



PUBLIC OPINION IN TAJIKISTAN 2004

**Findings from a Survey Conducted by
IFES**

**With Funding Provided by
USAID**



PUBLIC ASSESSMENT OF THE SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

- More Tajikistanis are satisfied with the state of their country than in 1996. A majority of Tajikistanis (65%) say they are satisfied with the overall situation in the country. By contrast, in 1996, only a quarter (26%) were satisfied while a majority (67%) were dissatisfied. This increase in satisfaction is largely due to the improvement of peace and order in the Republic.
- Tajikistanis are more likely to say life is good than in 1996. A majority of Tajikistanis rate their quality of life as either as very or somewhat good (68%). In 1996, significantly fewer (39%) described their quality of life as good.
- A majority of six in ten (60%) Tajikistanis say the current economic situation in the country is good or very good. A similar percent (64%) rate their own household's economic situation favorably. In 1996, fewer than two in ten (14%) thought the economic situation of Tajikistan was good.
- Yet a large percentage of Tajikistanis are only meeting their basic needs. A majority of Tajikistanis either are not able to meet basic food requirements daily or barely meet these needs. Only ten% of the population say their household has enough money left over after meeting basic needs that they can save money.
- Tajikistanis are hopeful about the future economic situation in the country. Six in ten (60%) Tajikistanis think the economic situation in Tajikistan will be better in twelve months—few (2%) think it will be worse.
- Support for a market-based economy has increased since 1996 but still finds only minority support. A little more than a third (36%) of Tajikistanis prefer a market-based economic system with limited state control. An economic system where the state has full control is preferable to half of Tajikistanis (50%). In 1996, 26% preferred a market system while 60% favored a state-control system.
- A solid majority of Tajikistanis (73%) are satisfied with the process of national reconciliation. Slimmer majorities are satisfied with the fight against narcotics abuse and trafficking (56%), the electoral system (55%), or the quality of education (51%).
- Dissatisfaction among Tajikistanis ranks the highest when it comes to the fight against corruption (56%), the quality of health care in the country (55%), or the quality of water (51%).

ATTITUDES TOWARD POLITICS, ELECTIONS, AND DEMOCRACY

- Interest in politics has decreased somewhat since 1996. Only a little more than a third of Tajikistanis (36%) express at least moderate interest in politics compared to 42% in 1996.



- More than half of Tajikistanis are uninformed about the political (57%) and economic (59%) situation in the country. Only roughly four in ten say that they have at least a fair amount of information on the economic (38%) or political situation (39%). Levels of information are up from 1996 when fewer than two in ten were aware of economic (15%) or political developments (13%).
- But lack of knowledge does not mean lack of interest. A majority of Tajikistanis say that they have discussed politics with their friends or neighbors (76%) or with their spouse or other family members (59%).
- Nor does lack of knowledge translate into complete disengagement. A majority of Tajikistanis (58%) say they have attended at least one community or *mahalla* meeting in the past five years. Forty-three percent of Tajikistanis say they have attended at least one election rally in the past five years. A small minority have signed petitions (15%) or promoted a candidate for political office (14%).
- Turnout in the February elections is likely to be on par with that of the two previous elections. Three quarters of Tajikistanis (75%) say they are very likely to vote in the February parliamentary elections. Similar percentages report having voted in the 1999 presidential elections (77%) or the 2000 parliamentary elections (76%).
- Just fewer than half (47%) expect the upcoming elections to be relatively fair. Only one in ten (11%) think the elections will be more unfair than fair, while more than a third (36%) take a neutral position.
- Nearly two-thirds of all Tajikistanis (64%) and six in ten of those with a high likelihood of voting (60%) say they do not have enough information to make a wise choice.
- Likewise solid majorities (77%) report they have little or no information about the Central Election Commission (CEC) or the new Law on Elections (85%).
- A majority of Tajikistanis (58%) fully believe in the power of voting and think that voting gives people like them influence over decision-making and that officials who are elected are more likely to focus on constituents' concerns.
- By contrast 7% are unconvinced that voting makes a difference in the voice of ordinary people or in responsiveness of officials. Roughly a quarter of Tajikistanis (22%) remain skeptical about the power of voting and agree with one statement but disagree with the other.
- When asked what it means to live in a democratic society, most Tajikistanis cite one of the various freedoms associated with democracy such as freedom of actions, freedom of speech, or equality before the law. Yet more than a third of Tajikistanis could not say what it means to live in a democratic system.



- Among those who are able to articulate what it means to live in a democracy, 66% say that democracy is preferable to any other form of government while fewer than two in ten say that in certain situations, a non-democratic government can be preferable (14%) or to people like me it doesn't matter what form of government we have (17%).
- And among those who know what it means to live in a democracy, three quarters (74%) say Tajikistan is a democracy.

OPINIONS ON INSTITUTIONS AND LEADERS

- Tajikistanis are much more likely to think that the national government can improve their lives than in 1996. More than three quarters (78%) of Tajikistanis say that it is possible that the national government can improve the lives of citizens. In 1996, fewer than half (48%) thought this was possible.
- Tajikistanis see the connection between their lives and government institutions. In contrast to 1996 when half of all Tajikistanis (50%) volunteered that no government institution had an influence on their lives, only a handful (12%) believe that to be true in 2004. Instead, the majority point to the President (60%) as the most influential institution followed by the local city or rayon administration (18%).
- When it comes to trust in specific groups and institutions, majorities have at least a fair amount of trust in the *Majlisi Oli* (71%), Cabinet of Ministers (67%), Imams (61%) or courts (60%). Fewer than half have confidence in people from different regions (47%) or ethnic groups (43%) or the police (42%).
- When evaluating specific political personalities, the president is by far the leader who is most trusted to do what is right for the people. Fifty-eight percent of Tajikistanis said the president is the most trusted followed by leaders at the local level: the chairman of their *Jamoat* (13%), the leader of their *Makhala* (12%), their community or village elders (9%), the hakim of their *wiloyat* (6%), or their deputy to the *Majlisi Oli* (3%).
- While the *Majlisi Oli* might be the most trusted government institution according to a majority of Tajikistanis, only 30% of Tajikistanis can correctly name the deputy who represents them in parliament. And among these only 31% can correctly name the party the deputy represents.
- Representatives to the *Majlisi Oli* do a good job of representing their constituents' views in parliament, according to the majority (58%) of those who can name their deputy to the parliament. Three in ten (29%) of those who can name their deputy to parliament say their deputy does a poor job of representing constituents.



- Knowledge about political parties is low in Tajikistan. None of the six officially registered political parties are known by a majority of Tajikistanis. This is true even of the current ruling party the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan.
- And knowledge of party platforms is low. Tajikistanis who could name at least one party were asked what proportion of parties have clear proposals to address the issues facing Tajikistan. Fewer than two in ten (18%) say that most parties have clear proposals to address issues while three in ten (30%) say that some parties do. However, a majority either say that no political party has clear proposals (17%) or that they do not have enough information to respond (35%).
- The majority of Tajikistanis think party platforms should be concentrating on economic issues. When asked what one issue parties should be concentrating on during the campaign for the parliamentary elections the most frequently cited issuers were employment creation (22%), improvement of the general economic situation (19%) and increasing the standard of living of Tajikistanis (17%).
- And when it comes to choosing a party, Tajikistanis say the party's leader, the party's social welfare policies, the party's economic policies, the party's policy on fighting corruption and the party's protection of migrant workers are major factors for at least four in ten.
- The ruling People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan has the highest level of support in the country overall and also garners more support than any other party in each of Tajikistan's oblasts.
- Party preferences are relatively stable in the lead off to the February elections. The majority of those who name a party as representing their views and interests are unlikely to change their mind in the upcoming parliamentary elections (63%). Twenty percent say they would be open to switching parties and only a handful (7%) say it is very likely they may change their minds.
- Media outlets and personal contacts are key to parties communicating their platform and message to the public. When asked how political parties could best communicate with people in their communities, Tajikistanis often mention media outlets such as TV advertisements and announcements (72%), radio (36%), and newspapers (31%). Personal communications such as public meetings (70%) and door-to-door visits (36%) were also seen to be important.
- Unlike in other post-Soviet republics in which IFES has conducted surveys such as Ukraine and Azerbaijan, as well as countries in other regions, the majority of Tajikistanis believe that parties represent the interests of ordinary people (60%). Fewer than a quarter think parties represent their own interests (24%) or those of other powerful institutions (17%).



OTHER ISSUES

- More Tajikistanis believe that Russia has influence on events inside Tajikistan than any other country (83%). Seventy-six percent believe that Russia's influence on Tajikistan is positive while only 1% believe it is negative. The country mentioned next most often as having influence on Tajikistan is Uzbekistan (36%), however, Tajikistanis are split on whether Uzbekistan has a positive or negative impact on Tajikistan (16% each). Other countries mentioned frequently as having influence on events inside Tajikistan include China (20%), Iran (16%), Afghanistan (14%), and USA (13%).
- When asked to evaluate Tajikistan's relationship with Russia, 95% described it as good and only 1% as bad. Similarly positive evaluations were ascribed to Tajikistan's relationship with Iran (76% good, 1% bad), Kyrgyzstan (76% good, 1% bad), and China (75% good). More negative evaluations are ascribed to Tajikistan's relationship with Uzbekistan (42% good, 27% bad) and Afghanistan (32% good, 20% bad).
- A little more than a quarter of Tajikistanis (26%) say that there are groups in Tajikistan that are causing problems in society today. These respondents mostly name religious groups, regional groups, and political groups as causing these problems.
- Half of all Tajikistanis agree that there is a problem of gender inequality in Tajikistan. Forty-five percent disagree. Women are more likely than men to agree with this statement. Among the areas cited for this inequality are responsibility for housework, access to employment, educational opportunities, involvement in politics, and unequal payment for work.
- Seventy-one percent of Tajikistanis support quotas for women in *Majlisi Oli*. A large majority of both men and women support these quotas for women. When respondents supporting quotas are asked to cite the percentage of seats that should be set aside for women, 23% say that half the seats should be allocated to women while 21% think that between a quarter and half the seats should be allocated.
- A large majority of both men (75%) and women (89%) say that they would be likely to vote for a woman candidate running for political office if the woman was as qualified as a man running for the position. Nearly two-thirds of all Tajikistanis support both quotas for women and are likely to vote for a woman candidate for political office.
- A large majority of Tajikistanis use mass media sources (TV and radio) in both Tajik and Russian for information on events in Tajikistan. Women are less likely to utilize newspapers and magazines than men, and the use of public meetings as well as friends, families, and neighbors as sources of information is higher in areas outside Dushanbe.



- Sixty-five percent of Tajikistanis strongly or somewhat agree that the state-run media in the country provides objective coverage of social and political developments in the country, while 19% disagree with this statement. Sixty-three percent strongly or somewhat agree that the private media in the country provides objective coverage of events.

METHODOLOGY

The fieldwork for this survey was implemented Oct. 24 – Nov. 21, 2004 with a total of 1404 respondents throughout Tajikistan. The sample consisted of a national sample of 1204 respondents, as well as over-samples of 100 respondents in GBAO and 100 respondents of Russian ethnicity. The national-level figures presented in this report is based on weighted data that is representative of the distribution of population in Tajikistan.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Eighty percent of the respondents in the sample are ethnic Tajiks, 15% are ethnic Uzbeks, 1% ethnic Russian, and 4% of other ethnicities. Twenty-two percent of the sample is aged 18-25, 23% 26-35, 25% 36-45, 17% 46-55, and 13% are aged 56 or older. Eight percent of the sample's highest level of educational attainment is primary school or less, a majority (51%) have some or completed secondary education, 20% have technical or specialized secondary education, and 21% have at least some university education. The sample is divided 50-50 between men and women.* Nineteen percent of those interviewed say that they are unemployed, while 24% work full-time, 5% work part-time, and 14% are self-employed. Nearly a quarter (23%) are homemakers.

*It is generally accepted that the proportion of women in Tajikistan is higher than that of men because of migration of men for work abroad. Given the lack of reliable estimates of this proportion, however, IFES decided to use an even split between men and women in this sample. In practical terms, weighting the data to a 54-46 women-men split, for example, would only make a one to two percent difference on national-level frequencies.

