

# The Baikal-Amur Mainline

## Memories and Emotions of a Socialist Construction Project

OLGA POVOROZNYUK

---

**Abstract:** The Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM), a railroad in East Siberia and the Russian Far East, became the last large Soviet industrial project. Its construction in the 1970s and 1980s attracted migrants from across the USSR, who formed the *bamovtsy*, or group of BAM builders. They share a history of working and living along the BAM and constitute the majority population in the region. The article argues that emotionally charged social memory of the BAM construction plays the central role in reproducing and reinforcing the *bamovtsy* identity in the post-Soviet period. Drawing on in-depth interviews and focus groups, the article examines the dynamics of both individual and collective remembering of the socialist BAM. It forms a vibrant discursive and emotional field, in which memories and identities are reconstructed, relived, and contested. Commemorative ceremonies such as the fortieth anniversary of the BAM serve as forums of public remembering and arenas for the politics of emotions.

**Keywords:** Baikal-Amur Mainline, emotions, identity, politics, post-socialism, social memory

---

The Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) is the longest northernmost railroad crossing the regions of East Siberia and the Russian Far East to link the Eurasian countries with East Asia. The history of the BAM starts with early construction projects dating back to the nineteenth century and continues with the first tracks laid under the Stalinist regime in the 1950s. However, the majority of the mainline was built between 1974 and 1984, under the authority of the Soviet industrial program focused on “mastering the North” (Slavin 1982). The mainline was built for resource extraction and became a “century project” employing modern technologies for the transformation of the natural environment (Josephson 1995) and a symbol of Soviet “high modernism” (Scott 1998),



combining the elements of technological and social engineering. The communist propaganda in mass media underlying the launch of the project and mass labor mobilization campaign constructed “the myth of the BAM” (Ward 2001). The railroad became a part of the Soviet project of modernization and internal colonization (Kotkin 1997), an agent of social change and the backbone of regional development (Povoroznyuk 2016).

The railroad construction brought a dramatic change to the territories sparsely populated by indigenous, primarily Tungusic-speaking peoples by attracting a massive inflow of labor force from different parts of the former USSR. The migrants included young, primarily male engineers, drivers, and other workers, usually recruited by Komsomol, a communist youth organization; they were delegated to designated construction sites in Russia and other Soviet republics and regions. It should be noted that in addition to communist ideology, material stimuli were applied as part of the late socialist methods of labor recruitment. High salaries, along with access to scarce goods and social benefits, were used to motivate and attract young people to the construction site. Upon completion of the construction, many of the migrants settled in the cities and towns they had built along the mainline to form a majority population with a distinct socioprofessional identity: the “BAM builders” (*bamovtsy*).

The popular Soviet slogan “We built the BAM and the BAM built us” (BAM 2012) reflects the process of co-construction of the railroad and *bamovtsy* identities. The ideal of a new man who develops positive personal qualities through overcoming everyday hardships in the process of the “nature’s conquest” and construction of a communist society (Bolotova 2014: 73) informed heroic images of the BAM builders as part of the Soviet people in general. The region of BAM construction was intended to become a miniature model of the Soviet Union: each railroad station was supposed to represent a particular republic and/or an ethnic group. The Soviet nationality policy, despite its Russian particularism and inherent contradiction between ethnic and territorial identities (Brubaker 2014; Martin 2001), along with other factors, was instrumental in the management of cultural diversity among the growing population along the BAM and the consolidation of the migrants.

The dissolution of the USSR marked a shift in the discourse about the BAM project and its builders, from glorification to public criticism. The following socioeconomic crisis, which coincided with the official end of the major construction works, also drove a major part of the *bamovtsy* population out of the region. The *bamovtsy* became a “silent

group,” whose heroic narratives were no longer part of the mainstream collective memory. Yet their identity and memory persisted throughout political, ideological, and mnemonic shifts since the late socialism and the dissolution of the USSR into the post-socialist times. Although *bamovtsy* is a contested identity based on internally drawn boundaries, they form a distinct social group. These people remember the BAM as both a grandiose national project and an important personal experience. Their memories have gone from privately held individual stories into publicly manifested emotional narratives.

I argue that social memory—as informed by socialist state ideologies, as well as by firsthand experience of participation in a historical event or a process like the BAM construction—plays the central role in post-Soviet identity-building. The dominant state discourses of the late Soviet period left little room for individual narratives, but the immediate experience of the first-generation BAM builders sustains the affective and living memory of the BAM and supports the identity of its carriers. A sociological study conducted among former BAM builders in Moscow and St. Petersburg concluded that *bamovtsy* are a product of the late Soviet subjectivity and their memories are essentially internalized discourses of a communist utopia (Bogdanova 2013: 215; Voronina 2009). While these findings resonate with my study, I claim that *bamovtsy* are both a product of the state ideologies and policies and an outcome of shared everyday life experiences related to participation in the BAM construction. Furthermore, the dialogue of “internalized” public discourses and “externalized” individual life stories (White 1999: 506–507) constitutes a multilevel remembering process that informs the reproduction of *bamovtsy* identity.

In this article focused on the memories of the construction of Baikal-Amur Mainline, I ask the following questions: How did the state policies and propaganda interplay with the lived experiences of the railroad construction in shaping *bamovtsy*? How much space is left for private memories of the BAM construction and what is the dynamics of individual and group remembering? Which role do affective memories of *bamovtsy* play in post-Soviet politics of emotions and identity-building in Russia? Finally, I consider the role of commemorative events in the reconstruction of the BAM social history, memory, and identity of *bamovtsy*. I address these questions drawing on my field data, which include observations, focus groups, and individual interviews with the builders of the BAM living in the cities of Tynda and Severobaikal'sk and the towns of Novaia Chara and Iuktali in East Siberia and the Russian Far East (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Location map. Note: the map represents only the districts (raions) where the main research sites are located. Author: Alexis Sancho-Reinoso.

The total sample included 30 informants: 3 focus groups and 5 individual interviews were conducted in 2016; and 3 focus groups and 8 individual interviews in 2017. The size of the focus groups varied from 2 (4 occasions), to 5 (1 occasion), and 10 (1 occasion) individuals.<sup>1</sup> For this research, I sought out people who had directly participated in or moved to the region during the construction process, consider themselves to be *bamovtsy* and continue to live permanently in the region. In order to find informants, I contacted local administration centers, museums, and local nongovernmental organizations of *bamovtsy*. My previous extensive fieldwork experience in the region, although on a different topic,<sup>2</sup> helped to build contacts with *bamovtsy* through social networks I had already established. The two larger focus groups in 2016 were organized with the assistance of a local administration body and a BAM museum respectively. Their participants were informed about a meeting in advance, though with short notice. The four other small focus groups emerged more spontaneously when informants suggested bringing along or including another person—a colleague, a friend, or a family member—in the conversation. In all cases, focus group participants knew each other from before through professional (former or/and current common place of work) and other social (neighbors, friends,

family members) networks. Individual interviews were arranged by the recommendations and contacts provided by the aforementioned institutions or by using snow ball sampling methods. In the case of the two larger focus groups, we invited 3 out of 10 and 2 out of 5 participants, respectively, to individual follow up interviews. The larger focus groups took place at the premises of a club in Novaia Chara and a local museum in Severobaikal'sk, while two smaller groups were conducted at informants' work places and two others at participants' homes. The locations of individual interviews varied from people's homes, to cafeterias and other public places, to hotels where I was staying.

