to the thesis topic and main objective. In large part, the series of questions contained in the interview schedule facilitated the identification of relevant themes. Themes included actual voting patterns, experiences of ANC government programmes locally (such as around service delivery),

historical connections to the ANC, and reasons for voting for the ANC. The interconnections between themes were crucial, notably any relationship between socio-economic deprivation (given that Mlungisi is a low-income area) and political choices pertaining to the ANC. Drawing the connections between themes permitted me to build, inductively, an understanding of ongoing support for the ANC within Mlungisi.

### **1.6 Thesis Outline**

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framing for the thesis, focusing on theories of the post-colony as well as more middle-level theories about voting patterns. In chapter 3, I examine the politics of South Africa, including race and voting patterns nationally over time. Chapter 4 provides a profile of the Mlungisi interviewees and examines their views about the ANC around a range of pertinent themes. In chapter 5, a more analytical understanding (based on the theoretical framing) is provided of ANC voting patterns within Mlungisi. Chapter 6 ends the thesis by offering a coherent overview of the key points and arguments emerging from the thesis.

## CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMING

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framing for the thesis. First of all, I set out specific macro-theorising about the post-colony, drawing in particular on the work of Frantz Fanon, Partha Chatterjee and Antonio Gramsci. These macro-theories provide a strong basis for understanding national politics in the post-colony, including the relationship between the ruling party and the state, and the state's relationship to the so-called wretched or damned of the earth. In this context, I then consider middle-level theorising about voting preferences and patterns. Together, these theories provide the analytical basis for understanding (as set out in later chapters) the ongoing support of the black urban poor for the ANC in post-Apartheid South Africa.

### 2.2 The Post-Colony

While Fanon's analysis cannot be simplistically applied to South Africa, it is necessary to note that we should not overplay the notion of South African exceptionalism vis-à-vis the rest of Africa. I focus on points from Fanon which seem particularly pertinent to post-Apartheid South Africa. Fanon (1961), in focusing on Africa broadly, examines the transition from a liberation movement struggling against colonialism to an ex-liberation movement, now ruling party, in a newly independent nation-state. He argues that the ruling party engages in a narrow nation-building project which involves an alliance with the comprador bourgeoisie and international capital, and which fails to address the everyday needs of the poor or damned of the earth, including both the proletariat and peasantry. As Fanon (1961:98) argues: "The suffering of the masses is not solely due to them being colonised [in the past]; what further deepens their struggle is the [post-colonial] apathy of the national bourgeoisie, its mediocrity and its deeply cosmopolitan mentality". These faults and failures inhibit the emergence of a more inclusive and genuine national consciousness.

In this respect, former liberation movements were based mainly on racial identification. Political solidarity was formed around "we are black, we are oppressed and we are on a quest for liberation" (Fanon, 1961:97). African liberation leaders raised people's hopes, stirred up their spirits, and sought to develop a nationalist identity amongst the colonised oppressed. The masses were mobilised using speeches which talked of freedom, how this freedom was attainable and how it was theirs for the taking. Once in power in the post-colony, the ex-

liberation movements regularly speak about the historical struggle against colonialism and highlight the heroic icons of the struggle; in doing so, these new ruling parties seek to convey to the masses the necessity of placing ongoing trust in their liberators and of remaining loyal to the post-colony ruling party. The masses are thus constantly called upon to be reasonable by a post-colonial government that fails to act reasonably in terms of social justice.

The ruling party takes over the colonial state and fails to transform it in any meaningful way. The political elite which forms the upper echelons of the ruling party is deracialised (now Black) under the post-colony but the state in-and-of-itself is not decolonised. In forming an alliance with the underdeveloped bourgeoisie, international capital and the rising Black middle classes, the ruling party simply takes over the reins of the modern state modelled on advanced capitalist societies (Fanon, 1961:8). In the case of South Africa, and compared to other African nations, it must be highlighted though that the national bourgeoisie is more developed and entrenched, but the overall argument put forward by Fanon remains relevant for post-apartheid South Africa. In a situation in which the ruling party seems to fuse with the state, and in which the new government remains subservient to global capitalism, the grand promises of the ex-liberation movements fall by the wayside and wealth continues to flow outside of the post-colony or fills the pockets of the party and state elite, even by way of corruption. Therefore, meaningful post-colonial transformation does not take place, and neo-colonialism becomes established, with the ruling party elite (with almost unfettered access to state resources) pursuing its own self-interest and acting as a conveyor belt for capitalist interests (Fanon, 1961:100).

This is despite the fact that, when elections approach, ruling party leaders will promise the world to the masses, notably in the form of the massive redistribution of land and resources, as they know that this is what the wretched of the earth want to hear. As soon as elections are over, the masses are then completely forgotten and it is back to 'business as usual'. The masses, including poor farmers and urban workers as well as the unemployed and informal traders, are left to fend for themselves. They at times even fight amongst themselves, or against Africans of other nationalities (Fanon, 1961), with xenophobic/Afro-phobic attacks taking place repeatedly in the case of South Africa (Nicolson, 2017). With economic growth (instead of fundamental redistribution) being prioritised by the ruling party, it is a daily struggle to survive for the common people who are in large part ignored by the ex-liberation movement elites. With the masses becoming increasingly aggrieved with their conditions of existence in the post-colony, the ruling party-state can readily, and often willingly, use coercion to keep the damned of the earth in check and thereby sustain at least a semblance of social stability.

While Fanon is useful for making sense of the broad character of the post-Apartheid ANC government, I turn to Chatterjee and Gramsci more specifically for reasons for why poor urban blacks continue to vote for the ANC.

Chatterjee (2002) argues that the notion of civil society is problematic in its applicability to ‘most of the world’ (including South Africa), such that not post-colonial subjects are full rights-bearing citizens. In effect, he argues that civil society is the realm of middle-class society, as civil society is “the closed association of modern elite groups, sequestered from the wider popular life of the communities, walled up within enclaves of civic freedom and rational law” (Chatterjee, 1983:4). He, therefore, speaks of the existence of political society, within which the urban poor live and work, and which entails a particular kind of relationship to the post-colonial state. The relationship between civil society and the state (based on citizens and rights) is far different than the relationship between political society – a space occupied by the urban poor – and the state (based on communities and entitlements). The effect of this political society-state relationship often plays itself out at a local government level. Though Chatterjee’s argument is about India more specifically, it resonates with contemporary urban South Africa.

While the post-colony respects the rights of the middle classes, and dignifies them with a deep respect for their constitutionally-guaranteed rights (Chatterjee, 1983:38), this is not the case with the urban poor (as part of Fanon’s wretched of the earth). In including the middle classes, the realm of civil society (as constructed by the post-colonial government) simultaneously excludes ‘the damned’ who continue to live on the margins of mainstream (civil) society. Though the constitutional rights of ‘the damned’ exist on paper, such rights (including socio-economic rights) are not guaranteed in practice; and this comes across as an acceptable state of affairs. By the law and the constitution, all of society is civil society, everyone is a citizen with equal rights and therefore regarded as a member of civil society.

During decolonisation, then, de-racialisation of civil society takes place as all people are now officially defined as rights-bearing citizens. But this overcoming of one differentiated social system is effectively replaced by another differentiated system, and the new one are rooted primarily in class differentials: middle-class respectability within the realm of civil society and the disrespected lower class within political society. In this sense, the status and treatment of people living within political society in the post-colony replicate to some degree and in some form the status of colonised people, as they are categorised by the post-colonial state as unworthy of a fully dignified existence.

Those living outside of civil society use whatever means available to sustain themselves, including un-civil practices such as occupying land and accessing water and electricity illegally. They need to violate the law in order to survive even at poverty levels. When these people make illegal use of state and other resources, the ruling party adopts colonial-type strategies – including police repression – to disrupt this illegality and bring the population to order. Protests by ‘the wretched’, who feel excluded from the formal democratic processes, are likewise often met with brute force. In this way, the post-colonial state handles and manages the urban poor differently than it does the middle classes (Chatterjee, 1983). But state agencies cannot and do not entirely ignore the plight of the urban poor and, in acting on their behalf, the state enters into a particular kind of relationship with them. As Chatterjee (1983:38) notes: “They are not, therefore, proper members of civil society and are not regarded as such by the institutions of the state. But it is not as though they are outside the reach of the state or even excluded from the domain of politics. As populations within the territorial jurisdiction of the state, they have to be both looked after and controlled by various governmental agencies. These activities bring these populations [as political society] into a certain political relationship with the state”.

Chatterjee (1983:40) argues further: “The state agencies recognize that these population groups do have some claim on the welfare programs of the government, but those claims could not be regarded as justifiable rights since the state did not have the means to deliver those benefits to the entire population of the country. To treat those claims as rights would only invite further violation of public property and civic laws”. Thus, even though the urban poor are recipients of state programmes, this is not done in recognition of any rights-bearing status. They are treated by the state as an undifferentiated population and as mere object of state largesse. This largesse is often used by state and party elites in a patrimonial manner, almost as if the state is doing ‘the wretched’ a profound favour in providing at least the most basic of infrastructure and services. This often entails and is in fact designed to entail, the development of patron-client relationships between the state and urban poor, as a form of informal and unspoken negotiated peace for a short time period. The overall system works to exclude the poor, but it may lead to the construction of a local political consensus outside of civil society (Chatterjee, 1983). The key point from Chatterjee’s argument is the way in which, despite material deprivation, the urban poor may still align to the ruling party because of even the minimal benefits they receive. This amounts to a form of hegemony if only a tentative form of rule by consent. Certainly, any breakdown in this unwritten contract leads to a spiral of local protests and state violence.

The type of hegemony existing in South Africa can be further examined with the aid of Gramsci. Gramsci highlights the importance of political leadership and hegemony, and particularly the hegemony of the dominant class or bloc or ruling party. In advanced capitalist countries, there is a bourgeois hegemony which has become firmly entrenched in civil society (Gill, 1993). But given the intertwined class and racial history of South Africa, and the newness of the post-liberation nationalist project in South Africa (still in-formation), the question of hegemony becomes much more fluid and complicated.

Overall, Gramsci distinguishes between “hegemony and dominance. He defines hegemony as a practice of power that rests substantially on the consent of various strata achieved by groups possessing or seeking state power, whereas dominance is a practice of power relying primarily on coercion” (Ali, 2015: 241). Gramsci’s idea of civil society involves an institutional space which lies between the polity and economy. He describes the non-coercive parts of society as non-state and non-market structures and activities focusing on trade unions, schools, professional, educational and cultural associations, parties, and churches. In advanced capitalism, this space is where hegemony is forged, though the dominant hegemony is also subject to contestation or a counter-hegemonic process (Katz, 2006). Though the state has coercive power, it is often only in the background awaiting any possible breakdown in the hegemonic consensus (Morton, 2007: 260). Unchallenged hegemony involves deeply embedded ideas and practices within civil society which become incorporated into people’s everyday lived experiences and common sense. In today’s world, the prevailing hegemony is rooted in neo-liberalism. This involves for example market fundamentalism and trickle-down theory of economic redistribution (or distribution-through-growth). This also reduces the capacity of all governments to pursue their own monetary and fiscal policies, with neo-liberal policies regularly delegitimising social spending and expansive welfare arrangements as well as causing mass impoverishment (Katz, 2006: 334).

In this context, Gillian Hart (2013:6) argues that, when post-apartheid South Africa was reintegrated into the global economy, neoliberal economic policies were set in place in 1996. Thus, “corporate capital defined the terms of reconnection with the global economy, as well as to the forces unleashed in the process” (Hart in *The Con*, 2013). Behind closed doors, the ANC makes deals with white monopoly capital but – in front of the masses – the ANC depicts white monopoly capital as the only driving force behind inequalities.

De-nationalisation after the end of apartheid and subsequent re-nationalisation, according to Hart, has different dimensions (Hart, 2013). Re-nationalisation, in particular, entails the illusion of a rainbow nation based on democratic principles with the ANC being

known as “Mandela’s party”. But it also entails “the national question” and the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). For Hart (2013:8):

The NDR refers to the first stage in a two-stage theory of revolution adopted by the South African Communist Party (SACP) in 1962 and subsequently by the ANC, in which the overthrow of the apartheid state would inaugurate a phase of bourgeois national democracy that would pave the way for the second-stage socialist revolution. This aspect of re-nationalisation highlights that it is not a separable ‘political’ process, but is crucially about making the case for accommodation of the inequalities of post-apartheid capitalism as a transitory phenomenon, to be superseded by the (ever-retreating) second phase”.

In the end, the status quo of capitalism is maintained in South Africa through discursive claims by the ANC about fundamental transformation and deepening democracy (as forms of legitimation) but hidden behind all this is reproduction of the existing system which, when challenged, is met by state repression.

### **2.3 Theories of Voting**

In the preceding discussion, I considered broad theories of the post-colony to provide an analytical context for making sense of political re-structuring under post-apartheid conditions in contemporary South Africa. In this section, I briefly address middle-level theorising which speaks more directly to voting preferences and voting patterns. More specifically, I focus on the following: the status (sometimes called sociological) theory which argues that voters’ choices are shaped by their status (such race, class and gender); the party-identification theory which claims that particular citizens are forever loyal to a particular party; clientelism theory based on the notion of patron-client relationships and which claims that political parties seek to buy votes before and after elections; and the rational choice theory which examines the extent to which the voting preferences of citizens are well-informed and motivated by self-interest. These theories may overlap in places and they often complement each other such that, in analysing particular voting patterns in a specific locale, all four theories may be relevant.

The status theory argues that social determinants such as ethnicity, race, class, gender, religious affiliation, educational background, occupation, social status and geography influence people’s voting behaviour (Patel et al. 2014). This notion implies that citizens identify with a particular party because of the fit between the party’s platform and the citizen’s social background and status and, because of this, there is often ongoing relationships of loyalty and trust expressed by repeated voting for the same party. When a person's status changes, for instance from moving from lower to upper class, his or her voting preferences, therefore, may

also change.