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implemented by IFES

Project Funded by USAID





Methodological Details

- Survey fieldwork implemented Oct. 24 to Nov. 21, 2004
- Sample size: 1404
- National sample of 1204 plus over-samples of 100 in GBAO and among ethnic Russians
- Data weighted by region and gender to reflect national distribution of population
- Margin of error for national sample: 2.62% at 95% confidence level
- Languages of Interview: Tajik (65%), Russian (20%), Uzbek (15%)
- Ethnic breakdown of sample: Tajik (80%), Uzbek (15%), Russian (1%), Other (4%)
- Follow-on focus groups conducted in January in Dushanbe, Khujond, Kulyab, and Khorog



Demographic Breakdown of Data

- Men (50%), Women (50%)
- Ethnic breakdown of sample: Tajik (80%), Uzbek (15%), Russian (1%), Other (4%)
- Age breakdown: 18-25 (22%), 26-35 (23%), 36-45 (25%), 46-55 (17%), 56+ (13%)
- Education breakdown: Primary or less (8%), Some or Complete Secondary (51%), Technical/Specialized Secondary (20%), At least some university (21%)
- Work Situation: Working full-time (24%), Working part-time (5%), Self-employed (14%), Not Employed (19%), Homemaker (23%), Student (4%), Pensioner/Invalid (11%)

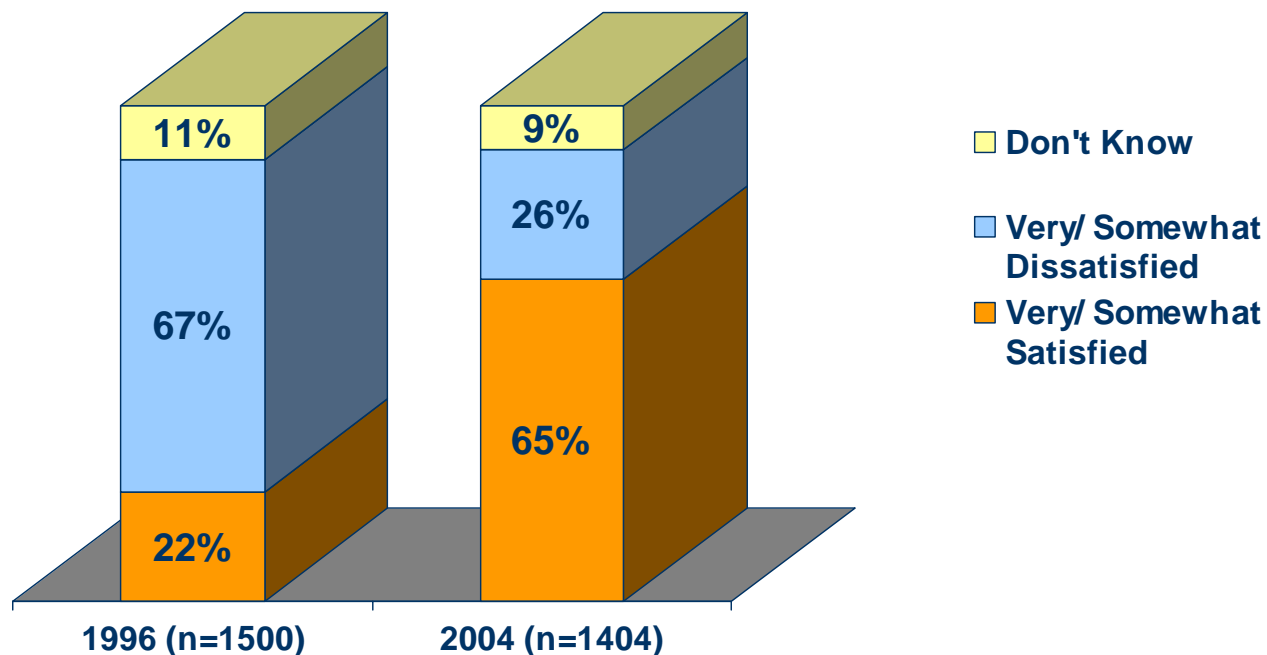


I. Assessments of the Socio-Political Situation in the Country

- Satisfaction with the Overall Situation has increased markedly since the 1996 IFES survey
- Majority have positive assessments of current economic situation and expect better times in the future
- Support for a market-based economy has increased since 1996 but is still a minority opinion
- Majority satisfaction with the process of national reconciliation and fight against narcotics, but dissatisfaction with quality of health care and water
- Widespread belief that corruption is a serious problem



Satisfaction with Overall Situation in Country



“And what about the situation of Tajikistan generally: are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the situation in Tajikistan today?”



Reasons for Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Reasons for Satisfaction (n=911)

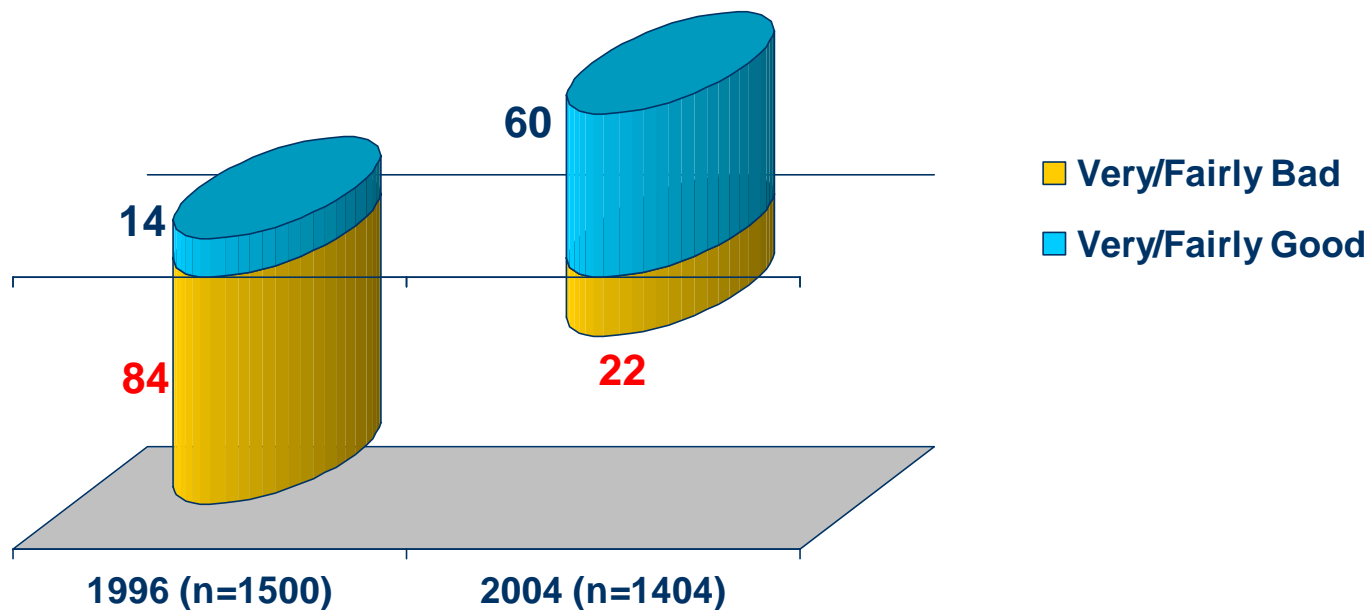
- Calm and peace in the republic (62%)
- General improvement in situation (22%)
- Improvement in economic situation (4%)
- Personal/Family Situation is good (4%)
- Have freedoms (3%)

Reasons for Dissatisfaction (n=368)

- Unemployment (45%)
- Low level/Non-payment of wages (38%)
- Generally bad economic situation (22%)
- Problems with social services (19%)
- Inflation (8%)
- Lack of law and order (6%)



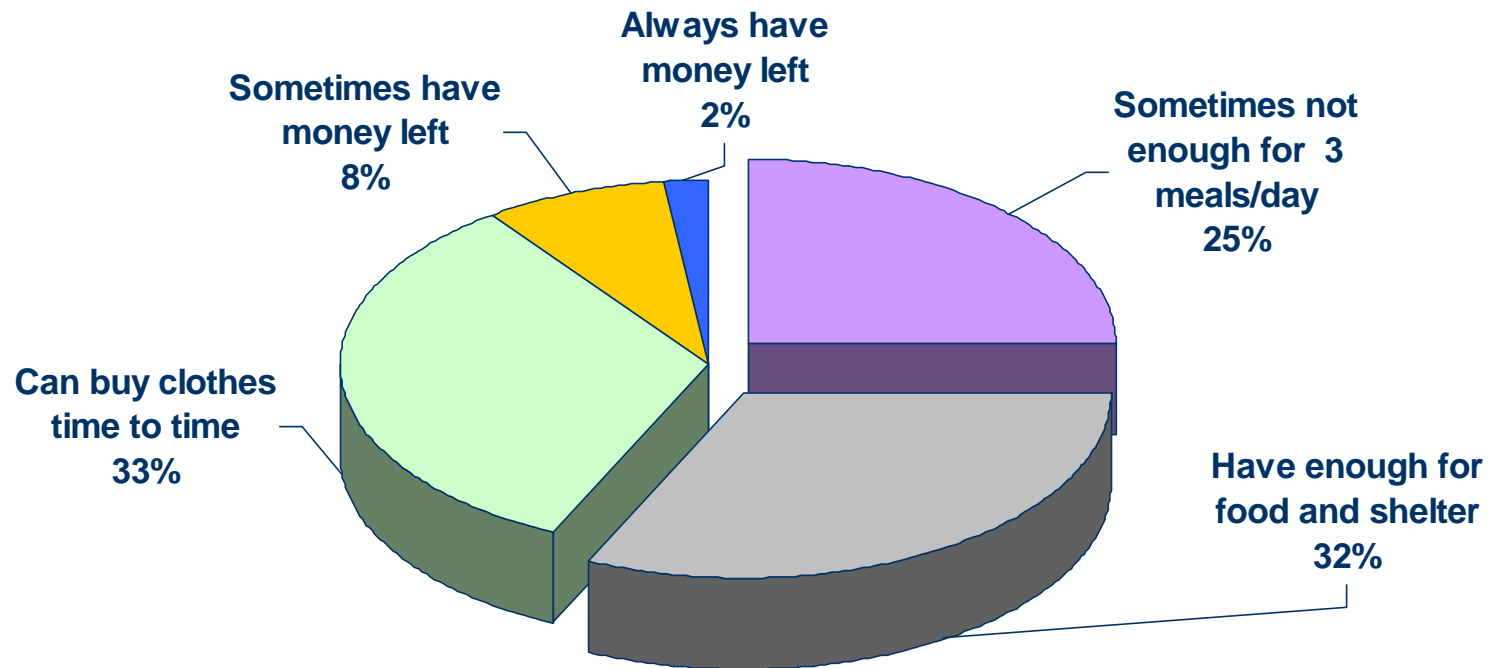
Assessments of Current Economic Situation in Country (in %)



"How would you describe the current economic situation in our country -- is it very good, fairly good, fairly bad, or very bad?"



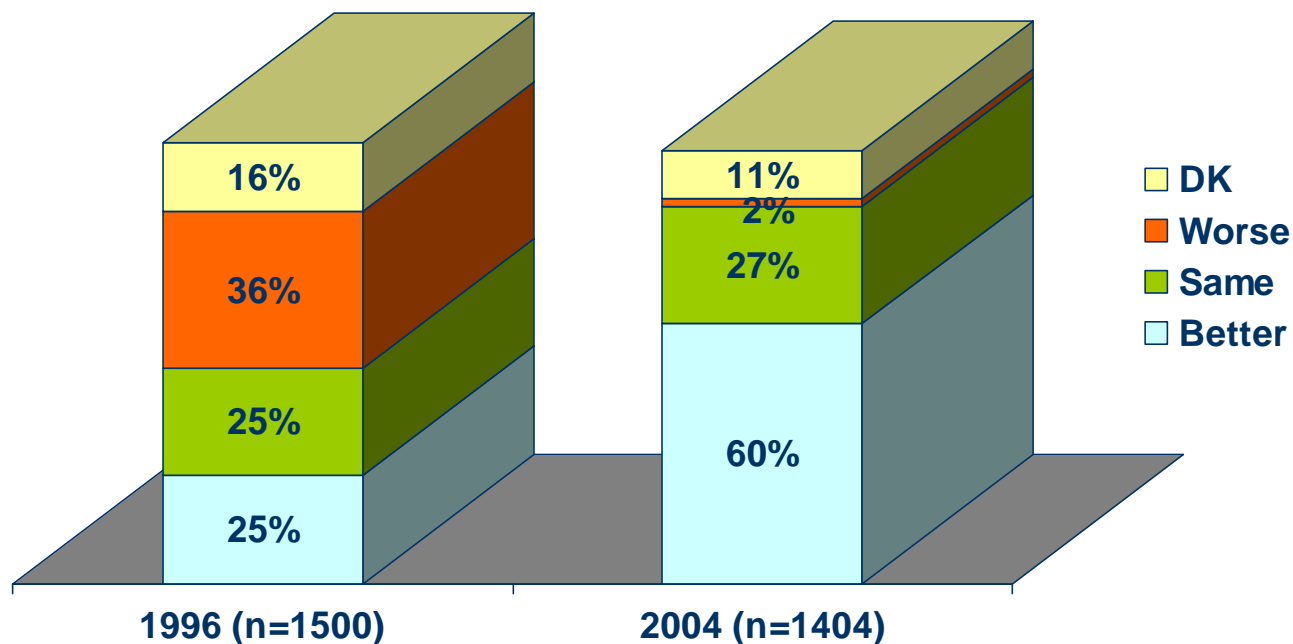
Financial Situation of Household



“Listed on this card are several ways to describe a household’s financial situation. Please tell me which of these statements best describes the situation in your household.”