Although focus groups were not planned in the initial research design, informants remembered the BAM construction collectively better, in the company of peers and friends. Therefore, I had to adjust to the circumstances and opportunities that such an interview format offered and to develop a number of key questions that could help to streamline the remembering process in groups. As a result, a combination of focus groups and in-depth interviews turned out to be instrumental in taking a more nuanced perspective regarding the emotional contents, functions, and dynamics of individual and collective memories of the BAM.

## **Memories and Emotions of (Post-)socialism**

The idea that the experience of the present depends on the knowledge of the past held by a particular person or a group is a common place of memory studies. Memory can be an individual faculty, but collective or social memory is a dimension of political power that uses images of the past to legitimate a present social order (Connerton 1989: 1–4).

Aleida Assmann (2008) argues that collective memory is an umbrella term extending to different memory formats. Among them, social and interactive memory is embodied and grounded in lived experience that vanishes with its carriers. "As we pass the shadow line from short-term to long-term durability or from an embodied intergenerational to a dis- or re-embodied transgenerational memory, implicit and fuzzy bottom-up memory is transformed into a much more explicit and institutionalized top-down memory" (Assmann 2008: 55–56). From her perspective, memory can be learned and/or experiential and that it is often difficult to disentangle what one experienced from what one read or saw in films; thus, the past cannot be just remem-

bered but has to be memorized through internalization and rites of participation that create the identity of a “we” (Assmann 2008: 50–52). Following this work, I point out the complex nature of the memories about the BAM and the sources that feed it: from Soviet propaganda slogans and clichés to individual life stories. I also discuss the transformation of the living memory of the BAM construction as narrated by the participants who experienced it firsthand into a more standardized and legitimized form of collective remembering transmitted to the next generations of *bamovtsy* or “children of the BAM” (*deti BAMa*).

Although memory can be a reservoir of history, it is not the same thing as history. Personal memory, collective memory, and written history interact and shape each other as versions of the past are constructed and reconstructed (Watson 1994: 8–9). Collective memories do not depend on a single individual’s direct experience of the past. However personal memories of events that they experienced themselves may be passed on in conversation and storytelling, written down in the form of diaries, autobiographies, or memoirs to become a powerful source of social memory. An avalanche of popular literature, newspaper articles, and photo albums about the BAM drawing on personal stories and interviews with the builders was produced during the construction process. Soviet mass media used individual examples to create the myth of the BAM that informed the collective memory. Thus, Soviet rhetoric and the social history of the BAM have been exploited as resources supporting the railroad modernization program.

Connerton (2009: 26) distinguishes two ways of bringing the past into the present: remembering and acting out. According to him, remembering is a capability of forming meaningful narrative sequences as an attempt to integrate isolated or alien phenomena into a single unified process. These narrative sequences are formed and modified throughout the time and translated from generation to generation. Commemorative ceremonies can be considered another important mnemonic device. They serve to remind a community of its identity as represented by and told in the master narrative: a collective variant of personal memory and a collective endeavor of making sense of the past (Connerton 2009: 70). Formalism and performativity are the features that they share with other rituals and forms of ritualized behavior. At the same time, an explicit reference to prototypical (be they historical or mythological) persons and events, alongside the powerful memory-shaping tool of re-enactment, distinguishes commemorative ceremonies from other rites (Connerton 2009: 61).

An affective turn in the social sciences turns its attention to the social dynamics and political dimensions of emotional interactions (Lutz and White 1986: 405–410, 417). Thus, emotions are mediators between the psychic and the social, and the individual and the collective rather than mere psychological dispositions (Ahmed 2004: 26). By mediating and representing the past and reinforcing the sense of belonging to a community, they address complex interconnections between memory, identity, and imagination (Kontopodis and Matera 2010: 3). Personal stories are often used as allegories to embody and emotionalize national histories. Acts of remembering bring personal memory and collective history into the same discursive field, thereby working to simultaneously emotionalize history and nationalize understandings of self and community (White 1999). Since the late 1990s, nostalgia, mistrust, fear, anger, on the one hand, and joy, pride, enthusiasm, and hope, on the other, have been leitmotifs of post-socialist memory narratives (PalMBERGER 2008). The concept of the politics of emotions sees rapid change in post-socialist states as an emotionally evocative context. Post-socialist emotions shape social life and provide a moral framework in which power relations are being discussed and played out (Svašek 2006: 3–7). I argue that the BAM builders' memories are populated by the reawakening feelings of joy, pride, hope, and nostalgia for a strong state, as well as by resentment and disenchantment caused by post-Soviet social change. These emotions are objectified and “managed” in order to sustain loyal socialist identities, such as that of the *bamovtsy*, within the current political regime.

In his case study of the Victory Day Parade in Russia, Serguei Oushakine vividly describes the role of commemorative rituals and emotions in the reconstruction of the Soviet history and the rise of performative patriotism. His concept “affective management of history” implies practices of active evoking of sensorial responses and emotional encoding, when “facts and events . . . are emotionally relived and re-enacted” (Oushakine 2013: 274). The use of media and technologies (e.g., a big screen on the Red Square showing war scenes), the collective singing of patriotic songs, as well as TV interviews with prominent figures, all induced synchronized collective emotions. The reinvented symbols of the war (e.g., St. George's ribbon, which is associated with the Soviet Order of Glory) became affective mnemonic objects connecting the history with the present. The author argues that the public remembering of the Great Patriotic War draws on new forms of memorialization that become dominant ways of organizing the Soviet experience in contemporary Russia. The celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the BAM

construction and the following launch of the program of the railroad's technological modernization became public forums of commemoration of the BAM history in the same way as described in Oushakine's article on the Victory Day.

## **Soviet Industrialization and Nation-Building**

Soviet industrialization campaigns included a series of large-scale projects popularly known as "communist construction sites" (Graham 1996; Kotkin 1997; Payne 2001) that were intended to serve as show-cases of modernization and development in different parts of the Soviet Union. Drawing settlers of diverse backgrounds to the country's frontier regions, communist construction sites followed similar ideological, economic, and demographic patterns. Popular arts and propaganda literature created the images of pioneers conquering a new frontier—brave and hard-working builders creating a new life in the harsh conditions of remote regions (Stolberg 2005).

The mobilization campaigns of the early Soviet period drew on forced labor, including the conscription of inmates of the notorious GULAG camps. During late socialism, new recruitment methods such as propaganda and the state programs of the voluntary distribution of the labor force became popular. A massive population influx had a major impact on the social and cultural fabric of the northern regions: the resulting ethnic diversity of its population was managed by the Soviet nationality policies. The official discourse proclaimed that the Soviet Union was a "happy family of nations," where "the national question" had already been resolved. Such idealist representations of nationality policies contradicted the realities of ethnic tensions, discrimination and conflicts that were widespread across the nation. The intrinsic controversy of the Soviet nationalities strategy—pre-determined by legal incongruity and spatial mismatch between the concepts of national territories and personal nationalities (Brubaker 2014)—challenged the policy's mission, which was the forging of the entity of "Soviet people." A critical historical study of the BAM argues that there was ethnically based discrimination at play, noting that there was a predomination of Russian and other Slavic migrants at the construction site and that more members of these groups that tended to gain access to well-paid jobs (Ward 2009: 99–114).

