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Assessing the demographic potential of the border areas of Russia and Mongolia

P V Osodoev[1*] and Y B Zhamyanova[1]

[1] Baikal Institute of Nature Management of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Science (BINM SB RAS), 6 Sakhyanovoy str., Ulan-Ude 670047 Russia

E-mail: osodoev@binm.ru

Abstract. The article presents empirical results of a study focused on the demographic development of the Russian-Mongolian border area since the 1990s. In the Russian border regions there is a decrease in demographic potential, which is due to migration outflow and a decrease in natural growth. In neighboring Mongolian aimags, the outflow of the population to the central region is compensated by high birth rates.

Keywords: migration, migration outflow, aimag, population, demographic development, natural movement, border regions

1. Introduction

In our opinion, contemporary relations of Russia and Mongolia are based on a long-term history of bilateral cooperation, have the character of traditional good neighborliness, and are aimed at further developing the strategic partnership. The significance of the socio-demographic component is one of the foundations for developing relationships within the cross-border region of these countries. At the same time, the demographic situation acts as a kind of indicator of the state of socio-economic processes and phenomena occurring on the territory. The study of certain qualitative characteristics of the population of border regions will allow to identify problem points of regional development and develop on this basis approaches to the formation of territorial socio-demographic and migration policies in the interests of the state [2].

2. Materials and Methods

The scientific work of domestic and foreign scientists on similar problems served as research materials. Statistical collections and data of national statistical services for the years 1990-2017 became an empirical base. The main research methods are logical-structural analysis and synthesis, comparative analysis, systematization.

The object of the study is the population of the Russian-Mongolian border area, consisting of four Russian subjects (Republic of Altai, Republic of Buryatia, Republic of Tyva, Trans-Baikal Region) and eight aimags of Mongolia (Bayan-Ulgiy, Uvs, Zavkhan, Khovsgol, Bulgan, Selenge, Khentiy and Dornod). 2597.1 thousand people live in the border areas of Russia, which is 1.7% of the total population of the country [5]. The area of the Russian border area is 1044.7 thousand km^2 (6.1% of the country's territory). The border areas of Mongolia occupy 592.2 thousand km^2 (or a third of the

national territory, 38.7%) and concentrate 714.5 thousand people, which is 22.4% of the country's population [3].

3. Results

The border areas of Russia and Mongolia are differentiated according to natural and geographical conditions, socio-economic development, and the state of infrastructure, which causes differences in the settlement system. The subjects of the border area of Russia are characterized by a relatively low density of population distribution, a threefold difference with national significance in the degree of population is noted. The population density in Mongolia is slightly lower than on the Russian side (1.3 and 2.3 people. per 1 km^2, respectively).

The Russian frontier zone is more urbanized than the Mongolian: 52.5% and 34.6% [3, 4, 5]. The largest number of urban residents live in the Trans-Baikal Region – 68.2%, and in the Altai Republic almost 2 times less – 29.0%. In frontier Mongolia, the concentration of the urban population is highest in the Dornod aimag (56.4%), here more than half of the population lives in urban areas, the lowest concentration in the Bulgan aimags is 19.8%, Zavkhan demonstrates 22.6%. A significant part of the population of the Russian border regions is concentrated in regional centers, such as the city of Ulan-Ude, with a population of 434.8 thousand people, the city of Chita (349.0 thousand people), the city of Kyzyl (117.0 thousand people), Gorno-Altaisk (63.2 thousand people.) The major cities of the Mongolian border region are Choibalsan (44.8 thousand people), Muren (42.4), Sukhe Bator (40.8), and Ulgiy (37.0). The peculiarity of the rural population of Mongolia is the occupation of nomadic pastoral livestock. The nomads (arats) make up 17.7% of the population of the frontier.

The demographic picture in the Russian frontier under study is currently characterized by both positive natural growth and migration outflow. Over the past 27 years (1990-2017), the population has decreased by 9.5% in border areas (272.9 thousand people) [5]. So, the population decreased most significantly in the Trans-Baikal Region by 18.6%, in the Republic of Buryatia by 6.4%; at the same time, the population increased by 11.3% in the Republic of Altai, with an increase of 5.8% in the Republic of Tyva. During the same period, the population of the Mongolian border area increased by 2.9% (23.0 thousand people), with a high natural increase and a high migration outflow [3, 4].

There are features of heterogeneity in the processes of natural movement of the population in adjacent territories. The demographic indicators of the Russian regions significantly "lag" behind the Mongolian ones. In recent years, economic growth has allowed the Mongolian government to strengthen policies to stimulate and encourage birth rates, expand ways to implement measures to improve health care, which ensured such results in demographics. Thus, birth rate indicators in the border regions of Mongolia are about 3 times higher than the similar values of the Russian subjects (Fig. 1). The natural increase in the border area of Mongolia is an average of 17.8 per 1000 people, and it is 6.2 in the Russian border area. At the same time, the border regions are the leaders in Russia in terms of the birth rate, demonstrates the value of 16.4 per 1000 people on average, with a national average of 11.5. The mortality rate in the border area of Mongolia is characterized by rather low rates – 5.8 deaths per 1000 people, and it is 10.2 in Russia.

