
Socioeconomic Factors and Migration's Role in Modern Labor Markets through the Play of

Marie Ndiaye

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Abstract

This research paper explores the issue of unemployment among diasporic communities living in France, with a particular focus on how migration influences contemporary work environments. Through a close reading of Marie NDiaye's plays *Papa doit manger* (Papa Must Eat) and *Hilda*, the paper examines how literature reflects and critiques the socio-economic realities faced by marginalized groups in society. These plays serve as powerful narratives that expose the emotional, psychological, and structural challenges experienced by immigrants and their families. In *Papa doit manger*, NDiaye portrays the fragmentation of a family under the pressure of poverty and displacement. The play highlights how economic hardship often leads to family breakdowns, abandonment, and an inability to maintain familial responsibilities. Themes such as postcolonial identity, systemic racism, and unequal access to employment opportunities are interwoven into the characters' experiences, offering a critique of the persistent inequalities faced by immigrants in French society. *Hilda*, on the other hand, presents a more symbolic and psychological exploration of inequality. The protagonist, Hilda, never appears on stage, which emphasizes her objectification and the erasure of her agency. The absence of the main character underscores the dehumanization that can occur under rigid social hierarchies and unequal labour systems. The play invites the audience to consider how strict societal expectations and discriminatory treatment affect workers, particularly those from immigrant backgrounds. Both plays reveal that unemployment among immigrants is not simply a matter of economic deprivation, but a reflection of deeper systemic issues including social exclusion, power imbalance, and cultural marginalization. The analysis argues for the necessity of rethinking employment policies and frameworks in France to promote fairness and inclusivity. Ultimately, the paper highlights how literature can be a critical tool for understanding and challenging the socio-political conditions that contribute to unemployment and marginalization in diasporic communities.

Keywords: Diasporic Communities, Unemployment, Migration, Socioeconomic Inequality

Introduction:

The play “*Papa doit manger*” of Marie NDiaye looks at the family, race and the frequent problems people face because they are unemployed. Because the family is experiencing financial problems, the play follows Papa’s arrival which threatens the family’s fragile balance. Papa seeks solace and financial help from his relatives, portrays the common story of a patriarch unable to make a living and living with the sacrifices brought by unstable work. Papa’s ways of deceiving his children and the readers also point out that social instability and poverty often repeat themselves in families and society. A major point made in the text is that hardship at work often leads to arguments within families and weakens relationships among loved ones (Smith, 2018). NDiaye describes the difficulty families encounter with unemployment by highlighting on Papa’s ties to his family. Additionally, the novel reveals the ways in which the system makes it difficult for minority groups to find and grow in employment. Papa’s struggles as a Black man in a mostly white French world give his story much deeper meanings, because it is connected to racism and poverty (Dubois, 2016). Because of race and labour, immigrants and ethnic minorities in France meet with additional difficulties when finding work. It points out the effects of economic challenges on the unity of the community which can increase existing differences in society (Jones, 2020). Similar to France, there is a portrayal of family emotional issues and unequal power through higher crime rates and more parts of youth society becoming isolated because they do not have jobs (INSEE, 2022). In completing its analysis, it brings together ideas from sociology and economics to expose the essence of *Papa doit manger*. It has been found in France that enduring issues with society leave many immigrants in poverty (Le Bras, 2029). The research explains how poor economic, racial and family circumstances are linked in NDiaye’s stories. This study looks at the relationship between unemployment, immigration and labour migration in France by reading writings on the subject, analysing studies and looking at official data. By examining the effects of economic troubles on peoples’ emotions and relationships in *Papa doit manger*, this study is trying to solve disputes regarding justice, equitable society and policy changes. Using multiple fields allows for advice on strategies that offer the same economic opportunities for all and unite different parts of a community (Paugam, 2021).

