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*Unemployment in the EU: Some  
Sociological Footnotes*  
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# 1. The labour market policy of the EU

- 2006 Report from DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- An economists' document that needs sociological comment
- Flexibility + Security = ideal of 'Flexicurity' (*Flexible contracts; labour market policies; lifelong learning; social security*)
- International competition
- Strengthened economy and full employment
- Flexibility has greater social costs than is recognised.

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# Unemployment

- Frictional
  - Conjunctural/cyclical
  - Structural
  - (Response, mainly individualistic)
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# Unemployment as a social problem

- Industrial society makes implicit promise of jobs
  - Economically destructive, for individuals and communities
  - Work is expressive of personality : its loss is a threat.
  - Personal discipline
  - Work tied to social status
  - Occupational and geographical mobility as disruptive
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# Rigidities in the labour market

- Mismatch of supply and demand
  - Job creation?
  - Making job-supply more flexible, eliminating rigidities
    - *High unemployment benefit*
    - *Occupational status*
    - *Enhancing qualifications*
    - *Core and marginal workers*
    - *Facilitating job-transfer*
    - *Subsidising jobs and limiting work hours*
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# Unemployment policies at local level

- Anonymity and motivation
  - Co-operative employment schemes: bringing jobs to people, rather than the opposite
  - Central authorities role – to supplement not replace local initiatives – structural funds
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# ‘A Christian Endnote’

- Economic growth good – but not primarily in terms of competitiveness
  - Danger of polarisation between skilled and unskilled
  - Mobility at cost of social fulfilment, of genuine relationships
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