PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION 2020 IN KYRGYZSTAN THROUGH THE EYES OF CITIZENS

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Public Foundation

This study is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the sole responsibility of the “Common Cause” and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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Methodology

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The study was conducted by the research company Erfolg Consult LLC for the public foundation “Common Cause”.

The purpose of the quantitative survey: to study general social processes and formation of a holistic understanding of the mood of the electorate on the eve of parliamentary elections.

Tasks of the survey:

- To study experience of voting during elections in general.
- Measurement of general interest of electorate to vote in the upcoming parliamentary elections. Identification of segments prone to voting.
- To determine the level of trust to election institute and the electoral system as a whole.
- To study influence of social factors, structures and institutions on electorate.
- To understand current attitude towards existing parliament and political parties.
- To identify problems that are considered as the most critical at the moment in this area.
- To identify key factors and criteria that influence to citizens' preferences.
- To identify sources of information about elections.
- To understand an impact of epidemiological situation caused by COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on the electorate in relation to the upcoming elections.

Sample

Target group: population / citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic from 18 years old (according to the data of the Demographic Yearbook at the end of 2019) and older - 1,500 households.

№	*Oblast*	*All population 18+**		
		Population 18+	*%*	*Number of interviews*
1	Batken	317496	7,9	119
2	Jalal-Abad	743578	18,6	278
3	Issyk-Kul	309109	7,7	116
4	Naryn	173582	4,3	65
5	Osh	803009	20,0	301
6	Talas	155288	3,9	58
7	Chui	612341	15,3	229
8	Bishkek city	699771	17,5	262
9	Osh city	193915	4,8	73
	Total in KR	***4008089***	***100***	***1500***

Out of total sample of 1,500 respondents, 35.31% represented 530 residents of urban areas (37 cities). 64.69%, represented 970 rural residents (68 villages) throughout the country. The total number of survey points was 105, the survey points were distributed taking into account the size of settlements. In each locality, the number of survey points ranged from 1 to 17. At each point, the number of polls was 10-16 respondents. Polling stations (in cities), a school, a joint-stock company building, rural health posts or other significant objects in rural areas were identified as starting point for the survey.

The size of the sample was identified by PF “Common Cause”. With a sample of 1500 respondents a sampling error was +/- 2.53 with a 95% of a confidence interval.

Households (HH) selection method: movement on the right side, every 4th HH in case of a successful interview for the private sector. And every 5th HH in the case of apartment buildings. In case of unsuccessful interview n + 1.

Method for selection of respondents: selection of a respondent according to the Kish grid, which guarantees an almost equal total probability for any eligible household member to be selected for the survey. The selection method was programmed for automatic selection of the respondent by a system to exclude errors from interviewers.

The average interview duration was 20 minutes.

Tool: the questionnaire was developed by the analyst of the Company in accordance with the goals and objectives of the study and was programmed in two languages - Kyrgyz and Russian.

Data processing: All questionnaires were collected into a single database in Excel format, then the data was transferred to a specially developed database in SPSS format for further cleaning and processing and transferred to analysts.

Weighting: Data weighted for gender

Period of work: field work was carried out in the period from June 4-24, 2020.

Executive summary

The study was conducted by the research company Erfolg Consult LLC for the public foundation "Common Cause".

Field work was carried out in the period from June 4-24, 2020 before the COVID-19 reached its peak.

This study was conducted to find out: a) how Kyrgyzstan citizens live in pandemic conditions, b) whom they will vote for during the elections to the Jogorku Kenesh in October 2020, and c) What kind of politicians they want to see in a new convocation.

- ***Are Kyrgyzstanis planning to vote?***

75,6% respondents are planning to vote in parliamentary elections. The highest number of respondents belongs to Talas oblast (94,4%), Osh city(85,4%) and Djalal-Abad oblast (84,6%). 19,4 % of citizens are not planning to vote, and the highest proportions of these citizens live in Naryn (30,6%) and Chui (28,5%) oblasts, as well as Bishkek city (24,4%). The age breakdown shows that most unwilling to vote are young people aged 18-25 (23,5%), 36-45(22%) and 26-35 (20,5%).

- ***Whom will Kyrgyzstan citizens vote for?***

82% of Kyrgyzstan citizens do not know whom to vote for during the upcoming elections. If the elections are held tomorrow Kyrgyzstan citizens would vote for "for no one" - which is the most popular answer of respondents, on the second place is the answer "I don't know", and then political parties, such as SDPK, RAJ, Ata- Meken and Butun Kyrgyzstan. New parties enjoy relatively low support from the population, despite the growing demand for new faces in party lists.

- ***What if the pandemic continues?***

60% of respondents agree that the elections should be held this fall, regardless of the situation with the coronavirus. Regardless of the epidemiological situation, more than half (55.3%) of citizens agree to participate in voting during the upcoming elections to the Jogorku Kenesh. while 17.2% strongly refuse to vote due to fears for their health (it should be noted that this survey was conducted before the exacerbation of the situation with the coronavirus from June 4, 2020 to June 24, 2020). The breakdown by regions point to more health related concerns in Bishkek, Issyk-Kul and Osh. Due to existing fears of some respondents about the ability of the state to fully ensure the implementation of electoral rights, state bodies need to strengthen measures to inform citizens about holding and organization of the elections, and a large part of these efforts should be directed to ensure safety of voters at the election day.

- ***What kind of candidates do citizens want to see?***

Almost all respondents (96%) rank "education" as the main quality they want to see in future parliamentarians. They also want to see young, new and 'of the people' candidates. Such preferences of citizens can be explained by disappointment of the electorate with the level of competence and work of the current convocation. Demand for female candidates is also growing among the population. The population wants to see more women in the Parliament, which is a positive development. In addition, about half of the respondents believe that a candidate's religiousness will also play a large role in choosing whom to vote for.

- ***What do citizens think about the situation in the country?***

More than half of the respondents (57.7%) believe that the country is in the crisis. Indices of dissatisfaction with the economic and political course of the country are quite high. Thus, 34.6% of the population is not satisfied with the existing political system, and 33.9% is dissatisfied with the current economic policy.

How do Kyrgyzstan citizens live before the parliamentary elections and what are the problems they worry about?

About 30% of Kyrgyz families live on less than 6,000 Soms per month. For comparison, the minimum cost of living in Kyrgyzstan for the first quarter of 2020, according to the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC KR), amounted to 5,167 Som. This figure indicates that 30% country's population lives in poverty. In this regard, it is not surprising that the top problems of concern to population are: unemployment, high cost of living, lack of production and corruption. (Health system problems were not in the lead at the time of the survey, as the study was conducted before the exacerbation of the pandemic)

- ***Is Kyrgyzstan a democratic country?***

61.9% believe that Kyrgyzstan is a democratic country, however 40 % of this are not satisfied with the way the democratic processes are going. 38.1% of respondents do not consider Kyrgyzstan as a democratic state.

- ***What do Kyrgyzstan citizens expect from the new convocation of the Parliament?***

Top six expectations from the new parliamentary convocation include: elimination of corruption, revival of the industrial sector, strengthening of statehood and borders, transparency in the work of the judiciary and overcoming the economic consequences of the coronavirus. According to citizens, future Parliament should be guided by the concepts of justice, peace, order and human rights. It should also be noted that the choice of citizens is more influenced by the rhetoric and eloquence of candidates, rather than an independent analysis of the past performance of deputies in recent years.

- ***What sources do Kyrgyzstan citizens use to get news about politics?***

Television remains the main source of political information for respondents in Kyrgyzstan. However, Internet is gaining a great popularity among the population and ranks as second in importance. Youtube enjoys a rapidly growing popularity as a source of political information, which could be caused by long lockdown during the pandemic and the general growth of popularity of this platform. 43.9% of respondents believe that there is equal proportion of both reliable and unreliable information published on various platforms. 27.7% mark that inaccurate information still prevails in the media and 23.6% assess media publications as generally reliable.

1. Geography, demography & economic welfare of Kyrgyzstanis

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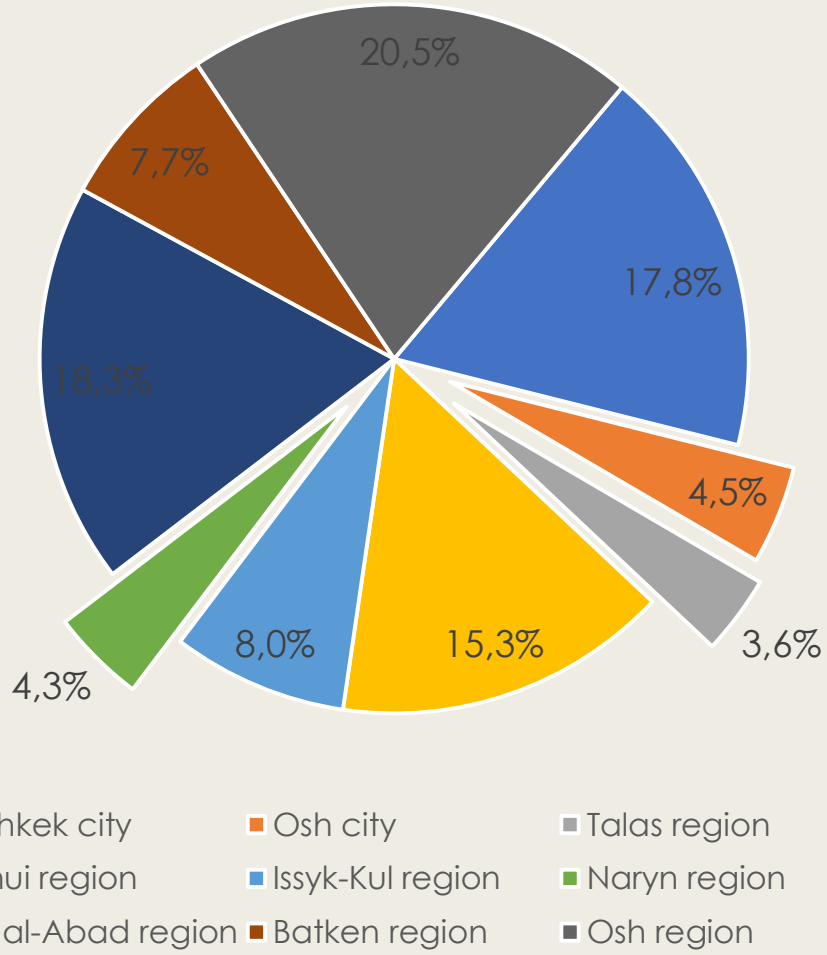
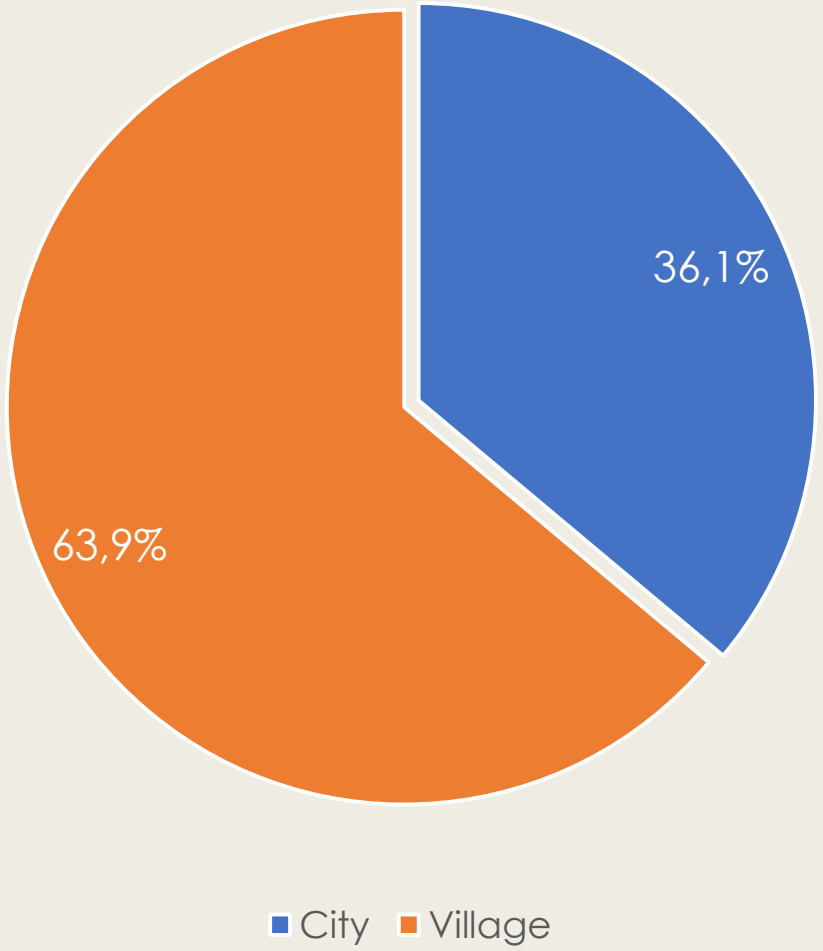
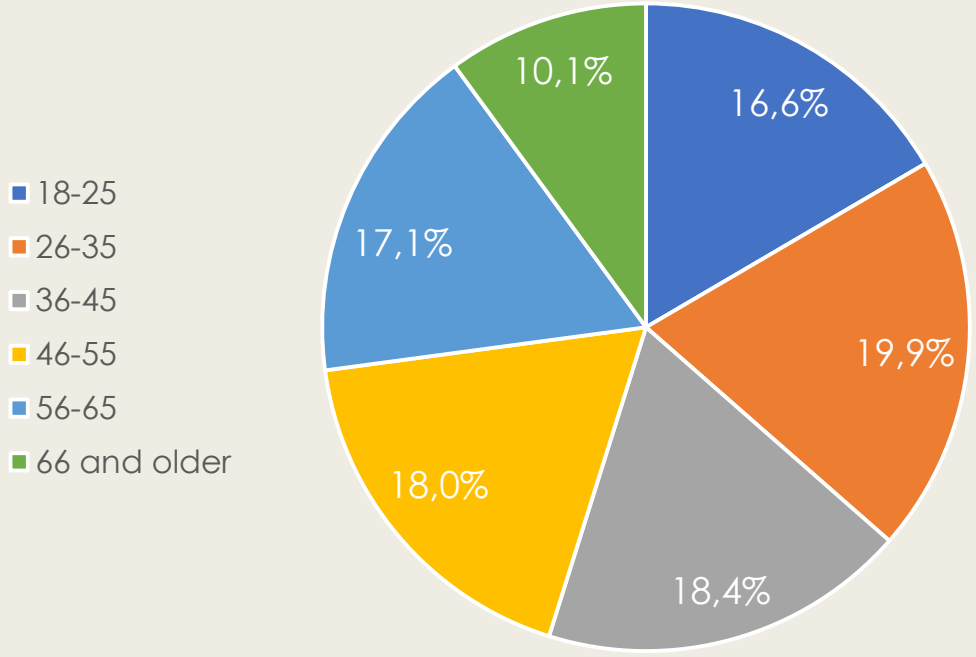
1.1. Place of residence (N=1500)