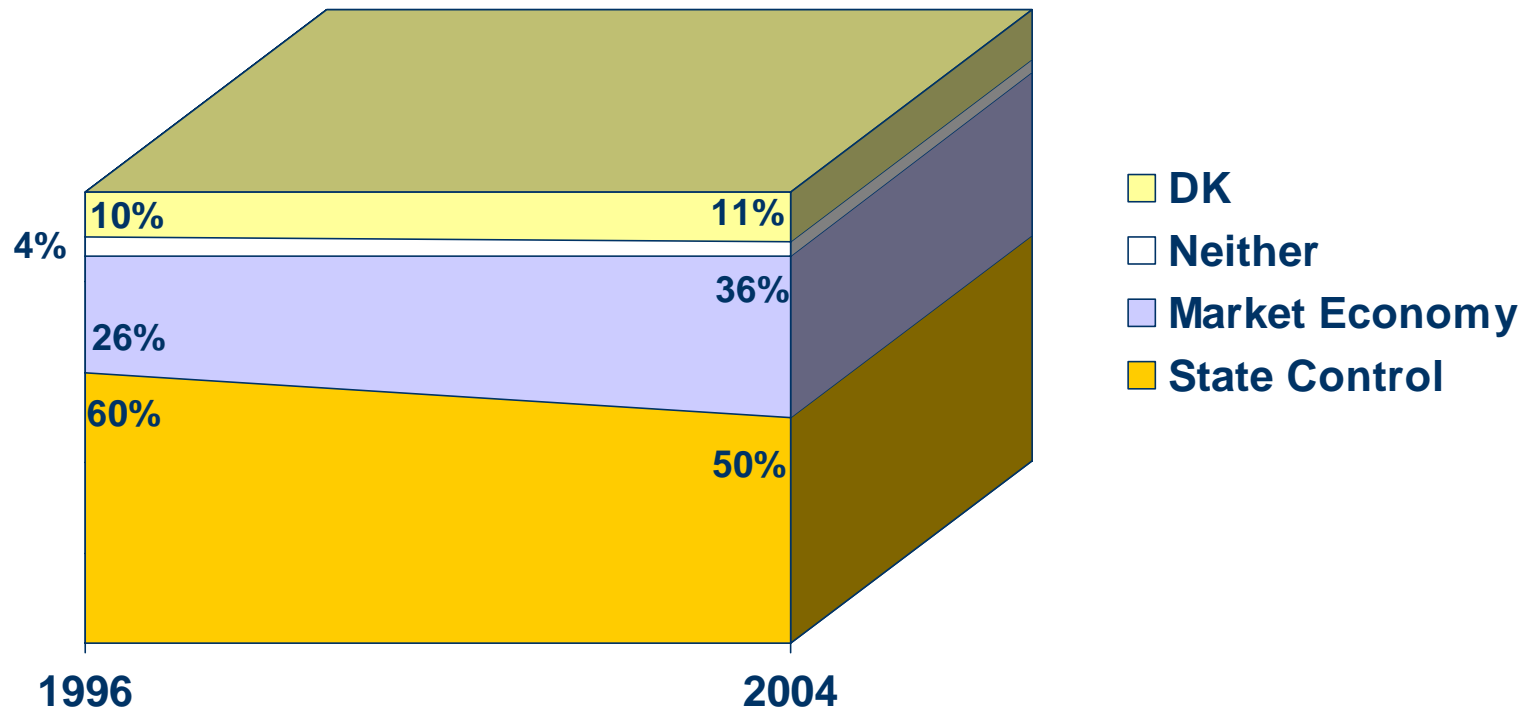
Expectations for Economic Situation in Country in 12 Months



"In the next twelve months, in your opinion, will the economic situation of Tajikistan be better than it is now, will be the same as it is now, or will be worse than now?"



Preferred Economic System

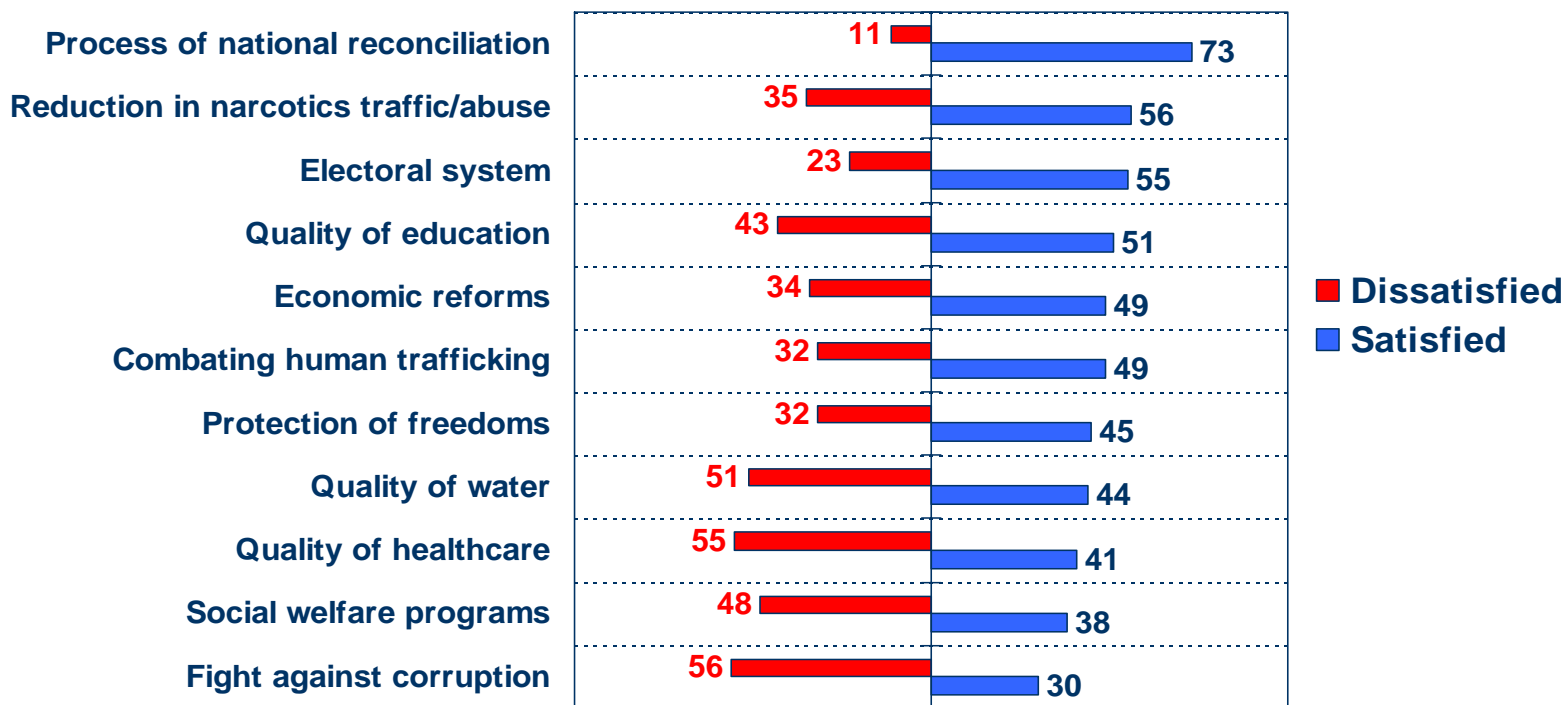


“When thinking about our economic future, should our country develop a market economy with limited state control, or should we have an economy totally controlled by the state? “

Dates of Fieldwork: Oct. 24-Nov. 21, 2004; Sample Size: 1404; Margin of Error: 2.62%



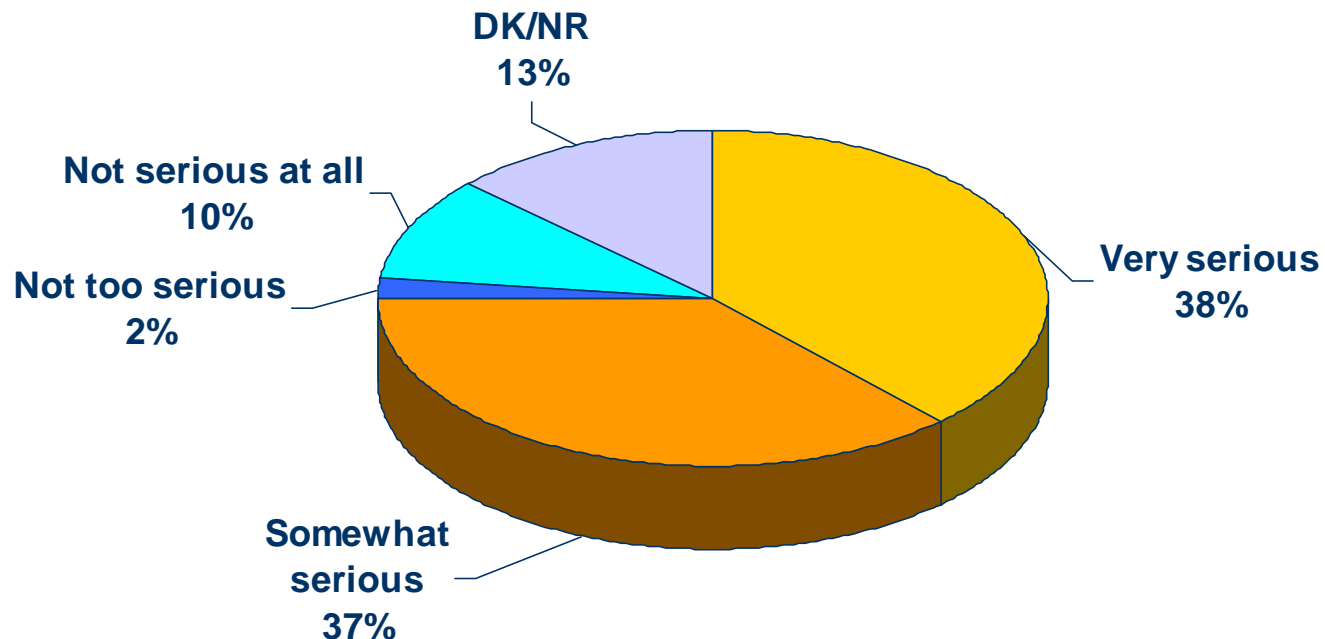
Level of Satisfaction with Specific Policies and Programs (in %)



“Please tell me whether you are completely satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or completely dissatisfied with each of the following issues?”



Seriousness of Corruption in Tajikistan



“Can you tell me how serious is the problem of official corruption in Tajikistan, meaning how much does it matter -- is it very serious, fairly serious, not too serious, or not serious at all?”

