
The Altai Road: Visions of Development across the Russian–Chinese Border

Pál Nyíri and Joana Breidenbach

ABSTRACT

The Altai Republic is a poor mountainous region of Russia squeezed between Kazakstan, China and Mongolia. A project to build a road connecting Russia with China through the Altai has been conceived within a quadripartite regional co-operation project, supported by Western development organizations. Yet while at the Chinese side of the border road construction went ahead, in Russia, a coalition of globally connected ecologists, romantic ‘Eurasianists’, nostalgic conservationists and anti-Chinese xenophobes turned the road into a political hot potato. This case study, in which production and investment are the focus on the Chinese side and environmental protection is key on the Russian side of the border, shows the inadequacy of approaches that pit global capital/international (read: Western) organizations against local (read: non-Western) resistance or adaptation. China’s entry into the politics of international development may be a setback for development critics who have helped engineer a ‘cultural turn’ in institutions such as the World Bank.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2002, Russia, Kazakstan, Mongolia and China established a joint committee, called ‘Altai: Our Common Home’, to develop the resources of the Altai, an Alpine mountain range shared by the four countries in a remote corner of Inner Asia (Xinhua News Agency, 2000). The initiative came from the Altai Republic, a constituent region of the Russian Federation with a population of around 200,000, located in the Russian part of the Altai Mountains, whose natural features are often compared to those of Switzerland. The signatories agreed to focus on trade, transport, tourism, environmental protection and education. The region was to be developed into an internationally renowned eco-tourism destination with a world-class agriculture, as well as a base for new technologies (Xinjiang Tianshanwang, 2004). The third international conference on economic and technological cooperation in the Altai,

The authors are grateful to Liang Yong for his help in locating Chinese sources for this article. Liang Yong’s assistance was made possible by a Macquarie University grant. Pál Nyíri acknowledges the support of a Humboldt Foundation research scholarship for the writing of this paper. The authors are also grateful for the comments of two anonymous reviewers on earlier versions of this article.

Development and Change 39(1): 123–145 (2008). © Institute of Social Studies 2008. Published by Blackwell Publishing, 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK and 350 Main St., Malden, MA 02148, USA

held in 2003, reaffirmed the priorities of developing eco-tourism, creating a 'transport corridor' and encouraging exchange of personnel (Dong and Yue, 2003).

In parallel with ongoing fieldwork at World Heritage sites in China (see Nyíri, 2006a), the two authors visited the Altai Republic in September 2004 with the intention of comparing the role of UNESCO's World Heritage designation in tourism development in the two countries (see Breidenbach and Nyíri, 2007). We soon noticed that our conversations on the topic with officials and local residents revolved around discussions of a road between Russia and China that had been proposed as part of the 'Altai: Our Common Home' collaboration and endorsed by the governors of the Siberian regions in 2002 (Antonenko and Pinnick, 2003: 9) and by President Vladimir Putin (Barabanov, 2003: 21). After initial cautiousness (Barabanov, 2003), regional Chinese authorities also endorsed the road and applied for the central government's permission to open a direct border crossing, stating bluntly that 'for a backward region to achieve a leap in development, the best way is to strengthen international co-operation' (Zhao, 2000a). Some officials and researchers in China even proposed the establishment of an international free trade zone and talked about 'the largest environmental tourism destination in the world' (Zhao, 2000b).

By the end of 2004, 140 km of the road had already been completed on the Chinese side, and the Party secretary of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region declared that the regional government would spend one billion yuan (US\$ 114 m) to build the remaining 120 km (*ibid.*). This enthusiasm for the project fits into an overall pattern of China pushing for more road and rail links with its western neighbours, including adjacent Kazakhstan (Garver, 2006). In 2006, an official in the Ministry of Transport announced that China intended to build twelve motorways from Xinjiang to Central Asia (Altaiinter, 2006a). Yet to date, despite the shared border, there is still no road connection between Russia and China over the Altai. This means that traffic between the Altai Republic and Xinjiang goes via Kazakhstan or Mongolia, and is hindered by the fact that neither of these countries has an agreement with China about the transit of third-country goods (Kovaleva, 2003).

We were surprised that many of our interlocutors in Russia expressed strong opposition to the road. Unlike dams or pipelines, roads are usually uncontroversial projects, generally accepted as serving the public good. At the news of a new dam project in Laos or a power station in India, television viewers across the West will reach for their pens to sign a protest petition. But if they hear about a new road being built, they will stay in their armchairs — especially if it is in a remote border region with few roads and no railway, whose export structure relies mainly on deer antlers shipped as aphrodisiac to Hong Kong and Korea, an area with a budget almost entirely reliant on federal subsidies (Nozhkin, 2003: 39), an unemployment rate of 47 per cent (in 2004), and average per capita monthly incomes ranging between US\$ 18 and US\$ 41 (in 2002) (Kovaleva, 2003). Border trade and tourism are

seen as the main hope for revenue, and China is seen as the major export market for timber and minerals from the Russian Altai, as well as a potential investor in tourism, timber and wool processing (Kovaleva, 2003; Zhao and Zhang, 2005). Against this background, opposition to the Altai road indicates profound disagreement about the meaning of development on the two sides of the border and within Russia itself.

The main aim of this article is to show different notions of development in action. That there are different notions has come to be, theoretically at least, widely accepted since the influential development critique started by Escobar (1994; for a more recent work, see Nederveen Pieterse, 2001). In addition to inspiring a whole school of social criticism, Escobar's accusation that the West's development agenda served to perpetuate a neocolonial system of control of poor countries by the rich jolted institutions like the World Bank into turning their attention to the social aspects of development. Capitalism as a vehicle to development remained unquestioned, but now there was a new preoccupation with 'social capital' and — especially after Amartya Sen's Nobel Prize — non-economic indicators of development. Western donor organizations also responded to calls for a more critical look at the ways their development strategies may clash with local ideas. In 2004, for instance, the German development agency GTZ initiated a worldwide project to interrogate the notions of 'progress' in different cultures.¹

Yet examples of such clashes in practice are rarely made public, and those that are typically take place between international agencies and local activists, confirming a well-established dichotomy of Western developmental hegemony versus local resistance — a view criticized by a number of development practitioners as serving to perpetuate 'potentially deeply conservative, and occasionally reactionary, aspects of such local particularisms' (Watts, 1998: 92). In this framework, cultural or environmental conservationists — who themselves have global allies but who are always legitimized as protecting 'indigenous knowledges and practices that have somehow escaped the clutches of a hegemonic developmental order' (Watts, 2001: 286) — are pitted against the culturally insensitive orthodoxy of global 'neoliberalism'. In our case, the 'clash of cultures' is a very local one, but it takes place across a border that supposedly separates 'East' from 'West', or at least from a territory with an ambiguous cultural pedigree. Both sides of the border are remote peripheries of their respective political (and putative cultural) entities, and both have been thrust onto the development scene recently as the globalizing forces of the market push against their last frontiers. In this situation, what can we learn from the passions that flare around the road? Who are the actors in this particular development 'game' locally and internationally, and what do their development agendas reflect?

1. See the website: <http://www.goethe.de/ges/prj/run/deindex.htm>

ROADS AND SCENIC SPOTS IN CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT MODEL

On the other side of the Chinese border, in Xinjiang, lies the Altay Kazak Autonomous Prefecture, home to the Lake Khanas National Scenic Area and, like the Altai Republic, inhabited largely by a Turkic-speaking population. In recent years, Lake Khanas has become the most popular tourism destination in Xinjiang, and the Chinese government has favoured a trace of the road that would connect the lake to the Russian border at the Khanas Pass. This would facilitate cross-border tourism, which, according to an existing Chinese–Russian treaty, is exempted from visa requirements as long as it is restricted to the border regions and does not exceed a certain time limit. In this way, the road would help Xinjiang Party secretary Wang Lequan to achieve his vision of making Khanas a ‘world tourism brand’ (Zhu, 2002).

