Demography and Democracy
A Global, District-level Analysis of Electoral Contestation

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Do larger country populations decrease the functionality of electoral democracies? Not necessarily...

Prof. Gerring has assembled a very unique dataset: the Multi-level Election Archive (MLEA) which, using data from electoral contests across a variety of district sizes and elective offices in 134 countries over 200 years, has shown that some features of electoral democracy are actually enhanced by a larger population. He’ll be discussing how his research has shown that population size has a “mechanical” effect on contestation, and that size affects the number of potential challengers, the diversity of constituents, and the impersonality of the representative/constituent relationship – all of which should enhance the level of electoral contestation within a district.

About the Visiting Speaker: John Gerring (PhD, University of California at Berkeley, 1993) teaches courses on methodology and comparative politics at BU. He is the author of many titles including Party Ideologies in America, 1828 -1996, Social Science Methodology: A Criterial Framework, Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework, (2nd ed). He is currently writing Democracy and Development: A Historical Perspective. Gerring served as a fellow of the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton, NJ), as a member of The National Academy of Sciences’ Committee on the Evaluation of USAID Programs to Support the Development of Democracy, as President of the American Political Science Association’s (APSA) Organized Section on Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, and as a fellow at the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame. He has received grants from the Clinton Global Initiative, the National Science Foundation, and the World Bank.