

Contextual Reflection of Migration Through Textile Art

George Kwame Fobiri,⁺ Ebenezer Kofi Howard,⁺⁺ William Badoe,³ Solomon Marfo Ayesu,⁴ Benjamin Eghan,⁵ Rowena Fatchu Kansanba⁶ & Michael Obeng Nyark⁷ (Ghana)³

Abstract

Controlling migration, especially the irregular type, has been an issue of global concern and one of the contending issues in academic discourse today. The study sought to create a reflection of human migration in the national developmental agenda through textile art. As a qualitative study, the Practice-based research design was adopted. Also, conceptual fabrics in the Ghanaian context were used since they add more meaning to stories with their conceptual nature. With immigrants, immigration officers, and refugee camp officers as a target, a sample size of 15 coupled with 105 engaged in an exhibition was considered. Interviews and Observations were used as instruments to solicit information from the participants. The study reveals the suitability of textile art in story-telling on pressing issues using mixed-media and panel concepts of art creation. It is recommended that artists should pay attention to pressing issues like migration in their creations to ensure national development.

Keywords: Migration, National Development, Textile Art, Conceptual Art, Visual Art, Ghana

⁺ George Kwame Fobiri, Asst. Lecturer, Dept. of Fashion Design and Textiles Studies, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana.
email: Kfobiri@gmail.com.

⁺⁺ Ebenezer Kofi Howard, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Industrial Art, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology, Ghana.
email: billhowardgh@yahoo.com.

³ William Badoe, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Industrial Art, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology, Ghana.
email: wbadoe@gmail.com.

⁴ Solomon Marfo Ayesu, Lecturer, Dept. of Fashion Design and Textiles Studies, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana.
email: Solomon.amarfo@kstu.edu.gh.

⁵ Benjamin Eghan, Dept. of Industrial Art, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology, Ghana.
email: bennelson2224@gmail.com.

⁶ Rowena Fatchu Kansanba, Lecturer, Dept. of Fashion Design and Textiles Studies, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana.
email: rfatchu12@gmail.com.

⁷ Michael Obeng Nyarko, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Fashion Design and Textiles Studies, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana.
email: moyfila@yahoo.co.uk.

Introduction

Necessities and choices invigorate human relocation, either permanent or temporal, in an attempt to stay in tune with the ambiguities, life comes along with. Migration could be defined largely as a permanent or temporal change of home (Lee, 1966; Esses, et al., 2017). Human migration normally comes to mind when one's life expectations are seemingly not reachable within their immediate environment. For thousands of years now in history, humans have kept moving around the world searching for food, escaping from enemies and seeking riches resulting in diseases and cultural dissemination (Ferrie & Hatton, 2013; Chamie, 2020). It is assumed that about a billion people globally, do not work in their country or region of birth as a result of migration (Démurger, 2015). Parents working abroad, however, have a great influence on children's decisions to engage in migration (Clifton-Sprigg, 2022). Most people, especially Africans always have dreams of migrating to European countries (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016). This increases the rate of national or 'route' abundance. However, national development largely depends on the citizens of the country and their distinct inputs. Internal migration as ascertained by Asare (2012), involves relocating to a new residence within one's province, country or continent of origin. This act results in the insufficiency and scarcity of adequate shelter in the cities, especially when the movement involves rural to urban areas, which in turn trample upon national development (Richter et al., 2016). Due to the lack of job opportunities in rural areas, the youth are compelled to engage in internal migration, although it comes with abuses and risks (Assan & Kharisma, 2023). External migration (Asare, 2012), also involves moving to a new residence outside one's province, country or continent of origin. This version of migration happens internationally and tends to affect both the former and the current home of migrants.

According to Démurger (2015), the absence of immigrants may adversely affect the lives of their family members left behind, in the areas of health, education and societal ranks. The author further expresses the good aspect of migration whereby families in the home country benefit economically through financial transfers by the migrant. When the citizens in a country are satisfied, the nation's progression is guaranteed. In the case when migration is propelled by wars and ethnic issues, the life of the migrant is assumed to be safe in the new home. According to Crush & Ramachandran (2010), South Africa and India enjoy economic development through the inputs of immigrants employed in both formal and informal sectors. Migration therefore comes with pros and cons with the latter tending to be a canker to national development. It is observed that migration causes a lot of transformation in cities (Triandafyllidou, et al., 2024). According to the report given in 2019 by the International Organization of Migration (IOM), more than 4,000 fatalities have been recorded annually since 2014. The report again shows that 33,686 migrant fatalities have been recorded from January 2014 to October 2019. The issue of migration therefore needs to be highlighted in the quest for national development.

In Ghana, addressing migration issues has become critical due to the rate at which people are willing to migrate out of the country. Inasmuch as everyone has the right to migrate, the illegal type of migration is highly frowned upon by the Ghana government with emphasis placed on embracing the legal type. With many efforts by the Ghana Immigration Service to mitigate illegal migration, the issue of leaving the country through inappropriate routes and unapproved documents still exists in the country. It is observed that visual arts have the ability to sensitize on pressing issues effectively, especially in the Ghanaian context (Badoe & Boamah, 2021; Buami et al., 2024), hence the need to address the issue from an artistic perspective through story-telling with conceptual arts. It is established that conceptual arts are characterized by materials that might be cheap and not necessar-

ily aesthetically pleasing but tend to send important information as the idea behind the work is paramount (Stigter, 2024). This characteristic of conceptual art makes it a thought-provoking one and draws people to ask more questions for an important engagement. The current study therefore adopts this idea to raise issues on migration.

Scholars have raised many concerns about migration and national development. Abdulai (2018), Asare (2012), Ferrie and Hatton (2013) among others have debated on the sour and sweet packages migration brings. Also, various artworks have been done by artists around the world to address pressing issues including migration. Reference could be made to Jacob Lawrence's 60-panel migration series which talks about the exodus of African Americans to the North from the southern sector. The panels show the struggles the people went through in the migration process. Jonathan Muzikar's exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art, between the periods of October 1st, 2016, to January 22nd, 2017 is also another art installation that addresses the global refugee emergencies. This exhibition was titled; "Insecurity: Tracing Displacement and Shelter". 'Woven chronicles' created between the years 2011 and 2016 by Reena Saini Kallat. It is a wall mat made of yarn, tracking the global routes where migrants have traveled. Edel Rodriguez's Artwork (illustration) produced in 2018; titled 'Strangers'. According to the artist, many immigrants are considered as 'Boat people,' and welcoming strangers can be dangerous.