In 2005, Lake Khanas was forecast to receive over 600,000 tourists (Guo, 2005), with more than twenty flights a day to the Altay airport that serves it. Burqin County, in which the lake lies, received nearly three-quarters of its income from tourism and had benefited from around 1 billion yuan (US\$120 m) of investment. Of this, 400 million yuan came from government funds to build and upgrade roads and service infrastructure, both leading to and inside the scenic area, and to purchase ‘environmental buses’ for the lake (Li, 2004). The government renovated buildings in the main street of the county town in ‘European style’ (Chen and Wang, 2003). In 2005, further roads and a hydroelectric power station were being built at an additional cost of 100 million yuan, while the accommodation capacity of the Khanas area was being expanded from 1,500 to 2,700 beds. (The area has over a hundred hotels, nine of which are star-rated, and the hotels are full during peak periods.) Several additional tourist destinations had been developed near the lake: the Yangguang Shatan (Sun Coast) Ecotourism Holiday Village; the Akegonggaiti Grassland Nomadic Culture Eco-Park (featuring a Kazak crafts fair, songs and dances, ‘traditional sports performances’, and a restaurant with ‘typical Kazak dishes’); the Aketubieke Five-Coloured Riverbank geological park (with walkways and pavilions); the pedestrian shopping and entertainment street ‘in Russian style’; a night market (Burqin County, 2005); and a neighbourhood of ‘European-style villas’, intended as holiday homes. The government-owned Burqin County Tourism Corporation was now seeking investors for the projects of the next stage, which included: ‘a race course, a ski resort and skating rink, a holiday village and other related public facilities; construction of infrastructure facilities, including a hydraulic power station, an airport, two roads with length of 170 kilometers and 180 kilometers respectively, and telecommunications facilities; construction of facilities for production of souvenirs and other tourism products’ (Agenda21, n.d.).

Lake Khanas has been declared a nature reserve and — ostensibly for environmental protection, but no doubt also not to disturb the investors — the nomadic Kazak and Mongol herder population has been resettled outside. All tourist accommodation is away from the shore, and swimming in the lake

is not allowed. Nearly 2,000 private enterprises operate in Burqin County, and the government claims that locals' incomes — which only a few years ago had to be supplemented by emergency food aid — have risen dramatically because of tourism-related services ranging from horse rental to the sale of foodstuffs and souvenirs (Chen and Wang, 2004).

This development has been linked to the marketing of local mythology — 'real' or invented — as much as to that of nature. According to the head of the Burqin County Tourism Office, reports on sightings of the 'Lake God', a Nessie-like creature that snatches goats and cows grazing around the lake, and the Sea of Clouds and Buddha Halo that manifest themselves after rain, have been instrumental in attracting tourists (Wang, 2005). The reserve management's office, in partnership with a Shanghai magazine, has founded a 'Society for the Exploration and Study of the Khanas Lake God', which organizes 'mountain- and rock-climbing, wilderness camps, rafting' and other activities (Li, 2004). Every morning at dawn, visitors queue up at the Moon Terrace and the Fish-watching Pavilion to take pictures of daybreak over the lake (Guo, 2005). At sunset, they move to the Lake-watching Terrace or the Lake-watching Pavilion as their guides call their attention to rock formations that look like a goat's back or a giant standing at the lakeside (Hua, 2001). In 2006, the county government was planning to further expand the 'cultural content' of its tourism 'products', including performances of Tuvan, Kazak and Russian customs, and exhibition of 'curious rocks', and the 'restoration' of a 'Russian village' (Ling, 2006).

Economic development is the unquestioned goal of China's policies at all levels of government. Since 1978, the interchangeable notions of modernization (*xiandaihua*) and development (*fazhan*) have consistently been the central mantra of the Chinese state. While these notions have always reflected a linear vision of development shared with the post-Bretton Woods Western discourse, after the Chinese Communist Party's decision to create a 'socialist market economy' in 1992, mainstream Chinese theorists of modernization essentially accepted the idea of a single path of development that Western Europe and North America have pioneered, even accepting in part that it results in the same type of sociocultural change and denying only that it necessarily leads to 'Western-style' social and political institutions.² Since the early 1990s, the media's favourite heroes of modernization have been all types of entrepreneurs, from billionaire capitalists who transformed state enterprises and led them to pioneer foreign markets, to former workers fired by these same transforming enterprises but turning around their fortunes by setting up an innovative shop or service. Although the new ideology of 'harmonious society', proclaimed by Hu Jintao, China's leader since 2004, has incorporated the promotion of 'harmony between man and man', 'between man and society' and 'between man and nature' in an apparent effort to pay greater

2. For a review of dominant modernization 'theories' in China, see Barabantseva (2005: Ch. 4).

attention to social inequality and the environment, the government's 'scientific view of development' leaves no doubt as to the primacy of economic growth (see Zhang, 2006).

Since the early years of the twenty-first century, infrastructural development, especially road construction, has been both highly prioritized and rapidly implemented in China. The slogan 'Want to get rich? Build a road first!' (*yao zhifu, xian xiu lu*) is a common sight in the countryside. According to official data, China invested two trillion yuan (about US\$ 241.5 billion) in road construction from 1990 to 2003 (*People's Daily Online*, 2004). From 2004 to 2006, the government planned to build an additional 176,000 km of roads with an investment of 50 billion yuan (Xinhua News Agency, 2003). Much of this construction is taking place in China's poorer northwestern region, which the government has vowed to help catch up with the richer areas. The development of tourism is a core component of the government's 'Great Northwestern Development' strategy (Wei, 2002). The State Council's 2001 resolution 'On further accelerating the development of the tourism sector' calls for the establishment of 'experimental zones for poverty alleviation through tourism' (*liuyou fupin shiyanqu*) as well as the construction of new airports and roads in the west, complete with rest and shopping areas. It promises the yearly allocation of some budget funds for such infrastructure (State Council, 2001). Areas just as remote as Lake Khanas have experienced spectacular growth in nature tourism. The Jiuzhaigou Scenic Area in the mountains of northern Sichuan, which has some 2 million visitors annually, a newly opened airport and a brand-name shopping street, may well have been the model for Burqin County's ambitions (Nyíri, 2006a).

Jiuzhaigou typifies much of China's nature tourism development: although promoted domestically as an 'eco-tourism' destination that is 'sustainably' managed (Nyíri, 2006a), it is a far cry from western ideas of 'community participation' and cultural preservation (Dombroski, 2008). The 'green' label serves as a marker of modernity rather than as a point of differentiation *vis-à-vis* mass tourism. A former top official in the National Tourism Administration and one of China's most sought-after tourism planners, Wei Xiaolan, writes forcefully against over-development and environmental destruction at tourist sites, but considers the Western model of eco-tourism (restricted visitor numbers, high prices and limited infrastructure) as unsuitable as a general model for China:

In a way, rich people and foreigners want to see places as Nature-made zoos: don't touch your environment, don't touch your culture; leave it for us to go and peek at it at our leisure. If so, are we still to have local development? . . . If development is the hard truth,³ then in the end, all the different views and opinions [on tourism] must converge on the point of development. (Wei, 2003)

3. A famous quote from Deng Xiaoping.

Indeed, foreigners — whether tourists or environmentalists — are by far the harshest critics of tourism development in China. Postings on an English-language Internet mailing list on tourism in China (ORIENTAL-LIST@HMSSURPRISE.ORG), complain of overcrowding, lack of authenticity, and economic greed. A typical posting about the popular tourist spot of Yangshuo in Guizhou Province, on, reads:

Hip-hop pick up [b]ars. . . are killing the traditional atmosphere. . . In general, although Yangshuo is growing at an enormous pace, little development is taking place and the growth is quickly becoming cancerous. Environmental degradation is especially obvious, and the amount of new construction of roads and buildings is making much good agricultural land marginal at best. The growing amount of cars, especially gas guzzling SUVs that are popular with affluent Chinese, makes the traffic here at this time of year worse than Guangzhou. . . There are lots of people making a profit. . . but it is completely at the town's expense, and that is just unsustainable. It will be interesting to see how long Yangshuo can stand up to this kind of abuse. (Chris Winnan, ORIENTAL-LIST, 5 October 2006)

Similarly, an Australian writer for the travel guide *Lonely Planet China* dismisses the development at Lake Khanas as a ‘tacky Switzerland with. . . dancing and karaoke, where land and hunting have been taken away from the locals’.⁴ The International Rivers Network — and, in a more muted way, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and UNESCO — have expressed concern with the plan to build dams on the Salween and Mekong rivers near the so-called Three Parallel Rivers area in Yunnan, a World Heritage site being rapidly developed for tourism.⁵ Litzinger (2004) describes TNC's involvement in tourism development at Meilixueshan (Khabadkarpo), a Tibetan holy mountain in the northwest of Yunnan Province. According to locals, TNC was opposed to building a road to the mountain because it would bring in mass tourism, which would destroy the diversity of plant life. Locals, however, generally welcomed the new road because ‘it would ease the burden of transporting goods into the village, provide faster access to the middle school. . . and. . . easier access to the hospital’ (Litzinger, 2004).

