

Civil Service Management in Slovakia

EVIDENCE FROM A SURVEY OF MORE THAN 11,000 CIVIL
SERVANTS AND STATE EMPLOYEES

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Introduction

This report presents the results from a National Survey of Civil Servants and State Employees in Slovakia. The survey was endorsed by the Government Office of the Government of Slovakia. The survey was supported by the Department for Civil and Public Service headed by Zuzana Dzurendova and by Slovakia's representative on the Working Party on Public Employment and Management of the OECD's Public Governance Directorate, Martina Mrazikova, and the former General Secretary of the Government Office, Tatiana Janečková.

The survey was conducted between February and April 2020. It targeted employees of the state administration at all levels of the Slovak public administration including: all central government organizations and selected subordinated organisations, all district offices as well as selected other state offices such as inspectorates and public health offices. The survey excluded a selected a number of state institutions, most of which are regulated by other laws than the Civil Service Law such as the court administration, the police administration, fire-fighters, fiscal offices etc. In total, the survey aimed to reach approximately 35.000 civil servants and selected state employees in Slovakia.

The survey consisted of approximately 80 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, job protection and training and competency development. Throughout, the survey sought identify how individual civil servants experience the day-to-day practice of human resources management.

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

The survey was translated into Slovak language and uploaded to Qualtrics; a platform for the design and implementation of online surveys. With the support of the Government Office, the authors contacted the Heads of HRM Departments of each institution as well as the Heads of Analytical Units in ministries and central offices with the request to distribute the invitation to complete the survey among its employees. The authors sent three reminders to ensure a high cooperation rates among participants.

In total, the survey generated 11,500 responses. This reflects an overall response rate of approximately 25 – 30 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 188 institutions. They include 13 central government ministries, 10 other central offices, 72 district offices and 93 other state administrative bodies such as inspectorates. In proportional terms, 26 per cent of the respondents were drawn from ministries, 11 per cent from other central offices, 23 per cent from district offices and 40 per cent from other state administrative offices. 71 per cent of the respondents were female, the average age of respondents was 44.2 years and 87 per cent had university education. Among the respondents, 13 per cent self-identified as regular managers, 11 per cent as de facto managers, 59 per cent in technical-professional positions, 10 per cent in administrative support roles. The sample largely mirrors the composition of the population of civil servants when compared to the latest numbers from the Government Office.

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 20 per cent and at least 30 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 20 per cent and with at least 30 responses, and differences between civil service ranks.

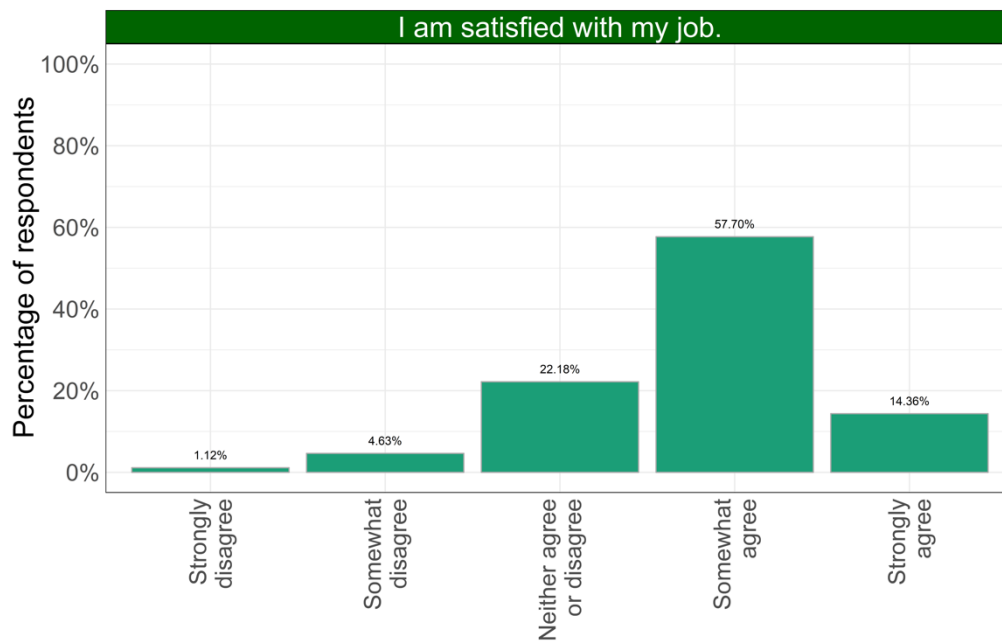
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Attitudes of civil servants

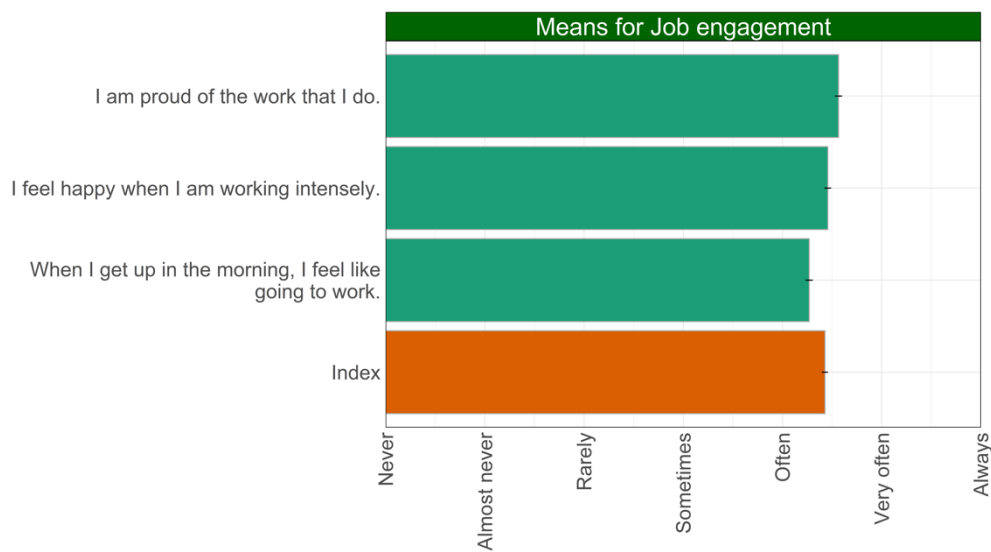
Job satisfaction

- I am satisfied with my job.



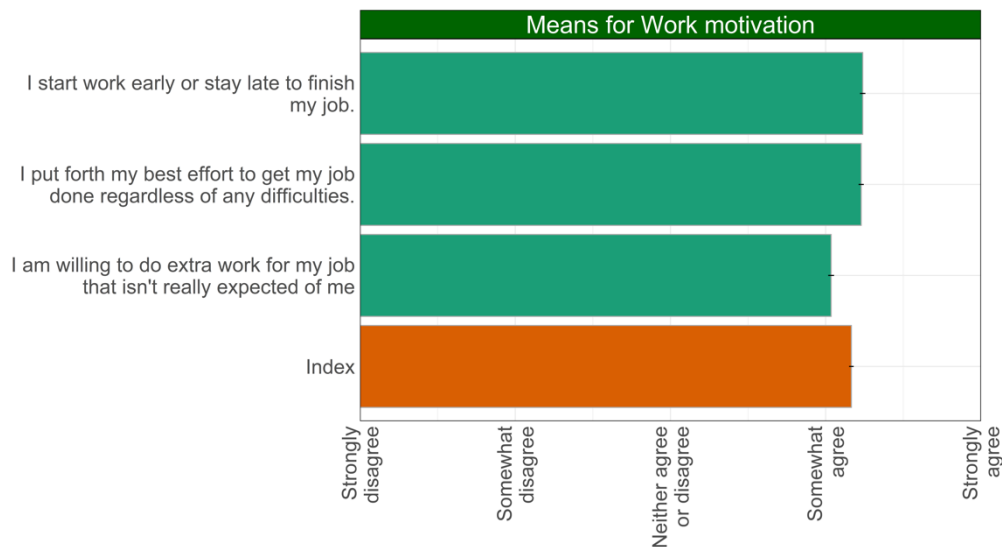
Job engagement

- 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)



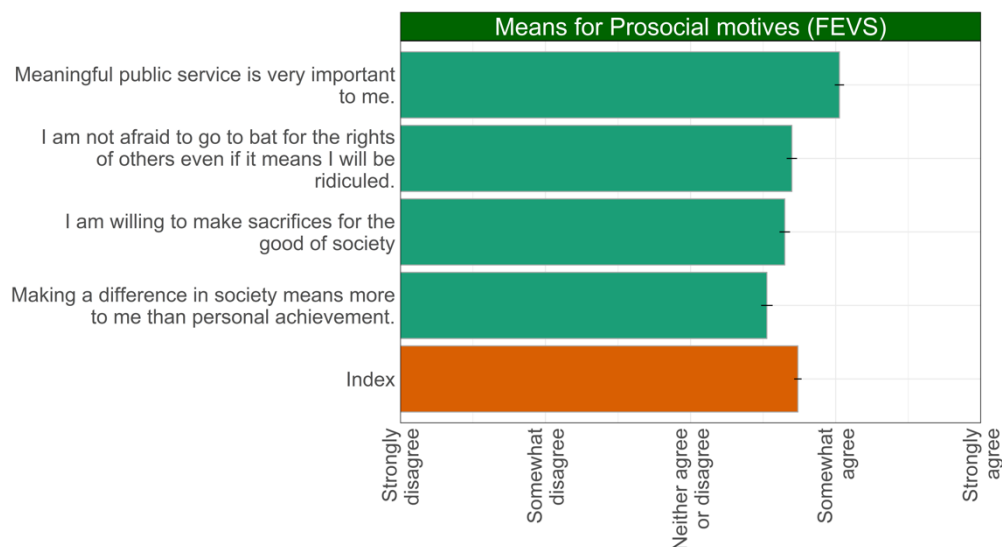
Work motivation

- 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)



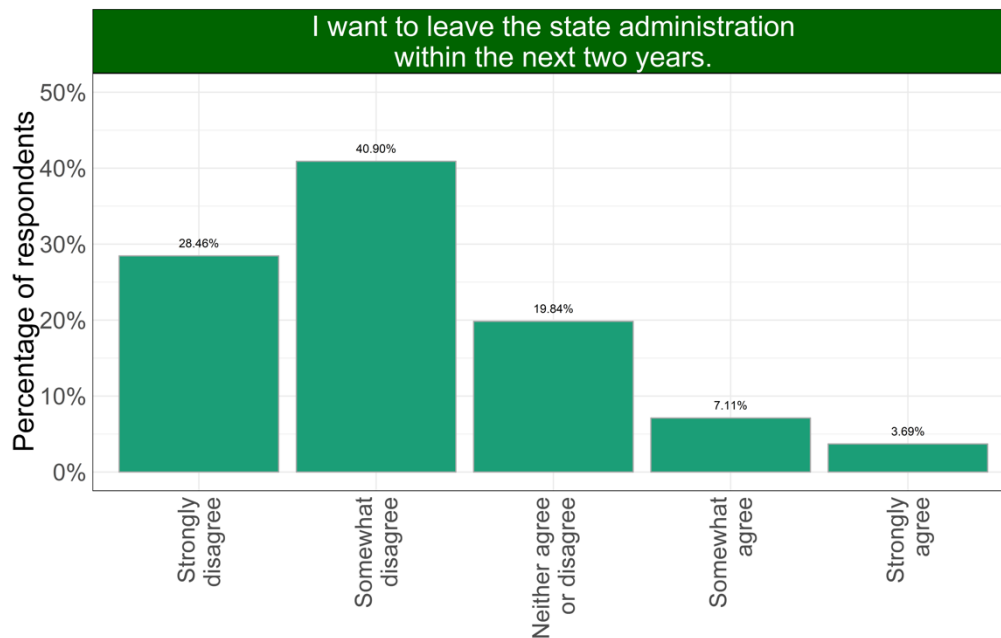
Pro-social motivation

- Meaningful public service is very important to me.
- I am not afraid to go to bat for the rights of others even if it means I will be ridiculed.
- I am willing to make sacrifices for the good of society. (Mean response)
- Making a difference in society means more to me than personal achievement. (Mean response)
- Pro-social motivation index. (Mean response of four items)



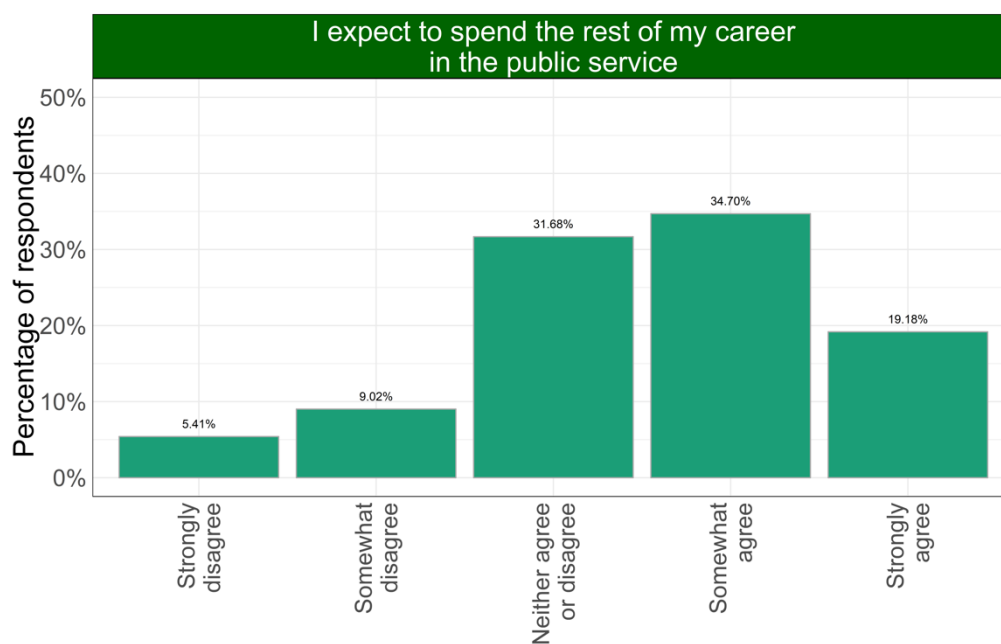
Commitment to public administration

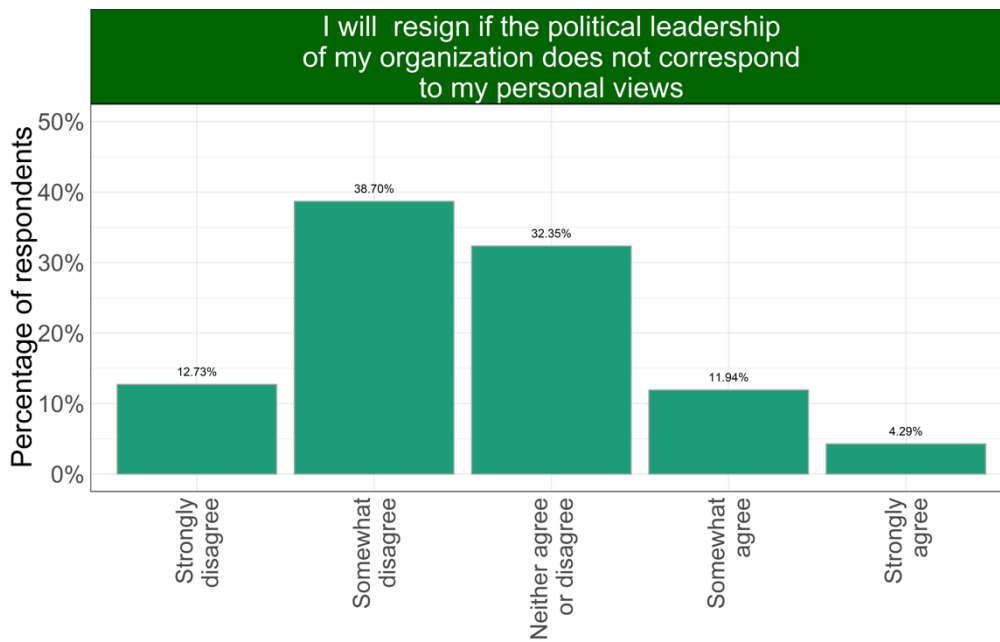
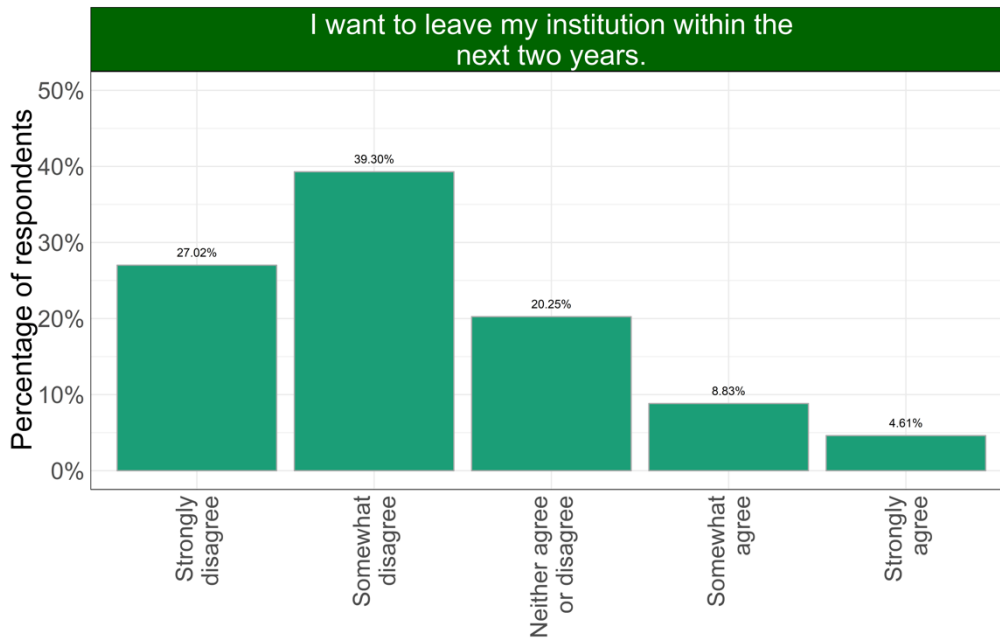
- 'I want to leave the public administration within the next two years'.



Varieties of turnover intentions

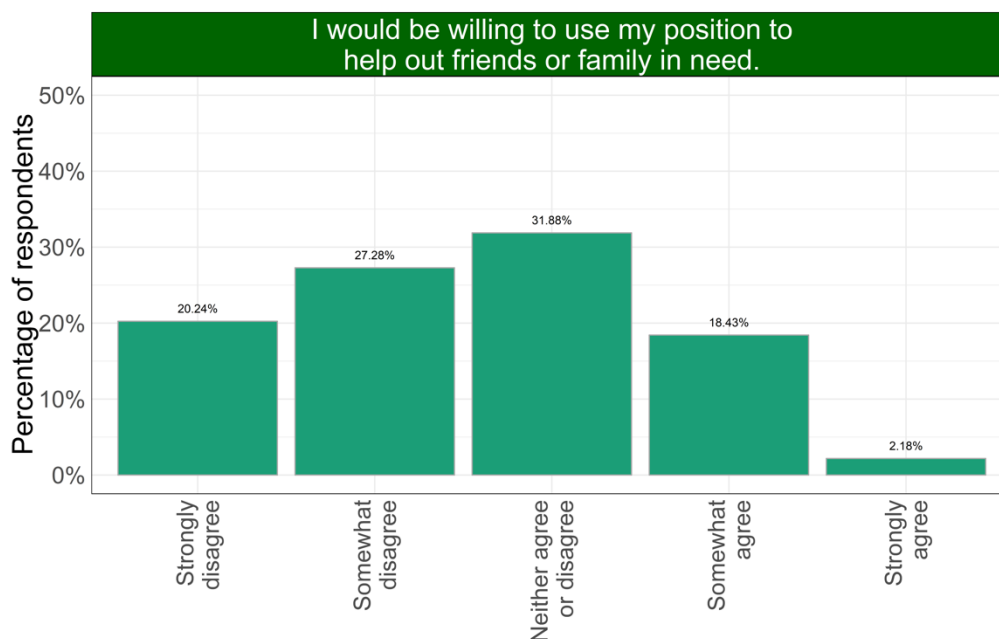
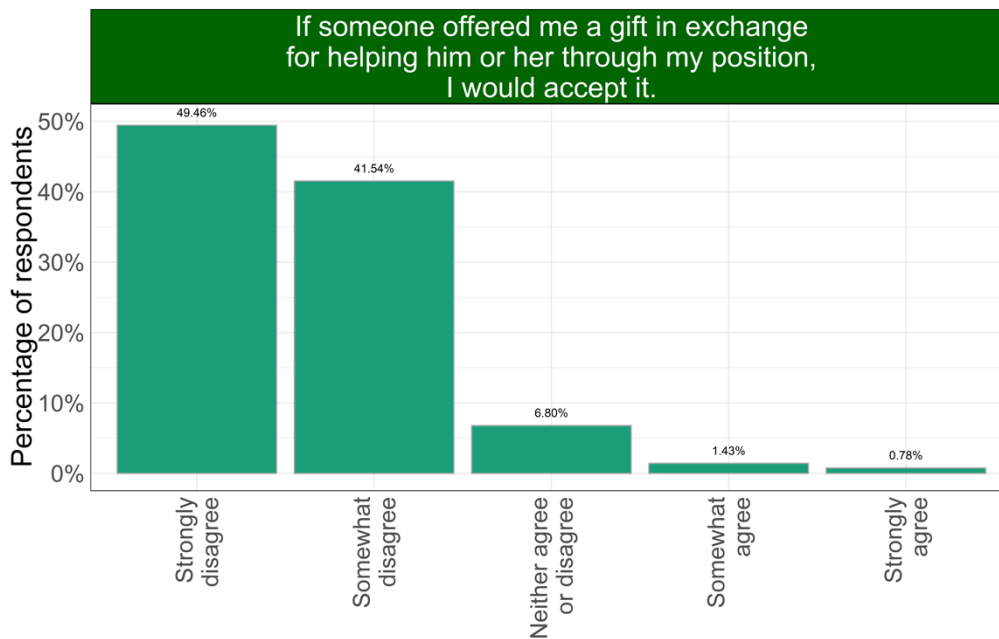
- I expect to spend the rest of my career in the public administration.
- I want to leave my institution within the next two years.
- I will resign if the political leadership of my organisation does not correspond to my personal views.





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.



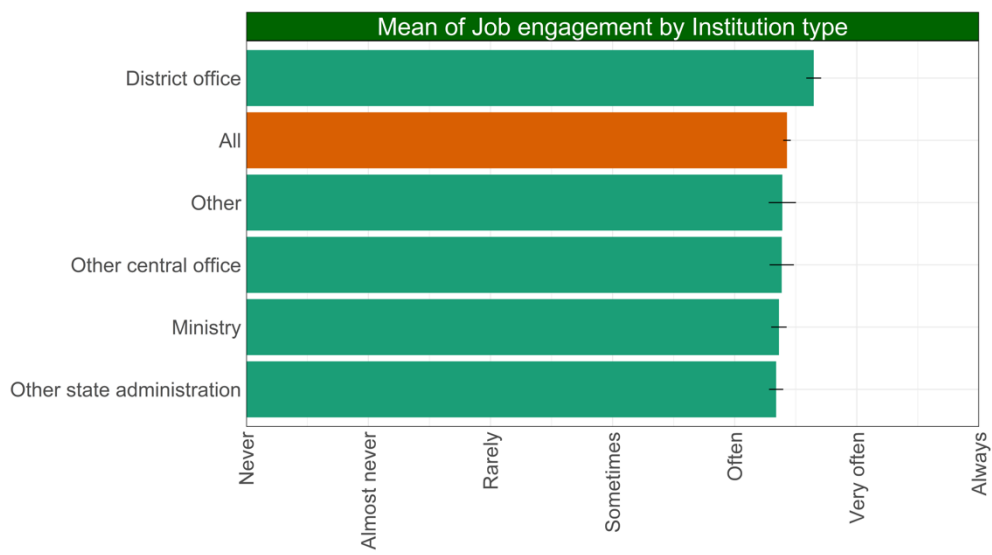
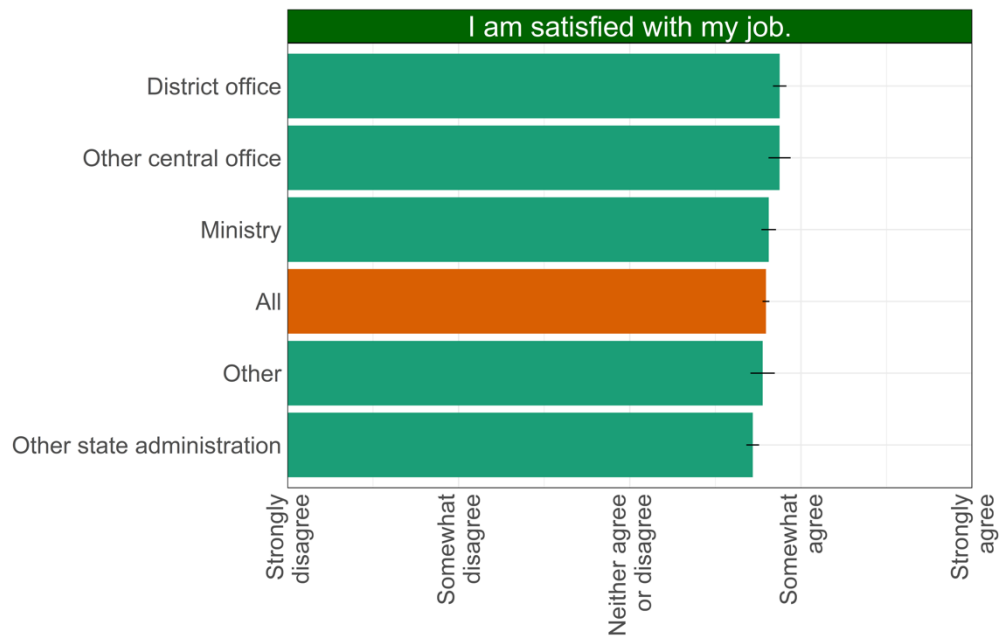
Differences across groups and institutions

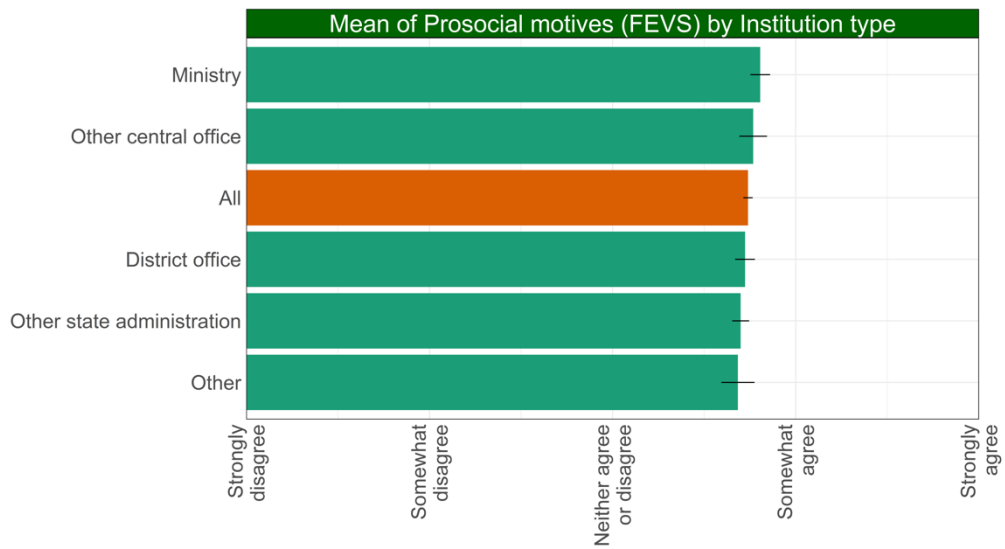
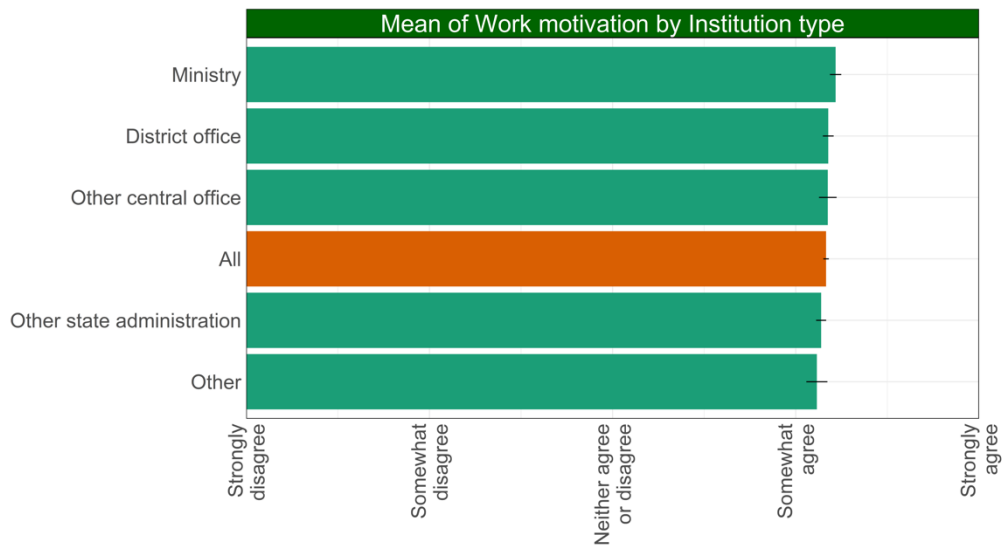
Differences by type of administrative institution

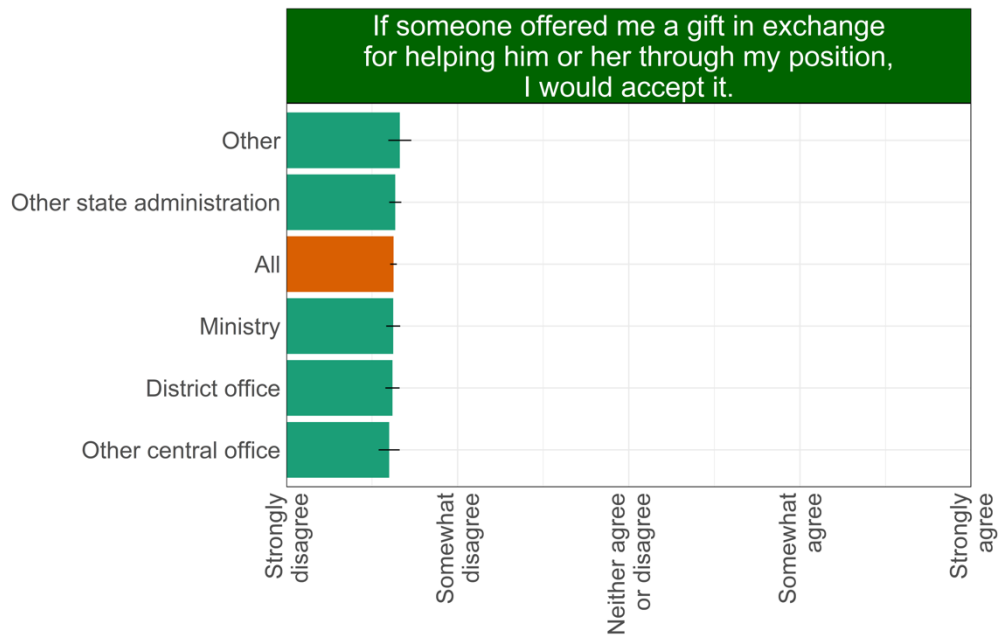
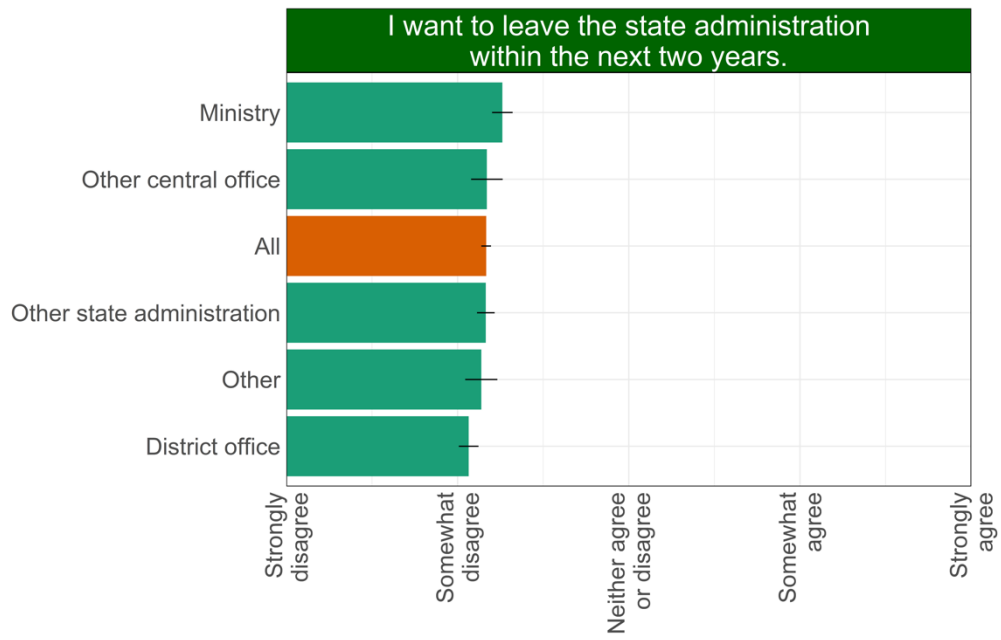
The survey was conducted in

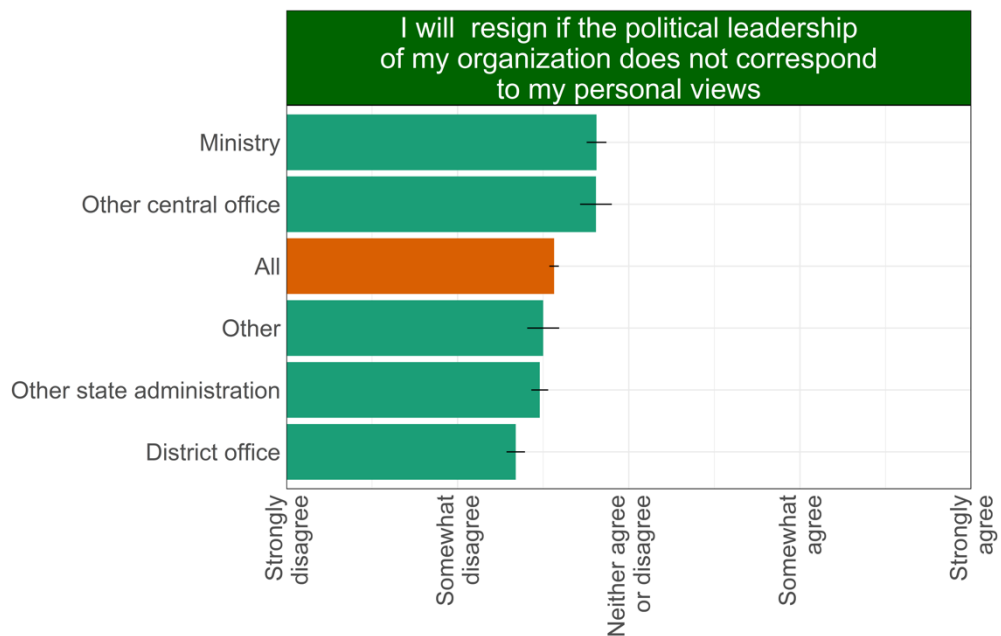
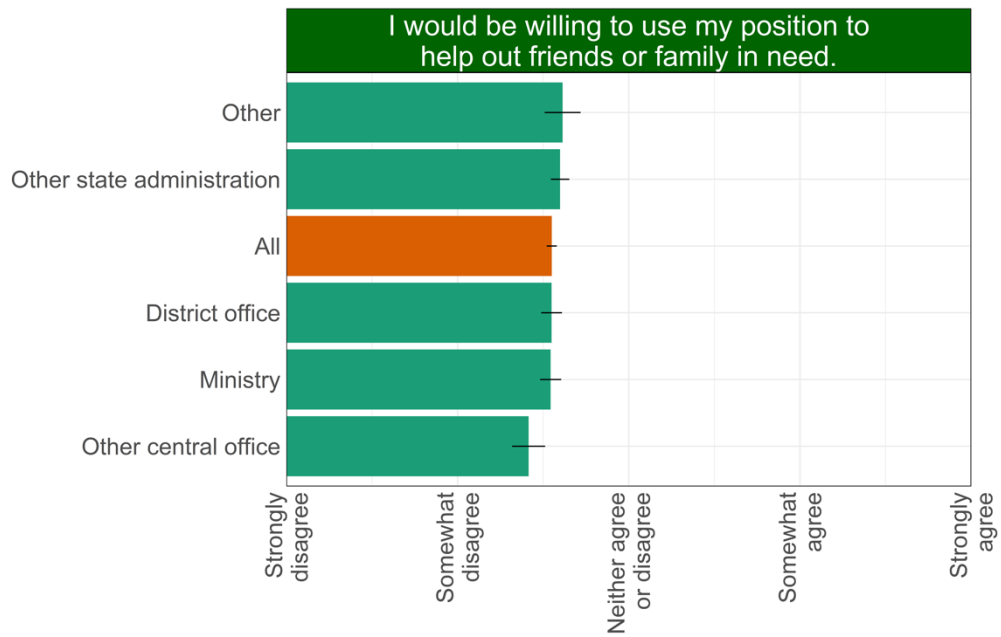
- The central government ministries (labelled as 'Ministry')
- Non-ministerial offices at central level (labelled as 'Other central Office')
- District offices (labelled as 'District office')
- Other state administration offices such as inspectorates (labelled as 'Other state administration').

