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CHAPTER 24

Anchoring Factors to International Youth Labor Migration

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ABSTRACT

Economic crises increase unemployment in general, but not uniformly across the labor market. Young people are considered a particularly vulnerable group in the labor market and are more prone to international migration, especially if they have a high level of education. After Croatia's EU accession in 2013 and the subsequent removal of labor market-related obstacles, it became easier for highly skilled young people to migrate to Western European countries, resulting in a significant brain drain and impacting Croatian demographics. In order to better assess the determinants of migration, we introduced the concept of anchoring factors, i.e. factors that influence the decision to stay in the home country and not to migrate abroad, which is also our main contribution. We distributed a questionnaire to 714 students at a Croatian public college. Our results show that despite income and economic differences between the home and destination countries, there is a significant influence of perceptions of quality of life in Croatia, suggesting that students do not determine their future primarily according to career-related determinants. These findings may have implications for the development of regional and national strategies aimed at preventing brain drain and improving demographic, and thus economic, indicators in Croatia.

Key words: *Migration, Youth, Anchoring factors, Push & pull factors, Migration barriers*

JEL classification: *F2, J1*

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1. Introduction

International migration is a global issue. So far, global migration has been proportional to the growth of the world's population, but there is a high probability that general development, especially the availability of information, will facilitate and thus accelerate human mobility. However, the migration literature does not provide a comprehensive understanding of why people migrate. Researchers apply different analytical approaches across disciplines to assess the drivers of international migration decisions. The phenomenon is complex and thus requires analysis at multiple levels. Therefore, migration research focuses simultaneously on the micro and macro levels to identify the determinants that contribute to migration behavior. Micro-level factors refer to a person's personal motivations for migrating. They examine the reasons behind a person's decision to leave their home country and settle in another country. Macro-level factors examine the conditions in both the home and destination countries that serve as incentives for international migration: They include socioeconomic, political, and cultural similarities and differences between countries, usually in a comparative dyadic manner. Because both similarities and differences between countries can serve as a starting point for considering migration, the migration literature often uses the terms *push and pull factors* to categorize incentives to move abroad. Push factors are incentives to move abroad that originate in adverse circumstances in the home country, e.g., the unemployment rate, poverty, the level of corruption in the home country, etc. They need not be only at the macroeconomic level. They can also be personal in nature and relate to perceptions of insecurity, climatic preferences, turning points in life, or perceived opportunities to achieve prosperity in personal or professional life in the future. Pull factors refer to the appealing conditions in a destination country and often lead to a better standard of living due to broader employment opportunities, higher incomes, better work-life balance, etc.

In general, we argue that incentives to remain in the home country should be studied in migration discourse. In addition, we suggest that research on the determinants that lead to non-migration behavior is as important as understanding the determinants that lead to migration. We suggest that research should be conducted through a multilevel analysis of micro and macro factors on a sample of individuals with a strong desire to migrate in order to fully understand the drivers of migration. Thus, the aim of our paper is to extend a push and pull model of migration factors to include two additional factors: anchoring and barrier factors. Both groups of factors are predictors of non-migrating behavior. We assume that push and pull factors are strongly influenced by agency and therefore it is not sufficient to assess which factors drive someone out of their home country (push factors), but also what kind of threat prevents their migration behavior in an unfavorable situation (barrier factors). We therefore argue that the other end of the push side is not a pull side, but barriers that are evaluated to be a stronger threat to out-migration than maintaining the status quo. On the other hand, in a situation where a person seeks and successfully perceives opportunities in a destination country (assuming he/she has a strong intention to migrate),

there is a set of factors that may provide even greater perceived opportunities if he/she stays (anchoring factors). Thus, we also argue that the opposite end of the pull factors side is not related to push incentives, but to a perceived domestic opportunity having even greater value. This group of factors may explain why the majority of people with migration intentions do not engage in migration behavior after all - they prioritize staying (they score it higher in decision making) because it means staying in the comfort zone and, at the same time, this is perceived as more valuable than moving abroad. This idea could lead to a shift in policy focus from how to stop brain drain to finding tools to better support those who stay.

