BUILDING TOMORROW'S CITI(ES)ZENS

HANNAH ARENDT ON CITIZENSHIP AND POLITICS IN THE SMART CITY

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With special thanks to my great love. For sharing your perspective on the world, for inspiring and challenging me. For reading draft versions and spending weekends editing. For the endless support and the ever more endless trust. Thank you so much, Ash.

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SUMMARY

In the past years the smart city discourse has gained a lot of attention in academic literature, government programs and corporate projects. The initial techno-centred approach to the smart city, as coined by multinationals, has been under fierce critique. Recently, in response to this critique, urban scholars have signalled a shift in the debate on smart cities from a techno-centred to a citizen-centric approach (Cardullo and Kitchen 2017, 2018; Joss et al. 2017; de Waal and Dignum 2017). All players in the field seem to propose a new smart city vision that places people rather than technology at its centre. However, what precise understanding the different parties have on the roles and responsibilities of citizens seem to differ, as well as their underlying ideologies (de Waal and Dignum 2017). The debate lacks clarity and sufficient theoretical grounding. A number of scholars (e.g. Zandbergen 2019) suggest there is a need to develop a (new) notion of citizenship in the smart city discourse grounded in political theory. In this thesis I aim to provide an alternative understanding of citizenship (and politics) – distinct from both liberal and republican traditions – as found in the work of Hannah Arendt (*The Human Condition*, *On Revolution* and a number of essays). This thesis analyses how we ought to understand citizenship in the smart city from an Arendtian perspective. Arendt's emphasizes on civic engagement and participation provides an uncontroversial alternative for the development of the future smart citi(es)zens. I propose the future smart city would benefit from a revival of Arendt's notion of citizenship and politics as digital technologies provide new possibility to organise society accordingly using digital democratic platforms that allow for direct participation. However, from an Arendtian perspective, we should not blindly follow the technological developments and shift all things political to a digital space. In a true smart city, we need an active citizenry that not only debates their differences online but that *act* together, can take collective initiative. As such, citizens – as civic friends – constitute a common world.

Wordcount: 22050 words

INTRODUCTION

We live in a digital age in which technology is playing an ever more crucial role. In the last decade the technological developments have grown exponentially: in particular artificial intelligence, 'big data', sensor technologies and the internet of thing (IoT) are making their way into society. In this changing field arose the image of the 'smart city': a technological utopia where life would be easier, better, faster, safer and more sustainable; where urban problems would be resolved by technologies; where (public) services would be optimized and decision-making automized. In Toronto, Canada, Sidewalk Labs is developing such a real-life technology paradise. On their website they promise to use digital advances to radically change the urban environment and tackle the challenges of urban growth. Their vision: "*By combining people-centered urban design with cutting-edge technology, we can achieve new standards of sustainability, affordability, mobility, and economic opportunity*".[1] Sidewalk Labs is just one of the 443 smart city projects spanning 286 cities worldwide (as reported in 2019).[2]

In the last years a number of scholars have signalled a shift in the smart city debate from technology oriented towards a citizen-centric approach to the smart city (Cardullo and Kitchen 2017, 2018; Joss et al. 2017; de Waal and Dignum 2017). Such a shift is evidently reflected in the emphasize on 'people-centred' in the above quotation of SideWalk Labs smart city vision. The discussion on smart cities is filled with buzzwords such as 'we-government' (Linders 2012), 'DIY-citizenship', 'co-creation' or 'co-production' (e.g. de Waal and Dignum 2017), 'active citizenship', 'smart citizens' (e.g. Zandbergen and Uitermark 2019), 'people-centred' (e.g. SideWalkLabs) etc. The renewed focus of both (local) governments and corporations on 'citizens' in the smart city is evident. However, it seems less clear what exact roles and responsibilities are assigned to citizens, governments and corporation.

Scholars are starting to link smart city visions to ideological (i.e. political philosophical) perspectives regarding citizenship: building on the assumption that smart city visions embed ideologies relating to roles and responsibilities of citizens (de Waal and Dignum 2017; Joss et al. 2017; Cardullo and Kitchen 2018; Zandbergen and Uitermark 2019). Joss et al. (2017) confirm that there is an explicit citizenship rationale guiding the smart city: however, they add, the concept is filled with contradictions and shortcomings (29). Some suggest different smart city visions are building on two distinct ideological traditions: respectively a civic-republic notion of citizenship and an individual-liberal notion (de Waal and Dignum 2017), while others argue a continuous neoliberal logic underlying the 'citizen-focused' smart city (Cardullo and Kitchen 2018). Ultimately, scholars agree the debate lacks clarity as the role of citizens in the smart city is ambiguous. There is according to these critical scholars a need for a new and more complex notion of urban citizenship. In other words, a need to rethink 'smart citizenship'.

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[1] "Sidewalk Labs." Sidewalk Labs. Accessed September 8, 2019. https://www.sidewalklabs.com/.

[2] "Smart City Tracker 2Q19." Energy Research. Accessed September 8, 2019. https://www.navigantresearch.com/reports/smart-city-tracker-2q19.

This thesis will be a contribution to the reconceptualization of (smart) citizenship drawing on the philosophical work of Hannah Arendt. The specific research question guiding this thesis is the following: *How ought we to understand – and (re)shape – citizenship in building the future 'smart' city?* Within the smart city discourse there are different visions of what the future smart city should look like. Depside their differences, the smart city visionaries all share one thing: they portray a vision of the ideal future city. They envision a city that is 'smart' because of its technological innovation, but, more fundamentally, rethink an entire societal ideal: they portray a new understanding of citizens sharing a public world and living together in a digitized world.[3] This brings us to a crucial question: what does citizenship and politics looks like in a city that is truly *smart*? How ought we to understand citizenship in the future smart city?

I will search for an answer to this question in the political philosophical theory of Arendt, drawing specifically on her magnus opium: *'The Human Condition'* [1958] (1959) (hereinafter referred to as "HC") and her later work *'On Revolution'* [1963] (2016) (hereinafter referred to as "OR") supplemented with a number of her essays.[4] First, I will provide a general outline of the smart city discourse and elaborate on the different ideologies underpinning the smart city visions (Chapter 1). I will describe the turn from a pure technology led ideal to the citizen centric approach. Throughout I will focus on the role of citizens in smart city discourses and the notions of citizenship they embed. We will see the smart city discourse can roughly

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[3] The smart city discourse talks about citizenship and politics on a local level without explicitly relating the local politics to the national or state level. Ordinarily political theories think about citizenship on the level of the nation state. However, in this thesis I will focus on citizenship on the level of the city and I will park the (relevant) question how to understand the cities citizens and local politics within the larger framework of democratic nation states.

[4] I.e. three essays written by Arendt: (1) "Labor, Work, Action" was originally a lecture held in 1964 at the *Divinity School of the University of Chicago* and published in *Explorations in the Faith and Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Boston/Dordrecht/Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987, p. 29-94); (2) "On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing" published in *Men in Dark Times* (New York/London/San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968, p.3-31) originally an acceptance speech held by Arendt in German for the Lessing Prize [1959]. (3) "Philosophy and Politics" is the third and last part of a series of presentations held in 1954 at the *Notre Dame University* and published in *Social Research*, vol. 57, nr1, 1990, p.73-103. These three essays are all part of a Dutch essay bundle *Politiek in donkere tijden: essays over vrijheid en vriendschap* (Amsterdam: Uitgevrij Boom, 1999). The bundle consists of six essays written by Arendt between 1954 and 1968. The essay "Philosophy and Politics" pre-dates her magnus opium: *The Human Condition* (1958). The other three appear around the same time Arendt published *On Revolution* (1963). The four essays and *On Revolution* all substantiate the crucial points made in the Human Condition. "Labor, Work, Action" provides a clear summary of the points and fundamental insights in the Human Condition. In both text Arendt focusses on the specificity of action and the decline of the public space in modernity. In the essays Philosophy and Politics that portrays Socrates and the essay on Lessing Arendt argues for the relation between action and thinking, and action and friendship (see *Politiek in donkere tijden,* 1999, p14-17). In these essays Arendt develops an ideal of civic friendship: a positive alternative to the tragic status of politics in modern age.

be divided into (i) the corporate smart city model building on neoliberal or libertarian ideals and (ii) the smart citizens model embedding a republican notion of politics and citizenship. However, both visions seem to be problematic. Therefore, in the next chapter, I will turn to the work of Hannah Arendt in search for a viable alternative vision on citizenship and politics in the future *smart* city. In chapter two, I will set out Arendt's critique on modernity and its lack of politics, as well as her positive alternative political theory and vision on citizenship. The following chapter analyses the smart city discourse through an Arendtian lens: with a specific focus on its political ideology and citizenship. I will formulate Arendt's critique to the dominant corporate smart city model: not merely for its neoliberal ideology, but more fundamentally, for its liberal underpinnings. Finally, I will propose how we ought to understand citizenship in the smart city discourse according to Arendt. That is, Arendt's understanding of active citizenship and participation in terms of political action and civic engagement of all citizens. I will suggest a form of direct democracy that allows for a dialogue between civic friends: not for the sake of consensus but in order for citizens to establish civic ties of solidarity and constitute a common world. Chapter four discusses a number of critical questions with regards to Arendt's political theory in relation to the smart city, specifically the components subjectivity (a possible shortcoming of Arendt's political theory itself) and spatiality (an Arendtian critique to the idea of an online smart city) in the digital age. I will conclude that in order for our future digital city to be truly *smart* we need to incorporate citizens: organise citizen participation not exclusively online, but use the digital means to allow for citizens to take the initiative: that is we need to establish a city where all citizens take politics upon themselves.

1. THE SMART CITY DISCOURSE

The first question is what exactly is the smart city? As scholars continuously point out there is little consensus on the exact meaning of the concept as it is associated with many different visions, interpretations, projects and ideas (Hollands 2008; Vanolo 2016; de Waal and Dignum 2017;). Definitions vary within the academic literature, policy documents and projects. Most commonly the idea of the smart city contains an element of 'technology' - i.e. ICTs, a digital network or a technological infrastructure throughout the city consisting of camera's, sensors and IoT - combined with the assumption that said technologies will solve urban problems (ranging from environmental problems to affordable housing), optimize the management of urban areas, and enhance the overall quality of life.

The smart city discourse can be traced back to several pre-existing urban imaginaries in academic literature. The discourse seems to draw specifically from the concept of Smart Growth within 'new urbanism' and the intelligent city (Vanolo 2016; Hollands 2008). However, as Vanolo (2016) points out, the smart city is not a pure academic concept. To the contrary, the term was primarily coined by (technology) corporations: and the smart city discourse was largely and mostly developed by these multinationals (3).[5] The choice for the adjective 'smart', then, was no coincidence: but reflects a certain normative vision and market-strategy. The smart city rhetoric suggests that technological innovation and ICTs will contribute to something *positive.* As Hollands (2008) rightly points out: "*what city does not want to be smart?*" (304).

The discourse quickly gained worldwide popularity both with governmental institutions as with corporations. Furthermore, the academic literature on 'smart cities' is vastly growing. In line with de Waal and Dignum (2017), this thesis approaches the smart city as a discourse: "*an ensemble of notions, ideas, concepts and categorisations through which meaning is allocated to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced in an identifiable set of practices*" (263-264). The collection of different smart city visions can be subdivided in three main sets of discourses (as done i.a. by de Waal and Dignum 2017; Cardullo and Kitchen 2018; and Hollands 2015): (i) the *control room* vision to the smart city, (ii) the *creative city* and (iii) the *smart citizens* vision. The first two can be categorised as the initial, and dominant, imaginaries of the smart city as envisioned by (corporate) proponents. I go with Hollands (2015) and call this 'the corporate smart city model'. The third is seen as counter discourse (mainly) to the control room vision of the smart city (de Waal and Dignum 2017, 268). The smart citizens model can be understood as an attempt to (not merely criticizes the corporate smart city) propose an alternative vision that allows for the benefits of technological developments.

1.1 The Corporate Smart city

The corporate smart city discourse can be subdivided in the technology focused control room vision and the creative city. The former focusses on the technology, with the key aspect being (i) the software and

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[5] Vanolo (2016) names Cisco and IBM as two of the frontrunners who started working on the idea of smart cities in the early nineties (3).

digital infrastructure in the city and (ii) the data which they generate, analyse and act on (Kitchen 2016, 2). In the control room all information gathered by technology is processed: based on these data the city is managed. Underlying the control room vision is the assumption that all meaningful flows and activity in the city can be sensed and measured; often in real-time. Kitchen speaks in this regard of the "*real-time data city*" (2). The proponents of this smart city vision argue the potential benefits of technologies to society, economy and environment (Kitchen 2016). Technology according to this view will be the solution to all managerial problems of the city: where data will provide answers for complex societal problems as well as facilitate - and automate - decision making processes (Kitchen 2013). In other words, technology is ascribed a key role in this smart city vision. At the heart lies a conviction that data and algorithms are (politically) neutral, that they facilitate a form of city-governance that is impartial, logic and rational (Kitchen 2013, 9). Hence, the smart city proponents see smart city projects as non-ideological evidenced-based endeavours that shall ultimately benefit everyone. The control room vision of the smart city is the dominant vision as coined by (technology) multinationals.

In the latter vision: the creative city, it is human capital enhanced by technology – rather than mere technology – which makes the city 'smart'. This vision focusses on the creation of an 'innovative milieu': by investing in the knowledge industry, smart citizens and the creative industry (de Waal and Dignum 2017, 267). Kitchen (2013) argues both forms of corporate smart city visions are truly techno-centred and business-led, promoting a corporate vision of smartness and entrepreneurial forms of urban governance, where unquestioned technologies are portrayed as the ultimate solution to urban problems, and (ICT) companies deliver the technological means to this end.

