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Croatia



Abandoning the Nest

Push and pull factors potentially influencing the young minds of Split and Dubrovnik

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ABSTRACT

Croatia is characterized by high level of emigration of educated people. Croatian youth is mostly affected by the problems in the state and make a significant part of the educated workforce that leaves Croatia in search of a better life. By administering a questionnaire to college students, this research was conducted to determine the factors that influence students from Dubrovnik and Split to emigrate from Croatia, the similarities and differences between those factors and needs and potentials behind them. The research showed that the majority of student population show a desire to leave for a short term period and that social injustice and law-breaking mentality are two most current problems in Croatia and most influential push factors affecting the decision to move abroad. Also, the research showed that majority of students perceive the Croatian future negatively, while employment in the field of education and ownership position opportunities lying abroad are the most influential pull factors attracting them to other countries.

Keywords: Brain drain, students, emigrants, push factor, pull factor, Split, Dubrovnik, globalization, migration,

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and Migrations

During the second half of the 19th century, there has been an increase in global integration of cultures and economy, known as the globalization phenomenon (O'Rourke & Williamson, 1999). Some believe that globalization can be described as the new phenomenon, induced by the advanced technological development in the 1960s. It has been on a discussion agenda as a process that has had possible significant influence on world migrations. The research has shown that this influence of globalization on world migrations is insignificant when it comes to the general world migration, mostly influencing the trade and economy (Frederic & Hillel, 2012). On the other hand, when only developed countries were taken as a sample in this research, the results showed significant correlation between globalization and human migration. Since 1960s, developed countries have experienced exponential growth in immigrants: tripled from 1960s to 1985 and since then doubled.

Push and Pull Factors

According to the (European Commission, 2000), push factors, which are motives for migration, can be divided into three main categories: economic, family related and other. Economic reasons for migrating are those work related, seeking employment and job opportunities in certain field of work, better living standard, etc. Family related reasons are less related to the economic situation in a country of origin and are more of a personal choice such as migrating due to marriage. Other reasons are also not related directly to the situation in a country of origin. On the other hand, pull factors, which are attractive circumstances that influence the decision on where to migrate, can also be divided into economic, family related and other categories. The most common pull factors found in this research are the economic ones, making employment and higher standard of living most desirable factors waiting for migrants abroad.

Brain Drain

The process of highly skilled and educated people migrating from developing or underdeveloped countries to developed countries is often referred to as a brain drain (Jambrek_&_Penić, 2008).

Brain drain is a specific type of migration of citizens where the host country is being vacated by higher educated citizens due to lacking circumstances in search for better life standards. These highly educated and skilled experts, scientists, intellectuals and artists are the carriers of the economic and social development of each country, therefore referred to as human capital or intellectual capital. According to Schiff and Ozden (2005), the statistics on brain drain have been insufficient due to the shortage of information about international migrants, specifically about their origin country and level of education. Current estimates have been done on the basis of general skill structure of country of origin and average statistics of immigrants' education.

European Migration & Brain Drain

In 2015, there were 2.7 million immigrants coming to European Union (EU) from non-member countries, and 2.8 emigrants migrating from EU to, both, EU member and non-member countries (EUROSTAT, 2017). Although this data is limited due to undefined number of migrants from EU to only non-member countries, it still presents a ground for concluding that EU is dominantly the destination of migrants, rather than the country of origin. Furthermore, the research has shown that the average age of immigrants in EU is lower than the average age of citizens of EU countries. This leads to a conclusion that the immigrants in EU are mostly young people with an age average of 27.5 years. Therefore, not only is EU attracting more people than there are emigrants leaving EU, but the immigrants are predominantly young people. European emigrants mostly come from Eastern Europe, Maghreb and Middle Eastern countries, which contributes to the conclusion that distance between the destination and home is an important pull factor for migrating (Schiff & Ozden, 2005). Since European Union has been increasing in

number of member countries, there has also been an increase in developed countries seeking educated workforce by creating lists of occupations they have estimated a shortage in. France, for example, introduced an induction of skilled and educated workers from outside of EU, mostly due to problems of aging of the population and increased brain drain in recent years.

