Abstract

This thesis analyses the factors that contributed to the electoral rise and long-term political dominance of the Hungarian Fidesz and the Polish Law and Justice (PiS) parties as the two main representatives of the populist radical right in Central Europe. The research is set within the theoretical framework of supply and demand for the radical populist right as defined by Cas Mudde and focuses on ten key factors: political and economic transformation, economic situation, immigration, trust in the political system, cultural environment, electoral system, political competition, media environment, party organization and leadership, and party ideology and strategy. The paper uses a comparative two-case study design and draws on academic literature, primary party materials, election data, and media and expert sources, supplemented by charts and tables. The conclusions show that both Fidesz and PiS have been able to combine strong leadership, thoughtful use of the institutional framework and consistent work with public opinion to consolidate their dominance. Although the two parties share similar ideological underpinnings and strategies for consolidating power, they differ in the extent of power centralisation, the style of institutional change and the emphasis on the symbolic and moral aspects of politics. The paper contributes to the understanding of the mechanisms of stabilisation of populist radical right parties in post-communist democracies and suggests possible trends for the further development of these actors in the European context.