1.1.1 Underlying Notions of Citizenship

Underlying the corporate smart city discourse are specific notions of citizenship, so argue urban scholars (such as Vanolo 2016; de Waal and Dignum 2017).[6] Before continuing to explore how citizens are envisioned in the corporate smart city, we need to clarify how citizenship is commonly understood in this context. Citizenship is understood – as defined by de Waal and Dignum – not as a set of formal rights and obligations of members of a polity, but "*rather as a social process through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing right*" (264).

In the early days of the corporate smart city there was very little emphasize on citizens. The smart city was connected to an image of tall buildings, flashing lights and a telling *lack of people* (Vanolo 2016). Even today this visual image of the smart city continuous to be dominant, despite of the growing citizen-centric

vocabulary in the smart city discourse.[7] But what is the role of citizens in todays' corporate smart city discourse? Is the citizen-centric language rhetorical or does it signal an actual change?

Source: "How to Outsmart the Smart City." Security Intelligence, August 16, 2018. https://securityintelligence.com/outsmarting-the-smart-city/.

Vanolo (2016) analyses four alternative smart city imaginaries and concludes that in all citizens play a 'subaltern' role. Either, (i) citizens lack voice and are portrayed as an invisible and silent political subject or, (ii) they are subjects constantly monitored in a panoptic smart city which impacts their freedom, (iii) citizens are active as sensors producing data or (iv) the focus lies on citizens of the future rather than today's citizens.

Vanolo's analyses of the *passive* role reserved for citizens is shared by many urban scholars (Hollands 2015l de Waal and Dignum 2017; Cardullo and Kitchen 2018). Hollands (2015) argues the role of citizens is reduced to being in the right 'smartmentality' to accept the inevitable technical changes (74). In fact, he continuous, the corporate smart city relies on a largely compliant and accommodating citizenry in order to succeed (61). De Waal and Dignum (2017) add that citizens, in government run control rooms, "*are cast as subject of local government that operate on behalf of them, in order to protect them or nudge them in a particular direction that is understood as serving a public interest*" (266). Alternatively, citizens are portrayed as mere service users, that use personalised (digital) platforms to optimize their individual lives. Or, in the creative city, citizens are

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[7] One only has to do a google image search on "smart city" to see clear evidence of the lack of citizens in smart city images. Citizens are still not present in the visuals, or merely represented by a single symbol in a long list of smart city components (see for example: Morshed, Adnan Zillur. "Debunking the Smart-City Myth." The Daily Star, May 28, 2019. https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/the-grudging-urbanist/news/debunking-the-smart-city-myth-1749721.).

potential members of a creative class that need to be attracted and educated for the sake of innovation and competitiveness of the city (267).

Overarching these different roles attributed to citizens is a shared ideological understanding of citizenship underlying the corporate smart city discourse. As many critical urban scholars argue: the corporate smart city promotes a form of neoliberal (or libertarian) citizenship (Cardullo and Kitchen 2018; de Waal and Dignum 2017). Even though the business-led smart city discourse started to incorporate 'citizens' rhetoric into their visions, claiming to 'empower and improve lives of citizens', there seems to be no true *political* role for citizens: i.e. they lack political agency.

1.2 Critics: The Neoliberal grip on the Smart city

Critical urban scholars have voiced (several) concerns about the corporate smart city vision ranging from focussing on: "*issues of power, capital, equality, participation, citizenship, labour, surveillance and alternative forms of urbanism*" (Kitchen 2016, 3). Furthermore, the discourse has been scrutinized for being techno-centric, top-down and offering technocratic examples of solutionism as well as serving the interest of corporations and governments rather than improving the quality of life for actual citizens (de Waal and Dignum 2017, 263). One of the most fundamental critiques to these smart city models – and arguably at the root of all comments - is their hidden political economic ideology: neoliberalism (Hollands 2008, 2015; Vanolo 2014; Kitchen, 2016; Cardullo and Kitchen 2017, 2018). Critics argue that the business-led smart city is built on this clear normative and ideological agenda, contrary to its own claim of being non-ideological, pragmatic, logic and overall *free of politics*. To understand these critical claims, it is relevant to describe to some extent the meaning of 'neoliberalism'.

1.2.1 Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is not an established (political) philosophy or movement, and people do not self-identify as being 'neoliberal'. Rather, the concept is wielded mostly by critics, while those referred to as neoliberals deny its very existence. Neoliberalism has its ideological roots in classical liberalism of the 18th century: an ideology that connects private property to individual liberty. According to this view: "*an economic system based on private property is uniquely consistent with individual liberty, allowing each to live her life -including employing her labour and her capital — as she sees fit*" (Gaus et al. 2018). In other words, a free market based on private property is seen as a realization of individual freedom. The return to classical liberalism is explained as a response to the economic stagnation and increasing public debt in the post-war welfare state under the Keynesian model of economics (Smith 2019). Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman are often portrayed as the frontrunners of this new read on classical liberalism (or according to critics: neoliberalism).

An important philosophical critique on neoliberalism comes from Wendy Brown who, in her work '*Undoing the Demos*' (2017), argues neoliberal ideology is marking the end of true democratic politics. At the core of

her analysis lies an understanding of neoliberalism as a 'governmental rationality'[8] in line with the work of Michel Foucault.[9] Both authors understand neoliberalism not as a mere political policy but as "*an order of normative reason that, when it becomes ascendant, takes shape as a governing rationality extending a specific formulation of economic values, practices, and metrics to every dimension of human life*" (30). Brown argues that under neoliberal rationality there is a widespread economization of all domains, activities and subjects.

One of Brown's arguments is specifically relevant with regards to citizenship in the neoliberal smart city model. According to Brown neoliberal rational reconfigures human beings as market actors (35). Through 'soft power' (another concept lent from Foucault) the individual is disciplined to understand the world and herself in terms of the market: as a 'human capital'. According to Brown such disciplining of the subject marks the end of *homo politicus*: that part of human beings concerned with society, the common and with one's relation to the common. That is, the subject with democratic aspirations such as deliberation (94). In contrast the neoliberal citizens become focussed on the accumulation of their own capital rather than oriented towards public and shared value. In other words, under neoliberalism the human subject is reconfigured as: "*always, only, and everywhere homo oeconomicus*" (33). This has, according to Brown, disastrous consequences for western (liberal) democracies: as the 'demos' is replaced by the market. Brown's analyses of modern society seem particularly relevant in the corporate smart city discourse with its focus on the marketization of all urban problems.

1.2.2 Neoliberal Bias and Corporate Smart City Citizenship
As mentioned before the corporate smart city discourse emphasizes the non-ideological nature of technology. One of the key assumptions is that algorithms and data are neutral: i.e. are value-free and can therefore be used to govern the city in an objective manner. However, data, algorithms and technologies are never neutral (Kitchen 2013, 9; de Waal and Dignum 2017, 267). Data do not simply reflect an objective reality and algorithms are programmed and optimized for certain pre-set values. In other words, technologies do embed ideologies of its designers.[10]

Hollands (2008) was among the first to argue that the true motivation behind smart city models is economical in nature: or alternatively, is built on neoliberal ideology. The smart city's rhetorical claims to environmental sustainability and social innovation, he continuous, hide the true profit motivations of IT

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[8] "Governmentality" principle of Foucault see p. 108 lecture four, February 1978. The concept combines government with rationality. At the centre is an emphasizes on power (The state) as the governor of human conduct. Government regulates and governs the behaviour of citizenry (Huff 2013).

[9] Specifically, Foucault's lectures on *The birth of biopolitics* in 1978-79

[10] The argument that technology is not value-neutral is voiced often both in academia and with civic organisations. Mireille Hildebrandt - Professor of Smart Environments Data Protection and the Rule of Law at the Radboud University is a prominent name in the Netherland regarding this topic.

firms.[11] He argues that the discourse merges business competitiveness with social well-being while being unconcerned with class inequality, inclusion and issues of social justice (311-2). Such merging reflects a fundamental neoliberal value: that market forces will generate welfare and social order. These ideological underpinnings shape the way technology is designed, and to what end.

The business-led model of the smart city causes a corporatisation of city governance (Hollands 2015; Kitchen 2013). As the economic logic embedded in the model is making its way into public services: i.e. engender a shift from the public to the private sector (311). Public services are no longer delivered by government agencies but increasingly brought to the market or carried out by public-private partnerships. Here too the neoliberal bias is reflected. The corporate smart city optimizes for the market and the economy under the header of benefiting all. In reality, so argue critics, it prioritizes the market over other social and public values (such as equality or privacy). Kitchen (2013) indicates technological solutions do not solve deep rooted structural problems in cities as they do not address their root causes: "*Rather they only enable the more efficient management of the manifestations of those problems*" (9).

In essence the critical urban scholars seem to criticize the ideological turn embedded in the smart city. An ideology that puts the economy and marketization at its core. The critics articulate a concern that the market is *not* the ultimate solution to all societal problems; specifically, they show market forces lack the capability to adequately deal with social justice. In the smart city discourse, there is the particular concern that the neoliberal ideological bias embedded in the model is hidden behind a veil of supposed objectivity. An objectivity that is rooted in a firm technocratic believe in the neutrality of technology. Overall, the proponents of the corporate smart city focus on technological benefits, while disregarding their wider consequences (Kitchen 2016, 3). Even more critical is the concern that the neoliberal rational embedded in the smart city is fundamentally changing western society in terms of politics and citizenship (in line with Wendy Brown) (Hollands 2015; Vanolo 2016; Kitchen 2016; Cardullo and Kitchen 2018; de Waal and Dignum 2017). Not only are corporate smart city models serving the interest of corporations (and governments) rather than improving the lives of actual citizens (de Waal and Dignum 2017, 263), the discourse leaves little room for ordinary people to participate. Kitchen (2016) for example argues that the top-down technocratic forms of governance replace more citizen-centred deliberative models of democracy. De Waal and Didgum take it a step further and argue the smart city is depoliticised: as important decisions regarding the management of public values are obscured and democratic control is therefore impaired. The technological processes furthermore lack transparency and accountability.

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[11] The smart city technology market has indeed been a booming business in the past years and is expected to rise to 263 billion in 2028. See: https://www.smartcitiesworld.net/news/news/navigant-tracks-smart-city-project s-around-the-world-4296

The neoliberal smart city discourse is changing our understanding of citizenship: and reduces it to a non-political form. The hyperindividualism underlying the neoliberal ethos undermines collective imaginations of citizenship, solidarity and mutual responsibility (de Waal and Dignum 2017). Overall, the role of citizens is mere instrumental and passive: they are reduced to consumers rather than citizens playing a role of political significance (Cardullo and Kitchen 2017). Or as Brown would state it: the smart city discourse – with its neoliberal rational – is reconfiguring human subjects as *homo economics* instead of political beings.

1.3 Alternative: Progressive Smart City and Smart Citizens

In response to the corporate vision on the smart city – and its shortcomings – the 'smart citizens' discourse was developed (de Waal and Dignum 2017, 268). A central role in this discourse is attributed to citizens. It argues for a shift in the power balance between governments and business, and citizens. People ought to be at the core of the smart city model, rather than technology. To achieve such a true 'citizen-centred' approach to the smart city an emphasizes is placed on participation and active forms of citizenship. Citizens should be involved in the production and creation of smart city projects (Kitchen 2016). Not only is citizen participation desirable for the empowerment of citizens, digital technologies provide new possibilities to realise new modes of (direct) participation: e.g. digital means could be used by citizens to define collective issues and organise themselves around these (De Waal and Dignum 269; Vanolo).[12] In the smart citizens discourse citizens can co-design the smart city, they can use data to organise local communities around particular issues or to hold governments accountable (Zandbergen and Uitermark 2019).[13]

The discourse started with citizens and civic organisation. Particularly in Europe, the smart citizens discourse found its way to a governmental level. The European Innovation Partnership for Smart Cities and Communities funds projects that are explicitly 'citizen-focussed' (Cardullo and Kitchen 2018). In these smart citizens projects citizens are portrayed as either, 'co-creators' or 'co-producers', as 'smart citizens' practicing 'citizen science' or 'DIY-citizenship' or participating in 'we-government'. As Zandbergen and Uitermark (2019) point out such labels gesture towards the active role of citizens in shaping the smart city. DECODE is an illustrative example of such European project, where fourteen partners – ranging from municipalities to civic organisations – are working on providing tools that "*put individuals in control of whether they keep their personal information private or share it for the public good.*"[14] Waag[15] – one of the partner organisations – contributes to the projects by arranging pilots and open participatory innovation with a focus on

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[12] For such a direct democratic approach see DECIDIM Barcelona: "Free Open-Source Participatory Democracy for Cities and Organizations." Decidim. Accessed September 8, 2019. http://decidim.org/.

[13] See for example the project 'Hollandse Luchten' by Waag as described in Zandbergen and Uitermark 2019 or Waag. "Hollandse Luchten." Waag. Waag. Accessed September 8, 2019. https://waag.org/en/project/hollandse-luchten.

[14] "What Is DECODE?" DECODE, May 15, 2017. https://decodeproject.eu/what-decode.

[15] Waag. Accessed September 8, 2019. https://waag.org/.

"*stakeholder engagement and cocreation methodologies*". That is to say, they work with citizens and incorporate citizens perspectives, as well as institutionalize ways for citizens to have a more active role in the smart city (e.g. have control of their data).

