



## VIOLATIONS DURING ELECTIONS IN THE OPINION OF KYRGYZ PEOPLE



### **VOTE BUYING AND MISUSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES**



Elections to the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic on October 4, 2020 and Early Elections of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic elections on January 10, 2021

## About Us

The “Common Cause” Public Foundation is a non-profit organization established to monitor elections at all levels in the Kyrgyz Republic, implement voter education projects, and promote greater citizen participation in governance processes.

The mission of the “Common Cause” Public Foundation is to facilitate the creation of opportunities for citizens to influence the quality of decisions made in the country through public involvement, discourse and oversight.

This public opinion survey was conducted as part of the voter education component of the project "Independent Election Observation in the Kyrgyz Republic", implemented by the "Common Cause" Public Foundation with the support of USAID.

The team of the "Common Cause " Public Foundation believes that the results of the public opinion survey will help inform the citizens of the country, the media, political parties, civil society institutions and decision-makers about important election issues and identify areas for improvement.

# Summary

Vote buying and misuse of administrative resources are among the most serious electoral violations. They have the potential to seriously undermine public trust in the electoral system and elected bodies and are a widespread phenomenon in many countries. These two problems have become an issue of priority for the state agencies involved in elections in Kyrgyzstan in the last few years but recent parliamentary and early presidential elections suggest that more needs to be done in this regard.

Common Cause asked citizens of Kyrgyzstan what they think about vote-buying and misuse of administrative resources. The survey was conducted by the "Common Cause" Public Foundation from February 19 to February 28, 2021. The survey results are broken down by gender, age, place of residence and regions.

Common Cause strongly believes that vote buying as well as misuse of administrative resources should be studied further in order to develop efficient measures to prevent such violations since the transparency of electoral processes and trust in the elections *inter alia* depend on how the society and state bodies counter those issues. While the survey did not specifically focus on the past early presidential elections or parliamentary elections, it may help us develop a better understanding of where we are and what needs to be done.

## Key findings on vote buying

### General

- 38% of Kyrgyzstanis heard of vote buying in the recent elections in all regions of the country, with the highest rates in Bishkek (48%), Chui Oblast (45%), and Naryn Oblast (43%). Among those, who said they have heard about vote buying in recent elections, there are more urban citizens (42%), young people aged 18-29 years (42%) and people aged 70 and older (45%). Of those who have heard of vote-buying, 27% have witnessed vote-buying themselves with 47% having heard about it from people within their community. Those who heard about it from social media were 19% and mass media 11%. " These responses are a sub-set, right? If this is the case, it means that the total number of those who witnessed it themselves is around 11%
- 69% of respondents believe that vote buying influence the decision of voters to vote for a certain candidate. The highest share such answers belong to Naryn (78%), Bishkek city (74%), and Issyk-Kul (72%).
- 79% of respondents said that this problem should be addressed. The highest numbers of citizens who wish this problem were solved reside in Bishkek city, Naryn oblast, Chui oblast and Issyk-Kul oblast. 98% of respondents consider vote buying unacceptable.

# Summary

## *Key reasons why vote buying is happening?*

- Key reasons why voters sell their votes include the desire to temporarily get advantage of it (46%), poverty (33%), “don’t know the answer” (15%), and fear or coercion (6%). The most offered favors in exchange for a vote are providing utility communication networks (gas, water, electricity) to the households (64%) and money (32%).

## *Is there a punishment for vote buying?*

- 90% of respondents have not heard of punishments for vote buying. 8% knew of such instances, 4% did not know the answer. Almost the same percent of people (89%) did not recall that vote selling was followed by a punishment either.

## *Suggested solutions*

- 31% respondents do not know how to prevent vote buying while the most popular methods among those who suggested a solution are civic education focusing on reasons why vote buying is harmful (24%) “improving welfare of the population” (21%) and “motivate voters to vote based on their preferences (19%). Citizens also said in order to stop political parties and candidates from attempting to buy votes, they should be banned from holding public offices (32%), didn’t know the answer (27%), candidates/political parties should be disqualified (18%), and higher fines should be introduced (14%).