- A small number of institutions is labelled as 'Other'



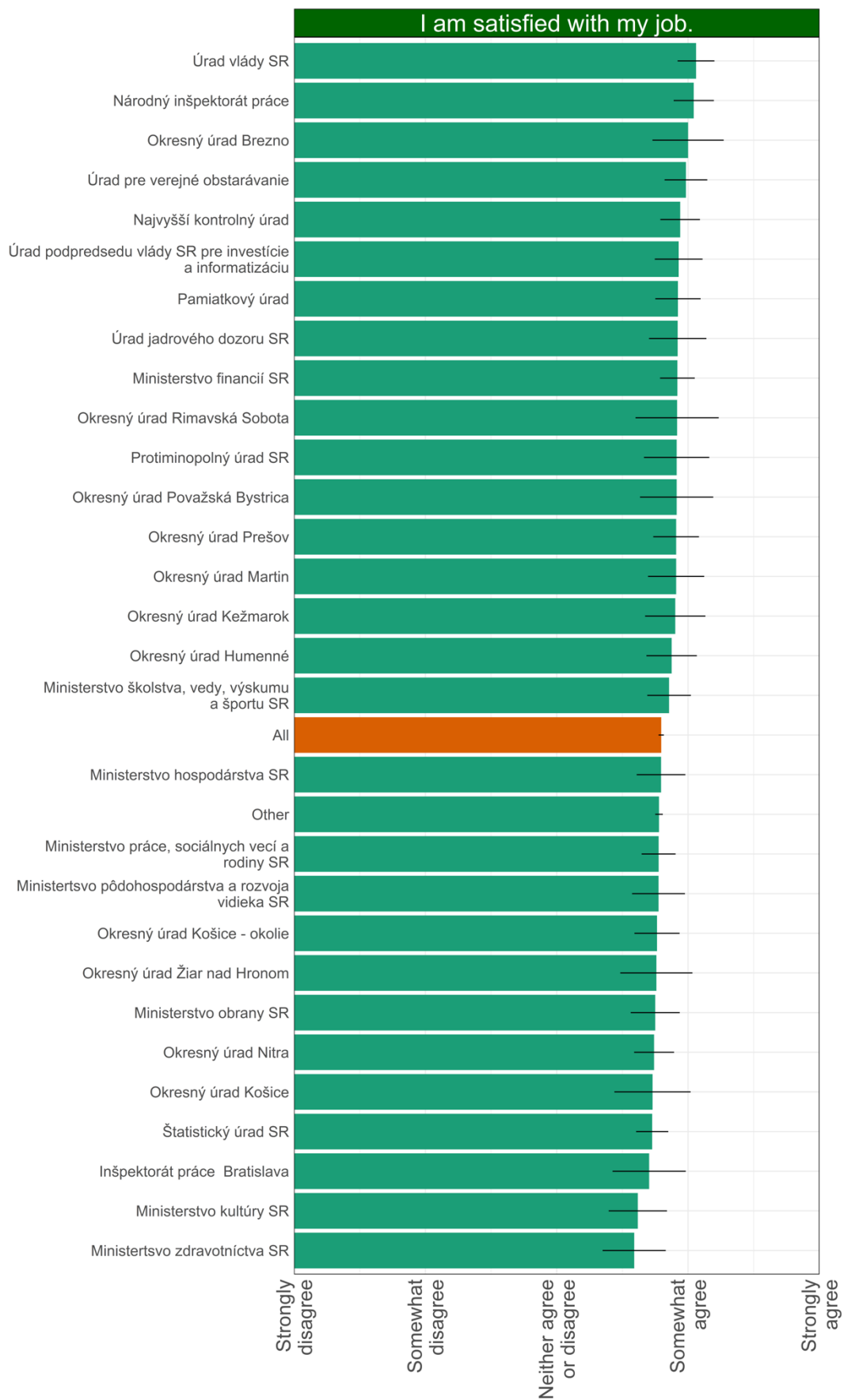


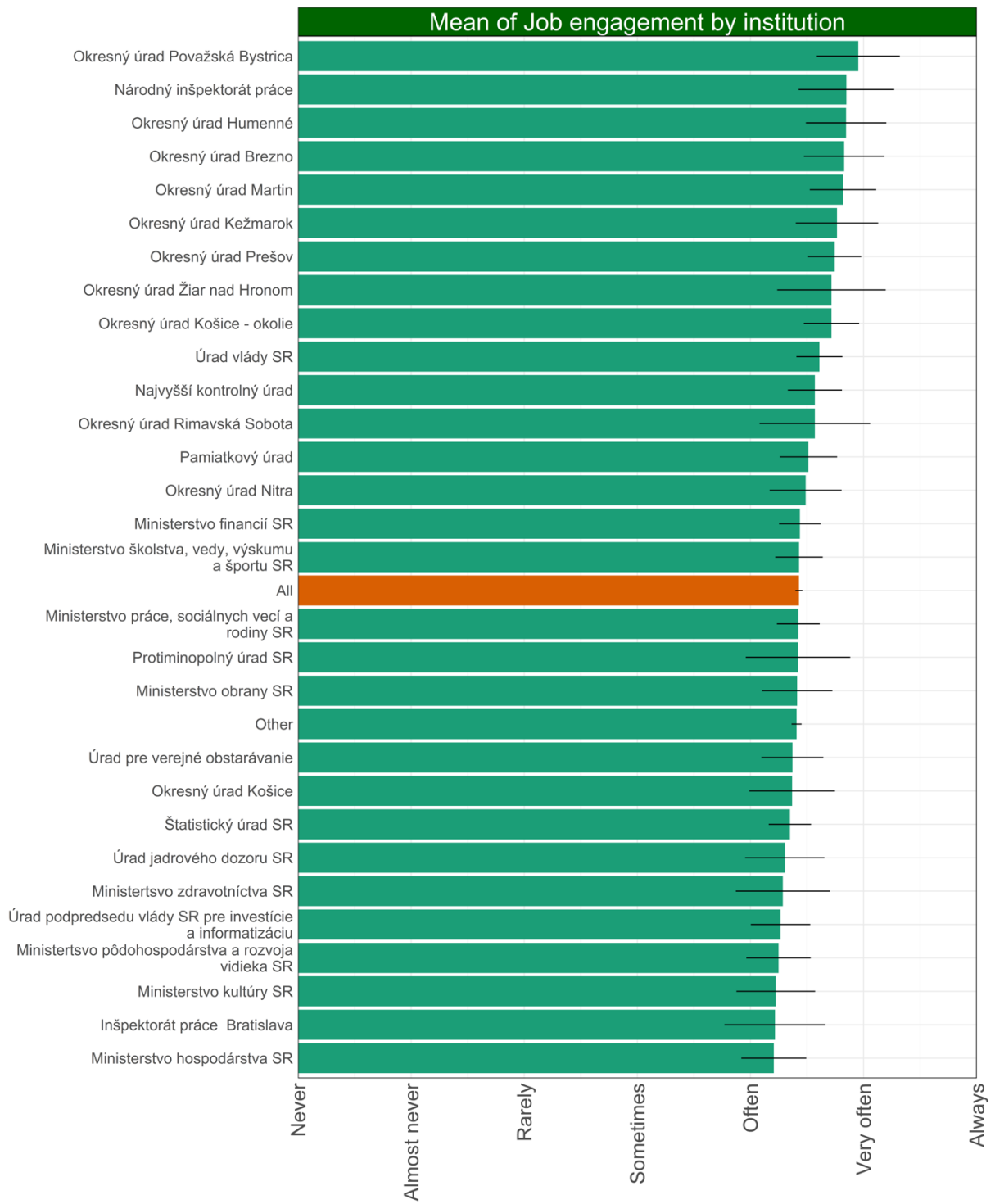


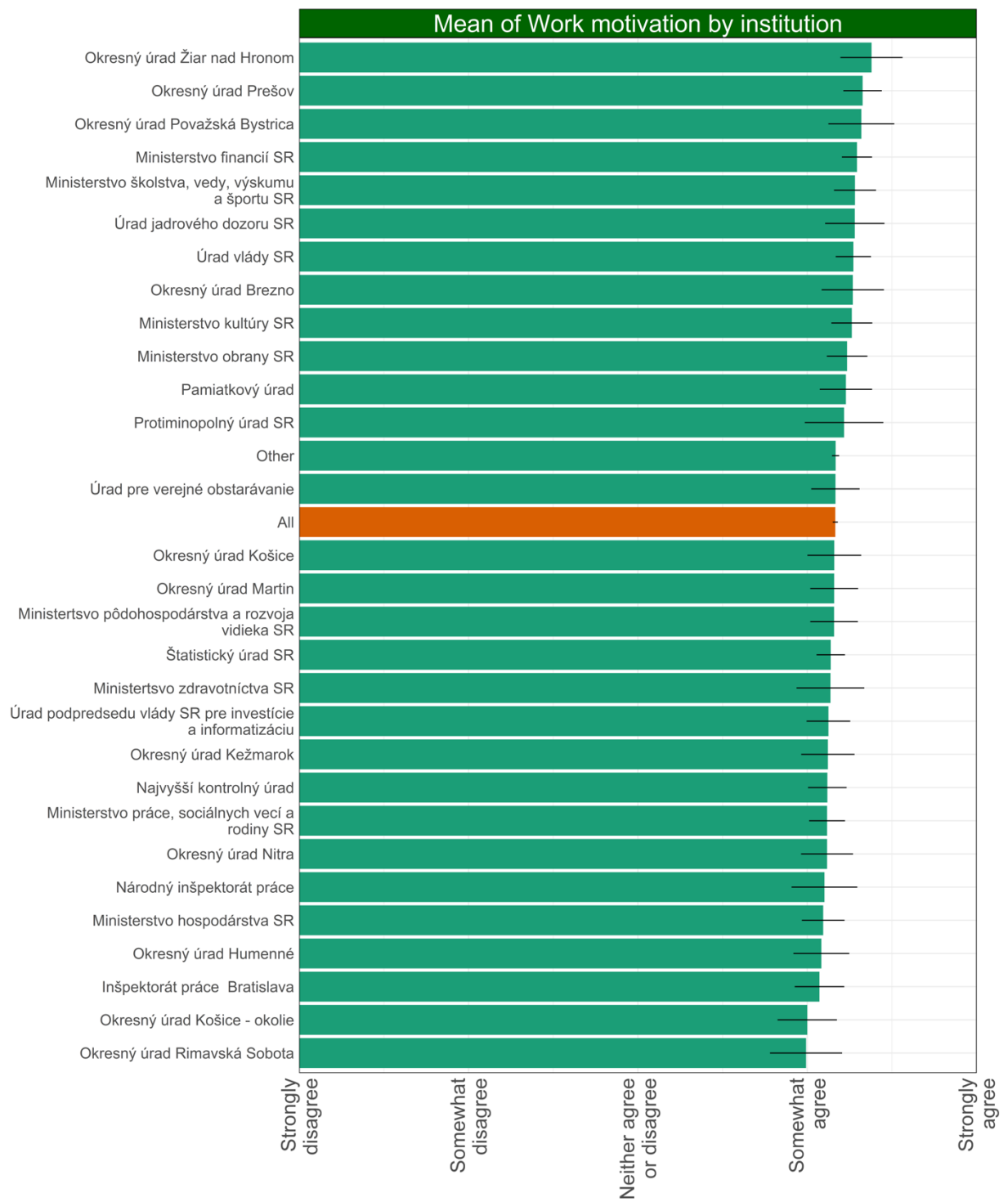


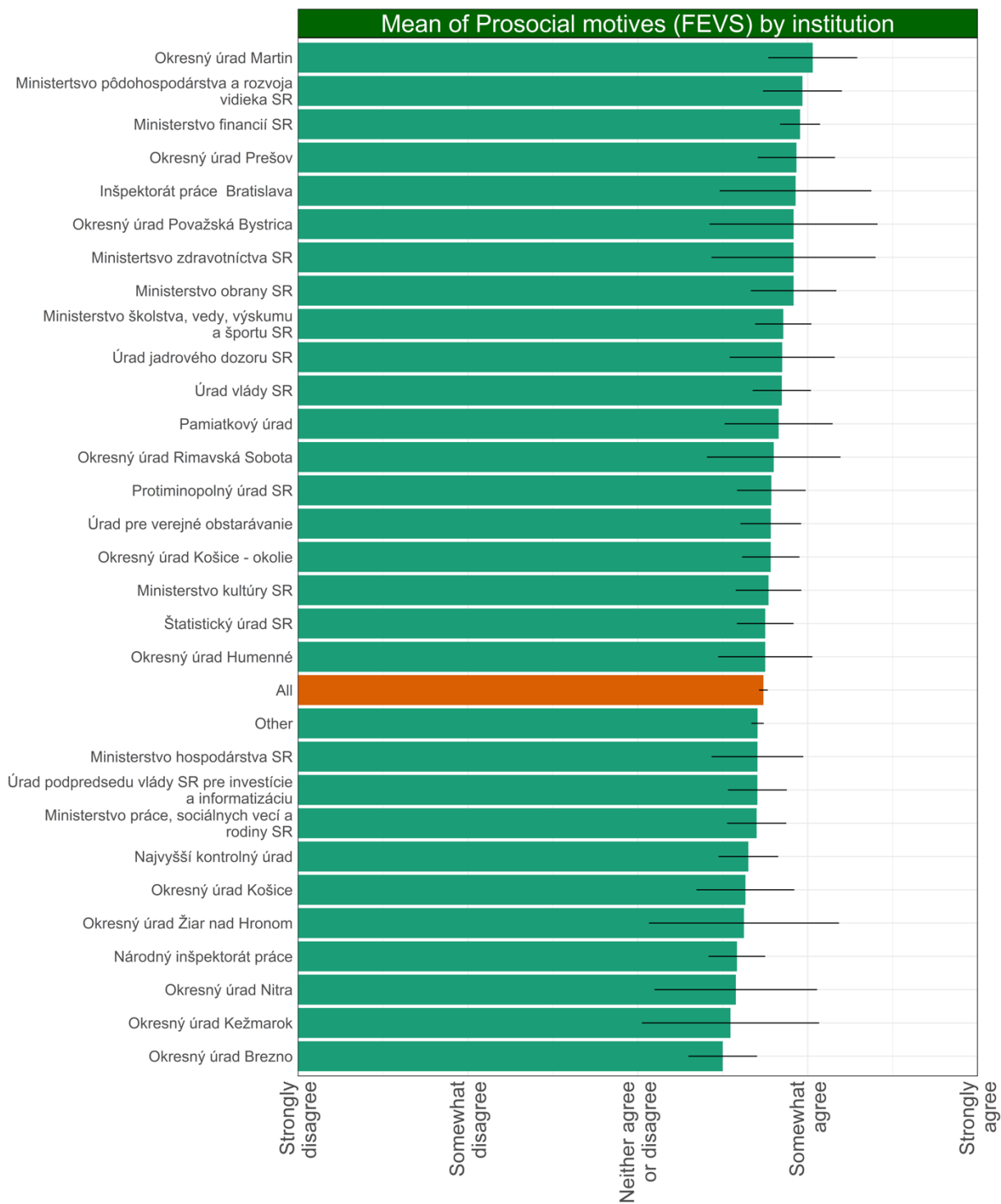
Differences by institutions

The graphs list institutions with a response rate of at least 20 per cent and a minimum of 30 responses. All other institutions are aggregated in the category 'other'. Labels are kept in Slovak language.

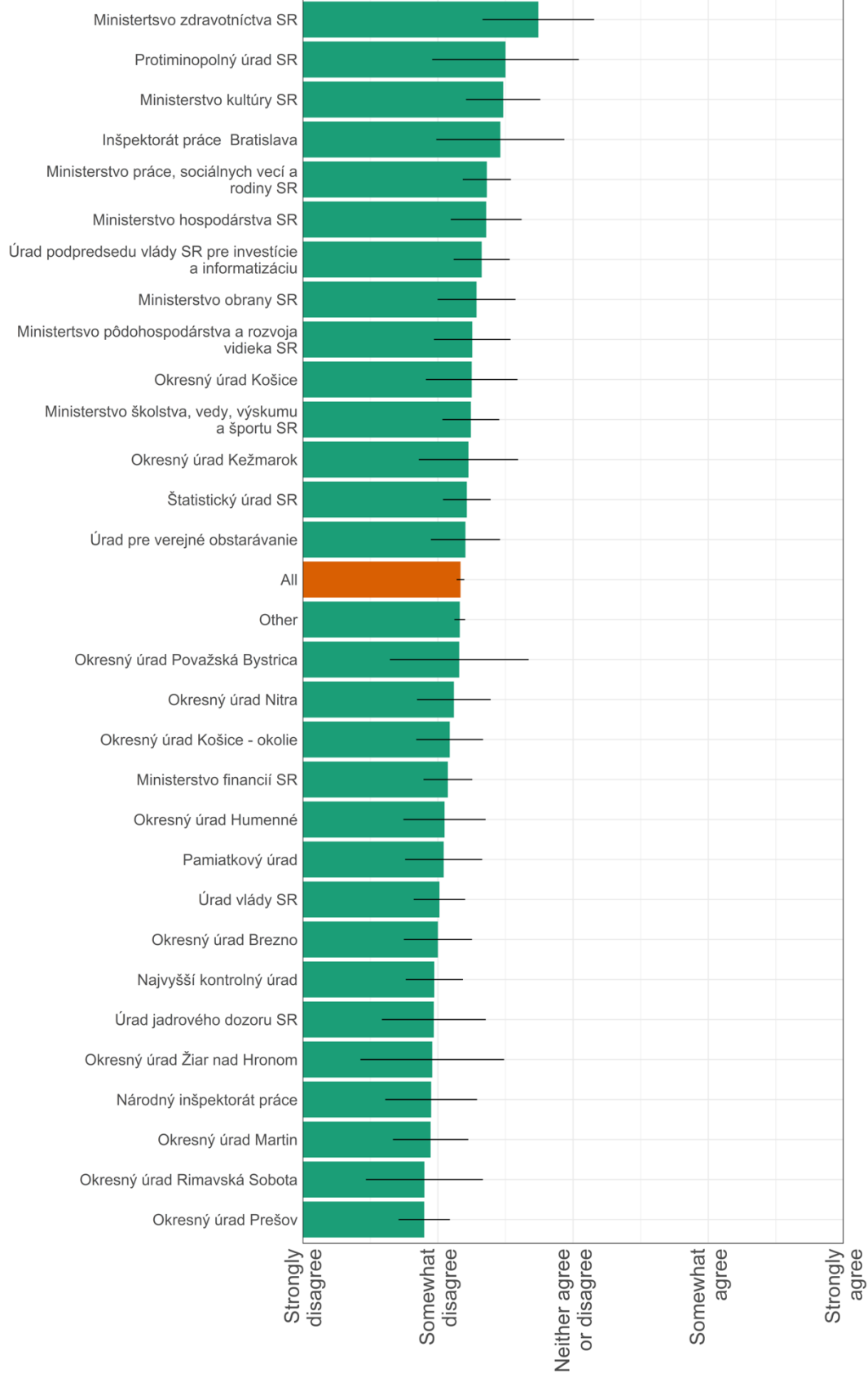




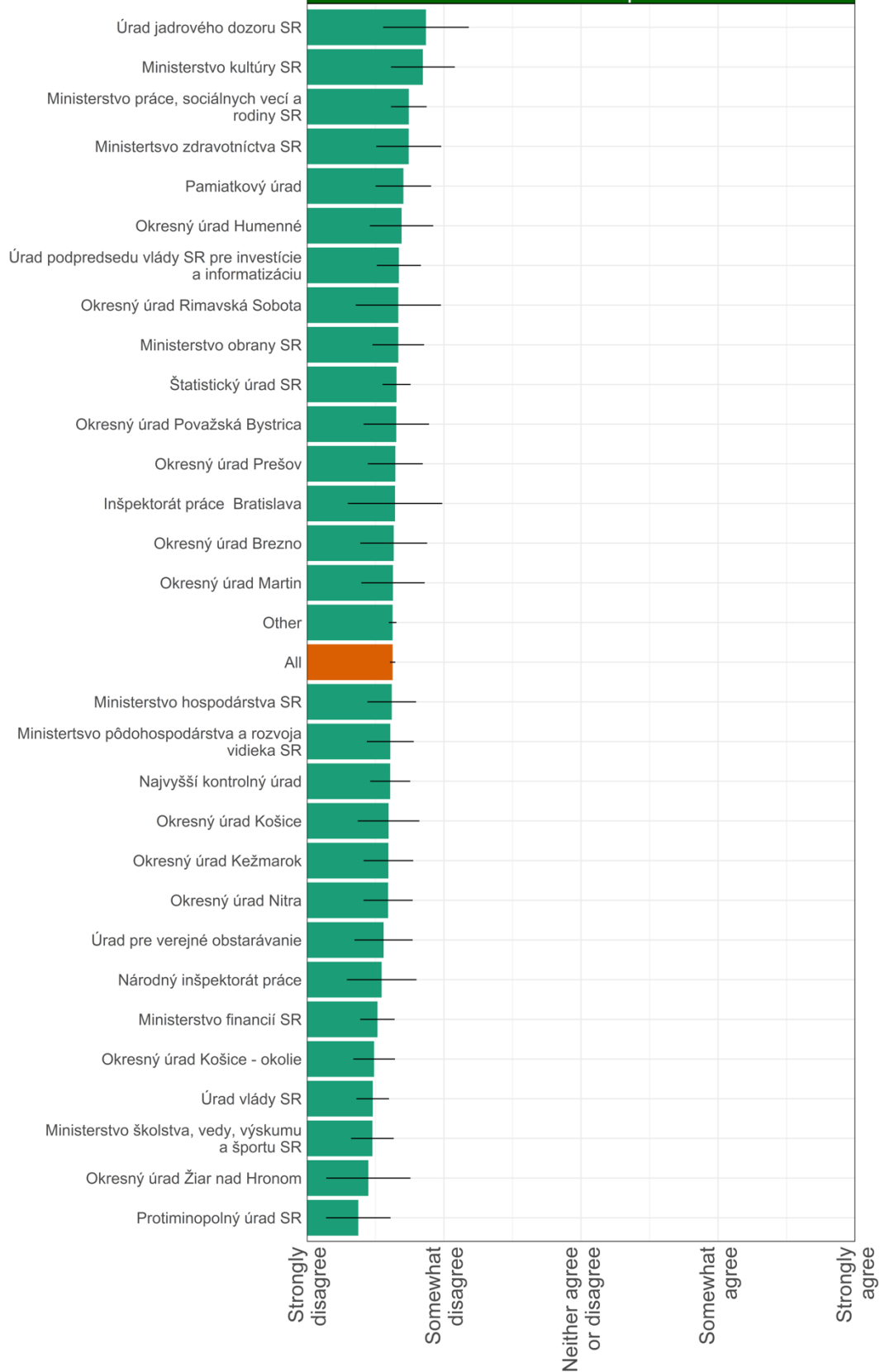




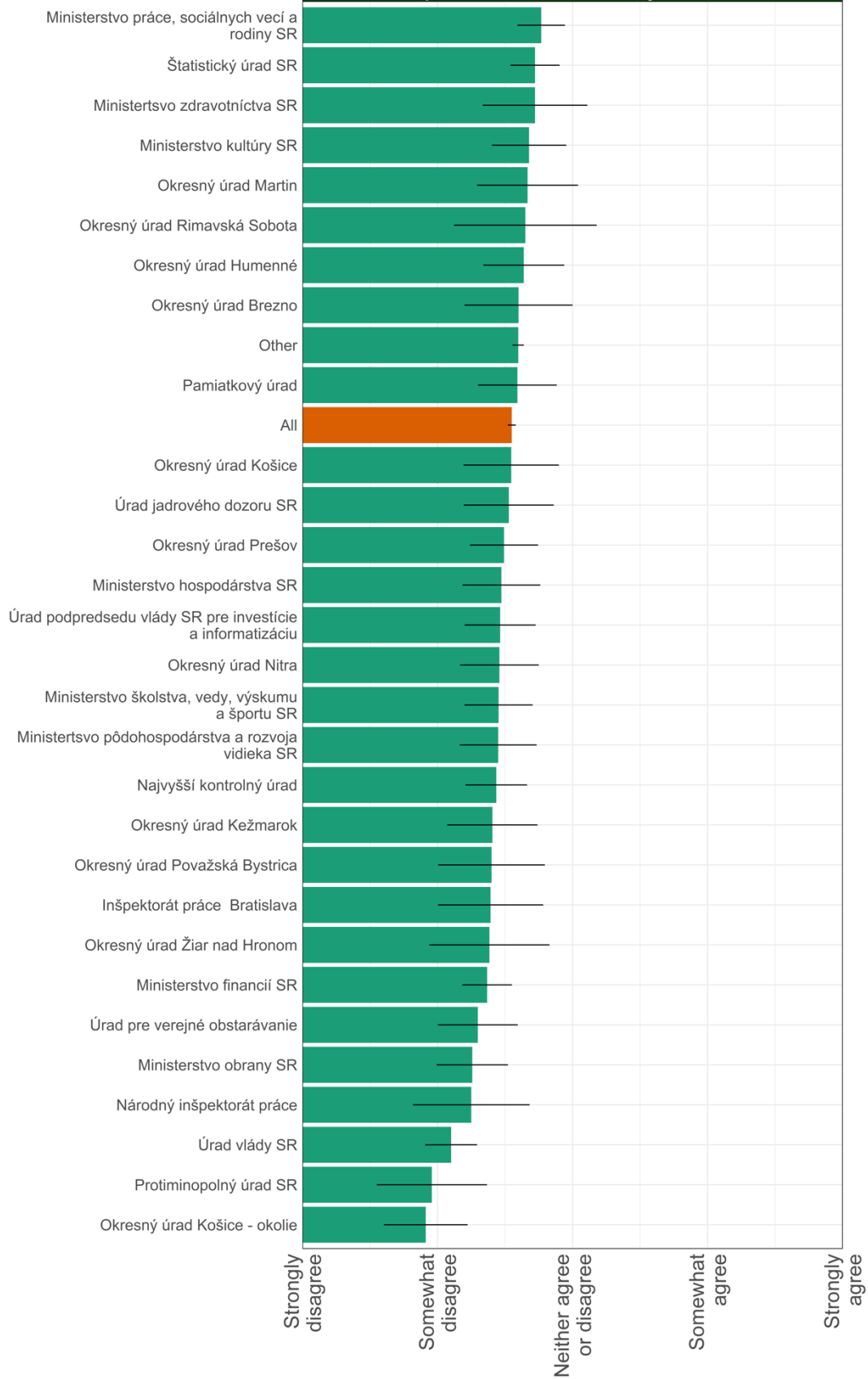
I want to leave the state administration within the next two years.



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.

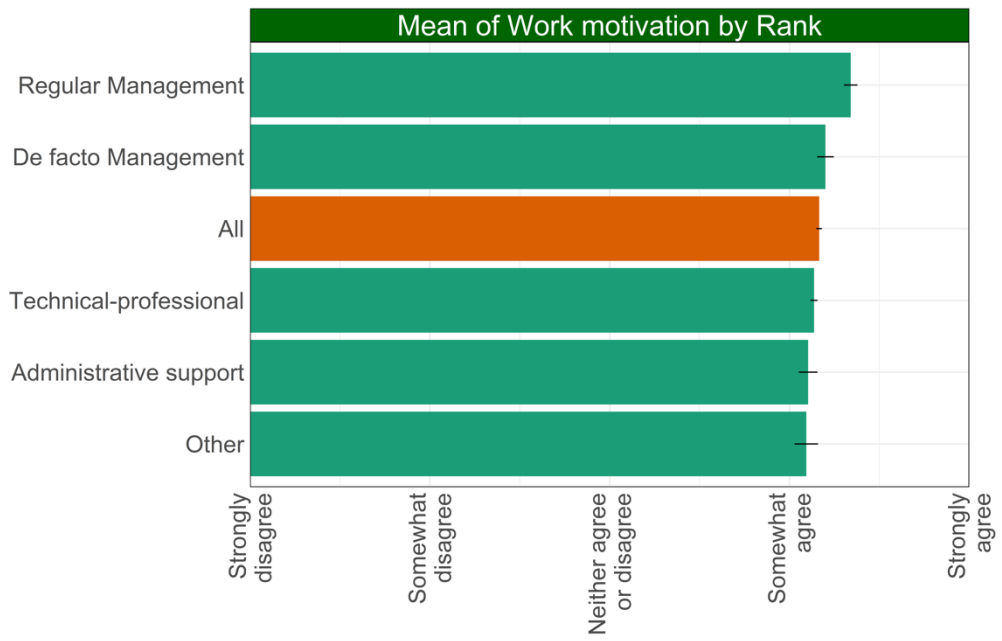
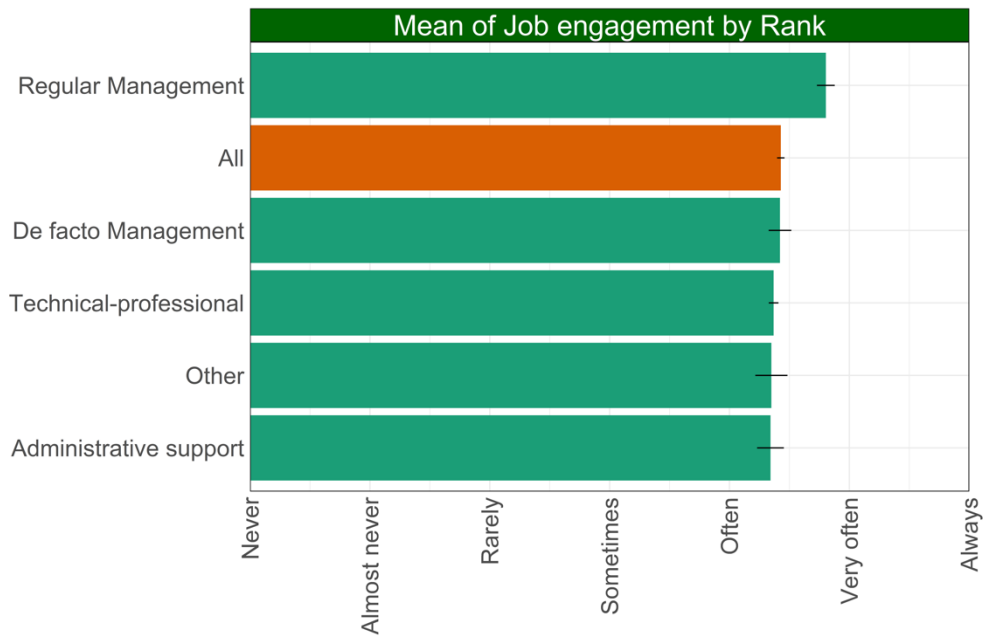


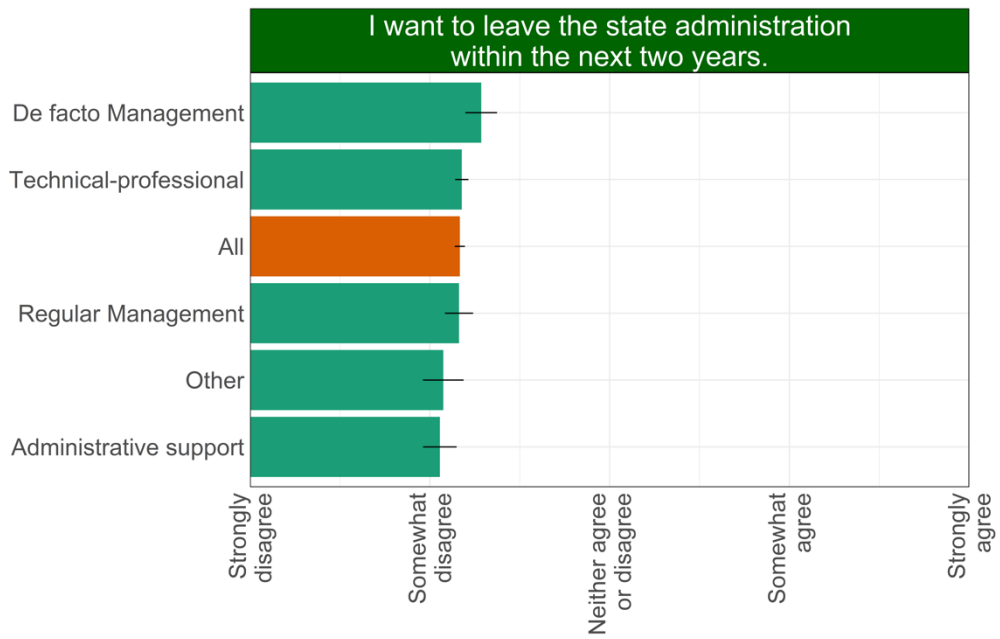
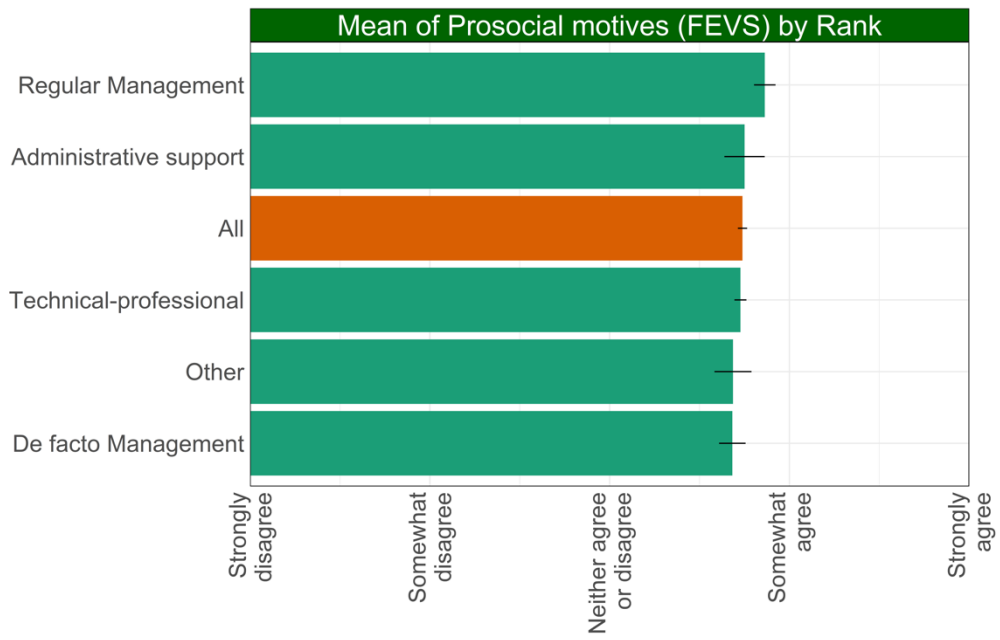
Differences by rank

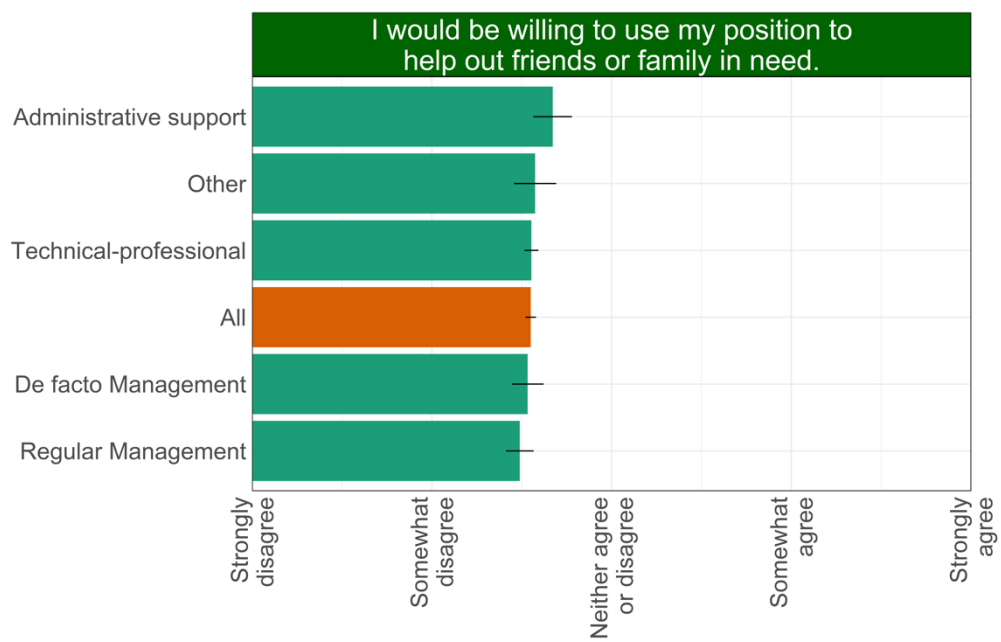
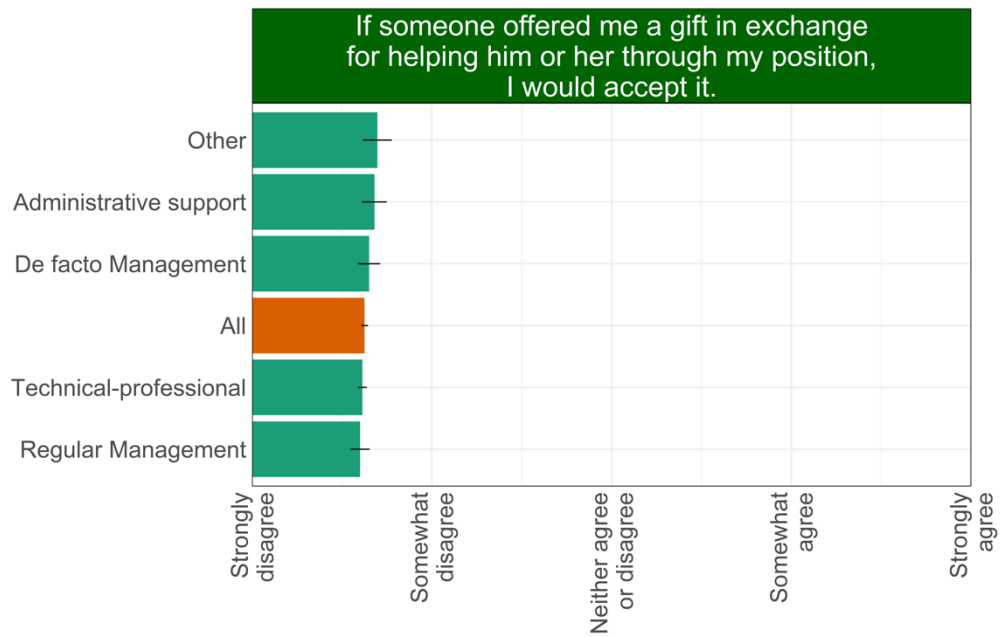
The survey distinguished six categories of administrative staff by asking respondents' rank. They are

- 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



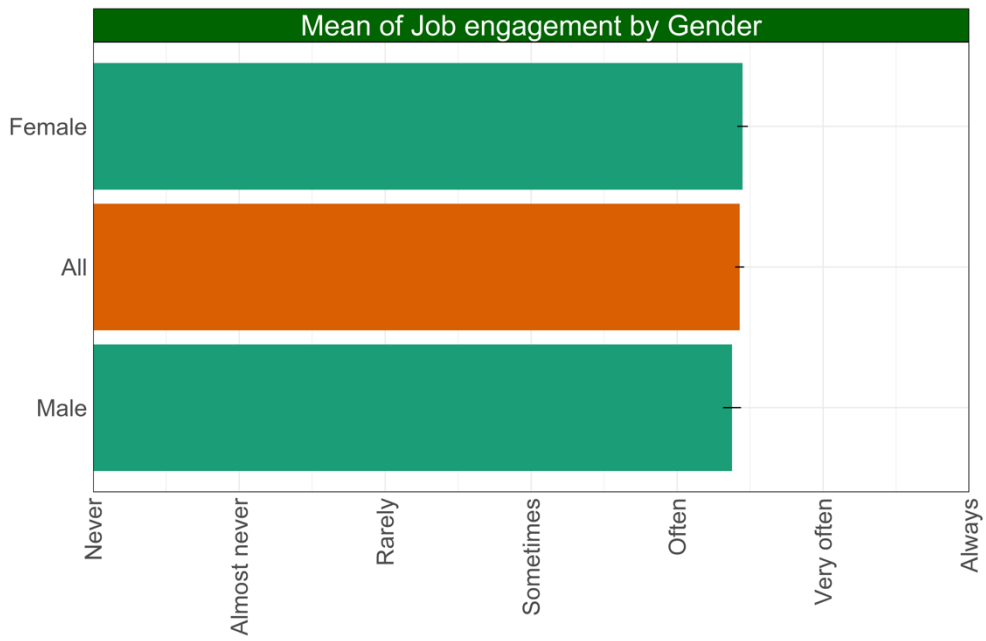
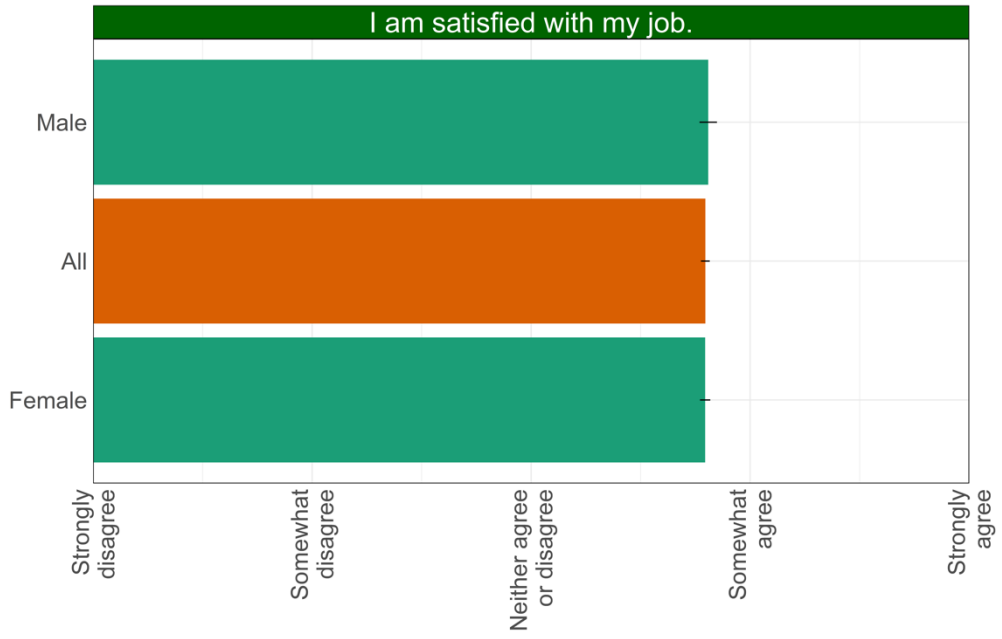


