

**CENTRAL ASIANS TAKE STOCK, PART II:
COMPARISON OF RESULTS FROM PUBLIC OPINION
SURVEY, UZBEKISTAN AND KAZAKHSTAN, 1993 & 2007**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper summarizes some of the key findings from a comprehensive public opinion survey conducted in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan first in 1993, and then re-administered almost 15 years later, in January 2007.

The 1993 survey, conducted under the auspices of the US Institute of Peace, was one of the first public opinion surveys to examine Uzbekistani and Kazakhstani attitudes toward a wide range of issues, including democracy and economic reform, corruption and organized crime, Islam (as a faith, identity, and catalyst for political mobilization), ethnic identity (likewise), environmental issues, and foreign policy views, particularly regarding international assistance. The same survey was re-administered in 2007 under the auspices of the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research.

INTRODUCTION

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The 1993 survey, conducted under the auspices of the US Institute of Peace, was one of the first public opinion surveys to examine Uzbekistani and Kazakhstani attitudes toward a wide range of issues, including democracy and economic reform, corruption and organized crime, Islam (as a faith, identity, and catalyst for political mobilization), ethnic identity (likewise), environmental issues, and foreign policy views, particularly regarding international assistance.¹ The same survey was re-administered in 2007 under the auspices of the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research.²

In both the 1993 and 2007 surveys, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 2000 respondents (1000 respondents in each country) in one of four languages: Uzbek, Kazakh, Russian, or, in the case of Uzbekistan, in the Karakalpak language, depending on respondents' preferences.³ The two surveys employed the same size and type of representative sample, and the margin of error was no more than 3%. Survey responses were broken down by most major indicators--age, gender, nationality, region/ place of habitation, urban/rural distribution, level of

¹ A summary of the 1993 findings can be found at the US Institute of Peace Web site: Central Asians Take Stock: Reform, Identity, and Corruption, <http://www.usip.org/resources/central-asians-take-stock>.

² Some questions were slightly modified, due to changes in circumstances or changes in the popular lexicon during the intervening 15 years. Questions regarding international assistance, for example, were modified to reflect the fact that international assistance was only beginning in 1993, and by 2007, had become quite substantial. Any modifications or additions to the survey questionnaire are noted in the text.

³ The sampling scheme had the following stages: proportionate stratification by population of provinces; for all provinces (including Tashkent city as an urban stratum), proportionate stratification by urban/rural population within the provinces, and PPS (Proportional Probability Sampling) of PSUs (Primary Sample Units) within urban/rural strata; sequential random sampling of households (Secondary Sampling Units--SSUs) in selected PSUs; and Kish grid-based

education, profession. Questions were phrased so as to draw not only on stated views, but descriptions of the respondents' own behavior.

The data presented in this paper represent but two snapshots in time, and do not in themselves provide a definitive picture of how the landscape in Central Asia has changed over the past fifteen years. They do, however, provide often sharp and sometimes surprising comparisons, and comprise an extensive data base of public attitudes in a region where comparative data over a fifteen-year time span is rare. They are intended as a useful complement to the many scholarly analyses of Central Asia, to contribute to our understanding of public attitudes in these key areas today, how they may or may not have evolved over the past decade, and what they might suggest in terms of current developments and trends, future prospects, and US foreign and assistance policy to this part of the world.

DEMOCRATIC REFORM

The 1993 survey brought into question a number of previously-held assumptions regarding Central Asian views towards democracy, and raised new questions. In the early 1990s, for example, some in the donor community assumed that Uzbekistan's and Kazakhstan's people share the same goal of democratic reform, and donors had only to get on with the particulars; others, equally mistaken, assumed Central Asians have few democratic instincts, and donors must start by trying to inculcate basic notions of trust, honesty, and fairness.

The original survey suggested a more mixed and complex picture. Despite the rhetoric regarding "democracy-building" by leaders and the general population alike, the 1993 findings suggested only a vague and contradictory understanding of what democracy entails as a political system, and few respondents regarded democracy as the best system to resolve Uzbekistan's or

sampling of respondents (total of 1000 respondents in each country). Thus, the sampling is a three-stage stratified

Kazakhstan's problems. The survey suggested a strong sense of justice and fairness among these populations, but most respondents still put a greater priority on strong leadership, stability, and law and order than on the construction of any particular government system.

In part, this was due to the disorder, and consequent disappointment that arose after the collapse of the USSR. Seeing how--under slogans of "democracy"--corruption and inequality were growing rapidly, while those few democratic freedoms and institutions that existed in the USSR were being destroyed, people seemed to believe that they themselves could do little to change the situation. As the survey suggests, they therefore hoped for a strong leader who would institute honesty, stability, and fairness. Indeed, slogans calling for fairness, justice, and anti-corruption became quite popular, to the extent that they were likewise incorporated into slogans of the Islamic opposition to attract more supporters to their ranks.

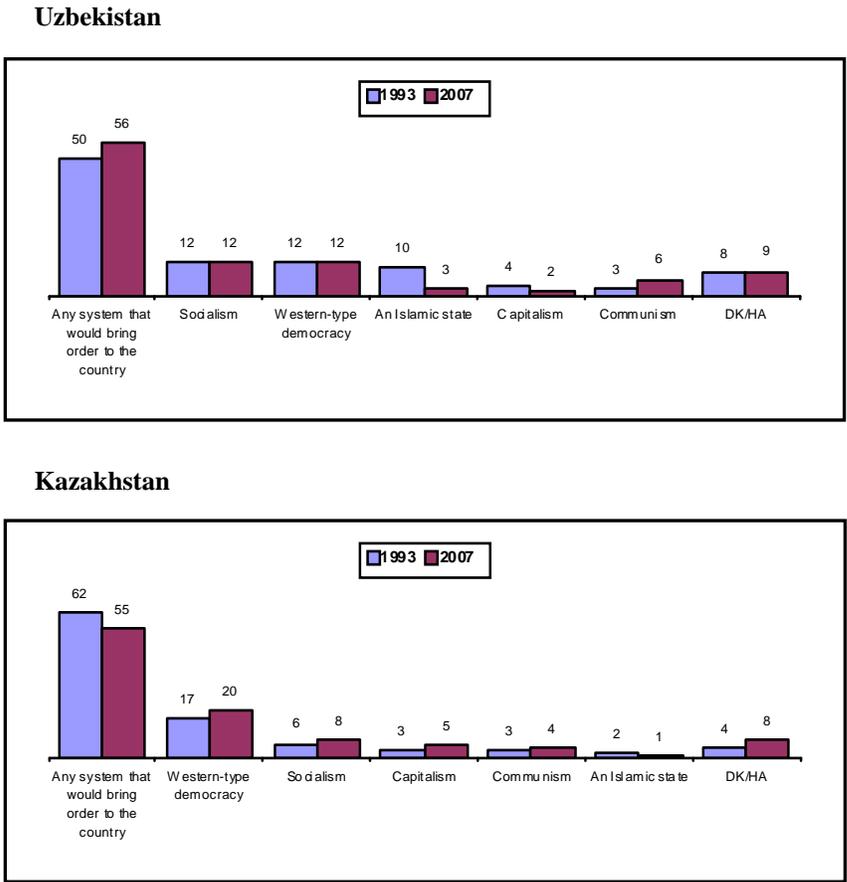
The 2007 survey results suggest that, fifteen years later, these views had changed little: Understanding of, and support for a democratic system as such, for example, had increased slightly in Kazakhstan, but maintaining strong leadership, stability, and law and order remained paramount in both countries. The 2007 survey also suggested, however, that support for some basic democratic freedoms had grown--in some cases, significantly.

When asked in 1993, for example, which political system would best promote the resolution of their country's problems, half of all respondents in Uzbekistan, and almost two-thirds of Kazakhstani respondents supported "any system as long as there is order." Fifteen years later, by 2007, this proportion had remained roughly the same in both countries, increasing slightly in Uzbekistan, while decreasing slightly in Kazakhstan. The proportion of respondents who selected a Western-style democracy went up significantly in Kazakhstan--but a Western-style democracy remained unpopular in Uzbekistan. As illustrated in Table 1, only twelve percent of Uzbekistani

clustered sampling.

respondents selected western style democracy in both 1993 and 2007, the same proportion of respondents who selected socialism. (Table 1)

Table 1: What political system would be the best for Uzbekistan/ Kazakhstan-for the country to be able to solve its problems?