The second theory, the party-identification theory, speaks to a strong almost unbreakable identity between citizen and party. This seeming undying loyalty has been built up over a number of years (including across generations) such that voting for an alternative party is rarely seen as an option. This unquestioned loyalty even continues when the preferred party has undergone significant internal crises and shows undemocratic tendencies. It comes across thus as an almost religious fervour for the one-and-only-party.

The clientelism theory highlights the ways in which parties, and particularly ruling parties with access to state resources, are able to manipulate voting patterns and ensure party loyalty by promising benefits to citizens framed as clients. These promised benefits, such as housing, may not be forthcoming, but constant promises in the period leading up to elections (notably for poor people) can hold sway over voting preferences. Insofar as a ruling party may withdraw benefits or withhold further benefits for a local community also has implications for voting preferences for citizens within such a community. In this way, a patron-client relationship, involving mutual dependence between party and citizen, arises.

A fourth theory used directly to make sense of voting patterns, though admittedly based on more macro-theorising, is the rational choice theory. This theory asserts that people look at a party's policy and programmatic platform, as well as a ruling party's performance in government or the parliamentary record of an opposition party, and make a decision based on which party will most likely advance their particular interests as a citizen. Voters, given their own social and economic interests, will weigh their options carefully and will then identify which party will most likely meet their interests. The voter is thus seen as a being rational actor-citizen who seeks to ensure that his or her interests are maximised (Patel et al. 2014), with their party choice being rationalised in terms of their conditions of existence and lived experiences.

It must be emphasised that citizens, though subject to the influence of political propaganda through the mass media, ultimately live in families and broader social networks such as communities, and undoubtedly many people acquire their political information through their immediate social context, including even their workplace. The information shared amongst individuals at local levels shapes people's perceptions about political parties and election campaigns. According to Herzenberg (2013:2253): "The result, scholars argue, is that the social context has an important bearing on enduring political attitudes like partisanship and voting choice". At times, people are influenced by those with whom they converse on a regular basis and may adopt the political views of those around them. This point cuts across all voting theories mentioned in this section.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided the theoretical framing for the thesis. Macro-theorising about the post-colony was discussed, and this raised critical questions about the basis for post-colonial power, including under post-apartheid conditions in South Africa. These theories offer some basis for understanding legitimacy amongst (ex-liberation movement) ruling parties and the support they receive through the electoral process. In addition, middle-level theories about voting patterns more specifically, as detailed in this chapter, allow for a deeper understanding of voting preferences and allegiances. In this context, the following chapter considers politics in South Africa.

## CHAPTER THREE: POLITICS IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 3.1 Introduction

Over the last decade, the people of South Africa have increasingly questioned why the ANC remains in power despite its failures to transform South Africa. This, in turn, brings people to investigate the voting patterns in post-apartheid South Africa. Voting behaviour refers to the factors that determine why people vote for a particular party (Letsholo, 2004). The behaviour of voters is determined by a number of factors, which are explored in this chapter with reference to South Africa. According to Marie Smuts (2010), “[t]he factors are divided according to long-, medium- and short-term influences and are manifested, amongst others, as party identification, issue voting, outcome preference voting, retrospective voting, race (or class) census theory, as well as ideological orientation”. In the 2000s, service delivery protests have escalated in South Africa. These protests are not just fuelled by service delivery issues but also by ongoing corruption in the South African government, and the growing inequalities between the rich and the poor (Alexander, 2010:25). The poor partake the most in these protests, yet the ANC continues to receive a majority of votes even amongst the poor. The party continues to reign while millions of South African are subjected to inferior healthcare, housing conditions, education and unemployment (Motala, 2014, Carter and May 2001). In this context, the chapter examines voting patterns in South Africa nationally, with a specific focus on the ANC.

### 3.2 Race, Party and Politics

With the adoption of various legislation and administrative practices during the segregation and then apartheid period, South Africa continued and intensified the system of racially-based domination and segregation which existed during the lengthy time of colonialism. Apartheid policies and practices codified and extended racial oppression to cover every aspect of life in South Africa (Alvarez-Rivera, 2014). The history of voting under both segregation and apartheid South Africa excluded black people, with the South African state being a racial state in which only whites were considered as citizens and entitled to vote in national elections. Voting amongst whites often existed along ethnic lines, with Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking whites voting for different political parties. The National Party, as the ruling party under apartheid, received its greatest support from Afrikaners rooted in Afrikaner nationalism (Ramutsindela, 2002). Black Africans were expected to pursue their political aspirations in Bantustans, with some of these becoming ‘independent’ before the end of apartheid, while

Indians and Coloureds were able to vote in the tri-cameral parliament which however was dominated by the white electoral bloc.

The end of apartheid and the elections in 1994 meant moving from an oppressive white state to a more liberal constitution, where all citizens would become rights-bearing citizens in a universal franchise under a unitary state (Woolard and Leibbrandt, 2010). The ANC easily won the first national elections under Nelson Mandela and it has continued to rein despite a decreasing majority of votes. The 1994 election manifesto of the ANC promised freedom, peace and a better life for all. The new ANC government promised to reshape South African in a way which benefits first and foremost black people, including in relation to employment, housing, healthcare and education. In this way, it would tackle the racially-based inequalities inherited from the apartheid state (ANC, 1994). There is no doubt that significant changes have taken place in terms of transitioning to and consolidating liberal democracy, and there have been major redistributive programmes which have benefited blacks and specifically black Africans. But, massive inequality remains and poverty is pervasive, and this has a distinct racial dimension to it (Gibson, 2001). South Africa remains deeply divided along racial lines, such that former ANC and state president Thabo Mbeki called it “a country of two nations, one white and healthy, the other poor and black (Moller, 1999).

In the first democratic elections in South Africa, the ANC won 65% of the vote. In 2004 it won 69% of the vote, and then 65% in 2009; in the last election in 2014, it received 62%. This has led to a percentage decrease as well in the number of seats held by the ANC in parliament. The strongest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance or DA, has gone from seven seats in 1994 to 67 seats in 2009 to 89 seats in 2014, and it attained 22% of the national vote in 2014 (de Jager, 2014). Other parties are of less significance, but in 2014, the recent breakaway from the ANC – the Economic Freedom Front or EFF – won 6.35% of the vote in its first contestation of a national election. The IFP and the NFP, both rooted in KwaZulu-Natal Province received 2.4 and 1, 57% respectively, while the right-wing white party – the FV Plus – obtained 0.90% (Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2014). The capacity of the EFF to enhance its electoral weight remains unclear, such that the polity is marked by two main parties. The DA, rooted historically in the white population, is currently seeking to expand its traditional base but it remains far behind the ANC such that the latter is the hegemonic party and South Africa is a dominant-party state.

In this regard, like SWAPO in Namibia and ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe, the ANC presents itself as the one and only legitimate ruling party in South Africa – because of its ex-liberation movement status. The fact that ANC stalwart and first post-apartheid state president Nelson

Mandela spent 27 years in prison before being released from prison during the transition years away from apartheid, is a vivid manifestation and reminder of the ANC's liberation credentials. Thabo Mbeki, the next state president, was perhaps somewhat subdued in treating the ANC as the 'revolutionary' party, at least compared to the current president, Jacob Zuma. This may be due to the loss of electoral support by the ANC and the rise of the EFF breakaway, so as to remind particularly black African voters of the ANC as their liberators. Thus, Zuma draws crowds with his singing of liberation songs (Letsholo, 2004) and is particularly fond of doing this in his home province of KwaZulu-Natal. He makes use of *imbizos* and connects with the crowds through inspirational and revolutionary songs and dances (Hart, 2013).

Since 1994, the ANC has campaigned on the basis of its liberation credentials and in terms of its successes in for example housing delivery and the social grant system. It also continues to make further promises of delivering change for the future (Louw, 2000) but, with the gradual loss of electoral support, this seemingly sometimes translates into the demands for another chance to finally get things right – given the ongoing large-scale poverty and inequalities. The depth of support for the ANC should never be underestimated. According to Letsholo (2004:7), “[m]any black voters would support the ANC even if they lacked a job because they believe it expresses their demand for dignity and freedom”. People born though before 1994 tend to have a deeper historical connection to the ruling party. And the equation of the ANC with Mandela continues to resonate with black African voters. In a study done in two poor areas in Johannesburg – Riverlea and Doornkop – and in a farming area in Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality (Groblersdal) in Limpopo in the second half of 2013, respondents referred to the Mandela legacy as the as the reason for not considering voting for other political parties (Patel et al., 2014).

This study is quite illuminating. Respondents said that they voted because they wanted to make things better and it was their democratic right. The 1,204 respondents were asked if national elections were to be held tomorrow, who they would vote for. The results were 56% for the ANC, 17% for the DA, while 10% did not know and the rest would not answer (Patel et al., 2014). People in these poor black areas knew that they had the right to basic needs such as healthcare, water, proper sanitation, electricity, education, housing and social protection. Even with this knowledge, many ANC supporters feared that these rights would not be protected if another political party – i.e. not the ANC – came into power. They feared in particular that the social grant system would not continue if they did not ensure electoral victory for the ANC. The ANC supporters also indicated that the ANC would eventually bring a better life for them, such that they trusted the party, particularly given that it had brought freedom

and democracy to South Africa (Patel et al., 2014, de Kadt, 2014). Of importance is that youth (ages of 18-24) were more likely to vote for the opposition party compared to their elders. They are also far less likely to vote on racial or ethnic grounds or to vote because of any family voting history. In a survey done in 2012, 58% of young South Africans said they would indeed consider supporting a different political party rather than the one preferred by their friends and family (Thomas, 2013).

Black Africans who continue to vote for the ANC see the party as seeking to address their socio-economic needs, and this is particularly relevant for the poor in both urban and rural areas. The ANC's alliance with COSATU, as the main trade union federation, has meant that it has had a large amount of support from the urban working class (Letsholo, 2004: 8), though there is current breakaway from COSATU and seemingly also the ANC. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was the ANC's initial major policy initiative, generated significant support amongst poor black Africans because of its redistributive thrust (Cherry, 2000), and the neo-liberal adjustments since then have not seemed to have had a major impact on voting patterns because of the government has retained its redistribution programmes such as grants. In rural areas – and notably the former Bantustans – ANC support remains strong even though land redistribution has not been strongly pursued by the government. The ongoing chieftainship system, which is closely aligned to the ANC, undoubtedly plays a part in this. The stronger ANC local party structures in Bantustans, compared to for instance the DA, is also of significance. Insofar as the ANC has stronger party structures, even in urban spaces, this may increase its capacity to bring its supporters out in numbers on election day.

In a survey done by Futurefact in 2013, 58% of the people said they voted for the ANC because it was the party that would win (Futurefact, 2014). This reinforces the notion that the party-system in South Africa is a one-party dominant system, with voting for another party being seen as a wasted vote. The people criticise the ANC about its failure to meet their basic needs yet they do not see any other alternative to the ANC. But involved in this was also a sense of loyalty to the ANC, or even belonging as such to the party, with the perspective that the main opposition party, the DA, was as a white party – despite its attempts to shed this image. People seem at times to conflate voting for democracy and voting for the ANC; it seems to them that if they vote for the ANC they will have democracy, and if they do not, it will be lost and a return to a white racial state will take place.

### **3.3 South African Politics and Voting Theories**

The transition from apartheid to democracy was sometimes referred to as black majority rule,

implying that – under the universal franchise – the black majority was in power. Given this, and the deeply racialised history of the country, it was expected that in large part black and white people would vote along racial lines (Rupert, 1996).

As per the *sociological-status* theory of voting, race would be seen as the likely binding force in voter behaviour, with the National Party representing the interests of the former colonisers and the ANC the interests of the former colonised. This racial consensus notion thus claims that people voted as blocs in the 1994 election, rather than as individuals (Ramutsindela, 2002). Black people did not want the continuation of white rule, just like the white minority did not trust black rule. This was evident for instance in how the National Party-linked race to politics and elections, and implied that black people were going to now oppress white people (Naidu, 2006: 41). Undoubtedly, race did become an important signifier of electoral choice, and even until now.

However, race, in the end, was never the only determinant of voting behaviour. For instance, the Coloured vote in the Western Cape was not necessarily wholeheartedly for the ANC. The ANC in the 1990s had in fact placed black Africans in leadership positions in the Western Cape and it lost Coloured support for this and other reasons. In 1999, Mbeki, therefore, changed this and put in coloured leadership in ANC structures in the Western Cape to win back Coloured voters (Louw, 2000). The evidence to date is that significant portions of the Coloured population no longer vote for the ANC but has shown increasing support for the DA. The fact that the DA is particularly strong in areas where large Coloured populations, such as Cape Town, are is testimony to this. Support for the Democratic Alliance, which was initially amongst the white population, has diversified to incorporate other racial groupings. Over the last few elections the DA has increasingly presented itself as having a non-racial identity; such that now they have a black African party president. Though the DA continues to be labelled as a “white party”, even by the 2009 elections it seemed clear that Coloured and Indian votes for the party had increased significantly (Southern 2011).

Likewise, there is evidence of problems within the ANC in terms of support by black Africans, and along ethnic lines. The IFP in KwaZulu-Natal has appealed to Zulu nationalism, and in fact was at loggerheads with the ANC during the transition period in Johannesburg, with a large proportion of migrants on the mines being from the Zulu ethnic group. Intense political struggles between the ANC and IFP over votes in certain parts of the province continue to this day. The UDM also tends to target Xhosa-speaking people in the Eastern Cape. In these ways, casting a vote still becomes an expression of a group identity but not necessarily a racial identity because of the continuing salience of ethnicity. Parties at times use the ethnic card to attract

voters though this does not allow for inclusivity and an expansion of voter base. The ANC has always sought, at least formally, to avoid bringing ethnicity into politics but – at local levels – this sometimes comes into play.

