

Civil Service Management in Croatia

EVIDENCE FROM A SURVEY OF MORE THAN 7,000 CIVIL
SERVANTS

Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling (University of Nottingham)

Kim Sass Mikkelsen (Roskilde University)

Christian Schuster (University College London)

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Introduction

This report presents the results from the first National Survey of Civil Servants in Croatia. The survey was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration of the Government of Croatia in the context of the Croatian-held Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2020. The survey was coordinated by a team led by Tomislav Mičetić from the Sector for Public Administration Development and EU Projects and Darija Gradski from the Sector for HR Development and Ethics. It was authorised and supported by the Minister of Justice and Public Administration dr.sc. Ivan Malenica.

The survey was conducted between January and March 2020. It targeted civil servants of all levels of the Croatian public administration including central government ministries and subordinated organisations, the local government administration, independent agencies and the administration of the courts. In total, the survey aimed to reach 40,000 civil servants in the Croatian public administration.

The survey consisted of approximately 60 questions, which measure civil servants' attitudes, their experience with human resources management, their experience with leadership practices, and the design of civil servants' jobs in terms of their task autonomy and experience with the application of administrative rules. In addition, the survey asked questions related to the demographic attributes of respondents such as their gender, age or level of education.

Among the attitudes of civil servants, the survey addressed the job satisfaction, job engagement, work motivation, public service motivation, commitment to working in the public sector and the integrity of civil servants. These attitudes have been shown to correlate closely with the organisational performance and integrity in the public sector.

Among the human resources management practices, the survey addressed civil servants' experience with recruitment into the civil service, career advancement, salary management, performance evaluation and job protection. Throughout, the survey sought identify how individual civil servants experience the day-to-day practice of human resources management.

The survey has hence provided, for the first time, the opportunity to systematically monitor and evaluate how civil service legislation in Croatia is applied in practice and how management practices vary across institutions and groups of staff.

The survey was translated into Croatian language and uploaded to Qualtrics; a platform for the design and implementation of online surveys. The Ministry of Public Administration contacted both the Information Officers of each institution and the HRM Department of each institution with the request to distribute the invitation to complete the survey among its employees. The Ministry of Public Administration sent three reminders to ensure a high cooperation rates among participants.

In total, the survey generated 7,020 responses. This reflects an overall response rate of approximately 20 per cent. The rate represents a lower bound, as it is likely that not every civil servant on the payroll of a given institution was in a position to complete the survey during the period when the survey was in the field. The 'real' response rate is hence likely to be higher.

The survey generated responses from 424 institutions. They include 42 central government institutions, 285 local government offices, 65 offices of the court administration and 36 agencies. In proportional terms, 53 per cent of the respondents

were drawn from the central government, 18 per cent from local government offices, 10 per cent from offices of the court administration and 18 per cent from agencies. 65 per cent of the respondents were female, the average age of respondents was 42.1 years and 74 per cent had university education. Among the respondents, 19 per cent self-identified as upper level managers, 15 per cent as lower level managers, 6 per cent as civil servants in supervisory positions, 23 per cent in technical-professional positions, 20 per cent in administrative support roles. 18 per cent in 'other' types of roles. The sample largely mirrors the composition of the population of civil servants when compared to the latest numbers from the Ministry of Public Administration

The report presents an overview of survey results. It is divided in two parts. The first part shows survey responses regarding the attitudes of civil servants such as their job satisfaction and motivation to work hard. It shows the distribution of responses, mean responses as well as differences across levels of the public administration, differences between institutions with a response rate of at least 15 per cent and at least 20 responses and differences between civil service ranks. The first part also shows differences in attitudes across gender, which is commonly used to map similarities and differences across the public sector workforce.

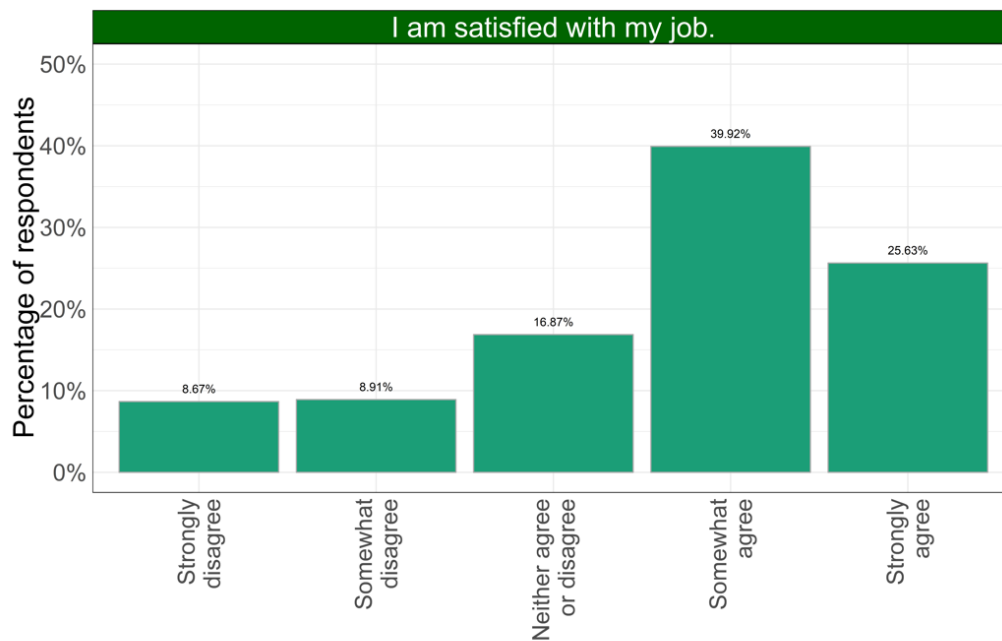
The second part summarises the results insofar as human resources management is concerned. It is divided in seven sections covering civil service recruitment, career advancement, salary management, performance evaluation, job protection, job design including competency levels and task autonomy, and, finally, the evaluation of leadership practices, in particular, ethical leadership in the civil service. Each section shows the distribution of responses followed by differences between levels of the public administration, differences between institutions with a response rate of at least 15 per cent and with at least 20 responses, and differences between civil service ranks.

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Attitudes of civil servants

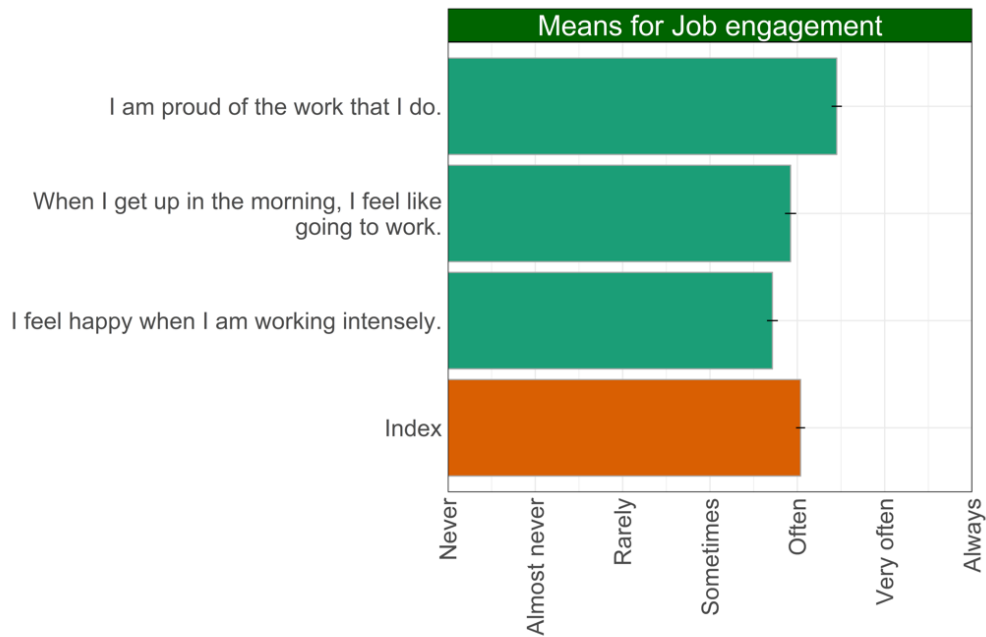
Job satisfaction

- I am satisfied with my job.



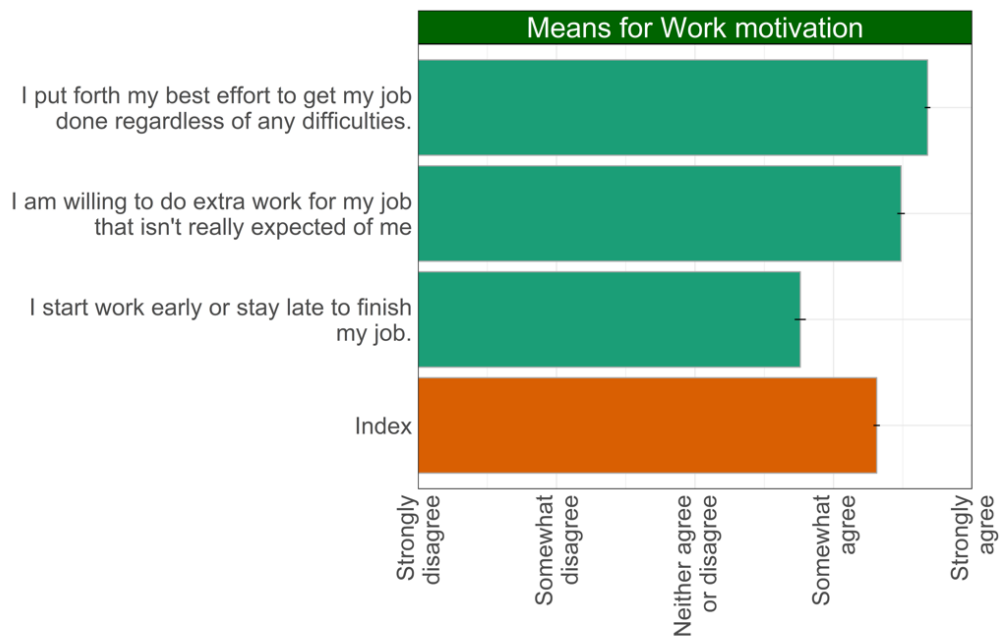
Job engagement

- When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work. (Mean response)
- I feel happy when I am working intensely. (Mean response)
- I am proud of the work that I do. (Mean response)
- Job engagement index. (Mean response of three items)



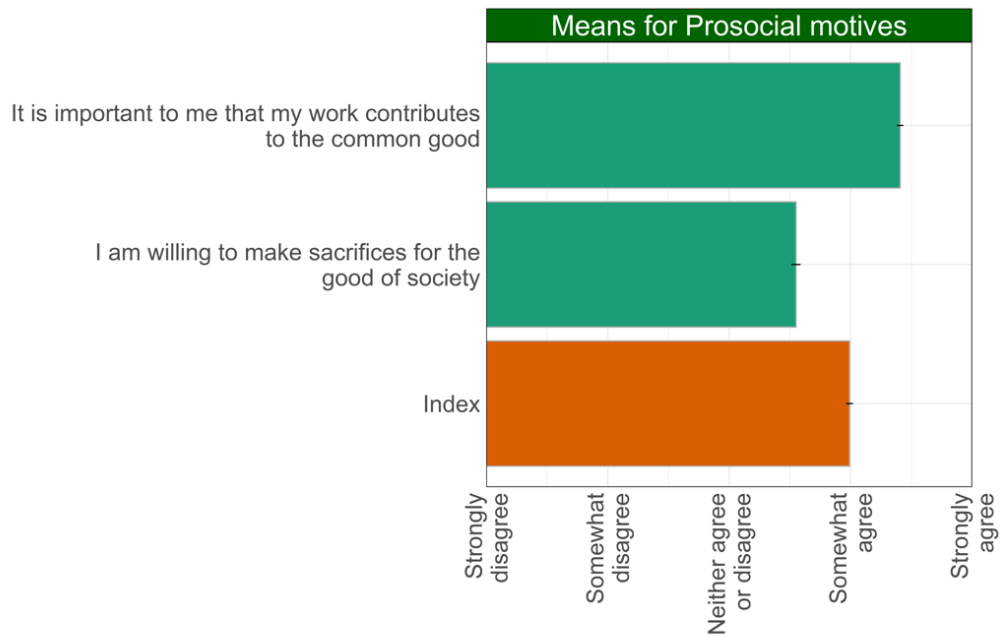
Work motivation

- I am willing to do extra work for my job that isn't really expected of me. (Mean response)
- I start work early or stay late to finish my job. (Mean response)
- I put forth my best effort to get my job done regardless of any difficulties. (Mean response)
- 'Work motivation index. (Mean response of three items)



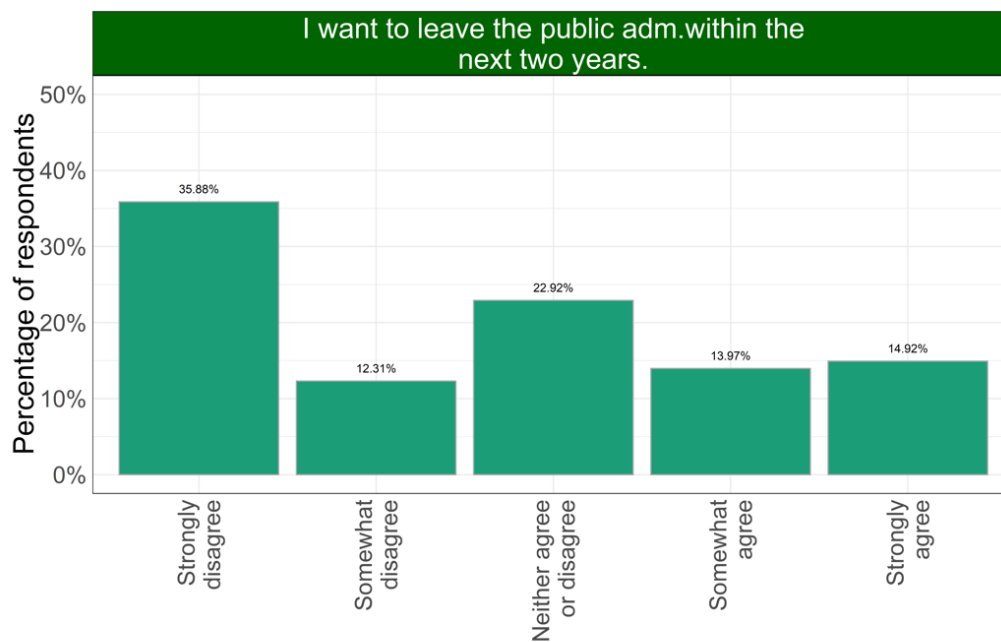
Pro-social motivation

- It is important for me that my work contributes to the common good. (Mean response)
- I am willing to make sacrifices for the good of society. (Mean response)
- Pro-social motivation index. (Mean response of two items)



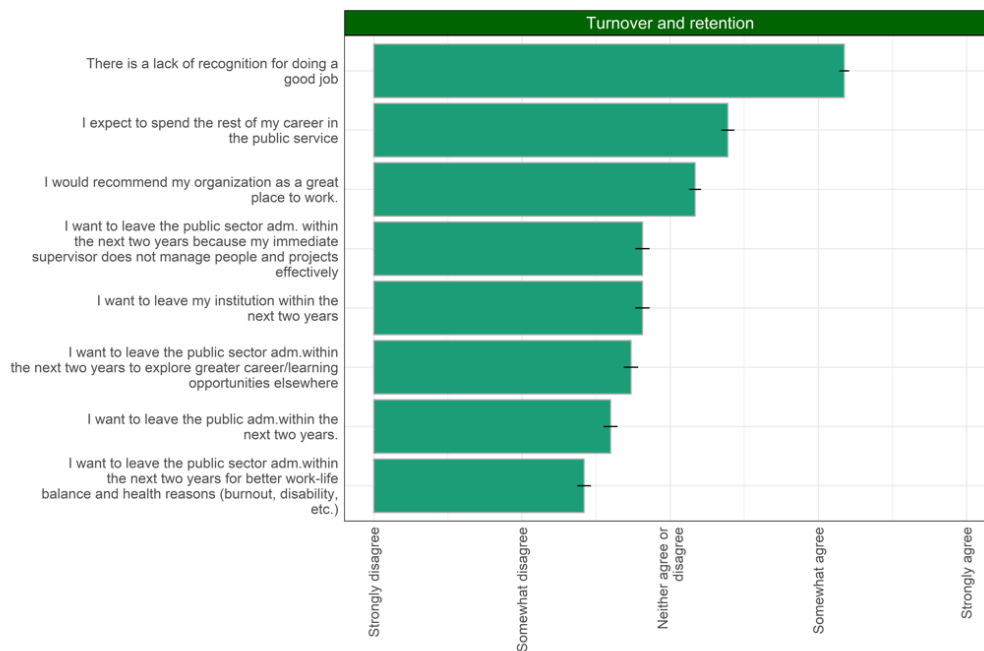
Commitment to public administration

- 'I want to leave the public administration within the next two years'.



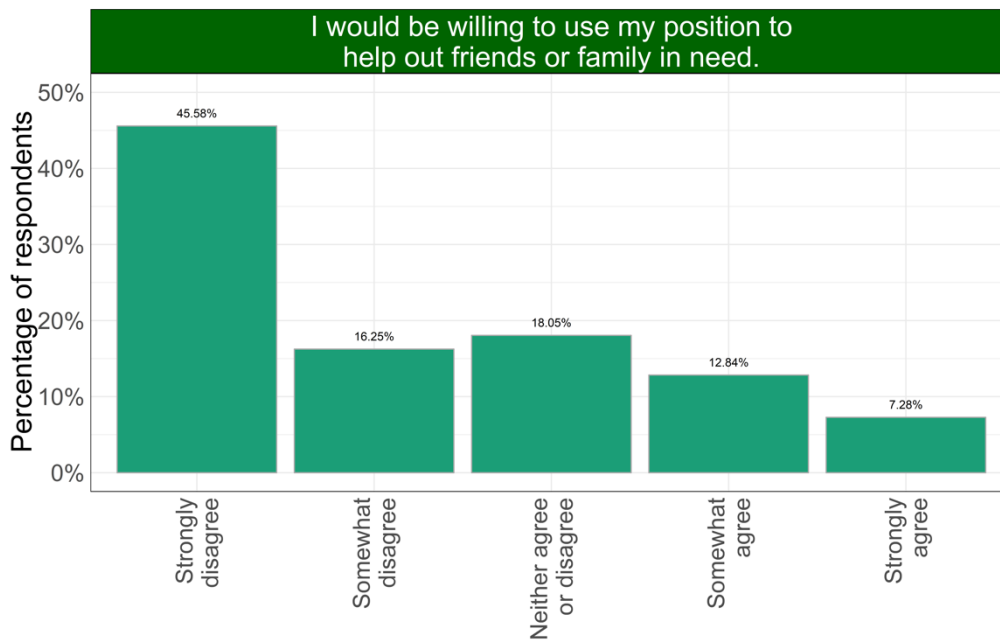
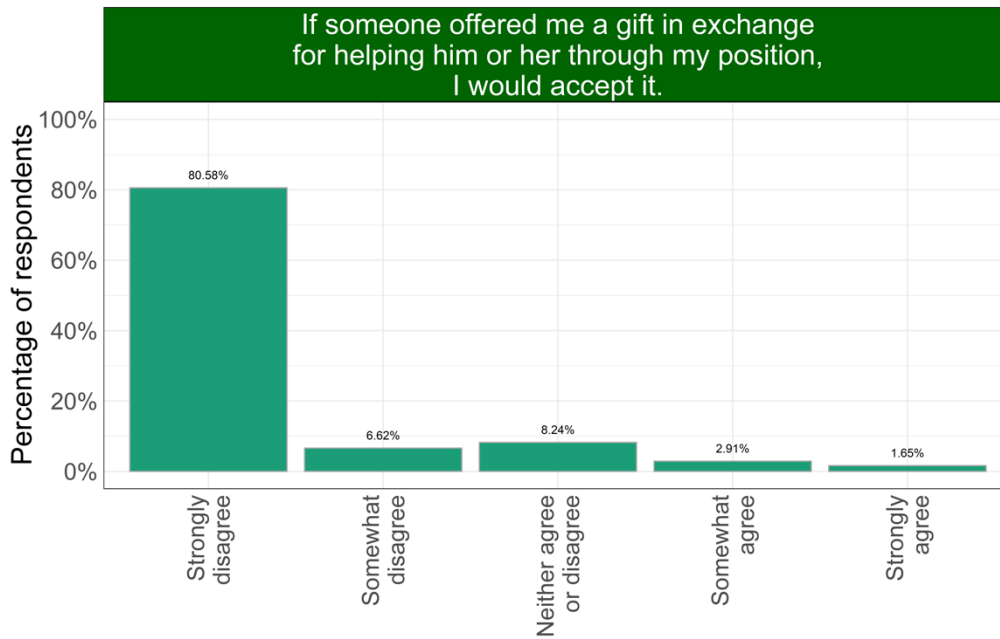
Varieties of turnover intentions

- There is a lack of recognition for doing a good job. (Mean response)
- I expect to spend the rest of my career in the public administration. (Mean response)
- I would recommend my organisation as a great place to work. (Mean response)
- I want to leave the public administration within the next two years because my immediate supervisor does not manage people and projects effectively. (Mean response)
- I want to leave my institution within the next two years. (Mean response)
- I want to leave the public administration within the next two years to explore greater career/learning opportunities elsewhere. (Mean response)
- I want to leave the public administration within the next two years. (Mean response)
- I want to leave the public administration within the next two years for better work-life balance and health reasons (burnout, disability, etc.). (Mean response)



Integrity

- If someone offered me a gift in exchange for helping him or her through my position, I would accept it.
- I would be willing to use my position to help out friends or family in need.



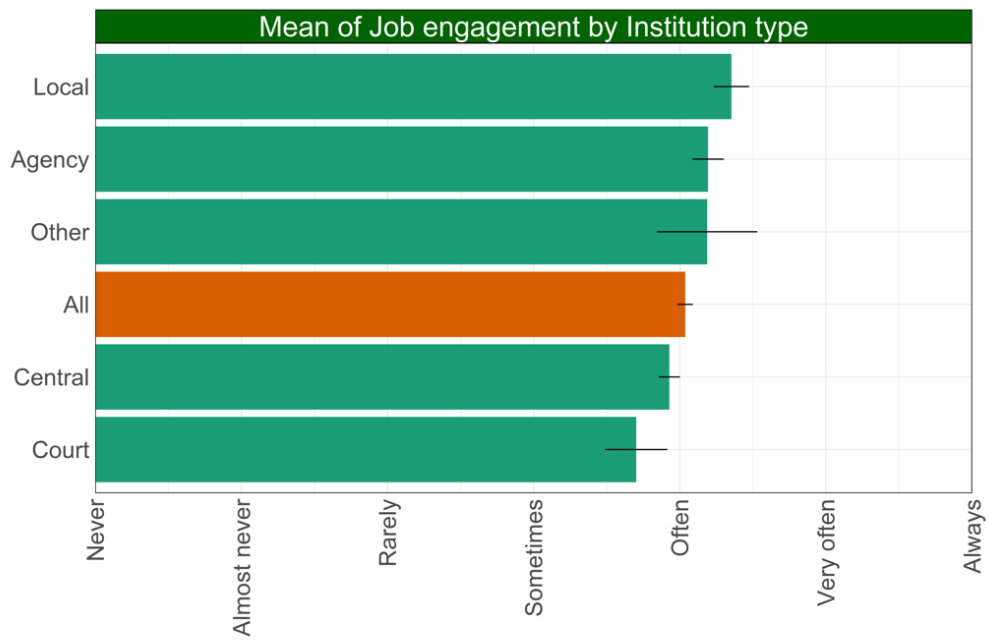
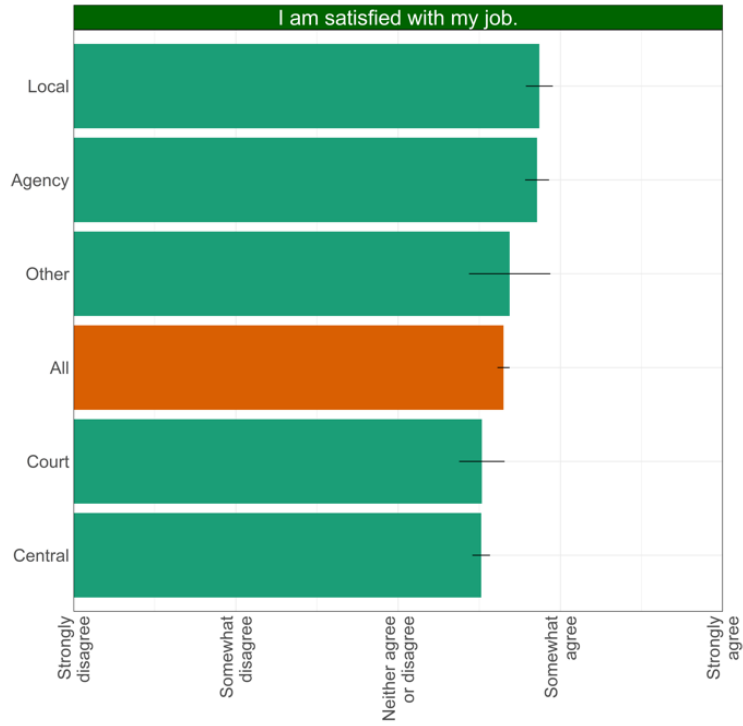
Differences across groups and institutions

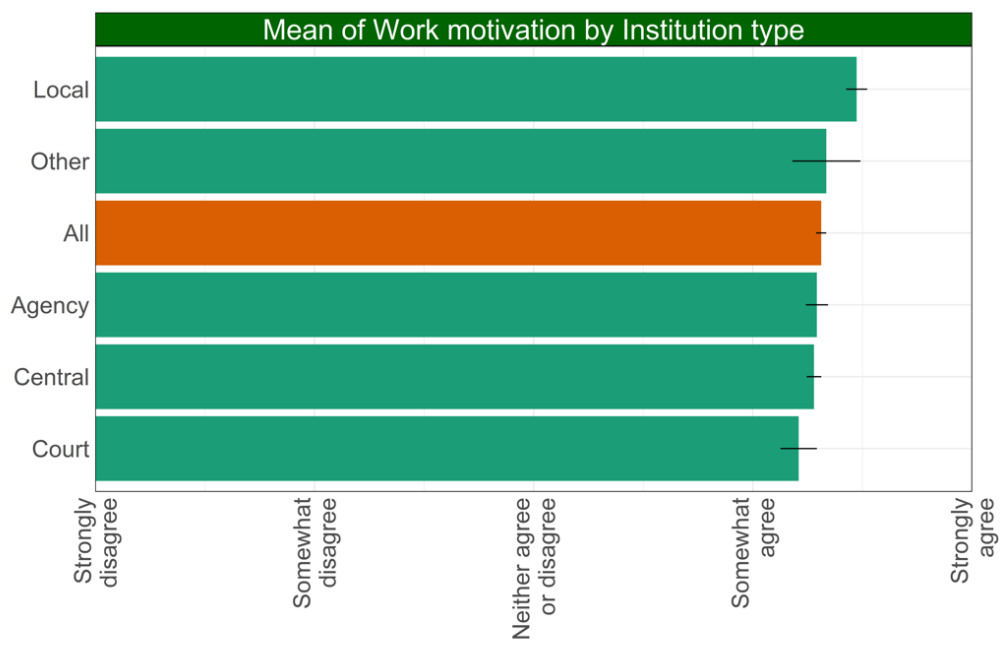
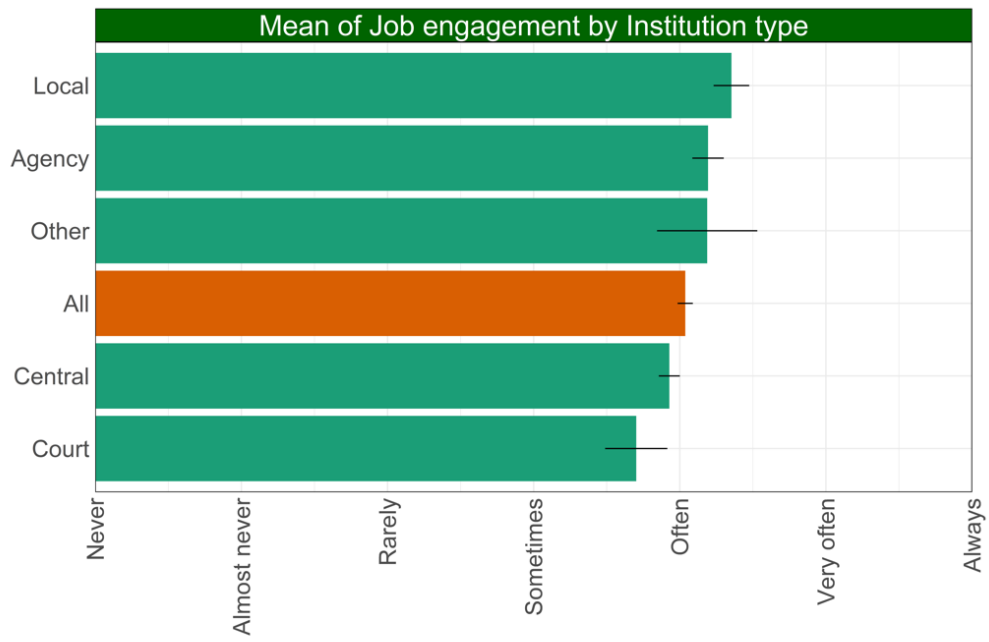
Differences by type of administrative institution