The paper is organized as follows: In the first section, we explain the push and pull factors described in the migration literature. We then develop and explain our four-factor model, which includes push, pull, anchoring, and barrier factors as vectors of a two-dimensional scale (context analysis and personal perception). In the Data and Methods section, we provide an overview of our sample and present the methods used in data analysis. In the Results and Discussion section we test our model, while in the Conclusions section we give a brief overview of our conceptual model, including a comparison of its results with previous studies in the field and highlighting its limitations.

2. Push and pull factors

Migration is a complex process in which regularities can be identified in when and where people migrate. Migrants move from low-income to high-income areas, from capital-poor to rich places and countries, and so on. Thus, migration represents a mechanism that establishes a regional spatial-economic equilibrium (Ravenstein, 1885). Because of its economic, social, political, and cultural importance, research on migration determinants goes back to classical economic development theory. Nevertheless, migration patterns often contradict the predictions of standard economic theory models (e.g., the absence of migration flows even in the presence of constant income inequality, or the presence of substantial migration flows despite the absence of an economic mismatch between home and destination countries) (Radu and Straubhaar, 2012). Given the large differences in migration behavior across regions or communities without corresponding differences in economic indicators, the question of why people migrate continues to be a focus of migration studies. Research on the determinants of migration has evolved considerably in recent decades (Williams et al., 2018; Belmonte and McMahon, 2019; Milasi, 2020). Researchers often examine migration decisions using push and pull factors in the home and destination countries (Lee, 1966; Passaris, 1989; McDowell and de Haan, 1997; de Haas, 2010; Van Hear et al., 2017; Urbanski, 2022). Push factors are usually related to fear or realistic threat (e.g., physical danger) or the perception of lower chances of succeeding in the home country. They may originate in personal life (work-life balance) or professional aspirations (e.g., not enough opportunities to advance professionally and pursue one's career). Pull factors represent the attraction of the destination country and refer to factors such as the prospect of more interesting jobs in destination countries, better salaries, gaining new

experiences, meeting new people, and discovering new cultures. In other words, models using push and pull factors explain how different conditions in the home and destination countries influence migration. Lee (1966) pointed out that high unemployment rates and low incomes in some countries drive residents out of their home country, while another country encourages them to move in by offering better prospects.

Push and pull factors have a multidimensional structure. They represent drivers that shape the broader context in which migration intentions arise and in which people make their migration decisions (Van Hear et al., 2017). They are multidimensional and include determinants at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Micro-level determinants include individual characteristics, traits, and preferences. Meso-level determinants include social relationships and membership in a particular social group (household, organizations, social networks, etc.). Macro-level determinants relate to economic, political, cultural, and other institutional conditions. The interplay of these dimensions makes it difficult to isolate determinants as universal drivers of migration. For example, poverty was considered one of the most important drivers of migration until migration costs were introduced into research on international migration and it was found that the most disadvantaged citizens (the poorest) could not afford to migrate (Tapinos, 1990; UNDP, 2003). Thus, poverty per se may not be a driver of migration, even though there is a strong link between migration and poverty (Van Hear and Sorensen, 2003). Migration researchers are therefore constantly striving to find reliable answers to the questions of how, where, and when the drivers of migration operate.

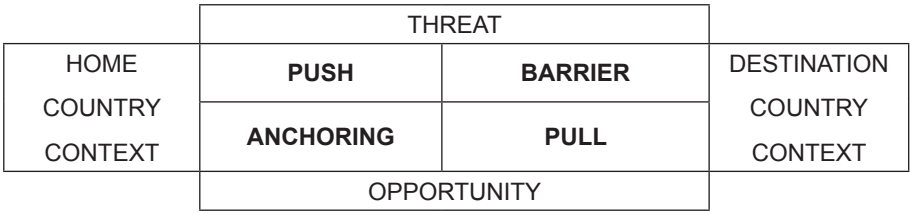
Critics of the push and pull approach point out that push and pull factors do not form a consistent explanatory framework, but rather serve as groups of determinants that are listed together (Skeldon, 1990). Moreover, push and pull factors are static variables in economic models, i.e., they describe migration as an action rather than a process with several distinct phases (from preparation to actual move) and thus do not consider the dynamic nature of the migration process, i.e., the integration of changing motivations, decisions, and the environment (de Haas, 2011).

