

## UNIVERSITY EDUCATION LEVEL AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE SILESIA VOIVODESHIP AND THE CITY OF CZESTOCHOWA

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**Abstract:** The paper discusses the changes in unemployment rate in Silesian Voivodeship with particular focus on the city of Czestochowa in 2007-2010. The particular focus is on the structure of unemployment according to the education level and the effect of education on job opportunities in the labour market. The paper also presents the methods of preventing unemployment, with particular focus on the group of young people.

**Keywords:** university education level, unemployment

### Introduction

Economic and demographic potential of Silesian Voivodeship causes that it is positively distinguished compared to other regions. It is one of the regions of Poland where unemployment reaches one of the lowest levels; however, recent months have seen unfavourable trends in the local labour market, since a considerable increase in the number of the unemployed was observed in February 2011. Compared to the previous month, the number of the registered unemployed in the voivodeship rose at the end of February by 5,335, thus increasing the unemployment rate to 201,519 people. This total number was a combination of very low (e.g. Rybnik powiat) and very high (Myszków powiat) unemployment rates. Sadly, one of the highest unemployment rates was observed in Czestochowa (14,605 people), which confirms difficult situation in the local labour market.

Analysis of the situation in Silesian Voivodeship throughout the years 2007-2011 reveals that a significant decline in the unemployment rate was observed in 2008. However, in mid 2009, a decline in the Silesian market was observed, with the increase in the number of unemployed. Unfortunately it is worrying that this trend is still maintained, with lower or higher fluctuations (decline in the number of the unemployed during the months of seasonal work). This view of the voivodeship in the aspect of unemployment can be affected by the following factors:

- intensified lay-offs
- peoplereturning from labour-related emigration
- seasonality of employment
- deteriorating standing of local enterprises

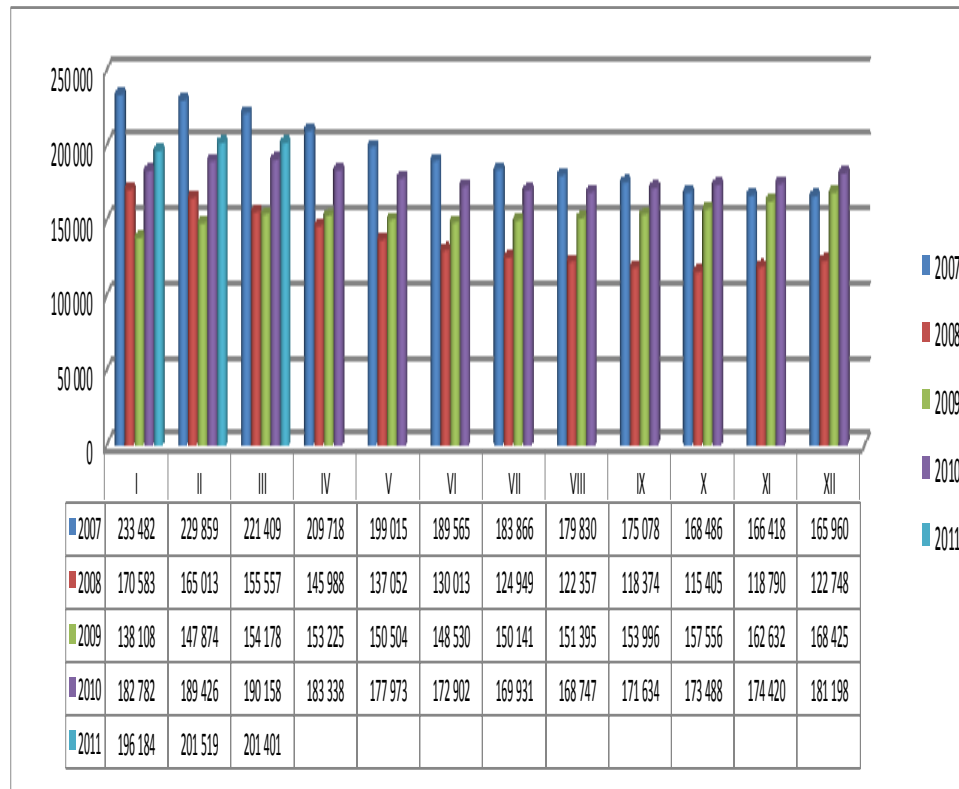
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- economic crisis.

