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1. Introduction

On February 25, 2021, the Dutch parliament passed a motion declaring that China is committing genocide against the Uyghur minority in its country. At the time, *De Volkskrant* analysed the move as a consequence of the fall of the third Rutte cabinet a month prior and the impending elections (du Pré, 2021b). Coalition agreements in the Netherlands are often very tightly negotiated, with minute details about the coalition's intentions for the coming four years and the same applied to the third Rutte cabinet (du Pré, 2021b). Due to the fact that the coalition included parties with divergent identities – the conservative-liberal VVD, the social liberal D66, and the Christian-democratic CU and CDA – these compromises in the agreement not always led to favourable outcomes and voting decisions for either parties. Thus, the fall of the government enabled D66 to propose the aforementioned motion about the Uyghurs without being tied to the expectations of the coalition agreement. Previously, the responsible minister of foreign affairs, Stef Blok, repeated that the government coalition, does not prefer using the term before the UN or International Court of Justice had ruled on it (Du Pré, 2021a). Moreover, the member of D66 who submitted the motion, Sjoerd Wiemer Sjoerdsma (2020), had previously been a staunch advocate for the Uyghur minority, but spoke of 'human rights violations' (mensenrechtenschendingen) instead of genocide prior to the government collapse. There is no evidence he was constrained by his party being in government, but, as the analysis from *de Volkskrant* mentioned, there was a sort of liberation in his ability to name it a genocide.

The authenticity mentioned in this example reflects how the ideals of politicians and political parties are translated in both their words and deeds. Do the motions of the parliamentary faction reflect their own ideals? Do the statements of the ministers affiliated with the party reflect their own ideals? Or are they determined by a different set of influencing factors outside their own person? These questions and the answers to them are important because they have implications for the judgement and evaluation of politicians. Parliamentarian Sjoerdsma became more authentic in his description of the mistreatment of the Uyghurs when the government collapsed, because he was now able to call it a genocide, which he might not have been able to before. This affected his standing and reputation among all voters, improving it with those that support his belief and favour a more confrontational and direct approach and decreasing it with people who are less likely to state so adamantly that a genocide is occurring. In another case, right-wing voters might consider a party a viable

alternative due to their statements which are entirely forced and constrained by the presence of a more powerful party in the coalition. These are some of the effects of inauthenticity, and is obviously not limited to political system bound by coalition governments. Among others, lobbyists who offer monetary incentives for policy changes might also tamper with politicians' authenticity.

The remainder of this paper is devoted to understanding the issue of political (in)authenticity and will advance with the following questions: Firstly: "How can authenticity be understood in politics?" And secondly: "How do the ideas of Hannah Arendt contribute to and improve our understanding of authenticity?". I will answer the first question by using explicitly non-Arendtian texts, before approaching the second question through my reading of Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* (THC) to provide an original look on this question through her lens of speech and action and the concepts that are related to them, such as disclosure, plurality, and unpredictability. Lastly, I will reserve a section on the implications of this approach for understanding contemporary politics, including the role of political parties, the extent of authenticity's relevance as a virtue, and the power of improvisation vis-à-vis speechwriting.

2.   Literature review: Authenticity in politics

In this literature review, I will conceptualise political authenticity using non-Arendtian texts. First, I will go through the different perspectives of political authenticity between performed, mediated, and perceived authenticity. Then, I will divulge further on the specific elements of this approach to political authenticity, covering consistency, intimacy, transparency, immediacy, and ordinariness. This conceptualisation will come back in the discussion later to compare it to the Arendtian approach to authenticity.

Broadly speaking, authenticity can be defined as degree to which a person's words and actions reflect their inner values and character (Luebke, 2021, p. 636; Jones, 2016, p. 490). This way, it can be distinguished from related, but different concepts such as sincerity and integrity. On the one hand, sincerity is related to honesty about a person's beliefs and on the other, integrity is related to consistency about a person's beliefs, which they believe to be morally right (Luebke, 2021, p. 637). Thus, a politician may be insincere or lack integrity yet remain authentic, because nothing about sincerity and integrity relates to the objective character of a

person, but rather what it is they are saying or doing with regards to their beliefs (p. 637). Moreover, authenticity is a narrower concept than either of those two, as it refers to those views which define a person and their identity, rather than any views or value that a person might hold (Stiers et al., 2021, p. 1183).