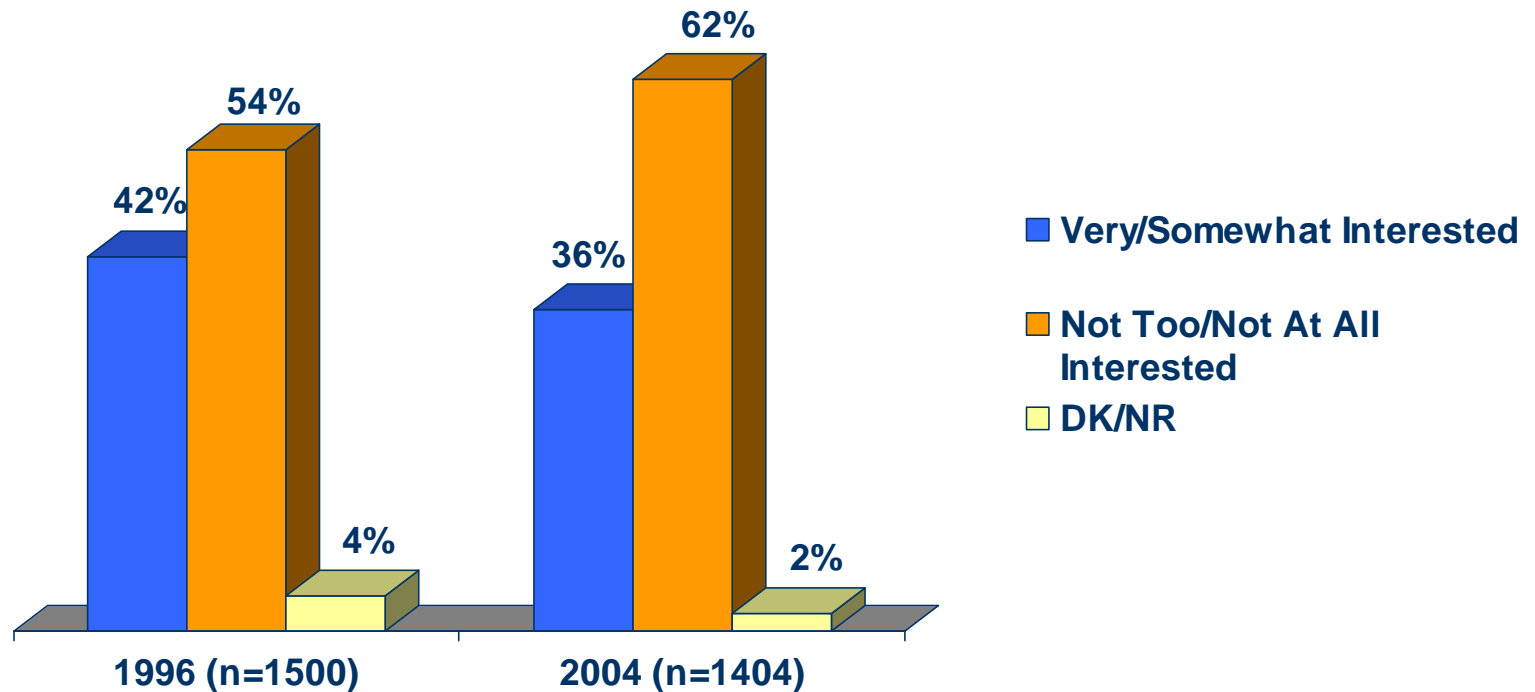


II. Attitudes toward Politics, Elections, Democracy, and the State

- A minority of Tajikistanis say they are interested in politics, and interest has decreased since 1996
- A majority say that they have little or no information on the political or economic situation in Tajikistan
- Low levels of formal socio-political engagement among citizens of Tajikistan
- Majority express high likelihood of participating in the February election
- Low levels of information on the election process
- High rate of participation due to belief in power of elections in increasing responsiveness of officials
- Tajikistanis exhibit strong support for a democratic system, and a majority believe that Tajikistan is a democracy
- Large increase since 1996 that the government can positively impact citizens' lives



Interest in Politics

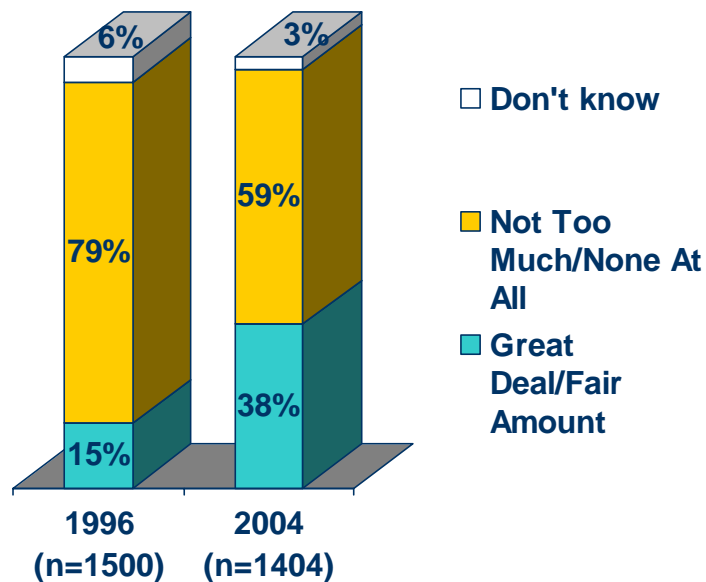


"How interested are you in matters of politics and government?"

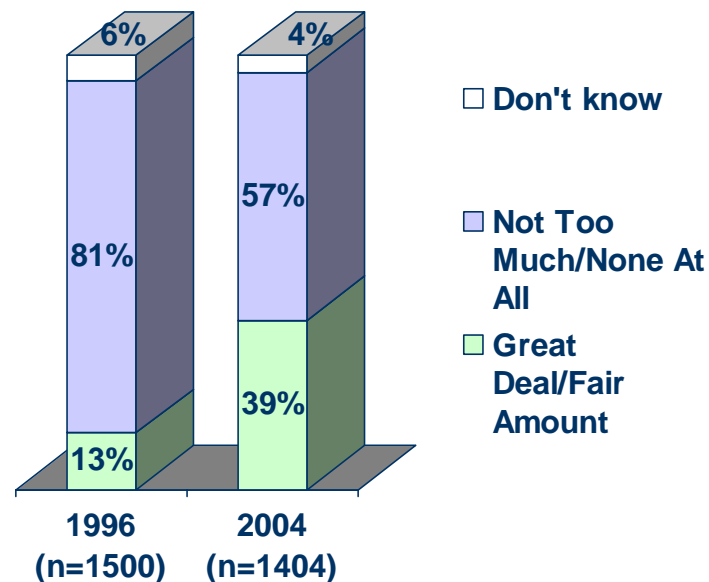


Information on Economic and Political Situation in Tajikistan

Information on Economic Situation



Information on Political Situation



“Can you tell me how much information you feel you have about the economic (political) situation in Tajikistan?”



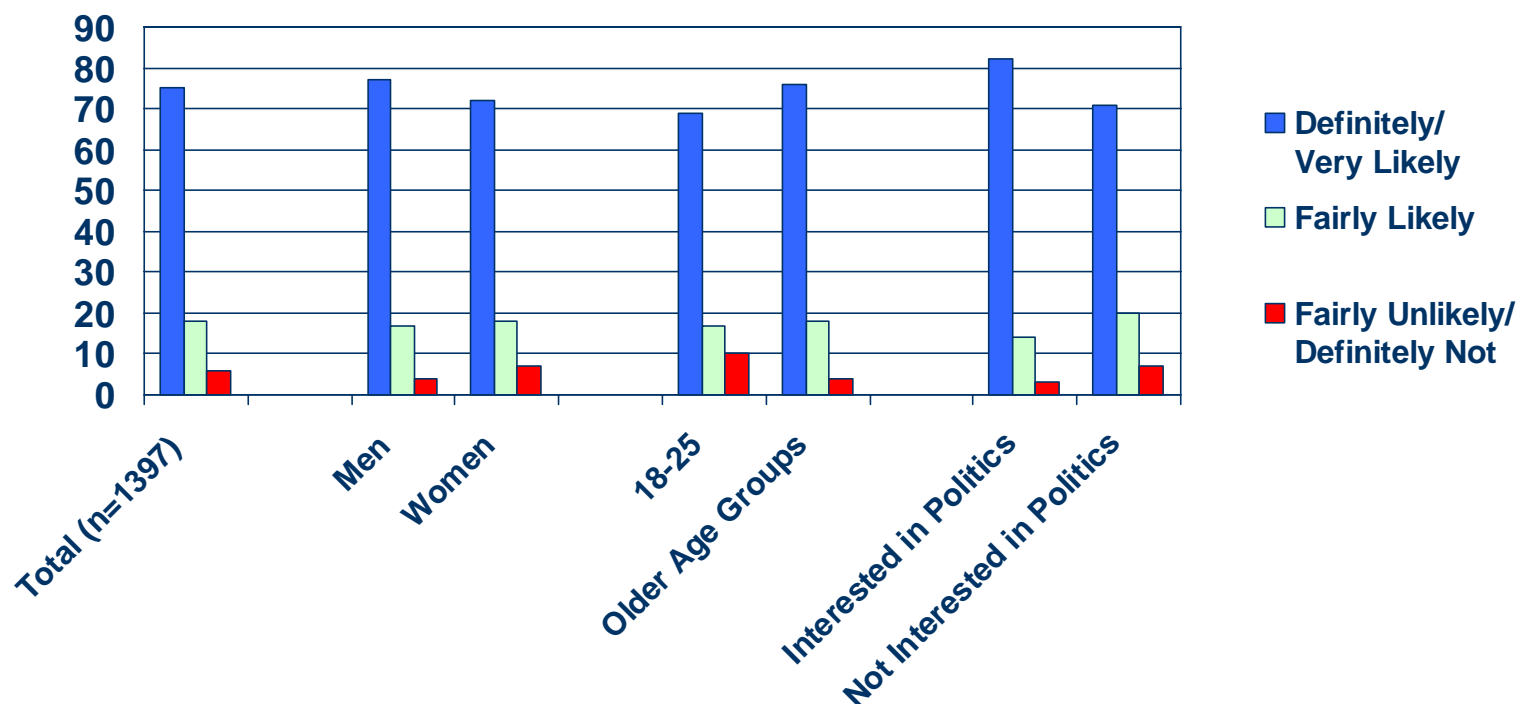
Political Engagement in Tajikistan

Interest in Politics	Information on Political Situation		
	Great Deal/Fair Amount	Not Much/ None At All	Don't Know
Very/ Somewhat Interested	25%	11%	0.5%
Not Too Much/Not At All Interested	14%	45%	2%
Don't Know	1%	2%	0.3%

25% of Tajikistanis are politically engaged
 26.5% are mildly engaged
 49.3% are politically disengaged



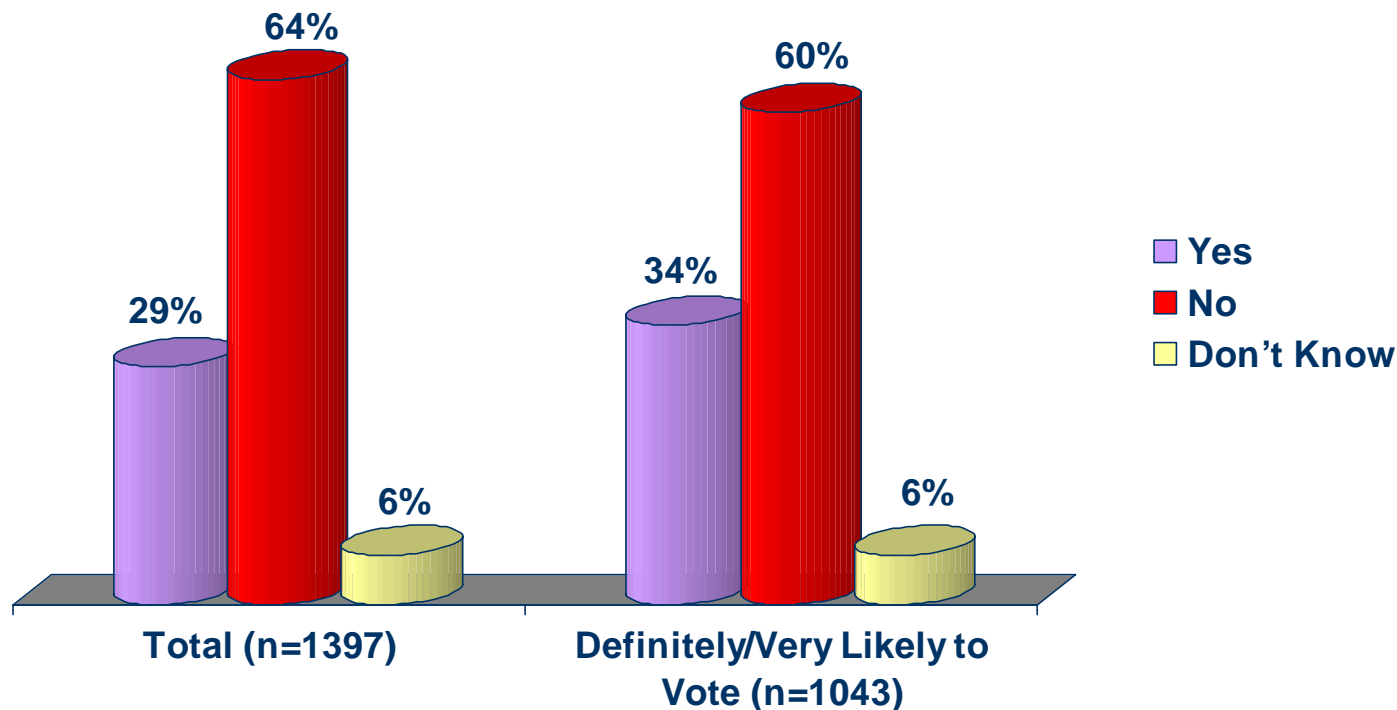
Likelihood of Voting in February 27 Elections (in %)