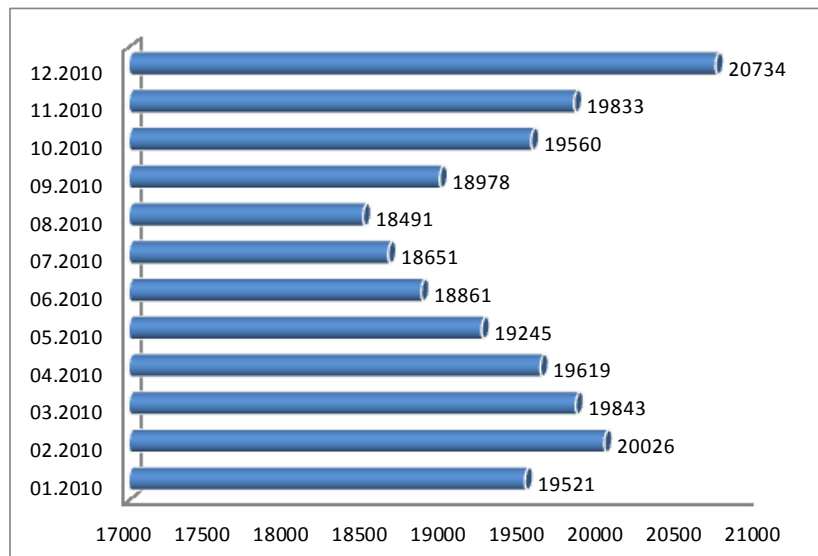


**Figure 1. The unemployed in Silesian Voivodeship (2010 – 2011)**

Source: author's own study based on [www.wup-katowice.pl](http://www.wup-katowice.pl) (visited 31.06.2011)

However, the situation in Silesian Voivodeship is more favourable than in the country in general, which is demonstrated by the unemployment rate which amounted, at the end of February 2011, to 10.6% compared to the average for the whole country being 13%. Analysis of the phenomenon of the unemployment in the whole voivodeship points to high instability of labour market and considerable differentiation in its intensity. The difference amounted to 15.3 percentage point between Katowice (the lowest level) and Myszkow powiat (the highest level). This state might point to the lack of job opportunities for the people who finished education in the recent period at different levels. One of the essential causes of this situation might be maladjustment of the level of education and qualifications to the demand among the potential employers.

Czestochowa, being one of the biggest cities of the Silesian Voivodeship, does not show favourable trends in general rankings of unemployment. Last months of 2010 saw unemployment rates in Czestochowa gradually rising, reaching in December the level of 20,734 people.



**Figure 2. Unemployment rate in Częstochowa in 2010.**

*Source: author's own study based on danych uzyskanych z Powiatowego Urzędu Pracy*

The increase in the unemployment rate within one month (December compared to November) was significant, particularly because in the beginning of the year 2010 (from February to October) its substantial decline was observed. The causes of this situation, i.e. the intensified inflow of the unemployed since September 2010 include in particular:

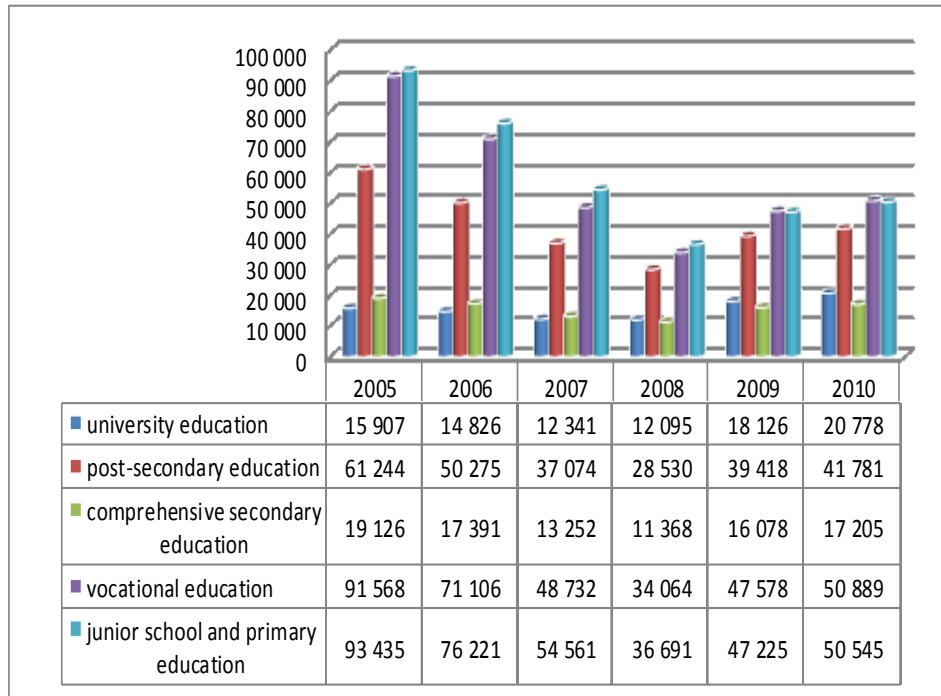
- completed scholarships and training periods
- expiry of the specified period contracts
- completed seasonal works.

