Furthermore, the association also regards itself as an important archive of traditional and indigenous knowledge and, concomitantly, as an important actor in Uganda's civic engagement with cultural identity construction. In addition, while innovation is often demanded, at times it appears that UNESCO discourses on cultural heritage interfere with conceptualizations of cultural expression as a vital and living aspect of everyday life and promote static notions of cultural preservation instead. Finally, yet importantly, the analysis of the NACCAU's work brings forward the important and yet challenging question of ownership of artistic handicraft objects which is oftentimes negotiated without the presence of those who produced them.

The following chapter is organized as follows: First, I introduce the NACCAU as an association and the two artists-activists who appeared as central figures and intellectuals in and around it, Nuwa Nnyanzi on an operational level and Bruno Sserunkuuma on a conceptual advocacy level. I then continue to situate the NACCAU in the broader discourses of economic struggle and artistic engagement in civil society, thereby particularly highlighting interlinkages and -dependencies with development actors, the UNESCO-bodies, and their respective agendas. In concluding, I discuss how dominant strands in the discourses around development, civil society, and art demand that associations such as the NACCAU constantly re-position themselves, making the association what I call an actor in-between – as co-opted to consent by development and heritage agendas that frame and limit its agency on the one hand and as an organizational actor seeking to establish locally situated answers to questions of creative, artistic production and meaning making as well as to social cohesion, conviviality, and development on the other hand.

6.2 The NACCAU
Being and Becoming

My first visit at the NACCAU crafts village occurred in November 2017. At the time, I worked for a socio-cultural organization based in Israel, and I had travelled to Kampala to attend an intimate co-hosted conference titled *the Future of Contemporary African Art in a Globalized Art World* at Makerere University. One of the speakers at the conference was Nuwa Nnyanzi, a practicing artist and, among other things, the vice chairperson of the NACCAU. In his presentation, titled *Transforming Visual Art Practice in Line with Global Market Trends,* he argued that for Ugandan (visual) artists to succeed, they needed to turn to their cultural and natural heritage, which could lead towards them "introducing uniquely fresh dishes to the global visual arts menu" (personal notes from 16/11/2017). Currently, he further claimed, Ugandan visual artists merely consume foreign trends and mostly copy and adapt them. In order to be able to contribute to the emerging global community, however, they need to use their

own cultural resources adequately. The lack thereof, Nnyanzi concluded, results in the currently negligible appreciation of art among the general Ugandan population.

Of Entrepreneurs and Intellectuals

A few days after the conference, I found myself in Nuwa's art studio at the NACCAU crafts village. He had invited me there together with colleagues from abroad. Standing in the stall that serves as a studio and office as well as art gallery and crafts-shop (he also resells artefacts), he now explained about his contribution in making Ugandan art renown throughout the world, namely by having designed the cover of the 1999 World Health Report and by having contributed to the UNICEF greeting cards series with a nativity scene he painted in 1978. This appears to be of great importance to him, because I will hear him repeat the story during other conversations we will have throughout the field stays of this research (e.g., roundtable discussion on Art in Intl. Development from 27/02/2019; interview with Nuwa Nnyanzi from 26/01/2020). At the time, I did not know that this was but the first of many conversations I would have with Nuwa. His vision has remained unchanged since then. Nuwa is convinced that Uganda, and Ugandan visual artists in particular, have a lot to contribute to the international arts and crafts industry. However, unfortunately, many individuals involved do not innovate but copy instead. What he and some scholars I spoke to consider a lack of innovation is understood as *not being selfish and sharing knowledge with others* by members of some of the handicraft groups I met in Eastern Uganda. It is a trait of which members of the wickerwork group in Supa were particularly proud of.

The differences in the quality of the products are another aspect with which Nuwa is concerned. Customers may want to order *in bulk*, meaning in large quantities. In addition, it is this bulk production with standardized quality norms that he considers essential for the future of handicraft artists he mainly refers to as *producers*. According to Nuwa, those "master crafts-producers" (Interview with Nuwa Nnyanzi 26/01/2020: 408) need further training "to improve on the design, layout – [on] design production – design development and production" (ibid: 408–410). This contradiction directly questions the framing of artisans as *masters.* However, it is a position taken by many in the situation – the UNESCO, for example – and it is also common among several professional artists engaged with socially engaged art projects that aim to improve the lived realities of handicraft artisans. While mostly they *do* believe that handicraft artists are masters and important contributors to the preservation of local culture, they are also believed not to conform to international *minimum* quality standards and not to know how to transform their technical man-

ufacturing skills into innovative designs that mark one of the transitions between art and craft[1].

In addition to the need for handicraft artists to improve on the innovativeness and quality of their designs, Nuwa frequently addresses the role of the Ugandan government in general and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in particular. He believes that if governmental policies were more in favor of supporting the creative industries, the NACCAU and other associations like it could contribute immensely to the local economy:

> Most of the [art-related] activities taking place in Uganda […] – I'm talking about the visual arts, eh – are not a result of government policy. Not even government support. Because we don't get it. If anything, government benefits from our work, efforts and ideas. But there is no direct policy in particular […]. The government of Uganda has a culture policy – which is not necessarily – is not a qualitative enough [sic] policy. It's a document, which is trying, which tried to fit in [into] what was already going on. (Interview with Nuwa Nnyanzi, 26/01/2020: 100–107)

His critique of the government is one of the re-occurring themes during this interview and other conversations we have. In the quotation above, his main concern is the lack of a well thought through cultural policy that could support the creative industries by providing it with ideas, directions and if not financial, then at least legal and structural support. As he continues, he tells me about the financial burden of the NACCAU needing to pay rent to the Ugandan National Culture Center (UNCC):

> So, we've been managing this place and at that time [in 2003] we were paying 4 million [UGX] every three months to the Ugandan National Culture Center[2] as ground rent. And then later on they increased it to 9 million, after they increased it to 25 to 27 million; now we pay 40 million. Every three months. The contradiction is: elsewhere the government would pay [laughs] people who were doing this kind

1 In her work, Acaye Kerunen addresses this question as well. Her participation as one of the two exhibiting artists at the inaugural Ugandan National Pavilion titled Radiance – They Dream in Time, curated by Shaheen Merali at the 59th Venice Biennale (2022) marks an important discursive moment for the negotiations of meanings of art and craft in Uganda, in which "Kerunen's understanding, across the wide range of vernacular diagrams, sophisticated patterns and constellations, draws on regions, tribal spaces and neighbourhoods [sic]. […] Shapes of decoloniality break into the space of representation where the normativity of urban life and the self in the ever-expanding modernity of westernized [sic] forms have entered as trashed tourist arts" (Merali et al., 2022: 15).

2 The UNCC is a Ugandan statutory body. It was established in 1959 by the Uganda National Cultural Centre Act. Today it operates as a "semi-autonomous body" under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (UNCC, 2022).

