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**THE RUSSIAN-MONGOLIAN BORDER ZONE: A STUDY OF THE CURRENT STATUS
AND CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL**

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Abstract

The border-zone areas in the aggregate of five municipal districts, as well as their place in the regional economy and intermunicipal characteristics, are considered for the first time ever. It is found that the existing preferences (geographical and territorial) for entering into the international division of labor and cross-border cooperation are not currently used enough. It is revealed that the border location imposes on municipalities and their population additional loads, and emergency situations, the implementation of which is within the competence of the federal authorities rather than local government.

Keywords

Russia – Mongolia – Border zone – Relations – Trends

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Introduction

The Republic of Buryatia (RB) borders on just one foreign state – Mongolia. At that, out of all the constituent entities of the Russian Federation (the Republic of Tuva, the Altai Territory, and the Zabaikalye Territory), bordering Mongolia, it has the longest border of more than 1,200 km. The RB borders on Selenge, Bulgan, and Khubsugul aimaks. Municipal districts adjacent to them include Kyakhtinsky, Dzhidinsky, Okinsky, Zakamensky, and Tunkinsky (Table 1).

No.	Municipal districts	Neighboring Mongolian aimaks
1	Dzhidinsky District	Selenge aimak and indirectly Darkhan-Uul aimak
2	Kyakhtinsky District	Selenge aimak and indirectly Darkhan-Uul and Orkhon aimaks
3	Zakamensky District	Bulgan aimak and indirectly Orkhon aimak
4	Okinsky District	Khubsugul aimak
5	Tunkinsky District	Khubsugul aimak

Table 1
Border and municipal districts of the Republic of Buryatia and neighboring Mongolian aimaks

Methods

On the one hand, the border-zone location of the territory provides additional opportunities for socio-economic development, while on the other hand, this imposes various restrictions. Therefore, the study of the influence of the border factor on the socio-economic development of the border-zone areas of the RB is of both scientific and practical interest (Tables 2, 3, 4).

To perform analysis, an array of publicly available statistical information was used, to which a set of analytical tools were applied. The calculated parameters characterize both the static picture and the dynamic change of the studied objects. In addition, structural indicators were calculated to assess the proportion of each municipal entity.

Border-zone area	Area, thousand sq. km	Administrative center	Distance from the administrative center to Ulan-Ude, the capital of the RB, km	Population size as of 01.01.2017, thousand people	Population density, persons/sq. km
Dzhidinsky district	8.6	Petropavlovka village	237.2	24.6	2.9
Zakamensky district	15.3	Zakamensk village	411.0	26.1	1.7
Kyakhtinsky district	4.7	Kyakhta town	235.4	37.4	7.9
Okinsky district	26	Orlik village	536.0	5.5	0.2
Tunkinsky district	11.8	Kyren village	475.1	20.8	1.8
Total in border-zone areas	66.4	-	-	114.4	1.7

Table 2
General characteristics of border-zone areas of the Republic of Buryatia

	Years							2017/ 2011 %
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Republic of Buryatia	971.5	971.4	971.8	973.9	978.5	982.3	984.1	101.3
Border-zone areas	124.9	122.4	120.6	119.1	117.6	115.8	114.4	91.6
	100	98.0	98.5	98.6	98.7	98.4	98.8	
Dzhidinsky district	28.9	27.4	26.6	26.0	25.6	25.0	24.6	85.1
	100	94.8	97.0	97.7	98.5	97.7	98.4	
Zakamensky district	28.4	28.0	27.7	27.4	26.9	26.4	26.1	91.9
	100	98.6	98.9	98.9	98.2	98.1	98.9	
Kyakhtinsky district	39.6	39.3	38.8	38.5	38.2	37.8	37.4	94.4
	100	99.2	98.7	99.2	99.2	98.9	98.9	
Okinsky district	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.5	101.9
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Tunkinsky district	22.6	22.3	22.1	21.8	21.5	21.2	20.8	92.0

Table 3

Population dynamics in border-zone areas of the Republic of Buryatia over 2011-2017, thousand people

Results

The total border-zone area is 66.4 thousand sq. km (19% of the total area of the RB). The Okinsky and Zakamensky districts have the largest territory, while Kyakhtinsky district is characterized by the smallest territory. In terms of population density, on the contrary, the highest population density is in the Kyakhtinsky district and is about 8 persons per sq. km, which corresponds to an average population density of Russia, while the lowest population density is in the Okinsky district, amounting to 0.2 persons per sq. km. Dzhidinsky and Tunkinsky districts occupy an intermediate position.

In total, 114.4 thousand people live in the border-zone areas of the RB (11.6% of the total population in the RB). During the period from 2011 to 2017, the population of border-zone areas decreased by 10.5 thousand people or 9.2%, while in the RB, in general, it increased by 12.6 thousand people (1.3%). The greatest losses were noted in Dzhidinsky (17.5%) and Zakamensky (8.8%) districts.

Uniform dynamics of the exodus of people from border zones of the RB demonstrates certain patterns of migration outflow.

