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## **THE MOBILITY AND RESOURCEFULNESS OF COLLEGE GRADUATES IN A REGIONAL LABOUR MARKET (THE EXAMPLE OF WEST POMERANIA PROVINCE)**

### **Abstract**

This paper analyses the local mobility and entrepreneurship of graduates. Entrepreneurship and mobility development is of a key importance for country's growth and development. The practitioners in such fields as: economics, engineering, sociology, psychology, management and many others are interested in the issue of entrepreneurship and mobility. Widely understood entrepreneurship and mobility depend on many conditions. They can be generally divided into two main groups:

1. internal conditions (subjective),
2. external conditions (objective).

Describing issue of economic conditions of entrepreneurship and mobility in Poland, attention should be paid to variability of economic changes during the transformation. Entities on the market are subject to changes. Their structure, function, range of activity, ownership, origin of capital, specialization or other elements deciding on their existence- all of them are subject to changes. Also households change their habits and buying customs. It results in necessity of conducting market researches and identification its needs. It's connected with recognition of consumers' preferences, appropriate shaping of sales, suitable choice of distribution channels, and stimulation of sales.

Transformations taking place in Poland in 1989, had also an impact on the labour market. At that time a serious problem emerged (it seemed that it hadn't existed before) namely: the unemployment understood as a visible aspect of the phenomena. Some groups seem to be less vulnerable to the unemployment and some of them belong to so called "groups of risk". The graduates belong to one of the most endangered groups by the unemployment because they graduate from schools, lack in experience, in many cases, have to do military service before starting a first job, have uncertain family situation, expect too much and they are going to continue their education. All mentioned factors cause that the graduates (generally young people) have always had problems with starting their professional carriers.

This article analyses and evaluates a situation of the academy graduates on the labour market in the West Pomerania province. Questionnaire research has been made to get information about the situation of academy graduates. Questionnaire research has been made in West Pomerania province. This province was considered the average in Poland. This research was given answers to questions about problems:

- to look for employment out of province by academy graduates,
- to look for employment abroad by academy graduates,
- to start own business

and about conditions to take these decisions.

**Key words:** labour market, entrepreneurship, mobility, graduates, local labour market.

## Introduction

Polish labour market, both regional and involving the whole country, is characterized by considerable instability which may be seen in the fact there is a market surplus, the indicator of which is a high unemployment rate. As far as Poland is concerned, it stood at 19,1% at the end of 2004. In West Pomerania province, which occupied the last but one position in the national ranking, it stood at 27,4%.

Lack of stability is also a feature of graduates' labour market, including (to a greater and greater extent) college graduates, both taking national and regional (West Pomerania province) into consideration.

In the present paper, preferences as to the actions which young people graduating from higher education institutions in West Pomerania province would take in order to avoid a status of the unemployed will be presented. Special attention was paid to resourceful actions and mobility. In order to do that, materials published by Central Statistical Office (GUS) as well as Labour Offices and the results of questionnaire surveys conducted directly on the group of young graduates in West Pomerania province were used.

## Research test

College graduates constitute a special group in labour market. It is a group which has been singled out because of abilities, qualifications and- most of all- the fact that they take up their jobs for the first time.

It is not an accident that this group was distinguished in the context of a labour market. Polish labour market has undergone radical changes over recent years which has not been without an influence on the situation of a graduate in this market. College graduates' interest in this matter results from the fact that these people constitute larger and larger proportion of all the unemployed graduates.

Young people, and also graduates, play a special role in society. This fact is not only due to the necessity of constant satisfying their needs but also due to their anticipatory role in forming qualification-professional structure and proper development of managing society. Smooth entering the labour market is both in the interest of a graduate and the entire economy. (Mlonek, 1991, p. 6)

Costs, both individual and social, are connected with the unemployment of graduates who are generally young people. Unemployed young people do not earn their living so they have to be supported on their families' incomes as well as on unemployment benefits. In addition, it should be borne in mind that young people reimburse the expenses spent on their education only when they take up paid work. (Frąckiewicz, 1992, p. 4) Thus, unemployment wastes costs spent on education and causes a great loss of qualifications. (Gmytrasiewicz M., Pastwa M., 1991, p.4)

Qualifications and abilities acquired during education are very often not enough to begin adult life without problems. Such a situation places graduates in a difficult position and requires determination and many other concessions made during looking for the first job. The main feature of the modern labour market is its constant changeability and basic processes which take place within it are a challenge for people who are resourceful, creative and not afraid of changes. A young person who takes up his or her professional career has to be aware

of the fact that in the age of globalisation, “digitisation” and decentralisation in which information and time are goods of the highest value, keeping up with changes may determine the success in seeking employment.

During analysing a great problem, i.e. the graduates’ situation in the labour market, available and secondary sources of information turned out to be not enough. In order to identify the situation of college graduates in West Pomeranian labour market, a survey by questionnaires was conducted. People who took part in this survey, **held a college diploma and, at the moment of research, were registered as unemployed in a county labour office in West Pomerania province and had not been 27 years old yet.**

The questionnaire survey, in which the unemployed college graduates took part, was carried out in county labour offices in West Pomerania province, namely in the ones where unemployed college graduates constituted a large part in the total number of the unemployed graduates during the period from June 1, 2004 to April 30, 2005. With the use of statistical tools, a minimal research test was established at the level of 600 persons.

### **The situation in the labour market in West Pomerania Province**

A high rate of registered unemployment is one of the features which distinguish West Pomerania province from other provinces in Poland. It stood at 27,4% on December 31, 2004. With regard to the unemployment rate, West Pomerania province occupied the last but one position in Poland, outstripping only Warmia-Mazuria province in which the unemployment rate, on December 31, 2004, stood at 29,2%.

What characterizes unemployment in West Pomerania province is a great geographical diversity. This phenomenon may be measured with the use of the unemployment rate which, as a matter of fact, differ considerably in particular counties of the province. The lowest unemployment rate on December 31, 2004 was recorded in Szczecin where it stood at 15,3% and this was the only case in the entire province when it was lower than the average rate given for the entire Poland. A relatively low, in comparison with other counties of West Pomerania province, unemployment rate was recorded in two other cities (with the rights of a county), namely Koszalin and Świnoujście, as well as Kołobrzeg county where it was slightly higher than the figures given for the entire country and stood at the level slightly higher than 20%. On the other hand, in the remaining counties, the unemployment rate stood at a very high level, much higher than the unemployment rate given for Poland. The highest unemployment rate was recorded in the following counties: **county of Świdwin, county of Łobez, county of Drawsko**, in which it exceeded 40% as well as **county of Białogard** and **county of Koszalin** where it nearly stood at 40%.