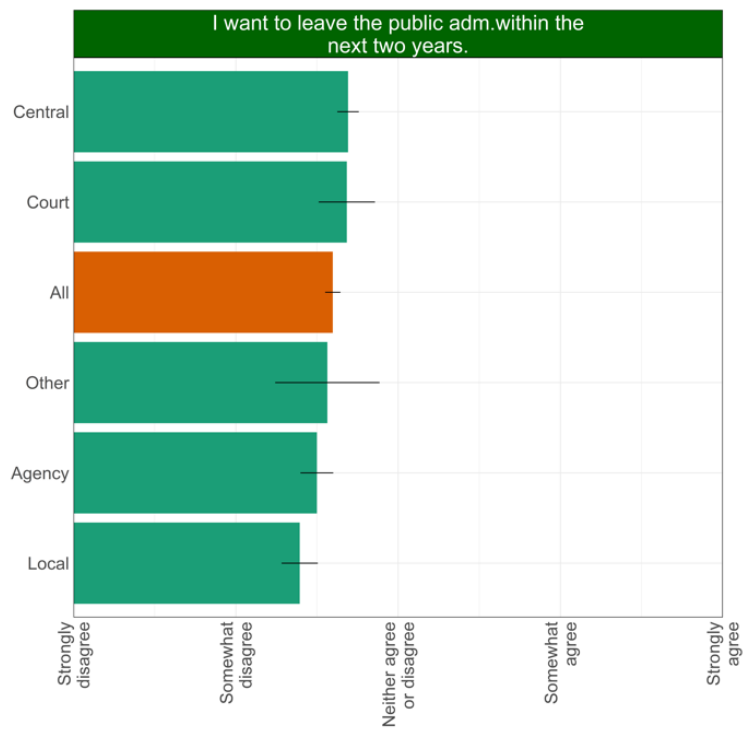
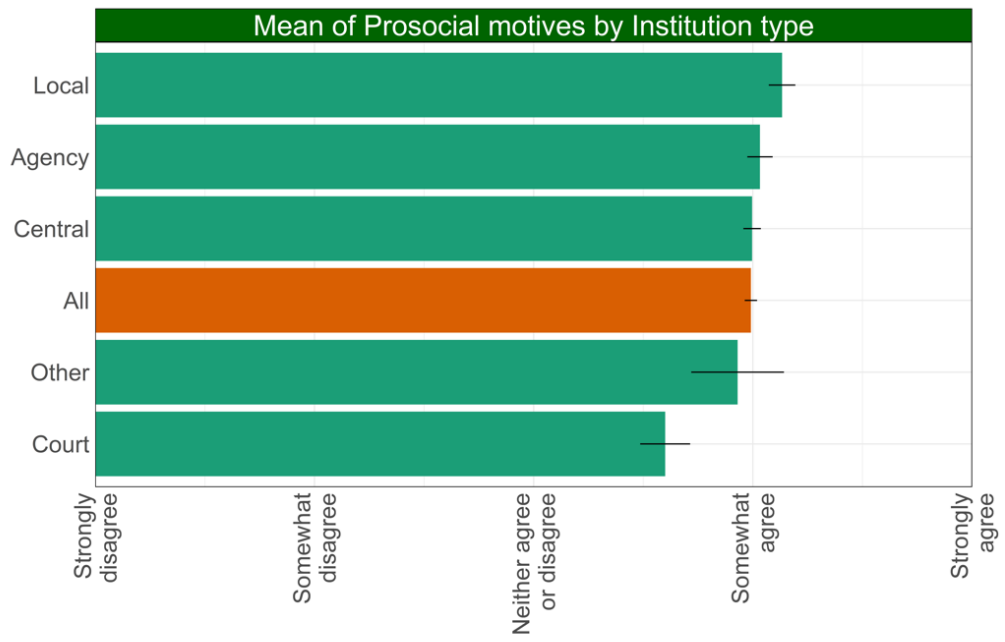
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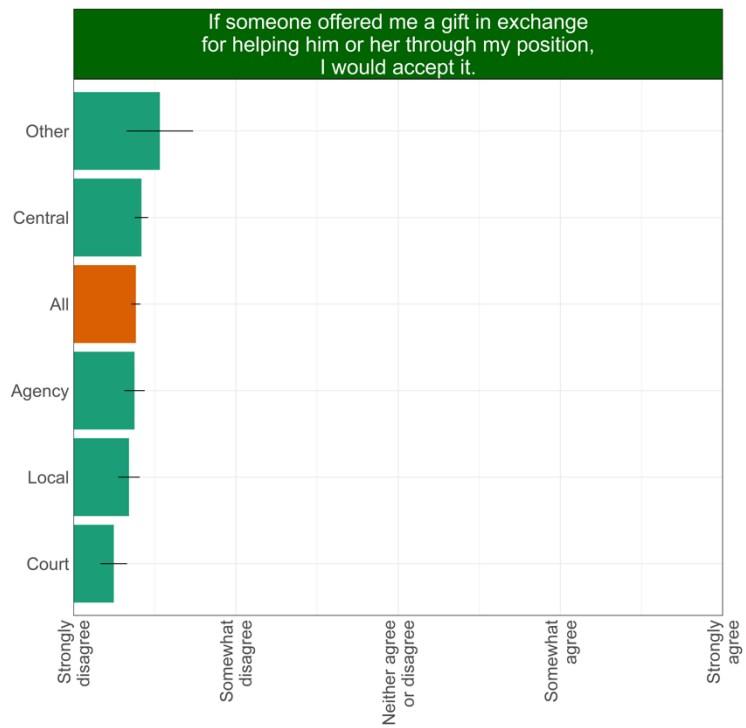
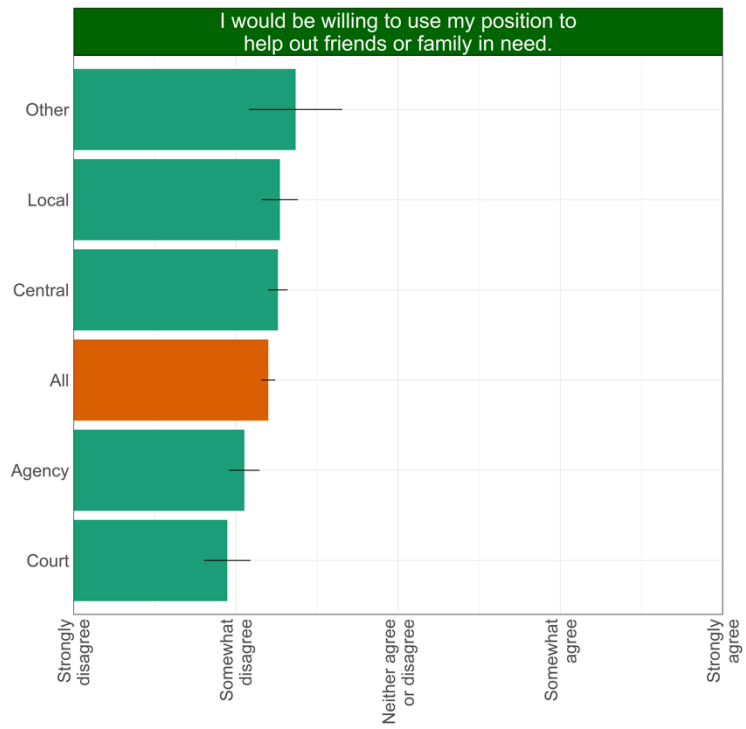
- The central public administration (labelled as 'Central')
- The local public administration (labelled as 'Local')
- Executive agencies (labelled as 'Agencies')

- The court administration (labelled as Courts).
- A small number of institutions is labelled as 'other'



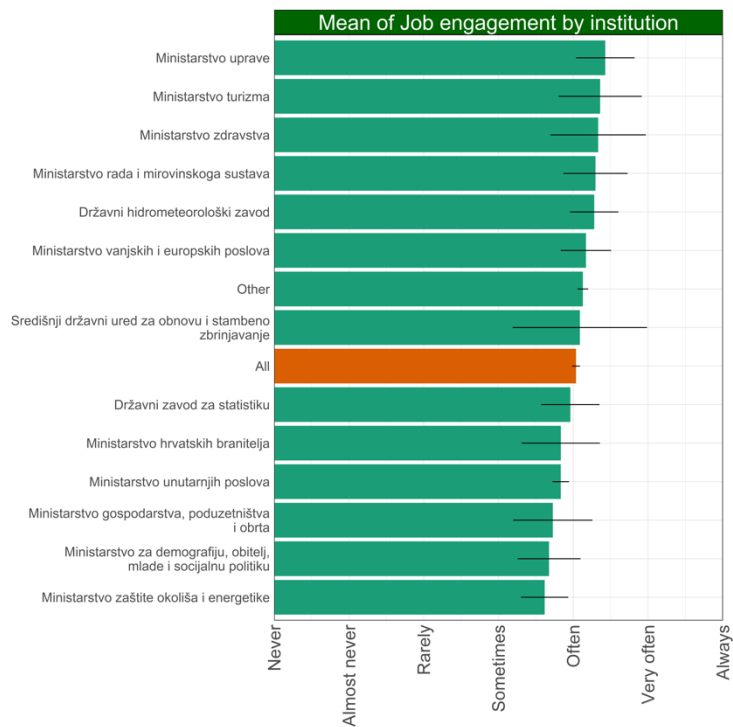
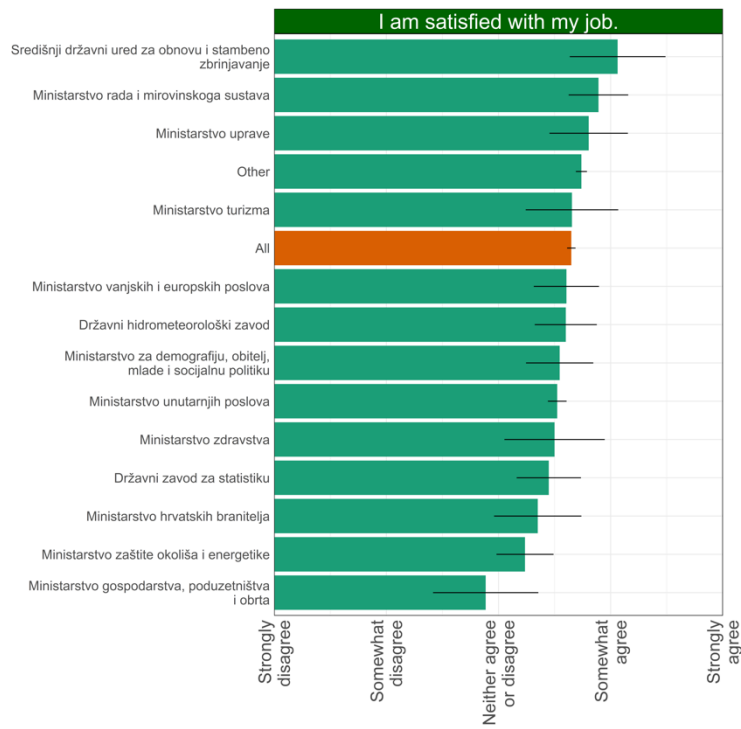


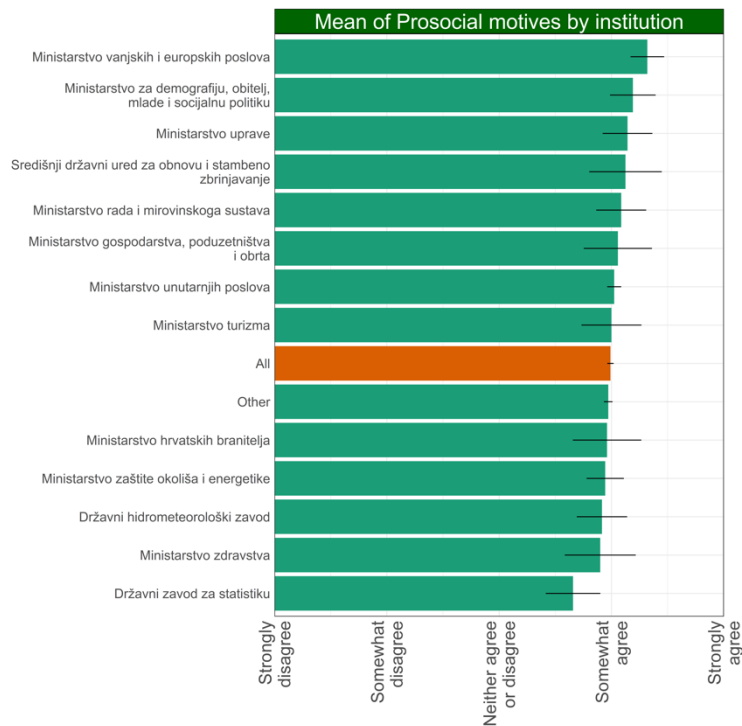
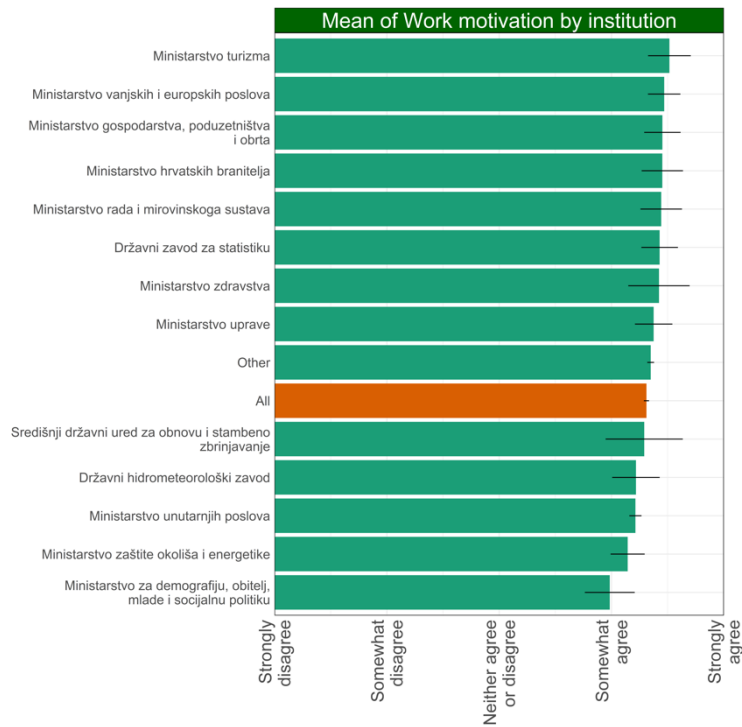


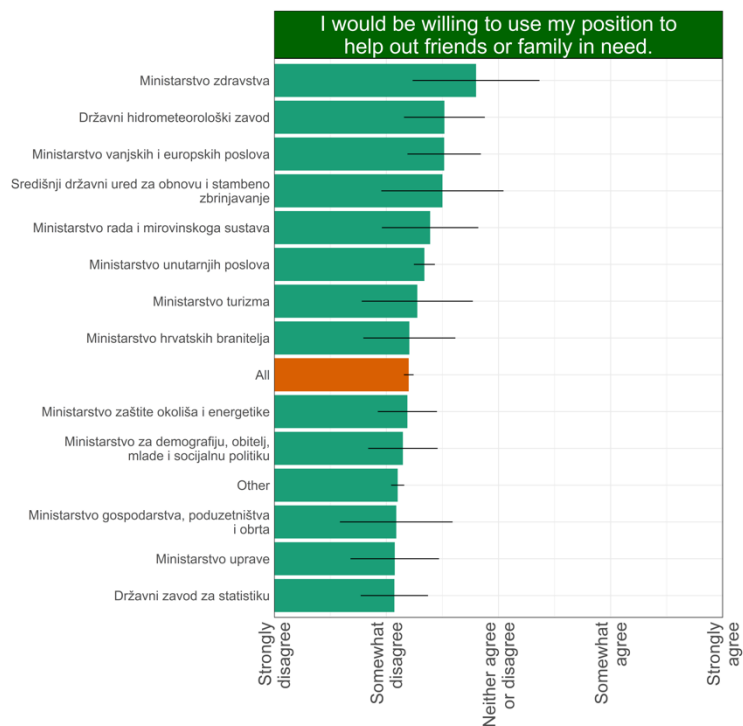
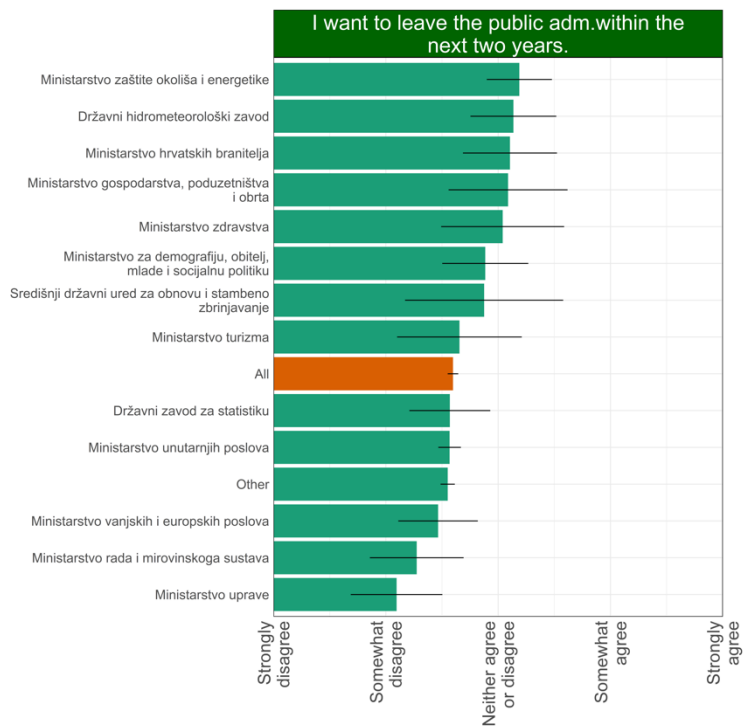


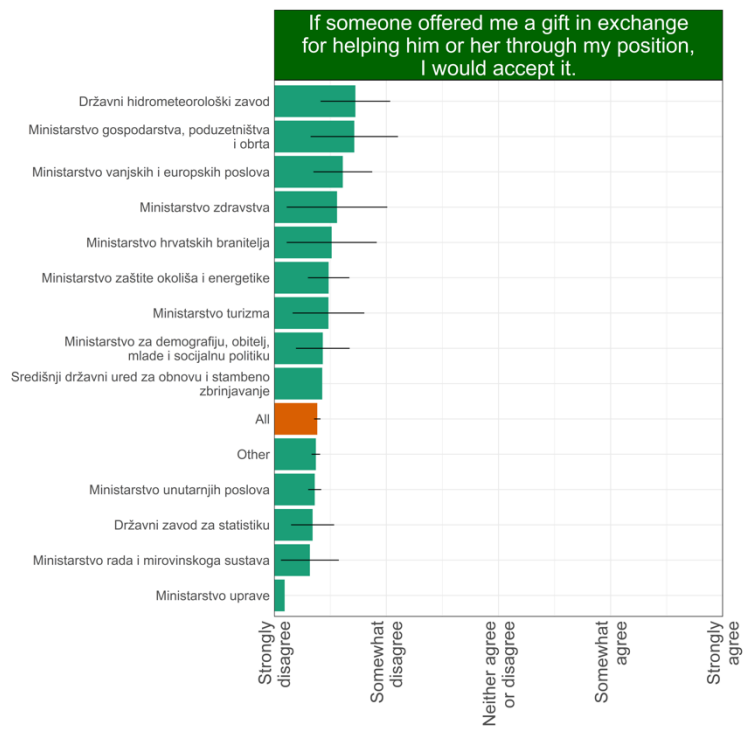
Differences by institutions

The graphs list central government institutions with a response rate of at least 15 per cent and a minimum of 20 responses. All other institutions are aggregated in the category 'other'. Labels are kept in Croatian language.





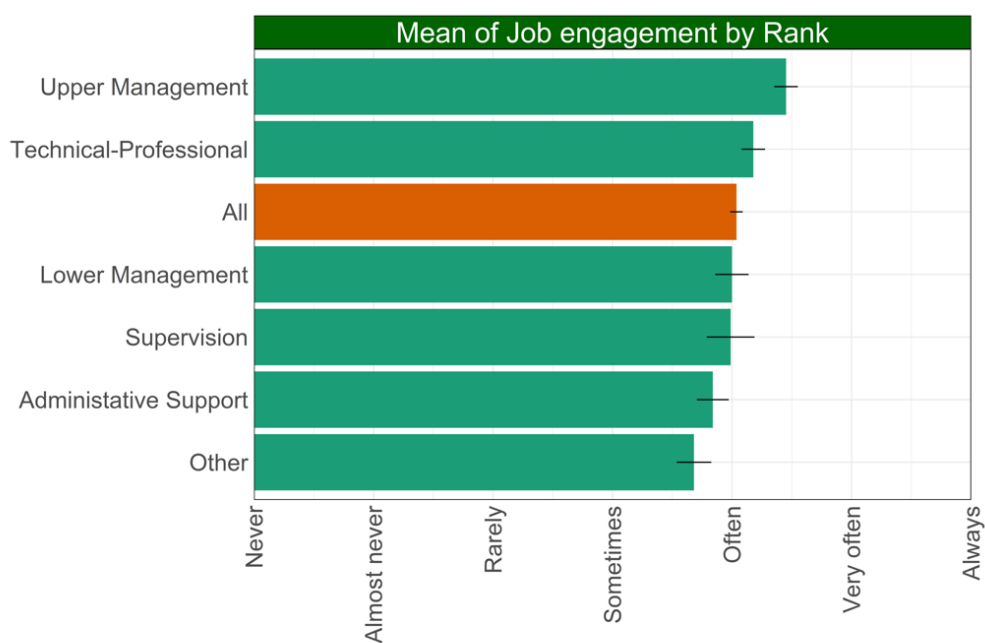
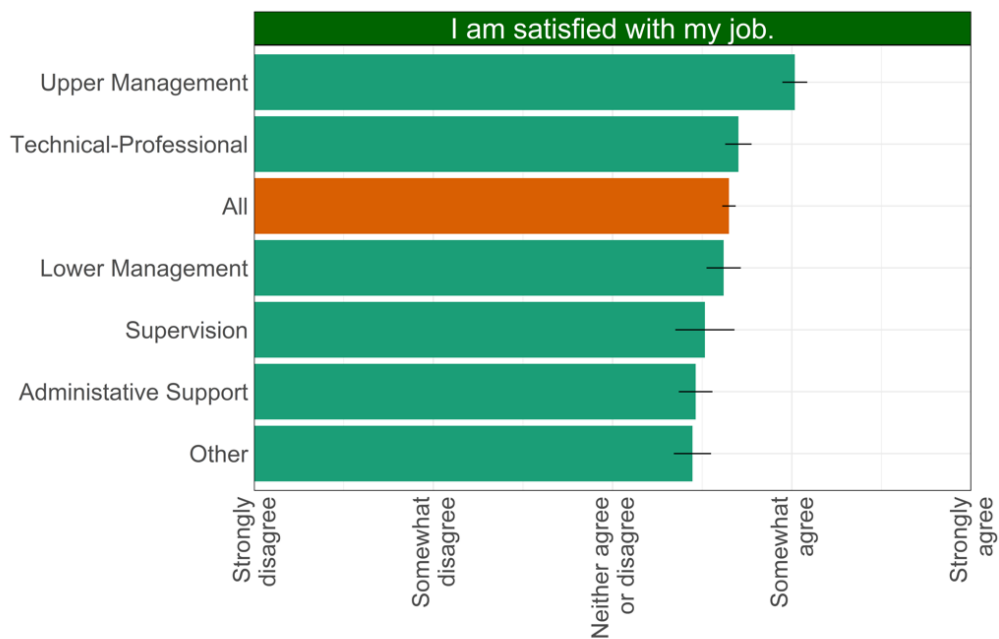


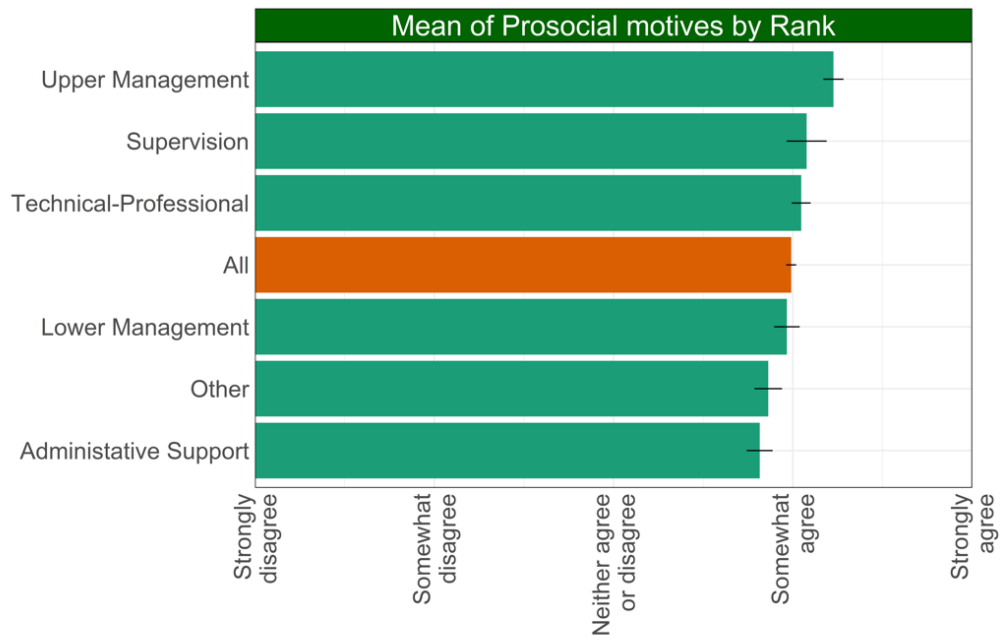
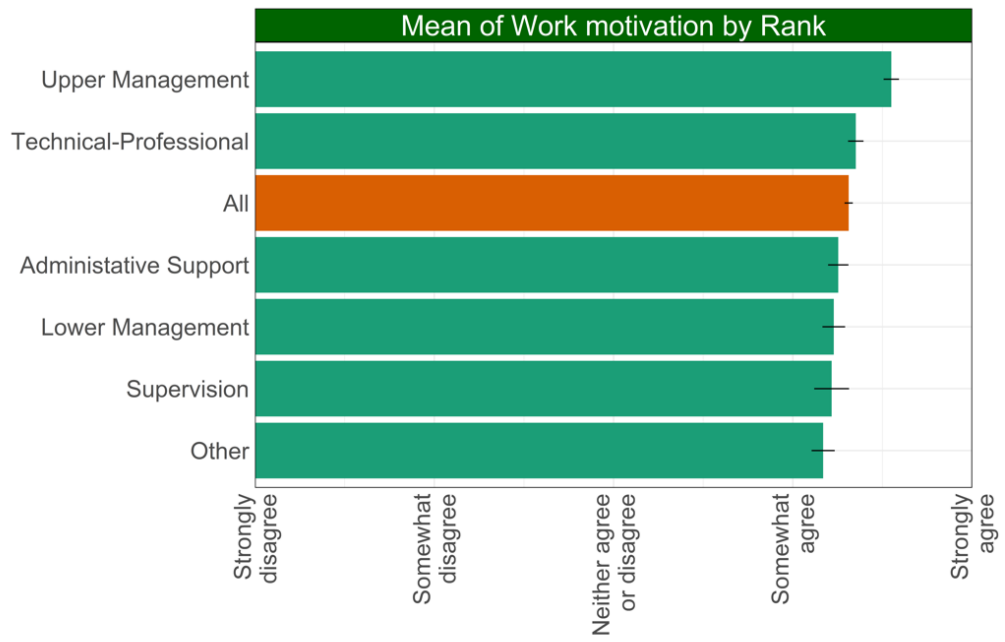


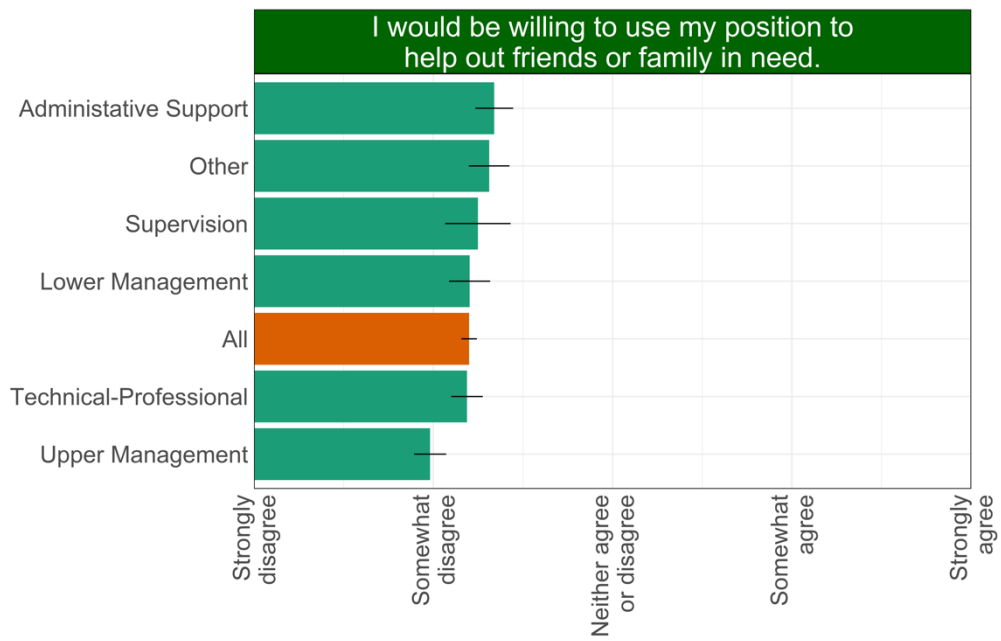
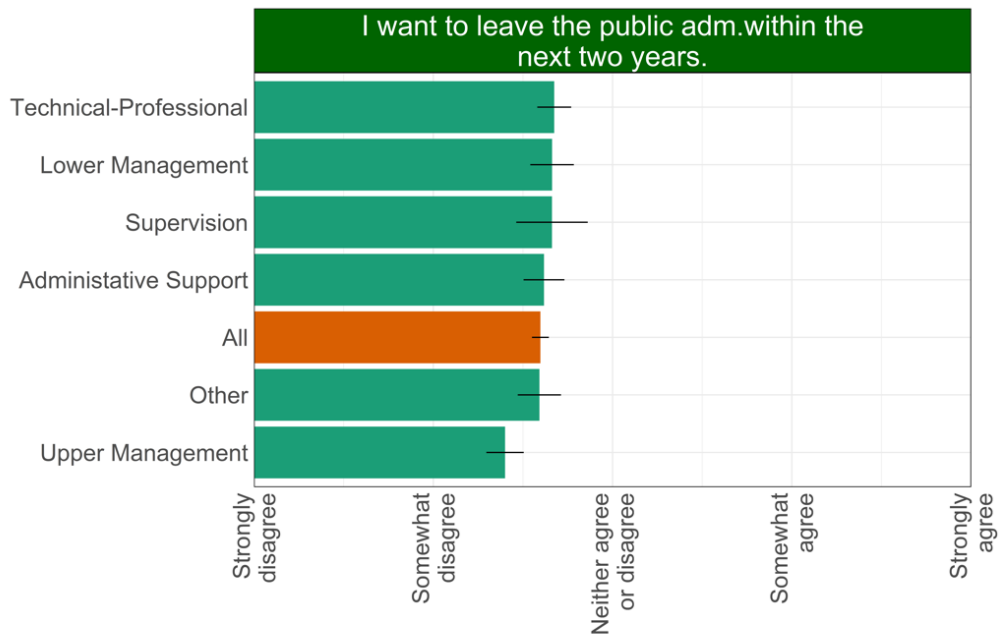
Differences by rank

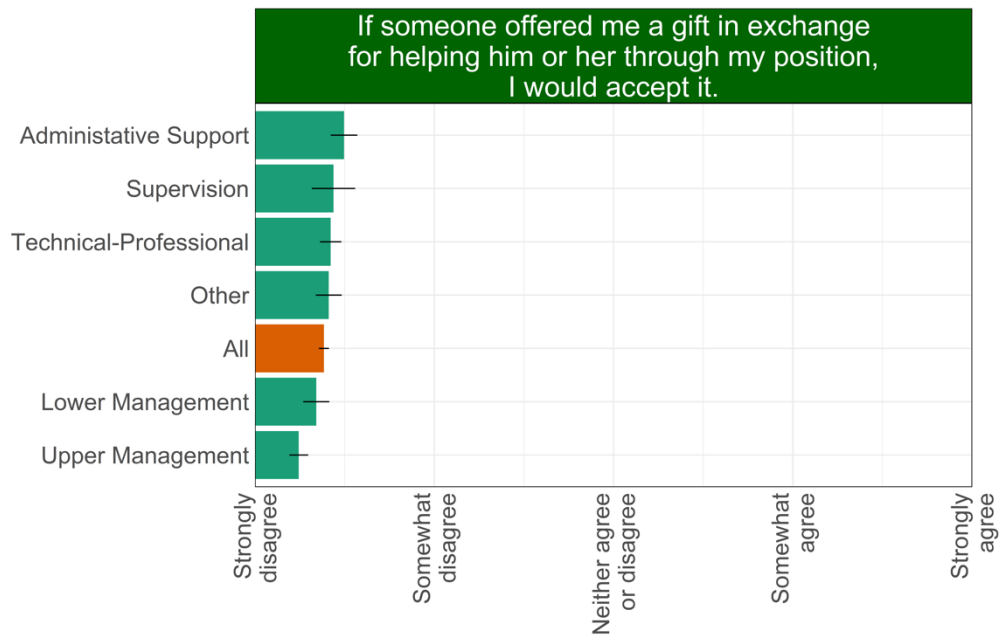
The survey distinguished six categories of administrative staff by asking respondents' rank. They are

- Upper management civil servants
- Lower management civil servants
- Civil servants with supervisory responsibilities
- Technical-professional level
- Administrative support level
- Other such as advisors and project staff