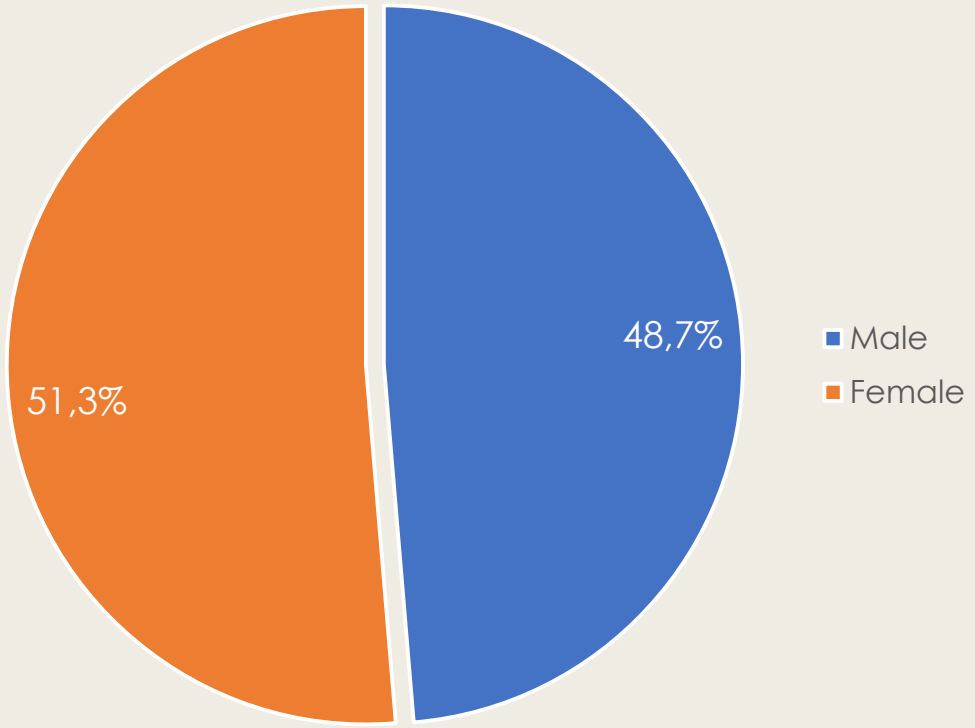
1.2. Type of settlement (N=1500)



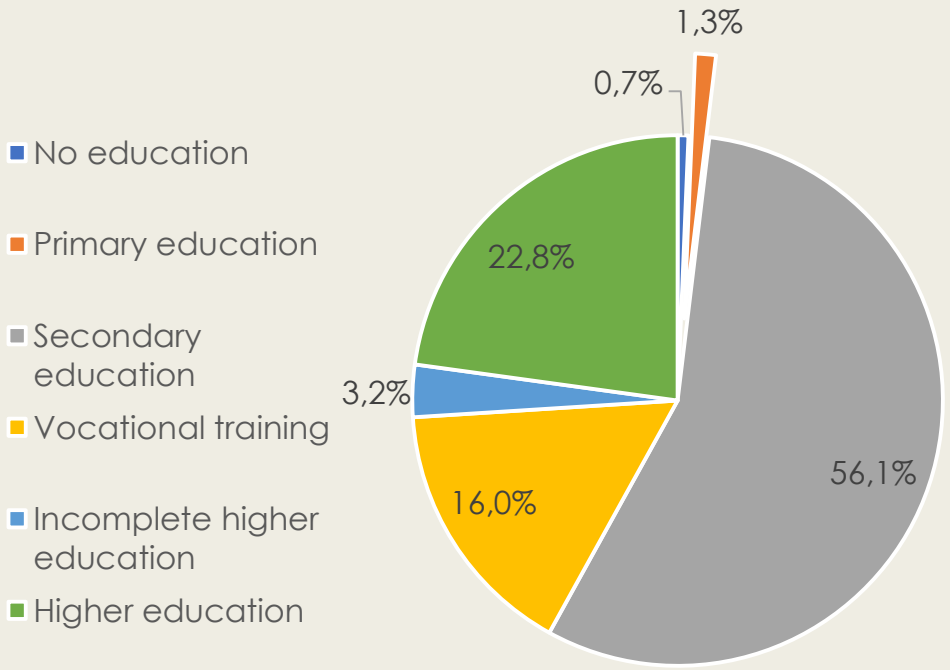
1.3. Age (N=1500)



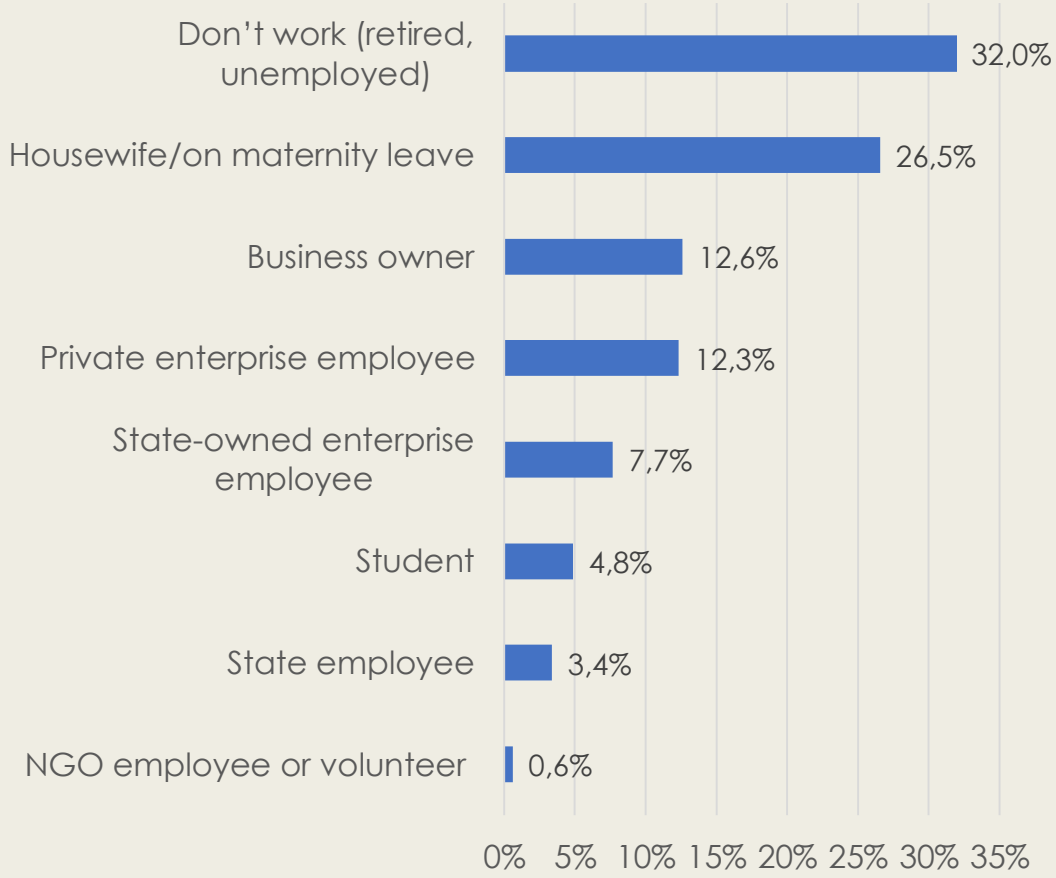
1.4. Gender (N=1500)



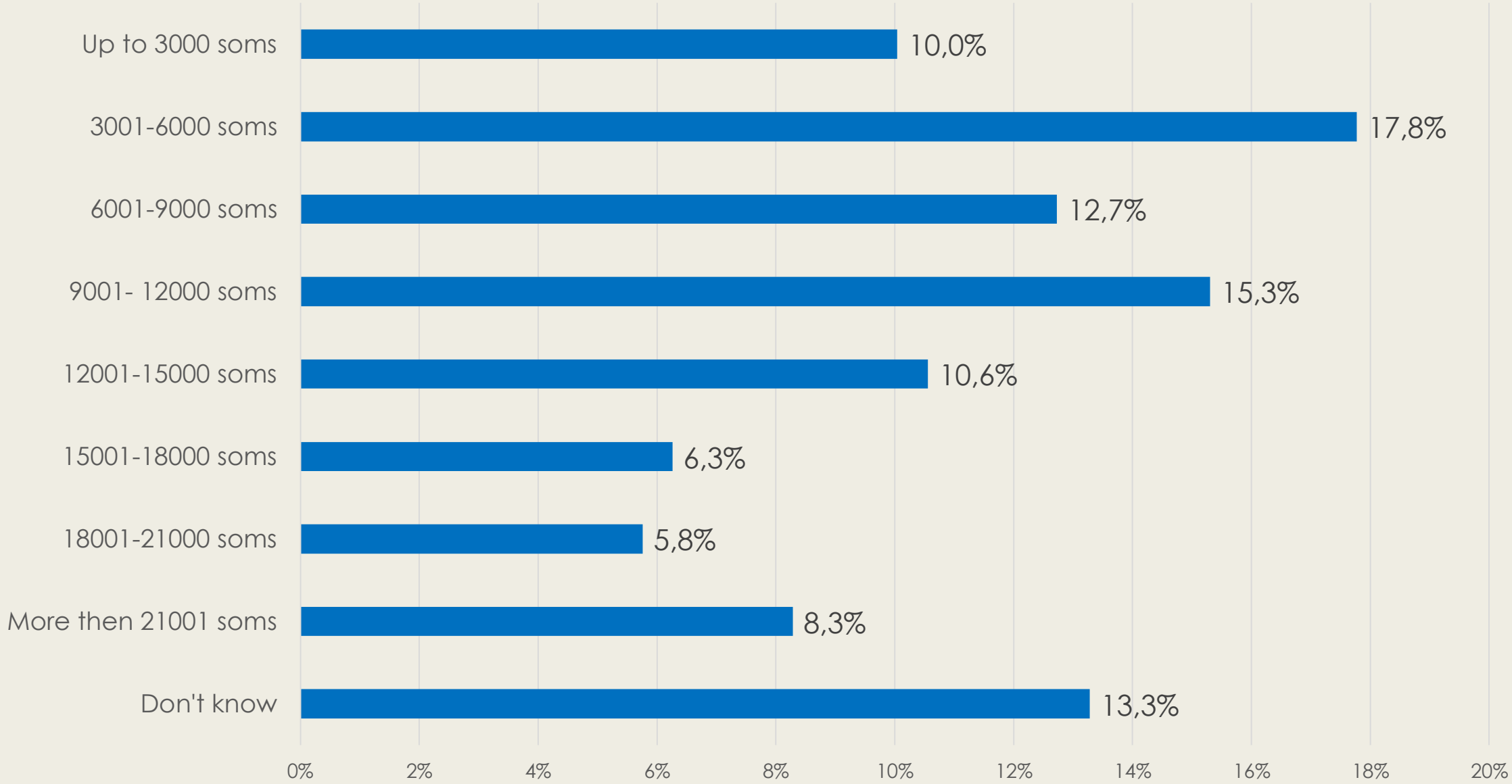
1.5. Education (N=1500)