Croatia

Generally about Migrations

Croatia, as a country in the southeast Europe, has been experiencing a rise in technology and innovation since the end of the Cold War (Radošević, 2009). This has contributed to the increase in integration of its economic and social aspect with the rest of the world in the process of globalization. Croatia is a developing country and is marked by emigrants being a majority in the migration process. According to Juroš, Pifat-Mrzljak and Vizek-Vidović (2004), Croatian research and development is in the process of growth, characterized by significant emigration of highly educated people.

Research on Croatian Brain Drain

Research done by the Croatian Ministry of Science estimated that approximately 5000 intellectuals emigrated from Croatia in the period from 1991 to 2001 (Flego, 2000). However, these were the estimates and the accurate numbers are unavailable. Furthermore, another research showed that 24 percent graduates studying at universities, out of a sample of 536 students, were very likely to emigrate after the graduation (Adamović, 2003). The most recent research done in 2011 showed that 64 percent out of 900 of participant expressed the readiness to leave Croatia immediately if they were given a job abroad (Čerenić, Reić Ercegovac, & Relja, 2015). The study also showed that the most desirable immigration destinations were highly developed European countries such as Germany, Great Britain and Switzerland. Furthermore, the majority of participants expressed the desire to work in the information technology industry. This study

determined some of the pull factors influencing the decision of highly educated people to leave Croatia; in this case it was a job opportunity, economically more stable countries and job opportunity for a certain field of work.

Push and Pull Factors in Croatia

According to Golub (2003), factors influencing the brain drain in Croatia vary, broadest factor categories being economic, scientific and socio-cultural reasons. Some of the economic reasons were better salary, assured living conditions and higher standard of living. Scientific reasons include better job opportunities, more developed scientific industry, more job development opportunities and better social status. Socio-cultural reason, less represented factors for emigrating than previous ones, were desire for life change, better work culture, more desirable state politics, etc.

The factors influencing highly educated and skill people to leave Croatia go in both ways: attractive factors in foreign countries are usually the opposite of negative factors in Croatia that push people to leave (Šverko, 1996). Some of the push factors are low salaries, high unemployment rate, insufficient work prospects, dissatisfaction with the government and work conditions, etc. These push factors can be grouped in broad categories of economic, political and legal. (Krasulja, Radojević, & Vasiljević Blagojević, 2016). Once these factors are primarily negative, there is a correlated increase in the brain drain. Pull factors come in second: once there is a desire to leave, emigrant chooses the destination according to the pull factors in the market.

Background of Push & Pull Factors

When it comes to the decision making process based on the pull factors that countries in the market offer to possible immigrants, different aspect and individual's preferences positively influence the importance and attractiveness of certain pull factors (Krasulja, Radojević, & Vasiljević Blagojević, 2016). These are the family related aspects, such as relatives living abroad,

or geographical proximity of a migration destination, and even language preferences, previous experience or knowledge of the destination, etc. Furthermore, migration decisions, when it comes to both push and pull factors, are significantly influenced by migrant's age, younger people having more incline to leaving than those over 40. The reason behind is the higher number of opportunities lying abroad for younger, highly educated people, as well as is their longer time to yield on these opportunities.

Needs and Potentials

According to Ilišin [and](#) Spajic_Vrkas (2015), there are two approaches of how young generations are perceived in a country. The first approach considers young as a resource that carries the future of development and innovation. The country in which this approach is dominant strives to secure optimal living conditions and opportunities for young people, looking at their potential as future economy, politic and social carriers and developers. In the same time, the potential for professional and private development of young people is higher in those countries. On the other hand, the second approach perceives young people as a problem and a threat that needs to be protected and monitored. In a society in which the second approach is more dominant, together with insufficient economic stability for young people, young have a greater need to search for a potential elsewhere. Therefore, their social and economic needs are greater and the potential for development is lower, which is one of the factors influencing brain drain. Croatian statistics show that the majority of registered unemployed people are young people from 20 to 35 years old (Ilišin, 2002). In 2002, Croatia had the highest unemployment rate among developing countries, with the number of unemployed young people at the top of this list. Young people are more often at risk of not finding a job than are older generations, with the beginning of their career being often stressful and turbulent period of their lives (O'Connell & Russel, 2001). One of the reasons for their inferiority in the work environment and job prospecting is the fact

they finish college with a lack of working experience, have high job position expectations and are less skilled than experienced, older workers.

