Trinity. So, why did he bother? The fact that the Trinity was "trending" in popular English discourse in the late 1640s offers suggestive—although hardly conclusive—evidence. Perhaps Hobbes was speaking to debates on the ground.

More broadly, computational approaches have the potential to expand the ambitions of contextualist work in the history of political thought. The opening gambit of contextualists in the 1960s and 1970s was to shift the history of political thought away from a conception of the Western canon *as* the context (e.g., Skinner 1969). For instance, reading John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1690) as if it were a response to Hobbes, rather than to the politics of the Exclusion Crisis, is deeply misleading (Dunn 1969; Laslett 1960). To understand what political thinkers meant by any given argument or utterance requires a deep knowledge of the public discourse of their time.

So, context matters. But what counts *as* context? Although the question remains unsettled, there is little doubt that the contextualist turn expanded the range of documents that *might* count—not only canonical works of political thought but also pamphlets and sermons, diary entries and plays, and illustrations and frontispieces. For those scholars working on twentieth- and twenty-first-century political thought, contextual evidence also may include tapes, films, memes, and social media posts.

However, any honest contextualist must admit that the sheer volume of material is overwhelming. Faced with such a large and varied archive, how can our expertise possibly expand to meet it? We run up against predictable cognitive limits (Blaydes, Grimmer, and McQueen 2018). Without realizing it, we may focus on the items that seem familiar or that confirm our intuitions. We will pattern the archive according to our priors and, in so doing, we will reduce the chance of finding the unexpected.

I view the role of macroanalysis with digitized archives as one way to resist these tendencies. Where rich digitized archives are available, computational approaches allow us to retain an expansive answer to the question of what might count as context, to allow new patterns to present themselves, and to expand the context beyond our current expertise (London 2016). Perhaps most of all, these approaches preserve the possibility that the archive will surprise us.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research. ∎

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CONCLUSION: WORKING IN A "LIVING" ARCHIVE

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Although contemporary political science is increasingly methods driven, political theorists rarely discuss questions of method and approach. This silence is surprising. After all, as the editors of one of the few volumes to address this issue explicitly point out, "the choice is not between having a method and not having one, but rather between deciding to think about method or simply carrying on unreflectively" (Leopold and Stears 2008, 2). The contributions in this Spotlight seek to further an explicit methodological conversation by bringing scholars together to discuss archival research.

The archive has a special place within political theory. Although the use of empirical data often is used to differentiate political theorists from the rest of political science, this bifurcation is too simplistic. Political theorists are indeed more likely to engage in normative arguments compared to the rest of the discipline. However, this does not mean that their claims are empirically groundless. On the contrary, political theorists rely heavily on evidence "derived from prior interventions within the archive of political theory" (Passavant 2015, 268).

Within political theory, archives usually are associated with the history of political thought. However, examining documentary material need not be limited to issues of textual accuracy, philology, or the exposition of text through the hermeneutic interpretation of the canon. As Verena Erlenbusch-Anderson points out in the introduction to this Spotlight, archival "data" are not limited to the types of published and unpublished primary source documents found in the basement of a museum, library, or personal collection. On the contrary, archival evidence can take many forms, especially in an increasingly digital age, as Allison McQueen demonstrates in her contribution.

Additionally, engaging with archives can furnish a broader, richer, and more robust understanding of moral and political thought as well as forging critical connections with political practice. As a result, "archives can provide interesting material for the political theorist well beyond the concerns of textual accuracy and philology" (Hazareesingh and Nabulsi 2008, 152). Thus, archives are important not only for developing new hermeneutical perspectives on canonical texts; in his contribution, Matthew Longo describes how they also can qualify and refine arguments.

Finally, normative theorizing also has much to gain from archival research. The contents of the archive, including "memoirs, essays, and interviews," thus "constitute[s] a rich source of information regarding the common past" (Guisan 2012, 6; see also Verovšek 2020, 13–14). This reservoir of information can help political theorists to map how past ideas affect both contemporary politics and shared visions for the future, as Niccolas Buccola's contribution on William Buckley and the machinations of the American Right demonstrates.

From this perspective, the archive appears to be a bulwark against forgetting. Insofar as this institution connects a community's backward-looking "space of experience" to its forward-oriented "horizon of expectation" (Koselleck 1985), the very creation of an archive is an act of memorialization—a point highlighted by Nancy Luxon's comments about the history of colonial trauma. However, it is a mistake to treat the archive as a full or complete representation of the past. On the contrary, the archive is a product of political contestation, in terms of both what it includes and what is omitted. In his contribution, therefore, Kevin Olson encourages political theorists to pay attention to these gaps and offers strategies to help researchers make these silences speak.