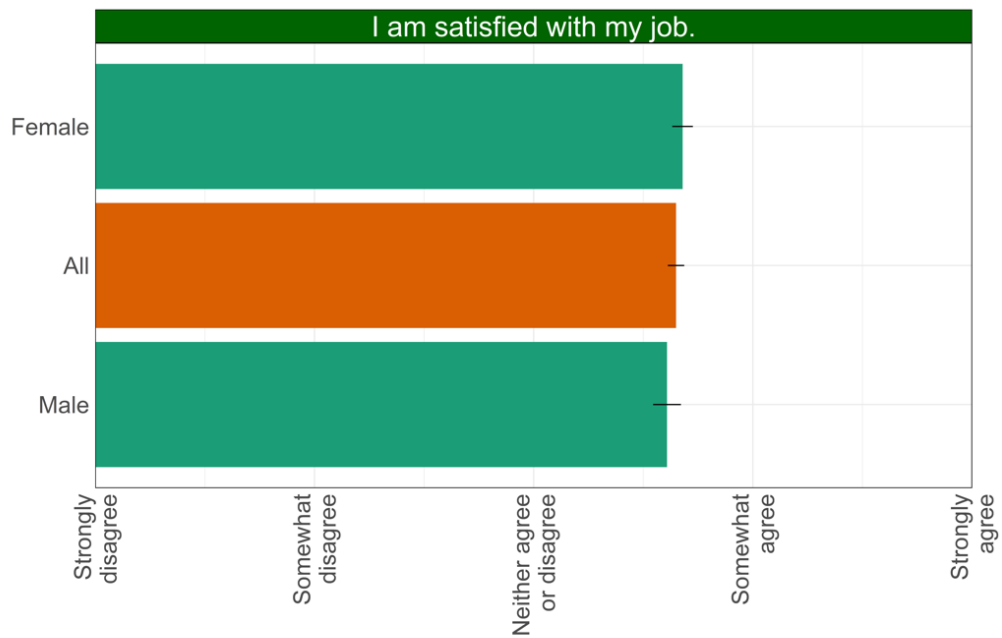


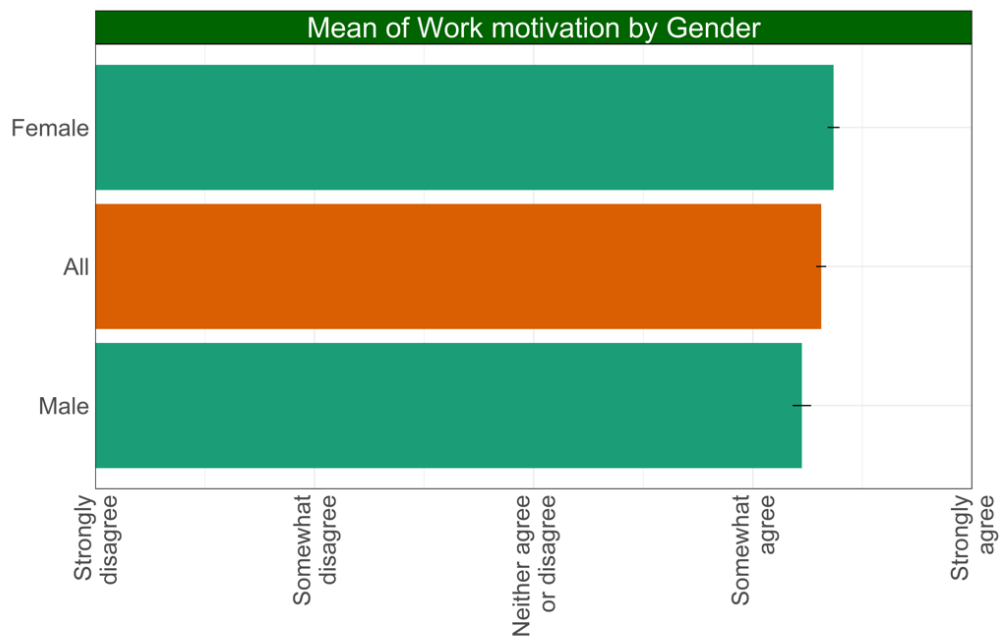
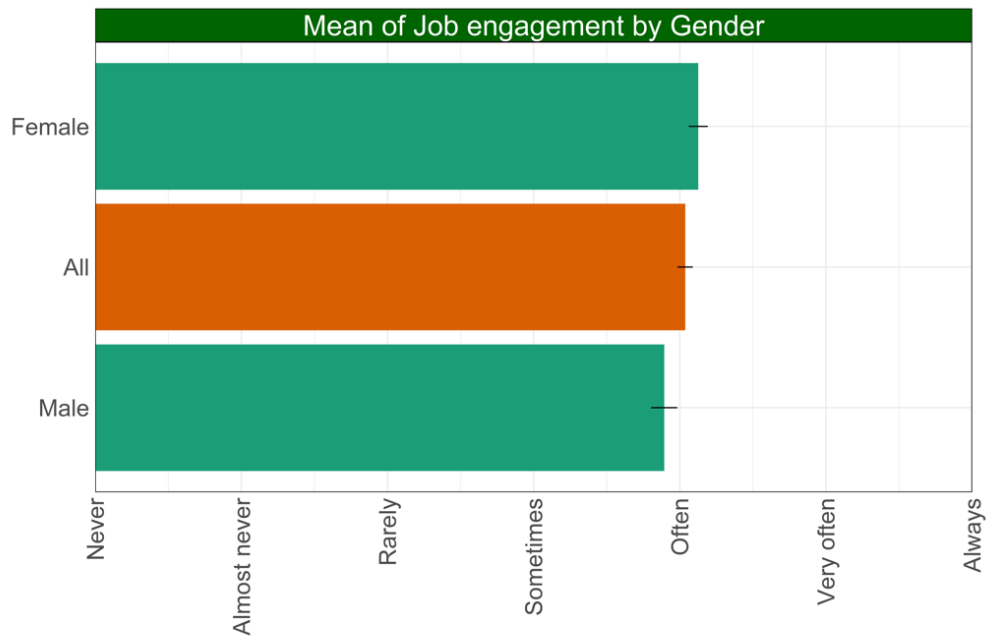


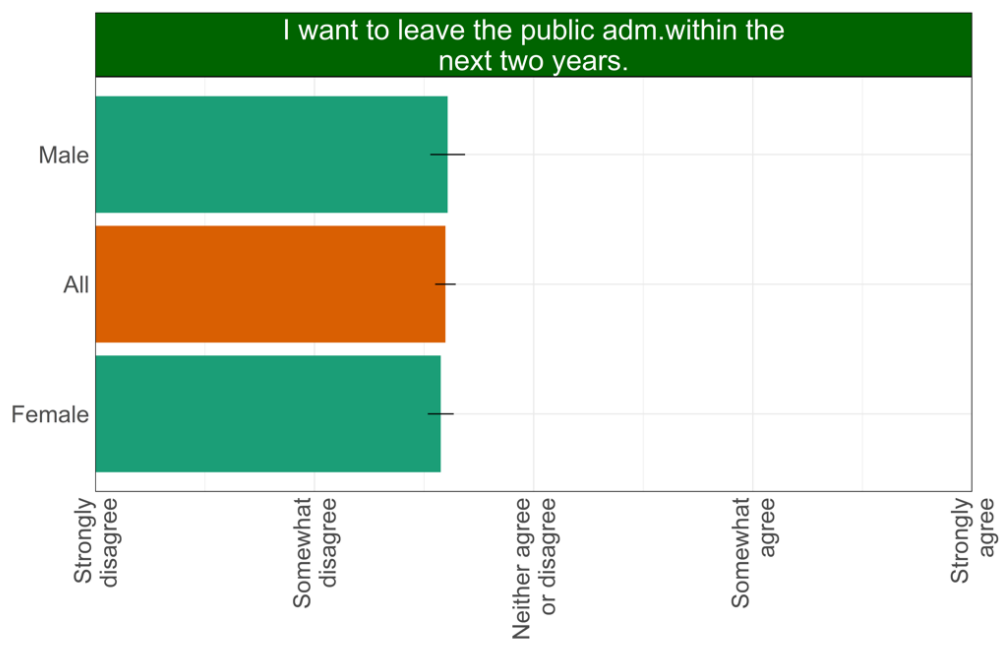
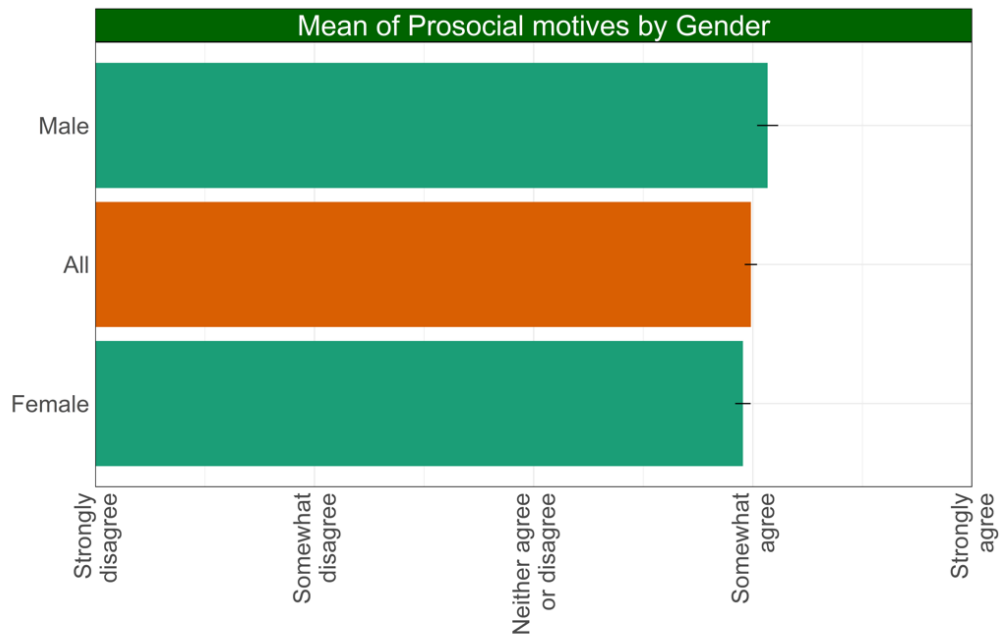


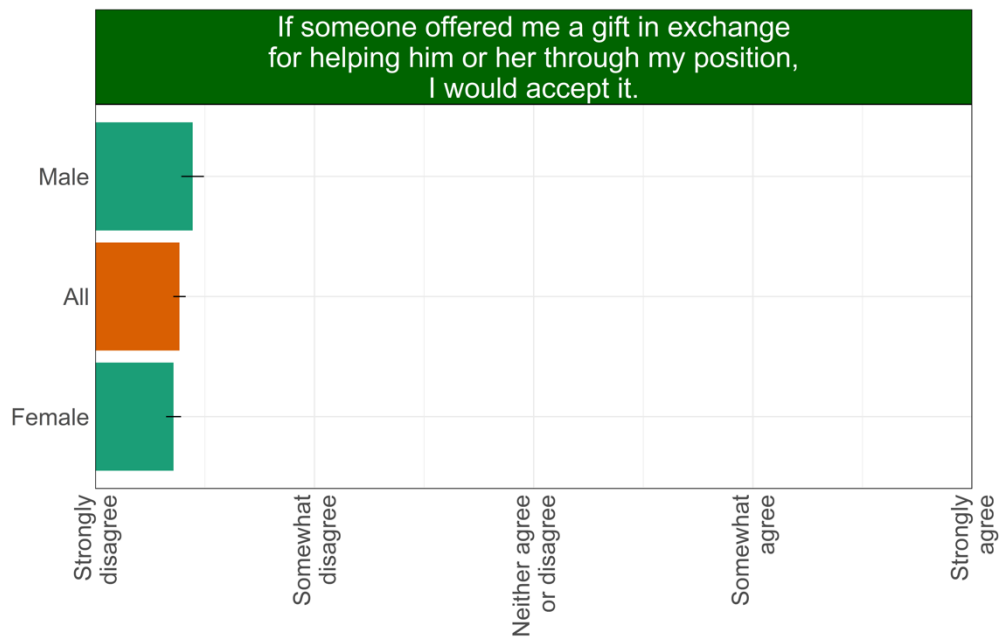
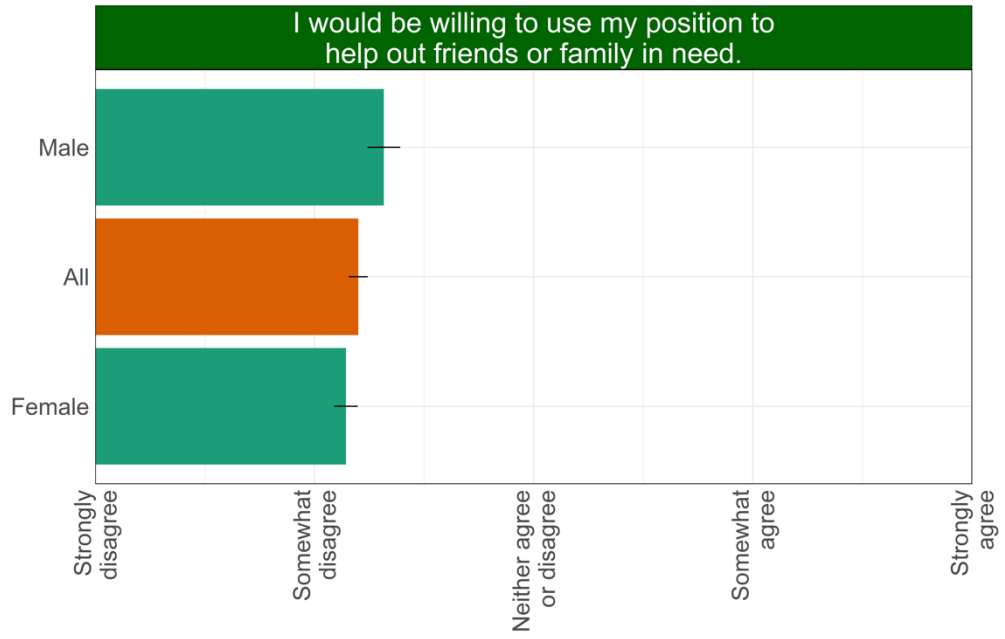
Differences by gender

The graphs in this section show basic differences between female and male civil servants.









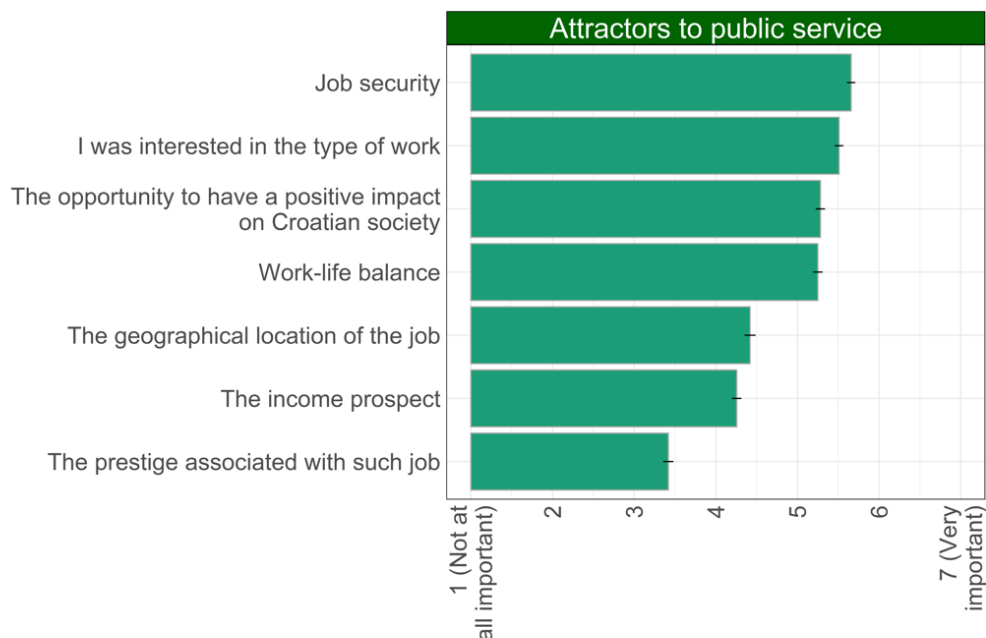
Human resources management

Recruitment

Attraction to the civil service

What most attracted you to take up a career in the civil service?

- I was interested in the type of work
- Job security
- Work-life balance
- The income prospect
- The prestige associated with such job
- The geographical location of the job
- The opportunity to have a positive impact on Croatian society

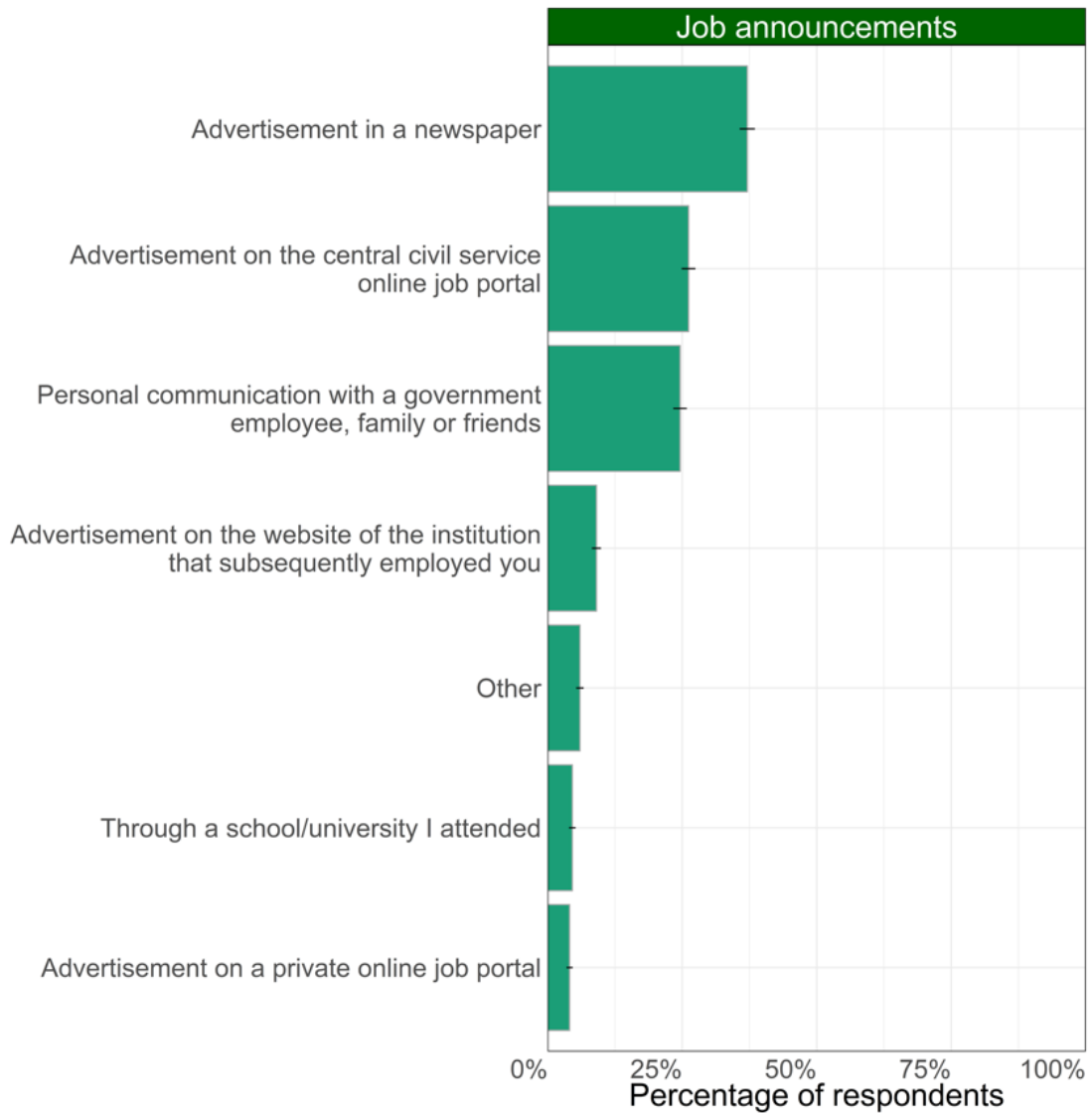


Job advertisements

Please think back for a moment to your very first paid, full-time job in the public administration. Do you remember how you found out about the job opportunity? Please tick all that apply.

- Advertisement in a newspaper or official gazette
- Advertisement on the central civil service online job portal (e.g. uprava.hr, hzz)
- Advertisement on a private online job portal
- Advertisement on the website of the institution that subsequently employed you
- Personal communication with a government employee, family or friends
- Through a school/university I attended

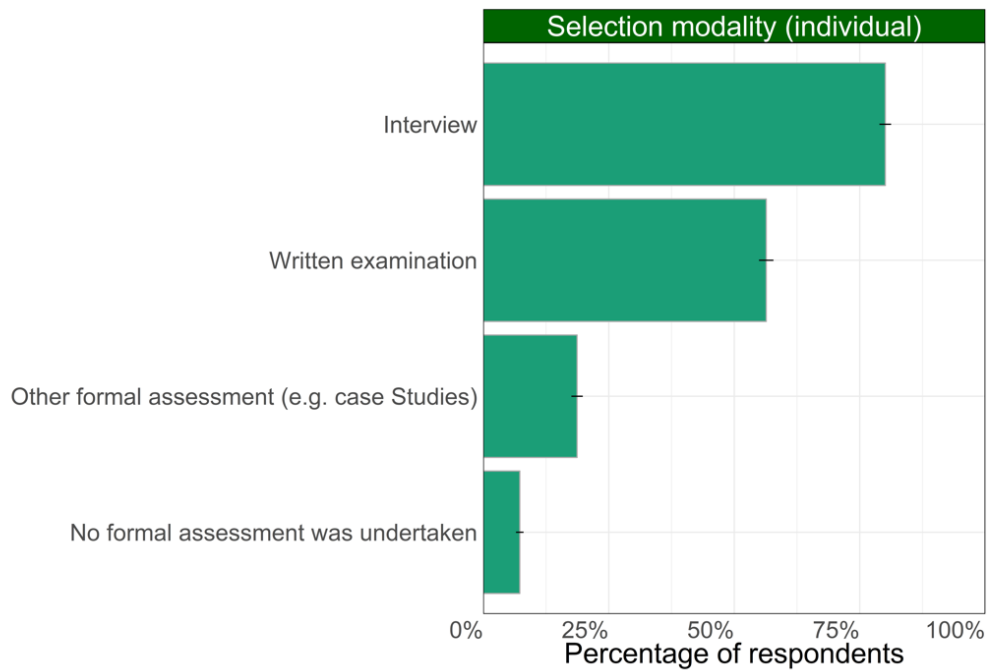
- Other _____
- Don't remember / Prefer not to respond



Assessment

Thinking back to your first job in the public adm.: how were you assessed when applying for your first public adm. job? Select all that apply.

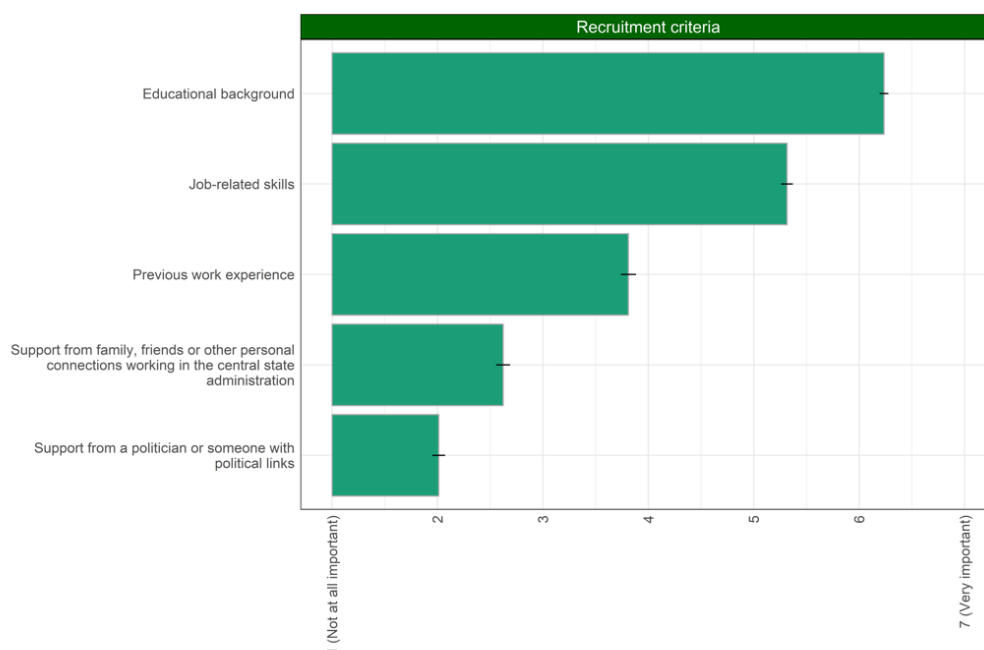
- Interview
- Written examination
- Other formal assessment
- No formal assessment was undertaken
- Don't know / prefer not to respond



Entry criteria

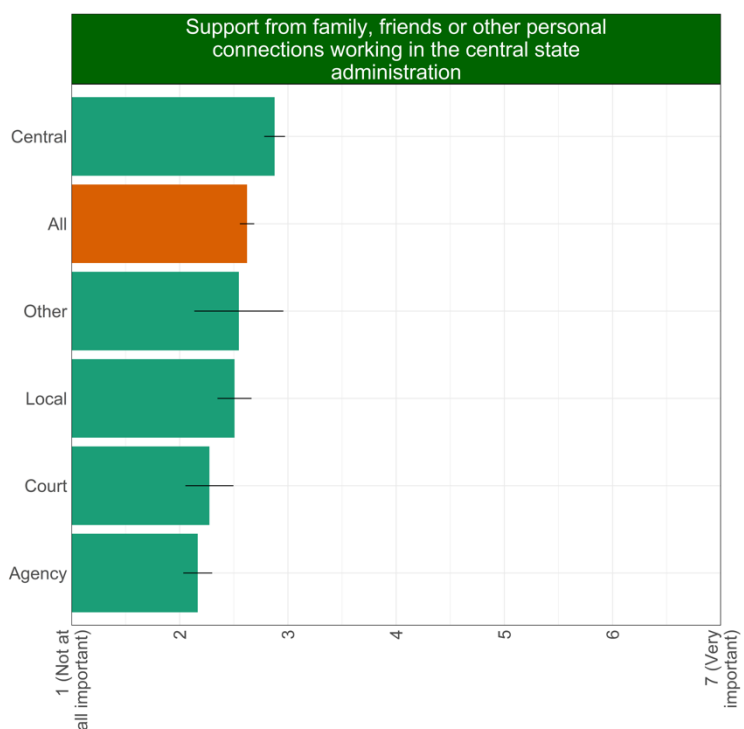
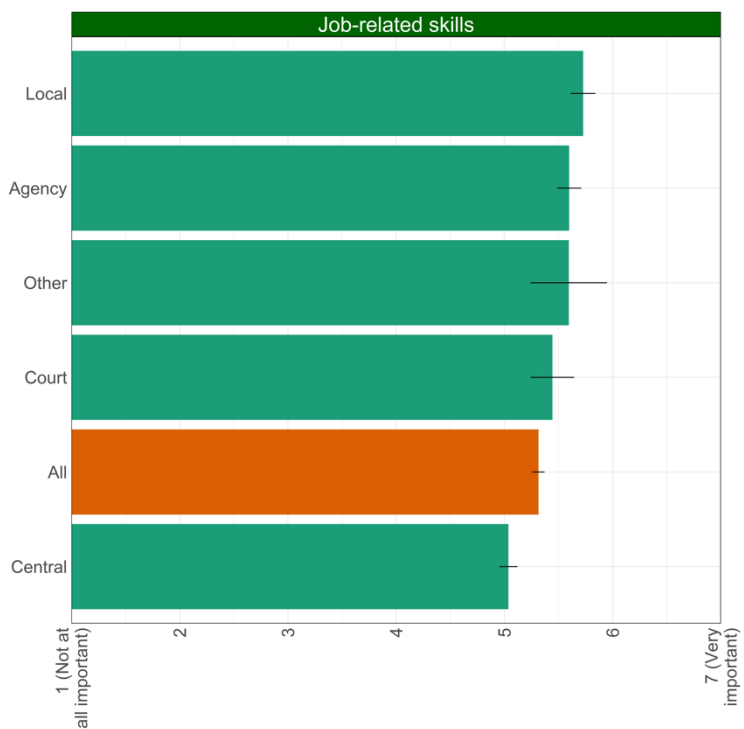
How important were the following criteria for you to be selected for your first public administration job?

- Educational background (mean response)
- Previous work experience (mean response)
- Job-related skills
- Support from family, friends or other personal connections working in the public administration (mean response)
- Support from a politician or someone with political links (mean response)

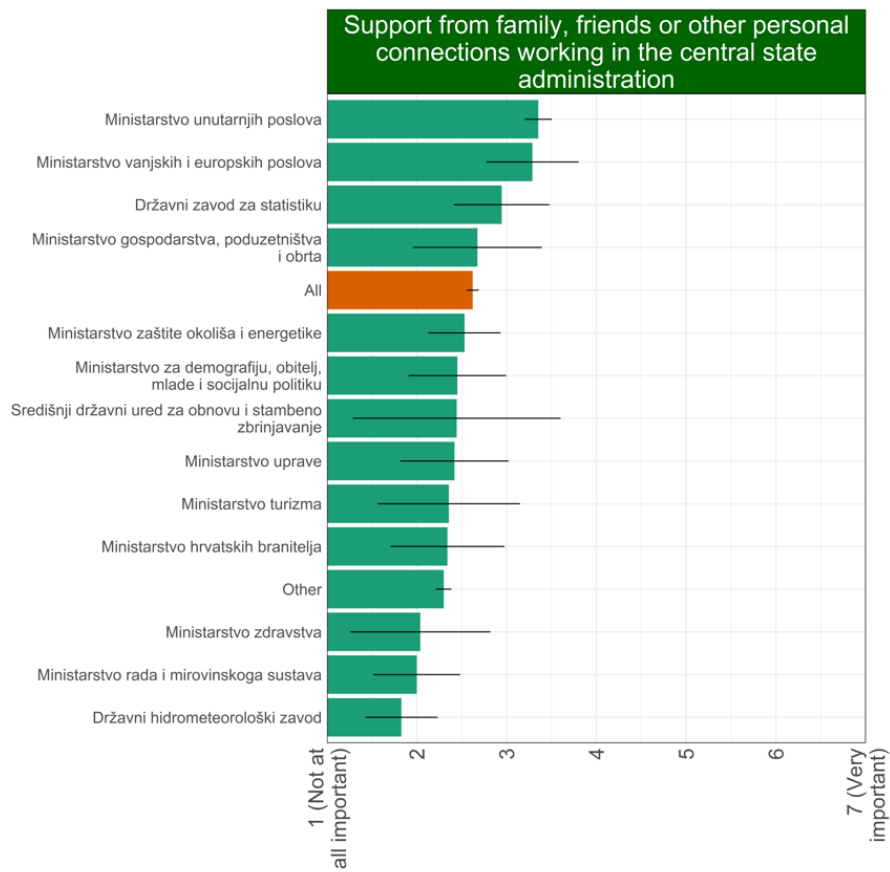
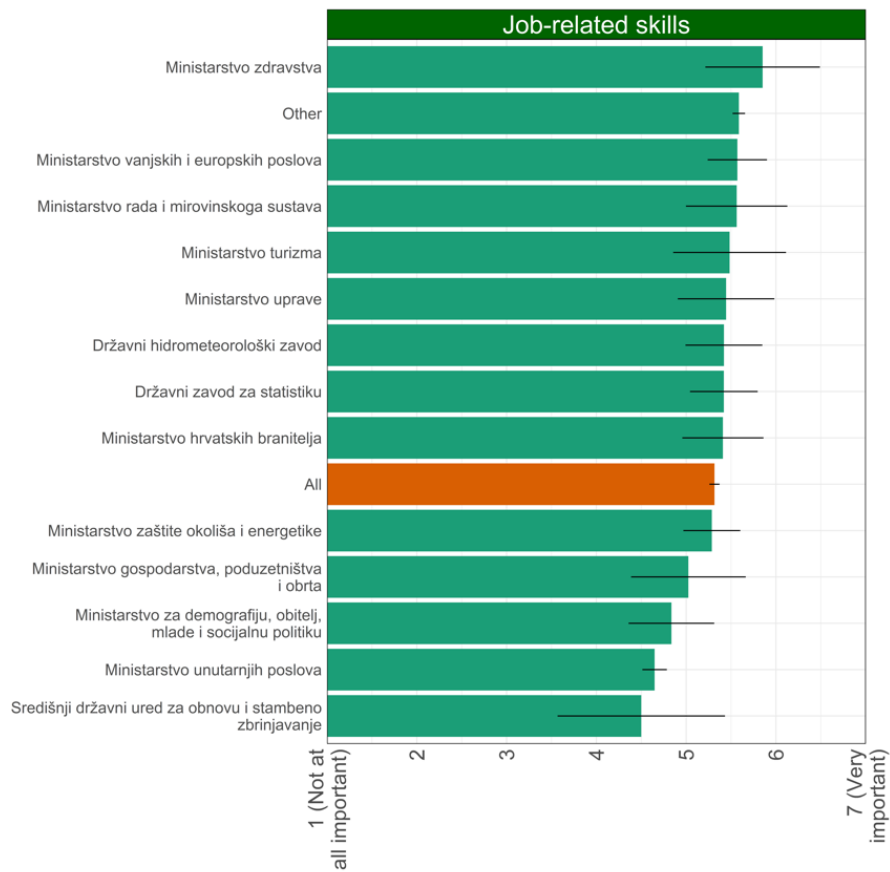


Differences between groups and institutions (selected results)

