

# De-Academizing Organology

## *Among Particular Research Communities in Urban Context*

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### Abstract

Taking organological research and display of outcomes in China, Vietnam, and Malaysia as example, this paper is to highlight burning issues regarding the purpose and meaning of the discipline in the context of research communities experiencing urbanity. Methodologically, this paper argues mainly in dialogue with the discussion on transcultural musicology. In the mentioned region, urban museums, archives, and universities are widely modeled according to successful academic institutions of supposedly global importance. The perspective of expected success needs a radical turn in order to serve social sustainability and a growing knowledge base that is inclusive regarding subjects and objects under research. The radical turn in de-academizing derives from the questioning of basic assumptions that once started with an uncritical praise of Herder's groundwork in defining 'people' and finds expression in the social engagement with ethnic minorities, migrants, diaspora, and other categorically constructed groups of people in specific nation states and their urban centers.

**Keywords:** *De-Academizing, Research Communities, Organology, Herder, Urban Experience*

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## Introduction

Joppke, Welsch, and Amselle (2017) were recently re-questioning based on a number of thoughts already evolving in the late 20th century philosophy and in a radical way through anthropology the singularity of cultures and refer to inherent contradictions in current key theories (Boas 1948, Durkheim, Benedict, Geertz). One example proving the existence of those conventional state-ments outside the region under discussion is a special program of the Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany, dealing with decision making across cultures in East Asia, which is factually still based on the assumption of cultural areas or circles.<sup>1</sup> The deepening of these views applied to a number of topics regarding organology raises questions such as “How do these writings contribute to a continuous grow in knowledge about any historical dimension within ethnomusicological academia?” Another important question is about the dynamics underlying the process of culturizing academia in this regard, which is not yet sufficiently answered though there is a tendency in recent years to scrutinize historical research cultures, for example in the (Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF), which is at the same time an actual example for how global diversity in research cultures is communicated through the choice of editorial board members and the topics those people work about. (<https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~culturalanalysis/editorial.html>).

Before going into the details, some definitions of terms used in this paper may help understand the arguments and directions of the discussion that may appear general if not connected to practical cases. It is, therefore, emphasized right from the beginning that the entire discussion is specifically dealing with particular academic communities and actual examples that were methodically observed and practically attended such as institutions of tertiary education and international organizations of professionals in the field of ethnomusicology, sound preservation, and museology.

*Academia* can be seen as a constructed environment of thoughts by a group of people dealing with scientific research and teaching. This group of people is often perceived as elitist by non-academic people (Lavoie & Roth, 2002:83; Kurylo & Yu, 2016:76), serving various purposes in a nation-state and economy without being directly involved in decision making, adhering to mostly self-imposed working ethics and resulting principles of acknowledging each other.

*Academizing and De-Academizing* is putting any kind of knowledge or scientific statement into an academic framework or taking it off respectively, which then complements the de-academizing. De-academizing is not the same as a non-academic or vernacular approach since knowledge outside the academic framework, which was never put into an academic framework, cannot be de-academized.

*Organology* in this context names the field of musical instrument studies that includes the musical instruments’ construction, use, social and cultural meaning, and the many changes musical instruments experience in different time periods of human society. The methodological framework is based on musicology with all its different approaches that also changed and still change over time.

*Research Communities* that are taken as an example in this paper are found in the Malaysian, Vietnamese, and Chinese social environment. However, they are not listed according to nation-states, though there might be common features resulting from nation-state implications of institutional laws and ways of working. Research communities manifest themselves through institutionalizing of research interests in organizations, movements within and outside these organizations, and establishing hierarchies within the respective groups.

*Particular* means that only some of them, not all, not general, and again not classified or categorized according to nation-states, have been considered. In this case, those research communities that draw on urban experience either in their home environment or abroad play an important model role and change the dynamics among their followers.

