

## **Abstract**

The theme of the thesis is the change of voters preferences and the impact of the shift of electoral support from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party in the state of West Virginia in the United States of America. The aim of the thesis is to find out what factors led West Virginia voters to change their voting behaviour in the 2016 election and why and based on what factors Donald Trump won. The thesis analyses what social and economic changes in the region had an impact on the victory. The thesis will first describe the political landscape of West Virginia, the cultural and socio-economic context of the electorate, and then it will focus on the populist rhetoric of Donald Trump, applied to West Virginia. The thesis is a case study and is divided into four parts. In the first part, the theory of electoral behavior and the theory of populism is briefly outlined, in the second part, the historical-cultural context of West Virginia, which is important for understanding the electoral mentality of voters, is presented. The third part will describe the historical-political context that serves to better understand party identification of voters and the election results in West Virginia. The last part applies the findings from the previous chapters to the election victory of Donald Trump in 2016.