This state translated directly into the level of unemployment rate, which, in December 2010 was 11.6% for Częstochowa and 16.9% for Częstochowa region. Częstochowa district unemployment rate is higher than average unemployment rates in Silesia province and in Poland. And Częstochowa city unemployment rate is higher than average unemployment rates in Silesia province and almost the same as average for Poland[1].

### **Influence of education level on unemployment**

Development of labour market structure depends on the education. It is education level, qualifications and skills which allow for finding good jobs and to support young people in meeting the employers' demand for particular professions and trades. Recent several years in Poland have seen a substantial increase in the number of university and university students, which was significantly affected by changing economic situation. However, some fluctuations in the number of university students might result from the demographic low or the impoverishment of society which has been observed in recent years.

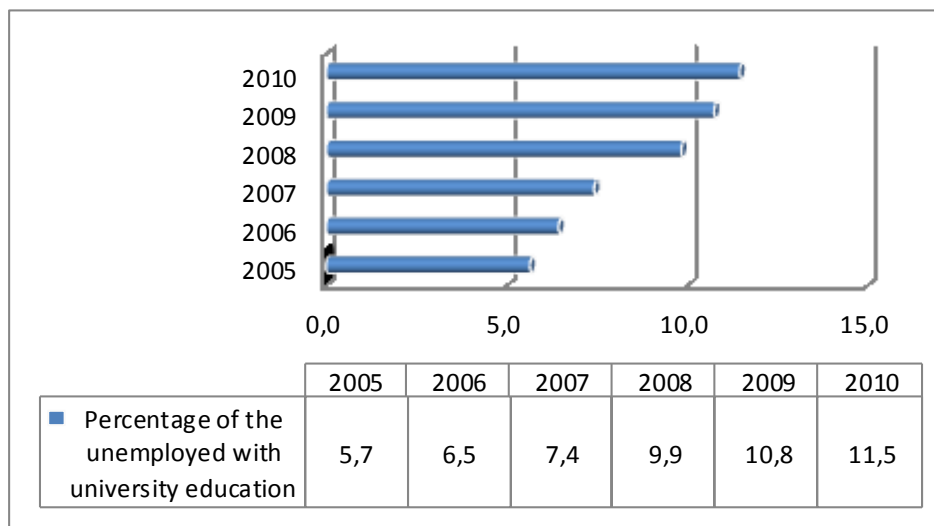
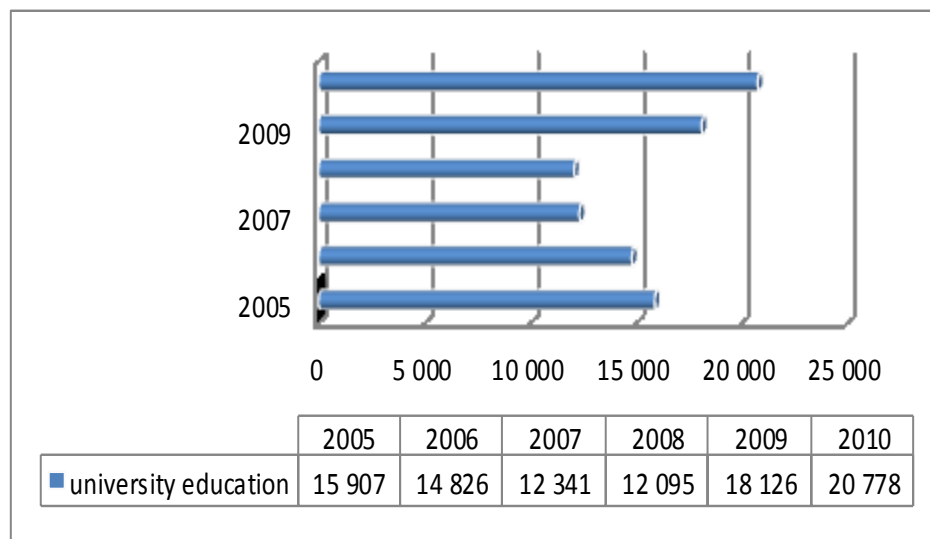
In terms of the education level, the Silesian Voivodeship looks unfavourably compared to other areas, particularly to those where high economic development is observed. This situation is directly reflected in the structure of education among the unemployed.