In many instances, opposition to local authorities' development plans tends to come from international organizations and foreign tourists, rather than residents or domestic tourists.⁶ The support of local residents for tourism development has been amply documented since Oakes' (1998) study of ethnic tourism villages in Guizhou. Among more recent studies, our own fieldwork in the town of Songpan, Sichuan Province, suggested that locals have welcomed the touristic transformation of the town that took place in 2004 and involved the demolition of houses and the resettlement of their residents in the old town. Although the compensation they received was not regarded as fully sufficient for building a new house, one of our informants (the owner of

4. Interview with Graeme Smith, Hong Kong, 8 January 2005.

5. See, for example, the International Rivers Network's protest campaign at <http://www.irn.org/action/060424nu.php> (accessed 6 October 2006).

6. For instance, see Notar (2006) on Dali.

a café whose income, incidentally, depended on western backpacker tourism that was now in decline) stressed that seeing their town so clean and neat for the first time makes locals feel very happy.⁷

In the same way, Kang (2005) and Huber (2006) found that both Songpan's elderly Buddhist faithful and the Tibetan population of the surrounding area were happy about the tourist development that allowed the renovation of temples and roads and generated income for drivers and souvenir vendors. Hillman (2003) came to similar conclusions in Zhongdian, a county in north-western Yunnan recently renamed Shangri-La as part of a massive tourism development, and Dombroski (2008) in Jiuzhaigou itself. Indeed, Dombroski uses her fieldwork in Jiuzhaigou — where corporate-style, top-down economic development has resulted in an increased sense of well-being for her informants — to argue against the now entrenched wisdoms of Western development studies, that mass tourism is always bad and that participation is a necessary component of 'good' development.

China's home-grown environmental movements and a growing number of researchers do challenge the view that places economic development above everything else and argue for a focus on the protection of nature. However, in contrast to the situation in Russia and Eastern Europe since the late 1980s, these movements have chosen to work with the state rather than confronting it and have not developed an alternative public discourse⁸ (see for example Ho, 2001; Stalley and Yang, 2006). Part of the reason is that every non-governmental organization in China is required to report to a government body, and while some organizations evade this rule, they obviously cannot achieve a great deal. Indeed, the most influential 'NGOs' have been those with strong connections to or even leadership overlaps with government bodies (Ma, 2006). The head of the largest environmental group, Friends of Nature, is a member of the People's Political Consultative Conference (Litzinger, 2004); the founder of the Beijing Environmental Protection Foundation was a member of the National People's Congress (Ho, 2001: 911); and the founder of Global Village of Beijing says that her strategy is to 'help the government instead of complaining about it' (ibid.: 916). In Russia and Eastern Europe, the environmental movement essentially functioned as a foil for political opposition in the late Soviet period and still largely preserves that tradition of confrontation.⁹

-
7. Development-induced displacement and resettlement does cause major protests in China — in fact, it is the most frequent cause of rural protests. But the object of protests is almost always inadequate compensation rather than the nature of the development projects. See, for example, the regular news updates from Human Rights in China: <http://www.hrchina.org/public/index>.
 8. Although there have also been groups that acted more confrontationally and were subsequently banned, such as Green Watch, whose founder Tan Kai was given a prison sentence in 2006.
 9. The successful protests against the opening of a chemical factory in Xiamen in June 2007, which included sharp criticism of the government and which enjoyed widespread support among townspeople, were perhaps the first that invite comparison with Eastern Europe.

Thus, in China, the model of developing sites of nature tourism as bounded 'scenic spots' with entry tickets, extensive infrastructure and an omnipresent cultural narrative (in the form of tour guides, pamphlets and song-and-dance performances) that situate them within the grand narrative of the nation remains predominant. This model, which mainly services group tourism and leaves little room for individual exploration, corresponds to pre-modern Chinese traditions of travel as a form of pilgrimage to canonized scenic spots previously visited and described by literary heroes. The purpose of such travel was to confirm canonical meanings and experience particular emotions associated with the place and reproduced in countless literary and artistic works. Standard 'views' (*jing*) encompassed not only a particular aspect of a scenic spot but also the appropriate circumstances of viewing, which could include season, time of the day, weather and the spectator's mood. As we have argued elsewhere (Nyíri, 2006a), rather than being the continuation of a post-Enlightenment quest for the sublime as in the west, contemporary Chinese tourism grew out of that tradition, revived by the state as it decided to turn citizens into consumers in the 1990s. The state-driven tourism boom has not only been a major tool of increasing domestic consumption; it also fits into the Chinese state's use of tourism development as a tool of both 'material and spiritual civilization' that should strengthen national pride and 'raise the quality' of the rural population and especially of ethnic minorities (Oakes, 1998). In the dominant view, environmentalism is primarily another tool that serves modernization and economic development, rather than a system of opposed, or even alternative, values.

THE RUSSIAN MODERNIZER

Even in the remote regions of the Altai Republic and Altay Prefecture, the contrast in the speed and nature of economic development on the two sides of the border is spectacular. Although the skyscrapers of Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang, are far away, the brisk growth of infrastructure and busloads of tourists at Lake Khanas offer a striking counterpoint to Lake Altyn-Köl (Teletskoe in Russian) on the Russian side which, unlike Khanas, was designated a World Natural Heritage site by UNESCO. Visitor statistics at the two sites are not so different. In 2003, the ten 'tourist bases' in Artybash, the main village at Lake Teletskoe, received 140,000 guests, according to official data (Altai Republic, 2004: 111). But these 'bases' are modest affairs consisting of a dozen log cabins with a campsite and perhaps five staff. The nearest hotel that would meet Chinese tourists' expectations is not even in Gorno-Altaysk, the regional capital, but four hours away in Barnaul, the capital of neighbouring, relatively more prosperous Altai Province, from which the Altai Republic seceded.

Almost all visitors to the lake now arrive in their own cars, but otherwise tourist practices have not changed much since Soviet times: they include

hikes, kayaking, swimming, and an emphasis on the spiritual benefits of ‘pure nature’ (Breidenbach and Nyíri, 2007). There is no central management or entry gate. The nature reserve itself is accessible only by a small boat; the larger ones that used to ferry passengers across the lake in Soviet times lie rusting in the water. Inside, the only infrastructure is provided by a couple of stands selling biscuits and tea and a single short plankway leading from the jetty to a nearby waterfall. There are no hotels, holiday villages, souvenir stalls, songs and dances, buses and tour guides as in Khanas. When asked why the local shamanic tradition is not displayed to tourists, Konstantin Pershin, manager of the Urtok tourist base on the lake, is puzzled: ‘Shamans are not a thing for excursions’ (interview, Artybash, 15 September 2004). The director of the reserve even forbade the sale of souvenirs with the reserve’s logo, made by local villagers. However, visitors can regularly contemplate drunks stretched out across Artybash’s main street, most likely part of the 70 per cent of the village population that is unemployed.

Chinese-style development does have its advocates in the Altai. Sergei Nozhkin, foreign policy advisor to the governor of Altai Province, visited Xinjiang in 2003 and, according to the Chinese press, expressed admiration at what he saw in the Urumqi Economic and Technological Development Zone (Dong and Yue, 2003). Accompanying him was economist Lidia Danilovna Kovaleva, who, in a speech at the ‘Altai: Our Common Home’ conference on 7 January 2003, had made a strong case for building the Altai road, stating that basic infrastructure and roads were at the core of the region’s development. In 2007, the federal government made the area of the Katun River, in the south of Altai Province, a ‘special economic zone’, promising major infrastructural investments and even allowing it to open casinos — a plan strikingly similar to what is happening across the border in China.