> of job to operate or to be subsidized. Here, they take each and every coin from us. And they don't plow it back. (ibid: 152–161)

In his logic, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in particular, should be supportive of the work of the NACCAU and its members. Throughout my field stays, I heard many people to whom I spoke openly criticize the current government for neither providing the structural prerequisites for the cultural sector to develop, nor for supporting any activities, yet being the first to benefit from the achievements. Although the government is unanimously perceived not to 'do its job', most solutions proposed by the actors are frequently state-centered. They include demands for government finally to take up its responsibilities and seek ways to advocate actively for their interests, e.g., by participating in steering committees or advisory committees to governmental projects while believing that large sums of the money will disappear between offices, or by partaking in working on the development of an updated National Cultural Policy (NCP) which is simultaneously criticized as not being implemented (e.g., roundtable discussions 02/2019).

Nuwa is very active and involved with several committees, always promoting the interests of the NACCAU, as he describes it. He is a member of a local Rotary Club, on the steering committee for the *Souvenir and Handicrafts Development Project*, and an independent art consultant. Nuwa knows how to position his vision of an artistically oriented society both in academic and business circles as well as in newspaper interviews or online podcasts (WhatsApp messages with Nuwa Nnyanzi, 05/2020 – 03/2023). With Clarke et al. (2018: 72), he could thus be understood as an entrepreneur, whom she defines to be a "participant[s] [of a Social World, who] cluster[s] around the core of the world and mobilize[s] those around them. […] These individuals or small social world elites typically remain at the core over time", and hence hold powerful positions within social worlds or organizations.

Empirically, Nuwa Nnyanzi can further be referred to as an organic intellectual. Organic intellectuals are *organically created* within any social group, and come "into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, [a social group] create[s] together with itself" (Hoare and Nowell-Smith, 2007: 3). A social group creates "one or more strata of intellectuals, which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields" (ibid). Organic intellectuals, therefore, function as organizers of the social hegemony of a group.

Just like entrepreneurs in the sense of Clarke et al. (2018), they are at the center of an organization, a group, or a more loosely affiliated cluster, such as a social world. Because of their position, they are powerful in terms of content creation and production within the group but also for its positionality in the discourse(s). They are organizers of all the functions intrinsic to the organic development of an integral civil and political society. In other words, organic intellectuals can be understood as

intermediaries. In addition, while they have a major role in influencing the social and political developments in a social (and artistic) organization, they also have the agency to subjectify the members of their social group.

In the situation of inquiry, Bruno Sserunkuuma, too, can be considered as an intellectual. He promotes the work of the NACCAU and brings its members and individuals such as Nnyanzi into the art academia sub-world (who does not fail to emphasize that he is a God-taught artist, not a formally trained one). In doing so, he also becomes an advocate of the association's work and supports it by visibilizing it in the wider art world. He shows solidarity with handicraft artists and artisans and their work (which he also appreciates for its aesthetics and cultural value).

Bruno and Nuwa promote the work and importance of the NACCAU internally as well as externally, although they do so in different ways. While Nuwa dedicates his daily business to the promotion of his work and socially artistic vision, he synchronizes it with his vision for the NACCAU and hence is very visible in the daily operations in and around the association. Bruno mostly has his entrances on special occasions, in strategic contemplations, and acts as an ambassador to the ideas the NACCAU stands for. Therefore, it should not be surprising that my first encounters with the NACCAU were also facilitated by Bruno and by Nuwa. Because of their importance, impact, and prominence in the twilight zone of artistically oriented engagement with civil society, their positions will be considered throughout this chapter. Moreover, since they both have been engaged with the NACCAU from its re-foundation in 2003, the genesis of the NACCAU, its achievements, challenges, and current aspirations presented here are to a large extent reconstructed through their narrations. Although I spoke to other people in and around the association as well, Bruno and Nuwa opened up and readily provided their answers to all questions and offered to share their experiences and memories. For this research, they were like an open oral archive for me. For both not only readily and voluntarily shared their knowledge but also their networks. This proved to be very important, as written materials and documents about the association are indeed sparse.

Being the NACCAU

I wonder whether the Ugandan art world responded similarly to its participation in the *Seven Stories about Modern African Art* Exhibition in London in 1995 like it did when it was announced that Uganda would stage its inaugural pavilion at the 2022 Venice Biennale, which Gloria Kiconco described as needing "a while to sink in: Uganda had secured a pavilion at the [59th Venice] biennale" (Kiconco, 2022: n.p). In 1995, Ugandan art 'returned' to the international art scene during the *Seven Stories about Modern African Art* after years of dictatorship that had driven many Ugandan artists into exile (Kyeyune, 2003; Littlefield Kasfir, 1999). While it must be added that until the early 1990s "anglophone countries [were] severely underrepresented relative to their

artistic importance" (Littlefield Kasfir, 1999: 136) in international exhibitions on contemporary African art, it would take another twenty years until Uganda had established its own art biennales and became more visible in the international art world. Even during the 2018 Kampala Art Biennale (KAB), curator Simon Njami opted for a studio format in which apprentices (mostly Ugandan artists) would work alongside masters (exclusively foreign artists) to learn and improve their work. While Njami himself interprets the studio format as a return to traditional African customs of transferring knowledge orally and in form of embodied experiences to the next generation – from masters to apprentices, others read it as a neo-colonial practice, in which Ugandans are yet again taken by the metaphorical hand and guided onto the path towards (artistic) development (for an in-depth discussion, see Klages, 2022).

Back in the early 1990s, parallel to the preparations for the *Seven Stories* exhibition in London, Kampala prepared for the 7th Pan-African Congress, which took place April 3–8, 1994. The organizers of the congress decided to invite visual artists and artistic handicraft artisans to display and offer their products for sale. According to Nuwa, this was to be part of the entertainment program – "that's what they always do" (Interview with Nuwa Nnyanzi, 26/01/2020: 122). Eventually Nuwa became part of the group of artists and artisans who exhibited during the 7th Pan-African Congress and then joined the organization responsible for the exhibit, the Uganda National Arts and Cultural Crafts Association (UNACCA) in 1994. Nuwa describes this period as one of a malfunctioning organization, which led towards the restructuring and eventually the foundation of a new organization in 2003 – the NACCAU:

> Then, due to management and misunderstandings there were very serious issues. […] The registered members got together and had to find a solution, that's how the association was renamed and founded based on the agreements towards what was going on. And it became the National Arts and Cultural Crafts Association of Uganda that is when honorable Mrs. Mpanga was appointed – eh – elected chairperson, and I was elected vice-chairperson. And then we have another executive of another seven members and Bruno [Sserunkuuma] happens to be one of them. (Interview with Nuwa Nnyanzi 26/01/2020: 147–152).

