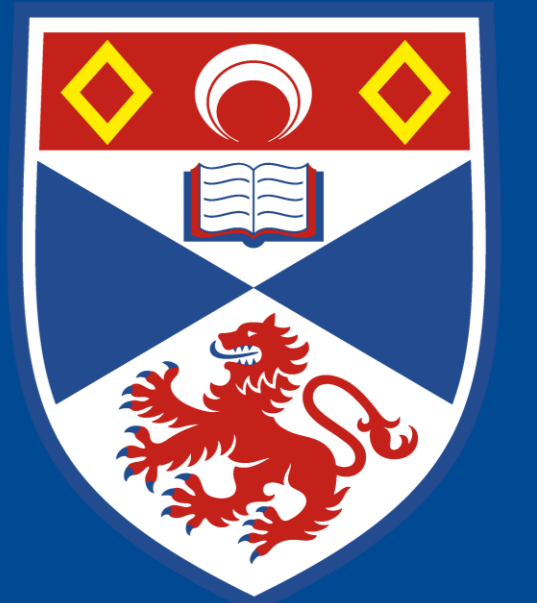


The Politics of Disengagement:

Can enforcing political engagement cause more harm than good?

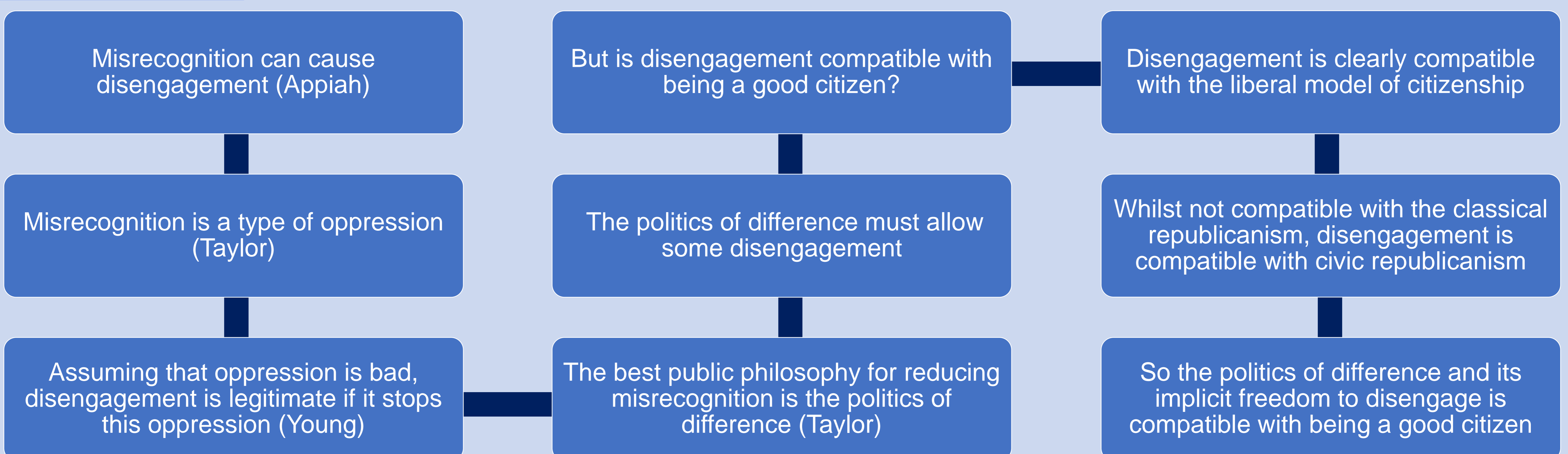
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Aims

My research examines political disengagement and asks whether it's ever ok to be disengaged. By exploring political identities and their influence on public behaviour, I suggest that political disengagement can be a legitimate response to oppression and identity 'misrecognition' (Taylor 1994, 25). In these circumstances I argue that society must adopt an attitude that celebrates diversity and accepts political disengagement. Furthermore I show that the disengaged can meet the demands of citizenship on both major models (republicanism and liberalism). In this way, using a narrative review of the literature, I use key concepts and themes to suggest a way that leadership and society as a whole can tackle oppression.

Argument



Some key questions considered in this work

<p>Who are the disengaged? The disengaged are the people who reject participating in politics through the traditional channels. Their disengagement could be politically motivated, disillusioned or apathetic</p>	<p>How can identity influence behaviour? Political identities relate to social categories which provide "life-scripts". These scripts contain loose norms of behaviour for public life (Appiah 2005, 21)</p>	<p>What is misrecognition? Recognition is a human need to have your sense of self accurately perceived. When this fails and society mirrors back a distorted image this is misrecognition (Taylor 1994, 25)</p>
<p>What is the politics of difference? The politics of difference is a public philosophy that demands we recognise the diversity of identities in a positive way rather than aim at universal 'equal' recognition (Krooks 2001, 85)</p>	<p>Can political engagement be oppressive? If engaging means assimilating with the dominant group, who set a standard for acceptable political behaviour, this can force individuals to adopt a false identity (Young 1990, 165)</p>	<p>Can you be disengaged and a good citizen? Civic engagement might be a goal for society but focusing on liberal neutrality and republican toleration suggests disengagement is compatible with citizenship (Lovett and Whitfield 2015, 126)</p>

Conclusions

Ultimately, this work shows that adopting the politics of difference could reduce oppression in society. This is because a public philosophy that accommodates differences allows individuals to live their most authentic life and avoids the oppressive effects of forced assimilation. I suggest that this uncovers an unstated implication of the politics of difference, its implicit protection of oppressed people's freedom to disengage. Going forward, this highlights a need for education, raising awareness of the merits of diversity and constructive dialogue. Furthermore this reveals the need for compassionate leaders who are aware of the diverse needs of minority and oppressed groups.

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