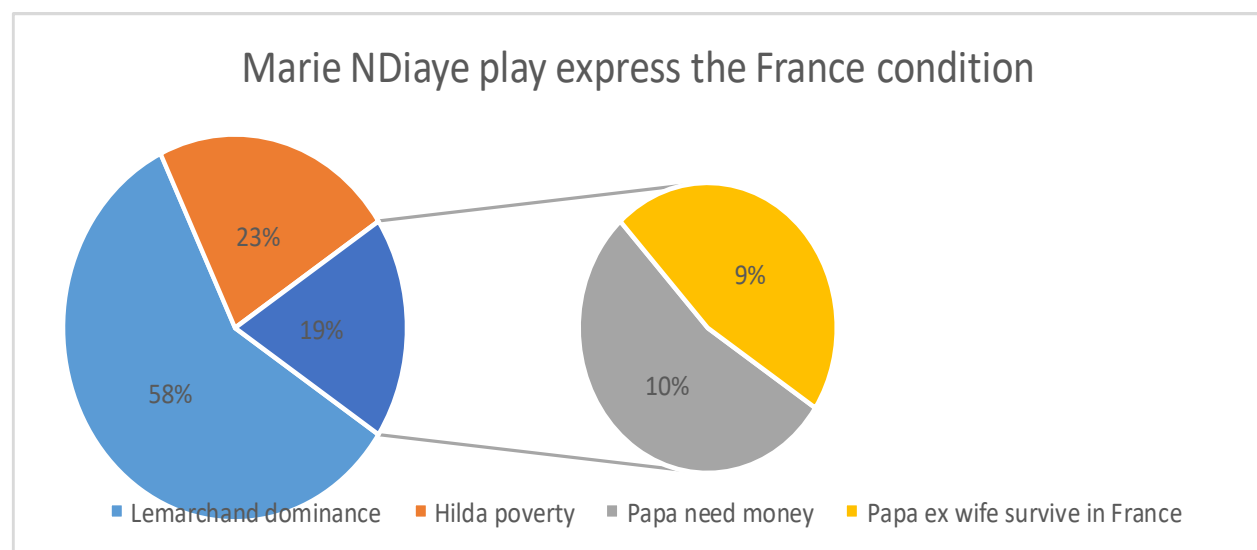


Figure:01

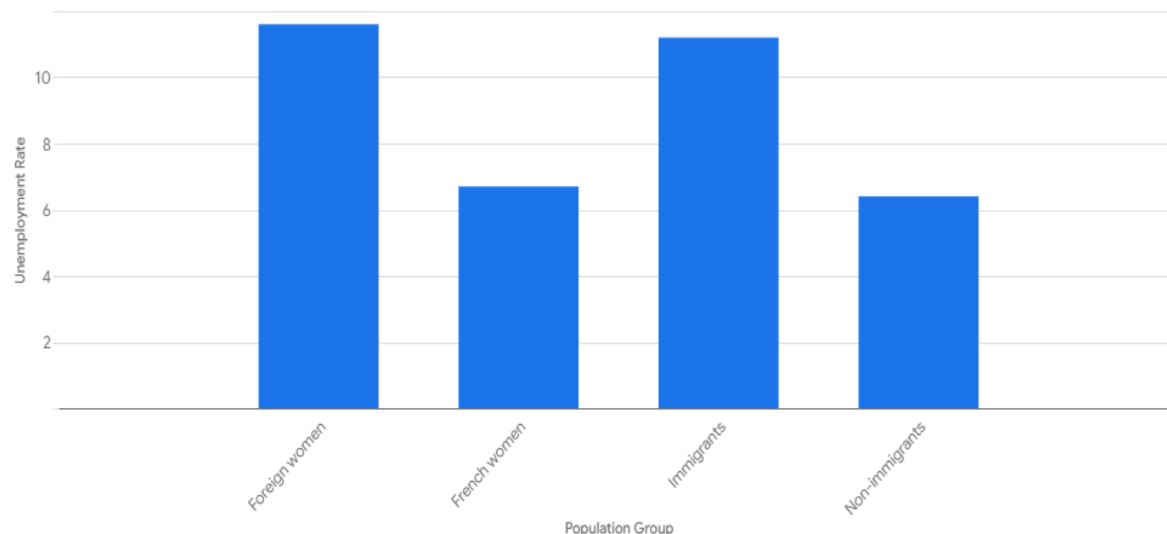
In the image "Marie NDiaye play express the France condition", two charts break down characters from Marie NDiaye’s plays as each representing a social aspect in France. The chart demonstrates the division of characters and themes to reveal how various social problems, like dominance, poverty, unemployment and fighting for survival, appear in NDiaye’s works, most clearly seen in *Hilda* and *Papa doit manger*. Three