## **Key findings on the misuse of administrative resources**

### **General:**

- A similar level of respondents had heard of abuse of administrative resources (41%) as has not (47%) 11% did not know or had difficulty answering. The highest numbers are attributed to Bishkek (54%) and Naryn oblast (51). Of those, who have heard of such cases, 52% of respondents found out about it from people in their community.
- 65% believe that misuse of administrative resources affects the decision of voters to vote for a certain candidate, 8% would rather agree, and 6% disagree. The highest share who believe that misuse of administrative resources affects the decision of voters to vote for a certain candidate live in Naryn (75%), Osh city (71%) and Bishkek city (70%).
- 73 % see this as a problem that should be resolved, 8% do not agree.

# Summary

## *How did it happen?*

- Of those who had heard of abuse of administrative resources, the most common type of abuse is “pressuring or coercing voters (employees) to vote for a certain candidate/political party” (48%). Abusing public funds was rated second (25%), followed by using resources (buildings, vehicles, equipment) (17%) and don’t know the answer/difficult to answer (10%).
- The highest number of people, who saw pressuring or coercion of voters such as employees to vote a certain way, live in Naryn oblast (62%), Talas oblast (59%), Osh city (58%), Issyk-Kul oblast (55%).
- In Osh oblast, respondents saw and heard more cases of abuse of public funds to benefit a candidate/party (45%), compared to other regions.

## *Is there a punishment?*

- 80% of respondents have not heard of cases when an abuse of administrative resources was followed by a punishment.

## Conclusions:

The analysis of the data implies that the existing measures to mitigate vote buying and misuse of administrative resources can be seen as ineffective by the society. This may indicate several things:

- ✓ The violations are poorly addressed by the relevant state bodies
- ✓ There is a distinct lack of information about the cases investigated and measures taken
- ✓ The existing measures are not enough to prevent and counter such violations

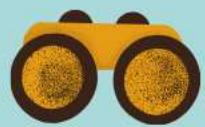
# **Public opinion poll results**



## Vote buying:



**38% - have heard of  
vote buying.**



**27% - of them have  
witnessed vote buying.**



**Residents of Bishkek, Chui  
and Naryn have heard of  
vote buying most of all.**

The survey was conducted by the Common Cause Public Foundation from February 19, 2021 to February 28, 2021 in all regions of the Kyrgyz Republic. 1201 respondents older than 18 years old were interviewed throughout the country.

## WHAT DO KYRGYZ PEOPLE THINK ABOUT VOTE BUYING?



**69%**



THINK THAT VOTE BUYING AFFECT THE DECISION OF VOTERS TO  
VOTE FOR A CERTAIN CANDIDATE OR POLITICAL PARTY.



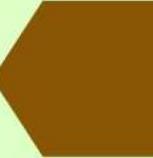
**79%**



STATED THAT THE PROBLEM OF VOTE BUYING NEEDS  
TO BE ADDRESSED.



**98%**

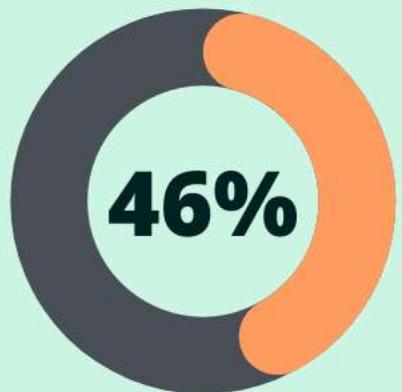


THINK THAT VOTE BUYING IS UNACCEPTABLE.

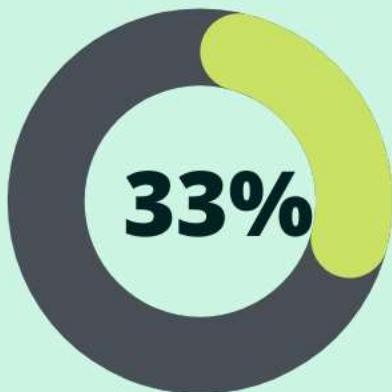
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# WHY DO VOTERS SELL THEIR VOTES?