Split and Dubrovnik

Since 2009, when the economic crisis started, Croatia has been experiencing negative net migrations, meaning that total emigration are larger than total immigrations in the country (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2017). In 2016, there were 36 436 people that emigrated and 13 985 people that immigrated, meaning that the net migrations of Croatia for 2016 were -22 451. Croatians dominantly migrate to Germany (56.1%), followed by Bosnia & Hercegovina and Austria. When it comes to demographics of migrants from Croatia, men tend to migrate more than women, while the biggest age group that migrates is people from 25 to 29 years. When looking at Croatian regions, all 21 of them had negative net migrations in 2016. Zagreb is the region with highest immigration and emigration numbers, while Splitsko-Dalmatinska County is on the second place when it comes to the number of immigration, but further down on the list when it comes to emigrations. On the other hand, Splitsko-Dalmatinska (capital Split) and Dubrovačko-Neretvanska (capital Dubrovnik) counties are doing relatively good when compared to other regions of Croatia (Hrvatska Gospodarska Komora, 2016). From 2015 to 2018, there has been a decrease in the unemployment rate in Split (7%) and in Dubrovnik (5.2%). Dubrovnik is on the third place among all 21 counties when calculating the net salaries per person.

Due to the fact that Split and Dubrovnik counties are doing similarly from the economic perspective, with Dubrovnik having somewhat better statistics and economic growth and showing some more positive economic and social trends, it is interesting to look at the push and pull factors of young and educated people from these two countries to estimate how are people from these two counties perceiving the current and future state in Croatia, as well as what is their tendency towards leaving Croatia.

METHODS

A survey of college students from Split and Dubrovnik was conducted to determine the factors that influence students from these two sample cities to emigrate from Croatia, the similarities and differences between those factors and needs and potentials behind them. The hypothesis (H1) of this research was that the results will show significant difference between the motivational factors of two sample groups (Split and Dubrovnik students), with the participant group from Split showing higher interest towards emigrating.

This research used the cross-sectional study design that researches people of different age with the same characteristic of interest. The instrument for this study's research was paper survey conducted as a nonprobability type of sampling (participants were randomly chosen without any predetermined list) with a sample chosen on purpose meaning that the students from Split and Dubrovnik were targeted sample groups as a non-representative subset (small group within the targeted group that should represent the opinion of the bigger group) of all students from these cities. The survey was distributed personally.

Most of the survey questions were constructed on the basis of the questions found in the research 'Potrebe, mogućnosti i namjera odlaska u inozemstvo: Analiza stavova studenata iz Splita (RH) i Sarajeva (BiH)' (Relja, Reic Ercegovac, & Cerenic, 2015). Questions were arranged so that first six were demographics related, asking for gender, age, city, origin, college type and study choice. The questionnaire consisted of three question groups that were seven-point likert scale questions asking participants to choose from least (1) to strongest (7) relevance of issue questioned. The first group of questions was estimating the opinion of participants of most current problems in Croatia and asking them to choose three that would influence them to leave Croatia. The second group of questions asked about the most current problems of Croatian youth, again asking to choose three problems that would influence them to leave Croatia. The third

question group asked to what extent would the opportunities lying abroad influence them to move to another country. Furthermore, one question asked to state the opinion on Croatian future, and another question asked the participants to state their intentions on leaving or staying in Croatia.