While this definition already covers much ground in terms of conceptualising authenticity of politicians, it does not capture the full picture due to the multiple ways in which the issue of political authenticity can be approached between performed, mediated, and perceived political authenticity. These are not elements of authenticity, which I will detail later, but different ways to discuss political authenticity. In the end, they will come back to the definition listed above and the traits which are associated with it, but help to clarify where it is located in discussions.

Firstly, performed political authenticity approaches it from the perspective of the politician and is related to the way a politician presents themselves in the public sphere to appear authentic (Luebke, 2021, p. 638). Engaging with the concept in this way presumes that when a politician is authentic, this is always as a result of a performance and not a "sincere presentation of an inner self" (p. 638). Despite the fact that this view sees authenticity as a performance, it does not depend on the perceived authenticity, as the 'performance' in this case comes from within, and it does not define performance in the traditional sense as seen in places such as the theatre. Whether the inner character of the politician can be translated accurately depends on the performance of the politician, and if their performance is bad, the speech or action is inauthentic, because by definition that means the character of the politician has not been accurately portrayed in their words or deeds.

Secondly, mediated political authenticity approaches it from the perspective of the media and online technology, often an intermediary between politicians and the population. The emphasis of mediated political authenticity is the construction of authenticity by media practices, which include traditional journalism in written and visual form, but contemporarily the emergence of social media has added a new dimension to this phenomenon (Luebke, 2021, pp. 639-40). Mediated authenticity is heavily related to performed authenticity, both in traditional media and social media due to the intrinsic features of these dimensions affecting the performances of politicians. In traditional media, journalists are the judge of the

parameters of authenticity, and while they are not a monolithic entity with the same standards for authenticity, as a collective they do shape a narrative about politicians and their authenticity. If politicians are judged to be inauthentic, their performance can be adapted to more accurately represent their character within the parameters and criteria that have been set by the media. On social media, the audience consists of both journalists and other members of the population, among other stakeholders that have some interest in statements by politicians. Moreover, social media feeds are algorithmically determined for optimal engagement with posts and while the full specifics of these algorithms are not publicly available, nor would I be aware of the specific technicalities if they were, I assume that there is a specific set of parameters upon which the (automated) decision to enhance or limit a post's reach. This is a different mediator than journalistic practices, as the goals and motives are primarily of a monetary kind, targeted towards user retention and ad sales. It would be a lie to claim that these motives are not present in journalism, especially in commercial media, but their primary goal is, or should be, mostly informational, despite the fact that ideological convictions are a . In sum, the crux of mediated political authenticity consists in the construction of authenticity as performed by politicians through a mediator.

Lastly, perceived political authenticity approaches it from the perspective of the population and is related to the construction of political authenticity by the audience of voters (Luebke, 2021, p. 641). Similarly to journalists, voters among the general population judge politicians and evaluate their authenticity, only this time they do not act as a mediator, but in their evaluation they are the targeted audience of authenticity performances by politicians. Once again, there is evidence that judgements about authenticity depend on ideological convictions and their opinion of politicians (p. 641; Stiers et al., 2021, pp. 1191-93). Nonetheless, there are differences that separate perceived authenticity from mediated authenticity, most notably in the fact that the focus of perceived authenticity lies in the person (Luebke, 2021, p. 641). In mediated authenticity, the perceptions of individuals do matter, but only insofar they contribute to a broader narrative about a politician. Voters attribute different weights to different publications, and the narrative that one newspaper, magazine, or community on a social medium offers about a politician in most cases outweighs the perceptions of a singular journalist, influencer, or other mediator.

Regardless of the angle from which it is approached, the elements of authenticity remain the same. These are intimacy, ordinariness, transparency, immediacy, and consistency, which are all related to authenticity in separate ways through a multitude of indicators.

The element of intimacy is "associated with this belief that one really knows a politician" (Luebke, 2021, p. 643). This comes back to the perspective of performed political authenticity, as it is related to the congruence between a politician's public and private performance. When politicians display and share more of their non-public life, through sharing intimate details of their life and increasing their "appearances in non-public contexts" (p. 644), voters can grow in their esteem of the politician's authenticity.

Ordinariness is about the idea that voters need to be able to relate to politicians and get the feeling that they perform their jobs in a way that any regular person could (Luebke, 2021, p. 644). One of the key indicators of ordinariness is mistakes as a result of imperfections (p. 644). Mistakes could also be interpreted strategic failures, but when they are a result of individual imperfections, mistakes can contribute to a politician's perceived authenticity in a positive way. Other indicators that contribute to a politician's ordinariness are being 'down-to-earth' and a certain degree of amateurism in their communication forms (pp. 644-45). This element also involves mediated political authenticity, as use of social media platforms is also a contributor to bringing politicians closer to voters and making them seem more normal, especially if the indicator of amateurism is present in how politicians use social media.