In both surveys, moreover, those respondents who selected a “Western-type democracy” as the best system to solve their country’s ills also showed less tolerance for supporting opposition parties, and named “strengthening social order and discipline” as one of the most important challenges facing their respective countries today. Overall, for example, whereas in 1993, roughly 90 percent of respondents in both countries identified the need to “strengthen social order and discipline” as one of the most important challenges facing their countries, by 2007, this had declined only slightly in Uzbekistan (to 83%), and remained unchanged in Kazakhstan.

In 2007, then, this lack of change may have again reflected the traditional effort in both countries to maintain order and discipline, particularly in response to what they now perceived as relatively weak and ineffective new governments that emerged from “color revolutions”— primarily in neighboring Kyrgyzstan, but also in other former Soviet republics. The populations of both countries again remained fearful of the potential for chaos and disorganization in public life. Results from both surveys also suggest that views of democratic reform in many ways remained theoretical and abstract, with little relevance to their own lives. With little history of democratic rule in these countries, democracy was widely perceived as, at best, an ideal for some distant future, but not the best system to help solve Uzbekistan’s or Kazakhstan’s problems today.

That said, the 1993 and 2007 surveys suggest that support for particular elements fundamental to a democracy—particularly free speech and freedom of the press—did grow in importance in the intervening years, perhaps in response to the persecution and constant pressure evident in both countries. Whereas in 1993, for example, fewer than 40 percent of all respondents in Kazakhstan, and fewer than half in Uzbekistan (47%), believed that securing free press and free speech ranked among the most important challenges facing their countries, by 2007, these proportions had grown to about two-thirds of all respondents in both countries (66% in Uzbekistan, and 67% in Kazakhstan). The distribution of answers was practically the same in both countries.

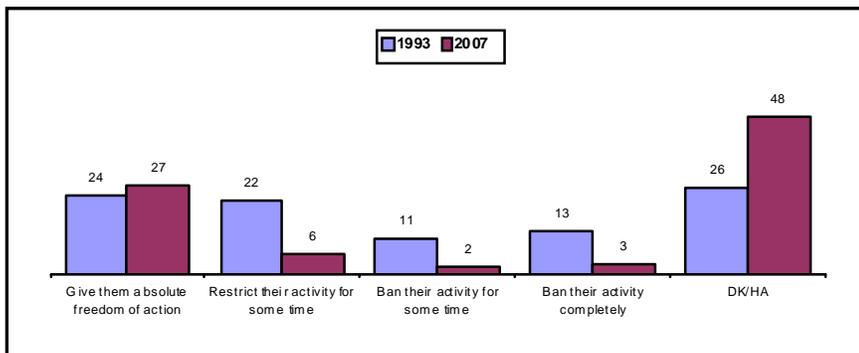
Tolerance of opposition views also grew, although it remained more muted than freedoms of the press and speech, particularly in Uzbekistan. In 1993, when asked how the government should treat opposition parties, about one-fourth of respondents in both countries believed opposition groups should be provided more freedom of action. By 2007, as illustrated in Table 2, the level of tolerance grew slightly. Most notable in Uzbekistan, however, was the fact that many more respondents found it difficult even to answer the question: the proportion of respondents

who could not answer this question almost doubled, from 26% to 48% of respondents (Q. 53)

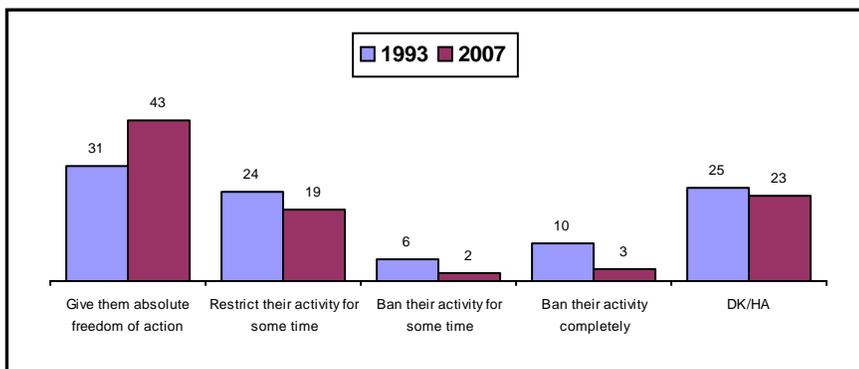
Perhaps this is due, at least in part, to the fact that the parties or movements that stood in real opposition to the Uzbekistani government in the 1990s had been forced out of the political arena—i.e., some had emigrated, while others had been imprisoned or persecuted by law-enforcement agencies; by 2007, there was no overt or powerful opposition in Uzbekistan, making it difficult for most respondents to answer this question. Despite this situation, the share of those who believed that the opposition should be given absolute freedom of action had slightly increased.

Table 2: How should the Uzbek government, in your opinion, build its relationship with the opposition parties and movements?

Uzbekistan



Kazakhstan



Overall, the data suggest that the notion of democracy, and perhaps notions of other systems of government, remain somewhat idealized in Central Asia. Responses suggest that the sense of fairness and the need for “decency” is quite high, but the particulars of a democratic system are poorly understood. Most important to our respondents are questions of maintaining order and stability in the wake of political and economic disruption in the early years, and in later years as well.

ECONOMIC REFORM

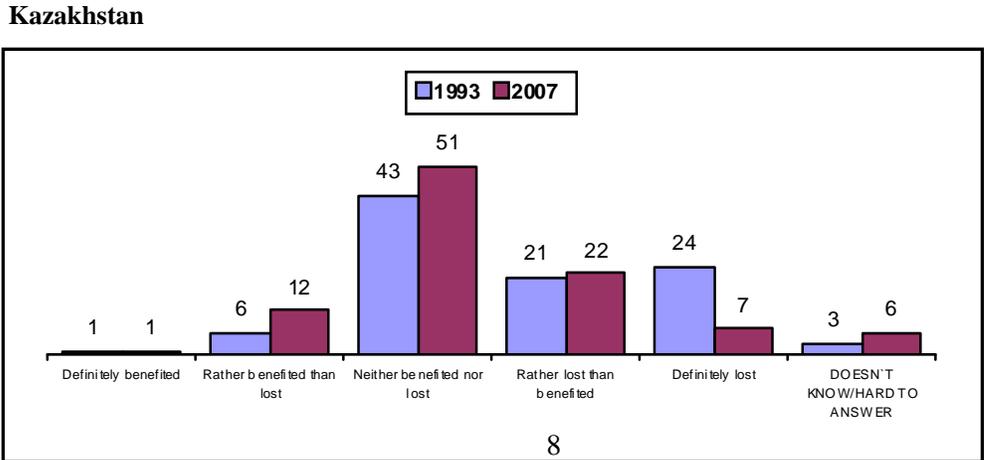
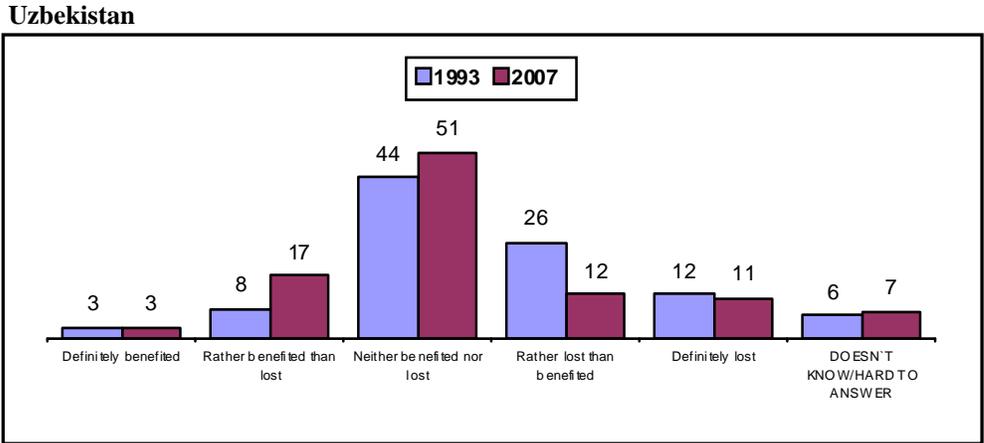
Responses to a range of questions on economic reform, in both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, were similarly mixed. When asked to rate the overall economic situation in their country, for example, few respondents in both countries, in both 1993 and 2007, stated that the economic situation in their respective countries is “very good.” But the population’s general evaluation of the economic situation in Kazakhstan changed significantly from 1993-2007, while it changed little in Uzbekistan. The proportion of respondents in Kazakhstan who stated the economic situation in their country is “sufficiently good” grew from 29% of respondents in 1993, to 66% in 2007; in 2007, almost three-fourths (72%) of Kazakhstani respondents stated the economic situation is “very good” or “sufficiently good,” vs. less than one-third (31%) in 1993. In Uzbekistan, the proportion of respondents who stated the economic situation was sufficiently good remained roughly the same (i.e., growing from 54% to only 56%)—but so, too, did the proportion of those who believed the economic situation remained “bad” or “very bad,” which remained at roughly 1/3 of all respondents, (i.e., 35% in 1993 and 31% in 2007).