Sergei Nozhkin — young, dynamic and German-educated — makes no secret of his admiration for China’s growth policies. ‘We just sit there and do nothing’, he says in German. ‘Only the Chinese make real steps’.¹⁰ He sees Lake Khanas as a model for tourism development in the Russian Altai. The Chinese, he tells us approvingly, have a strong state policy. Two large companies have been given the licence to develop tourism. Tourism experts from New Zealand developed a ten-year plan, and it is being carried out exactly. Because of tourist demand, the local population at Khanas fetches four times as much for some agricultural products, such as fish, than they would otherwise. Nozhkin argues that Russia, too, needs a strong state policy. ‘We have no plan, just spontaneous development’. When asked whether this would include the resettlement of residents from the lakeshore — as has been the case at Khanas — Nozhkin says that the only ones to oppose this at Teletskoe would be the operators of the tourist bases. He admits that the political means for such a solution in Russia have so far been lacking. But

10. This and the following quotes are taken from an interview with Sergei Nozhkin, foreign policy advisor to the Governor of Altai Province, Barnaul, 29 September 2004.

many politicians in the Altai find the power structure of China, and of the former Soviet Union, if not attractive, then at least useful.

Nozhkin's hopes are pinned on Chinese tourists — 'they are forced to visit places like Khanas' because 'the borders are closed' — as well as Chinese investors. But, he says, the Russian side is afraid. 'The Chinese will come, they will take our women, they work a lot and don't drink. We don't work and drink a lot'. But when asked about the road, he gets defensive: 'What plans? It's just an idea'. He takes a dim view of it becoming a reality; he says that the Kazak population near the Chinese border are for it, because they are interested in contacts with the Kazaks across the border, but the other local ethnic groups oppose the road, because they too are 'afraid of the Chinese': 'The Greens are against it. They are supported by all the Greens of the world. Rumour has it that Shishin [the main "green" opponent of the road] has scraped together \$100 thousand. Chances are we'll never build this road. Moscow prioritizes relations with Kazakhstan rather than China, and the alternative route leads through Kazakhstan'.

Nozhkin professes himself sensitive to ecological arguments. Despite the development, he says, tourists cause less harm to the environment at Khanas than they do in Russia. At Teletskoe, they stay on the lakeshore; at Khanas, they are ten minutes away. The bus takes them to the lake in the morning and back in the evening. If Teletskoe were developed according to this model, then 'a lot of people should come to one corner of the lake and the rest would be kept free'. In any case, Nozhkin says, 'ecological security' is not possible without income from tourism. 'Poor people are no environmentalists'. For him, 'eco-babble' is just an excuse for a foot-dragging opposition to opening the region for foreign investors.

THE EURASIANISTS

Curiously, Mikhail Shishin — whom Nozhkin describes as a 'radical Green' — is his partner in the 'Altai: Our Common Home' project. Shishin heads the Fund for a 21st Century Altai, a local NGO with extensive connections to the international ecological movement. The Fund was founded in 1997 and, along with the Russian chapter of Greenpeace, was one of the initiators of the Russian Altai's nomination for the World Heritage list. According to A.V. Ivanov, the Fund's vice-president, their current aims are to promote ecotourism, energy conservation (through the use of solar energy, wind energy, microturbines, and straw bales as construction material) and traditional ways of agricultural production, as well as to create markets for the 'deeply ecological' foods, such as free-range yak meat, produced in this way (interview, Barnaul, 28 September 2004). All of these aims target the international stage, and to accomplish them, the NGO runs a travel agency as well as a small campsite that serves as a testing ground for 'eco-technologies'. In 2005, the straw-bale buildings were erected here with help from specialists and

volunteers mobilized by two US-based organizations, Builders Without Borders and the Center for Safe Energy.¹¹

If these strategic aims are proving difficult to put into practice, Ivanov blames the gigantic inertia in thinking carried over from Soviet times. This inertia means that those who support industrialization, logging and coal mining always gain the upper hand. Ivanov identifies the plans for the road to China, as well as for a gas pipeline and a dam that would serve a hydropower station, as the greatest threats. The road would 'cause gigantic damage and that would be a gigantic blow to tourism'. After all, 'what people really want is pure nature', and that would be disturbed by the planned road, which would cross the Ukok Plateau, declared a 'Quiet Zone' in 1994. According to Ivanov, road construction violates the Republic's law on Ukok, which stipulates that only traditional agricultural techniques like herb gathering and grazing are allowed there (Altai Republic, 2004: 87). He dismisses Nozhkin's arguments that Lake Teletskoe may in fact be better served by a more interventionist state policy. 'Real ecology', he says, 'can never contradict the conservation of culture'. Ivanov accuses Mikhail Lapshin, the (now ex-)head of the Altai Republic — a 'Moscow puppet' — of supporting the road and thereby betraying locals' interests (interview, Barnaul, 28 September 2004).

One of the reasons behind local opposition to the road is that it would cross sacred burial grounds. Ivanov believes that 'the Altai should be treated like a sacred space'. In 2000, along with other NGOs, the Fund signed the Spiritual-Environmental Charter of the Altai-Sayan Region, which states: 'The Altai-Sayan region, situated in the exact center of the Eurasian continent and inhabited by the key ethnic groups of Eurasia, is its geopolitical, ethnocultural and biospheric heart. By and large, the future of the Earth's entire civilization depends on the region's destiny in the 21st century and the collaboration of the peoples dwelling here' (Center for Safe Energy, 2004).

Indeed, the Fund advocates not only a return to pastoralism but also the philosophy called Eurasianism, which was resurrected under *perestroika*, and which sees the Russian 'civilization' as a bridge between 'Oriental spirituality' and western rationality. The Fund's magazine, *Eurasia*, and the semi-annual almanac *The Altai Messenger* — funded by two American foundations and edited by a committee that includes both Shishin and Ivanov — devote much space to these ideas. Each issue of the bilingual (Russian-English) *Altai Messenger* includes a section devoted to the 'Euroasian (sic) Approach and Geopolitical Processes in Southern Siberia and Central Asia'. The 1/2005 issue carries, for example, Count Nikolai Trubetskoi's essay 'The Legacy of Genghis Khan: A Perspective on Russian History not from the West but from the East'; an excerpt from Roerich's disciple Georgii Grebenshikov on Siberia as the future cradle of a unified world religion; a piece by contemporary historian Vadim Kozhinov on Russia's resistance to

11. See the website of Builders Without Borders: <http://builderswithoutborders.org/whatsnew/> (accessed 6 February 2006).

‘cosmopolitan aggression’; and an article by sociologist Yuri Popkov claiming that the people of Southern Siberia have maintained an ‘Oriental mentality’ despite ‘centuries of Westernization’.

According to Shishin, Eurasianism should serve as the basis for international co-operation. Shishin stresses that ‘Russians are neither European nor Asian, but combine both heritages and are therefore ideally suited to holistic and organic thinking, ideally suited to solve global problems’ (interview, Barnaul, 28 September 2004). This is in line with statements of Mikhail Titarenko, an influential China scholar and head of the Institute for Far Eastern Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. He writes: ‘the Eurasian character of Russian civilization opens the possibility of new intercivilizational and international relations founded on the principles of co-development and mutual influence, allowing to solve the problems of . . . preserving civilization diversity’ (Titarenko, 1996, quoted in Lomanov, 2005: 75–6).

Yet, although Ivanov describes Altai 21st Century as one of the initiators of the ‘Altai: Our Common Home’ project, he is disappointed at their inability to find a partner on the Chinese side to help their struggle against the road and the pipeline. While Russian participation in the project includes NGOs, only government bodies participate on the Chinese side. Chinese contributions to *Eurasia* and *The Altai Messenger* — publications designed to bring together Russian, Kazak, Mongolian and Chinese environmentalists — also lag markedly behind others.¹²

Shishin’s ideas are inspired particularly by the writings of the painter and theosophist Nikolai Roerich (1874–1947), who spent much time in the Altai before leaving Russia for India after the Bolshevik revolution, and by geologist Vladimir Vernadskii’s (1863–1945) theory of the ‘noosphere’, composed of all the interacting minds on Earth. These ideas gained new popularity after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the 1996 presidential decree on the transition of Russia to sustainable development, that goal is linked with the notion of the noosphere: ‘The advancement of humanity to sustainable development ultimately would lead to the emergence of the sphere of wisdom [the noosphere]. . . when the spiritual values and knowledge of humankind, existing in harmony with the environment, will become the criterion of national and individual wealth’ (cited in Oldfield, 2001: 104).