Differences by types of administrative institutions



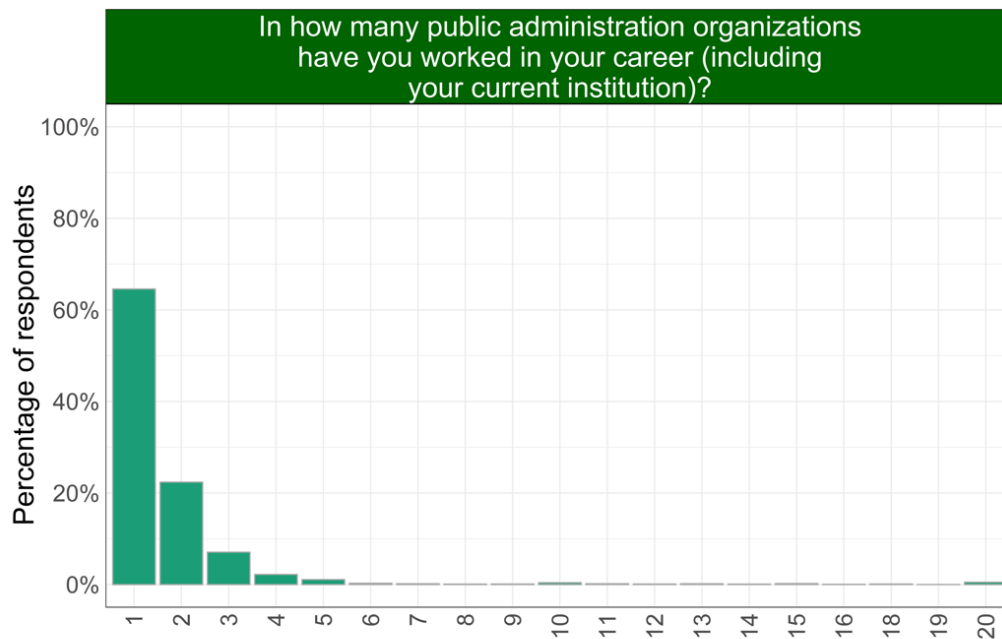
Differences by institutions



Career advancement

Mobility

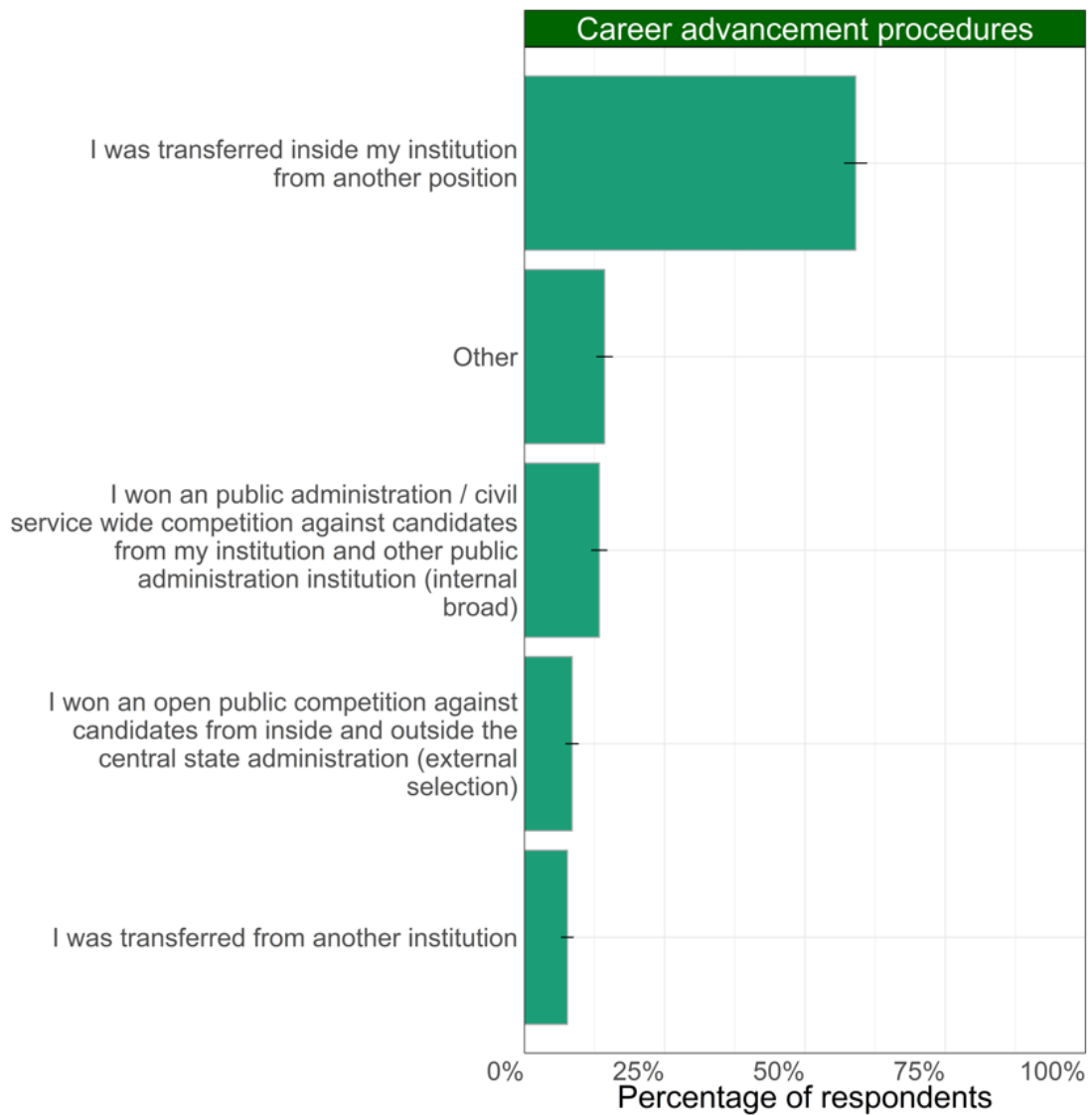
'In how many public administration organizations have you worked in your career (including your current institution)?'



Mode of advancement

Do you recall through which procedure you last advanced to a better position in public administration.? Please tick all that apply.

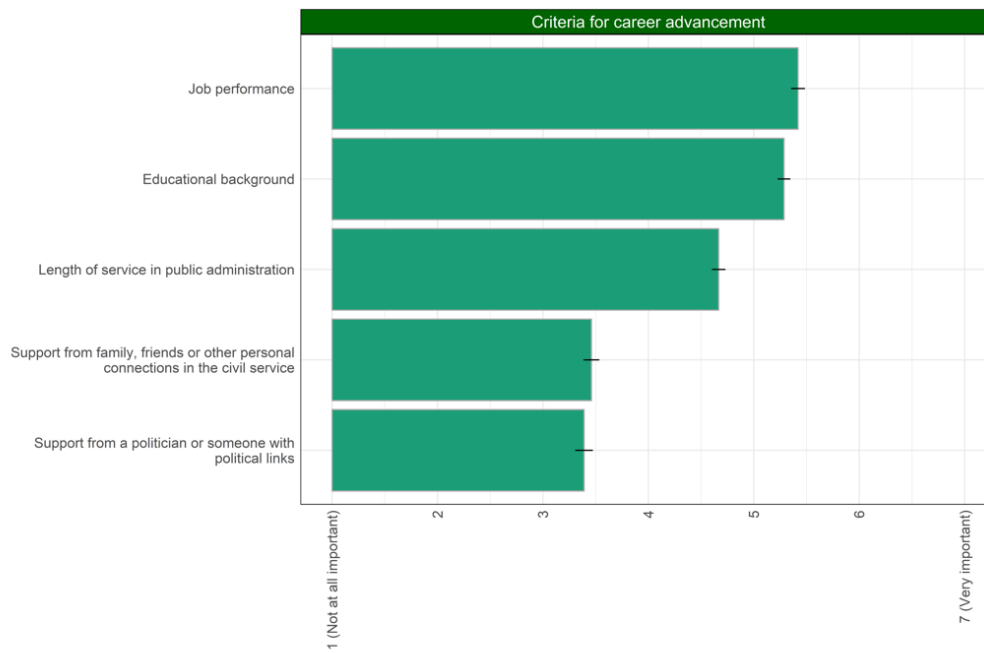
- I won a public competition against candidates from inside and outside the public administration.
- I won an public sector / civil service wide competition against candidates from my institution and other public administration institution
- I won an internal competition against candidates from my current institution
- I was transferred from another institution
- I was transferred inside my institution from another position
- Other _____
- Don't know / prefer not to respond



Advancement criteria

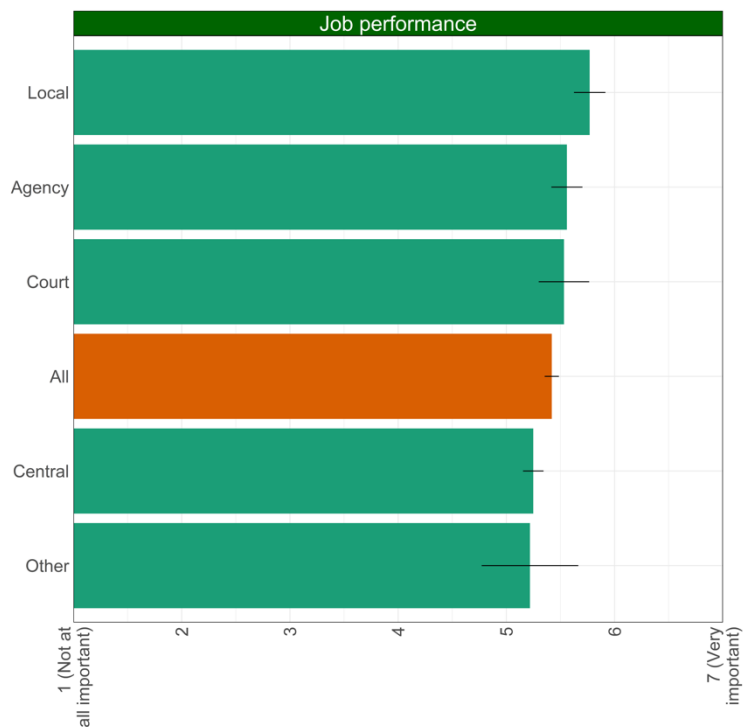
Thinking about your future career advancement in the public administration how important do you expect the following criteria to be for your advancement to better position in public administration?

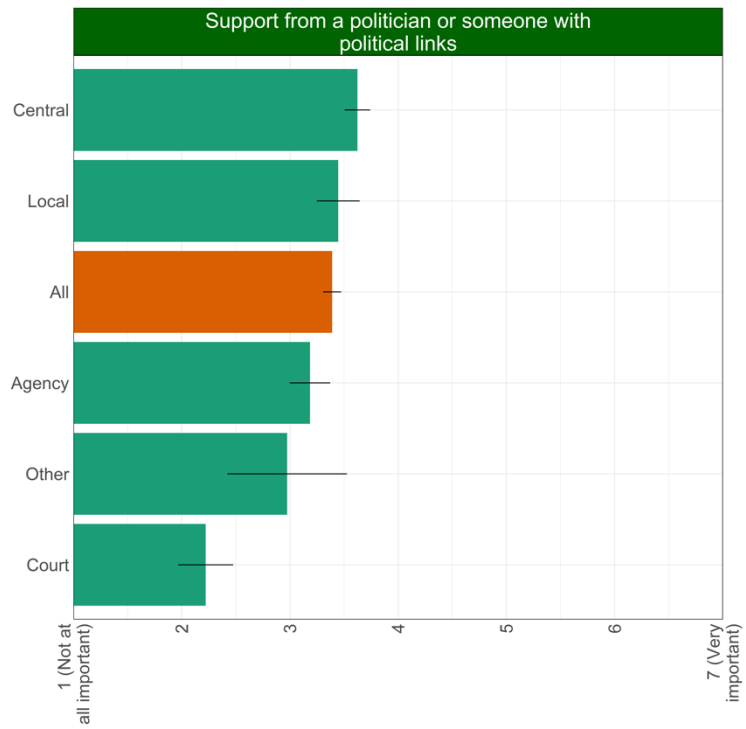
- Length of service in the public sector (mean response)
- Job performance (mean response)
- Educational background (mean response)
- Support from family, friends or other personal connections in the civil service (mean response)
- Support from a politician or someone with political links (mean response)



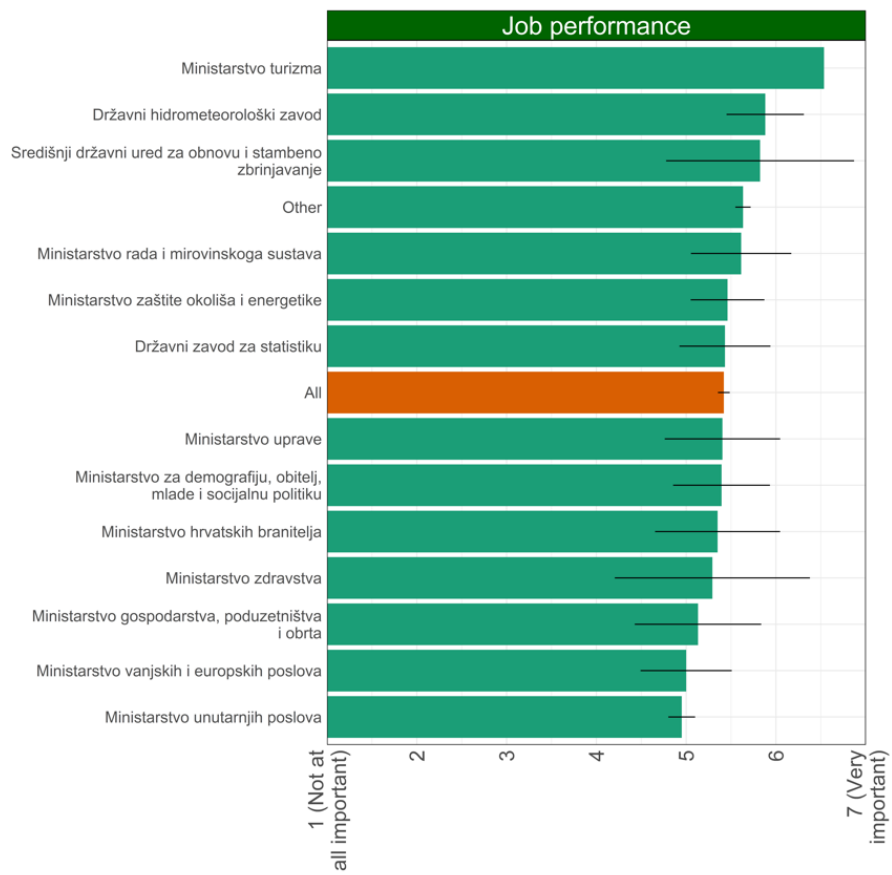
Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

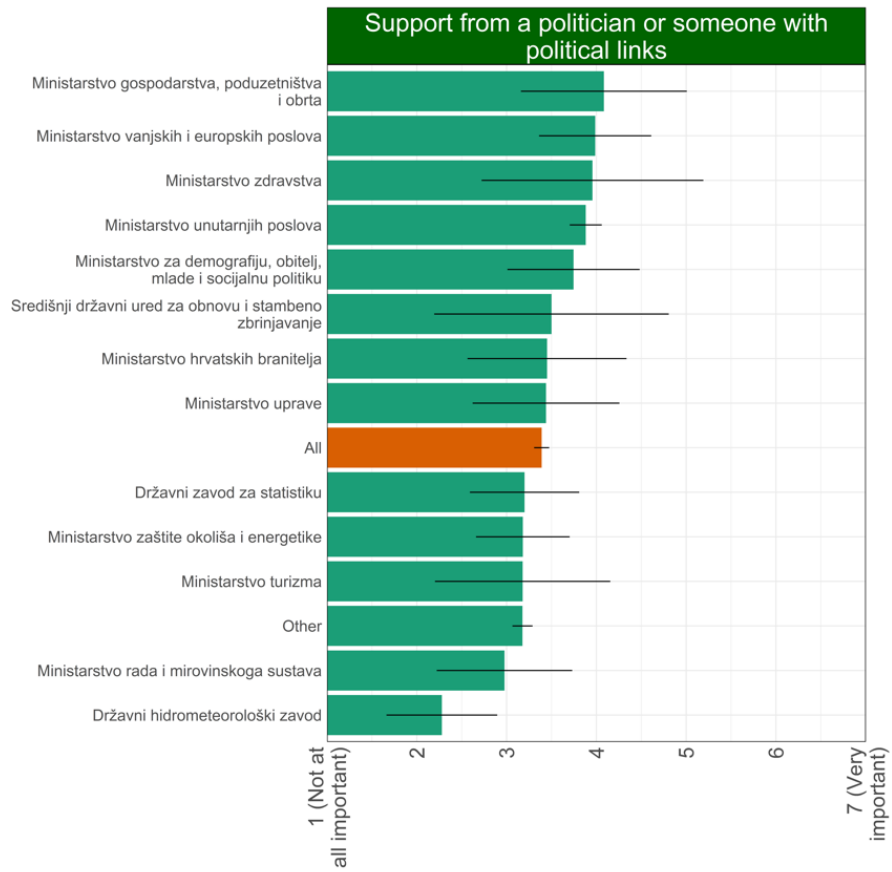
Differences by types of administrative institutions



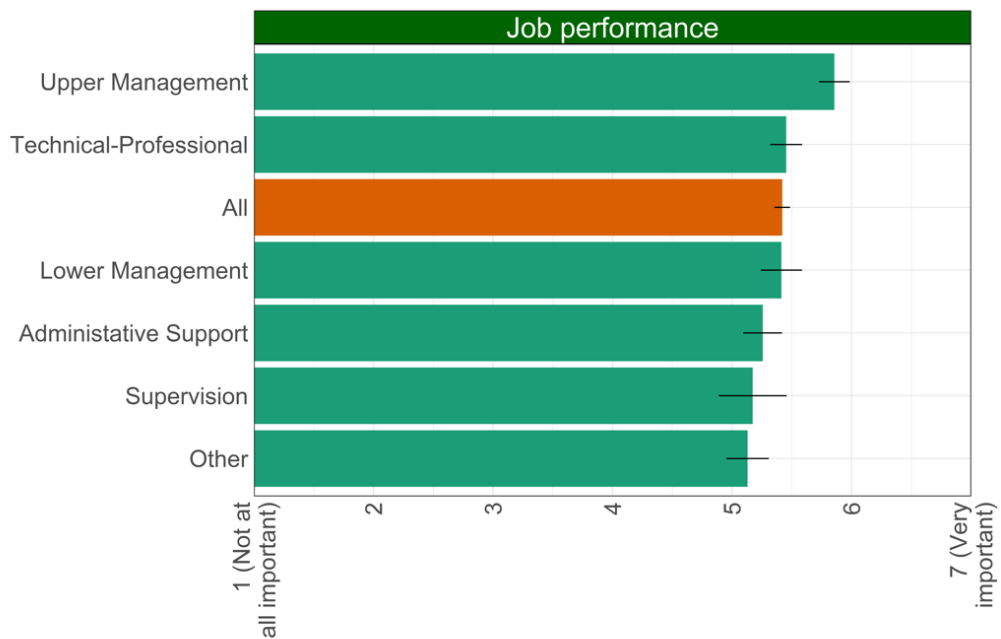


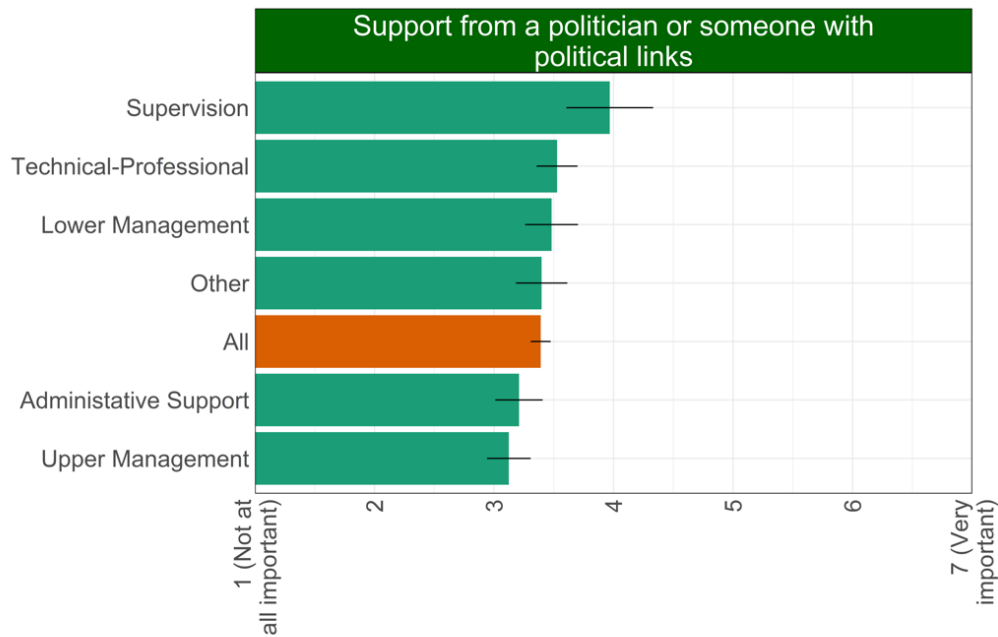
Differences by institutions





Differences by rank





Salary management

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your salary?

- I could sustain my household through my salary alone (mean response)
- I am satisfied with my salary (mean response)
- When I perform well at work, my prospects for a pay rise or bonus improve (mean response)
- As I gain years of work experience, my salary increases. (mean response)
- I am paid at least as well as colleagues who have job responsibilities similar to me (mean response)
- It would be easy for me to find a job outside the public administration that pays better than my current job. (mean response)



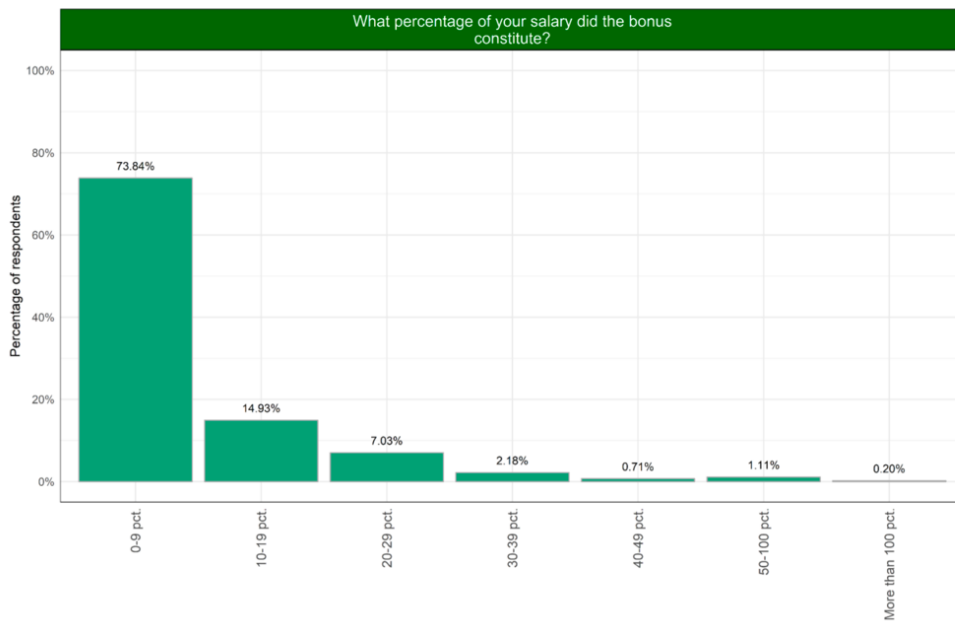
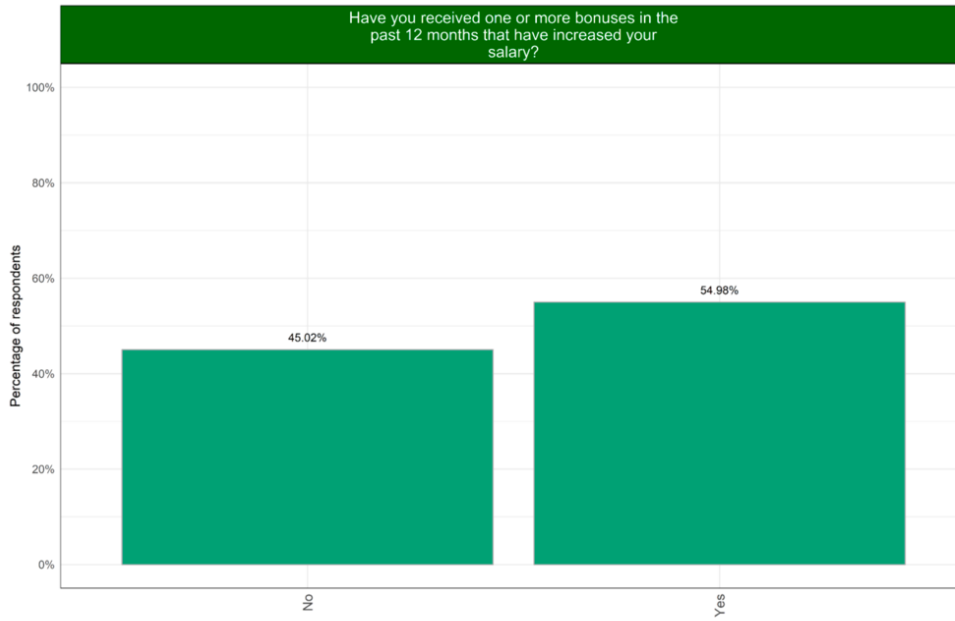
Salary bonuses and allowances

During the last 12 months, did you receive one or several bonuses that increased your salary?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know / prefer not to respond

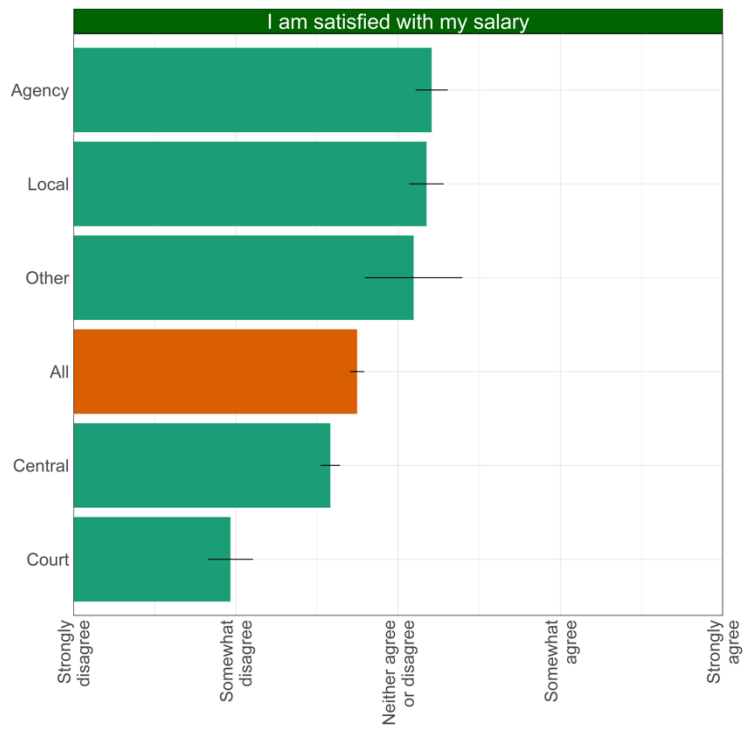
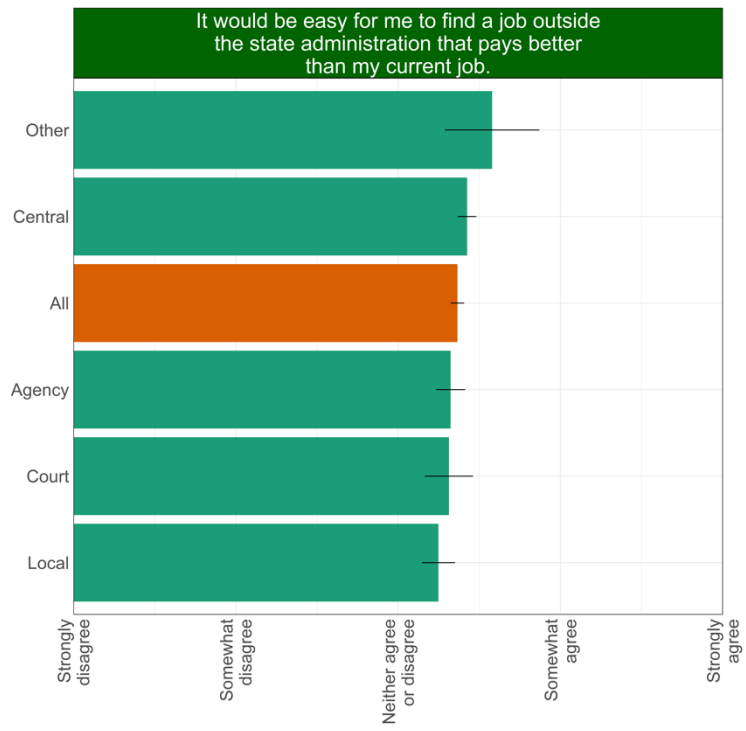
[If Yes] How large was your bonus relative to your annual salary?