At the same time, far fewer respondents in both countries stated that their own personal situations had changed significantly over this period of time. In the 1993 survey, most respondents

believed their quality of life had declined in the short time since independence and economic reform became a government slogan: only seven percent of respondents in Kazakhstan believed they had personally gained from economic reforms, while six times as many or nearly half (45%) said they had lost. In Uzbekistan, one-tenth of all respondents said they had gained, while nearly four times as many, or almost two-fifths of all respondents, said they had lost.

As illustrated in table 3, by 2007, this picture had improved. But a higher proportion—now, slightly more than half of respondents—stated that they had seen little change in their personal situation; and despite substantial economic growth in both countries in the years leading up to the survey, a significant proportion of respondents still felt they had lost ground. In Kazakhstan, 13% said they had gained, while over twice as many, or 29%, felt they had lost; in Uzbekistan, 20% said they had benefited, while 23% stated they had lost.

Table 3: Have you, personally, benefited, or lost from the implemented economic reforms?



In both 1993 and 2007, the vast majority of respondents in both countries named high unemployment, high prices, and economic hardship among the population as a whole as the most important problems facing their countries at that time.

Attitudes towards particular features of market reform, however, seemed to remain ambivalent. By 2007, almost 90% of respondents in both countries (89% in Uzbekistan and 88% in Kazakhstan), believed that establishing government control over prices was one of the three most important challenges facing their respective countries; this marked a sharp increase in this response in Kazakhstan in comparison to 1993 (76%), and the same percentage in Uzbekistan, where this response had remained consistently high.

At the same time, the proportion of those favoring the “introduction of private ownership of land with the right to buy and sell” grew in Uzbekistan (from 39%-46% of respondents), and more significantly in Kazakhstan (from 45 to 67% of respondents). The difference between countries can be partly explained by the fact that private land ownership was already legalized in Kazakhstan by 2007, while in Uzbekistan this type of ownership was still under discussion and some saw tentative steps in this direction.

CORRUPTION

Both surveys demonstrated how deeply systemic, and systematized, issues of corruption have remained in Central Asia over the past fifteen years—and how corruption has only become deeper and more widespread. In 1993, for example, more than two-thirds of respondents in Uzbekistan—and about 70% in Kazakhstan—believed that “without bribes, it is virtually impossible to resolve anything in a timely manner.” By 2007, these percentages—already high—had grown to about 70% in Uzbekistan, and a dramatic 82% in Kazakhstan.

Likewise, when asked to rate the level of corruption in their country over the past two decades on a scale of 1 to 5, (5 being “a maximum level” of corruption), the preponderance of respondents in both countries believed it has been getting progressively worse. In Kazakhstan, for example, well over half of respondents (54%) said that the level of corruption was at a maximum level in the 2001-2006 period and another 14% said it was close to that. About 38% said it was at that level in 1996-2000; fewer still, (23%) in the 1991-95 period; and only 11.3% believe corruption was very high in the 1986-1990 period just before independence, while about one-fourth could not answer.

In Uzbekistan, perceptions were similar: well over one-third of respondents said that the level of corruption was at a “maximum level” in the 2001-2006 period; one-fourth said it was at that level in 1996-2000; fewer still, in the 1991-95 period; and most believe the level of corruption was relatively low in the 1986-1990 period just before independence, although a higher proportion (about half) of respondents could not answer the question for this time period.

Few sectors remained untouched by the growth of corruption, according to 2007 respondents. In the opinion of the Kazakhstani respondents, corruption had significantly increased in almost all the organizations and institutions named in the survey during the intervening fifteen years. This was especially pronounced regarding educational institutions (both schools and institutes of higher learning), hospitals, and the government, including law enforcement and the courts. In Uzbekistan, responses suggested that corruption/bribe-taking had remained particularly high at hospitals, and had similarly remained steady or worsened in the same sectors as in Kazakhstan.

Despite the concern, respondents showed some ambivalence about the impact of corruption on society. On the one hand, respondents in 2007 were almost unanimous in both

countries that fighting corruption remains one of the highest priorities today. On the other hand, almost one fourth of Kazakhstani respondents agreed with the statement: “If bribes are not too high, corruption doesn’t do much harm,” and 30% found it difficult to answer. Two-thirds of respondents in Uzbekistan agreed with the statement that “unofficial payments help achieve necessary results sooner;” and 40% of respondents agreed with the statement: “Unofficial payments help solve some disputes in a fair and honest way.”

ISLAM

In the early 1990s, our survey suggested that Islam was one of the strongest sources of identity and sense of belonging among Central Asians in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. But a long history of successive political regimes either forbidding or co-opting religious teaching and practice in this region meant that personal understanding of Islam was limited; Islam was viewed more in traditional and cultural terms than in religious ones.

Thus, the 1993 survey results suggested a good deal of ignorance of, and ambivalence toward, Islam among respondents in both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, reflected in both the views they expressed, and the ways in which they described their own behavior. Although most respondents identified themselves as “Muslim”, understanding of Islamic doctrine remained limited or distorted; and even among those who promulgated a political Islam (such as creation of an Islamic state), this, too, appeared to have little content.

Results of the 2007 survey showed an increase in the number of ‘nominal’ Muslims in both countries in the last 15 years, as one Uzbek sociologist put it, but a decrease in the ‘actual’ religiosity of respondents. Greater numbers of respondents identified themselves as ‘Muslim’; but respondents’ understanding of Islam still remained relatively superficial, and adherence to

some Islamic practices declined noticeably relative to 1993.

In the 1993 survey, for example, 43% of Kazakhstani respondents, and 52% of Uzbekistani respondents, replied in the affirmative when asked “Do you consider yourself a believer?” Of these believers, 24% of respondents in Kazakhstan, and 46% of respondents in Uzbekistan, professed belief in Islam.

By 2007, the proportion of believers had risen dramatically in both countries, to almost three-fourths of respondents in Kazakhstan, and to 93% in Uzbekistan. Of these, almost double the 1993 percentages stated that they practice Islam—i.e., about 46% of believers in Kazakhstan professed adherence to Islam, and about 87% of believers in Uzbekistan.

The age and regional distribution likewise had changed dramatically by 2007, as numbers grew in every category, and disparities narrowed. The 1993 survey, for example, suggested that adherence to Islam was weaker among the younger generations. In Uzbekistan, for example, roughly 39% of the 18-29 year olds in the 1993 survey considered themselves Muslim believers, vs. 47% of the 50-59 year olds and 2/3 of the respondents over 60. By 2007, over 90% of every age category said they consider themselves religious, of which over 80% of every age category said they practice Islam, except for the age group over 60 years old (where the percentage was 70%).

Regional variations also narrowed. Whereas adherence to Islam in 1993 was strongest in the Fergana Valley than in other parts of these two countries, moreover, by 2007, over 80% of the populations in *all* regions of Uzbekistan stated they practice Islam except for Tashkent oblast’ (78%), Tashkent city (64%), and Kashkadarya` province (77%). The highest proportions of Muslim believers were located not only in the Fergana Valley (Andijan, Namangan, Fergana provinces), at 92% of respondents, but also in Samarqand and Djizzak oblasts (93%), and Bukhara

and Navoi oblasts (91%).

Despite the significant growth in the number of Muslim “believers,” however, religious observance in Uzbekistan declined, while it grew among Kazakhstan’s Muslim communities, but from a lower base. By 2007, differences between the two countries in the level of understanding and adherence to the main pillars of Islam had narrowed.