The chairperson, Joyce Rose Mpanga, is an educator and a politician. In her political career, she became the first Minister for Women in Development in 1988, and has been a firm promoter for women's rights throughout her political and educational career (Tripp, 2000). The NACCAU, to her, is first and foremost about supporting women, which becomes apparent in her following quote from the Ugandan newspaper the Monitor:

> Our aim is to encourage women to use their traditional crafts skills to create articles that can be used in a home in an artistic form. We carry out trainings at

> our centres across the country to improve craftsmanship, perfection, patterns, the choice of pleasant colours that people want. (Musinguzi, 2019 – updated 2021: n.p.)

In this quote, Mpanga reproduces common notions of fusing material culture with women's empowerment and the economic potential of craftmanship. The outward orientation towards (imagined) customer taste is similar to that of, e.g., Bruno Sserunkuuma, who also suggests that local products must be directed by the taste of international consumers of those products:

> Because if you are producing here, for example most of the basketry here is colorful and you are targeting maybe a market in New Zealand, and you plan for them; and this season they're interested in natural products, things which don't have color. So, instead of putting color, then you make them natural, without color. Or you may find the season in that area is green or blue, so instead of making colorful products then you make blue products. (Interview with Bruno Sserunkuuma, socially engaged artist and lecturer 23/08/2018: 163–168)

At the same time, Sserunkuuma is also among the major critics of the concepts of mass-production and standardization, for he finds that it is in difference, variety, imperfection, and non-normativity that artistic handicraft products become art and cease to be a mass-produced item without an emotional and personal touch.

While both Sserunkuuma and Nnyanzi, despite some differences in their visions, are very much involved with promoting the idea that artistic and creative work can contribute immensely to the economic development of the country, the association's current secretary-general, Reste Kaddu Lwanga, finds that being a member (and co-founder) of the NACCAU is first and foremost a political act against governmental policy making and in favor of mutual empowerment among artists-peers. When I asked her about her motivations to become involved with the NACCAU, she told me that at the time she felt that artists (she was an active dancer at the time) "had to make a statement" (field notes from 19/02/2020) against a government that was not supporting the cultural sector and the arts as it should. For her, it was apparent that this could be done better in a group of like-minded artists and activists rather than alone. In addition to the political activities she associates with being involved with the NACCAU, being a member provides her with a sense of self-efficacy. Rather than being on the street and on her own, at the NACCAU she receives support even when times are hard (ibid).

When asked why she continues to remain involved in spite of hardships, she offers the following response: "At least here I have my shop. Here, we help each other. The painters and I, we empower each other" (field notes from 19/02/2020). For Lwanga, the shop means independence. So many people sell on the streets, she

tells me, and many of them do not know where they work or what their working hours will be. Her stall and the regular opening hours of the crafts village provide her with a structure as well as a feeling of ownership over her work. In addition, her statement "here we help each other" demonstrates a sense of belonging and empowerment, which she emphasizes upon by stating that she and the artists she works with empower each other. Unlike the dominant strands of economic empowerment, Lwanga believes empowerment means being appreciative of one another, of one's talents, skills, and persistence. Here, empowerment is about social and structural support. Being the NACCAU, then, means political advocacy in favor or artists, artisans, and their work, and raising awareness of its meanings for social cohesion and cultural practices.

Lwanga long ceased to be an active dancer at the National Theater next door. Instead, she collaborates with young visual artists from within and around Kampala, exhibits, and sells their paintings in addition to colorful hand-dyed and waxed fabrics and some beaded necklaces. Her business at the NACCAU is slow, I will learn, because "most customers don't look for what I have in my shop" (ibid). People who look to purchase paintings and visual arts in general strive for their luck in contemporary art galleries such as AfriArt Gallery (AAG). Unknown painters however – formally trained or self-taught – because of lack of opportunities, oftentimes try to sell their artworks directly on the streets:

> There was a big difference between craft and fine art and it would be rare to find an artist selling his work on the street as is happening now. Because when you are driving, someone is showing you a painting and normally some of them are good, but they are cheaper. The pieces you get from the street are not the process you get from a gallery. Again, that one raises a question, is that one an art or is it a souvenir? (Bruno Sserunkuuma, socially engaged artist and lecturer, round table discussion 'Art in Intl. Development', 27/02/2019: 164–168)

It is noteworthy for this statement to come from Bruno, who promotes the idea that crafts are to be considered equal to other forms of contemporary art practices because they are linked to local culture and therefore an important actant in society. He also refers to handicraft artists and artisans as "custodians of the traditional knowledge" (Interview with Bruno Sserunkuuma from 27/01/2020: 36). He is particularly engaged with empowering women and frequently brings their handicraft products to his office at Makerere University to offer them for sale to international visitors.

His own art, however, is nowhere to be found at the crafts village. The boundary between arts and crafts and the economic and cultural value of products, then, may also be linked with the situatedness of the location of the trade. Being the NACCAU therefore also means to work with the fact that situating an object into a crafts village more often means to allow for it to be regarded as a souvenir.

Image 6.1: Paintings for sale at Lwanga's Shop.

©Anna-Lisa Klages, 26/02/2020

Back at Lwanga's shop, I notice another factor, which, with Hume (2013), positions the products presented here in the souvenir-realm: the content of the paintings. Image 6.1 shows some of the paintings for sale at Lwanga's shop. While they vary in size, color, and style, five out of eight paintings are images (and imaginations) of rural African life. The colors and the scenes display a story of calmness, peace, and harmony – much how a foreigner might envision life in Africa as the simple and self-fulfilling peasant life of traditionally-dressed people in-synch with flora and fauna, away from technology, digitalization, and anything that might provoke the idea that this may actually be a scenery in the 21st, not the 19th, century. The only painting that breaks with this storyline is the scene of an urban rush hour in Kampala. At the time I was in her shop, there was one other urban scene and one other large portrait of a young man similar to the portrait of the laughing woman at the bottom of Image 6.1. All other paintings for sale had safari-game animals (lions, giraffes, elephants, gorillas, antelopes, zebras, or buffaloes), or traditionalized rural agricultural life as their theme. As the designs, scenery, colors, and aesthetic language address the taste of foreign visitors, one might indeed wonder who authors the paintings – the painter or the customer the painter has in mind while painting. In a group discussion with three artists and art-historians, this question unfolds in the following way:

JN: *In fact, let me ask you what do you mean by 'power' – within this context now?*

ALK: *[…] So, I'm looking at jewelry. I'm looking at jewelry made from paper-beads. And I'm looking at an organization – in this case it's a start-up or a social business or a non-profit – and what they do is – they sell – jewelry made from paper beads. Made, produced in Uganda and they sell it [abroad]. The designs, however, come from [abroad].*

JN: *Why?*

ALK: *Because they*

KMK: *The power struggles that was*

ALK: *and that is the power construct that I'm talking about. So, you are – Selling something as a 'Ugandan artefact' or jewelry, but as a matter of fact the design*