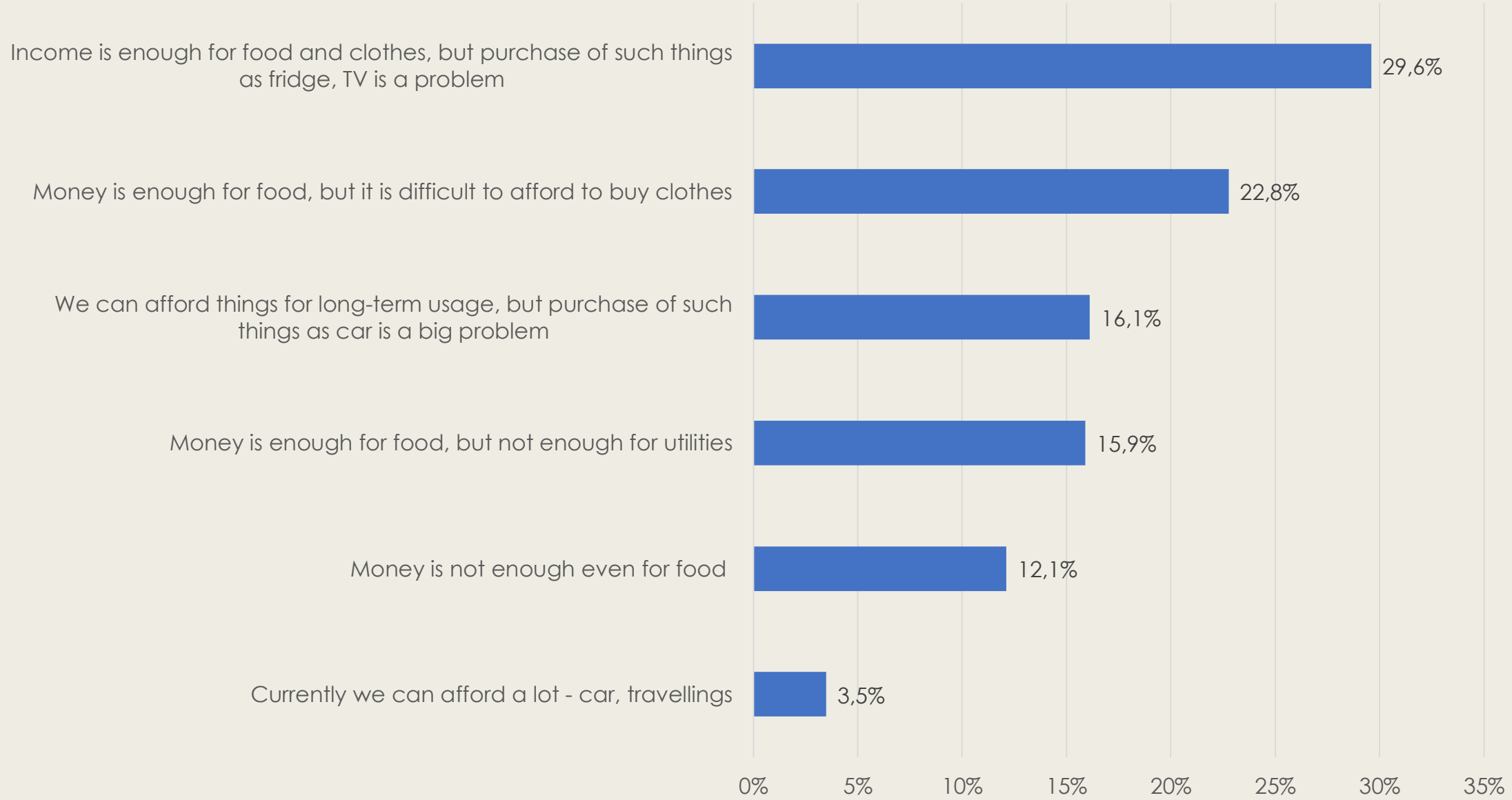
1.6. Employment



1.7. What is a monthly income of your household in soms? (N=1500)



1.8. How would you assess financial situation in your family? (N=1500)



2. Pre-election situation in Kyrgyzstan through the eyes of citizens

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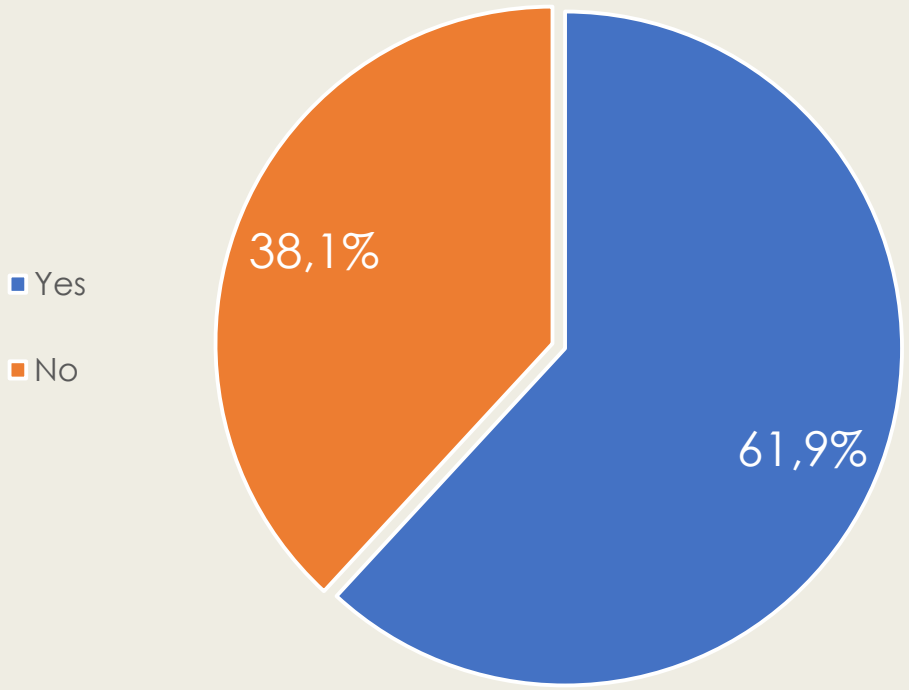
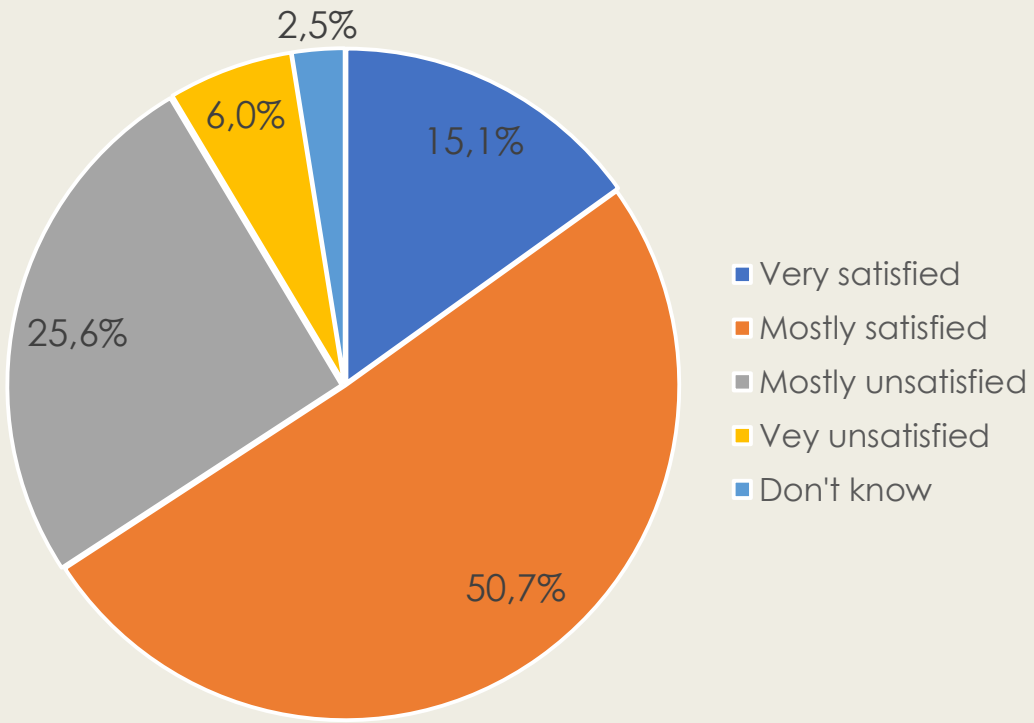
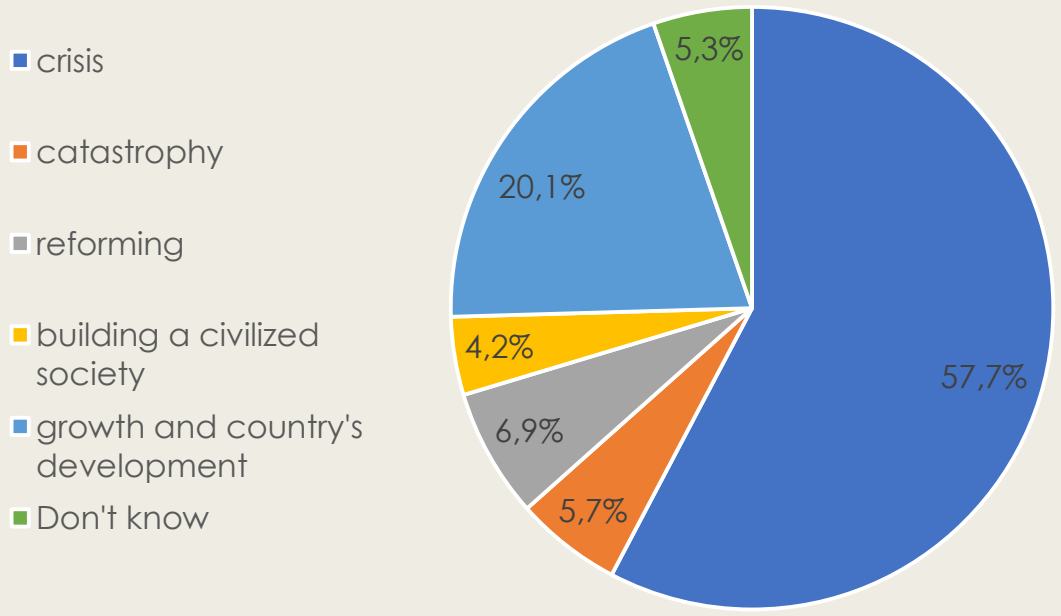
2.1. Do you think that Kyrgyzstan is a legal democratic state? (N=1500)



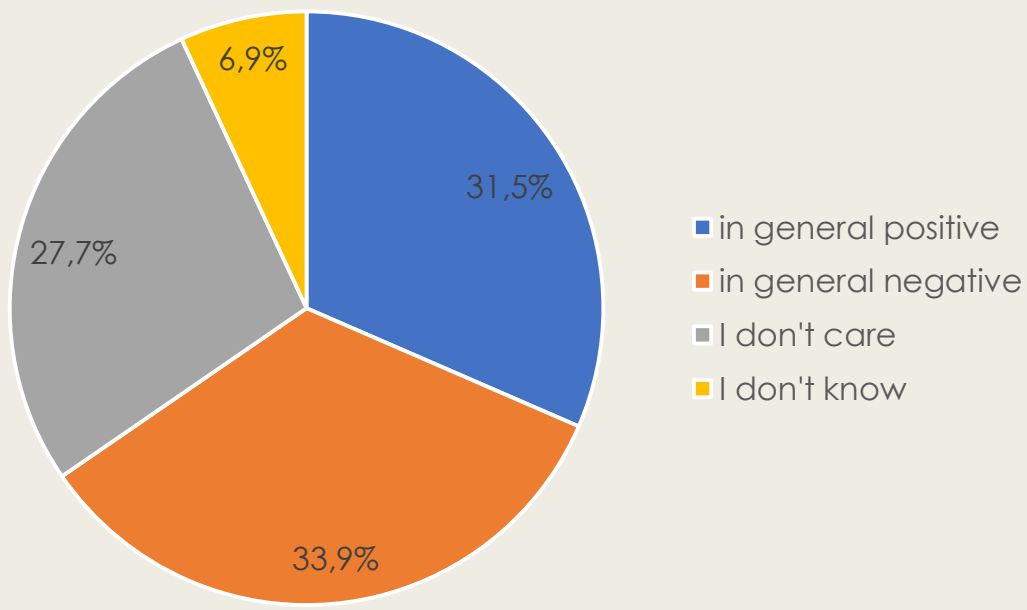
2.2. If yes, then how much are you satisfied with development of democracy in Kyrgyzstan? (N=937)



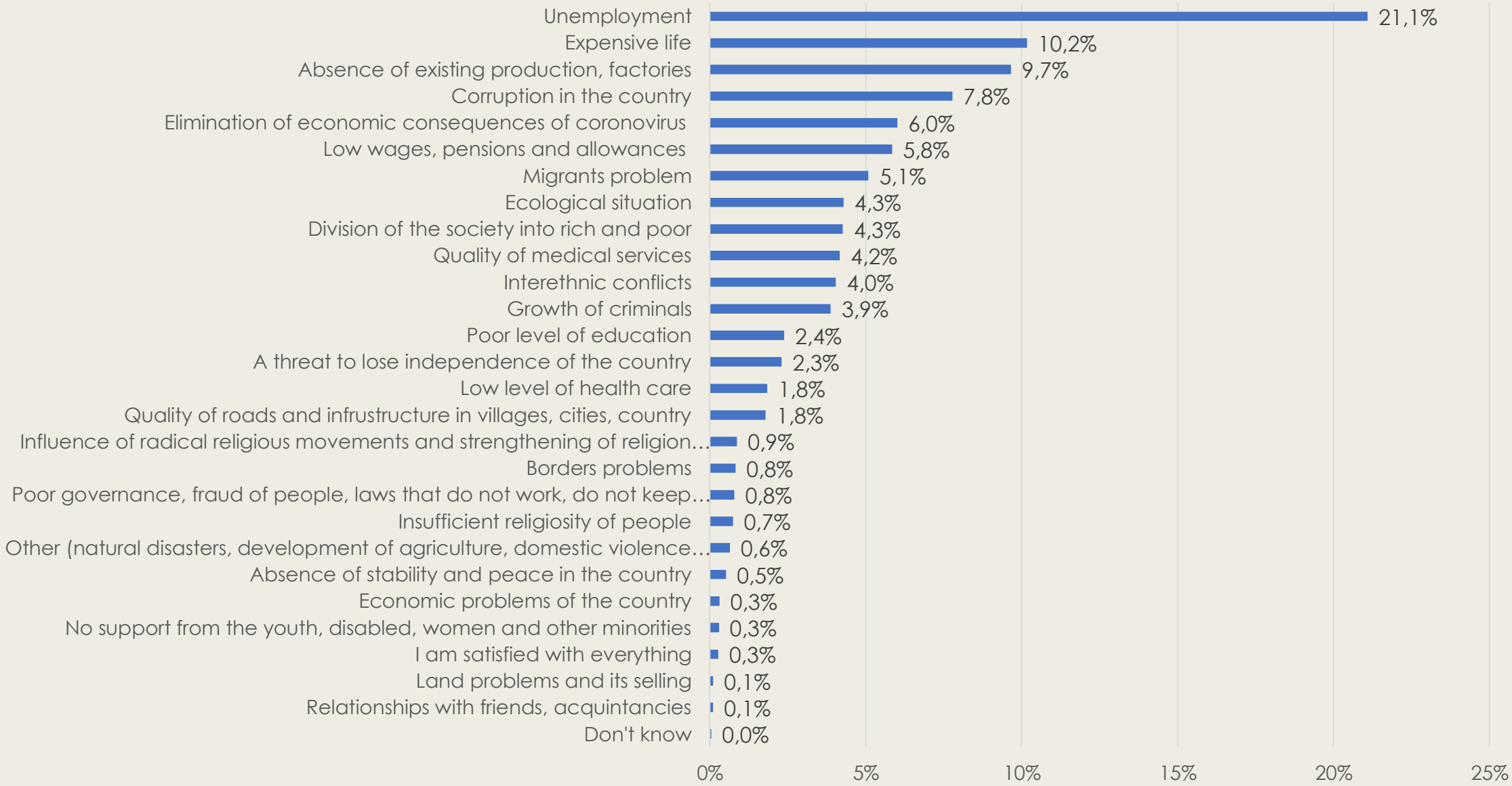
2.3. Which of the following statements is closer to your personal assessment of the current situation in the country? (N=1500)