Meanwhile, transparency means that the character of a politician is accurately represented in their outward politics (Jones, 2016, p. 490). It is one thing to be authentic in your own person, to uphold the views that are part of your identity, but it is another thing to actually express those views towards others. Because politics contains within itself a constant involvement with other people that is required for progress, this is an element that is specific to politics, and without accurate representation of politicians' identity, authentic politics is impossible. However, an important caveat is that while accurate representation is necessary, complete representation is not required, and there are aspects of a politician's private life for which they are owed privacy (p. 497).

Immediacy refers to the construction of authenticity through "real-time communication reflecting spontaneous thoughts from a politician's mind without revision or reflection" (Luebke, 2021, p. 645). This is related to both the performed and perceived approaches to political authenticity. If speech is not immediate but envisioned beforehand, politicians' performance loses in authenticity because there is a lack of spontaneity and emotion, both indicators of immediacy (pp. 645-46). Furthermore, voters are likely to perceive the politician as less authentic too, in the face of the same indicators, alongside the fact that there is a lack of a shared present world that is shared between the politician and the audience (p. 645).

Lastly, consistency refers to both the similarity of politician's deeds over time and the congruence of their deeds with the public's expectations (Luebke, 2021, pp. 642-43). Especially the second part of this definition is of great importance, as authentic action, that necessarily shows the personality and character of the agent, necessarily changes depending on new situations and circumstances. The only constant in this form of action is the character on which it is based, so when, for example, economic circumstances change, a politician may advocate for different monetary and fiscal policies. In a way, this type of action can still be considered consistent, because it is consistent with a person's character and core beliefs. However, from an original viewpoint that does not take the circumstances into account, it can also be viewed as inconsistent when a politician advocates for higher interest rates in one year and lower rates in another year. This is where it is important that expectations are taken into account, as those do take into account which environment politicians are working in.

This conceptualisation, and other papers that also cover political authenticity, are often motivated by the increased popularity of the term in political coverage and debates (see also Stiers et al., 2021; Luebke & Engelmann, 2022). There is also evidence that voters value in politics at the same level as virtues such as integrity and competence (Valgarðsson et al., 2021).

While this conceptualisation is helpful to understand political authenticity, there are holes in it which need to be addressed. Most notably, it places too much emphasis on the construction of authenticity in the elements, while the definition focuses more on authenticity as something innate. This leaves it vulnerable to inconsistencies such as the fact that activities which have been described as constraining authenticity might still reflect the identity of the politician, but

which seemingly still limit authenticity because of the elements that allow its construction. As I will detail later, ghostwritten speeches could be authentic in the general definition, but be described as inauthentic due to a lack of the associated elements. Describing the elements as part of the innate definition could remedy this, as speech it would necessitate a transparent, immediate, consistent, ordinary, and intimate representation of a politician's identity for their speech and action to be considered authentic.

3.   Authenticity in THC

For the fact that I have bound myself to the concept of political authenticity, the task ahead is much less challenging. Covering the general authenticity in the Arendtian conception of human life would have sprung many questions about the equivalency between labour, work, and action and how humans are authentic in each activity of human life. In Arendt (1958/1998, p. 7), political authenticity is necessarily identified with action, because action and the condition of plurality which it corresponds to is a strictly political activity. Much of what follows in this section is dedicated to discussions revolving around the concepts related to action and many of the definitions will be related to the disclosure of the agent. For me, this concept is what links Arendt and THC most to political authenticity for reasons that I will explain more. Furthermore, I will not make use of any source other than THC, because I want this paper to solely reflect my own reading of Arendt and keep the reading of other authors that link Arendt to authenticity outside this scope.

In what follows, I will first define politics through THC by associating it with the condition of plurality and human action. Then, I will link political action to authenticity to authenticity by a direct effect of action, the disclosure of the agent inherent to action, further talking about other effects of action and disclosure such as the creation of a story. Finally, another aspect of action, unpredictability, is brought into the discussion further illustrate the innate relationship between action and authenticity.