KMK: *Does not belong to you*

JN: *does not belong to the people*

KMK: *No. It is like – Madam Justine*

JN.: *Then it is not Ugandan*. (Group interview with Kizito Maria Kasule (KMK), Justine Nabaggala (JN) and Joan Kekimuri 23/08/2018: 318–332)

Leading up to this part of the discussion, Kizito shares his experience about working with a woman from a foreign country. She had volunteered in Uganda and, jointly with two fellow volunteers, established a non-profit organization that aims to improve the lives of *marginalized* women (e.g. single mothers or women living in poverty) by teaching them to make jewelry from rolled paper beads (see also Kasozi, 2019). He had spoken about how the decolonization of society is hindered by colonized minds that do not understand crafts to be indigenous art forms and how projects, such as the one established by the three volunteers, re-colonizes indigenous art forms. Firstly, by altering them to the fashion needs of people living in far-away places and secondly, by re-emphasizing that the commercial value abroad is more relevant than the aesthetic, social, and cultural values of the artist who makes them. This leads the discussion towards constructions and deconstructions of power emphasized through artistic work and the excerpt above. Here, Justine decisively positions artistic products that were designed, hence intellectually created, abroad as *not Ugandan* because if the design is not endogenous, it cannot belong to the people.

The NACCAU is not financed by a foreign organization or (foreign) social-business, its member and affiliated handicraft artists thus do not create artefacts for a single foreign market like in the example provided above. And yet, the dynamic relationship between customer and creator or at least between customer and seller co-constitute the meaning of the artefact that facilitates the encounter of the two (Hume, 2013). This brief moment of engagement shapes the narrations of all actors and actants involved. It leaves the customer with his or her piece of Ugandan culture as much as it tells the seller and/or creator about how the customer wants to see, feel, and aesthetically relate to Uganda and how much they are willing to pay for this feeling (see also chapter 5.2.2). Being the NACCAU thus means to meander constantly on the fringes between art and craft, between cultural heritage and souvenir, between commercialization and political advocacy, and between liberation and (new) dependencies.

Finding (new) Allies

As I have touched upon before, the NACCAU and its activities officially fall under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. In its operational structure, the association is part of the Uganda National Culture Centre (UNCC), whose two major sites are the National Gallery called Nommo Gallery, and the National Theatre, on the premises of which the NACCAU members built their crafts village. It was through the then-chairperson of the UNCC board of trustees General Elly Tumwine (who also held a B.A. degree in Fine Arts from Makerere University) that the temporary event of bringing artists and artisans together as part of the entertainment program during the 7th Pan-African Congress was considered further and resulted in the provision of space for the establishment of a more permanent crafts village. Since then, the NACCAU pays rent to UNCC, which causes frustration for the vice-chairperson Nuwa Nnyanzi, for whom the UNCC is almost synonymous with the Ministry for Gender, Labour and Social Development. I already elaborated on some of the resentments Nuwa and others shared with me regarding governmental support from the respective ministry in charge. Because of the perceived relationship with a ministry that does not honor its responsibilities but remains indifferent at best and exploitative at worst, the association sought to establish alliances elsewhere. While I am writing these lines, a newly established alliance with the Ministry of Tourism and private tourism actors (mainly UTA) en lieu has already leads to a more successful collaboration in terms of activities and visibility. One such example is a crafts expo which was only a vision of Richard Kawere, in 2020 the CEO of UTA, when I interviewed him. The expo took place for the first time in April 2022, financially supported by the MasterCard Foundation and facilitated by the UTA.

Cerinah Kasirye, whose business name is Cerinah Trillion, introduces herself to me as a marketing expert (field notes from 30/01/2020). She is not an artist, she fur-

ther explains, but she knows how to tailor and in early 2020, when I met her to speak about her work with the NACCAU, she had just established her Start-Up TrillionLooks. In January 2020, she had been working with the NACCAU for about a year part-time and with a focus on developing an online marketing strategy for the NACCAU. Kasirye is the first person who informs me about the cooperation with the UTA and a joint project that had been inaugurated just a couple of weeks earlier. She confirms the sentiments of frustration with regard to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and then tells me about the benefits of being a member of the UTA, despite the membership fees the NACCAU has to pay. Because of its membership, the NACCAU now has the opportunity to display and sell at the *Pearl of Africa Expo 2020*, an international tourism expo hosted by Uganda in 2020. In addition, the UTA, jointly with the NACCAU members from the board of trustees, submitted a project proposal and received a grant over US $40,700 for a project called the *Marketability of East African Cultural Crafts*, funded by the GIZ and in collaboration with a Kenyan partner organization.

Richard Kawere, CEO of the UTA at the time, confirmed that the NACCAU was not receiving any directed support of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. In an interview, he told me:

> Ordinarily, you will find that the crafts production, in terms of legislation and laws in Uganda, falls under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Works. They were not being helped that's why they wrote and requested to us if they could come and be part of our congregation. So, we accepted them about two years ago, and have been studying how to best support that sector. (Interview with Richard Kawere, CEO UTA, 11/03/2020: 206–210)

He continues by telling me what exactly that means in terms of supporting associations such as the NACCAU:

> They have mainly been under Gender. And the government, in terms of restructuring positions there – but the Gender Ministry or the Gender Institutions do not have any proactive activity directly towards that. They are focusing more on exportation of labor, safety, health and safety standards. They are actually not focusing on how they can make use – or they can empower these people [meaning handicraft artists and artisans] through what they are doing. So, (…) that's why they left, and came to tourism. So, we had a discussion, went to the Ministry, and we admitted them to the tourism. So, they are here in the tourism industry association by choice. […] Since Culture was not caring for them, they found where they can be cared for. (ibid: 212–221)

Here, the government world and two sub-worlds become relevant. I consider them as social worlds rather than as organizations because, as the quotation above indi-

cates, also private business actors such as the UTA can be part of the Government World in terms of advocating for policymaking. Kawere's elaborations summarize what many people told me: in its core activities and emphasis, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development focuses on labor export – thereby meaning negotiating bilateral agreements with third countries for easy access to working visas for Ugandan citizens and ensuring for their safety once abroad – since there have been many reports of migrant workers from Uganda having been exploited in their destination countries. A second major focus of the ministry, as the terminology used by Kawere powerfully demonstrates, is gender. Nuwa holds "so-called development partners" (Interview with Nuwa Nnyanzi 26/01/2020: 641 et seq.) in European countries responsible for this emphasis, since there are many development funds to receive when focusing on gender equity in general, and on women empowerment in particular.

By finding new allies, the NACCAU also needs to confine to its interests. Partnering with the UTA and actors of the tourism world here leads to consequences by which the commercial value and marketability of handicraft products are favored over their artistic, cultural, and social values. The new collaboration with UTA in the joint project *Marketability of East African Cultural Crafts* aims at the establishment of a digital sales platform, which is to link *producers* (as they are referred to in the project) with each other for knowledge and skills exchange and to create market access to promote their products.