Overall, the ANC continues to receive its major support from black Africans, who feel that the party is the protector and promoter of black interests (Magadla, 2010; Kersting, 2009). (Redelinghuys, 2014). People voting along racial lines is not unexpected in a country that is still highly segregated along racial lines (Ndletyana et al., 2014; Redelinghuys, 2014). At the same time, besides race and ethnicity, social class also comes into play in shaping party affiliation (Buhlungu, 2002), if levels of education and income are used as proxies for class position. Even when controlled for race, and looking at specifically black African voters, it appears that the DA attracts more voters with a senior matriculate certificate and tertiary education, compared to the ANC – with substantial numbers of its supporters not completing secondary school (Graham, 2012).

These points also have regional and urban-rural dimensions. According to Graham (2012: 2):

The DA finds the majority of its strong supporters in three provinces—Gauteng, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape, which make up 80% of their profile. ANC supporters are more evenly spread throughout the country, although Gauteng and Kwazulu Natal make up fully 49% of the party's profile. The results of this brief analysis suggest that the DA is a fundamentally urban party, with 88% of their party identifiers living in one or other town or city. The ANC too is a majority urban party at the moment—with 55% of their party identifiers living in such circumstances—but 45% of their close identifiers do live in rural areas.

In this sense, the fact that the ANC has significant support from poorer sections of the black African population in part reflects the significant number of black Africans living in rural areas, notably in the former Bantustans. DA support in urban areas, besides drawing upon the white population, also involves increasing support from the urban black African middle class.

Clearly, the ANC has lost support in recent years, with larger numbers of people switching party allegiances and perhaps even becoming independents. Thus identification with a particular political party may be loosening. This though does not necessarily mean that the ANC will soon no longer have the majority vote (Habib and Naidu, 2006). In this regard, a second model, that is the *party identification theory*, is relevant to South Africa. Party identification should not necessarily be conflated with group identity party affiliation. Since 1994, party identification has been significant, with the ANC enjoying the highest level of party

identification (Kersting, 2009). People who identify with a party will stick to that party, no matter what. They feel a deep affiliation with the party and thus are also more likely to be party activists in campaigning for the party and becoming involved in party structures at local level. Graham (2012) notes that "[a]t the end of 2011, 44% of respondents identified themselves with the ANC and 10% with the DA". These voters have almost pre-existing predispositions about which party they 'identify with' or feel close to, predispositions that underlie actual voting choices (Campbell et al., 1960; Key, 1966; Fiorina, 1979; Achen, 1992, Mattes et al., 1999: 4). For the ANC, much of its support base are die-hard supporters who have been socialised over time to express loyalty to the party.

The evidence suggests though that intense party loyalty, even for the ANC, is waning despite its attempts to portray itself as the one and only liberation party (Graham, 2012). It may be that this waning of loyalty is taking place amongst a particular part of its traditional support base, through which part remains unclear. For instance, recently when the ANC lost a Port Elizabeth ward to the UDM during a by-election, the people told journalists that they had grown sick-and-tired of the ANC's failure to deliver on its election promises (Makhafola, 2015). These people noted their high levels of poverty and unemployment and rampant crime. Though identifying with the ANC in the past, their relationship with the party has been torn asunder because of ongoing frustrations with their day to day experiences of life.

Quite possibly, the *theory of clientelism* may assist in explaining ongoing significant support for the ANC (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997; Patel et al 2014:54). For example, South Africa's social security system has expanded enormously under post-apartheid conditions, with vulnerable groups within the black African population such as the elderly and women being the main recipients (Woolard and Leibbrandt, 2010). The ANC has been accused of using the social grant system to win and maintain supporters (Sadie, 2014). Thus, the ANC's Agriculture MEC in KwaZulu-Natal, Meshack Radebe, has publicly said that 'those who receive grants and are voting for the opposition are stealing from government'. He further stated that those who voted for another party should 'stay away from the grant', as if social grants were gifts from the ruling party. This kind of talk will obviously exert a sense of fear amongst the poor, especially those who are not educated enough to know their rights (Patel et al., 2014:24). According to Sadie (2014), "[s]ocial grants, unlike receiving food parcels before elections, are not regarded as 'vote-buying' by a large majority of respondents. However, social grants can provide an incentive for people to vote for the ANC since a large proportion of grant-holders who support the party do not think that they will continue receiving the grant when a new party comes to power".

In a clientelistic relationship, politicians often also buy their votes by distributing material things such as food parcels and installing taps and toilets before election time. In other words, politicians are buying voters, with voters likely believing that these material hand-outs will continue after elections. Many of the poor genuinely appreciate the handouts they get from the government, especially when it is close to election time. This, of course, entails the ANC at times commodifying democracy by associating it with tangible benefits. For example, when the ANC went to Mgezankamba Village in KwaZulu-Natal during an earlier election, they arrived with work crews to repair the local roads, to distribute foodstuffs and to install electricity (Motala, 2014). When people are given basic resources, they also fear that – if they do not vote for the ANC – those necessities could be easily taken away from them (Bernstein et al., 2014). The ANC, in this context, may not be seeking to change people's lives but to influence people's votes, thereby keeping the ANC in power and furthering its own self-interests.

Clientelism may mean, then, that people vote not out of identification with the ANC or because the ANC represents the formally black oppressed, or because they are satisfied with the party's performance, but because of at least short-term gains based on clientelism – though, no doubt, all these factors may come into play simultaneously (Bernstein et al., 2014:17).

### **3.4 Dominant Party System and the Post-Colony**

According to Brooks (2004:3), “South Africa is formally a multiparty system in which one party is dominant”. In other words, South Africa can be characterised as a dominant-party political regime, like Zimbabwe and Namibia. The ANC has dominated the political landscape since the dawn of democracy, with no political party opposition which is able to challenge the ruling party effectively. Some of the reasons for this I have sketched out in the previous section. A dominant party system entails electoral dominance for a prolonged and uninterrupted period, including dominance in the formation of governments and dominance in determining the public agenda (Giliomee, 1998). The ANC carried the leading role in paving the way for democracy in South Africa, and parties – as ex-liberation movements – that are seen as landscape since the dawn of democracy, with no political party opposition which is able to challenge the ruling party effectively. Some of the reasons for this I have sketched out in the previous section. A dominant party system entails electoral dominance for a prolonged and uninterrupted period, including dominance in the formation of governments and dominance in determining playing a significant role in overthrowing their former oppressors seem to enjoy ongoing support in the post-independence – or post-apartheid – era of the post-colony. Some of the concerns that arise

out of a nation that enjoys a dominant party system are as follows: there may be declining government response to public opinion, an erosion of democratic principles, and the emergence of authoritarian rule (Brooks, 2004:1). In this section, I return to the thoughts of Fanon, Gramsci and Chatterjee to make further sense of this.

Fanon's thoughts seem relevant to the fact that the ANC enjoys the highest level of party identification. The majority of the masses feel close to the ANC because they believe it brought freedom, and they trust the party and carry a sense of loyalty because they believe the ANC is the best party to represent black people. The ANC often has used racial differences in trying to win people over (or maintain their support). Current ANC leaders are always going back to the history of the anti-apartheid struggle, relying deeply on the activities of the stalwarts of the liberation struggle, most notably Nelson Mandela. They castigate the DA as a white party which would bring back the days of apartheid, and other parties (such as UDM and EFF) as traitors and reactionaries who left the true and authentic liberation party. As Fanon (1961:112) argues: "Every time he [the ex-liberation movement leader] addresses the people he recalls his life, which it was often heroic, the battles waged and the victories won in the people's name and thus conveying to the masses they should continue to place their trust in him". Such leaders play on the historical victories of the ANC, asking people to look within themselves on how far they have come with their one-and-only political party.

In doing so, the ANC also speaks about being a pro-poor party which is opposed to the interests of white monopoly capital. It thus represents itself as being on the side of those people whose status are poor and black. This is despite the fact that the ANC presents the public image of a party with a non-racial identity and as a home-for-all. In terms of the status-sociological theory, then, it may seem that poor black people are simply voting for their best option in voting for the ANC. But Fanon would claim that this, in fact, would not be case, because a party such as the ANC lords it over the people and is adept at masking its true colours. This would mean that poor black people are not being fully rational in voting for the ANC, as the party goes against their real objective interests (such as alleviation of poverty). Their class-race interests, as understood subjectively, are mediated by the ANC's interpretation and framing of their everyday experiences. In this regard, Chatterjee's claims about a special kind of relationship between the ruling party and the urban poor become relevant.

The black poor in South Africa do not exist fully within civil society, as they exist within political society; and the ruling party-cum-state deals with the urban poor on the level of political society (Chatterjee, 2004). This means that the urban poor are not afforded their full socio-economic rights (for example, decent housing) despite being (at least officially) rights-

bearing citizens. At the same time, the ruling party does recognise the need to offer the urban poor something of value, if only of a very minimal value. The massive nation-wide social grant system, notably the child grant and old age pension, can be seen in this regard, with the grant system being of fundamental significance for millions of poor black households. Though perhaps not designed for this purpose, there is no doubt that the social grant system works in practice as a kind of patron-client arrangement between the ANC and the black urban poor. The poor majority relies heavily on the social grant system and, no matter how little relief it provides, they consider it better than nothing. Many fear that if the ANC was no longer in power, this guaranteed monthly source of income would disappear as well. Close to election time, the ANC also expresses its pro-poor approaches through the distribution of food parcels and other benefits. The ANC connects itself to the people using tangible resources and for the poor, this may come across as synonymous with “democracy”.

In order for domination to exist, as Gramsci noted, there needs to be a combination of consent and coercion. The ANC continues to seek to ensure that people consent to its rule through a range of mechanisms, as discussed in this chapter. Coercion (or the threat of coercion) though is used when the ruling party and state feel that its interests and ideals are being threatened. Two decades into post-apartheid rule, the hegemony of the ANC seems to be intact but it is not averse to using the repressive might of the state apparatuses if and when needed.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The ANC remains the dominant party in contemporary South Africa though it has been challenged in different ways by opposition parties. This chapter has provided an overview of this dominance and has explored possible reasons, why nationally, the ANC’s hegemony remains in force. In doing so, it has brought the theoretical framing to bear on the subject. In the next chapter, I provide a discussion of voting patterns amongst the shack-dwelling Mlungisi residents in Queenstown. It will become clear that there is massive support for the ANC amongst the residents and the thesis seeks to offer an explanation for this.

## CHAPTER FOUR: VOTING TENDENCIES IN QUEENSTOWN

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview or profile of the Queenstown residents interviewed as well as detailing the voting motivations, preferences and practices of these residents. It thus seeks to show the level of support amongst these residents for the ruling ANC party, the reasons why they vote as they do, and any concerns they might have about the actions of the ruling party. The following chapter (chapter five) offers a more analytical understanding of these voting tendencies and patterns in the context of the theoretical framing outlined earlier.

### 4.2 Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

In this section, I provide a brief socio-economic profile of the fifty interviewees for the Queenstown study.

Twenty-nine of the interviewees were male – 58% – while 21 or 42% were female. Overall, 70% indicated that they were not or had never been married, and the other 30% stated they were married. In terms of age, as Table 4.1 indicates, the vast majority or 88 percent were 59 years of age or under, with 48% between the ages of 30 and 49.

**Table 1: Age Categories**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Research participants</b>
20-29	20%
30-39	26%
40-49	22%
50-59	20%
60-69	6%
70-79	2%
80+	4%

In relation to education, only 6% of the research participants had a post-secondary school or tertiary education, including two with diplomas and one who was able to enter into the first year of university but had to drop out because of financial problems. Only 4% never went to school. Another 34% were able to complete Grade 11 or 12. Of those who attained Senior Certificates, financial constraints became a problem in terms of studying further. For instance,

one interviewee explained that, after he matriculated, he was able to get into a nursing course in East London with his course being funded by a family friend. He had to stop halfway through the course though because the person funding him no longer could lend a hand. He then went to on to study agriculture and engineering but struggled to finish any of these courses because the money was simply not there. This is the story of many students who matriculate in South Africa, and many parents in Mlungisi in Queenstown complain that their children matriculate and then simply sit at home because there is no money for them to go further with their studies. These former students often end up turning to drugs and crime or find lower-paying or casual work such that they remain trapped in the same vicious cycle of poverty in which they grew up.

In this context, it is notable (as Table 4.2 shows) that 78% of the interviewees are unemployed, with only 12% formally employed.

**Table 2: Employment**

Not employed	78%
Employed	12%
Self- employed	6%
Temporary employment	4%

Half of the research participants rely quite extensively on the social grant system. Of those who receive social grants, the vast majority receive a child support grant while a few others receive a disability grant or an old age pension. Though the monthly amount for the child support grant is very minimal in value and does not sustain anyone for the entire month, those who receive it indicate that, without it, they would be in an even more desperate situation materially. There are other sources of income as well in the informal sector, but very few respondents are involved in such activities. Some, however, do obtain income from babysitting, collecting tins and selling them at a scrapyard, painting, fitting tiles and polishing shoes.

Five individuals reported that they have no form of income whatsoever. These comprise a 65-year old male who had studied until grade 12 and is being currently supported by his wife; a 21-year old women who studied up to grade 9 and lives off her boyfriend's salary which is R1,500 per month; a 33-year old male who studied up to grade 11; a 45-year old man who has not worked since 1985 because of seizures, and a 54-year old who has completed secondary school.

The limited sources of income and money for the individuals interviewed is reflected in their household income levels. Table 4.3 shows that household income levels, including money from work, grants and other sources, is exceedingly low, with 66% of the households having a monthly income of less than R1,500 per month. By any standard, these household live under conditions of deep poverty.