In 1993, for example, almost one-third of respondents in Uzbekistan who identified themselves as practicing Muslims—and about two-thirds of the self-proclaimed practicing Muslims in the Kazakhstani survey—could not translate the sentence, “There is no God other than Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet” from the Arabic, or they gave the wrong translation. (Indeed, nearly 20% of the Kazakhstani respondents who said they are practicing Muslims also said they disagree with this statement, which is a fundamental tenet of Islam). By 2007, in both countries, about 40% of respondents who considered themselves Muslims could not give the correct translation. Even after having translated the phrase, moreover, some of the Muslim respondents (particularly in Kazakhstan, but also in Uzbekistan) again did not agree with it.

In terms of rituals, in 2007, more than two-thirds (68%) of Kazakhstani respondents who said they are Muslim believers also said they do not pray at all, and more than half said they do not fast. In Uzbekistan, responses suggested slightly more adherence to ritual, but adherence was down significantly from 1993. In 1993, for example, about one-third of Uzbekistani respondents who said they are Muslim believers said they pray 1-5 times/day; around 20% said they pray occasionally, and 44%, not at all. Likewise, roughly one-third of those who said they are religious Muslims said they fast regularly, one-third did sometimes, and one-third said they do not fast at all. By 2007, around two-thirds of respondents in Uzbekistan who said they are Muslim believers said they do not pray at all, and only about 20% said they pray 1-5 times/day; over 40% said they do

not fast. (Tables 4-5)

Table 4: Do you consider yourself religious?

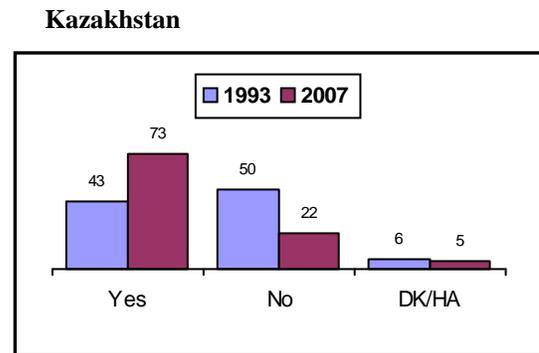
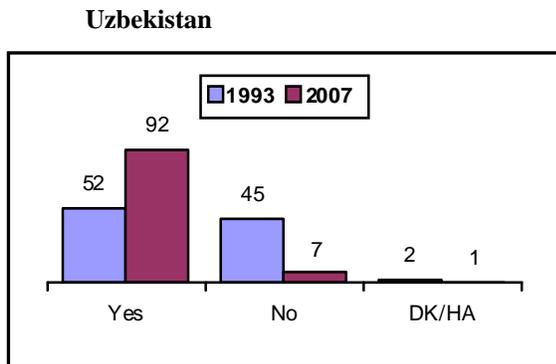
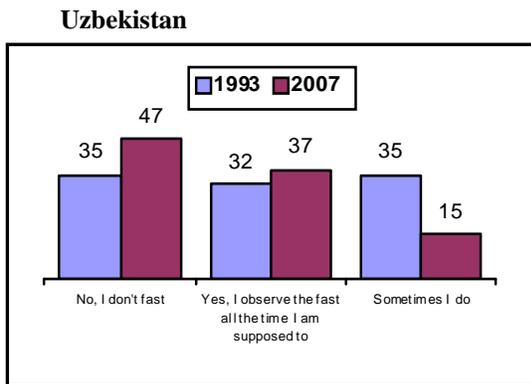


Table 5: Do you fast, and if yes, do you observe the fast all the time you are supposed to?



ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Despite the vast array of serious environmental challenges throughout Central Asia, and their enormous impact on the health and economic livelihood of all of Central Asia’s citizens, the 1993 survey suggested that they remained a low policy priority among citizens in both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. To be sure, about 80% of respondents in both countries included environmental protection among the most important challenges facing their country. At the same time, however, in 1993, most respondents believed that in the areas where they lived, the environment was not very dangerous for themselves or their families. And even in the most environmentally degraded

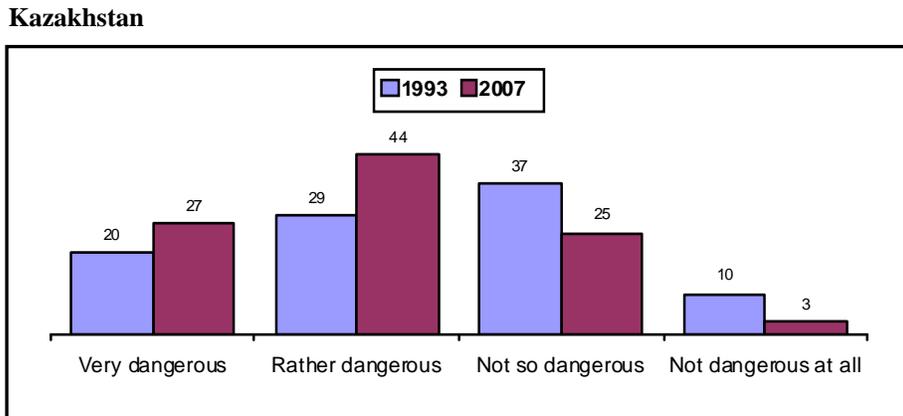
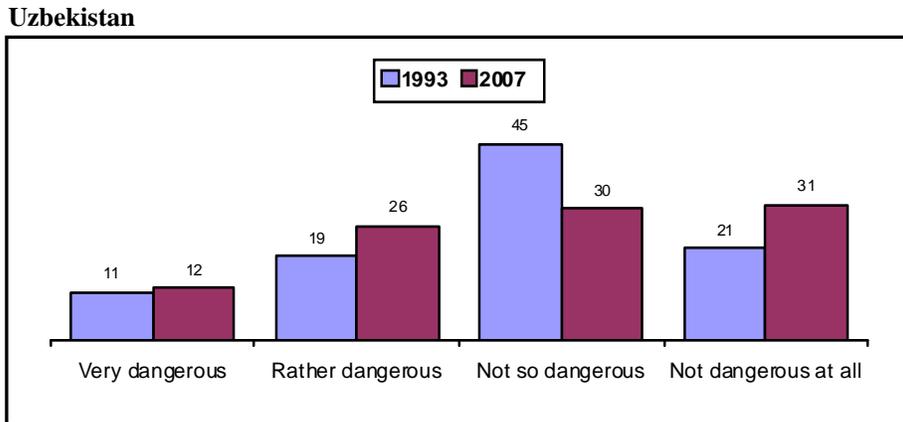
areas (such as the Aral Sea region in both countries), few individuals named environmental issues as a top policy priority, and fewer still were willing to make any economic trade-offs to change that situation. (These responses contrasted markedly with a similar survey we conducted in Russia).

By 2007, the environmental situation in many areas of our survey had only worsened. But while attitudes had shifted accordingly in Kazakhstan since the early 1990s, the survey showed little attitudinal change among Uzbekistan's respondents. In 1993, about 80% of respondents in both countries named environmental protection as among the most important challenges to be addressed in their respective countries; by 2007, this had increased to 92% in Kazakhstan, but remained unchanged in Uzbekistan.

The difference in attitudes between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstani respondents was particularly pronounced with regard to perceptions of how environmental issues affect their own families. When Kazakhstani respondents were asked, in 1993, how dangerous—or not dangerous—is the environmental situation in their area for their own health and the health of their family, respondents were relatively evenly split—49% vs. 47%—between those who believed the environment was endangering their own families, and those who felt otherwise. By 2007, public opinion had shifted dramatically: 71% said the environmental situation in their area was dangerous for themselves and their families, while only 28% felt otherwise.

In Uzbekistan, on the other hand, opinions barely changed over the 15-year period: in 1993, 38% of respondents believed that the environmental situation in their area of residence is dangerous for their own health and for the health of their families, while 62% believed it is not so dangerous or not dangerous at all. In 2007, 30% felt it was dangerous, vs. 66% who felt it was not. (Table 6)

Table 6: How dangerous, or not dangerous, in your opinion, is the environmental situation in your area for your own health and for the health of your family?



Finally, respondents were asked how specific environmental problems affect their own health and the health of their family members—i.e., whether they have a significant effect, a not-so-significant effect, or do not affect them at all. The environmental factors included such varied problems as drinking water pollution, air pollution, global warming, acid rain, radioactive contamination of residential areas, the drying-up of rivers, seas, and lakes, the deterioration of land quality, shrinking of forest areas, death and disease of animals and birds, and ozone holes.

