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**SJSI5018**

**Assignment 1**

***Choose a group in society and consider how they have had to engage with the 'politics of recognition' in order to seek greater equity in the last 50 years.***

This assignment is going to look at what an individual is and what a group is. It will look at what equality and equity is and what the individual or group in society has faced and struggled with while trying to be accepted in society. It will look at how the fights and struggles they have faced over the last fifty years has led them to being accepted and being able to live normally and happily in their lives today. The group being investigated in this assignment is LGBTQ. LGBTQ is an initialism that means lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning.

An individual is a person or a specific object. An individual person has an entity, they have needs, goals and responsibilities, they have their own perspectives and more importantly they have their own identity. Having your own identity means that no two persons are the same. Although we are all individuals, we have social influences that make us have things in common with other individuals. A social influence is something that can or may influence an individual's behaviour, thoughts, feelings and actions. Family and friends have a big impact and influence on the behaviour of individuals and the way they act and behave.

A group is a collection of individuals who have regular contact or interaction, they have a mutual influence and interest in each other. They have common feelings about certain things, and they work together as a team to achieve a common set of goals and achievements. A group can be made up of many different collectives. A group could come together because of their age, sex, nationality, disability, their class, their religion, whether they are veterans, peer groups, whether they are in or out of work and many more. Being part of a group also means that social influences are still a big factor of how that group acts and thinks and how they go about gaining their knowledge and understanding. All the individuals in a group will have different personalities, have a different rearing and life experiences, have different goals and have different ways of thinking but they also have that one thing that brings them together whatever it is that makes them that group. An individual can be part of many different groups at a time for example they could be part of a back to work group as well as a fight against racism group, the two groups are totally different but having things in common with other individuals is normal. Communication between separate groups is central to sharing knowledge and understanding as described by Kronberger Wagner

"Our membership in social groups constrains the ways in which we come to understand an object and conversely, by positioning oneself with regard to an object and by the style we communicate about it, we ascertain our belonging to a particular group of people, and

simultaneously distance ourselves from others” (Kronberger and Wagnor (2007)).

Being male or female in society should be equal, both genders getting treated the same. A gender equal society is when they both have the opportunity to participate in all kinds of social activities at will, they both equally enjoy economic, political and cultural benefits. The human rights for men and women being equally respected. It used to be that women would stay at home with their children while the men would go out to work however, these days it is not unusual for the man to stay at home and be the house husband and the women to go out to work and earn the money. The importance of inclusion of gender and sexual diversity means that individuals can openly and visibly identify their sexual orientation and gender identity with safety and freedom. Their social participation and social status are accepted wherever they go or whatever they do.

Equality is a word used to describe and promote fairness, but it can only work if every individual starts off from exactly the same place and needs exactly the same help and support. That way they will reach their goal at the same time. Equity can appear to be unfair, but it actively moves every individual closer to success by ensuring they have a level playing field. Not every individual starts at the same place and not every individual has the same needs leaving it a very complex situation. So, treating everybody the exact same is unfair, as we have different needs. What treating everyone equally does do is erase our differences and promote privilege.

The group being looked at is LGBTQ is shortened down and commonly used in the community or society of today because it is user friendly and more respectful and people belonging to the LGBTQ community prefer it. The L stands for lesbian, a lesbian is a female homosexual or can be described as a female who has a sexual attraction to another female. The G stands for gay, gay is often used to describe homosexual males who experiences romantic love or sexual attractions to other males. B stands for bisexual, bisexuality is having a romantic and or sexual relations with both men and women, one nor the other gender is more important as you find sex with both acceptable. T stands for transgender. Transgender is a term used for people whose gender is different from what sex they assigned with at birth. This is kind of an umbrella term as there are two genders male and female but there are sixty-three genders known in the world now. The Q stands for queer, queer is also an umbrella term for sexual and gender minorities that are not heterosexual or cisgender. Q is also used for questioning, which is used to describe people who are unsure of their sexuality and are still exploring their options. They are not confident in applying a social label to themselves yet. While we all understand individuals and their choices in life for example, LGBTQ people, we must think about the implications of the media and how it represents the different groups and their identities. The media can either enhance the understanding of LGBT or it can cause harm and hatred towards these people.

“Social representatives is an organised corpus of knowledge and one of the physical activities that allow human beings to make physical and social reality intelligible, to insert themselves into groups or day to day relations of exchange and to free the powers of their imagination” (Moscovici (1961/2008)).

Unequal access to the media and communications and uneven representation and privilege certain groups against others.

The Stonewall riots took place in 1969 in New York city, the riots took place when the LGBTQ people who were frustrated by police brutality they faced, finally started fighting back and acting. It was a key moment in history as activists from black power, feminists and gay liberation movements all came