RESULTS

The Purpose

The purpose of this research was to determine the push factors that would influence students from Split and Dubrovnik to leave Croatia, as well as the pull factors for leaving they find attractive. Also, the study tried to determine the opinion of students about the future of Croatia and their level of interest in leaving, while conducting analysis of the questionnaire results to determine the difference in these factors between students from Split and those from Dubrovnik. To test the hypothesis of this research that students from Split will show higher interest in leaving Croatia and have more negative perception of current situation in the country for the young, descriptive analysis of answers was conducted, with SPSS software used to analyze the responses to the questionnaire.

Participants and their Demographics

The sample was 74 participants, 39 (52.7%) of them being current students from Split and 35 (47.3%) of them being current students from Dubrovnik. All of the questionnaires were valid. The sample was relatively young, with 51% of respondents being 19-21 years old, and only 7% from 25 to 27 years old. The sample was predominantly female (60%). When it comes to the origin of the respondents, 47% come from Splitsko-Dalmatinska County and 31% from Dubrovačko-Neretvanska.

Descriptives for the Sample

The most current problems of Croatian society, according to the results of this research, are: corruption ($M=5.99$, $SD=1.15$), unemployment ($M=5.72$, $SD=1.28$), economy ($M=5.51$,

$SD=1.14$) and education ($M=5.22$, $SD=1.39$). The most current problems for Croatian youth are: importance of connections ($M=5.86$, $SD=1.38$), brain drain ($M=5.78$, $SD=1.31$), unemployment ($M=5.74$, $SD=1.3$) and ignorance of society towards youth ($M=5.30$, $SD=1.18$).

Push Factors

The most mentioned problem in Croatia that would be a push factor for leaving is unemployment (51%). Also, many of the participants (45%) mentioned corruption as a push factor for leaving Croatia. The third most often mentioned push factor is unappreciated knowledgeable workforce (38%). The most mentioned youth problem in Croatia that would be a push factor for leaving is the importance of connections (55%), followed by unemployment (42%) and low standard of living (42%).

Pull Factors

The student population rates the following as pull factors that would mostly influence them to leave Croatia: to be their own boss and do as they want ($M=5.43$, $SD=1.39$), to have financial security (wealth) ($M=5.36$, $SD=1.5$), to be recognized in their field of work ($M=5.35$, $SD=1.34$) and to have a high positioned job ($M=5.18$, $SD=1.19$).

Perception of a Croatian Future and Intentions on Leaving Croatia

When it comes to the perception of Croatian future, 31% of respondents believe the future will be much worse and 20% believe it will be slightly worse, compared to 28% that believe it will be slightly better and only 4% that believe it will be much better (see Table 1). Furthermore, most of the participants (55%) stated they would leave Croatia for a longer period, but eventually return, and 16% stated that they would leave and never return, while 17% said that they will definitely stay in Croatia (see Table 2). Overall, participants stated that they would leave forever if the circumstances were right.

Differences between Split and Dubrovnik

Intentions on Leaving Croatia

In terms of willingness to leave Croatia, most participants from both Split (60%) and Dubrovnik (51.3%) expressed the desire to leave, but not forever (see Table 2 and Figure 1). Interestingly, a lot of students from Split (20%) expressed a desire to leave permanently, while the second choice of students from Dubrovnik (23.1%) was to stay put. The differences recorded were not statistically significant.

Perception of Croatian Future

When it comes to the perception of Croatian future, most participants from Split (34.3%) believe that Croatian future will be much worse, while their second belief is it will be slightly better (28.6%). Divided opinion as well, participants from Dubrovnik (28.2%) equally believe that it is either going to be much worse or slightly better. Interestingly, although participants from both Split (51.4%) and Dubrovnik (51.3%) perceive Croatian future as either much worse or slightly worse, a slight number of participants from Dubrovnik (7.7%) believe that the future will be much better, unlike their counterparts in Split (0%) (see Table 1 and Figure 2). The differences recorded were not statistically significant.

Current Problems in Croatia

There is a significant difference between Split and Dubrovnik based students in the assessment of how current a problem of 'lack of discipline and laziness' is in Croatia, $t(72)=2.99$, $p=0.004$. Students from Dubrovnik rated this problem as more current ($M=5.31$, $SD=1.32$) than students from Split ($M=4.43$, $SD=1.19$) (see Figure 3). There were no other significant differences noted in terms of problems in Croatia generally speaking.