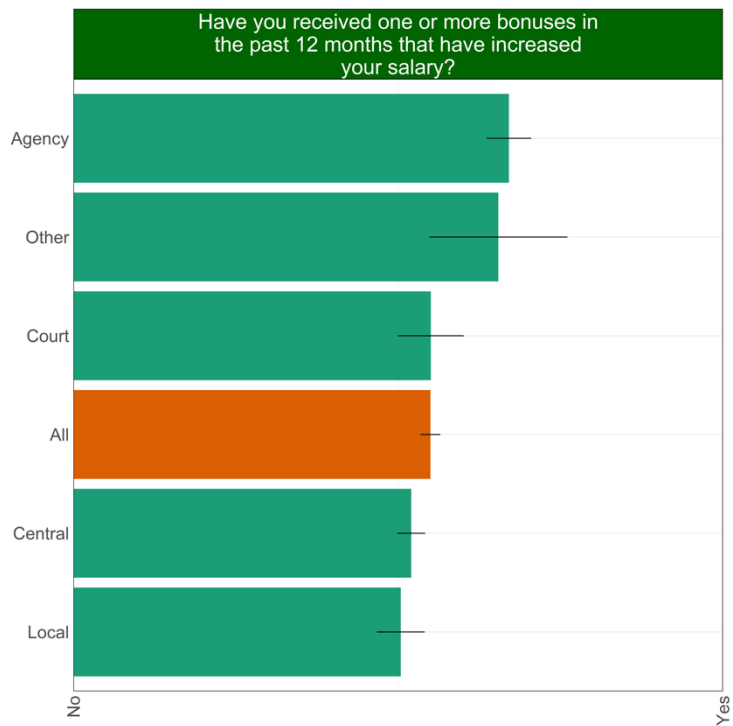
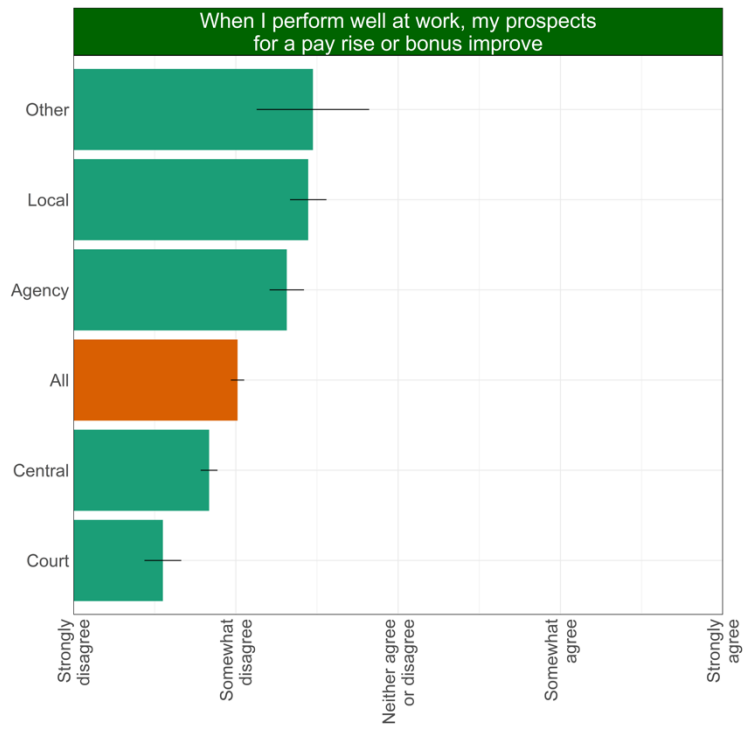
- 0 – 10 per cent
- 10 – 19 per cent
- 20 – 29 per cent
- 30 – 39 per cent
- 40 – 49 per cent
- 50 – 100 per cent
- More than 100 per cent
- Don't remember / prefer not to respond



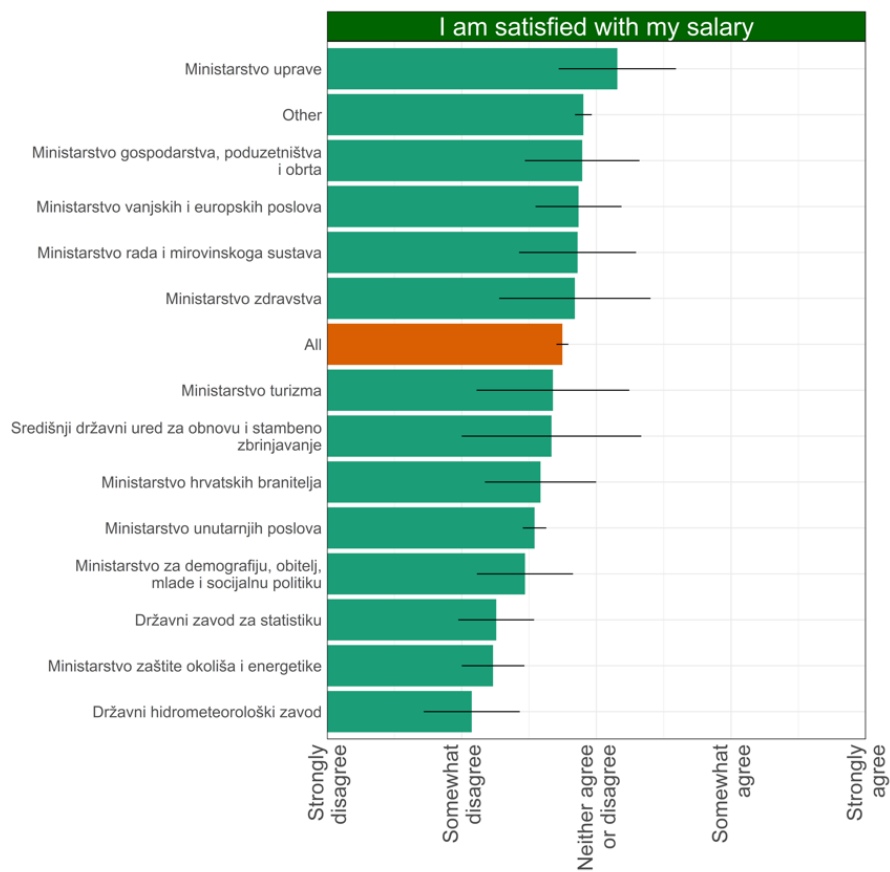
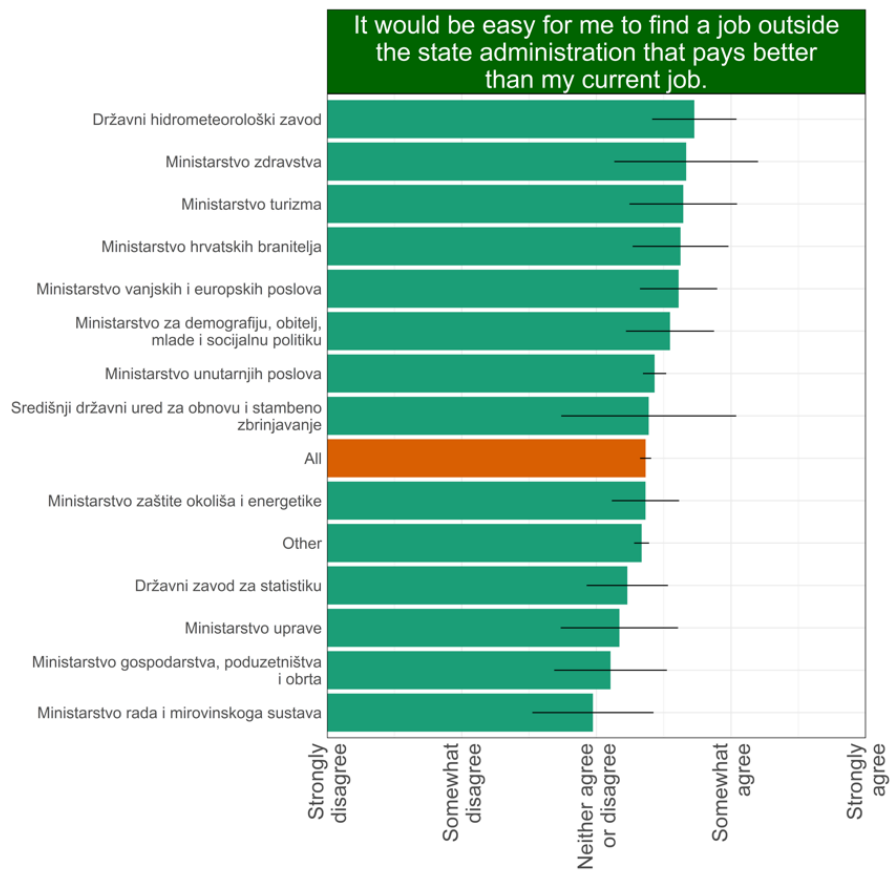
Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

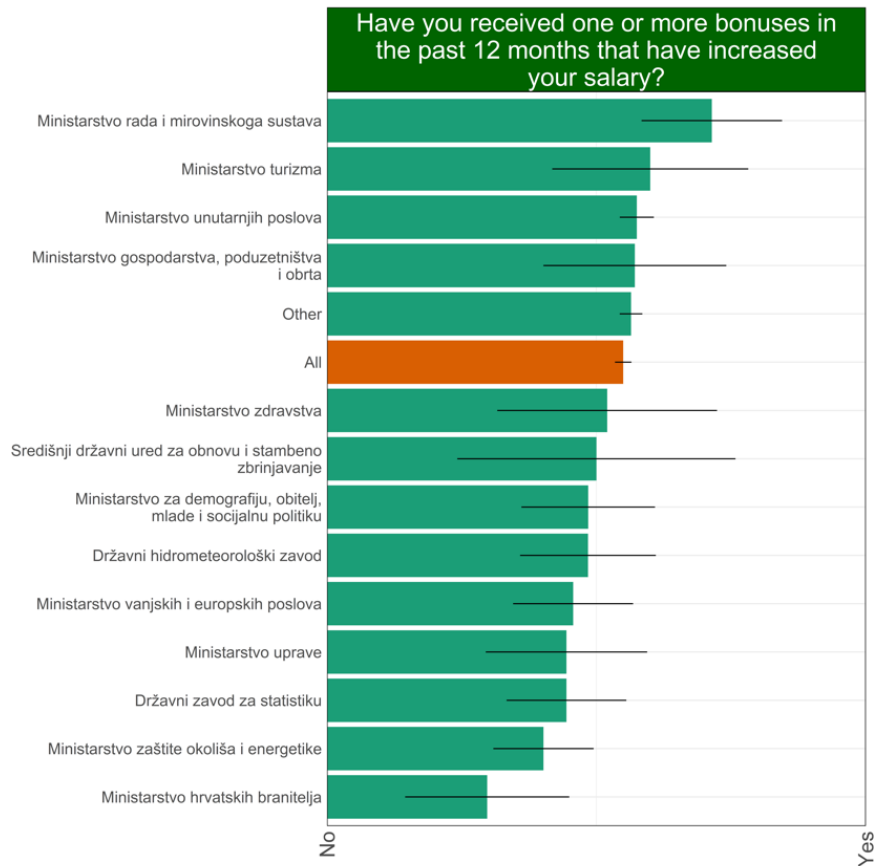
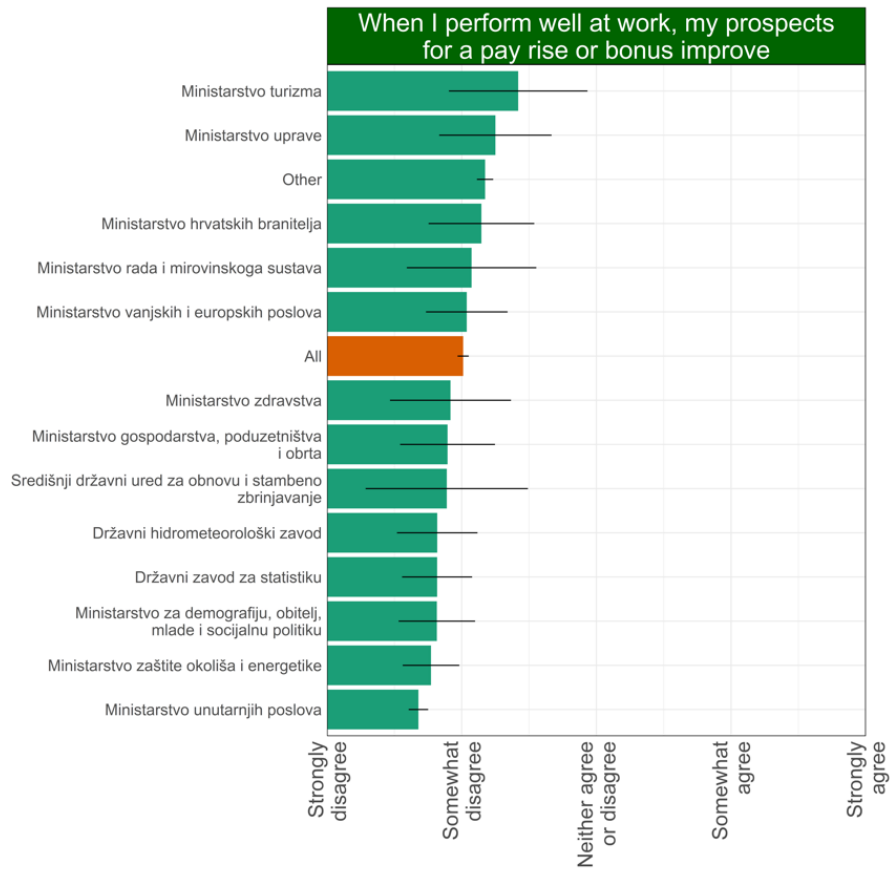
Differences by types of administrative institutions



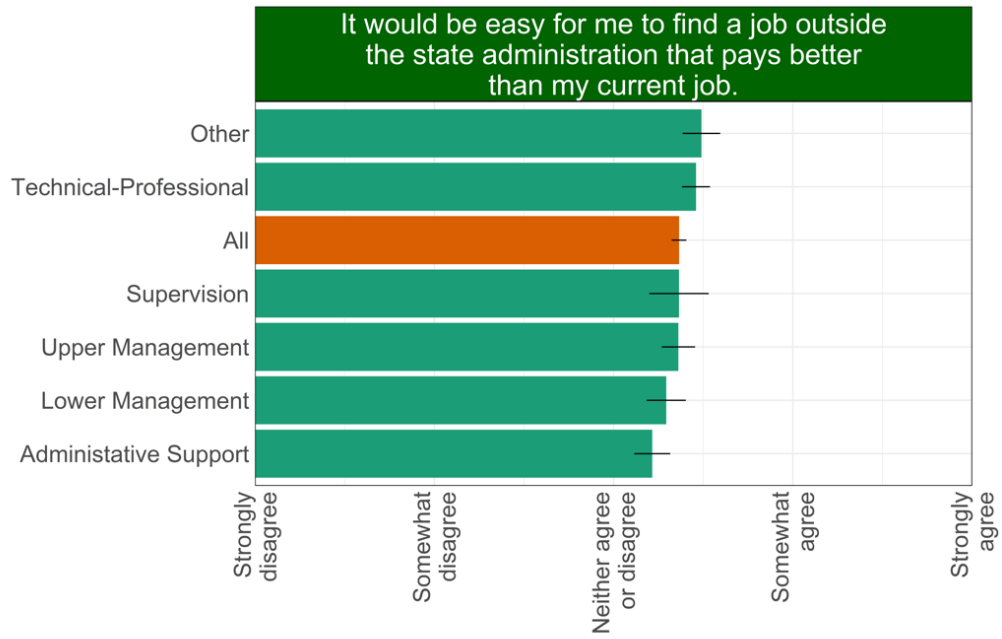


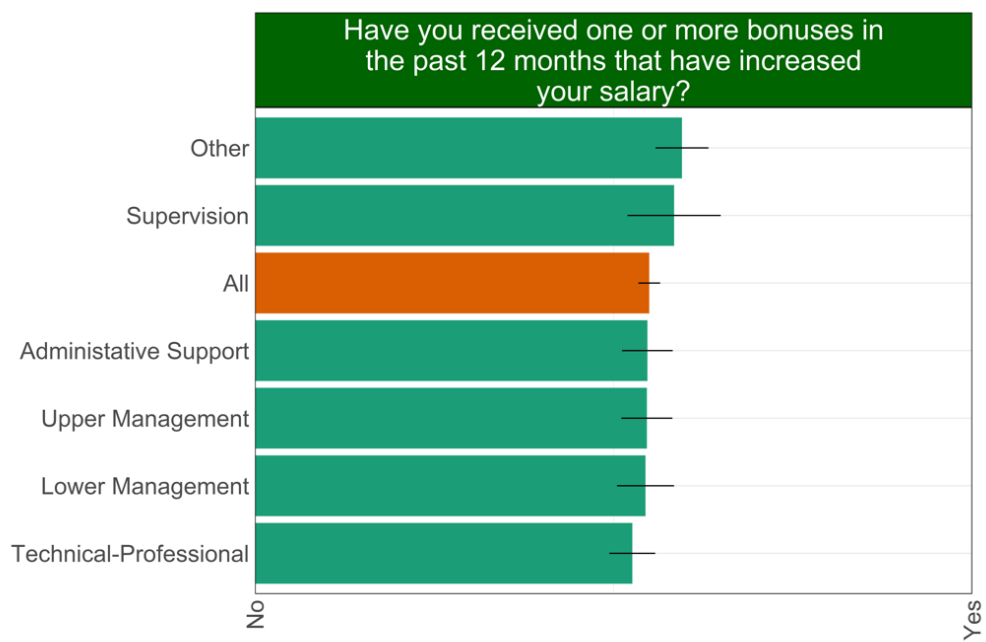
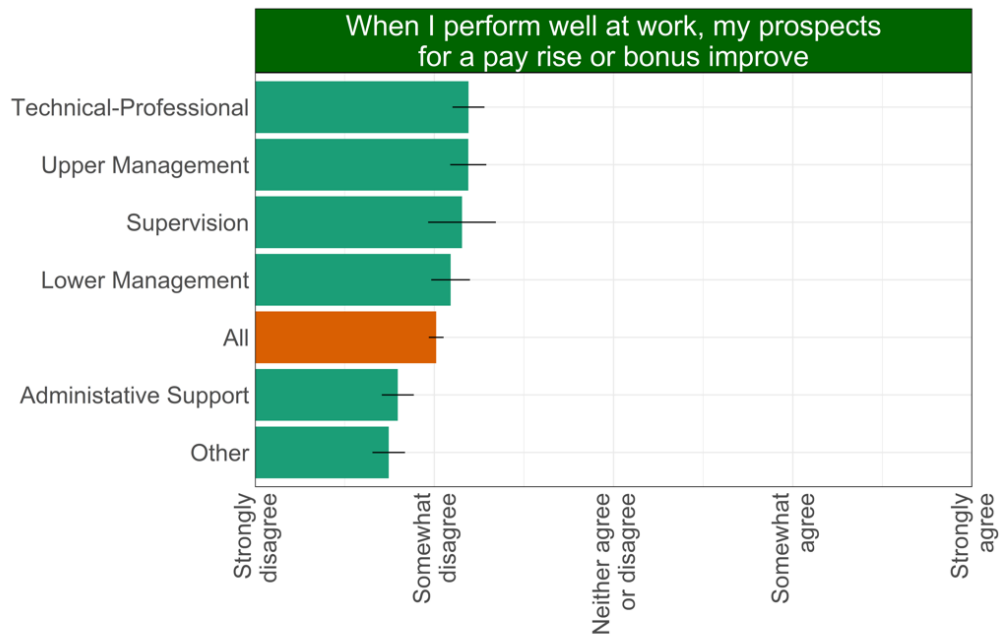
Differences by institutions





Differences by rank





Performance evaluation

Process of performance evaluation

Has your performance been formally evaluated during the last two years?

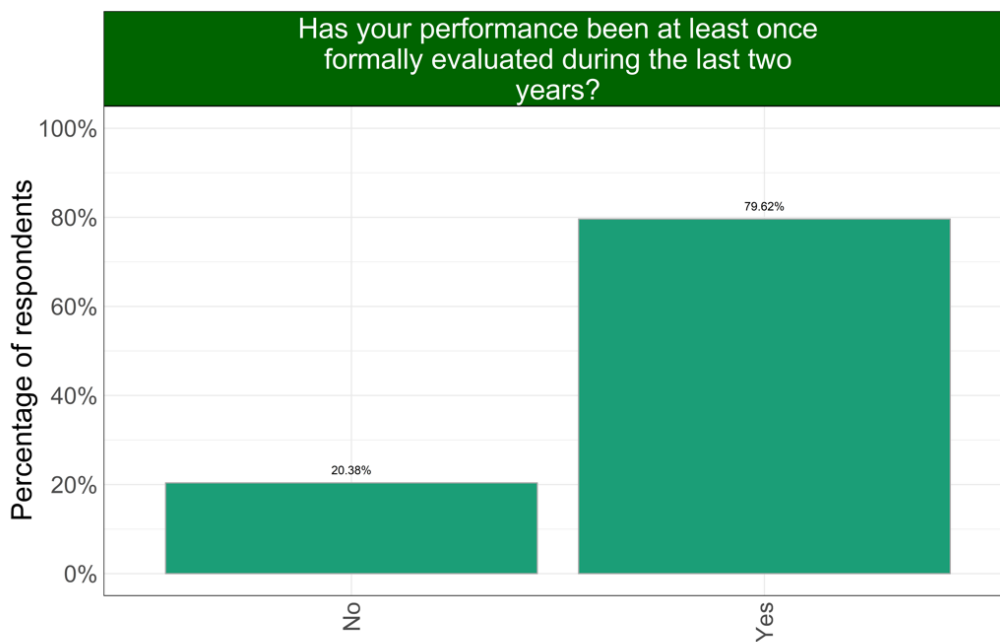
- Yes
- No
- Don't know / prefer not to respond

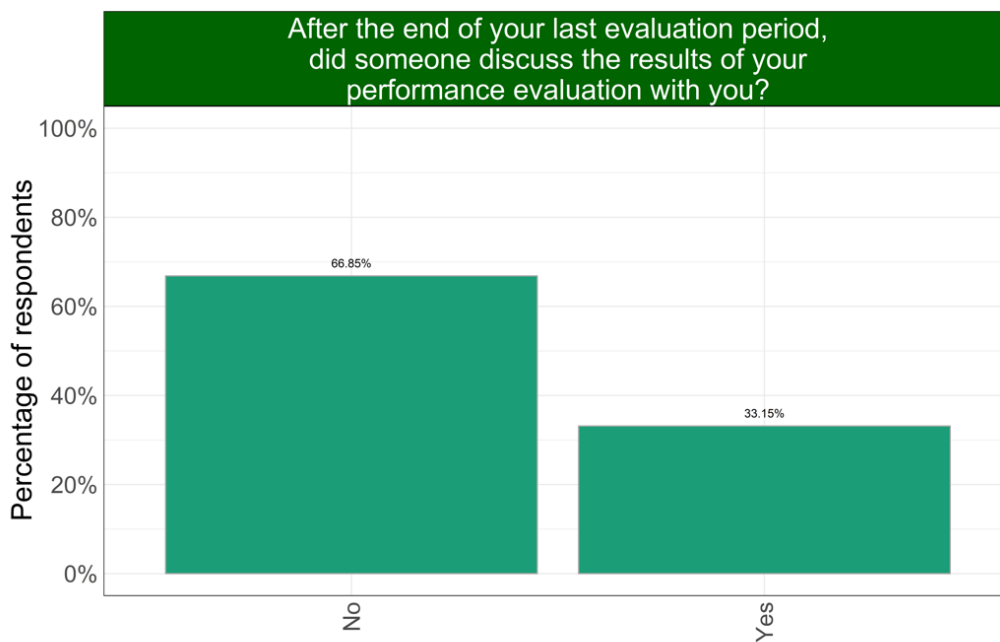
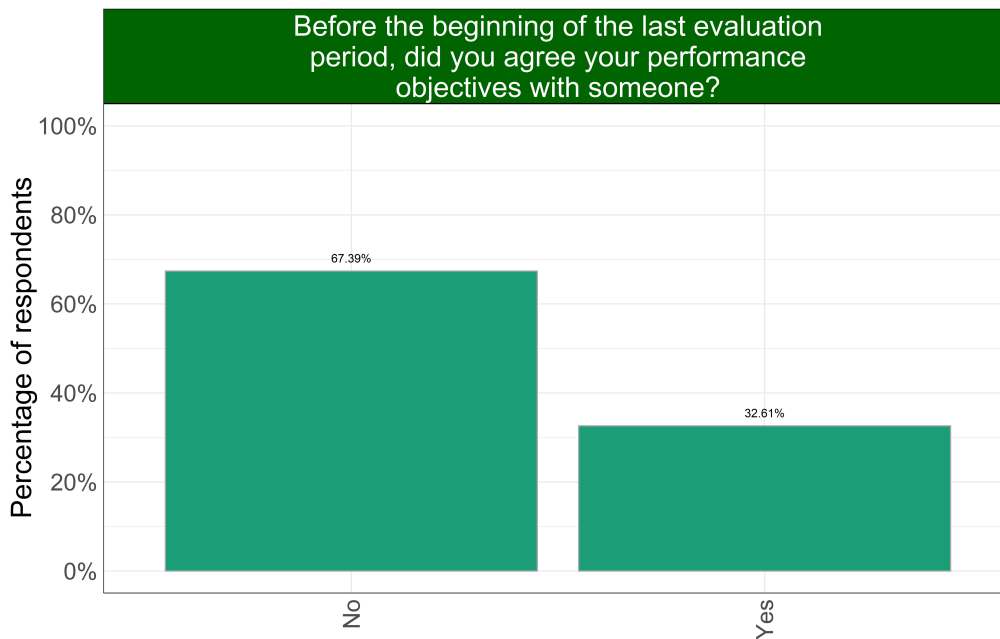
Before the beginning of the last evaluation period, did someone set your performance objectives with you?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know / prefer not to respond

After the end of your last evaluation period, did someone discuss the results of your performance evaluation with you?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know / prefer not to respond



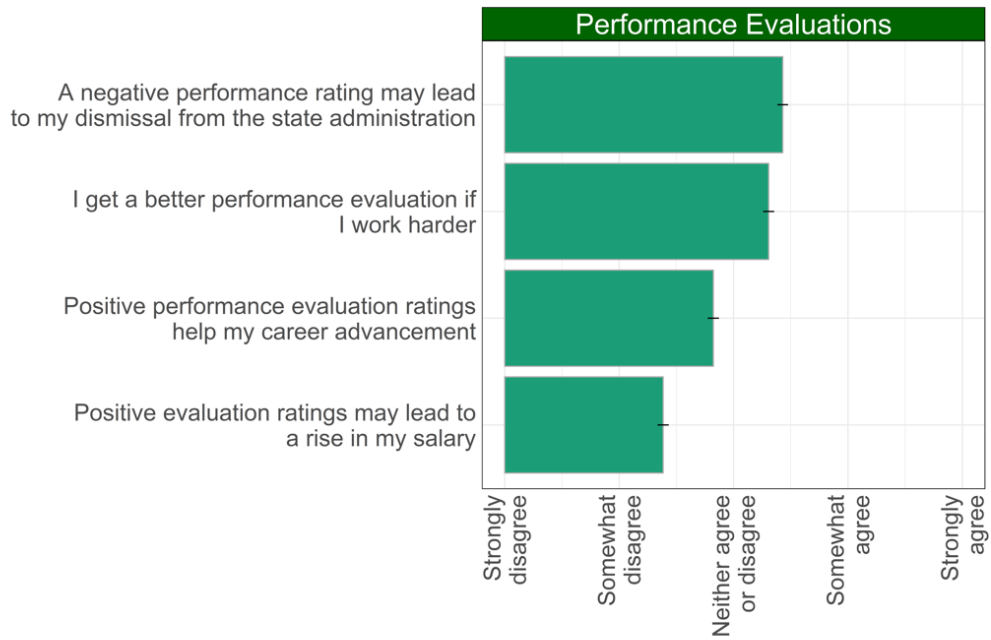


Consequences of performance evaluations

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your performance evaluation?

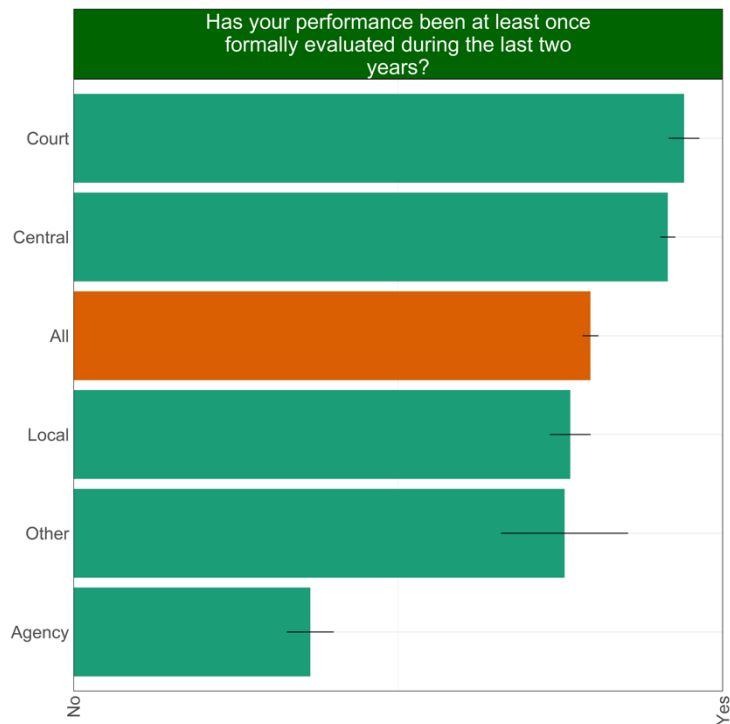
- I get a better performance evaluation if I work harder (mean response)
- Positive evaluation ratings may lead to a rise in my salary (mean response)
- Positive performance evaluation ratings help my career advancement (mean response)

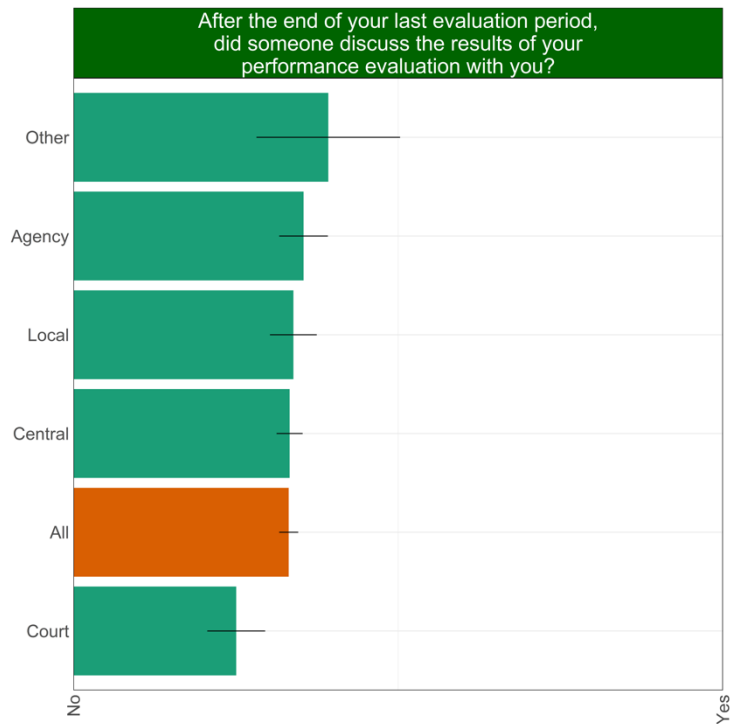
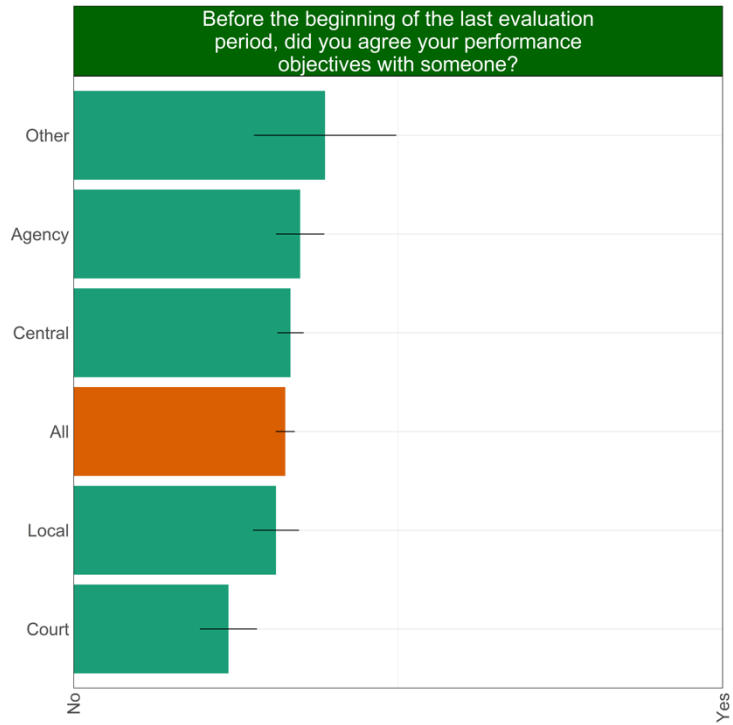
- A negative performance rating may lead to my dismissal from the public sector (mean response)

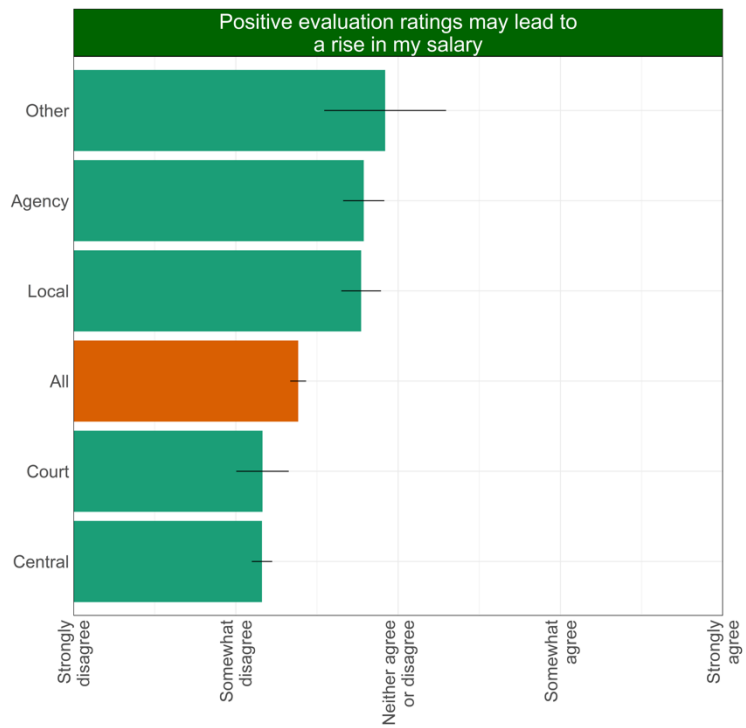
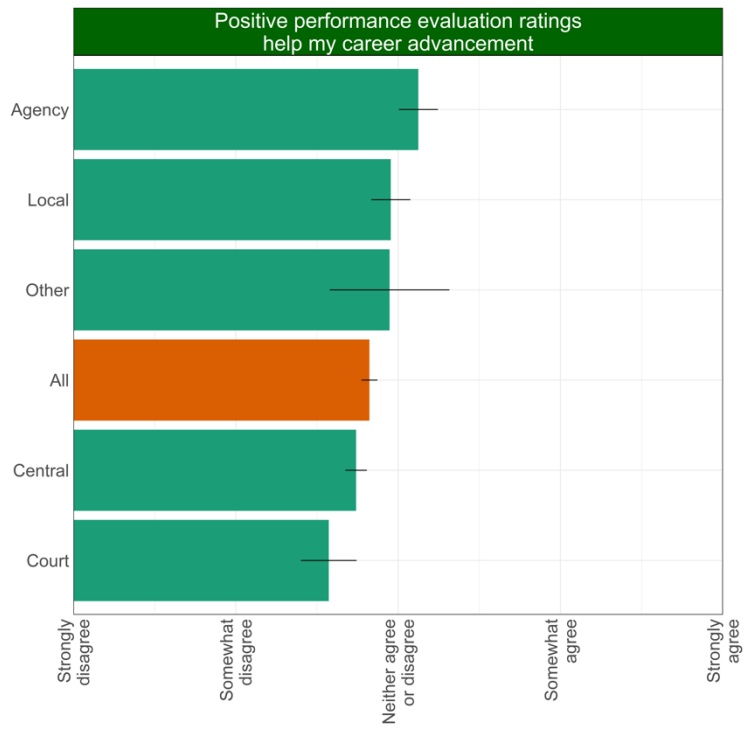