The unemployment rate was the highest in counties distant from the capital of the province, Szczecin, especially in counties which had been parts of former provinces: koszalińskie and słupskie. In all the counties of koszaliński sub region, except for the city of Koszalin as well as county of Kołobrzeg and county of Wałcz, the unemployment rate considerably exceeded 35%.<sup>1</sup> However, in szczeciński sub region the following counties were characterized by the highest unemployment rate: county of Łobez, county of Gryfice, county of Choszczno, county of Kamień Pomorski and county of Pyrzyce. In these counties, the unemployment rate stood at 35% or even higher. Yet, it exceeded 40% only in county of Łobez.

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<sup>1</sup> The following counties are included in koszaliński sub region: county of Białogard, county of Drawsko, county of Kołobrzeg, county of Koszalin, county of Sławno, county of Szczecinek, county of Świdwin, county of Wałcz and the city of Koszalin.

### Higher education in West Pomeranian Province

In order to present resourceful actions and mobility of college graduates in the labour market, specifying education level in West Pomerania province seems to be significant.

During fourteen years, from 1990/1991 to 2003/2004, the number of students grew from 403 800 to more than 1 800 000, so it increased by more than 360%.<sup>2</sup> Educational boom could be seen in the growth in the number of students, but, at the same time, the number of schools became greater. During the academic year 1999/2000 there were 277 higher education institutions in Poland. Four years later there were 390, so their number increased by 40% (Table 1).

Table 1. Higher education institutions in Poland from 1999 to 2004

Year	Higher education institutions	Students		Graduates	
		altogether	including full-time studies	altogether	including full-time studies
	state on November 30			state from the previous academic year	
1999/2000	277	1421277	635099	212924	91890
2000/2001	300	1572533	687857	258518	104027
2001/2002	334	1706455	760489	301215	114748
2002/2003	367	1789055	787254	340243	123339
2003/2004	390	1846464	873395	363807	132955

Source: own compilation based on GUS (Central Statistical Office) data, The Statistical Yearbook of Provinces 2004- p. 509; 2003- p. 211; 2002- p.177; 2001-p.171; 2000- p. 169.

The situation in educational market at a higher level in West Pomerania province during 1999/2004 developed similarly to the situation in the entire country. In this case, the growth in the number of students was accompanied by the growth in the number of higher education institutions (Table 2).

Table 2. Higher education institutions in West Pomerania province from 1999 to 2004

Year	Higher education institutions	Students		Graduates	
		altogether	including full-time studies	altogether	including full-time studies
	state on November 30			state from the previous academic year	
1999/2000	13	94505	35166	14521	5280
2000/2001	15	93419	36876	18225	6303
2001/2002	16	91380	39402	19804	6435
2002/2003	18	91917	41505	19414	6729
2003/2004	18	88045	42836	18724	6902

Source: own compilation based on GUS (Central Statistical Office) data. The Statistical Yearbook of Provinces 2004- p.509; 2003- p. 211; 2002- p. 177; 2001- p. 171; 2000-p. 169.

University of Szczecin is definitely the biggest college in West Pomerania province. In the academic year 1999/2000, more than 27 000 people studied there. This number increased till the academic year 2003/2004 by 23,6%, to more than 34 000. In the academic year 1999/2000, 30% of all the students in West Pomerania province studied at University of Szczecin. This percentage increased to more than 38% four years later (see Table 3).

Subsequent positions on the list of colleges in West Pomerania province presenting the

<sup>2</sup> based on GUS (Central Statistical Office) data.

number of their students were taken by: Koszalin University of Technology and Szczecin University of Technology. Both universities could boast of more than 10 000 students in the academic year 1999/2000 as well as 2003/2004. It should also be noticed that the number of students at both universities remained the same in the academic year 1999/2000 as well as 2003/2004 (see Table 3).

Apart from already mentioned colleges, there are three more state colleges in West Pomerania province, namely: Agricultural University, the Pomeranian Medical University and The Maritime University (previously Szczecin Maritime University). Out of these three colleges, it was Agricultural University which could boast of the greatest number and dynamics of students. In the academic year 1999/2000, 7 575 people studied at it, whereas till 2003/2004 this number grew by 44,22% and amounted to 10 925 students. The remaining two colleges, because of their specific educational profile, had a considerably smaller number of students than other state schools (see Table 3).

Beside state colleges, there are private ones in the higher education market in West Pomerania province. The West Pomeranian Business School is the biggest now. In the academic year 2002/2003, 4 293 people studied at it.<sup>3</sup> In the academic year 1999/2000, Baltic School of Arts was the biggest private college in West Pomerania province. The number of students amounted to 19 000, yet now it is slightly bigger than 2 000.<sup>4</sup>

Table 3. Colleges along with the number of students in West Pomerania province from 1999 to 2004

The name of college	The number of students in the following academic years				
	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004
<b>PROVINCE- ALTOGETHER</b>	91 860	92 612	90 283	91 250	89 647
<b>State colleges- altogether</b>	66 400	72 326	76 702	78 899	78 200
<b>University of Szczecin</b>	27 583	30 117	31 961	34 292	34 090
<b>Koszalin University of Technology</b>	15 729	17 158	17 675	16 783	15 748
<b>Szczecin University of Technology</b>	11 008	11 785	12 309	12 296	11 779
<b>Agricultural University of Szczecin</b>	7 575	8 590	9 654	10 223	10 925
<b>The Pomeranian Medical Academy</b>	1 612	1 646	1 698	1 759	1 844
<b>Szczecin Maritime Academy (The Maritime University of Szczecin)</b>	2 893	3 030	3 405	3 546	3 814
<b>Private colleges- altogether</b>	25 460	20 286	13 581	12 351	11 447
<b>the West Pomeranian Business School</b>	2 710	3 413	4 869	4 293	lack of data
<b>Higher School of Humanities, Association for Adult Education in Szczecin</b>	1 710	2 002	2 342	2 249	lack of data
<b>The Higher School of Applied Arts in Szczecin</b>	163	183	187	194	lack of data
<b>Baltic School of Arts in Koszalin</b>	19 115	12 431	3 469	2 177	lack of data
<b>The Higher School of Public Administration</b>	1 505	1 504	1 332	1 170	lack of data
<b>The Higher Vocational School "Oeconomicus", Polish Economic Association</b>	185	359	428	406	lack of data
<b>The Higher School of European Integration</b>	72	185	349	404	lack of data
<b>The Higher School of Management</b>	x	141	244	343	lack of data
<b>The Higher School of Foreign Languages and Tourism</b>	x	68	x	x	lack of data

<sup>3</sup> Detailed data concerning the number of students at private colleges were presented only till the academic year 2002/2003, due to the change in the form of publishing these data by GUS.