In 1993, the level of concern over these environmental problems was roughly the same in both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. By 2007, however, in virtually all cases in Uzbekistan, concern

had declined sharply regarding virtually all of these environmental problems, while in Kazakhstan, in all cases, the level of concern had grown significantly. (See Appendix A)

In part, this may be due to the greater economic growth in Kazakhstan that had made its population more sensitive to issues of environmental protection, and some decline in industrial pollution in Uzbekistan;⁴ the severity of other social and economic issues in Uzbekistan; and the differences in media attention to environmental problems in these two countries. In the early 1990's, for example, Uzbekistani media outlets gave extensive coverage to environmental problems—most often politically motivated—including discussions of intense pesticide and herbicide application in agriculture, the drying-up of the Aral Sea, and other serious environmental challenges. But by 2007, media attention to these issues had become more muted. By 2007, despite the fact that serious environmental challenges remained, the public appeared to lose much of the interest it had held a decade before; at the same time, Kazakhstani population's concern over environmental problems continued to grow.

VIEWS OF ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

With both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan facing a litany of political, economic, and social challenges in the early 1990s, the ambivalence among respondents in both countries toward foreign assistance in 1993 was striking. When respondents were asked whether their country should turn to other countries to help solve its economic and environmental problems, respondents in both countries were split: about half the respondents in Uzbekistan said no, while 40% said yes;

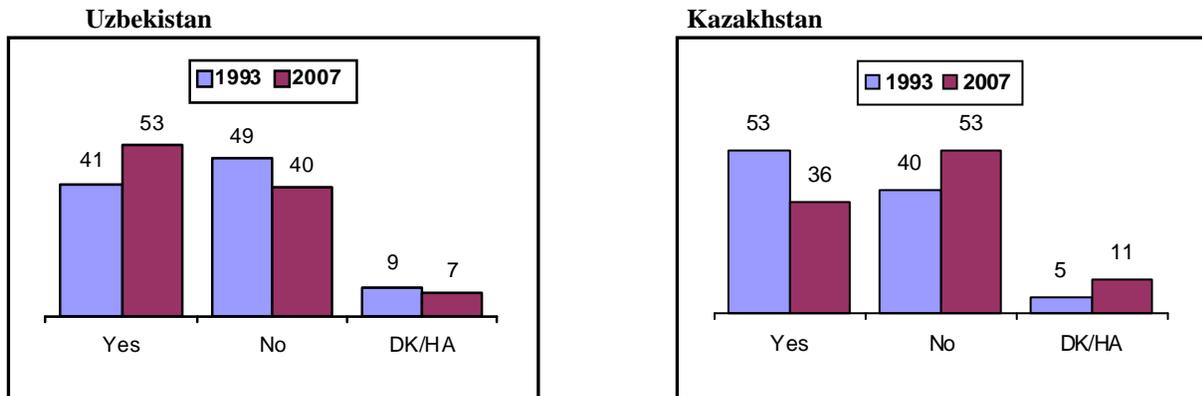
⁴ By 2007, aside from a major chemical factory in Kashkadaria and an aluminum factory in Tajikistan that also polluted territory in Uzbekistan, many large industrial factories in Uzbekistan had gone bankrupt or seen a significant decline in production relative to 1993. Likewise, because of the high cost, use of chemicals in agriculture, including use of fertilizer, had also declined dramatically relative to 1993, as many farmers were replacing fertilizers with manure. As two-thirds of Uzbekistan's population lives in rural areas, this had a significant impact on survey responses.

in Kazakhstan, these proportions were reversed.

Fifteen years later, the challenges confronting the citizens of these countries were no less daunting, and responses were no less ambivalent. But this time, in 2007, these proportions were reversed again: In Uzbekistan, 40% of respondents now said no, and 53% said yes, whereas in Kazakhstan, 53% said no, and 36%, yes.

In other words, about 12% more respondents in Uzbekistan now believed that their country should ask other countries for assistance, while in Kazakhstan, on the contrary, 17% fewer respondents supported foreign assistance than in 1993. A main reason, of course, was the significant difference in economic performance in these two countries: according to IMF data, in 2006 per-capita GDP was \$9,294 in Kazakhstan and only \$2,283 in Uzbekistan. But particularly in light of the political climate at that time, other factors were also at work.

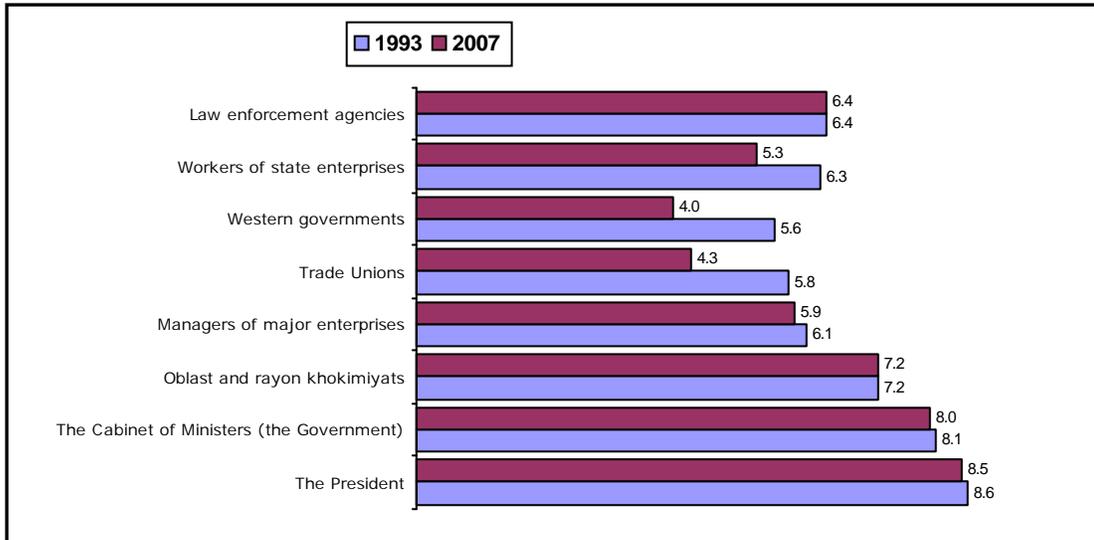
Table 7: Do you think this country should ask other countries for assistance in solving its economic and other problems?



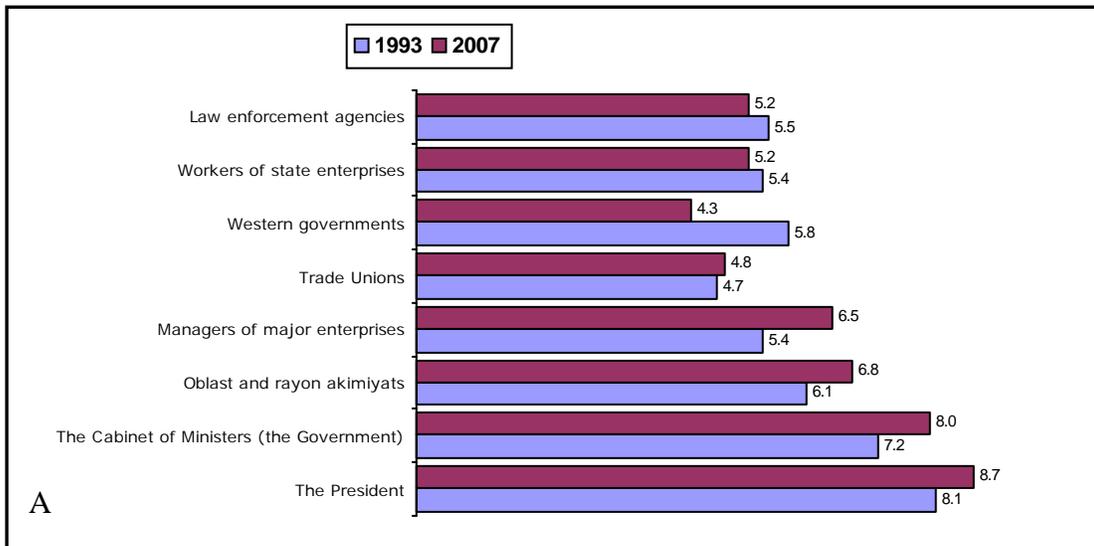
In 1993 and 2007, one of the main reasons for the negative responses was the confidence many respondents felt that “we can do it ourselves.” This sentiment is echoed in Table 8 where—and in both 1993 and 2007—Western governments were increasingly perceived in both countries as among the least-helpful actors in promoting market reform.