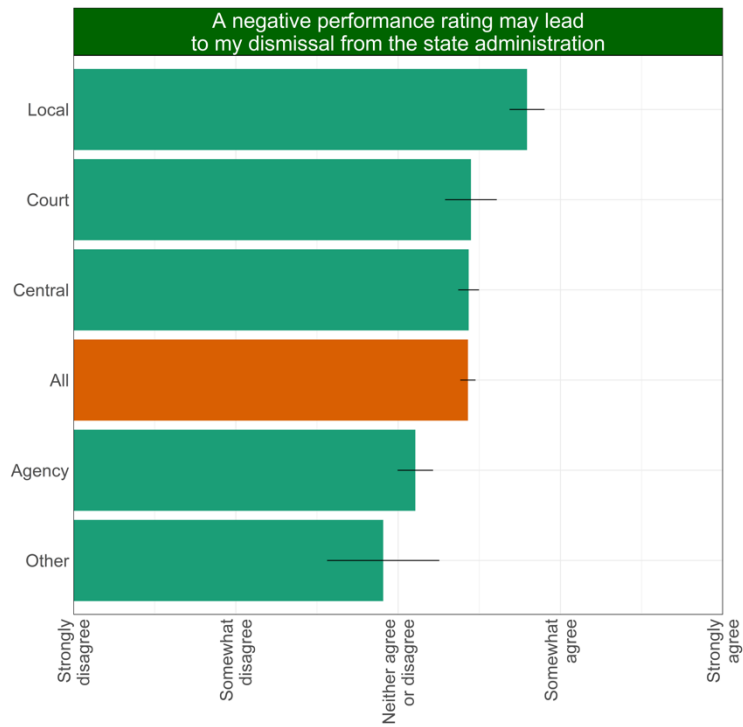
Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

Differences by types of administrative institutions

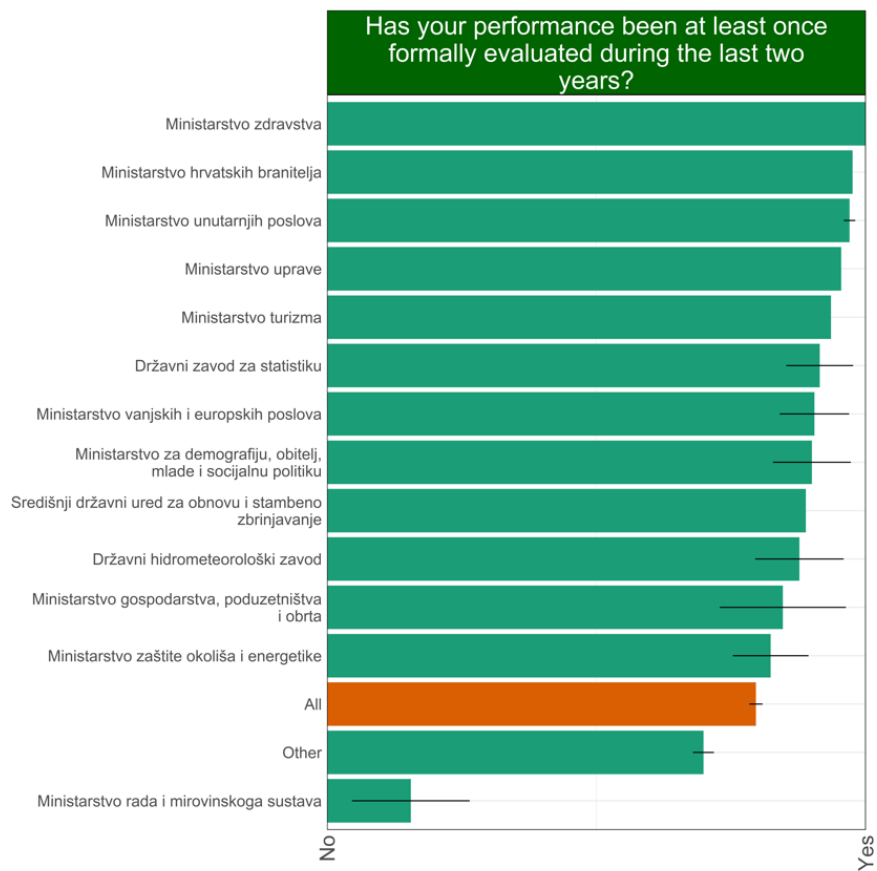


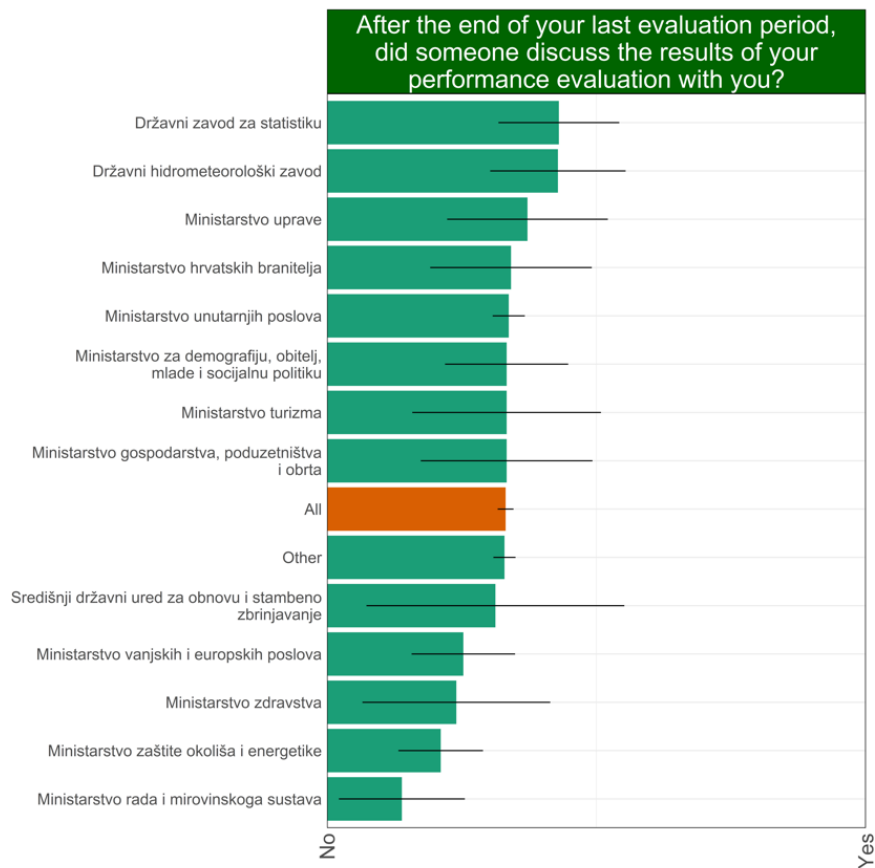
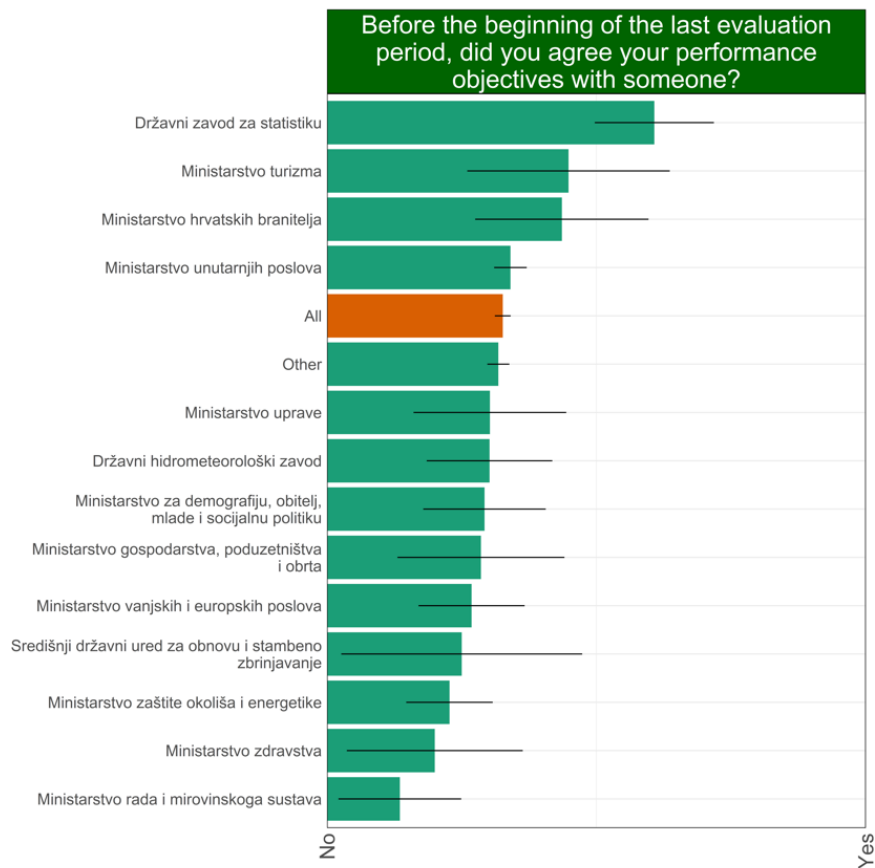


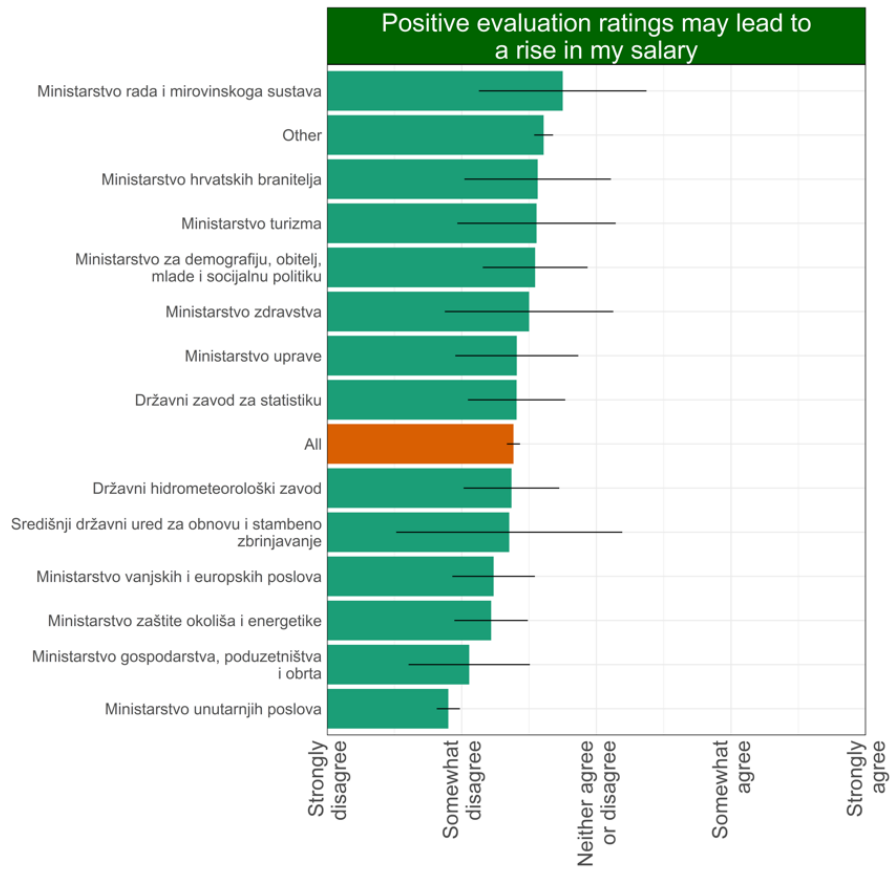
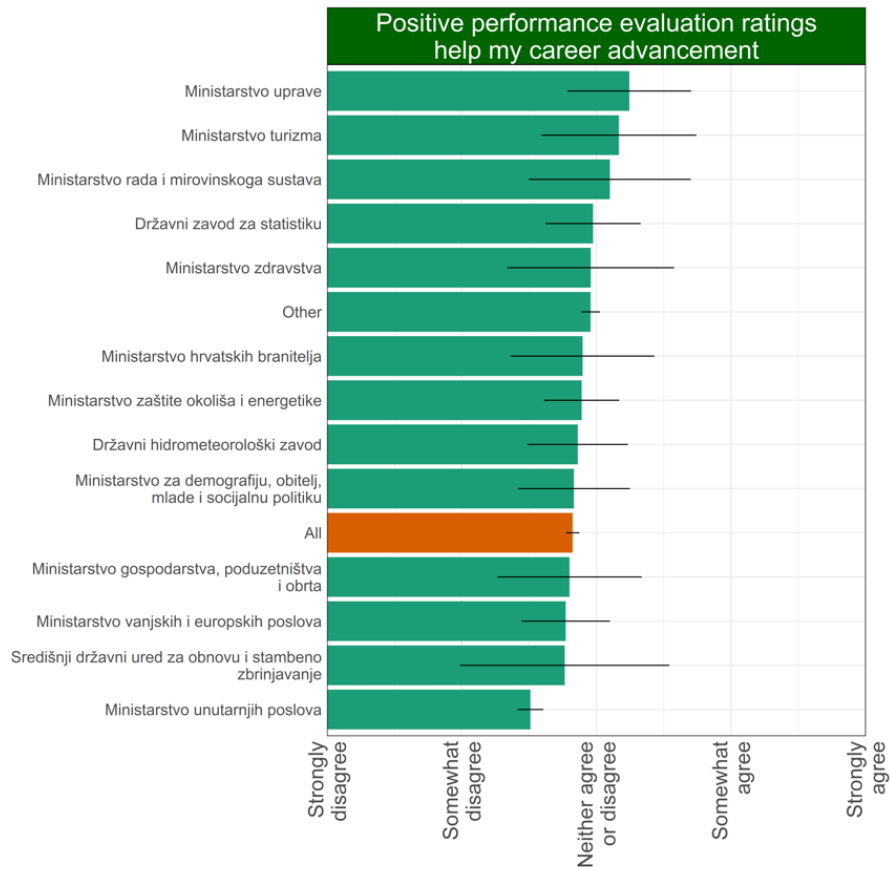


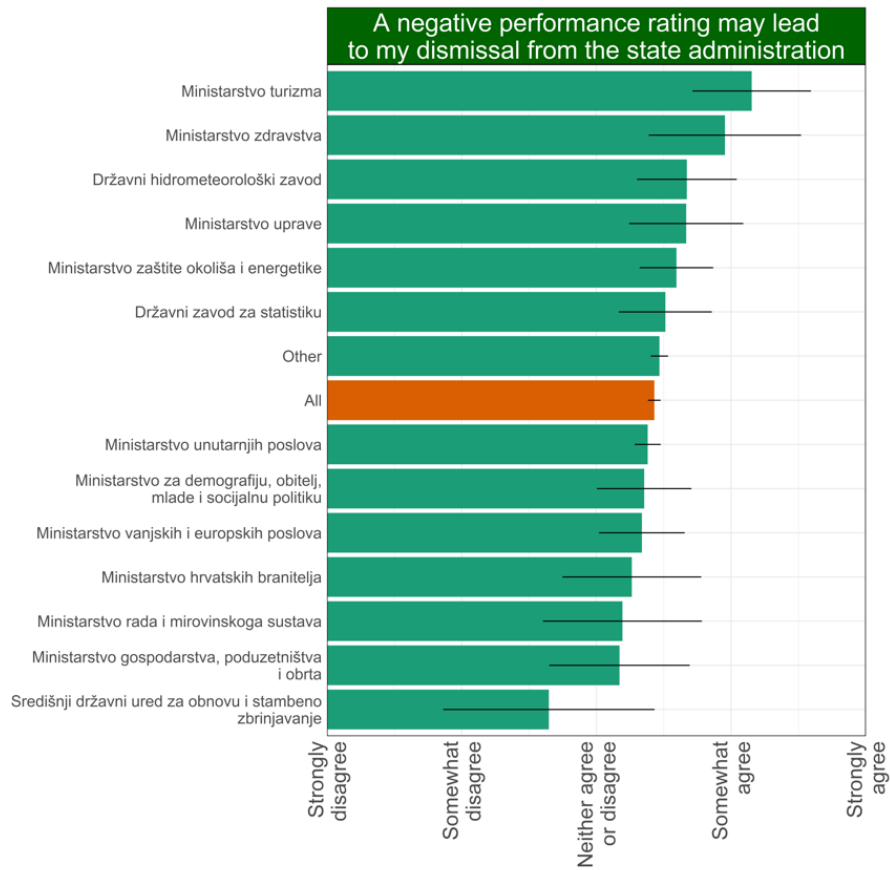


Differences by institutions

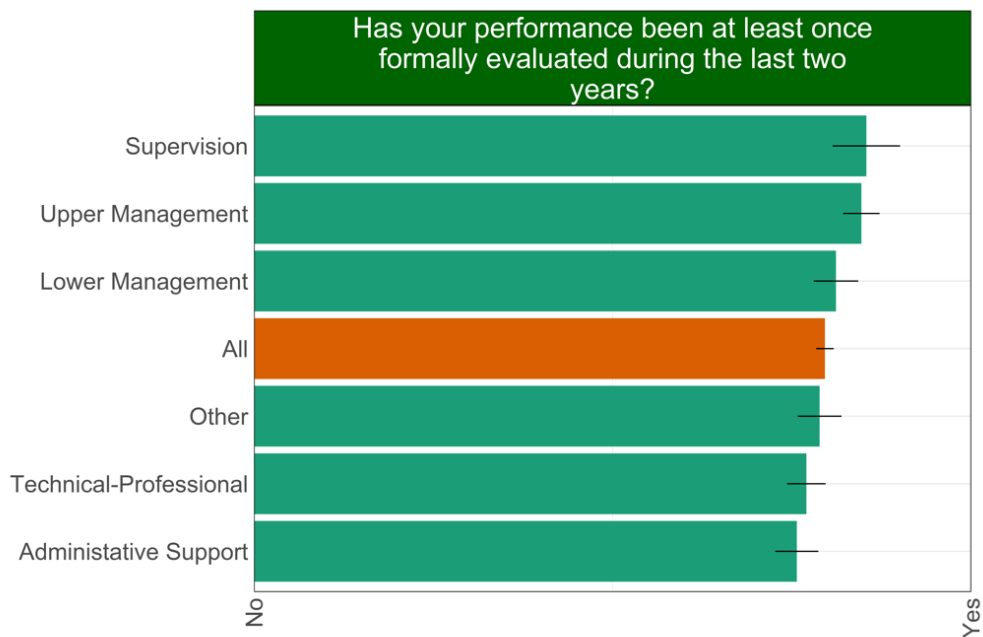


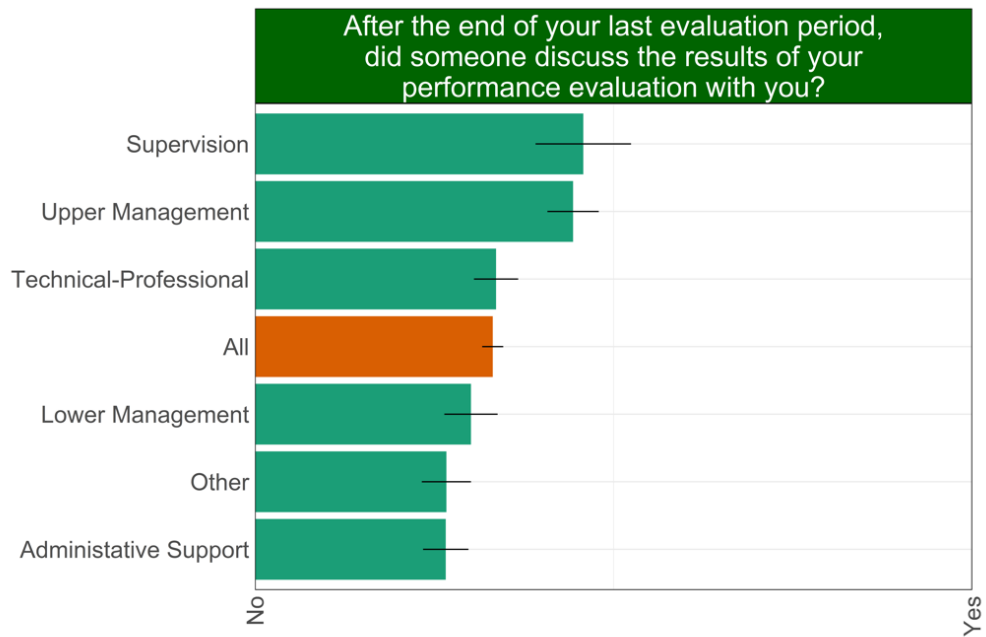
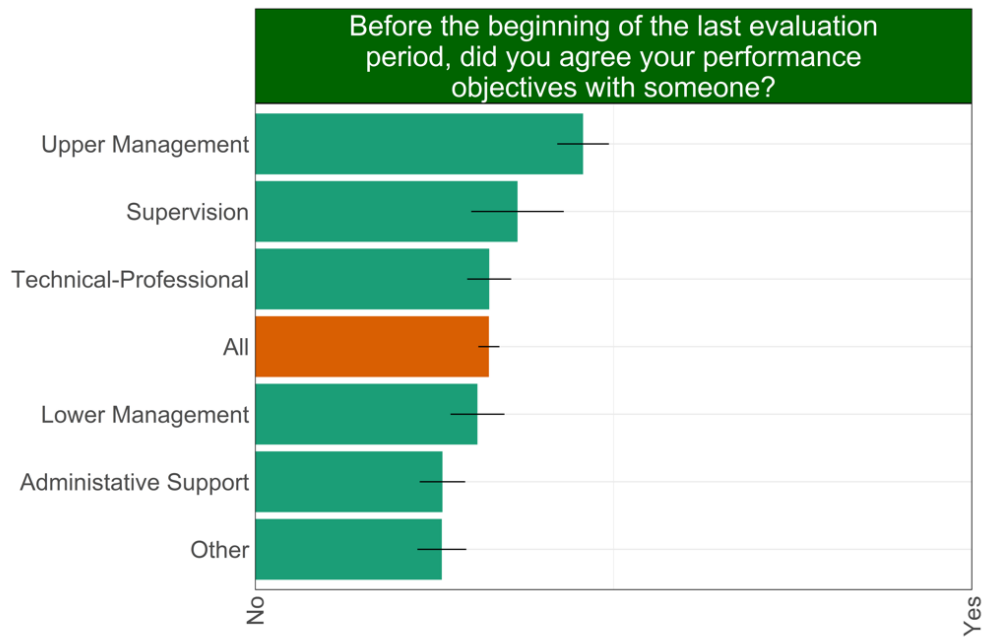


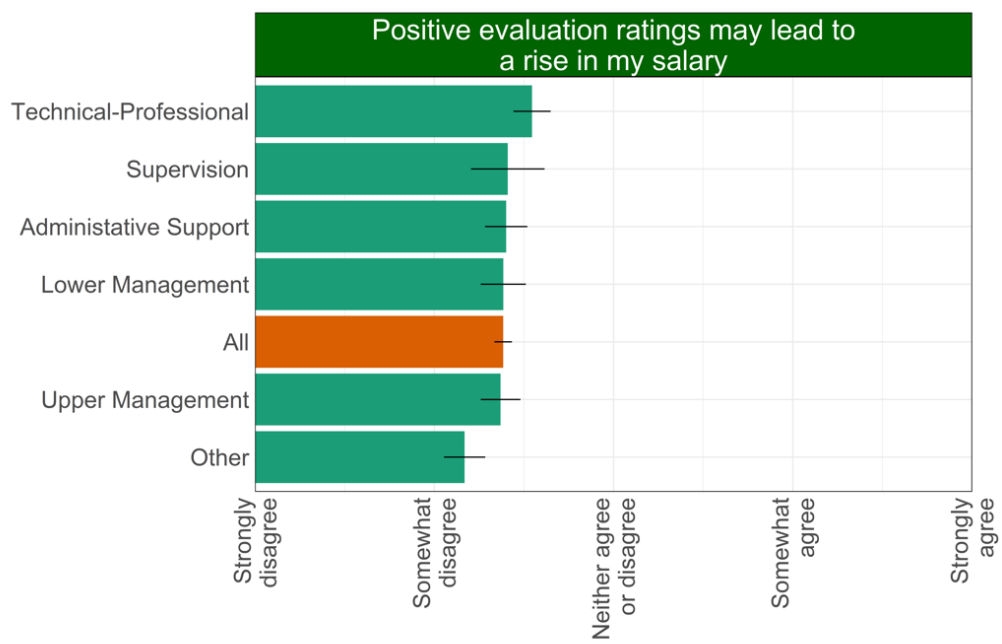
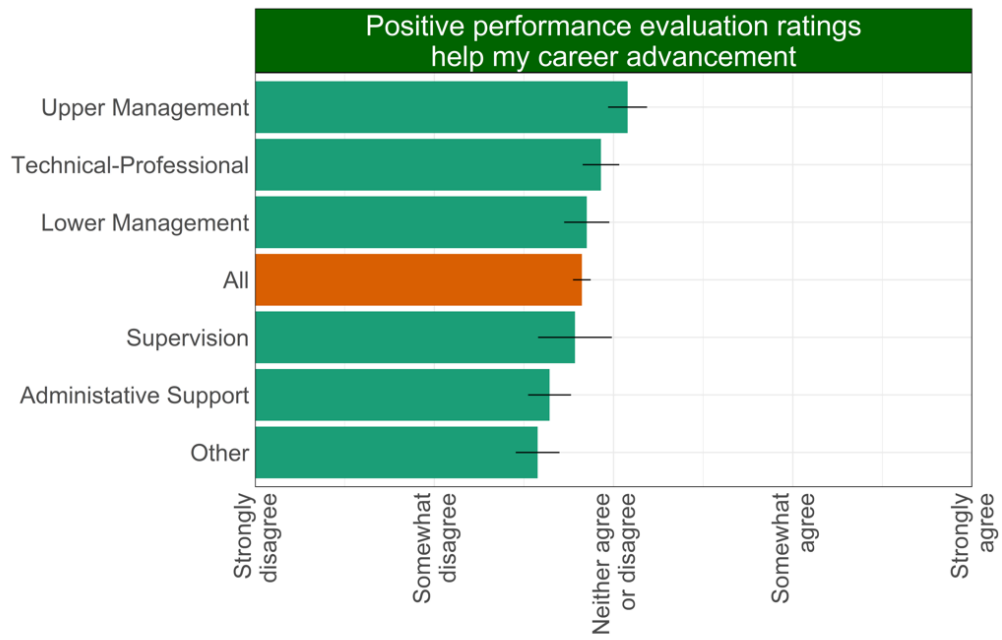


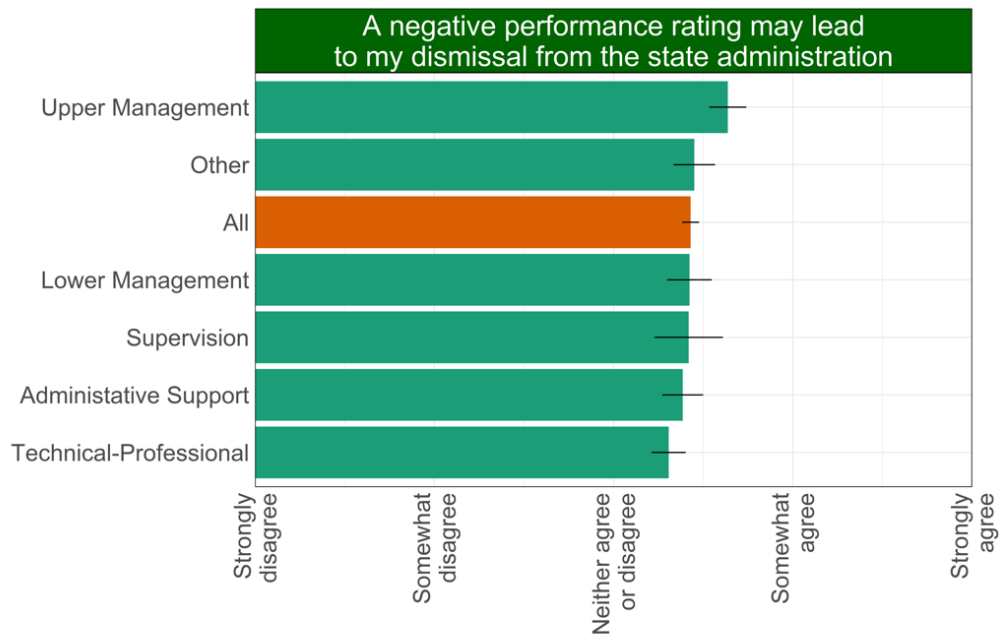


Differences by rank





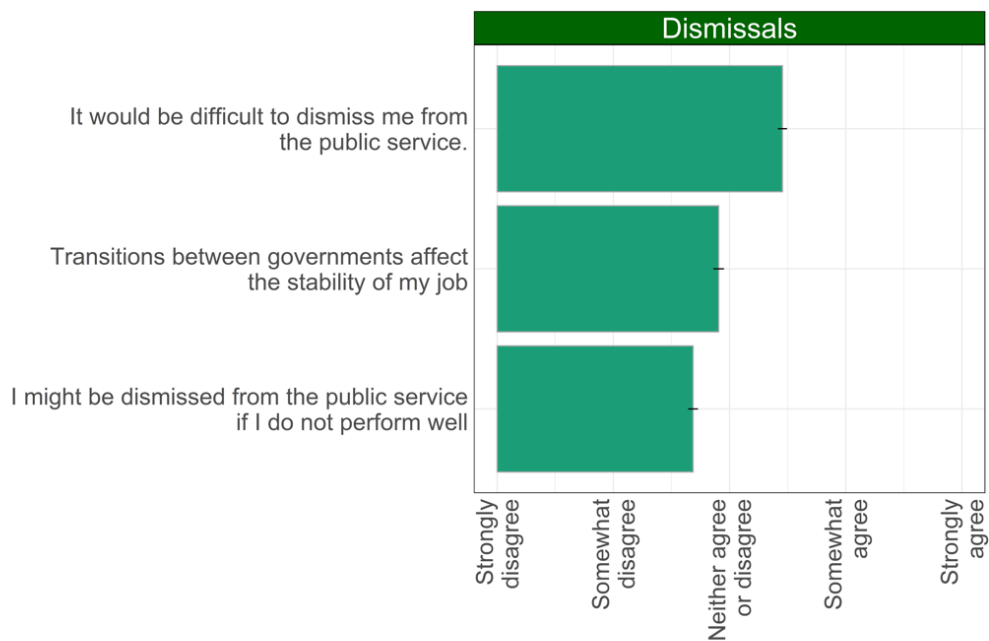




Job protection

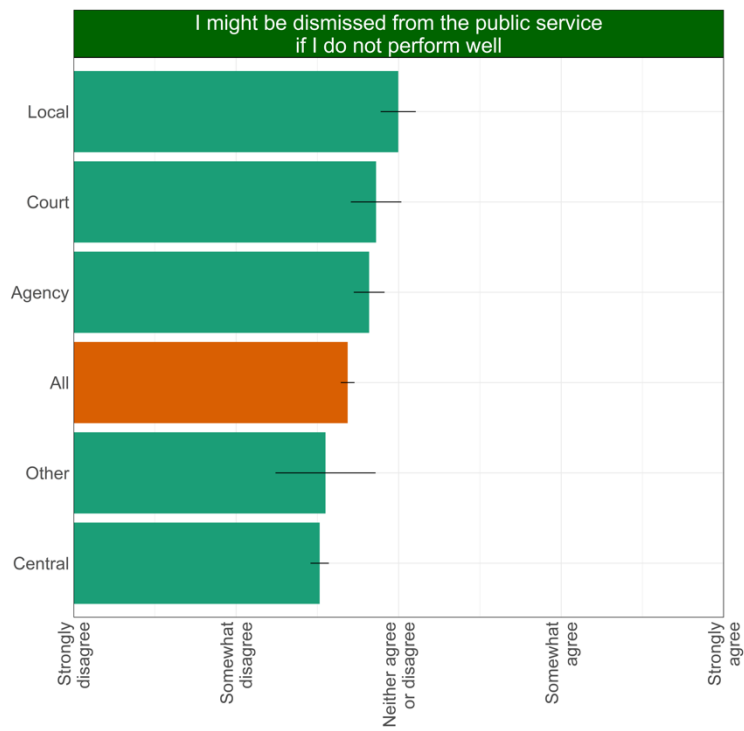
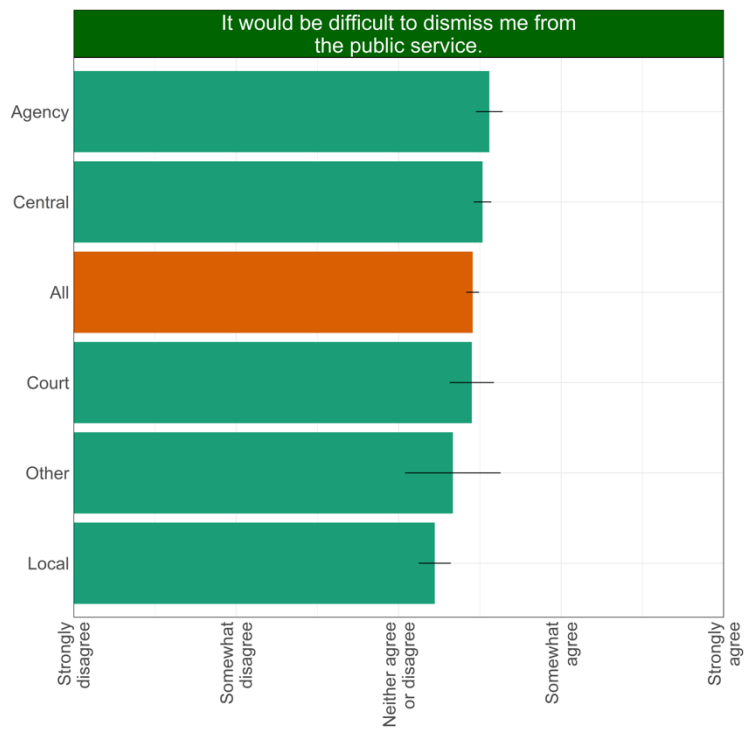
Thinking about your job stability, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