The decree states that ‘The idea of sustainable development is extremely consonant with the customs, spirit and mentality of Russia’ (ibid.:105). According to Nikolai Moiseev, a senior environmental scientist and nationalistic theorist of ‘civilizational faultlines’, the ‘transition to the noosphere requires deep-seated changes in both the actions and morals of humankind’ (ibid.: 105) and thus complements western notions of sustainable development. Moiseev uses the term ‘ecological imperative’ to denote the need for

12. For more on the interviews with Ivanov and Shishin in Barnaul, 28 September 2004, see http://www.altaiinter.org/publication/the_altai_messenger/

‘restrictions on the activities of humankind’ (Moiseev, 1999: 171–2, paraphrased in Oldfield, 2001: 105). Oldfield’s (2001) analysis of the discussion of ‘sustainable development’ in Russia suggests that it appeals both to nationalists (who see it as ‘consonant’ with the Russian ‘spirit’) and Communists (who are reminded by its rhetoric of Soviet ideologemes).

Eurasianism, too, is a politically rather eclectic movement. Some of its strands subscribe to an explicitly nationalistic, anti-western political theory associated with figures such as the philosopher Aleksandr Dugin.¹³ This version of Eurasianism shares some of the pantheistic, mystic language of the Vernadskian strand, but it is hard to reconcile with Roerich’s promotion of racial *métissage* as a vehicle of future harmony, praise of Jews and other diasporas as carriers of ‘Oriental spirituality’ in the West, and opposition to the arrogance of Christian missionaries. Rather, this strand goes back to figures such as the historian Lev Gumilev and Nikolai Trubetskoi who emphasized struggle with the ‘Atlantic’ West. *The Altai Messenger* publishes articles by Trubetskoi and Kozhinov — a prominent disciple and scholar of Bakhtin as well as an anti-Semite and advocate of returning to the trinity of ‘Autocracy, Orthodoxy, and *Völkischness*’ — and carries news portraying the west as the cradle of ecological disaster (see, for example, Altaiinter, 2005). But while Dugin’s movement has been a strong supporter of Putin’s policies, Altai 21st Century has been vehement in its opposition to them as anti-environmental.

ECOLOGISTS AND XENOPHOBES

Altai 21st Century enjoys a good relationship with Vasilii Manyshev, whom Nozhkin also counts as ‘being on the same team’ with the ‘Greens’. As deputy head of the Altai Republic branch of the federal Administration of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Manyshev is the top official in charge of nature reserves, including Lake Teletskoe. As such, he would be well placed to work to develop tourism, were his priorities not elsewhere. ‘After 1991, we had to face capitalist robber barons who wanted to enrich themselves on Nature. But for indigenous people who live here, Nature is the most important thing they have. Economics is only secondary’, he declares. ‘Those who put economics in the first place are right now pumping the last bits of oil and gas out of the earth and killing the last animals. The sustainability of the environment is the most important’. He boasts that a plan has been adopted to set up more nature reserves by 2010, ‘in order to protect the local population, so that they can go on collecting and selling pine nuts and herbs’ (interview in Gorno-Altaiisk, 11 September 2004).

13. Founder of the Eurasia Party, former associate of the anti-Semitic, racist National Bolshevik Party and later adviser to leading Russian politicians, now supposedly close to President Putin (see Berman, 2001).

Manyshev's environmentalist rhetoric is by no means unusual in Russia. The Russian Federation joined international initiatives for 'sustainable development' early on: in 1992, it signed the three main documents of the UN Conference on Environment and Development, and in 1994 and 1996, the Russian president issued decrees on the protection of the environment (Oldfield, 2001). Even after Putin shut down the State Committee on Ecology, environmentalist rhetoric continued to cut right across the political spectrum. A Communist member of the Republic's parliament condemns the ecological harm of the 'so-called perestroika' and the times thereafter; the liberals point to rocket parts that spacecraft launched from nearby Kazakstan dropped on the Altai in Soviet times. Expressions like 'ecological security' and 'biological integrity' belong to the daily language of newspapers. Veneration of Nature is not unique to Eurasianists: post-Enlightenment fascination with the sublime reached the Russian upper classes in the late nineteenth century (Ely, 2003). Despite the Soviet emphasis on transforming nature, hiking and alpinist clubs flourished and continued to define the concept of 'tourism' as they were adopted by the state as tools of physical and spiritual education. Manyshev's views on tourism development are therefore cautious. There are, he says, enough tourists in the Altai as it is, and he is critical of the pollution that some of them cause: 'We don't want tourism on a Berchtesgaden scale, where you drive up the hill to sniff some fresh air' (interview in Gorno-Altaiisk, 11 September 2004).

The head of the Altai State Reserve's ranger service, which oversees the World Heritage area, finds Manyshev's views extreme. He does not see anything wrong with tourism in the reserve as long as it is managed. He points out that tourism can bring 'socioeconomic development', rather than just money:

Of course, there are tourists that drive fast cars from the big city, are rapidly taken by boat to the waterfall, drink some vodka and have a nice pastry and go back. But I have spent six years taking problem children, handicapped children, and children from orphanages on treks, and you can see that when they leave they aren't just well rested, they have also gained some knowledge. (Interview in Iailiu, Altai State Reserve, 13 September 2004).

But according to Hyde (2000), even Aleksandr Chekonov, the top tourism official of the republic, is somewhat reserved, claiming that: 'disrespect for nature is anathema to the Altai national character'. In his view, according to Hyde, 'The local mentality, the Altai population's, is a caring attitude to nature. People don't have to learn ecology, they are already mentally geared up for it'. Furthermore, 'a tourist invasion leads to conflict on the spiritual level. A tourist doesn't understand local ways and doesn't take care of nature. Local opinion of tourism isn't entirely positive, because tourists have come, polluted the [river] bank, and left' (cited in Hyde, 2000).

Some versions of ecological discourse concerned with the behaviour of unregulated tourists — known locally as 'savage' (*dikie*) — are distinctly tinged with Soviet nostalgia. Ironically, these anticapitalist 'disciplinarian

ecologists' agree with dynamic economist Nozhkin in their preference for Chinese-style tourism development: fenced-off scenic spots with an entrance fee, with tourist groups bussed to the gate and prevented from accessing the shore elsewhere. 'Then the deer and bears would come back to the lakeshore', in the words of Genrikh Sobanskii, a zoologist who has lived on Lake Teletskoe for forty-two years. He reminisces fondly about the times when the only tourist base at the lake belonged to the Central Committee of the Trade Unions, when departing guests met arriving guests with a welcome fruit drink at the jetty, and all tours were accompanied by well-trained instructors (interview in Artybash, 15 September 2004).

A guest in his late thirties — a government employee from Barnaul, spending the weekend at one of the ten bungalows of the Urtok tourist base — disagrees:

What was there at the old base? They gave you a sleeping bag and an instructor and you could go groping about the mountains . . . Something like this here was unimaginable . . . I have to admit that I liked how we could get to the waterfall in a civilised way. The pathway, the toilets, rubbish bins, shashlyk, kiosks . . . even toilet paper . . . Yes, the Chinese make a lot of money on tourism, and we don't. In order to develop tourism, you need money. (Fieldnotes, Artybash, 15–16 September 2004)

But being pro-capitalism, even being a capitalist, does not mean being pro-road: 'Only the mountains save us' (from the Chinese), says Konstantin Pershin, the manager of Urtok. Another of his guests, a district official and local leader of Putin's party, has no time for Manyshev: 'What these people care about is not ecology; what they want is for things to have no master (*beskhoznost*)'. He supports the hydroelectric dam project but he, too, opposes the road to China: 'we don't need that', he says curtly. Former President Yeltsin 'opened the borders, but they should be regulated and shouldn't be open to terrorists' (fieldnotes, Artybash 15–16 September 2004).