2.1. Migration intentions and non-migrating behavior: designing a four-factor model

Migration intentions are a widely used proxy for actual migration, as studies show that they are an immediate antecedent (Mobley et al., 1979) and a reasonable predictor of migration behavior (Griffeth et al., 2000; Van Breukelen et al., 2004; Van Mol, 2016; Carling and Collins, 2017; Bakina et al., 2019; Zdrilić and Sokolić, 2022). Nevertheless, it is noted that while many people express a desire to emigrate, only a proportion of them actually engage more intensively in preparations for moving abroad, and even fewer put their intentions into action and emigrate (European Commission, 2018). Moreover, studies that examine migration incentives often focus on contextual factors at both the macro and micro levels. In other words, they consider both structural characteristics of countries of origin and/or destination and individual characteristics of people with migration aspirations (Van Mol,

2016). For example, Ådnanes (2004) examined the structural characteristics of post-communist Bulgaria and their impact on youth migration in his study of the student population. Agadjanian et al. (2008) did the same with the young population in Kyrgyzstan, as did Bastianon (2019) in Georgia and Moldova, while Apsite et al. (2012) in their study of Latvian immigrants in Sweden compared structural differences between Sweden and Latvia as countries of origin and destination. Bahna (2008) looked at the impact of the 2004 eastward enlargement of the European Union on the migration intentions of citizens of the new member states, again focusing mainly on macro-level contextual factors. Boneva & Frieze (2001), Gosling et al. (2003), Frieze et al. (2006), Tabor et al. (2015), and Shuttleworth et al. (2020), on the other hand, focused mainly on the micro level and examined in their studies how different personalities or basically different individual characteristics influence the migration decision. Thus, in all of these studies, researchers often focus on the incentives to migrate (both at the country and individual level). However, by focusing only on the reasons for migration, the studies fail to analyze the reasons that lead people to stay in their home country as a result of their migration-related decision-making process. Thus, the incentives of a much larger group of people - those who have reasons not to act - remain fairly unknown. This group of factors is composed of micro and macro factors and thus requires a multilevel approach to analysis. Because the factors that ultimately lead to the decision to stay in the home country are multiple, even if people had a strong prior desire to move abroad, and the decision context is complex, we consider the decision process followed by non-migration behavior to be as complex as that leading to actual migration behavior. Based on this line of thought, we propose the following model to explain the conceptual decision-making framework of individuals who express migration intentions (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Factors affecting global migration



Note: *Factors related to personal context encompass personal characteristics, competencies, values and attitudes, and self-perception.

Source: authors

Based on the proposed model, we assume that: A) Push and pull factors are multidimensional in nature and therefore require multilevel analysis; and B) Push and pull factors are not two sides of the same coin.

We argue that push and pull factors do not account for the same dimensions of analysis. We introduce the following dimensions of analysis when people consider to migrate internationally:

1) Structural elements - a dyadic comparison between home and destination country contexts, 2) Agency - a subjective perception of factors related to personal context (opportunities vs. threats).

Agency refers to individual freedom of choice and is related to people's abilities to translate their desires into actions (Van Hear et al., 2017). Freedom of choice is enabled and constrained by external structural elements that affect migration decisions (contextual factors). Structural conditions can defer relative to individuals' attributes (gender, age, education level, ethnicity, etc.).

In addition to the push and pull factors found in the migration literature, the combination of these two dimensions allows for the discussion of two new aggregate groups of factors relevant to decisions about international migration: Anchoring factors (incentives to stay) and Barriers (perceived obstacles to migration). While these two groups of factors can lead to a similar effect of not taking migration action, they do not have the same underlying incentives. Anchoring factors refer to the circumstances in the home country that a person subjectively finds attractive, and he/she perceives these factors as opportunities. The person decides to stay regardless of strong personal migration intentions. Therefore, a person evaluates the possibility of moving abroad as less attractive compared to the possibility of staying. On the other hand, factors that act as obstacles affect the subjective perception of one's capabilities and therefore force the person to stay despite a strong desire to migrate. Thus, moving abroad is perceived as a higher risk (a detriment to one's well-being) than not taking action. All four groups of factors should be analyzed at the micro and macro levels.