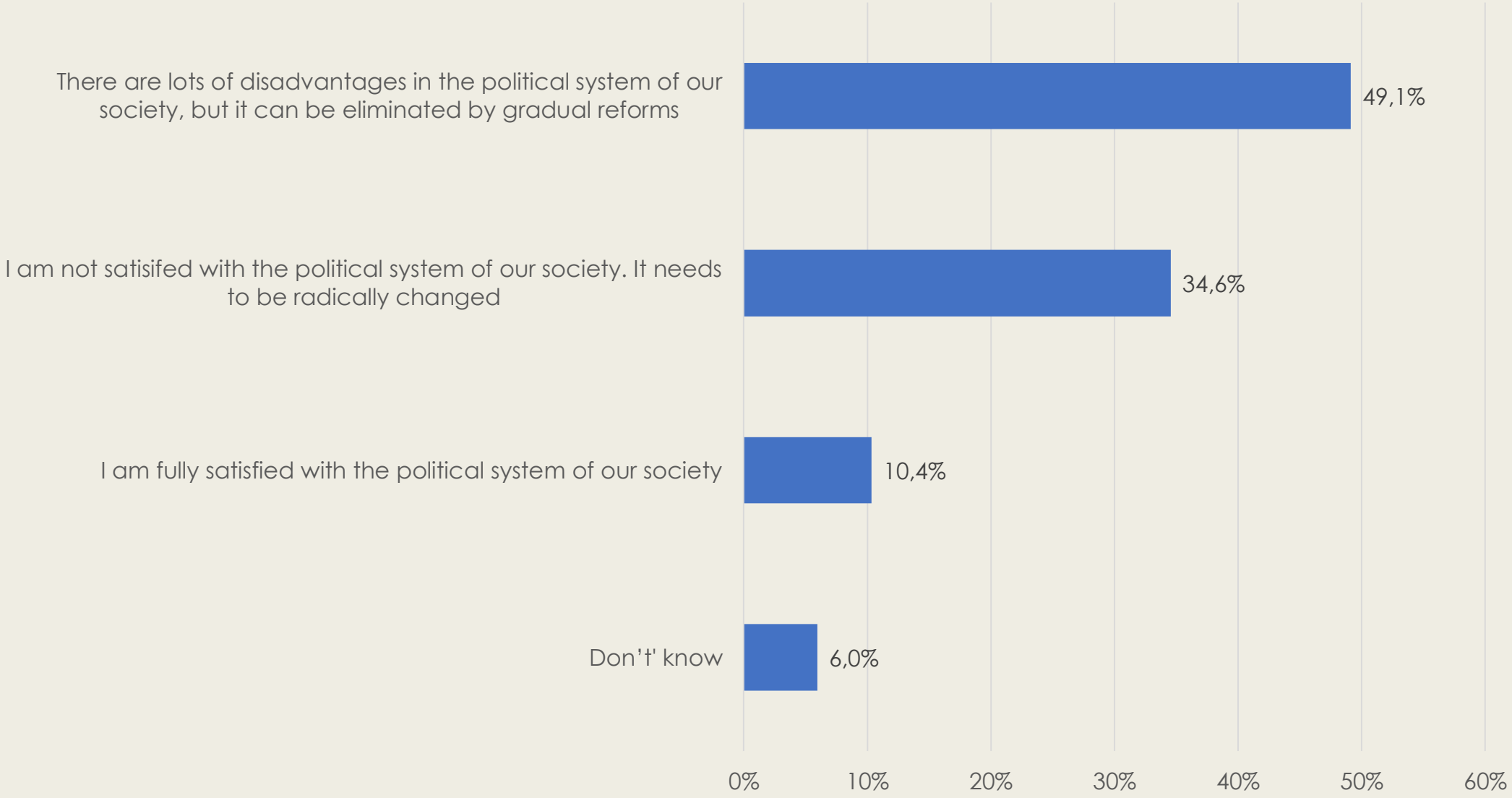
2.4. What is your attitude towards economic policy governed by the leadership of the country? (N=1500)



2.5. What concerns you the most on a country level? (N=1500)



2.6. Which of the following statements about the political system do you mostly agree with? (N=1500)



3. COVID-2019 & 2020 Parliamentary election

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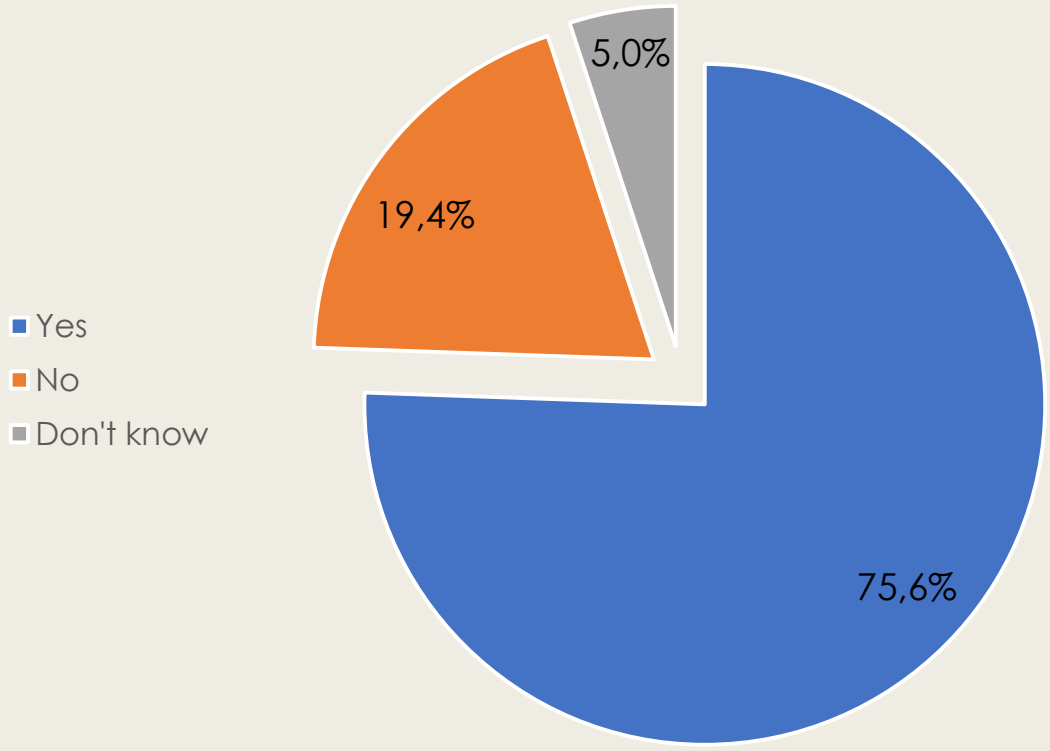
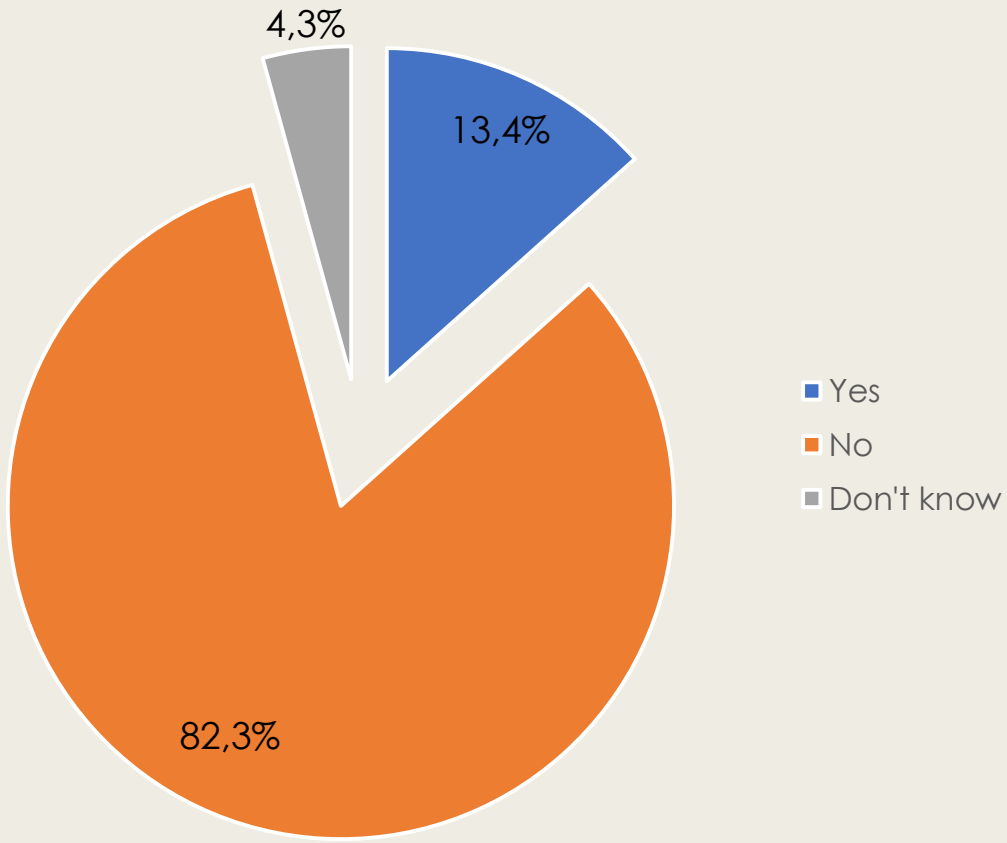
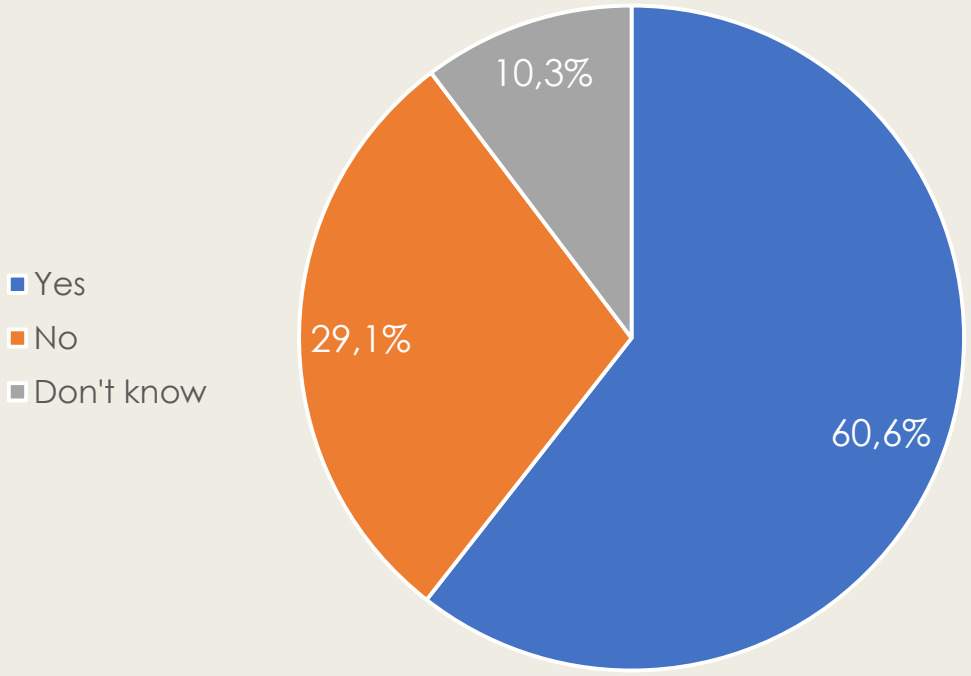
3.1. Do you plan to vote in the parliamentary elections in the fall of 2020? (N=1500)