*“As you may know, the next parliamentary elections will be held in February 2005.
What is your likelihood of voting in this election?”*

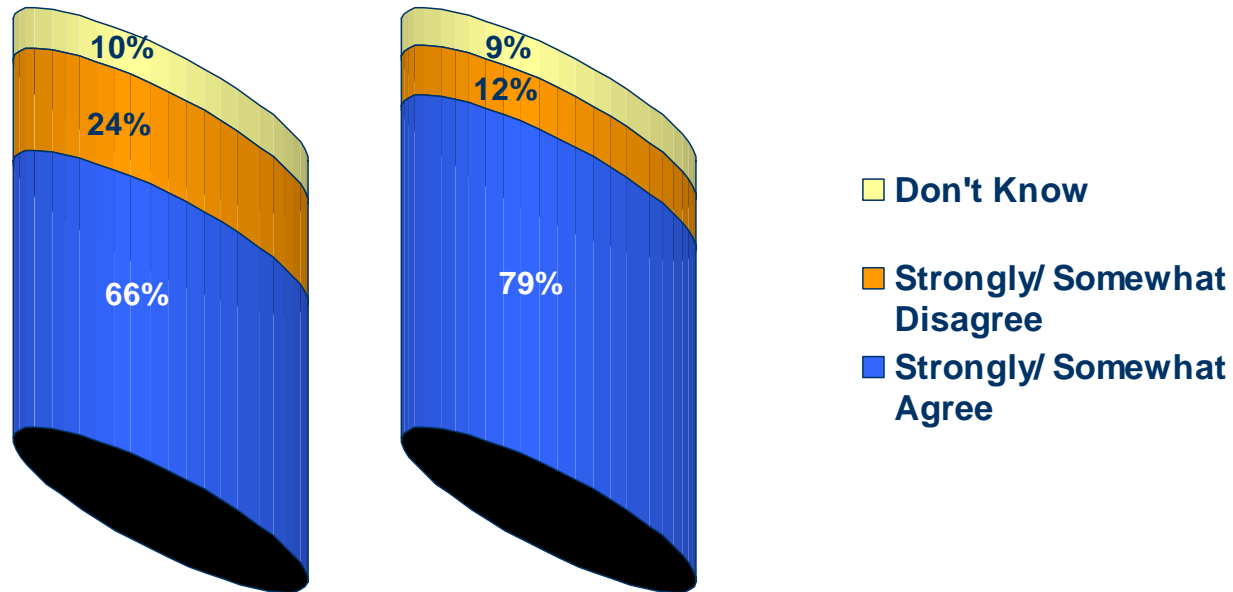


Majority Lack Information to Make Wise Choice when Voting



"Do you think you have enough information to make a wise choice when voting in elections in Tajikistan?"

Majority Display Voter Efficacy

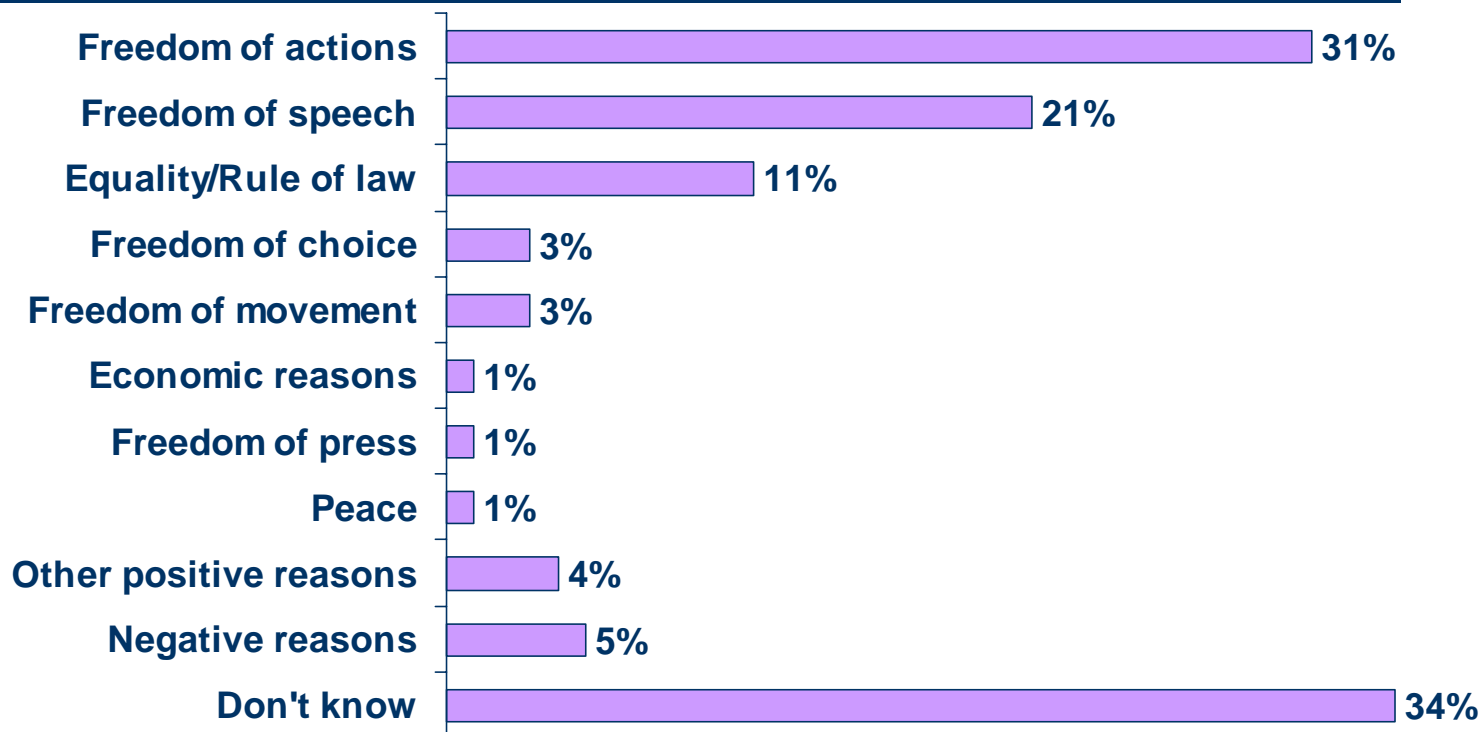


"Voting gives people like me a chance to influence decisions made in our country."

"When government authorities must be elected by the people in order to keep their position in government, they will be more concerned with doing what the people want."



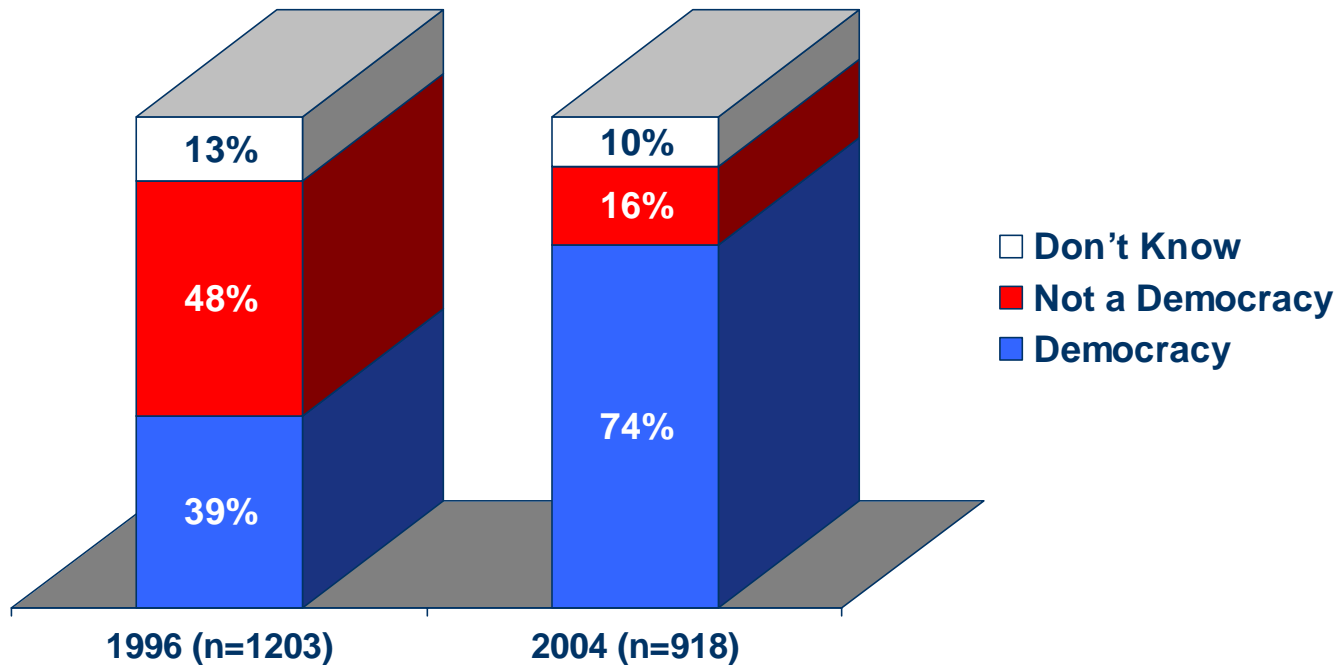
Democracy Associated with Freedoms



“What does it mean to you to live in “a democratic society”?”



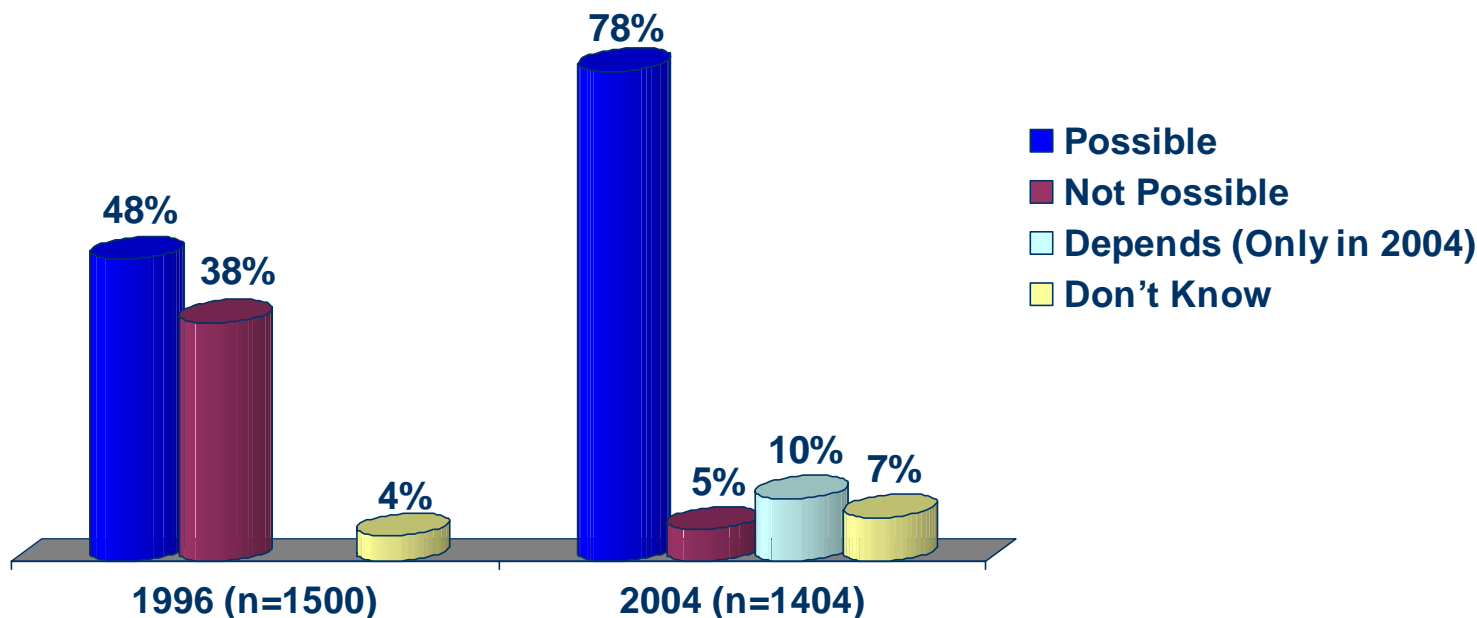
Tajikistani Democracy



"Would you say that Tajikistan is primarily a democracy, or is it primarily not a democracy?"