1.3.1 Ideological Turn from Liberal or Libertarian to Republican Citizenship

A handful of scholars have linked the shift from the techno-centric to the citizen-centred smart city to a changing perception of citizenship throughout the discourse (de Waal and Dignum 2017; Joss et al. 2017; Zandbergen and Uitermark 2019).De Waal and Dignum argue smart city visions embed ideologies linked to roles and responsibilities of citizens. The authors connect different smart city visions – respectively the control room, the creative city and the smart citizens – to ideological perspectives regarding citizenship. On the one hand they identify the control room and the creative city (which I address as the corporate smart city discourse) that built on liberal or liberation notions of citizenship (see paragraph 1.2.2), on the other hand they locate the smart citizens vision that invokes a republican ideal of citizenship.[16] Joss et al. speak in this regard of a distinction between civic-republic and individual-liberal citizenship regimes that colour the smart city discourse. Zandbergen and Uitermark (2019) in a recent article draw a similar conclusion: they too signal a republic ideology underlying the notion of citizenship in the smart citizens discourse; however, they add this notion is mixed with a 'cybernetic citizenship'.

The smart citizens discourse proposes a new understanding of the smart city: with a growing emphasizes on political agency. Underlying is this idea that active participation in processes of deliberation and decision-making ensures that individuals are citizens, not subjects. In response to the corporate smart city this vision argues citizenship should be more than the neo-liberal consumer. Furthermore, the new smart city visions seem to suggest citizenship ought to be more than the traditional liberal ideal of citizens. The liberal tradition as Leydet (2017) puts it: "*understand citizenship primarily as a legal status: political liberty is important as a means to protecting individual freedoms from interference by other individuals or the authorities themselves. But citizens exercise these freedoms primarily in the world of private associations and attachments, rather than in the political domain.*" In other words, citizens should be free from the burden of politics and freedom is portrayed as non-interference. The emphasizes on democratic debate and active participation in the smart citizens discourse invokes a more elaborate understanding of citizenship. They seem to imply citizens have a more active and involved role in shaping and governing the community. Said understanding of citizenship invokes a more republican understanding of citizenship. Such a model puts the emphasizes on political agency and understands democracy in terms of civic self-government (Huff 2013).

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[16] De Waal and Dignum (2017) differentiate between two interpretation of the creative city, one invoking republican ideal while the other building on liberal or liberation notions of citizenship.

Both political philosophical traditions – liberalism and republicanism - presuppose two fundamental different notions of freedom, most famously distinguished by Isaiah Berlin (2017): negative and positive freedom (or liberty). In general, liberalism is associated with negative freedom, while republicanism prompts a more positive understanding of freedom. "*Negative liberty is the absence of obstacles, barriers or constraints*" (Carter 2018). One is free to the extent that she can pursue her private interest without interference. Liberal citizens are protected by negative rights – such as voting rights and free speech - against interference of the state and other citizens (Habermas 1994). In republican theory the conception of political freedom is not understood as non-interference but as non-domination: that is, a person can be considered free to the extent that she exercises self-control. In other words, is free from arbitrary power (Lovett 2018). The classic example to illustrate the difference between positive and negative freedom – of freedom as non-interference or as non-domination – is the condition of a slave. When freedom is understood as non-interference a slave can experience at least some degree of freedom when his masters leaves him alone for most of the time. However, if freedom is understood as non-domination, a slave – at any arbitrary moment subject to the wishes of his master – can never experience freedom. The mere possibility of dominance by his master inhibits the slave's prospect to freedom. In the words of Philip Pettit – arguably the prime defender of civic republicanism in the 20th century – one is free to the extent that no other person "*has the capacity to interfere in their affairs, in particular the capacity to interfere in their affairs on an arbitrary basis*" (Pettit 1999, 165). Therefore, self-government and political participation play a central role in republican theory: citizens are free to the extent they can participate in common praxis. Rather than understanding citizens in terms of individual rights and liberties, in republicanism citizens have active civic duties: together they govern the public. As such all citizens are subject to rules and regulations, they – as a community – compose and enforce upon themselves. Thus, political rights in republican theory are positive rights: e.g. political participation.

In short, republicanism builds on a fundamentally different notion of freedom then liberalism. Liberalism thinks of freedom as non-interference, focusses on individual rights and liberties of citizens and considers public goods as an aggregate of individual preferences. Republicanism criticizes such liberal understanding of citizenship as it will loosen civic bonds and undermines self-government (Dagger 2002, 152). In republican theory publicity and self-government play a central role. Citizenship here comes with active duties and an orientation towards the common good of society.

1.3.2 The 'New Citizen': Rhetoric's or Change?

It is clear that the smart citizens discourse is gesturing towards a more active role for citizens and seems to propose a new citizenship ideal. However, it is unclear on what theoretical convictions this new notion of citizenship is grounded. Joss et al. (2017) who analyse a number of British smart city projects concluded that the discourse is filled with contradictions and shortcomings regarding the roles and responsibilities of governments, corporations and citizens. On the one hand the discourse focusses on active civic participation, community-formation, public deliberation and contestation: in line with the republican

tradition. On the other hand, the importance of the free market, individual self-governance and limited state intervention is emphasized: drawing from a liberal or neoliberal ideology (Joss et al. 2017; Zandbergen and Uitermark 2019).

Some critics of the smart citizens visions argue the new emphasizes on citizens in the smart citizens discourse is mere tokenism, i.e. citizens do not gain any true influence (de Waal and Dignum 2017). Furthermore, with DIY-initiatives (do-it-yourself citizenship) the government has found ways to outsource the responsibility for public value creation. On top of that, the smart city initiatives that claim to work in co-creation with citizens, refer to a very limited part of the citizenry: e.g. higher educated and well-connected citizens (Zandbergen and Uitermark 2019). Others argue the smart citizens discourse – in practice – falls victim to the continuous neoliberal grip (e.g. Cardullo and Kitchen 2018). Both Vanolo (2016) and de Waal and Dignum (2017) point out that participation – and bottom-up organisations – fit in a broader trend of the responsibiliation of citizens under neoliberalism. Participation can be understood as a means to make everything an individual responsibility rather than a public concern. Similarly, the discourse refers to 'active citizens', that are active *as sensing nodes*, or citizen-sensors. Citizens are ascribed the responsibility to sense and monitor their practices so their data can be used for urban problem-solving and management. The agency of these citizens is reduced to data generation, while they lack any control over the use of said data (Vanolo 2016, 12). Using the citizen-centric language to promote such an interpretation of citizenship does not seem to align with the true meaning of 'active citizens' the smart citizens discourse refers to. On the contrary most 'citizen-centric smart city initiatives "*are rooted in stewardship, civic paternalism, and a neoliberal conception of citizenship that prioritizes consumption choice and individual autonomy within a framework of state and corporate defined constraints that prioritize market-led solutions to urban issues, rather than being grounded in civil, social and political rights and the common good*" (Cardullo and Kitchen 2019, 1).

Put differently, some critics argue the shift in the debate from techno-centred smart cities to citizen-focused visions is mere rhetorical. Others seem more optimistic about the attempts in smart city projects to incorporate citizens. Overall, critical scholars researching the smart city discourse seem to agree on one conclusion: notions of citizenship within the discourse are confused and lack sufficient normative and theoretical grounding (Hollands 2015; Vanolo 2016; Cardullo and Kitchen 2018; Zandbergen and Uitermark 2019). Authors emphasize the need to develop an alternative conception of smart citizenship in order for smart cities to be truly citizen-centred (Cardullo and Kitchen 2018, 11). In this thesis I will attempt to develop such an alternative conception to citizens using the work of Hannah Arendt. I will try to answer the question raised by Vanolo (2016): "*What kind of 'active' citizens are supposed to live in smart cities*" (11). More formally stated: How ought we to understand and organise citizenship in the future smart city? In this thesis I will attempt to develop an alternative understanding of smart citizenship, drawing on the political-philosophical literature of Arendt.

1.4 Justification Arendt: Ideological Alternative

Many scholars and organisations look for answers at the level of citizens, however the theory is lacking what type of citizens and politics they envision. It might be necessary to develop a whole new ideological understanding of citizenship and politics. For this purpose, I will analyse the smart city discourse using the political-philosophy of Arendt. In search for an alternative to the corporate smart city and its neoliberal underpinnings (that according to critical urban scholars is problematic), and to the (underdeveloped) civic-republican notion of politics and citizenship (popular in the smart citizens discourse). Both neoliberalism and republicanism do not seem to provide a satisfying vision for the future smart city: i.e. a comprehensive society ideal that deals with diversity and individualism without reducing citizens to passive consumers and politics to an aggregate of private affairs. I will argue Arendt stipulates an appealing alternative. She criticizes not merely neoliberalism, but its underlying liberal conception of freedom and citizenship. To Arendt considering citizens as mere bearer of rights, misses the fundamental importance of political action for humanity. The smart citizens alternative that turns to classic republicanism and its idea of self-government and non-domination, although more in line with Arendt vision of politics, stills misses a crucial point: the fact that politics is meaningful in itself. That is, through (political) action people experience happiness, self-fulfilment and freedom. To Arendt: freedom lies in the act, in doing and speaking.

Smart citizens alternatives seem to propose a very different understanding of politics and citizenship: with a focus on political action, citizen involvement and participations. Scholars have typically classified this as a more 'republican' understanding of citizenship. However, as stated earlier, these new notions of citizenship are ambiguous and lack theoretical grounding. What seems clear – in my opinion – is that they share a fundamental discontent with a neoliberal understanding of citizenship, and an appeal to a more elaborate notion of citizenship than typically in the liberal tradition (i.e. the citizen as a bearer of right). It might be possible to find an alternative conception of citizenship in traditional republicanism. However, republicanism has been criticized for being elitist and relying on a moral community. Arendt who criticizes liberalism but is not classified as a (typical) republican might offer a more fruitful ideological alternative. [17] Not only does she emphasize the importance of an active citizenry (in accordance with the smart citizens discourse), she also allows for *plurality* which makes Arendt more appealing in todays globalized world. I will turn to Arendt and use her genealogical approach to understand the critic to the current ('neoliberal') logic to the smart city: and search for an alternative in her work on active citizenship. First, I will recapitulate Arendt's own philosophical project. Next, I will use her theory to analyse the smart city discourse. I will provide a critique to the notions of politics and citizenship in the dominant smart city discourse and propose an alternative grounded in Arendt's philosophical work.

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[17] Arendt does not easily fit in within the republican tradition. She does differ in some crucial respects, as will be elaborated on later in this thesis. Whether or not Arendt should be understood as a 'republican' thinker is a topic of debate.

2. HANNAH ARENDT ON MODERNITY, ACTION AND CITIZENSHIP

Before going into the theory of Arendt it is important to understand her work in its proper historical context. Arendt who wrote the majority of her work in the midst of the 20th century was greatly influenced by the second world war, Nazism and Stalinism. She became famous for her work '*The Origins of Totalitarianism*' (1951) in which she analyses the totalitarian regimes. In her later works the political events of her time continue to play a crucial role (Canovan 1992, 1). It became her project not only to understand the meaning of the horror of the 20th century, but to "*develop a new set of philosophical categories that could illuminate the human condition and provide a fresh perspective on the nature of political life*" (d'Entreves 2019). In other words, Arendt proposes an alternative vision on politics and citizenship. Arendt, as such, does not provide a political theory where she explicitly formulates her conception of politics and citizenship in a normative manner. Instead Arendt takes a more genealogical approach: providing descriptions of historical phenomena and human deeds (Schwarz 2016, 19-21). Arendt's work is difficult to classify in the western tradition of political thoughts: she does not fit within the liberal tradition as she criticizes some of its core values (e.g. politics as a means for the satisfaction of individual preferences), but does not depart from this ideology completely (e.g. strong defender of constitutionalism and the rule of law). With her emphasize on active citizenship, civic engagement and collective deliberation Arendt could best – if we must - be identified within the republican tradition (d'Entreves 2019).

Arendt's unorthodox and original political thought has attracted greats interest (and controversy) over the years. In the past decade her work spiked particular interest in relation to the rise of right-wing populism.[18] Arendt analyses the modern age of her time: even though she describes modernity as it took shape in the 20th century it still – I will argue – is relevant for today's politics. In particular her prediction that the growing economisation has a depoliticizing effect on society shows remarking similarities to the critique on the neoliberal smart city and its consumer citizen. This chapter is divided into two parts: the first part consists of Arendt's negative critique on modernity, derived primarily from *The Human Condition*. Arendt's diagnosis of modern time is necessary to understand her proposed alternative vision on politics and citizenship. The second part contains this more positive political philosophy concerned with what Canovan calls "*the possibility of building a republic that can stand as a bastion of civilisation*" (as found in *On Revolution* and the essays as explicated in the introduction).

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[18] See for example:

The Washington Post. WP Company. Accessed September 8, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/gdpr-consent/?destination=/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/12/17/how-hannah-arendts-classic-work/?.;

Deutsche Welle. "Why the World Is Turning to Hannah Arendt to Explain Trump: DW: 02.02.2017." DW.COM. Accessed September 8, 2019. https://www.dw.com/en/why-the-world-is-turning-to-hannah-arendt-to-explain-trump/a-37371699.

This chapter – in other words - provides two lessons we can learn from Arendt relevant to the smart city. Arendt's critique on modernity with the rise of the social (provided in the first half of this chapter) parallels the critique on what critical scholars have called the 'neoliberal smart city'. Arendt's vision on the smart city deepens this critique to encompass not merely a problem with the "neoliberal" character of the smart city, but its underlying liberal roots. To Arendt what is truly problematic in the smart city discourse is the liberal foundations it builds on. Secondly, Arendt can deepen our understanding of republicanism – the popular alternative in the smart citizens vision to the smart city – in terms of civic friendship.