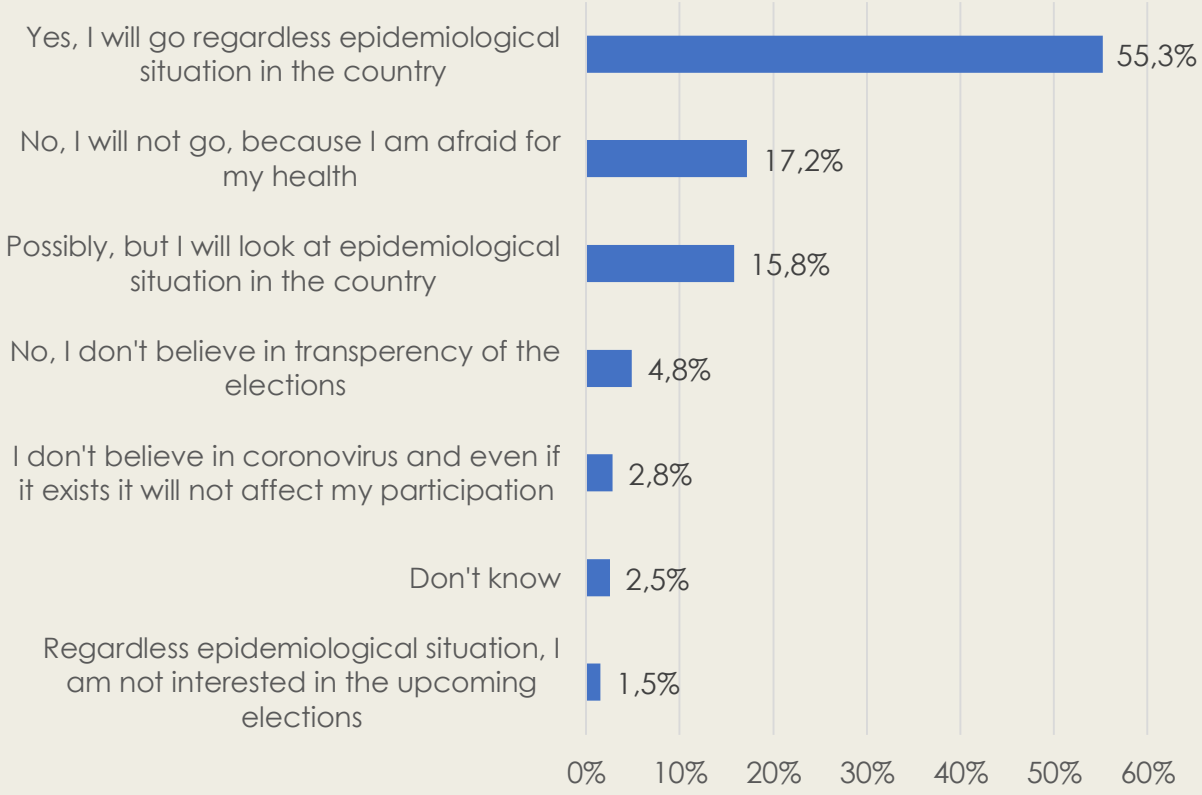
3.2. If yes, have you already decided which party you will vote for? (N=1137)



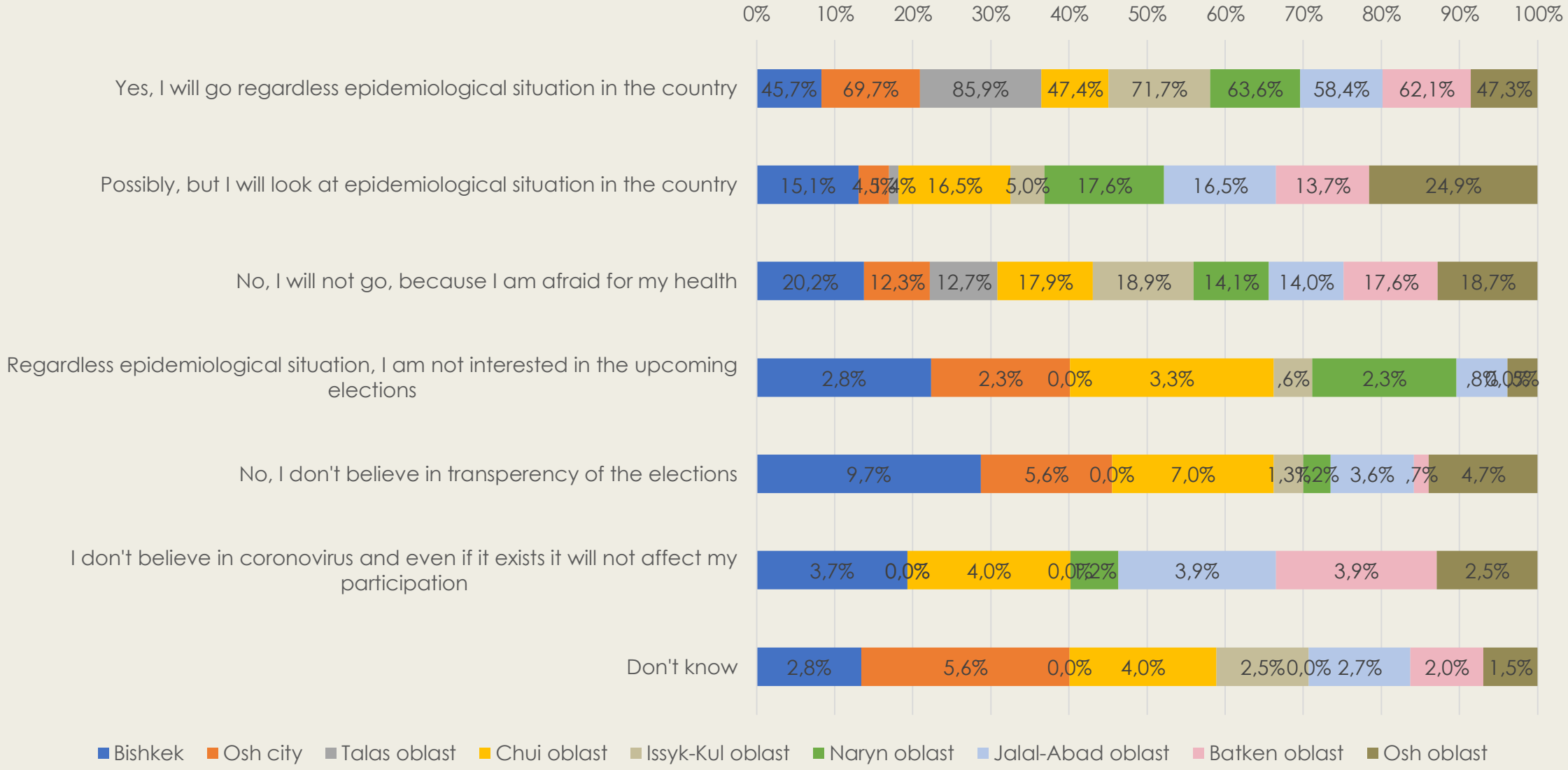
3.3. Given the COVID-19 how should parliamentary election be conducted in autumn in your opinion? (N=1500)



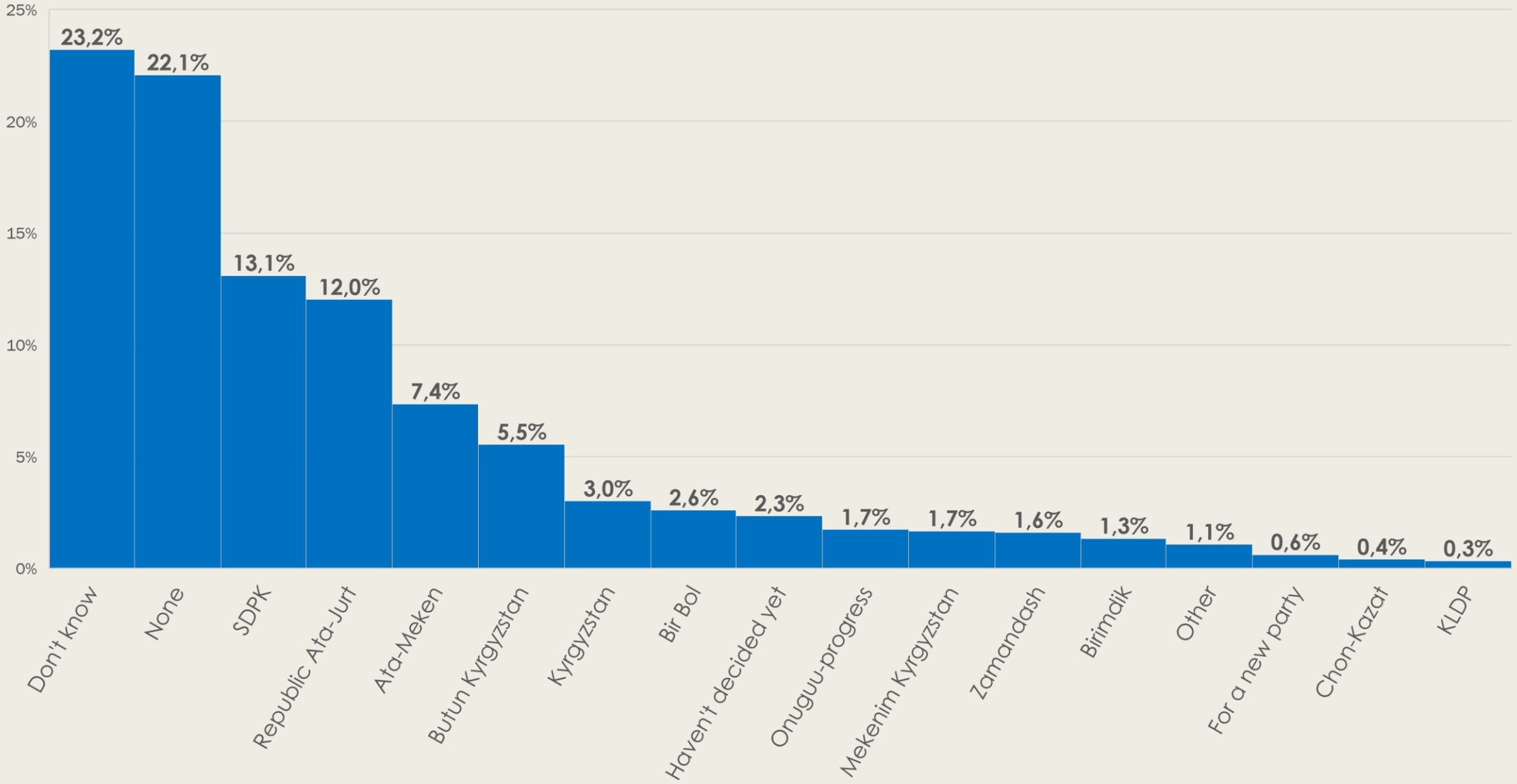
3.4.1. Will you be ready to vote in parliamentary election in autumn 2020 regardless the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic? (N=1500)



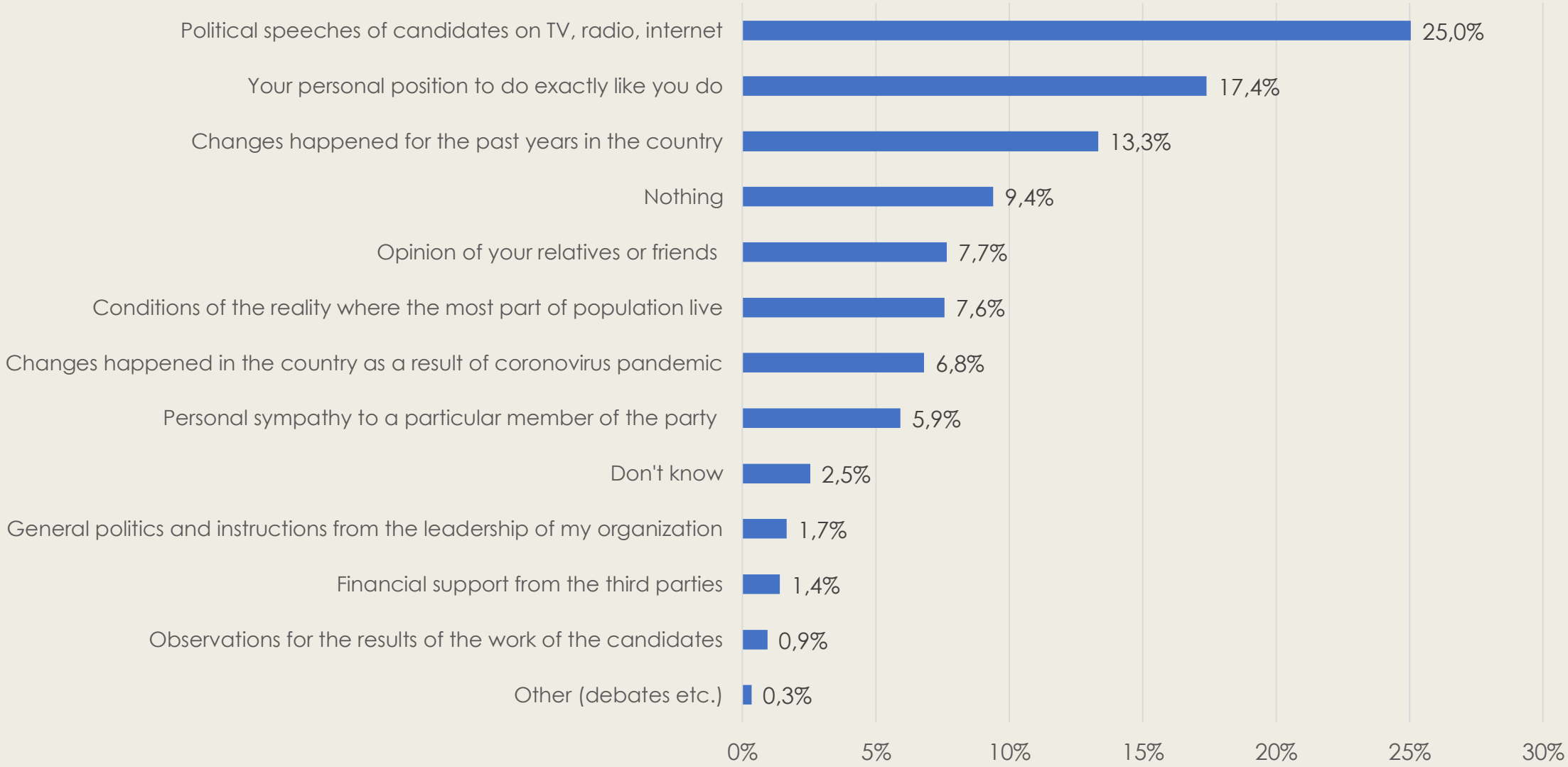
3.4.2. Will you be ready to vote during parliamentarian elections in autumn 2020 regardless the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic? (N=1500)