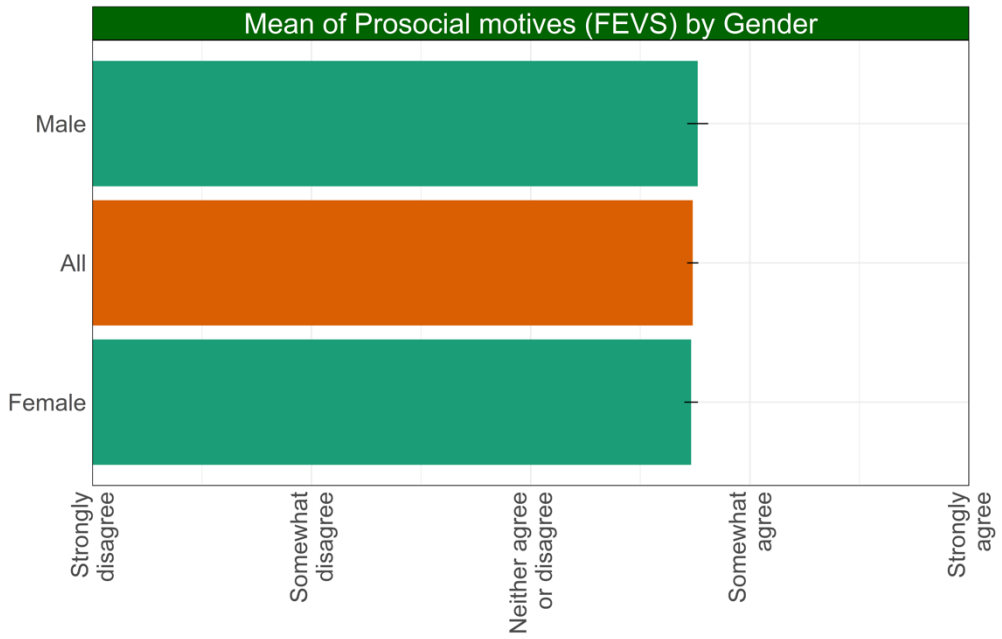
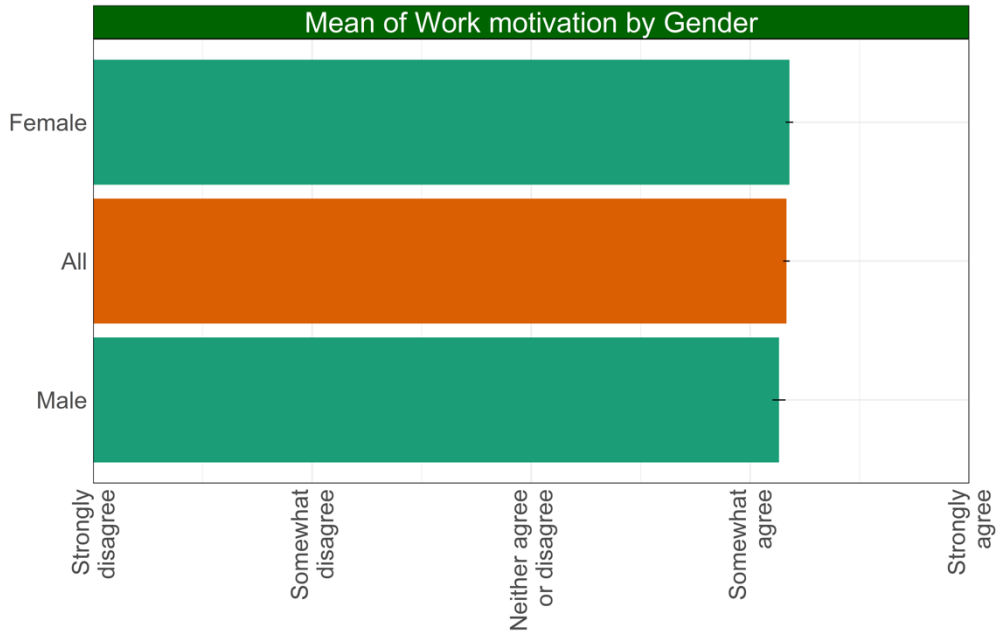


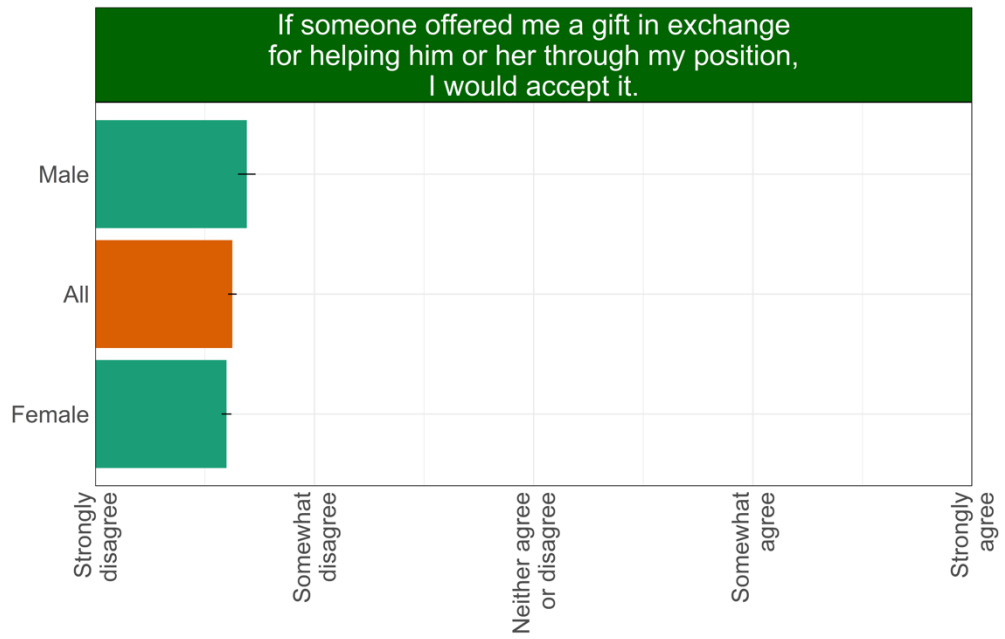
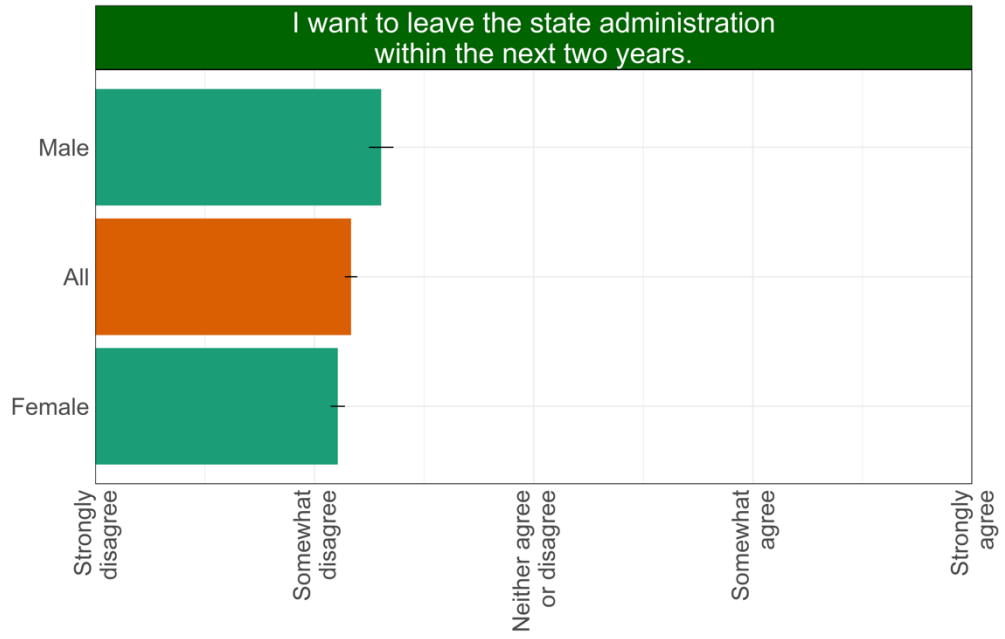


Differences by gender

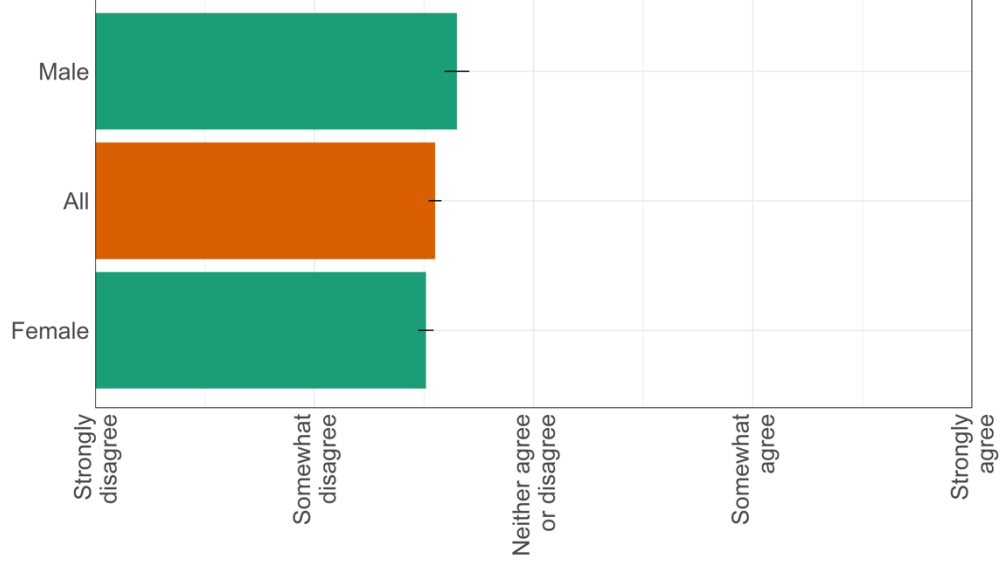
The graphs in this section show basic differences between female and male civil servants.







I would be willing to use my position to help out friends or family in need.



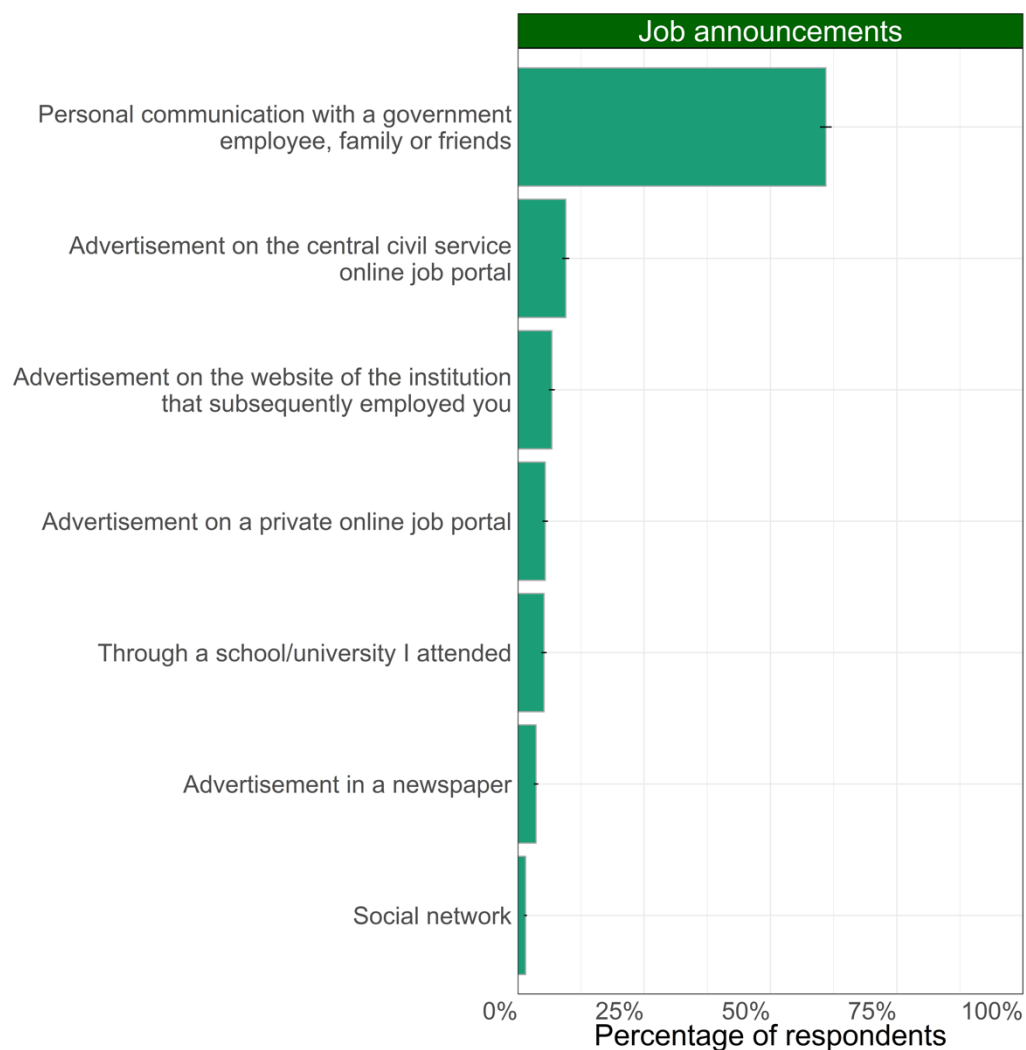
Human resources management

Recruitment

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.

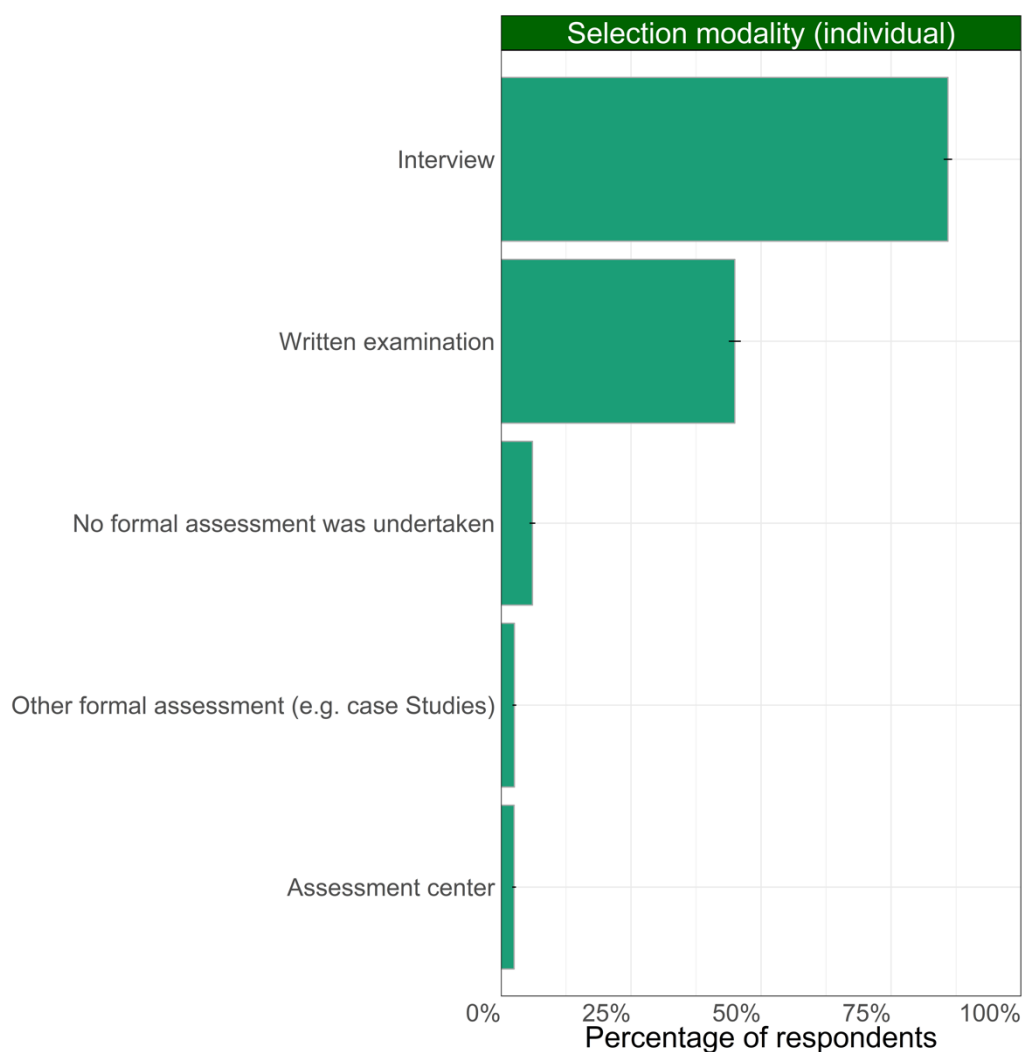
- Advertisement in a newspaper or official gazette
- Advertisement on the central civil service online job portal
- Advertisement on a private online job portal
- Advertisement on the website of the institution that subsequently employed you
- Personal communication with a government employee, family or friends
- Through a school/university I attended
- Through social media
- 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

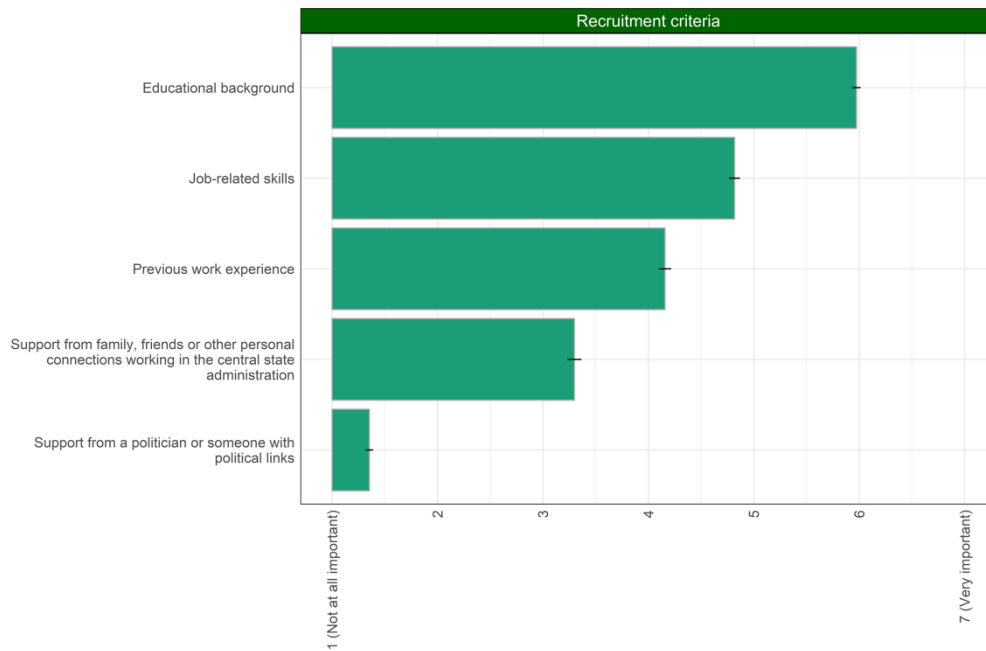


Entry criteria

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

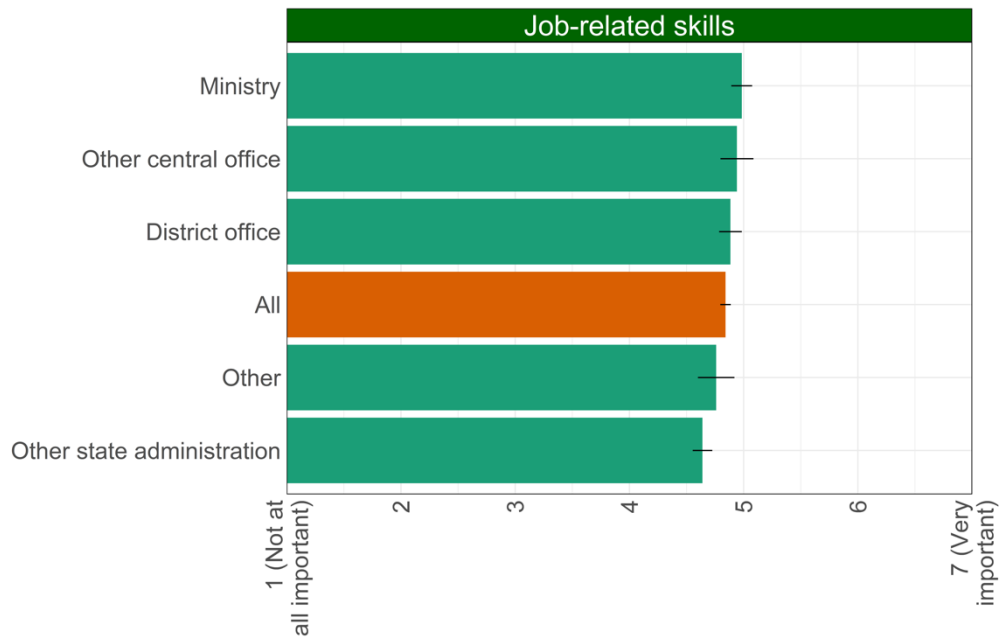
- Educational background (mean response)
- Previous work experience (mean response)
- Job-related skills

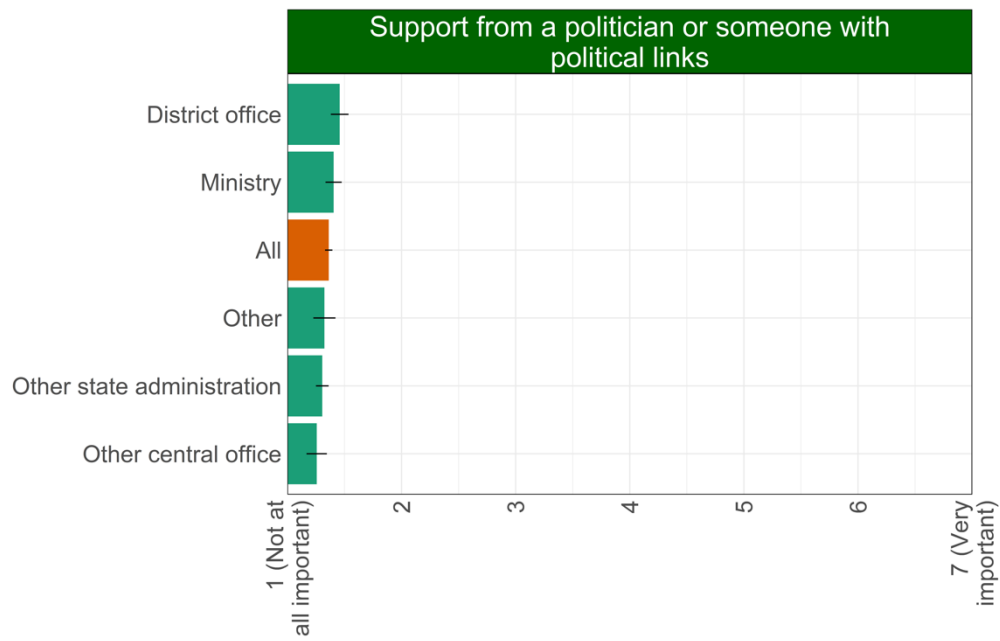
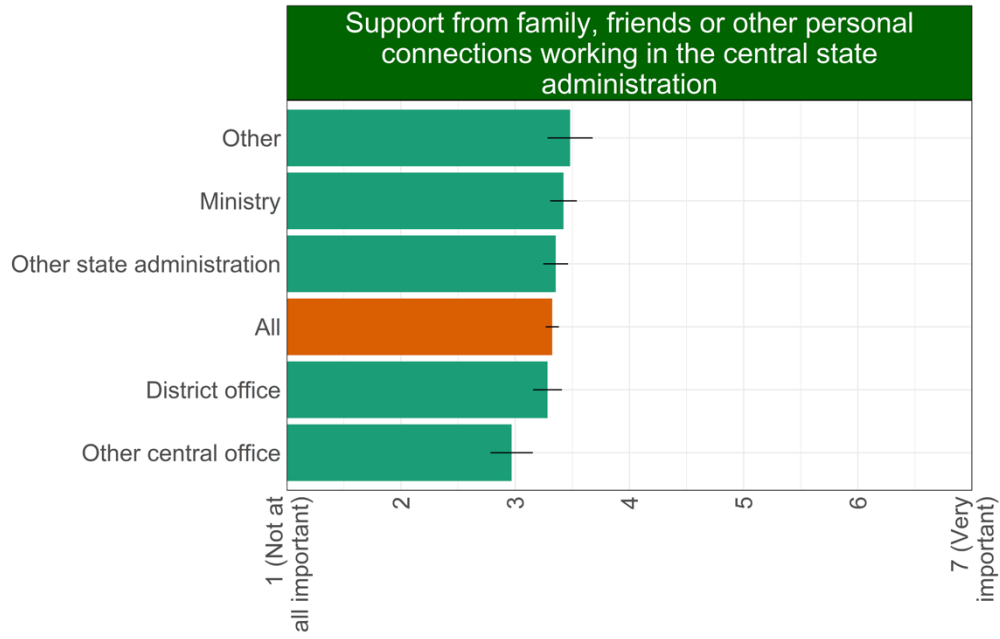
- Support from family, friends or other personal connections working in the public administration (mean response)
- Support from a politician or someone with political links (mean response)



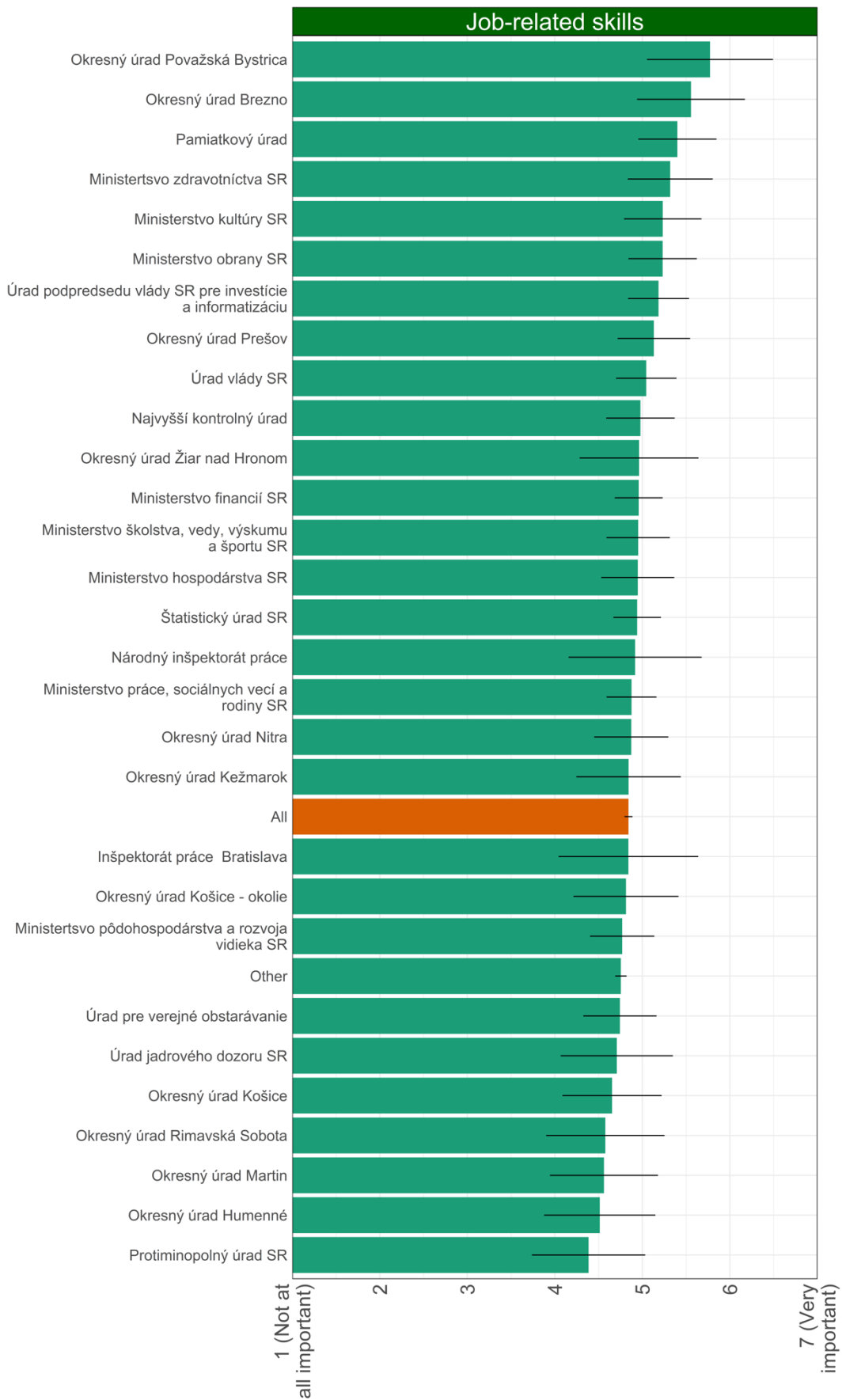
Differences between groups and institutions (selected results)

Differences by types of administrative institutions





Differences by institutions



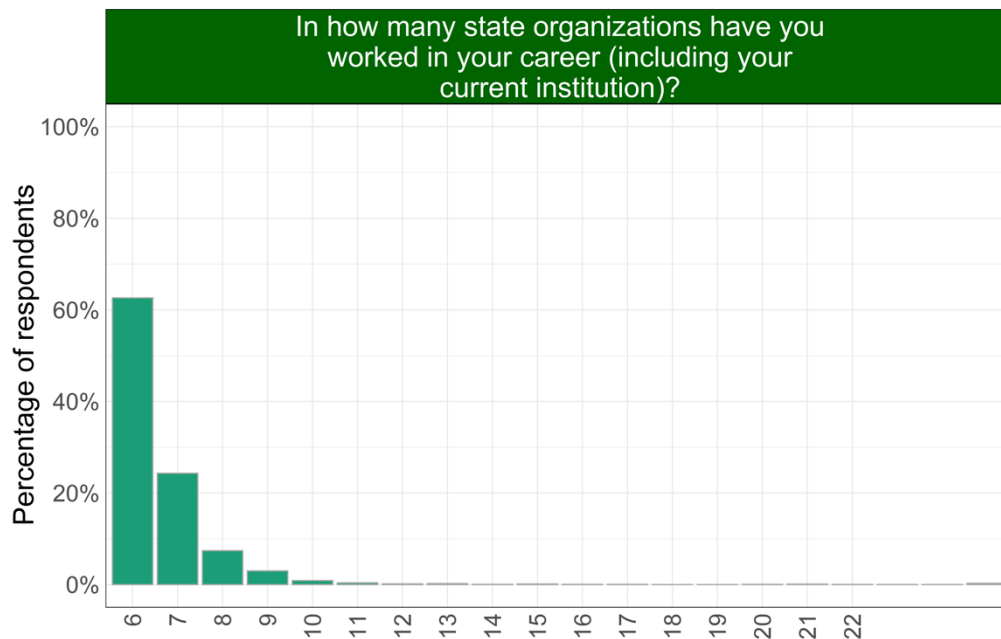
Support from a politician or someone with political links



Career advancement

Mobility

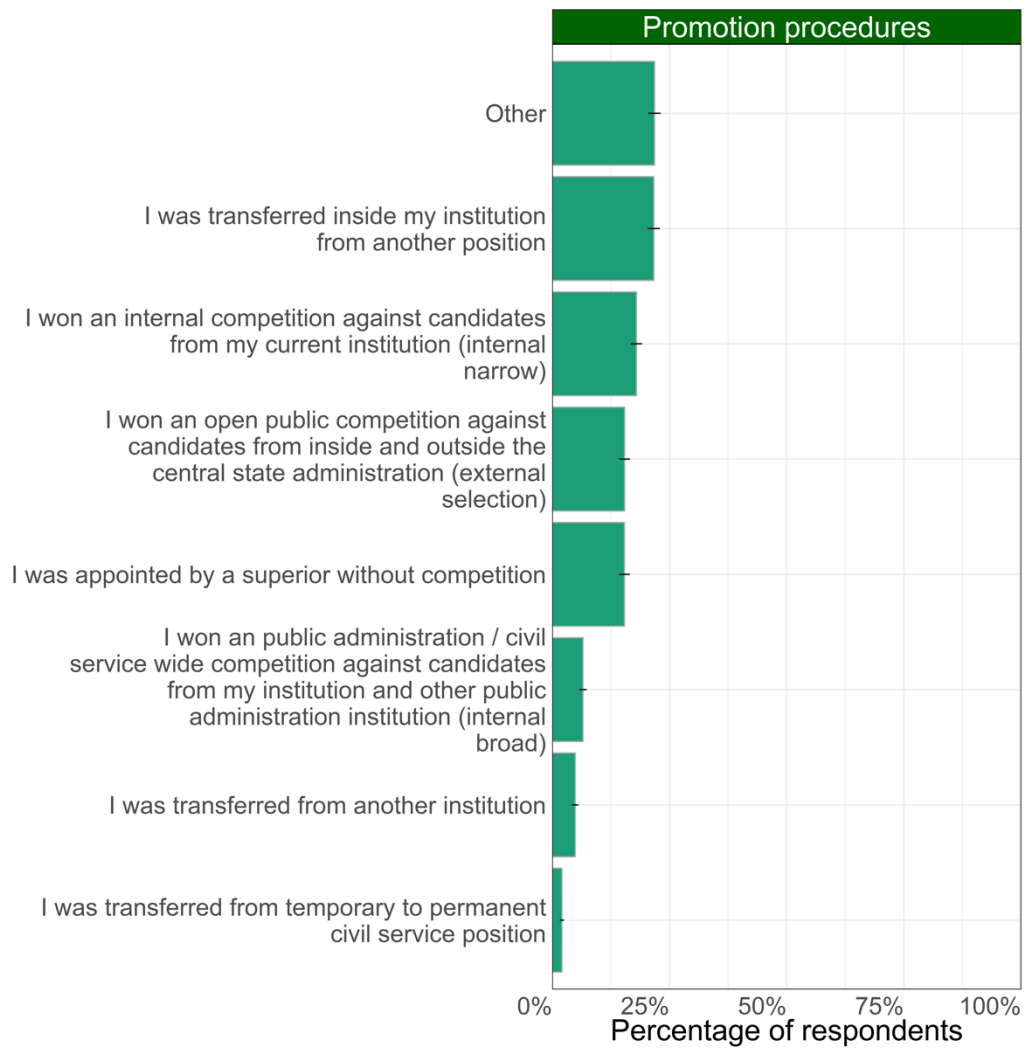
'In how many public administration organizations have you worked in your career (including your current institution)?'



Mode of advancement

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

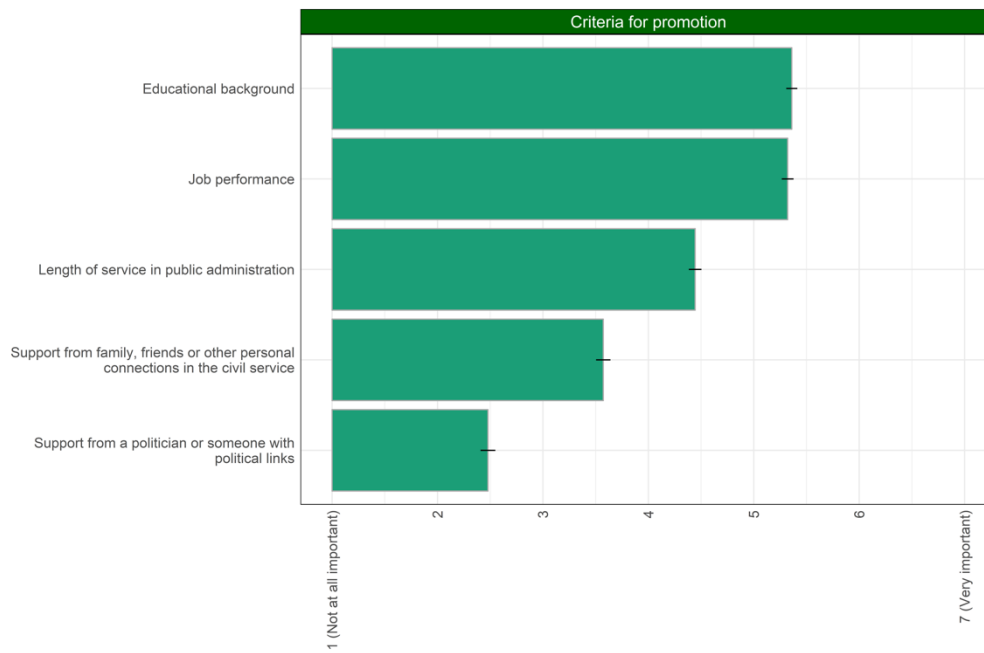
- I won a public competition against candidates from inside and outside the public administration.
- I won an public sector / civil service wide competition against candidates from my institution and other public administration institution
- I won an internal competition against candidates from my current 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

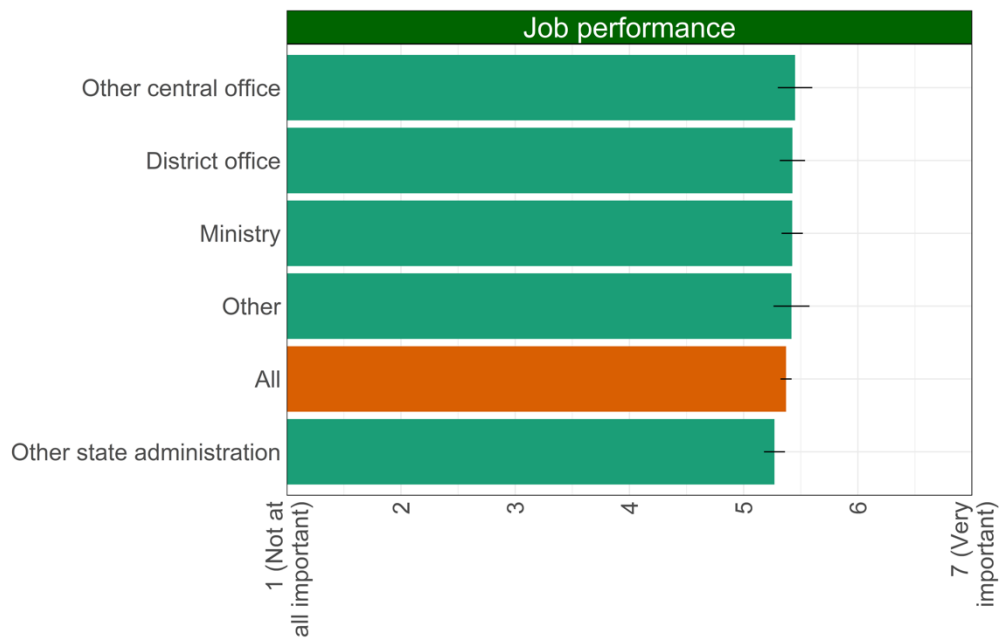
Thinking about your future career advancement in the public administration how important do you expect the following criteria to be for your advancement to better position in public administration?