**Figure 3. The unemployed according to the education level in the Silesian Voivodeship**  
 Source: author's own study based on [www.wup-katowice.pl](http://www.wup-katowice.pl) (visited 31.06.2011)

The worrying situation observed in recent years is the increase in highly-educated unemployed. It is also frequent occurrence to hear the opinions that the education in Poland has risen to the excessive dimensions and the educational reform, enhancing the level of general education among young people, is a failure. There are also opinions that the limitation of recruitment to vocational schools is illegitimate, because there is a deficiency of well-qualified blue-collar workers, whereas more and more graduates with master's degree are educated[2]. Moreover, the choices of the students have also changes, which resulted in that since the early nineties, the percentage of those studying at economical, administrative and social science universities has increased. Therefore, a huge and the most likely excessive concentration of education in the field of business, management, economy and finance is observed.[3]

A considerable effect on the supply in the labour market is from the level of education, which increases the opportunities of finding attractive and stable jobs. Figure 4 presents a structure of the unemployed with university degrees in the Silesian Voivodeship.



**Figure 4. The unemployed with university degrees**

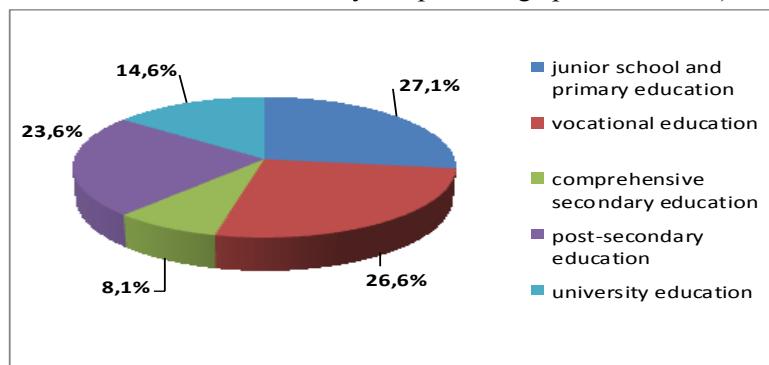
Source: author's own study based on [www.wup-katowice.pl](http://www.wup-katowice.pl) (visited 31.06.2011)

Analysis of the situation in the Silesian labour market reveals that the fluctuations in the unemployment rate in the whole economy occur in proportion to the changes in the discussed phenomenon among the representatives of university education level. It is essential that, in longer perspective, the group of people with the university degree constitutes the lowest percentage of the unemployed, although in recent 3 years, the better situation was observed in the group with secondary education level. It should be emphasized that the years 2005-2010 saw

the percentage of the unemployed with higher education level increasing, doubled in 2010 compared to 2005. This situation might be caused by an increasing number of university graduates and specialization of the demand in the labour market. The unemployment can be effectively prevented through e.g. investments in the staff. This operation largely depends on the reform and modernization of education and orientation towards education, increasing the value of human capital.

Assessment of the situation in the labour market might lead to the conclusion that better education allows for finding the satisfactory job. However, 'better' does not necessarily mean university degree, since this factor depends on the demand in the labour market. It is generally accepted that the university education is increasingly less 'protective' in terms of the risk of unemployment, which, in consideration of the presented data, might be transformed into the conclusion, that the higher education provides the relatively highest chances to be employed, but, does not provide a guarantee[4].

The highest percentage of both voivodeship inhabitants and the unemployed belongs to the group with vocational education level or primary education level. In Czestochowa, this situation is similar: the highest number of the people registered in Powiat Unemployment Office are those with minimal education level (primary or junior school) and there are merely 14.6% of the unemployed with university degree (with an increase in the latter by 1.2 percentage points in 2010).