<sup>4</sup> Such a significant decrease in the number of students resulted from internal problems of the college which had a financial character. The loss of the college's prestige could have been a reason, as well.

The Higher Vocational School "Collegium Balticum"	x	x	215	500	lack of data
The Higher Economic-Tourist School	x	x	146	303	lack of data
The Higher School of Foreign Languages	x	x	x	161	lack of data
The Higher Technical-Economic School	x	x	x	151	lack of data

Source: own compilation based on Szczecin Statistical Office

The Statistical Yearbook of West Pomerania province 2000, Statistical Office in Szczecin, Szczecin 2000, pp. 358-361, The Statistical Yearbook of West Pomerania province 2001, Vol. 1, Statistical Office in Szczecin, Szczecin 2001, pp. 275-279, The Statistical Yearbook of West Pomerania province 2002, Vol. 1, Statistical Office in Szczecin, Szczecin 2002, pp. 270-275, Higher Education Institutions and their finances in 2002, GUS (Central Bureau for Statistics), Warsaw 2003, p. 16, Higher Education Institutions and their finances in 2003, GUS, Warsaw 2004, p. 10.

### Unemployment among college graduates in West Pomerania Province

On the last day of 1999, there were 5 894 unemployed graduates registered in labour offices in West Pomerania province. Similarly to data concerning the entire Poland (collected in May 2004), their number decreased in comparison with December 31, 2004. The drop in numbers was also recorded as far as the comparison between the situation on May 31, 2004 and December 31, 1999 was concerned. The decline stood at 4,60%. However, when one analyses the number of unemployed graduates registered in labour offices in West Pomerania province on the last days of 2003 and 1999, it can be noticed that this number increased by 12,37% (Table 4).<sup>5</sup>

Table 4. Unemployed graduates according to the education level in West Pomerania province from 1999 to 2000 (according to the state on December 31) and in May 2004 (the state at the end of the month)

Year	Education					
	Higher	College and secondary vocational	Grammar school	Vocational secondary	The remaining	Altogether
	states at the end of a term					
1999	479	1 858	793	2 626	138	5 894
2000	791	2 163	844	2 677	234	6 709
2001	1 147	2 331	855	2 546	216	7 095
2002	1 452	2 049	960	1 937	203	6 601
2003	1 629	1 747	1 129	1 882	236	6 623
2004 (May)	1 377	1 229	930	1 889	198	5 623
2004/1999	+187,47%	-33,85%	+17,28%	-28,07%	+43,48%	-4,60%
2003/1999	+240,08%	-5,97%	+42,37%	-28,33%	+71,01%	+12,37%

Source: own compilation based on Szczecin WUP (Provincial Labour Office) data, Department of Information, Research and Analyses.

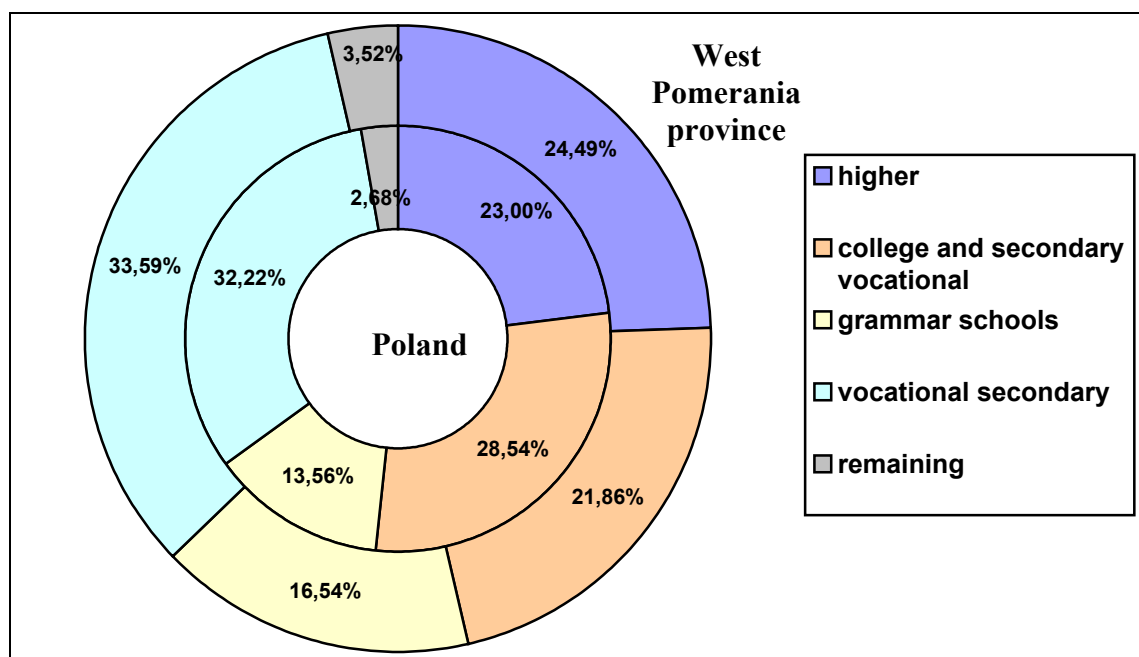
<sup>5</sup> In Poland, the number of unemployed graduates decreased by 14,56% in May 2004, in comparison with December 1999. Thus, this decrease was larger in comparison to West Pomerania province. However, in December 2003, in comparison to December 1999, the number of unemployed graduates in Poland increased by 5,40%. In West Pomerania province, this number increased by 6,97%, whatsoever.

The structure of unemployed graduates in May in West Pomerania province differed very slightly from the structure of unemployed graduates in the entire country. In West Pomerania province, in comparison with Poland, college graduates constituted a larger group in the community of all the unemployed graduates. Yet, the difference was not considerable and amounted to 1,49 (percentage point). The graduates of grammar schools constituted smaller proportion in Poland in comparison with West Pomerania province. It was larger only in the case of the graduates of vocational colleges and vocational secondary schools. In May 2004, these graduates constituted 21,86% of all the jobless graduates registered in West Pomerania province, while in the case of statistics concerning the entire Poland, this percentage amounted to 28,54% (Chart 1).

In the case of college graduates, the most numerous group was recorded in May 2004 in Szczecin. Circa 40% of all the graduates who had a diploma of a higher education institution and did not have a job were registered there. The city of Koszalin occupied the second position in May 2004, according to the number of unemployed college graduates. There were 101 of them registered in the labour office there. They constituted 7,33% of all the unemployed graduates who had higher education and were registered in labour offices in the province.

It can be noticed that counties situated nearby academic centres, Szczecin and Koszalin, had relatively great numbers of jobless college graduates. The following were included into that group: county of Stargard, county of Police, county of Goleniów, county of Gryfino, county of Szczecinek.