The aforementioned artists amongst many have added their voices to societal issues through their artworks. On these bases, textile art creation stands the chance of adding to the academic discourse and campaign on the issues regarding migration and its role or effects on national development. This artistic research contextually and visually creates a reflection of human migration through textile art creation with a focus on migration and national development. The objectives of the study are to explore various concepts regarding the causes and effects of migration, select suitable concepts to produce a conceptual art piece under art studio conditions to reflect the issue of migration and national development and evaluate the artistic piece through an exhibition.

Materials and Methods

The study employed the Practice-based research design. This research design allows one to think critically to come out with new ideas which eventually create room for innovation in research. Candy (2006) noted that practice-based research design is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice. The study involved the exploration of tools and materials such as philosophical fabrics, wood, adhesives, and polyurethane foam at the studio to gain knowledge. Philosophical fabrics were included in creating the art pieces since Ghanaians can relate well to their meanings and link them properly with the interpretations of the artworks. The nature of the current study also required an original investigation regarding migration in the Ghanaian context, specifically with people who have gained experience in the situation at hand. The practice-based research approach was therefore adjudged the best research method since it allows the researcher to gain knowledge and subsequently apply it in artistic creation.

The targeted population for the study was immigrants, refugee camp officers and immigration officers in Ghana. Out of this population, a sample size of fifteen (15) was considered. The sample comprises two (2) immigration officers from Ashanti Regional Headquarters,

ten (10) immigrants from Fetentaa refugee camp, and three (3) refugee camp officers from Fetentaa refugee camp. Also, 105 people were engaged in an exhibition. It became necessary to focus on specific individuals such as immigrants, immigration officers, and refugee camp officers as they are the best people to provide the needed information. Refugee camp officers deal directly with the refugees while the immigration officers have in-depth knowledge of the dos and don'ts of migration. Geographically, the study included Fetentaa refugee camp as it is one of the major refugee camps in Ghana. Interviews and Observations were used as instruments to solicit information from the participants. The participants were anonymously presented in the study by assigning unique codes to aid in referencing. Thus, Ghana Immigration Service Officer (GISO) and Fetentaa Refugee Camp Officer (FRCO).

Again, a conceptual framework named 'CTPEP' was adapted from the 'Universal Design Model' to guide the study. The adapted model is made up of five (5) phases which include the Conceptualisation, Transformation, Production, Evaluation and Preservation phases. Figure 1 shows the Universal Design Model whereas figure 2 presents the adapted conceptual framework used for the study.

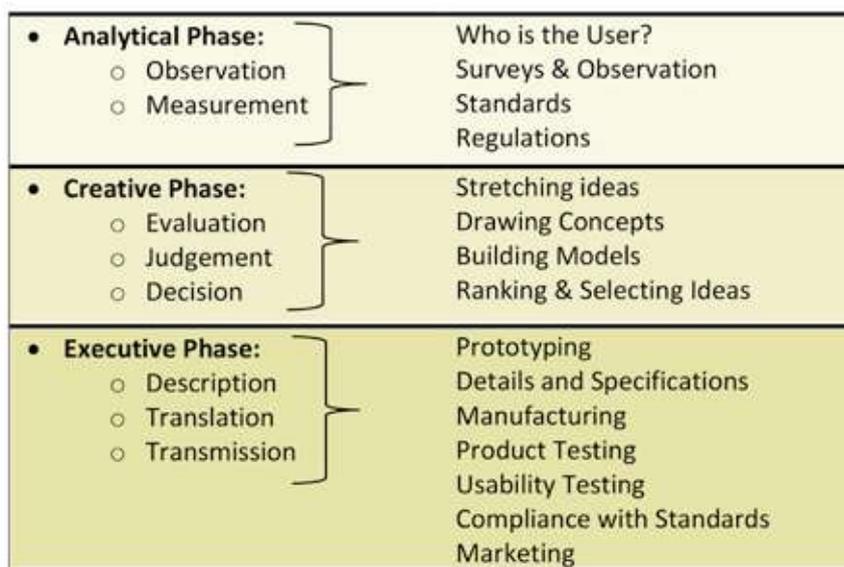


Figure 1. Universal Design Model (UDM). Source: Van-Roosmalen (n.d).

The adapted model was thoroughly assessed by experts in studio-based research who confirmed its suitability in the execution of studio research of this nature. Upon several trials at the studio, it was confirmed that the CTPEP model allows researchers to exhaust the design procedures as far as the UDM is concerned. The model allows the creation of concepts by gathering ideas from a target audience and existing theories toward problem-solving. It also allows researchers to transform ideas gathered from a given locality on pressing issues into tangibles (art pieces) through practices to fully explore the practice-based research approach. At this phase (transformation) of the model, researchers are allowed to create prototypes to establish appropriate means of solving the problem. The selected concept is then produced and allowed to be evaluated for feedback, and subsequently preserved at the final phase for easy accessibility by stakeholders.

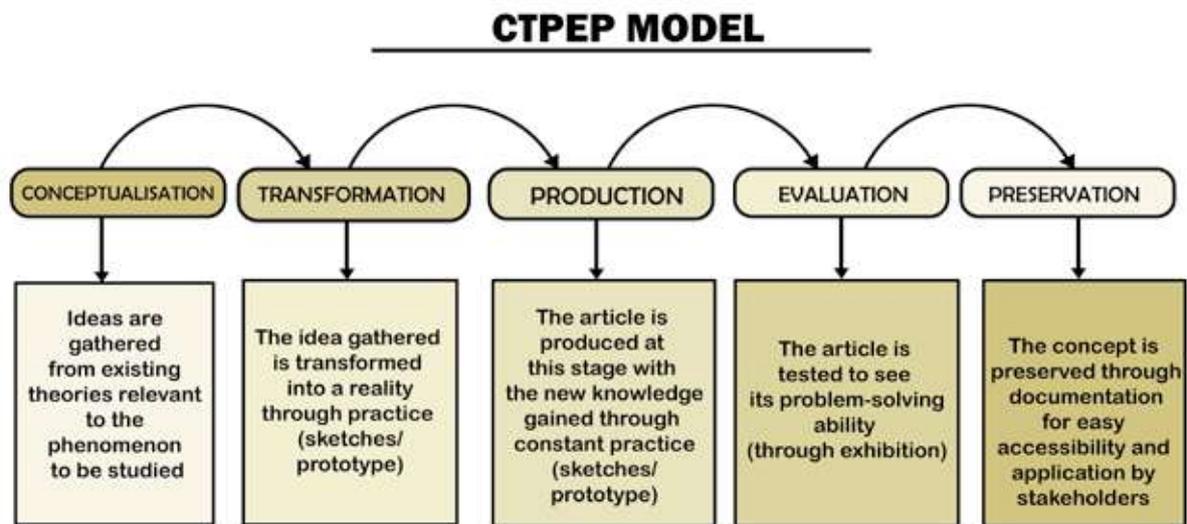


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework (CTPEP Design Model adapted from UDM). Source: Researcher's own construct (2021).