Table 8: Evaluate on a 9-point scale how the activities of the following people and organizations help or inhibit the carrying out of market reforms in the republic. "1" means they significantly inhibit reform, and "9," significantly help.

Uzbekistan



Kazakhstan



Among respondents in both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan who supported international assistance, the choice of countries in 1993 from which assistance would be most welcome was relatively uniform. The vast majority of respondents favored receiving assistance from Europe,

Japan, the US, and Russia (in that order), over Turkey, “Muslim countries,” China, and Arab countries.

Yet by 2007, when it came to rating their performance, respondents’ rankings of donor countries had changed significantly. The 2007 survey asked which countries have already provided assistance to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and then asked respondents to evaluate that assistance on a 7-point scale, (where “1” means the most valuable assistance, and “7,” the least valuable). Russian assistance was named “most valuable” by an overwhelming percentage of respondents: about half (49%) assigned Russian assistance a “1,” and another 10%, a level “2.”

Despite high expectations in 1993, on the other hand, fewer than 5% of respondents gave the US a level “1”, and only 15%, a level “2.” Japan received a similar assessment (5% and 13%), and China scored likewise (7% and 14%). The UK, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan were at the bottom of the list, each receiving somewhere between 2 and 6% for the two levels combined, and many respondents were unaware that they had provided any assistance in the first place.

Part of these responses is attributable to the deterioration in relations between Uzbekistan and Western countries, particularly the US, in the two years preceding the survey. But judging from other questions in the survey, Uzbekistani respondents still viewed the US favorably at that time,⁵ and similar rankings of countries providing foreign assistance emerged from respondents in Kazakhstan as well. For example, about 40% of Kazakhstani respondents gave Russian assistance a level “1,” and more than 10% a level “2,” while they accorded the US roughly the same scores as Uzbekistani respondents had (i.e., 7% and 13%). In both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, 12-14% of respondents believed the US hadn’t provided any assistance in the first place, and about one-third of respondents selected “don’t know/ hard to answer.”

The 2007 survey included several additional questions not asked in 1993 to assess respondents' views of Western, and particularly US, assistance over the previous 15 years. These included the spheres in which respondents would like to receive more US aid in the future, and which individuals or institutions should be the recipient of that aid.

As shown in Table 10, the response rate to the first question was quite high relative to most other questions in the survey. Public support was highest for foreign assistance in public health, and noticeably low for assistance in support of democracy-building and women's rights, with little variation in answers by gender and age group. A slightly higher proportion of women ranked public health and economic development assistance in the highest level (level 1), and respondents in their 40s were most opposed to economic development assistance relative to both older and younger age groups.

There was little variation by gender or age in all responses regarding democracy-building programs, although the percentage of those choosing level 1 (already extremely small), was slightly higher among respondents in the younger age groups. Perhaps most interesting was the lack of variation in responses among male and female respondents regarding assistance in promoting women's rights / possibilities, where only 1-3% of respondents named this among the most valuable areas for assistance, and about one-third of female respondents in both countries included this among the "least valuable" areas for assistance. (Table 9)

⁵ When asked their opinion of the US in the 2007 survey, for example, well over half (56%) viewed the US in favorable terms (i.e., "very favorable" or "quite favorable"), while 28.6% of respondents' opinions of the US were "unfavorable" or "quite unfavorable." 15% found it difficult to answer. (Q 63)

Table 9: In which spheres would you like Uzbekistan/Kazakhstan to receive US assistance in the future? Evaluate these spheres on a 6-point scale, where “1” means the most valuable assistance and “6” means the least valuable assistance. (In percent of total respondents)

Sphere of Assistance	Level 1	Level 2	Middle ground: Levels 3-5		Level 6	Shouldn't Accept Assistance from the US	Don't know/ Hard to answer
<u>Economic Development</u>							
Uzbekistan	22	10	24		1.7	28.1	14
Kazakhstan	12.8	11.4	31		8.6	23.4	12.7
<u>Public Health</u>							
Uzbekistan	20.5	21.8	43		0.5		14
Kazakhstan	27.6	17.8	40		1.5		12.8
<u>Education</u>							
Uzbekistan	7	15.1	61		1.1		15
Kazakhstan	10.1	19.1	40		1.7		13
<u>Support of Democracy</u>							
Uzbekistan	1.8	4.7	65		10.7		17.8
Kazakhstan	1.9	2.6	60		21.2		13.3
<u>Natural disasters/ humanitarian</u>							
Uzbekistan	7.1	4.8	62		7.9		18.5
Kazakhstan	8.8	8.9	63		6.4		13
<u>Women's rights/ possibilities</u>							
Uzbekistan	0.8	2.1	47		30.4		19.6
Kazakhstan	2.6	3.5	56		24.2		13.4

Finally, the 2007 survey included a question regarding the most effective recipient of US assistance in their respective countries. In Uzbekistan, about half of respondents said that the US should deliver its assistance directly to the people of Uzbekistan; about 6%, directly to the Uzbekistani government; about 5%, directly to Uzbek businesses and banks. One fourth of respondents said “The US should cut any assistance to Uzbekistan and leave this country.” Only fifteen percent did not answer.

In Kazakhstan, 42% of all respondents said that US should deliver its assistance directly to the people of Kazakhstan; 3.5%, directly to the Kazakhstani government; about 11.5%, directly to Kazakhstani businesses and banks. More than one-fourth (27%) of respondents said, “The US

should cut any assistance to Kazakhstan and leave this country.” Only sixteen percent did not answer.

CONCLUSION

Public opinion surveys in Central Asia have tended to be single snapshots in time, rarely repeated after a significant interlude. The data above represent a short summary of the kinds of findings that emerged from two almost identical surveys taken about 15 years apart. As the data continue to be mined, we hope they will complement other studies within the scholarly community, and contribute to filling the large gaps in our ability to assess trends and changes over time.

It is also hoped that the results may prove useful to the US policymaking and donor communities seeking to strengthen ties; encourage the development of civil society; improve the U.S. image; and raise the effectiveness of U.S. assistance in this part of the world. U.S. policy, and especially U.S. assistance, was at least initially predicated on assumptions of public attitudes that have increasingly been brought into question. In the six years leading up to planning the 2007 survey, for example, over \$600 million in aid to these two countries alone had been reported to the State Department by US government agencies tasked with administering those funds. Roughly one-half to two-thirds of those funds were targeted towards promoting democratic and economic reform and change in the social and environmental sectors. Yet over the same time period, many in the donor community began to reevaluate their underlying assumptions in light of uneven—and, in the words of some donors, often troubling—results of many donor programs.

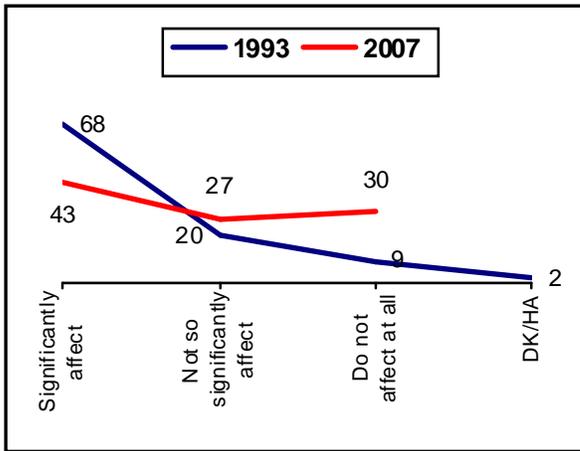
While public attitudes are certainly not the only factor affecting the outcomes of international aid, it is hoped that the results of these kinds of surveys can provide useful input for

reassessing US policy and assistance programs -- as well as re-shaping individual programs and initiatives -- so that they are more attuned to the public and societies they are intended to impact.

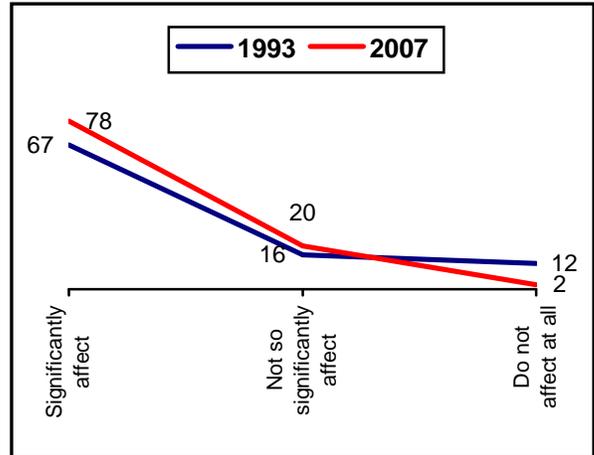
Appendix A: How do the following phenomena affect your health and the health of your family members: significantly affect, not so significantly affect, or do not affect at all?