Depopulation of territories, starting from the border, increases the risks to the national security of the country (Table 4). Border-zone areas are characterized by an outstripping decline in the working-age population over the overall decline, with a favorable balance of the population of children, youth, and old age.

The reason lies in the migration outflow of the most mobile part of the population. This results in the decline in the birth rate which is 705 newborns in the last 7 years. A positive fact is the reduction of mortality.

	Years							2017/ 2011, %
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
Total population as of January 1 of the certain year, thousand people	124.9	122.4	120.6	119.1	117.6	115.8	114.4	91.6
including by age: younger than working age	31.3	31.8	32.1	32.6	32.8	32.6	31.6	101.0
working age	75.3	72.2	69.4	67.0	64.6	63.2	63.4	84.2
older than working age	18.3	18.4	19.1	19.5	20.2	20.0	19.4	106.0
Number of births	2,655	2,595	2,503	2,449	2,228	2,124	1,950	73.4
Number of deaths	1,695.0	1,682.0	1,640.0	1,430.0	1,477.0	1,471.0	1,363	80.4
Natural increase (+increase/-decrease)	960.0	913.0	863.0	1,019.0	751.0	653.0	597.0	62.2

Table 4
Gender-based population dynamics in border-zone areas of the Republic of Buryatia over 2011-2017

Over 2017, the border-zone areas of RB demonstrated a positive natural increase due to the high birth rate. The number of births in all border-zone areas exceeded the number of deaths. Thus, in Dzhidinsky district, population growth amounted to 149 people, in Zakamensky district – 120 people, Kyakhtinsky district – 193 people, Okinsky district – 84 people, and Tunkinsky district – 104 people.

The leading sectors in the economy of the border-zone areas are mining (37.0%), trade (18%), and agriculture (12.5%). The proportion of manufacturing production is 5.1%, construction – 4.8%, etc. Distribution of enterprises and organizations of border-zone areas of the RB in terms of economic activity is presented in Table 5.

Economic activities	Municipal districts					Total in border-zone areas
	Dzhidinsky	Zakamensky	Kyakhtinsky	Okinsky	Tunkinsky	
Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries	21	18	15	12	15	81
Extraction of minerals	1	8	-	4	-	13
Manufacturing activity	8	10	8	3	4	33
Electric power supply	8	7	9	-	7	31
Water supply; waste disposal	1	1	4	-	1	7

Construction	4	6	8	5	8	31
Wholesale and retail trade	15	27	35	7	35	119
Transportation and storage	3	4	11	4	7	29
Hotel and catering services	1	2	3	1	13	20
Information and communication activities	1	3	4	2	4	14
Financial activity	6	7	11	1	8	33
Other	40	70	55	15	60	240
Total	109	163	163	54	162	651

Table 5

Distribution of enterprises and organizations of the border-zone areas of the RB depending on economic activities

The spatial structure of local border-zone economies is characterized by the following differences. Dzhidinsky district is a leader in the number of enterprises in agriculture. Tunkinsky district leads in the field of tourism, has greater number of hotels and public catering enterprises. Zakamensky and Okinsky districts are distinguished by the number of enterprises in the field of extraction of minerals and their primary processing. Kyakhtinsky district, where trade has historically been developed, has the largest number of trade, transportation, and storage enterprises.

Discussion

The potential of the RB and its border-zone areas is included in the Development concept of border-zone areas of constituent entities of the Russian Federation¹, which are part of the Far Eastern Federal District and Baikal Region. The regional program "Development of border-zone areas of the Republic of Buryatia up to 2020"² is developed and approved at the level of the RB. The expected results of the program implementation by 2020 include the growth of the population of border-zone areas, the growth in the

¹ Konceptsiya razvitiya prigranichnyh territorij sub"ektov Rossijskoj Federacii, vkhodyashchih v sostav Dal'nevostochnogo federal'nogo okruga i Bajkal'skogo regiona. Approved by the order of the Russian Federation Government 28.10.2015 No. 2193-p. Retrieved from <http://static.government.ru/media/files/FulGBPKawTbXiRmufyHpAxtGzUgc0Kpm.pdf>; E. Ts. Chimitdorgieva; G. A. Aydaev; D. D. Tsyrenov; A. M. Balkhanov y E. A. Malishev, "Assessment of the nature of reproduction processes in rural municipalities (districts) of the region of Buryatia", International Review of Management and Marketing, num 6 (S3) (2016): 239-245; L. R. Slepneva; D. D. Tsyrenov; A. A. Kokorina; J. V. Slepneva y I. S. Munkueva, "Socio-economic development of regions of Russia: Assessment of the state and directions of improvement", International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues, num 6 (S2) (2016): 179-187; D. D. Tsyrenov, "Socioeconomic development of regions of Siberia and Russian Far East: Statistical analysis", International Journal of Engineering and Technology, num 7 (4.38) (2018): 701-703; D. D. Tsyrenov; I. S. Munkueva; E. B. Dondokova; B. B. Sharaldaev y L. A. Goryunova, "Statistical research on spatial differentiation of the innovation system of the Russian Federation", Journal of Applied Economic Sciences, Vol: 10 num 5 (2015) y D. D. Tsyrenov y L. R. Slepneva, "Forecasting the socio-economic development of the RB in the context of labor potential", International Journal of Mechanical Engineering and Technology, num 9 Vol: 11 (2018). 2070-2075.