While ethnicity and its derivative state-imposed categories might have played a role, especially at the beginning of the construction, other

processes of boundary-making and identity-building proved to be more important with the time. The differentiation between “locals” (*mestnye*) and “newcomers” (*priezzhie*) became a more meaningful category distinction in mixed communities emerging along the railroad. In the late socialist period, the Soviet state systematically invested its economic resources in regional development. New settlers were often attracted to the North because of state benefits and privileges granted on a temporary basis, but over time they developed roots and a sense of belonging to local communities. BAM builders, similar to Russian settlers in Chukotka (Thompson 2008), were drawn to the North by romantic images, ideological slogans, and new life opportunities. They formed their communities during a period of economic stability, solidarity, free access to education, jobs, and leisure; the life conditions of the last Soviet generation later became the objects of post-Soviet nostalgia (Yurchak 2007).

## Building the BAM and BAM Builders

BAM’s legacy begins in the late nineteenth century. With the outbreak of World War I, the tsarist government built a railroad on the southern shore of Lake Baikal as an attempt to ensure the geopolitical security of the Russian Far East and East Siberia against China. The next ancestor of the contemporary BAM was a railroad stretching from Komsomol’sk-na-Amure to Sovetskaia Gavan’, which was built between 1932 and 1953 by labor camp inmates, military personnel, and prisoners of war (Mote 2003). That project was abandoned after Stalin’s death in 1953, and the idea of restarting BAM construction gained official favor during the Brezhnev era nearly two decades later.

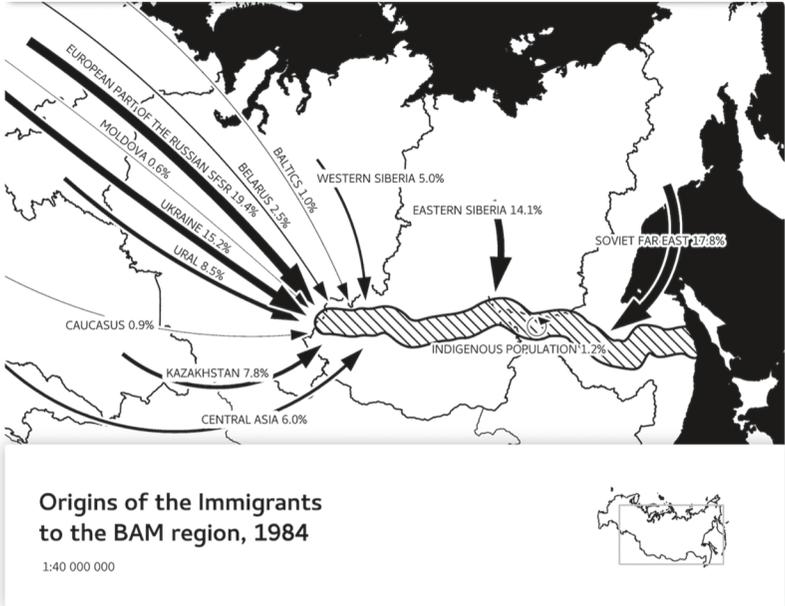
“The third BAM” represented a grandiose engineering endeavor and the last massive Communist industrial project “exploiting the USSR’s vast natural resources for propagandistic and economic reasons” (Ward 2009: 2). Moscow hoped that a completed BAM would bolster collective faith in the command-administrative system and serve as the prototype for further conquests of the Soviet Union’s vast and resource-rich northeastern frontier in the twenty-first century. The Komsomol labor mobilization campaign launched in 1974 urged young people to rally together and build the BAM in the spirit of “self-sacrifice” and “fraternal cooperation” for the sake of “social strengthening” in the remote corners of the USSR. Thus, the major part of the mainline was built between 1974 and 1984, although some sections were put into operation as late as in 2003.

The present-day BAM is approximately 4,300 kilometers (2,600 miles) long, with its main branch, the Amur-Yakutsk Mainline, stretching 1,200 kilometers (746 miles). The Mainline crosses the northern districts of six federal subjects: Irkutskaiia Oblast', the Republic of Buriatiia, Zabaikal'skii Krai in East Siberia, and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutiia), Amurskaia Oblast', and Khabarovskii Krai in the Russian Far East. With its existing and projected sidetracks leading to mineral deposits and connecting remote settlements with administrative centers, the railroad provides a reliable transportation network for people, goods, and resources. The growing demand for coal, oil, and timber resulted in almost double the increase in cargo transportation (RZhD 2016). For the purposes of continued extraction and transportation of resources, a state program of the railroad modernization was launched in 2014.

As previously mentioned, the construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline attracted labor migrants from other Russian regions and former Soviet Republics (Belkin and Sheregi 1985). From 1980 to 1985, 1,000,000 young people arrived in the Far East, including the BAM Zone<sup>3</sup> annually: 800,000 of them then moved on to other places and only 100,000 stayed in the same location for two winters (Argudiaeva 1988: 10). The labor force recruited to build the BAM was made up of young, educated, and skilled men, who initially came to work on a short-term (usually three-year) contract, but often married and settled in the region. One-third of the BAM builders arrived from different parts of Russia, one-fifth from Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan, and the remaining part from Belarus', the Baltics, and the Caucasus (Figure 2).

As also mentioned previously, the young BAM builders were motivated by communist ideology and romanticism of the Komsomol movement, a driving force of other Siberian large-scale industrial projects during late socialism (Rozhanskii 2002). Prior to enrollment in a BAM construction brigade, a specialist was supposed to meet certain educational and professional requirements and to demonstrate his or her motivation and compliance with communist ideals. Official discourses heroicized *bamovtsy* and celebrated their labor (Figure 3).

Ideological slogans, clichés, and romantic images of "the building site of the century," "the path to the future," "the project of the era of developed socialism" propagated in mass media and popular literature, created "the myth of the BAM" (Ward 2001). The theme of the BAM and the images of *bamovtsy* were reflected in local arts, literature, music, poetry, and architecture (Figure 4).



**Figure 2.** Map of migrations to the BAM region in 1984. Author: Christoph Fink. Source: Argudieva 1988.



**Figure 3.** BAM builders with slogans at a demonstration. Source: Courtesy of the Museum of the BAM Construction in Tynda.



**Figure 4.** Monument to the BAM builder, Severobaikal'sk Railway Station. Author: Peter Schweitzer.

Special events that occurred during the BAM construction, such as the connection of the eastern and western tracks (*stykovka zolotogo zvena*), visits of high profile officials and pop stars to the region were surrounded by public ceremonies (e.g., drinking champagne from helmets) and festive events. This massive propaganda, extending the mythologization and ritualization of the events (Grützmacher 2012: 46–47, 64–66), helped develop a sense of solidarity and reinforce *bamovtsy* identity.