**Table 3: Monthly Household Income**

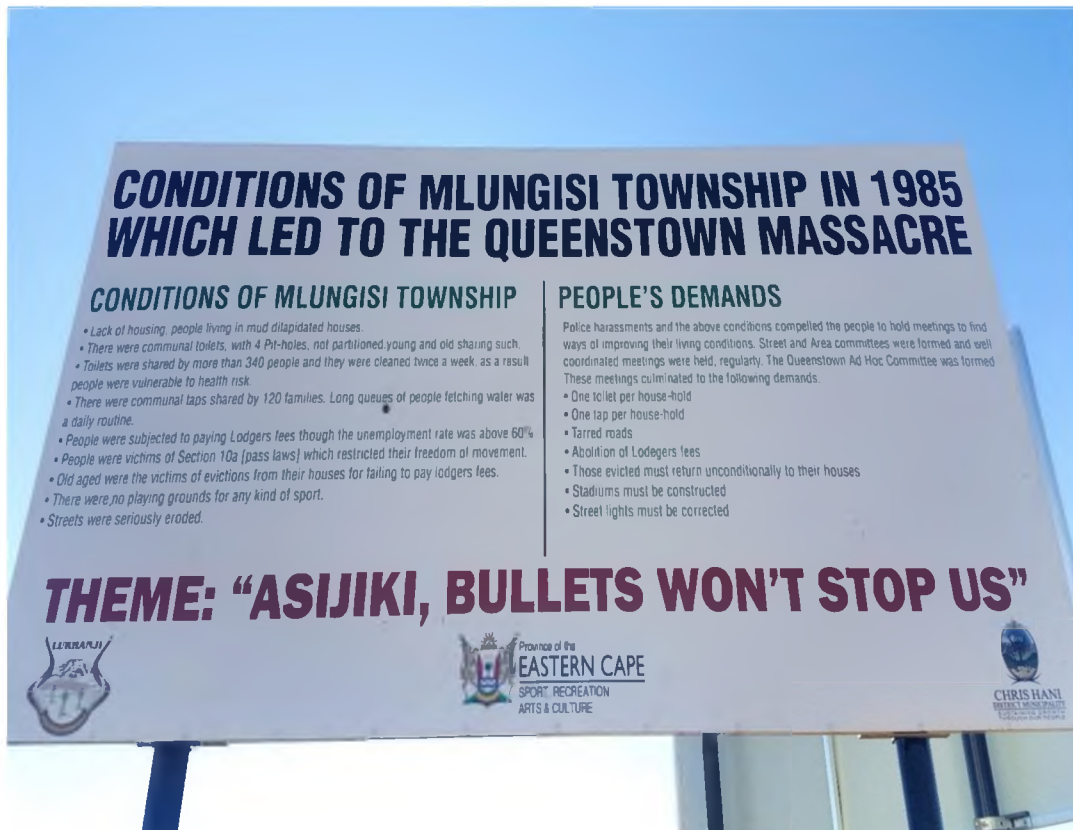
Less than R1500	66%
Not less than R1500	10%
It is R1500	6%
It can be more or less	6%
No income	6%

It is important to emphasise that Mlungisi is a shack settlement. There is no formal state public housing available and hence it is not a formal township. Figure 4.1 is a photograph of some of the shacks in Mlungisi and it clearly shows the conditions of squalor within which residents live. In Figure 5.2, there is a photograph of a board which is situated right outside a school on one of the main roads that lead in and out of Mlungisi. The conditions of existence in Mlungisi under apartheid, specifically in 1985, are listed on the board, including ‘people living in mud dilapidated houses’, communal toilets ‘shared by more than 340 people’, and ‘communal taps shared by 120 families’. As well, the demands of the residents during that time are also listed. In many ways, though, the conditions outlined on the board echo the current conditions in Mlungisi. For instance, people in Mlungisi are still using communal taps and toilets.

Figure 1: Shacks in Mlungisi



Figure 2: A Board in Mlungisi



### 4.3 Voting in Queenstown

In this section, I go through each interview question in turn to give an empirical overview of the politics of residents in Mlungisi. In the following chapter, I offer an interpretation of these empirical findings based on the theoretical framing of the thesis.

#### **1) *Which political party do you support and have you always supported this party?***

It was determined that 92% of the research participants have always supported the ANC throughout their entire lives; 4% said that they were ANC supporters, but they did not vote for the ANC in the 2016 election. One person, or 2%, stated that they had decided to vote for the EFF because the ANC had not fulfilled its promises but he/she was still a member of the ANC. Another 2% stated that in 2008 they were ANC but they had decided to vote for COPE in 2008; they then left COPE because COPE got divided into two camps so they ended up going back to the ANC. The vast majority of the research participants show an unwavering support for the ANC and don't have any intentions of leaving the ANC. This was expressed through words like "*I will be ANC until I die*". People do not see themselves voting for any other party and they do not see any other party serving their needs.

#### **2) *Does your family discuss political matters and have they had any influence on your political values and perspectives?***

When looking at the number of research participants who engage in political dialogue within their home environment, 74% said that they discuss political matters within their homes and these conversations influence their views. The other 26% said they do not discuss political matters within their homes. One research participant stated that they do not discuss political matters because "*no one has that knowledge, it is for the educated*"; three of them went on to say that, although they do not discuss political matters within their home, they have these discussions with their friends and neighbours. One of the interviewees pointed out that residents do not have televisions or radios which means that they are unable to access information about current political events and remain uninformed on certain issues.

#### **3) *Have you participated in every election in which you have been eligible to vote in?***

The number of people that have participated in every election they have been eligible to vote in sits at 78%. The number of research participants that have not voted in every election is 22%. Most of the latter said that the reason they didn't vote was because of the government's poor service delivery or they did not have proper identification during that time.

#### **4) What are the reasons you feel close to the ANC?**

Overall, 80% feel close to the ANC because they believe it has brought them freedom. As one interviewee put it: *“It is the party that fought for freedom. The ANC has been dominant and I grew up with it. It makes its mistakes but I don’t see anything better than it. It will fix its mistakes”*. Another resident highlighted: *“The ANC first of all recruited me. It is an authentic organisation. The way they explained it to me and the way they recruited me. The explanation of liberation and what would happen after liberation. How they portrayed themselves, I thought this was the organisation for me”*. A minority (20%) focused on more contemporary socio-economic issues such as the ANC providing social grants, job, food parcels, houses and education.

#### **5) How would you rate the party’s performance? Good, not so good, bad.**

Though interviewees were highly supportive of the ANC, only 50% of the research participants thought the ANC’s performance as a ruling party is good. Those which rated it as ‘good’ indicated that *“the ANC has given us jobs”* and *“some people have received homes”*. Only 2% said that the ANC was both good and bad, with 48%, therefore, highlighting the negative side of the ANC's performance. One interviewee said *“the ANC is failing us. The ANC used to work well; we still do not have houses we live in shacks”*. Another said: *“The people do not like the counsellor because he does not deliver. People have spent many years without work and do not have the skills to hold good-paying jobs.”*

#### **6) How do you feel about the direction our democracy is taking, and any concerns?**

Most Queenstown residents (56%) believe that, under the ANC, South Africa has been moving in a democratic direction. This is despite the many corruption scandals which have bedevilled the ruling party for years. But 44% thought that democratic processes could be stronger and that the ANC was showing failures in this regard. One interviewee spoke at length about this: *“Is it democracy? A democracy does not defend one person and leaders do not act this way. When the president’s [legal] cases come up they brush it off and ignore [the public prosecutor] Thuli’s finding. A democracy goes according to the constitution; it holds people accountable. It does not defend one person, corrupt people. This is not a democracy”*. Another interviewee indicated that democracy exists in name only: *“We have it but it is oppressing our people”*.

**7) How do you feel about access to basic services, have they handled the issues in your area well?**

It is not surprising to find that 72% of are not happy with the service delivery in Mlungisi, with only 28% believing that service delivery was fine. Those who spoke negatively about service delivery said for instance that “*they [the ANC] have done nothing*”; “*we are struggling, there is no electricity, no basic services*”; and simply “*we want them [housing and other services], we don’t have them*”. To emphasise the problems with service delivery, Figure 4.3 displays the living conditions of the shack dwellers in Mlungisi. Further, Figure 4.4 shows the river that shack dweller cross so that they can defecate. This river, which is highly unclean, is also used by children to swim in.

**Figure 3: Mlungisi Shack Dwellings**



**Figure 4: River at Mlungisi**



**8) *If elections were tomorrow which party would you vote for?***

Service delivery is undoubtedly a major problem in Mlungisi. However, this does not seem to dampen the spirit of voting for the ANC. Thus, 90% of interviewees said they would vote for the ANC if elections were held the following day. The sentiments expressed though do not necessarily entail unqualified support for the ANC. Thus one respondent lamented: *“I see no point in changing political parties because the DA would also serve its own self-interests”*. Others simply said that they would vote for the ANC because *“it is Mandela’s party”* or that *“they would just continue to vote even if there won’t be changes”*. These do not entail ringing endorsements of the ANC and its performance in power.

**9) *Have other political parties shaped why you vote for the ANC and how?***

Broadly, the interviewees do not seem to vote for the ANC by systematically comparing it to the political platform of other parties. Hence, 96% said that other political parties have not shaped their voting behaviour, in the sense that their exclusive focus tends to be on the ANC. Other parties are not seriously considered as an alternative to the ANC because of this narrow focus on the ANC, irrespective of the democratic and service delivery performance of the ruling party.

**10) *Have you ever considered voting for any opposition parties?***

In this context, it is noticeable that 82% indicated that they had never considered voting for any opposition political party. As one person said: *“I would rather not vote than vote for an opposition”*. Only 18% thus indicated that they had thought about voting for an opposition party but clearly, broadly speaking, they have not followed through on this consideration of voting against the ANC.

**11) *Do you have any concerns about the levels of skills and education being received in your area?***

Compared to views on service delivery broadly, Mlungisi residents are more positive about the state of the local educational system. Hence, 52% said that the education system in the area was good. As parents, they said for instance that *“there is nothing wrong with the schools, it is the children that are a problem”*; and that *“they feed our kids and give them uniforms”*. A large minority though (44%) expressed dissatisfaction with the level of education being received. As one parent stressed the need to consider education in South Africa more broadly in this regard: *“You are talking about an area [Mlungisi]. Why should I talk about an area yet millions of*

*children in South Africa are not getting the free education that was promised in the Freedom Charter? There are no jobs and we are paying for university. Blade Nzimande [Minister of Higher Education] wants to up the fees. How do you up the fees?”.*

**12) What have your expectations been for the current government?**

The major concern for Mlungisi residents was the need for basic service delivery and they expected the ANC government to first and foremost concentrate on this delivery. Nearly all interviewees (98%) therefore said that their expectations from the government were basic services; houses, water, electricity, jobs and education. One interviewee spoke emotionally about the problems Mlungisi residents face: *“There are so many basic things that our community is looking for. For argument's sake in this township, we cannot be proud by saying we have been in government for 22 years. The lives of people have not changed. Yes, we appreciate the expansion of the township in terms of the RDP houses but what about the old houses that are here”*. Another resident highlighted the importance of the government focusing on employment creation, and the problems of corruption in accessing work: *“Jobs, people must be given contracts. When people stop working they shouldn't still be getting paid in the system. They must monitor people in the municipalities. They are hiring people because they know each other. When there is a project people call people they know, they work in groups. People should be hired according to their qualifications. How do people who don't have qualifications have jobs? People must find jobs according to their education. Remove the people in the cabinet who do not have education. They are there because they are comrades, the government needs to test people's skills”*.

**13) Have there been any changes or significant developments since 1994 in your area?**

After two decades of democratic rule in South Africa, only 62% said there have been significant changes to the lives of people in the area: in terms of both political rights and socio-economic conditions. To quote some residents: *“It is not the same as the time of the Boer”*; *“now we have water and electricity”*; and *“we do not experience as much police brutality under the current government”*. About a third of the respondents (32%) expressed disapproval and disappointment: *“I wonder who would say there have been. Maybe someone would say so because of the RDP house but that is nonsense. They use cheap material. The services we get are poor. We are paying double for everything. Everything is worse than before, the roads, the lights. Someone who was shot in 1985 in Queenstown fighting for liberation, if we would wake them up from the dead, they would go straight home because Queenstown is the same. There*

*have been no significant changes at all*". Another 6% could not give a definitive opinion on this.

***14) Are there any changes that occur close to election time compared to when government is not campaigning?***

Most Mlungisi residents (64%) notice that the ruling party and government, when close to election time, become more active in the area. Besides simply canvassing for support, this involves making a range of promises as well as implementing small development projects which allow for short-term employment. But one-third of the interviewees did not notice, or remember, any increased activity by the party in the lead up to elections.

***15) Do you feel there has been a significant shift in job creation?***

About two-thirds of interviewees (64%) expressed dissatisfaction with the level of employment in the area. One resident stressed that *"nothing has changed and the government has failed, its projects have failed"*, while another noted that *"most of the people in the location do not have jobs"*. Parents expressed concerned about this in relation to the youth, claiming that *"there are very limited opportunities and this leads to children turning to crime"*. The other third of residents were less critical of the ANC when it came to the job creation in Mlungisi.

***16) What do you feel the ANC government could have done differently in post-apartheid South Africa?***

Though high levels of support for the ANC seem to exist in Mlungisi, 82% of interviewees recognise that the government could have done more, particularly in relation to education, housing and job creation. Housing was especially crucial: *"The shacks should go, and give people their dignity back"*. But others spoke of more national issues, such as land reform: *"Land redistribution was not done properly, there was no compensation. Land should be owned by both black and white"*.

***17) Is there a difference in how you vote on the municipal level and national level? If there is a difference, why?***

Interestingly, 96% of Mlungisi residents said they voted for the ANC at both municipal and national elections. Thus, despite any nagging local or national concerns amongst residents, there tends to be solid ANC support at different tiers of government within Mlungisi.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The Mlungisi residents show unwavering support for the ANC and do not have any intentions of leaving the ANC. This has been expressed through words like *“I will be ANC until I die”*. People do not see themselves voting for any other party and they do not see any other party serving their needs. Those that did not vote for the ANC on occasion sought merely to punish the ANC government, or to give the ANC a wakeup call. The ANC is seen as a saviour, with interviewees often recalling what the ANC has done in the past, including its credentials as a liberator. They, therefore, tend to vote for the ANC because it is the party their families have always voted for. Their grandparents, parents, spouses and siblings have voted for the ANC, such that they say that *“the ANC is the party of our grandparents, therefore, the party for us”*. The ANC is passed down from one generation to the next, such that it becomes a duty almost to carry the mantle.