important parts are illustrated in the first pie chart. This category is largest, with 58%, showing that the upper class or elite rules in French society. Lemarchand represents the French bourgeoisie as a character who is very powerful and in charge in Hilda. The graph demonstrates that, as in real French society, the upper classes have much stronger control than other social classes. Hilda's Poverty (23%) –This section shows what working-class people endured. Hilda, who is a white French woman, stands for those in France living in poverty and not able to find jobs. Because of her silence and obedience, her character may illustrate how those in poverty have no say. According to the chart, France's unemployment rate is about 23% which is similar to the size of this group. Papa (19%) stands for immigrants; in the story, Papa has gone to France hoping to find steady work. The fact that Nakata wants to earn more money so desperately shows what many immigrants end up facing: a tough life with little stability.

The second chart emphasizes statistics about being able to survive and living independently. Papa's Ex-Wife Survives in France shows how women from the Generation of Immigrants were tough. Papa's former wife supports herself and her family through sewing which makes her a role model for many hardworking immigrant women finding their independence in life. The final 9% includes the less-known side of immigration and living such as doing informal jobs, often working less than expected or getting help from the community. Papa's ex-wife is strong and independent; she goes through life by herself, mirroring the new portrait of an immigrant woman in France. This figure suggests that Marie NDiaye's plays reveal the growing difference in power, income and challenges between the two communities in today's France. Lemarchand stands for those in charge, Hilda describes the condition of the poor living in poverty, Papa faces the many issues people encounter while immigrating and his ex-partner reveals the rise of determined immigrant women. For this reason, plays go beyond narration, highlighting the social and political life of France and explaining the links between race, class, gender and immigration. The two pie charts in the design clearly illustrate the social structure in the plays by Senegalese playwright NDiaye.

Figure:02

Unemployment Rates in France (2023)



Source: Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques (INSEE), 2023

https://www.data.gouv.fr/fr/organizations/institut-national-de-la-statistique-et-des-etudes-economiques-insee/datasets/?page_size=20

The chart in figure:02 breaks down unemployment in France in 2023 by age and gender. The bars on the chart each show the unemployment rate for women separated by whether they are immigrants, non-immigrants, French-speaking or from a different country. On the vertical axis, you'll find the unemployment rates indicated in percentages and across the horizontal axis, you can see the various groups of people. This document explains the job market in France as measured by unemployment rates in 2023. An important finding in this figure is how different unemployment rates are for these groups. Those born in other countries report the highest rate of unemployment at 11.6% and immigrants are nearly at that level at 11.2%. In

comparison, non-immigrants only see 6.4% and French women have 6.7%. The unequal numbers make clear the various issues that affect immigrants and women, most of all those who belong to both categories.

The unemployment rate for immigrants (11.2%) (INSEE, 2023) is much higher than for non-immigrants, reflecting many difficulties immigrants face when looking for regular work. People from non-Francophone backgrounds often have a hard time with language barriers which can keep them from doing well in their jobs. If your foreign qualification is not recognized, your documents and certificates are regarded as inferior to the same documents issued in France. It is still a problem that discrimination in hiring happens at all levels. Absence of professional groups which usually help connect people with jobs in different sectors. What this data shows is that having skills or education does not necessarily guarantee economic integration for many migrants (OECD, 2022). Because of difficulties of degree recognition and available support services, an African-trained engineer might work in entry-level service jobs. Even more concerning is the plight of foreign women, who exhibit the highest unemployment rate (11.6%) in the graph. This group experiences a dual vulnerability: on one hand, they are immigrants and thus face all the challenges described above; on the other, their gender adds another layer of structural disadvantage. Foreign women may be: More likely to shoulder unpaid domestic responsibilities, reducing their time for job search. Less represented in sectors that offer stable employment. Disadvantaged in terms of childcare access, cultural expectations, or legal paperwork related to work permits. This aligns with sociological studies that indicate immigrant women, especially from Africa or the Middle East, face higher barriers to employment compared to their male or native counterparts (INSEE, 2023). Additionally, foreign women are often employed in precarious jobs (e.g., cleaning, caregiving), which are more susceptible to economic downturns.

