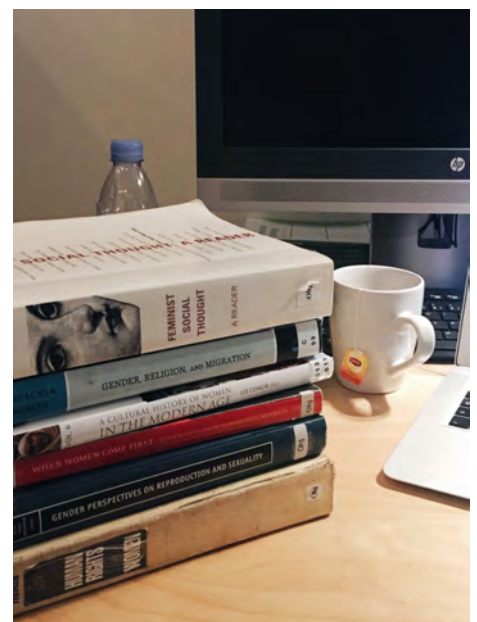




Utö, Sweden

The luck and my determination to expand the professional skills and knowledge in the field of women's rights and migration brought me to Sweden. The six months I spent there were one of the most wonderful and efficient experiences in my life both professionally and personally.

My research looked at the Swedish experience concerning the integration of women migrants. To conduct it, I split it into 2 articles that are currently were accepted by the legal journals: the gendering of international migration and integration of women migrants. The general trend is in the feminization of migration due to the various reason. Sweden is the greatest example to look at. Since 2013, Swedish periods of development can be characterized as “the integration issue” and “the refugee challenge” Sweden has been praised as being “the forefront of integration”. “Sweden is better equipped than many other countries to integrate refugees, given its strong economy and tradition of welcoming immigrants”. Besides, Sweden has traditionally been a state favourable to women and their rights. Gender equality is a cornerstone of Swedish society. I was privileged to experience excellence in gender equality myself in my everyday life.



I started the first three months at the Stockholm Centre for International Law and Justice under the supervision of Prof. Pål Wrangé. Also, to conducting research and scheduling meetings and interviews with the representative of NGOs and the government, I was invited to the weekly meeting of the doctoral candidates and professors to discuss the international law current events and cases. It was a great chance not only to meet wonderful people but also to widen my horizons and learn more about the Stockholm University School of methodology that was completely different from the Dutch one that I used extensively in my research. The doctoral candidates were very generous to share their techniques and advice. Those meetings allowed me to visit also lectures on migration together with one of the PhD students.

While I did not have any problems in collecting academic data, I faced some difficulties in scheduling interviews at first. I was able to interview the representatives of the Swedish NGO KvinnaLobby that gave me an overview of the current problems' women face in Sweden, especially migrants.



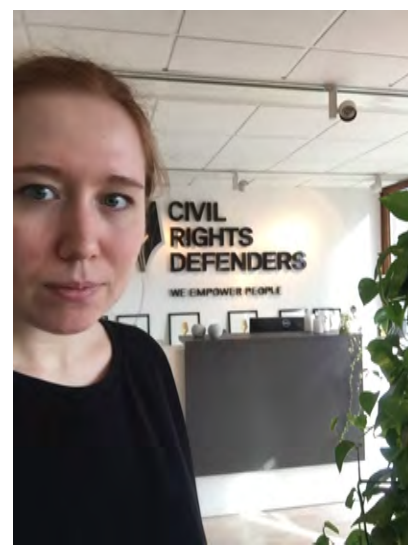
KvinnaLobby



At Stockholm Human Rights Day 2019

However, the visit of the Human Rights Day (*Mänskliga Rättighetsdagarna 2019*) helped me to acquire the necessary contact with for instance with Civil Rights Defenders, *Riksförbundet för sexuell upplysning* (RFSU), Swedish Association for Sexuality Education and Migration Agency. Besides, with the great help of Elsa Håstad, I was able to schedule an interview with the representative of Red Cross Sweden. Those interviews gave me empirical data and a great understanding of the Swedish policy towards women and migrants.

The second term of my fellowship I decided to be practically involved in the work of the NGO to look at how the problems tackled. I was selected to be an intern at the Civil Rights Defenders. This internship was a wonderful chance to meet great people and learn a lot about both human rights and migration. The internship allowed me to deepen my knowledge and see how international law works outside textbooks. I am so grateful to be given this wonderful opportunity.



In addition, working and chatting with the professionals in the field of discrimination, migration was a blast!



Undoubtedly, my days did not consist only of the work and research (nevertheless, it mostly consist of work). I undertook Swedish language classes, was a volunteer at the Stockholm Film Festival, visited the Stockholm Internet Forum, Kulturnatt, etc. One of the most wonderful things that happened to me was the invitation to the International Scholars event at the City Hall. This event gathered researcher from all over the world who came to Stockholm to continue their work. The events held few days before the Noble Prize award ceremony what made it even more special

City Hall, International Scholars event

One of the most unique experiences is the Tea Party organized by Benedicte and Örjan Berner. First of all, the list of invited people blows the mind: ambassadors, ministers, the UN personnel, journalist and art people. The conversations and their advice are forever with me. The hosts are the wonderful people who expressed genuine interest in the fellows and their research. And of course, the venue of the party is the apartment of the host, was one of the most stylish and interesting places I've ever seen.



None of the aforementioned could be possible or enjoyable without the greatest Disa Håstad. Disa is a person with great hospitality and kindness. She is ready to help and assist if some problems occur. The Easter celebration involved the travelling by car, dinners, fikas is the perfect memory from my Swedish period. Dinners at Disa's place with her friend was a unique chance to discuss politics and art with the people directly involved in both. I was highly impressed by everything happened at Disa's place and I will be forever grateful for those moments.

The fellowship introduced me to wonderful people who were doing their research at the same time with me and who became my good friend and a perfect network for the future project. Meeting them also opened new opportunities!

I have been travelling a lot and have been studied in different countries, and I can tell that Sweden is an ultimately different experience for me as for a foreigner. I felt a bit integrated into a Swedish lifestyle and society (even if it is not a case). I felt the culture and tradition more than in any other country. Importantly, Sweden and Swedish people taught me great lessons about self-caring and work-life balance. All those fikas and flexible working hours for me coming from the Russian working culture was a surprise and I could not adapt at first. I felt that I am losing valuable working time at fikas or that I should finish the work before calling it a day. But I even went to one of those seminars on work/life balance at Stockholm University that opened my eyes a little. Then, at Civil Rights Defenders I tried to practice the knowledge. The main lesson I learned about Swedish culture is that you should always choose yourself and your family first and no other things.



Life in Stockholm comes with a pleasant bonus of having a chance to visit great museums, opera and parks and also enjoy Swedish cuisine (I am still a bit shocked about the fact there are different seasonal pastries).

I'd like to thank the Board of Sverker Åstrom Foundation for giving this life-changing chance to understand Sweden and learn more about it as well as to conduct the research. The greatest gratitude is to Disa for being so kind and supportive!