First, for Arendt, all of politics comes back to the condition of plurality, i.e., sheer human togetherness with both equality and uniqueness as men, as the condition without which it necessary cannot exist (Arendt, 1958/1998, pp. 175-76; p. 7). It is important to note that this equality does not refer to any qualities, endowments, or skills of men, as it is clear that this is not equal between men, but simply the fact that they are all born as humans makes them

equal. It is in this plurality that men act together, in that their words and deeds are acted upon each other, which creates a common world consisting in these relationships which constitutes a political realm (p. 198). Action, which creates something new through words and deeds, is the paramount human capacity because it is prompted only by our existence in a world with other men, and it is possible because all men are uniquely capable of new beginnings (pp. 176-77). Thus, all action that consists in plurality, where men are the subjects and initiators of action, can be considered political according to Arendt. Moreover, it is in political activity that men can generate power, the potentiality not characterised by strength or violence, but by organisation of men acting together through deeds and words (pp. 199-200). It is a boundless potentiality in the same way that action is boundless, as action creates new action that can generate more power through the establishment of new associations of men (p. 191). These are some of the most basic aspects of what Arendt identifies as politics, and it is noteworthy that concepts such as hierarchical rule and legislating, aspects of contemporary politics through parliaments and heads of government, are not part of this core. Though they are related one way or another, they do not make up they key definition of politics, which consists in plurality.

In turn, the human condition of plurality and the acting together that constitutes the political realm generates a set of ripple effects that forms its relationship to political authenticity. Most prominently, this is the disclosure of the agent that is inherent to all action. Disclosure is a phenomenon that occurs in both speech and action, but is mostly related to speech as the act that is most closely related to plurality (p. 178). Because men are all unique individuals despite the fact that they all share their manhood equally, disclosure is relevant because it reveals men's personalities, which distinguish them from other men (p. 179). This is clearly tied to authenticity, because the identity that is disclosed in true action and speech is the authentic personality of a person. The reason why this disclosure is necessarily authentic is because the agent, before acting, is always unaware of the identity that they are disclosing to others (p. 180). Because of this, there is always an element of risk and courage in action. Furthermore, because authenticity depends on disclosure, which is not constructed but revealed, authenticity itself can also not be constructed according to the Arendtian view, unlike the traditional approach which is more hybrid.

Conversely, action that does not involve disclosure is unable to still be called action, because it is necessarily the result of one of two possible and interrelated scenarios involving a loss of speech or plurality. Firstly, it could be that there is no disclosure because action is not accompanied by the speech necessary for disclosure, a scenario in which there may be an act, but it has lost its relevance to others because it has foregone its relationship-building capacity in favour of utilitarian ends (pp. 178-79; pp. 183-84). Secondly, it could be a result of a lack of plurality in the acted deed, which is also associated with a lack of speech. Action, without plurality, turns it into an activity that can be done for or against other men, rather than with them, and this is a development that occurs prominently in war (p. 180). In each case, action has lost its capacity to create meaning in human existence through plurality, because the moment it loses its agent-revealing capacity, it is relegated to the same category of work, where possibility of meaning is foregone for the utility in the finished product (pp. 154-55; pp. 180-81).

This action that involves authentic disclosure always creates a story of the act and the agent it reveals, giving them a unique status as a product of human hands, i.e., action, that says something about the person who created it (p. 184). Other human products, such as works of art, do not reveal who produced it to the degree that action reveals the actor. However, the peculiarity of this story is that the actor can never be the author of their own story despite the fact that it came about through their own actions, and the storyteller is the only person whose account of an act and actor can be trusted (p. 184; p. 192). Actors may present a truthful account of the proceedings of the act, but it is only after its conclusion in the hands of the storyteller that the identity of the actor can be revealed. This means that, while action is necessarily authentic, we are unable to know what the actor's authentic personality is before the conclusion of their act.

Furthermore, where politicians attempt to keep action predictable, it has also ceased to be authentic within these parameters. As we have seen, action that is not agent-revealing ceases to be action at all, because of the fact that plurality, the defining condition of action, always leads to disclosure. Thus, action, by definition, is always authentic. However, speech and plurality are not the sole characteristics of action and their characteristics also make it so that action is necessarily unpredictable. Unpredictability is inherent to action because of the plurality in which it occurs, where an act of one individual can trigger more acts from other unique individuals, which the initiator can never know before they start their act (p. 244). If

action were predictable, this means that the subjects of the act were not equal men that are also capable of action, but men that are somehow constrained in their capacity to act and react. In this scenario, a supposedly public realm has assumed the character of a household, which is not characterised by plurality, but strict hierarchy constraining the capacities of otherwise equal men (p. 32).