For some, these feelings of loyalty to the ANC are shaped by the memories of the past. They expressed that, because of the ANC, people are now able to move and speak freely without restrictions (unlike under apartheid). The ANC is thus seen as the party for (the formerly oppressed) black people; it is Mandela’s party, therefore it is their party and their political home (with the ANC as their political father so to speak). This, according to the vast majority, will not change despite any problems they experience with the ANC and their daily lives. Even when individuals within the ANC are seen as abusing their power, loyalty to the party itself appears to remain intact. Particular criticism was made by Mlungisi interviewees of the current ANC leader, Jacob Zuma, who is seen to place his interests above the people. Ultimately, the ANC (as a party) is seen as a caring government (as witnessed for example by social grants) though Mlungisi residents recognise the poverty and squalor within which they live. Socio-economic deprivation, and even criticisms of the ANC because of this deprivation, does not translate into a rejection of the party as such. Still, the current version of the ANC is seen as a water-downed version compared to the ANC under Mandela or even Thabo Mbeki. Given the views of the Mlungisi residents about the ANC, as discussed in this chapter, the following chapter provides an analytical understanding of ANC voting in Mlungisi by drawing upon the theoretical framing for the thesis.

## CHAPTER FIVE: UNDERSTANDING ANC SUPPORT IN QUEENSTOWN

### 5.1 Introduction

This thesis has sought to understand why the urban poor in South Africa, who have limited social-economic opportunities, still vote in significant numbers for the ruling African National Congress (ANC) in national elections. The poor majority are fighting for their lives politically, economically and socially. Millions of South African are unemployed and live below the poverty line. In the 2000's we have seen an increase in nation-wide anger and discontent (Hart, 2012). It has also been clear that South Africans are divided in understanding post-apartheid tensions within the country. For many, the inequalities that exist within South Africa are seen as a problem of white monopoly capitalism. Within the transition from apartheid to democracy, it is unclear whether the masses are fighting the ANC or white monopoly capital. The popular protests seem to blame white monopoly capital when ANC policies need to be situated within white capital. In post-apartheid South Africa, there was the emergence of a powerful group within the ANC who after the liberation struggle became instruments of capitalism in a country that is still economically predominantly white-owned. Mandela's transition is admirable in how it was able to facilitate a non-violent transition from apartheid to democracy and the economic channels that were established during the apartheid regime were kept intact. Twenty-two years later and the poor majority still have not tasted the fruits of liberation. This chapter is going to analyse the experiences and the views of the poor majority in why they continue to vote for the ANC. In order for us to understand why the ANC is the preferred party of choice, we first need to understand interactions that occur between the masses and the party.

Sociological models were used in trying to answer, why the ANC remains the main party of choice amongst the poor majority. The sociological models state that one must look at social determinants such as ethnicity, race, class, gender, religion, education, occupation, social status and identity (Patel et al., 2014). When these factors are moulded together, we are able to paint a clearer picture of people's experiences and their perceptions of the world.

The socio-demographic profiles comprised of sex, age, educational qualification, employment, income and marital status. This enabled the researcher to know the participant's socio-economic statuses which were later linked to voting behaviour. The research was conducted in the Mlungisi location in Queenstown, in an area that is densely populated by shacks. There is a relationship between these socio-demographic factors and how the respondents vote and align themselves with specific political parties. An attempt in the thesis

has been made to link party identification, clientelism and rational theory to voting behaviour. These sociological models focus on the importance of social identity that is reflected in party alliance and voting behaviour (Patel, 2014).

## 5.2 Party Identification Model

Voting preference has been highly linked to party identification. This includes strong party loyalty, race and ethnicity. This type of voting behaviour can be compared to a paternal bond. Those who vote for the ANC due to closeness and loyalty will be protective of the political party and remain loyal throughout its repressive behaviours.

For a long time, the ANC's victory has been explained using racial and ethnic identities. During the period 1994-1999, people were expected to vote according to their own racial group. After the first democratic elections, the black working class identified itself with the ANC because of the role the dominant party had played in the liberation struggle. The position of the ANC has been strongly linked to its historical legacy. The current election strategy of the ANC has to a certain extent existed alongside this voting style. Initially, there has been no significant electoral shift in the number of people that vote for the ANC (Naidu 2006), but a downward trend is now evident. The ANC though has had this great ability to gain support from the black majority using strategies that run along race and portraying the ANC as the only party that represents the interests of the black majority.

When the respondents were asked whether they have always supported the same political party, 92% said they have always supported the ANC. The majority of the research participants have shown an unwavering support for the ANC throughout their lives. Furthermore, they emphasised that they have no intentions of leaving the ANC. When they were asked why they feel close to the ANC, 28% of the respondents believe that the ANC brought black people freedom. This was expressed in the following statements:

Research Participant 1 *“The ANC first of all recruited me. It is an authentic organisation. The way it explained it to me and the way they recruited me. The explanation of liberation and what would happen after liberation. How they portrayed themselves, I thought this was the organisation for me. It was a non-racial organisation”*.

Research Participant 11 *“It is because of Mandela. He fought for us”*.

Research Participant 35 *“It is the party that fought for freedom. The ANC has been dominant and I grew up with it. It makes its mistakes but I don't see anything better than it. It will fix its mistakes”*.

Research Participant 44 *“I loved the Freedom Charter. The people shall govern, it was for the people. They would be free to own enterprise”.*

Research Participant 39 *“It gave us freedom. It is the party that works for most of us”.*

From the time the ANC was formed in 1912, it positioned itself as a nationalist formation that sought to break tribal walls and unite all Africans behind a common agenda. The ANC had portrayed itself as the party that could take care of all South African, black and white. ANC stalwarts have been used strategically to maintain supporters from one generation to the next. Every time an ANC official addresses the masses, there is a special emphasis on how the victory for the party has been possible due to the sacrifices of certain political figures and the continued support of the black working class. For the masses, the ANC of the past still carries the mantle of emancipation (Mashele and Qobo, 2014).

The majority of the research participants (80%) felt close to the ANC because of personal ties they have with the party. The research participants were influenced by a web of various personal ties with the party. The reasons that were given were that they trust the party and have faith in it. The participants believe that it is the ANC that will give them the “promised land”. They believe that there may be certain individuals that are destroying the party, but one bad apple (who is supposedly Zuma) does not spoil the whole bunch. The ANC is able to make significant inroads and enjoy the highest level of party identification in places like the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal because of the loyalty people have for it. This loyalty stems from the fact that their families have supported the ANC since it was formed. The research participants’ grandparents supported the ANC, their mothers and fathers supported the ANC; therefore, they feel they have a calling and owe it to those who came before them to continue to support the party. Their connection to the ANC becomes their lineage identity and generational continuity.

Parties like the IFP have focused on Zulu nationalism in their campaign strategy. The same goes for parties like the UDM that target Xhosa speaking people, whom the majority of them reside in the Eastern Cape. Casting a vote then is not really about doing what is best for the country; it becomes an expression of group identity. Most of these parties that have used ethnicity as a way of getting votes have ended up losing votes because they have not diversified and welcomed other ethnic nationalisms. This has stunted their own growth. One of the reasons the ANC is able to attract people from all walks of life is that they refuse to claim they are an ethnic party; they tell citizens that they are there to better the lives of all individuals (Letsholo, 2004).

The research conducted tells us that people are still voting as blocks rather as individuals. In a study that was done in 1999, it was stated that people first identified

themselves as South Africans then the second label they attached to themselves was language and then ethnicity. By saying they were South African first this represents a broader identification with the country (Ramutsindela, 2002); however, the research participants identified themselves with the ANC because of their race. The ANC is referred to as “our party” because they believe it represents the interests of the black majority. The ANC continues to use black identity to gain political support, just like the NP wanted to protect its own group identity during apartheid. In order to protect Afrikaner identity, in the 1980s the NP was willing to extend its support base to include Coloureds and Indians.

### **5.3 Dominant Party System and Identity Voting**

When the research participants were asked who they would vote for if elections were to be held tomorrow, 90% said they would vote ANC. They were against voting for the DA because they believe that the DA would also end up serving its own self-interests. They felt that there is no alternative party that could meet their needs. Furthermore, they would vote for the ANC because it is “Mandela's party” and it would continue to vote for it even if there will be no changes. The blame for the areas in which the ANC has failed the people is shifted and associated with Zuma. They believe the ANC is failing because of Zuma.

About 98% felt that other political parties have not shaped their voting behaviours; 8% said they had considered voting for another party. However, this 8% continued to vote for the ANC because they believe the ANC brought them freedom and their grandparents struggled for it. The majority of the research participants would rather stay at home and not vote than vote for any other political party. One of the research participants stated that there exists a one-party system in South Africa and that we need alternatives. Only 18% of the interviewees said they had considered voting for other political parties; none of them had considered the main opposition (the DA) but they said they had considered COPE and UDM.

Hence the ANC has enjoyed a prolonged and uninterrupted period of dominance since the dawn of democracy (Giliomee, 1998). The DA has been repeatedly labelled a “white party”. Black people who vote for the DA are considered “sell-outs” by the dominant party and its supporters (Southern, 2011) and this portrayal of the DA ensures it stays a weak opposition (Brooks, 2004). This is incredibly beneficial for the ANC as it does not allow the main opposition to diversify nor for a significant electoral shift. By painting the opposition out to be racist this ensures that the black majority is unresponsive to a DA approach. This entrenches identity voting which enhances ANC support.

How research participants vote compared to how they feel can be quite different. The ANC's victory and how the party's supporters in fact feel about the party are seemingly two different stories. There is seemingly a significant disjuncture between the economic conditions of existence of the black majority and the fact that they tend to vote for the ANC. They grumble privately about their material deprivation, and engage publicly in so-called service delivery protests, but come out in their numbers to vote for the ANC.

The deprived economic condition of the black majority is explainable in part from the neo-liberal restructuring which has taken place in South Africa since the mid-1990s. The national bourgeoisie that took over after apartheid was an underdeveloped bourgeoisie that lacks the experience of handling the economy. When this national bourgeoisie came into power it started to think like businessmen, and it became disconnected from the masses. The national bourgeoisie became an instrument of capitalism. They began to stray away from their original plan of transformation (Fanon, 1961). When the ANC was unbanned it did not have an economic policy (Hart, 2006). The fight for transformation was rooted in a neoliberal path. The focus was shifted away from fighting for the dignity of the poor majority to fighting for capitalist accumulation. The national bourgeoisie is no longer pursuing nationalisation but responding to the power that has been transferred to them. We have seen the current government unfold into a replica of the former government.

In understanding the neoliberal macroeconomic policies adopted by the ANC in 1996 Julian Hart uses the term 'de-nationalisation'. The ANC has claimed to be anti-neoliberal but the seeds of neoliberalism were long sown when Mandela sealed the 'Faustian Moment' in the 1990s. After the ANC was unbanned, corporate capital (which is made of various capitalist stakeholders, the Bretton Wood Institutions and foreign governments) sought to shape South Africa's economic politics during the apartheid to post-apartheid transition. Sampie Terreblanche and Willie Esterhuyse both Afrikaner academics who called for negotiations in the mid-1980s, recall participating in some of these meetings, which were held in Britain. Terreblanche explains that Mandela had regular meetings with Oppenheimer (CEO of the Anglo-American Corporation) and other stakeholders within the Mineral Energy Complex (MEC) discussing the future of South Africa's economic policies. Some of the members of the ANC were not aware of the negotiations that went on between Mandela and the MEC. There was a sudden change of tone as to how the ANC would enable the transition from apartheid to democracy (Hart, 2013).

In this context, about 98% of the research participants still need access to basic services such as housing, water, electricity and jobs. They have no access to sanitation and live in shacks

that pose a great health and safety risk. They feel unsafe in their neighbourhoods. They prefer not to leave their homes after 8 pm at night and complain about the role of police in criminal activities. The majority have stated that there have been no significant changes in their lives and communities in post-apartheid South Africa. The changes they feel have occurred are as follows: they are able to move freely without restrictions, they do not experience apartheid police brutality, and they have water and electricity. They have access to grants and feeding schemes, which was something they were never able to access under the apartheid regime. For the research participants receiving something from the government is better than nothing. They compare the conditions and circumstances they lived under apartheid to how they are living now. The now is good enough because it is not the apartheid government.

Besides the sheer objective conditions of the urban black poor, there has been street-based protest action over essential resources specifically water and electricity. Water issues have been badly handled by municipalities. The shack dwellers interviewed struggled with access to water. There are two taps available in an area that is densely populated by shacks, and they also experience water cut offs despite their rising poverty levels. The shack dwellers usually fill a bucket and that is the amount of water they will be using for the day. Water quality management has been poor in South Africa and this is due to how municipalities are poorly run throughout the country (Kapuku, 2015). We cannot look at the factors that contribute to the deterioration of water supply, and the many other challenges with regard to urban services more broadly in South Africa, without placing it within neoliberal reforms and how the political elite have benefited from these reforms.

Basic services are still racialised in post-apartheid South Africa (Hart, 2013). Post-apartheid street protests come from the masses being tired of forced removals, and of having limited access to water, electricity and sanitation. The government is being run by an ANC political elite that promotes hegemonic interests by promoting neoliberal values, disguising them as democracy for the black working class (Katz, 2006). Mashele and Qobo (2014:11) state that “the party has become a pale shadow of its former self and the only thing left of the ANC is its glorious history”. But it seems that this glorious legacy remains important in ensuring a significant degree of support for the ANC amongst the black urban poor, including in Queenstown such that the ANC remains the dominant party. They identify with the ANC historically, racially and culturally. Standing in solidarity with the ANC means standing side by side in a meaningful way towards nation building as the party has claimed to unite all Africans in a common political agenda (Mashele and Qobo, 2014).