Chart 1. The structure of unemployed graduates of post-primary schools in Poland and in West Pomerania province according to the state in May 2004



Source: own compilation based on WUP (Provincial Labour Office) Szczecin data and Information System of Labour Offices, <http://www.praca.gov.pl>

In the remaining counties of West Pomerania province, college graduates did not constitute the most numerous group any more, yet one might find such regions where the unemployment rate exceeded or nearly amounted to 20%. Such a situation was observed in the following counties: county of Kołobrzeg, county of Police, county of Stargard

Szczeciński, county of Wałcz, county of Goleniów, county of Kamień Pomorski, county of Pyrzyce and the city of Świnoujście.

On the other hand, people who received higher education constituted the smallest percentage in the group of unemployed graduates in May 2004 in the following counties: county of Koszalin, county of Białogard, county of Drawsko.

In the face of unfavourable situation of college graduates who are seeking employment in West Pomeranian labour market, specifying alternative actions which could be taken by them becomes necessary. A readiness of unemployed college graduates to look for a job outside the region and set up their own business enterprises is a question which seems to be particularly crucial.

### The mobility of college graduates

One of opportunities which the labour market creates for college graduates due to difficulties in finding employment in West Pomeranian labour market is the fact that it provides them with estimates of the chances of finding job in other regions of the country as well as abroad.

Table 5 shows declarations of unemployed college graduates who took part in the questionnaire survey. These declarations refer to the opportunities of job-hunting outside the region.

Table 5. The readiness of unemployed graduates to change their dwelling places in order to take up a job

Answer	The number of people	Percentage
Definitely no	34	5,56%
Rather no	118	19,31%
Neither yes, nor no	61	9,98%
Rather yes	251	41,08%
Definitely yes	147	24,08%

Source: own compilation based on conducted questionnaire surveys.

Table 5 shows that almost every fourth respondent, while answering the question about potential *readiness to change his or her dwelling place to look for a job*, chose *definitely yes* option, whereas 41,08% - *rather yes*. It means that the vast majority of jobless college graduates (since as many as 65,14%) would treat the change of dwelling place seriously if they found jobs. The group of undecided people was small. They could neither confirm, nor deny they would leave in order to take up jobs. This group included every tenth person out of the whole group that consisted of 611 respondents.

Yet, certain proportion of unemployed graduates was against changing their dwelling places even if they were successful in finding employment in other town, although only 34 graduates were absolutely sure of such a choice, which constituted 5,56% of the whole group. The remaining 19,32% of the respondents were of the opinion that they would rather not decide to leave.

Table 6 shows the readiness of unemployed college graduates to change their dwelling places in order to take up employment depending on the size of the town they came from.



Table 6. The readiness of jobless graduates to change their dwelling places in order to take up jobs depending on the place where they are registered

The place where a respondent is registered	The percentage of respondents who chose <i>rather yes</i> or <i>definitely yes</i> answer
Country	63,44%
Town up to 5000 residents	67,80%
Town from 5001 up to 10 000 residents	67,42%
Town from 10 001 up to 50 000 residents	71,58%
Town from 50 001 up to 100 000 residents	62,07%
Town over 100 000 residents	53,91%

Source: own compilation based on conducted questionnaire surveys.

The greatest readiness to change the place of residence in order to take up a job was declared by people who came from towns in which the number of residents exceeded 10 000, but was not larger than 50 000. As far as this group was concerned, more than 70% of respondents chose *rather yes* or *definitely yes* answer. This percentage amounted to 67% among people who came from towns of not more than 10 000 residents, among country dwellers: 63,44%. However, the least determined to leave were residents of big cities, the population of which exceeded 100 000 people. In this group, 53,91% of jobless college graduates would potentially decide to leave.

The way that unemployed college graduates replied to the question concerning their mobility showed they were very determined to look for and get a desired job. Certainly, it should be borne in mind that the respondents' answers are just declarations which might not be fulfilled when it comes to real decision about changing the place of residence. On the other hand, these answers show that the respondents are, at least, aware of the fact that such a dilemma could, sooner or later, appear in their lives. If there is no job in a hometown, one ought to look for it somewhere else, whereas when one finds it, he or she should leave and fulfil oneself in a professional job in the place where it is possible.

Yet, where the college graduates from West Pomerania province would seek employment?

Graduates who participated in the survey were asked to state *in which Polish city one may find a well-paid job most easily?* The respondents had an opportunity to select at most three cities, starting from the one they viewed as the most suitable. The results were analysed and presented in two variants.

The first variant consisted in considering only this city which a respondent chose as the first one. It allowed for selecting the most significant potential destinations that the graduates would choose as far as job-hunting is concerned. Table 7 shows the ranking of cities in which, according to the respondents, finding job is the easiest, in accordance with the first computational variant. This variant was supplemented with data concerning the unemployment rate in relation to the state on December 31, 2004.

Table 7. The ranking of cities in which, according to the respondents, finding a well-paid job is the easiest; the unemployment rate in these cities in 2004 is shown as well

City	The number of times it was mentioned as the first one	The percentage of times it was mentioned as the first one	The unemployment rate	The position in the ranking	
				according to appraisals	according to the unemployment rate.*
<i>Warszawa</i>	380	65,18%	6,5%	I	I
<i>Poznań</i>	114	19,55%	7,0%	II	II
<i>Szczecin</i>	29	4,97%	15,3%	III	XIII
<i>Kraków</i>	19	3,26%	7,5%	IV	III
<i>Wrocław</i>	18	3,09%	12,4%	V	X
<i>Gdańsk</i>	9	1,54%	11,4%	VI	IX
<i>Trójmiasto</i>	3	0,51%	-	VII	-
<i>Gorzów Wlkp.</i>	2	0,34%	17,59%	VIII	XV
<i>Bydgoszcz</i>	1	0,17%	11,2%	IX	VIII
<i>Gdynia</i>	1	0,17%	9,5%	IX	VII
<i>Katowice</i>	1	0,17%	7,7%	IX	IV
<i>Lublin</i>	1	0,17%	12,5%	IX	XI
<i>Łódź</i>	1	0,17%	18,2%	IX	XVI
<i>Nowy Sącz</i>	1	0,17%	16,9%	IX	XIV
<i>Rzeszów</i>	1	0,17%	9,3%	IX	VI
<i>Sopot</i>	1	0,17%	8,4%	IX	V
<i>Toruń</i>	1	0,17%	13,1%	IX	XII
TOTAL	583	100%	-	-	-

\*the lower the unemployment rate, the higher the position in the ranking

Source: own compilation based on the research and structural data of **Information Bulletin of Labour Offices** <http://www.praca.gov.pl>

The first place was taken by Warsaw which was mentioned by 380 people so 65,28% of respondents who chose at least one city. Poznań occupied the second position and was chosen by 20% of the respondents. It should be emphasized that the gap between the capital of Wielkopolska and Warsaw was considerable. At the same time, Poznań considerably outstripped the third city in the ranking, namely Szczecin. The fact that Szczecin occupied such a high position was certainly surprising. However, the percentage of respondents who chose this city was small. While Warsaw was mentioned by 380 people and Poznań, which occupied the second position, by 114 respondents, Szczecin was chosen by only 29 people which meant that by only every 20<sup>th</sup> unemployed graduate who took part in the survey. Then the respondents mentioned Kraków and Wrocław. These occupied the first position according to a dozen or so respondents. The remaining cities were mentioned by several or even one person, yet including them in the ranking was justified by the fact they were, at least once, mentioned as the first ones.