Conceptualisation Phase: The concept of the study is clearly stated and ideas are gathered from existing theories significant to the phenomenon to be studied.

Transformation Phase: The ideas gathered at the conceptualisation phase are transformed into sketches to gain new knowledge. The best sketch is ranked & selected for prototyping.

Production Phase: The article is formed at this phase, paying attention to the details and specifications.

Evaluation Phase: Testing is done at this phase to see the capability of the product in problem solving as far as the situation at hand is concerned. It is publicly displayed to allow comments and appreciation from viewers.

Preservation Phase: To ensure the product maintains its problem-solving ability, it is preserved at this phase through documentation. This makes it easier for stakeholders to get access to it when the need arises.

Conceptualisation and Transformation

With the data gathered from primary and secondary sources, various concepts were developed to reflect migration and its impact on national developmental agenda. The concept of the study is 'To Reprove Illegalities with Textile Art to Build a Nation'. With this concept in mind, several ideas were conceived to address the issue of migration, especially the illegal type. Images relevant to the concept were sketched and composed with the adobe Photoshop software after several practices at the studio. This is termed 'Transformation' as far as the conceptual framework for the study is concerned.

Concept 1

The first concept was built out of theme "Migration: Unbroken Exodus" to suggest the continuous movement of people to and fro the country (Ghana). The concept is made up of five panels in varied dimensions which collectively showcase the causes of migration, Legal migration, Illegal migration and the consequences of both legal and illegal migration. The second panel of the first concept demonstrates the act of illegal migration. It displays the various means through which immigrants get to their destination countries illegally.

These include the use of the desert which is depicted in the concept by three people walking together on a dry land, and the use of the sea represented by a canoe with passengers and loads. The concept again showcases the idea of legal migration in the third panel. It employs images such as an airplane, a passport and a ship to address the issue of legal migration. It is believed that one becomes a potential legal migrant when these things among others are considered in the migration process.

The fourth panel tells a story about the consequences of illegal migration on the individuals who involve in the act. These include death through killing by terrorists and drowning on the sea, persecution, overcrowding of people in destination countries, armed robbery and arrest by security forces. In the last panel (5th panel) is seen the benefits of legal migration to the sending and receiving countries, the individual migrants and their families. The benefits of legal migration may include cultural promotion and knowledge again. Again, the sending countries gain remittances from natives outside the country. Most people acquire well-paying jobs when they migrate legally to other countries. This stands as a major benefit of migration since job hunting is a chief contributor to migration as found in this study. When the individual panels are put together, they tell a full story of the causes and impact of legal and illegal migration on nations and migrants. This concept is simulated in Figure 3. with the theme “Migration: Unbroken Exodus”. It is worth noting that these panels were created without sidelining the information gathered from the participants through the interviews and observations. The major causes of migration and its impact featured in the panels were revealed through an interview with the immigration officers and the refugees. The refugees listed all the issues that triggered their movement into the country and the challenges they encountered. For instance, some of the refugees pointed out in an interview session that they moved to Ghana because of wars and violence, which are all featured in the panels, especially panels 1 and 4. Information gathered from the immigration officers and refugee camp officers was also considered in creating panels 2, 3 & 5.

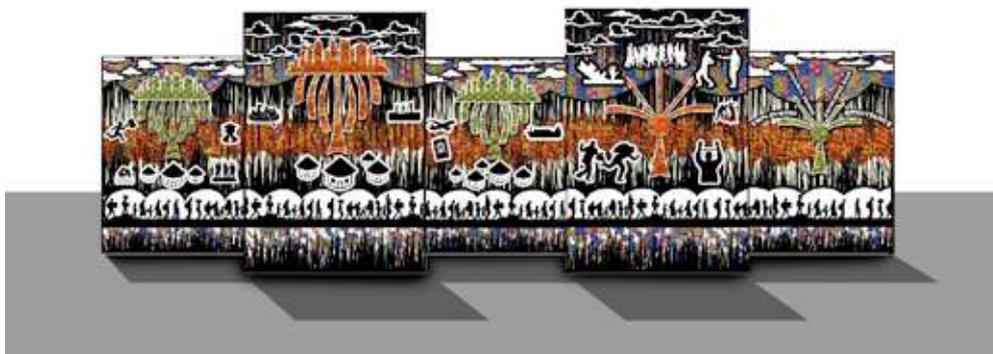


Figure 3. Simulation of concept (Migration: Unbroken Exodus). 200" x 72". Source: Studio work (2021).

Concept 2

The second graphical concept bears the theme “Unbroken Exodus II” with the same concept of split canvas in five panels. This concept addresses the Rural-Urban form of migration under Internal migration which is rampant in Ghana. The concept was inspired by data gathered from the Ghana immigration service officers who gave an in-depth insight into the causes and effects of rural-urban migration, especially in Ghana. These were considered to come up with a concept to educate people on the rural-urban type of migration.

In the first panel, the advantages and disadvantages associated with the rural setting are outlined. These among others include Availability of food (normally in perishable forms), no access to electricity which results in less usage of gadgets and less expenditure. Panels 2, 3 and 4 wholistically showcase the causes and impact of Rural-Urban migration on the two settings. The causes among others include job seeking, positions, project, education, job transfer.

In the quest to acquire white collar jobs, people migrate to cities to have their dreams realized. Others also migrate to engage in rural-based jobs such as farming. This brings about a continuous movement of people from rural to urban areas and vice versa. Some leadership positions compel people to engage in Internal migration in order to perform their duties effectively. Chieftaincy and family positions among others sometimes require the presence of the leaders in the area. Developmental projects, education and job transfers are potential causes of internal migration. They cause people to leave their current homes at a particular point in time to another location in order to fulfil a given task. These have been fused artistically within panels 2, 3 and 4 to express the causes of internal migration and its cyclical nature. The panels again show the massive movement of people to and fro urban areas and the impact it has on such areas. The rural areas normally suffer the loss of energetic youth to the urban areas while the urban areas in turn suffer overcrowding and pressure on its amenities. This fact is captured in the panels with human silhouettes where less people are seen in the rural areas and more people in the urban areas.