*Urban Context* as used in this paper describes a state of extended belonging to a place, a time, and definite groups of people that are rather diverse in their individual histories yet are determined to lead other research communities due to their specific urban experience. The urban feature of individuals within these groups can be seen in the sacrifice of land boundness, continuity of acquired cultural patterns taken over from life styles in less urban areas, or the re-establishing of cultural patterns fitting daily needs and prospective advantages in life styles within an urban context.

Some other important terms are: *Hype*, being a publicity, propaganda, following a stirred fashion in doing things a certain way; *Label*, which is a definite, representative, and symbolizing name or term for any entity defined by it; and *Classification and Categorization*, which establish hierarchies and types seen from a specific perspective of use. While classification is connected to a typology of research patterns, categorization deals with evaluation practices.

The main questions in this regard, as they mark the gap of understanding, are: What makes a framework *valid* in a particular community considering space/time/agent? What methods are available to validate the way of validation? Why does the urban context work as a catalysator in this environment? What consequences can be traced through observing organology as a field of study transferred into an urban context?

## Background

Amselle (2015) questions any kind of a bare framework of human belonging as he is able to prove the multiple rootedness of any cultural entity, which subsequently includes research traditions. Before him, the sociologist Joppke (2003) analyzed similar appearances. His article about “de-” and “re-ethnicization” discusses some contemporary transformations of citizenship across Western states, with a special emphasis on Europe. It is argued that citizenship is subject to countervailing “de-” and “re-ethnicization” pressures, the first pushing toward incorporating immigrants, the second toward retaining ties with emigrants abroad. While grounded in the dual nature of the modern state as a territorial and ethnic unit, and reinforced

by contemporary globalizing and transnationalizing processes, de- and re-ethnization are identifiable projects of the political left and right, respectively. Which trend prevails is then a simple function of who has the political majority. Beyond this political sociology, he questions valid frameworks for any type of research as he refutes the common notion that citizenship law is a reflection of a state's national identity. Per law the citizenship law simply does not have the requisite variety to help any national identity into existence. Instead, a revisionist view of 'citizenship without identity' is suggested. Philosophers, such as Welsch (2015), oppose the basic assumption of any kind of cultural entity since the fluidity of mutual affects and changing patterns of appropriations and adoptions may lead to cultural impositions that are counterproductive in discussing features of any specific 'culture' from the perspective of historical changes. It is important to observe these different views and their dualistic approaches in past writings in order to analyze recent appearances of de-academizing any field of research.

In the field of music or other performing arts research, these thoughts are tremendously significant. It is not by accident that they become obvious in dealing with evidences at the crossroads of tangible and intangible achievements such as the material, construction principles, and the use of musical instruments. Welsch suggests to rethink any term which includes the word 'culture' since such terms are based on the constructed existence of remarkably different and homogenous entities that are provenly not present in reality. Though these thoughts have predecessors in some parts of anthropology (i.e. Joppke, 2003; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997), the many claims circulating about a COO (Certificate of Origin) of any musical instrument are an alarming fact that should not be ignored in dealing with practical issues.

Another interesting approach regarding the practical consequences of assuming the existence of remarkably different and homogenous entities has to be discussed, which is widely investigated by Morgenbesser and Weiss (2008). These authors draw on the region of Southeast Asia as a natural laboratory for comparative analysis. By intending to offer guidance on how to successfully conduct archival research, carry out interviews, and undertake participant observation in regions with what they call authoritarianism, they reach far into incomparable conditions of decision making in the field of musical practice and limit overarching perspectives that do not adhere to nation-state politics. The studies of Morgenbesser and Weiss show clearly that there are research frameworks built on assumptive basics, which have to be questioned in the first place.

To make it clear once more again, in this paper, particular research communities found in Malaysia, China, and Vietnam are taken as examples rather than as representatives for nation-states. They relate to joint educational experiences or outcome-based writing traditions. Researchers of music and other performing arts conduct their primary work in emerging economies with a strong orientation toward practical applications in the society they live in and the respective industries they serve.