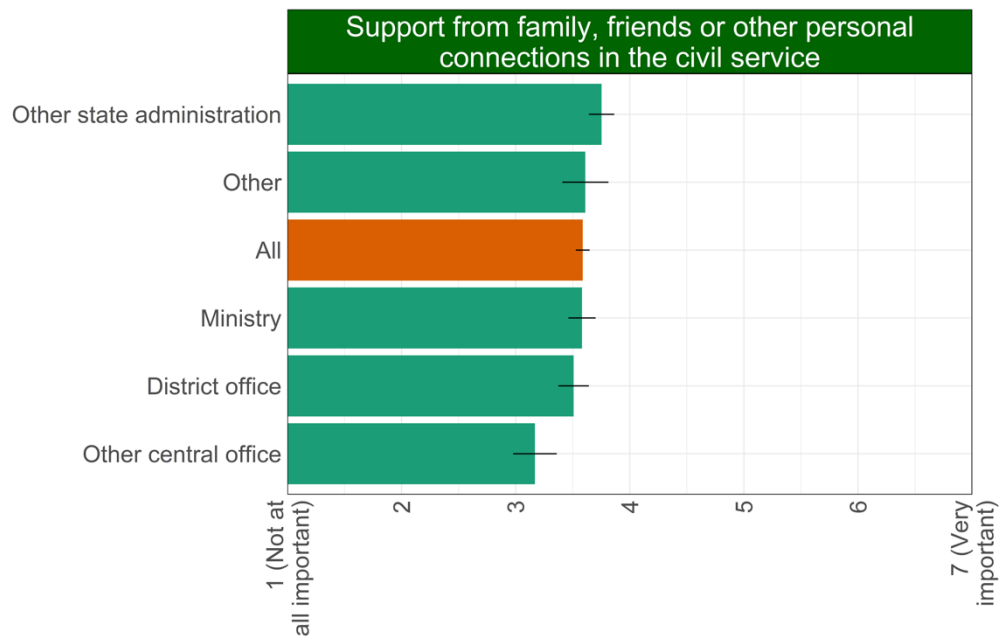
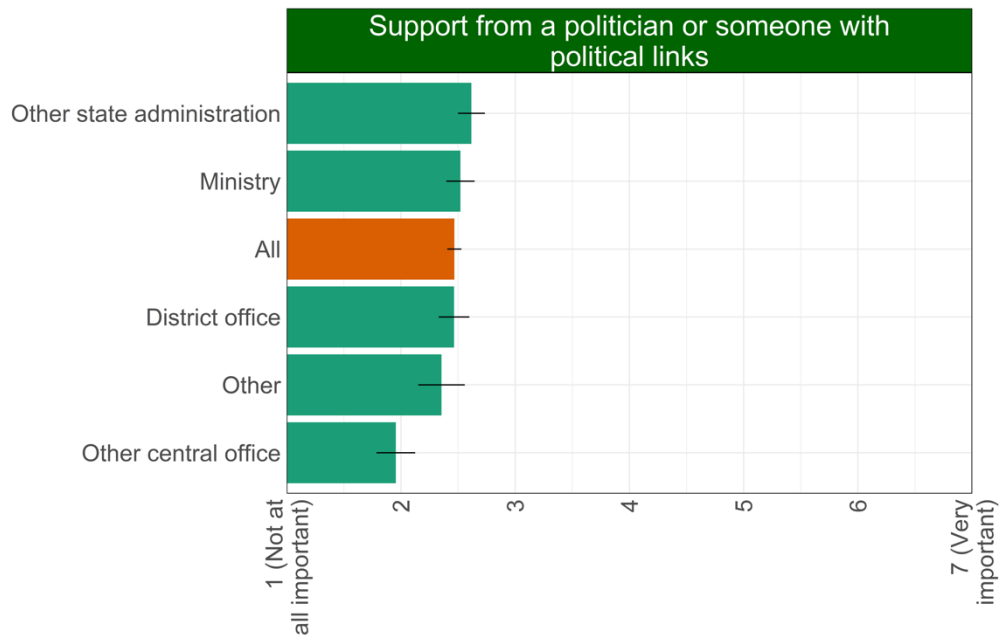
- Length of service in the public sector (mean response)
- Job performance (mean response)
- Educational background (mean response)
- Support from family, friends or other personal connections in the civil service (mean response)
- Support from a politician or someone with political links (mean response)



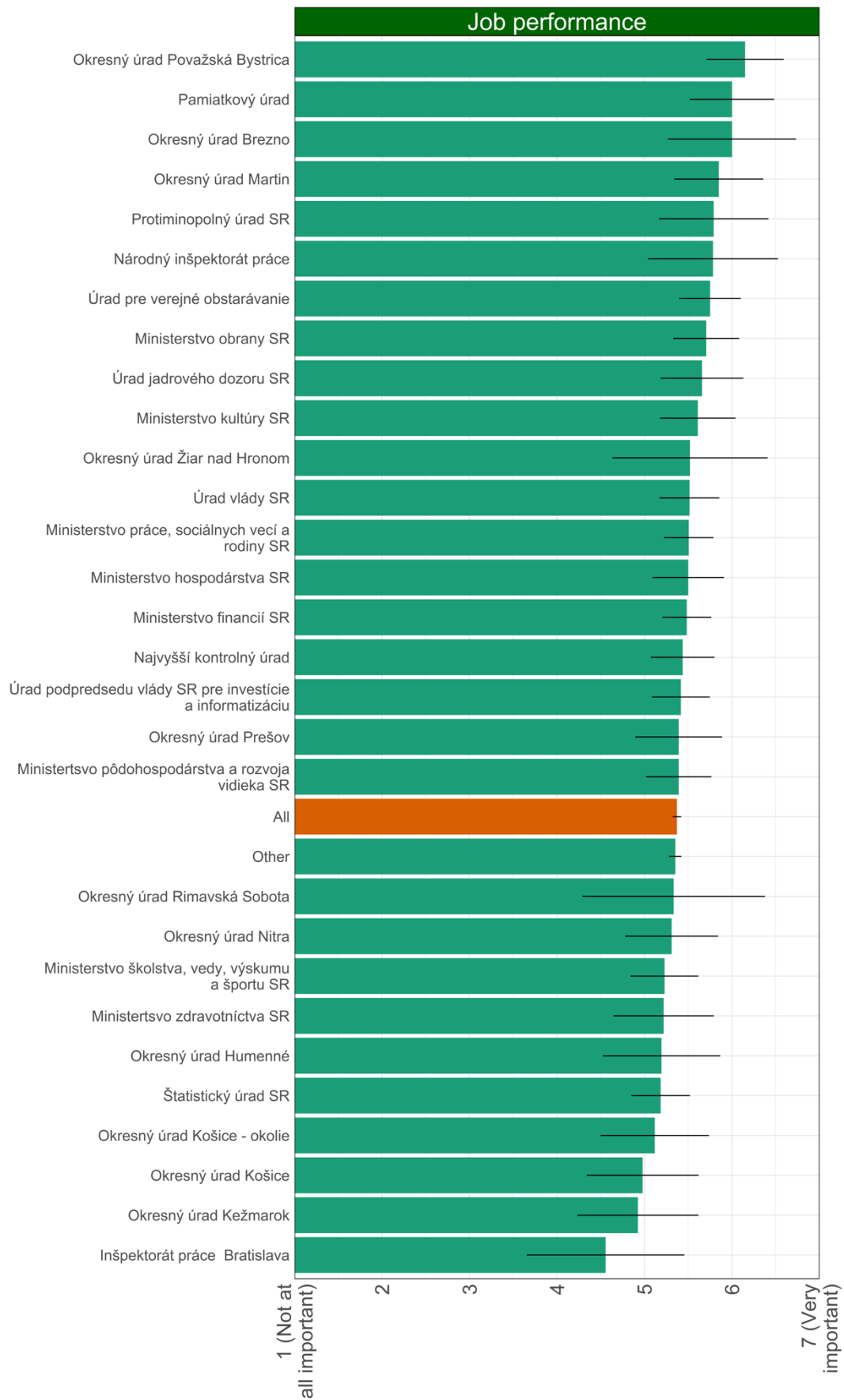
Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

Differences by types of administrative institutions

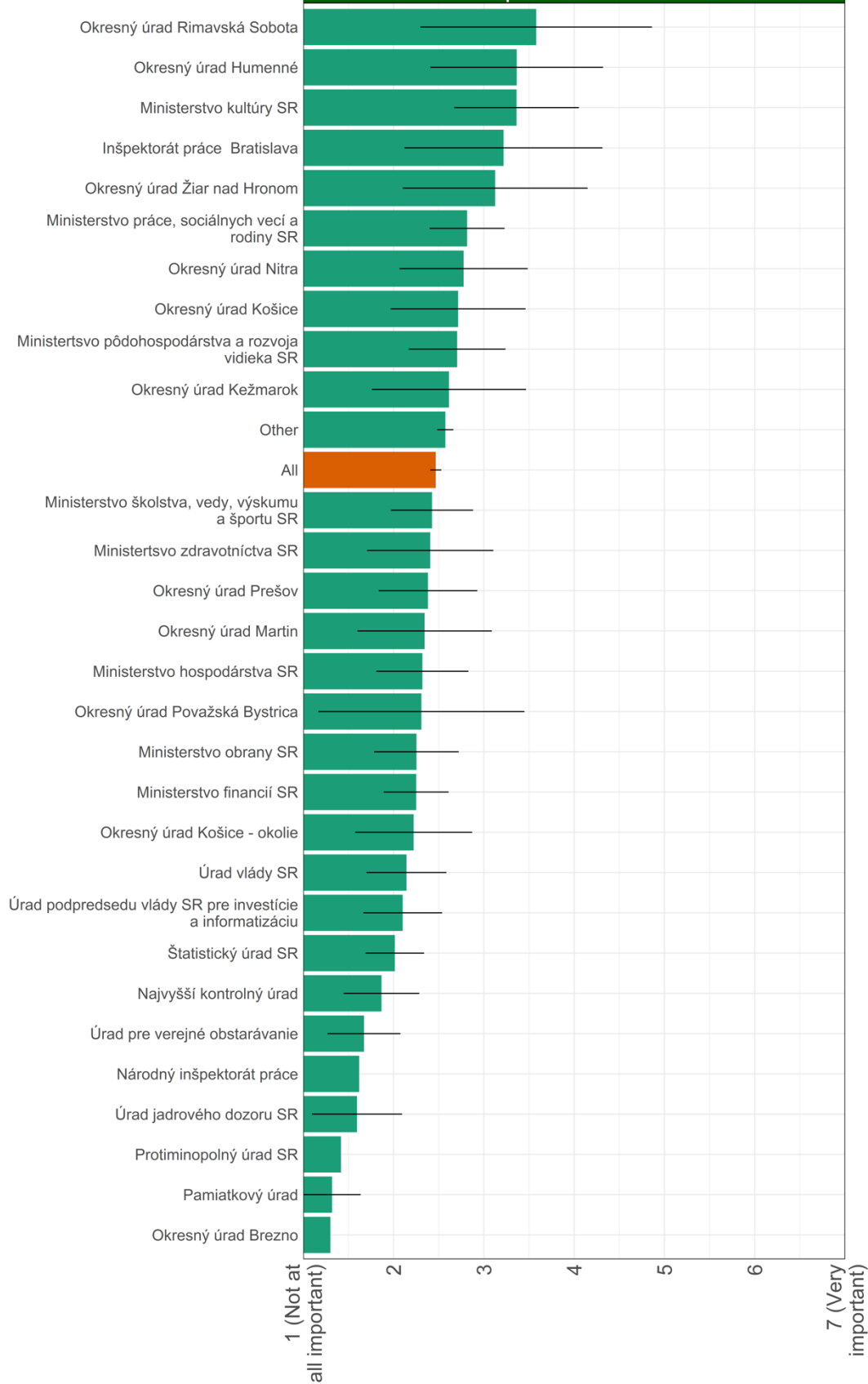




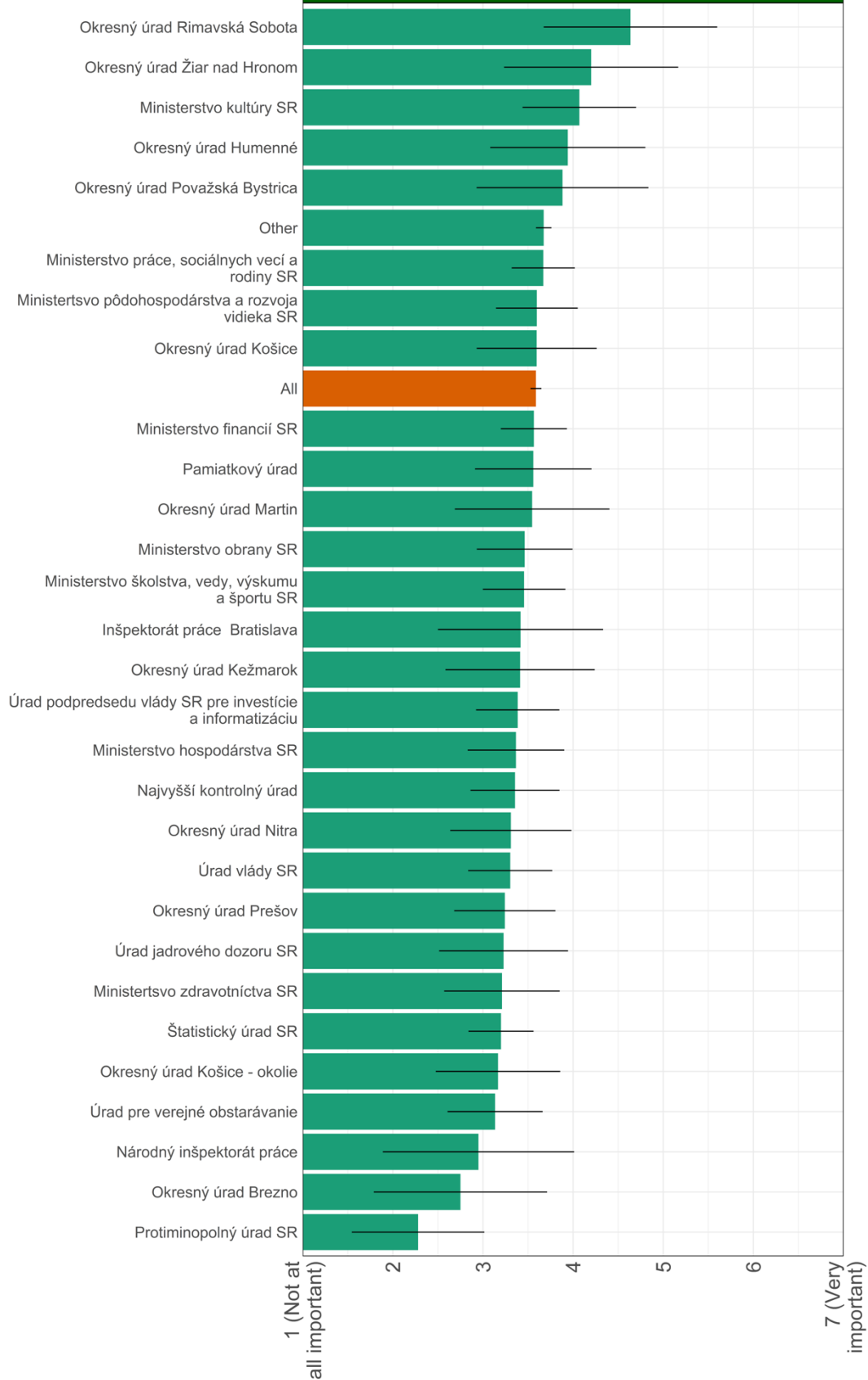
Differences by institutions



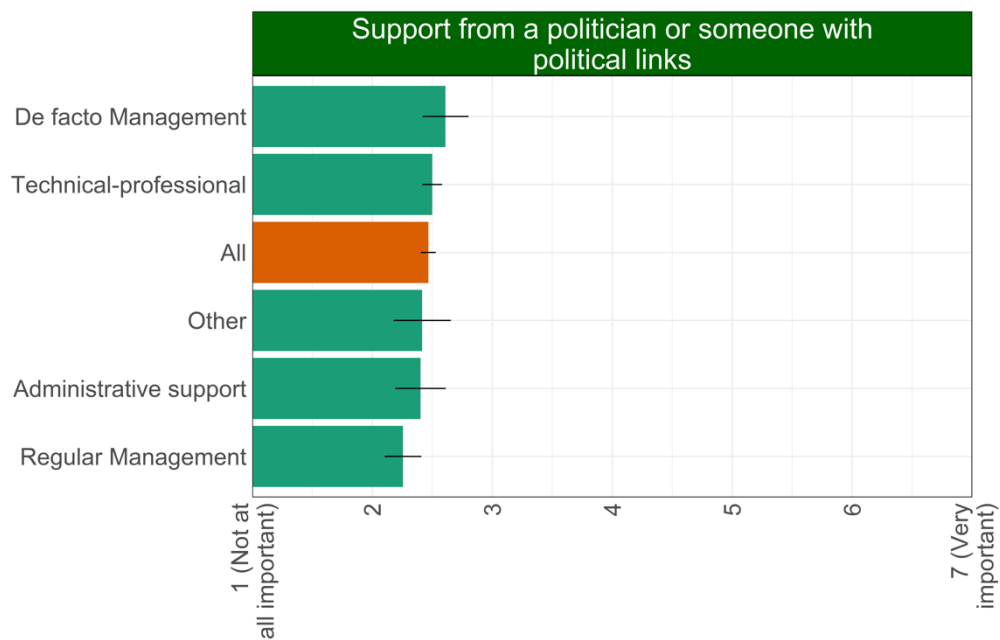
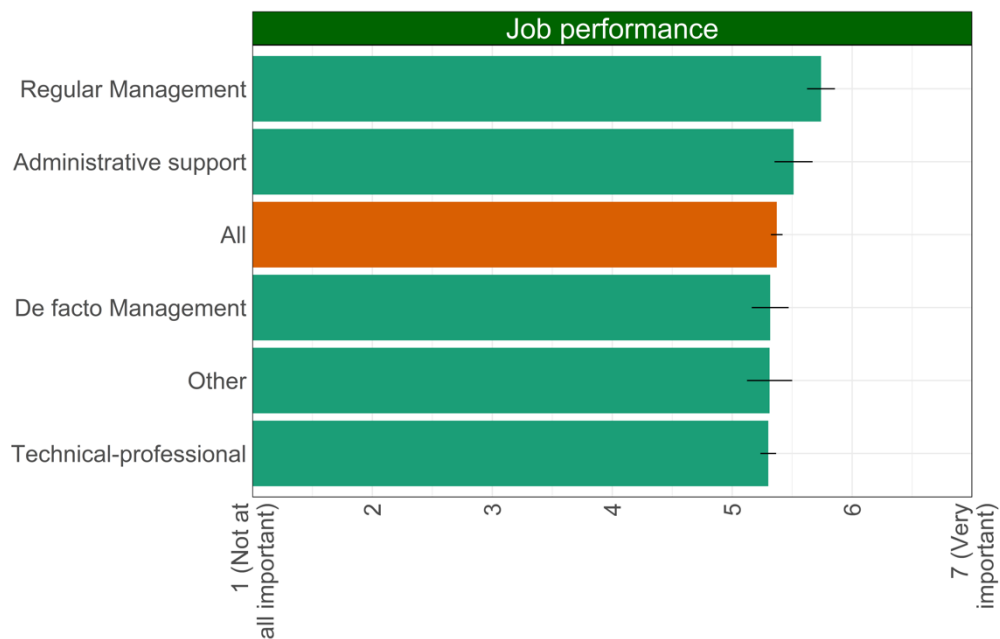
Support from a politician or someone with political links



Support from family, friends or other personal connections in the civil service



Differences by rank

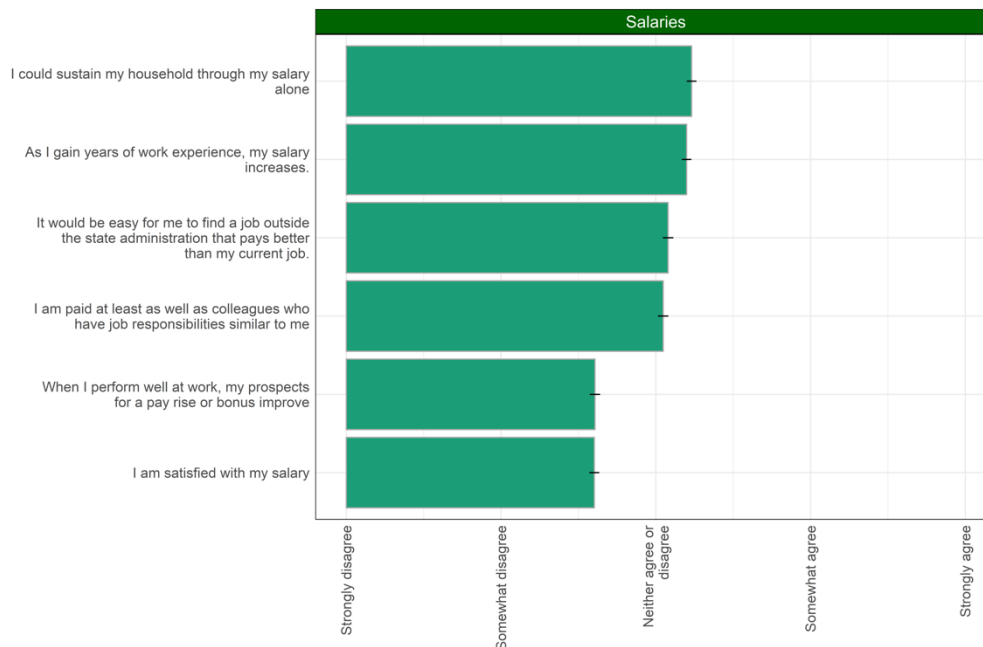


Salary management

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)



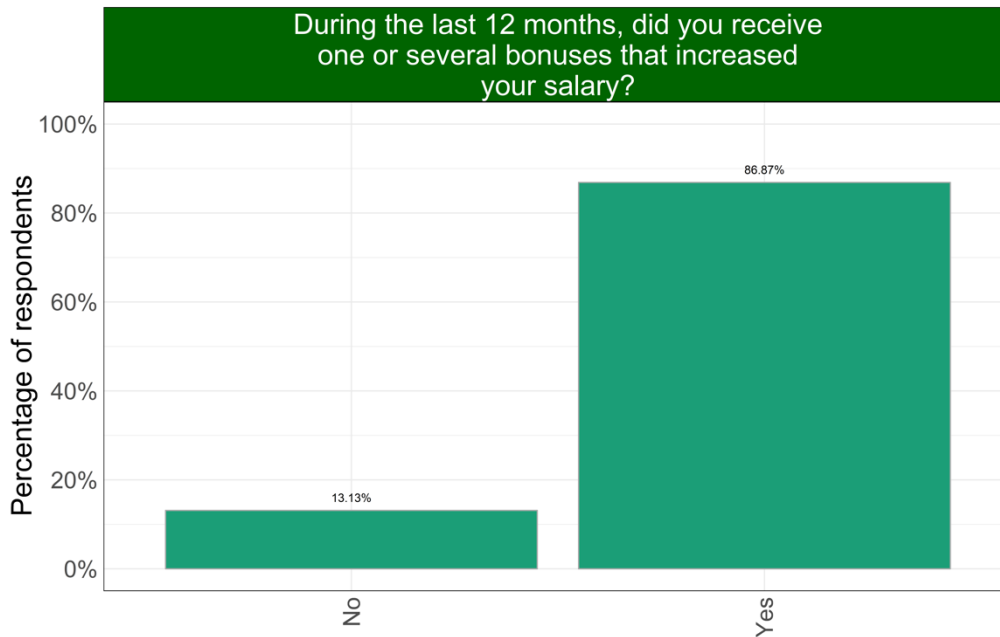
Salary bonuses and allowances

During the last 12 months, did you receive one or several bonuses that increased your salary? (Dostali ste počas uplynulých 12 mesiacov odmeny a/alebo osobný príplatok, ktoré navýšili Váš základný (funkčný) plat?)

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

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

- 0 – 5 per cent
- 6 – 10 per cent
- 11 – 25 per cent
- 26 – 50 per cent
- 51 – 100 per cent
- More than 100 per cent
- Don't remember / prefer not to respond



Ancillary employment

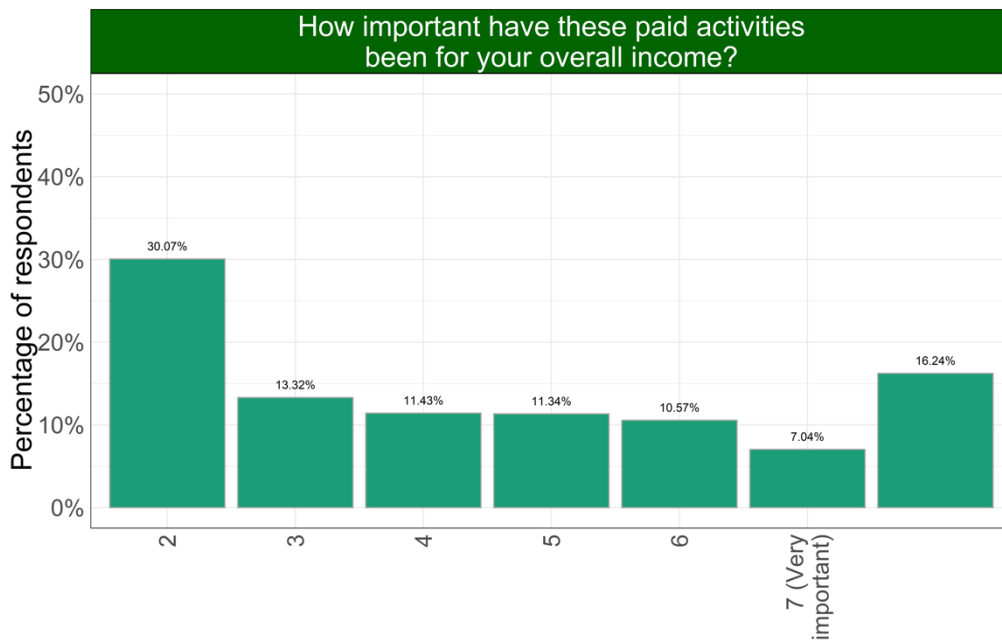
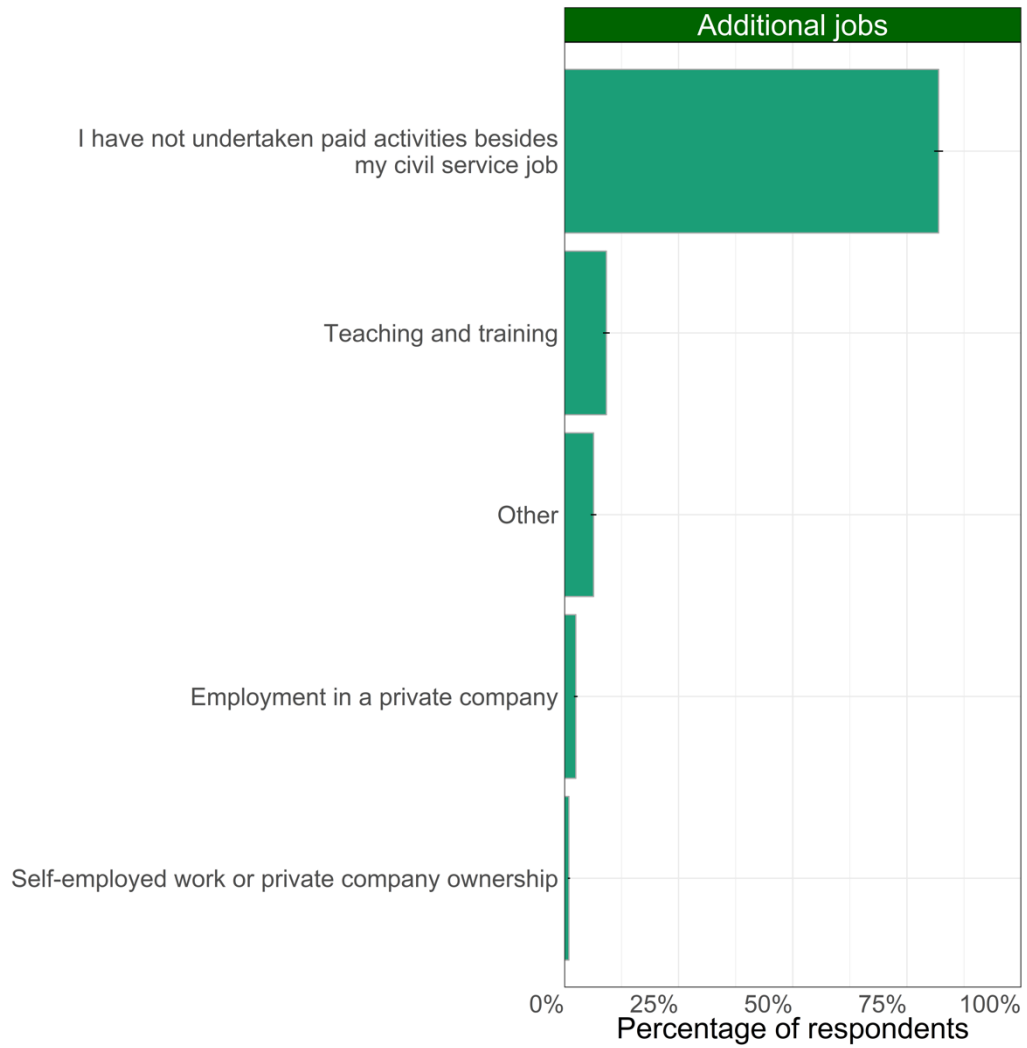
During the last two years, which of the following paid activities have you undertaken in addition to your job in the civil service? Please tick all that apply.

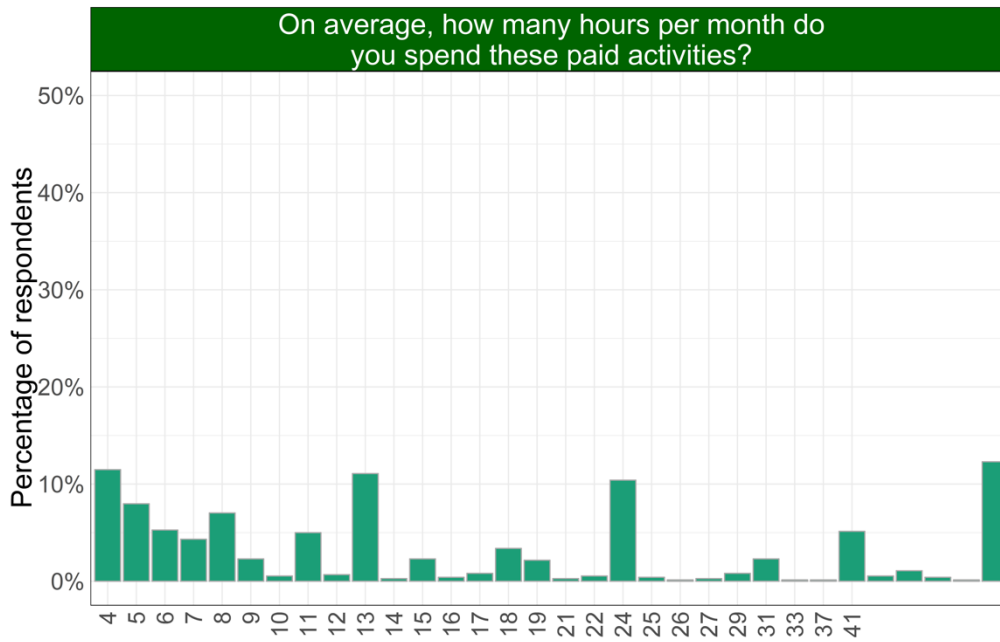
- Teaching and training
- Consultancy and provision of services
- Self-employed work or private company ownership
- Employment in a private company
- Other _____
- I have not undertaken paid activities besides my civil service job
- Don't remember / prefer not to respond

How important have these paid activities been for your overall income?

On average, how many hours per month do you spend these paid activities?

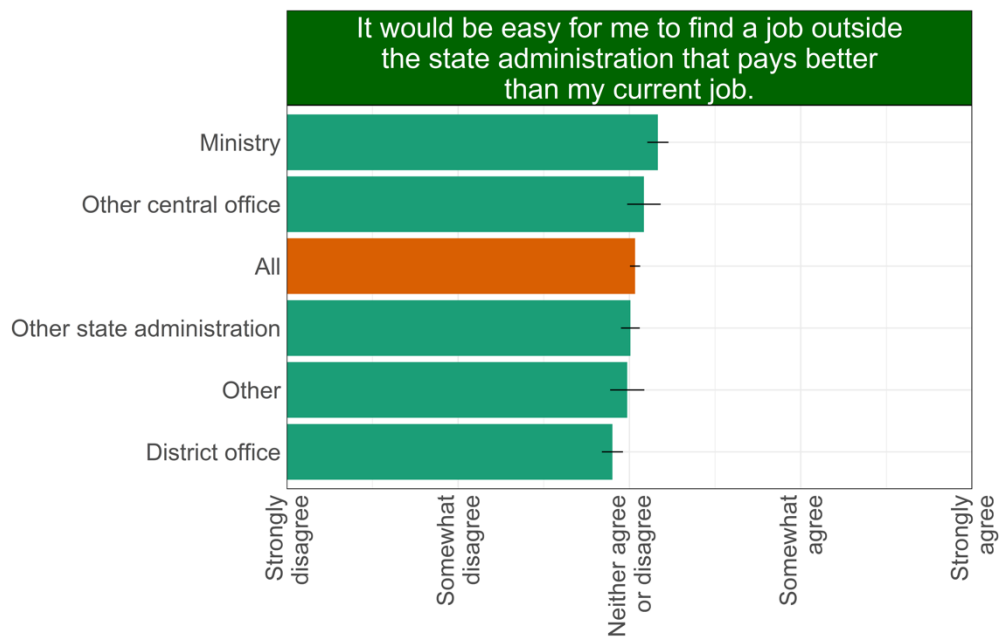
- Approximately ___ hours per month [drop down menu]
- Don't remember / prefer not to respond