3.5. If elections are tomorrow which party would you vote for? (N=1137)



3.6. Apparently, what can affect your position towards the upcoming parliamentary elections? (N=1799)



4. Kyrgyzstanis' expectations and preferences

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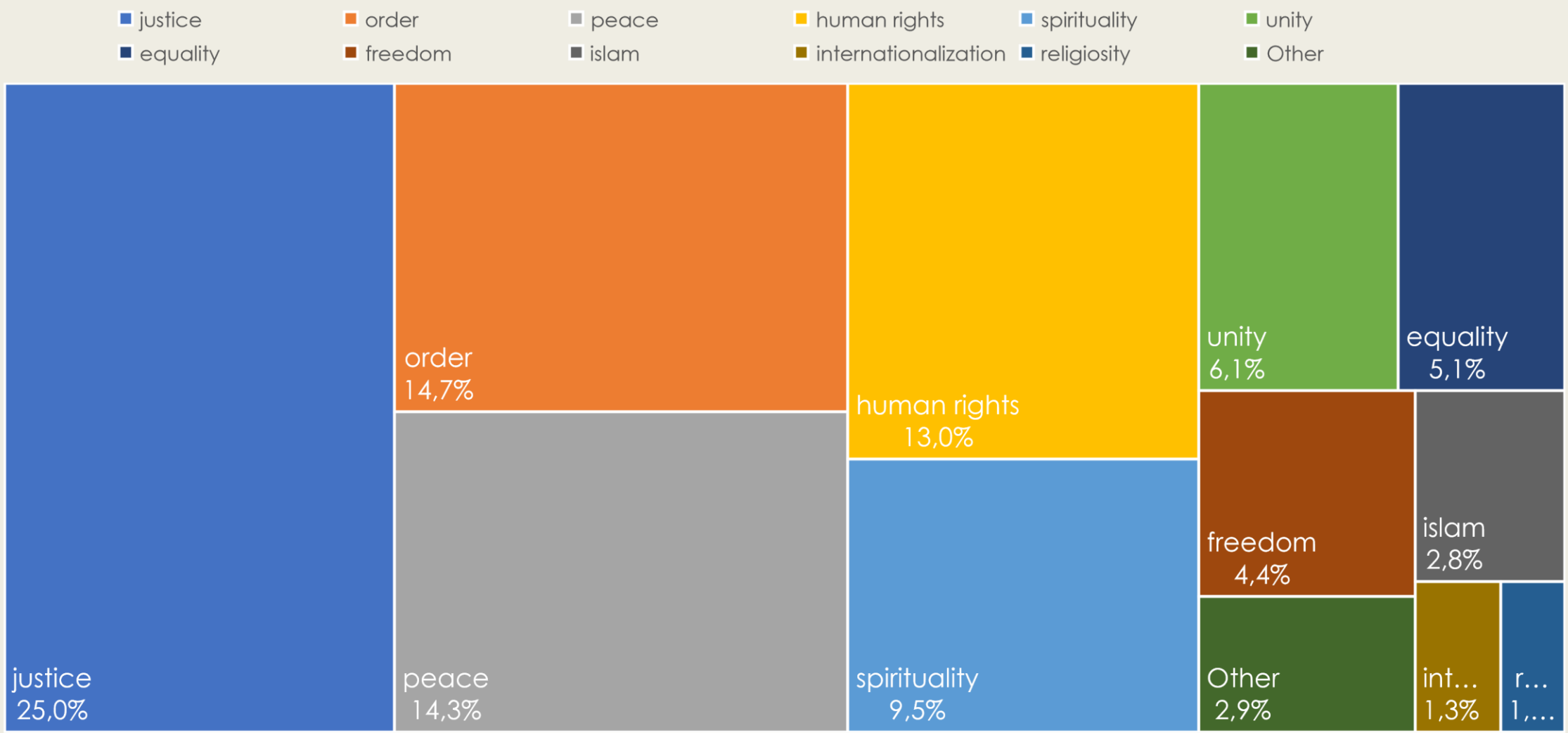
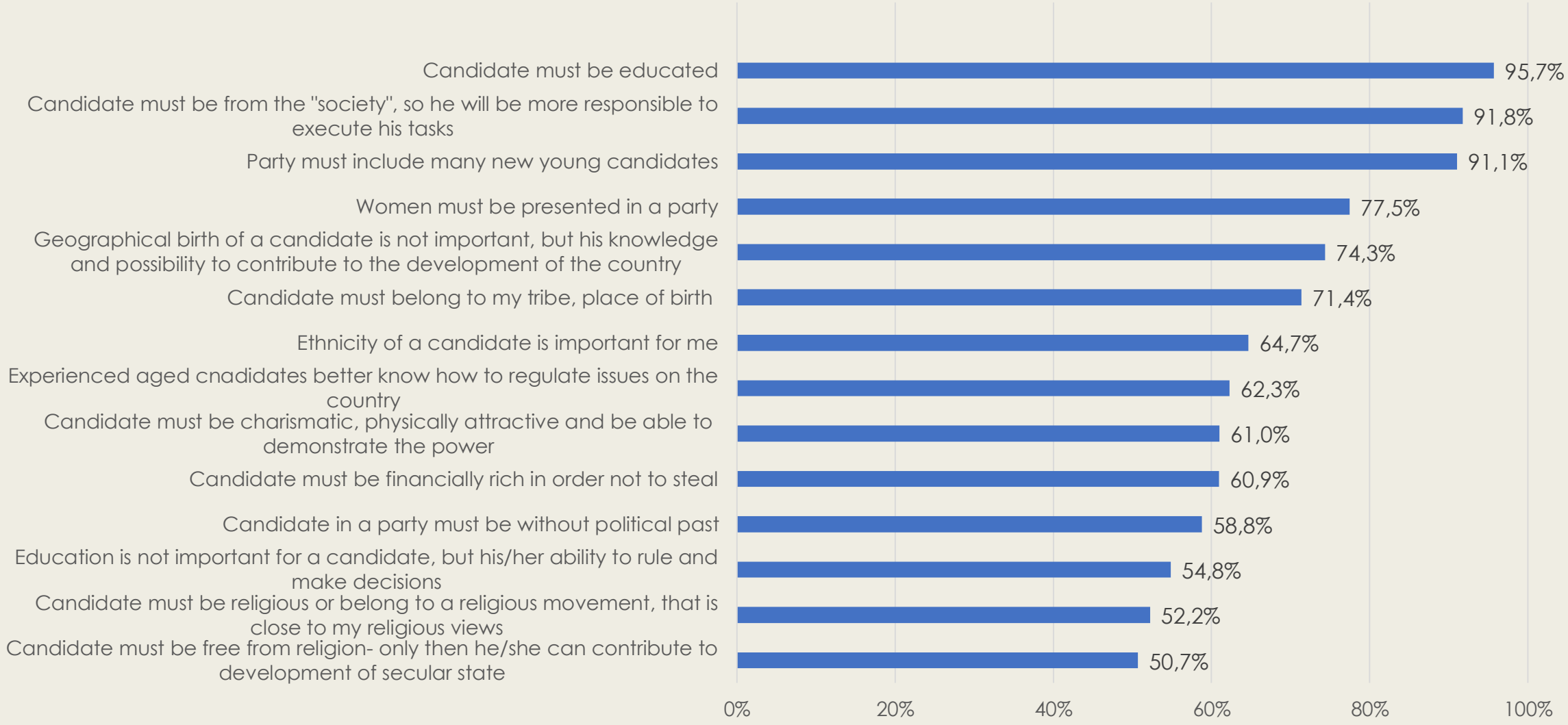
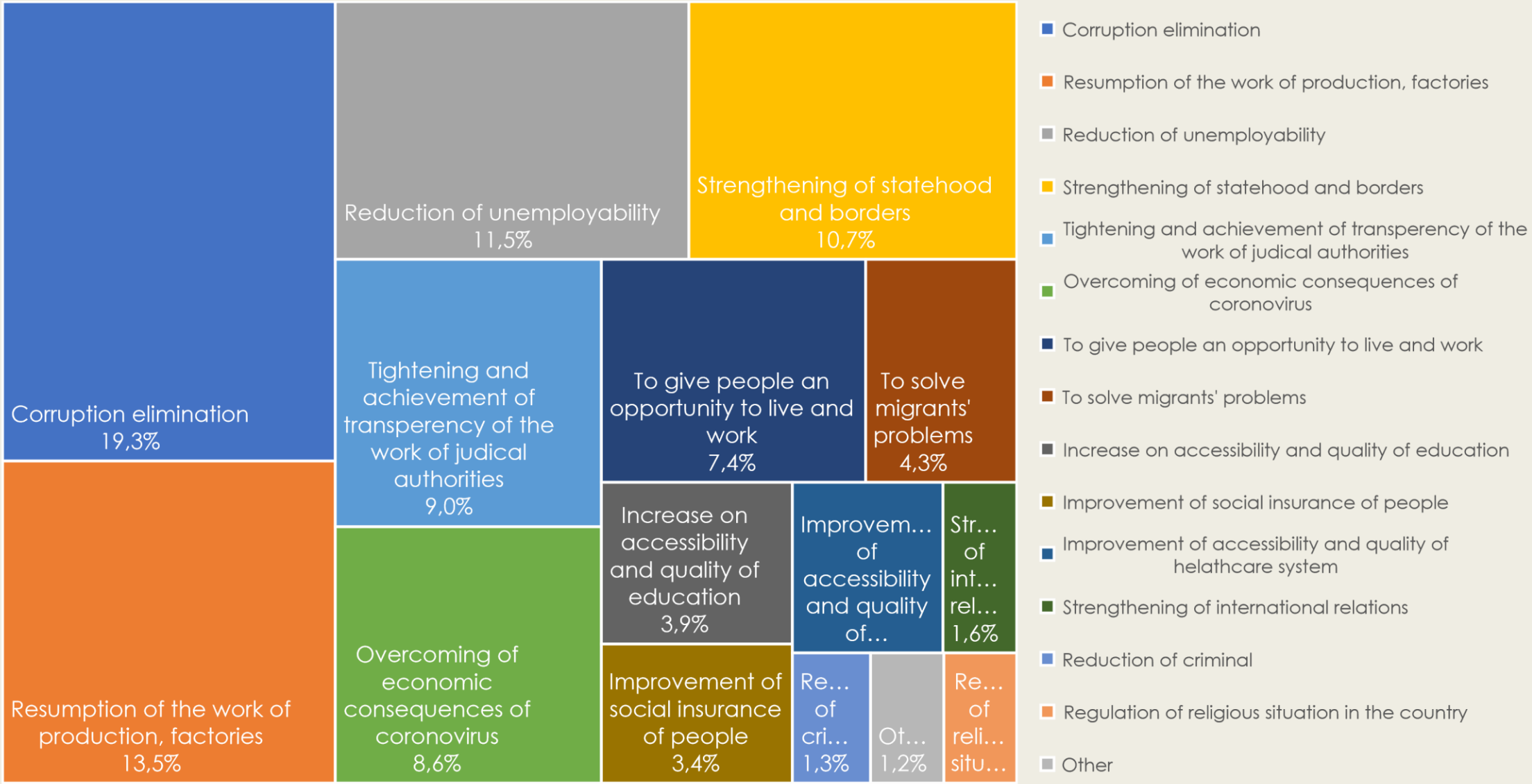
4.1. In your opinion, what are the three main definitions that must become a basis of the policy of the next paraliament of the Kyrgyz Republic and a slogan of election campaign of different parties? (N=4466)



4.2. Preferences to candidates to Jogorku Kenesh and factors, that can influence the decisions of electorate (N=1500)



4.3. In your opinion, what are the main problems that the new parliament should focus on (identify 3 most urgent problems)? (N=4489)



