Chapter 5: Situating Artistic Handicraft Products
Creative Industries in a Development Realm

5.1 Introduction
Creative Industries between Empowerment, Protection, and Sustainability

> While cultural practices across the [African] continent do not serve as a basis to conceptualize and theorize the CCIs [cultural and creative industries], the urge to buy into this discourse creates the necessity to turn to textbooks and 'Western' debates. Although the literature is not grounded in the realities of most African artists, managers, producers, organizers, publishers, and so on, the search for the model of the African cultural industries thus lies more in understanding the ways culture is currently practiced than in making this praxis fit existing taxonomies. (De Beukelaer, 2017: 585)

Christiaan De Beukelaer's point of concern is based on a set of two interlinked developments regarding the creative industries on the African continent. First, the academic discourse was developed largely without empirical engagement with the creative industries outside the Global North. Consequently, in Africa, it was almost absent from debates and local policies until the adoption of the *2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (ibid), which Uganda ratified in 2014. Second, and potentially as a consequence of the former, De Beukelaer found that many stakeholders in Burkina Faso and Ghana believed that in order for creative industries to be 'real', they have to be similar to the discourse and practices in the Global North (De Beukelaer, 2015; 2017). In my research situation, in which I look at artistic handicraft production, many actors in this strand of the creative industries are western-style NGOs, international organizations such as the UNESCO, and private business actors. Frequently, creative and artistic work is associated with its potential for economic growth and sustainable development and hence positioned in what I call a 'development realm', in which foreign humanitarian, cultural and development organizations, foreign governments and their financial capital, international bodies such as the UN organizations, national ministries

as well as local actors from the private sector, and western-style non-governmental organizations negotiate the course of direction. They all find a lot of potential in the creative industries for intellectual development and heritage, and hence identity construction on the one hand and, importantly, economic growth and financial development on the other. It is thus a site of contestation, conflict, and power manifestation, of consent and hegemony, and therefore an issue through which ownership and in(ter)dependences are negotiated.

This arena, which I call *Cultural Crafts Industry in Civil Society Arena*, thus became the central arena[1] – the "play- or battleground" (Clarke et al., 2015: 174) in my research situation. The following chapter is dedicated to introducing my empirically reconstructed research situation and its most relevant collective actors. Here, I delve into the pivotal social worlds, sub-worlds, and organizations (see also Figure 4.6 in chapter 4.4.2). To do so, the boundary object *artistic handicraft products* serves as a thread around which I build my narrative and present my findings. Consequently, chapter 5.2 first addresses the boundary object and introduces its associated meanings among the social worlds with a particular emphasis on my first case study, the NAC-CAU. Next, I elaborate on several important collective actors that inform, shape, and are shaped by the discourse on the boundary object which I here call the '(Visual) Arts World' (chapter 5.2.1), the 'Artistically-Oriented Handicraft Associations and NGOs World' (chapter 5.2.2), the UNESCO as a pivotal organization (chapter 5.2.4), the 'Tourism World' (chapter 5.2.6), as well as the minoritized social world of 'Independent Handicraft Groups' (chapter 5.2.7). I also briefly discuss the discursive arena of the 'Cultural Crafts Industry Funding' (chapter 5.2.4), in which funding narratives and (assumed) convictions are at play and which feed into the co-constitution of the boundary object in the 'Cultural Crafts Industry in Civil Society Arena'. In closing (chapter 5.3), I summarize the findings regarding the negotiated meanings of the boundary object and their implications for the situatedness of artistic handicrafts and their production.

The social worlds/arenas map (Figure 4.6) of my situation includes more social worlds than presented in separate sub-chapters. Yet, the epistemological underpinnings, the theoretical sampling, and my research questions ultimately directed me towards a focus on the *minoritized* positions of collective actors further discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 (see also chapters 4.2 and 4.4). "Turning up the volume" (Clarke et al., 2018: 225) on those positions and dynamics is the major point of interest here. Nonetheless, throughout the following chapters, I do refer to the positions taken by other social worlds in detail wherever empirically relevant.

1 See chapter 4.4.1

5.2 The Contested Meanings of Artistic Handicraft Products

Early versions of my social worlds/arenas map displayed a rather complex and broad notion of my situation of inquiry (Figure 4.6). The findings of analytical mapping indicate how contemporary notions of the meanings of artistic handicraft products and production are influenced by colonial narrations and art curricula closely linked to Margaret Trowell and, subsequently, though differently, Cecil Todd (see also chapters 2.2 and 2.3.1). For example, in the roundtable discussion on indigenous knowledge systems, Joan Kekimuri, an artist and art historian, argues for the need to explore artistic practice rooted in local culture and ancestral worship to dissect their relevance for social change in the present day but largely ignored:

> Whether you like it or not, that area [of cultural art making] is marginalized due to – in the contemporary Uganda – in the traditional art practices because of the connotations: colonial, educational, political, Christians. […] So, you can see that they have been branded, okay? (Dr. Joan Kekimuri, roundtable discussion 'Indigenous Knowledge Systems', 28/02/2019: 456–460)

Kekimuri affirms that traditional art practices have been marginalized due to colonization, (imported) education, policy decisions, and Christianization. Later in the discussion, another discussant claims that while most of the participants present are devoted Christians during the day, at night they turn to ancestral worship practices "made to be satanic" (571) by the "colonial masters" (556), linking artistic handicraft products with cultural practices that may still be performed under the radar, yet are affiliated with "pagan, uncivilized people" (558) in the public discourse.

Similarly, they are shaped by the UNESCO discourses and their local adaptions, for example, in the vocabulary used to frame artistic handicraft products in a cultural heritage framework. The Uganda National Culture Policy (2006: 7) links its definition of culture with a cultural heritage definition, whereby "tangible heritage includes monuments or architecture, art and crafts, sites, manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic and historical interest". National, urban-based associations, too, adapt strands of the UNESCO discourses and fuse them with economic interests commonly associated with the creative industries and development agendas. More recently, tourism actors tapped into the arena as well, promoting sustainable and culturally sensitive tourism combined with what they frequently call 'authentically' African experiences, thereby altering the perceptions of artistic handicraft products and production. This position, albeit differently framed, can also be found among community elders and cultural leaders, whereas foreign-based and (often) foreign-run, private NGOs frame artistic handicraft products as culturally marked