Both push and anchoring factors assess the context of the home country with respect to international migration. While push factors express the urge to migrate, anchoring factors represent an assessment of the benefits of staying despite the desire to migrate. For example, a high unemployment rate in an occupation is a classic determinant that represents a push factor. The (un) employment rate is also a contextual, macroeconomic, objective indicator of the labor market, which should provide an equidirectional incentive for the entire population in a similar occupation. However, due to subjectivity and bounded rationality, this determinant could act simultaneously as a push factor and an anchoring factor. For example, if a person assumes that he or she would not find a job in his or her home country, this could provide a strong incentive for a person with migration intentions to move to a more promising country (with a less saturated labor market in a particular occupation). On the other hand, if a person assumes that he or she has the possibility of finding a good job in his or her home country, ceteris paribus, despite high unemployment, this could lead him or her to choose to stay in the home country. In other words, push factors refer to assigning a higher value to the unfavorable context in the home country, while anchoring factors refer to assessing the same or similar determinants as more favorable to remaining in the home country.

Both pull and barrier factors refer to estimations of a destination country. If pull factors appear attractive enough to the person with migration intentions, migration behavior is highly likely to be exercised. In contrast, a person who

perceives himself or herself as not having sufficient professional and life skills to succeed in the international market will not migrate regardless of his or her migration aspirations. We can apply a similar example with two individuals who have similar levels of expertise and education, in a situation with a high employment rate. An individual who is highly employable in both the country of origin and the country of destination may still perceive the opportunities abroad as more interesting and choose to move abroad, while a similar individual who is highly employable in both countries may, ceteris paribus, perceive their skills to be less competitive in the global marketplace and therefore be forced to stay.

It should be noted that these factors do not operate in isolation from each other. There is a very complex interplay between them that makes it very difficult to assess and isolate specific and precise determinants of decisions to continue or mitigate international migration in the case of strong migration intentions. These factors are also very difficult to study because they are largely subjective and based on individual perceptions and preferences. For example, suppose that two individuals have similar levels of propensity to migrate internationally (which is very difficult to measure to begin with), the same level of education and experience in the same occupation, and similar levels of comfort in life, etc. They live in the same country (the macro factors are the same for both) and have similar knowledge about the destination country. In this case, the extent of corruption in the home country, as a theoretically relevant determinant of migration behavior, should affect both individuals equally. In contrast, the results of our study show that while the level of corruption is the same for the entire population, it only affects a subset of people in their migration decision. Thus, while one group of individuals bases their migration decision on a high level of corruption, the other group of individuals at the same time and in the same sample completely disregards this determinant in their migration-related decision-making process.

3. Data and Methods

To deepen our knowledge of the anchoring factors that influence the decision to stay in the home country and not move abroad, we used both an online and a written version of the questionnaire distributed to undergraduate and graduate students of a Croatian public Faculty of Economics and Business in February of 2022.

After excluding the missing ones, we obtained 714 valid responses. The first part of the questionnaire was related to students' demographics (age, gender, and place of residence), the study program they attend and their current year of study, their work experience, income, and parental education. The second and most important part of the questionnaire dealt with the students' plans to stay in their home country and the supposed anchoring factors influencing such a plan. Thus, the main question describing our dependent variable referred to the students' desire to stay in Croatia after completing their studies, while the remaining questions focused on various factors that might influence such a decision. Students were asked about their family

relationships and social ties in Croatia, as existing studies have shown that this is one of the most important personal factors determining individual migration decisions. They were also asked about various job-related factors, such as availability and quality of job opportunities in Croatia, working conditions (e.g., working hours, complexity of work, etc.), salary-to-work ratio, possibility of undeclared work and career development opportunities. Regarding the institutional environment, questions were asked about the education, social and health care systems and the general political situation. Questions on social quality of life, general economic situation, and cost of living covered the main socioeconomic factors considered significant in the existing migration literature.

