



## **Youth marginality and militia proliferation. Representations and reproduction of violence in North Kivu**

Luca Jourdan<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

Starting from a historical and anthropological approach, the chapter aims to explore the socio-cultural and structural factors that drive many young people and children to join armed groups active in the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo. I will analyze both long-term and current social dynamics, paying particular attention to the representations that different social actors elaborate on the war and that contribute to perpetuate and reproduce violence. Furthermore, the meaning and functions of magical beliefs and practices within militias will be examined, aiming at exploring the symbolic universe of combatants. Finally, I will propose an analysis of the self-representation of victimhood that the various communities involved in the war tend to elaborate of themselves, thus contributing to foster a climate of paranoia and mistrust that inevitably leads to mutual disavowal.

**Keywords:** Congo, youth, war, representations of war, violence

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<sup>1</sup> Dipartimento di Storia, Culture, Civiltà, Università di Bologna, Via Zamboni, 33, 40126, Bologna (Italy); E-mail: luca.jourdan@unibo.it.



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