The fifth panel captures the advantages and disadvantages associated with the urban setting. These include High expenditure, overcrowding, remittances, job creation etc. Living in an urban area demands a high expenditure as compared to living in a rural area. Most bills paid in urban areas are not applicable in rural areas, resulting in a minimal expenditure at the rural setting. Another factor accompanying internal migration (Rural-Urban) is overcrowding of people in cities which results in pressure on government amenities. Nevertheless, remittances are made to families back in the rural areas by immigrants in the cities. Women who travel from Northern to the Southern Ghana engage in kayaye which enables them to remit their families and get gadgets like sewing machines for themselves (GISO 1, 2021). Other immigrants grab the opportunity to create private jobs for personal and national development. The installation of the various panels gives a reflection of internal migration and its impact on national development. It highlights on both the advantages and the disadvantages of Rural-urban and Urban-rural migration on the destination and receiving settings. Figure 4 shows the second concept “Unbroken Exodus II”



Figure 4. Simulation of concept 2 (Unbroken Exodus II). 130" x 65." Source: Field Work.

Concept 3

The third concept is inspired by Lee's model propounded in 1966 as part of his studies in migration. It depicts the Origin factors, Destination factors and Intervening obstacles which are key factors in migration according to Lee's migration theory. The concept is made up of three panels and communicates effectively when arranged in a landscape manner. The first panel describes the origin factors which push people to migrate to other localities. In the panel is seen silhouette of thatched houses which suggest a village setting with limited opportunities. People in such localities always aspire to migrate to cities where there are a lot of opportunities. In pursuit of acquiring new favorable homes, migrants are posed with several hindrances which Lee describes as "Intervening obstacles". These obstacles are illustrated in the second panel of the concept and may include Distance between the origin and destination settings, means of transportation, etc. The third panel describes the destination setting with pull factors that catch the migrant's attention to migrate at a given time. In relation to the current study, the panels reflect the stories narrated by the refugees in the interview session. It was revealed that the origin factors that led to their relocation were primarily wars and violence. They felt moving to the destination country (Ghana) would provide them with the peaceful living they yearned for. Also, since Ghana shares borders with Ivory Coast, it happened to be their destination country partly because of the intervening obstacles that included a means of transport as mentioned in Lee's assertion to be a key factor. Figure 5 shows the simulation of a three-panel concept of migration inspired by Lee's theory of migration. It gives a picture of the various factors involved in migration in abstract forms. It comes in a dimension of 90" x 65."



Figure 5. Simulation of Concept 3 (Factors Associated with Migration). 90" x 65." Source: Field Work.

Concept 4

The fourth concept is themed "Agonies on Desert". It gives a picture of the suffering immigrants go through on the desert in their decision to migrate irregularly to their destination countries. The concept is in three separate panels and expresses sad moments in the desert when put together. The agonies are artistically depicted by a person crying in anguish and death people being fed upon by a vulture in the desert. This panel was also created out of the information obtained from the immigration officers who receive news daily regarding the death of irregular immigrants. As narrated by GISO 2, the immigrants go through unfriendly challenges in the desert, where unlucky ones receive their untimely death. The simulated version is shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Simulation of concept 4 (Agonies on Desert). 70" x 60." Source: Field Work.

Concept 5

Again, as narrated by the Ghana immigration officers, reports are received daily about the death of irregular migrants on the sea causing a rise in fatalities regarding migration. Based on these facts, concept five was created to sensitize the dangers involved in migrating illegally on the sea, with the theme “Agonies on Sea”. The concept features images of people crying for help as they fall from boats and drown in the sea. Others are purposefully being thrown into the sea by their colleagues who want to survive a sinking boat. These images are incorporated into the concept to create awareness of the sufferings illegal migrants go through on the sea. In instances where illegal migrants manage to hide in ships to be stowed away to their destination countries; the victims take the risk of being killed and thrown into the sea. Reference could be made to a true story in the movie “Deadly Voyage” in 1996, directed by John Mackenzie. The fifth concept was purposefully created to include images evolving around sad true stories on the sea narrated by immigrants. The concept comes in three separate panels with the split canvas idea. Figure 7 shows the computer-simulated version of “Agonies on Sea.”



Figure 7. Simulation of concept 5 (Agonies on Sea). 80" x 60." Source: Field Work.

The various Graphical themes and concepts generated out of the study at the idea generation stage, all stand the chance of educating general public on the issues of migration,

especially the illegal type. Both internal and international migration have been addressed to sensitize on their positive and negative consequences. It could be observed from the various concepts generated that, the harm caused by illegal migration has the capacity to hinder human and national development, and therefore must be discouraged in an attempt to create a favorable environment for national development.

After a thorough assessment by experts (Artists), the first concept (Migration: Unbroken Exodus) presented in figure 3 was vetted to be implemented. The choice of the concept was based on its ability to address the causes of migration, illegal migration, Legal migration, the consequences of legal and illegal migration through the various panels.

Production Phase

The materials required for the implementation of the concept were sourced for and prepared. The major materials among others were wood, fabrics, yarns, polyurethane foam and adhesive. Frames were constructed from wood (*Triplochiton scleroxylon*) for the mounting of canvas which served as a support to the elements captured in the concepts. The frames were constructed according to the dimensions of the individual panels forming the concept. Figure 8 shows the dimensions of the wooden frames used for the concept, while figure 9 shows the constructed frames. A canvas (off-white colored) was stretched on the various wooden frames to create a suitable base for pasting of the various elements.

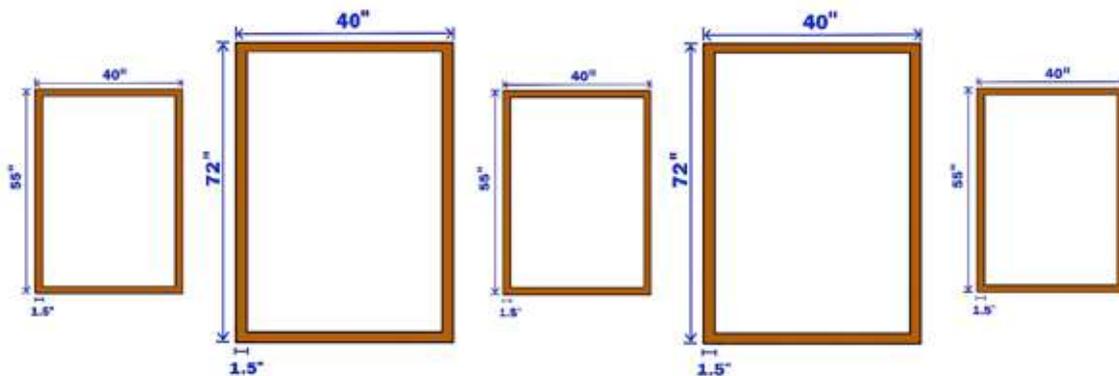


Figure 8. Dimensions of the wooden frames. Source: Studio Work (2021).