However, this is not true for all characteristics of action, which can be seen in the aspect of boundlessness. For the same reason of plurality, boundlessness is inherent to action, wherein deeds and words break through existing boundaries around the human world, establishing new relationships that form new boundaries and limits that will eventually get broken by new acts that form relationships (pp. 190-91). This constant establishment of new boundaries is dependent on plurality, without which action is not acted and spoken upon equal men. Nevertheless, when action does not appear to be cutting across boundaries, establishing relationships that did not previously exist, the act does not cease to be action, because there are remedies against it that do not arise from the activity itself. These remedies are the various laws and institutions that form and determine the course of politics and keep political action within bounds, but nonetheless plural (p. 191). Meanwhile, the remedy for unpredictability is the capacity to make promises, which arises out of the activity itself and is a direct potentiality of action (pp. 236-37). Moreover, promises can only ever pertain to a single action as "isolated islands of certainty in an ocean of uncertainty" (p. 244). As such, action still retains its unpredictable character, merely remedied in certain acts that were the results of promises.

In sum, authenticity is a defining quality of action according to Arendt. If action were inauthentic, it could not be action because the condition of plurality makes inauthenticity an impossibility. If authenticity involves an accurate portrayal of a politician's identity, the aforementioned element of transparency, this means that the Arendtian conception of authentic action necessarily involves disclosure of the politician, in which their identity becomes known to those who observe their action. In essence, authenticity in this case always depends on the eye of the beholder, as authenticity loses all its worldly meaning without plurality. Authenticity, through the Arendtian lens, is a virtue because it, through action and speech, inserts people into a plural world where we can find meaning by establishing relationships with others. Through the Arendtian lens, authenticity is a virtue because "a life without speech and without action […] has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among men" (p. 176), which means that the meaning of life is found in action, the only activity that makes life a specifically human life.

4. Political authenticity in contemporary age

Now that the task of defining lies behind me, the question that remains pertains to the same question that Arendt tried to answer in the final part of THC: 'What now?' Just as she did, I will apply the concept of political authenticity according to Arendt to the modern age and analyse how certain modern political developments stifle or enhance political action and, because they are inherently tied, political authenticity. In particular, I will discuss the merits of the Arendtian approach compared to the traditional approach to political authenticity, using examples around political parties, speechwriting, and action in international organisations (IOs) to illustrate my case. Lastly, I will discuss the desirability of authenticity and the effects of considering authenticity a virtue.

a. Political parties

Secondly, the authenticity of legislators, but also other political actors, is compromised by the existence of political parties. For politicians, parties are helpful because they provide an infrastructure towards engaging with politics, providing logistical support for electoral campaigns, funding, and more. But, a collateral effect of this institution is the loss of authenticity for politicians that are a part of them. During election campaigns, candidates may still be able to act authentically to market themselves and their party to voters and in this way, different candidates for the same party can distinguish themselves through their electoral campaigns, which applies to any electoral system.

However, once elected, this authentic expression may be stifled for the sake of party unity. Members of the legislature and executives that represent a party may be forced to follow the party line in certain votes, propagate talking points that the party has determined, and engage in other acts that reflect the party program more than the politician's personality. In any of these scenarios, the authenticity of the act no longer lies within the politician, but within the initiating party, who can be considered a singular actor in these outward expressions. The politicians are actors nonetheless, but their role within the act is limited to the execution of the initiative of the party. This can also be compared to the way Greek and Latin differentiated between *archein* and *agere*, which are defined as 'beginning' and 'setting into motion', and *prattein* and *gerere,* which are defined as 'achieving', 'finishing', and 'bearing' (Arendt,

1958/1998, p. 189). The beginner, also interpreted later as the ruler, is the actor whose identity is disclosed through their initiative and represents the party in our case. The executor, who represents the politician, is equally part of the act and plays a role in ensuring the act is achieved, but their act is much less authentic because they are dependent on the beginning to act at all, and therefore do not disclose to the same degree. Their act does result in disclosure, because that is in the character of an act, but they need to be capable of beginning as much as the beginner they were once following. Otherwise, their capacity to act is stifled, which consequently diminishes their ability to disclose and be authentic politicians.