However, prior to being able to work on reaching this goal, first a set of *minimum standards* for the quality of the products is to be developed. They are to be determined by a study that was carried out by Nuwa "and his team" (Interview with Richard Kawere, CEO UTA, 11/03/2020: 244–245) at the time of the interview. Based on those results, the UTA and the NACCAU would then focus on the development of those standards that relate to the selection of products to be promoted. With the small budget of the project, Kawere says, not all products can be supported and selection will be made based on sales, input, and revenue:

> We can select the most prioritized products in terms of – we are looking at value, ease of production, and value to the production. For example, how many of those products are being exported? How many are highly on demand? So, those are some of what are going to be the parameters for selection of the products to start with in developing the minimum standards. […] But our target was to – maybe in about two to three years to hit a minimum of products which have the minimum standards. (ibid: 242–256)

When he speaks about the NACCAU and his members, I sense sincere concern for the wellbeing of the handicraft artists he calls producers. He is strongly opinionated about the government and understands the tourism sector to be socially oriented

because ultimately it is Ugandans who benefit from his work, he believes. His vision is to help handicraft artists to become so successful that they can afford to become tourists themselves and explore their own natural and cultural heritage. For Kawere, engagement with the creative industries in form of handicraft production is only one of many potential strategies, and he follows them from a business perspective. To him, handicraft products are a means from which – ideally – people can make a living. He is less concerned with the uniqueness of products or with the question of safeguarding material culture and knowledge about production. Hence, the selection of products to be promoted through the joint project with the NACCAU follows a logic of measurability, which allows for success to be quantified and conveyed into numeric parameters. Being the NACCAU thus also means obeying the rules of capitalist marketing strategies.

Authorship of Handicraft Products

Back at the crafts village, the question of the importance of author- and ownership is one that keeps me busy. For handicraft artists here, too, are mostly referred to as *producers*, not as artists. And none of the handicraft artists I spoke to introduced themselves to me as artists, either. Only in one independent group with which I met, the *Imbalu* initiation ceremony uniform designers, were the members disappointed for not being singled-out in receiving public acknowledgment for their work. Other groups sell their products together without the purchaser ever knowing about the person who made the artefact. There, the person who carries the objects to a market – frequently a member of the group – becomes the initial author. Moreover, the further away from its production site a product travels, the more it ceases to be the result of creative engagement with raw material facilitated by a pair of hands and a mind that had envisioned it before those very hands transformed this vision into a crafted object. By the time it reaches the NACCAU, it is one object among many, ideally purchased in bulk, and potentially by several *dealers* (see Image 6.2). In her analysis of wood carvings in Oaxaca, Mexico, Alanna Cant (2020) observes that the differentiation between art and craft is oftentimes dependent "on the ways that authorship is or is not recognized within a given context" (21). Although, according to Cant, scholars have long deconstructed the notion of the individual creative genius artists allegedly possess and instead highlighted that art is genuinely the product of a flow of knowledge, which in turn is the result of communal production, dissemination, and circulation of ideas, symbols, and aesthetic positions, the question of authorship in artistic handicraft production continues to be contested because it is both "highly variable and inherently political" (ibid: 21).

At the NACCAU, most members are intermediaries – or *dealers*. They buy the products from artisans and handicraft artists and re-sell them. While there are some people who are members of the NACCAU and practicing artists like Nuwa, it re-

mained odd to me that an association that calls itself National Arts and Cultural Crafts Association of Uganda primarily appears to focus on distributing artefacts and art objects rather than providing members with space and structural support for their own production. For Nuwa, my irritation is no contradiction at all. In his opinion, the NACCAU members have expertise in marketing and quality management and mediate between the *producers* and the (foreign) customers. In their own, distinct way, they become "unofficial cultural ambassadors" (Kersel and Luke, 2015: 72) – a space usually occupied by archaeologists, conservators, museum practitioners, and the like.

In the realm of handicraft dissemination, however, it is their narration of the particularities, histories, and associated cultural significance of the products for sale that facilitates the emotional attachments between handicraft object and customer. This is, in its outward orientation, frequently a consequence of meta-discourses and "neo-imperialist agendas associated with international, national and state agencies, [which are] often the driving mechanisms behind what is preserved, what is excavated, and what is on display as representative of a particular locality, nation, or culture" (ibid: 72) – and of economic interests, I should add.

In its self-understanding, this knowledge equips the NACCAU (members) with the expertise needed to further train those *master crafts persons* to "sharpen their skills, make more professional and appreciate standards and uniformity" (roundtable discussion Art in Intl. Development, 27/02/2019: 103–104) as I will demonstrate in chapter 6.4. Being the NACCAU thus also means to make sense and find meaning in contradictions, e.g., to justify the need to train those who are already discursively constructed as *masters* or in offering trainings in craft-techniques, although the majority of the members are neither artists nor artisans themselves.

The NACCAU as Intermediate

According to the explanations of members to whom I spoke, the NACCAU further regards itself (and is regarded) as a cultural interpreter, an actor who connects local material culture and the people who produce it with the logics of the customers. It is through the work of the NACCAU that the latter learn about the value of the product purchased. In return, producers learn how to position their works in a heritage and development narrative. In the conversation with the women's group from Supa, one member (whom I will call Sarah Akumu here) tells me that she wishes for other women to join the group as well, so all women together can "come out of poverty" (conversation with members from women's wickerwork group from Supa 28/02/2020: 282). Furthermore, she adds, members "can also make some products for their own use in their homesteads" (ibid: 284). Here, she speaks about togetherness and about creating a sense of self-efficacy when creating objects that can be of

use at home. I then continue to ask her about the perceived learnings from the UNESCO training she participated in in 2018, executed by the NACCAU. Now, her tone shifts. While until now the major narrative had clustered around social networking and togetherness, suddenly I hear the following:

> First was teamwork, to support each other. Secondly, we also learned that once we work hard in our crafts business, they are global. We want to produce in bulk so we are globally recognized as Uganda – and: to preserve our culture. (ibid: 292–294)

In her response to my question, Akumu first re-affirms the previous statement. During the weeklong training, working together, training others, and thus supporting one another were the elements that were emphasized. Here, the information confirms the importance of the previous statement and gives it additional authority because even during the official training sessions, working together was considered essential. However, rather than elaborating on this aspect, Akumu proceeds towards the "second" aspect – in which she talks about the need to "work hard" for the success of their businesses. Working hard here means to produce in large quantities and is equated with internationalizing, which leads towards receiving global recognition for their work and ultimately, Akumu says that they learned to preserve their culture, which here is understood as "restoring crafts that were always made by our forefathers" (ibid: 298).