Figure 9. The constructed wooden frames. Source: Studio Work (2021).

The intricacy of some images in the concept demanded the use of screen printing method in order to achieve precision. Those images were therefore printed on a white cotton fabric

prior to the cutting and pasting on the canvas. Figure 10 shows the screen-printed images incorporated in the concepts built.



Figure 10. The screen-printed images. Source: Studio Work (2021).

The plain fabrics coupled with the printed fabrics (industrial and screen printed) were cut and pasted on the canvases as simulated with the computer. To create a 3-Dimensional effect, the researchers employed polyurethane foam as a base for some elements in the concept. Polyester yarns (black and yellow) also became significant materials for the creation of special effects in the articles. Black twill-woven fabrics were cut in strips and pasted on the background to create harmony in the concepts.

The first panel showcases the general causes of migration. The screen-printed images relating to the general causes of migration such as natural disasters, violence, job hunting etc. were cut and pasted on the first canvas of a dimension of 40" x 55". The second panel was also created with the aforementioned fabrics and techniques; thus, printed and plain fabrics with a 3-D effect. The panel addresses the illegal type of migration. The third panel showcases the legal type of migration which is widely accepted and encouraged by immigration authorities in all forms of human relocation. This panel has similar features to the first panel and therefore went through the same procedure as happened in the production of panel 1. The fourth and fifth panels were created with inspiration from a tree and fruits. The 3-D concept on these panels was created with usual polyurethane foam and the gluing method using the printed fabrics. The screen-printed images were cut and pasted together with the industrial printed and the plain fabrics to depict the consequences of illegal and legal migration.

Contextual and Philosophical Discussion

'Unbroken Exodus' constitutes five panel textile art pieces reflecting on the causes and impact of migration on individuals and nations. The theme 'MIGRATION: UNBROKEN EXODUS' explains the nature of migration as part of humans' daily activities. According to Ballyn (2011), migration happens in our daily life and has existed since the inception of time. The mass movement of people to and fro around the world stands unbroken, hence the theme; 'Migration: Unbroken Exodus'. This is visually presented in the concept with a continuous movement of people without a break, although the panels were made separately.

Printed Fabrics

The pieces forming the concept are composed of textiles materials (printed fabrics, plain fabrics and yarns) and other media which are deemed suitable by the researchers for the creation of conceptual art pieces. As a conceptual art, it boasts of its value from a material cultural perspective; thus, the symbolic meaning of every element and the ideas behind its engagement in the creation of the concepts. The industrial printed fabrics used for the concept are presented in figure 11.

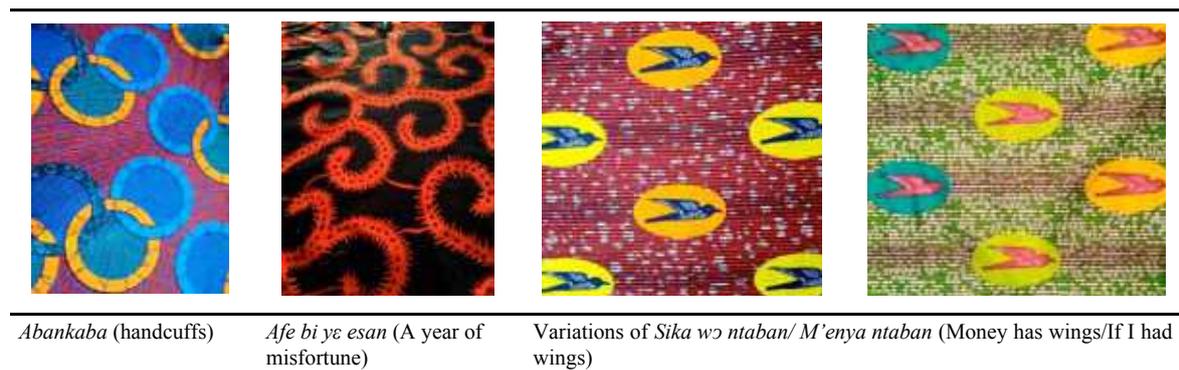


Figure 11. Industrial printed fabrics used in the concept. Source: Market survey (2021).

The names of the printed fabrics and their meaning in relation to the concept are explained below:

Abankaba (handcuffs) – The surface designs in this fabric come in overlapping circles which gives it a handcuff resemblance. This fabric was used to depict the consequences of illegal migration. Immigrants stand the risk of being caught and jailed when they embark on migration with inappropriate routes and unapproved documents.

Afe bi ye esan (A year of misfortune) – The fabric is usually used as a mourning cloth in Ghana when a loved one passes on. It is therefore used to express sad moments in one's life. The fabric is featured in the concept to address unfortunate moments such as the loss of loved ones, assets, jobs etc. which are potential causes of migration. It also draws attention to the fact that, although some people embark on migration by illegal means and are not caught, there will be an unfortunate day for such people where they would be caught and prosecuted.

Sika wo ntaban/ M'anya ntaban (Money has wings/If I had wings) – The fabric comprises flying birds in circles as the main motifs with wax effect and horizontal lines as textures. Two interpretations are drawn from this fabric by the locals based on its surface designs. One school of thought interprets the fabric as 'Money has wings'. This means that, a rich person can become poor sooner than we think when he/she fails to handle money with care. Another school of thought interprets the cloth as 'If I had wings to fly'. This suggests how certain circumstances can deprive people of their desires in life. Poverty is a key initiator of migration and is counted among such hindrances. Two variations of this fabric were used in this project to portray two different settings. The green one suggests migration of people for greener pastures while the orange one depicts the desert. The flying birds in the fabric portray the act of migration at all levels.

The adaptation of the split canvas technique in the implementation of the concept was aimed at presenting varied stories with individual panels, which when merged gives a wholistic message on the causes and effect of migration on individuals and their respective nations. Immigration is pronounced to be among the most pressing issues globally (Castañeda, 2017; Esses, et al., 2017). The inappropriate means of engaging in immigration and its side effects therefore needs to be sensitized on to ensure national development. To this effect, some panels are purposely made bigger in the concept to place emphasis on the messages they carry. These bigger panels address the illegal form of migration and its consequences on the migrant, the origin and the destination country. As people's eagerness to relocate increases, so do they devise means to achieve their aim. These means turn out to include illegal acts which lead to increased rates of mortalities. The concept (Unbroken Exodus) becomes relevant in an environment where verbal sensitization on the harm caused by illegal migration becomes insufficient to draw the attention of people to this big national development canker.