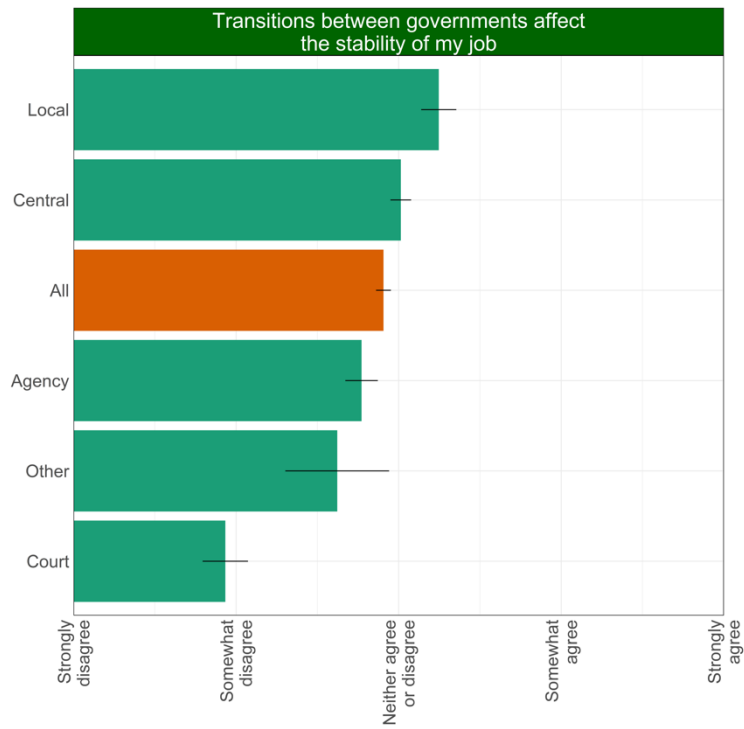
- It would be difficult to dismiss me from the public service. (mean response)
- I might be dismissed from the public service if I do not perform well (mean response)
- Transitions between governments affect the stability of my job (mean response)



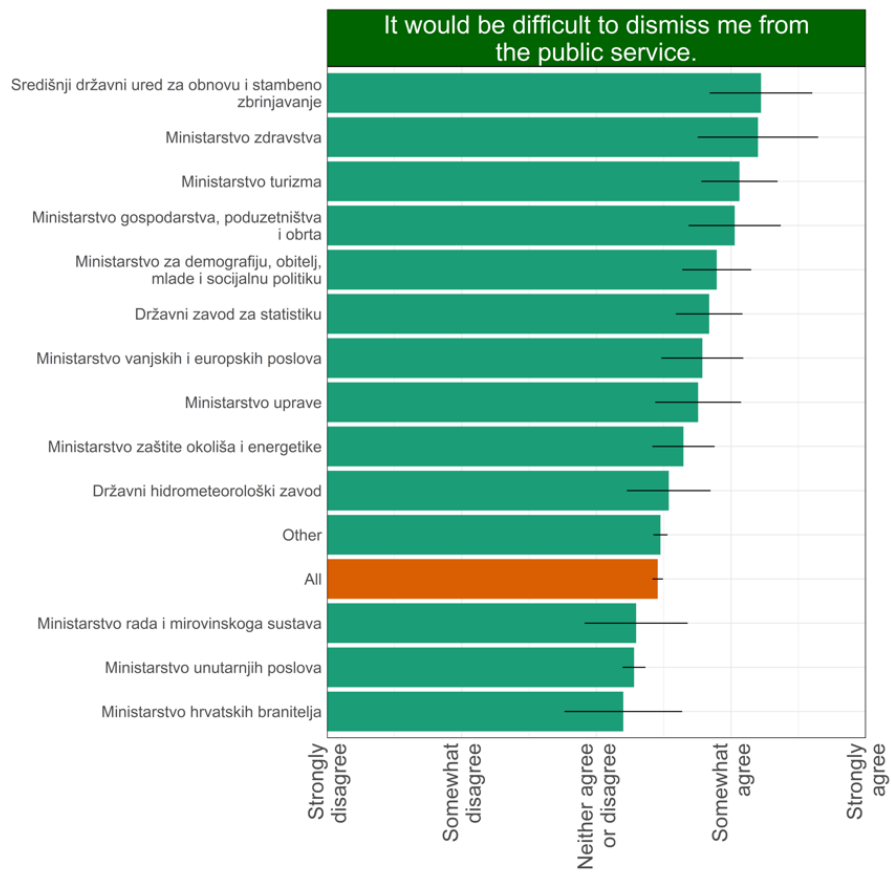
Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

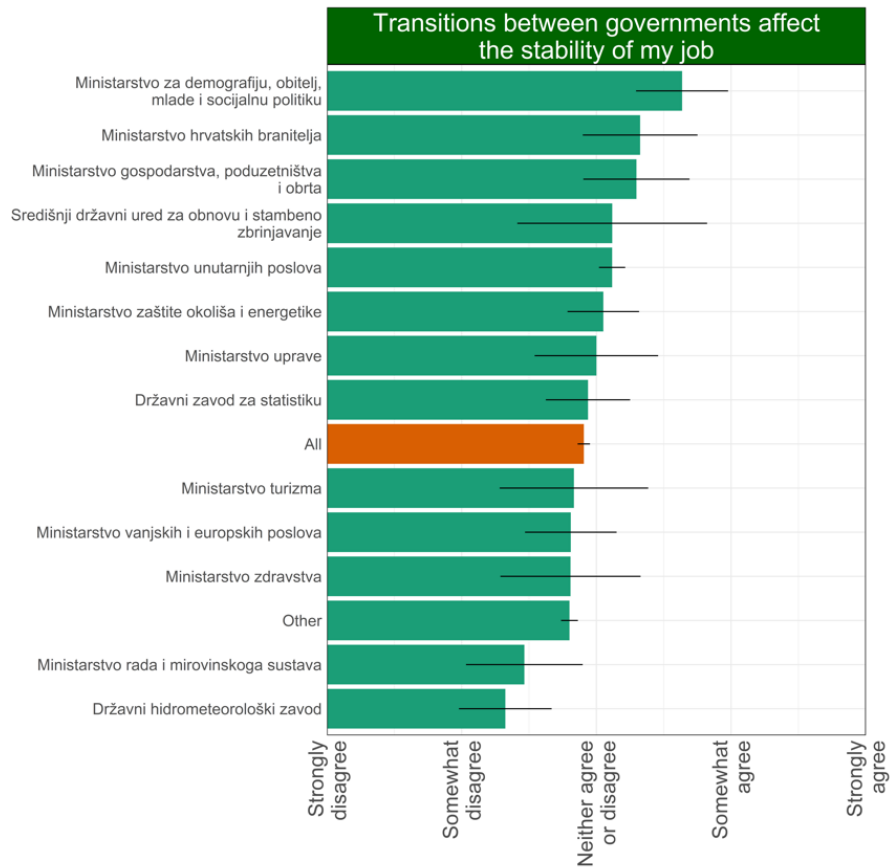
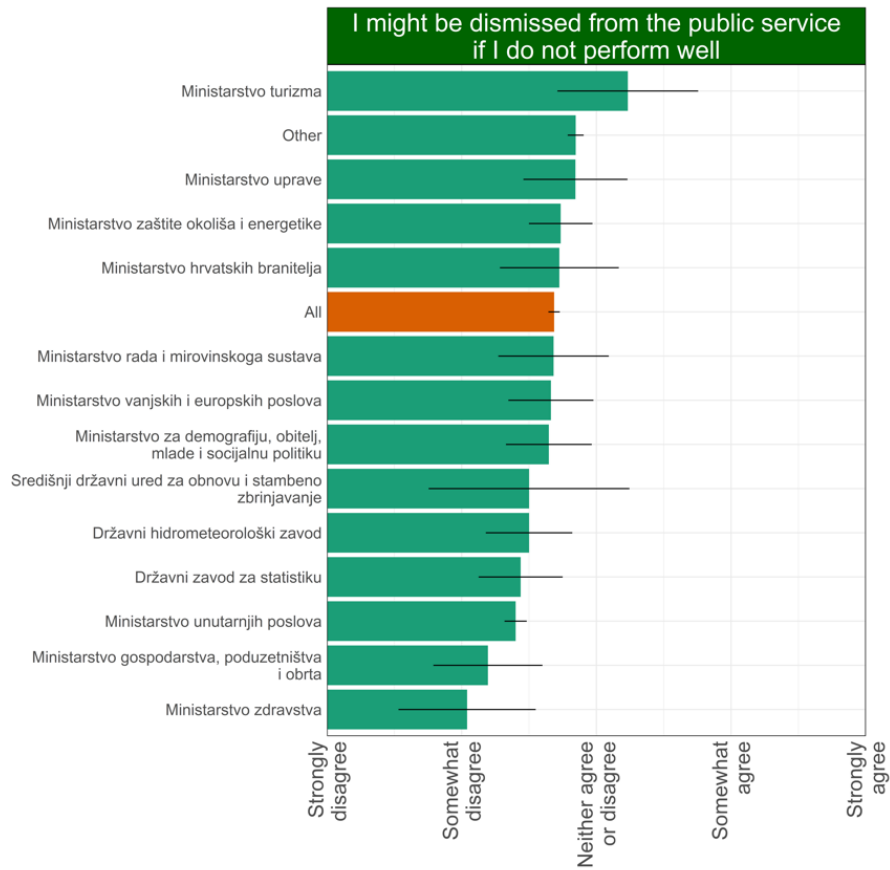
Differences by types of administrative institutions



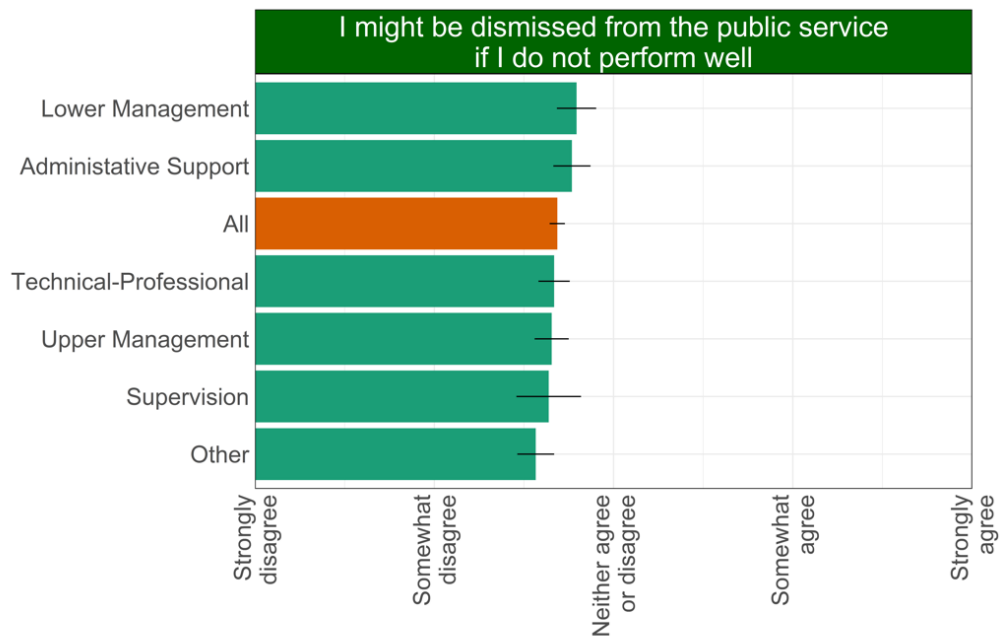
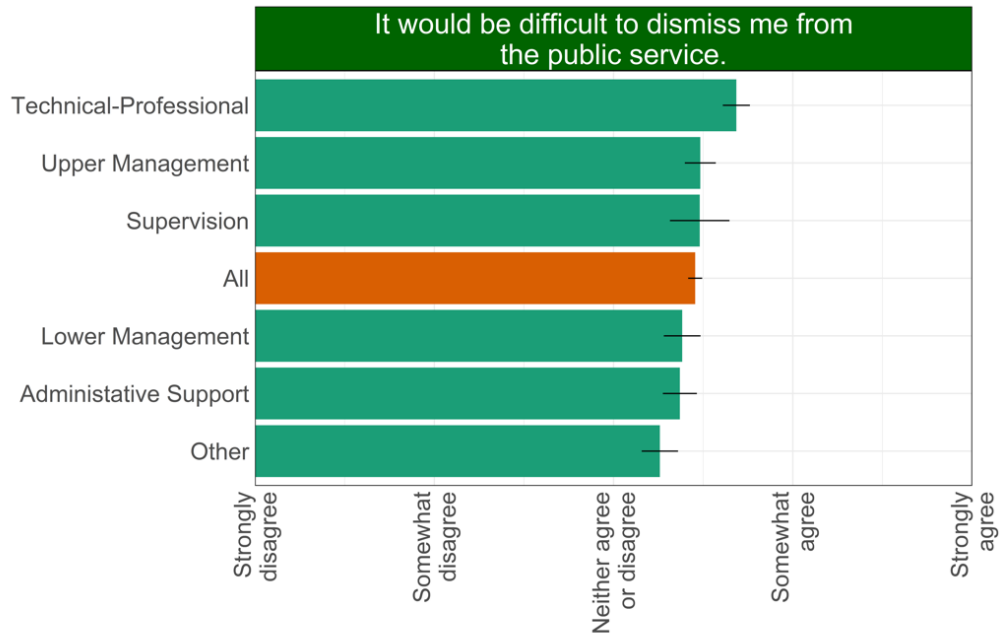


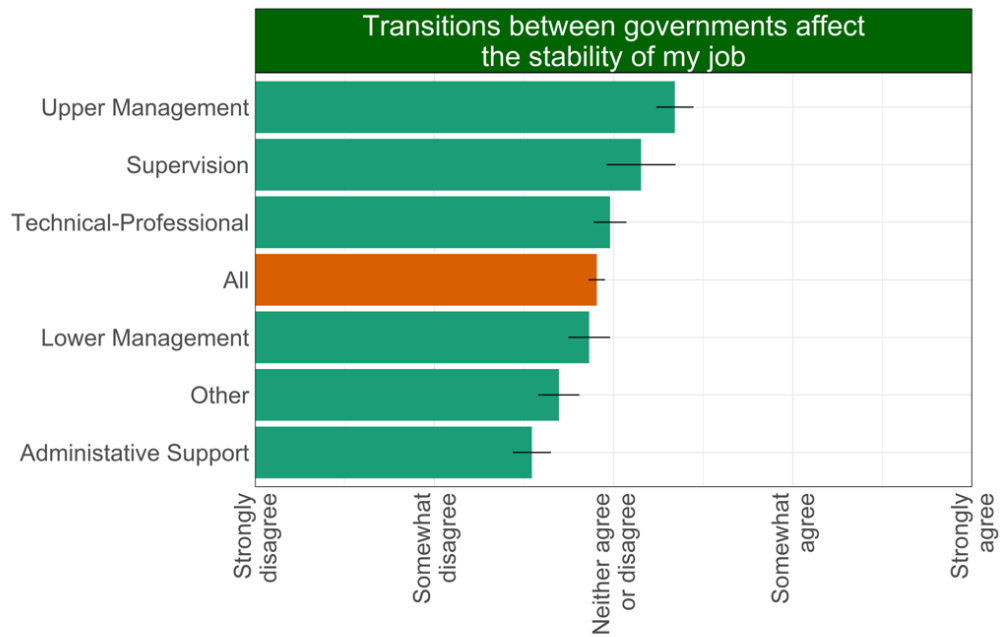
Differences by institutions





Differences by rank



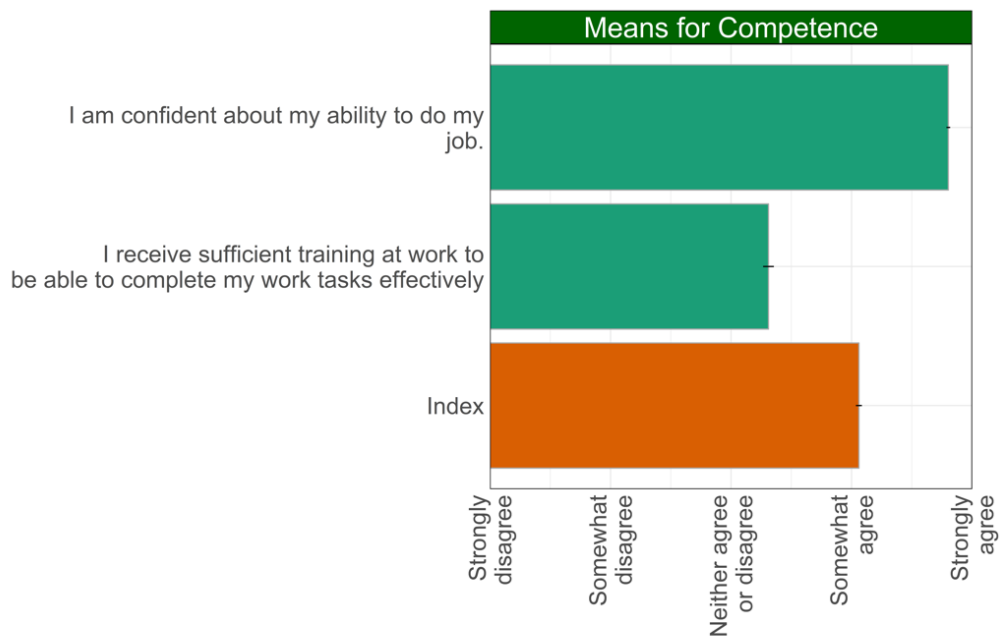


Job design

Competencies

Thinking about your job and the tasks you do every day, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

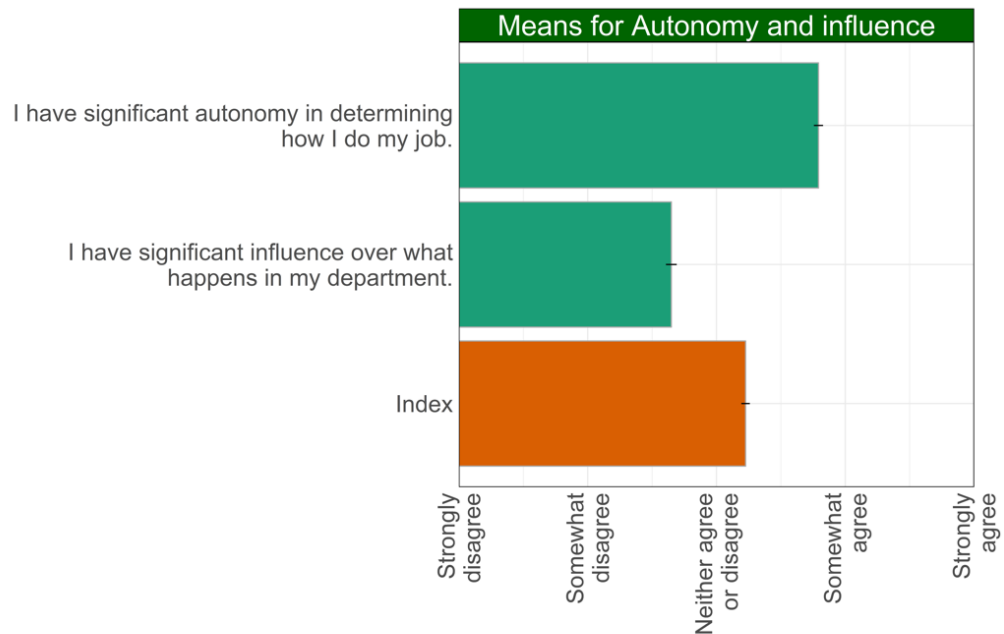
- I am confident about my ability to do my job. (mean response)
- I receive sufficient training at work to be able to complete my work tasks effectively (mean response)



Autonomy

Thinking about your job and the tasks you do every day, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

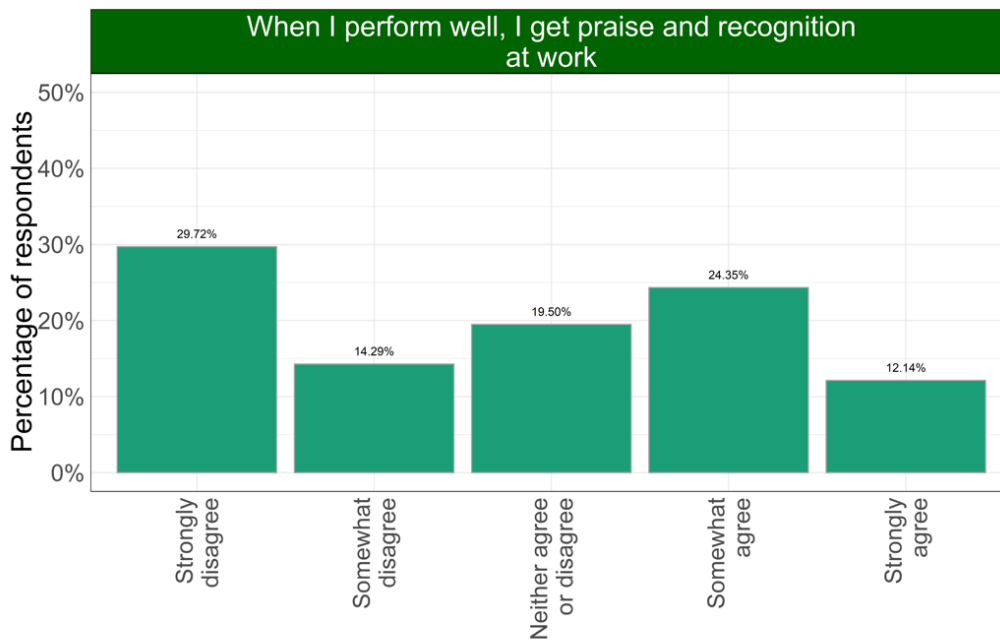
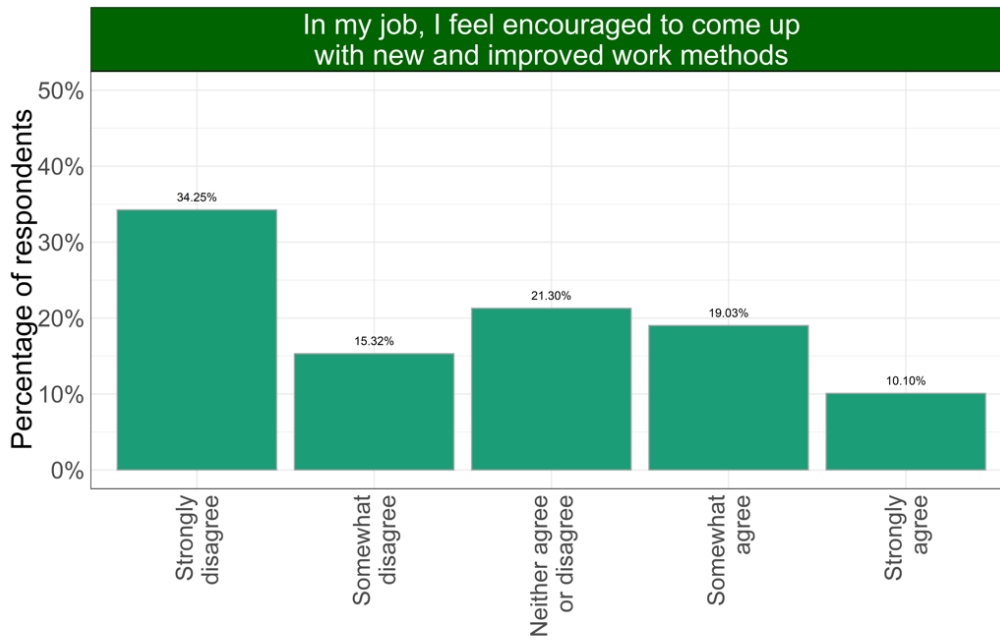
- I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job. (mean response)
- I have significant influence over what happens in my department. (mean response)



Innovation and recognition

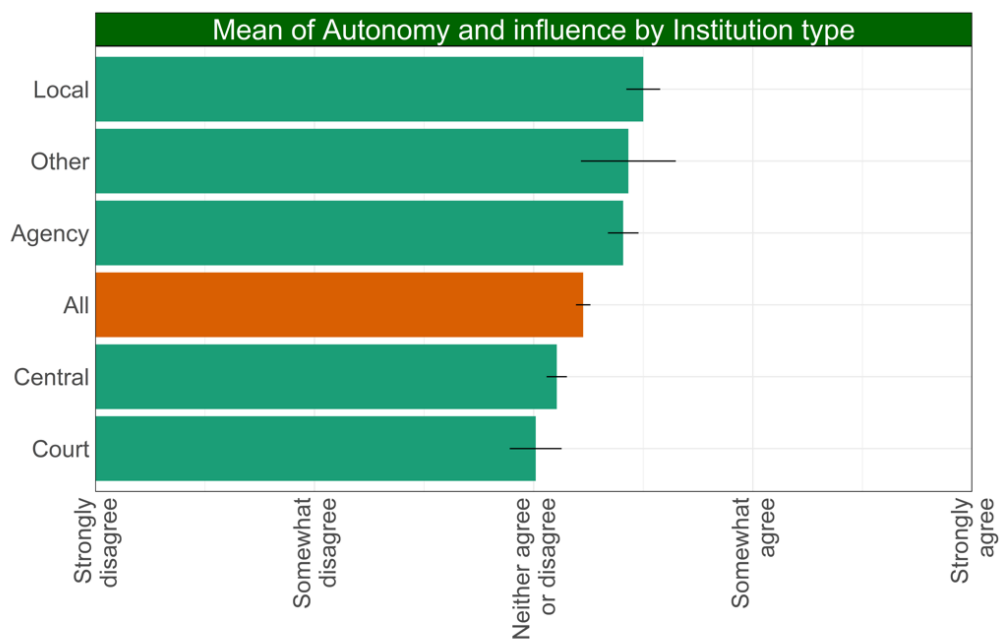
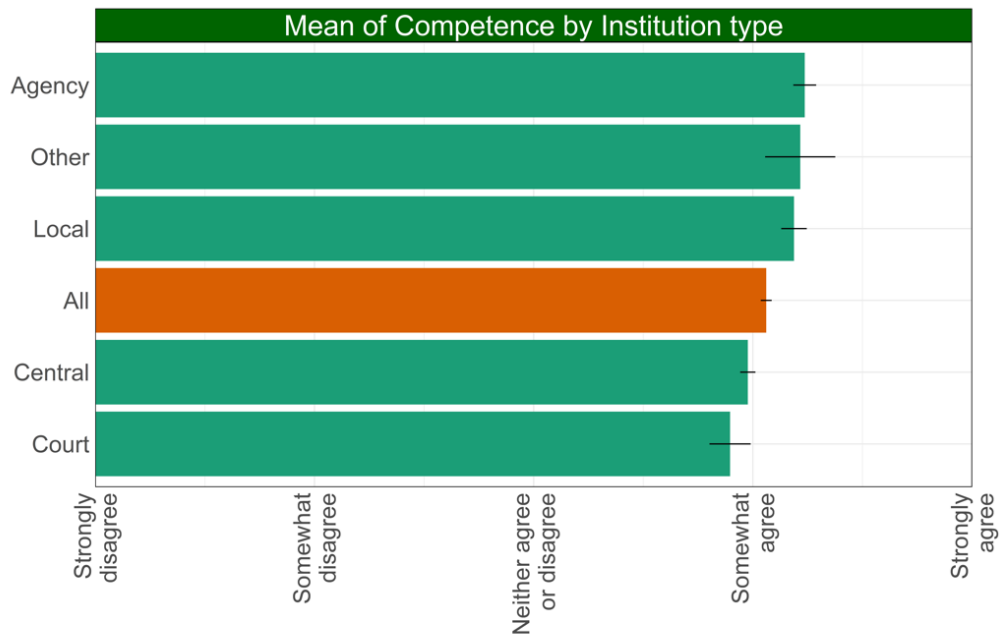
Thinking about your job and the tasks you do every day, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

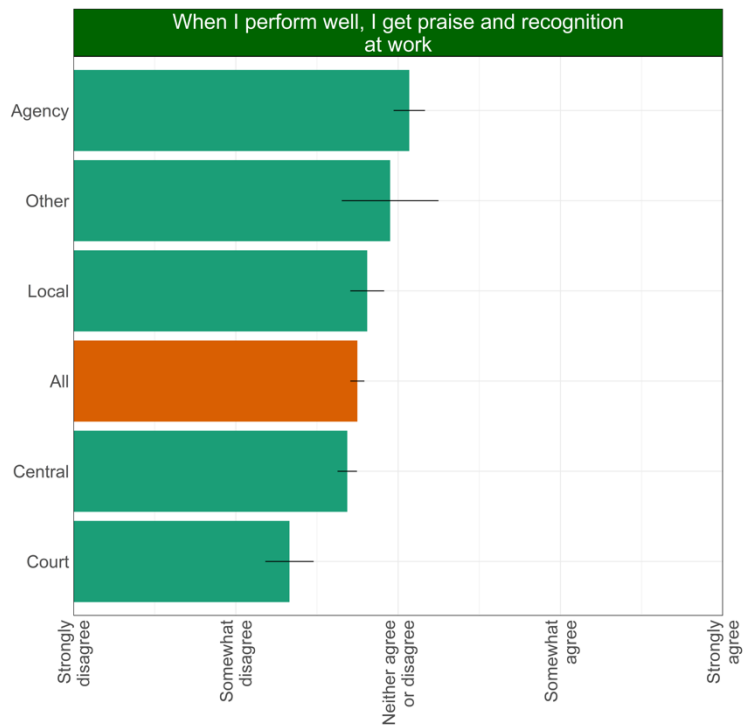
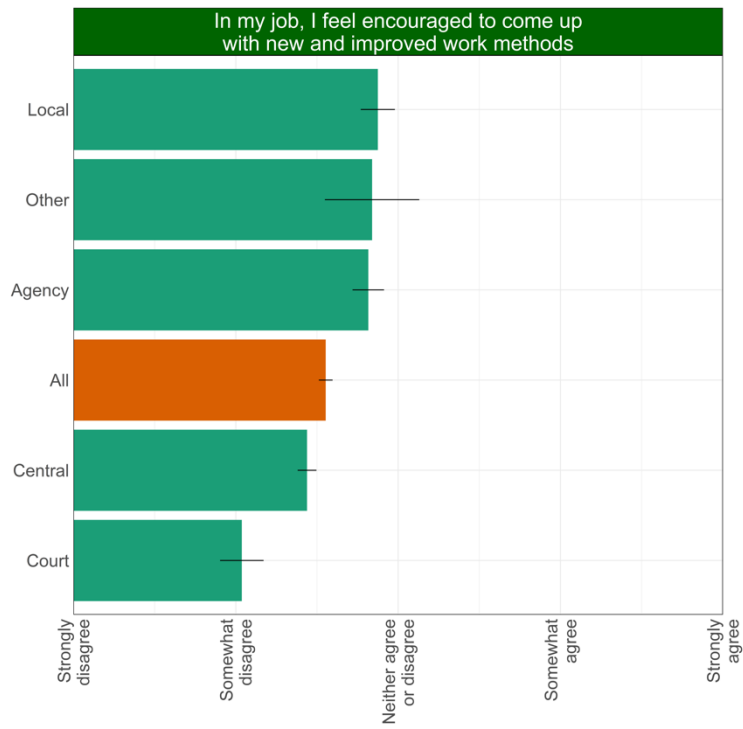
- When I perform well, I get praise and recognition at work
- In my job, I feel encouraged to come up with new and improved work methods