Moreover, because of this factional system that allows some to begin acts and holds some to following those beginnings, the plural society of the legislature has vanished in favour of a hierarchical system that is antithetical to any plural society. Within the Greek polis, equality was the defining feature that allowed it to be the realm of freedom and a space of appearance where men could act, speak and form relationships (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 31; pp. 198-99). Without this equality, the public realm in which the space of appearance for action and speech is formed, could not exist, as it is the power of acting together which keeps it alive (p. 200). When the legislature loses its equality between members, it loses its status as a public realm where politicians can act without being forced into the necessities found in private life and the utility necessary for work (p. 177). Thus, the hierarchy of political parties threatens the very fabric of the political institution of the legislature.

b. *Political speechwriting*

Much of political authenticity is concerned with the communication of politician's values. A key way this can be accomplished is through speeches, which arise in a myriad of ways. For one, there is a distinction between the spoken word and those that are spread on social media. Even though political speech on social media is not uttered out loud, it is speech all the same in the way that communicates values through words and not deeds. The relevance of speechwriting cannot be understated in this discussion, as political speeches especially are often produced beforehand and rarely arise improvisationally and spontaneously (Reisigl, 2008, p. 243). In this chapter, I will detail the process of speechwriting and compare how an Arendtian approach differs from a traditional approach to authenticity.

In speechwriting, it is important to note that it is not a uniform practice and different politicians take different approaches to it, but the practice has increased in importance to politicians as a whole (Kjeldsen et al., 2019, p. 95). However, there is a selection bias in research like this, because they tend to focus on the higher offices of political institutions, where speeches hold more weight as they reach a larger audience and almost invariably employ speechwriters (see also Smith, 1976; Einhorn, 1982). Parliamentarians and other politicians of smaller parties might make less use of speechwriters, simply because of the lesser reach of their speeches.

Nonetheless, the task of speechwriters in official political institutions has increased over time and it has been integrated with official bureaucratic procedure that often comprises many steps. To accomplish the final goal of a written speech ready to be delivered, speechwriters must first take a number of steps to ensure its quality, related to the speaker and their style, audience, setting, and required content (Kjeldsen et al., 2019, pp. 97-99; pp. 187-88). Even among speechwriting groups, there are specific and delineated roles between researchers, writers, and media consultants (Smith, 1976). Their influence is dependent on a few factors; for speechwriters as a whole, it depends on their closeness to the style and rhetoric of the politician and the extent of their expertise (p. 60; Einhorn, 1982, p. 42). However, this imitation largely resulted in "colourless and conservative" (p. 42) speeches that lacked the character that a speech would have without the intervention of speechwriters. For media consultants specifically, it likely depends on the extent and salience of mediated political authenticity in the grand scheme of a politician's authenticity. Their specific task is related to image and as such they have a great influence on which parts of the campaign are prioritised, especially if political authenticity is mediated to a large degree (Smith, 1976, pp. 64-65). The whole study of speechwriting involves more than this, but the core tasks of speechwriters do not extend further than how I have described them here.

Clearly, the practice of speechwriting, in which the words that politicians use, do not spring from their own minds but from the pens of a team around them, that paints a caricature of a politician's values, taints some of the politician's authenticity. A traditional approach to political authenticity might relate it to an element such as immediacy. Speechwriting makes speeches lack their natural immediacy, which is measured at the time of speaking. As authenticity in this sense is about the communication of a politician's personality and the way

they are able to represent this, written speeches, and especially ghostwritten speeches, prevent this from resulting in a naturally authentic way.

Nonetheless, there are some holes in this approach which can be supplanted by taking an Arendtian approach to speechwriting. Mainly, it fails to get at the difference between constructed and innate authenticity which I mentioned in the literature review. Despite being written, a speech could still contain the inner values and character of the politician for whom it was written, while lacking in immediacy or any other element. In the Arendtian understanding, political speechwriting presents a similar issue to authenticity as the traditional approach, but this failure is not present due to the logical precepts of the disclosure of the politician.

Mainly, the ghostwritten speech is damaging to the disclosure of the politician that would otherwise naturally occur through speech. Disclosure is the revelation of distinctness of men, and the result of speechwriting is speeches which lack the colour and character of authentic speech (see paragraph 3). This conservatism in contemporary speechwriting fails to reveal the politician's distinct identity, and therefore makes it an inauthentic process. It does disclose some of the identity of the author, but because this author is often not identifiable as the speech is often written by a multitude of actors (see paragraph 3), it is unknown who is exactly being disclosed and as such, it does not produce a story of the politician.

Key in this understanding is the idea that the identity that is disclosed is necessarily unknown before it is disclosed. The written speech, be it by the politician themselves or a team around them, is unable to disclose the identity of the speaker no matter how hard they try, because disclosure through speeches only happens when politicians speak on their own initiative, bearing full responsibility for the risk in the potential outcome. It is impossible for either politicians or speechwriters to grasp or describe the identity of the speaker while writing the speech, as

> the moment we want to say who somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying what he is; we get entangled in a description of qualities he necessarily shares with others like him; we begin to describe a type or a "character" in the old meaning of the word, with the result that his specific uniqueness escapes us. (Arendt 1958/1998, p.