### Assumptions Versus Observations

In the earliest times of formal tertiary education in the region, a time period starting in the middle of the 20th century, the introduction of the classification system of musical instruments according to von Hornbostel and Sachs was conducted through first ethnomusicologists studying abroad or still living there. Some, also took over teaching and research options offered through the Russian scheme of scientific approaches and tried to enforce them in their home institutions. In Vietnam, a school of ethnomusicologists was led by To Ngoc Thanh (1999), who encouraged the mentioned perspective. In China, similar aspects apply to Liang Qichao (梁启超) (1959) and later, Xiao Youmei (萧友梅) (2004). In Malaysia, Patricia Matusky and Tan Sooi Beng tried to introduce a first draft to organology within their larger descriptive work (2004). All these attempts of ‘academization’ were imposing a framework upon a living community of researchers and their social environment that has probably another history in approaching research frameworks and out-come deliveries. Terms like ‘rare,’ ‘indigenous,’ ‘authentic,’ ‘real’ or ‘original,’ in many different versions appeared rather as an advertising tool helping project placements or seeking attention within the constructed culture of a short specific time period. The introduction of these tools was not productive and may have led to an observed aversion or a denial of technicalities by naming them being over-academized, bulky, or inappropriately complicated. However, the compromised use was not sufficiently descriptive or seriously analytically in order to revise the imposed framework either.

The understanding of reasons for academic tools has been often far from reality. Xiao Mei tried a first promising way in order to explain these reasons (2013, 2019). Tan Sooi Beng encouraged systematic approaches (2004).

Margaret Kartomi tried to combine reasoning and flexible systematics (1990). Yet, it has to be clearly stated that core observations related to this paper were not free of pre-framed views. In the course of the study presented more than 150 colleagues and postgraduates of musicology or ethnomusicology within the given region living in urban areas were asked key questions through open conversations over a time period of at least 6 months.<sup>2</sup> They were colleagues at institutions the author worked with and students of these colleagues and the author’s students. In order to keep focused, further specifications were excluded from the outcomes. Only the most basic statements were considered.

The findings of similarities in assumptions and statements are quite clear and easily to understand. In all cases from Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu, Nanning, Kunming, and Suzhou, Kuala Lumpur, Shah Alam, Penang, Johor, and Melaka, Hanoi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City, Hue and Can Tho, could be found positive confirmation about the following:

- Every musical instrument has a home culture or an indigeneity.
- Every musical instrument has at least one name or some indigenous names.
- Every musical instrument can be developed to fit an ethnic label in the context of nation building.
- Every musical instrument must have and displays a national identity.

These similarities appear as a joint feature, yet they may have different motivations regarding organological issues.

When it comes to the definition of terms used in the context of organology, many differences can be established. Regarding the term “indigeneity”, there were expressed opinions from Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu, Nanning, and Kunming focusing on the ethnic background of any musical instrument. A striking example is the Museum of Ethnic Music on the Campus of the Guangxi Arts University in Nanning that displays mainly musical instruments (Lin, 2019). Sources from Hanoi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City, Hue and Can Tho see rather the “national feature” being pivotal for the use of the term “indigeneity.” If taking examples from Malaysia, the confusion caused through the policy of bumiputra-culture plays into the use of the term. “Indigeneity” is used to name something exotic that is neither considered “Chinese” nor “Western” – both denominations being vaguely defined as alien – unless it is using any “Malay” feature, of which a valid description might be missing as well. This complex of thoughts is hard to analyze because it involves many other disciplines of which anthropology, linguistics, and sociology is only a rough outline. Malayness is generally under discussion over a number of decades and re-invented for every item under investigation (Milner, 2009). Insofar, only a handful of musical instruments might be visually fall under indigenous items yet indigenous musical ideas can be expressed through any other musical instrument as well such as a bass guitar or a harmonium (Meddegoda, 2015). Musical instruments indigenous to the Malay world are, therefore, limited. The strength of cultural prosperity lies rather in adaptation and appropriation, which may confirm diffusionism and acculturation theories.