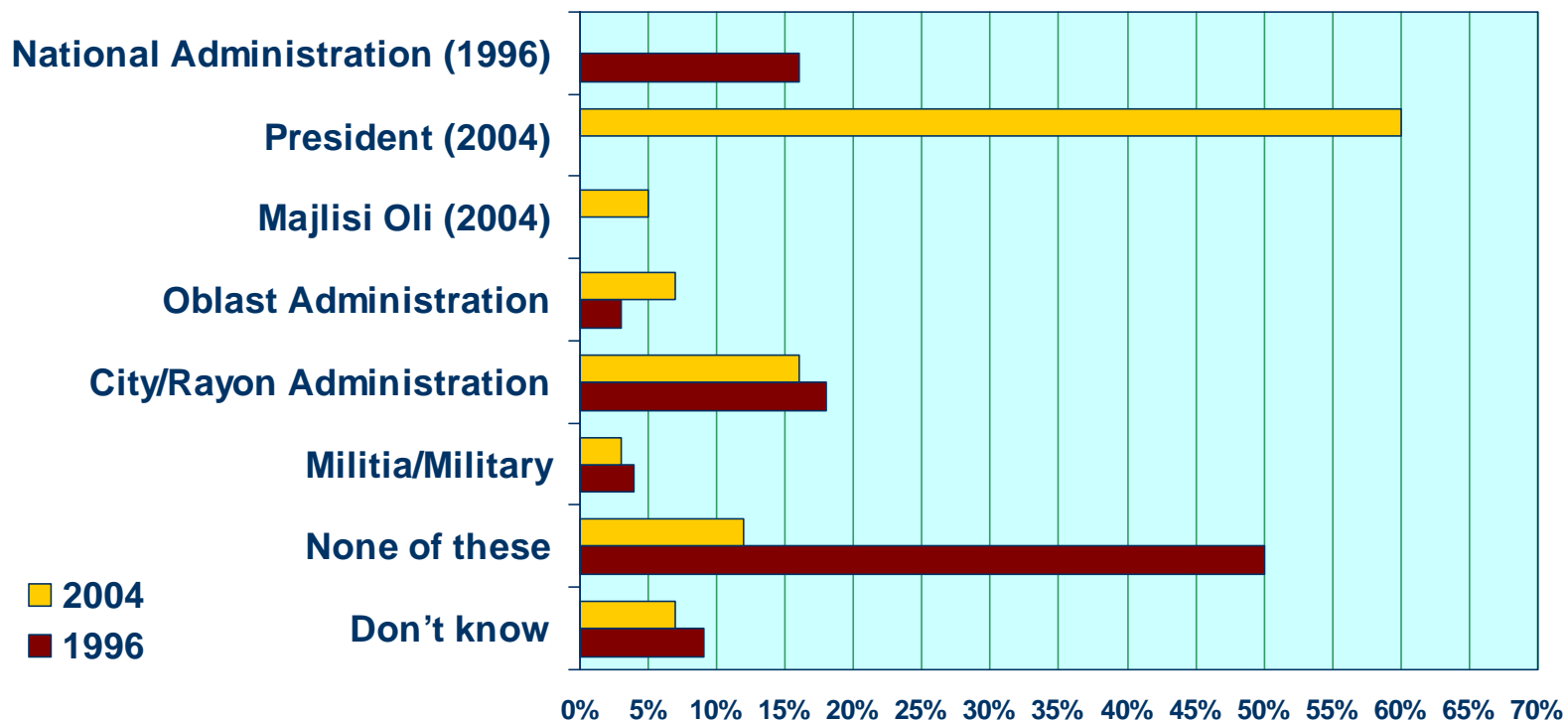
Increase in Perception that National Government can Have Positive Impact



“In your opinion, is it possible or not possible for the national government in Dushanbe to significantly improve the lives of the citizens of Tajikistan through its policies and actions?”



State Structures with Greatest Influence in Life



“Which of these structures of the State has the greatest influence on the way you live your life?”

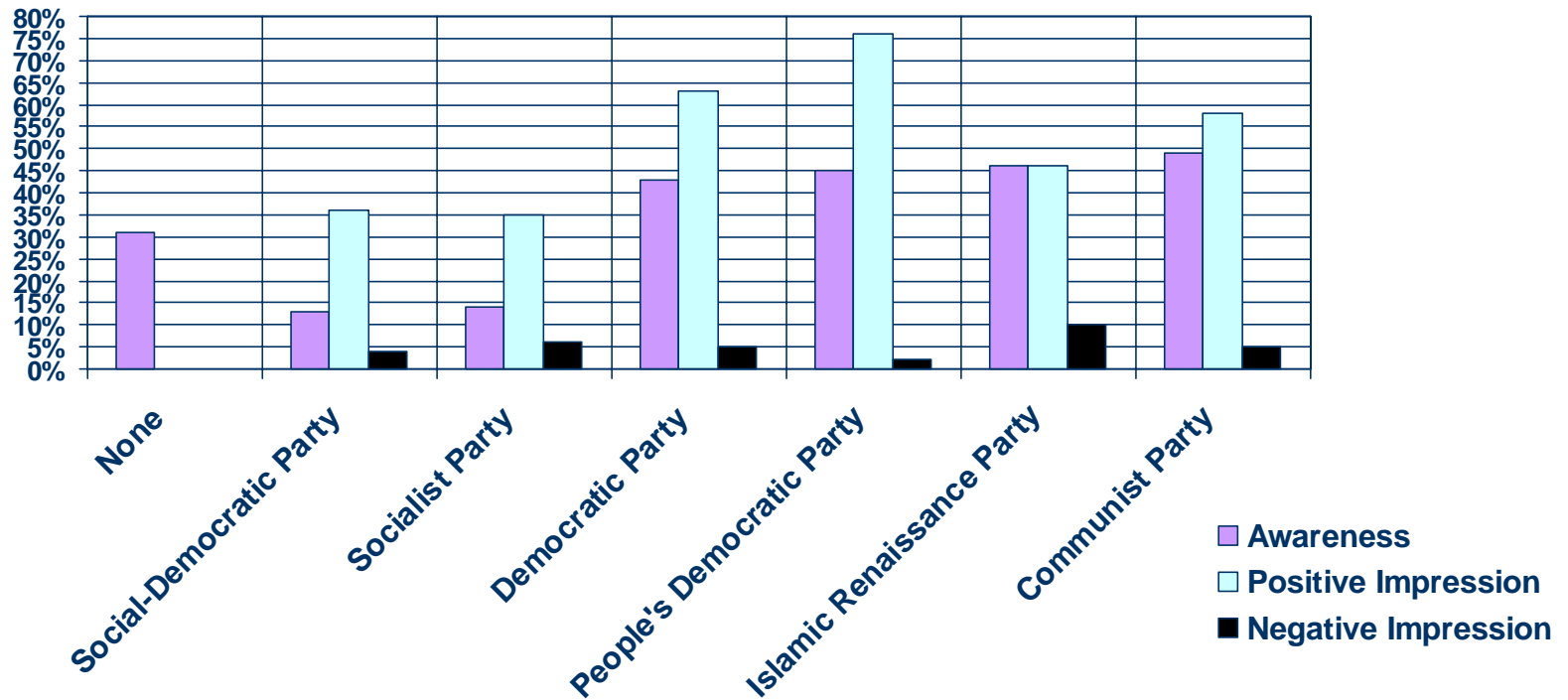


III. Opinions and Attitudes on Political Parties

- Generally low name-recognition of political parties
- Little awareness of party platforms or party leaders
- Few Tajikistanis think that political parties in Tajikistan have clear proposals to address important issues facing the country
- Tajikistanis believe that political parties should focus on economic issues, social welfare, and improvement of services during campaign
- Party leader was cited most often as a primary reason for choosing a party, but specific policies also received high number of mentions
- PDPT was leading choice as party that represents their views and interests
- Majority believe that parties represent interests of Tajikistani people



Party Awareness



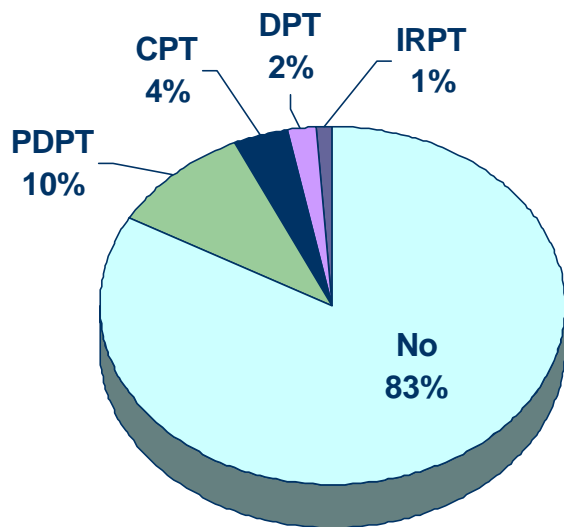
"Which political parties in Tajikistan are you aware of?"

Dates of Fieldwork: Oct. 24-Nov. 21, 2004; Sample Size: 1404; Margin of Error: 2.62%

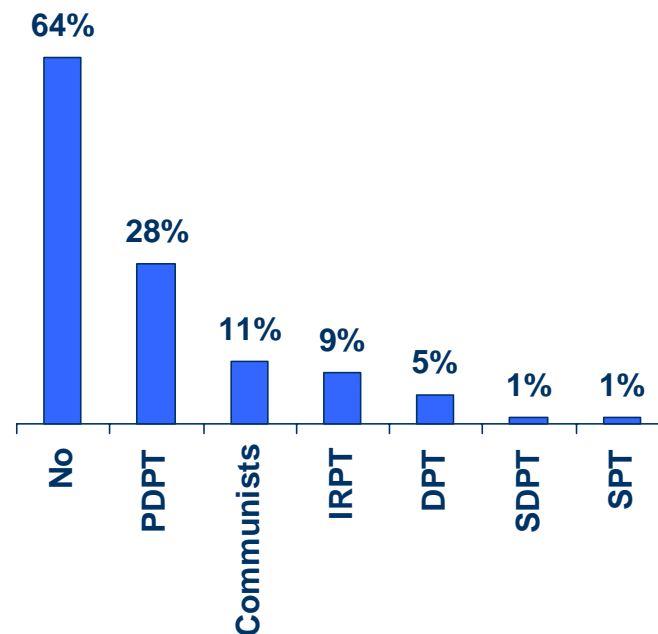


Awareness of Party Platforms and Leaders

Aware of Any Party's Platforms?