Current Problems of Croatian Youth

Furthermore, there is a significant difference between Split and Dubrovnik based students in the assessment of how current a problem of lack of youth's interest in state's politics and society is in Croatia, $t(72)=2.2$, $p=0.031$. Students from Dubrovnik rated this problem as more current ($M=4.95$, $SD=1.28$) than students from Split (4.29 , $SD=1.32$) (see Figure 4). There were no other significant differences noted in terms of problems of youth in Croatia generally speaking.

Similarities between Sample Groups

Apart from the opinion on how current is the problem of lack of youth's interest in state's politics and society and the problem of lack of disciplines and laziness, there were no other significant differences found for the socio-demographic categories between two sample groups, students from Split and students from Dubrovnik. This findings show that these two sample groups are generally in agreement when it comes to their opinion on socio-demographic situation in Croatia, which leads to the conclusion that educated youth is probably knowledgeable and informed about the current economic, political and social situation in Croatia.

DISCUSSION

The present study looked into the potential push and pull factors that would influence young people in Croatia to leave Croatia. The study's relevance comes from the fact that Croatia has been experiencing a negative net migrations, meaning that more people are leaving Croatia than immigrating into Croatia, and the fact that Croatia is on the list of countries with high number of emigrations of young and educated people. As a method for the study, questionnaire with demographic and seven point likert-scale questions regarding socio-demographic situation in Croatia was distributed to students from Split and Dubrovnik.

Perception on Croatian Current and Future Situation

However, this researched showed that most of the young generation in Croatia is pessimistic about the future of Croatia and show a desire to leave either permanently or temporary. When it comes to their perception of how current certain problems in Croatia are, student population believes that unemployment is one of the most current problems for Croatia generally and for the youth in Croatia. Aside from unemployment, corruption and high importance of connection are perceived as ones of the most current problems in Croatia generally and for its youth which shows that student population believes the most negative influence on Croatia has the social injustice and law-breaking mentality.

Push and Pull Factors

Supporting this, the three most influential push factors are unemployment, corruption and high importance of connections, leading to a conclusion that social injustice and law-breaking mentality are two most represented reasons why young people want to leave Croatia. On the other hand, main reasons why young people would want to go live in some other country are three mostly mentioned pull factors: to be their own boss and do as they want, to have financial security (wealth), to be recognized in their fields of work. This result shows that student population believes that there is a lack of opportunity in these aspects in Croatia and higher level of these opportunities abroad. On the other hand, religious beliefs and drug abuse were not mentioned as push factors, which suggests that these two social factors are positively perceived when comparing Croatia to other countries.

Limitations of the Study & Further Research

The limitation of this research is the small sample size of 74 participants and this issue should be investigated furthermore with a larger sample size and comparing different cities, with a suggestion to compare Split and Zagreb since Zagreb, as the capital, is perceived as the most

prominent city in Croatia for young people. Furthermore, to determine the actual and not potential push and pull factors for leaving Croatia of young and educated people, research should be done on the sample of young and educated people that have already left Croatia in last five to ten years. Another limitation of this study is that the sample from Dubrovnik consisted of mostly RIT Croatia students and the opinion of students from other universities should be researched to avoid bias.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research that students from Split will show greater desire to leave Croatia than students from Dubrovnik and that students from Split will perceive problems in Croatia as more current and represented than their counterparts from Dubrovnik has been rejected. This research showed that students from Split and Dubrovnik are in general agreement in the opinion on current situation in Croatia and that they represent an educated population that is knowledgeable and informed about the current economic, political and social situation in Croatia. Furthermore, the research showed that both students from Split and Dubrovnik share the same level of desire to leave, with majority of both sample groups expressing the desire to leave, but not for a longer time period. Also, both sample groups are in a general agreement on the opinion that Croatian future will most probably be worse than it is now, which supports the result that young people show intentions to leave Croatia after graduation since there is a perceived lack of opportunities lying in Croatia for them in some further years.