Comparing the positions of particular cities in the ranking with the unemployment rate that was recorded in them, one might draw a conclusion that in a few cases the impressions of the unemployed were more than justified. This was certainly the case with the leaders of the ranking, i.e. Warsaw and Poznań in which the unemployment rate was evidently lower than in

other cities and also in relation to the average unemployment rate given for the entire Poland which stood at 19,1% in December 2004. In this respect, both above-mentioned cities occupied the same position as in the case of opinions expressed by the respondents. Warsaw, with the unemployment rate at 6,5% level- the lowest out of the cities that were mentioned-occupied the first place (due to that criterion), whereas Poznań the second position.

As far as Szczecin, which occupied the third position in the ranking according to the graduates, was concerned, it occupied the 13<sup>th</sup> position on account of the unemployment rate.

The second variant of presenting data consisted in establishing positions of particular cities in the ranking according to weighted average which was created as a result of aggregating the points given for each city according to the following key:

- the fact it was mentioned as the first one - importance 3,
- the fact it was mentioned as the second one - importance 2,
- the fact it was mentioned as the third one - importance 1.

The ranking of cities was created according to the second variant and allowed for considering also those cities which, as was not mentioned by any respondent as the first one, would no appear in the first variant and could be a potential destination for college graduates who were looking for a job.

The second variant of calculation enables to find graduates' opinions concerning greater number of cities since it takes all the positions which these cities occupied (according to the respondents who expressed their views in questionnaires) into consideration. Some cities held the second or third position, for instance right after Warsaw, the fact due to which they occupied lower positions in the first variant. Yet, their "statistics" in variant II enabled them to improve their rankings considerably, as far as all the cities in which, according to the graduates, one might find a well-paid job most easily were concerned.<sup>6</sup> Table 8 shows the ranking of ten cities in which, in the respondents' opinion, finding well-paid job is the easiest.

Table 8. Ranking of ten cities in which, according to the respondents, finding well-paid job is the easiest; ranking created according to variant II which takes weighted average into consideration

City (in alphabetical order)	Weighted average	Position in the ranking
Warsaw	1392	I
Poznań	852	II
Kraków	288	III
Wrocław	253	IV
Szczecin	171	V
Gdańsk	127	VI
Łódź	39	VII
Trójmiasto	23	VIII
Katowice	14	IX
Gdynia	9	X
Gorzów Wielkopolski	9	X
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3218 points</b>	-

Source: own compilation based on conducted questionnaire surveys.

As it appeared from table 8, only six cities reached the highest "statistics" and received the highest number of points. According to the respondents, the greatest chances of finding good job in Poland are in the following cities:

<sup>6</sup> The list of cities mentioned by unemployed graduates contained 26 items. It included every city which was, at least once, mentioned in the questionnaire survey. Many of them were mentioned only once and, what is more, as the third one, so- according to a respondent- they could be places where one would easily find a job, yet he or she mentioned two other cities in which the chances were greater. The following cities appeared in the ranking in this way: Białystok, Bytom, Koszalin, Olsztyn, Płock, Świnoujście, Tarnowskie Góry as well as Wałbrzych.

- in *Warsaw*- the capital of Poland was classified high in the ranking. It received weighted average of 1392 points. This resulted from the fact that it occupied the first position according to 380 respondents, the second according to 106 people and the third one according to 40 persons;
- in *Poznań*, which held the second position and received 852 points. This resulted from the fact that it occupied the first position according to 114 respondents, the second according to 206 people and the third in the opinion of 98 graduates;
- in *Kraków*- the third city in the ranking, which was given almost five times smaller number of points in comparison with *Warsaw* and almost three times smaller than *Poznań*. The capital of Małopolska was given 288 points as the first place went to Kraków according to 19 respondents, the second and third ones according to 77 and 77, respectively.
- in *Wrocław*, which received weighted average of 253 points. This resulted from the fact that it held the first position according to 18 respondents, the second according to 62 people and the third according to 75 graduates as far as cities in which finding well-paid job was the easiest were concerned;
- in *Szczecin*, which received 171 points, the fact due to which it occupied the fifth position in the ranking. This resulted from the fact it took the first place according to 29 respondents, the second according to 26 people, and the third according to 32 graduates.
- in *Gdańsk*, which received weighted average of 127 points. It occupied the first position, among three cities, according to 9 respondents, the second according to 30 persons whereas the third according to 40 respondents.

On the basis of the above opinions expressed by college graduates who were not successful in coming in domestic, West Pomeranian, labour market, it could be fairly stated that in the face of growing discouragement and frustration caused by a difficult situation in the market, some of them would not make an attempt in order to find a job outside the region.

Furthermore, after Poland had entered the European Union (on May 1, 2004), a considerable growth in the number of Poles leaving the country in order to job-hunt in community countries was recorded. It may be assumed that such decisions were made not only by unemployed people who had difficulties in finding job in Poland, but also by people who spotted a chance of higher earnings and improvement in their material situation. In this context, one may view both the labour market in Poland and regional ones from the perspective of its competitiveness which may be noticed not only in the number of workplaces but also in the amount of earnings that one may get.

College graduates, who were unemployed at the moment they participated in questionnaire surveys, were asked about *their potential readiness to job-hunt abroad*. The way that the respondents answered was shown in table 9.

Table 9. The readiness of unemployed graduates to job-hunt abroad

Answer	The number of respondents	Percentage
Definitely no	32	5,24%
Rather no	112	18,33%
Neither yes, nor no	72	11,78%
Rather yes	249	40,75%
Definitely yes	146	23,90%

Source: own compilation based on the research.

