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Presentation: «**Immersion into the city: (non) institutional experiences**».

International Conference «Complex Gaze at a Complex World: Challenges of Comparison in Social Research».

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Being based on the experience of long-term collaboration in the field of Urban Studies, our presentation is aimed to answer two questions. The first one is methodological. It problematizes the significance of universalities and distinctions in comparative research. We will discuss the potentiality of application of micro-optics focused on the details and nuances in the comparative urban research describing some holistic experiences such as city life or city experience. The second question, which is more pragmatic one, addresses the practice of collaborative studies realized by micro-alliances and its institutional support.

The shared research interest as well as shared urban experience (like being a walker, cyclist, tourist, etc.) constitutes the starting point and the common ground for the collaborative studies realized by the researchers representing different countries, cities and disciplines. This perspective explicates the multi-dimensional character of the experiences to be compared and requires the constant articulation of compared phenomena. For instance, the remark of a skater, who is new to the city, on the convenience of the city roads for skate-boarding actualizes and valorizes not only the experience of newcomer/outsider, but also the experience of a skater opposing to one's of a walker, which is shared by a researcher.

The search of coincidences and common logics in the variety of urban situations allows researchers to elaborate some universal descriptions of urban experiences. At the same time, the development of common conceptual scheme does not lead to the elimination of the details, but provides them with a new heuristic status. The details and nuances being privileged by micro-optics (applied in urban studies) might be used as a tool for questioning both everyday experience and process of conceptualization. The way detail is conceptualized highlights the productiveness of comparison and theoritization: whether the detail becomes the starting point for new research trajectory, opening the new perspectives or it is treated as a research anecdote, "the matter of curiosity" giving the way to exotization of the unusual experiences.

The second question to be raised in our presentation relates to the institutional support of the collaborative research, which is implemented by the micro-alliances (2-3 participants) constituted by the researchers, who affiliate with different institutions/work in different countries. Our experience of collaborative studies says that their productivity is usually approached rather in spite of institutional efforts than because of them. The existing formats of institutional support are oriented mostly towards big alliances (counted in the number of institutions or participants), while the micro-groups quite effective in co-working stay aside of institutional help. Both enthusiasm and personal interest in co-working becomes an engine of the common projects shaping and nourishing the moral economy of collaboration.