The policies of a country form the pillars on which transformation will occur (Fanon, 1961). Freedom for the black majority in South Africa was compromised because the ANC was no longer a direct expression of the grievances of the masses. The masses' demands have been around nationalisation, with the ANC's Youth League lead by Malema making that clear in the 2000s. Malema's words did not only get the attention of the youth but also thousands of black people who have been waiting for the ANC to fulfil its promises. According to Julian Hart (2013: 84):

The Marikana massacre was not just a pivotal moment, it was the most momentous of the post-apartheid era, made all the more so by its passage into popular culture. Militant labour strikes are a common occurrence in present-day South Africa, much as they were during the apartheid regime. What has made Marikana distinctive is both militaristic violence with which the coercive arm of the state smashed down on striking workers and the shocking clarity with which Marikana and its aftermath laid bare the contours of the South African crisis.

This is one example of how the ANC government has protected a white-dominated capitalist MEC at any cost. Restructuring of South Africa since 1994 has worked in favour of an ANC that can be situated within white monopoly capital (Hart, 2013). However, the key point is that, until now, the black majority (and particularly amongst the black poor as in Queenstown) continue to express fidelity to the ANC. No economic (or strictly class-based) explanation based on neo-liberal restructuring could ever account for this.

#### **5.4 Fanon and Chatterjee in Understanding ANC Hegemony**

The ongoing protests boil down to service delivery and the failure of the ANC government to help the masses find meaningful ways of alleviating poverty. The legitimacy of a state is firmly grounded in the concept of popular sovereignty. The ANC's authoritarian rule has not allowed space for a strong opposition to exist. The idea of property and community for the masses represents liberty and equality. In South Africa, the black majority have political freedom. The transition from apartheid to democracy has not yet translated into economic freedom. Apartheid was rooted in racial-capitalist ideals of development. The ANC's political and economic path has been rooted in neoliberal views that have undermined the political and economic views of the poor. According to Fanon (1961:97): "Instead of being the coordinated crystallization of the people's innermost aspirations, instead of being the most tangible, immediate product of popular mobilization, national consciousness is nothing but a crude, empty, fragile shell".

Majority of the research participants were not happy about the councillor who had been chosen for their area in the Queenstown/Mlungisi location. The councillors themselves rule with an iron fist. They have complete disregard for human rights by empowering only their network of elites. They are accused of only taking care of those closest to them. Additionally, some of the research participants complained that in order for them to get even precarious labour at the municipality they were forced to have sexual intercourse with those who were within the municipality. Hart (2013) explains that councillors have become the petty bourgeoisie and have a poor response to the masses. Furthermore, even the most diligent councillors have become side-lined. Some research participants have pointed out that councillors, once appointed, move out of the location and go live in the suburb because they start earning higher salaries, so they buy bigger houses and start driving better cars. Once these councillors move out they get disconnected from the masses. They no longer communicate with the masses, like they used to. They no longer monitor the living standards and the needs of the poor. As Hart (2013:149) put it:

Calling attention to how local councillors are being transformed into petty bourgeoisie on the road to class power in the context of intensifying struggles over resources flowing into local government, Sitas observes that ‘because of the broader mix of polarising greed and need, each locale (involving branches and councillors and large numbers of expectant people) is animated by class contestations, inclusions and exclusions, crisis and differential strains’; and that ‘class struggles and competition are rife within branches of the ANC (and Inkatha for that matter) than they are between workers, bosses and the state in broader society’.

There is a decline throughout ANC municipalities of how they respond to the masses and there is absolutely no accountability. From the top to the bottom the ANC has become self-serving, yet people continue to vote for them.

Fanon further argues (1961:98) that “[t]he suffering of the masses is not solely due to them being colonised; what further deepens their struggle is the apathy of the national bourgeoisie, its mediocrity and its deeply cosmopolitan mentality”. There are two types of bourgeoisie that govern in South Africa, the first is the one that was formed through the Bantustan system during Apartheid and the second is the one that has been formed in post-apartheid South Africa: it consists of working-class citizens who become middle-class citizens (Hart, 2013) plus the emerging black capitalists. The black capitalists are the anti-working class because they have embraced neoliberal views (van der Walt, 2013); they do not believe that there are enough resources for everyone and they end up filling up their own pockets and

representing their own class interests. The national bourgeoisie calls for the nationalisation of industries. For them, nationalisation means taking all those privileges their former colonisers had and giving them to people within their own class, not the masses. The national bourgeoisie does not have the intellect nor the material means to do this so it fills in the places of businesses and firms that were run by their former colonisers. It does not only fill in those shoes but they also start to think and act like their former colonisers. Therefore, transformation does not take place, they end up pursuing their own self-interests and serve as a conveyor belt for capital, forced to camouflage themselves behind the mask of neo-colonialism (Fanon, 1961:100).

It is through these processes that the ANC maintains a dominant party system. The use of policies and resources has played a critical role in how they have been able to control the direction democracy has taken. The classification that was used during colonialism continues today under a black government. We have witnessed the ANC authoritarian undertone multiple times, in how the poor are not regarded as members of civil society by the institutions of the state. The state does not treat the claims of the poor as rights because if they treated them as rights the masses would revolt. Civil society is then restricted to a small section of the population (Chatterjee, 2004). When Mandela held the secret meetings in the 1990s with Oppenheimer and other corporate leaders for the adoption of neo-liberal macroeconomic policies in 1996, those processes set the tone in which democracy would unfold under the ANC's authority.

In maintaining ANC hegemony, the ANC has gone to all lengths in ensuring it stays in power. During the electoral period, we see the government backsliding from an all-encompassing party to a party that highlights racial and ethnic differences (Fanon, 1961). This is when we truly see the ANC strategically positioning itself within society. When the dominant party holds a particularly symbolic identity and historically significant role in a country that continues to be divided along racial lines, this allows for the ANC to deepen its agenda into the minds of the black majority. The ANC remains a huge part of their continued struggle because the masses feel the opposition does not represent the interests of black people (Brooks, 2004).

### **5.5 ANC Identity-Based Campaigns**

The ANC from its formation adopted a non-racial and non-sexist feature into its vision of democracy. All people of colour white, black, coloured and Indian were going to be represented through its domination. By not excluding non-blacks this allowed the organisation to grow and for the masses to view the ANC as a party that put nation building at the forefront and would

be able to represent everyone's aspirations. During the liberation struggle, the ANC was able to master extensive organisational growth through its orthodox mass campaigning, strikes, and mass acts of defiance. The ANC gave a new spirit of defiance and mobilisation. The strategies that were used by the ANC (the use of identity) during the struggle has allowed them to sustain a racially-based strategy when necessary. This involves the deepening the ties of national confidence, national pride and national assertiveness (ANC Historical Documents Archive, 1969).

Campaign slogans used during these election campaigns carry great weight. Slogans are used to disguise neoliberal ideas. They are used to hype up the masses and gain a substantial influence over how they understand politics. This is a form of manipulation that allows the elite to control how to think and perceive things. Emotions tend to be very high during election time because of how they identify with that specific party. Voters are fed images during election time; there is less or almost no focus on real issues (Fourie and du Plessis, 2011). An example would be how the ANC will host an '*imbizo*', which is a government initiative that engages with citizens and encourages participation in an open dialogue with the government. These imbizos allow the government to make significant inroads in communities, especially in poor areas. The *imbizo* dialogues become more about recalling the history of the ANC, describing how people's lives have changed after apartheid and how they will still change under the ANC government. These imbizos further reinforce the cultural influence the ANC has over the masses. The ANC represents their race, land and culture, furthermore making their views valid. When Zuma uses struggles songs in these imbizos there is an exclusive outreach to black voters. The voter then votes out of loyalty rather than an expression of satisfaction with the party's performance.

## **5.6 Education and Identity Voting**

When it comes to the education system in South Africa there has been no meaningful transformation in the education system. Education should have been at the forefront of transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. The national bourgeoisie does not want to spend money in developing its people. Instead, money is invested in foreign banks and not the people of the country. Resources are taken out of the country to build the economies of other nations (Fanon, 1961).

Out of the fifty research participants, only two attained higher tertiary education (diplomas). One of the research participants only did the first year and had to drop out of university because of financial exclusion. Only twelve of the research participants studied until

Matric; the rest were spread out between Grade zero and eight. When the research participants were asked what they want from government, the answer was always houses and a job. None of the participants said they want education first. The elderly complained that after their youth have completed their matric most of them stay at home and do nothing because parents cannot afford to send their children to further their studies. Some of these youth end up turning to drugs and crime. Some will take up the lowest paying jobs and live off the lowest monthly minimum wages. The youth become trapped in the same cycle of poverty as their parents.

The Eastern Cape continues to be the worst performing province when it comes to Matric passes. There are many challenges that still face our school system in South Africa. Schools in the township and rural areas are under-resourced. This includes weak institutional functionality, poor teacher content knowledge, and insufficient learning time for pupils (Masondo, 2016). There is a two school system that exists in South Africa, split along historical and socio-economic lines. When a school does not have the necessary course material, no access to computers, children coming to school with empty stomachs, there is a shortage of teacher or teachers who sometimes decide work on certain days, then learning cannot effectively take place. The issue is not necessarily lack of funding, as South Africa spends more on education than any other African country, yet quality education is only available to a minority of South Africans: “The cancer lies deep in the education system and the continuing legacy of apartheid” (Nkosi, 2016). Overall, 52% of the research participants said that the education system in the township is ‘okay’ while a few others used the word ‘good’. They found absolutely nothing wrong with the education children were receiving. The blame is shifted towards learners. Some parents and guardians expressed that some of the schools had feeding schemes for children. Often some of these children leave home in the mornings on empty stomachs due to poverty.

The education these children are receiving seems decent to this majority because they compared it to the education they were receiving during apartheid. For these parents, the present is far better than the past. But 44% expressed a strong dissatisfaction with the education that was being received in the location. One parent went on to say the education crisis cannot be looked at in isolation (Queenstown/Mlungisi only) as millions of South African children are not getting the education they were promised by the ANC government. For these people, the present education system is seen as a continuation of the Bantu education system. The conditions and appearance of the schools have deteriorated. The schools are not a conducive learning environment or a place where children have pride in. Some of the parents went on to complain about the abuse their children suffered under teachers, from corporal punishment to

verbal abuse. The greatest number of parents are unable to further assist their children with homework because they themselves did not have access to quality education if any education at all.

The quality of education plays a big role in determining which individuals get jobs and how much they earn in the labour market (Spaull, 2015). Spaull (2015:37) argues that:

Poverty reduction is seen as unlikely unless knowledge, skill and capabilities are extended to those who are marginalised from value-added economic activity by illiteracy, lack of numeracy, and higher level reasoning that links causes and effects rationally. In most societies, and especially those that are developing rapidly, households and individuals value participation in education and invest substantially in pursuing the benefits it can confer. The rich have few doubts that the investments pay off; the poor generally share the belief and recognise that increasingly mobility out of poverty is education-related, albeit that their aspirations and expectations are less frequently realised.

Poor quality education does not only limit economic opportunities but it also does not open the masses to have access to knowledge or fundamental understanding of the relationships between governments and society.

When the research participants were asked about ANC policies, none had a clear and comprehensive understanding of the policies that had been adopted by the ANC government in post-apartheid South Africa. The interviewer had to explain what ANC policies were in isiXhosa as strategies that guide the government. About 68% said they were satisfied with these policies of the ANC but feel that it has abused its position and responsibilities. They felt that the ANC had worked well under Mbeki and the breakdown occurred during Zuma's governance. There was 12% of the research participants who still had no clear conception of ANC policies even after the interviewer tried to explain them; and the remaining 20% said they were dissatisfied both with ANC policies and whatever strategies the ANC was using to pursue and implement policies.

Some intimated that Mandela had changed the Freedom Charter and thus they were confused about the direction democracy is taking. The research participants believed that the version of democracy they received in post-apartheid South Africa was not what was promised to them (i.e. that the people shall govern). They kept on outlining how and where the ANC had failed but had no knowledge or showed no knowledge of how the inequalities that persist are directly connected to the decisions made by Mandela's government and the neo-liberal macroeconomic policies adopted by the ANC in 1996. The research participants may not have

a knowledge of the neoliberal policies adopted by the ANC but they can understand that something went wrong in the transition from apartheid to democracy. This though did not necessarily lead to a rejection of the ANC, if only because of the high levels of historical trust developed and garnered by the ANC over many decades.

One may argue that party affiliation is aligned with the level of education and income among various groups in the country. There is often a difference in political thinking between those with different levels of education and income. The higher the education and income, the less likely it is that an individual will base their preference of a party on party identification.

Education is a key issue for 19% of ANC supporters (Kersting, 2009). The higher the education and income the higher the chances of an individual being able to make a decision not based on identification but on political knowledge and reasoning (Kersting, 2009). The majority of the people who identify themselves with the DA are white Afrikaans and English speakers. The majority of the people who identify themselves with the ANC are Xhosa and Zulu supporters. When it comes to educational level, in both parties, some voters attained a secondary education. However, more DA supporters furthered their studies after Matric compared to ANC supporters. The DA tends to attract more people that have a senior certificate and varsity qualification whereas the ANC attract more people whose education has not gone beyond primary school (Graham, 2012). Education is an important determinant in voting behaviour, we need to ask, do citizens understand their rights? Do they understand the political system?