**TO GET A TEMPORARY  
ADVANTAGE**



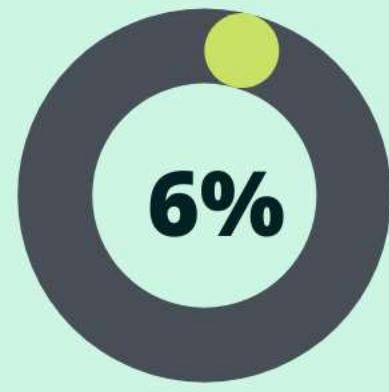
**POVERTY**



**DON'T KNOW OR  
FIND IT DIFFICULT  
TO ANSWER**



**FEAR OR COERCION**



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## WHAT IS OFFERED TO VOTERS IN EXCHANGE FOR A VOTE?



**64%**

**PROVIDING UTILITY  
COMMUNICATIONS  
NETWORKS  
(GAS, WATER, ELECTRICITY)**



**32%**

**MONEY**

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## HAVE KYRGYZ PEOPLE HEARD OF PUNISHMENTS FOR VOTE BUYING?

**90%**

OF RESPONDENTS HAVE NOT HEARD OF PUNISHMENTS FOR VOTE BUYING.



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## HAVE KYRGYZ PEOPLE HEARD OF PUNISHMENTS FOR SELLING VOTES?



**OF RESPONDENTS HAVE NOT  
HEARD OF PUNISHMENTS FOR  
SELLING VOTES.**

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## WHAT DO KYRGYZ PEOPLE PROPOSE TO STOP POLITICAL PARTIES AND CANDIDATES ATTEMPTING TO BUY VOTES?



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## WHAT DO KYRGYZ PEOPLE PROPOSE TO STOP THE PROBLEM OF SELLING VOTES?

**31%**

**DO NOT KNOW OR FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ANSWER**

**24%**

**THINK CIVIC EDUCATION  
FOCUSED ON REASONS WHY  
SELLING VOTES IS HARMFUL  
CAN SOLVE THE PROBLEM**

**21%**

**THINK THAT IMPROVING THE  
WELL-BEING OF THE POPULATION  
WILL SOLVE THE PROBLEM**

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## MISUSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES:



HAVE NOT HEARD OF ANY CASE WHEN AN OFFICIAL ABUSED HER/HIS POSITION OR  
RESOURCES IN FAVOR OF A CANDIDATE OR A POLITICAL PARTY

**47%**



HAVE HEARD OF MISUSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE  
RESOURCES.

**41%**



DO NOT KNOW OR FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ANSWER.

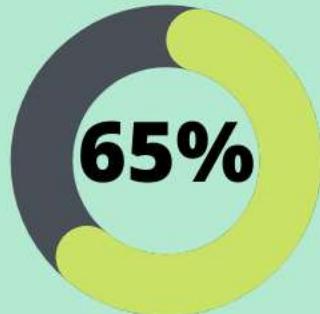
**11%**



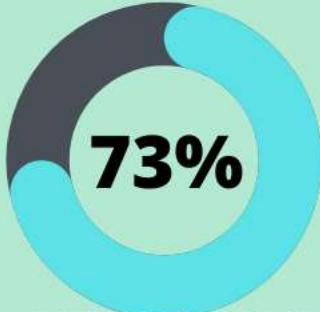
RESIDENTS OF **BISHKEK AND NARYN REGION** HAVE HEARD OF MISUSE  
OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES MOST OF ALL.

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## WHAT DO KYRGYZ PEOPLE THINK ABOUT MISUSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES?