The widely shared fear of 'the Chinese' — in a 2001 poll, 29 per cent of Russians thought that China constituted a threat to the country (Lomanov, 2005) — is rooted in a border dispute which lasted from 1964 to 2001 and involved a brief war in the 1960s. When the dispute was finally settled in a 2001 treaty, many Russians opposed it as a cession of territory. In the 1990s, fear of a 'peaceful conquest' by China became a popular topic as a surge in Chinese migration to the Far Eastern regions of Russia was exploited by regional politicians fanning anti-immigrant hysteria in their fights with each other over (amongst other things) central government funds. The scale of the migration has been hugely inflated by the media, which, combined with anxiety over the depopulation of the Far Eastern regions and armed with statements by demographers, made it appear almost inevitable that the 'demographic imbalance' between the two sides of the border would eventually result in Chinese domination (Lomanov, 2005; see also Nyíri, 2003).

Since our visit, the dramatic centralization of power in Russia and the hardening of statist discourse have strengthened the political and ideological

positions represented by this district official. The time of our visit coincided with Putin's announcement that he would henceforth appoint the previously elected heads of Russia's federal regions, effectively dismantling the federal model of the Russian state. In late 2005, the State Assembly of the Altai Republic approved — with two abstentions — Putin's appointee, a former police general, who promptly declared his 'total support for the direction set by the President', as the new head of the Republic (Altai Republic, 2005). During a March 2006 visit to China, Putin declared Russia's intention to construct two pipelines from Siberia to China. This immediately resulted in renewed discussion of both the road and the pipeline, and this time, according to a Russian news site:

Representatives of the authorities and social organizations of the Altai Republic published a declaration in support of the pipeline's construction. It states, among others, that the authors resolutely condemn the ecologically and historically themed speculations that serve the purpose of preventing the construction of the Altai pipeline. 'The unsupported and often plainly unprofessional statements by opponents of the pipeline's construction allow the supposition that this is a commissioned campaign. Using the foil of ecological problems, the opponents strive to halt the development of our region and prevent Russia's entry into the markets of Asian countries'. (Regnum, 2006a)

The veiled reference to the foreign paymasters of the 'opponents' shows how much Russia has changed in Putin's second term and chimes with the new NGO law adopted earlier in the year, which required NGOs to re-register and discouraged them from accepting foreign funding. Nonetheless, Altai 21st Century was undeterred: it launched a renewed fax campaign to stop the pipeline, while the Russian chapter of the World Wildlife Fund asked that Gazprom, the state gas giant, invest 870 million rubles in environmental safeguards (Regnum, 2006a).¹⁴ Months later, the head of UNESCO's Russian national committee registered his opposition in the mildest terms, saying 'I believe it will not come to that' (Regnum, 2006b). In a few weeks, Gazprom and Aleksandr Berdnikov, the new head of the Altai Republic, signed an agreement specifying the route and schedule of construction (Altaiinter, 2006b). Berdnikov reported to a Putin envoy that 'there are no organized forces in the Altai able to aggressively oppose the implementation of the project' (Regnum, 2006c).

Yet despite all this, the road remains taboo in the politics of the Republic. In 2005, the Chinese press reported that a vice-head of the Altai Republic and a Xinjiang official had signed a joint declaration of intent on building the road via the Ukok Plateau and the Khanas Pass, and establishing a free trade zone focusing on tourism (Zhao and Zhang, 2005). But on 11 September 2006, the Republic's minister of economic development reaffirmed that, despite statements by 'some Altai Province bureaucrats' — an apparent reference to Nozhkin — there was no such plan 'in the medium term' (Regnim, 2006d).

14. We thank a reviewer of an earlier version of this article for bringing this link to our attention.

A CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS, BUT NOT AS YOU EXPECTED

The discourse of international development has, in the past decade, veered away from the earlier, and much criticized, unilateral emphasis on economic indicators and Western structural models, and towards a socially and culturally ‘sensitive’ framework — although just how much difference that shift has made on the ground is a matter of debate (see, for instance, Rao and Walton, 2004). But the clash of views about the road through the Altai, this shared periphery of Western and Chinese civilizations, reveals profound disagreements on the meaning of development and of the ‘good life’ on the two sides of the border. In this clash, China represents the unquestioned causality linking economic growth, development and ‘civilization’ — the view long associated with Western modernization theory. In Chinese accounts, the goal of ‘raising population quality’ — meaning everything from physical fitness to education, manners, and respect for rules (Kipnis, 2006) — is expected to be an eventual corollary of increasing production and investment (Nyíri, 2006b).

This emphasis on the economy is particularly significant in the context of China’s emergence as an actor in the field of international development. Agencies like the World Bank are not sure what to do with a country that is suddenly offering large loan-and-investment packages and infrastructure projects reminiscent of Western projects in the 1960s and 1970s, but which does not join the discussion of issues such as environmental standards or local participation (Perlez, 2006).¹⁵ In 2004, Angola rejected a loan package from the International Monetary Fund that would have demanded greater accountability, accepting instead a US\$ 2 bn Chinese loan (Eisenman, 2007: 48). In the Sudan, China is officially the largest investor, contributing to an economic boom that, Western development agencies charge, benefits the ruling elite but deprives the rural population of its livelihood (*The Economist*, 2006). Indeed, there have been attacks on Chinese workers by disaffected locals in Sudan, Ethiopia and Tanzania (Hsu, 2007). In Cambodia, villagers have protested against logging and land grabbing by a Chinese company aided by local officials (*The Economist*, 2007). Soon after the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank agreed to provide a US\$ 600 m aid package to Cambodia with human rights and anti-corruption conditions, China’s Prime Minister Wen Jiabao announced an offer of the same amount in infrastructural development, with no strings attached (*ibid.*). China’s ‘Yellow Paper on World Socialism’ claims that ‘capitalist globalization led by the United States’ will eventually be replaced by a ‘socialist globalization led by China’ (CASS, 2006). So far, however, Chinese globalization looks in many ways like an earlier stage of Western capitalist globalization. With China in the game, the world of ‘post-development’ suddenly

15. King (2006) noted that there was ‘almost no mention of this rather strange donor term, “capacity building”, during the Beijing Summit’ of China and African countries.

seems like the post-national world prophesied in the early 1990s: a long way away.

In Russia — a place whose population has actually experienced modernization and development for much longer and which has, in Chinese terms, better ‘quality’ — views of development remain highly contested, despite an apparent Putinian turn in the Chinese direction. In the case of the Altai road, the only allies of Chinese developmentalists, the only ones who see the apparently obvious benefits of connecting their region to their main potential market and source of investment, are a small group of free-market modernizers who are actually more drawn to the West than to China. They face a diverse coalition of opponents: globally connected ecologists who mobilize Western allies to oppose the road; romantic ‘Eurasianists’ who seek to synthesize ‘Asian’ and ‘Western spirituality’ into a uniquely Russian environmentalism; nostalgic conservationists reminiscing about the strong hand of the Soviets; and plain anti-Chinese xenophobes.

The cross-border struggle over what development means and whether it is desirable reflects continuing disagreements (not just across the border) about the meaning of the ‘good life’. These disagreements are no less significant for being in part determined by the differing political structures of the two states: as the Chinese party-state has adopted development as its essential legitimation tool, it understandably maintains hegemony in determining the meaning of development. In Russia, a plural articulation of development visions to underpin competing political agendas has so far been possible, and even with the dramatic centralization of state power since the time of our fieldwork, the environment remains a powerful trope. In 2006, in a move seen by many as designed to cow foreign companies into sharing profits with the state, Russia’s environmental protection agency suddenly joined Greenpeace and a local NGO in objecting to oil extraction projects in Sakhalin — just a week before Exxon was due to begin exporting (Kramer, 2006).

Whatever the causes of the differing visions, the main lesson we can draw from the case of the Altai road is clear. As not only the objects but also the agents of development spread across the globe, we must go beyond questioning the dominant Western paradigms of development and realize that the situation on the ground is already more complicated than the usual picture of global capital/international (read: Western) organizations versus local (read: non-Western) resistance or adaptation might suggest. China, while ideologically ‘standing up to the West’ in the name of ‘the developing world’, is pursuing a development agenda based on economic rationality and openly inspired by Western models. Yet the putative beneficiaries of that agenda, whose position, though ambiguous, is conventionally seen as closer to the Western ‘core’, are determined to resist, invoking an array of both old and new anti-developmental arguments from the arsenal of nineteenth-century nationalist romanticism as well as from the latest eco-technological babble. These visions of ‘alternative development’ are neither more local than those against which they militate, nor necessarily more benign. In the current

wrestling bout between universalist and culturalist ideologies, which strongly influences the practice of development, it seems imperative that we pay more attention to cases such as this.