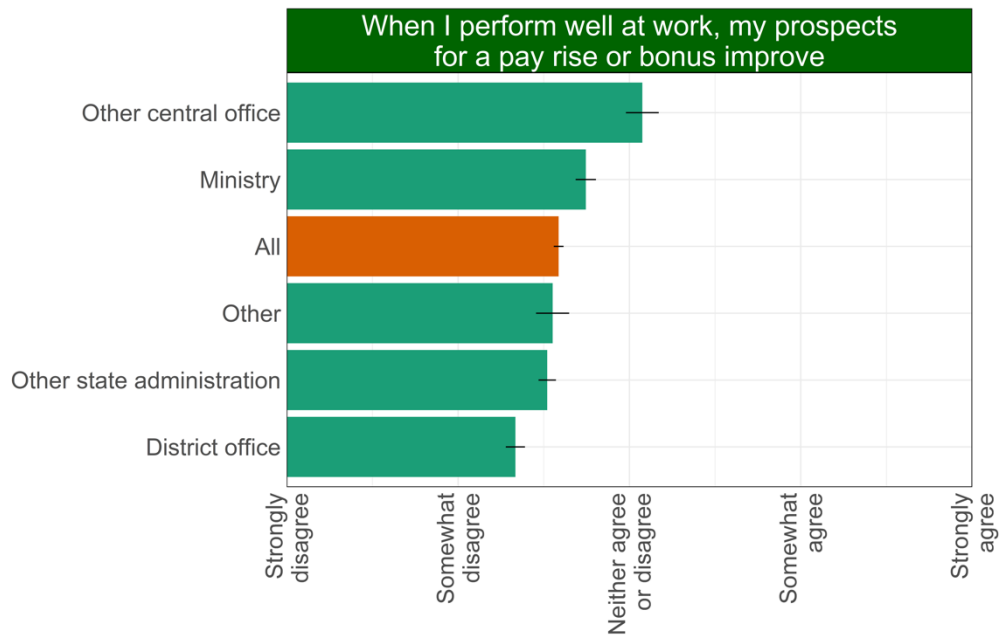


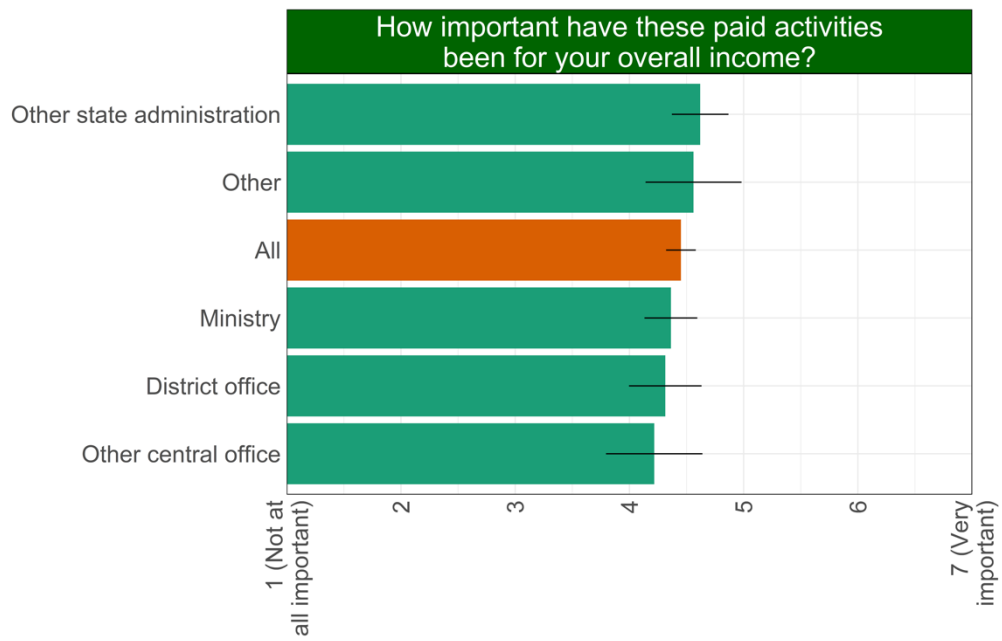


Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

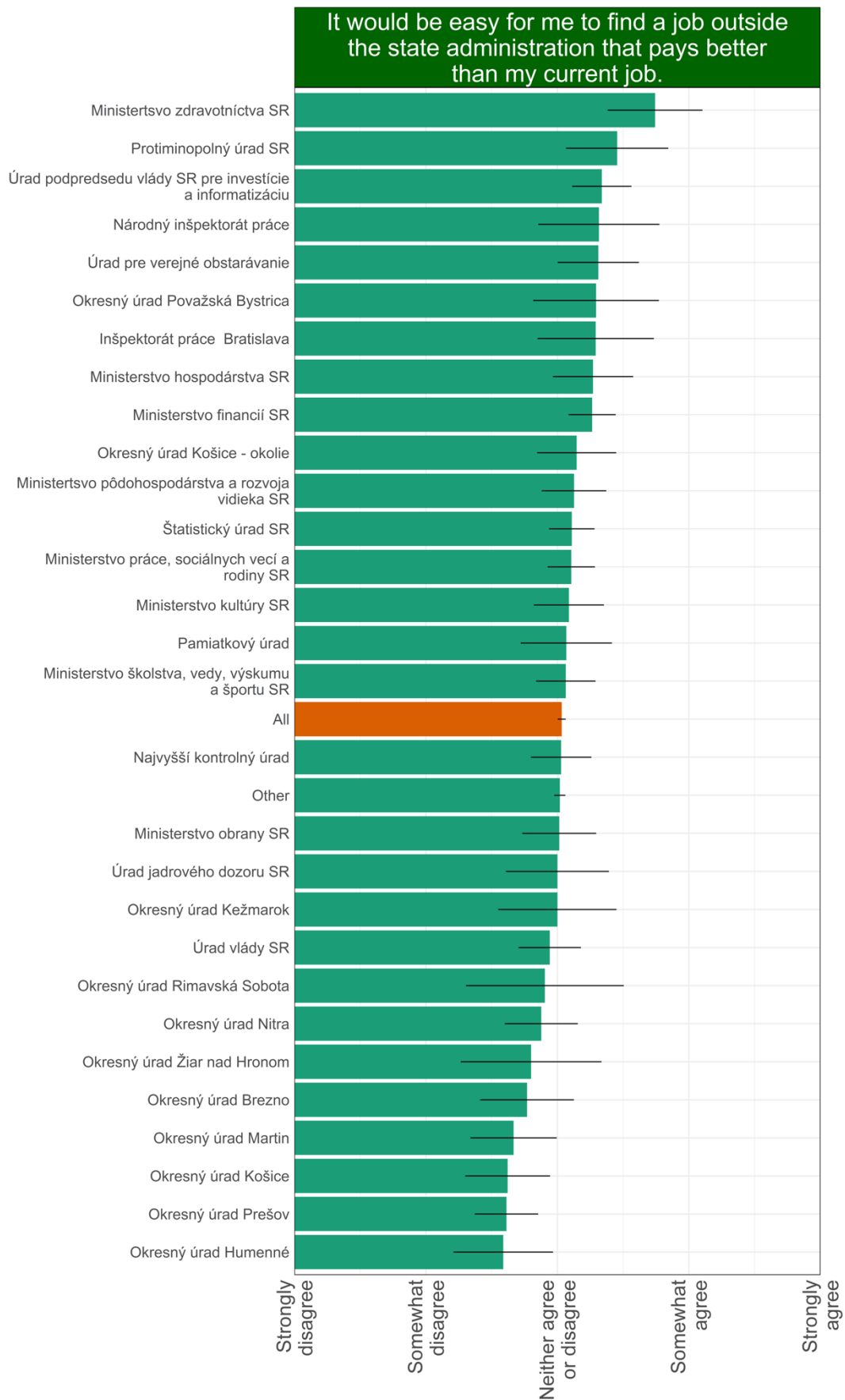
Differences by types of administrative institutions



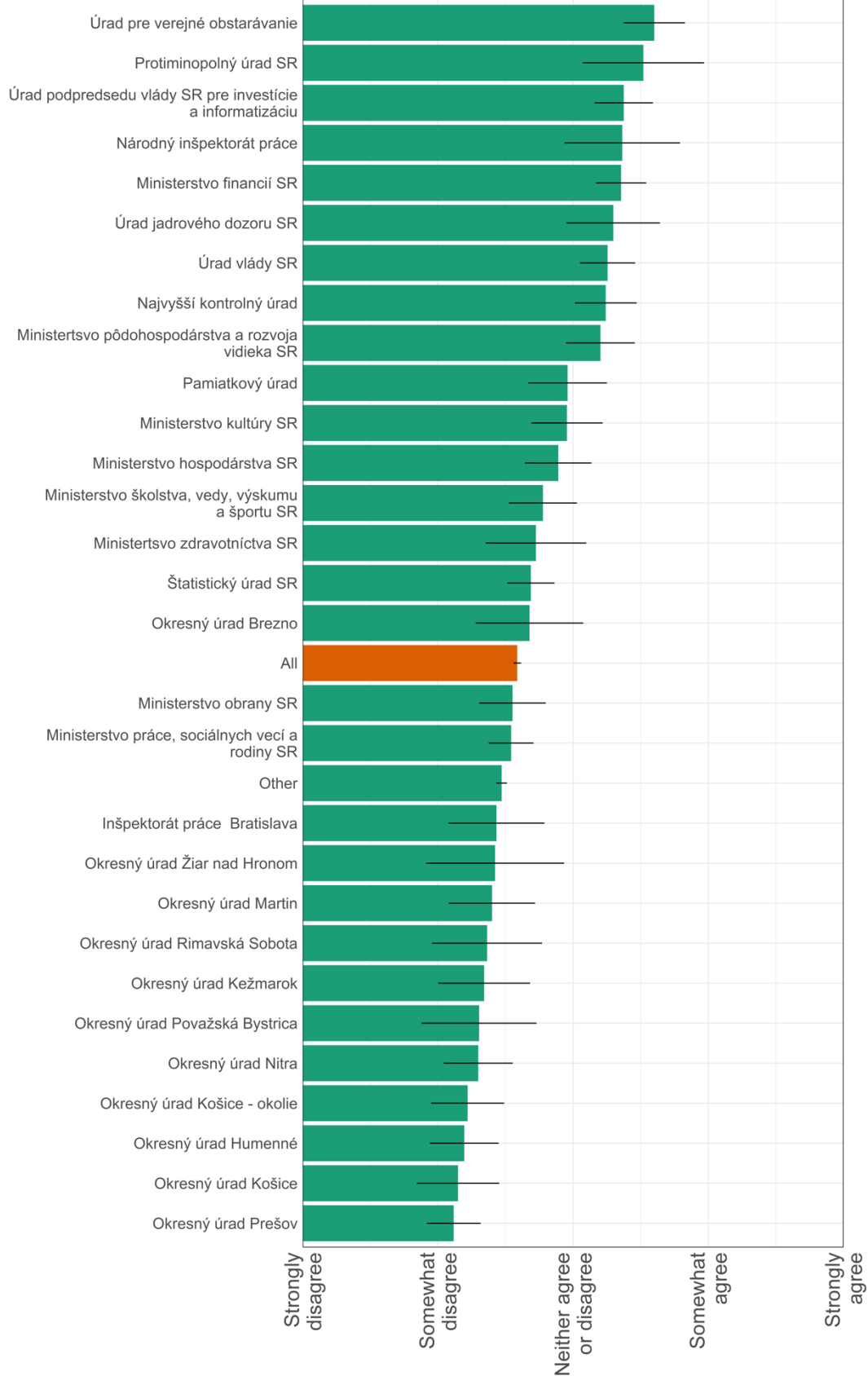


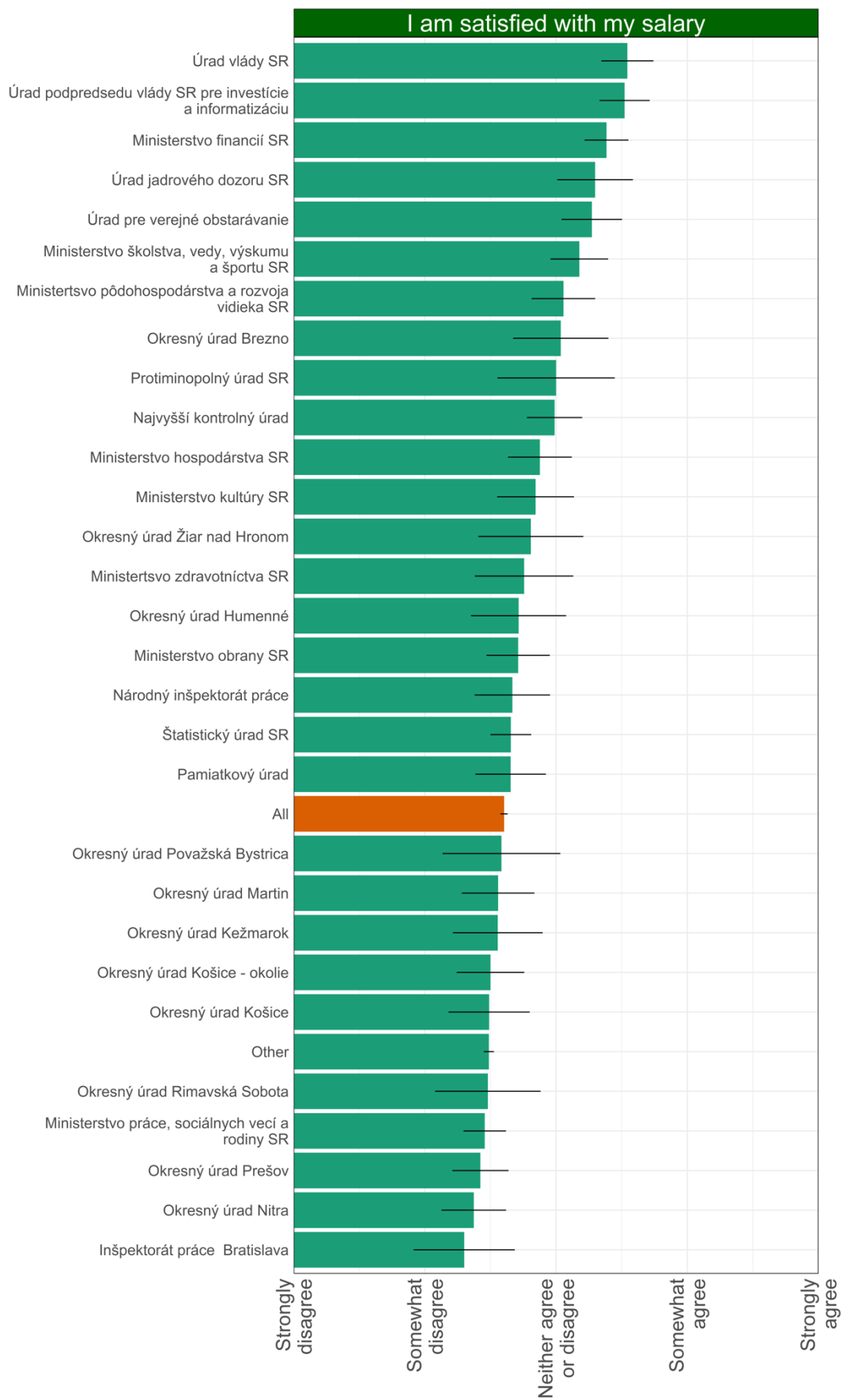


Differences by institutions

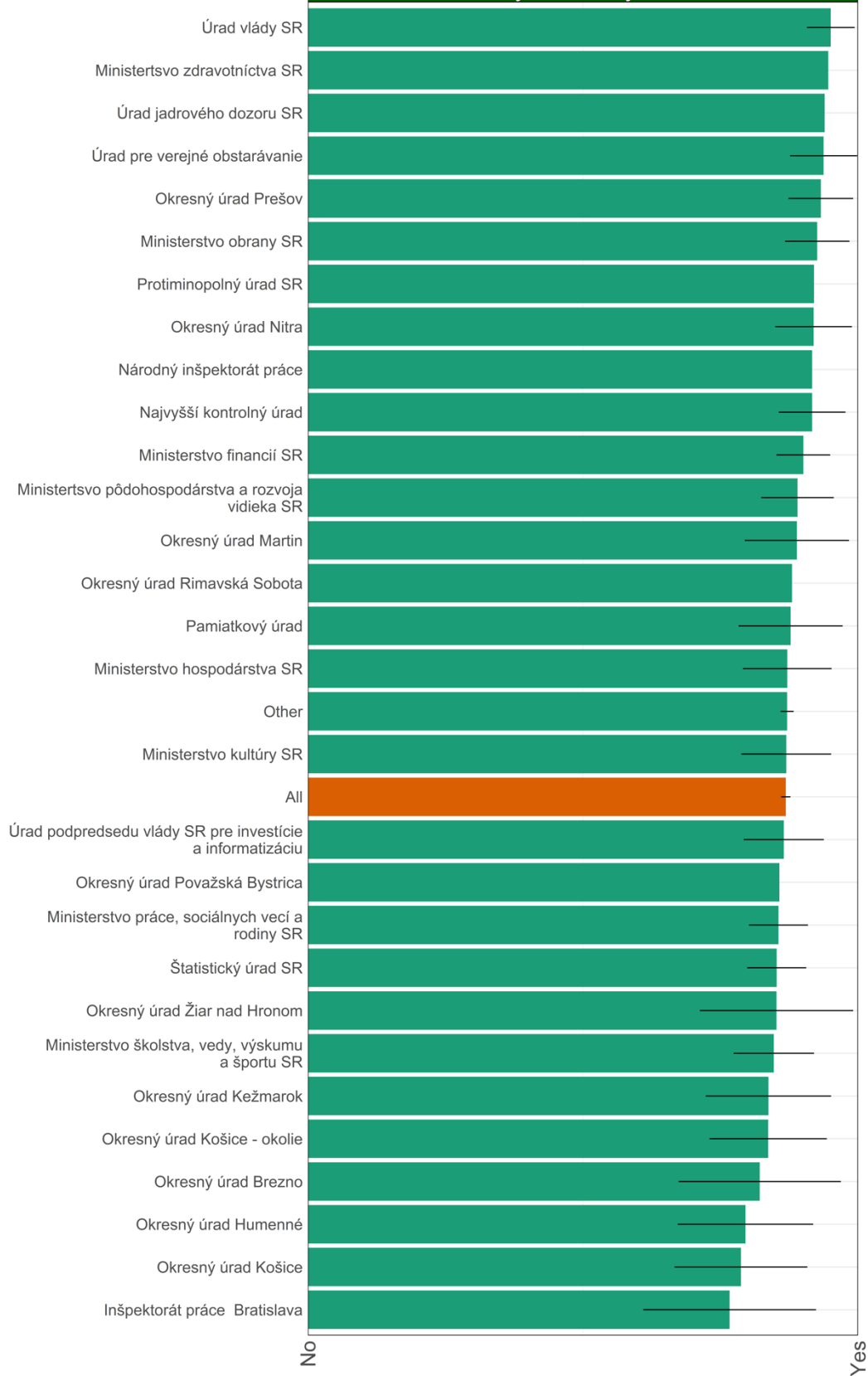


When I perform well at work, my prospects for a pay rise or bonus improve

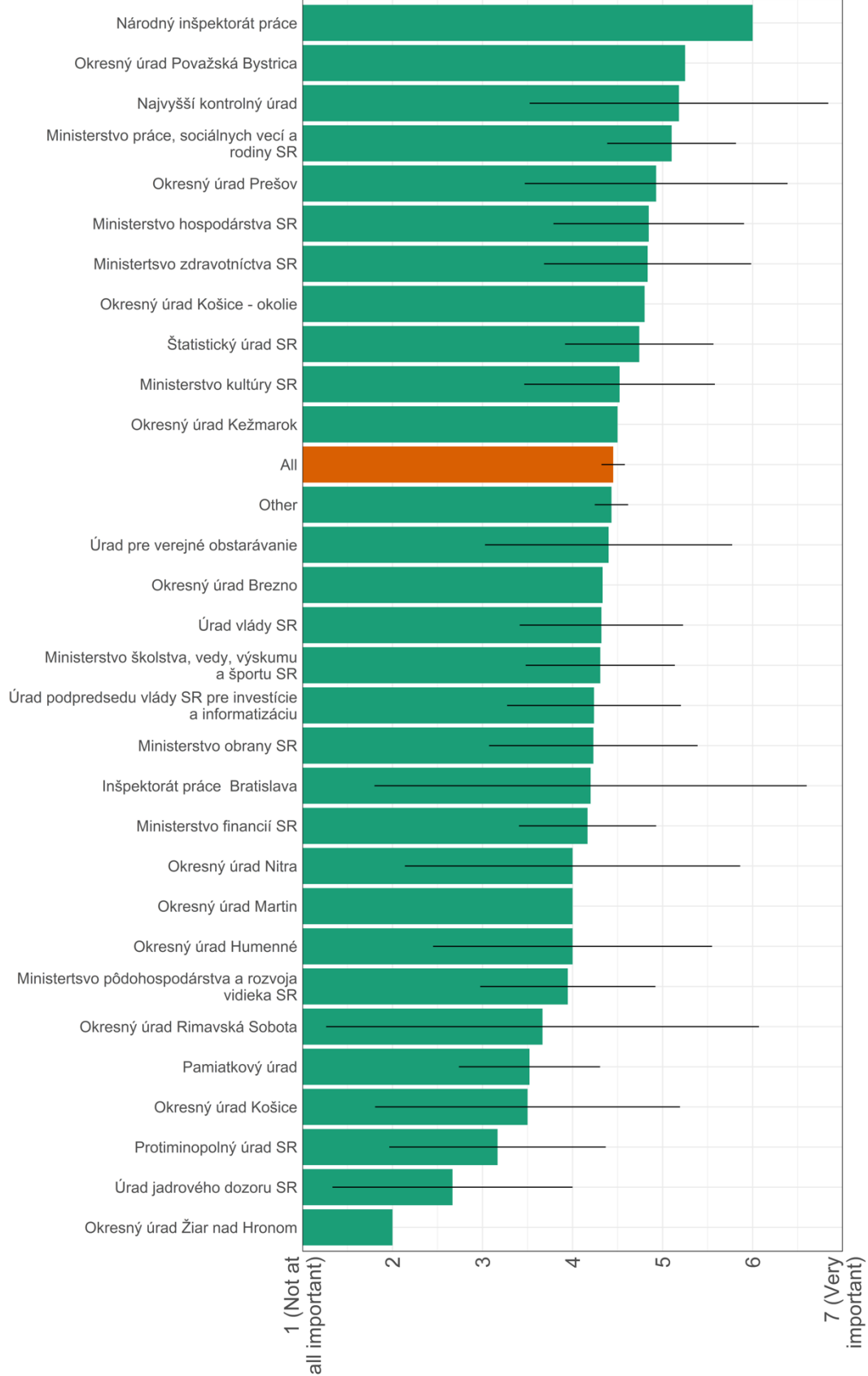




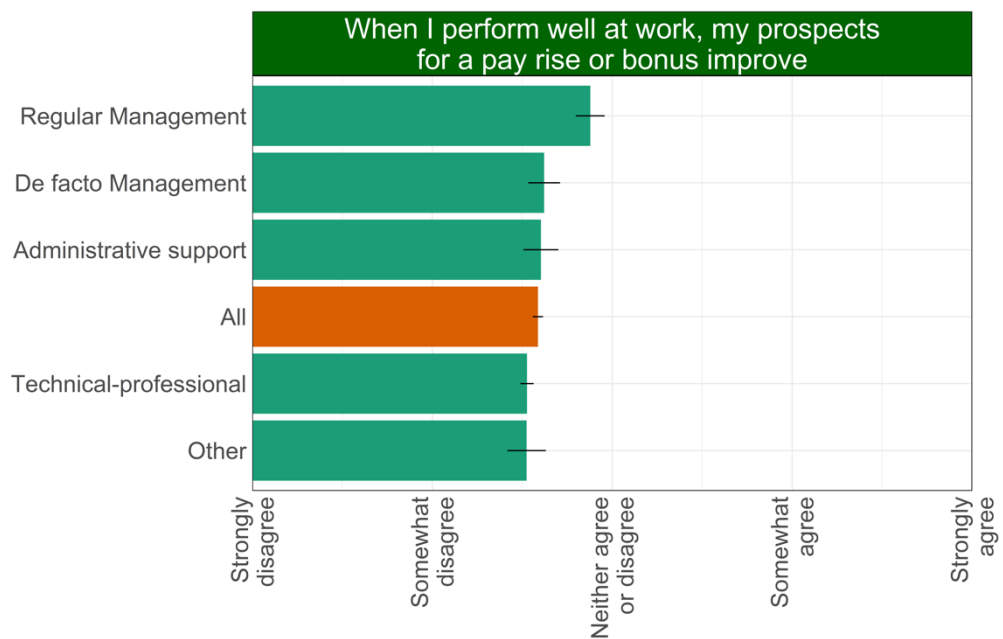
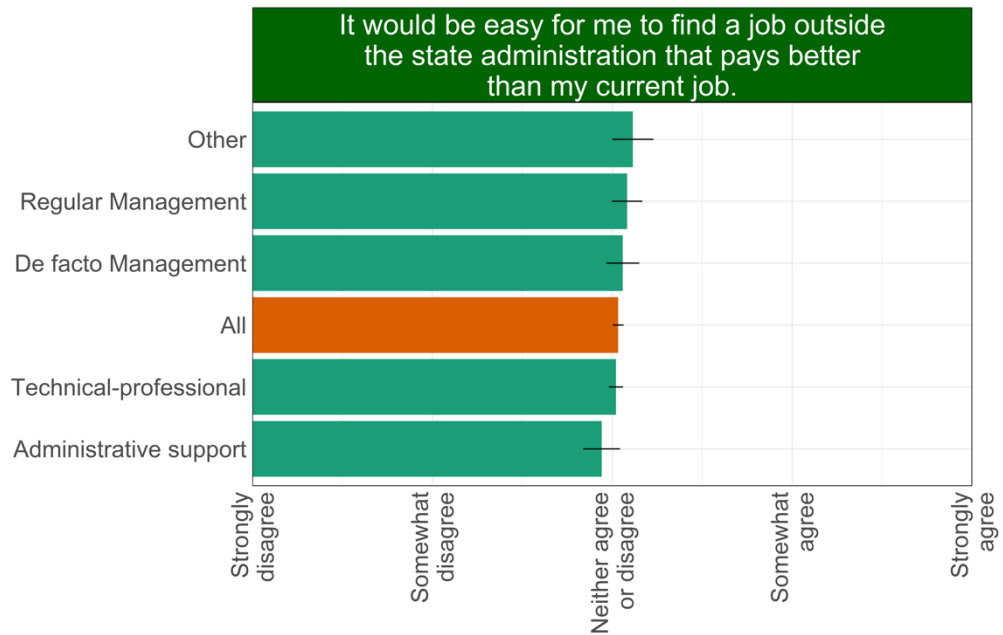
During the last 12 months, did you receive one or several bonuses that increased your salary?

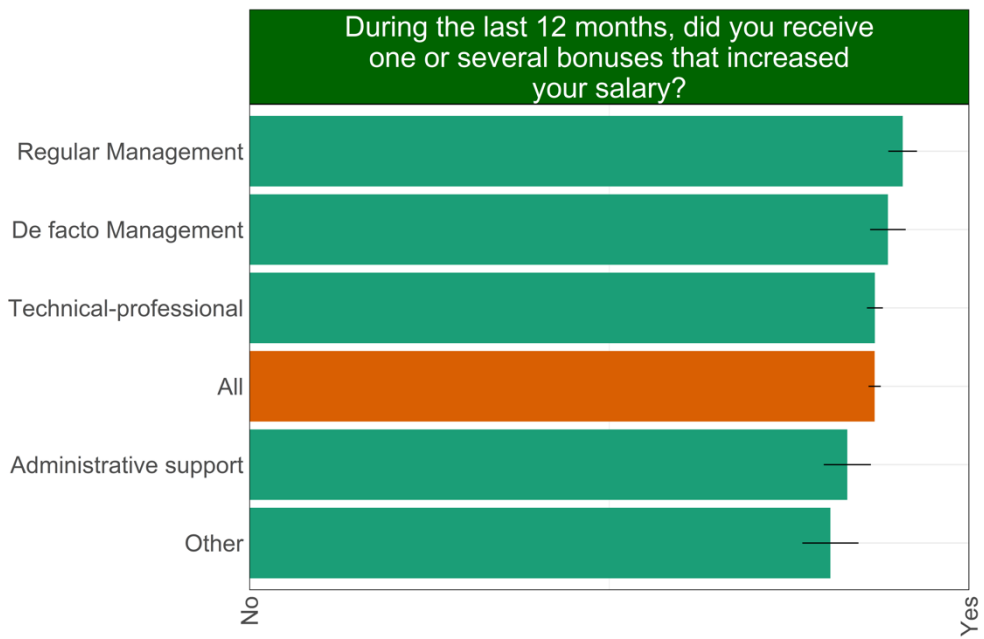
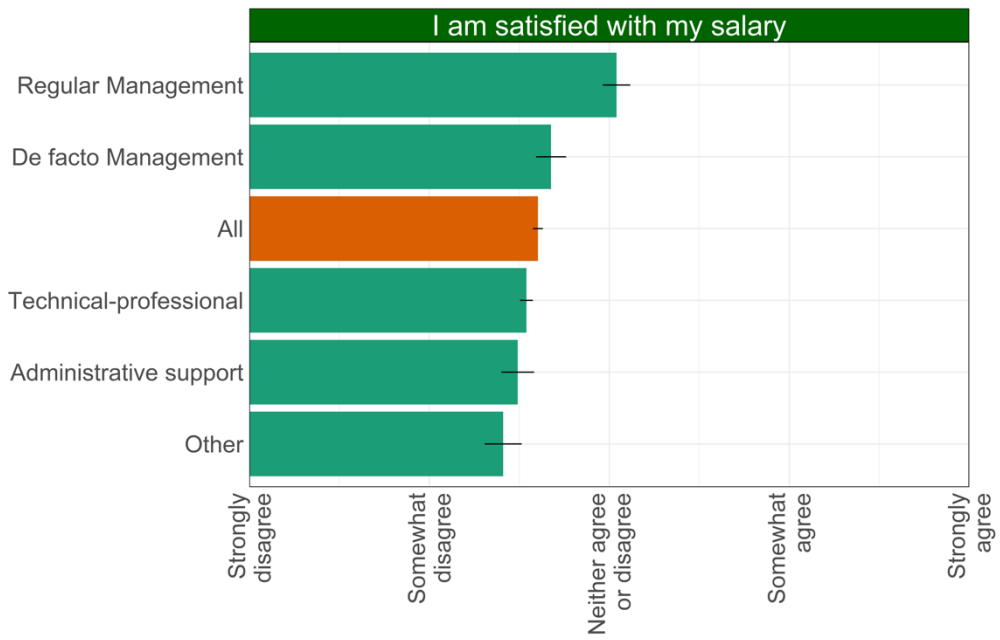


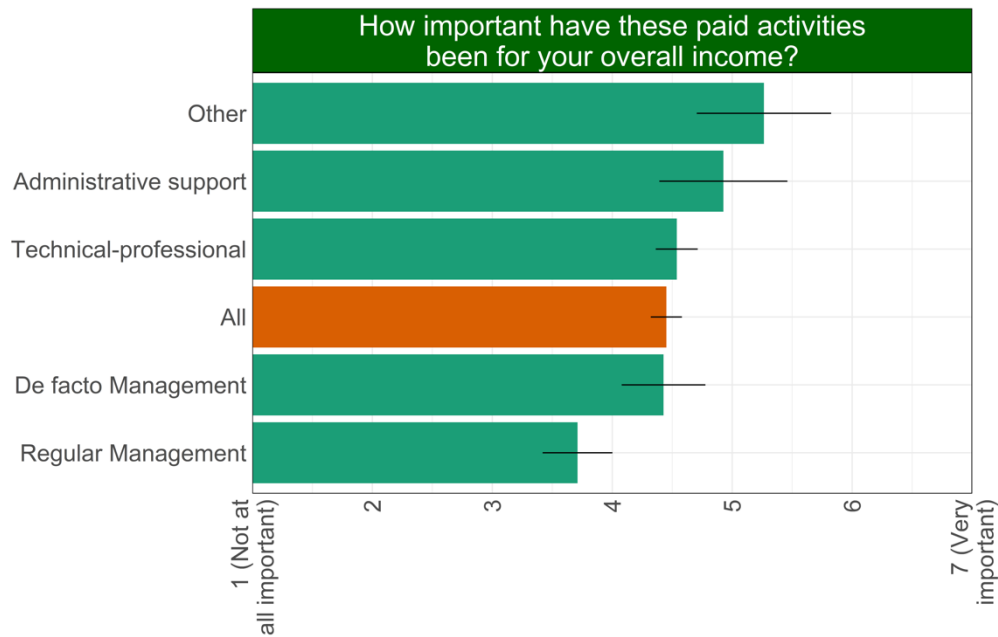
How important have these paid activities been for your overall income?



Differences by rank







Performance evaluation

Process of performance evaluation

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

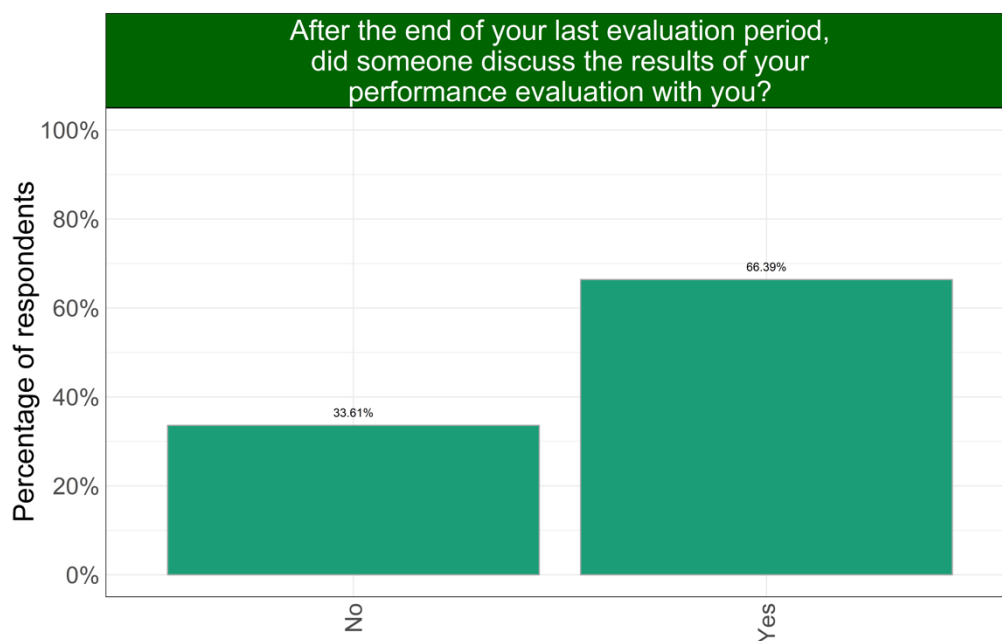
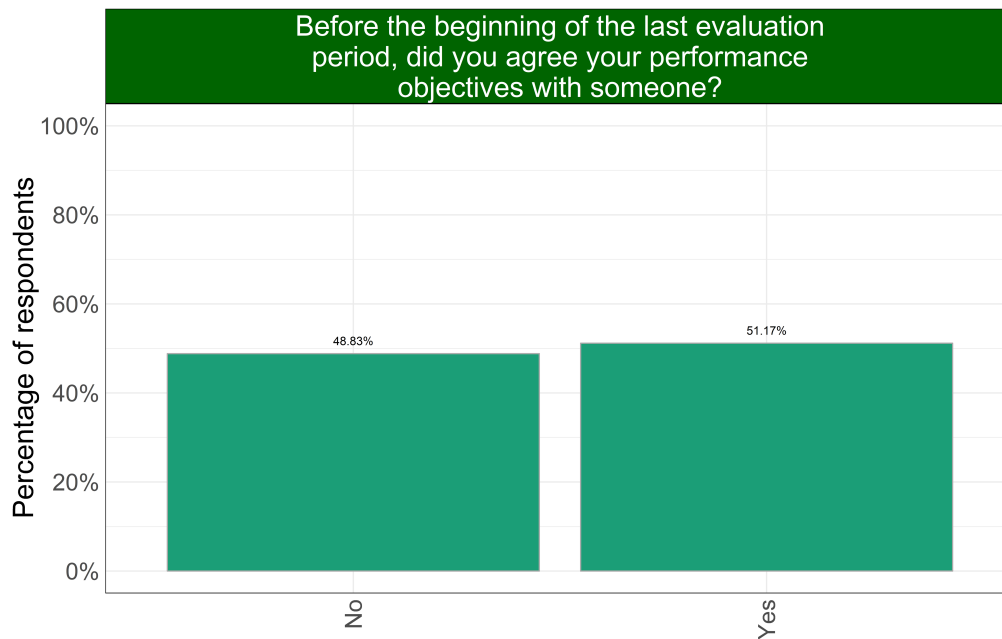
- Yes
- No
- Don't know / prefer not to respond

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

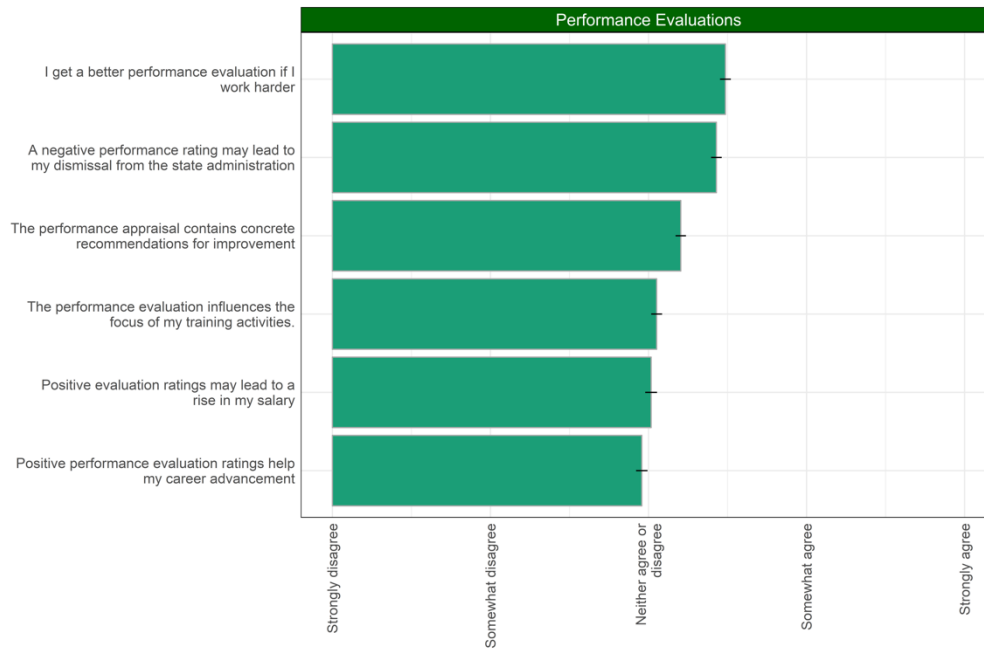


Consequences of performance evaluations

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)

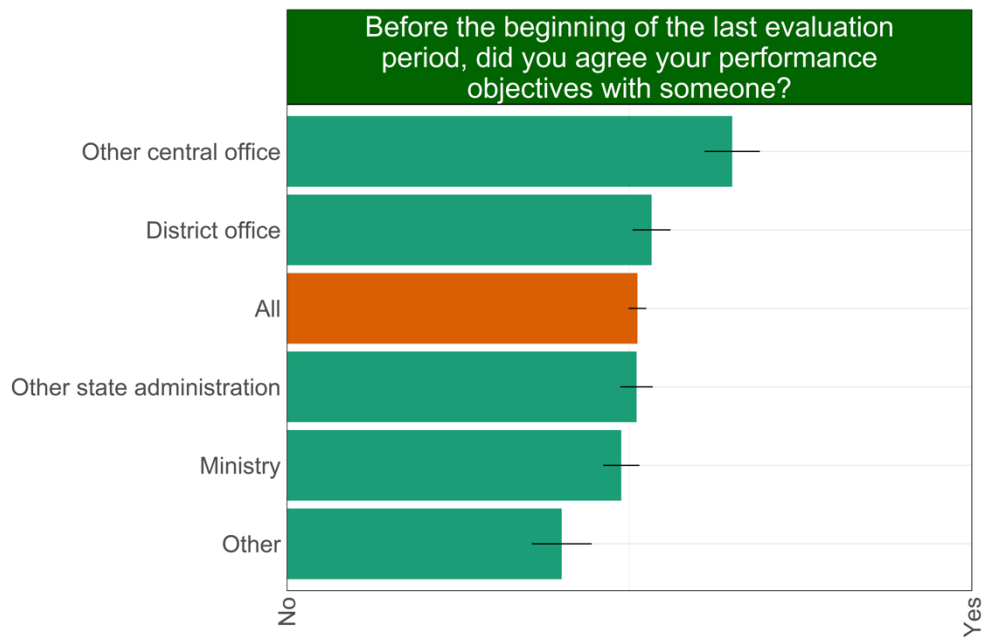
- A negative performance rating may lead to my dismissal from the public sector (mean response)