² Regional'naya programma Respubliki Buryatiya "Razvitie prigranichnyh territorij Respubliki Buryatiya do 2020 goda". Retrieved from <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/450280788> y S. S. Mikhailova; N. I. Moshkin; D. D. Tsyrenov; E. Ts. Sadykova y S. D-N. Dagbaeva, "A spatial analysis of unevenness in the social-economic development of regional municipal units", European Research Studies Journal, num 20 (2B) (2017): 46-65.

number of small and medium-sized businesses, and the growth in the number of investment projects, including those with the involvement of foreign capital.

In fact, the status of border-zone areas does not give them any dividends or preferences, while on the contrary, sometimes leading to loads and costs, of which many issues are within the scope of federal competence. For example, the access control of nonresident citizens to enter the border area imposes additional costs for the issuance of entry permits.

The 5 km wide borderland along the border restricts conducting construction and economic activities within its limits, i.e. withdraws from circulation a decent territory. As a result, the matter of construction of transport, logistics and tourism infrastructure associating to the state border crossing points, which logically fits into the economic feasibility criteria, in fact, cannot be solved.

Residents of border-zone areas are constantly in a state of readiness for various emergency situations, such as extinguishing transboundary fires, preventing the migration of wild and domestic animals from the Mongolian side, in order to avoid the transfer of various diseases, such as foot and mouth disease, anthrax, glanders, etc.; as well as fighting against cattle stealing. A special problem concerns raids from the Mongolian side of wolves killing local cattle. Therefore, squads are created in the settlements, as well as duty and patrolling are organized along the border. The greatest burden falls on the administration of the Kyakhtinsky district, which performs also unusual diplomatic functions in organizing meetings and seeing off officials and delegations of Russia, Mongolia and third countries crossing the state border.

Conclusion

The following grouping of the research objects' strengths and weaknesses (Table 6) is offered, as well as the ways of socio-economic development of border-zone areas are developed based on increasing the efficiency of strengths and minimizing the adverse impacts of weaknesses.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Border-zone location provides access to foreign markets; - Significant areas of land resources, including those for agricultural use; - Positive dynamics in natural population growth; - Availability of minerals, liquid on domestic and international markets; - Relatively developed enterprises of wholesale and retail trade, as well as services, in particular, tourism; - A huge number of natural and historical monuments of culture; - Availability of natural healing mineral springs, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharply continental climate; - Migration outflow of the population not compensated by natural population growth; - Reduction in the proportion of the working age population; - Increase in the proportion of the older population; - Low income of the population; - High energy tariffs affecting the competitiveness of enterprises; - The growing tax burden on entrepreneurship; - Remoteness from the business and cultural activity centers; - The presence of specially protected natural areas that limit the extraction of minerals, etc.

Table 6
Strengths and weaknesses of the border-zone areas of the Republic of Buryatia

1. For more effective use of the border-zone location in cross-border cooperation with the neighboring municipal entities of Mongolia, as well as interregional cooperation with potential partners of the provinces of China, the border-zone areas of the RB should multiply the conversion of potentials (human, industrial, and natural) into demanded and competitive actions, goods, and services.

2. The main mechanisms for achieving this purpose, as proposed by the authors, include:

- creating conditions to restore demographic well-being in the border-zone areas based on the incentives on the part of the regional and federal authorities;

- transiting to high-commodity farming and related processing industries, as well as logistics and commercial services; this should be carried out based on the restoration of innovation and investment institutions of gene-fund breeding farms, engineering services, the creation of consumer purchasing and sales, as well as production cooperatives in the settlement municipalities that will increase the trust in cooperatives on the part of shareholders, and strengthen the role of local government;

- forming the management institution to develop foreign economic relations at the level of the government and administrative-territorial entities, developing cooperation with potential partners of the Mongolian aimaks, as well as municipalities of the autonomous region of Inner Mongolia of China within the three-country program of creation of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, and embedding business structures of Buryatia in its trade and economic chains (the Program of creation of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor).

3. The entry of the RB into the jurisdiction of the Far Eastern Federal District should contribute to the more complete implementation of the socio-economic development strategy, especially in the investment and foreign economic sectors. The main resources for the development of regional and cross-border cooperation are:

- high level of entrepreneurial activity and labor potential mobility;

- cultural environment in the broadest sense, including spiritual and moral foundations, level of education and health care; the activity of the population in the field of improving economic culture, etc.;

- rich natural capital and its competent utilization by present and future generations;

- the developed international cooperation institutions of local self-government, state power, and civil society.

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