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APPENDICES

Table 1 *Difference between the Perceptions of Croatian Future*

Perception of Croatian Future

			The future will be much worse	The future will be a little worse	The future will be the same as now	The future will be slightly better	The future will be much better	Total
City	Dubrovnik	Count	11	9	5	11	3	39
		% within City	28.2%	23.1%	12.8%	28.2%	7.7%	100.0%
	Split	Count	12	6	7	10	0	35
		% within City	34.3%	17.1%	20.0%	28.6%	0.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	23	15	12	21	3	74
		% within City	31.1%	20.3%	16.2%	28.4%	4.1%	100.0%

Table 2. *Differences between students from Split and Dubrovnik in terms of willingness to leave Croatia*

City	Willingness to				
	Willingness to leave for long but not forever	leave forever with right circumstances	Willingness to leave forever no matter what	Staying put	Have not thought about it
Dubrovnik	51.3%	12.8%	5.1%	23.1%	7.7%
Split	60.0%	20.0%	0.0%	11.4%	8.6%

Figure Captions

Figure 1 – Willingness to Leave Croatia

Figure 2 – Perception of Croatian Future

Figure 3 - How current is the problem of lack of discipline and laziness in Croatia?

Figure 4 - How current is the problem of lack of youth's interest in state's politics and society is in Croatia?