Regarding the names of musical instruments exist further differences. While in most places considered in China, the easiest to remember way of naming was and is preferred and translations are rather creating secondary problems, in other communities of Malaysia the translations into English are more important and they are seriously considered as official terms. In the view of the informants (Lee Siow Mong, 2006) Malaysian academics may represent a higher developed level of understanding through using English terms as they define them. Among Vietnamese academics, the best equivalent is the Vietnamese term for any musical instrument found. That results in a high number of differently named musical instruments in the region, which is partly reflected in museums of musical instruments, teaching materials, and academic writings (To, 1999).

Another wider complex of discussions went about the development of musical instruments, their contribution to nation building, and their role in the process identity establishments. Again, many differences could be found yet ascribed to particular groups. While academic communities in Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu, Nanning, and Kunming assured that any musical instrument that can be used in larger modern compositions or stage performances is showing progressive developments since it adds important colors to a standard serving the entire nation and a clearly national identity, academic groups in Hanoi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City, Hue and Can Tho focus rather on technical capabilities such as melodic

ranges, number of produced tones or chords, and sufficient elements in order to play Vietnamese stage repertoire that represents the various ethnics in Vietnam. Researchers from Kuala Lumpur, Shah Alam, Penang, Johor, or Melaka seem to tolerate repertoire shifts and to still embrace shapes and appearances such as in gamelan sets or drum constructions. Nation building may be of secondary importance as well as identity questions raised in this context. Here, the urban context of performances and stage use is a driving force in blending the function of musical instruments with repertoires that can be consumed by all audiences beyond the limits of presenting Malay performing arts.

This result of discussions seems to be not really useful for more specific opinions were widely diverse within the given regional areas among those living in urban areas. Outside urban areas, the answers represent stated opinions of already cited and acknowledged authorities in terms of academia. They were often taken as proofs to be followed. Hence, they do not necessarily reflect on the colleagues' and students' own perception or critical analysis. This could be an important part of departure for further studies in this field.

### The Label Hype

Despite having a mixture of similarities and differences in assumptions, these are basic statements found across literature in China, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Typically, if this is a term useful in this context, schoolbooks and encyclopaedic literature draw on those assumptions that are rather over-simplifying to a degree that the content becomes wrong seen from the perspective of historical facts and practical use. Organology, as it seems, according to these observations of its academizing and de-academizing, is a field of "pretended" fights. In the Guangxi University of the Arts Museum of Ethnic Music, I had the opportunity to revise text tables with labels and descriptions in order to avoid unproven comments and statements that lead the visitors to accept them in a wrong way. The discrepancies were discussed yet not published (Lin, 2019).

Nation-state-labels are put on the character of these fights, which are often taken as motivations in presenting research outcomes, which then fit into the formally merged and further developed academic framework, for example:

1. Some ethnomusicologists in Shanghai fight for a detachment from any framework yet observes increasing demand for true science (Filipiak & Schaab-Hanke, 2019).
2. Some ethnomusicologists in and outside Malaysian institutions fight between quantitative re-search based on current software applications for empirical research and museum collector's approaches (Musib, 2019)
3. Some ethnomusicologists in and outside Vietnamese institutions fight for acknowledgements and cultural leadership regarding modernization in mainland Southeast Asia (Nguyen, 2019).

However, all these pretended fights and motivations are based on basic assumptions provided within the used academic framework and, at the same time, can be observed in other regions as well.