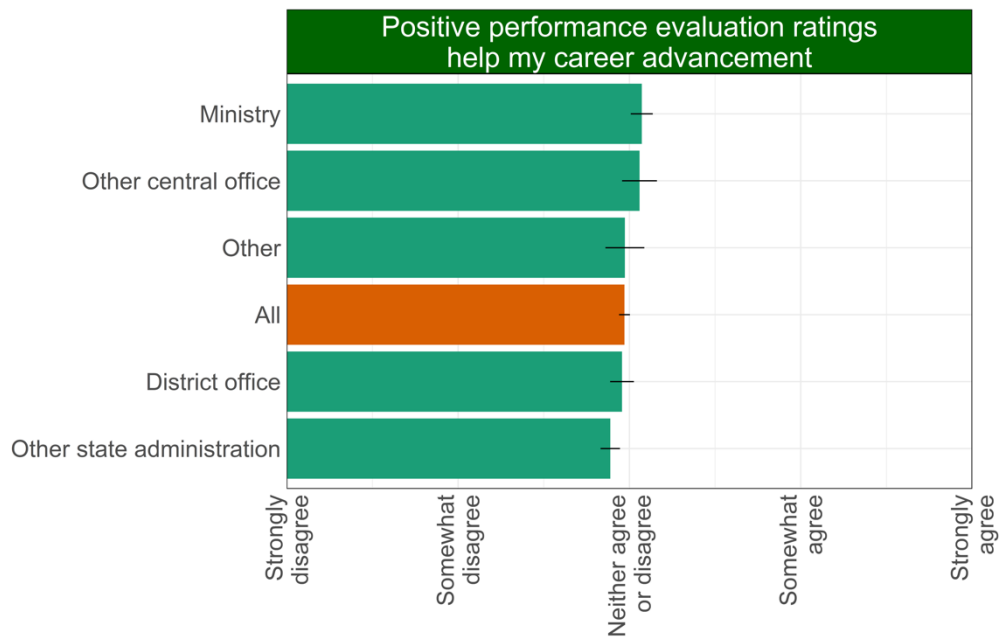
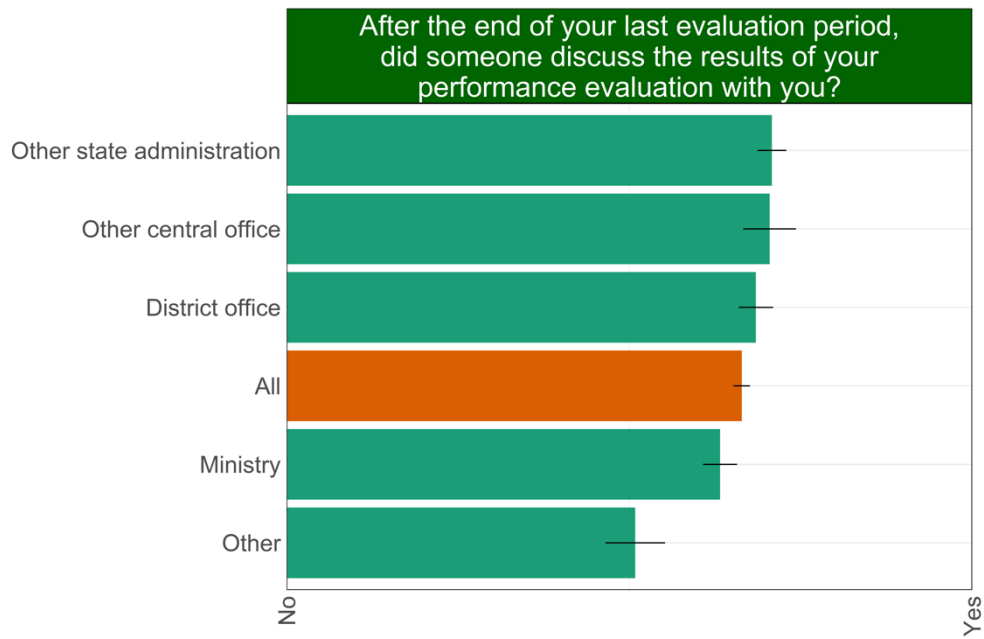


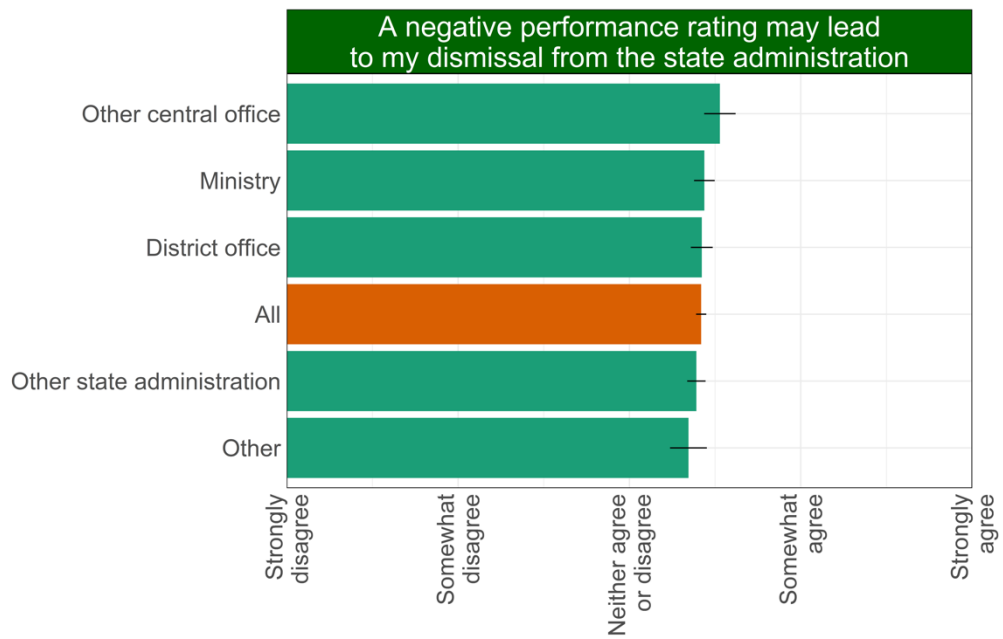
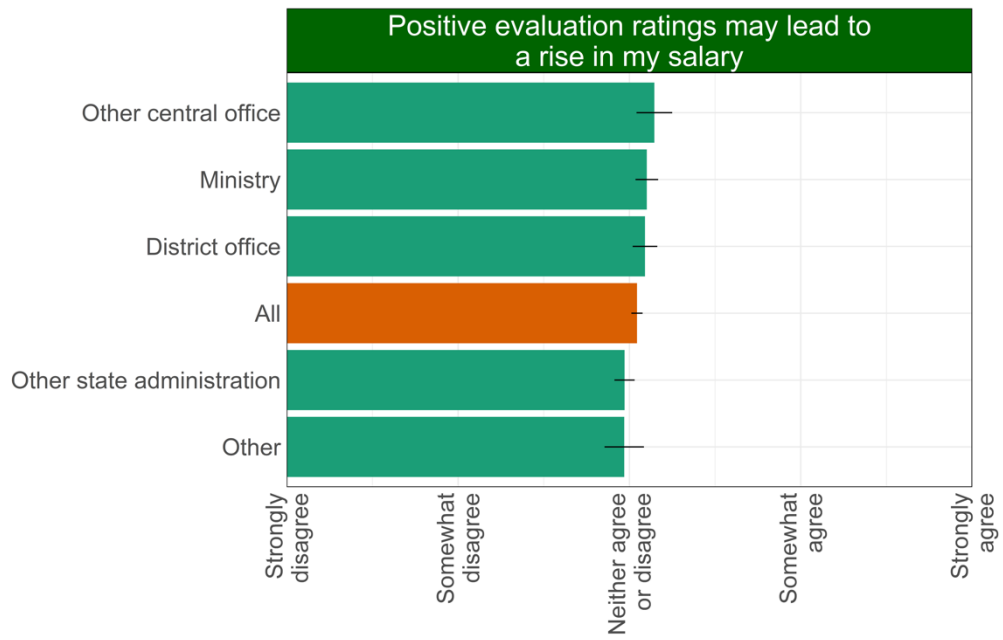
Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

Differences by types of administrative institutions

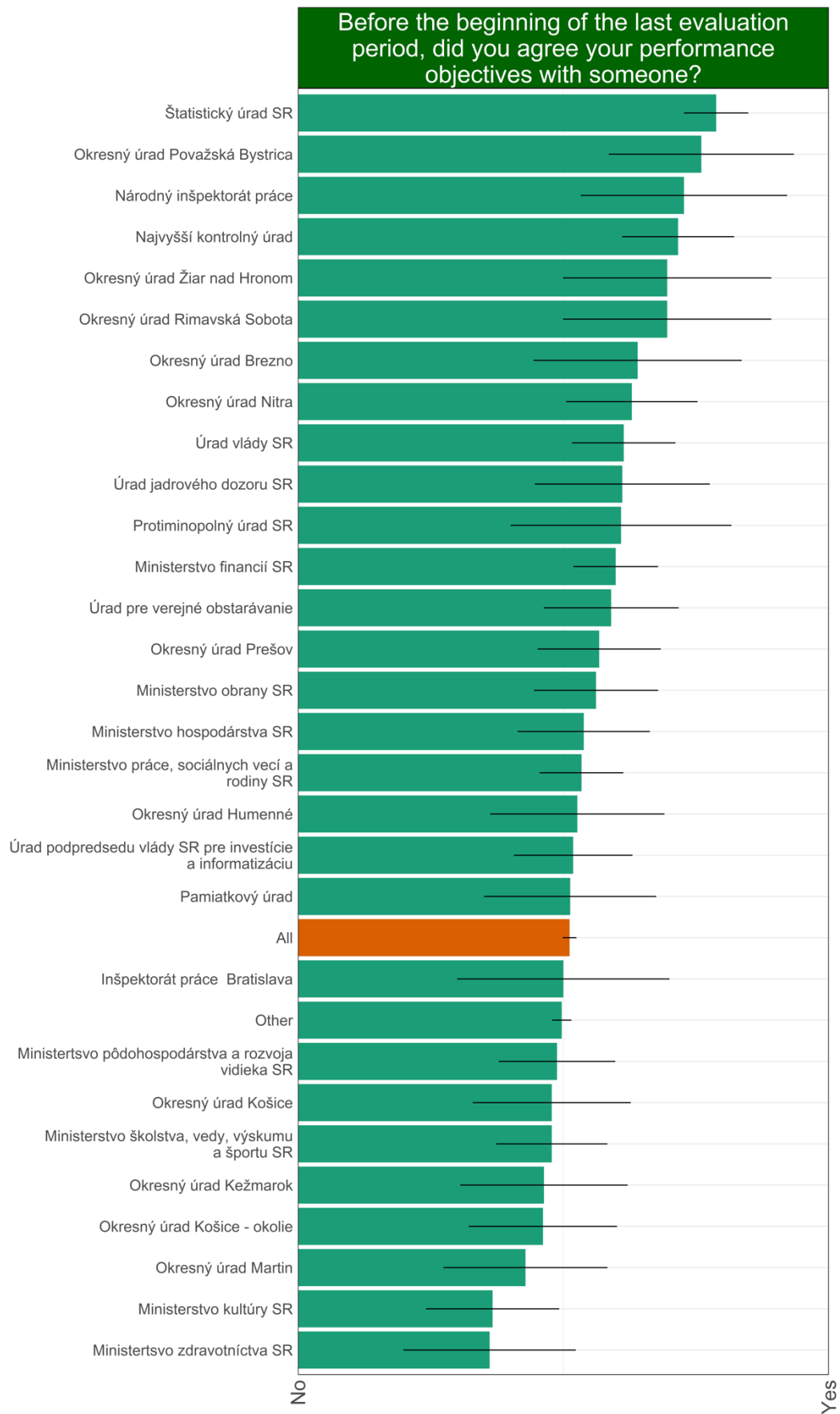
Frequency



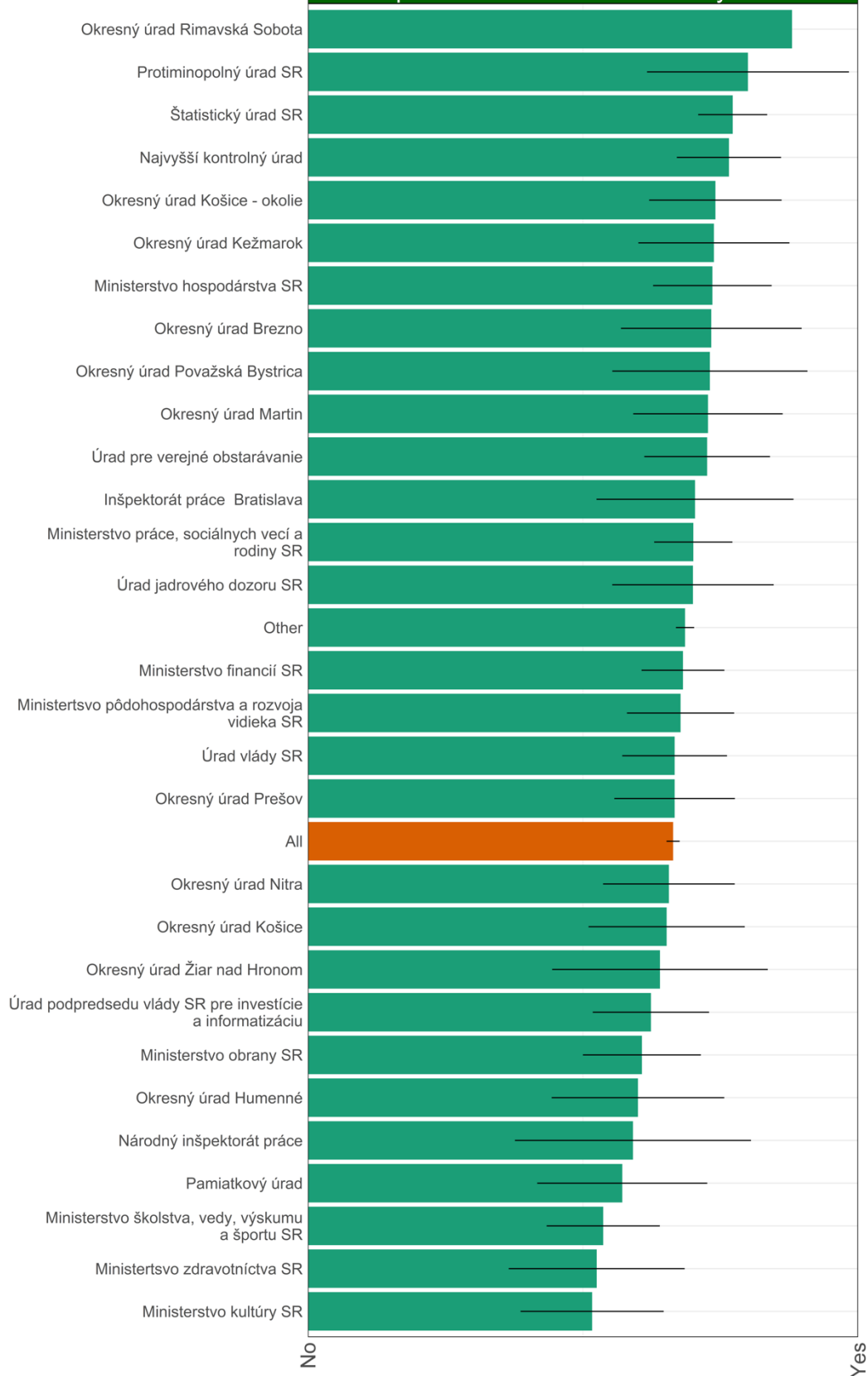




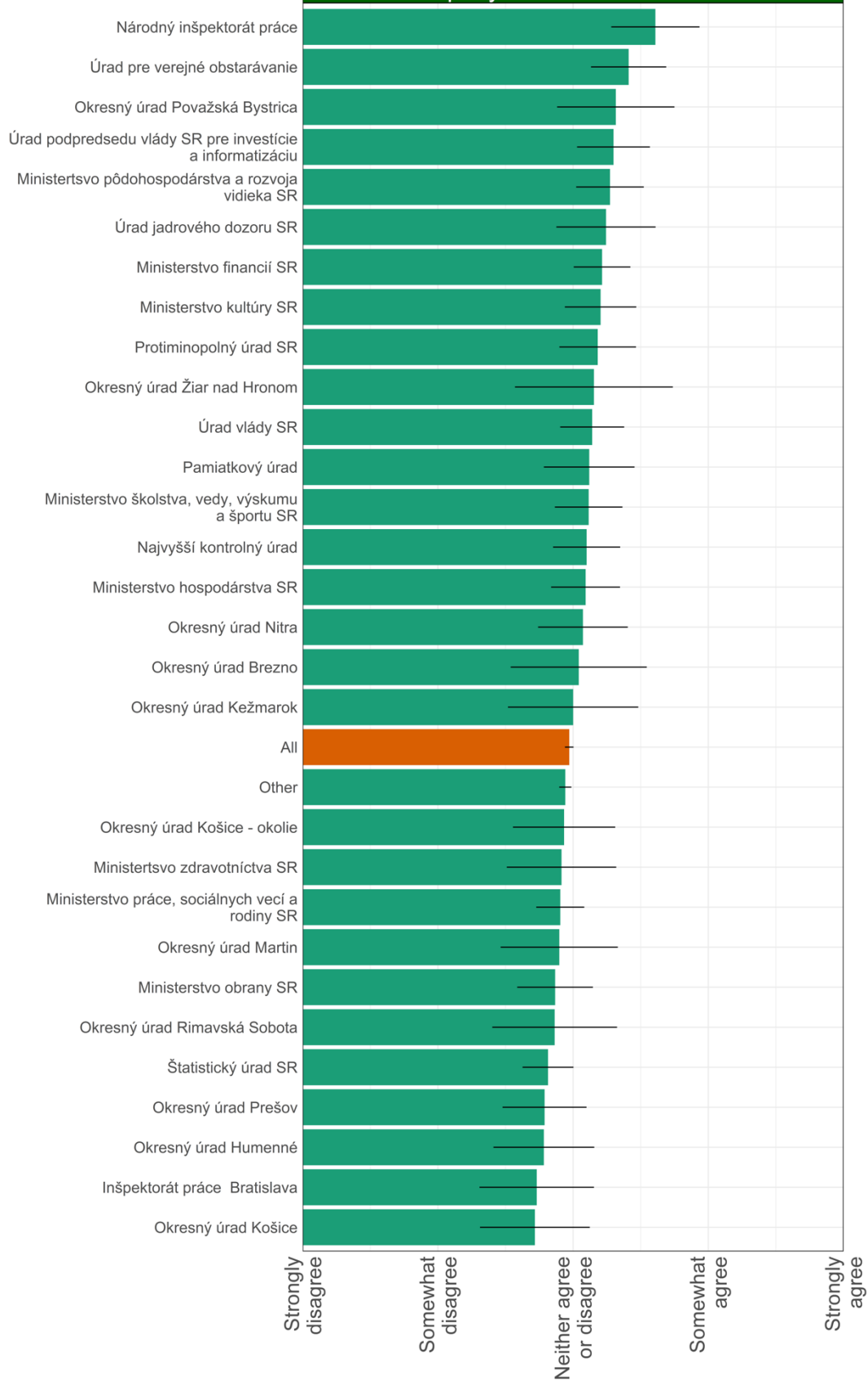
Differences by institutions



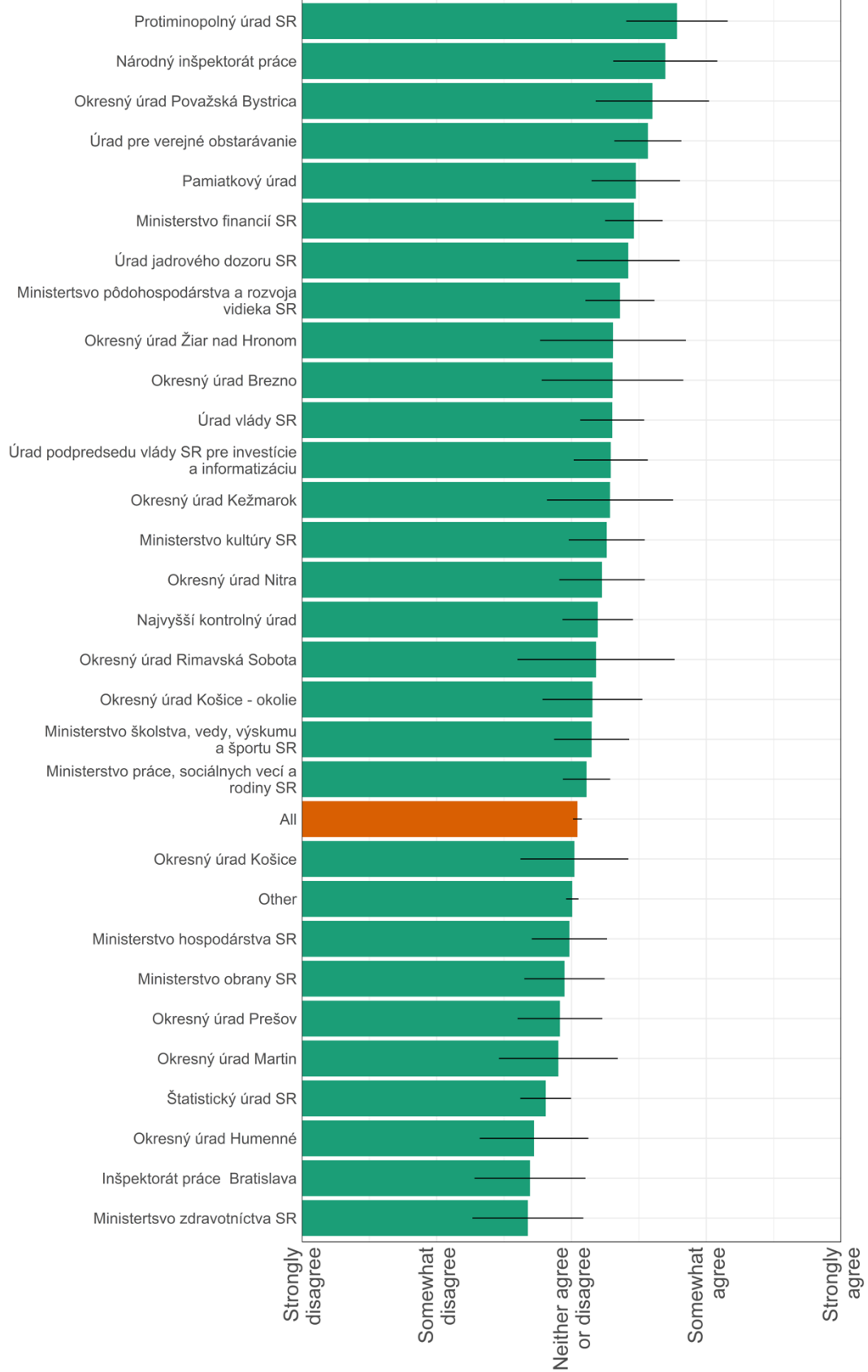
After the end of your last evaluation period, did someone discuss the results of your performance evaluation with you?



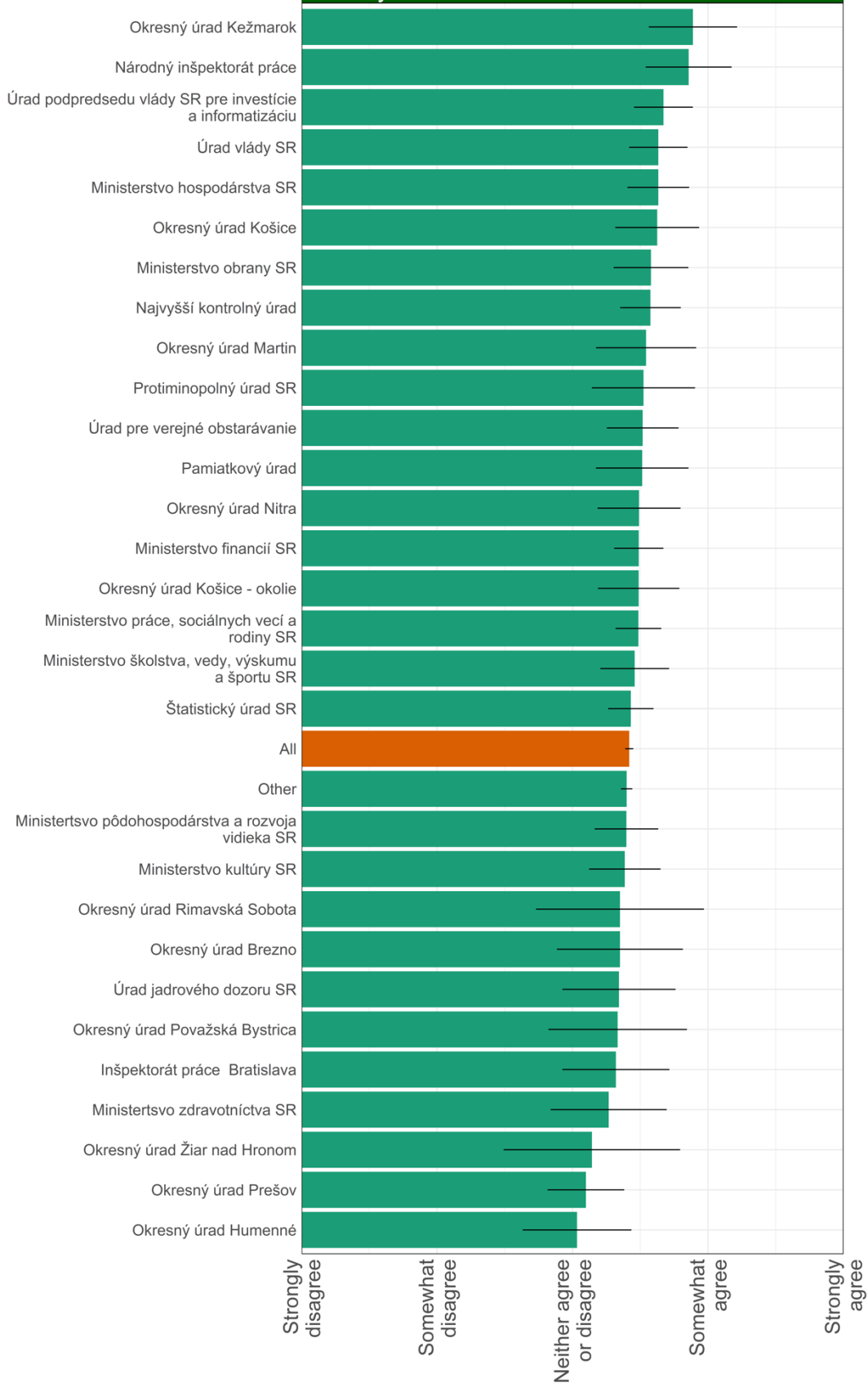
Positive performance evaluation ratings help my career advancement



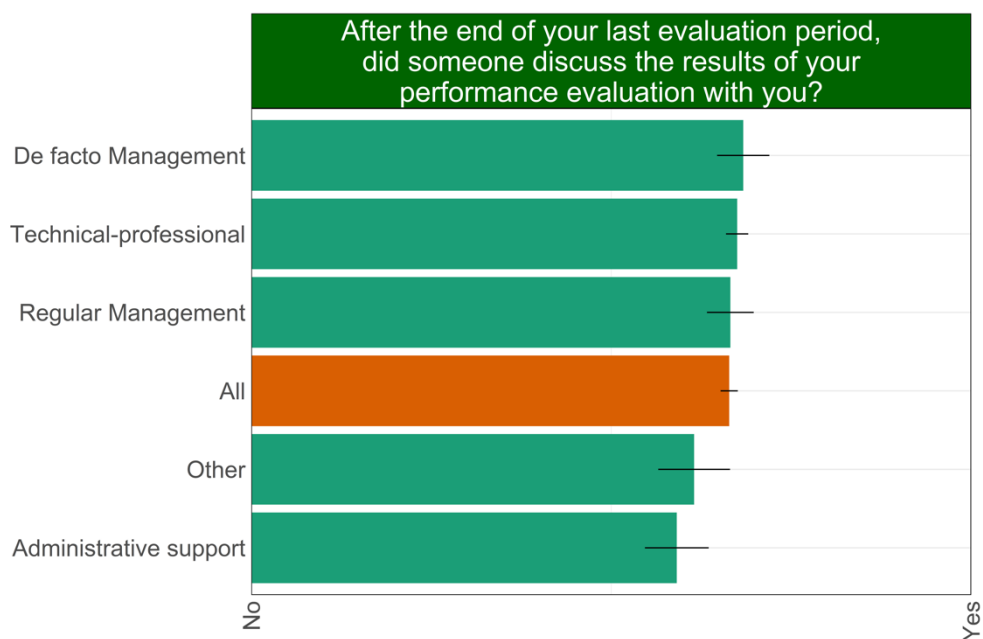
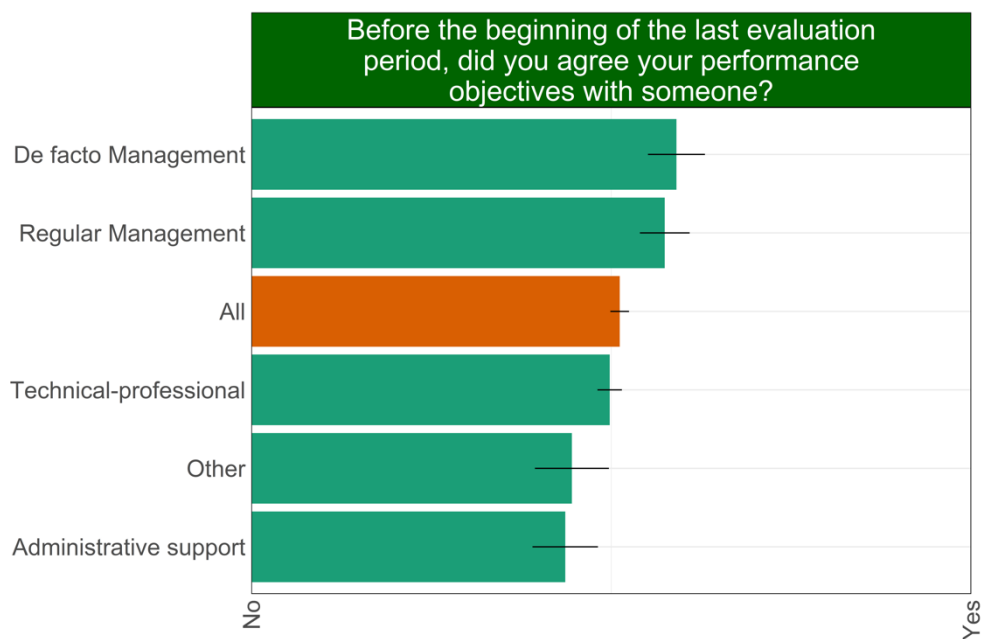
Positive evaluation ratings may lead to a rise in my salary

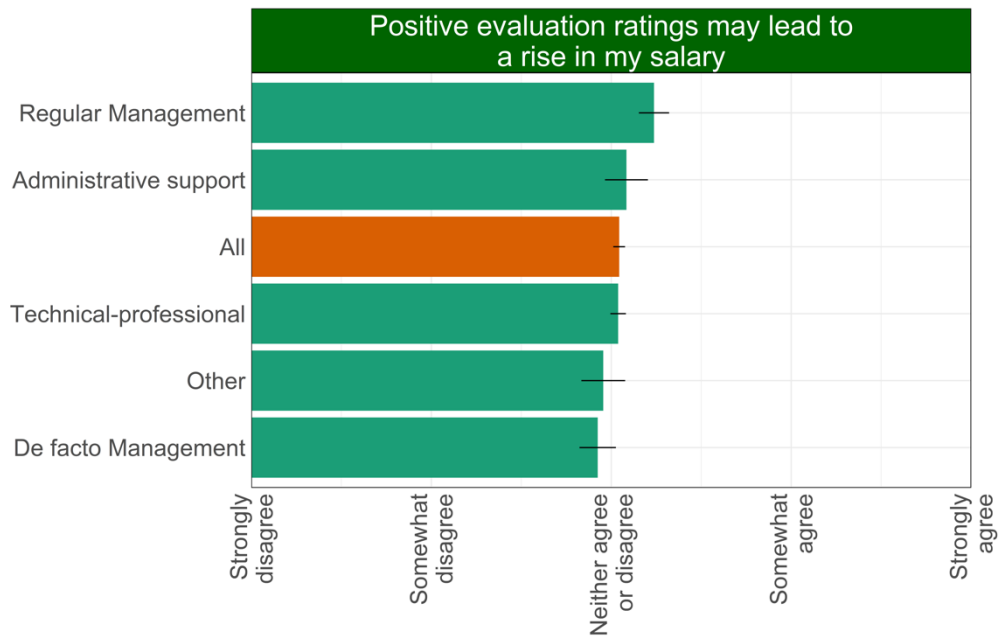
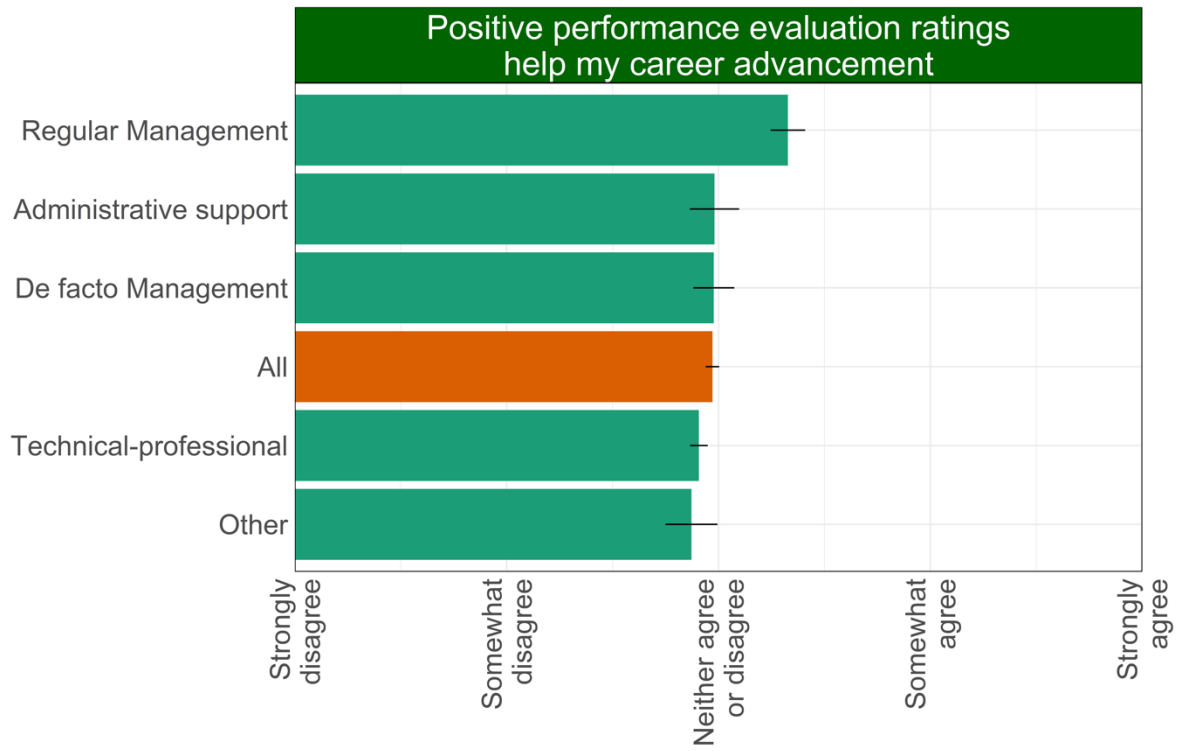


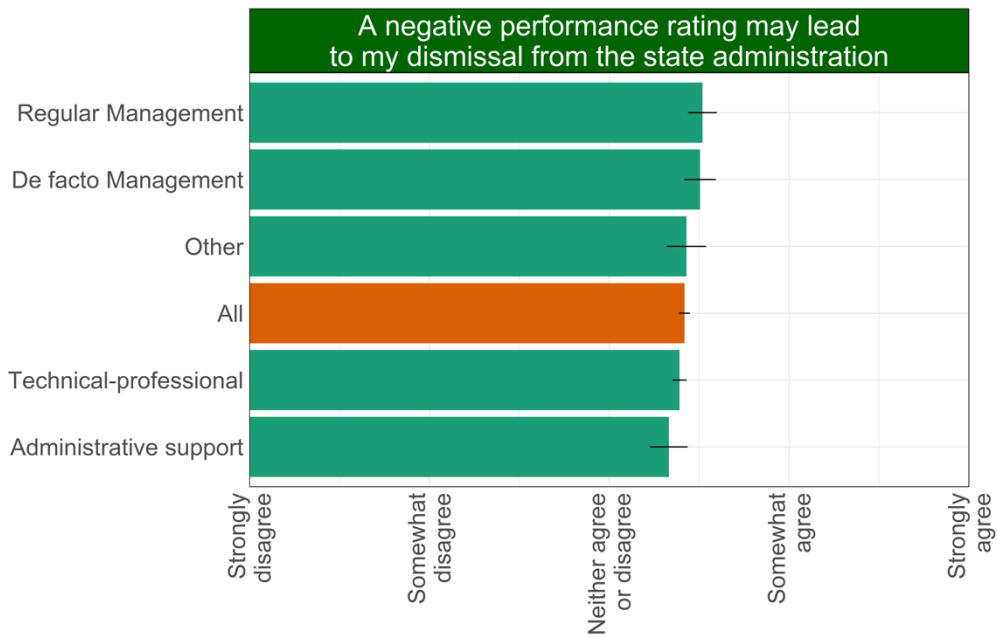
A negative performance rating may lead to my dismissal from the state administration



Differences by rank



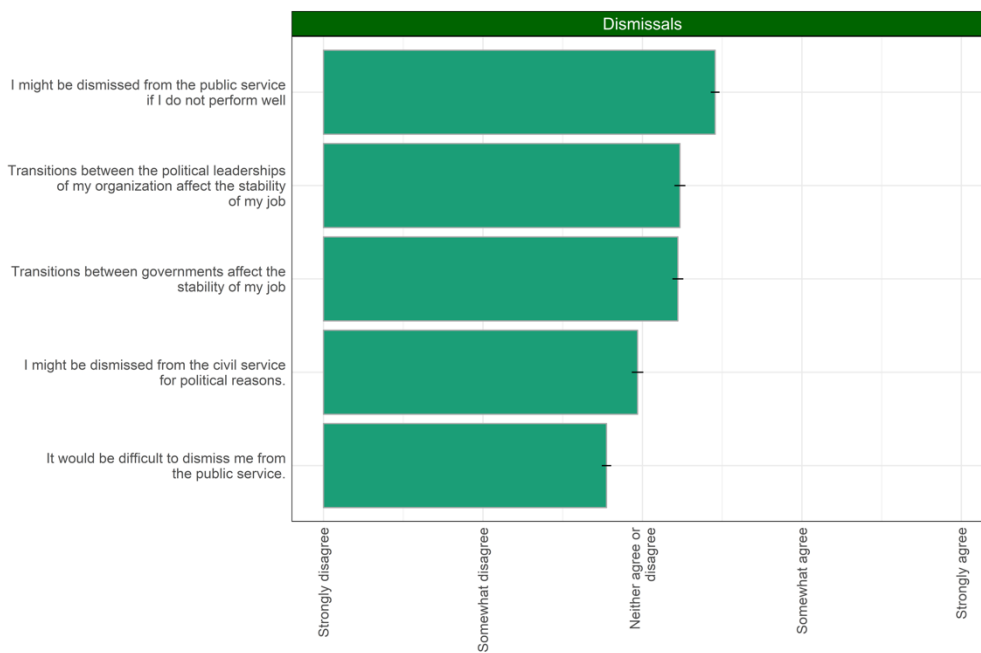




Job protection

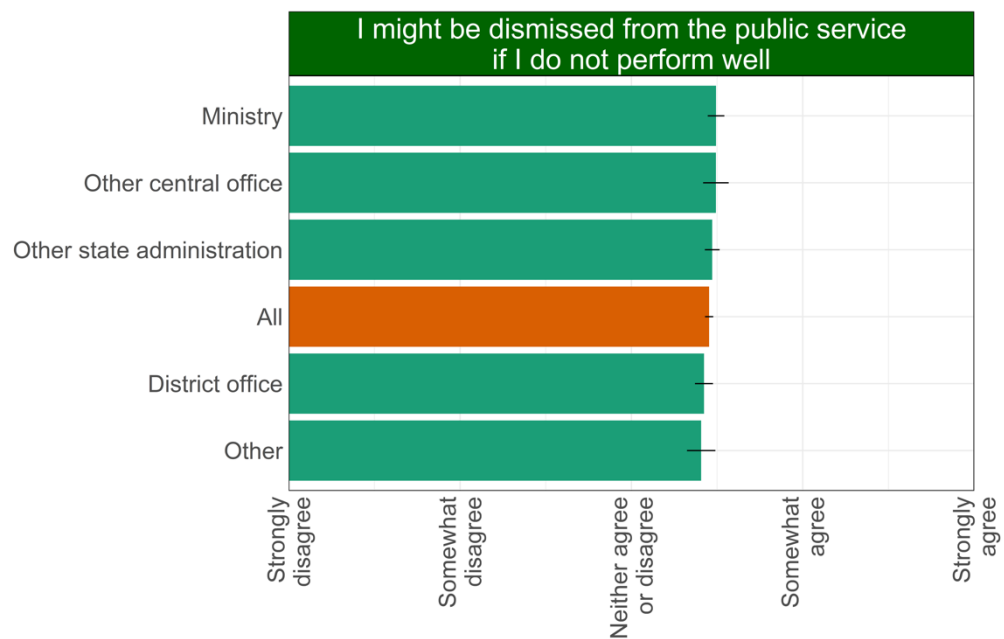
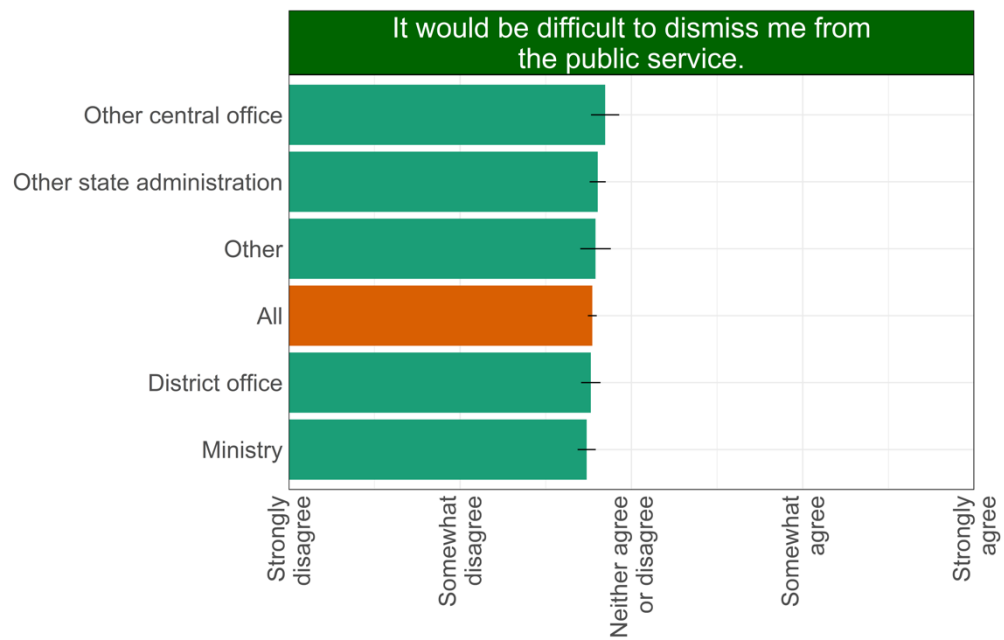
Thinking about your job stability, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

