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Engaged Global Millennials: Preliminary Results on an Qualitative Analysis of a Global Millennial Generation

Anthropology

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Generational studies have primarily focused on American youth, which leaves out perceptions of youth from around the globe; Howe & Strauss, leading authors on the Millennial generation, define seven attributes of American youths: special (i.e. privileged), sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured, and conventional (2000, 44). These general characteristics of millennials that emerge from the literature are seemingly unfit for the recent images of engaged youth conjured up by world events such as the Arab Spring youth movement. The preliminary findings presented in this paper arise from semi-structured ethnographic interviews with six young people that have a strong tendency towards social and political engagement and fit the Millennial generation criteria (born between 1982-2003) within both domestic and international contexts. These interviews elicit participants' own experiences, which are complicating and even challenging widely held assumptions about the Millennial generation. The global dimension of the study will add to our understanding of engaged millennials who are acting as change agents by creating solidarity through shared experiences, ideas and actions, without the constraints of arbitrary lines of nationality. This study is part of a growing body of research on non-American millennials, youth engagement, and origins of social movements. In using a largely untapped source of perspectives from global youths, this project will contribute to future research on understanding social movements and the youth responsible for driving social change around the globe.