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The Mellon Foundation award allowed me to conduct five weeks of pre-dissertation in Guatemala in the summer of 2018. I interviewed community members and leaders, local officials, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), and others to investigate the legacies of past wartime violence in Guatemalan social movements today. In addition to interviews, I was able to explore the archives in the Center for Mesoamerican Regional Investigation for social movement documents and news clippings related to my investigation. I also met with the director of Social Sciences at the Universidad del Valle and the head of the Center for Forensic Analysis and Applied Sciences (CAFCA), both of which I will be affiliated with for my dissertation research. Through this fieldwork, I was able to probe the plausibility of my theoretical ideas about how a history of civil war violence enables and constrains social movements today, and to further develop research contacts across Guatemala. This laid the foundation for dissertation fieldwork that I will conduct from January 2019 to January 2020.

I spent the first week conducting interviews and meetings in Guatemala City. Here I was able to connect with members of national-level NGOs working on issues from post-conflict recovery and social programs to present day legal and social mobilization challenges to hydroelectric dams and mines. I focused on how these NGOs were formed during and after conflict, the impact of the conflict on present politics, and their relationships with local community organizations and leaders. These interviews shed light on the continued legacy of the Internal Armed Conflict (CAI) on present social mobilization from influencing how people understand the state to informing the importance of resisting repression broadly.

These interviews also helped me think about which cases of hydroelectric dams made sense to conduct ethnographic research in in the coming year. While it is possible to find data on the broad variation in wartime violence across Guatemala, it is difficult to know from afar which communities have resisted the presence of hydroelectric dams and the forms that these mobilizations take. Yet, my dissertation research design moving forward relies on comparing cases of mobilization and non-mobilizations. These interviews highlighted which communities had mobilizations and the varied forms of resistance in different communities.

I then spent two weeks in Nebaj, Guatemala, a region that experienced intense wartime violence. Here, I conducted interviews with local organizations and leaders and witnessed community events. Through being present in these spaces, I could see how individuals and communities grappled with the wartime violence they survived and how they understand present day political struggles. Interviews allowed me to ask about what motivates their participation in collective action and how they understand the present and past actions of the state. Being in Nebaj also allowed me to meet with other scholars of Guatemala who were conducting research there and to share ideas about our research and the important dynamics in Guatemalan politics today.

Finally, the Mellon grant allowed me to spend close to two weeks in the Center for Mesoamerican Regional Investigations (CIRMA) Archives in Antigua. There, news clippings, social movement publications across the decades, and a collection of social movements posters

informed my understanding of how movement actors refer to their own actions, as well as broad media narratives about their activities and operations. Overall, the Mellon allowed me to test the plausibility of my dissertation research, select cases for future research, further build contacts, and deepen my commitment to Latin America as a region, Guatemala as a country, and Nebaj as a case.