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Furthermore, the life story of the politician, which is supposed to reveal their identity, the "who" in the above quote, is tainted by this process. While the identity cannot be verbally described, the identity can be observed through politicians' words and deeds, which naturally create a life story. The politician, the actor, can only create this story by acting and speaking, and it is impossible to be authored by themselves or anyone else (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 184). When the story does not consist of words that were initiated by the politician themselves, it does not tell the story of the supposed actor, but of those that have authored their words. Especially when a group of people is responsible for authoring politicians' speeches, and there are different people in charge of writing them throughout their career, the story becomes fully unclear, as the result of team work in writing speeches make it so that, eventually, the identities of so many people are merged that none become clear at all.

Thus, any written speech obstructs political authenticity in the Arendtian understanding, leading to the conclusion that there are few acts more authentic than the improvised speech, in which the actor speaks with the fewest number of barriers possible. There are still barriers in societal expectations and standards, but these exist in any other form of action where mediators are present. Where a politician improvises their speech, this is the closest we can get to full authentic disclosure not present in any other form of action. Compared to written speeches, improvisation is much less inherently methodical and calculated and allows for more authentic expression. Of course, politicians who are in their identity methodical and calculated will still speak in that way when they are improvising, but the fact that they are improvising more clearly differentiates them from politicians whose identity involves much less calculation and consideration. In the case of the latter, the difference is more distinctly observed between improvised and non-improvised speech, which involves any speech that has received consideration before the situation in which it occurs, be it in thought or on paper.

In a more traditional understanding of authenticity, improvisation might not be considered as beneficial, as there are other elements focused on a more effective construction of authenticity than the representation of a politician's unique personality. Improvisation places more attention on the innate self, and traditional frameworks might overlook this element, alongside other elements that are more about the innate self as a result.

c. *Action in IOs*

Political acts, those that are not speech, also have a bearing on political authenticity. Speeches are often about (intended) political action, but they have a different element of authenticity because it is merely about the words, which can also convey other elements than (intended) action. An authentic act refers solely to the actual deeds of the politician. While multiparty democracy necessitates that deeds in parliament, such as legislation and motions, are the result of deliberation and compromise, authenticity is still analysable in political action. Here, I will talk about how action originates and is managed in political institutions through organisational script-writing and the benefit of using Arendt in this framework.

Within official organisations, the behaviour of political actors is constrained in a different way through a process Kentikelenis and Seabrooke (2017) have dubbed 'organisational script-writing' (OSW), which refers to the processes that "codify norms in prescriptive behavioural templates" (p. 1066). Opposed to authentic forms of action, scripted action lacks the individuality needed for authentic expression and homogenises organisational actors to a state where their deeds are no longer able to be authentic expressions of the individuals. This framework was created to understand how policies emerge in IOs, and is therefore not fully applicable to national institutions, which contain political actors all the same. As such, I will not generalise this theory to national institutions, and understand it solely within IOs. From their framework, OSW occurs through a process that involves both organisational staff, those with topic-specific knowledge and expertise, a board of directors comprised of decision-makers, and the interactions between them (pp. 1068-69).

In IOs, the strength of scripts can be determined by analysing those interactions between the experts and the decision-makers, leading to four possible outcomes based on how active the experts are at attempting to create new policy and how much oversight and attention the decision-makers give to them (Kentikelenis & Seabrooke, 2017, pp. 1069-70). Firstly, scripts are considered stable and thoroughly overseen when consistent policy activity is paired with heavy attention. Secondly, they are considered consensual when consistent activity is combined with little attention, as the board will not spend much time on a policy if the script that it is based on is disputed. Thirdly, they are seen as contested when inconsistent activity still attracts much attention, as the experts in the staff have little basis, i.e., established norms, to initiate new policies. Lastly, there is no clear script when there is a lack of both consistent

activity and attention, the authors assume that policies are created on an ad-hoc basis.