Graduates' answers given to the question concerning the readiness to seek employment abroad were very similar to the answers which were given to the question about the readiness to change the place of residence in order to take up a job. The number of

respondents and, as a consequence, the percentage of people who chose another variants of answers were almost identical. The vast majority of jobless graduates, as almost 65%, would be ready to job-hunt abroad, whereas 146 respondents would be definitely for leaving the country which constituted 23,90% of all the respondents. Finally, 249 of the respondents would be rather for job-hunting outside Poland which constituted 40,75% of them.

Respondents who had not yet been sure whether to give a yes or no reply to this question constituted 11,78% of the respondents. Generally speaking, it was a little bit more than in the case of the question about possible change of a dwelling place.

There were 144 respondents who chose *definitely no* or *rather no* variant as far as the question about the readiness to look for job abroad was concerned. It constituted 23,57% of all 611 respondents. However, it should be emphasized that there were few people who *were definitely not ready to leave* since only 32 so 5,24% of the respondents. Table 10 shows the declarations of unemployed college graduates concerning their readiness to go abroad.

Table 10. The readiness of jobless graduates to job-hunt abroad, depending on the place where they are registered

The place where a respondent is registered	Percentage of respondents who chose <i>rather yes</i> or <i>definitely yes</i> answer
Country	58,06%
Town up to 5000 residents	71,19%
Town from 5001 up to 10 000 residents	60,07%
Town from 10 001 up to 50 000 residents	67,52%
Town from 50 001 up to 100 000 residents	68,97%
Town over 100 000 residents	62,61%

Source: own compilation based on conducted questionnaire surveys.

As it appeared from table 10, the readiness of unemployed graduates to job-hunt abroad was diverse and depended on the size of the town they came from. The results of the survey showed that the greatest determination in this scope was declared by the respondents who came from small towns, the population of which did not exceed 5000 residents. In this group, the percentage of respondents that chose *rather yes* or *definitely yes* variant while answering the question concerning the possibility of looking for a job abroad amounted to 71,19%. On the other hand, it was the lowest among jobless college graduates who came from the country- 58,06% as well as big cities- 62,61%.

As it turned out, it was also the degree of knowledge of foreign languages that influenced the readiness to go abroad. Among the graduates who declared they did not speak any foreign language well or very well (they constituted 10,15% of all the respondents), the percentage of graduates who considered the possibility of going abroad amounted to 43,55%. In contrast, this percentage was slightly lower or exactly 80% among the respondents who declared they spoke three or four foreign languages.

The respondents, apart from declared readiness to go abroad in order to seek employment, mentioned potential destinations as well, while answering the question **in what country they would possibly look for a job?**

The answers (given by the graduates) to the question regarding a country in which they would potentially job-hunt, were put in order and presented in two variants, just as in the case of Polish cities.

The ranking of ten countries that would be graduates' destinations, as far as looking for a job was concerned, according to variant I is shown in table 11.

Table 11. The ranking of ten countries in which the respondents would make attempts to seek employment (variant I)

Country	The number of times it was mentioned as the first one	The percentage of times it was mentioned as the first one	The position in the ranking
England	204	37,57%	I
Germany	127	23,39%	II
the USA	67	12,34%	III
Ireland	38	7,00%	IV
Norway	18	3,31%	V
Sweden	15	2,76%	VI
the Netherlands	14	2,58%	VII
Spain	13	2,39%	VIII
Italy	8	1,47%	IX
France	7	1,29%	X

Source: own compilation based on the research.

The list of countries which the respondents chose as the most ideal for job-hunting contained 23 items. Each of them occupied, at least once, the first position among three potential destinations which the respondents could choose. *England* occupied the first position according to the greatest number of respondents. Out of 543 graduates who answered the question about the country in which they would look for a job, England was chosen by 204 respondents. The second place was taken by Germany. There were 127 respondents who believed that this country should occupy the first position. It was much fewer than in the case of England, yet other countries were chosen by definitely fewer respondents.

The United States of America held the third position in the ranking of countries to which unemployed college graduates who took part in the survey would go first of all. It took the first place according to 67 respondents. What resulted from this was the fact that every eighth respondent, who was asked to choose potential countries of destination which would be the best as far as job-hunting was concerned, believed that it should be looked for especially in the USA.

While completing the ranking of countries in which- according to the respondents- one should especially seek employment, it ought to be stressed that Ireland was high on the list as it occupied the fourth position in the ranking.

Table 12 shows the ranking of the most popular countries to which the respondents would go in order to look for a job. This ranking is based on weighted average.

Table 12. The ranking of ten countries in which the respondents would look for a job, according to variant II which takes weighted average into consideration

Country	Weighted average	The position in the ranking
England	885	I
Germany	552	II
the USA	328	III
Ireland	240	IV
Sweden	126	V
the Netherlands	123	VI
Norway	111	VII
Spain	90	VIII
France	82	IX
Italy	65	X

Source: own compilation based on conducted questionnaire surveys.

As it turned out from the table, *England* took the first place in variant II as well,

leaving *Germany* and *the USA* behind. The countries which occupied subsequent positions were the following: *Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain* and *France*. The places they took were comparable in both variants.

What appeared from both variants of the ranking was the fact that the respondents would look for a job in rich countries in which the unemployment rate was low. They recognized the labour markets of the countries which were the EU members as especially attractive destinations. In the ranking of ten countries which could be destinations for college graduates who were seeking employment, eight of them were the EU members.

### The resourcefulness of college graduates

Declarations concerning the change of a dwelling place expressed by college graduates who had no employment in West Pomeranian labour market might prove they had lost their faith in the possibility of finding job in the place where they graduated from colleges and were going to fulfil themselves in their professional lives. Regional labour market, in which they decided to seek employment, did not meet their expectations and turned out to be hardly competitive in comparison with other regions, both in Poland and abroad.

An alternative for working as a hired worker, in the face of problems with finding such a job, is certainly a decision to undertake one's own business activity, in other words self-employment. First of all, it would enable unemployed college graduates to solve a problem that some of them have, namely with being active in the labour market. Secondly, in the case of success and development of one's own business it would create opportunities for generating new workplaces.

Therefore, an attempt was made to specify to what extent college graduates registered in county labour offices in West Pomerania province as unemployed would be ready to undertake their own enterprises. Within questionnaire surveys that were conducted, factors determining these decisions were specified as well.

Table 13 shows the way in which the respondents answered the question concerning their potential readiness to set up their companies.

Table 13. The readiness of unemployed graduates to set up their own companies

Answer	The number of respondents	Percentage
Definitely no	41	6,71%
Rather no	166	27,17%
Neither yes, nor no	185	30,28%
Rather yes	161	26,35%
Definitely yes	58	9,49%

Source: own compilation based on conducted questionnaire surveys.