5. Sources of information

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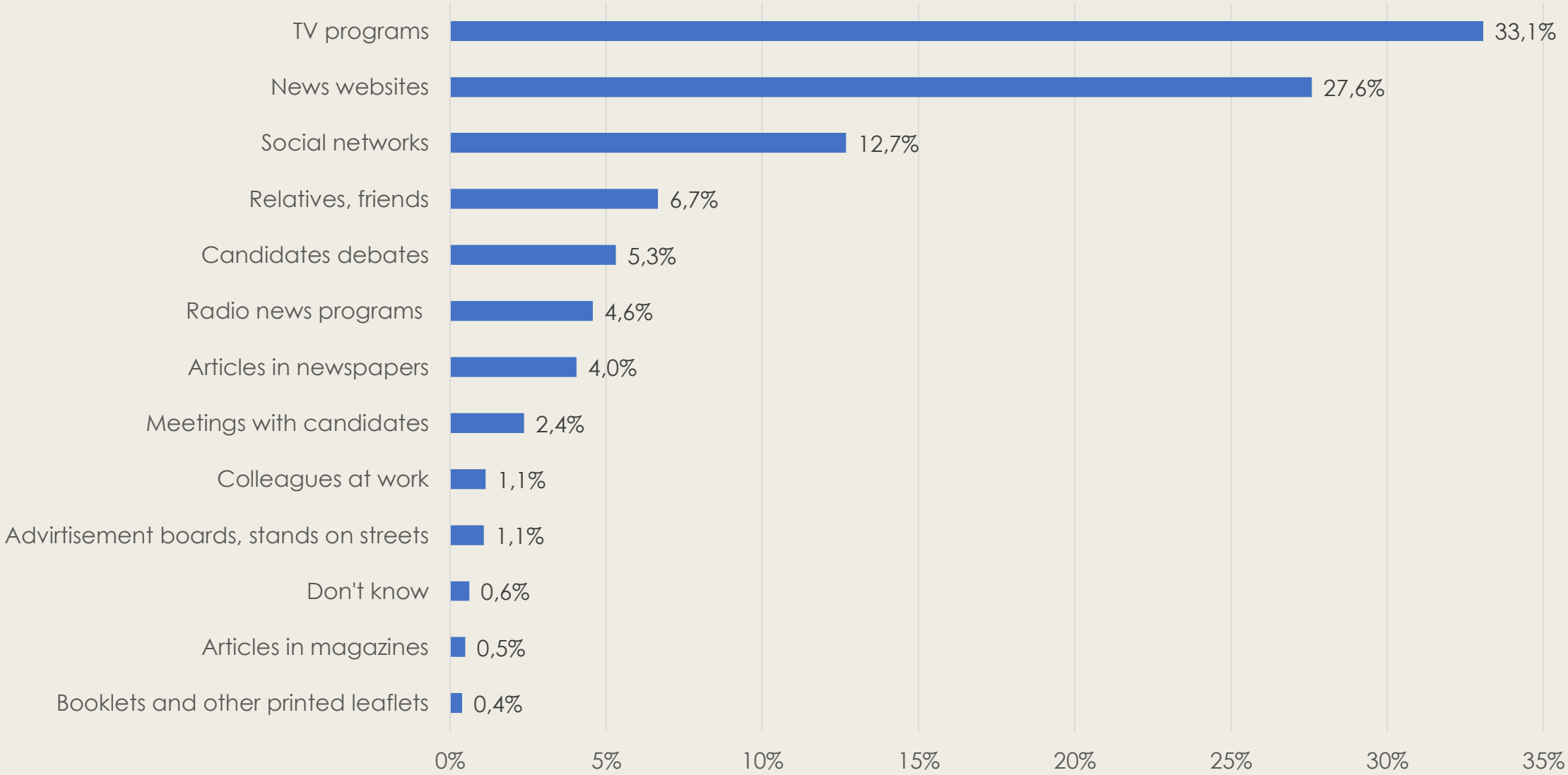
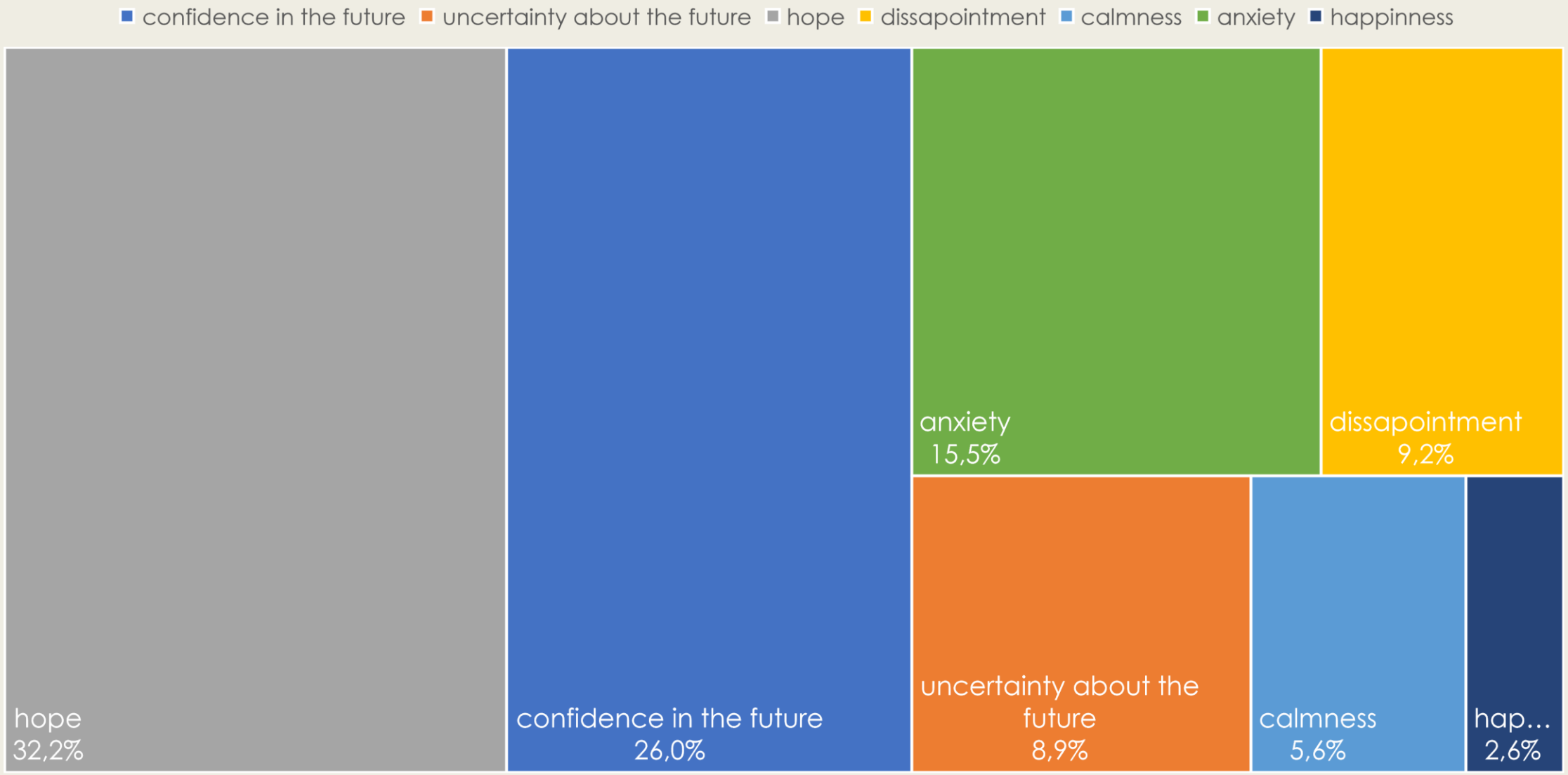
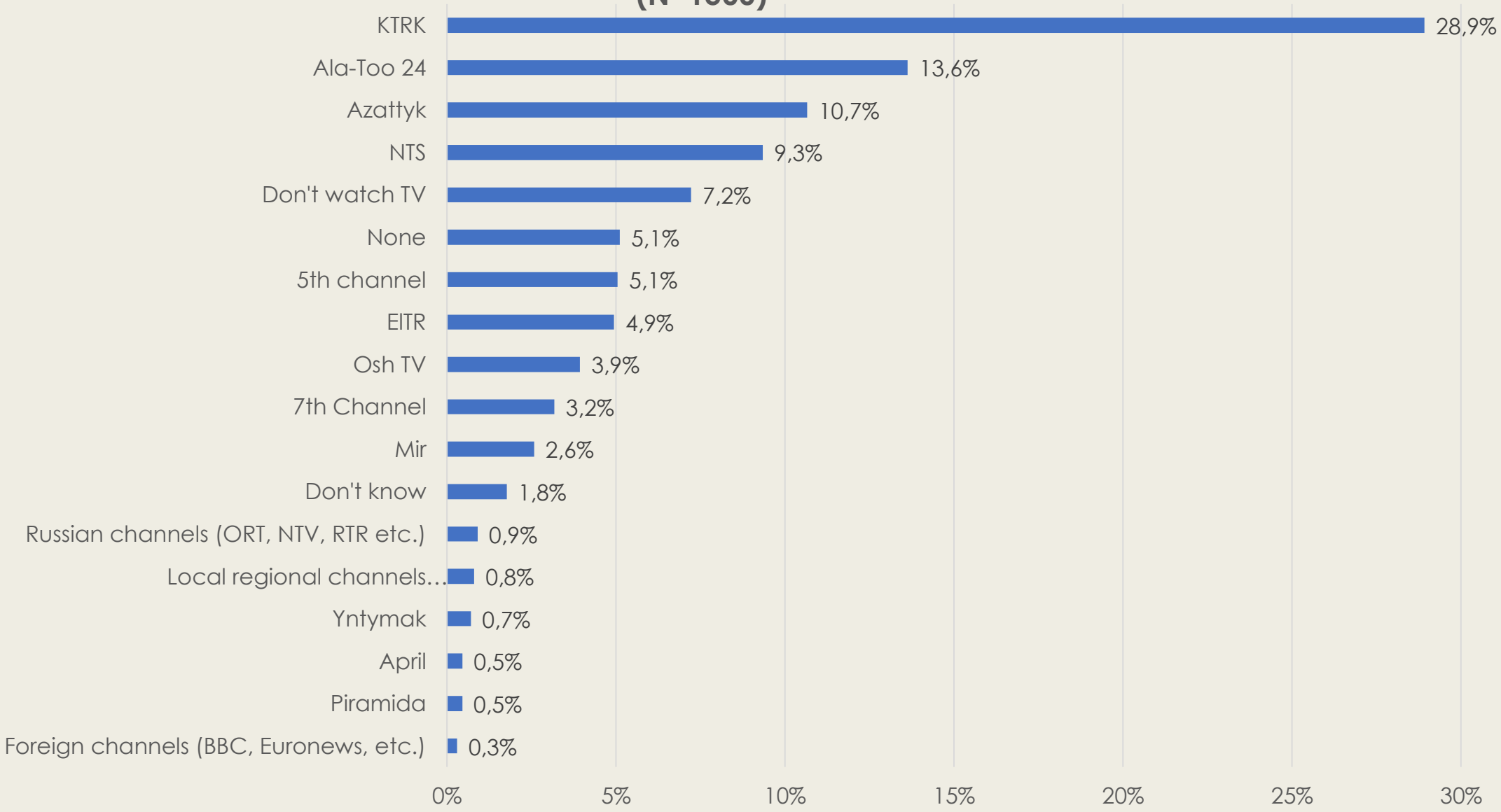
5.1. Which of the following sources do you use to receive political information? (N=2932)



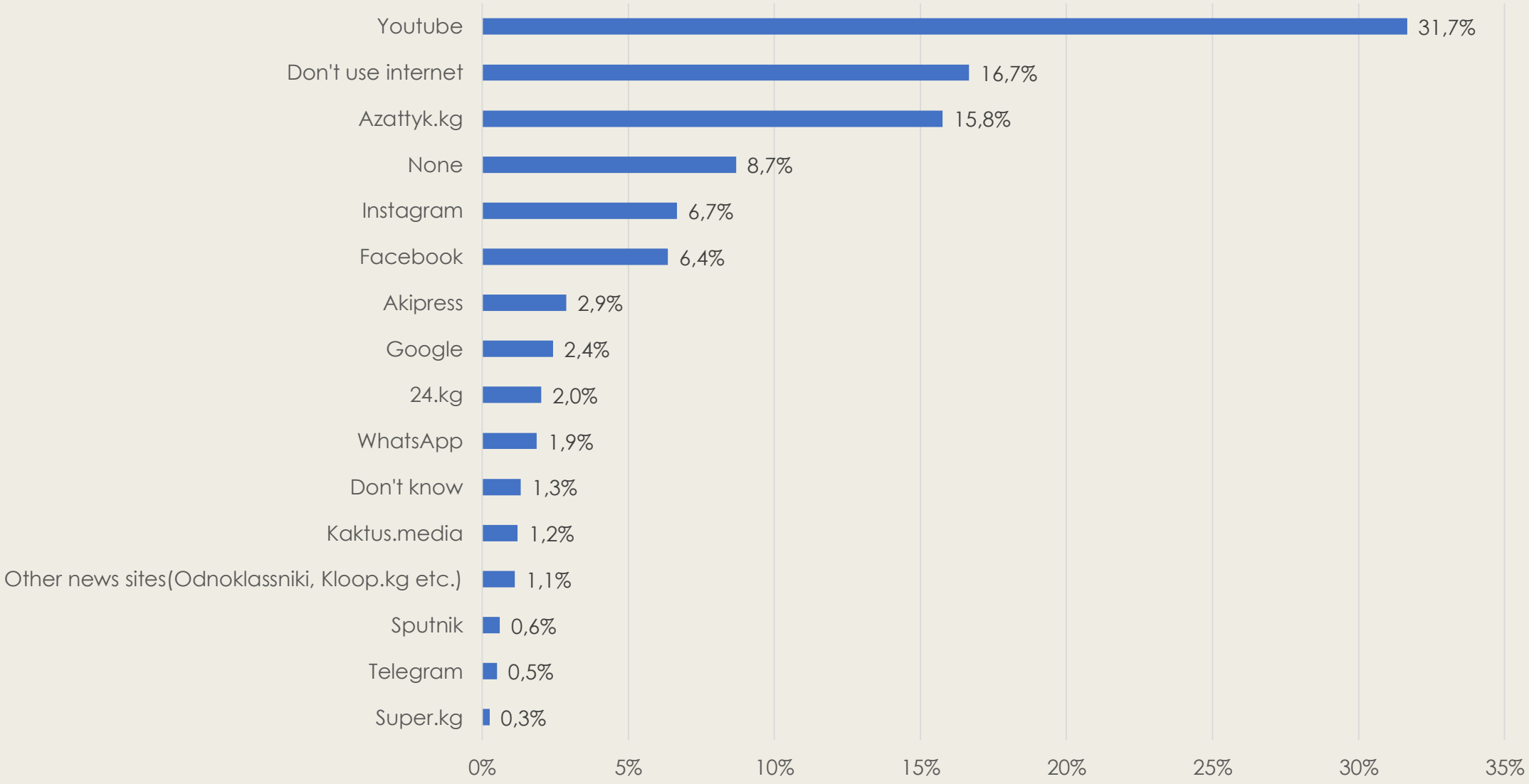
5.2. Normally, what do you feel when watching local TV and radio programs, and news in internet and newspapers? (N=1931)



