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School, Knowledge and Technology. Towards a Global Teen Culture

My research focuses on globalization and education, with particular interest for the question of social justice and the new forms of inequality. I am concerned with the impact of globalization on secondary public education. My research questions are: if we are on the way to a global knowledge society, how does school prepare young people for that? How does globalization affect the way school is supposed to guarantee equality of opportunities? The theoretical approach involves a reflection on the stakes of competitiveness in a knowledge economy and of the homogenization of education via international reports and evaluations. The empirical part of my research is devoted to teenagers from a specific local context that is spreading at the global level: the socially and racially segregated areas of large cities, namely Rio’s favelas and Paris’ cités. I investigate their uses of new technologies in and out of school, showing that a teen culture based on MSN, YouTube and social networking websites has emerged on both continents, redefining the youngsters’ relations to time and space, socialization and information. However state school systems do not adapt at the same pace, and an increasing part of decisive abilities for the students’ professional perspectives are to be learnt out of school.