REFERENCES

- Agenda21 (n.d.) 'Brief Profiles of Investment Projects for China's Agenda 21. Resource Protection and Eco-tourism Development of Khanas Lake: New Eco-tourism Programme'. Beijing: Administrative Centre for China's Agenda21. www.acca21.org.cn/bpip1-7-7.html (accessed 4 February 2006).
- Altai Republic (2004) *2003 Report on the Condition and Protection of the Environment in the Altai Republic*. Gorno-Altaiisk: Administration of the Altai Republic.
- Altai Republic (2005) <http://www.altai-republic.com/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=1834&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0&POSTNUKESID=8a5ccc0c79ec449029ef1678c42d359e> (accessed 9 February 2006).
- Altaiinter (2005) 'Europe's Demise Predicted in Half a Century'. http://www.eng.altaiinter.info/publication/the_altai_messenger/, January.
- Altaiinter (2006a) 'Kitai gotov v blzhaishie gody postroit' 12 avtotrass, veduschikh v strany Tsentral'noi Azii' ('China ready to build 12 motorways to Central Asian countries in coming years'). <http://www.altaiinter.org/news/?id=14382>, 25 October (accessed 27 October 2006).
- Altaiinter (2006b) 'Vybrana trassa gazoprovoda iz Zapadnoi Sibiri v Kitai cherez Respubliku Altai' ('Western Siberia–China pipeline route over Altai Republic selected'). <http://www.altaiinter.org/news/?id=14437>, 27 October (accessed 27 October 2006).
- Antonenko, Oksana and Kathryn Pinnick (2003) 'Russia's Foreign and Security Policy in Central Asia: The Regional Perspective', *Russia's New Southern Border: Western Siberia–Central Asia. The IISS Russian Regional Perspectives Journal for Foreign and Security Policy* 2: 4–13.
- Barabanov, Oleg (2003) 'Greater Altai: A Proposed Alliance of the Regions Bordering Central Asia and Siberia,' *Russia's New Southern Border: Western Siberia–Central Asia. The IISS Russian Regional Perspectives Journal for Foreign and Security Policy*, 2: 20–24.
- Barabantseva, Elena (2005) 'Shifting Boundaries of the Chinese Nation: Overseas Chinese and Ethnic Minorities in the People's Republic of China's Modernisation Project'. DPhil dissertation, School of Social Sciences, Manchester University.
- Berman, Ilan (2001) 'Slouching toward Eurasia?', *Perspective* XII(1) (September–October). www.bu.edu/iscip/vol12/berman.html (accessed 25 May 2006).
- Breidenbach, Joana and Pál Nyíri (2007) "'Our Common Heritage". New Tourist Nations, Post-"Socialist" Pedagogy, and the Globalization of Nature', *Current Anthropology* 48(2): 322–30.
- Burqin County (2005) 'Burqin xian lüyou jiben qingkuang' ('Key points of Burqin County's tourism'). Burqin County Government.
- Center for Safe Energy (2004) 'The Altai Project'. <https://www.earthisland.org/project/genPage2.cfm?generalID=205&pageID=98&subSiteID=7> (accessed 6 February 2006)
- Chen, Chen and Hongqiao Wang (2003) 'Aletai lüyouye "huo le"' ('Altai tourism is "hot"'), *Xinjiang Ribao* 22 August: 4.
- Chen, Chen and Lubo Wang (2004) 'Buerjin qi cheng shouru laizi lüyouye' ('Seven-tenths of Burqin's income comes from tourism industry'), *Xinjiang Ribao* 3 November.
- CASS (2006) 'Shijie shehuizhuyi huangpishu' ('Yellow paper on world socialism'). Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. <http://www.cass.net.cn/file/2006051559241.html> (accessed 18 November 2006).
- Dombroski, Kelly (2008) 'The Whole Nine Villages: Local Level Development through Mass Tourism in Tibetan China', in J. Connell and B. Rugendyke (eds) *Tourism at the Grass Roots: Villagers and Visitors in the Asia Pacific*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Dong, Ping and Ping Yue (2003) 'Wei tuijin Aertai quyue de guoji hezuo fangwen Xinjiang' ('They visited Xinjiang to promote international co-operation in the Altai region'). <http://www.ecdc.net.cn/events/zyxx/zyzzml/ml15/1.htm> (accessed 25 January 2006).
- The Economist* (2006) 'Glittering Towers in a War Zone', 9 December: 21–3.
- The Economist* (2007) 'Can We Help You?', 31 March (Special report on China): 12–13.
- Eisenman, Joshua (2007) 'China's Post-Cold War Strategy in Africa: Examining Beijing's Methods and Objectives', in Joshua Eisenman, Eric Heginbotham and Derek Mitchell (eds) *China and the Developing World: Beijing's Strategy for the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 29–59. Armonk, NY, and London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Ely, Christopher (2003) 'The Origins of Russian Scenery: Volga River Tourism and Russian Landscape Aesthetics', *Slavic Review* 62(4): 666–82.
- Escobar, Arturo (1994) *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Garver, John W. (2006) 'Development of China's Overland Transportation Links with Central, South-west and South Asia', *The China Quarterly* 185: 1–22.
- Guo, Guanyong (2005) 'Hanasi lüke tupu 50 wan ren' ('Visitors to Khanas exceed 500 thousand visits'), *Yili Ribao* 29 September: 1.
- Hillman, Ben (2003) 'Paradise under Construction: Minorities, Myths and Modernity in Northwest Yunnan', *Asian Ethnicity* 4(2): 176–88.
- Ho, Peter (2001) 'Greening Without Conflict? Environmentalism, NGOs and Civil Society in China', *Development and Change* 32(5): 893–921.
- Hsu, Elisabeth (2007) 'Zanzibar and its Chinese Communities', *Population, Space and Place* 13: 113–24.
- Hua, Jun (2001) 'Hanasi: xiayu zhi hu' ('Khanas: a lake in a ravine'), *Jiancha Ribao* 30 October: 12.
- Huber, Toni (2006) 'The *Skor lam* and the Long March: Notes on the Transformation of Tibetan Ritual Territory in Southern Amdo in the Context of Chinese Developments', *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 2: 1–42 (August).
- Hyde, Lily (2000) 'Siberia's Altai Republic Seeks to Preserve its Ecological Purity', *Green Nature*. <http://greennature.com/article531.html> (accessed 6 February 2006).
- Kang, Xiaofei (2005) 'Tourism, Two Temples and Three Religions: A Three-Way Contest on the Sino-Tibetan Border'. Paper presented at the 2005 Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, Chicago (31 March).
- King, Kenneth (2006) 'Aid within the Wider China–Africa Partnership: A View from the Beijing Summit'. Paper presented at the China–Africa Links Workshop, Center for China's Transnational Relations, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (11–12 November).
- Kipnis, Andrew (2006) 'Suzhi: A Keyword Approach', *The China Quarterly* 186: 295–313.
- Kovaleva, Lidiia Danilovna (2003) 'Mezhdunarodnoe sotrudnichestvo v altaiskom regione' ('International cooperation in the Altai region'). Speech at the 'Altai: Our Common Home' conference, Belokurikha, Altai Province, Russia (7 January).
- Kramer, Andrew E. (2006) 'In Russian Far East, a Sudden Concern for Environment', *International Herald Tribune* 6 October: 1, 17.
- Li, Xiaoling (2004) 'Hanasi hushing youhuo Beijiing lüyou' ('Khanas lake god enlivens tourism in northern Xinjiang'), *Jingli Ribao* 4 September.
- Ling, Xiating (2006) 'Hanasi lüyou neirong fengfu' ('Khanas tourism content enriched'), *Yili Ribao*, 6 January: 8.
- Litzinger, Ralph (2004) 'Participatory Practices and the International Agenda in Northwest Yunnan'. Paper presented at the conference 'Theoretical Issues in the Study of Rural and Small-Town China', University of California, Berkeley (14–15 November).
- Lomanov, Alexander V. (2005) 'On the Periphery of the "Clash of Civilisations": Discourse and Geopolitics in Russian–Chinese Relations', in Pál Nyíri and Joana Breidenbach (eds) *China Inside Out: Contemporary Chinese Nationalism and Transnationalism*, pp. 71–97. Budapest and New York: Central European University Press.