This quotation also marks a shift in narration as it introduces the concept of *crafts business*. The wording is used after I specifically ask about the learnings from the training, and enriched with the addition that their aim is to be "globally recognized as Uganda". Throughout the conversation, the term only re-appears in relation to the training. For Akumu and her colleagues, the training is linked to learning to understand their handicraft work as a business. Moreover, it results in a group of women from Supa now being preoccupied with their contribution towards the global recognition of Uganda's culture.

In this example, the UNESCO training project implemented by the NACCAU members delivered a heritage industry and development logic of value making to handicraft artists. In this logic, handicraft artists are taught that their work by itself is of cultural significance and therefore needs global recognition as part of a post-independence nation-state. Furthermore, success here becomes the result of determination of individuals, which re-enforces capitalist conceptualizations in which the successes and failures of humans are by and large the result of their efforts, passion, and dedication. Here, this notion beautifully collides with the previous statements of needing to work together to come out of poverty, and not to be "selfish with [one's] knowledge but instead [to choose] to share it with other people" (ibid: 286). The instructors of the training project were Nuwa Nnyanzi and Bruno Sserunkuuma.

Image 6.2: Purchased Artistic Handicraft Objects Upon their Arrival at the Crafts Village.

©Anna-Lisa Klages, 26/02/2020

Place Matters

The NACCAU members, whether they are artists, artisans, dealers, or all the above, spend a lot of time at the crafts village. They pay an annual membership fee of 50.000 UGX and a quarter-annually rent for the stall they use of 700.000 UGX for a shop. In return, the association pays for the parking fees and a cup of coffee for tour operators whenever they bring tourists to the crafts village and rent includes electricity and basic maintenance of the NACCAU gardens in the center of the village. Some members have employed staff who receive 10.0000 UGX per day and, depending on their sales performance, a bonus at the end of the month. Because members commit to the values of the association, I learn from Cerinah Kasirye, staff members receive some standardized benefits for selling the products they offer. I do not know how many members employ people to work for them in their shops, but I was able to find out that most of them employ them as help, meaning that most NACCAU members spend a lot of time at the crafts village – and with each other. Even on slow days there is thus chatter and laughter to hear around the place; members share food and their stories as well as their sorrows. Many sell similar products and hence are also competitors. The similarity of the products can result in unfortunate dynamics. In one of my protocols, I wrote about a conversation I had with Cerinah about these dynam-

ics, after – to my initial surprise – having just found out that Sserunkuuma does not sell any of his artworks at the crafts village:

> While my thoughts are still wandering, Cerinah and I talk about the absence of Bruno's pots in the village. 'One would have to ask Bruno about this choice to not sell here. But I think there is a good reason.', she says. 'What is the reason, you think?', I ask her, and she replies that objects being sold here are actually devalued due to the fact that they are being sold at the crafts village. Whoever has the opportunity to not sell here, will do so. Here, the major problem are the competitors, for there is always someone who is willing to sell for less. This actually devalues the products, for they are no longer appreciated for their artistic know how and aesthetics, but considered as cheap souvenir. (Ethnographic notes from 30/01/2020: 145–153, my translation)

To Cerinah, the crafts village appears to be something like a last resort – for to her, there are much better options to sell artistic handicraft products than here. She names Banana Boat, the social enterprise I introduced in the previous chapter, to support her hypothesis. Another example she offers to prove her point is the *kabaka's* palace. To her, the location shapes the object: an item purchased at the *kabaka's* palace is more valuable because it is associated with the *kabaka*, while Banana Boat shops are located in expensive areas of the Kampala. They are located in areas where many foreigners reside, do grocery shopping, or meet in western-style cafés and restaurants. In both environments, artistic handicraft products have authenticity and are singled-out in a positive sense; at the *kabaka's palace* they were allowed in, potentially hand-chosen or even received the blessing of the *kabaka* (see also chapter 5.2.7). At Banana Boat Shops, there are no competitors around, and the story Banana Boat founders and owners Suny Magyar and Ralph Schenk tell is that of items each "carefully chosen to inspire you" (Banana Boat, n.d.). In its descriptions, Banana Boat uses words and phrases that stimulate positive emotions, such as "exciting", "carefully", "skillfully", "has fun", and "[we] choose the best" (ibid). Each product tells a story about the people who made it, and although they remain in the collective unknown as women's groups from the Rwenzori Mountains or families from rural areas, they suggest that costumers bring about positive social change through the consumption of products. Unlike the NACCAU, Banana Boat is a business with two owners rather than a larger number of members with different visions and ideas for what the NACCAU should become.

The Savings Circle

As I previously stated, on average, the NACCAU members spend a large amount of time at the crafts village. For individuals such as Nnyanzi, it is a place to promote

his own vision, for people such as Lwanga, a place of self-determination, for Kasirye it is a place for exploration, and for Sserunkuuma, a place to give back. For Sara Nabunya and Juliet Khabakuma, it is a place for joint savings, investments, and an opportunity towards more financial independence as well. Sara and Juliet are not only NACCAU members, but also members of the *Uganda National Arts and Cultural Crafts Community Cooperative Savings and Credit Society Limited* savings circle. The circle was founded in 2016, and although for legal reasons it is not an official NACCAU program (for it is not mentioned in the MoU of the association), its purpose is to support the NACCAU members financially (field notes from 23/02/2020; observation protocol by Barbra Khoba from 23/02/2020). Every Monday, two volunteers of the group collect weekly savings from the circle members, and every Thursday, the entire group meets to discuss and decide upon investments to be made, loans to be granted, and members to be supported. The savings circle provides access to small loans, which, according to Sara are unbureaucratic and can be granted without possessing a bank account, support individuals in making investments for their businesses, but also, and quite frequently, to pay for funerals, medicine, or other emergencies. Thus, it is also means to establishing a culture of mutual social support, enabled, and facilitated through the agency of artistic handicraft objects. The savings circle is only one example of this, but it is through their engagement with artistic handicraft objects that the NACCAU members – and only to a certain extent – establish their own community on their own terms. While they are infiltrated by various and sometimes contradicting discursive and material interests (I will get back to those in chapter 6.3), being a group of people with its organic and traditional intellectuals enables the NACCAU and its members to become visible in the civil society arena.

Becoming the NACCAU

On the previous pages, I elaborated on what, according to the empirical data I gathered, *being the NACCAU* means for important individuals within the association as well as how *being the NACCAU* is perceived by some of its partners and social worlds with which it is engaged. In brief, it can be concluded that *being the NACCAU* is processual. It depends on internal negotiations of interests, which, situated more broadly, are co-determined by discourses on sustainable development, women's empowerment, and creative industries development, as well as on the marketability of ethnically marked African artistic handicraft products. Hence, *being the NACCAU* is always also a form of *becoming*. Furthermore, *becoming the NACCAU* is not exclusively a process of social world actors' engagement with one another, but additionally co-constituted by what Clarke, in building on Actor-Network Theory, refers to as non-human elements in the situation (Clarke, 2005).