Builders were also attracted to the construction project by lucrative material benefits. According to contracts that workers signed in their home republics and regions, the state provided them with apartments and cars after a few years of work, as well as high salaries and social benefits. The BAM builders also enjoyed access to goods and commodities that were regularly supplied to the region but unavailable elsewhere in the country. As a result, a contract at the BAM often yielded a substantial amount of income in a relatively short period of time. Such opportunities attracted not only specialists, but also fortune-seekers: short-term contractors, and, since the 1990s, individual entrepreneurs and dealers.

In addition to the ideologies and material benefits, the sense of unity and belonging was achieved through social factors; a mostly homogeneous age, educational, and professional profile of the BAM worker facilitated the creation of social networks. For example, the neighborhood settlement patterns, wherein colleagues working in the same organization or construction brigade also became neighbors in their apartment buildings and, thus, spent time together both at work and at home, strengthened friendly ties. The construction of the newly built environment, including the BAM railroad with its settlements and social infrastructure, gave builders a sense of fulfillment and the subsequent attachment to this new environment (Bolotova and Stammer 2010). Thus, the collective experience of overcoming of everyday hardships (especially in the early days of the construction), and the establishment of professional and personal networks formed an identity based on a sense of belonging to the North and making a contribution to a great development and modernization project.

Currently, the term *bamovtsy* is used both as an external and self-designation primarily in relation to those who directly took part in the construction process. Among this core group, most distinguished are veterans of the BAM (*veterany BAMa*) who came at the initial stages of the BAM construction. They differentiate themselves from “late comers” who arrived when the road and settlements were almost fin-

ished and launched and, thus, could enjoy better life comforts. There is also a strong internal differentiation among *bamovtsy* by their institutional affiliation and the infrastructural objects; they distinguish between builders of the tracks, tunnels, bridges, and so on. A current place of residence is another marker. Those who settled in the region consider themselves to be “real” *bamovtsy* in contrast to those who left during the economic crisis of the 1990s, despite the strong social networks among *bamovtsy* living in the region and beyond.

The self-designation *bamovtsy* can also be interpreted in a wider sense. For example, it can be applied to specialists and entrepreneurs who “came to work at the BAM” in the 1970s–1990s. They did not directly participate in the construction, but worked in the public sector (trade, communal services, education, and health care), which was emerging parallel to the railroad. A broader interpretation of *bamovtsy* as a regional identity exists that can be applied to all permanent local residents of the BAM Region. Finally, “children of the BAM” (*deti BAMa*) are the second generation of BAM builders who were born into *bamovtsy* families and spent their childhood and/or their adult life in the region. Furthermore, some informants also mention a legal concept of *bamovtsy*, which applies to those who took part in the BAM construction for at least three years and received an order of merit or other distinctions. The latter interpretation of the term is not so wide spread.

## Narrating the Socialist BAM

Individual and collective memories of the socialist period of the BAM construction share a number of common themes that follow, to varying degrees, the master narrative of the BAM. The main distinguishing feature between the two is a scale of attention: while individual stories are told from a perspective of oneself and one’s own family and immediate surroundings, memories that pop up in focus groups tend to raise larger-scale issues. In remembering, though, personal stories and collective memories intermingle, informing each other and these bringing different perspectives together. Both individual and collective narratives have a performative aspect, but it is more pronounced in focus groups. The line between the remembering informant(s) (the actors) and the anthropologist (the spectator) sets the stage for the (re)construction of memories and identities. Personal stories illustrate and emotionalize descriptions and chronologies. The repetition of individual stories with a similar cognitive and emotional message in focus groups either

reinforces the overall sense of happiness, joy, pride, disenchantment, or nostalgia or reveals latent dissonances and tensions.

The theme that opens memory narratives usually includes first encounters with the BAM project and one's motivation to participate in it. Some informants present their decision to join the construction as simply taken for granted: BAM was such a large and well-known construction site that it was hard to avoid coming there. Others recall where and when they first learned about the BAM, including the facts that caught their attention and reasons that motivated them to join the project. While many *bamovtsy* mention the material benefits as important stimuli, virtually all of them claim that nonmaterial motivations were stronger. Genuine interest in the grandiose industrial project, a sense of romanticism, enthusiasm, and inspiration for new and exciting life opportunities, and the challenge of testing oneself professionally and personally were all reasons given for engagement with the BAM project:

I can tell you that we all went to “the building site of the century,” as it was declared. Komsomol, youth, romantic people were coming. When one is 20 he is not yet seasoned—not for money, but for romanticism. People with pure souls were coming for the idea . . . There was unity, and respect for each other. All this created a good environment.” (AICH, Severobaikal'sk, 2017)

Even though in practice many of the BAM construction leaders managed to build a career, achieve a high social status, and to accumulate solid material resources, they preferred to highlight other motivations for their participation in the project.

The second master narrative relating to the BAM concerns its status as a great industrial and modernization project. *Bamovtsy* reiterate that the railroad brought “civilization” with its modern infrastructures and lifestyle to this remote region and its indigenous population. Only few of our interlocutors could critically reflect on the project's negative impacts, such as environmental pollution, encroachment on traditional lands and lifeways, and the assimilation of indigenous peoples. And even when doing so, they justified these impacts as inevitable costs of “progress” and development:

BAM gave life to the north of the Republic of Buriatia. Development, roads . . . Now all the settlements are accessible: there is asphalt. There is also electricity everywhere. Radio and television broadcasting towers were built everywhere. Today even in B.K. they use these [mobile] phones. They could not even imagine it earlier . . . Most

important, they [the indigenous people] got development. Look at people from those villages now. They work in industrial companies and at the railroad. They got higher education, specialized secondary education. (focus group, Severobaikal'sk, 2016)

The rhetoric of “mastering the North” penetrates individual stories of everyday hardships, labor, and human achievement in “conquering nature.” These memories are filled with the pioneering spirit and heroic feelings and are distinctly related to the early days of the BAM. Typically, former builders and their family members recall their austere living and working conditions in a harsh natural environment, unsettled lives caused by frequent travels and relocations, as well as an insufficient supply of food and goods. “There were not any facilities: a barrel with water and a toilet outside. My husband’s apartment was a small room: a self-made wooden table, a cupboard and a TV. When we entered, I thought: ‘And how are we going to live here!’” (GVL, Novaia Chara, 2016).