together after being treated unfairly, learned from each other and they fought together to get things changed. The first pride event took place in the United States (US) formed by the GLF, it took place on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1970, a year after the Stonewall riots. UK activists were involved in the key movements for the US and returned to form a British Chapter of the Gay Liberation Front. The first UK gay pride took place in London on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1972. In the 1980s the LGBT community was politically and socially stigmatised against, certain laws that were passed prevented teachers and professionals of that kind from talking and teaching about same sex relationships and marriages forcing teachers backwards or back into the closet, which led to scarring a generation of LGBT people. On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1988 at Sir Ian McKellen's house in Limehouse, a meeting was held, and documents drawn up which they named the Second Limehouse Democrat Party. On May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1989 the new group announced the funding of the Stonewall Group after sending out a press release to the LGBT. Over the past thirty years, they have made a significant difference to the lives of LGBT people not just to the UK but all over the world. In the UK alone the LGBT has led them to winning employment rights, parenting rights, partnership rights and equal age of consents rights. Although the equality of LGBTQ has been successfully founded by the Stonewall over the last fifty years, there have been many key moments in which have been important to their journey. In 1994 the first ever same sex kiss between two women was aired on television. Brookside was the programme and it did not go without controversy but, it was soon to be followed by other big named programmes. In 1998 Human Rights Acts opened the doors to LGBTQ rights, which means the LGBTQ could and would be equal to things like starting a family, getting married and sharing their lives with who they loved legally. In the 2000 Stonewall Scotland was founded to tackle discrimination and inequality north of the border. I campaigned for LGBT rights across Scotland including the Equality Network. In 2001 the age of consent was lowered for gay and bisexual men. The age limit for opposite sex couples was sixteen and has been for years but for gay men and bisexuals it was originally twenty-one. So finally, in 2001 it was lowered from twenty-one to eighteen with the help and fight from the Stonewall team. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations came into force on December 2003. Since this law came in Stonewall work more than eight hundred employers to help them ensure that their workplaces are free from direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation. In 2005 on 5<sup>th</sup> December the first same sex couple had their civil partnership ceremony. From that date on same sex couples could enjoy the same benefits as opposite sex marriages when it comes to tax benefits, benefits and inheritance arrangements. Same sex couples were recognised as the legal parents of children conceived through the use of donated sperm eggs or embryos in 2008. In 2013 the first Trans Pride in the UK was held, with about four hundred- and fifty-people taking part, the march was said to have been a huge success and has been repeated every year since, getting bigger and better as the years go by. In July of 2018 the Gender Recognition Act consultations began to help reform and make it easier for an individual's journey towards full trans equality. More than fifty thousand people completed the consultation leaving the government with no choice but to consider the responses and to make changes. In 2019 the government made successful change to the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to make relationships and sexual education compulsory in all schools in England. This means that with Wales and Scotland following England's lead, every school child will be taught about LGBTQ to help people speak and understand it and to prevent people going through being bullied due to the lack of understanding. Although all these dates and achievements are good and a positive for LGBTQ people, their fight is far from over.

The media has a big part of how we see things and how we act towards others. The news headlines and the papers tell us what we want to believe and what they want us to see. Some of the reports they show us or want us read can be misleading in many ways, but they also have their uses. They do publish when crimes are committed against ordinary people when they shouldn't be, and f

it was not for these papers we would be unaware of the crimes that are committed and the things that need hanging drastically. Every paper report different differently to the next, giving us more information about the article. Next are two different papers citations about two different crimes taken place. They are homophobic attacks and without the papers publishing them we would never know about them. Stories like these we need to be made aware of. The BBC covered a story in September 2019 of a young man named Jerek. In February 2019 Jerek was beaten up so badly he was hospitalised after a night out. It was not just any old attack though it was a homophobic attack. He was beaten up for being gay in the middle of London. Jereck was beaten up by a group of men, he reported in the incident, but the men were never found or tried in court for it. So much has happened in ensuring LGBT people have rights and equality why are such crimes still being carried out and why are individuals and groups still getting away with causing so much pain to others. In July 2019 the Guardian newspaper also reported a homophobic attack. In May 2019 again in London two ladies who were a couple were left needing hospital treatment after being attacked on a bus for being lesbians. The couple had their bag and phones stolen and were left bloodied. The attack was carried out by four teenage boys all aged between fifteen and seventeen. Luckily the boys were caught and charged with aggravated hate crime under the Public Order Act as well as being charged with handling stolen goods. Although these teenagers were found and convicted crimes like this should not still be happening. London is a big place and thy are covered by the same laws and legislation as everywhere else. They children are taught of same sex relationships in school, so they understand that it is a part of society today, and that LGBT is legal, and these people are not doing anything wrong.

Statistics from the National LGBT survey report shows that LGBT people are less satisfied with their lives in general than the general UK population, they also said that they avoid holding hands in public with their same sex partners out of fear of being bullied and mistreated by other individuals. LGBT people have made complaints or experienced verbal harassment or actual physical abuse because of the way they live their lives. Some of them even claim to have not reported it as to them it happens all the time and is part of their day to day life. LGBT people have also claimed that they have been offered conversion or reparative therapy in a bid to cure them of their life choices. They have also accessed help and support from the mental health service to help them cope with their lives. After receiving all this information from the LGBT people, the government have no choice but to change things and make it easier for them to live freely. Currently people should be allowed and feel happily about holding hands with who they wish to while walking the streets, they shouldn't have to live in fear. As for not reporting crimes against them, it's an awful thing for someone to think that verbal or physical abuse is a normality. It should be reported and taken very seriously.

To conclude this assignment, an individual is an individual, but they can also be part of a group. A group is individuals coming together to communicate and share their lives over something that is an interest to them, this is described by Moscovici and Markova when they argued " we cannot communicate unless we share certain representations" (Moscovici and Markova, 2000)). Over the last fifty years the people of LGBTQ have struggled with how they have been treated. With the help of Stonewall and others, laws, legislations and acts have been made and passed to ensure these people are treated fairly in and out of their work. It took a group of people with the same interest to come together and start changing things and to make it easier and more acceptable for LGBTQ people to live happily and freely. They can now get married, have children and be families. Although a lot has been done especially over the last fifty years, they still have a lot more to do and their fight is far from over. As you can see by the Jerek story homophobic attacks are still happening when they should not be. These LGBT people are humans too and the police, government and other professionals need to do a lot more to ensure their safety.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/stories-49743545/homophobic-hate-crime-beaten-up-for-being-gay>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-lgbt-survey-summary-report/national-lgbt-survey-summary-report>

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/stonewall-uprising-50-years-lgbt-history>

<https://www.wisegeek.com/what-are-social-influences.htm>