This conclusion to the Spotlight raises a new issue: namely, what it means to study the archives of a living individual. Kathy Ferguson's reflections on the anarchist movement shows how the auto-creation of archives can help the objects of the archive to take agency over both the past and the future by shaping what is remembered and how their own history is written. This is true as much for individuals as it is for movements.

These brief reflections on this issue emerge from the research I conducted in the course of writing a biography of Jürgen Habermas as a public intellectual (Verovšek, forthcoming). Although Habermas is still alive, he has made available a selection of his papers from before 2000—including his correspondence, research notes, manuscript drafts, and teaching materials—via the Special Collections (*Spezialsammlungen*) department at the University

complete, this inherent open-endedness is even greater in the case of subjects who are still alive.

Second, there is the issue of permission. Many archives have restictions on how their materials can be used, requiring researchers to fulfill certain conditions before they can gain access. In the case of individual estates and bequests, these conditions occasionally include stipulations placed by the author of the papers in question. By contrast, the Habermas papers have no set rules or policy; because he is still alive, he approves every request (including my own) himself based on a short project proposal outlining what the researcher is doing and why access to these papers is needed. The *Vorlass*'s archivist acts as the liaison for these requests because Habermas is protective of his contact details.

On the one hand, this desire for control is understandable because indeed it must feel "strange to him [Habermas] that someone would want to 'rummage around' in his 'entrails'" (Müller-Doohm 2016, xiii). On the other hand, the fact that he has created a *Vorlass* signals a degree of openness: he is under no obligation to make his personal papers available to researchers. It is interesting that in addition to reading and approving all requests for access to his papers, Habermas tracks the output that results from this research. I know this to be true because a year and a half after my visit to his archive, I received an email from him noting that he had enjoyed two of my recently published articles (personal communication; June 22, 2021). The fact that a scholar can receive feedback from the subject of the archive is unique to working in a "living" archive.

This raises a third point. Unlike standard estates, where the researcher clearly is separated from the archive—both temporally and materially—because the content of the collection is closed, this is not the case for the Habermas *Vorlass*. I do not know whether or how Habermas's email correspondence will be preserved in what sooner or later will become the Habermas *Nachlass*. However, it is likely that ultimately I will be a part of the archive due to my request to gain access to these materials

The distinct perspective that each contributor brings to this Spotlight not only questions the rather staid distinction between intellectual history and normative political theory but also raises questions about an archive's creation, content, function, and use.

Library Johann Christian Senckenberg in Frankfurt am Main. The unusual status of these papers is signaled immediately by their designation as the "Habermas *Vorlass*."[1] Other collections held by the Archival Center of the Goethe-University bear the label of a *Nachlass*—that is, a bequest, or literally what is "left (*lassen*) behind (*nach*)." However, the compound noun *Vorlass*, which has no direct English equivalent, literally means "left (*lassen*) ahead (*vor*)" and refers to the estate of a living person that already has been placed in an archive.

Writing about a living individual is difficult for several reasons. First, while history and biography are always indeterminate in the sense that different interpretations are possible, the polyvalence of meaning is even greater when—in the words of another Habermas biographer—"its subject is a *life and work in progress*" (Müller-Doohm 2016, xii; italics in original). While no archive is ever

and my project proposal as well as my subsequent email exchange with Habermas. This type of entanglement of the researcher with the archive is another distinguishing feature of working in a "living" collection.

The distinct perspective that each contributor brings to this Spotlight not only questions the rather staid distinction between intellectual history and normative political theory but also raises questions about an archive's creation, content, function, and use. In addition to generating insights about archival research and contributing to debates within the discipline, this Spotlight will encourage more political theorists to think about the methods they use and to engage in archival research. Although this conversation originates within the subfield of political theory, it has implications for scholars across political science who are interested in archival methods.

NOTE

1. For further details on the Habermas *Vorlass*, see www.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/archive/habermas.html.

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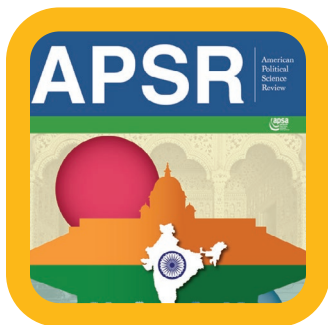
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