2.1 Crisis of Modernity

Arendt's political theory starts from a diagnosis of the ills of modernity. At the heart of *The Human Condition* lies a critique on modern age: on the growing emphasize on the market economy with the rise of capitalism and its obscuration of the possibilities of meaningful political agency. Arendt in *The Human Condition* is attempting to establish the conditions necessary for the possibility of political experience. She therefore returns to the origin of political philosophy and democracy in Ancient Greece.

2.1.1 The Rise of the Social

Modernity is accompanied by what Arendt calls '*the rise of the social*': the economisation of all spheres of human activities on the one side, and the emergence of mass society on the other (HC 41). The rise of the social refers to the expansion of the market economy, where everything in society is turned into an object of production and consumption; of acquisition and exchange. Before, these activities, related to the continuance of life itself and satisfying natural needs were considered affairs of the household and by definition a non-political matter (29). However, in modernity – with the rise of the social - this (economic interest) became the norm of the public realm. As a consequence, society is understood as though it is one giant family. In the traditional household the household head determined the family's common interest, "*society demands that its members act as though they were members of one enormous family which has only one opinion and one interest*" (39). This monolithic vision and its conformism are inherent in society and mark the second aspect of the rise of the social: the emergence of mass society.

The rise of the social coincides with a blurring distinction between the private and the public, as both terms lose their authentic meaning. In modern age all activities that used to be exclusively part of the private are now entering the public sphere (38). Which, we will see later, has disastrous effects for the public realm and politics. In antiquity all activities connected to the continuance of the individual life and the survival of the species were pre-eminently private and connected to the household (29). In other words, all activities connected to the maintenance of humanity - i.e. all material concerns - were considered private affairs (Canovan 1992, 118). In society these material concerns became the collective concern of a whole nation. The nation as a whole is focussed primarily on economic activities: on the type of activities aimed at

sustaining the life process. In modern age – in what has become the social – the continuous economisation has turned the nation into one household: where all serve the purpose of making a living, of sustaining the life process.

However, this new society has nothing to do with the original authentic meaning of public: or political. In the ancient Greece world, it was those activities directed at *necessity* (the continuance of life processes) that were excluded from the public realm (HC 37). The public was the domain *not* directed at the necessity: but on the contrary where humans were free from the burdens of life. A domain where individuals could appear as their authentic and individual self: it was the space for true (political) action, rather than a space concerned with the banality of labour.

The rise of the social marks the emergence of necessary labour – traditionally private concerns - into the public realm. The effect of this blurring distinction between private and public is – according to Arendt – that the true political meaning of the public realm is being destroyed. No longer is the public realm a space of human freedom, but it has become concerned with mere *animal necessity*. To fully grasp this statement, we need to elaborate on the distinction made by Arendt between work, labour and action.

2.1.2 Vita Activa and the Victory of Animal Laborans

Arendt makes a division between the three fundamental human activities that make up the 'vita activa': labour, work and action (7). Arendt defines 'labor' as: "*the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body* […]". Labour, simply put, are those activities necessary for the maintenance of humanity: i.e. the life of the individual and the survival of the species. Arendt – in her essay 'Labor, Work, Action' (1987) (hereinafter "LWA") refers to the production and the consumption of goods, as activities of labour: both are stages of the ever-recurring cycle of life (32). Labour, then, is connected to the natural and biological *necessity* of human existence: human beings are bound to continue the labouring process (HC 7). Consumer goods, the result of such processes, are the least durable of things: they are consumed – and disappear – (nearly) as soon as they are finished (HC 96). In contrast to consumer goods, the result of 'work' is more durable. Arendt refers to work when a thing or object – i.e. an artifice - is created that contributes to the common world of things (HC 136-7). Together they constitute a world of things "*distinctly different from all natural surrounding*" (HC 7). Put differently, through the process of work the public and common world is created – distinct from the natural - that connects human beings. Work (in contrast to labour) relates to the unnaturalness of human existence: to its capability of shaping and transforming - rather than being bound to the demands of - nature (HC 7).

Where labour is directed towards the continuance of biological processes, and work to the constitution of things, "*action is the only activity that goes on directly between men, without the intermediary of things or matter*" (HC *7).* Action and speech, the last category of human activities, refers to our strictly human capacity *to act.* To act – to Arendt – means "*to make a new beginning instead of being determined by what has gone before*" (Canovan 1992,

103). Labour is a process subject to a compulsory repetition: it is bound to the never-ending cycle of biological processes. Work might not be subject to this type of necessity, in the sense that it is only repeated for reasons outside itself (wants and desires): it does have a definitive predictable end (e.g. the making of a table ends when the table is finished) (LWA, HC 143-4). Action is the only activity that is unconditioned: in action human beings can take initiative, start something new. To Arendt this is the purpose of the life of man: what all human beings are endowed to do by virtue of being born. Namely: "*articulate the new beginning that comes into the world with the birth of each human being*" (LWA 42). Action therefore corresponds to the human condition of plurality: "*to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world*" (HC 7): a key concept in the work of Arendt. According to Arendt, what makes us human – of the same species – is the fact that nobody is ever the same as anyone else: that every human being is unique and can reveal this '*unique distinctness'* in speech and action (HC 176) (see 2.1.3).

Even though, Arendt notes, life on earth corresponds to all three activities together: she does arrange the activities in an ascending hierarchy of importance. Action is identified as the highest insofar action relates to the political sphere (LWA 3) followed by work and lastly labour. According to Arendt the modern age is characterized by the overturning of this hierarchy. The rise of the social is associated with the victory of *animal laborans* (humanity in the mode of labour) over *homo faber* (mode of work) and *zoon politikon* (mode of action). In modernity the category of labour – the economic activities – is glorified (LWA 31): the focus of society as a whole has come to lie on economic activities. As such the centre of gravity of society has come to lie on the individual life and the survival of the species. Society has become primarily focused on the production of vital needs; this supposed single and common interest binds society together while negating the true plural nature of men.

2.1.3 The Loss of the Public Realm and World Alienation

Modernity glorifies labour over work and action, this has severe effect on the mere possibility of political action. This has everything to do with the loss of public realm and the destruction of plurality as a result of the rise of the social. Plurality, to Arendt, is the human condition of action: "*to the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world*" (HC 7). What makes us human (of the same species) is that every human being is unique and can express this alterity through action (8). Plurality is the necessary condition of (political) action. That is to say, action exists only insofar as it consists of the interaction between different worldviews. With the rise of the social the plurality of perspectives on reality in the public sphere is threatened. In society people are bound together through an assumed common interest (the economy or 'a national housekeeping') rather than being gathered around a common world that allows for plural individuals (Canovan 1992, 117). Furthermore, society expects a certain kind of behaviour of its members: this supposed unanimity of what Arendt calls 'mass society' replaces action with behaviour (HC 41). With the rise of the social, its one-dimensional view on reality and conformist character, the possibility of action is altogether, and, on all levels, obscured.

Modernity – according to Arendt – is characterized by the *loss of the world*: a restriction or full elimination of the public sphere of action and speech (d'Entreves 2019). Arendt understands the world – distinct from nature and earth – as intersubjectively constituted. The common world – the true political realm – is created between plural men through action and speech. This common world functions as an in-between (an interest): "*To live together in the world means essentially that a world of things is between those who have it in common, as a table is located between those who sit around it; the world, like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time.*" (HC 52). That is to say, the common world is created in the interaction between competing worldviews, but it is also the fabric that binds people together without a loss of plurality.

Not only do people constitute a shared world through action and speech, "*human beings need to act and speak in the presence of their fellows in order to affirm their own reality*" (Canovan 1992, 134). That is, human beings derive a sense of the world (lying between them) and of the self by acting and speaking (see 2.2.3). According to Arendt action is constitutive of the individual as an agent: action discloses who the agent is. To Arendt people are born with the purpose to begin something new. In action, an individual articulates the something new, that comes into the world with the birth of each individual human being. Simply put, through action the individual can display his uniqueness and individuality. The act gives the actor a sense of self and delight (LWA 40). Without the possibility of action – without a *space of appearance* were one can disclose once identity (HC 180, 208) – people withdraw into a world of introspection, loneliness and private pursuit of economic interest (LWA 42). In modernity – with the rise of the social – the public realm of action is replaced by such a private world: where the focus on labour and the necessity of life impairs the possibility to act spontaneous. This results in what Arendt calls '*world alienation*': without an intersubjectively constituted world we lose a sense of reality; and without such a public realm we lose the means to establish our self-identity.

This loss of the world – of a true political sphere – seems particularly relevant in the current (neoliberal) smart city discourse with its continuous focus on economic aspects of urban governance. The hyper-individualism and model of competition underlying the smart city seems miles away from the human relations that constitute a shared intersubjectively world, as Arendt perceives it. Crucial to Arendt's positive political alternative is the revival of a true political space.

2.2 New Republicanism

In response to the crisis of modernity and the depoliticization of life, Arendt offers an alternative understanding of politics and citizenship (what Canovan terms 'New Republicanism'): according to Arendt she returns to the authentic meaning of politics (political concepts), that were lost in modern age. She proposes an ideal of politics rooted in political participation and civic engagement. At the heart of Arendt's distinctive political though are her emphasize on the *plurality* of human beings and the *political space* (Canovan 1992, 205). To understand what she proposes I will begin with Arendt's theory of civic friendship (inspired by Aristotle): I believe this theory captures the root of her vision on citizenship. Next, I will interpret

Arendt's ideal of civic friendship – her participatory conception of citizenship and political agency – in modern terms.

2.2.1 Civic Friendship and Solidarity

In her essay '*Philosophy and Politics*' (1990) [1954] (hereinafter "PP") Arendt develops an ideal of civic friendship inspired by Aristotle. In search for an alternative form of political community – one not bound together by economic interest such as in modern age – Arendt goes pearl diving for a conception of political community that allows for the *plurality* of individuals. According to Arendt a community always consists of people who are different and unequal. However, she does agree the community comes into being through 'equalizing' (PP 83). That is, a community does need some political tie to bind it together. The true political tie – the noneconomic equalization – to Arendt is civic friendship and solidarity (83). As friends, citizens become equal partners in a common world, partners who respects each other's worldview but by no means need to share the same opinions (i.e. become the same) (83).

Arendt understands friendship in its political meaning, distinct from the common modern understanding of friendship as a phenomenon of intimacy limited to the private sphere (Arendt 1968). On the contrary, Arendt locates friendship in the public sphere, in which the individual can truly reveal himself: that is display his unique self, his subjective worldviews and opinions. In a truthful conversation between friends – characterized by joy and openness – both can learn to understand and respect each other's unique perspective on the world (PP 84). As Arendt puts it: "*each of the friends can understand the truth inherent in the other's opinion*" (83) In this truthful dialogue shared by friends a common world is constituted: as friends talk about what they have in common and what lies between them (82). By talking about the things between them, those things discussed become something more common. For the two friends, a shared world arises out of the willingness of civic friends to understand the subjective viewpoint of the other: to understand in what distinct way the common world appears to the other.

A dialogue between friends is not directed at discovering the truth: or to impose the worldview of one friend on to the other. Rather, such conversation is meaningful without having to reach a conclusion (82). It is important to recognize that Arendt does not, therefore, defend a type of deliberative democracy as proposed by for example Jurgen Habermas.[19] According to Arendt the focus on consensus undermines difference, which is harmful to plurality. Deliberation understood as a discussion aimed at a rational consensus does not have the friendly character underlying Arendt's dialogue: the orientation to consensus enforces a single opinion, rather than being aimed at understanding the truth inherent to different perspectives on reality. To conclude: the political value of friendship is that it brings people together in a common world – through dialogue - without abolishing natural differences between men. Civic friendship creates the willingness of a plurality of people to act towards the common world: that is to share a world

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[19] Three normative models of democracy (1994)

common to them. This willingness can be understood as a reciprocal commitment – what Allen calls 'solidarity' - to act in concert (Allen 1999, 113-4). A type of promise and shared commitment that binds a community of political actors together. Such a promise is always open for revision, reinterpretation and contestation: if not the promise loses its binding power (HC 244).

Political participation establishes a relation of civility and solidarity among citizens. Through action – in words and deeds, by comparing worldviews and opinions – people constitute a common world. This political realm does not arise naturally but is a world of human creation that requires effort to build. The common world depends on the *plurality* of perspectives offered by those who take part in it. Through action and speech, where each individual shares its unique perspective on the world, a political realm is created: as long as citizens engage in a dialogue of civic friendship. The solidarity created between men is the source of political power: their willingness to act in concert. This power keeps the public sphere in existence. The mutual promises – their chosen commitment – is what binds people together in a political community. In Arendt's words: "*We mentioned before the power generated when people gather together and "act in concert", which disappears the moment the depart. The force that keeps them together, as distinguished from the space of appearances in which they gather and the power which keeps this public space in existence, is the force of mutual promise or contract*" (HC 244-5).

2.2.2 Power and the Space of Appearance

In the above quotation two key features of Arendt's account on politics shimmer through: '*power*' and '*the space of appearance*'. The space of appearance is the public sphere where people gather and can share their opinions. In order to speak of politics, and political agency, such a political realm is necessary. It is the dimension of the public sphere that is crucial for citizenship to flourish: i.e. the space where individuals (i) can disclose their identities and (ii) establish relations of reciprocity and solidarity. The former: the space of appearance in relation to the individual self is discussed in paragraph 2.2.3. The latter refers to the space of appearance as the locus of civic friendship.