Panel One

Panel one projects the general causes of migration in graphical themes. In this case, the major causes as found in the study are innovatively captured on the panel. The panel comes in a dimension of 40" x 55" and carries messages powered by symbolic African print fabrics, yarns, screen printed images and texts. Also in the concept are plain fabrics artistically adapted in the creation of special effects.

The major elements on the panel include mud houses, collapsed buildings, military men, a job hunter and an academician. These elements reflect the causes of migration at both internal and international levels. Also, in the panel is seen a mass departure of people seeking a new home, a globe and towers suggesting a well-developed setting. The globe signifies the world and attests to the fact that migration happens around the globe. On top of the towers are clouds which conceptually stand for fantasies that draw people to developed cities and countries. Immigrants relocate with assumptions that their aspiring homes have all the solutions to their problems, which may not turn out to be so in reality. The mud houses portray less developed communities within a country with little infrastructure and fewer opportunities which propels people to migrate to cities and developed countries. The mud houses equally stand for developing countries that lack amenities necessary for human development. The collapsed building suggests natural disaster being one of the key causes of migration. Earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions etc. are natural occurrences that may initiate human migration. The military men stand for war and agitation by political leaders. During the interview at the Fetentaa refugees camp, FRCO 1 explained that all the immigrants relocated to Ghana because of political agitations which resulted in war/violence. Figure 12(a) presents panel-1 of the concept (the causes of migration).

Panel Two

Panels two and four were made a bit bigger than the other panels in order to place a focus on the messages they carry. As the study seeks to reprove illegalities regarding migration, the unacceptable and dangerous means of reaching destinations countries are highlighted on the second panel of the concept. It conveys messages with images depicting illegal migration through the desert and on the sea. These two images stand in for several illegalities

in migration ranging from the uses of false documents to the infringement of conditions of residence as opined by Aleshkovski (2013). Casarico, et al., (2015) opines that, any act of migration that is against the legal means laid down for the entry and stay in a given country is referred to as illegal migration.

The clouds in this panel are depicted with a black twill woven fabric with a white plain-woven fabric as borders to create a distinction between the clouds and the background. This was done to depict many uncertainties regarding illegal migration which makes it riskier to engage in. A decision to migrate illegally comes with many unforeseen risks that may lead to death, loss of assets, waste of time etc. However, these are not clearly visible to the immigrants until they become victims, just as the black clouds are not visible in the concept until they are defined by the white borders. The panel comes in a dimension of 72" x 40". As found on the first panel, this panel also has an exodus of people searching for a greener pasture. As established earlier, the orange cloth depicts the desert which is naturally uncomfortable to stay on. This fabric was purposely made to dominate on the second panel to suggest the discomfort nature of illegal migration in all forms. Since many circumstances come to play in illegal migration according to Casarico, et al., (2015) definition, the fabric links the agonies on the desert to the several predicaments associated with illegal migration.

The second dominant fabric next to the orange Sika wo ntaban/M'anya ntaban cloth is the Afe bi ye esan fabric which warns illegal migrants to stay away from the act due to the troubles it may come along with. Although some migrants may succeed to their destination countries safely, this may not turn out to be so all the time. Some years may come with misfortunes as the name of the fabric suggests. Illegal migrants are therefore warned with the second panel to desist from the act. Figure 12(b) shows the second panel which talks about illegal migration.



Figure 12. Left, Panel 1 (Causes of Migration) and Right, Panel 2 (Illegal Migration). Source: Studio Work (2021).

Panel Three

Panel three outlines the various means by which one can embark on legal migration which is recommended to be the safest. These laid down principles help one to escape the risks involved in illegal migration such as loss of properties, opportunities and above all, loss of life. The size of the panel is 55" x 40" with images reflecting the acceptable means or migrating. These images include; the huts which signify rural and underdeveloped areas, a passport representing rightful documents needed for migration, a ship and an aeroplane signifying the appropriate means of transport among others in both internal and international migration. The white clouds represent the expectations of migrants who relocate with rightful documents and appropriate routes. The green Sika wo ntaban/M'anya ntaban cloth represents greener pastures which is a major drive of migration according to the findings of this study. Figure 13(a) shows the third panel.

Panel Four

Illegal migrants are exposed to several dangers in the desert and on the sea, which Caraballo (2017) refers to as victimization. These may include attacks from armed robbers, terrorists, smugglers and exploitations by border patrol personnel. The consequences of illegal migration are conceptually and graphically transcribed on the fourth panel to discourage people from forfeiting the formal process of entering destination countries from their countries of origin. To place emphasis on the consequences, the panel was made bigger than the other panels and same dimension (72" x 40") as the second panel which presents the illegal type of migration.

Images on the panel are armed robbers whose target is to rob and harm immigrants who refuse to give out their possessions. Another image on the panel is a hand-cuffed illegal migrant caught by authorities. This image is featured in the panel to create awareness of the existence of the law and the need to abide by it. Both origin and destination countries have their laws that need to be followed, especially in the area of migration. Going contrary to it results in the offender being arrested and prosecuted. Immigrants are therefore advised to stay away from illegal migration as they may be caught in the process and be prosecuted.

The fourth panel again has images of terrorists killing some illegal migrants and inflicting physical pain on others. Terrorism and xenophobia issues are possible consequences of illegal migration (Crush & Ramachandran, 2010; Sheryazdanova, 2015). Illegal migrants are prone to intimidation by terrorists in the desert and on the sea. In the case where they manage to get to their destination countries, they go through a lot of inhuman treatment by their masters in such countries. Other images on the panel are overcrowded people and men crying for help as they drown in the sea. Increased migration leads to overcrowding of people in cities and developing countries, and this is depicted with silhouettes of people moving in different directions. This causes pressure to be mounted on public infrastructure and shorten its lifespan, leading to insufficient amenities in most cities as opined by Richter, et al. (2016). A sinking ship with a hand raised in the air signifies the dangers associated with illegal migration on the sea. One can easily sink and die in the sea.

The tree-like 3-D image at the center of the panel signifies the concept of fruit-bearing. Plants bear fruits of their kind, so does illegal migration brings forth undesired consequences. Figure 13(b) shows the graphical representation of the consequences of illegal migration.

