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IRIS Awards for Incoming Graduate Students

In June and July of 2022, I used IRIS funding to support an eight week preliminary dissertation fieldwork project in Rome, Italy and Madrid, Spain. The goal of my fieldwork was to clarify ideas for my dissertation, access archives of relevant political documents, and collect other qualitative data to begin my dissertation. My research centers around how narratives of national history can affect modern political attitudes and outcomes, with an emphasis on how far right parties strategically use historical narratives in their electoral messaging. As a student of comparative politics, I try to draw lessons from multiple countries to better understand this phenomenon. My dissertation focuses on both Spain and Italy as primary cases to study far right messaging related to authoritarian history.

To begin my fieldwork, I spent about four weeks in Rome, Italy. While in Rome, I spent most of my time combing through party documents from the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* and *Alleanza Nazionale* parties, both of which are important players in my dissertation. These documents were found through an archive of the Italian political right held at the *Fondazione Ugo Spirito-Renzo De Felice* in Rome. Additionally, I was able to observe a party rally while in Italy and better familiarize myself with the modern Italian political landscape.

Following four weeks in Rome, I traveled to Madrid to focus on Spanish politics for the remainder of my travels. In Madrid, I conducted an interview with a national parliamentarian from Vox, a major far right party discussed in my dissertation. I was also able to make multiple contacts connected to the party which while likely be useful for return trips in the future. In addition, I spent time investigating documents at the *Archivo de la Transición Española* through the Juan March Foundation, and observed multiple protests related to historical memory laws that were actively

being debated in the congress at the time. These experiences were quite informative in shaping my prospectus and will provide useful qualitative data when writing my dissertation.

Funding received from IRIS supported my travel and lodging throughout this trip. Being able to pursue preliminary dissertation fieldwork in the countries that I plan to write more about was crucial for gaining better case knowledge, practicing language skills, and beginning to collect original data. These experiences and outcomes set me up well for dissertation writing as I move forward in my PhD.