

## ***Section 11 – Metodologia della ricerca***

### **Panel 5. Comparing methods for the study of conflict and political violence.**

**Chair: Stefano Costalli, Andrea Ruggeri**

Wars and political violence have been key research objects in International Relations, Comparative Politics and Sociology for decades. In the last fifteen years civil wars and the use of violence by non-state actors have become distinctive features of the post-bipolar system, so that much of most recent research have focused on these phenomena. The burgeoning literature on intra-state conflicts offers insights on the causes, the dynamics and – increasingly – the political and socio-economic consequences of civil conflicts.

Additionally, a lively debate on methods, for instance on the relative advantages of qualitative and quantitative approaches, has been emerging. Advanced quantitative methods have been applied to increasingly disaggregated spatial and temporal data, but qualitative methods have also produced valuable research on contemporary civil wars and terrorism. A stimulating strand of literature has recently applied both qualitative and quantitative methods to previously unreleased archival material to study the micro-foundations of historical cases of conflict.

This panel is an attempt to collect contributions that account for the recent trends in research on collective violence, trying to highlight the pros and cons of different research methods. While all methods can fruitfully contribute to create valuable empirical research, all methods have limitations and it is crucial to carefully think about them. Thus, the panel welcomes methodologically aware papers performing empirical research on conflict and political violence, including both qualitative and quantitative methods.

From a substantial perspective, topics embrace – but are not limited to – the causes and consequences of international and civil wars; the strategies and tactics used by states and non-state actors, ranging from conventional warfare to terrorism and the use of traditional and innovative tools for organizing mobilization; the organizational features of the armed groups.