This piece is probably a bit more turgid than some of the other things you’ve been reading in the course. Nonetheless, it is a very efficient overview of a variety of different methodologies in Political Science. As I’ve said from the start of the course, you are learning a variety of statistical tools that will help you analyze quantitative data. But, as we all know, there is a wide range of other types of data out there. This piece by Gerring provides a good overview of some of those techniques. As you read, pay special attention to the following:

**Criteria for evaluating different methods:** In the first sentence of this chapter, Gerring provides a set of 10 criteria for evaluating the different methods. We could spend our entire discussion parsing these things out. Spend some time trying to understand what he means by each of these 10 terms. These criteria provide standards by which we can evaluate the validity of our different research designs, as well as criteria to help us decide which method is the most appropriate one to use for a given project.

“A good research design, I have argued, is characterized by plentitude, boundedness, comparability, independence, representativeness, variation, analytic utility, replicability, mechanism, and causal comparison” (200).

**Applying concepts we have learned:** Gerring outlines 9 different methods for analyzing data, including one category called “statistical methods”. That is what you have learned. As you read about the other 8 methods, try to apply the concepts we have learned in class to the method he describes. In particular, consider the following as you read about each of the other 8 methods:

- What is the dependent variable in these types of studies?
- What is (are) the independent variable(s) in these types of studies?
- What is the central goal of these types of studies?
  - What techniques are used to *describe* data, or relationships between variables?
  - What techniques are used to make *inferences* about the world, or what types of inferences are we trying to make?
- What is the unit of analysis?
- How do we account for *spurious correlation* (or control variables) in this technique?

**When do you use what kind of method:** As you read, think about when you would use each method. In other words, what are the conditions that define when statistical methods are appropriate and when other types of methods are appropriate? Try to identify for yourself a set of criteria that you might use to decide when each type of method is appropriate. Some things you might consider include:

- The type of research question
- The type of information, or data, that you have
- The problem (methodological or substantive) that you are trying to solve