As it was presented in table 13, unemployed college graduates who participated in the survey and answered the question about their readiness to set up their own companies during the following five years, divided themselves in three groups which consisted of similar number of the respondents. Less than 34% chose *definitely no* or *rather no* answer, circa 36% declared *rather yes* or *definitely yes* variants. It should be noticed that the percentage of people who chose definitely yes or definitely no was small: 6,71% of the respondents definitely rejected the possibility of setting up their own companies in the following five years, whereas the percentage of respondents who were intent on taking such actions amounted to 9,49%.

It is hard to state explicitly to what extent graduates' declarations would be confirmed by real actions and whether these declarations ought to be treated as definitely positive. The percentage of respondents who chose *definitely yes* or *rather yes* answer, which constituted

36% of the total, may be recognized as a positive sign of their resourcefulness.

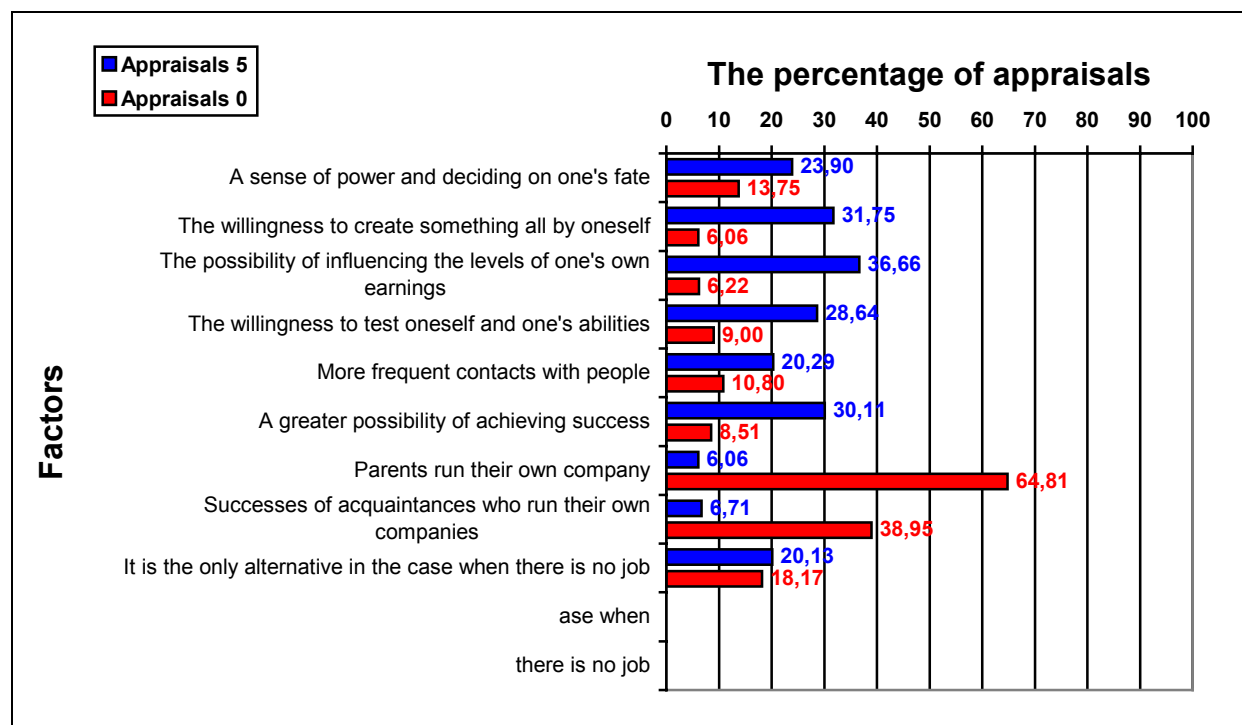
What was checked then was the fact whether the declarations of jobless college graduates referring to resourcefulness depended on the faculties in which these graduates had degrees. The results were presented in table 14.

Table 14. The readiness of unemployed graduates to establish their own companies, depending on the faculties in which they had their degrees.

Faculties	The percentage of respondents who chose rather yes or definitely yes answer
Law and public administration	39,13%
Architecture and construction	66,67%
Economics	34,38%
Humanities	19,05%
Engineering	39,13%
Natural sciences	40,63%
Agricultural, forest and	30,61%
Social	31,39%
Management and marketing	46,34%

Source: own compilation based on conducted questionnaire surveys.

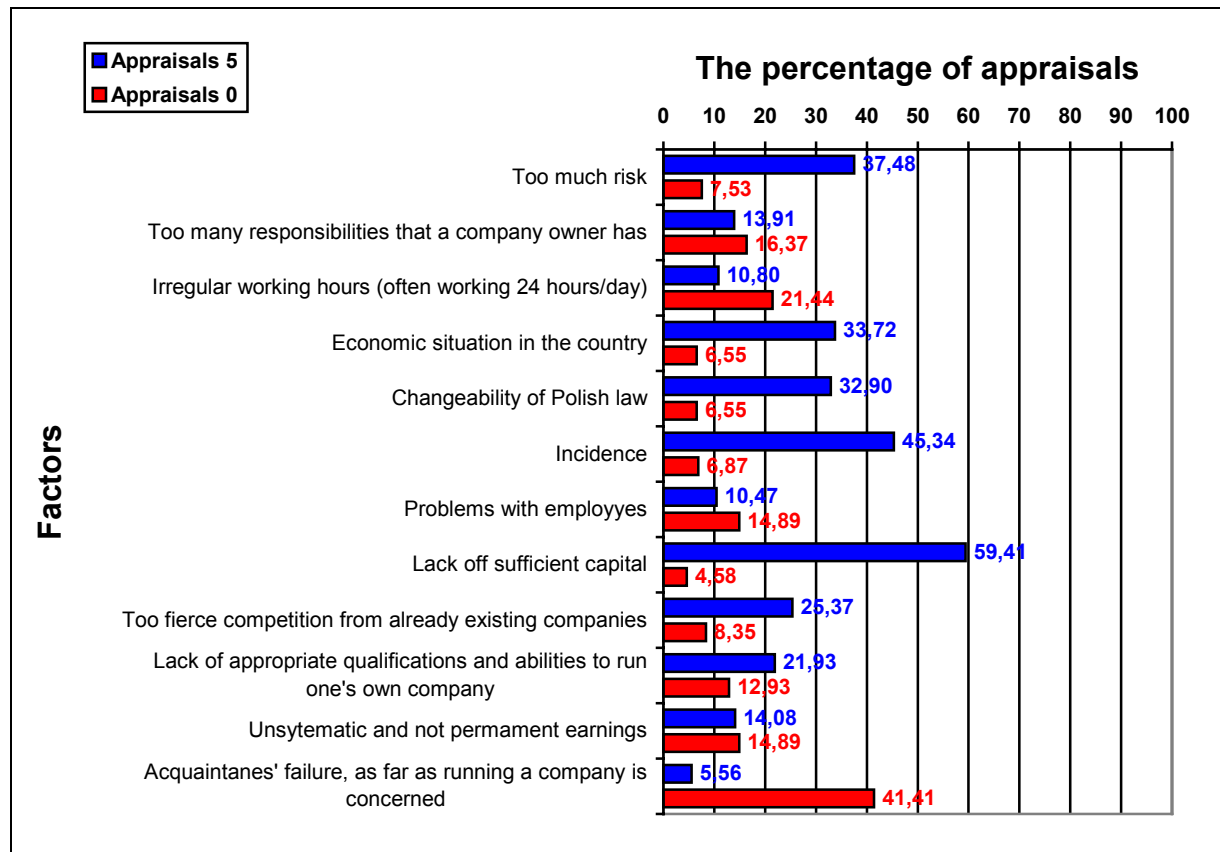
Chart 2. Factors which would make the respondents set up their own companies- the percentage of extreme appraisals