As interviews develop, survival stories—with their background emotions of surprise or astonishment—usually give way to joyful and proud memories of the first achievements of the BAM construction. These memories are often connected with public celebrations of the milestone events at the construction process:

In 1974, the construction was launched, and in 1979 it had progressed. This work was then appreciated and recognized. It was a big source of pride. We were meeting the first train. My husband was given a floor since he was a trail-blazer of the construction. The first train went here. The golden spike was made here. We have outlived all this. We had a hard life. We were freezing and burning, we were eating dried vegetables. (GVL, Novaia Chara, 2016)

One could feel real life here! I worked as a switch-board operator and connected deputy ministers with our [BAM] administration. Every day we gave a summary report on each kilometer and requested all we needed: “The track-laying vehicle reached such and such kilometer. Such and such an object was put into operation.” And you had a feeling of moving on and on. (NIK, Tynda, 2016)

The repetition of similar stories in focus groups reinvigorated shared emotional memories as well:

We were happy when the first train arrived. This was crazy because I couldn’t believe it! When you live in a such an out-of-the-way place, when the only means of transport are a boat in summer and in winter

we have to wait for two or three months before the river freezes so that the first car could bring us apples, onions and cabbage . . . That was infinite joy!! (focus group, Novaia Chara, 2016)

Many informants remember so-called socialist competitions between building organizations and brigades, a tool commonly used for increasing labor productivity in the Soviet period. These memories are associated with individual stories of career growth and financial rewards received for personal achievements during the construction. Even if informants used these competitions as stimuli for getting higher positions and salaries, they also pointed out the minor role of money in the everyday life and economics of the BAM. Money is usually devalued in their narratives, in contrast to socialist ideas and human capital. In practice, this attitude to money was predetermined by the late socialist economic system. The state regulated citizens' consumption through target supply and state-provided services and predefined an assortment of available foods and goods as well as opportunities for spending money on leisure activities, especially, in remote regions along the BAM:

When there is a high idea, money stops being a value that is now being forcefully introduced into our consciousness. That is, I spend money when there is an opportunity and it makes sense to spend it. Moreover, I don't feel sorry. The trust [among *bamovtsy*] originated from the fact that there was no sense to steal money. And it was not even that there was nothing to spend it on, but there was no time to do so. (TNV, Severobaikal'sk, 2017)

During the later stages of the construction process, the emerging BAM settlements—which initially suffered from scarcity of consumer goods and a humble lifestyle—had grown into “an earthly communist heaven.” BAM builders enjoyed free access to commodities, including highly prestigious consumer articles that were unavailable to average citizens elsewhere in the country. Exalted stories of the fresh-frozen vegetables supplied directly from Bulgaria, fruits from Uzbekistan, high quality shoes, clothes, carpets, furniture, and home appliances from China, Japan, Yugoslavia, and the GDR are also a favorite theme in the narratives. The belief in—and reliance on—the strong state that could take care of its people and provide them with all they needed, along with few opportunities for spending along with limited ideas about investing, engendered bizarre practices of financial management. Few people invested in housing or deposited money in banks since public trust in the planned economic system was still strong.

The golden thread of BAM builders' memories of the Soviet construction period is related to solidarity. It was experienced in different forms: professional networks and friendship, communal leisure and cultural activities, and through ethnic and social relations. Virtually all of the interviews mention this topic in different contexts at least once. The shared idea and goals set by the project united the labor migrants of different backgrounds into one distinct community. At the BAM, professional and neighborhood relations often turned into lifelong friendships or marriages. The general humanist idea of mutual help, support and sharing in difficult situations is illustrated by multiple examples. While reiterating the communist slogans of "fraternal cooperation" and "socialist solidarity," these memory narratives are essentially built on individual lived experiences.

I keep telling you they were coming here neither for glory, nor awards, nor money, nor cars. Their task was to build a road to future . . . And they didn't only build it, but also united two centuries. And the traditional BAM builders' lifestyle—one of mutual support and help, when you don't have relatives, but only friends around—is still living. (TNV, Severobaikal'sk, 2017)

Sports events, dances, musical and drama studios, and other leisure activities were equally unifying for young *bamovtsy*. Memories of public holidays and weddings "celebrated by the whole neighborhood" when "tables were served in the middle of the street" and cultural festivals devoted to the BAM project were attended by Soviet and world-renowned pop stars, constituted other factors for the consolidation of *bamovtsy* as a distinct group.

Examples of how *bamovtsy* solidarity crossed ethnic and national borders are quite common. The official slogan "The whole country built the BAM," referencing the complex map of origins of the organizations and teams who built the BAM, is reiterated by *bamovtsy*. Individual biographies or family histories of those who came from "far away" (usually referring to Central Asia or the Caucasus) often serve as illustrations of this theme. Main characters of such stories first re-immigrate to their countries and regions in the 1990s, but often return because they "feel drawn to the North" as their new home or/and because no one waits for them in the motherland. In some cases, builders do leave the BAM for good, but retain their networks in the region. The idea of the peaceful interethnic relations in the region during the BAM construction and at present is supported by examples of cooperation at work, interethnic marriages and friendships, and mixed neighborhoods:

Among our friends we had and still have a lot of people from the Baltics. Uoian was built by the Balts. In general, all 15 republics were represented here: each republic had its own organization. Ikab'ia was built by Georgians, Chara by Kazakhs. But not only Kazakhs built it; there was a brigade from Chita and a brigade named after Kedyshko from Belarus'. Friends from the Baltics left in 1989 on the eve of the dissolution of the USSR. (LMK, Novaia Chara, 2016)

Such memory narratives contrast with the findings of other critical historical accounts of the BAM construction, which mention the ethnic discrimination and the marginalization of non-Slavic builders (Ward 2009). Our interview data show that in some cases, the common ideology, similar age, shared working and living conditions, as well as a sense of co-creation of a new environment contributed to the social solidarity and formation of *bamovtsy* identity that overrode ethnic differentiation. As one of my informants, a local poet and activist, pointed out, "the term *bamovtsy* has grown from a territorial self-identification into a nationality that implies special kinds of relationships: more honesty, sincerity, and friendship" (TNV, Severobaikal'sk, 2016).

## Making Sense of the Post-Soviet BAM?

The end of the major construction works at the BAM overlapped with the beginning of the socioeconomic crisis and political turmoil following the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, the infrastructure along the railroad declined: unfinished side-tracks and buildings were abandoned to decay. The BAM region witnessed a large-scale out-migration of the population. Local authorities in Kalarskii Raion estimate that approximately one-third of *bamovtsy* left the district in that period. The population of Tyndinskii Raion, another northern district along the BAM, has decreased by almost one-half since its population peak registered in the census of 1989. *Bamovtsy* relocated to other regions, including home Soviet republics and provinces, as well as the cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and regional administrative centers (e.g., Irkutsk). Due to this reorganization and general economic problems, *bamovtsy* who stayed in the region lost their jobs at the railroad. They have also not yet received the long-awaited permanent housing promised by the state. Because of its high construction and maintenance costs and the fact that the railroad did not operate to its full capacity, the BAM project was losing its social prestige and, for the first time, was openly criticized in media and in public discourses in the

1990s. In 1997, the BAM as a legal entity ceased to exist and was transferred from the state-owned Baikalo-Amurskaia Zheleznaia Doroga to Rossiiskie Zheleznye Dorogi (RZhD), currently Russia's largest state railroad company.