The Russian border regions are with high rates of migration, rather than border aimags of Mongolia. Migration has the most negative character in the Trans-Baikal Region. Since 2000, the average annual decline here has been about 5.8 thousand people. Inter-regional migration flows have equally centripetal directions on both sides. So, in most cases, the population of Russian border regions moves to permanent residence in the central parts of the country, major cities of the Siberian Federal District. Internal migration of frontier subjects is directed to regional centers. The centers of gravity for migrants in Mongolia are mainly the cities of Ulan Bator, Darkhan, and Erdenet. Ulan Bator is one of the fastest growing cities in the world, the average annual influx of internal migrants is estimated at 100 thousand people [1]. The main causes of migration in adjacent regions are similar in their conditionality and severity. Among the dominant factors of migration are the following: high unemployment, underdeveloped socio-economic infrastructure, and low quality of life, economic instability.
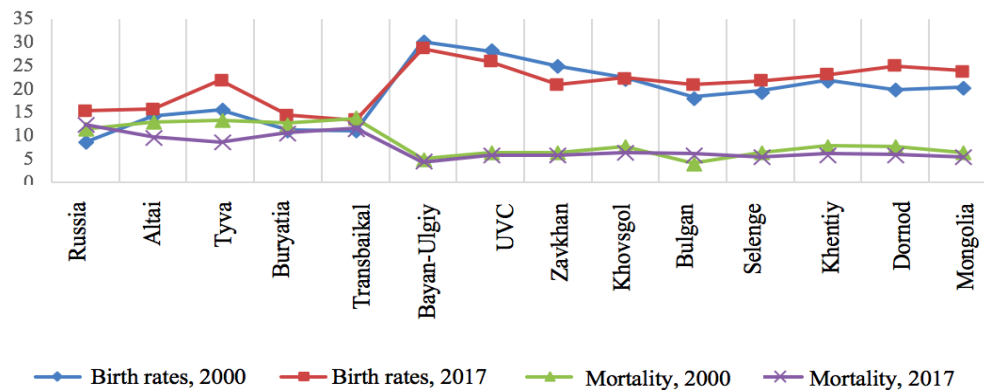
Figure 1. Natural movement in the border areas of Russia and Mongolia for 2000-2017.

Significant imbalances are observed in the age structure of the population of adjacent subjects. Changes in the processes of natural movement in the border regions of Russia found expression in the decline in the working age population. So, at the moment, the border regions are characterized by the predominance of the "middle-aged" population relative to the indicators of the Mongolian side. The highest proportion of the population younger than working age is observed in the Republic of Tyva, and the smallest is in the Trans-Baikal Region. In general, in the border regions, 82.5 people unable to work per 100 people of working age, with an average number in Russia of 78.5 people.

Since 1990, the number of able-bodied populations has significantly increased in the total population of Mongolia, in about 2 times [3, 4]. In 2017, the demographic load in Mongolia was 45.9 unable-to-work people per 100 people of working age. It should be noted that in recent years, the number of people unable to work in Mongolian families has decreased. In 2000, there were 81.2 of the disabled population per 100 people in the Bayan-Ulgiy aimag, but it wasonly 55.8 in 2017. The decrease in the number of working age population affects labor resources of the studied regions, which creates a threat to the socio-economic stability of the territories.

4. Discussion

According to the authors, the main problem points in the demographic development of the cross-border territory of Russia and Mongolia were identified in the work. Although, the obtained results cover only one part of the larger existing problems, but this does not prevent us from marking the general trends in the development of demographic processes on both sides of the border.

5. Conclusion

Consequently, we can conclude that the uneven development of demographic processes in the cross-border territories of Russia and Mongolia. Changes in the demographic structure of the population of the regions are interrelated and interdependent with the processes of socio-economic development of the countries in question.

Comparative analysis of the key aspects of the demographic development of border regions allowed to identify existing problems in these areas. The border areas, being a part of the country, reflect the general trends of its development. At the same time, they have their own regional characteristics. Changes in the demographic structure of the population of the regions are interrelated and interdependent with the processes of socio-economic development of the countries in question. In the Russian border regions, a decrease in the demographic potential is observed due to migration outflow and a decrease in natural growth. In adjacent Mongolian aimags, the population outflow to central aimags is compensated by high natural growth.

In general, we can talk about the uneven development of demographic processes in the border areas of Russia and Mongolia. The most negative fact is the negative trend of reducing the demographic potential of the Russian border areas. In this regard, the implementation of strategic measures of the

state regional policy in the field of economic development, health, migration is expedient in these areas.

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