All responses were given on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement with each statement. We used the categorical variable describing students' desire to stay in Croatia after completing their studies as our main dependent variable. We used the IBM SPSS software to apply different methods of data analysis. Pearson's chi-square test was used to examine the relationship between the dependent variable (i.e., students' desire to stay in Croatia) and other categorical variables. Then, we checked the correlation between our dependent variable and other anchoring factors, as well as those factors that are classified as important push and pull factors in the existing literature. We also examined the main barriers to actual migration abroad, as we found that these barriers are as important as the anchoring, push, and pull factors. In other words, despite a person's strong desire to migrate abroad, unfamiliarity with the language spoken in the preferred destination country or the lack of starting capital to build a new life there may prevent someone from actually emigrating. Thus, these barriers tend to work in a different direction than the push and pull factors, but unlike the anchoring factors, they focus only on the characteristics of the destination country. After finding correlations between different factors and our dependent variable, those factors that showed significant relationships were included in the model to predict students' desire to stay in their home country. Finally, the model was tested by linear regression analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

The majority of respondents were female students (76.5%) enrolled full-time in one of the undergraduate study programs (66.4%). Only 8.3% of all students surveyed attended an English-language study program, while the rest studied in their native language. In addition, only 11.5% of the respondents had no work experience, while the rest worked mainly in some student jobs, especially during the summer season. Regarding the place of residence, more than half of the surveyed students (56.7%) answered that they moved during the academic year to live closer to the faculty, which could be an indication of the internal migration in Croatia. Moreover, 70.9% of the respondents estimated their monthly income to be less than half of the average Croatian salary. Only 14.2% of them earn their own money through various jobs and scholarships, while the rest rely entirely (40.3%) or partially

(45.5%) on the financial support of their parents and family. Almost 70% of the surveyed students said that they have enough money to cover all their regular monthly expenses. However, less than half of them (41.2%) answered that they are able to cover some unexpected expenses (e.g., computer or mobile phone repair), while about one third (37.8%) manage to save some money every month. Regarding the parents' education, both parents of about half of the surveyed students have secondary education (i.e., high school diploma).

We have checked for the differences in students' desires to stay in Croatia using the Pearson's chi-square test. We controlled for differences in several other categorical variables: gender, study language (i.e., whether they are enrolled in the English-language program or studying in their native language), students' living experience abroad (minimum six months), students' studying experience abroad (minimum one month), and having partner, family/ relatives, or friends abroad. Generally, the Pearson's chi-square test is based on the simple idea of comparing the frequencies that are observed in certain categories to the frequencies that might be expected in those categories by chance (Field, 2009, 688). Thus, we have tested whether there is a difference in desire to stay in Croatia between female and male students; between those who study in English and Croatian language programs; between those who have already experienced living or studying abroad and those who haven't; and between those who have relatives or friends abroad and those who do not have such relationships.

The results showed there is a statistically significant difference only in students' desire to stay in Croatia based on their gender and language of the study program they are enrolled in. The other categorical variables proved to be insignificant for the differences between potential stayers and movers. In accordance with many previous studies that found men to be more likely to migrate, female students in our sample showed stronger desire to stay in Croatia after obtaining their university degree (χ^2 = 16,71; df = 4; p<0.05). The result showing adjusted residual > |1,96| is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Crosstabulation – gender and student's desire to stay in Croatia

			Desire to stay in Croatia after completing studies					
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Gender	Male	Count	16	15	42	45	48	166
		Expected Count	24,3	21,0	43,0	29,5	48,2	166,0
		Adjusted Residual	-2,1	-1,6	-,2	3,6	,0	
	Female	Count	88	75	142	81	158	544
		Expected Count	79,7	69, 0	141,0	96,5	157,8	544,0
		Adjusted Residual	2,1	1,6	,2	-3,6	,0	
Total		Count	104	90	184	126	206	710
		Expected Count	104,0	90,0	184,0	126,0	206,0	710,0

