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My initial goal for applying to Sverker Astrom Foundation scholarship was threefold: I hoped to establish contacts with colleagues in Sweden and develop institutional links and joint projects, have some time for my current research projects, and dive into Swedish academic and intellectual life. To say that I have fully achieved the goals above would be a simplification and a grandstanding; there are several places to visit left behind in Sweden, events that I missed, colleagues that I could not meet, not to mention that the papers written could be better. Nevertheless, if I were to describe the visit just in few words, that would be “inspiration” and “a fresh good start”.

From September 7th until December 4th I resided in Uppsala Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies (UCRS) in Uppsala with occasional retreats to Stockholm. UCRS itself is a wonderful new establishment at Uppsala University with excellent team, vibrant intellectual life, and lovely location at the very heart of Uppsala. During my stay I participated in the Center's seminars, most of them were highly relevant to my own studies, including talks and discussion on Ukraine by Volodymyr Paniotto, Mykola Riabchuk, and Stephan Hedlund; Nataliya Zubarevich and Marina Nisotskay's seminars on Russian subnational politics; and excellent lecture of Alexander Golts on Russian military reform. And I got acquainted with peers working on similar topics: Sofie Bedford, Vasiliy Naumov, Ann-Marie Sätre, Leo Granberg, and Leonid Polischuk. UCRS hosts scholars whose interests vary from anthropology and ethnography, history and literature to political economy and sociology; hence for me it was a good chance to expand my knowledge about developments in the fields outside political science. On 17th of November I had a pleasure to present my own research on political mobilisation in Russia. Outstanding comments and questions from my colleagues gave me an opportunity to amend the draft I had come with, and on December 1st it was accepted by Austrian Journal of Political Science and scheduled to be published next year.

Thanks to University library and institutional access to online repositories, I also started two other papers – on political effects of ethnic territorial autonomies and social origins of anti-Western mobilisation in Russia. For the former it was my great pleasure to meet professor Kjell-Åke Nordquist, now the Head of Ålands Institute for Peace and one of the most established scholars of ethnic autonomies, and discuss with him this project; his insights helped me to refine my argument in the paper. For the latter, I'm heavily indebted to UCRS fellow Greg Simons and numerous conversations with other researchers and practitioners, who were willing to share their view on this issue. As a miscellaneous, I even started the introduction for my book on contentious

politics in Russia after 2008 crisis, hence the word “inspiration” is very appropriate: having done one paper, two drafts, one introduction in a three-month timespan is not a usual thing for me.

As for intellectual and academic life (apart from UCRS), it was great to visit events at Stockholm Institute for Transitional Economies (SITE), Södertörn University, and Peace and Conflict Research Center in Uppsala. Good memories come from my participation in Uppsala Forum's 6th Doctoral Student Conference:

“Post-PhD—Today's Choices, Tomorrow's Possibilities”, where young and established scholars shared their views on opportunities and challenges of staying inside/outside academia, many things I found similar to what we face in Russia. Above all stand the famous Sverker's tea-parties, where the flow of conversations takes you all across the world and issues: from Perm to South Africa, from climate change to challenges in high education. For me it was important to meet and talk with those wonderful people so that we could make bridges, and it is even more important now given the current situation in Europe and a lack of mutual understanding between Russia and European countries.

These links and bridges constitute “a fresh good start” for new collaborative projects: with my counterparts from Sodertorn we are going to have a joint panel on the impact of recent Russian legislation on the third sector development, which is going to be held in Stockholm next June. Also, UCRS together with University of Tartu and University of Kent is organising a big conference on East European Politics, and we are going to propose two panels on local politics and political opposition in Post-Soviet countries. Finally, with Uppsala University Department of Government and UCRS we are now thinking about methodological workshop focusing on contentious politics in general and event-analysis in particular scheduled for next Autumn.

Last but not the least, it was useful to observe and learn from Swedish culture inside and outside academia. I enjoyed weekly fika on Tuesday in the Center, an excellent tradition to keep updated on what is going on around you. Some other little nice traditions would be of great use for our Center in Perm and I am looking forward to implementing some of them back home.

All in all, I am happy to be the part of Sverker Astrom's legacy and the growing community of the Foundation stipendiates. It is a great opportunity for all of us to discover Sweden, to meet new people there, to explore their culture and world-views, and to continue Sverker's quest for peace and happiness in the world.

– Andrey Semenov