**THINK THAT MISUSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES AFFECTS THE DECISION OF VOTERS TO VOTE FOR A CERTAIN CANDIDATE OR A POLITICAL PARTY.**

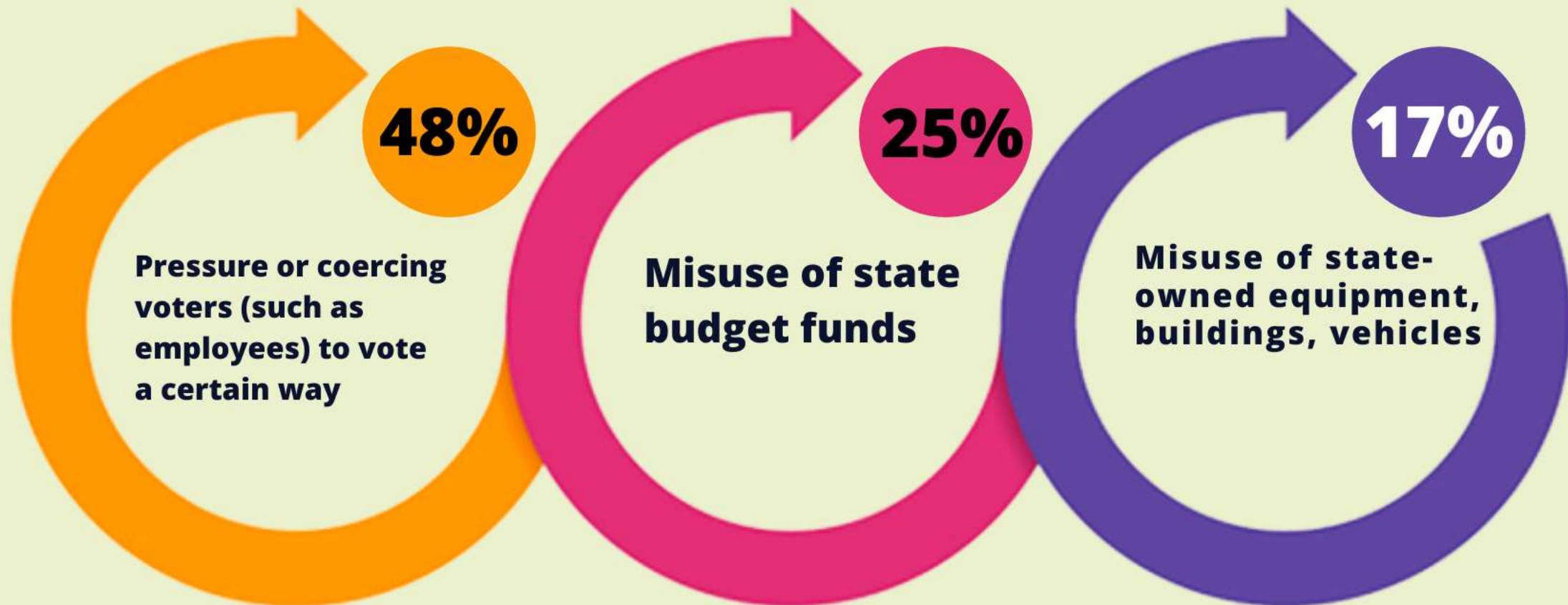


**STATED THAT THE PROBLEM OF MISUSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED.**

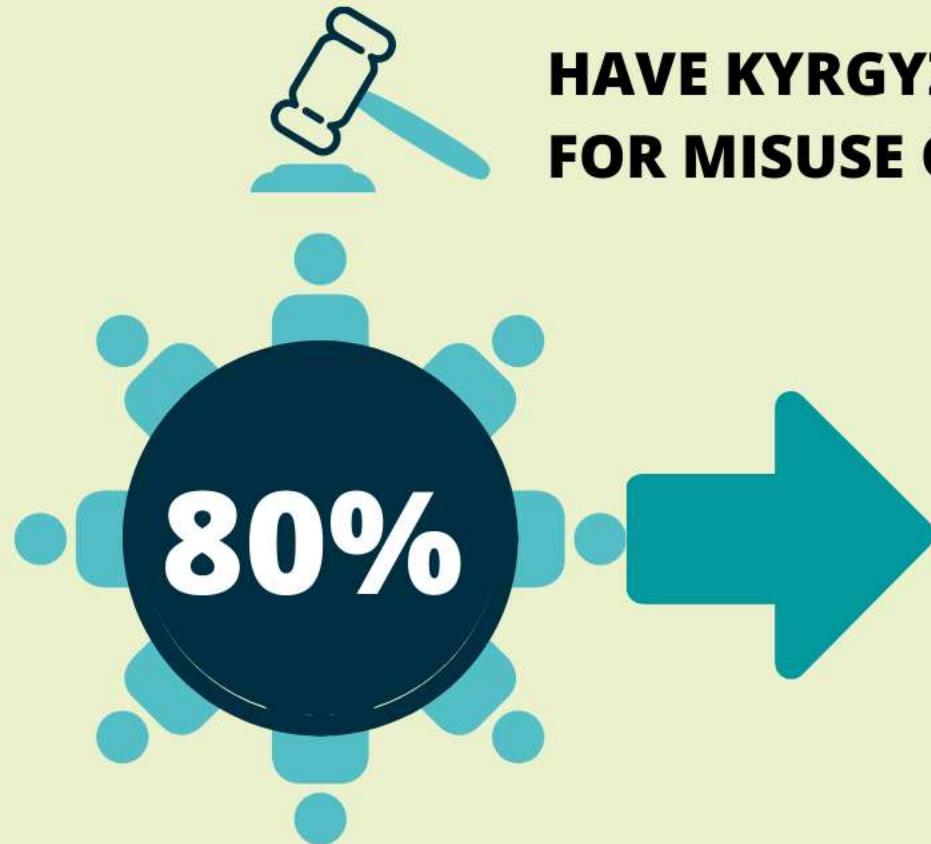


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## **TYPES OF MISUSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES APPLIED IN THE RECENT ELECTIONS**



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## **HAVE KYRGYZ PEOPLE HEARD OF PUNISHMENTS FOR MISUSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES?**

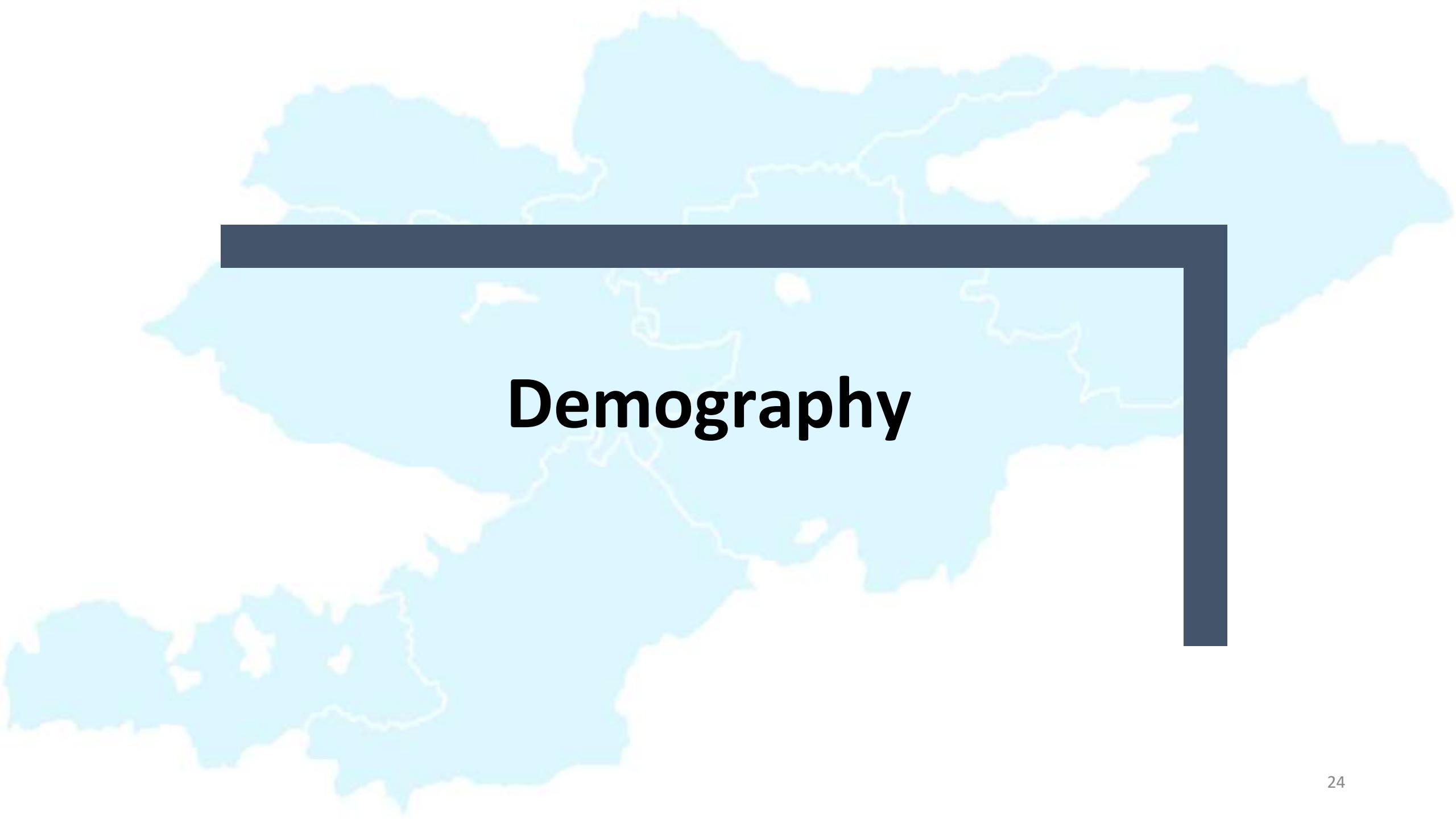
**OF RESPONDENTS HAVE NOT HEARD  
OF PUNISHMENTS FOR MISUSE OF  
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# Methodology