Source: authors' calculations

Furthermore, those students who are enrolled in the English-language study program have weaker desire to stay in Croatia, while those who study in their native language show stronger desire to stay in the home country after obtaining the university degree ($\chi 2 = 17,96$; $df = 4$; $p<0.05$). The result showing adjusted residual > |1,96| is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Crosstabulation - study language and student's desire to stay in Croatia

			Desire to stay in Croatia after completing studies					
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Study language	Croatian	Count	88	84	162	120	199	653
		Expected Count	95,4	83,5	168,8	116,5	188,9	653,0
		Adjusted Residual	-2,8	,2	-2,1	1,3	3,0	
	English	Count	16	7	22	7	7	59
		Expected Count	8,6	7,5	15,2	10,5	17,1	59,0
		Adjusted Residual	2,8	-,2	2,1	-1,3	-3,0	
Total		Count	104	91	184	127	206	712
		Expected Count	104,0	91,0	184,0	127,0	206,0	712,0

Source: authors' calculations

These results are as expected and could be reconciled with some previous findings showing that individuals who overcome language barriers and study in a multicultural environment tend to pursue their personal and professional goals more internationally and therefore have less desire to remain in their home country (as in the case of the English-language program presented).

After examining differences in the desire to remain in the home country (dependent variable) based on differences between genders and languages of the chosen study program, we examined students' perceptions of the main factors determining their migration decision (independent variables). Corruption and unethical behavior in Croatia turned out to be the most important variables representing push factors. Both pull and anchoring factors were covered by various occupational, socioeconomic, and personal factors, with only pull factors characterizing the preferred destination country abroad, while anchoring factors referred to the home country. Inadequate foreign language skills were investigated as the main barrier to foreign migration for the students surveyed. Descriptive statistics of all these factors are shown in Table 3.

First, we checked the correlations between our main dependent variable (students' desire to stay in Croatia after completing their studies) and different independent variables to decide which of them to include in our final model (the correlation matrix is shown in Table 4).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the observed variables

		N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Dependent variable	**Student's desire to stay in Croatia:** *"After graduation I would like to live in Croatia."*	712	1	5	3,34	1,392
Independent variables – push factors	**Corruption in Croatia**: *"I would migrate abroad because of the corruption rate in Croatia."*	673	1	5	4,23	,890
	Unethical behavior in Croatia: *"I would migrate abroad because of unethical use of acquaintances in Croatia."*	708	1	5	3,45	1,219
Independent variables – pull factors	**More job opportunities abroad**: *"I would migrate abroad because there are more job opportunities there."*	707	1	5	3,91	1,080
	More interesting job abroad: *"I would migrate abroad because jobs there are more interesting."*	708	1	5	3,70	1,120
	Better salary abroad: *"I would migrate abroad because of a better salary there."*	707	1	5	4,21	,997
Independent variables – anchoring factors	**Chances of finding an adequate job in Croatia**: *"I would stay in Croatia because I have a chance to find an adequate job after completing my studies."*	711	1	5	3,57	1,115
	Better life quality in Croatia: "*I would stay in Croatia because the quality of life here is better than abroad."*	711	1	5	3,07	1,295
	Family and friends in Croatia: "*I would stay in Croatia because of my family and friends here."*	712	1	5	3,97	1,118
Independent variables - migration barriers	**Language barrier:** "*I would not migrate abroad because I do not know the foreign language of another country."*	712	1	5	1,92	1,161

