



Call for papers

Theme: “The spread of hate speech in a multicultural environment: what future for the African Great Lakes region?”

The African Great Lakes region possesses a rich cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious diversity. Over time, this diversity has primarily been the source of social vitality but also, unfortunately, a breeding ground for various forms of political manipulation. The socio-political manipulations have been contributing to the persistence of violent identity-based conflicts that still continue compromising social cohesion in the region. In 1994, this has resulted to the Rwandan genocide and, currently, the recurrence of armed conflicts in the Eastern DRC. All these events which have characterized the history of the region demonstrate how identity-based references, mainly the exclusionary identity discourses, can preside the denying of other people humanity and/or annihilation of the someone identity.

Over the past three decades, the region has experienced critical moments that have led to important rivalries among its countries. From opened clashes between states, the rivalries have mutated into traumatic identity crises. Following political and identity-based manipulations, the different communities have difficult to construct a peaceful coexistence due to stereotypes. Even domestically, some people of a same country, as it can be observed in the Democratic Republic of Congo, refer to exclusionary identity when approaching others, based on geographic, linguistic or religious differences. In such an atmosphere, cultural diversity, or rather peaceful coexistence between different ethnic groups, appears not only utopian but also the root cause of interethnic clashes and territorial fragmentation.

Moreover, with the considerable rise of social media, where information spreads, socio-political landscape has been profoundly altered in the region. Toxic messages, coupled with divisive tonality, continue to violently oppose the communities of the region. From Burundi to Uganda, via Rwanda and the DRC, discriminatory discourses are igniting the entire region. While technological evolution contributes to the emergence of various social transformation movements, social medias serve as channels for the dissemination of conspiracy theories, various forms of manipulation, hate speech, and exclusionary and denialist messages.



This compromises the future of the region. To which destiny the spread of hate speech predestines the Great Lakes region? Beyond the offensive expressions and the blatant threat to human dignity, one knows that the key problem of such spread is the debilitating fracturing of identity and the rejection of shared prosperity. From this perspective, and following Jeremy Waldron, hate speech undermines the common good of inclusion. It erodes the understanding that “visible minorities” also have the right to enjoy the rights defended by the democratic values, mainly freedom of expression, freedom of movement, recognition of their humanity, territorial belonging.¹ There is a fear that in the future, a violent society may emerge through a permanent reactivation of historical traumas.

The 45th issue of the *Regards Croisés* of the Intercultural institute in the Great Lakes region (Pole Institute), aims to critically analyze the spread and consequences of the persistent hate speeches in the Great Lakes region. Researchers, according to the discipline and field of expertise, will address the following questions: How does the dissemination of hate speeches in a multicultural and post-conflict society affect the prospects for social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, democratic consolidation, and regional integration in the African Great Lakes countries? What could be the limit between legitimate socio-political critique and discriminatory discourses? In the globalized world, how do narratives shared through social media interact with local grievances and historical memories, and then, undermine social cohesion? How does hate speech undermine the remarkable commitments of civil society organizations and public institutions for the consolidation of peace and peaceful coexistence in the African Great Lakes region? What political, cultural, artistic, and social paths will overcome exclusionary rhetoric in the Great Lakes region? Under what conditions can dialogue-based approaches strengthen resilience against divisive rhetoric and discourse?

Researchers and practitioners interested in the topic and the raised questions are invited to share their papers (electronic version - Times New Roman, 1.5 space, 12 to 15 pages) to the following emails: innocent.mpoze@pole-institute.org or publications@pole-institute.org, before April 15, 2026. For the approved projects, the Editorial Board may make minor changes. However, no substantive changes can be made without consultation with the author(s).

For the *Regards Croisés* Journal

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¹See Jeremy Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech*, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2012.