Figure 1

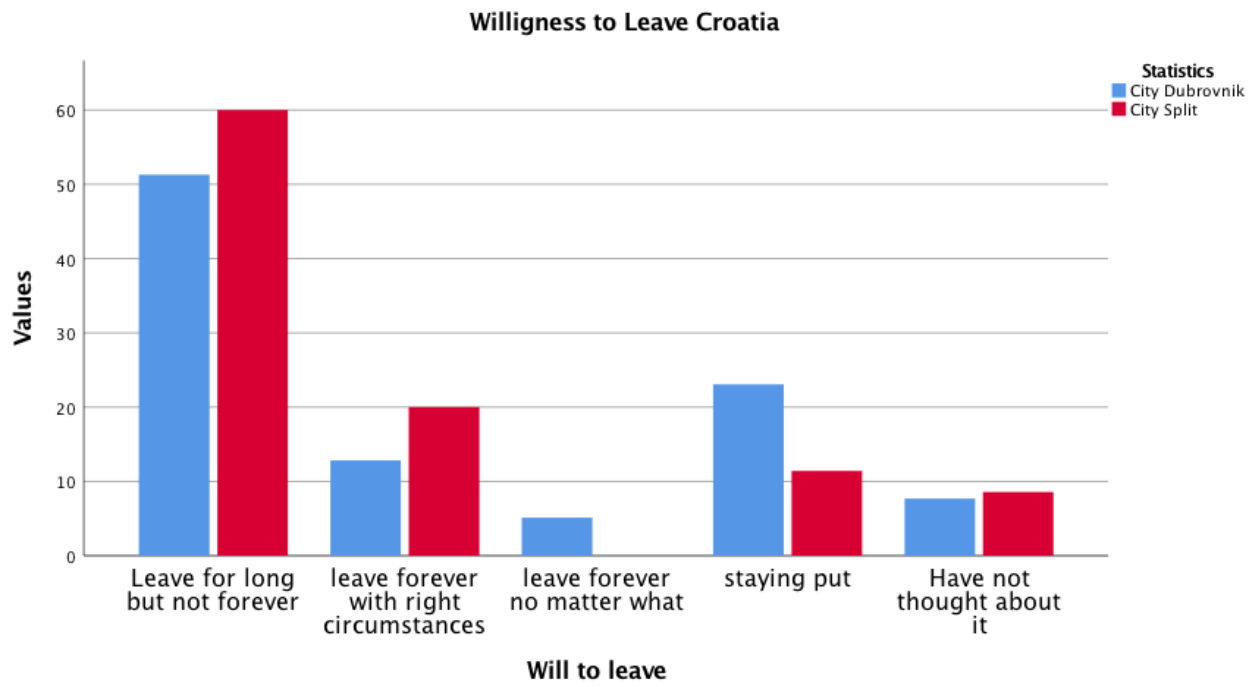


Figure 2

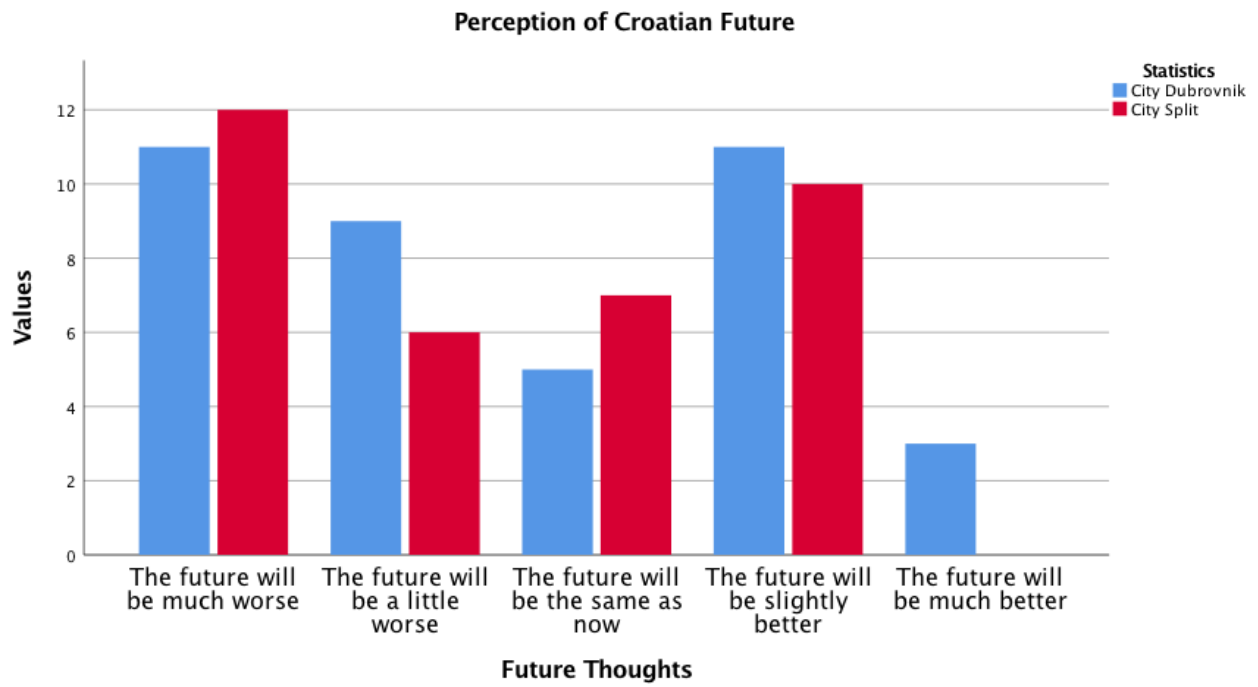
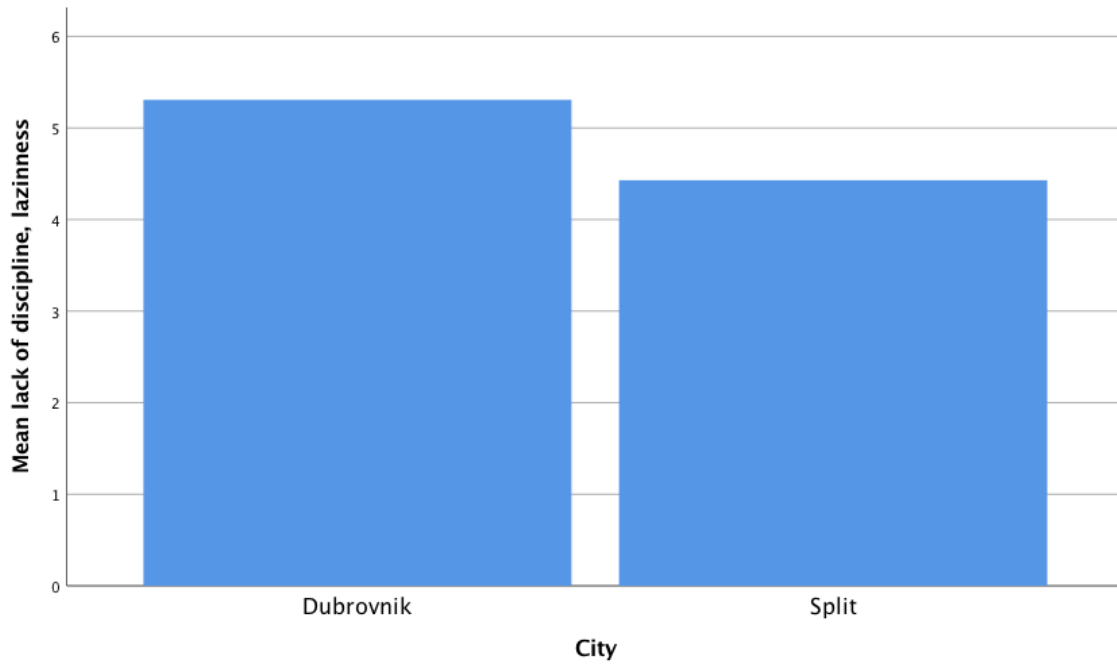