Table 4: Correlation matrix

		Desire to stay in Croatia after completing studies	Chances of finding adequate job in Croatia	I don't feel like migrating because of language barrier	Better salary abroad	Family and friends in Croatia	Better life quality in Croatia than abroad	Corruption in Croatia	Unethical behavior in Croatia	More interesting job abroad	More job opportunities abroad
Students' desire to stay in Croatia	Pearson Correlation	1	,233**	,207**	-,232**	,423**	,241**	-,052	-,151**	-,283**	-,154**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	,181	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	712	711	712	706	711	710	672	707	707	706
Corruption in Croatia	Pearson Correlation	-,052	-,061	-,133**	,207**	-,010	-,124**	1	,331**	,149**	,233**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,181	,115	<,001	<,001	,800	,001		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	672	671	672	668	673	672	673	670	669	668
Unethical behavior in Croatia	Pearson Correlation	-,151**	-,181**	-,117**	,421**	-,144**	-,235**	,331**	1	,373**	,463**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	,002	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001
	N	707	706	707	706	708	707	670	708	707	706
More job opportunities abroad	Pearson Correlation	-,154**	-,231**	-,105**	,657**	-,117**	-,247**	,233**	,463**	,530**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	,005	<,001	,002	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	
	N	706	705	706	705	706	705	668	706	706	707
More interesting job abroad	Pearson Correlation	-,283**	-,158**	-,197**	,587**	-,156**	-,211**	,149**	,373**	1	,530**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	707	706	707	706	707	706	669	707	708	706
Better salary abroad	Pearson Correlation	-,232**	-,205**	-,140**	1	-,114**	-,260**	,207**	,421**	,587**	,657**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		,002	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	706	705	706	707	706	705	668	706	706	705
Chances of finding an adequate job in Croatia	Pearson Correlation	,233**	1	,039	-,205**	,194**	,254**	-,061	-,181**	-,158**	-,231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		,304	<,001	<,001	<,001	,115	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	711	711	711	705	710	709	671	706	706	705
Better life quality in Croatia	Pearson Correlation	,241**	,254**	,196**	-,260**	,179**	1	-,124**	-,235**	-,211**	-,247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	710	709	710	705	711	711	672	707	706	705
Family and friends in Croatia	Pearson Correlation	,423**	,194**	,175**	-,114**	1	,179**	-,010	-,144**	-,156**	-,117**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	,002		<,001	,800	<,001	<,001	,002
	N	711	710	711	706	712	711	673	708	707	706
Language barrier	Pearson Correlation	,207**	,039	1	-,140**	,175**	,196**	-,133**	-,117**	-,197**	-,105**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	,304		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	,002	<,001	,005
	N	712	711	712	706	711	710	672	707	707	706

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: authors' calculations

All variables showed a significant coefficient with our dependent variable, except for the corruption in Croatia, which is why this variable was not included in our final model. Accordingly, the linear regression analysis has been applied. Its results show that the model significantly explains almost 28% of the variance in the dependent variable: R=52.9; R^2=27.9; $F_{9,688}$=29.64; p< 0.05 (Tables 5-7).

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,529[a]	,279	,270	1,190

Source: authors' calculations

Table 6: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	377,511	9	41,946	29,638	<,001[b]
	Residual	973,711	688	1,415		
	Total	1351,222	697			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' desire to stay in Croatia after completing studies

b. Predictors: Unethical behavior in Croatia, More job opportunities abroad, More interesting job abroad, Better salary abroad, Chances of finding adequate job in Croatia, Better life quality in Croatia, Family and friends in Croatia, Language barrier, Gender.

Source: authors' calculations

Table 7: Linear regression coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
B		Std. Error	Beta		t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1,512	,364		4,150	<,001
	Unethical behavior in Croatia	,024	,043	,021	,555	,579
	More job opportunities abroad	,124	,060	,096	2,074	,038
	More interesting job abroad	-,216	,052	-,173	-4,148	<,001
	Better salary abroad	-,131	,066	-,094	-1,997	,046
	Chances of finding adequate job in Croatia	,143	,043	,115	3,319	<,001
	Better life quality in Croatia	,106	,038	,099	2,789	,005
	Family and friends in Croatia	,440	,042	,354	10,429	<,001
	Language barrier	,101	,041	,084	2,475	,014
	Gender	-,220	,109	-,067	-2,022	,044