The unemployment rate for French women (6.7%) is just above that of non-immigrants (6.4%), showing relative stability and better labour market integration. These figures suggest that being born in France, even as a woman, offers protective factors such as: Familiarity with the local education system, Legal and cultural fluency, Greater access to social networks and support services. While gender disparity persists, French-born women are evidently better positioned to navigate the employment landscape than their foreign counterparts. Their lower unemployment rate could be attributed to better support structures, local qualifications, and less discrimination. These unemployment patterns expose deep social inequalities in France's labour market. Immigrant status, and even more so being an immigrant woman, significantly increases the risk of being unemployed. The data calls for targeted public policies to reduce these gaps. Such policies may include like language and professional training programs tailored to foreign populations, quicker recognition of foreign diplomas, Anti-discrimination hiring initiatives and support systems such as affordable childcare to enable women to enter the workforce. Moreover, there's a pressing need for gender-sensitive integration policies, which recognize the unique challenges faced by foreign women.

The socio-economic inequalities reflected in this data find a haunting echo in the literary works of Marie NDiaye, particularly in her play *Papa doit manger*. The narrative centers on an absent father who returns to his family under economic distress. His desperate search for support, particularly from his ex-wife, symbolizes the vulnerability of immigrant men within the French socio-economic structure. The character of Papa is a metaphor for marginalized immigrant populations who oscillate between aspiration and hardship. He is unemployed, financially unstable, and emotionally disconnected, a figure trying to survive in a society that offers him little economic or social security. Equally significant is the role of Papa's ex-wife, who survives by sewing clothes to feed her children. She embodies the resilient immigrant woman—not unlike the foreign women represented in the graph—trying to maintain independence in the face of adversity. She represents informal labour, resourcefulness, and quiet resistance against systemic barriers. In this way, NDiaye's theatrical characters become social archetypes that mirror the figures from the unemployment graph. Papa personifies the economically vulnerable immigrant man, while his ex-wife reflects the silent struggle of foreign women grappling with financial survival and social marginalization.

Graph: 02 is more than just a statistical representation; it is a window into France's labour market inequality. The disproportionately high unemployment rates among immigrants and foreign women point toward persistent socio-economic exclusion. These disparities must be urgently addressed through inclusive, intersectional policy frameworks. At the same time, literature, especially theatre, offers critical cultural insights into these issues. Marie NDiaye's *Papa doit manger* illustrates how personal lives are shaped by

broader socio-political forces. By blending statistical data and literary narratives, one gains a more holistic understanding of how unemployment, gender, and migration intertwine to shape the French social fabric in 2023. In this regard, Marie NDiaye addresses themes related to race, colonialism, and the institutional barriers that hinder the economic opportunities of minorities. It points out in her analysis of “Hilda”, the author examines resistance to social expectations, offering a complex vision of unemployment that goes beyond the purely financial and encourages a rethinking of labour relations and social responsibilities (Rathelot, 2014). Several empirical studies shed light on the themes addressed by NDiaye. The work on the socioeconomic and demographic factors of crime in Germany, as well as the causes of violent crime, highlight the complex link between unemployment, particularly among young people, and delinquency (Rundle, 2006 and Volant, 2019). This research echoes the situations described in *Papa doit manger*, where economic desperation drives certain characters to reprehensible acts. It analyses the impact of employment and dynamic deterrence on crime. These studies highlight the importance of economic factors in understanding deviant behaviour and confirm the relevance of the themes explored by Ndiaye (Entorf, 2000). The author explores the violence of identity construction in French and Francophone theatre of the absurd, providing a relevant analytical framework for understanding the identity tensions at work in “Papa doit manger” (Fajnzylber, 2002). Migration dynamics and their impact on the French labour market are also a central element to consider. The author analyses the changing life cycle of female employment, study the link between France's high fertility rate and immigration (Gould, 2002, and Imai, 2004). The author examines the impact of children on income and careers in the domestic labour market (Anderson, 2011), while other author examines whether highly skilled and well-paid women are most disadvantaged by motherhood (Goldin, 2017). Finally, the academic and professional difficulties of young people from immigrant backgrounds, as well as those of one on the challenges and opportunities of integration in developed Western countries, highlight the specific obstacles encountered by immigrant populations in the labour market offers an analysis of ethnic differences in the labour market in relation to asymmetric spatial sorting. (Lucifora, 2017), (England, 2016), and (Aeberhardt, 2015). This literature review highlights the complexity of the issues related to unemployment, immigration, and social inequality in France, while emphasizing the relevance of Marie NDiaye's work in shedding light on these crucial issues.