Arendt talks of the Greek 'polis' as the space of appearance, but this is more an example or a metaphor as she points out: "*The polis, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be*" (HC 198). The space of appearance arises whenever men are together in action and speech. However, this space of appearance is fragile: "*it exists only when actualized through the performance of deeds or the utterance of words*" (d'Entreves 2019). Namely, it is a potential space that only comes into being when people gather to undertake a common project. Power – distinct from strength, force, and violence – is what keeps the public realm, the space of appearance, in existence (HC 200-3). Arendt understands power not as an individual trait (as common in liberal traditions), but power arises out of collective action of people. In *On Violence* (1970) (hereinafter "OV") Arendt describes power as the capability of men not just to act, but to '*act in concert*' (44). We can understand Arendt's conception of political power as organised solidarity

– not based on a shared identity or nature – but based on a choice, a willingness of people to unify. Power remains in such willingness, this potential of action that is always available. Power as such is at the root of every political community: it keeps the public space, where people can gather to act, in existence. The mutual promises or 'contracts' they establish is what binds people together as civic friends in a political organisation (HC 245). However, these promises, or contracts should not be understood as a consensus in its liberal sense. Power to Arendt – located in human action – is an end in itself (OV 51-52). It is not the consensus or the result of gathering that legitimizes power: it is the act itself, the willingness to act in concert that legitimizes it.

To Arendt the legitimacy of political institutions depends on the power, the active consent and the continuous active involvement of all citizens (d'Entreves 2019). Without such involvement the political ties of civic friendship disappear, people stop acting in concert and power and the space of appearance are lost.

2.2.3 Active Citizenship, Freedom and Political Engagement

Hence, Arendt's emphasis on active citizenship and participation. To Arendt political engagement is not merely desirable, it is a means to achieve political freedom and public happiness (Canovan 1992, 229). Freedom in Arendt's theory is realised in the interaction between pluralities. In other words, freedom is a matter of participation in public affairs. The concept is closely related to the human ability to act (i.e. to take initiative and start something new). Freedom, then, is the realisation of our capacity as human beings to make a new beginning (LWA 42). This capability of man, to show his individuality through action and speech, becomes political when action is seen by others in a public sphere (Canovan 1993, 213). To Arendt, action and speech only become meaningful when seen or heard by a plurality of human beings. That is: when unique opinions and worldviews are shared among unique human beings in a public sphere actions become political. Furthermore, in *On Revolution* (2016) Arendt emphasizes that for action to become realised as freedom we need the cooperation of others. Acting in concert is what turns us in a state of being free. Arendt points to revolutions as the example of freedom in its worldly reality, as revolution is "*a new experience which revealed man's capacity for novelty*" (OR 34). Politics then is meaningful in itself: being able to act politically in a public sphere provides human beings with the possibility to expose their authentic self and realise their human capacity to act: which to Arendt is the core of human existence. In politics while acting together people reveal and discover who they are as unique individuals, as such the act of politics is gratifying in itself. Remember, without action, "*without the capacity to start something new and thus articulate the new beginning that comes into the world with the birth of each human being, the life of man, spent between birth and death, would indeed be doomed beyond salvation*" (LWA 42, emphasis added).

Recapitulating: politics according to Arendt exist in an involvement and commitment to the world – the public space that unites people as well as separates them - that is shared by a plurality of people. Crucial to Arendt's conceptions of citizenship is this public sphere. For citizens to have a sense of political agency

and efficacy they have to be actively engaged in the determination of public affairs (d'Entreves 2019). As such, we need a public space in which this type of action can be realised: we need a context where individuals can encounter each other as civic friends, that is, as members of a community. There individuals can discover their identity and establish relations of solidarity. To Arendt the revival of politics and the reactivation of citizenship depend on the recovery of a public sphere: a durable common world and the creation of spaces of appearance. It may be clear that Arendt is not in favour of a representative democracy: she requires direct involvement of all citizens with the public sphere (d'Entreves 2019). As, true civic ties arise out of the dialogue between citizens, not representatives.

Plurality is a necessary condition for the public sphere: plurality should be accepted and celebrated. Citizenship is the process of active deliberation between *competing* identities: the conversation between friends about their different worldviews. It is the interaction between competing worldviews- true differences, that are inherent to human beings – that a common world is created. The personal – the character of the individual – should re-enter the public, rather than being reduced to a private affair. A public debate to Arendt is more than a discussion about economics: the private affair of labour and animal necessity. True differences of opinions – one might say ethics, normative questions or religion – are the ultimate subject of the political life. Otherwise stated, we need to recover the true hierarchy of action, labour and work as we bring back *zoon politikon*.

There is a clear relationship between Arendt's critique on modern age and her positive account of politics and citizenship. At the core of her political theory is a discontent with some of the key assumptions and concepts of modern western societies: i.e. its liberal ideology. Among others, Canovan (1992), has placed Arendt's political alternative in the tradition of republicanism. However, as Canovan agrees, Arendt's thinking as well differs from traditional republicanism (201-52). In chapter one I described the dominant 'corporate smart city' discourse and its alternative, the 'smart citizens' discourse. As discussed, urban critical scholars have placed the former in the liberal (or libertarian) tradition and the latter in the republican tradition. However, both discourses give an unsatisfying account on citizenship in the smart city: partly because the underlying ideological notions are either ignored or underdeveloped. But perhaps because – as Arendt would argue – both ideologies fail to acknowledge the true meaning of citizenship and civic ties. In the next chapter both strands of the smart city discourse are analysed through an Arendtian lens.

3. SMART CITY THROUGH ARENDT'S LENS

The following chapter provides an account of the smart city through an Arendtian lens. Parallel to chapter two, the first part criticizes the corporate smart city discourse from an Arendtian framework. I will analyse how we ought *not* to understand citizenship and politics in the smart city: reflected in most dominant (liberal) smart city visions. By using Arendt, I argue the liberal underpinnings of the dominant smart city discourse are problematic. Paragraph 3.2 – the second part - provides Arendt's positive account of the smart city vision, building on her new republicanism as outlined? in the second half of chapter two. This paragraph describes Arendt's positive account of citizenship. I propose a type of direct democracy through participation on online platforms as an alternative to organise politics and citizenship in the smart city. I investigate the possibility to organise citizenship and participation via digital platforms for direct democracy, taking DECIDIM Barcelona as an example.

3.1 Dark Times in Smart Cities: Critique to The Corporate Smart City

"The Public Realm has lost the power of illumination which was originally part of its very nature" – Arendt (1968) [1959]

"The world lies between people, and this in-between, is today the object of the greatest concern" – Arendt (1968) w[1959]

The above quotations – found in Arendt's essay 'On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing' [20] (1968) (hereinafter "OH") – reflect Arendt's worries about the status of society as it took shape in the midst of the 20th century. Rather than making a turn for the better, western societies of today – as emphasized in the smart city visions - are descending more into darkness. From Arendt's perspective, the corporate smart city discourse is destroying the common world, the possibility of political action and by default: freedom.

Urban scholars criticize the corporate smart city for its hidden neoliberal ideology (Hollands 2008, 2015; Vanolo 2014; Kitchen, 2016; Cardullo & Kitchen 2017, 2018). The problem with neoliberalism according to Brown – i.e. the economisation of all spheres of life and the loss of *homo politicus* – shows great similarities to Arendt's critique on modernity. Both emphasize the depoliticization of society as a result of its economic orientation. Despite the similarities between the urban scholar's critique on mere economic interest (at cost of social justice or democracy) and Arendt's discontent with the dominance of 'labour' in society, they do differ. To Arendt the problem with smart cities is not the neoliberal tendencies, but their underlying liberal foundation.

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[20] The essay 'On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing' was derived from a web source. Unfortunately, the source did not use page numbers, hence the lack of page numbers in references throughout the thesis with respect to this essay. See: Arendt, Hannah. "On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing." Signale. Cornell University. Accessed September 21, 2019. https://signale.cornell.edu/text/humanity-dark-times-thoughts-about-lessing.

The corporate smart city as it is envisioned in the dominant discourse, to Arendt, proposes a city without a world. In the smart city, with its focus on business and economic interest, the common world is lost. In such a city – that behaves like a nation household – the plurality of worldviews is eliminated from the public realm, where all human beings are focused on the mere animal necessity of the life process: production and consumption. The continuous focus on economic interest obscures the public realm and drives people into a world of introspection (OH). In this dark city of laborers, without a public space of appearance, political action is obstructed. However, to this extent this seems not radically different from what Arendt diagnosed in the 20th century with regard to modernity. Indeed, some Arendt's critiques on smart cities are general critiques on liberal democracies that reoccur in the smart city visions. However, the technological components of smart cities do seem to take her critique to a new level.

3.1.1 The Algorithmic Ruler: Free from Politics
As we have seen, the main component to citizenship and politics to Arendt lies in the common world: the public sphere. Both as a space of appearance and as an intersubjectively constituted world that binds people together without dissolving their inherent differences. Arendt argues the modern conception of freedom – i.e. the liberal understanding – has further decayed the public realm: "*countries […] have regarded freedom from politics as one of the basic freedoms and have retreated from the world by making use of this freedom*" (OH). In the liberal tradition freedom is generally understood in a *negative* sense: as the absence of obstacles barriers or constraints that allow the individual to pursue private interest without interference (Carter 2018). To Arendt this is a grave misconception of freedom: that is, freedom in this sense is conflated with liberation (OR 22). According to Arendt these civil liberties – e.g. voting rights and free speech – are the result of liberation, "*but by no means the actual content of freedom, which […], is participation in public affairs, or admission to the public realm*" (OR 25). One can never be free in isolation, as true political freedom is an attribute of the public sphere.

In the corporate smart city discourse the understanding of freedom as 'free of politics' is clearly reflected: politics in these visions is considered a burden. In its utopian ideal everyone can continue his life as he sees fits, without having to be troubled with questions of urban governance. Rather, as critical urban scholars argue, the smart city proponents believe data and technology will provide the answers for complex societal problems "*as well as facilitate – and automate – decision making processes*" (Kitchen 2014, 2). A network of digital devices in the city will monitor, manage and regulate city processes by connecting, analysing and integrating information. The smart city governs itself and this in the smart city is considered: a *good* thing, "*make decisions fairer, easer and better*" (Kitchen 2014). In other words, technology will do politics better than humans and simultaneously will free individuals from the trouble of politics. Algorithmic governance and automated decision-making will replace not only the role of citizens in decision-making processes but also the role of *political leaders* in politics. In the smart city all people 'free from politics' can pursue their private affairs. Smart city proponents fail to acknowledge, according to Arendt, that by participating in politics – engaging in political action – people experience public happiness and political freedom. As Hollands rightly points

out: "*we should be wary for these corporate smart scenarios where urban problems have all been solved by technology and all of its inhabitants are happy and prosperous*" (2015, 73). Arendt would consider it contradictory to think that being free of politics – automating urban problem solving – results in happiness.

3.1.2 Algorithmic Governance, Behavioural Nudging and Conformism

Mathematics and computers do not only overtake our role as political beings in governing our societies, they too influence, shape and guide our behaviour (Danahar et al. 2017). Algorithms run on statistics and data that predict our behaviour and adjust accordingly. Partly, these technologies assume a natural *sameness* guiding human behaviour, reflecting the (assumed) monolithic nature of the smart citizenry, and partly they shape human behaviour (i.e. destroy plurality).

In *The Human Condition* Arendt refers to the concept of liberal equality, that according to her assumes such a 'sameness' of human beings; i.e. all members are focused on the same (economic) interest and share the same opinion (HC 41). Society equalizes, that is destroys plurality, by degrading distinction and difference to private matters of the individual. Such a conformist nature is inherent to the smart city discourse that expects a certain kind of behaviour and attitude of its citizens in order to succeed (a point made by urban critical scholars such as Hollands 2015). The smart city relies on the assumption that data can reveal a pattern of behaviour through data analyses: and human behaviour therefore is predictable (this type of 'Behaviour' stands opposite to 'Action': the human capability to start something new, characterised by *unpredictability*). The degree to which, in the smart city, a system of behaviour is enforced on citizens exceeds the degree of conformism in what Arendt called the 'social'. Through algorithmic governance, nudging and manipulation a system of behaviour is enforced. Many critical scholars have voiced their concern with nudging and manipulation: where data and technology in the smart city are used to shape human behaviour (e.g. Rachordas 2019).[21] The smart city discourse envisions a predictable – conformist and monolithic – citizenry. There is, simply put, no room for difference within the smart city. Without plurality and without a public space, there is no room for human spontaneity: for human beings to take initiative. Urban critical scholars point out that: "*The smart city delivered by business/corporate visions of smartness and entrepreneurial forms of urban governance: only succeed with largely compliant and accommodating citizenry*" (Hollands 2015, 74). The smart city both needs and enforces a conformist citizen, who reflects a severe dismissal of plurality, rather than

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[21] One of the top examples of Nudging by technology in the Smart City can be found in Eindhoven, Netherlands. The pub area "StratumsEind" has been turned into a living lab where a number of experiments with technologies is being conducted to monitor and reduce nightlife disturbance. StratumsEind has been known for its high number of incidents (e.g. barfights). Not only were cameras and sound sensors installed in order to quickly recognize conflicts, but light sensors have been installed to influence the mood of visitors in order to – successfully – reduce crime and disturbances (Kanters 2013; Rachordas 2019). There are many more examples – think of predictive policing and finally the *Social Credit System* as being developed in China – where the power of technology to influence and shape citizens behaviour is clearly reflected.

celebrating plural human beings as part of the public realm, the original domain for this type of individuality (41). Underneath lies – according to Arendt - a liberal conviction that the equality of human beings is something natural (that we are born equal), rather than something that can be achieved through politics (OR 23). To Arendt, true political equality exists under the condition of plurality: the possibility for people to expose their unicity. The type of human beings inhabiting the smart city are not *citizens* in the political meaning. The individuality of people - their character - is completely reduced to the private sphere and lost in nudging and manipulation. Where in the social what remained 'public' where economic interest, now, with algorithmic decision-making, not even those topics require public discussion.

