



Eckhard Dittrich, Heiko Schrader (Eds.)

# „When Salary is not Enough...“

Private Households in Central Asia



Gesellschaftliche Transformationen/Societal Transformations

LIT

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Societal Transformations

herausgegeben von/edited by

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Above: Village in Chui Region, Kyrgyzstan (Heiko Schrader)  
Below: Astana, Capital of Kazakhstan (Heiko Schrader)

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living conditions with some gap to the top priority (more than 20%), and the goal to give 'best education for the children' (again 10% behind).

Concerning the spheres of responsibility, we assume that paternalistic attitudes combined with 'nanny-state' orientation dominate in Kazakhstani society. If it is not the state being responsible, it is the family. The belief in individual responsibility already shows up in some answers but quite weakly. The institutional sphere of insurances to care for problem situations is hardly considered in Astana and Akmola region, that is, market driven orientations and solutions for solving social problems hardly exist.

### 3.4. The South Kazakhstan Survey

Nazym SHEDENOVA, Aigul BEIMISHEVA, Heiko SCHRADER, Eckhard DITTRICH

#### The Sample

The sample consists of 100 urban and 50 rural private households. Data gathering took place in June 2011. The survey was conducted in Almaty, Kazakhstan's largest city, its business, educational and cultural center, and in villages in the region. Distance from Almaty and Taldykorgan, a regional center, served as a criterion for the selection of villages. The two townships – Turgen and Shilik – are 60 km away from Almaty and Taldykorgan, which makes it difficult for the residents of these villages to commute daily to the cities.

The majority of the respondents were female (79% in total, 81% urban, 74% rural). Most respondents are ethnic Kazakhs (84% in total, 92% urban, 67% rural). 8% are ethnic Russian, and 8% other ethnic groups. Overall, 92% of all studied households are ethnically homogeneous families, while 6% and 12% rural households in the sample are ethnically mixed households/couples. All households represent the middle class as defined above.

#### Household Composition

Most households studied include only two generations both in urban and rural areas (79% and 78%, respectively). In the city there are more one-generation households (12% compared to 4% rural). In the rural areas we find more households which consist of relatives from 3 (18% rural, 9% urban) and even more generations. Whether this higher number of extended families, and also of larger families in the countryside, is due to the lower living standard or to more traditional orientation or to both, must be left open here. The following table shows the household size in urban and rural regions.

Table 35: Household size, South Kazakhstan

Household Size (Interval)	Location		Total
	urban	rural	
One or two persons	18.0%	10.0%	15.3%
Three persons	16.0%	2.0%	17.3%
Four persons	33.0%	22.0%	29.3%
Five persons	22.0%	24.0%	22.7%

of various institutions for the solution of important social issues showed that there are only few significant dependencies of the answers on the location.

Table 48: Perception of responsibilities, South Kazakhstan

Life situations	State		Family network		The Individual		Insurance companies		Charity organizations	
	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural
For old age security	66	72	24	34	37	30	20	24	3	*14
For child care	38	48	88	76	18	24	4	**20	4	*16
For unemployment	82	88	19	26	39	30	7	10	5	10
For health-care provision	91	90	14	26	16	22	19	16	3	14
For the poor	76	88	13	24	18	22	13	10	55	*34
For school education	81	94	41	28	27	28	8	10	11	14
For higher education	74	86	43	30	40	28	6	8	6	6

Notes: percent;

\* Chi-square: significant dependency on location;

\*\* highly significant dependency on location

But it should be noted that rural households trust more in governmental assistance concerning all items, especially in issues of access to education and poverty. Only in health care do urbanites have a negligible lead (91% vs.90%). Urban citizens more often suppose that the family itself should provide its members with good education and child care. Villagers suppose that the family is responsible for elderly people, health care, care of the poor and unemployed. This indicates both local economic problems in rural areas, its "abandonment" by the government, and the maintenance of stronger family supportive networks in the countryside. People in the city often tend to speak about individual responsibility for higher education, jobs and old age protection. People in the rural settlements tend to stress more the responsibility of insurance companies and charitable organizations in child care issues. Urban citizens more often note responsibility of charity providers for the solution of poverty issues which reflects the activity of these organizations in the city. But all these differences touch only very few respondents.

Overwhelmingly the responsibilities for 'social policy' issues are seen to be with the state, then followed by the family and the individual.

### Conclusions

The results of this empirical research in South Kazakhstan demonstrate the mix of traditional and market-based ways to cope with social and economic problems in urban and rural areas. Private households tend to use all possible survival strategies – depending on their capabilities. These range from "muddling through", i.e. always spontaneously reacting on problems, to planning for the future.

Data demonstrate, to a certain extent, the preservation of the role of social networks, despite their significant weakening in recent years as a result of the influence of the market economy, the growth of economic differentiation of families and the reducing of guarantees to return the debts by relatives and friends. Nevertheless, particularly intergenerational solidarity within the household, which is regulated according to tradition (the youngest son living with his parents) is still more important than individual security provided by market institutions such as insurances, and mainly designed for individuals, couples and nuclear families. This refers to ethnic Kazakhs. However, urban life shows that the weakening of this pattern of behavior can already be observed from the quantitative data, with regard to the constitution of households.

However, the economic strategies of the monetary mutual support of households in a wider network of relatives (on a regular basis and on event-based basis) is gradually losing its leading position and individual strategies gain importance, the strategies directed at the autonomy of nuclear families.