Methodology:

The methodology for analyzing Marie Ndiaye's play "Papa doit manger" involves:

1. Reviewing existing literature on familial relationships, racial dynamics, and unemployment.
2. Close textual analysis of the play to identify themes and narrative devices.
3. Integration of empirical studies on youth unemployment, crime rates, etc.
4. Comparative analysis with other literary works and policy frameworks.
5. Qualitative interviews with experts and scholars.
6. Interdisciplinary approach combining literary studies, sociology, economics, and migration studies.
7. Examination of relevant policy documents related to unemployment and immigration in France.
8. This methodology aims to offer a nuanced analysis of the play's thematic exploration and contribute to broader discussions on literature, society, and public policy.

Results and Discussions:

Youth unemployment and its potential correlation with crime have long been subjects of interest and concern for policymakers and researchers alike the relationship between youth unemployment and crime in France during the period from 1990 to 2000. This decade saw fluctuations in the unemployment rate, with an initial increase followed by a subsequent decrease. However, the patterns in crime rates did not mirror those of unemployment. Our analysis aims to shed light on the nuanced dynamics between these two phenomena, focusing on both property crimes and violent crimes. Theoretical frameworks such as Becker's economic theory of crime provide a basis for understanding the relationship between unemployment and criminal behaviour. According to this perspective, individuals weigh the costs and benefits of legal and illegal activities when deciding whether to engage in criminal behaviour. Empirical research, however, has yielded mixed findings regarding the link between unemployment and crime (Alba, 2016). While some studies

suggest a positive association between unemployment and crime rates, others fail to establish a significant correlation. Factors such as age group, access to unemployment benefits, and duration of unemployment further complicate the analysis. Moreover, the impact of social and economic variables at the regional level necessitates a nuanced approach to understanding the relationship between unemployment and crime. Moving forward, effective policies to combat youth unemployment and its associated crime implications require a multifaceted approach. Education emerges as a critical component, with targeted interventions aimed at improving educational outcomes and increasing the economic returns to schooling (Rundle, 2006). Furthermore, addressing structural issues such as apprenticeship wages and long-term investments in education are identified as potential strategies to mitigate youth unemployment and its downstream effects on crime rates. However, the efficacy of these interventions may vary depending on evolving socio-economic conditions, underscoring the need for ongoing research and evaluation. Same as the play of Marie Ndiaye *papa doit manger* happens as *Deception* and *Fallout*. Papa's deception and manipulation, driven by his economic struggles and desire for financial gain, lead to significant fallout in his relationships. His attempts to swindle money from his family members and his mistress culminate in violence, with Maman resorting to a violent knife attack. This demonstrates how economic desperation can drive individuals to engage in criminal behaviour, causing harm to themselves and others (Aeberhardt, 2015). Maman's refusal to listen to racist arguments from her family members reflects broader societal tensions surrounding race and discrimination. The portrayal of racist attitudes among certain characters, as well as the challenges faced by interracial couples, underscores the pervasive nature of racial discrimination and its impact on individuals and relationships. Mina's journey towards understanding her identity and sense of responsibility in the midst of familial turmoil highlights the psychological toll of unemployment and familial discord. Her realization that her identity is intertwined with her father's actions, despite her lack of affection for him, speaks to the complex dynamics of familial relationships and the lasting impact of parental influence (Alba, 2016). Overall, the play paints a nuanced picture of the interconnectedness between unemployment, crime, and interpersonal relationships, demonstrating how economic hardship and societal tensions can shape individual behaviour and interpersonal dynamics (Goldin, 2017). In "*Papa doit manger*," the protagonist's unemployment drives him to desperate measures, seeking money from his ex-wife, whom he left previously. This situation highlights the intersection of unemployment, financial instability, and strained relationships.

Figure 3:



Source: Labor Force Surveys, INSEE, 1990-2002, <https://journals.openedition.org/cres/1996>

Even Figure:03 the Labor Force Survey by INSEE underscores the societal implications of unemployment, such as crime, poverty, and strained relationships. As it figures out more about:

Unemployment not only affects individuals' financial well-being but also has broader societal consequences. The protagonist's plight reflects the struggles faced by many individuals grappling with joblessness. In "Papa doit manger," the father's unemployment leads him to seek financial assistance from his ex-wife, demonstrating the strain it places on personal relationships. This mirrors the findings of the Labor Force Survey, which link unemployment to crime, poverty, and strained relationships.