The smart city imagines a city deprived of plural human beings, where all things political – i.e. individuality – has become a private affair. The 'hyperindividualism of the smart city' that Lake (2017) refers to shows the focus of the smart city on the individual life, rather than – as Arendt would like to see it – on a common world. In the smart city people are driven out of the realm of politics: that lies in the common concern for a shared world as they focus on individual affairs. The focus on private affairs rather than the common interest – as in the common world – could explain the ongoing debate about privacy in the smart city discourse (e.g. Van Zoonen 2016; Tene and Polonetsky 2011).[22] To Arendt the focus on privacy – a liberal individual right – is an example of the conflicted nature of liberal politics and its focus on the aggregation of private affairs, rather than the common world that lies between men (Arendt's late essay: '*Public Rights and Private Interests'* in Canovan 1992, 231).

3.1.3 The Non-citizen Citizens
The smart city visions do not merely 'free us from politics', the possibility for (political) action is totally and utterly inhibited with the rise of algorithmic governance. Algorithm obstructs the possibility for human beings to do the unexpected: to take initiative. Algorithms at the one hand take over public decision-making, by automizing governance. Secondly, the rise of predictive algorithms (such as predictive policing) allows computers to interfere with human behaviour. While algorithms run the city: the possibility for human spontaneity – for human beings to act – disappears. That is, no longer are people required, or able, to organise themselves around collective problems: to debate possible solutions and act in concert. Without plurality and without a public space, the possibility of action is obstructed.

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[22] Data scholars and civic rights organisations voice a growing concern for the loss of the individual right to privacy in an age of big data: as lots of personal data are being collected, stored and analysed. This concern is reflected in the new European privacy laws: The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Overarching: the (liberal) smart city understands political equality and freedom as natural rights. Arendt disagrees: neither are naturally given but both are artificially constituted in a web of human relations, that is, the result of the effort of men (OR 23). The (corporate) smart city is destroying plurality and driving people out of the public realm: in other words, is eliminating politics. To Arendt, true political freedom arises when citizens partake in public affairs. The smart city vision is supplying means, even facilitating, for humans not to have to partake in public life. Individuals, then, can focus on private affairs: the accumulation of wealth and consumption. In the smart city, visions we are not merely 'freed from politics', the possibility for (political) action is altogether inhibited with the rise of algorithmic governance. That is, no longer are people required, or able, to organise themselves around collective problems: to debate possible solutions and act in concert. Human beings, in the corporate smart city, are reduced to an unprecedented form of *animal laborans.*

What the corporate smart city fails to acknowledge is that politics is neither a means for the good life nor ever "*for the sake of life*", but rather it is an end in itself (HC 37). The corporate smart city – and the liberal society in general – misses the point that the act of politics is meaningful on its own. Not only do we constitute an intersubjective world through the act of politics – i.e. create bonds of civic friendship and solidarity and realize our power to act in concert – we too derive our sense of reality and sense of self in the act of politics. Through politics human beings realize their individual potential and distinguish themselves from animals. Furthermore, they disregard the fact that politics requires effort and engagement of citizens. Such a disregard of the importance of political action is reflected in the modes of participation proposed in the 'citizen-centred' version of the corporate smart city. The type of *passive* 'citizens participation' in most corporate smart city visions stands in grave contrast to Arendt's *active* interpretation of participation. For example, 'Datadriven participation' – citizens participate by providing their data – is a popular conception of participation in the corporate smart city (e.g. Tenney & Sieber 2016). Citizens should provide their health data or transport information in order to optimize the public transport system and develop new medicine, as such citizens are reduced to data generators (Vanolo 2016, 12). For (municipal) decision-making a public opinion can be harvested from twitter, using sentiment analyses and topic searches (102). Such an understanding of participation shares no similarities with Arendt's political participation. Participation to Arendt is not possible in the (liberal) corporate smart city: true participation requires a different understanding of equality, freedom, citizenship and politics altogether. The smart city has to depart from its underlying liberal understanding of citizenship: as a passive barrier of rights in favour of a citizen with active duties towards the common world.

3.2 New Light for Smart Citizens: Arendtian Smart City

The new smart citizens discourse, with her focus on citizen participation and civic engagement in the smart city, seems to invoke a more elaborate understanding of citizenship. At first sight the emphasis on political agency and active modes of participation resonates Arendt's understanding of politics. The discourse

proposes a more active and involved role in shaping and governing the community. However, the smart citizens alternative does not present a comprehensive notion of citizenship. It seems the discourse does not have a crystalized idea on the role and responsibilities of citizens. Some scholars explicitly suggest we need more than a liberal understanding of citizenship and turn to republicanism (e.g. de Waal and Dignum 2017; Joss et al 2017). But others criticize these attempts for being ambiguous; building both on liberal and republican ideals (Zandbergen and Uitermark 2019). Rather than attempting to analyse the smart citizens discourse, I will provide a notion of *active* citizenship building on Arendt's political theory as a step towards developing a comprehensive theory of the smart citizens in the smart city.

3.2.1 The Brotherhood of Republicanism

First, it is worth noting that Arendt would not (fully) agree with the turn towards republicanism as seems to be the trend in a growing number of smart city projects (see Joss et al. 2017; de Waal and Dignum 2017). Even though Arendt's political theory shows similarities to republicanism, she explicitly criticizes traditional republicanism (in 'On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts about Lessing' – and elsewhere). According to Arendt republicanism builds on a faulty conception of humanity: namely, they assume a moral equality or a sameness underlying the 'Volk'. In Arendtian terms: republicanism proposes civic ties based on 'brotherhood' rather than friendship.

Arendt's notion of Friendship – the true civic bond (see paragraph 2.2.1) – should not be confused with brotherhood. The ties binding brothers together are based on *compassion*. Compassion cannot be the base for anything public, or political: as compassion is a passive emotion that overcomes us, that makes *action* impossible (OH). In the intimate bond of brothers, differences are overcome for the sake of the relation. In this type of fraternity, humanity moves so closely together to experience warmth "*the interspace which we called world*" disappears (OH). As Arendt points out: in times of darkness humanity turns to brotherhood to experience some warmth. The smart citizens discourse should be wary to turn to these bonds of fraternity: as they too (as conformism in the social) hinder the possibility of true politics. Both brotherhood and liberal equality disregard the inherent differences of human beings: people do not share the same opinion as though they are all brothers. The only political bond – what humanity shares – is the orientation towards a common world. The elegance of Arendt's conception of civic ties is that 'humanness' to Arendt does not become soft and sentimental: rather, *cool and sober* (OH). Her notion of a civic bond – in terms of friendship - is not a phenomenon of intimacy, but on the contrary is rooted in the individual differences of all unique human beings and makes explicit political demands (i.e. a shared orientation towards a common world). What humanity is searching for when turning to the warmth of brotherhood, is the light they experience in the public sphere.

According to Arendt – as substantiated by for example Habermas – republicanism supposes a moral community. In such theories a community shares a common will – a single opinion – instead of a world

that they have in common. In republicanism, differences are seen as a threat to politics. The opposite is true to Arendt who (a) considers differences inherent to human beings and (b) regards this plurality as a necessary condition for political action. To think of a community in terms of a general will, disregards all the natural differences between men and impedes the possibility of action that has plurality as a condition. What unities citizens is "*that they inhabit the same public space, share its common concerns, acknowledge its rules and are committed to its continuance and to achieving a working compromise when they differ*" (Canovan 1992, 227). In other words, true political ties lie in friendship and a shared orientation towards the common world. It is the world itself that binds people together, without destroying the unique differences between men: it is the table that relates men and separates them at the same time (HC52). When all men are united in a single opinion: "*the world, which can form only in the interspaces between men in all their variety, would vanish altogether*" (OH).

3.2.2 Common World and Citizen Participation

To Arendt a community is not bound together by a shared opinion or compassion, but by a common world. Citizen engagement should then be understood as an active involvement with the common world.

Civic participation can be understood in a number of ways. In paragraph 3.1, I argued participation cannot be understood as the passive sharing of data: and deducing a 'public opinion' from data. Furthermore, participation to Arendt is not the mere casting of a vote in accordance with our individual preferences. The only way to come to a public opinion is through public debate. In this type of public debate – as the conversation between friends - a political opinion can be formed as we modify our own views and incorporate the perspective of our fellow citizens (PP). In a smart city, where every topic of debate is settled by aggregated data and machines, no political action is taking place.

In a number of smart city visions participation is understood in a more comprehensive manner: e.g. citizens are participating to facilitate decision-making (e.g. Kitchen 2014, 1). Citizens are allowed to decide on a pre-determined topic or agenda, without allowing for human spontaneous or citizens own initiatives. Furthermore, deliberative democracies understand deliberation as a means to come to a rational consensus: that is the participation is directed to overcome differences. To Arendt these forms of participation have no political significance: none allow for true 'action', the human capability that has plurality as its condition. Participation – politics even – to Arendt is not directed at a result or a goal: it is the process itself that is meaningful. Citizens do not have to agree on all topics – that would even be impossible considering the inherent differences between plural beings - but by engaging in a conversation (i.e. the dialogue between friends) they constitute a common world. By discussing the world that lies between them it becomes to both more common. They built, through the process of discussion, a civic tie of solidarity that allows them to overcome differences – not eliminate them – in an attempt towards a common world. If we understand participation in this way, as meant by Arendt, smart citizenship does not have to reach a predetermined goal: on the contrary, such predetermined goals kill the possibility for human spontaneous (i.e. political

action). Citizenship lies in a shared commitment towards a common world: a citizen is participator in a common world as he shares the common responsibility of public affairs with all citizens. As a participator he appears in the public arena of discussion and debate about matters of public interest.

3.2.3 Council's and Digital Democratic Platforms

To Arendt an active engagement of *all* citizens with the common world is crucial. Concretely, this means Arendt resents representative democracies and replaces them with direct modes of democracy. Arendt finds systems of representation by means of parties objectionable. Such systems succeed in representing citizens' interest, but they do not make citizens effective participators in the public world (OR 269). Citizens are participators when they share a common responsibility to public affairs. Alternatively, we need a public realm where citizens can both think and act as citizens: where they can debate to form their public opinions and where they can take action about their public affairs (Canovan 1992, 235). We need – that is – a common world: both a stable background for politics to take place and different spaces of appearance that allow for human action. A public space guarded by constitutional arrangements and upheld by the public commitment of citizens: we need what Arendt calls, 'lasting institutions' (OR 84-6).

Arendt was faced with the challenge to combine a stable institutional background, with the possibility for free action (OR 23). Arendt suggest, in modern history, societies have been unable to establish such an institutional structure. However, inspired by the re-emergence of a council system during the Hungarian Revolution of 1957 (OR 245), Arendt sees potential in this type of political institutions. The councils were a type of 'grassroots' that sprung spontaneously. They were not parties, nor ideological movements, but public spaces in which people could debate and take action upon their common affairs (Canovan 1992, 236). The grassroots in the Hungarian revolution failed: but Arendt retrieved from them – what she believed – a vital alternative to representative democracies (OR 267). The council system proposed a type of federate world: citizens would participate directly in politics through their local council. In a pyramid – a hierarchy of representatives - their participatory efforts would be sent on from lower to higher councils. The council system was an attempt by Arendt to make her proposal of a direct democracy with all-round citizens engagement realistic in the modern age. However, many readers find this attempt unsuccessful: the council system is considered unrealistic and elitist (Canovan 1992, 237-8).

Arendt did not know the technological means – i.e. ICT – available to us in the 21st century. In the past years "*online platforms have been developed with the aim of improving participatory democratic processes*" (Aragón et al. 2017, 1). Digital technologies have been said to provide new possibilities to realise modes of (direct) participation: e.g. digital means are used by citizens to define collective issues and organise themselves around them (in the smart citizens discourse see: de Waal and Dignum 2017). These online democratic platforms might offer an (better) alternative to organise the participation and active citizenship, Arendt envisions. One of the suggested means to facilitate citizens' engagement in the smart city (in the smart

citizens discourse) is the development of such a digital participatory platform. On these platforms citizens can mobilize themselves around issues of collective interest as well as partake in the coproduction of public services. DECODE is European project that developed a democratic platform "*to deliberate and construct alternative and more democratic forms of data governance, which will allow citizens to take back control over their personal data in the digital society and economy*".[23] Instead of corporations or government deciding which data need to be collected to manage the smart city, these platforms suggest an alternative way to govern data that allows citizens to decide what data is being collected and for what purpose. Urban governance based on the collection and analyses of citizens' data would only be possible if discussed and decided by citizens. Rather than automatically deducting data, predicting and nudging behaviour. Algorithms could only be used to execute citizens (active) choices. It is crucial that the functioning and purpose of algorithms – what they do and how they do it – is understandable and open for continuous revision by citizens. Algorithms could be understood as the executioners of the civic 'contracts' established in a conversation between friends: their commitment to a common world (see paragraph 2.2.1).

A real-life example of a digital democracy platform is DECIDIM[24] in Barcelona, a platform for citizens to discuss proposals through an interface of group discussions and comments (Aragón et al. 2017). The City Council of Barcelona uses this digital democracy platform to consult citizens in decisions on the (smart) city and to facilitate citizens' *initiatives*. From an Arendtian perspective only the latter is truly politically significant. While the former refers to discussing a pre-set agenda, and therefore lacks the possibility for citizens to take own initiatives (to *act*). The latter allows for citizens to realize their human spontaneity: to propose new topics of debate, to take their own initiative for urban governance. On their website DECIDIM speaks of the platform as a way to *empower* the community through citizen *initiatives*.[25] The relation between collective initiatives and power is parallel to Arendt's notion of political power and acting in concert. In an Arendtian reading: DECIDIM (potentially) facilitates the means for a plurality of human beings to organise around collective problems of their own choosing, to discuss and debate their perspectives: that is, to constitute a shared world amongst them, to establish ties of civic friendship and solidarity and together make the commitment to – for certain topics and purposes – share a common world.