Figure 3

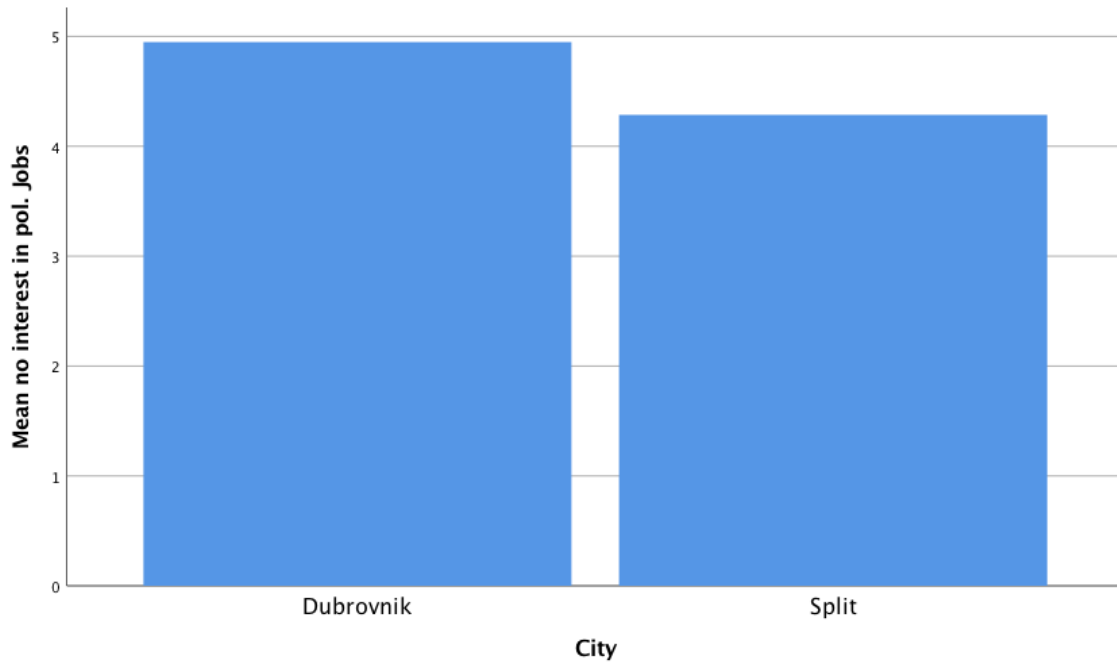
How current is the problem of lack of discipline and laziness in Croatia?



Significant difference at $p\text{-value} < 0.05$

Figure 4

How current is the problem of lack of youth's interest in state's politics and society is in Croatia?



Significant difference at $p\text{-value} < 0.05$.