People are more likely to make better-informed decisions when they have access to information and resources. They are able to empower themselves with knowledge and engage well in issues affecting their lives. One of the research participants detailed that some of the people in their area do not have access to a television or the radio. One will find that a lot of people acquire their political consciousness from their immediate social context (de Kadt, 2014). This informal way of sharing information with a neighbour, at the spaza shop, tavern, or a salon is how they keep up to date on current events. This is what shapes people's perception of political parties during election campaigns. Mattes, Taylor and Africa (1999) argue that there is a low amount of factual information that most voters possess about the details of other political parties. Supporters of the ANC tend to think that the most pressing issues relate to unemployment and poverty. DA voters have labelled the most pressing issues as being: crime, unemployment and corruption (Kersting, 2009).

Those who have received quality education are most likely to have a holistic perspective of how South Africa was restructured along neoliberal lines, without necessarily being against

such restructuring. This comes from the privilege of being able to attend high quality, well-resourced schools. For many ANC members, the experience is of a dysfunctional school system that has a limited curriculum and does not allow students to become critical thinkers. A poor education system does not only limit opportunities but it also diminishes people's sense of self-worth (Spaull, 2015). Therefore, it is easier for the masses to gravitate towards a party that identifies the opposition as the enemy and continues to paint itself as the liberator. Most of the ANC votes come from the rural and peri-urban black South Africans. The ANC has come to rely heavily on these voters. Amongst these voters, the ANC has strong legitimacy and a proven track record. Though the poor black majority have been treated like an outsider by the ANC government, they cannot recognise the power they have to bring about change when they are seemingly trapped in identity voting.

The urban-poor have been starved of resources and basic services, and they face high prices for electricity and water with additional cut-offs. The ANC steps in to help the poor when it needs the poor. Fanon (1961) states that the masses are politically uneducated so the government relies heavily on popular support. Education is key in the awakening of the masses. Fanon believes the opening up of people's consciousness is where real freedom begins. Access to information empowers citizens. The flowing of ideas and information is very important in a democracy because it allows people to think and find a suitable way forward when it comes to their development (Fanon, 1961). This is further examined below in relation to Clientelism and the Rational Choice Model in relation to ongoing political support for the ANC.

### **5.7 Clientelism and Voting Behaviour**

There have been no significant changes when it comes to eradicating the gap between the rich and the poor in South Africa. The post-apartheid government continues to implement policies that marginalise the poor. The poor rely heavily on social welfare, such that it has become a means of survival. To date, most of the government's policies aimed at bringing about redistribution in South Africa has been centred on a large social grant system – including the child support grant and old age pensions. A large portion of the population depends on this system in order to support their households (Pellicer et al., 2014 in Oduro and Amanfo-Tetteh, 2014). Clientelism looks at whether the ANC has used social welfare and other public goods in pursuing its own agenda in order to control electoral outcomes. It looks at the relationship between the exchanges of services for political support.

The research found that 78% of the research participants were unemployed and only 12% were employed, 6% were self-employed and 4% held temporary jobs. Those that had

some form of employment earned less than R1500 a month. Only 10% of those employed earned just above R1500. About 6% earned R1500 and another 6% said their salary could be less or more than R1500 depending on the employment, as a steady income did not exist. Half of the research participants live off the social grant, with 4% within the 50% receiving the disability grant, 4% within the 50% receiving the old age pension grant and the remaining 42% receiving the child support grant. Within a household, the number of children receiving a child support grant ranges from 1 to 4 children. The child support grant is an integral part of their lives, however small. These families will also take on other small jobs like babysitting, picking up tins for the scrapyards, painting, fitting tiles, and polishing shoes and so on, to bring in an extra income. Even when they do take on these odd jobs, their monthly income remains below R1500, barely reaching R600. When the participants were asked whether there had been any significant developments by the ANC in post-apartheid South Africa, the grant system was considered as one of those developments. It represented some form of economic emancipation for them because it was not something that had been available to them during apartheid. This goes back to the constant theme articulated by participants (i.e., comparing the present government to the former), with one person saying “*things are bad but they were worse during apartheid*” (Respondent 10). This makes the ANC seem like a lesser evil.

South Africa has a long history of corruption and political patronage (Hart, 2013). The apartheid government dedicated itself to enriching its own self-interests; there was large-scale corruption and scandals. A patron-client relationship was practised by apartheid authorities and ordinary citizens and this extended into the homelands (Beresford, 2015). Beresford uses the term ‘patrimonialism’ to describe the exchange of power that happens between the government and society. This involves corruption and manipulation that happens in negotiating ways of maintaining hegemony. Beresford argues (2015: 6):

The first, patronage-based relationships formed the core of inter-elite alliances within the ANC in its early years; second, the participation of ANC elites within the Advisory Board institutions of the old apartheid state, which were ‘centres of clientelistic politics’; and, third, the incorporation of criminal networks into the ANC during the struggle period nurtured criminal activity within the party and strengthened ‘patrimonial political predispositions’. It is clear, however, that whatever the potency of these ‘predispositions’, it was not until 1994, when the ANC captured the state, that patron-client relations could begin to assume the scale and character that we now witness.

Patron-client relationships continue to be used across all sectors of society from the top (parliament), right to the bottom (municipalities) in order to maintain ANC dominance.

### 5.7.1 Vote Buying

What has been customary in African countries has been a form of Clientelism, which is referred to as vote buying. It refers to the handing out of social services or goods before election time. The distribution of social grants has been linked to voting-buy (Patel et al., 2014). The 2016 local municipal elections in Queenstown have shown that vote buying does not necessarily mean services or goods are distributed during campaigns. The research participants reported that in the Mlungisi district the masses were promised a braai after they had voted. This is one of the ways in which the ANC was strategic in bringing in voters. They went into an area where they knew people were desperate for meals on a daily basis. The offerings of food were used to purchase political loyalty. The consumption and distribution of state resources are used as a form of persuasion; it represents power over the masses. The government knows very well that the masses are starved and the masses are desperate, so it abuses this power as a means to control the masses (Beresford, 2015).

Clientelistic relationships have a strategic component in which they build up and only target those who support that specific political party. The food parcels distributed by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) are being distributed to the poor. According to SASSA CEO Virginia Peterson, they are for those who are experiencing undue hardships, such as unemployment or have no source of income (Pule, 2014). SASSA services come in cash or in the form of food parcels or vouchers. These services go on for three months, then they resume again after several months, though this may differ in each province (Pule, 2014). The research participants stated that during the 2016 municipal elections, ANC campaigners would tell the poor to go to SASSA so they can get forms for food parcels. This direct system of exchange is cloaked as a relief project for the poor. Loyalty and votes are gradually bought over a period of time so that no one can accuse the ANC of using food parcels as a form of vote buying.

Vote buying manifests in many other ways; for instance, before elections the government will come in, install things like taps and toilets. An example would be Mgezankamba village in KwaZulu-Natal. In a previous election, they arrived with a work crew that repaired local roads, distributed foodstuff and installed electricity (Motala, 2014). Another example would be the residents of Diamond Park who have not had any sanitation for the past 11 years. In July 2016, they received 12 chemical toilets, just before municipal elections (Louw, 2016). This seems to be the only relationship that now exists between politicians and voters. The ANC's Agricultural MEC in KwaZulu-Natal, Meshack Radebe has publicly said that "those who receive grants and are voting for the opposition are stealing from a

government”. He said that those who voted for another party should “stay away from the grant”. This rhetoric provokes fear amongst the poor, especially those who are not educated enough to know their rights (Patel et al., 2014:24). Parties are supposed to provide benefits for all voters regardless of whether they voted ANC or not. This message from the MEC implies that social services are for ANC supporters and those who do not vote ANC should be excluded.

During apartheid, there was a State Maintenance Grant that was only open to white mothers who did not have partners to help support their children. In post-apartheid South Africa, the programme was extended to black women (Case, Hosegood and Lund, 2003). The Child Support Grant (CSG) was first introduced in 1998; poorer and less educated households are the ones who relied and still rely the most on the CSG. The CSG is the most important grant for the research participants because it does not only sustain their children but it sustains the entire family. The CSG was implemented so that it could reduce poverty and promote human capital development. The assumption is that cash grants will reduce the poverty gap and inequalities within households and therefore directly improve the living conditions of the poor (DSD, SASSA and UNICEF, 2012). The CSG income is too little, as it does not have a significant impact on poor households (Coetzee, 2011). The CSG cannot be used as criteria in determining whether the needs of the poor are taken care of, especially children. Housing, education, jobs, hunger and sicknesses are inextricably linked. The poor are in desperate need of a miracle, and this has created a paternal relationship between the ANC and the masses. The participants labelling of the ANC as “*Mandela’s party, Winnie’s party*” shows how they still hold onto a promise and not the reality of the ANC.

### **5.7.2 Clientelism and Capitalism in Post-Apartheid South Africa**

In 1996 the ANC announced that it would be moving away from redistributive social change to restructuring South Africa along neoliberal lines. The nature of neoliberalism is that it does not allow equal opportunities for the masses or the redistribution of resources equally. The RDP wanted a total transformation of the social, economic, and political: it had five sub-programmes which was as follows: Meeting Basic Needs, Developing Human Resources, Building the Economy, Democratising the State, and Implementing the RDP (Marais, 1998). However, there was a more pressing need for the ANC to focus on economic growth, so that a package of conservative neoliberal economic policies known as GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) was adopted by the ANC in 1996 (Hart, 2002). By introducing these macroeconomic policies, the government wanted to reduce fiscal deficits, lower inflation, maintain exchange rate stability, decrease barriers to trade and liberalise capital flows. The first

goal of GEAR was economic growth. The government believed that if its first priority was the economy, the wealth generated through the economy would trickle down to the poor. But South Africa's unemployment rate went from 16% to 31% from 1995 to 2003. Even these figures are problematic because they are not an accurate percentage of those who are unemployed. The government does not include those who have become discouraged to find work (Magetla, 2004). Magetla argues (2004:264): "If they were included, the unemployment would be over 40%". Between 2004 and 2016 the unemployment rates averaged 25.35%, and in the third quarter of 2016 it went up to 27.1% (Trading Economics, 2016). Unemployment is more prevalent amongst the black youth and women, who are most likely to engage in the informal sector of employment (Magetla, 2004).

The system of accumulation in South Africa known as the 'Mineral Energy Complex' (MEC) remains dominated by and dependent upon a cluster of industries. It has been highly protected by the state pre- 1994 and post -1994. Its accumulation is based on mining and energy – raw and semi-processed products such as gold, platinum, steel, coal, iron, and aluminium (Ashman, Fine and Newman, 2011). In the 1980s, there were eight private conglomerates that were controlling the economy in South Africa, and this included internal corporations and foreign multinational corporations (Southall, 2005). When the political handover occurred in 1994, these conglomerates were strongly linked to each other and continued to dominate the economy. The MEC continues to play a critical role in directing and shaping capital accumulation in South Africa (Hart, 2014).

Within capitalism there are two kinds of labour markets, the first being jobs that offer high wages to workers, good working conditions for workers and workers' rights are protected. The second is jobs that offer low wages with poor working conditions and most of the times workers' rights are not protected (Burawoy, 1981). Race still plays a huge part in the poor receiving low paying wages; although South Africa has a growing black middle class, the composition of the lower class remains predominantly black. In 2015, the unemployment rate amongst black South Africans stood at 39% compared to 8.3 % amongst whites (Writer, 2015). Black youth and women tend to find themselves stuck in low paying subordinate jobs and this is the result of the uneven socio-political and economic developments that exist. By keeping the black majority poor and in insubordinate jobs, this ensures that there is a surplus of cheap labour to protect the interests of the capitalist class.

When the ANC was first formed it was comprised of a group of black men in suits who were businessmen and lawyers (van der Walt, 2013). These colonised intellectuals are the ones who later established a dialogue with the bourgeoisie of the colonising country leading to the

continuation of the old capitalist system in post-apartheid South Africa (Fanon, 1961). These liberation heroes supposedly wanted to embark on a complete transfer of land and resources to the oppressed. The ANC in government though has adopted the universal values of the coloniser. At the same time, they tell the masses that they are bringing in a new system. When the transition from apartheid to democracy occurred it was handled more like a business deal than a liberation struggle outcome, whose goals were to transfer privileges from the former colonisers to those who had been oppressed. Van der Walt (2013:7) thus argues that “the ANC is a bourgeois-bureaucratic black nationalist party; that it represents the interests of both the emergent black capitalist and the (largely black) state managerial elite: top officials and politicians, judges and military leaders”.

The government has political power however it is the white minority that carries economic power, such that the black capitalist class shares the same privileges as the former colonisers and becomes completely disconnected from the masses. The state elite (largely black) and private corporate elite (largely white) pursue their own self-interests endorsing a pro-capitalist path at the expense of the working class (van der Walt, 2013). Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) has been commonly seen as an initiative that empowers black people within the private sector of the economy. It has been described as the promotion of black businesses and black businessmen, but it has tended to empower a handful of black people (Southall, 2005). According to Southall (2005:457):“Consequently, a more precise definition of BEE, which will be used here, centres around a sociological perspective, which focuses upon the increase of black ownership, control and management of state, parastatal and private economic activity in the formal sector". This definition excludes the working class, the urban and rural poor. It is only a certain number of black people who get to operate within this private sector. The black elites will do everything to hold onto the power they have because white monopoly capitalism has included them in an economy that they have been excluded from for generations. BEE produces wealthy black businessmen, many of the capitalists, so that the country is therefore not run by leaders but by businessmen (Fanon, 1961). The formation of a capitalist owning black bourgeoisie means that the dialogue between the masses and these colonial-taught political leaders changes. The colonised intellectuals apply Western methods to African situations, and it is no longer about what the masses want as now it is about following the orders of a neoliberal strategy. The government is following the orders and interests of the black elite (Hart, 2012).

