Oral Presentation O7.2

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD: ELECTORAL THRESHOLDS AND THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

Tracy Quinlan and Kathleen Montgomery*
Department of Political Science, Illinois Wesleyan University

There are large cross-national differences in the percentage of women in legislatures. Institutional arrangement is a considerable explanatory factor in the disparity in women's representation, and many mechanisms have been implemented to increase parity. Within PR systems, electoral systems are a way to try to increase the representation of women. Previous studies have linked thresholds to increased party magnitude and in turn to increased women's representation, but there have not been extensive studies to directly link thresholds to women's representation. This paper analyzes the impact of thresholds directly, finding that the relationship between thresholds and women's representation is not as strong or as direct as assumed within the previous literature.