The 1990s are now remembered with predominant feelings of disillusion, fear, and resentment. The fact that the early post-Soviet media discourse renamed the project from "the road to the future" to "the road to nowhere" reinforced those feelings. The 1990s are publicly remembered as "troubled" and "cursed" times of failed expectations and plans. There is popular saying "if Brezhnev would have lived 5 more years, the BAM project would have been completed," revealing the public dissatisfaction and sense of incompleteness:

Well, they didn't fulfill our expectations . . . Old BAM builders are disappointed, let's put it this way, by the fact that the BAM Zone is not being developed. And many *bamovtsy* left, left the BAM reluctantly because they could not find a job, because they were no longer needed. And they, this huge productive labor force, have dispersed all around. (focus group, Severobaikal'sk, 2016)

Disillusion, offense, and nostalgia are wide-spread feelings, especially among those *bamovtsy* who, upon the end of the construction, continued living in temporary housings barracks type without prospects of relocation into permanent apartment buildings or houses. Lack of jobs, the high costs of communal services and consumer prices are among the challenges of everyday life in the towns along the BAM where this research was conducted.

Narrating the BAM in a temporal perspective, *bamovtsy* associate the challenges of the socialist construction period with the feeling of pride, and those of the post-socialist life with offense. This emotional paradigm constructed in the remembering process reflects shifts in the quality of life, as well as in state ideologies. The demonstrated emotions are as much signs of individual justification of one's own life as those of collective nostalgia for the strong state:

It [the construction] was a difficult period, but it was different and better. We were motivated, striving for something better, for improvement . . . However difficult life was, the state took some care of us: salaries were higher, foods and goods were supplied, education had a different value . . . We built the BAM, went through all these hardships, sacrificed our youth and health; we all came young and beautiful, and now we are not just old BAM builders, but simply old people . . . And now no one cares about us, we have crazy prices for

everything! . . . Now all of us, *bamovtsy*, thinking that we've built the road, feel proud. And, of course, one is offended to hear someone saying: "All your awards are not worth anything." (focus group, Novaia Chara, 2016)

## Commemorating the BAM: The Second Track and the Fortieth Anniversary

Public discussion and criticism of the state in the early post-Soviet period have gradually retreated and given way to a new sense of "patriotism" and trust in the current political regime. Russia's new "patriotism," nourished by the state leadership in recent decades, has found fertile breeding ground in the BAM region. In the houses of former BAM builders one can find calendars, embroidery, and other souvenirs with the images of Russia's president and vice president displayed along with awards for the BAM construction, sometimes alongside Orthodox icons. This reminds us of Oushakine's (2013) article on "affective management of history," drawing on the case study of the practices of public remembering of the Great Patriotic War. He demonstrates how material symbols of victory marked a mnemonic shift "from the playful retrofitting of the past in the late 1990s, with its aesthetics of ironic noninvolvement, to the obvious attempts to envision "history" as an assemblage of emotionally charged objects" (Oushakine 2013: 301–302). In the BAM region, this nation-wide "patriotic education" policy has a particular connection with the late socialist BAM and its commemoration ceremonies taking place in the present. The Victory Day itself is an important public celebration on the national and regional level. The Great Patriotic War and the BAM construction are the two most popular historical events in the region, drawing on the similar concepts of heroism, self-sacrifice, and the overcoming of hardships. Patriotic feelings penetrate all BAM-specific events, where collective emotions and identities of *bamovtsy* are relived and performed (Röhr 2016). Since the 2000s, with the stabilization of the socioeconomic situation and reemerging patriotism, BAM has been regaining its popularity as a unique engineering and nation-building project. These socioeconomic, political, and ideological shifts have affected BAM social memory and builders' identities. Silence in the period of the public criticism has recently given way to public remembering fueled by reinvigorated memories of *bamovtsy*.

In 2014, two key events—the launch of the state program of technological modernization called BAM-2 and the fortieth anniversary of the beginning of the BAM construction—symbolically coincided. The long-awaited project BAM-2 was, in fact, a continuation of unfinished Soviet regional development programs brought back to life by new economic realities and initially backed by financial resources accumulated during the relative socioeconomic stability of the early 2000s. While the railroad has always played a minor role for passenger connection, cargo transportation by BAM doubled since the late 1990s due to growing resource extraction in Russia's northern regions and the insufficient capacity of the Trans-Siberian Railway (TransSib). Not only was the launch of BAM-2 a continuation of Soviet socioeconomic plans, but it also relied on the slogans of the communist propaganda and “mastering the North” being reintroduced into official discourse. Not surprising, both BAM builders and average residents of the region alike initially associated the BAM-2 with future resource extraction, expecting community development, but also fearing possible ecological problems.

The popularity and expectations of the BAM-2 project between 2014 and 2017 have mismatched the realities. Limited job opportunities targeted and fragmented investments and rumors of financial mismanagement and fraud characterize the implementation of the reconstruction program. While the RZhD managers that I interviewed officially vested great hope in the current railroad modernization, informal communication with people involved in the (re)construction works revealed how limited their expectations are. In the stories told about BAM-2, the idealist images and clichés of the BAM as “a railroad built with love” that “will work a long century” contradict statements that reveal skepticism and disillusion (TNV, Severobaikal'sk 2017).

The celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the BAM construction was preceded by a well-prepared media campaign drawing on the same retro-discourses and images. The Ministry of Transportation and RZhD, along with the leading media agencies, created dedicated Internet resources (e.g., *Vspominaem BAM* 2018) and supported the publication of a series of special issues of railroad journals and photo albums. Several editions dedicated to the BAM popular history, BAM builders' biographies, and other relevant topics were published on the eve or shortly after the anniversary (*Bronepoezda pobedy* 2015; *Il'kovskii* 2014). A series of events and celebrations along the BAM were marked by the arrival of “BAM anniversary trains” (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Train “40th Anniversary of the BAM.” *Source:* Courtesy of the Public Affairs Office, Administration of Tyndinskii Raion.

Two trains coming from the opposite directions—from Irkutsk in the west and Khabarovsk in the east—left to meet in the city of Tynda and stopped at every BAM station and settlement to celebrate the anniversary. Their passengers were BAM veterans, who met the second generation of BAM builders at every stop.

Major celebrations took place on July 8, 2014 in the city of Tynda, recognized as the BAM capital due its location at the crossroads of TransSib, BAM, and Amur-Yakut Mainline (AYaM) and the fact that it hosted the BAM Administration during the construction process. The event was attended by a number of important guests, including high-profile officials, journalists, and pop stars. The opening started with the awards ceremony where certificates of merit, medals, and other symbols of distinction (e.g., ribbons of honor, scarfs, and souvenirs with the symbols of the BAM) were distributed among veterans of the BAM construction (Figure 6).

The awards ceremony with public speeches by officials and BAM veterans ran parallel to the opening of a new training center and a conference at the premises of the RZhD company. The evening cultural program included hits of the 1970 and 1980s devoted to BAM, as well as



**Figure 6.** Awards ceremony, fortieth anniversary of the BAM. *Source:* Courtesy of the Public Affairs Office, Administration of Tyndinskii Raion.

remakes of patriotic war songs performed by pop stars and accompanied by public karaoke singing. Two concerts were held simultaneously in the central city park and at the stadium called “BAM.” In the latter location another momentous event, a teleconference with the state leader, took place. The president did not only congratulate *bamovtsy* with the event, but “committed” to a ritual of the Silver Spike. The ritual symbolized the joining of the first sections of the second railroad track between the stations of Taksimo and Lod’ia and the first achievement of the current modernization program BAM-2. The ritual immediately triggered the memory of the first Silver Spike ceremony in 1975 that symbolized the joining of the first railroad tracks Tynda-Chara, thus, reconnecting BAM-1 and BAM-2. The public celebrations were closed with festive fireworks.

