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**The Russian-American Cooperation on Long-Duration Outer Space Missions:  
Governmentality Perspective**

In academic and public discussions outer space exploration had been frequently considered in the context of geopolitical militarized competition, the phenomenon known as “space race.” Less attention was given to partnership projects between the Soviet Union/Russia and the US – the central space race antagonists – that started already in the 1970s with a short-term Soyuz/Apollo initiative and continued in 1990s by collaboration around long-duration space missions. My project zooms at the Russian-American Mir/Shuttle program (1993-1998) that allowed accommodation of American astronauts aboard the Russian orbital complex Mir, participation of Russian cosmonauts in Shuttle flights and general exchange with technological and social innovations between the two counters. The purpose of the study is to get a better understanding of why this partnership, despite all the variety of obstacles, become possible. The study relies on the Foucauldian notion of “governmentality.” I plan to examine the ways in which (geo)political dynamics was articulated within the organizational context of the cooperation project and shaped cosmonauts and astronauts conduct on the low orbit, their wellbeing and desire for further collaboration. Instead of perceiving national value systems (manifested both in material and ideal forms) as oppressive, restricting or abusive for individual social actors, I would like to show how they were expressed, communicated and appropriated to sustain the joined efforts of Mir/Shuttle missions. The project is in the initial stage. In my conference presentation, I would like to focus on one aspect of the planned research, on space flyers’ experiences and representations of interpersonal interactions that emerged in the framework of the Mir/Shuttle program. On the analysis of autobiographical materials, I will explore the ways in which dominant value systems, the materiality of organizational structures and the embodied sense of existential vulnerability might shape the flyers’ perception on the objectives, realities, and outcomes of the cross-national collaboration.