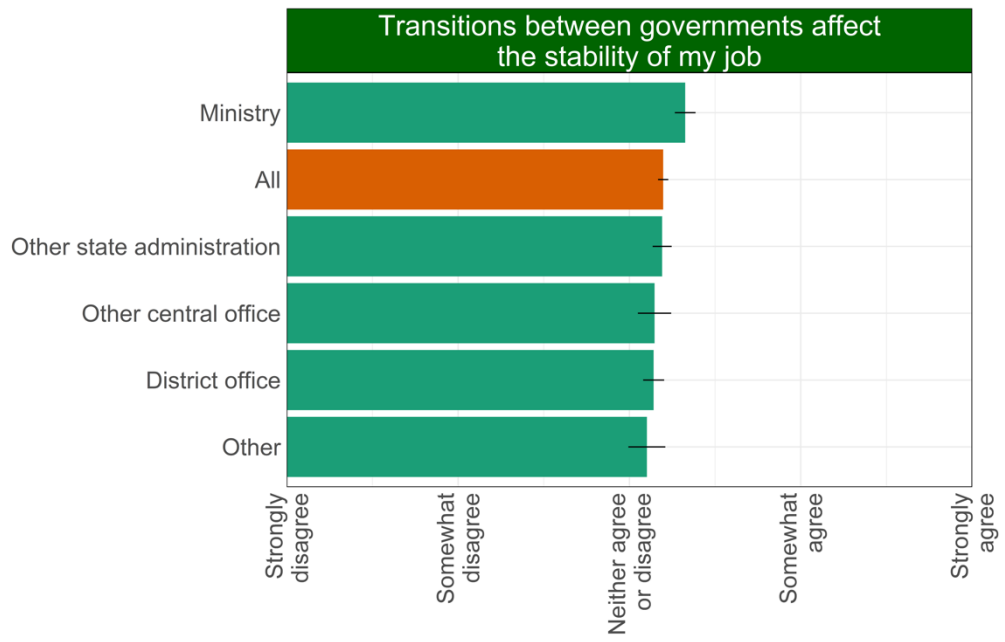
- It would be difficult to dismiss me from the public service. (mean response)
- I might be dismissed from the public service if I do not perform well (mean response)
- Transitions between governments affect the stability of my job (mean response)



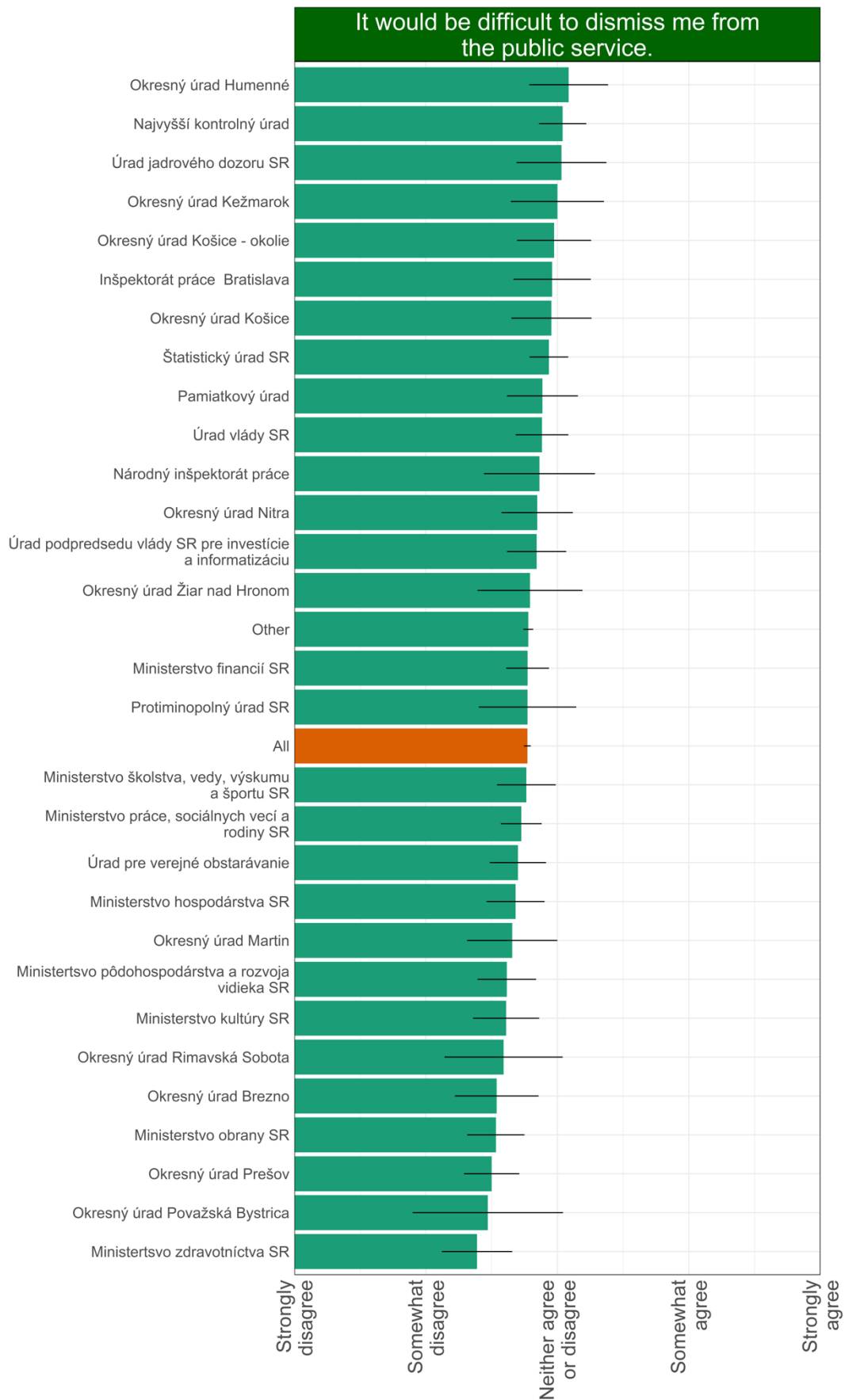
Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

Differences by types of administrative institutions

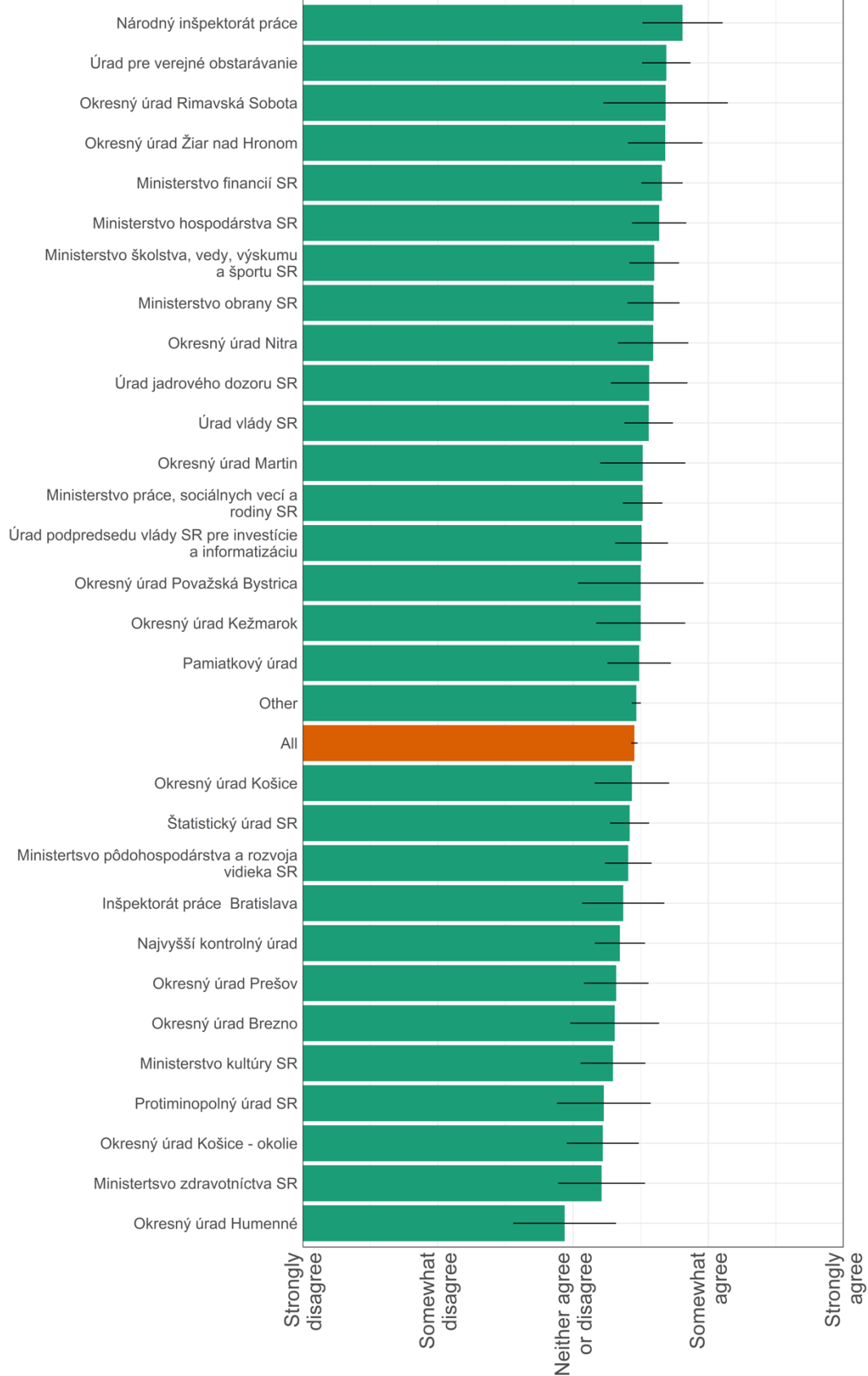




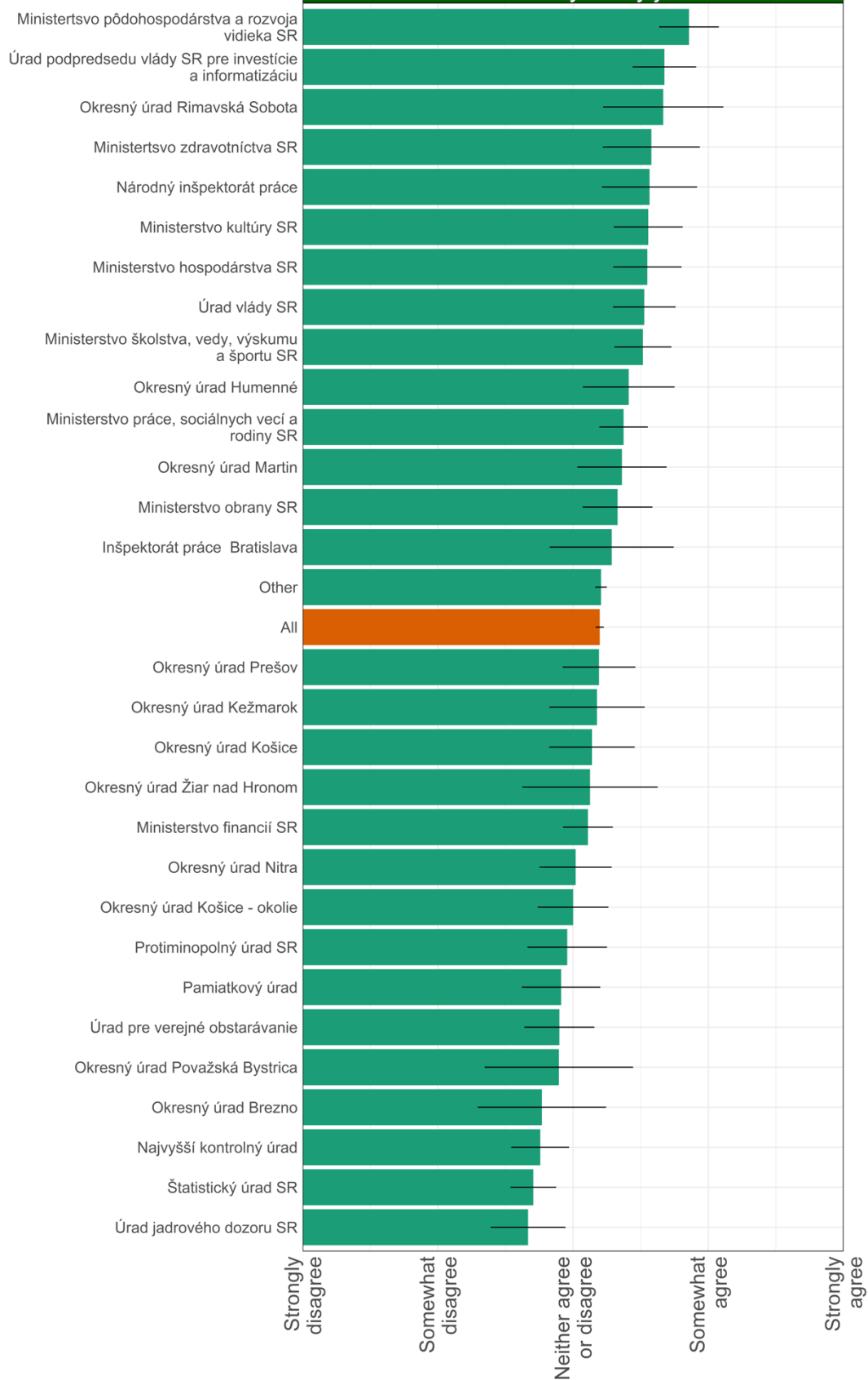
Differences by institutions



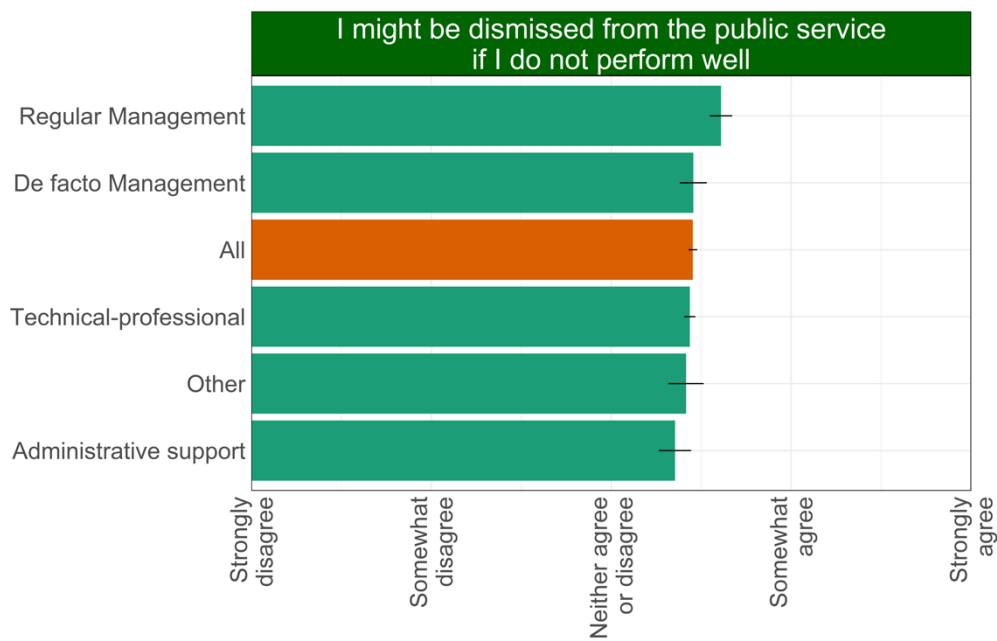
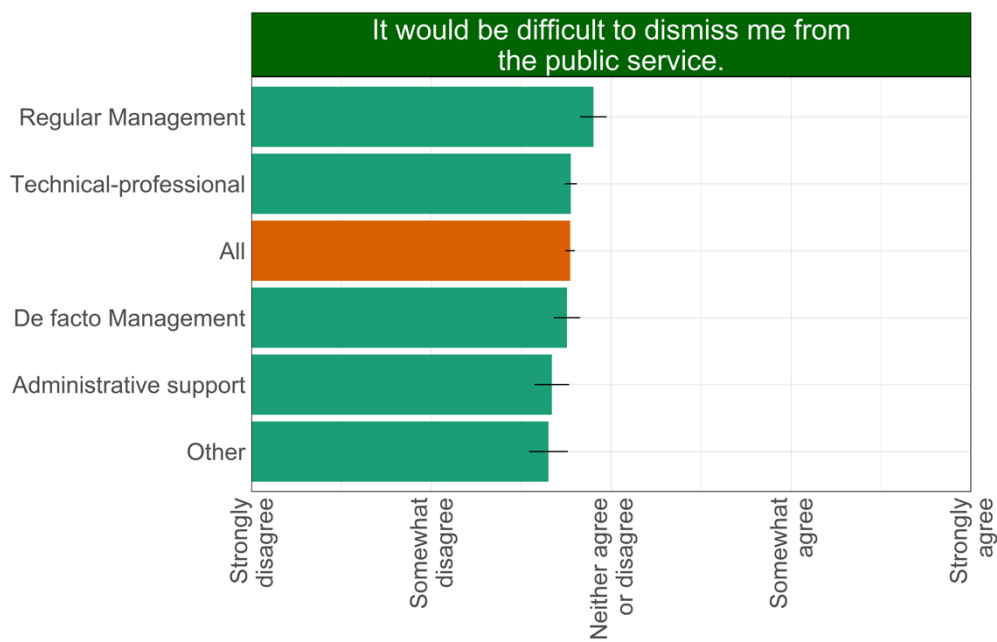
I might be dismissed from the public service if I do not perform well

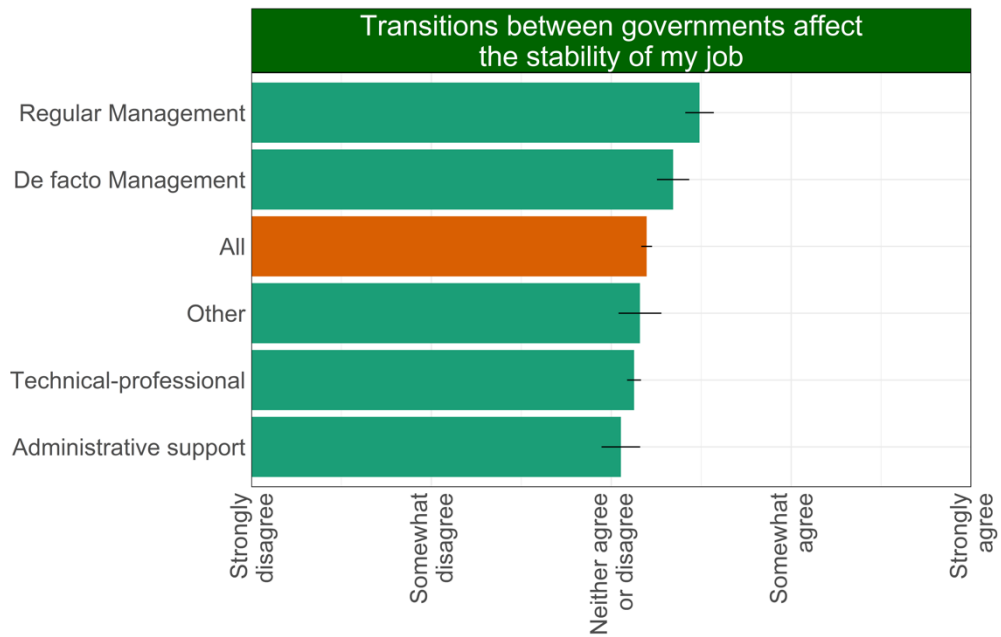


Transitions between governments affect the stability of my job



Differences by rank



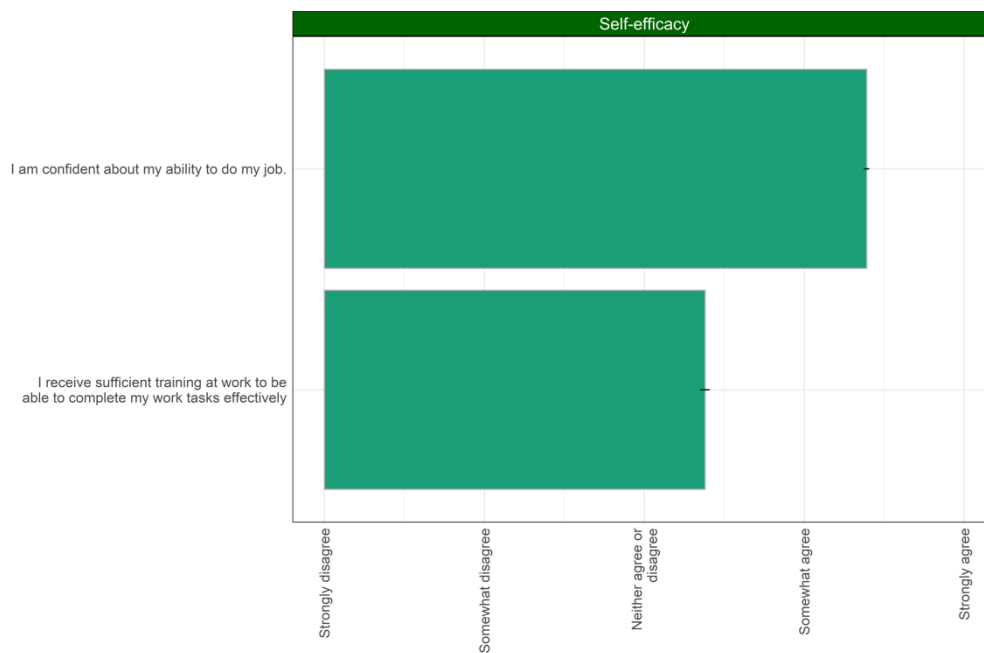


Training and competencies

Competencies and training opportunities

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)



Training participation

Did you receive training by (or paid for by) your organization in the last year?

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

Who selected you for your last training? Please select all that apply.

- I self-selected into the training
- My superior
- Human Resources Department
- Senior management
- Don't know / prefer not to respond

How many colleagues in your unit received the same training?

- All colleagues (the training was mandatory)
- Most colleagues
- Some colleagues
- Few colleagues
- You were the only one trained in your unit
- Don't know / prefer not to respond

For colleagues in your unit who have not attended this training, how important would it be for colleagues' job performance to attend it as well? (7-point scale)

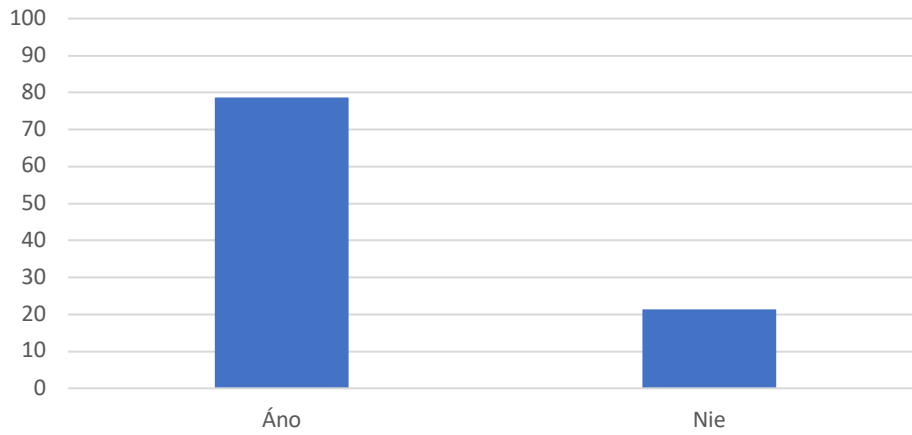
Since you returned to work, have you used any of the skills/knowledge gained from the training?

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

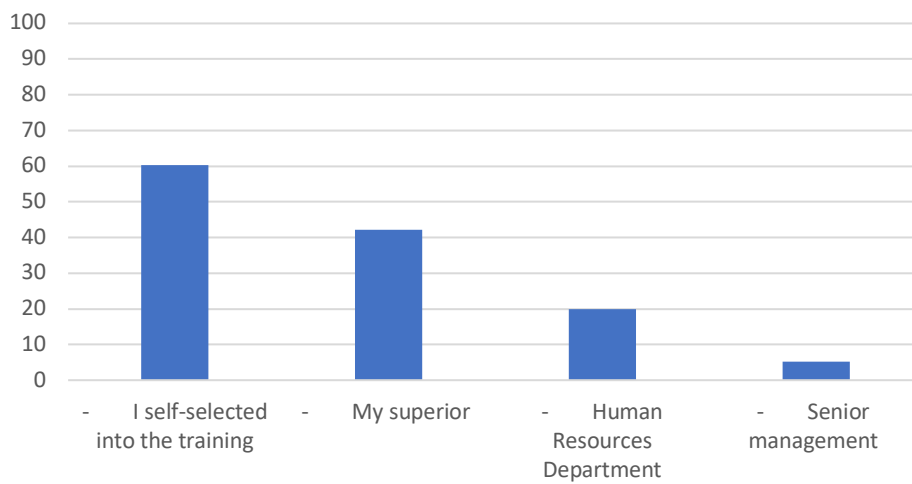
To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- 'I have shared the skills/knowledge gained from the training widely with colleagues at work'
- 'I often get new information about organizational procedures and skills from colleagues'

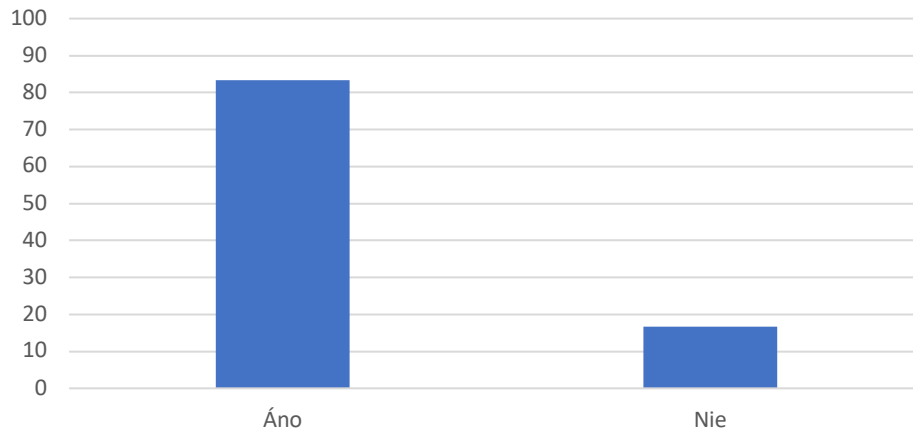
Absolvovali ste v ostatnom roku školenie, ktoré organizoval (alebo platil) Váš Úrad?



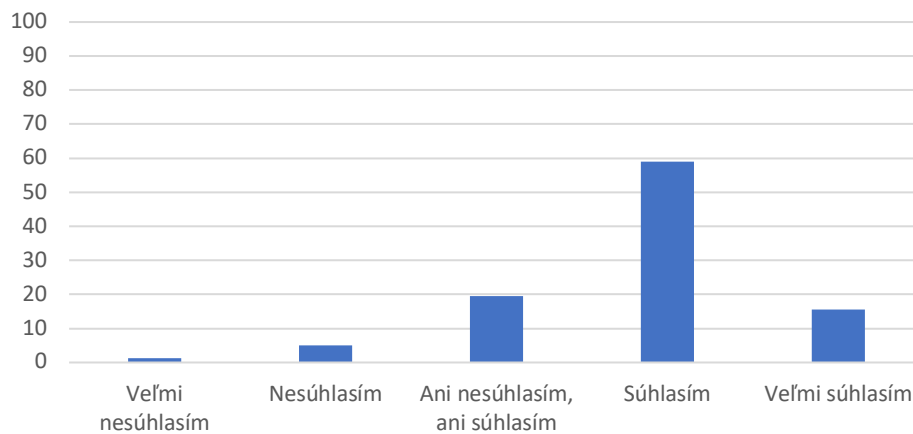
Who selected you for your last training?



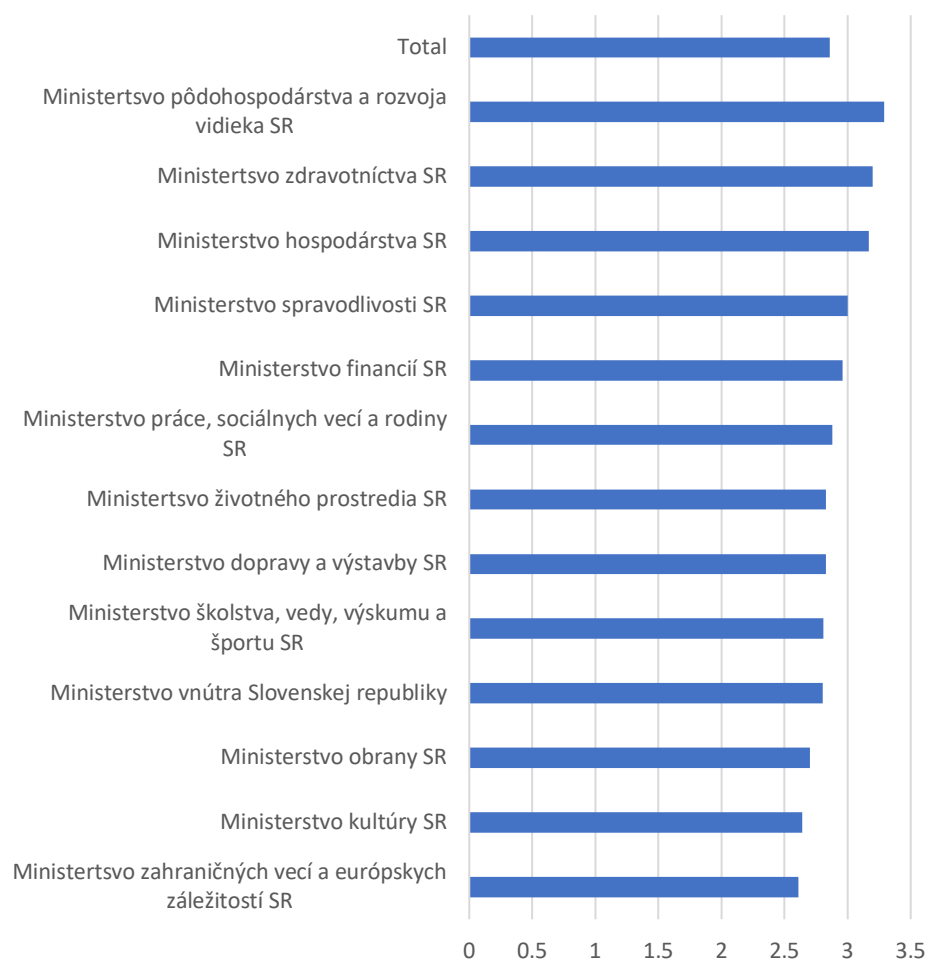
Since you returned to work, have you used any of the skills/knowledge gained from the training?



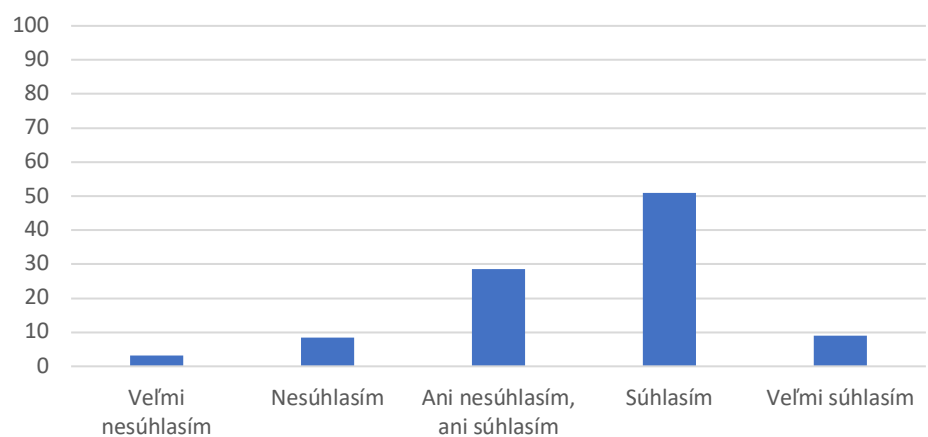
'I have shared the skills/knowledge gained from the training widely with colleagues at work'



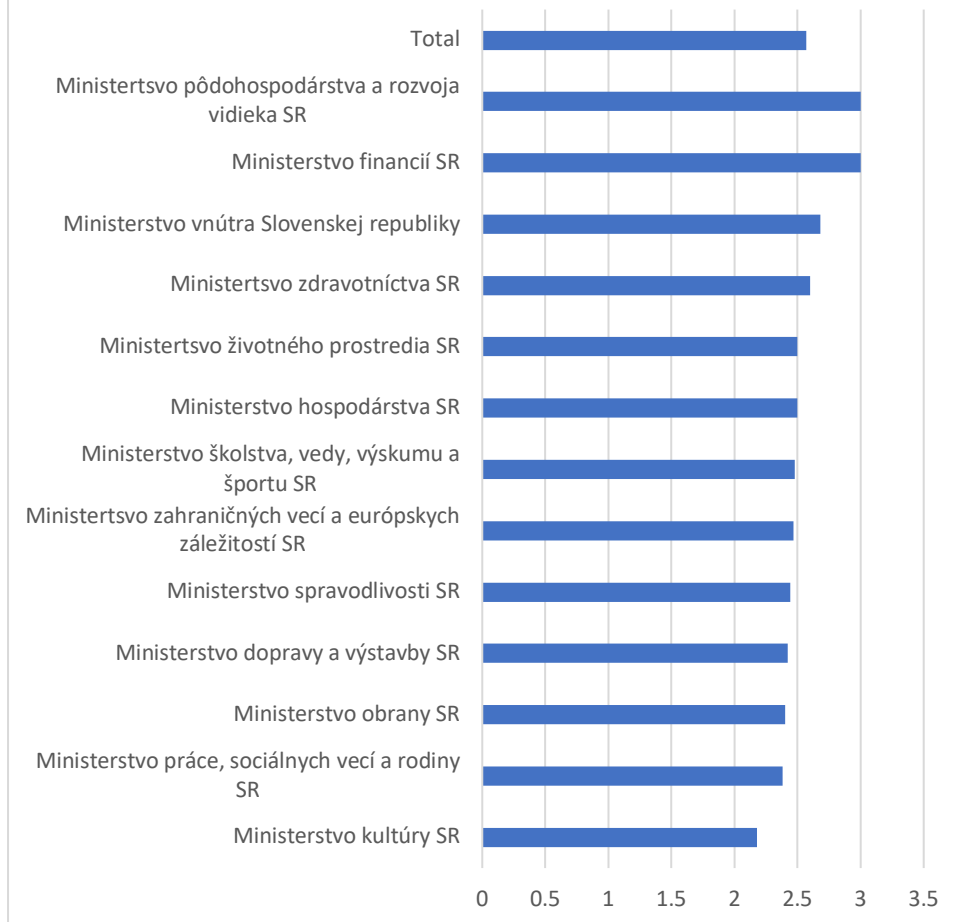
Do akej miery súhlasíte s nasledujúcimi
tvrdeniami? - Zručnosti a vedomosti, ktoré získan
na školení zdieľam s kolegami v práci



'I often get new information about organizational
procedures and skills from colleagues'

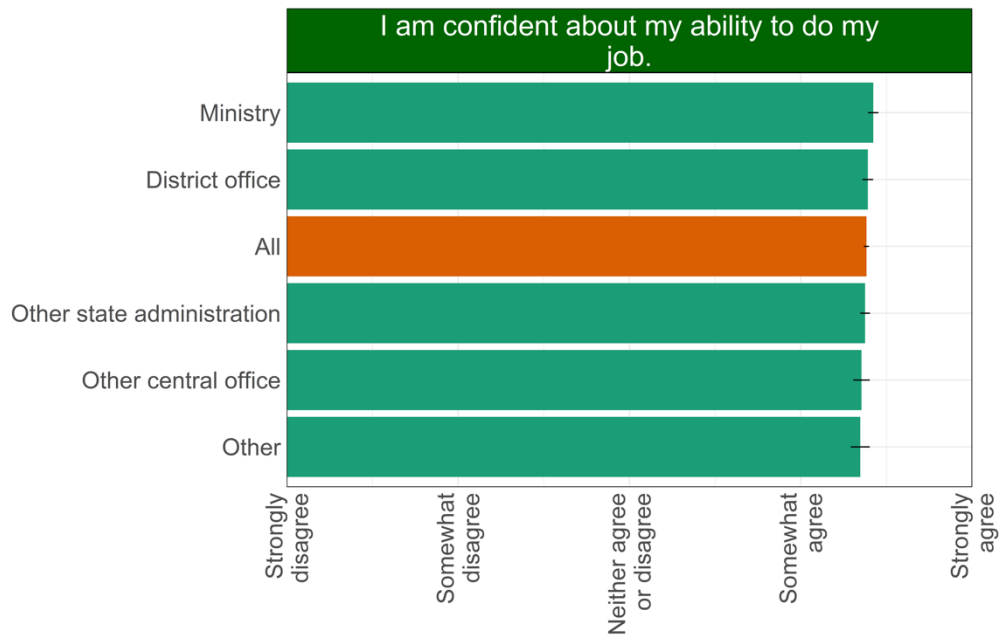


Do akej miery súhlasíte s nasledujúcimi
tvrdeniami? - Často získam nové informácie o
organizačných postupoch a zručnostiach od
mojich kolegov