Dependent Variable: Students' desire to stay in Croatia after completing studies

Source: authors' calculations

All pull factors related to job characteristics abroad (i.e., job opportunities: $\beta=0.12$; $p<0.05$; job quality and interest: $\beta=-0.22$; $p<0.05$; and salary: $\beta=-0.13$; $p<0.05$) were found to be significant in the respondent students' desire to stay in their home country. However, job opportunities abroad did not have the expected negative relationship with our dependent variable, so this factor needs to be further investigated and tested on a larger young population. Among the anchoring factors, expectations of finding a suitable job in Croatia ($\beta=0.14$; $p<0.05$), quality of life ($\beta=0.11$; $p<0.05$), and family relationships and social ties ($\beta=0.44$; $p<0.05$) played a significant role in predicting future migration considerations of our student respondents. They all had the expected positive relationship with our dependent variable, which in other words means that the possibility of finding a job in the field and the expected good quality of life in the home country, as well as strong ties with family and friends there, contribute to the preference to stay there rather than move abroad. Unfamiliarity with the language spoken in the preferred destination country proved to be a significant barrier to moving abroad ($\beta=0.1$; $p<0.05$), even when there is a desire and intention to migrate. Finally, unethical behavior in Croatia did not prove to be a significant push factor in the decision to stay in or leave Croatia.

The vast majority (over 70%) of students in our sample have a strong desire to leave their home country after graduation. Thus, they consider international migration as an option for building their future. These findings are in line with some other previous studies such as that of van Mol (2016), who used the Flash Eurobarometer survey to sample young people (aged 16-30) from all 28 EU Member States, and that of Milasi (2020), who examined the migration aspirations of the same population in 139 different countries during 2010-2016. The determinants of migration are the focus of such studies that analyze migration decision-making processes and secular trends and fluctuations in migration flows. These determinants are usually divided into push and pull factors. The results of our study show that occupational pull factors such as the number of job opportunities, more interesting jobs, and a better salary abroad are significant for the intention of Croatian students to leave their home country. This is consistent with the findings of the study on migration of young people from the Middle East and North Africa to European countries, which identifies employment status, salary, and other aspects of employment as the most important pull factors (Dibeh et al., 2019). Although it may appear that pull factors are counterbalanced by push factors, we propose a different perspective on the drivers of international migration. We argue that push factors are related to the home country context and the perception of a destination country as an alternative option is the next rational iteration in the migration decision process, but not the immediate one. The first option is weighing the pros and cons of remaining in the home country as a more convenient approach. Therefore, we introduce two additional groups of factors: Anchoring and Barrier factors. They refer to the study of staying or not migrating as an alternative to migration behavior among people with strong migration intentions. Anchoring factors explore the positive side of staying and affect non-migration behavior as an outcome of the migration-related decision-making process. They lead to compare and positively

evaluate the characteristics of the home country. At the macro level, the students in our sample estimated that they had a good chance of finding a job in their profession in their home country, even though youth unemployment was objectively high in several subsequent years. At the micro level, significant anchoring factors were associated with one's comfort zone, where friends and family are located. This is consistent with the findings of Hoffman et al.'s (2015) study, in which poorer relationships with family and friends were associated with a higher likelihood of youth migration aspirations. Other significant anchoring factors included geographic location, cultural fit, and pleasant climate, which were rated higher than some other economic and political factors. In contrast, it is the barrier factors that discourage people from moving. In our sample, students who rate their language skills lower tend to believe that they would not be successful in the international market and are therefore forced to stay in their home country despite strong migration intentions. This is consistent with several other studies that have found that knowing multiple languages has a positive impact on migration aspirations (Nowotny, 2014; Golovics, 2020; Marrow and Klekowski von Koppenfels, 2020).

5. Conclusion

The logic of the argument in our study is as follows: If migrations are usually studied in terms of migration intentions and aspirations, and only a small fraction of these tendencies seem to translate into actual migrations, then more attention should be paid to the incentives that lead potential migrants to change their minds. Push and pull factors are not sufficient for this purpose, as they do not cover all dimensions of an individual's migration decision. Therefore, we add additional elements that cover the comparison between the home and destination country contexts as well as the personal context - i.e., individual opportunities and threats. We refer to these elements as anchoring factors and migration barriers. Including them in migration research is the most important contribution of our study, as these factors complete the construction of migration theories by helping us to better understand this complex phenomenon.

Limitations of the study arise from the sample and the purpose of the study. We designed this study primarily to explore push and pull factors, and anchoring factors came to our attention as a byproduct of our initial investigation. The broader research plan, including a specific survey, was to be developed with an objective to specifically exploring the importance of anchoring and barriers factors on international migration decisions.

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