Within the traditional framework, OSW might be related to authenticity through the element of intimacy. How they are related becomes clear through an example given in the article of how a consensual script supporting the implementation of a value-added tax (VAT) emerged within the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (p. 1074). This script was followed by the staff members and led to the implementation of a VAT in many countries where the IMF assisted with tax reform (p. 1076). IMF staff engaged in this through their policy script, and as such, there was little intimacy regarding the cooperating staff. States where these reforms took place and observers of IMF policies could not identify whether the policies put forward by these staff members reflected their true opinions, especially if these staff members were not employed when the script emerged or involved with its emergence. This creates the same problem identified in the introductory example, where evaluations of individual actors within the IMF were complicated.

From the Arendtian perspective, the issue of OSW with political authenticity revolves around the presence of plurality. Within this idea, there is a separation between the stages of script emergence and institutionalisation. While a script emerges, there is still a form of plurality within the IOs. There is a hierarchy between the experts who execute policy and boards who oversee them, but script-writing still depends on interactions between them (Kentikelenis & Seabrooke, 2017, pp. 1068-69). Thus, the interactions through which scripts are written have a degree of equality within them, as the lower-level employees still have a say in their policy preferences. This does not contain all the true characteristics of an act, because policy scripts emerge out of utilitarian motives of codifying norms at an institutional level as well as the human drive to create beginnings (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 177). Nonetheless, they can be political acts to a certain degree, because the utility of scripts is secondary to the overtly political process of intra-organisational interactions that create scripts.

However, when a script has emerged that is followed by the IO, that aspect of plurality has altogether disappeared. First, the roles of boards and staff are delineated and separated again, creating a clear hierarchy within the organisation that goes against the precepts of a plural society where people can act equally. Secondly, the distinctness that adds the human aspect to plural societies has also disappeared from IOs. With the existence of scripts, both the

overseeing board and the executing staff have no room to distinguish themselves through their acts, as they are forced into a policy script where actors have no opportunity to deviate from it by advancing different policies and different methods of policy implementation, which their distinct personality might allow for.

d. Authenticity as a virtue

Finally, there is a debate about the desirability that already existed among existing papers that is changed by the Arendtian interpretation of authenticity. One side of this debate portrays authenticity as an unattainable ideal, that demonises hypocrisy too much and distracts from more harmful acts (Jones, 2016, pp. 499-500). In this view, hypocrisy is inevitable and should therefore not be considered too harmful, as politics forces politicians into roles that never represent themselves (pp. 493-94; p. 500). The rebuke against this idea focuses on the value that viewing authenticity as a virtue provides for preventing politicians' inauthenticity as much as possible, by limiting the possibility to deceive about their views and conceal their identity and balancing political proceedings by not focussing everything on either rhetoric or authenticity (pp. 495-499).

Within the Arendtian framework, authenticity is changed to such a degree that deception is not possible because the content of disclosure can never be determined by the actor. If a politician attempts to deceive their audience by saying they are something they are, this will never refer to their identity, but always their qualities or talents, which are not part of their authenticity. In this view, hypocrisy is no longer demonised by valuing authenticity, as an authentic politician may still be a hypocritical one, so long as this is the identity that is disclosed. In this regard, authenticity is still a desirable virtue in politics, and the problem with valuing authenticity in politics has little to do with authenticity and more to do with how politics are executed. When politicians are forced to cater to other politicians and their voters, this is a direct challenge to the form of action, with disclosure of the agent as a core component, that Arendt values. Then, the course of action would not be to change our valuation of authenticity in politics, but to change politics to promote authentic action.

Nonetheless, problems persist that pertain to viewing authenticity as a virtue in terms of outcomes. As noted in a previous paragraph, there are always societal norms and standards that partly determine acts through words and deeds. These norms could be a safeguard to harmful action that may be authentic, but you could hardly argue that to be a positive. Consider an example where a society may espouse democratic norms, or even perhaps norms

that negatively view murder. An antidemocratic or murderous politician could express or act on these aspects of their identity, and be evaluated as an authentic politician in that case. However, a better outcome follows when this politician acts inauthentically, according to the norms that rule that society. This example may be extreme, but shows that it is important to view these virtues in the context where they appear and that they need not necessarily be positive or hold any weight.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, I have devoted myself to understanding the contemporary manifestation of political authenticity through, the existence of political parties, and improvised speech by the concepts of Hannah Arendt compared to previous approaches. Using the concepts of disclosure, action, politics, and storytelling as they were introduced in THC by Hannah Arendt, the way in which politicians are and can be authentic has become more clear. The value of approaching authenticity using her vocabulary has merit due to the uniqueness of her terminology and where she places emphasis in them. Concepts such as plurality, action, and disclosure elucidate aspects of politics and authenticity not previously recognised.

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