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Oral Presentation 5.5

**LET US IN, LET US IN: A STUDY OF POST-COMMUNIST FEMALE
LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION**

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There is no dispute that women are grossly under-represented in the world's legislatures. However, there are several explanations for this under-representation and for the variation that exists between regions and between countries. The prevailing literature points to institutional, developmental, and cultural variables. This study uses the post-communist context in order to control for culture. Given the common experience of state socialism and the re-traditionalization of social values associated with a backlash against directive emancipation, culture cannot be the main factor in determining the wide variation in levels of female legislative representation in the new democracies of East-Central Europe. In testing for both institutional variations and levels of socio-economic development, this study suggests that, while institutions certainly matter, socio-economic development is also an important factor in explaining high levels of female legislative representation.