The Situatedness of the NACCAU in the Ugandan Artistic Discourse

In February 2019, and with the decisive support of the then Dean of the Margaret Trowell School of Fine and Industrial Arts (MTSIFA) of Makerere University Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kizito Maria Kasule, I was able to gather about 50 artists, curators, scholars, NGO-staff, members of local arts associations, and art-affiliated people at the university's art gallery. In a three-day round-table workshop, participants debated on current notions of art in civil society (see also chapter 4.4.2). In a discussion group that roughly focused on Art in Intl. Development, discussants spent a fair amount of time arguing how to represent Uganda best internationally, while relying on indigenous forms of visual and material culture, for example, shields, textiles, designs, and wickerwork (roundtable discussion from 27/02/2019). The discussion participants then shifted toward asking what makes Ugandan art *authentic*, before returning to the question to what extend art exists in international development, debating the benefits and pitfalls, and discussing how artistic expression can be considered to be contributing to sustainability in development – if at all.

During the round-table discussion workshop in 2019, one participant had proposed to bring Ugandan art into its embassies abroad, to use artistic expressions as a vehicle for cultural diplomacy just like other countries are allegedly doing:

> My interest is in how to integrate art and tourism. Like when he was presenting [the moderator of the round table discussion had previously initiated the debate with a verbal presentation] in the morning, he said 'you go to embassies and you find the president's photo on the walls, but what about art?' If we can bring in many pieces in those embassies, at least it can help to promote our cultures to different people who visit these embassies, […] which in the long run may promote tourism and increasing [sic] national income. (Philip Balimunsi, curator, round table discussion 'Art in Intl. Development, 27/02/2019: 135–139)

Here, Balimunsi's main concern is how to create a nation brand of Uganda through visual culture, powerful enough to attract tourists to come and visit. Tourism in return is immediately associated with the national income, which positions artistic products as a tool, as already discussed in the previous chapter 5. What I want to emphasize here, though, is not the conceptualization of art as a tool, but the continuation of the issue that is being raised in association with the question of whether art should be exhibited in Ugandan embassies abroad later during the group discussion:

> I will hit on the point of identity and maybe diplomacy, because we are talking about going to embassies and not finding anything artistic there. Because I kind of believe that maybe Ugandan artists have lost pride in their country […] And also,

> that brings me to the question of identity; are there art works or anything artistic that identifies Uganda to the point that if someone finds it there they can say this is Ugandan? (Vivian Lokoth Naume, fashion designer and lecturer, round table discussion 'Art in Intl. Development, 27/02/2019: 432–437)

Unlike Balimusi, who assumes that the government does not want to display Ugandan art in its embassies[3], Naume, who is a fashion designer and lecturer, turns the question around, wondering whether artists would want for their work to be at display in offices of the Ugandan embassies and hence immediately be affiliated with the Ugandan government. Although her statement that artists may have lost pride in their country remains generalized, it implicitly raises the question of what exactly she means with having lost pride and whether this could also be an indirect critique of the current government, indicating that some artists may not want to be associated with it.

In the second part of the quote from above, she then turns towards another topic, raising the question of whether Balimusi's proposal is relevant if the ultimate aim is to enhance tourism. She suggests that this would require aesthetics that can be identified as Ugandan to the extent that it can stand for the country and its cultures – both in the sense that something common is emphasized like dances or drums that may have variations but according to the discussants, are similar among the ethnic groups of Uganda. In addition, materials and some elements in local wickerwork could be considered representative.

Other participants, such as Philip Kwesiga, who is a sculptor and an art historian, criticizes artists in Uganda for not sufficiently grounding their art in local histories. In his opinion, Ugandan artists must do more research "to discover their roots in order to understand better where they are going" (Philip Kwesiga, sculptor and art historian, roundtable discussion 'Art in Intl. Development, 27/02/2019: 721–722). In his opinion, building on the local cultural heritage is a prerequisite "to be able to operate in the global world. […] You need to work from a solid foundation and be able to justify something that you do" (ibid: 723–724). In this debate, the discussants can agree that material culture in form of artistic handicraft objects dominate Uganda's tangible cultural heritage. Here, they are not a means for the economic development of marginalized groups of Ugandan society but are highly relevant for the future development of nation branding as well as to historically ground contemporary artistic practice. Other participants associate artistic handicraft objects with indigenous spirituality and emphasize their meaning in relational moments associated with traditions, as the following examples show:

3 Whether or not art is exhibited in Ugandan embassies is not a subject matter here, nor is the question of who would be the target audience of an exhibition in Ugandan embassies.

> I was saying that the Ngali culture was a strong culture of the Baganda, so whenever the family came together, they would put money in baskets and these baskets would be kept in shrines. And the booze had to be created [sic]. And whenever the family came together, they had to ask permission to the ancestors to allow them to touch this money to use it – but not for luxury. That was the purpose of the Ngali. (Assoc. Prof. Kizito Maria Kasule, artist and art historian, roundtable discussion 'Art and Indigenous Knowledge Systems' 28/02/2019: 590–594)

The *Ngali* are a clan among the Baganda, and Kasule shares his knowledge about *Ngali* culture. Here, Kasule refers to the baskets as an indigenous art form that transcended hierarchy within family structures (all contribute a share and then the money is jointly spent) and connected the living family members with their ancestors (for money can only be spent with the blessing of the ancestors). In another example, the spiritual purposes of indigenous art forms are also to facilitate the relationship with the ancestors:

> Many of you – I said this and I want to repeat it – many of you people here, Ugandans, you have some of these indigenous art forms under your beds, you know. And at night when you go there, you remove them and you offer these small sacrifices to your ancestors. In the morning you are true western Christians – during the day. (Assoc. Prof. Kizito Maria Kasule, artist and art historian, round table discussion 'Art and Indigenous Knowledge Systems' 28/02/2019: 567–570)

In the quotes above, it becomes clear that the discourse on the meanings of artistic handicraft products travels across disciplines and issues that impact the conceptualization of a society's norms and values. Here, spirituality and faith are addressed as well as family traditions. It addresses questions of modernity and the impact of *western intrusion* or *Chinese products*, which the discussants debate at large, especially with regard to the question how ancestral worship is shaped by indigenous art forms such as gourds and clay pots – and increasingly by the replacement thereof with plastic pots, jerricans, and polythene or plastic bags.