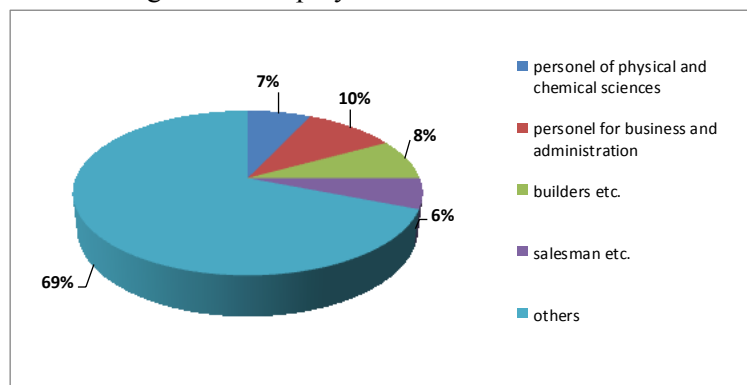
**Figure 5. Structure of the unemployed according to the education level in Czestochowa**

*Source: author's own study based on danych uzyskanych z Powiatowego Urzędu Pracy*

It is also worrying that 53.7% of the total of the unemployed do not even have the secondary education level, which considerably reduces their chances to find jobs in consideration of the competition in the labour market today. The statistics also showed that ca. 28% of the unemployed do not have suitable vocational qualifications and ca. 26% of them do not demonstrate any professional experience. However, as results from the observations, there is a deficiency of the technicians in the labour market with suitable and demanded vocational qualifications. These dynamic changes in educational policies and in the labour market are a result of adaptation to generally recognized realities of the

international labour markets and extending the equal opportunities policies in terms of the access to job offers.

In order to prevent the difficult situation in Polish labour market, a series of actions are taken towards encouraging continuous education and development and minimization of negative effects of unemployment. One of the directions of activities is activation of people who have been unemployed for a long time and preventing their professional and social exclusion. Moreover, the unemployment offices implement the programmes which allow the people who look for the job to change or supplement their vocational competencies within the courses and training organized by these offices. However, these measures, despite their extent and the fact that they affect a wide group of the unemployed, seem to be the insufficient response to the rising requirements of the labour market. The conclusions concerning the necessary change in educational programmes are more and more often drawn, which, with the profiles and the quality of education, will provide the response to the demand among the employers and will allow graduates to find jobs and stimulate their professional development. When analysing the situation of the unemployed in Czestochowa, one should emphasize the effect of the level of education on this state. At the end of 2010, a disproportion in the number of the groups of the unemployed was observed. It is significant that only 15% of the unemployed are the people without any profession or trade, whereas the major part of them are the people prepared for being employed. However, the qualifications they have are insufficient to satisfy the demand among the employers. It is highly unfavourable that the people with particular education have the status of the long-time unemployed (Fig. 6). This group is a substantial majority of all the long-time unemployed.



**Figure 6. The long-time unemployed: selected vocational groups**

Source: author's own study based on [www.pup.czestochowa.pl](http://www.pup.czestochowa.pl) (visited 31.06.2011)

The observations and in-depth analysis of the tendencies in Czestochowa labour market in 2010 reveals that this situation is invariable in terms of the professions and trades which generate long-time unemployment. With respect to even higher requirements of employers, young people always increase their

qualifications, focusing on the lifelong learning. Unfortunately, in consideration of the world economic crisis, an increase in the number of unemployed graduates was reported. It is worrying that almost 58.7% of this group are women.

Professional activity plays an essential importance to each person: it allows for their self-realization, frequently determines the association to a social group, stimulates attitudes and, first and foremost, guarantees the opportunity to satisfy basic existential needs. The basic problem of the adaptation of job opportunities is a dynamically changing Polish labour market, which is quickly following the global conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to monitor trends in the labour market, identify the deficit professions and trades and to dynamically adapt educational and training offer to these changes.

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### POZIOM EDUKACJI WYŻSZEJ A BEZROBOCIE W WOJEWÓDZTWIE ŚLĄSKIM I CZĘSTOCHOWIE

**Streszczenie:** W artykule Autorzy opisują zmiany bezrobocia w województwie śląskim ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem miasta Częstochowy w latach 2007-2010. W szczególności zwracają uwagę na strukturę bezrobocia według wykształcenia oraz związek poziomu wykształcenia na możliwości znalezienia pracy na rynku. W artykule przedstawiono również sposoby zapobiegania bezrobociu w szczególności w grupie ludzi młodych.

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#### 大學教育水平和失業率的西里西亞 Voivodeship 的和琴斯托霍瓦市

本文论述Silesian Voivodeship 地区特别是Czestochowa 城市2007-2010 年失业率的变化情况。本文特别关注失业人群中教育层次的水平，以及受教育程度对在劳动力市场中获得就业机会的影响。该文还提出了防止失业的方法，尤其针对青年人群而言。