Southall (2005) believes that the power of black empowerment is limited power. There is a black elite that has been able to acquire the skill to access good, well-paying jobs in

corporations and some of them are business owners but they still lack capital (they are what he calls ‘capitalists without capital’). They either need to be given or lent capital. While there are extremely successful black businessmen, the vast amount of wealth lies within white corporations. To gain more power in these corporations the government will place black people in senior positions, people who can carry out ANC capitalist hegemonic projects. The major government-owned companies are run by black professionals. The government has used privatisation as a means of securing further privileges for the black middle elite and to exert some weight over the economy. One of the problems they face is that some of those who run these private companies do not have the necessary qualifications and without stable capital available (Southall, 2005). The national bourgeoisie that has taken over these parastatals in an underdeveloped bourgeoisie. They lack the knowledge and experience of handling the economy (Fanon, 1961). This national bourgeoisie talks about building up, empowering and investing in local businesses but are unable to establish those factories or equip the masses with the necessary education and skills to have those businesses.

There has been direct exchange between the ANC and white capital since the beginning of democracy. This has been evident in the relationship between the ANC and its neoliberal strategy. The ANC’s commitment to GEAR has strengthened the power of the black elite while the majority of black South Africans suffer in poverty. It has been argued by Ferree (2011) that there is little evidence that there is clientelism in South Africa. This is based on the belief that the South African economic situation does not allow a clientelistic relationship; she believes that the government is not wealthy enough to support a clientelistic relationship. Furthermore, she believes the government is undeveloped. The macroeconomic policies that the ANC has adopted have reduced its latitude in pursuing expensive redistributive programmes.

But clientelism functions well in countries like South Africa because of the gap between the rich and a desperate poor. In this regard, the ANC’s anti-poverty strategies have not been sustainable. The fact that significant corruption exists within the South African state, in which the political elite diverts state resources in order to maximise individual gain, provides the foundation for clientelism between the ANC elite (at national and local levels) and the urban black poor. Such clientelism does not seem, for the ANC elite and the urban poor, as necessarily unethical, such that it becomes normalised. Neoliberalism and its undercutting of urban livelihoods, alongside the underdeveloped bourgeoisie which engages in nefarious actions with the ANC elite (as discussed in this sub-section) provides the political economy context in which clientelism has arisen and flourished. In this respect, 22% of the research participants voted because of clientelism, which derives from the grants, jobs, food parcels and houses they are

getting. When services, in the form of food, jobs and money are distributed, they are not distributed evenly or in an unbiased manner. In Queenstown, parts of the black townships receive services before and after elections while some parts do not. Some ANC campaigners will do door to door visits in some areas and not others. The selection of targeted areas is based on facilitating and maximising support and loyalty to the ANC. The masses enjoy that moment of distribution of goods and services because that is the only time they get to really celebrate the ANC. The ANC is able to use tangible resources to break the local tensions and bring back a celebratory spirit, at least for a moment, to the people through clientelism.

### **5.8 Rational Choice and Political Behaviour**

The Rational Choice theory first appeared in Anthony Down's *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957). The theory first assumes that citizens are rational thinkers and vote on the basis of whether the party has served their interests well. An example would be in an economic market, as consumers will first calculate costs and benefits and choose the product that best suits their needs and if that product is worth it. When an individual goes to the supermarket, the shopping they do is usually based on prior knowledge, taking into account which product is best suitable for them. So when people are voting issues like policies (whether policies serve the vote's interests and have been implemented effectively and suitably) and views on the economy will be a determining factor in how individuals vote (Newton and Van Deth, 2010). Overall, then, "[v]oting is thus considered a rational act, where individual electors are believed to – based on personal self-interest – decide for themselves which party they prefer. Voting is also seen as a retrospective comment on the party in power and how its performance has influenced citizen's choice" (Heywood 2002:243 in Wiese, 2011:50).

The Rational Choice model argues that, after the voter conducts a careful assessment, an individual choice is made and one not based on any collective identity. The voter will most likely ask questions like 'who does the party serve?'. However, this theory is problematic because prior knowledge and learning come through the socialisation process and other systems of communications available to voters. These circles include one's partner, family, friends, colleagues, academic environment and social networks. Our everyday lived experiences, as rooted in the history of our community and nation, are how we acquire knowledge, so our decisions will be influenced by various forces. The research participants stated that most of them do not have televisions or radios; they sit outside and have conversations, and this is how they gain knowledge on current events. Political decision making

amongst the research participants in Queenstown does not appear to be purely based (if at all) on individual rational calculations about which party best suits the voter's interests.

However, Goldfarb and Sigelman (2010:285) in Wiese (2011:53) link

The Party Identification Model (the part focussing on values) with the Rational Choice Model by incorporating civic duty into the Rational Choice Model. However, they state that .... norms or values can often impede on rationality, while others such as honesty or fairness can advance it. The Party Identification Model can also challenge the Rational Choice Model, where the former states that voting is not a deliberate choice based on a preference for one set of policy positions over another (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006:175). Weinschenk (2010) also indicated that retrospective evaluations (which may be somewhat rational) also play a role in party identification, and depending on the context, these can sometimes also cause a change in party identification.

The key point is that rationality is not necessarily reducible to individual choice around voting because of policy considerations. Even when people vote based on identity, loyalty or because of clientelistic influences, this can also be considered as a rational choice. Thus, to vote for the party that establishes patron-client relations through access to state resources is a fundamentally rational choice (particularly for the urban poor), even if that party does not serve your long-term interests.

A voter will also sometimes use the vote to hold the party accountable. When the research participants decided not to vote as a community this expresses rational choice because they are using their power to punish a government that ignores and marginalises them. They are using collective action to try and make sure the ANC loses support. The ANC suffered ITS worst election results in 2016; it has lost ground in its strongholds because the masses feel that the party has become self-serving and arrogant. The ANC has always mostly depended on the votes of the black majority. However, when people no longer feel taken care or have lost faith in their party they will not vote. The ANC's performance was as follows in the Metros (SA News, 2016).

**Table 4: 2016 Local Government Elections**

	ANC seats	DA seats	EFF seats
Buffalo City	60	24	8
Nelson Mandela Bay	50	57	0
Free State	58	27	9
Ekurhuleni Gauteng	109	77	25
City of Tshwane	89	93	25
City of Johannesburg	44	40	11
KwaZulu-Natal	126	61	0
City of Cape Town	57	154	7

We see that the DA is trailing very close to the ANC hence it was able to gain a good stronghold over the major metros (SA New, 2016). Given the grinding poverty amongst urban black voters in Queenstown and elsewhere, it is not surprising that, under such conditions, the Rational Choice model states that the most rational course of action for the voter is not to vote at all (Newton and Van Deth, 2010).

## 5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to examine the findings from the Queenstown study in the context of both the macro-level and middle-level theoretical framing of the thesis. It is clear that the ANC continues to receive major support amongst the Queenstown residents, who are part of the class of urban poor in contemporary South Africa. In examining the restructuring of the political economy in post-apartheid South Africa, based in large part on neo-liberalism, it is clear that this restructuring is not benefiting the urban poor. This form of capitalism has tended to benefit the rising black middle class and bourgeoisie, the state elite and white monopoly capitalism. Based on an analysis of this restructuring alone, one would expect the urban poor to break free from the ANC and vote for another more suitable party, notably the EFF. The deplorable living conditions of the Queenstown participants, manifested at times in terms of service delivery protests, would seem to imply significant disapproval of the ANC. But rational choices in voting, involving strictly an examination focusing on existing ANC policies (and their implementation), and how these differ from the kinds of policies which would uplift the urban poor in a material sense, does not provide a strong basis for understanding voting patterns amongst the Queenstown residents. On the contrary, it appears that identity, history, clientelism

and loyalty combined provide a much stronger basis for a sociological analysis of ongoing support for the ANC amongst the urban poor in South Africa.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Elections are a critical part of democracy as they “determine who is to take control of the government” (Newton and Van Deth, 2010). In the case of South Africa, after so many years of racialised rule, regular free-and-fair elections at national and local levels are seen as a crucial hallmark of post-apartheid South Africa and they are deeply cherished by all citizens. The fact that one party, namely the ANC, has dominated the electoral scene since 1994 does not take away from the fact that a thriving electoral democracy exists in the country. For people to repeatedly give one political party ongoing majority support for now over twenty years is a political phenomenon which requires explanation. This is what the thesis has sought to do, through a case study of Queenstown.

South Africa transitioned away from apartheid during a time in which neo-liberalism was being consolidated globally, and this influenced the restructuring of the post-apartheid political economy. Though the post-apartheid state has pursued certain redistributive policies and programmes, such as the social grant system (which is so important to the lives of poor urban blacks), the main focus has been on economic growth and subsequent redistribution based on trickle-down assumptions. The livelihoods of urban blacks, including those interviewed in Queenstown who live in an informal settlement, are characterised by socio-economic deprivation and marginalisation. Because of this, it appears that a strictly economic analysis would not facilitate an understanding as to why poor urban blacks continue to vote for a party (the ANC) which has failed to live up to its grand promises about economic liberation. The ANC’s economic policies and programmes simply fall short in terms of transforming the lives of poor urban blacks. Voting for the ANC does not seem rational.

The post-colonial theory used in the thesis to understand post-apartheid restructuring (such as the work of Fanon) has indicated the ways in which an ex-liberation movement now ruling party (the ANC) takes over the apartheid-colonial state and uses this state to enrich the political elite in alliance with an emerging black bourgeoisie. This is done simultaneously with the implementation of neo-liberal restructuring. Ordinary black South Africans, including poor urban blacks, are left out of the riches which are acquired through for instance access to state resources as a basis for elite accumulation. Despite this, as this thesis shows, poor urban blacks appear to remain loyal to the ANC, if only because of its liberation credentials and the party’s ongoing claims that it was in large responsible for overthrowing apartheid and is thus deserving

of the support of the former oppressed. The fact that the main opposition (the DA) is easily portrayed as a 'white' political party of course facilitates the inculcation of the liberation narrative into the minds of ordinary South Africans.

In this context, this thesis also made use of middle-level theories (such as clientelism, status and party-identification theory) as a way of making sense of ongoing support for the ANC amongst poor urban blacks in Queenstown. Clientelism seems to be a particularly relevant middle-level theory when it comes to the relationship between the ANC and its supporters; and it relates to the thoughts of Chatterjee, who discusses the ways in which ruling parties treat the urban poor as 'political subjects' dependent on state largesse, and how the party incorporates these subjects under their hegemonic domination on this basis. As well, the status and party-identification theories – and their significance for understanding ongoing support for the ANC – relate back to the type of analysis which Fanon provides of the practices of (ex-liberation movement) ruling parties.

Given all this, it is possible to understand how it has been possible for the ANC to construct and consolidate its hegemony in post-apartheid South Africa. Hegemony rests fundamentally on the consent of people, an issue which Gramsci believed was necessary to focus on in understanding the social cohesion which exists in advanced capitalist societies. Hegemonic ruler-ship is also central to the post-apartheid state as led by the ANC government. This is not to deny the coercive character of the South African state, manifested most vividly during the Marikana massacre. To understand why the ANC remains popular, despite neo-liberal restructuring and repression, it is necessary to consider the consent-based hegemonic domination which pervades the relationship between the ANC and citizens in South Africa. Hopefully, through the case study of Queenstown, this thesis has made a contribution to understanding and explaining the hegemonic foundations of ANC support.

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## Appendix A – Interview Schedule

### Demographic Questions

- 1) Where is your hometown?
- 2) How long have you been here?
- 3) What is your age?
- 4) Please specify your race?
- 5) Please specify your gender?
- 6) What is the highest level of school you have received?
- 7) Are you currently employed if not do you have any other sources of income?
- 8) Is your monthly income under 1500?
- 9) How many people do you live with and support?
- 10) Marital status?

### Interview Questions

- 1) Which political party do you support have you always supported this party?
- 2) Does your family discuss political matter and have they had any influence in your political values and perspectives?
- 3) Have you participated in every election in which you have been eligible to vote in?
- 4) What are the reasons you feel close to the ANC?
- 5) How would you rate the party's performance? Good, not so good, bad.
- 6) How do you feel about the direction our democracy is taking, any concerns?
- 7) How do you feel about access to basic services, have they handled the issues in your area well?
- 8) If elections were tomorrow which party would you vote for?
- 9) Have other political parties shaped why you vote for the ANC and how?
- 10) Have you ever considered voting for any opposition parties?
- 11) Do you have any concerns about the levels of skills and education being received in your area?
- 12) How do you feel about the policies that have been set by the dominant political party?
- 13) What have your expectations been from the current government?
- 14) Have there been any changes or significant developments since 1994 in your area?

- 15) Are there any changes that occur close to election time compared to when government is not campaigning?
- 16) Do you feel there has been a significant shift in job creation?
- 17) What do you feel the ANC government could have done differently in post-apartheid South Africa?
- 18) Is there a difference how you vote between municipal level and national level? If there is a difference why?

## Appendix B- Consent Form

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of the research is to examine people's attitudes and perspectives on voting behaviour.

### **Who is doing the study?**

The research is being conducted by Ncebakazi. Makwetu, a graduate student in Sociology at Rhodes University. Her faculty adviser is Professor Helliker.

If you have any questions or problems you can email Ncebakazi- g08m2346@campus.ru.ac.za. You may also contact her supervisor Prof Helliker- k.helliker@ru.ac.za-(046) 6038361

### **Benefits of the Research Study**

There is likely no direct benefit to you for participating in this study, but it will help us to develop a more effective understanding of voting behaviour and perceptions.

### **Protection of Confidentiality**

Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Interviews will be recorded by tape. After the research has been submitted the tapes will be destroyed. Your name will remain anonymous throughout the entire research process. The research will use a number system allowing us to track your writing results without revealing your identity. I may also quote directly from your work, but we will only refer to you as, for example, Participant #32 or Participant #87. Once again, we will not reveal your identity in any component of the research study.

### **Voluntary Participation**

The participation in the study is completely voluntary. If you decide to dismiss yourself from the research study at any time, you are allowed to do so. You have every right to withdraw from participation. Withdrawing still maintains your protection of confidentiality.

### **Consent**

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....