- Ma, Qiusha (2006) *Non-Governmental Organizations in Contemporary China*. London: Routledge.
- Moiseev, Nikolai (1999) 'Reflection on the Noosphere: Humanism in Our Time,' in P. R. Samson and D. Pitt (eds) *The Biosphere and Noosphere Reader: Global Environment, Society and Change*, pp. 167–76. London: Routledge.
- Nederveen Pieterse, Jan (2001) *Development Theory: Deconstructions/Reconstructions*. London: Sage.
- Notar, Beth E. (2006) *Displacing Desire: Travel and Popular Culture in China*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Nozhkin, Sergei (2003) 'The Altai Region: Old Neighbours, New Partners', *Russia's New Southern Border: Western Siberia–Central Asia. The IISS Russian Regional Perspectives Journal for Foreign and Security Policy* 2: 38–42.
- Nyíri, Pál (2003) 'Xenophobia in Hungary: A Regional Comparison. Systemic Sources and Possible Solutions'. Center for Policy Studies working paper. Budapest: Central European University. http://www.ceu.hu/cps/pub/pub_polstud.htm
- Nyíri, Pál (2006a) *Scenic Spots: Chinese Tourism, the State, and Cultural Authority*. Seattle, WA, and London: University of Washington Press.
- Nyíri, Pál (2006b) 'The Yellow Man's Burden: Chinese Migrants on a Civilizing Mission', *China Journal* 56 (July): 83–106.
- Oakes, Tim (1998) *Tourism and Modernity in China*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Oldfield, Jonathan D. (2001) 'Russia, Systemic Transformation and the Concept of Sustainable Development', *Environmental Politics* 10(3): 94–110.
- People's Daily Online* (2004) 'China's Road Construction Uses US\$6 Billion Foreign Investment', *People's Daily Online* 28 October. http://english.people.com.cn/200410/28/eng20041028_161886.html (accessed 5 February 2006).
- Perlez, Jane (2006) 'China Becomes Major Player in Asian Aid', *International Herald Tribune* 18 September: 1, 4.
- Rao, Vijayendra and Michael Walton (eds) (2004) *Culture and Public Action*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Regnum* (2006a) 'V sviazi so stroitel'stvom gazoprovoda v KNR ekologi predlagaiut 'Gazpromu' vlozhit' v prirodookhranyu na Altae 870 mln. rublei' ('In response to China pipeline construction, ecologists suggest Gazprom invest 870 million rubles in Altai environmental protection'). www.regnum.ru/news/654374.html, 9 June (accessed 6 October 2006).
- Regnum* (2006b) 'V Gornom Altae sozdan natsional'nyi komitet po delam IUNESKO' ('Mountain Altai creates UNESCO national committee'). <http://www.regnum.ru/news/709058.html>, 21 September (accessed 6 October 2006).
- Regnum* (2006c) 'Administratsiia prezidenta izuchaet obschestvennoe mnenie o stroitel'stve gazoprovoda 'Altai'' ('Presidential administration studies public opinion on Altai pipeline construction'). <http://www.regnum.ru/news/651574.html>, 5 June (accessed 6 October 2006).
- Regnum* (2006d) 'Ministr ekonomiki Respubliki Altai: Federal'nye vlasti ne namereny sroit' dorogu v Kitai cherez plato Ukok' ('Altai Republic's minister of the economy says federal government has no plan to build road across Ukok Plateau'). <http://www.regnum.ru/news/702511.html>, 11 September (accessed 6 October 2006).
- Stalley, Phillip and Dongning Yang (2006) 'An Emerging Environmental Movement in China?', *The China Quarterly* 186: 333–56.
- State Council (2001) 'Guanyu jiakuai fazhan minzu diqu lüyou chanye de jianyi' (On further accelerating the development of the tourist sector') August. Beijing: State Council.
- Titarenko, M.L. (1996) 'Iubiley. Institutu Dal'nego Vostoka RAN — 30 let' ('Jubilee: Thirty years of the RAS Institute of Far Eastern Studies'), in *Institut Dal'nego Vostoka RAN. Spravochnik (RAS Institute of Far Eastern Studies. A handbook)*. Moscow: Institute of Far Eastern Studies.
- Wang, Lubo (2005) 'Hanasi mei tian jiedai yi wan ren' ('Khanas receives ten thousand people every day'), *Xinjiang Jingjibao* (Chinese edition) 30 July: 2.
- Watts, Michael (1998) 'Collective Wish Images: Geographical Imaginaries and the Crisis of

- Development', in Doreen Massey and John Allen (eds) *Human Geography Today*, pp. 85–107. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Watts, Michael (2001) 'Development Ethnographies', *Ethnography* 2(2): 283–300.
- Wei, Xiaohan (2002) 'Xibu lüyou fazhan zhanlue' ('A strategy for tourism development in the West [of China]'). Opening speech at the Western Tourism Development Strategy Seminar, Guiyang (23 April). Electronic file courtesy of author.
- Wei, Xiaohan (2003) 'Zhongguo lüyou guihua fazhan de xianzhuang yu Qushi' ('The present state and trends of China's tourism planning development'). Paper presented to the tourism planning class held by the Peking City Tourism Bureau (13 March).
- Xinhua News Agency (2000) 'Zhong E Ha Meng si guo qianshu "Aertai quyu hezuo changyi"' ('China, Russia, Kazakstan, Mongolia sign quadripartite memorandum on co-operation in the Altai region'), Xinhua News Agency 25 July.
- Xinhua News Agency (2003) 'Rural Road Construction Speeded Up', *Zhongguowang* 16 May. <http://test.china.org.cn/english/2003/May/64719.htm> (accessed 6 February 2006).
- Xinjiang Tianshanwang (2004) 'Zhong E Ha Meng si guo gong jian Aertai quyu kongjian' ('China, Russia, Kazakstan, Mongolia jointly build Altai regional space'), 27 February. <http://www.tianshannet.com.cn/GB/channel3/99/200402/27/67859.html> (accessed 25 January 2006).
- Zhang, Qunsheng (2006) 'Zhengque bawo kexue fazhanguan de lilun yiyi yu shijian yaoqiu' ('Correctly grasp the theoretical meaning of the scientific view of development and the requirements for its practical implementation'), *Renmin Ribao* 31 March: 5.
- Zhao, Hongmei and Xuebiao Zhang (2005) "'Zhong-E gonglu" fuchu shuimian' ("Russian-Chinese highway" emerges), *Xibu Shibao* 13 September: 5.
- Zhao, Xueqin (2000a) 'Aertai quyu kaifa qianli da: Aertai quyu keji hezuo yu jingji fazhan yantaohuai zongshu' ('Altai region has great potential: summary of seminar on scientific and technological cooperation and economic development in the Altai Region'), *Xinjiang Ribao* (Chinese edition) 2 August: B03.
- Zhao, Xueqin (2000b) 'Jiaqiang guoji hezuo, cujin quyu fazhan: fang Guojia Kejibu Guoji Hezuosi fusizhang Wan Shuguang' ('Strengthening international co-operation, promoting regional development: an interview with Ministry of Science and Technology Department of International Co-operation deputy head Wan Shuguang'), *Xinjiang Ribao* 2 August: B3.
- Zhu, Dan (2002) 'Hanasi quanli dazao "shijie yiliu" jingqu' ('Khanas goes out to create world-class scenic area'), *Keji Ribao* 12 July.

Pál Nyíri is senior lecturer and director of the Applied Anthropology programme at Macquarie University, Sydney (e-mail: Pal.Nyiri@scmp.mq.edu.au). His research focuses on China, migration, and tourism. His latest books are *Chinese in Eastern Europe and Russia: A Middleman Minority in a Transnational Era* (Routledge, 2007), and, together with Joana Breidenbach, *Maxikulti* (Campus, 2008). Breidenbach, Nyíri and colleagues contribute to a blog on <http://culturematters.wordpress.com>.

Joana Breidenbach is a Berlin-based anthropologist, columnist and author of *Tanz der Kulturen* (Rowohlt, 2000). She is currently involved in setting up the Web-based charity platform betterplace.org. She can be contacted at e-mail: joanabreidenbach@hotmail.com