Source: own compilation based on the research.



Chart 3. Factors which would reduce respondents' tendency toward setting up their own companies- the percentage of extreme appraisals



Source: own compilation based on the research.

Unemployed college graduates, who took part in the survey, considered *lack of sufficient capital* as absolutely the most crucial factor which would reduce their tendency toward establishing their own companies. This variant was given such a status by 60% of the graduates who participated in the survey. This factor undeniably excluded any possibility of establishing one's own company at all.

Subsequently, the respondents included the following factors in the group of the most crucial ones which reduced their tendency toward setting up their companies: *incidence, too much risk, economic situation in the country* as well as *changeability of Polish law*.

The analysis of factors in the context of an average rank (given for each of these factors) will facilitate their arrangement. Table 15 shows these factors.

As it turns out from table 15, the list of the most crucial factors reducing graduates' tendency toward undertaking their own business activities, apart from already mentioned, is supplemented with graduates' fears of *too fierce competition from already existing companies*, average rank 3,37 as well as *lack of appropriate qualifications and abilities to run one's own company*, average rank 3,01.

The remaining factors reducing the tendency toward establishing one's own company, mentioned in the survey, received average appraisals lower than 3. The following may be included in this group: *irregular and not permanent earnings, too many responsibilities that a company owner has, problems with employees* as well as *irregular working hours* which very often implies "a 24 hours/day" involvement. This variant of answer received an average rank 2,22.

**Table 15. Factors which reduce jobless graduates' tendency toward establishing their own companies**

Factor	Average rank
Lack of sufficient capital	4,14
Incidence	3,82
Too much risk	3,60
Changeability of Polish law	3,58
Economic situation in the country	3,57
Too fierce competition from already existing companies	3,37
Lack of appropriate qualifications and abilities to run a company	3,01
Irregular and not permanent earnings	2,70
Too many responsibilities that a company owner has	2,61
Problems with employees	2,54
Irregular working hours (often working 24 hours/day)	2,22
Acquaintances' failure, as far as running a company is concerned	1,52

Source: own compilation based on conducted questionnaire surveys.

Summing up the analysis of factors which influence resourceful approaches of college graduates, the following conclusions may be drawn:

**Conducting one's own business activity makes one feel independent and a 'master' of one's fate.** Among positive factors which could reinforce their tendency toward establishing their own companies, the dominant ones were connected with a great independence in achieving one's aims, opportunity for self-realization, aspiration for achieving success, influencing earnings levels, which was a natural consequence and privilege resulting from conducting business activity all by oneself;

**Lack of capital and a considerable risk exclude possibility of undertaking business activity all by oneself.**

**The thing which, according to the graduates, makes finding job difficult is also a crucial factor that reduces possibilities for setting up one's own company.** The graduates included the following exogenous factors in the group of the ones that reduced their tendency toward establishing their own companies: macroeconomic situation, a strict fiscal policy of the country as well as changeability of law.

**Challenges, which are a natural consequence of conducting activity all by oneself, are not a serious obstacle for the respondents.** Graduates are ready to meet challenges which result from the specificity of conducting one's own business activity. They are not afraid of *responsibilities that a company owner has, problems with employees, irregular earnings*, or finally *working longer than 8 hours a day*;

**Lack of knowledge necessary to run one's own business and competition are not a considerable barrier as far as graduates' resourcefulness is concerned.** Unemployed graduates declare directly that they lack some qualifications and knowledge necessary to run their own companies, the consequence of which may also be fear of competition from the companies which already exist on the market (mentioned by the respondents).

## Conclusion

West Pomeranian labour market is characterized by a market surplus, understood as the situation in which there are more people who seek employment and are ready to take up a job than the number of workplaces.

One's own business activity may be an alternative form of being active in the labour market in the face of problems with finding employment. The respondents, when asked about the form of being active in the labour market they prefer, were hardly interested in conducting their own business activities. However, when asked whether they would declare readiness to establish their own companies during the following five years- 35,84% of them would consider such a possibility, 30,28% did not have an opinion, the remaining 27,88% excluded this possibility (to a greater or lesser extent).

Looking for a job in other regions of the country or abroad might also be an alternative as far as job-hunting in West Pomerania province is concerned. In both cases, graduates' interest in and readiness to leave their hometowns may be regarded as considerable. The readiness to change a dwelling place in order to take up a job was declared by 65,14% of the unemployed graduates who took part in the questionnaire survey. Their destinations would be, most of all, Warsaw, Poznań, Kraków as well as Szczecin- cities in which, according to the respondents, finding well-paid job is the easiest.

The tendency of jobless graduates toward going abroad in order to job-hunt was great as well. *Definitely yes* or *rather yes* variants of answer were chosen by 64,65% of the respondents. They would go to the countries which are members of the European Union most readily, namely England, Germany and Ireland. The United States of America occupied the third position in the ranking of countries in which the respondents would seek employment.

Summing up the above analyses and results of the research, it should be stated that a decision to go to college is not unwise. Higher education is not probably a chief asset of a person who looks for a job, but may turn out to be necessary to begin negotiations with a potential employer. In the face of insufficient demand in the labour market, which evidently characterizes West Pomeranian region, college graduates who do not have any professional experience will have difficulties in finding employment. Yet, as they are aware of this fact, they should show maturity and determination while looking for a job. They should aspire to constant development as well as change of profession. In accordance with human capital theory, everything that one has learned, knowledge that one has gained, studying, every experience and ability enrich one's portfolio which, prepared in a right way and supported with determination to job-hunt will lead one to finding a desired job. Is there any other alternative, whatsoever? Professional inactivity leads to degradation and giving up efforts deprives one of any chance of finding job.

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