BAM builders from Tynda recollected the BAM anniversary celebrations with the strong feelings of pride, patriotism, and belief in the current state power:

That was a great event! Celebrations took place throughout the city. Visitors from Moscow and Iakutiia came to congratulate us. There was

a teleconference with Putin. I respect Putin and wish we had more strong-willed men like him . . . I wish every generation on this earth had such a construction project as the BAM so that they could understand the unity and honesty of human relations. Let the politicians do their things, nothing depends on us anyway. If you live your life right, everything will be right. We have good people, we have good Putin! (NIK, Tynda, 2016)

However, the celebrations also provoked more critical attitudes and reflections on what and who were to be commemorated and distinguished. These reflections were particularly related to the ceremony of awards and questioned a moral right to entitlements and symbols of distinction distributed among the large group of *bamovtsy*. A ribbon of “honorary BAM builder” or a medal “for construction of the BAM” become “affective objects” of social memory and, in some cases, evoked dissatisfaction and resentment:

“I saw these people marching with the ribbons of honorary BAM builders.” For some reason, no one tied such a ribbon around me and I never asked for it. But I am thinking: Why did you put this ribbon on when you don’t know what BAM is, when you came to live in a normal house, worked in a different organization but never on the railroad? There are so many people who worked hard and died at this railroad. People who came later don’t know what it is but got housing while we still live in shanties. I am looking at these people and thinking that they don’t have any sense of consciousness! (focus group, Novaia Chara, 2016)

Thus, public celebrations of the BAM demonstrated affective management of history and patriotic education at work. The launch of BAM-2 and, especially the fortieth anniversary, created a temporal and spatial continuum where visions and discourses of the socialist past were iterated and “encoded” in mnemonic objects. However, in the new socioeconomic realities, these verbal and material mnemonic codes often induce cognitive and emotional dissonance. The same individuals may feel patriotic and loyal to the state when remembering the glorious past of the BAM construction, and disenchanting and deceived by it when reflecting on the current social problems such as the lack of appropriate housing.

This politics of emotions, leading to social tensions and public contestations of the *bamovtsy* identity, doesn’t seem to significantly affect the memories of the socialist past. Those are transmitted from the first to the second generation of *bamovtsy*, although in a slightly transformed

and critically assessed way. Below are the words of a young woman from a *bamovtsy* family who currently works at the railroad and considers herself to be a “child of the BAM”:

I am now reading Bradbury’s “Dandelion Wine” and the story “Happiness Machine.” The main character was trying to build one, but it didn’t work. And then it turned out that happiness consists of everyday things . . . I think that the BAM is not a finished happiness machine, but a perfect time machine (laughing) . . . because all those events are so memorable. I think it’s a typical perception of *bamovtsy*—those who didn’t come across the BAM don’t have anything special to remember about that time. (LVK, Novaia Chara, 2016)

## Conclusions

The construction of the BAM attracted mass population inflow, consolidated multicultural migrants, and forged the identity of BAM builders as part of the Soviet people. Following Assmann (2008), I have argued throughout the article that the social memory of the BAM is grounded in socialist ideologies as well as in lived experience of its carriers, the *bamovtsy*, which is central to post-Soviet identity building processes. Memories of the BAM construction are informed by different sources that constitute their learned and experiential dimensions. *Bamovtsy* identity is reconstructed, translated from generation to generation and reinforced through the rites of participation in public events. In line with Connerton (1989), I have shown how socialist ideologies, discourses, and emotions are used as a resource for the legitimation of the present social order.

Public and private remembrances form a vibrant discursive field incorporating not only internalized popular Soviet slogans, but also “externalized” individual biographies and voices (White 1999). Emotional narratives and performances of the BAM construction are the two most significant acts of remembering that sustain *bamovtsy* identity and reinforce their we-feeling and set them apart as a distinct group. Their memories of the construction period are charged with the emotions of happiness, enthusiasm, joy, romanticism, pride, and fulfillment correlating with socialist slogans and images of “mastering the North.” Remembering takes a nostalgic turn as soon as it comes to the present socioeconomic predicaments. Visions of the future associated with the BAM-2 are colored with the mixed emotions of hope, expectations, and mistrust.

Recollections about the first encounters with the BAM and motivations to participate in the construction, labor competitions and achievements, supply of goods and economics at the BAM, cultural life and solidarity constitute main themes of memory narratives. Individual and collective memories interplay with each other to form a dynamic discursive and emotional environment. Focus group participants usually follow master narratives internalized in the Soviet period; the reiteration of similar plots and emotions of individual stories reinforces collective feelings. Disagreements and diverging interpretations of the past, however, reveal latent emotional tensions. Individual remembering is usually more spontaneous, detailed and based on personal and family stories. The immediate experience of participation in the construction project serves as an identity building factor and a powerful emotionally charged source of the social memory about the BAM.

Commemoration ceremonies referring to the BAM history serve as public forums, where *bamovtsy* memories are narrated and performed. Two almost synchronic public events—fortieth anniversary of the late socialist BAM project and the launch of BAM-2—were widely celebrated in 2014. On the one hand, they served as favorable grounds for performing *bamovtsy* memories and identities; and the use of Soviet discourses, images, and affects as a resource for the legitimization of the present social order, on the other. The celebrations demonstrated how idealized memories of the construction period with their mnemonic symbols and underlying nostalgia for the strong state became objectified in the politics of emotions along the BAM.

## Acknowledgments

This article is based on the research conducted with the framework of the project “Configurations of ‘remoteness’ (CoRe): Entanglements of humans and infrastructure in the region of Baykal-Amur Mainline (BAM)” supported by the Austrian Science Fund FWF [P 27625 Einzelprojekte]. I want to acknowledge the local partners in my research, including the administrations of Kalarskii Raion and Tyndinskii Raion, the Museum of the BAM history in Tynda and the Museum of the BAM in Severobaikal’sk, to the archives of Tyndinskii Raion and the city of Severobaikal’sk, as well as to all our informants and friends. I am also thankful to my colleagues at the University of Vienna—PI of the CoRe project Peter Schweitzer and Monika Palmberger for discussing earlier drafts of this manuscript.

---

**Olga Povoroznyuk** is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department for Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna. Her research interests cover the topics of ethnicity, identity, post-socialism, infrastructure, and built environment with a focus on Northern Russia. She is the author of the book “Evenki of Transbaikal Region: Socio-Economic and Cultural Transformations in the 20th–21st Centuries” [in Russian, 2011] and a number of academic articles published in Russian and in English. Since 2015, she works on a project on entanglements of humans with transportation infrastructures in remote regions, where she focuses on social dynamics and identity building in the region of the Baikal-Amur Mainline, East Siberia. Email: olga.povoroznyuk@univie.ac.at.

---

## Notes

1. For the sake of anonymity, the names of the informants are disguised throughout the text.

2. I have conducted long-term field research in indigenous and mixed communities of the northern Zabaikal'skii Krai (since 1998) and Amurskaia Oblast (since 2013).