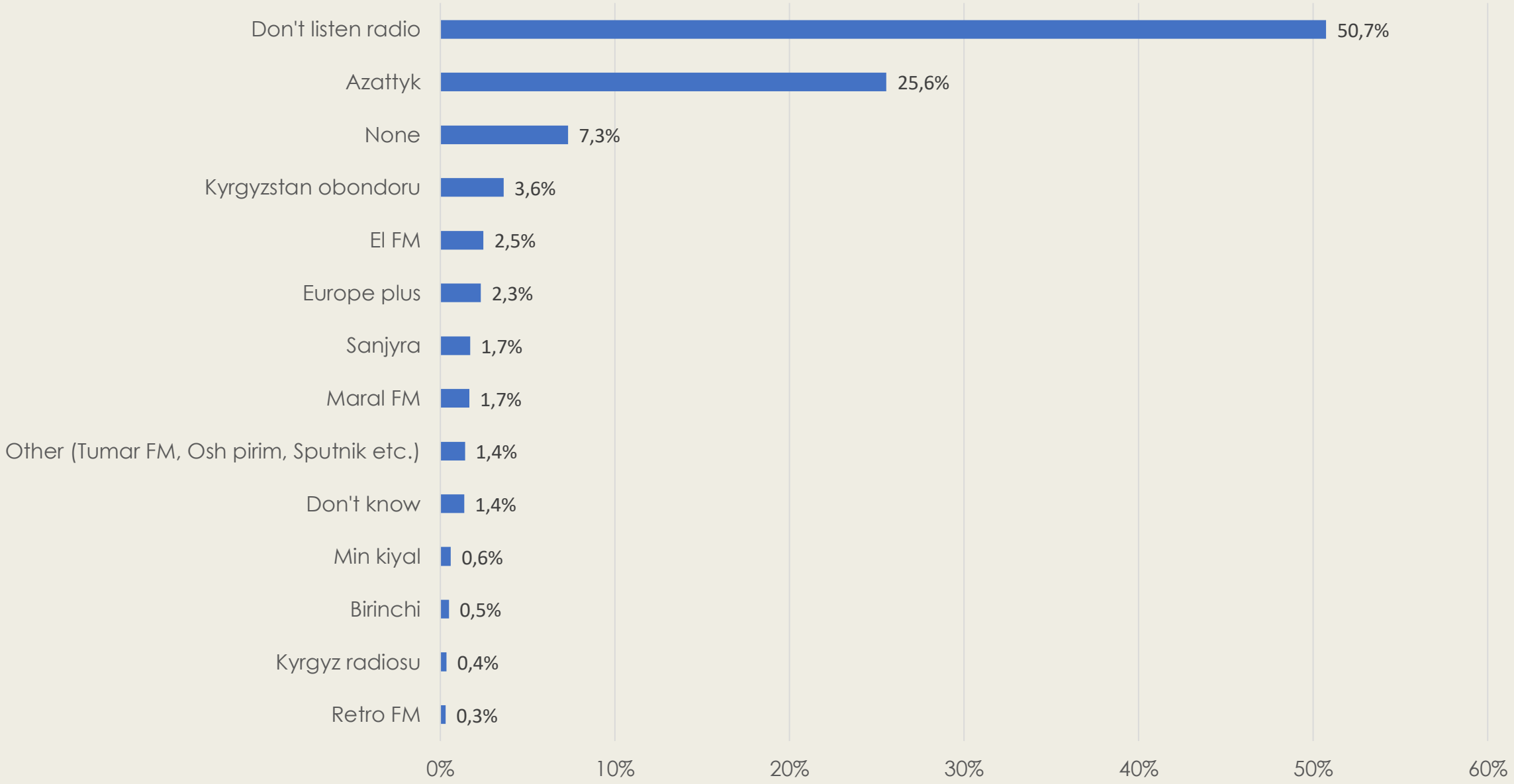
5.3. News and political information of which TV channels do you trust the most? (N=1500)



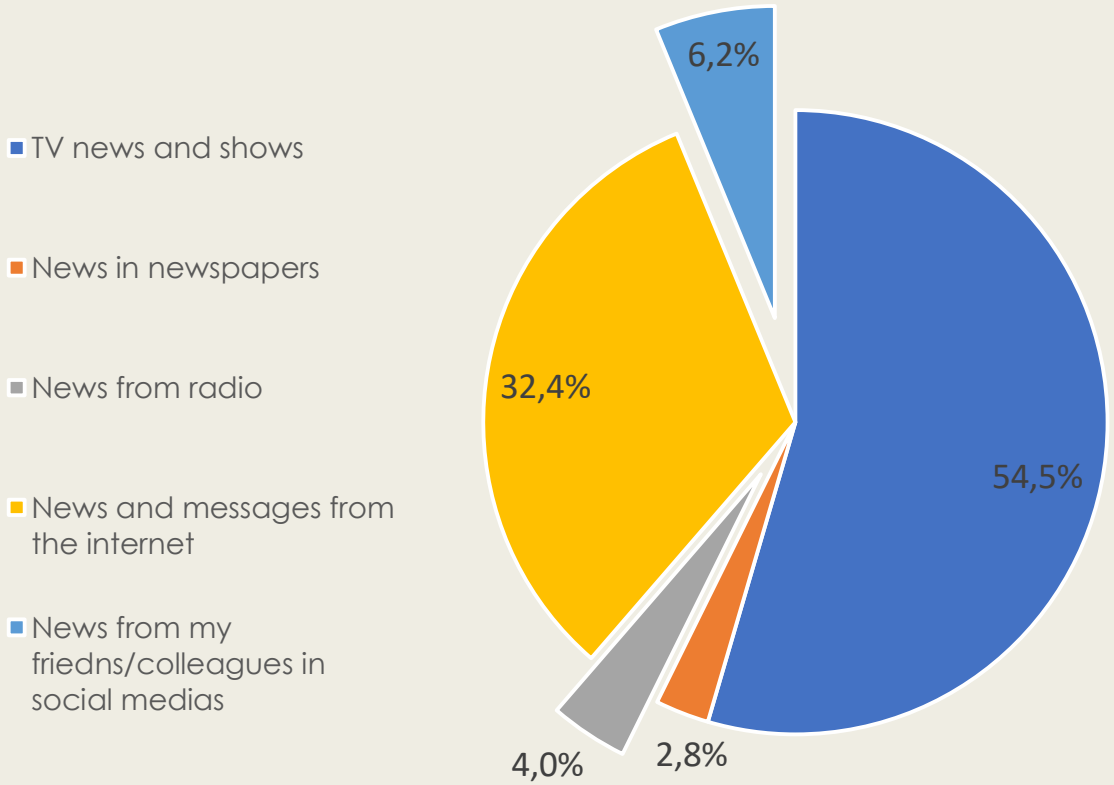
5.4. News and political information of which web-site/internet sources do you trust the most? (N=1500)



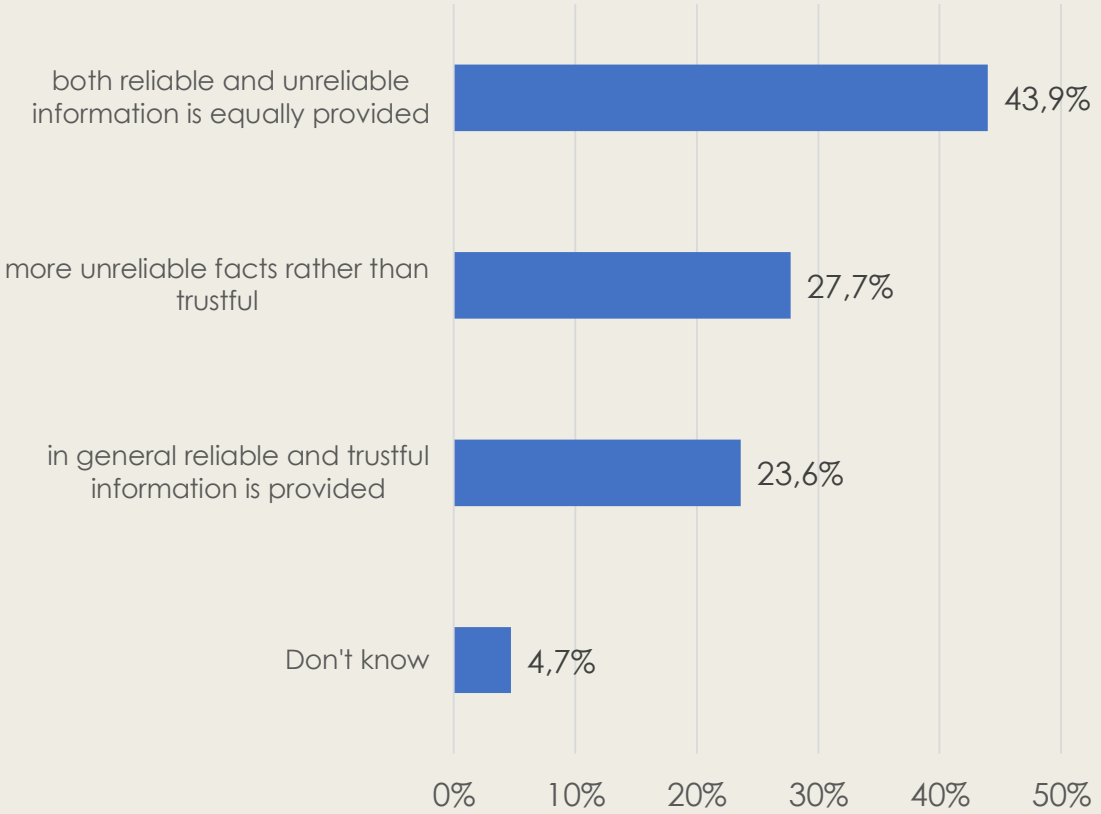
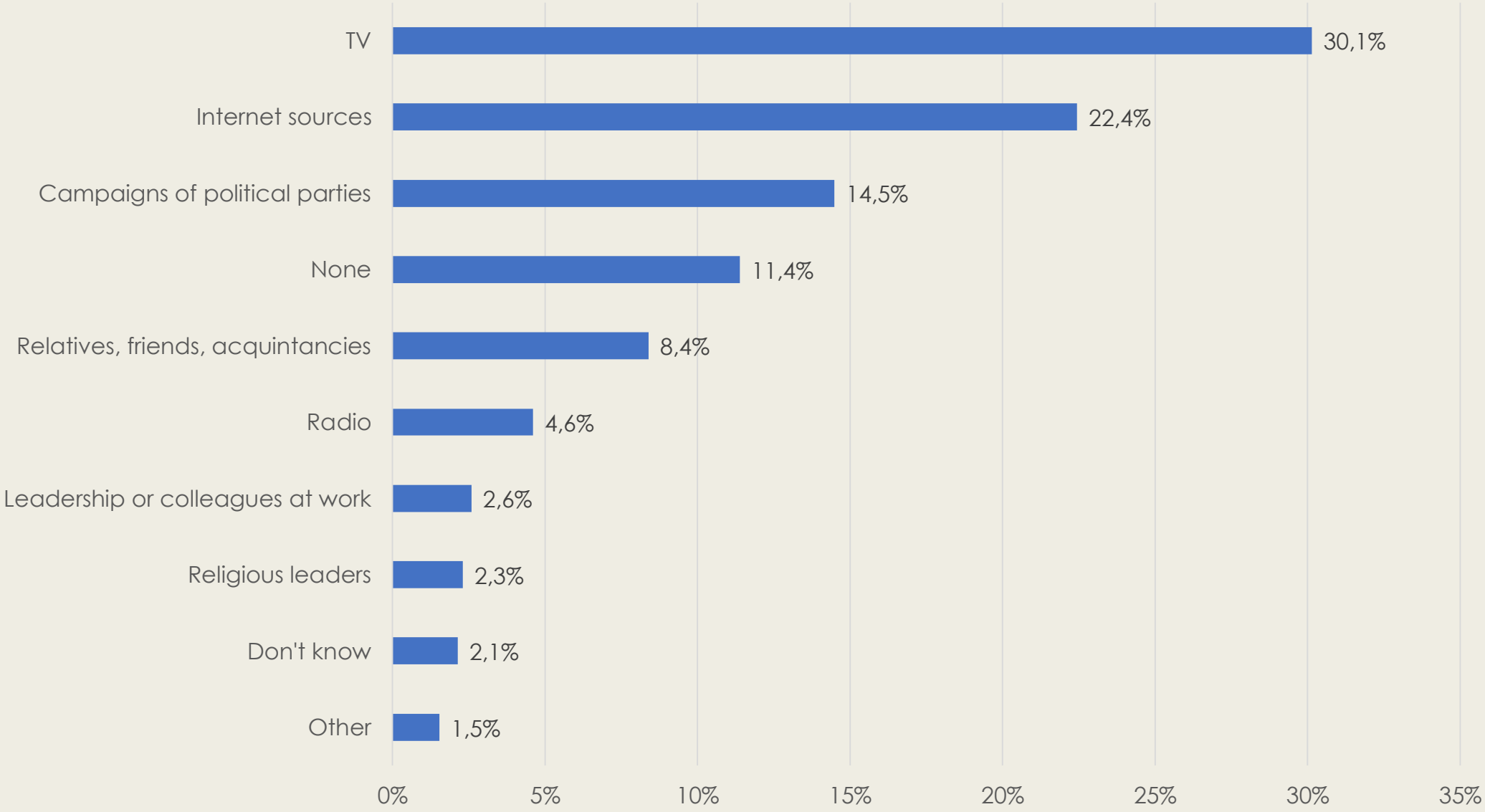
5.5. News and political information of which radio station do you trust the most? (N=1500)



5.6. Which resources do you trust the most? (N=1500)



5.7. How would you assess credibility of mass-media that you read/watch/listen? (N=1500)



5.8. How do you think which information sources will influence to your decision to participate in voting during the upcoming parliamentary elections? (N=1876)