Projects like DECIDIM often contain an element of DIY-initiatives.; an example of which is 'smart sensing' described by Zandbergen and Uitermark (2019). Smart sensing refers to the use of sensor technology by citizens (e.g. to measure air-quality) to collect data which can be used to "*negotiate with institutions and the government by means of self-acquired and collected data on problems that matter to them*" (3). In such context online platforms are not merely a room for discussion on pre-determined topic: but the platform is complementary to the citizens collective initiatives (e.g. their joint effort to measure air-quality in order to change public

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[23] "Decode DDDC." Decode DDDC. Accessed September 8, 2019. https://dddc.decodeproject.eu/.

[24] "Decidim.barcelona." decidim.barcelona. Accessed September 8, 2019. https://www.decidim.barcelona/.

[25] "Decidim.barcelona." decidim.barcelona. Accessed September 8, 2019. https://www.decidim.barcelona/.

policy). Democratic platforms and modes of DIY-citizenship together facilitate the possibility for citizens to *act in concert*.

DECIDIM in Barcelona is still in its infancy: the platform is experimenting with ways to effectively introduce discussions and involve all citizens (Aragón et al. 2017). Still, this type of platform initiatives seems a fruitful endeavour to organise direct democratic participation and active citizenship: of civic engagement and collective action. That is to say, digital democratic platform could constitute the revival of Arendt's beloved public space – in its true political meaning: both as an institutional background as well as a space of appearance for individuals.

4. CRITIQUE: SUBJECTIVITY AND SPATIALITY IN THE DIGITA AGE

In this chapter I discuss a number of critical questions that arise in the attempt to revive Arendt's notion of citizenship in relation to the smart city. First, I discuss a possible critique not to the smart city model but to Arendt's theory: i.e. its elitist implications. Furthermore, I question whether Arendt's ideal of the political subject in the digital age is realistic. Both these critics to Arendt are problematic but, I argue, these frictions are not inherent to her political theory (and could be overcome). In the second part I raise a concern – from an Arendtian perspective – with the conception of politics (i.e. online democracy) in the smart city. Particularly, I discuss the possibility to organise civic participation in an online environment, a popular idea in the smart citizens discourse. I consider this a serious critique that could best be overcome by the (co)organisation of offline public spaces.

4.1 The Political Subject: Shortcoming in Arendt's theory?

I will go into two possible problems with regard to the political subject necessary to Arendt's form of citizenship. First, the political subject might not be representative for the citizenry at large. Secondly, we no longer understand ourselves as the type of political subject Arendt envisions.

4.2.1 Elitist and Non-inclusive

Both the smart citizens project as well as Arendt's idea of councils have been criticized for being 'elitist'. The direct modes of democracy would only engage citizens with a high educational degree, sufficient time and resources (de Waal and de Lange 2017, 269). As such neither the councils, nor the democratic platforms are representative of the citizenry as a whole (e.g. Zandbergen and Uitermark 2019). Arendt, at the one hand one of the most radical democratic thinkers, can on the other hand be read – as many critics have argued – as an elitist (Canovan 1978, 5-6). Most clearly the contrast is reflected in the example of the 'polis' in Ancient Greece she describes in *The Human Condition*. The polis brings to light the equal and free citizens in the public space of the agora. It portrays the true free and political beings, where they act among peers in a common world. However, Arendt contrasts these free citizens with the dark, degraded lives of slaves in the household. The slaves that are bound to the private life of the household: to the necessity of life and the continuous of life processes. As Canovan points out, the freedom of the masters comes at the cost of the slaves (6). Arendt, in other words, seems to suggest that politics is reserved for the few who can afford not to be troubled with the necessity of life. In antiquity, because of the presents of slaves in the households who dealt with the necessity, masters could effort to enter the public realm free from the burden of continuing life processes. Arendt acknowledges that public happiness – what we experience when we engage in the public – is a luxury, "*an additional happiness that one is made capable of only after the requirements of the process have been fulfilled*" (Canovan 1992, 231).

On a more positive note, as Arendt herself acknowledges, *technological developments* might free us all from the necessity of life (231).[26] In *On Revolution* Arendt states: "*the rise of technology… has refuted the old and terrible truth that only violence and rule over other could make some men free*" (OR 110). Technological developments have lifted a great amount of the burden of life: i.e. liberated us from poverty and slavery. One of the problems with Arendt's theory of active citizenry was the lack of time and resources of individual people to engage in politics. In the smart city however, more and more of the production processes are automatized: taking over the traditional roles of slaves in the household and labourers in the modern age. In theory this should open up time for citizens to be engaged in politics. Furthermore, as Trevor Smith (2017) argues, digital democratic platforms make political participation extremely accessible and reduces the time and effort for individual citizens to participate (7). It is important to acknowledge that the ambition of (some) smart city discourses to automize politics itself – e.g. automated decision processes – would be highly problematic to Arendt. Such automatization would not free us from the necessity, but altogether eliminates us from politics (and the possibility of freedom).

4.2.2 The Political Subject and Understanding of the Self

Arendt's proposal for a council system too has been criticized for being elitist: for facilitating democratic participation for the few, rather than the many (Canovan 1992, 237-8). In a party system politics – and political freedom – is only accessible to those in parliament, but not to the common citizens. In a council system of direct democracy, Arendt argues: every citizen has in principle access to participate in politics. However, Arendt acknowledges, not all people will exercise their privilege to partake in politics. This reflects a second criticism to Arendt's council system: its *lack of realism*. Particularly, that many of us do not want to be citizens in the Arendtian sense. In the 21st century many prefer the representative system in which individuals are not burdened with politics (other than voting) but can continue their private lives while politicians take care of governance (Canovan 1992, 237). In present time many people simply do not wish to be politically active: not because of a lack of time or resources, but because they do not understand themselves as political beings. This disinterest in politics Canovan links to the rise of the social and economic growth: *"The difficulty is […] that that very economic growth has itself created the artificial necessity of modern society, in which people are too much absorbed in consumption to be interested in citizenship."* (Canovan 1992, 172).

In other words, Arendt's idea of citizenship stands far away from individuals own understanding of citizenship. Ultimately this line of arguments assumes citizens have a (neo)liberal understanding of the self, that cannot (easily) be changed. Zandbergen and Uitermark (2019) criticizes a smart sensing project for

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[26] The role of technology is rather ambiguous in Arendt's work. At times – for example in The Human Condition - Arendt seems to argue technology is part of the problem: that is, contributed to the rise of the social and the prioritization of labour over politics (see Canovan 1992, 149). While at other times Arendt proposes technological developments as a potential solution: a means to liberate all citizens from the necessity of life and labour. This ambiguity is particularly relevant when trying to apply an Arendtian framework to the smart city. There seems to be a fine line within Arendt's political thought between the good and the bad of technology.

incorporating liberal-individualistic forms of engagement (what they call "cybernetic forms of citizenship") into republican modes of citizenship (12). The authors see this tension between liberal and republican modes of citizenship as a problematic contradiction within the project. Alternatively, the tension could be explained by a persistent (neo)liberal understanding of the subject, underlying the attempt to reform society into a more republican ideal. To reform human beings into the type of active citizens Arendt proposes, might require a radical change in perspective to what it means to be a citizen by citizens themselves. In order for Arendtian politics to succeed people should start thinking different about their role as citizens and society as a whole. However, such criticism is not a critique to the heart of Arendt's political thought. That is to say, to Arendt such change in perspective is possible. Even though *homo faber* and *animal laborans* claimed a dominant spot within the social, *zoon politikon* has never fully vanquished.

This can best be explained by returning to the work of Wendy Brown (2017). Brown, building on Foucault, argues that under neoliberalism the subject has come to understand himself as "always and everywhere *homo oeconomicus*" (see paragraph 1.2.1). According to Brown, neoliberalism as a governing rational disciplined the subject to understand both the world and *himself* in economic terms. As a result, *homo politicus* – that part of human kind consider with politics – has been destroyed. For Brown the revival of *homo politicus* is hard or even impossible. Parallel Arendt argued that *zoon politikon* lost importance with the rise of the social: however, the political part of humankind did not disappear. The question for Arendt is not how to revive *homo politicus*: but how to restore the hierarchy of work, labour and action in its correct order. How can the individual – the character and difference – again become something public rather than private? How can a society that is inherently liberal and where such a large role is reserved for economics, devalue economy?

To Arendt, no matter how dark times get, no matter how far people are driven out of a public realm of politics, they can (and should) always take upon themselves the possibility to act. Arendt – in this respect – contributes a great deal of moral responsibility to individuals. Claiming citizens do not wish to engage in politics is similar to the Jews who under Nazi regime failed to see they could be political actors rather than helpless victims of history, a point made by Arendt in 'The Jewish State: Fifty Years After' (1946, 174).[27] The point crucial here, to Arendt, is that political action is central to men and to history: we must realize that it is politics itself, what makes us free. In order to prevent disasters such as Nazism – she concludes in *The Origin of Totalitarianism* (1985) [1951] – we need a "*consciously planned beginning of history… a consciously devised new polity*" (106). In other words, the best remedy for political evil is not an appeal to religion or to morals but to political action itself, "*the deliberate building of republics to guarantee equal rights, and the defence of those republics by citizens who understand what they are defending*" (Canovan 1992, 163). Her conviction that human beings always have a possibility to act explains why to Arendt "*those who are not interested in public affairs will simply have to be satisfied with their being decided without them*" (Arendt in Canovan 1992, 237).

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[27] 'The Jewish State: Fifty Years After' (1946) in Arendt, Hannah, and Ron H. Feldman. *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age.* New York: Grove Press, 1978.

In short, Arendt's political thought in relation to the smart city could be faulted for a lack of realism and elitists implications. However, from a practical point of view these criticisms can to a large part be overcome by technological developments that (i) take over the task related to the necessity of life and (ii) facilitate participation: e.g. direct democratic platforms. Furthermore, from a theoretical point: claiming citizens do not wish to be the active citizen Arendt proposes, is precisely the grave misunderstanding (and underestimation) of the importance of politics inherent in the 'social'. Claiming citizens do not longer understand themselves as political beings, to Arendt, is similar to Eichmann blindly following the orders of his superiors in the Nazi regime: people who stop thinking for themselves but follow the masses and fail to acknowledge their duty to the public world.[28]

4.2 Arendt's critique to Smart City: Public Space a Digital Space?

We have seen Arendt's theory of citizenship depends to a large extent on the realization of a true public sphere. In the previous chapter I referred to the possibility of organising direct democracy in the digital space. Scholars (e.g. van Dijk 2012) and projects (e.g. DECIDIM Barcelona) propose the organisation of a direct democracy through digital means: i.e. on digital platforms. However, this raises concerns for Arendt's theory: particularly the possibility to organise public sphere - understood as a space of appearance where one can disclose his identity - in the digital realm. Arendt's emphasis on the spatial quality of the public sphere seems to hinder this. The public sphere functions as the space to exchanges opinions, debate differences and search for collective solutions. All of which – in theory – should be possible on a digital democratic platform. However, does Arendt's public space need to be a physical space? Is physical proximity – the interaction between physical bodies – necessary for politics?

Trevor Smith in his book *'politicizing digital space: Theory, the Internet, and Renewing digital space'* (2017) argues the digital space can be a true political space in it Arendtian meaning. Smith turns to Arendt to argue the political value of the internet. According to the author the internet is the ultimate place to start something new (to *act*) in the 21st century (3). It can be – thus Smith – the ultimate locus for human spontaneity. Furthermore, he argues, the digital space on the internet can provide a public space in a global world which is accessible at all times (7). This seems fruitful in a world that is increasingly transcending national borders. Smith is, ultimately, one of the authors who argues in favour of a technologically enabled politics (6). He suggests the internet – as the space were millions of people can discuss their differences and conflicting opinions and can engage and participate in politics – "*is the space within which the reinvigoration of politics will take place*" (7). On the other hand, scholars voice their concern with online communication: the high numbers of depressions, social isolation and loneliness are linked to the increased time on social media and platforms (e.g. Caplan 2006; Burke et al. 2010; Baker and Algorta 2016). In other words, the digital age seems to be

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[28] Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil.* New York: Viking Press, 1963.

coloured by a decreasing *sense of belonging*. Arendt would interpret such lack of belonging as the lack of a truly intersubjectively constitutes world. The experienced loneliness and lack of solidarity online seems to evidence that online communication is not sufficient to establish ties of civic friendship as meant by Arendt. From *The Human Condition* it is clear Arendt values the public sphere, however it is not clear what the public sphere must look like. Some of her remarks seem to hint in favour of Smith and suggest the public space does not need a physical location. For example on page 198 of *The Human Condition* she states: "*The polis, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be*" (emphasis added). However, Arendt's focus on *appearance* in the public realm might be a problem for the possibility of an online political realm (Smith 2017, 27). Arendt argues the public sphere – as a space of appearance is the podium where individuals can reveal themselves as unique subjects, as well as realise their full human potential. Can one reveal his identity in the "*bodiless and anonymous fluctuations of online space*" (8)?