DRINKING WATER POLLUTION

Uzbekistan

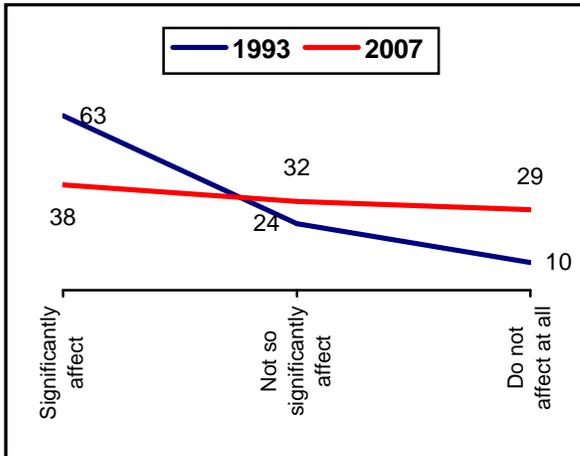


Kazakhstan

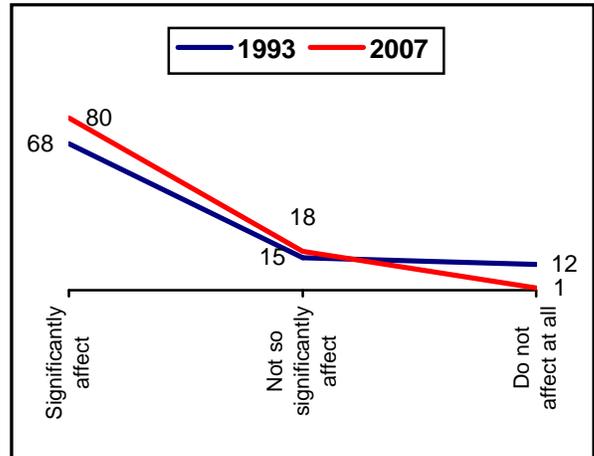


AIR POLLUTION

Uzbekistan

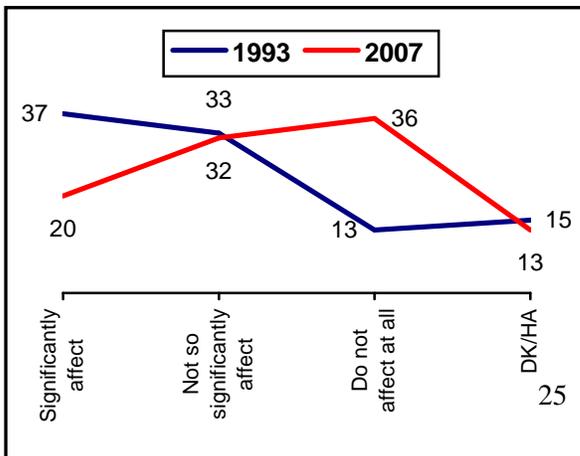


Kazakhstan

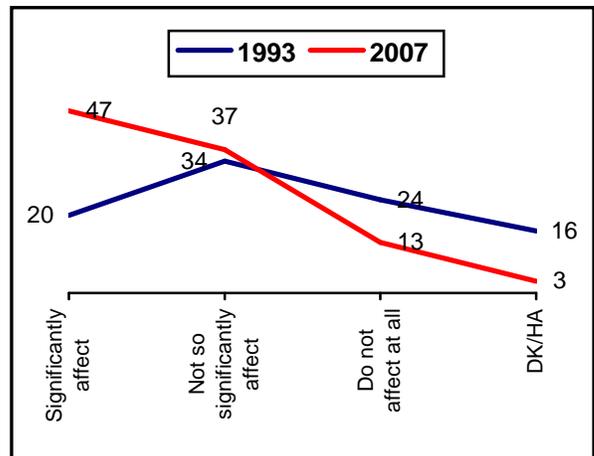


GLOBAL WARMING OF THE WHOLE PLANET

Uzbekistan

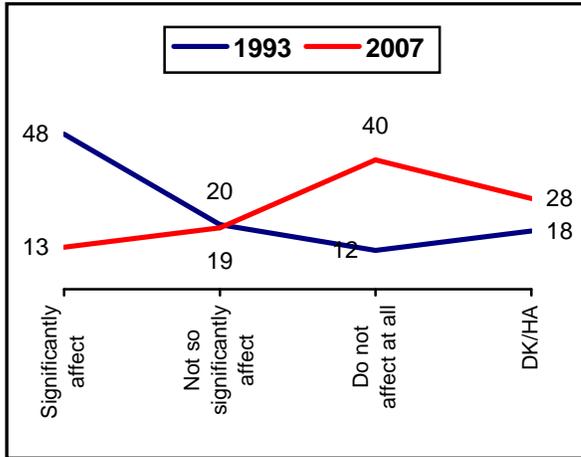


Kazakhstan

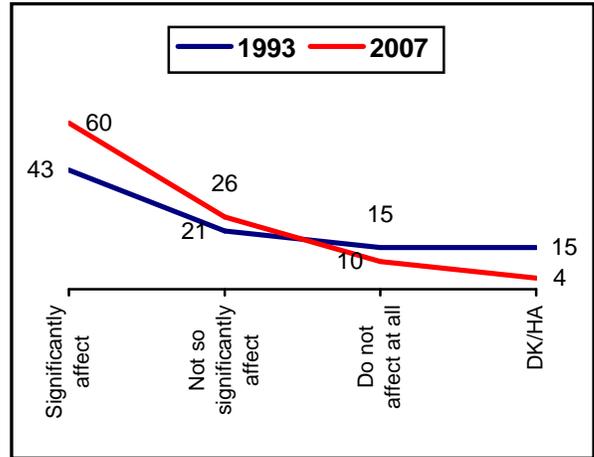


ACID RAIN

Uzbekistan

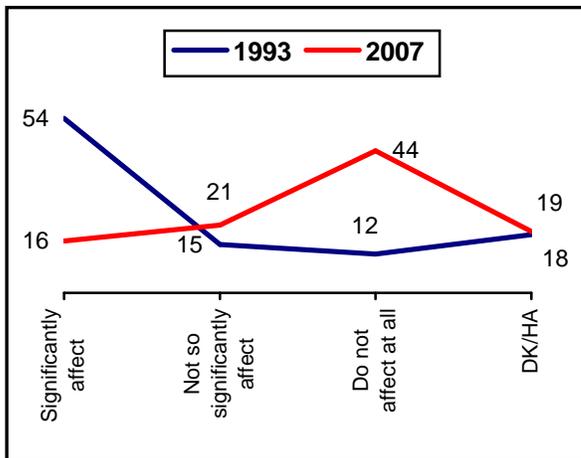


Kazakhstan

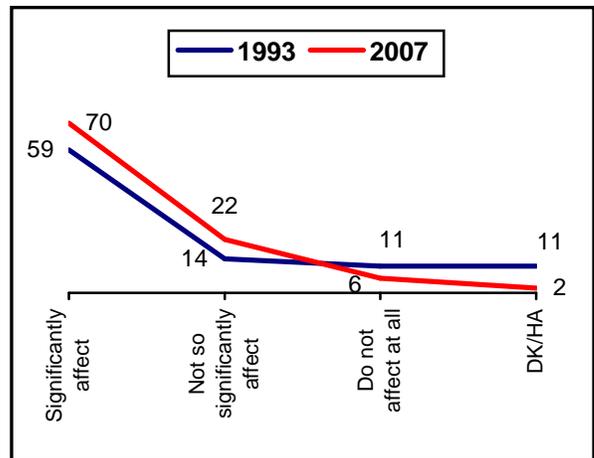


RADIOACTIVE CONTAMINATION OF PEOPLE'S RESIDING AREAS

Uzbekistan

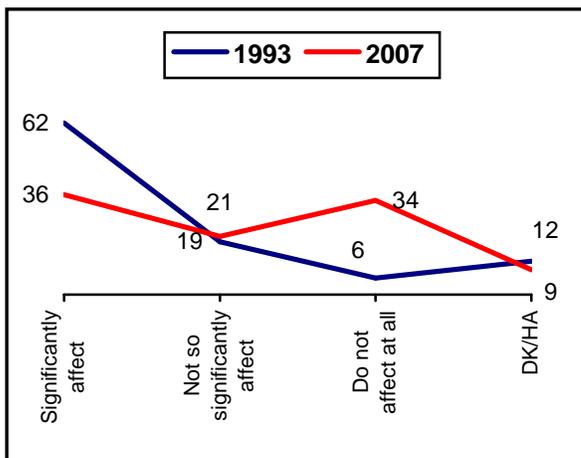