At the NACCAU, indigenous knowledge is mostly addressed when discussed in relation to cultural heritage. As previously mentioned, De Beukelaer (2017) associates this problematic emphasis on the economic potential of the creative industries, which also include a vast range of creative works beyond visual arts and artistic handicrafts, with the lack of an "African take" (583) on the meanings and implications of the CCIs. For him, this is but one of three major problems in the current work with and of the creative industries. In addition to the lack of empirical engagement with the CCIs across Africa, he shows how the discourses of *culture and development*, which include assumptions about how society is organized to establish an idea of the future, is often synonymized with *development of cultural industries*. He writes:

> This creates a tension between what Pratt (2014) calls 'culture in development' and 'cultures of development'. There, precisely, the cultural patterns that inform action are seen as key to gradually, selectively, and partially alter practice in order to foster development that is in line with the cultural context. (De Beukelaer, 2017: 588)

So, there is the culture that informs the practice. There is a product, which is ethnicized and understood to be a material product of a particular cultural group, and then there is the temporal culture of development, which is constantly developed or, as Clarke would have it – co-constituted – by the social world actors and the non-human elements involved. As an association in-between, the NACCAU is currently preoccupied with establishing supportive networks rather than with alteration of practices. In its outward orientation, it consents to the narratives of their partners, which determine the framing of its work. This can be seen powerfully in the notion of poverty eradication through artistic handicraft production, which is also not locally grounded empirically, for there is no empirical evidence that the notion lives up to its premise. According to De Beukelaer (2014), the third and last problem with developing the creative industries as a development strategy is their assumption that the creative industries can be a motor for (socio-)economic development. This assumption is dangerous in that it neglects empirical findings, which suggest that "increased cultural consumption and flourishing cultural industries *follow* a socio-economically prospering society, and not vice versa" (Beukelaer, 2014: 246, emphasis added). Furthermore, by co-conceptualizing artistic handicraft objects as souvenirs, the NACCAU further consents to a tourism world that targets foreign visitors with its outward orientation. The 2020 and 2021 lockdowns and international travel bans during the COVID-19 pandemic embody another example of the dangers involved with primarily consenting to the Creative Economy Reports (CER) published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (ibid).

If one were to follow this outward orientation of the NACCAU only, one could ask to what extent, if at all, and by which means the NACCAU can be regarded as an actor in civil society that has political agency in confronting the current cultural hegemony, which continues to dwell extensively on the overarching assumption that Uganda is 'developing' (which, according to the De Beukelaer is synonymous with 'underdeveloped') and in need of support for its development. Yet, in its inward orientation, the NACCAU members constantly negotiate and alter the positionality of the association. As I already discussed at length in chapter 3, dominant strands in civil society fall short of grasping its meanings, functions, and adaptations in the lived realities of the African post-colonial era (e.g., Kamruzzaman, 2019; Kasfir, 1998a; Obadare, 2014). Almost unsurprisingly, then, was Nuwa's understanding of civil society as

> those people who advocate for community development, for example those you'd find helping our teachers' associations or other associations in terms of like office, in terms of salaries, in terms of other programs, based on external funding. The NGOs. The non-governmental organizations. (Interview with Nuwa Nnyanzi, 26/01/2020: 398–401)

For Nuwa, civil society is primarily associated with *those people*, meaning western NGOs that provide basic funding for associations. By covering costs for offices, salaries, and programs, they enable the work of the association, which could be teachers' associations or the like. Those associations by themselves remain outside the civil society realm. This statement indeed confirms the critical positions of scholars who attest to western or western style NGOs to be insufficient when contemplating local forms of civil society and its role(s) in the state, for democracy, and in development. Nelson Kasfir builds on an understanding of Michael Walzer, whose conceptualization of civil society allows for a "set of relational networks – formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology" to be included in addition to regarding civil society as "the space of uncoerced human association" (Walzer, 1991: 293, as cited in Kasfir, 1998a: 4).

In its inward dynamics, the NACCAU becomes more political, normative, and ideological and is an association led by interests other than economic benefits. However, its members seldomly succeed in positioning aspects of mutual empowerment, conviviality, and political advocacy into the contested arena of meaning making of artistic handicraft products in civil society. Within the association, they are pushed to the margins by a dominant focus on the development of the creative industries for poverty reduction and economic development, which are promoted as culturally sensitive and relevant with referrals to the safeguarding of heritage. Having made similar observations, Sophia Labadi (2020a) re-addresses the question of the Cultural Turn in international development work:

> Some chapters [of the edited book] have explained that such a cultural turn has not yet happened. Many cultural and non-cultural projects funded through international aid share the same characteristics: they do not take account of local communities and contexts; they are based on external evaluations and inputs; and they often fail as a result. […]. Projects need to contribute to the national interests and priorities of donor countries, in terms of trade and economic growth. […] Another reason is that cultural projects, when funded through official development assistance (ODA) by donor countries, must promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. (Labadi, 2020a: 243)

In her elaborations, Labadi describes a continuation of the established status-quo, whereby project concepts are designed detached from the lived realities and conditions of the communities, as occurred, for example, in the *Strengthening the Sus-*

tainability of the Creative Industries in Uganda" project. Of course, the NACCAU has a responsibility to its members, which includes the expectation that the association as such also considers their economic interests. Cultural hegemony, its discourses, and the reproduction thereof organize utterances and statements that determine "what is to be known and what is understood and what is *not*" (Clarke et al., 2018: 225, emphasis as in original). In doing so, they set the "conditions of possibility" and hence also the "conditions of *im*possibility" (ibid, emphasis as in original) and co-determine what will be heard, seen, and considered. However, this does not automatically mean that they do not exist nor that they are less important in the situation. It is noteworthy that they are articulated not in utterances and statements with an outward orientation, but in inward-oriented moments and actions, which are particularly present in the positions taken by those independently organized artistic handicraft groups on the peripheries and outside the realm of what could commonly be associated with civil society activity.

In the previous chapter, I reconstructed how relevant social worlds and organizations such as the NACCAU engage with one central non-human element in the situation of inquiry – artistic handicraft products. In doing so, I highlighted some contestations and contradictions in the conceptualizations of artistic handicraft objects, which are subject to the establishment and continuity of cultural hegemony but also of ruptures in my research situation. In what follows I continue to dwell on the roles, the discursive power of some non-human elements, and the assigned impotence of the discursive construction of handicraft artists in positioning the NACCAU as an association in-between.

6.3 Interlinkages and -Dependencies

Unlike chapter 6.2, which was mainly based on the analysis of interviews, roundtable discussions, photographs, and ethnographic protocols by use of open coding strategies to zoom in on the segments within the NACCAU, the findings in chapter 6.3 are empirically based on the relational analysis of messy-situational maps (see also chapter 4.4.1) of the NACCAU in the broader situation of inquiry. Through mapping, I found two cultural policies to be re-emerging elements of reference, *the 2006 Ugandan National Culture Policy* and the *2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. I will therefore briefly introduce them before I show where and how these non-human elements become actants in the research situation, thereby returning to international project cooperations already covered throughout the previous chapters, the *Strengthening the Sustainability of Creative Industries in Uganda* project and the *Marketability of East African Cultural Crafts* project. In addition, I elaborate on the non-human element material(ity), the discursive construction of artistic handicraft artists who, in this particular moment within