Smith acknowledges this possible conflict between the digital space and the space of appearance. Ultimately, he argues, the question arises whether physical proximity is necessary for politics: whether, in other words, the issue of appearance refers to the body (27). According to the author it is a misreading of Arendt to think her conception of political action requires the appearance of a physical body. What we need to disclose in the public sphere is not our body – which is always already visible – but our actions and opinions. Remembering the conversation between friends, what constitutes political actions is the exchange of perspectives on the world. Nothing inherent in Arendt's conception of politics requires a physical body. Arendt is concerned with a web of relations generated through actions, not with a web of physical bodies (28). Smith's argument can be substantiated if we return to Arendt's understanding of brotherhood. Brotherhood to Arendt is explicitly not political: as brotherhood replaces public light with the warmth and intimacy of physicality (i.e. bodily proximity). In smith's reading of Arendt, the body has no political significance and therefore a digital space of appearance is unproblematic. To Smith, what really matters for politics in terms of appearing and visibility is that opinions are heard and "*for collective actions to have lasting impact*" (28).

Even though Smith makes an appealing case for an Arendtian understanding of online politics, I will supply three arguments suggesting an online democratic platform cannot – on its own - be sufficient to establish a public sphere. Smith fails to acknowledge we do need an offline component to complete the political realm. Smith focus on online debate and interaction between differences of opinions neglects the importance of political *action*. He tends to understand the space of appearance merely in terms of words (speech) while disregarding the *deeds* that play a crucial role in Arendt's work. Arendt would agree that it is not the body that needs to appear in political action. For the exchange of opinions and differences an online democratic platform might function as a space of appearance. However, the online space can never be

comprehensive as a public sphere. In line with critics – e.g. Springer (2011)[29] – in order to speak of true political action, we need a component of action that happens offline. Parallel to online platform we should organise and establish institutions that allow for citizens to take collective action in order to make a lasting impact. Secondly, Smith underestimates the importance of face-to-face interaction in Arendtian politics. In response to critics, Smith argues face-to-face communication might be superior to computer mediated forms of interaction for the conversation with a friend, but not for political communication that is directed towards a wider audience (29). Referring back to Arendt's understanding of civic-friendship we could disagree with Smith here: Arendt does seem to value this type of conversation for the purpose of establishing ties of civic friendship and solidarity. And lastly – a practical argument – it is not at all convincing we can establish a truthful conversation between conflicting worldviews on a digital platform. At the one hand, the internet could facilitate the discussion between different worldviews as it is very easy to find people with another opinion. On the other hand, the internet can facilitate filter bubbles and uncivil speech which depoliticize conflict (Smith 2017, 9). Can we establish an environment of civic friends, where people exchange opinions causing people to (re)think their own beliefs, or do we facilitate echo-chambers where we are reinforced in our existing (unsubstantiated) opinion? Will an online democratic platform, in other words, celebrate plurality and discussion or contribute to segregation of societies and reinforce differences? From a practical point of view, engaging people in online discussions is more difficult than Smith seems to suggest. In the project DECIDIM, one of the main problems is to effectively introduce discussion, encouraging people to interact with one another rather than submitting votes (Aragón et al. 2017, 1). Engaged political action will not magically emerge once we introduce politics on the internet.

All things considered, from an Arendtian perspective, organising part of the public realm in the digital space seems fruitful. However, it does not seem convincing that introducing online democratic platforms will be enough to re-establish a public sphere where political action can take place. Online platforms could help facilitate discussion between citizens and make participation easily accessible. However, engaging citizens in online discussion is hard and establishing a truthful conversation between civic friends might never happen online. A true political smart city would need to be supplemented with offline spaces of appearance. To establish ties of civic friendship and solidarity face-to-face interaction may be valuable, but more importantly we need to facilitate the collective *actions* of citizens in the common world (for example, supplement online democratic platforms with smart sensing or modes of DIY-citizenship, see Zandbergen and Uitermark (2019).

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[29] Springer, Simon. "Public Space as Emancipation: Meditations on Anarchism, Radical Democracy, Neoliberalism and Violence." *Antipode* 43, no. 2 (2011): 525–62. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2010.00827.x.

CONCLUSION

The 'smart city' has become a popular concept within governments, business and academia. Initially, the smart city – as coined by multinationals - started as a vision of a future city filled with integrated technologies. A city where technology would automatically solve urban problems, automatize urban governance and improve the overall quality of life. However, this techno-utopia has been under fierce critique of scholars, NGO's and activists that claim the corporate smart city disregards the people living in it. As a result, the smart city discourse has shifted: from being techno-centred towards a citizen-centric approach to the smart city. The discussion focusses on the incorporation of citizens and the roles and responsibilities of these citizens (governments and businesses). Underneath there is a more fundamental discussion: the smart city discourse has stirred up the classic political philosophical debate on societal ideals. The thinking about the future smart city has grown from focussing on technological improvements, smart devices and automating processes, to a more fundamental discussion about a fair and functional political organisation of (the smart) society.

The current smart city debate can be divided in (roughly) two sets of discourses: the corporate smart city and the smart citizens discourse. Both discourses attempt to provide a societal ideal for the future smart city, both building on opposing political philosophical theories. The former business-led smart city vision is rooted in (neo)liberal political theory. This discourse assigns to citizens the role of passive consumers and understands politics in terms of an aggregate of individual preferences. The latter, more recent, discourse builds on republican ideals. Attributing to citizens an active role in terms of participation, civic-engagement and self-government. However, the theoretical grounding of both smart city visions is thin: they provide broad sketches of what the future city should look like, without providing political philosophically grounded notions of citizenship. This thesis attempted to describe how citizens and cities of the future ought to look like. Society is changing under the influence of technological developments and brings up the old discussion on politics and citizenship (e.g. technologies provide new means and possibilities for civic participation). I turned to Hannah Arendt – a controversial political thinker – to answer the question: *How ought we to understand – and (re)shape – citizenship in building the future 'smart' city?* In other words, if we envision a future "*smart*" city, what should citizenship (and thereby politics) look like?

From an Arendtian perspective the corporate smart city is not a desirable future city. To Arendt such a (neo)liberal smart city can by no means be considered *smart*. The Arendtian critique to the corporate smart city is twofold. First, the continuous economisation of society - parallel to the rise of the social – is problematic to Arendt. As argued in *The Human Condition* in modernity the focus has come to lie on production and consumption: on the activities of labour. Arendt describes the overturn of the hierarchy of action, work and labour resulting in the victory of the animal laborans. According to Arendt, society has come to disregard the importance of (political) action. What used to be public – what is truly political – has been degraded into the darkness of the private sphere. In the corporate smart city, that arguably economizes

all aspects of life and society (the popular critique by urban scholars to the neoliberal ideology underlying the smart city ideal); the importance of labour has taken unprecedented forms. More than ever, society is understood in terms of economics, politics in terms of aggregated private interests and citizens in terms of consumers. Secondly, the fundamental problem with the corporate smart city to Arendt – divergent from the common critique of urban scholars – is not its neoliberal tendencies but its liberal roots. To Arendt the liberal conception of equality and freedom are both problematic. Liberalisms focus on equality – understood as *sameness* – negates human plurality. Arendt describes how in the social the nation became a national household, bounded together by a similar interest (i.e. economic welfare) and an assumed shared opinion. This conformism takes new forms in the smart city: not only a shared interest and opinion are enforced, but data analyses and algorithms can be used to predict and manipulate behaviour to ensure a complaint and accommodating citizenry. In other words, the plurality – the difference inherent to unique individuals – is taken out of the public sphere. Furthermore, liberalism tends to confuse freedom with liberation. Consequently, the idea of being free from politics has arisen. To Arendt this is contradictory: as we only experience freedom through politics. 'Being free' from politics to Arendt is not possible: retracting from the political is nothing more than locking oneself in the world of labour. The corporate smart city and her ideal of algorithmic governance and automated decision-making drives all human beings – including political leaders – out of politics. Taken together, the inhabitants of the corporate smart city are not citizens (in Arendtian terms) but mere passive consumers. These consumers lack political agency: without a public sphere that arises out of the interaction between plural beings there is no possibility to act, where action has plurality as its condition. Without plurality, there is no human action, no possibility for individuals to take initiative. At the end of the day, what the corporate smart city and liberalism fail to acknowledge is the importance of political action as an end in itself. Political action allows for self-disclosure and the experience of freedom and public happiness.

In search for an alternative, the smart citizens' discourse has arisen, building on civic-republic ideals of civic engagement and participation. In this thesis, I used Arendt to deepen our understanding of a (more) republican vision to the smart city. Arendt develops an ideal of politics as a dialogue between civic friends: a dialogue through which both exchange their unique perspective on the world, learn to see the truth inherent to the other person's opinion and as such constitute a share common world. A world that binds them together without ignoring their differences. Such a conversation between friends is to Arendt a form of action: where both individuals show their unique self, given to them by virtue of being born, and realise the new beginning they embody. The solidarity established between civic friends is the source of political power: their willingness to act in concert. In broader terms: Arendt develops an ideal of politics that puts at it centre civic engagement and participation. Political engagement and active citizenship are not merely desirable, but it is the means to achieve (political) freedom. Arendt provides us with an account of citizenship that seems particularly interesting in digital times: she gives us a different perspective on what it ought to mean to be a citizen in the smart city. Her refreshing perspective could help deal with a number

of urgent issues in the digital age: such as, for example, privacy. Privacy has been of great concern in developing the smart city. Arendt establishes a notion of citizenship that does not focus on individual negative rights and private affairs, but rather teaches us a concern with the common i.e. the world that lies between us. Arendt understands the public as the original realm of individuality (of the personal). Privacy – understood as an individual right to control access to her personal information – is to Arendt an incomprehensible liberal value. Ultimately, Arendt's ideal of citizenship provides us with a notion of citizenship that allows for plurality and celebrates difference, while simultaneously establishing a sense of belonging.

The public sphere – a durable common world and spaces of appearance – is crucial to Arendt as the locus for political action. The direct democratic platforms that play a role in smart city projects – e.g. Decidim in Barcelona – could potentially be the type of political institution (similar to Arendt's council system) that allows for the active engagement of all citizens with the common world. Technological developments have made possible new means of organising civic participation. However, are these alternatives *smart*? Should we aspire a city that organises its democratic processes in the digital space? In this thesis, I provided arguments in favour and against the proposition. On the one side, direct democratic platforms are easily accessible, which makes it possible to engage all citizens rather than an elite group. Since engaging in politics would require less time and recourses, in theory, all citizens should be able to participate. Furthermore, technological developments increasingly take over tasks of work and labour. In other words, technology takes over the necessary processes of life and liberates all human beings to engage in politics. Finally, direct democratic platforms could facilitate discussions between citizens and an exchange of worldviews and opinions, as well as allow citizens to take initiative (e.g. suggest topics of debate or propose actions). On the other side, one could question whether a direct democratic platform can promote politics understood as a truthful dialogue between friends. Put differently, can the digital space function as a space of appearance for self-disclosure and building civic ties of solidarity?

In Chapter 4, I discussed the arguments made by author Trevor Smith about the possibility of technologically enabled politics. In Smith's reading of Arendt, a digital space of appearance is unproblematic: according to the author, political action does not require the appearance of the physical body. Although I agree with Smith on this account, I differ from his conclusion. Smith concludes a digital space, as a space of appearance, is unproblematic. However, it is my believe Smith's underestimates the relevance of face-to-face interaction in Arendtian politics and pays too little attention to the deeds rather than words as part of political action. Part of the counter-arguments provided in this thesis built on the work of Arendt: the evidence supporting the idea of the digital space as a public space within Arendt's work is thin. However, the main counter-arguments are derived from reality. In practice, the online realm does not straightforwardly facilitate discussion as meant by Arendt. Project DECIDIM for example, struggles to engage its platform users in discussions: so far, the platform is used primarily to omit private votes.

Additionally, the question arises whether online platforms can facilitate a conversation between conflicting opinions or accommodate filter bubbles. A digital platform potentially celebrates plurality and discussion but can easily be hijacked to contribute to segregation of societies. Furthermore, studies show a lack of empathy in online communication and link depression to time spend on social media: suggesting a lack of solidarity and sense of belonging. To Arendt a sense of belonging, in a non-monolithic way, is based on the experience of a shared world. The evidence seems to suggest this cannot be achieved in an online space. As for now, the internet does not facilitate the type of dialogue – as between friends - where citizens can establish civic ties and a sense of community. At Waag many of the projects struggle to create a sense of 'community' necessary for the projects to succeed. The common solution is to organise events where participants meet *in person*. However, this does not mean the implementation of direct democratic platforms is worthless. I suggest we should use the technologically available means to organise citizenship online. Direct democratic platforms, initially, will reintroduce politics in the day-to-day life of citizens in a manner that is accessible. That is, the platforms could help recover the proper hierarchy of work, action and labour: and allow citizens to take upon themselves the active making of history. However, organising direct democratic platforms alone will not be sufficient for the future society to be *smart*. Politics has to become a more prominent aspect of our lives. With all technological developments of the digital age, citizens can be liberated from the necessity of life and focus on what is truly meaningful: (political) action.

The future technological city could develop in two ways. Either, following the current trajectory of the dominant corporate smart city models, we will end up in the ultimate 'social'. A society of animal laborans, of consumer citizens. Where all inhabitants, subject to behavioural nudging and manipulation, are conforming to a single opinion and interest. Where algorithms and computers are overtaking politics, while human beings are reduced to meaningless masses. Alternatively, we utilize the technological developments to liberate us from tasks of labour to focus on the act of politics. In this future city, *zoon politikon* will return to the public sphere. Designing direct democratic platforms is a step in the right direction of reintroducing the 'polis' in the digital age. In other words, it is one of the ways to establish the type of active citizens, civic engagement and participation, Arendt develops. However, in order to succeed – to be truly political in Arendtian sense - we need to acknowledge politics is something that requires time and recourses. That the act of politics is the purpose of the life of man: *what all human beings are endowed to do by virtue of being born.* The political potential of the smart city is not that it could govern itself, automate decision-making and leave citizens to focus on consumption in their private lives: but that it supplies new opportunities for citizens to engage in politics.

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