Panel Five

The last panel exhibits the fruits of legal migration. As seen in the fourth panel, the benefits of legal migration are also arranged like fruits on a tree. The symbolic tree is depicted with polyurethane foam in a 3-D form. When migration is done on legal bases, one is assured to enjoy the benefits outlined in the panel among the numerous. The benefits of legal migration captured on the panel include; Knowledge gain, cultural promotion, employment and remittances. These are regarded as the fruits of legal migration and are the key instruments to national development. Unlike the other panels, this panel conveys messages with texts.

In circumstances where one acquires the rightful documents to study outside his/her country, the results is often knowledge acquisition which in turn leads to personal, professional and national development. Although, international scholarships greatly encourage migration as ascertained by Asare (2012), the benefits thereof are worth developing a nation and need to be encouraged so long as it is done on legal bases.

In addition, Legal migration gives immigrants a recognized platform to proudly showcase their culture and enjoy a full package of other cultures without any intimidation whatsoever. Bhugra and Becker (2005) opine that, migration has served as nourishment to cultural diversity, ethnic and racial matters in developed countries around the globe. This has greatly paved way for the dissemination and adaptation of varied lifestyles among people of different backgrounds.



Figure 13. Left, Panel 3 (Legal Migration), Center, Panel 4 (Consequences of Illegal Migration) and Right, Panel 5 (Benefits of Migration). Source: Studio Work (2021).

Employment and remittances move together as one largely depends on the other. The effectiveness of remittance depends on the employment status of immigrants which subse-

quently determines their level of contribution to national development. Remittance among employed immigrants is therefore expected to be higher than the unemployed. Boswell and Straubhaar (2004) is of the view that illegal migration is the great cause of illegal employment which remains problematic in national development agenda. This suggests that legal immigrants stand the chance of gaining legal employment which positively influences remittances and national development. The fifth panel addresses remittance and employment as fruits of legal migration. Figure 13(c) shows the fifth panel of the concept.

Through the research design employed for the study (practice-based), new concepts/techniques for producing artistic pieces in the context of textiles have been discovered. It is worth noting that textiles have been used over the years to create fashion products with little emphasis on their suitability in artistic pieces such as conceptual art. Although popular textile artists such as Anni Albers, Shiela Hicks, Faith Ringgold, etc. have explored conceptual art production with textiles. These artists are known for the creation of textile art with weaving, fibre art, and quilting techniques respectively. Reference could also be made to Badoe and Boamah (2021), who ventured into creating artistic textile art pieces with mixed-media techniques to sensitize people to good sanitation. It could be said that the current study, apart from creating awareness of the causes and consequences of migration with storytelling art pieces, has revealed an innovative approach to creating textile art that has not received the light of the day as far as previous studies are concerned. Combining materials such as conceptual fabrics, foam, fibres, wood, adhesives, etc. with techniques including printing and gluing is an eye-opener to exploring mixed-media art creation.

Feasibility of the Concept (Through Exhibition)

To measure the feasibility level of the concept, an exhibition was mounted to involve the public in the assessment of the established concept. The views of the participants were captured with the aid of structured questions and an open section giving them the chance to criticize the concept by putting it into writing. In the structured questions, three variables were established for the rating of the concept. These include Feasible, somehow feasible, and not feasible. Comments were taken from students, lecturers, and individuals from various regions of the county. The responses of the participants revealed a high acceptance of the concept as majority of participants indicated that the concept is feasible. Figure 14 and Figure 15 show the mounted textile art pieces during the exhibition.

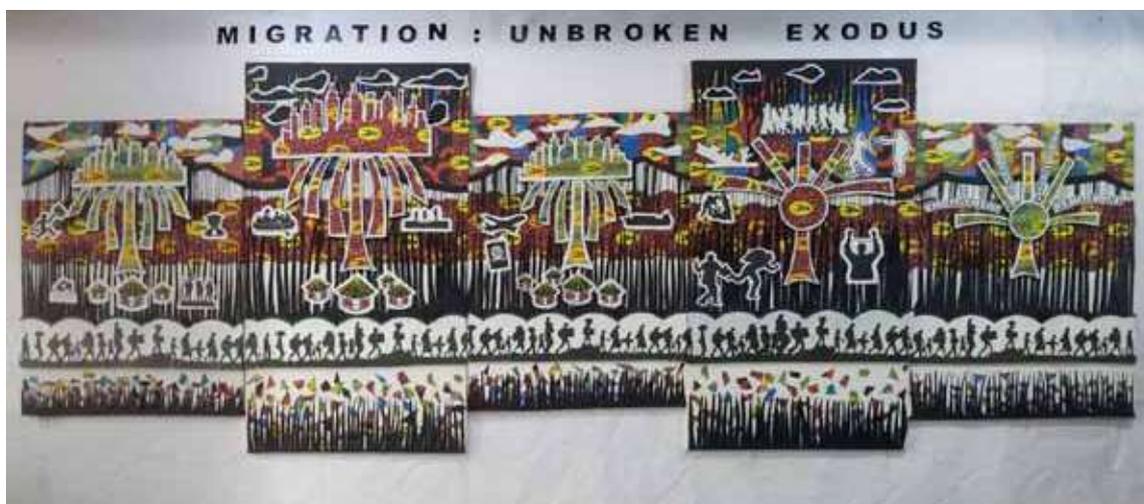


Figure 14. Exhibition of the concept created (200" x 72").



Figure 15. Exhibition of the concept created (200" x 72").

The impact level of the concept was determined by a general assessment made by the total number of participants (105) engaged in the exhibition. The results obtained from the overall assessment show that ninety-three (93) participants rated the concept to be feasible as far as issues about migration and national development is concerned. These participants represent 89% of the total. Twelve (12) participants were of the view that the concept is somehow feasible with respect to migration and national developmental agenda. These numbers also represent 11% of the total number of participants engaged in the exhibition. None of the participants regarded the concept as 'not feasible.' With these results, it could be said that the impact of the work towards academic discourse to educate the public on issues pertaining to migration especially, the illegal ones is feasible.