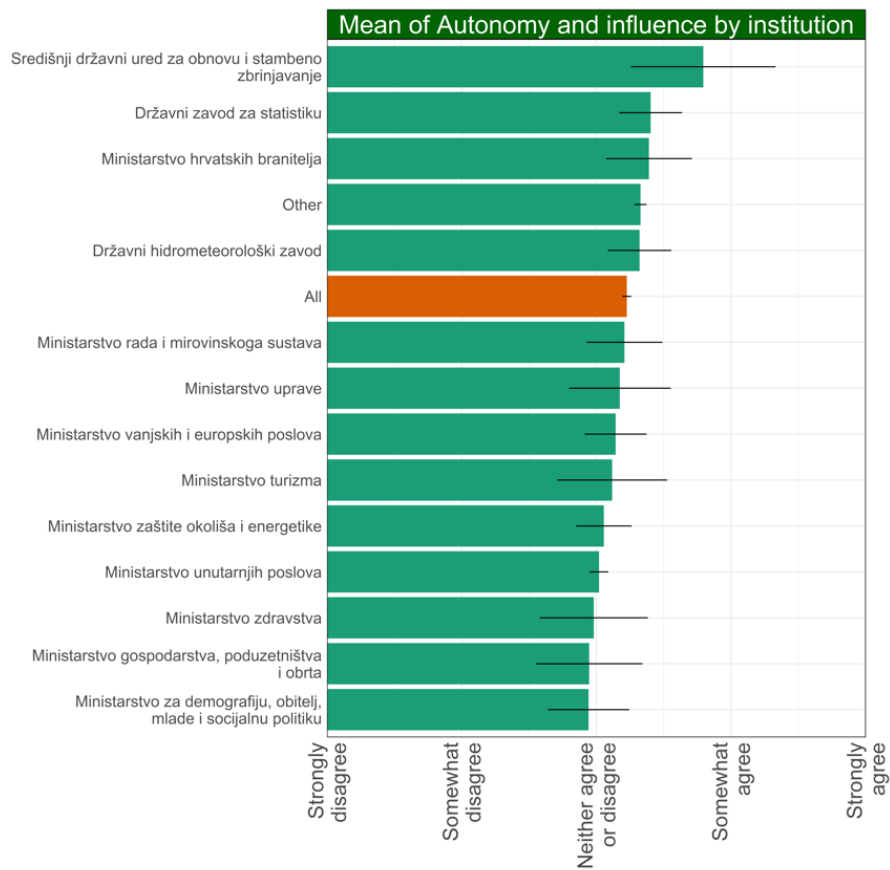
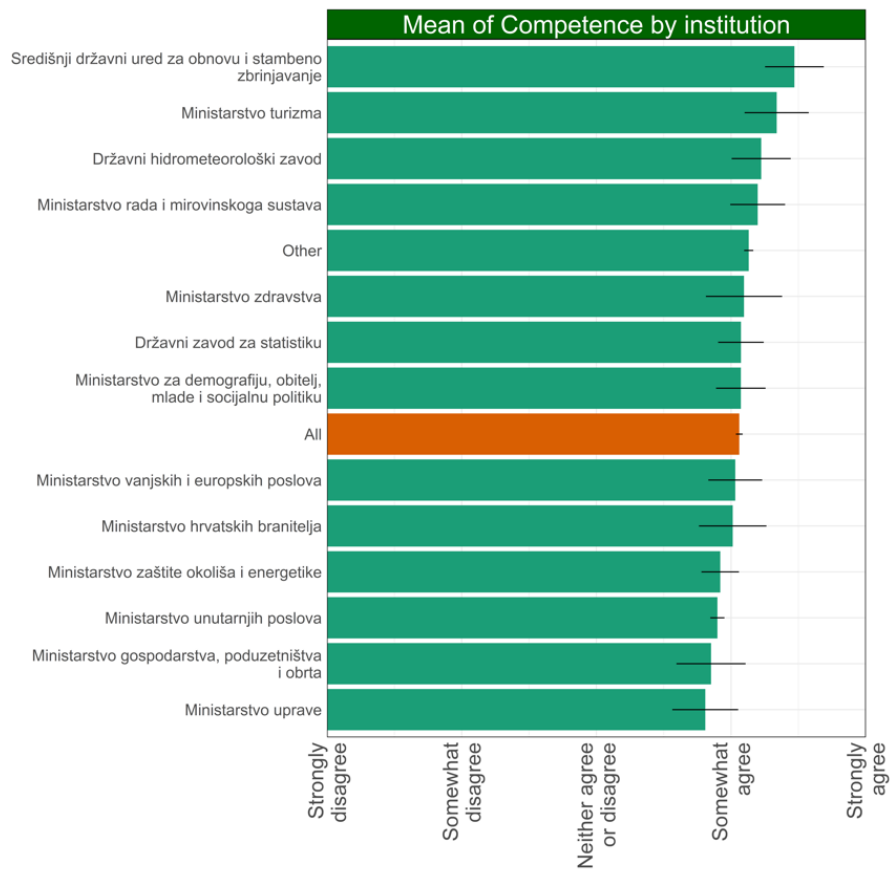
Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

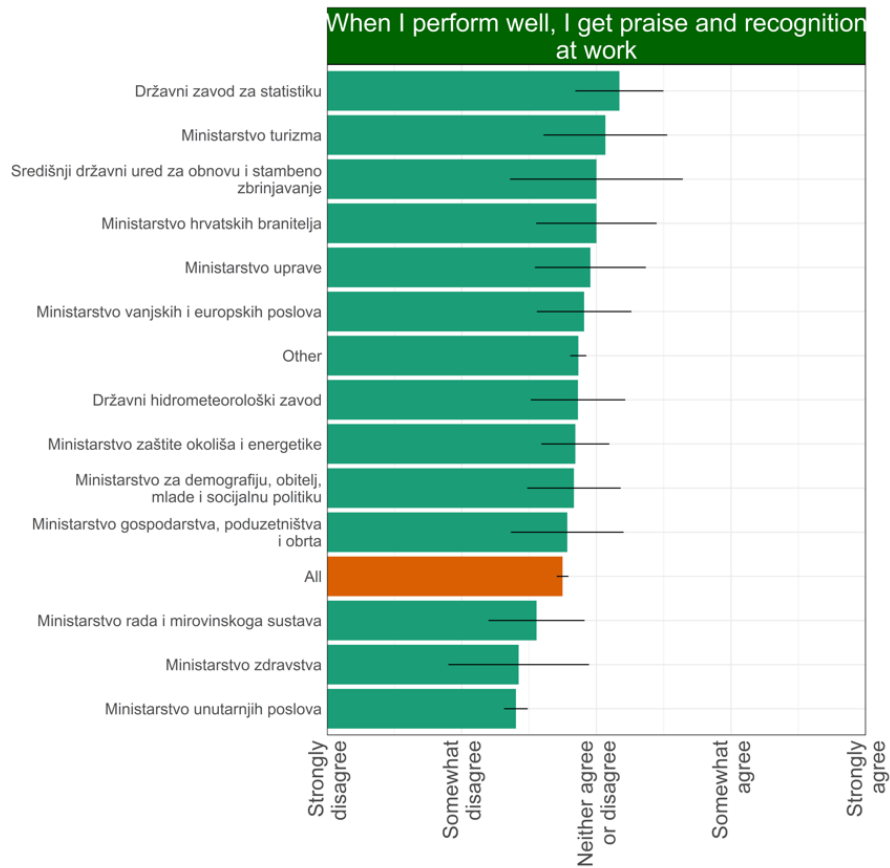
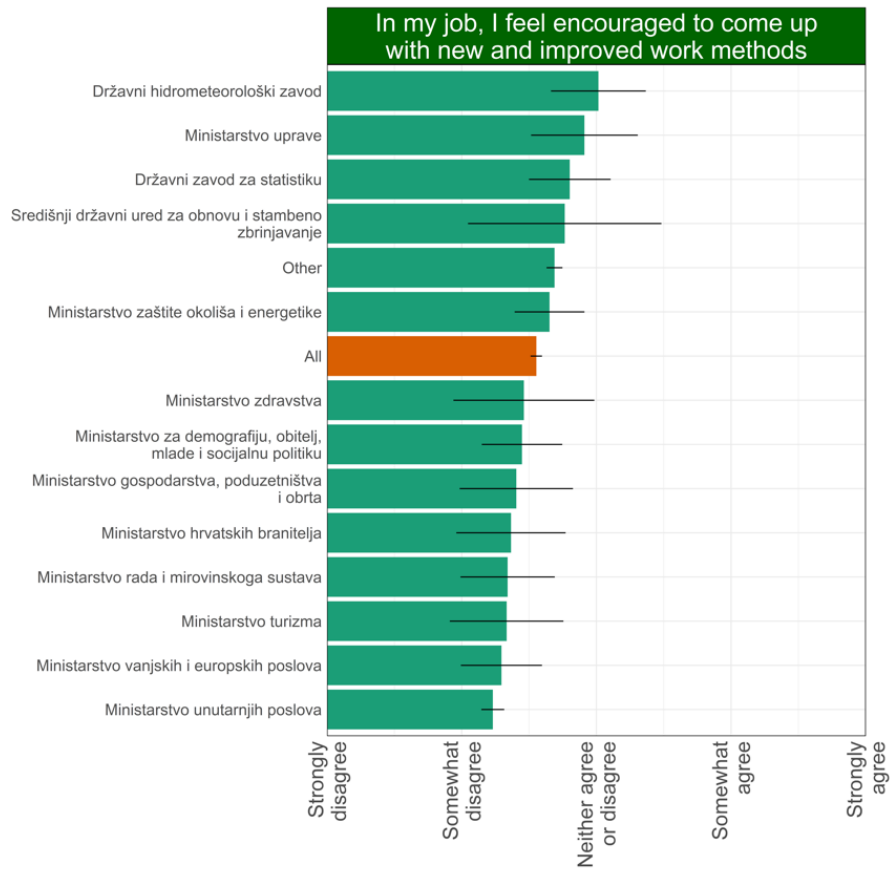
Differences by types of administrative institutions



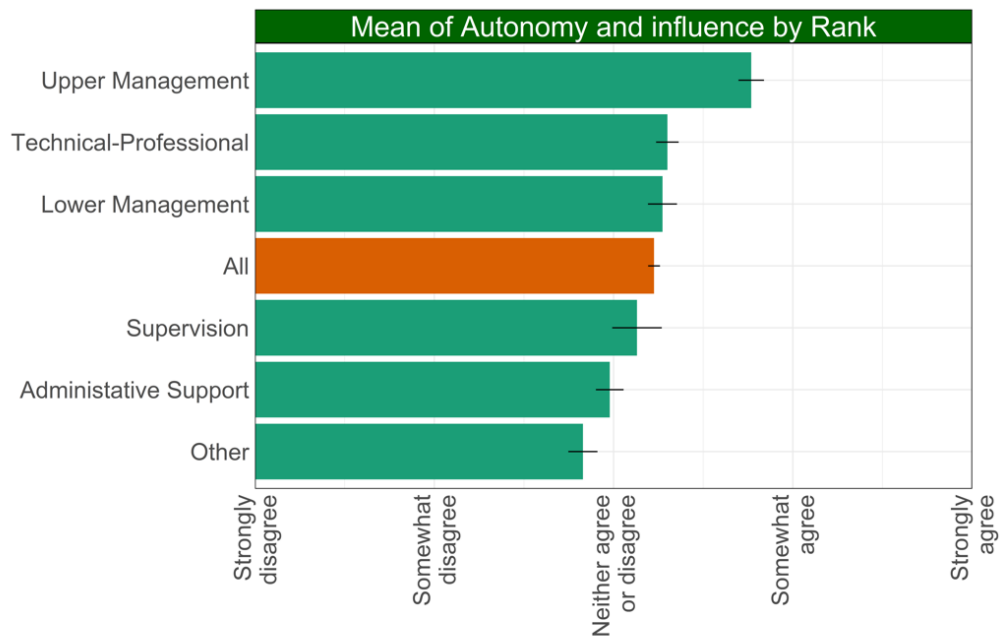
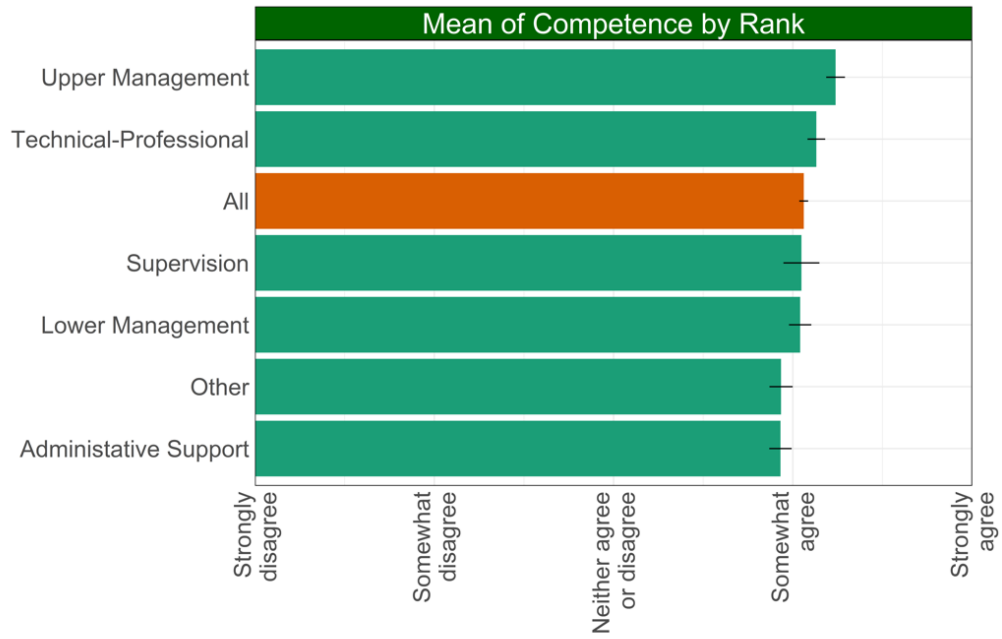


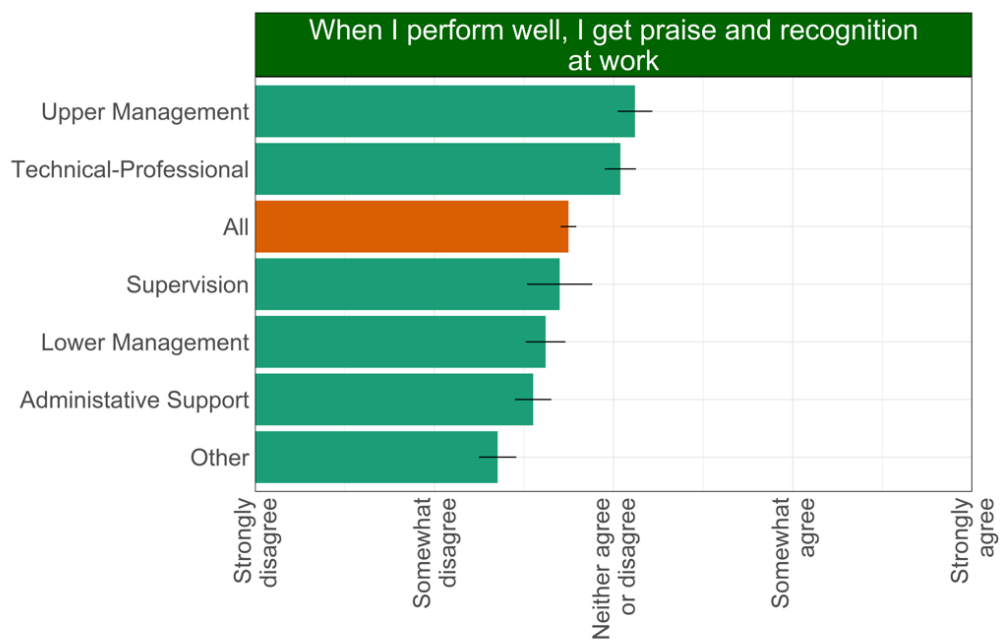
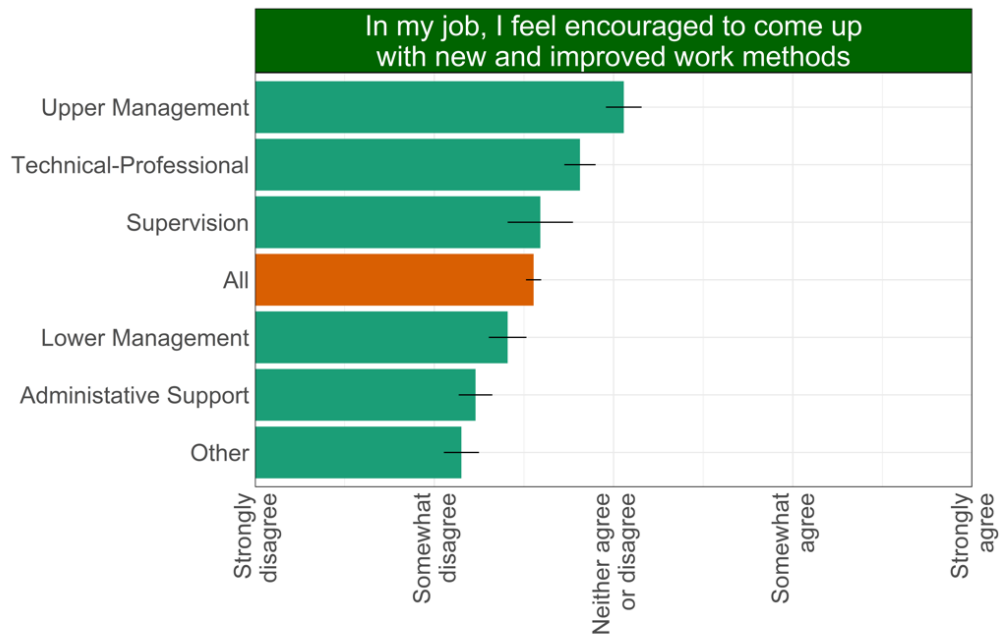
Differences by institutions





Differences by rank





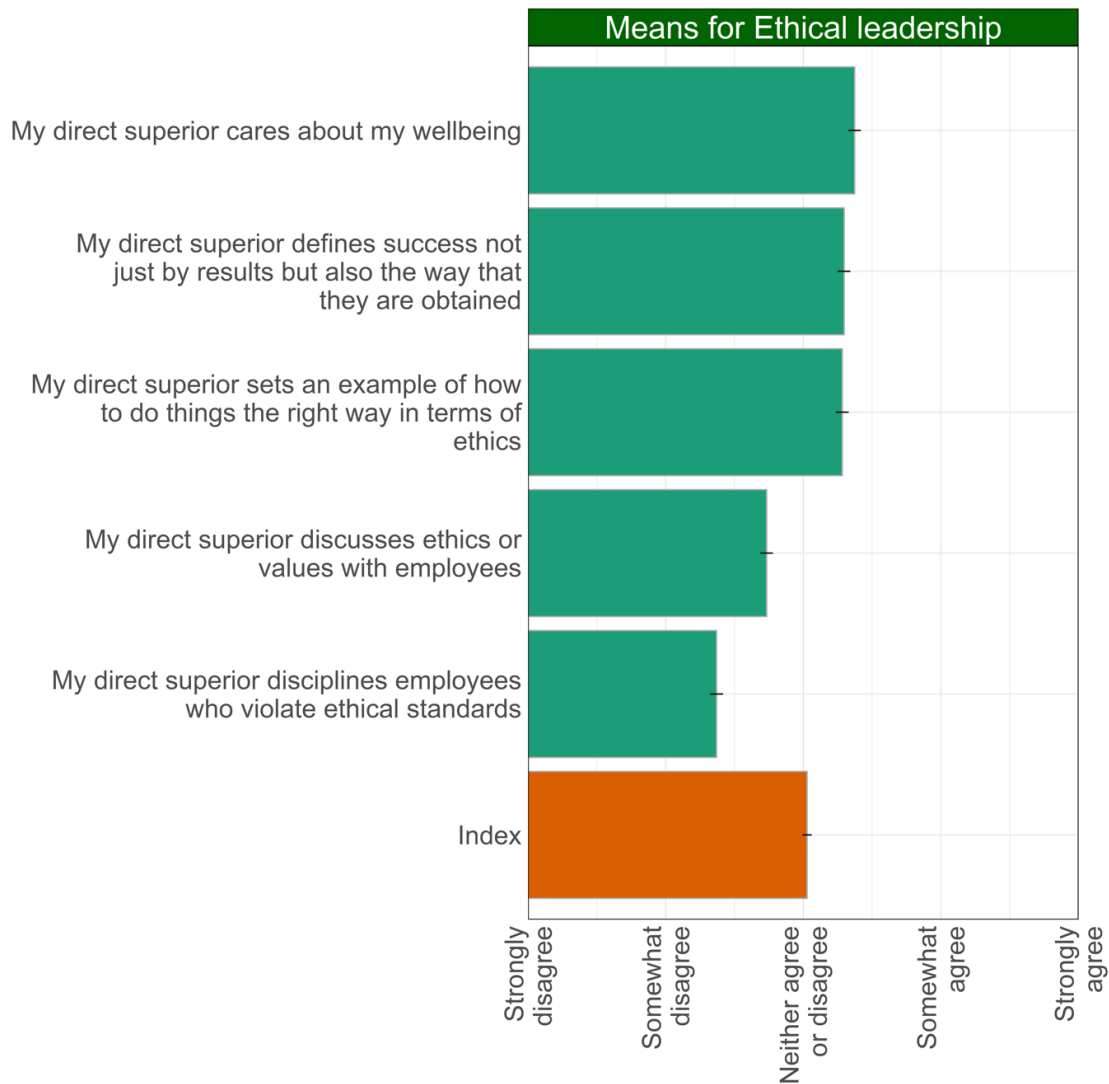
Leadership

Ethical leadership

Thinking about your superior and managers, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- My direct superior cares about my wellbeing (mean response)

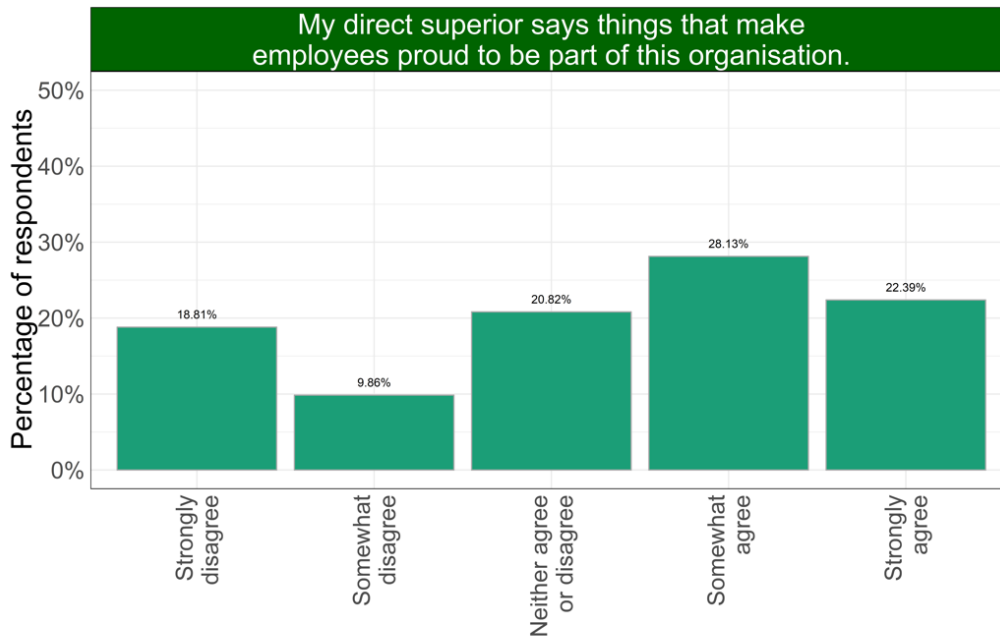
- My direct superior disciplines employees who violate ethical standards (mean response)
- My direct superior discusses ethics or values with employees (mean response)
- My direct superior sets an example of how to do things the right way in terms of ethics (mean response)
- My direct superior defines success not just by results but also the way that they are obtained (mean response)



Transformational leadership

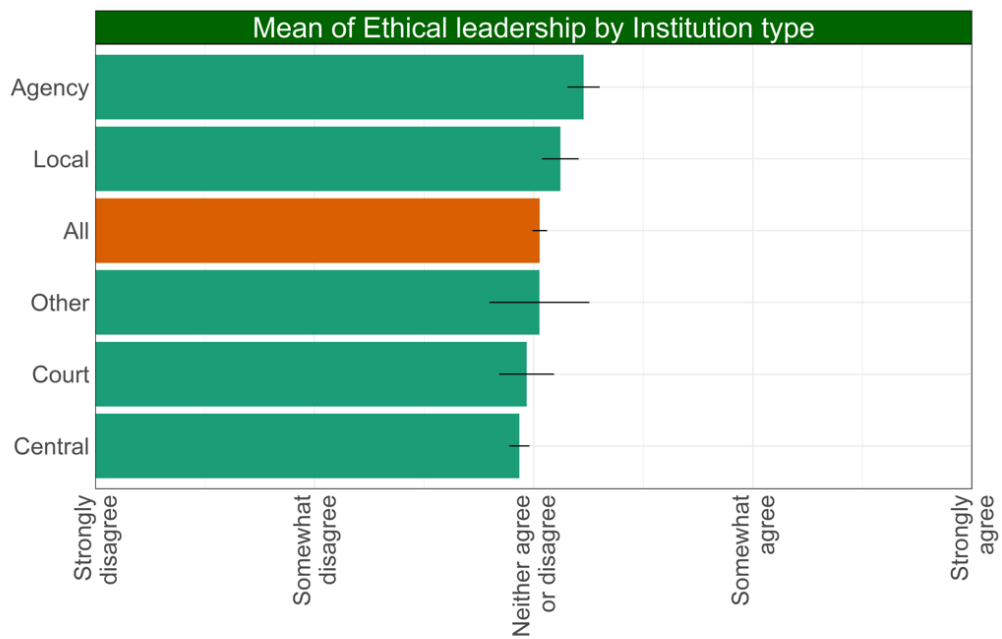
Thinking about your superior and managers, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

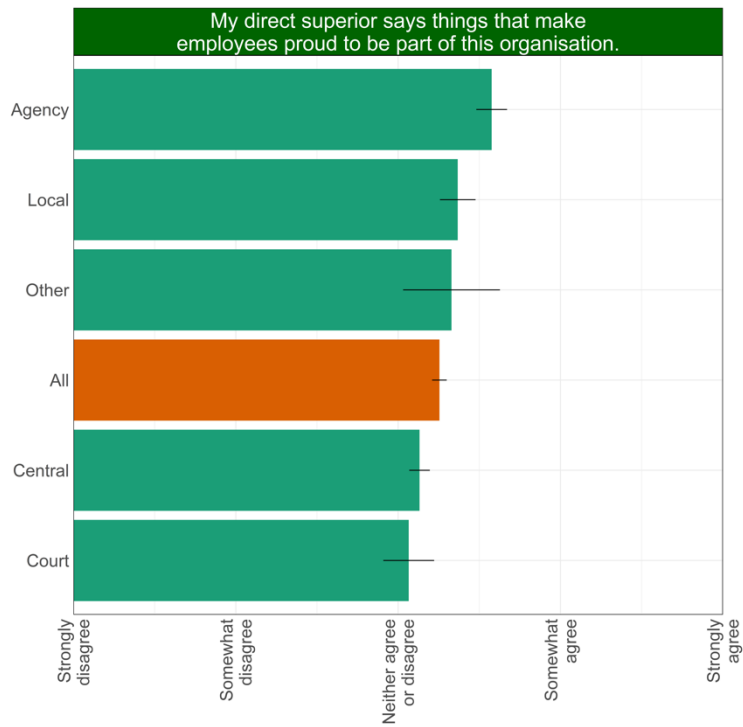
- My direct superior says things that make employees proud to be part of this organisation.



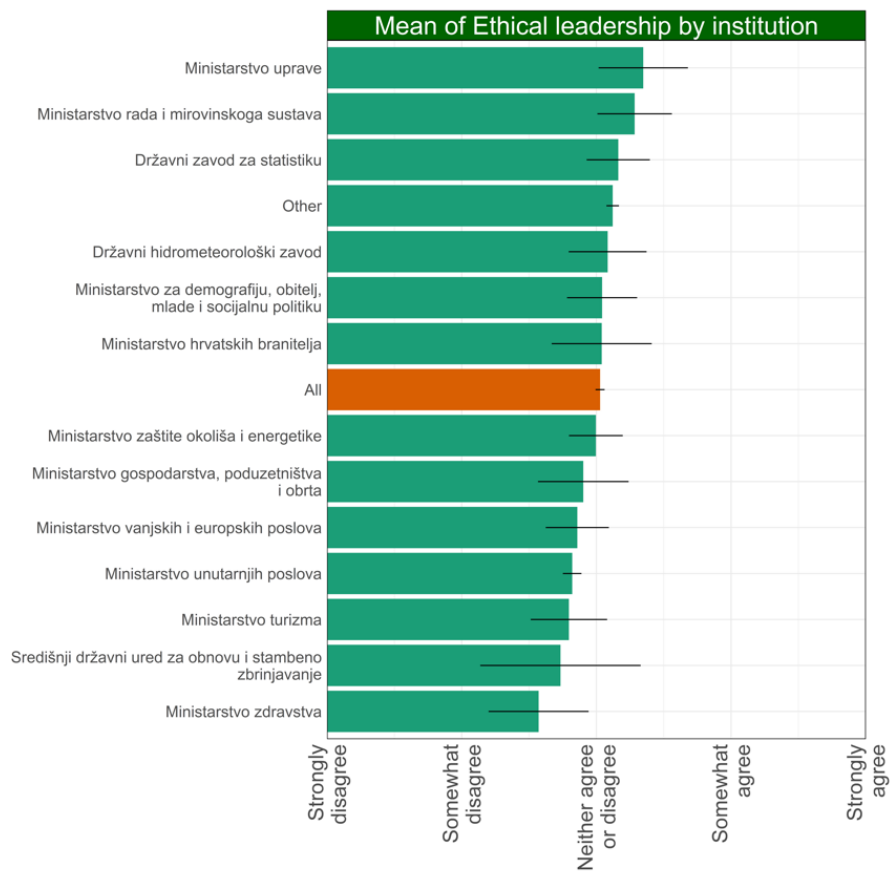
Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

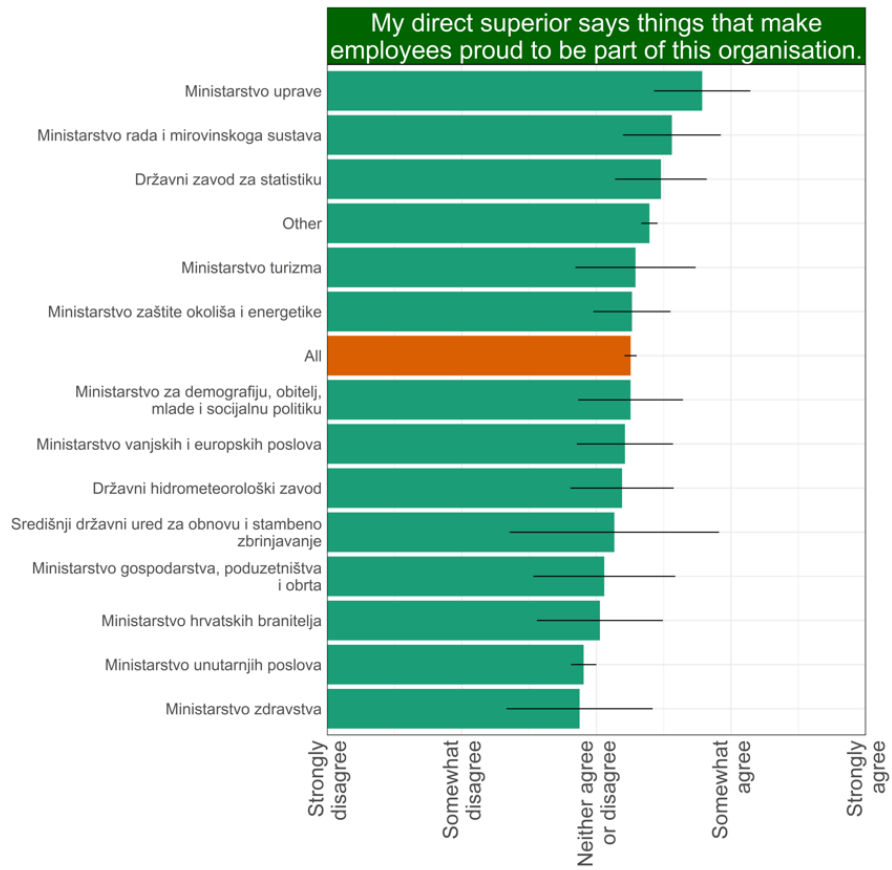
Differences by types of administrative institutions





Differences by institutions





Differences by rank