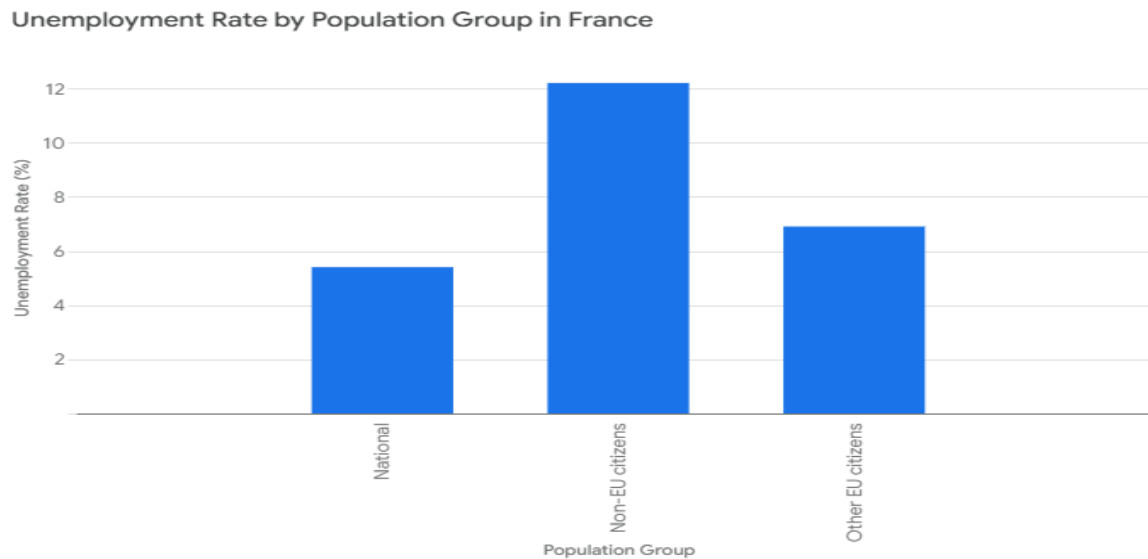
France's immigration policies aim to attract skilled workers and investors while facilitating the integration of newcomers. Reforms introduced in 2016 and 2017 focused on economic migration, including multi-annual residence permits and measures to attract innovative companies and startups. Integration efforts, such as the French integration contract, provide newcomers with access to language and civil training, but more comprehensive reforms are needed to address persistent disparities in labour market outcomes (Anderson, 2011). It highlights the complex interplay between unemployment, immigration, and labour market dynamics in France. Unemployment not only affects individuals' financial stability but also has broader societal implications, including strained relationships and increased crime. Immigrants face unique challenges in labour markets, influenced by factors such as region of origin and integration policies. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive reforms to promote inclusive growth and improve labour market outcomes for all residents, regardless of their background (Entorf, 2000).

As foreign native writer in France because her father was non-native French citizens. Here she faces an identical crisis which is reflected in her novel *papa doit manger*. There are differences in how childbirth affects the careers of foreign-born and native-born women. While native-born women are more inclined to take career breaks for childcare, foreign-born women are more likely to refrain from entering the labour market altogether when having children. approximately 78,000 permits were granted to international students at the tertiary level, while 21,000 permits were issued to temporary and seasonal labour migrants and trainees (excluding intra-EU migration). Moreover, 241,000 intra-EU postings This were recorded in 2017, indicating a notable 19% increase compared to the previous year, with posted workers typically engaged in short-term contracts (Fajnzylber, 2002). Additionally, in November 2018, the Prime Minister announced a national strategy to attract internationally mobile students, with measures aimed at simplifying visa policies, increasing French language courses and English-taught programs, adjusting tuition fees based on educational attainment and financial circumstances, and enhancing reception conditions by introducing a label and expanding scholarship opportunities. In 2019, the global labour force witnessed the participation of 169 million international migrant workers, constituting 4.9% of the workforce in destination countries (ILO, 2021). These migrant workers comprised approximately 69% of the world's international migrant population aged 15 and over during the same period (Gould. 2002).