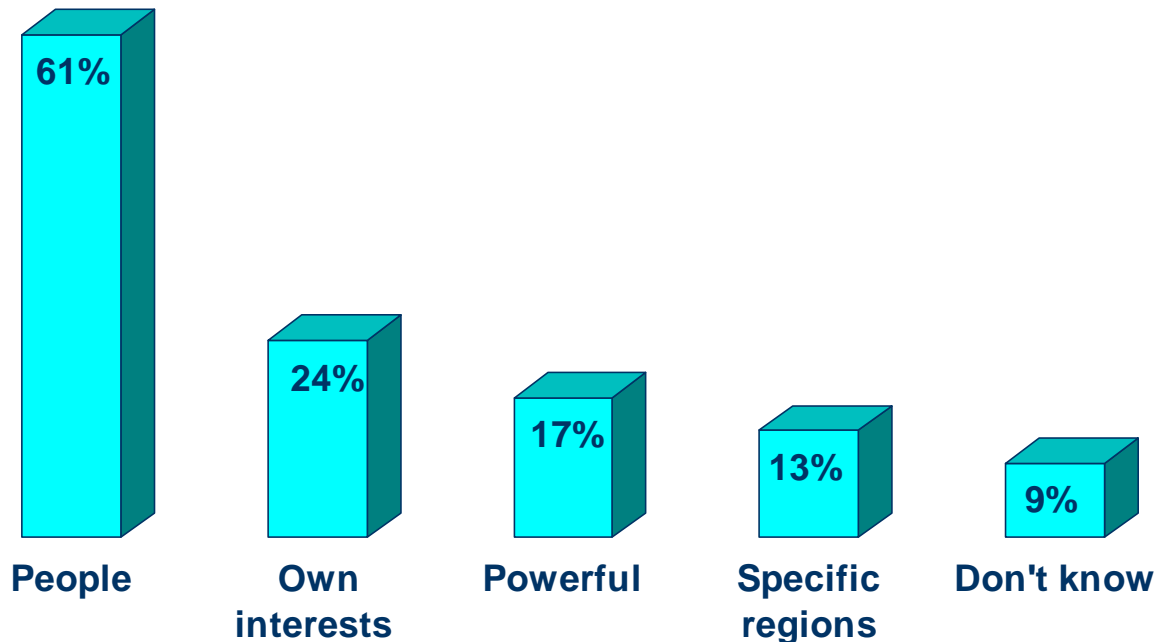


Aware of Any Party's Leaders?





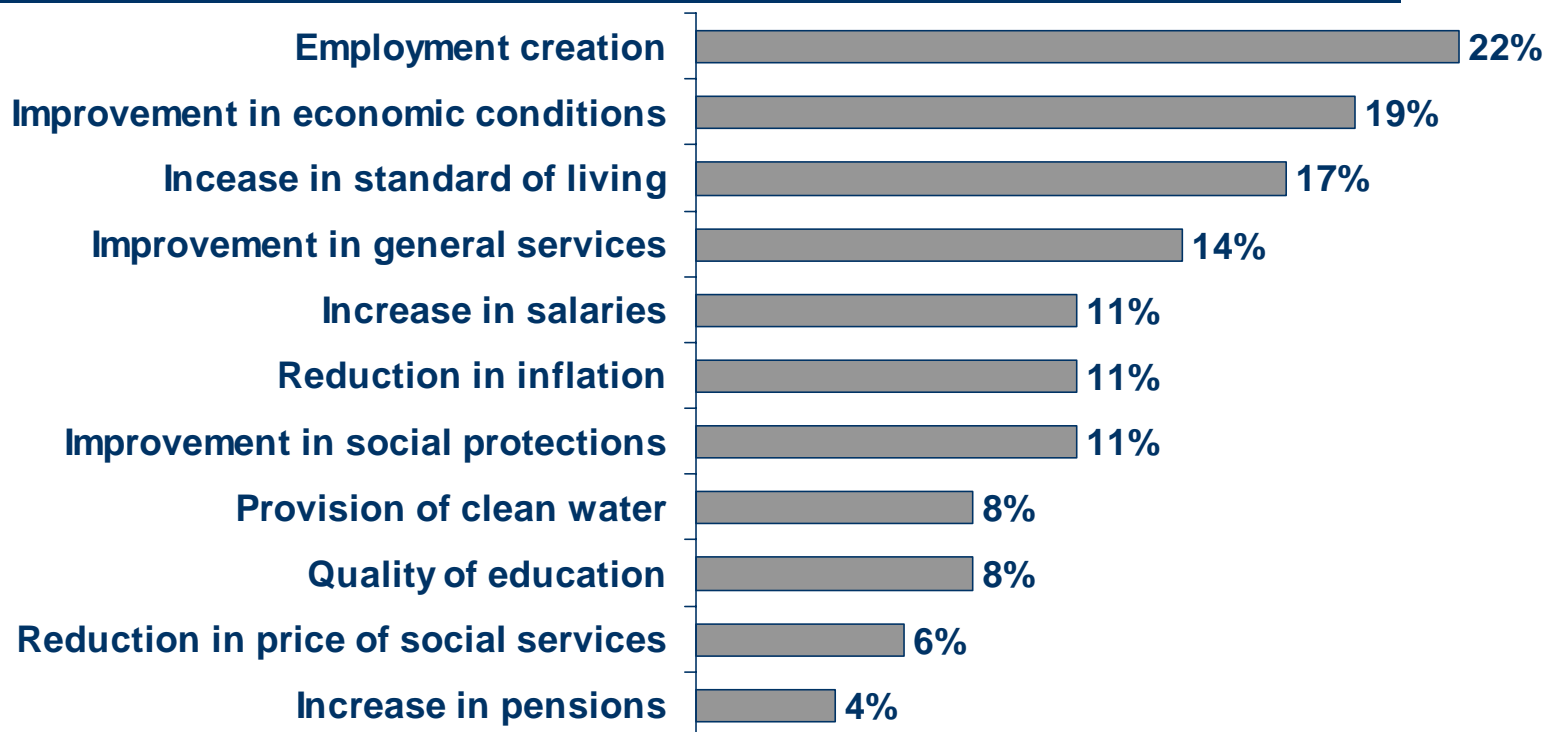
Interests Represented by Political Parties



“Whose interests do you think political parties in Tajikistan represent: the interests of all Tajikistanis, the interests of the powerful, the interests of a particular region, their own interests, or some other interests?”



Issues that Should be Addressed by Political Parties in Campaign



What important issues would you like to see the political parties and candidates address in the campaign for the 2005 parliamentary elections?

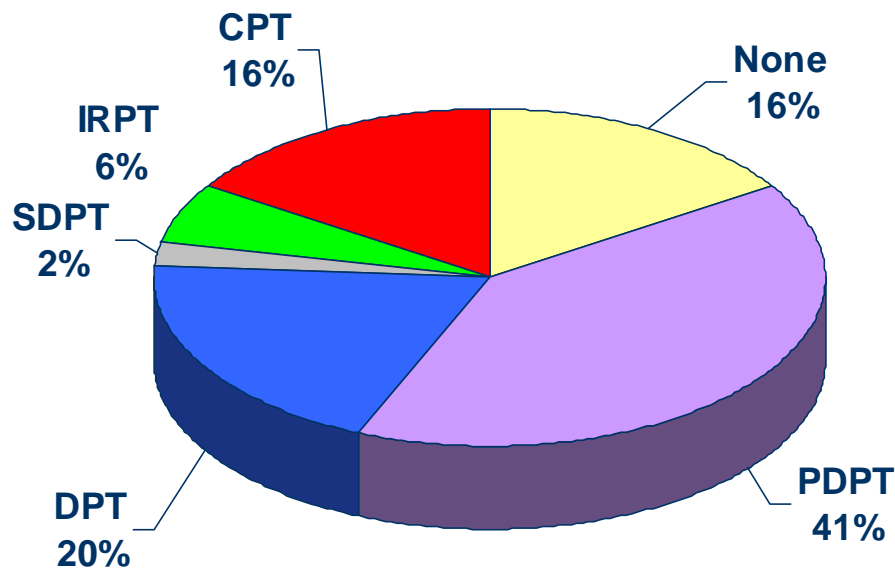


Primary Factors in Support of Political Parties

- Leader of party (50%)
- Party's social welfare policies (40%)
- Party's economic policies (39%)
- Party's policy on fighting corruption (39%)
- Party's protection of migrant workers (36%)
- Party's foreign policy (18%)
- Religious outlook of the party (16%)
- Party that represents the interests of the respondent's region (11%)
- Party's policy to address regional and ethnic tensions (10%)

Listed on this card are several factors one may consider when thinking about supporting a political party. What three factors do you consider most important when deciding which political party you may support?

Political Parties that Represent Views and Interests



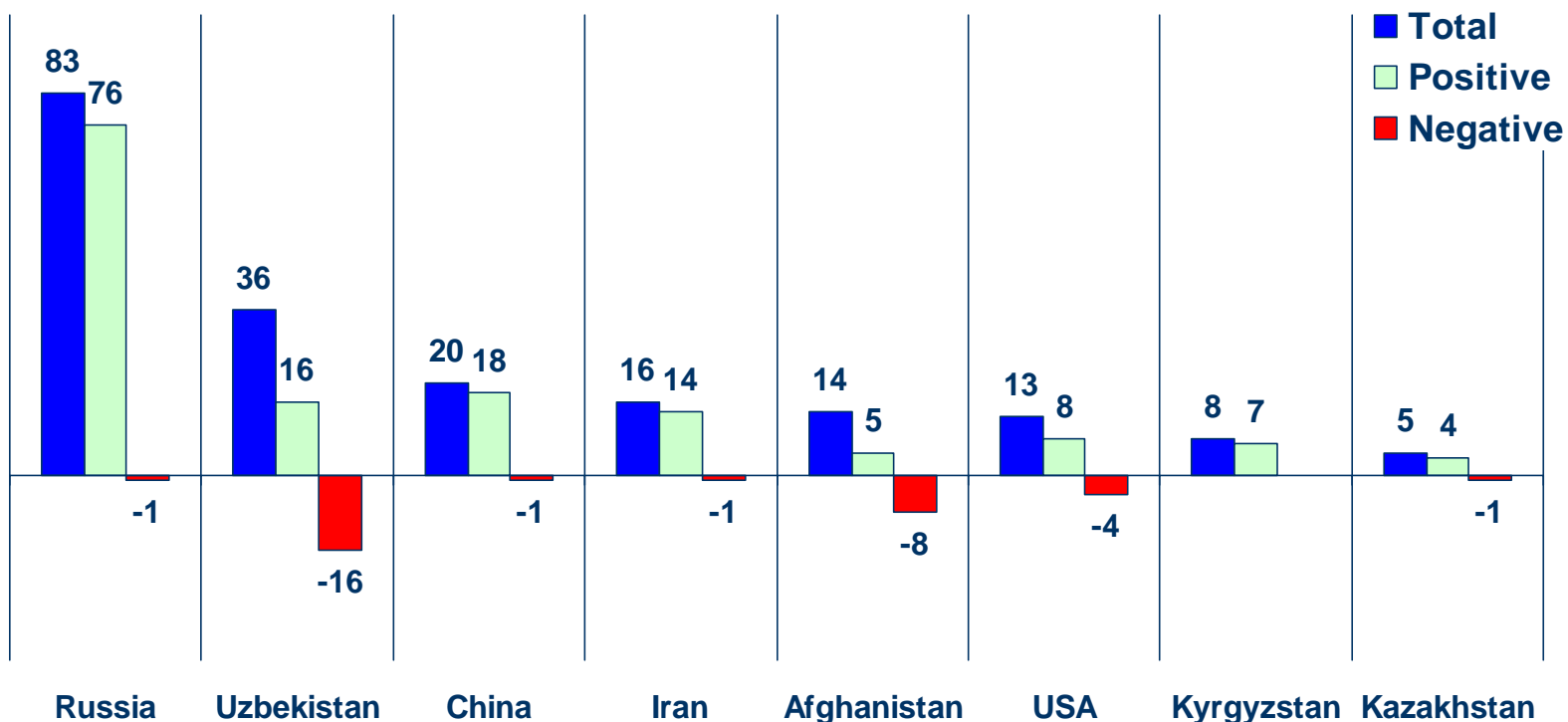
*Which of the political parties listed below best represents the views and interests of people like you?
(n=963)*