Research Outcomes

The study has explored various concepts regarding the causes and effects of migration as aimed in the study. Five concepts were developed with inspiration from data gathered from the participants including refugees, refugee camp officers, and immigration officers. The concepts include Unbroken Exodus I, Unbroken Exodus II, Migration factors (partly inspired by Lee's theory), Agonies on Desert, and the Agonies on Sea. These were all created to tell stories regarding migration. One of the five concepts deemed appropriate to sensitize people on migration was selected to produce a conceptual art piece under art studio conditions as a second objective of the study. The selected concept (Migration: Unbroken Exodus) was built with a mixed-media approach under studio conditions and finally assessed to understand its suitability in story-telling through an exhibition. The study confirms the suitability of textile art in addressing pressing issues as successfully achieved by previous studies that addressed the concept in different areas including the struggles of female porters in Ghana (Buami, et. al., 2024), the use of cubism in a textile art installation to educate people on biodiversity conservation (Manu, et. al., 2020), improving urban sanitation with textile art (Badoe & Boamah, 2021), etc.

Conclusion

Artists are surrounded by diverse techniques and media which inspire their studio creations. This study utilized composite techniques and media at the studio to creatively tell stories of migration in a split canvas concept. It employed industrial and screen-printed fabrics with philosophical interpretations. Yarns and polyurethane foam were employed to complement the printed fabrics to show the extent to which composite materials could be utilized by artists at the studio to achieve great results.

There are different means of creating images on a substrate such as stitching, gluing, etching etc. This study employed gluing technique as the main method of creating images with the textiles materials on the canvas. This method gave rise to images with even surfaces and edges which was the researcher's great desire. The polyurethane foam responded well to the gluing technique in the creation process. The split canvas concept was adopted in this study to communicate societal issues to the public. Five panels with different meanings were created out of the study. These panels tell a common story when installed together to portray the concept of unity in diversity. The study again has proven the feasibility of conceptual textile art creation in addressing pressing national issues. It demonstrates the power possessed by textile materials in awareness creation.

It can therefore be concluded that studio creations of this nature are best implemented with composite materials and techniques. With the Practice-based research design, artists are offered the platform to exhibit their creative abilities and this opportunity could be explored to the maximum when attention is paid to every material surrounding the artist. It is recommended that the conceptual textile art pieces created out of this study should be kept in national museums for education. It is also recommended that artists should pay attention to pressing issues like migration in their creations to ensure national development.

References

- Abdulai, Ayishetu. "The Effect of Rural-Urban Migration on Socioeconomic Status in the Accra Metropolitan Assembly." Thesis, University of Ghana, 2018.
- Aleshkovski, Ivan. "Illegal Immigration as a Structural Factor of Global Development." *Globalistics and Globalization Studies* (2013): 243–256.
- Asare, Phyllis. "Labour Migration in Ghana." *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, October, 2012.
- Assan, Joseph & Dinar Kharisma. "The Precarity of Internal Migration of Youth in Ghana: Exploitative Employment and Livelihood Insecurity." *Development in Practice* 33, no. 2 (2023): 215-227.
- Badoe, William & Frederick Boamah. "Futurism In Conceptual Textile Art: An Approach to Improving Sanitation in Ghana." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* 22 (2021): 228-245.
- Bhugra, Dinesh & Matthew Becker. "Migration, Cultural Bereavement and Cultural Identity." *World Psychiatry* 4, no. 1 (2005.): 18-24.
- Boswell, Christina & Thomas Straubhaar. "The Illegal Employment of Foreign Workers: An Overview." *Intereconomics* 39 (2004): 4-7.

- Buami, Edem Kwami, Tsotorvor Rejoice Makafui, Adjei Daniel Akuoko, Ahiabor Robert & Howard Ebenezer Kofi. "Textile Art from Mixed-Media on the Struggles of Kayayie in Ghana." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* 28 (2024):230-247.
- Candy, Linda. "Practice Based Research: A Guide." CCS Report, Sydney: University of Technology, 2006.
- Caraballo, Krystle. "The Targeting of Undocumented Latino Immigrants by Active Street Offenders." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2017.
- Casarico, Alessandra, Giovanni Facchini & Tommaso Frattini. "Illegal Immigration: Policy Perspectives and Challenges." *CESifo Economic Studies* 61, no. 3-4 (2015): 673-700.
- Castañeda, Heide. "Migration is Part of the Human Experience but is Far from Natural." *Nature Human Behaviour* 1, no. 0147 (2017).
- Chamie, Joseph. "International Migration Amid a World in Crisis." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 8, no. 3 (2020): 230-245.
- Clifton-Sprigg, Joanna. "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Migration Intentions of Teenagers with Parents Working Abroad." *Journal of Applied Economics* 25, no. 1 (2022): 563-582.
- Crush, Jonathan & Sujata Ramachandran. "Xenophobia, International Migration and Development." *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 11, no. 2 (2010): 209-228.
- Démurger, Sylvie . "Migration and Families Left Behind." *IZA World of Labor* (2015): 1-10.
- Esses, Victoria , Joshua Wright, Clint Thomson & Leah Hamilton. "Immigration." In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Political Behavior*. Edited by Fathali Moghaddam, California: Thousand Oaks, 2017.
- Ferrie, Joseph P. & Timothy Hatton. "Two Centuries of International Migration." *IZA Discussion Paper* (2013): 1-49.
- Flahaux, Marie-Laurence & Hein Haas. "African Migration: Trends, Patterns, Drivers." *Comparative Migration Studies* 4, no. 1 (2016): 1-25.
- International Organization for Migration. *Migration in Ghana: A Country Profile*, Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2020.
- Lee, Everett. "A Theory of Migration." *Demography* 3, no. 1 (1966): 47-57.
- Mackenzie, John. "Deadly Voyage." Produced by HBO NYC Productions, 1996.
- Manu, Gideon Owusu, Howard Ebenezer Kofi, Adom Dickson, and Agyemang Osafo. "Textile Installations Inspired by Cubism for Biodiversity Sustainability Education." *Journal of Urban Culture Research* 20, no. 6 (2020): 54-68.
- Richter, Solina, Helen Vallianatos, Patience Aniteye & Ansu-Kyeremeh. "Migration, Health, and Gender and Its Effects on Housing Security of Ghanaian Women." *Global Qualitative Nursing Research* 4 (2016): 1-8.

Sheryazdanova, Kamilla. "Illegal Immigration and Fight against Illegal Migration in Member States of the European Union." *Acta University Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies* 8 (2015): 89-102.

Stigter, Sanneke. "Conceptual Art and Conservation". In *Conservation of Contemporary Art*. Edited by Van de Vall and Van Saaze, Cham: Springer, 2024

Triandafyllidou, Anna, Amin Moghadam, Melissa Kelly & Zeynep Sahin-Mencütek. "Migration and Cities: An Introduction". In *Migration and Cities*. Edited by Triandafyllidou, Anna, Amin Moghadam, Melissa Kelly, and Zeynep Sahin-Mencütek, Cham: Springer, 2024.