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), migrant workers are individuals employed or seeking employment in their present country of residence. The United Nations Statistics Division (UN SD) offers a complementary definition, focusing on foreign migrant workers admitted by a receiving state for economic activities. It is crucial to distinguish between foreign migrant workers and international migrants, with the former emphasizing citizenship and the latter encompassing any change in the country of usual residence (Imai, 2004). Different regions employ varying methodologies for data collection, utilizing harmonized labor force surveys, census data, and specialized databases. Collaboration between international organizations and regional bodies enhances data collection and analysis efforts. Despite progress, challenges persist, including data quality issues and limited comparability due to differing definitions. Efforts to standardize international standards and methodologies aim to address these challenges and improve data accuracy and reliability. Labour migration is a dynamic global phenomenon influenced by various factors. Accurate and comprehensive data are essential for informed policymaking and effective governance. Addressing challenges in data collection, standardization, and comparability is crucial for advancing our understanding of labour migration and fostering international cooperation in managing migration flows. The unemployment rate in France has been a persistent concern for the economy, remaining prevalent since the financial and economic crisis of 2008. Despite signs of improvement in recent years, challenges persist,

particularly regarding youth unemployment. The unique dynamics influencing France's labour market underscore the need for targeted policies and initiatives to address these issues effectively.

Figure:04



Source: Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques (INSEE)

The bar graph “Unemployment Rate by Population Group in France” illustrates the gap in unemployment facing Nationals (those with no migrant background) and EU citizens and Non-EU citizens. You can see from the graph that a French citizen has greater access to employment than someone who is not French. 5.4% of French nationals are currently looking for work, making it the lowest unemployment in the European Union. The low unemployment rate may be because migrants know French, are familiar with the local work environment and have qualifications approved and trusted in France. Moreover, nationals do not usually struggle with the cultural or institutional obstacles that immigrants meet. People living in other EU nations are facing a jobless rate of 6.9%. Although people from EU countries can work and live wherever they like in the EU, there are still obstacles. Some of the issues people encounters are having problems with language, meeting various work skill standards or changing to the French work environment. But because EU citizens are treated differently by law and by institutions, they often find it much easier to search for jobs and settle in the country. The most remarkable aspect of the graph is that unemployment among non-EU citizens is over twice the national average. This data points out the big problems immigrants from other countries in Europe have in France.

The disparities highlight systemic inequalities in access to employment and underscore the importance of targeted public policies. Improving labour market integration for immigrants, especially non-EU nationals, requires coordinated action: language training programs, faster recognition of foreign qualifications, anti-discrimination enforcement, and targeted support services. However, it's also crucial to recognize the limits of the data presented. The graph provides a snapshot but lacks demographic details like age, gender, education level, or length of stay in France. These variables can significantly influence unemployment rates and help explain group disparities more precisely. For instance, younger or newly arrived immigrants might face different challenges than those who have been in the country longer or have acquired French citizenship. Hence, it sheds light on the unequal employment landscape in France, reflecting broader social, institutional, and economic issues that affect different population groups. Bridging these employment gaps is not just a matter of fairness but also essential for the economic and social cohesion of the country.

Conclusion:

In Marie NDiaye's play "Papa doit manger," the richness of the story comes from the way related themes of family problems, racial issues and work insecurity are so cleverly combined. Rather than only focusing on hard times, the play deepens our understanding of the many ways vulnerabilities are made worse by economic and societal settings. As the symbolic lost father of Papa, the boy finds himself depending on a family whose relationships are threatened by stories and tactics. By telling the unpredictable journey of a man trying to re-establish himself, NDiaye expresses the harsh impact job loss has on men and their families. Although labour migration is not the main point, it helps us see the problems the play explores from another angle. The stories of the characters and their relationships with people from different cultures reveal more detailed accounts of identity and the obstacles of mobility for humans. So, it is necessary for policies to support migrants in finding work and becoming more integrated into their host communities. Eventually, Papa doit manger and Hilda, rise above being a simple play. It is a detailed, human look at unemployment, mixed with the family lives and racial issues found in an uncertain economy. Because she prefers to see the details of why people act the way they do, rather than judge them simply, Marie NDiaye highlights tough realities for her readers and encourages them to think about how to bring about a fairer and united community. The play resonates long after the curtain falls, reminding us of the urgency of collective action to deconstruct the mechanisms of exclusion and build a fairer future for all.

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