IV. Other Issues



Countries that Influence Events in Tajikistan

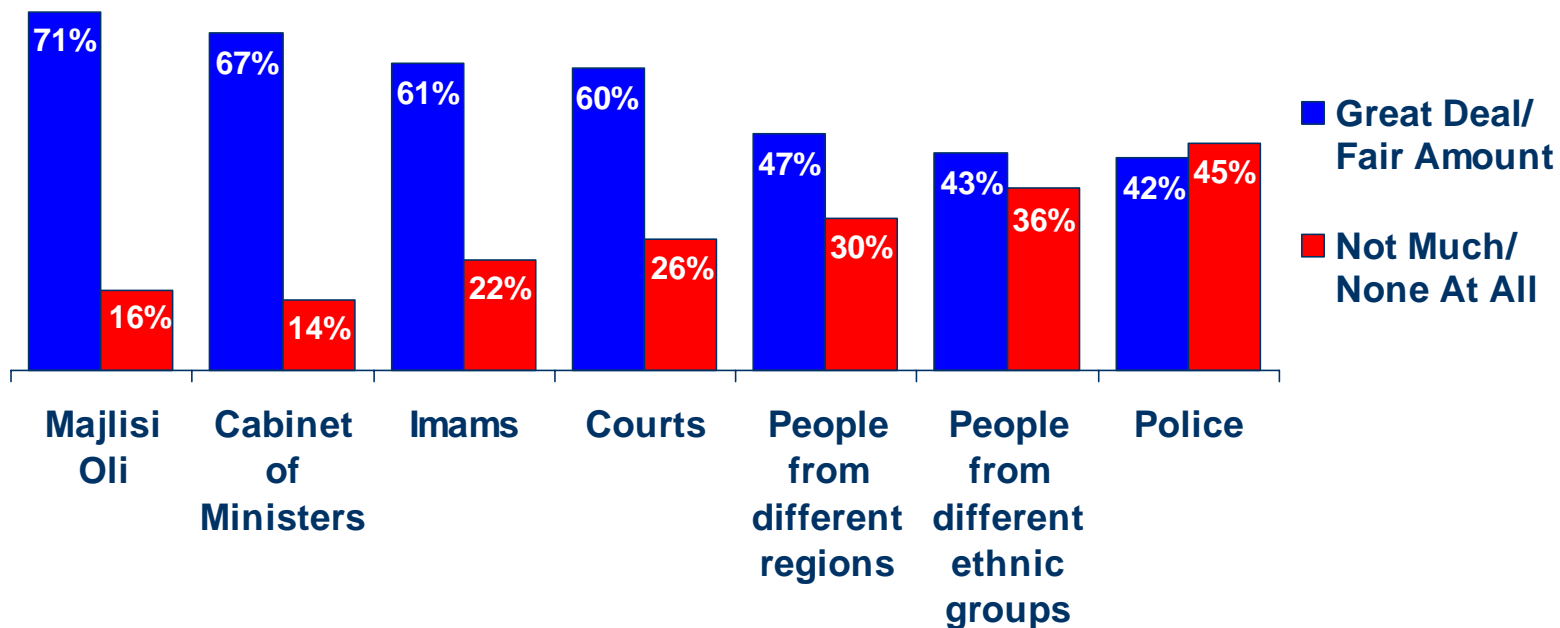


“As you may know, a country’s actions can influence the internal affairs of other countries. Which country do you think has the most influence on what happens inside Tajikistan?”

Dates of Fieldwork: Oct. 24-Nov. 21, 2004; Sample Size: 1404; Margin of Error: 2.62%



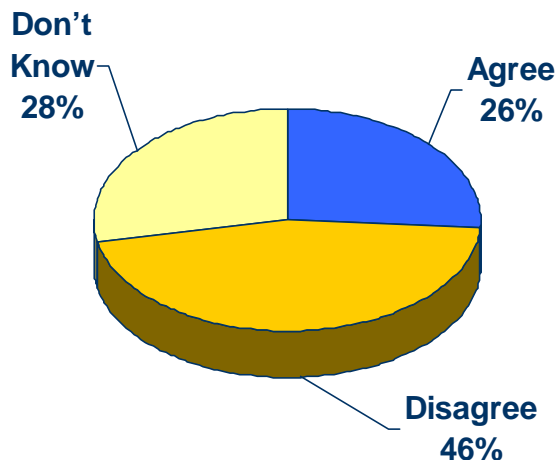
Levels of Confidence in Select Institutions



"I am now going to ask you about institutions and groups. Please tell me how much trust you have in these institutions and groups?"

Opinions on Groups Causing Problems in Society

Agree/Disagree: “There are particular ethnic, religious, regional, or political groups which are causing problems in our society today.”



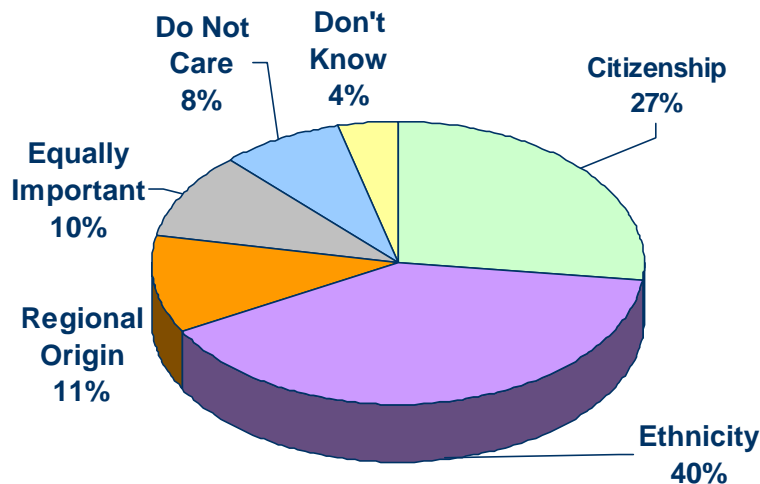
Groups Named (n=365)

- Hizb-Ut-Tahrir (44%)
- Islamic religious groups (18%)
- Regional groups (6%)
- Terrorist groups (3%)
- Political groups (3%)
- Wahabbist groups (2%)
- Criminal groups (2%)

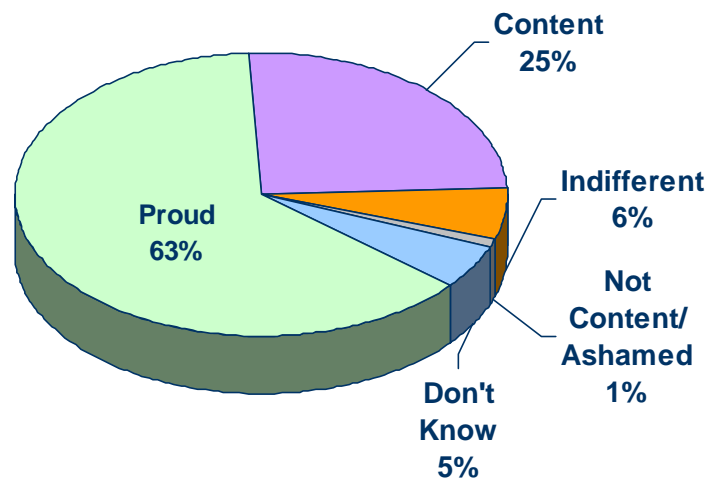


Opinions on Identity and Citizenship

Which is of more importance to you: your regional origin, your ethnicity or your national citizenship?

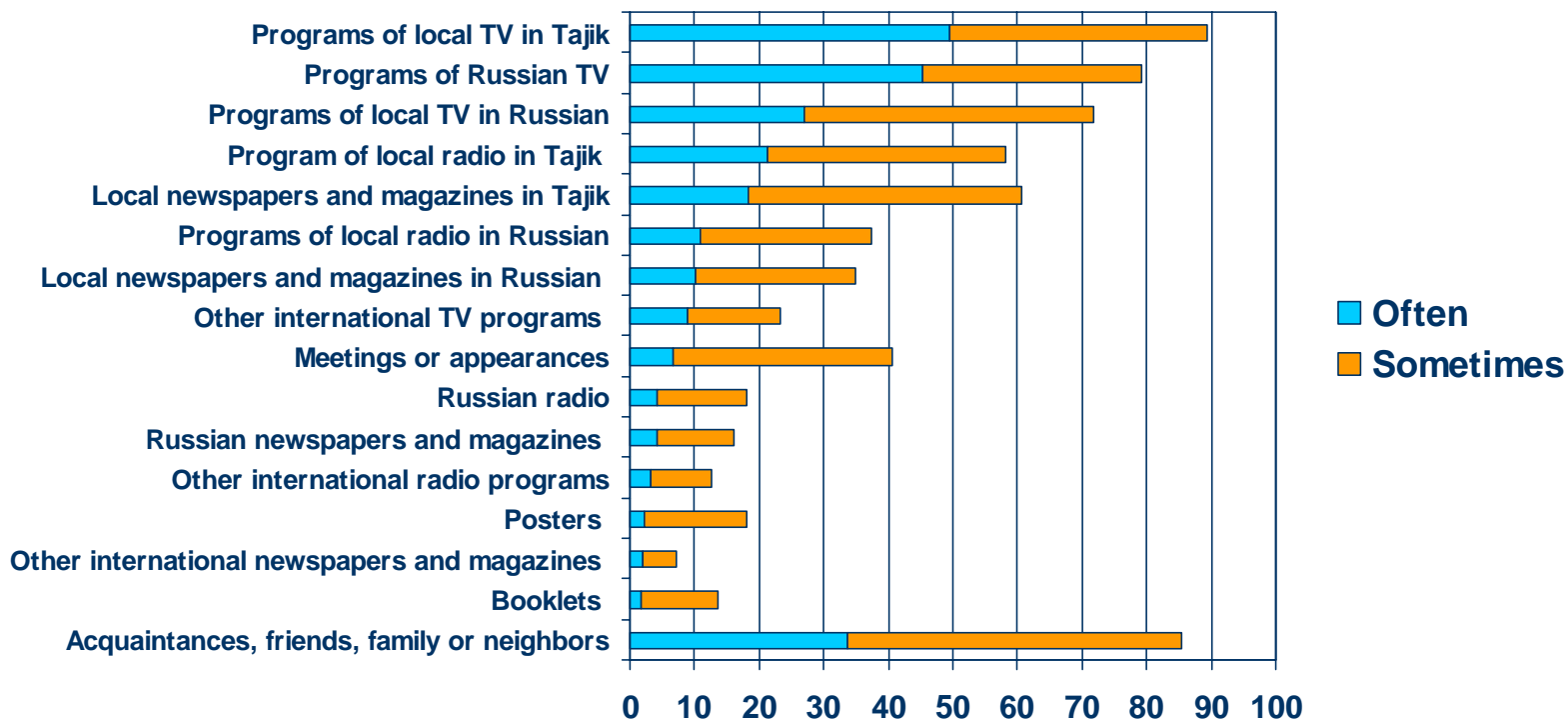


What are your feelings about saying that you are a citizen of Tajikistan: proud, content, indifferent, discontent, ashamed?





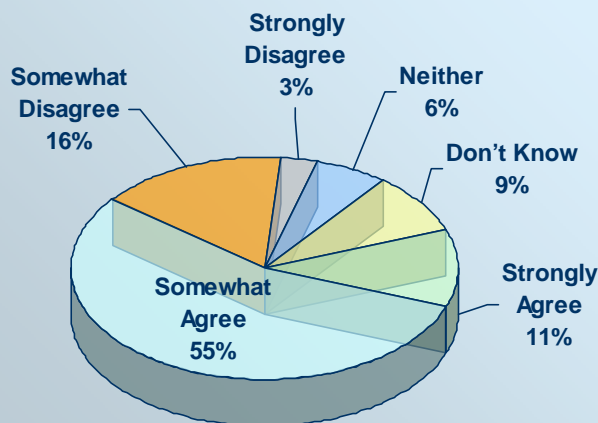
Sources of Information (% using 'Often' or 'Sometimes')



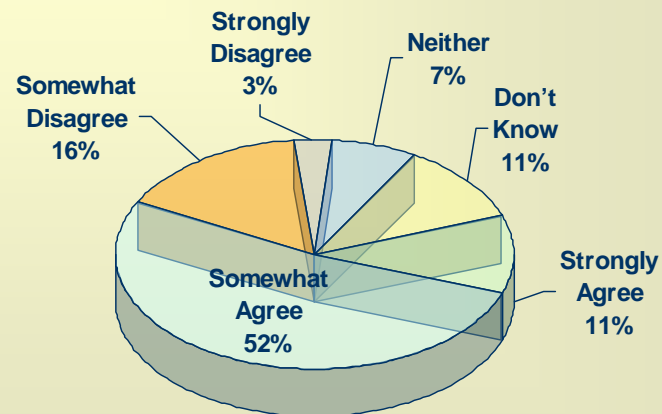
“Next I am going to read to you sources of information you might use to get information about events in Tajikistan. As I read each one, please tell me if you use it often, use it sometimes, or use it never?”

Objectivity of State and Private Media

Agree/Disagree: State Media is Objective



Agree/Disagree: Private Media is Objective



Agree/Disagree: *"The state-run (private) media in Tajikistan provides objective coverage of the social and political developments in Tajikistan."*