Kazakhstan

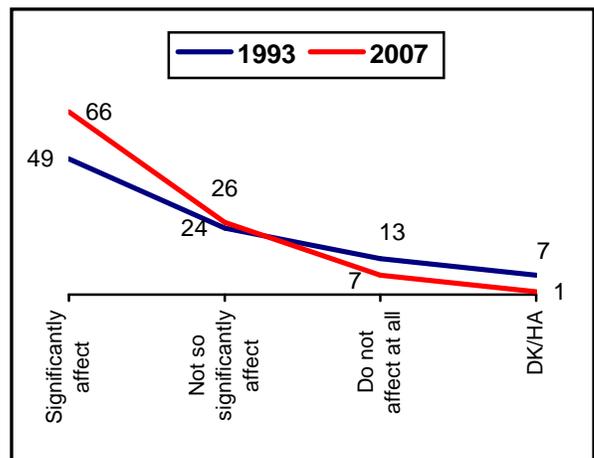


DRYING-UP OF RIVERS, SEAS AND LAKES

Uzbekistan

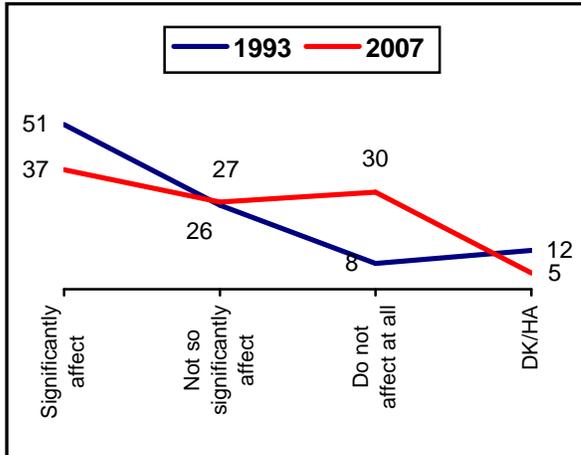


Kazakhstan

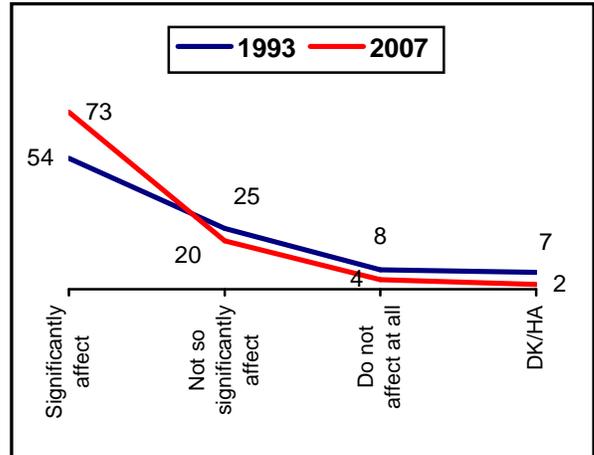


DETERIORATION OF THE QUALITY OF LANDS

Uzbekistan

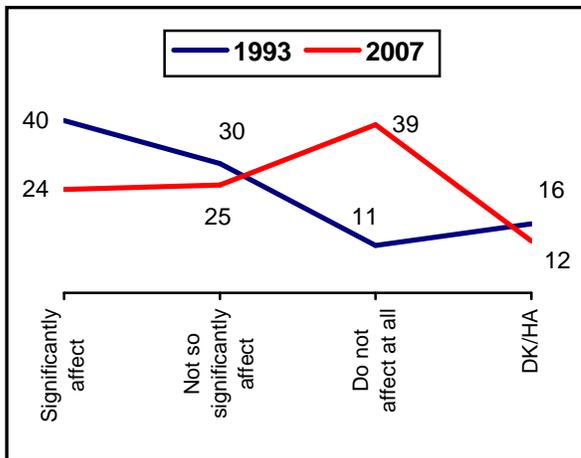


Kazakhstan

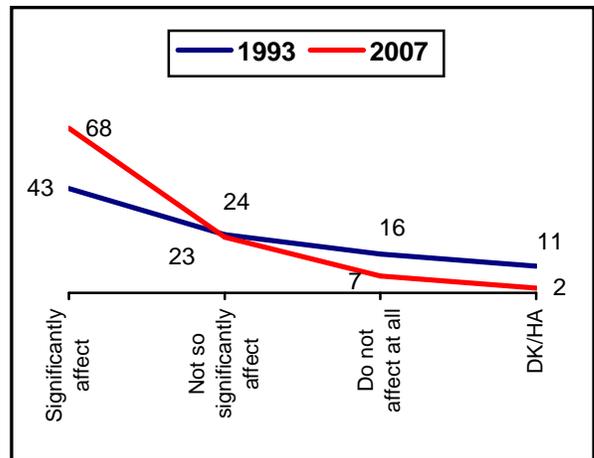


SHRINKING OF FOREST AREAS

Uzbekistan

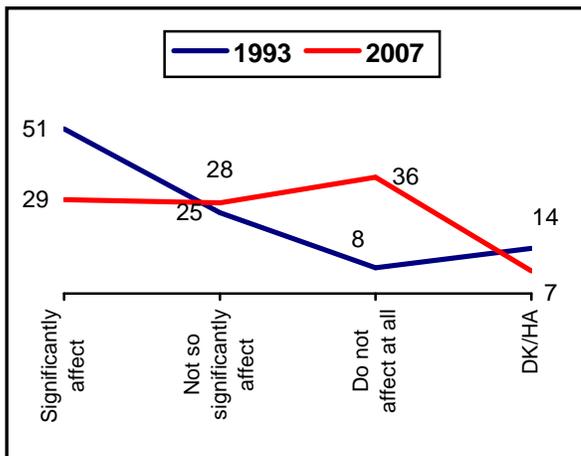


Kazakhstan

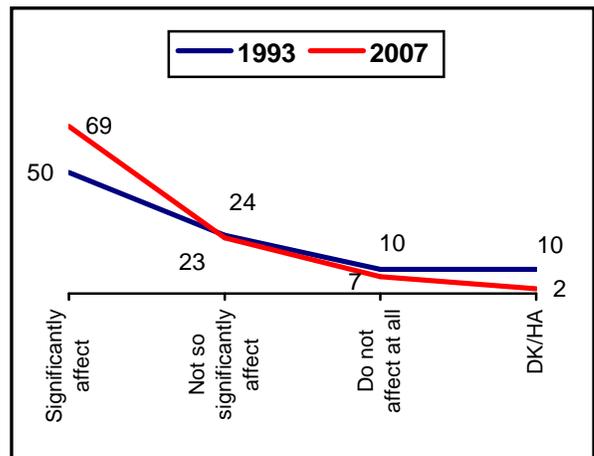


DEATH AND DISEASE OF ANIMALS AND BIRDS

Uzbekistan

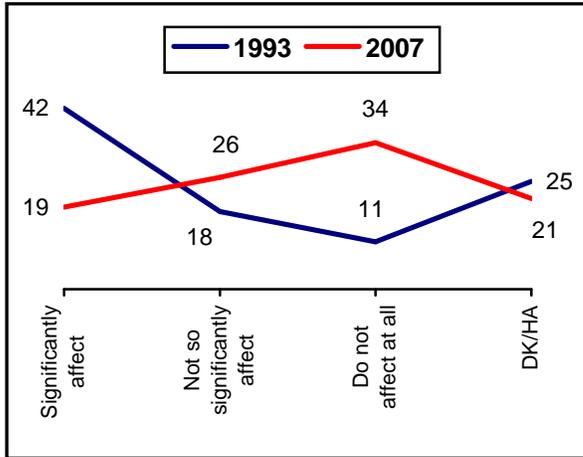


Kazakhstan



OZONE HOLES

Uzbekistan



Kazakhstan

