groups introduced here in more detail could be reconstructed and recognized as local civil society actors who use the agency of their artwork to push forward their explicitly or implicitly articulated agendas.

The conclusion marks the final part of this dissertation. It includes a return to the major findings of the empirical analysis and a discussion in the light of locally grounded conceptions of civil society, the meta-narrative of development as well as the need for homegrown conceptions and pluridisciplinarity in meaning making of artistic articulation; be it in the private, the semi-public, or public spaces. Finally, by zooming out of the particular situatedness of the research at hand, implications that move beyond the findings of this research are addressed.

1.4   Theory and Methodology

Introduction to Theory and Methodology

This dissertation builds on a number of theoretical and methodological assumptions that frame and situate the epistemological perspectives I applied throughout the research trajectory. As beforementioned, it is grounded in critical thoughts informed by postcolonial perspectives. These bear three major epistemological assumptions, and all fundamentally inform this research. The first assumption is that colonial hegemony sustained and sustains to exist even after the formal ending of the colonial period. Postcolonial theories acknowledge that colonial historie(s) are closely interwoven with global power imbalances that continue to feed the mechanisms of exploitation of people of the so-called Global South (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006b, 2018; Mbembe, 2001, 2021; McEwan, 2019; Quintero and Garbe, 2013). Second, influential postcolonial works such as *Orientalism* (1994 [1978]) by Edward Said and *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak emphasize how the formerly colonized *Others* are constructed within the frameworks created by the Anglo-European West. In a critical discussion of the term *Colonialism*, John L. and Jean Comaroff (2018) disclose the differences between colonialisms overseas, but also refer to the similarities with the rural and peasant population in the home countries of the colonizers (ibid). The periphery, which was established by the aristocracy to be able to consider itself the center, was applied abroad as well, and since the *Enlightenment* era extended to racialization in the colonies, colonized people were denied their histories, their societal and educational systems, their aesthetic taste, their religious beliefs, and their ways to make sense of the world and all things living upon it (ibid). In the process of their subjectification (Foucault, 1982), the formerly colonized *Others* were and continue to be discursively constituted into subjects by Anglo-American perceptions of truth, which frame the possibilities and boundaries of

articulation (Chakravorty Spivak, 1988) and space of subjection assigned to those individuals and groups (Barry, 2020: 95; Foucault, 1982).

I elaborate on these assumptions (as well as others) and their implications for my research further on in chapter 4, as they bear consequences for the design and the theoretical chapters two and three to follow. While I sought to consider multiple perspectives and voices that display the current theoretical debates and discourses in their complexities, I also acknowledge that my own concepts to make sense of the world around me shape the interpretation and presentation of the literature discussed. In acknowledging that all knowledge is always partial (Clarke et al., 2018) and always situated (Clarke et al., 2018; Haraway, 1988), therefore, I also acknowledge that albeit ongoing (self-)reflexivity and ethical considerations throughout the entire research trajectory, the positionality of myself as a researcher inevitably impact the defined relevance of the literature discussed and the concepts considered important. Spivak (1988), too, concluded that being aware of these structures and processes of inequality she refers to as *epistemic violence*, which favors some theorizations and disregards other forms of knowledge, does not prevent anyone from committing it. Rather, conducting research necessarily includes the conduction of epistemic violence in one way or another.