# Methodology

- The survey of respondents was carried out by the method of personal interview through a telephone survey to the mobile numbers of the main cellular operators (O! , Megacom, Beeline). Sociological research was carried out in all regions of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- For the study and extrapolation of the obtained results to the entire Population, the sample size was calculated at 1203 residents of the Kyrgyz Republic over the age of 18 years. The designated sample size is sufficient and will allow, at a 95% confidence level, to draw conclusions with an accuracy of  $\pm 2.8\%$  at the level of the Population. The confidence level shows how likely the random answer will fall within the confidence interval. The confidence interval can be understood as an error, it sets the range of the part of the distribution curve on both sides of the selected point, where the answers can fall.
- For the study, a stratified sample was built. 9 strata were identified including the cities of Bishkek and Osh. The Population is the population of the Kyrgyz Republic over 18 years old, according to the data of the National Statistical Committee and the Central Election Commission for 2020.
- When distributing the size between strata, preference is given to an equal / disproportionate distribution of the sample. This distribution of the sample made it possible to increase the missing number of respondents in strata with a small population.
- When using an equal-size sample, after collecting the data, a proportional weighting procedure was carried out, which made it possible to correct an equal-size sample close to the Population, by weighting the under-represented observations and facilitating redundant representations.



# Demography

# Социально-демографические показатели

## Respondent's age

18-29 years old (n = 349)	29,1%
30-39 years old (n = 291)	24,2%
40-49 years old (n = 207)	17,2%
50-59 years old (n = 180)	15,0%
60-69 years (n = 119)	9,9%
70 years and older (n = 55)	4,6%

## Area of residence

Bishkek city (n=211)	17,5%
Osh city (n=59)	4,9%
Chui oblast (n = 184)	15,3%
Talas oblast (n = 46)	3,9%
Osh oblast (n = 240)	20,0%
Naryn oblast (n = 52)	4,3%
Issyk-Kul oblast (n = 92)	7,7%
Jalalabad oblast (n = 223)	18,5%
Batken oblast (n = 95)	7,9%

## Type of settlement

City (n = 316)	33,8%
Village (n = 620)	66,2%

## Gender

Male (n = 571)	47,5%
Female (n = 630)	52,5%

# Our contacts

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