3. The BAM Zone is an official term used in acts and regulations in relation to the construction sites, including emerging settlements and other infrastructures along the railroad.

## References

- Ahmed, Sara. 2004. “Collective Feelings. Or, the Impressions Left by Others.” *Theory, Culture & Society* 21 (2): 25–42.
- Argudiaeva, Iulia. 1988. *Trud i byt molodezhi BAMa: Nastoiashchee i budushchee* [Labour and everyday life of the youth at the BAM: the present and the future]. Moscow: Mysl'.
- Assmann, Aleida. 2008. “Transformations between History and Memory.” *Social Research* 75 (1): 49–72.
- BAM—doroga nashei sud'by: Vchera i segodnia* [BAM – a way of our life: yesterday and today]. 2012. Novosibirsk: Izdatel'stvo SGUPSa.

- Belkin, Evgenii, and Frants Sheregi. 1985. *Formirovanie naseleniia v Zone BAMA* [Formation of the population in the BAM Zone]. Moscow: Mysl'.
- Bogdanova, Elena. 2013. "Kak utopiia stala real'nost'iu. 'Stroitel'stvo BAMA—samoe schastlivoe vremia moei zhizni.'" [How utopia became a reality. "BAM construction is the happiest time of my life"]. In *Topografiia schast'ia: Etnograficheskie karty moderna: Sbornik statei*, ed. Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov, 199–218. Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie.
- Bolotova, Alla. 2014. "Conquering Nature and Engaging with the Environment in the Russian Industrialised North." Ph.D. diss., University of Lapland, Rovaniemi.
- Bolotova, Alla, and Florian Stammeler. 2010. "How the North Became Home: Attachment to Place among Industrial Migrants in the Murmansk Region of Russia." In *Migration in the Circumpolar North: Issues and Contexts*, ed. Lee Huskey and Chris Southcott, 193–220. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.
- Bronepoezda pobedy* [Victory trains]. 2015. Moscow: OOO "Alonta AG".
- Brubaker, Rogers. 2014. "Nationhood and the National Question in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Eurasia: An Institutionalist Account." *Theory and Society* 23 (1): 47–78.
- Connerton, Paul. 1989. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Connerton, Paul. 2009. *How Modernity Forgets*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Graham, Loren R. 1996. *The Ghost of the Executed Engineer*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Grützmacher, Johannes. 2012. *Die Baikal-Amur-Magistrale: vom Stalinistischen Lager zum Mobilisierungsprojekt unter Brežnev*. München: Oldenbourg.
- Il'kovskii, Konstantin, ed. 2014. *BAM. Kalarskii Raion*. Chita: Transbaikal State University.
- Josephson, Paul R. 1995. "'Projects of the Century' in Soviet History: Large-Scale Technologies from Lenin to Gorbachev." *Technology and Culture* 36 (3): 519–559. doi:10.2307/3107240.
- Kontopodis, Michalis, and Vincenzo Matera. 2010. "Doing Memory, Doing Identity; Politics of the Everyday in Contemporary Global Communities." *Outlines—Critical Practice Studies* 12 (2): 1–14.
- Kotkin, Stephen. 1997. *Magnetic Mountain. Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lutz, Catherine, and Geoffrey M. White. 1986. "The Anthropology of Emotions." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15 (1): 405–436. doi:10.1146/annurev.an.15.100186.002201.
- Martin, Terry. 2001. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Mote, Victor L. 2003. "Stalin's Railway to Nowhere: 'The Dead Road' (1947–1953)." *Sibirica* 3 (1): 48–63.

- Oushakine, Serguei. 2013. "Remembering in Public: On the Affective Management of History." *Ab Imperio* 1: 269–302.
- Palmberger, Monika. 2008. "Nostalgia Matters: Nostalgia for Yugoslavia as Potential Vision for a Better Future." *Sociologija* 50 (4): 355–370.
- Payne, Matthew J. 2001. *Stalin's Railroad: Turksib and the Building of Socialism*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Povoroznyuk, Olga. 2016. "Social Dynamics and Sustainability of BAM Communities: Migration, Competition for Resources, and Intergroup Relations." Pp. 133–157 in *New Mobilities and Social Changes in Russia's Arctic Regions*, ed. M. Laruelle. New York: Routledge.
- Röhr, Andreas. 2016. "Posiolok Niia (Gruzinskaia) v gody Gruzstroibama (1975–1982): Kommemoratsiia i vospominaniia byvshikh rabotnikov i nyneshnikh zhitelei." [The settlement of Niia (Gruzinskaia) in the period of Gruzstroibam (1975–1982): commemoration and memories of the former workers and present residents]. In *Sibir': Konteksty nastoiashchego: Sbornik materialov mezhdunarodnykh konferentsii molodykh issledovatelei Sibiri*, ed. I. P. Basalaeva and M. Ia. Rozhanskii, 225–240. Irkutsk: Tsentrazavisimyykh Sotsial'nykh Issledovaniy.
- Rozhanskii, Mikhail. 2002. *Baikal'skaia Sibir': Fragmenty sotsio-kul'turnoi karty: Almanakh-issledovanie* [Baikal, Siberia: fragments of the socio-cultural map: a research almanac]. Irkutsk: Irkutsk State University.
- RZhd. 2016. *Gruzooborot BAM za 2006–2015 Gody* [Cargo Turn Over by BAM in 2005-2015].
- Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Slavin, Samuil V. 1982. *Osvoenie Severa Sovetskogo Soiuza* [Mastering of the North of the Soviet Union]. Moscow: Nauka.
- Stolberg, Eva-Maria, ed. 2005. *The Siberian Saga*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Svašek, Maruška. 2006. "Introduction: Postsocialism and the Politics of Emotions." Pp. 1–33 in *Postsocialism: Politics and Emotions in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Maruška Svašek. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Thompson, Niobe. 2008. *Settlers on the Edge*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Voronina, Tatiana. 2009. "Pamiat' o BAME: Tematicheskie dominanty v biograficheskikh interv'iu s byvshymi stroiteliami." [Memory of the BAM: predominant motives of biographical interviews with former builders]. *Neprikosnovennyi Zapas* 2 (64). <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2009/2/vo5-pr.html>.
- RZhd and ITAR TASS. "Vspominaem BAM.2008. Spetsial'nyi Proekt RZhd i ITAR TASS." [Remembering BAM. A Special Project by RZhd and ITAR TASS] <http://tass.ru/bam-40>.
- Ward, Christopher J. 2001. "Selling the 'Project of the Century': Perceptions of the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway (BAM) in the Soviet Press, 1974–1984." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 43 (1): 75–95.

- Ward, Christopher J. 2009. *Brezhnev's Folly: The Building of BAM and Late Soviet Socialism*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Watson, Rubie S., ed. 1994. *Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- White, Geoffrey M. 1999. "Emotional Remembering: The Pragmatics of National Memory." *Ethos* 27 (4): 505–529.
- Yurchak, Alexei. 2007. "Pozdnii sotsializm i poslednee sovetskoe pokolenie. [Late socialism and the last Soviet generation]" *Neprikosnovennyi Zapas* 52 (2): 1–8.