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Discerning the Baby Boomers Various Faces

Most often, people view the picture of baby boomers like a monolith-everyone is identical. But the truth is the generation of Baby Boomers are slightly distinct from each other.

The Staff Writer of The Christian Science Monitor, Kim Campbell, featured in her report last January 26, 2005 the baby Boomer in his mid-50s, Jerry Benston, an African-American New Yorker.

According to him, while he was a college student in 1968, the university where he studied proposed to have a more diverse culture.

He recalled that he was one of those who protested. His reason, as a Baby Boomer he wants to help in raising awareness regarding the significant issues in the society nowadays.

One of these significant issues is the Baby Boomers and how people view them in general terms.

Looking at the outer surface, what you will commonly notice with these Baby Boomers are their similarities. For instance, that several of them survived in the Vietnam War, lived during the era of civil rights, and that their generations were the first ones to grow with television.

All of these events which they shared are part of the history, and you can discern it by simply browsing a book in history, or by just surfing through the internet. Unlike distinguishing their difference from each other, this is commonly not evident on their image in public.

According to researchers including the advocates, it is vital to avoid generalizations that mirror the 79 Million groups of retirees. The purpose of this is to understand the diversity of Boomers in economic lines, across age, in ethnic, and so on, thus their actions as well as their needs will be accurately assessed.

Duke University Professor and Author of current Boomer Lives Analysis, Elizabeth Hughes stated that reports reveal the inequality of income or wealth of the Boomers. And this directly suggests that while the other Boomers lived a well off life during their retirement, there are some who live a life packed with

struggles.

The media are used in portraying that Boomers are homogenous. Most of their reports suggest that all of them have common upbringings, that all are married and have their children, wealthy, and well-educated.

There is an argument created by Hughes and the others that if people will persist on perceiving the boomers in excessive general terms, the effect will be reflected on their retirement policies, and this is viewed negatively.

In addition, taking the Boomers in over general term hides the truth that concerns the group. According to Hughes, diversity among the group only mirrors the society.

Sarah Zapolsky, a researcher of boomer diversity said that most of these people who perceive boomers in too general terms seem to convey that the 79 Million Boomers will all retire in just one day.

"This example clearly reveals the fallacy of perceiving the boomers as a single unit," Zapolsky added.

The clear example of boomers' diversity is the range of their age. Certain researches show that Boomers does not only cover one generation, they cover even more. For this reason, their spans may possibly range to 19 years; hence, if there are some grandparents' boomers already, some boomer might still have a preschool kid.

Another example of Boomer diversity stated by Zapolsky is shown in their different backgrounds in ethnic and culture. For instance, this can be reflected on the way they take care of their parents who are already aging. Some may choose to have a Medicare rather than taking a nurse to care for their parents, while some may not.

There are researches already that show that the inequality of Baby Boomers persists on their education and riches. According to Hughes, the blacks' incomes now are higher as compared to the earlier generations, and there were some who already shifted to the middle strata.

But she added that if it will be viewed on the utmost perspective, there is really no improvement on these black boomers condition as compared to the whites.

The President of Generational Targeted Marketing, Ann Fishman, explained the

reason why the diversity among Boomers is not widely talked about. This is because the characteristics that identify Boomers are not viewed very important.

Probably, the public viewed these Boomers like a monolith, but Baby Boomers will remain diverse as they are popularly recognized.