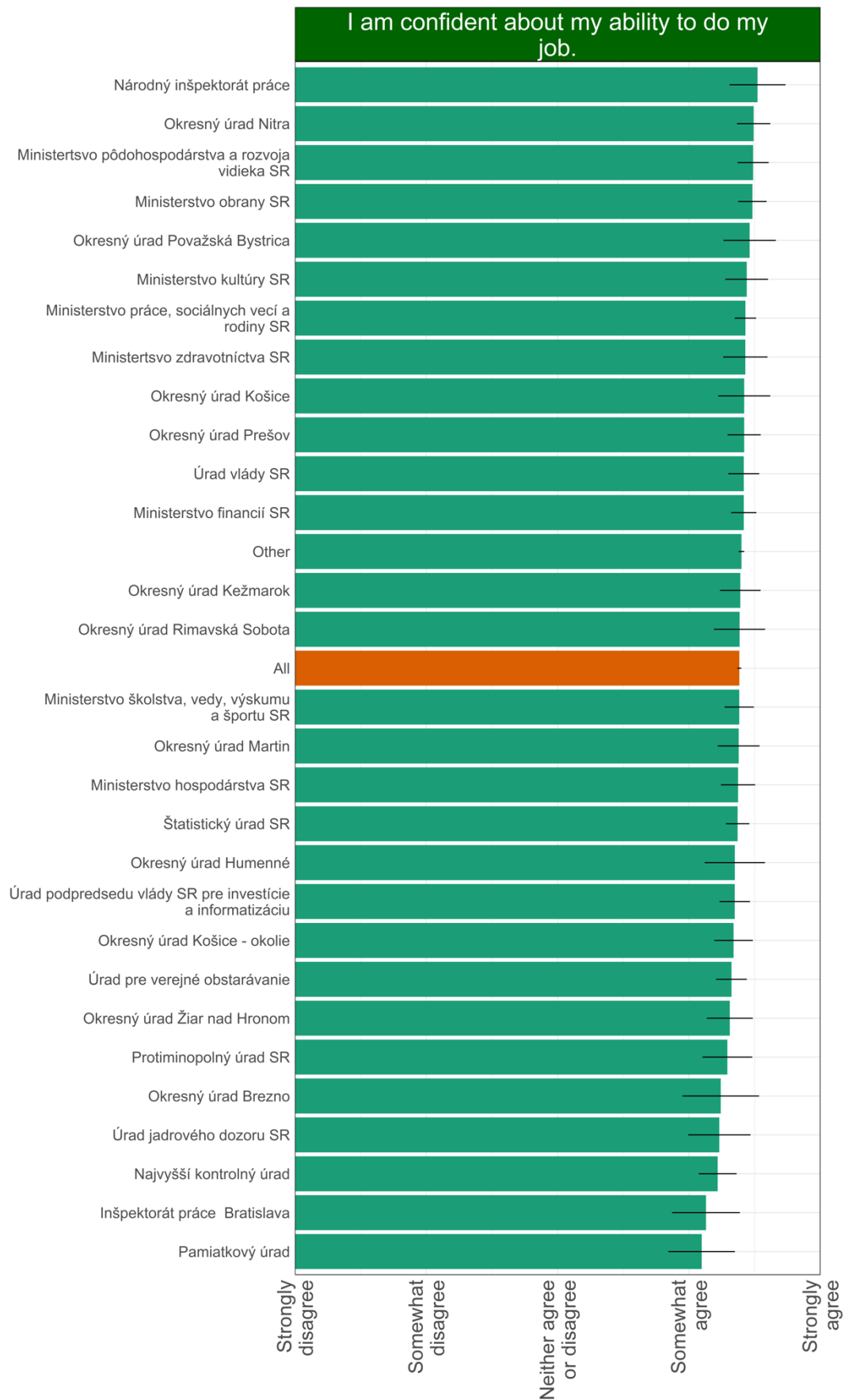


Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

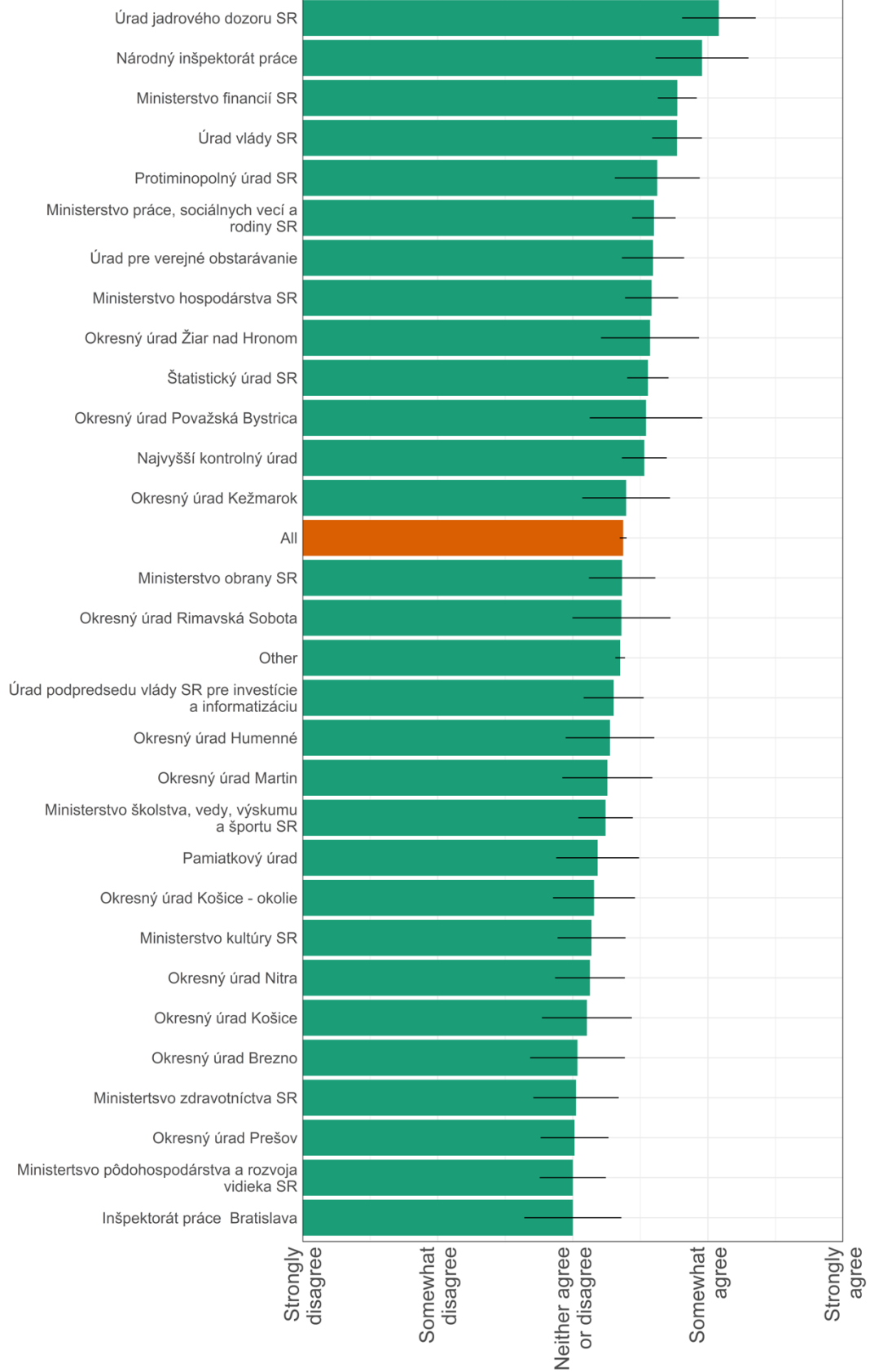
Differences by types of administrative institutions



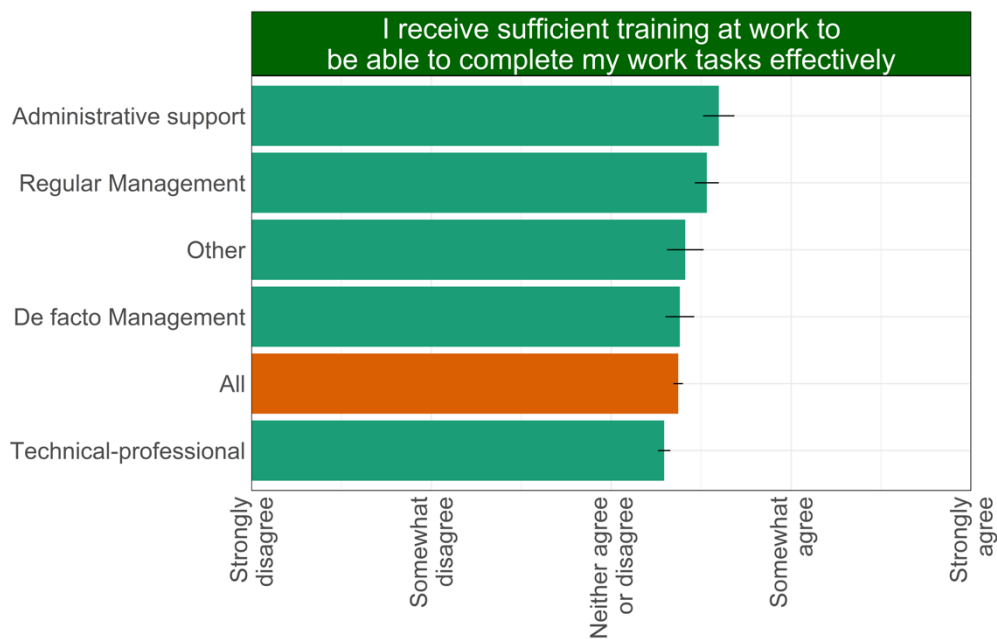
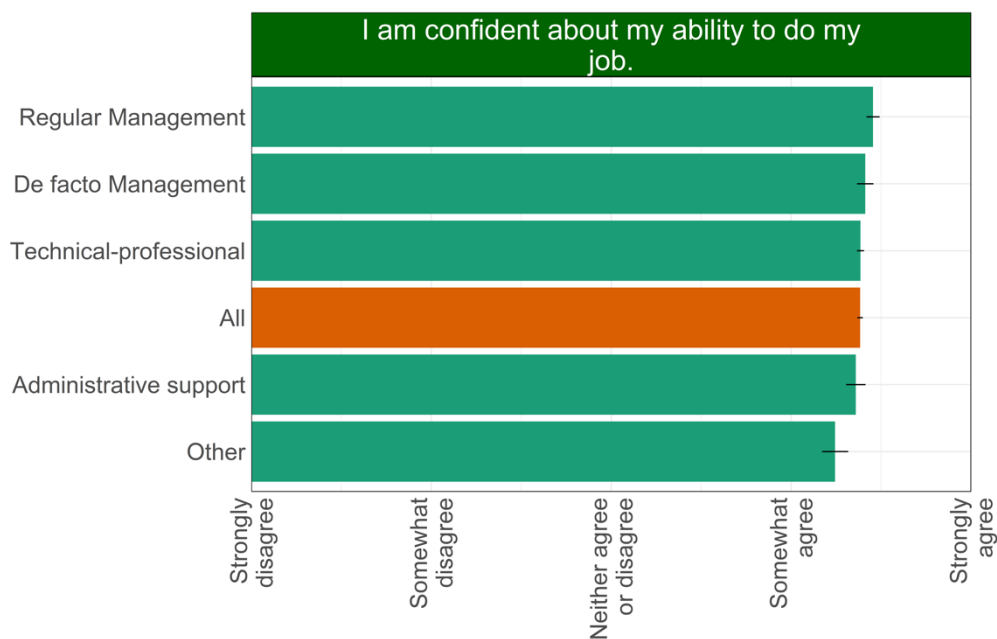
Differences by institutions



I receive sufficient training at work to be able to complete my work tasks effectively



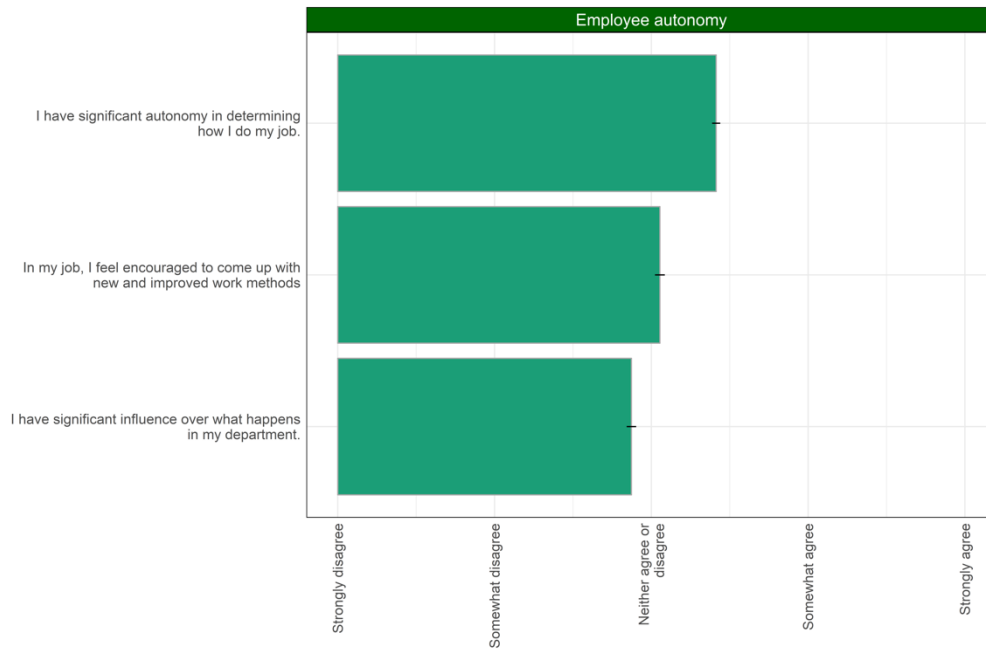
Differences by rank



Job design

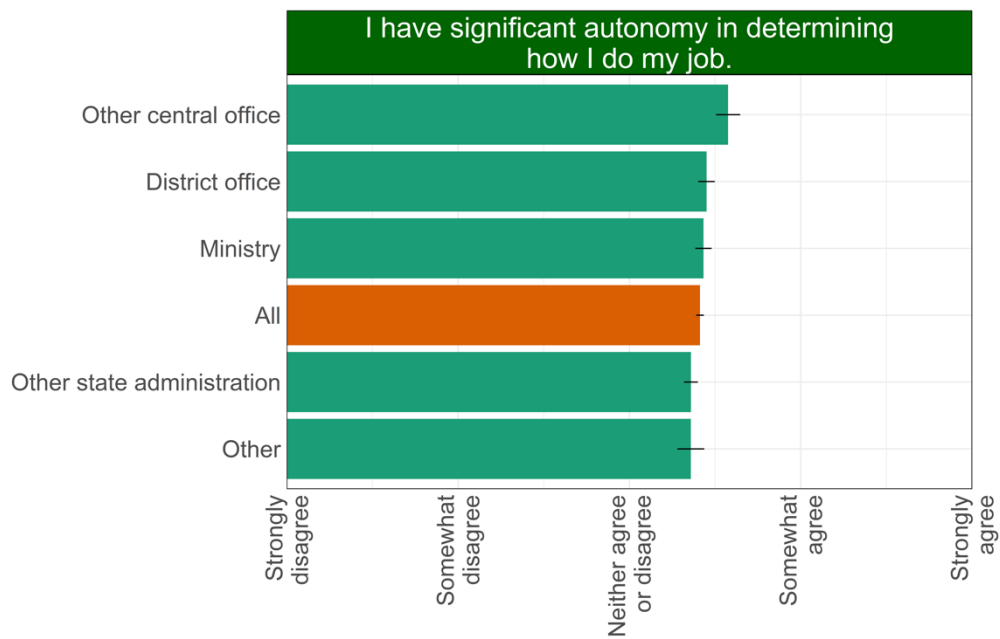
Thinking about your job and the tasks you do every day, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- 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)
- In my job, I feel encouraged to come up with new and improved work methods. (Mean response)

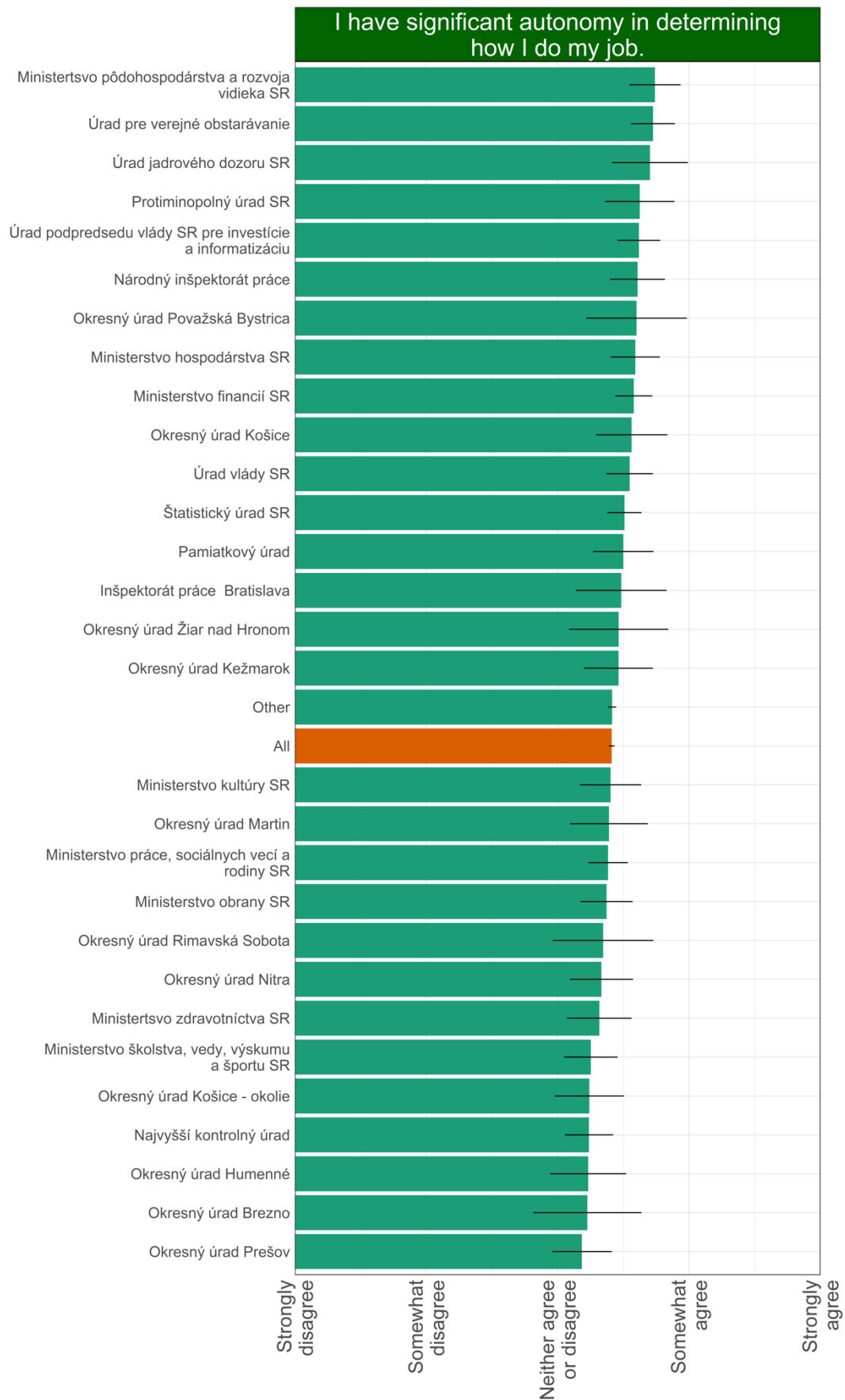


Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

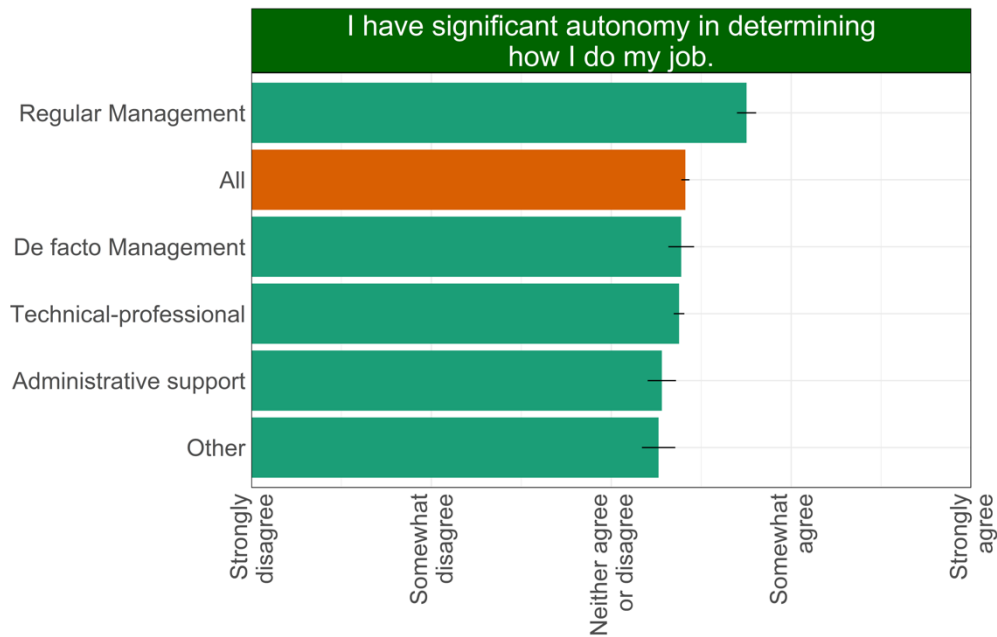
Differences by types of administrative institutions



Differences by institutions



Differences by rank

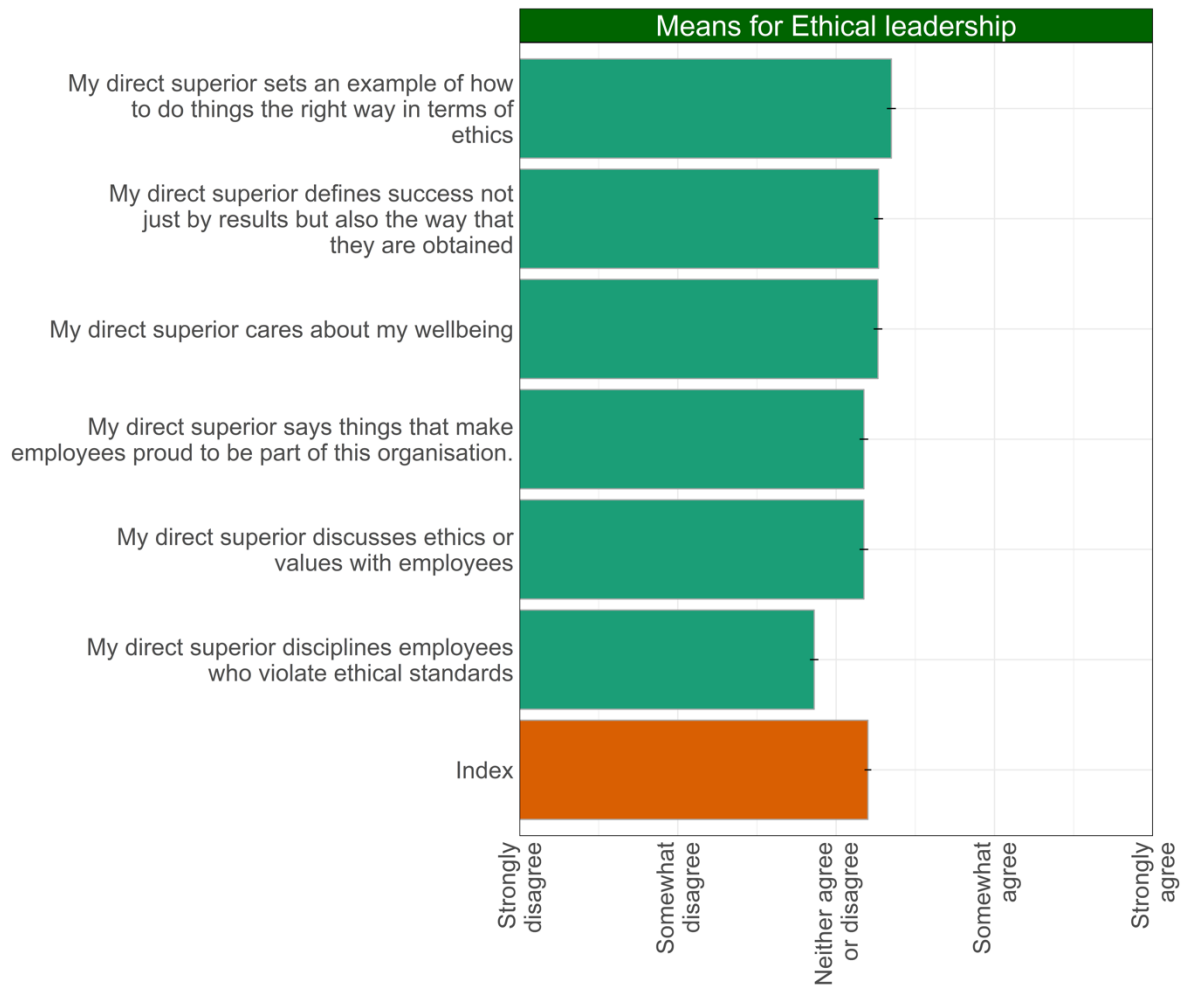


Leadership

Ethical leadership

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

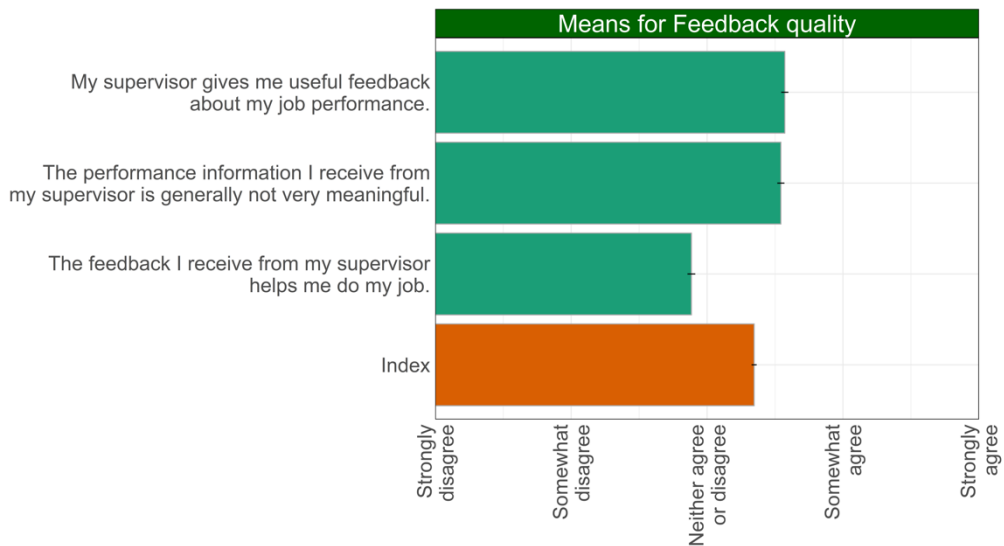
- My direct superior cares about my wellbeing (mean response)
- My direct superior disciplines employees who violate ethical standards (mean response)
- My direct superior discusses ethics or values with employees (mean response)
- My direct superior sets an example of how to do things the right way 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)



Quality of feedback by superiors

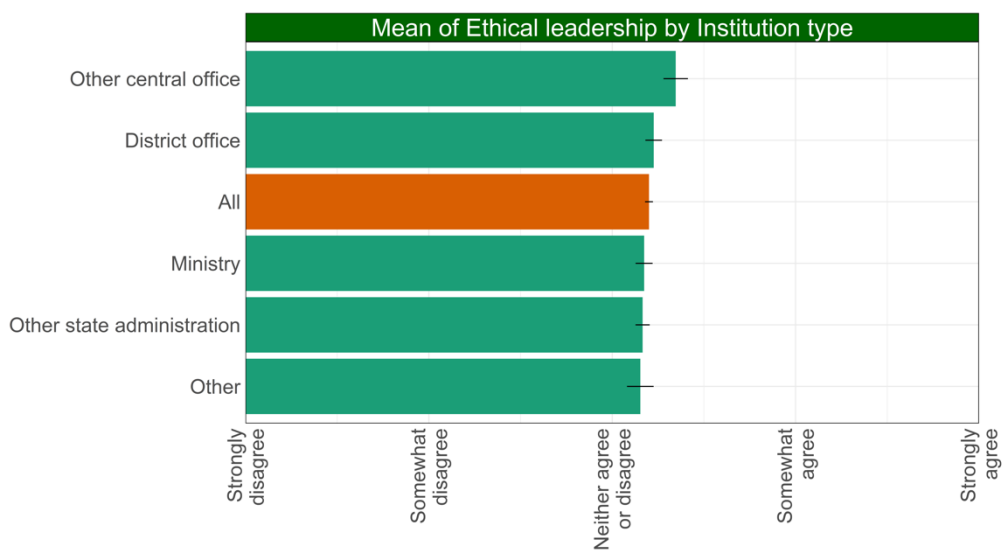
Thinking about your supervisor, to what extent do you agree with the following statements?

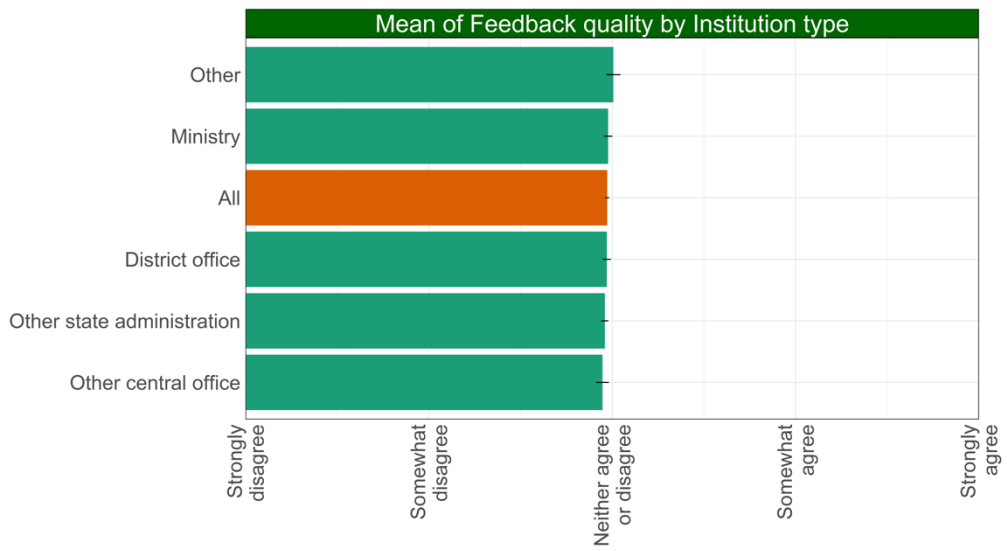
- My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my job performance.
- The performance information I receive from my supervisor is generally not very meaningful.
- The feedback I receive from my supervisor helps me do my job.



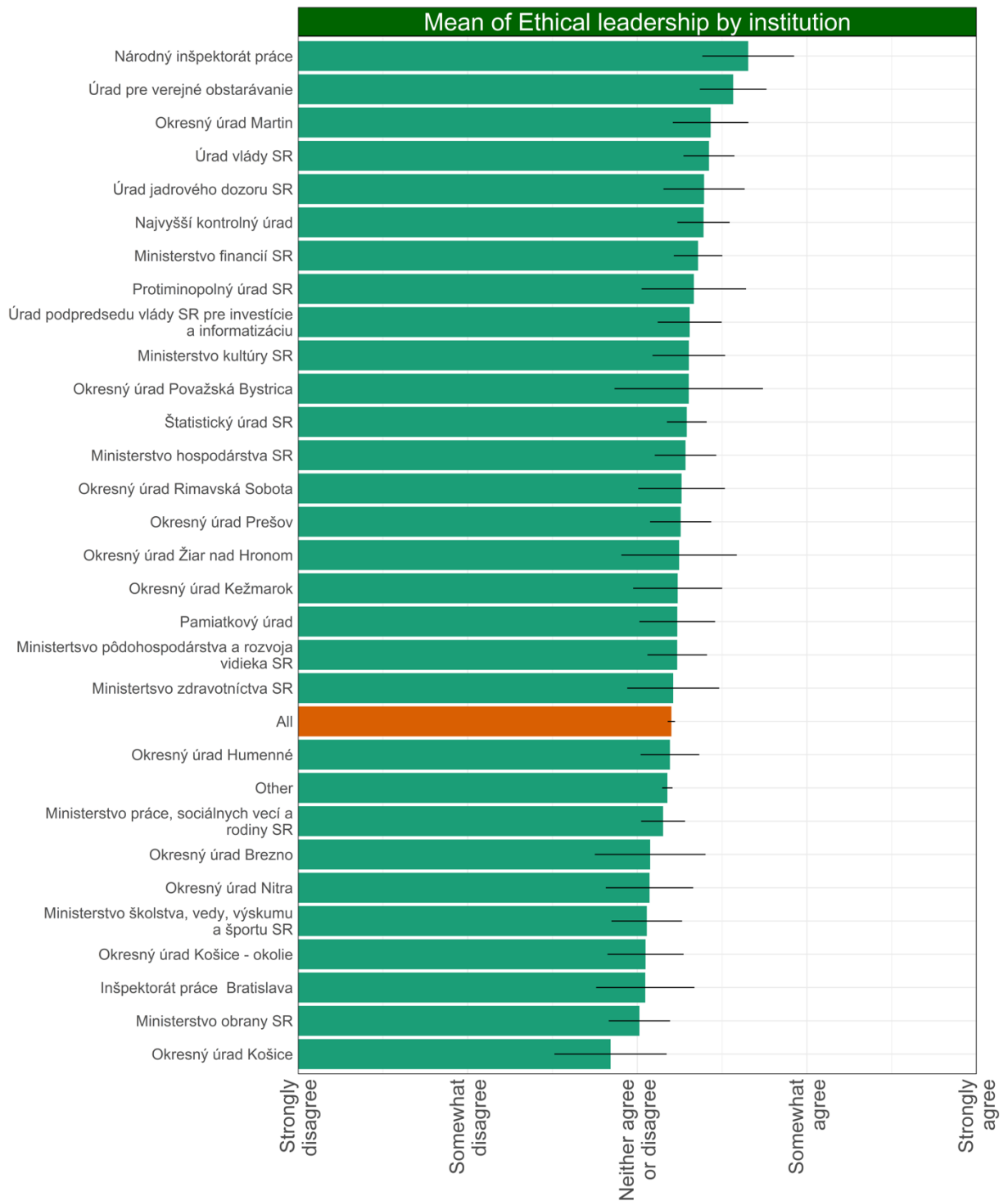
Differences by groups and institutions (selected results)

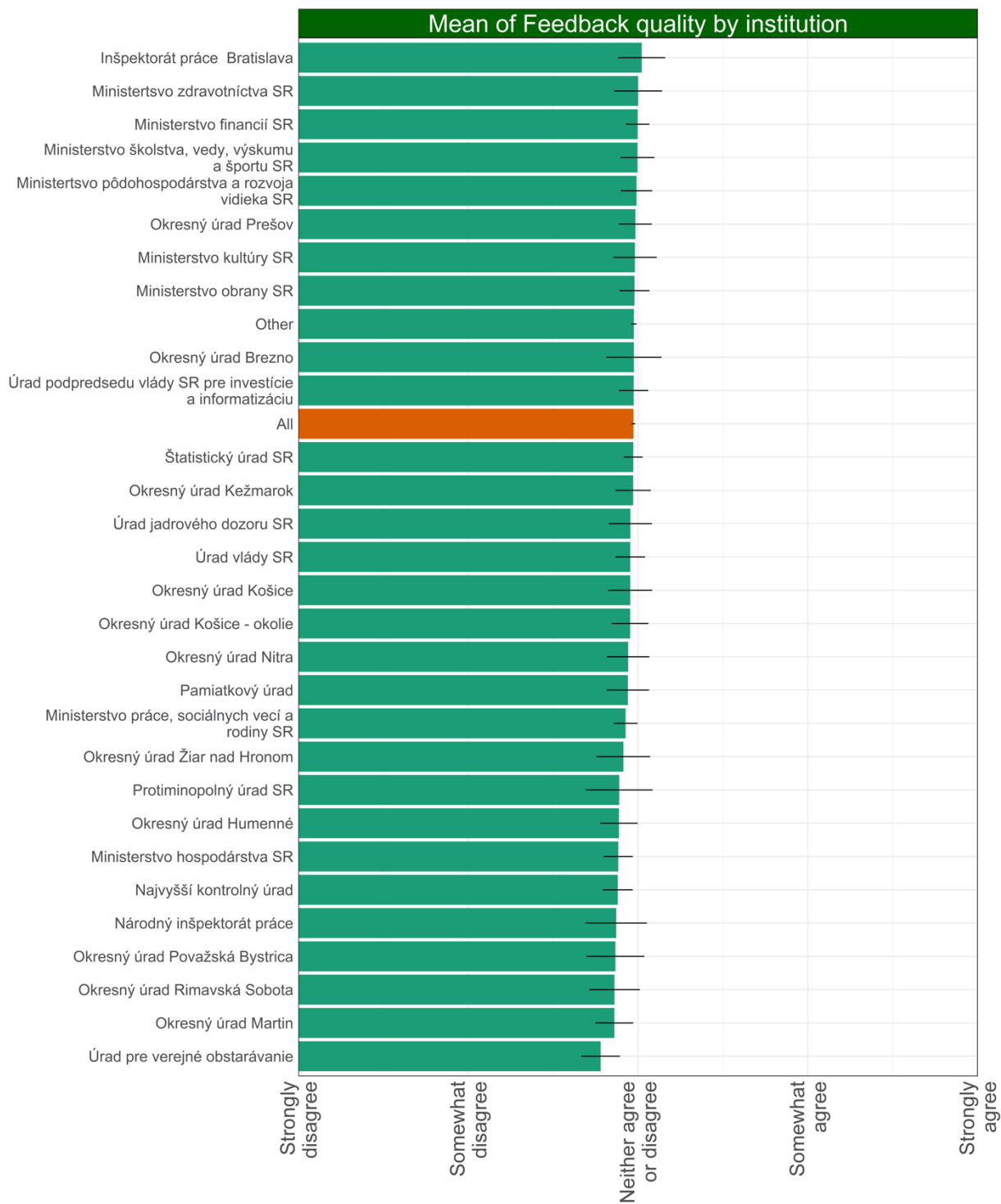
Differences by types of administrative institutions





Differences by institutions





Differences by rank