In the city centre of Kuala Lumpur is located a new Music Museum (Museum Muzik, 29, Jalan Raja, 50050 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) that was academically supported by an acknowledged and leading organologist living in the city (Patricia Matusky). The museum displayed mainly musical instruments that are believed to be crucial to the local identity of people living in Kuala Lumpur and other places of Malaysia. Yet the advice of the experts were then not followed since they may have required larger displays and more information, critical annotations, as well as open questions regarding provenance and current use. Nearly always missing in the descriptions were:

- Time frame
- Patterns of use
- Technical metadata

Most items were simply labeled with a name and its translation into ‘international language,’ such as ‘Biola (Violin)’ or ‘Nafiri (Nafiri).’ The easiness in labelling and the free admission did not help in sustaining the museum neither. The entire museum was shut down as the historic building was not anymore available for free to the city (Bavani and Kamarul Baharin A. Kasim, 2017).

Similar cases can be found in many other museums of musical instruments situated in urban settings that are spatially far from the places of the musical instruments’ history or current use (for example the National Museum of Malaysia’s section of displaying musical instruments, or a similar exhibition in Melaka). Most of the active instrument players are themselves experiencing urbanity. However, they may feel being cut off from meanings they were taught previously by their teachers and see the transformation of diverse interferences into an unknown creativity as a threatening (Meddegoda & Jähnichen, 2016:366-373).

### Classification and Categorization Hype

One part of academizing and de-academizing respectively, following this effort is the classification and categorization of musical instruments (Jähnichen, 2019a, 2019b). In order to understand the urge of classifications and categorizations, meaning the rather general application of typology and taxonomy on musical instruments, the underlying reasons have to be scrutinized.

Observing a stream of causations, the following can be stated and confirmed through basic discussions of the matter with colleagues and students in said institutions (see introduction). It is hard to find written statements of origin since a number of them is taken over from earlier authors, in other languages, or in parallel contexts with problematic translations. Here are only basics noted that were clear enough followed in current practice.

- Classification serves often as a way to *claim cultural status*. Classification is quantifying claims, according to ranks that take measurements as their basic data. The number of finger holes in a flute, the possible melodic range of an instrument, its overall dimension, its use by important public figures and others may be a proof of superior achievements.



- Categorization serves as a way to *simplify* non-musical statements reasoned with time pressure and the respective degree of importance. Any musical instruments that fall into ‘unspectacular’ categories are rather underrepresented. Due to their labelling as such, they are hard to be advertised though having crucial meanings to some musical communities.
- Classification and categorization seem often to be completed by presenting *simplifying schemes* rather than *complexity* in the context of organology and they aim at distancing from “the musicology”, which is seen as the ‘Western approach’ that should be avoided (Xiao Mei, 2019).

Resulting from this situation, there are some efforts to *undo academization* of observations in organology. When considering the given causation, there exist a counter current against project bound classification and categorization and the short-term practice of academic actions which put practice in a usually 2-year rushing work that is finally meaningless to the future of the respective communities. In itself, this approach is unsuccessful as long as the general academization in re-search institutions does not change or opens up to a variety of an alternative understanding of local academia.

What can be done? One point is *learning from examples* in all other parts of the world and from other research communities. Another point could be the rethinking of de-academization in its consequences. If de-academization is a way to liberate research far from social boundaries of their originating regions, then academizing stays caught within these questionably originating regions. Academia would be demonized as being unsuccessful in other regions. Following the advice and thoughts mentioned in the previous section of this paper, a dynamic merging of research cultures may be a better way to go. From examples that are useful as far as known to the author, there can be named Matthias Lewy (2017) who shows the connection between human and non-human beings in terms of their meaning for instrumentality in sound, Weisser & Quanten (2011) who try to incorporate timbre modification and electric derivatives into the existing classification of von Hornbostel and Sachs, as well as any detailed field study that uses culturally inherent patterns of classifications (Elsner 2009, Kartomi 2011, Teffera 2009, Daukeyeva 2019, Terada 2019, Jimenez 2019, Jähnichen 2013, 2019a, 2019b) and probably many more. Finally, being just against academization leads often to simplification.

### Simplification

A short excursion into the realm of simplification, which is not equal to expressing academically framed thoughts as simple as possible, leads to a temporary exhibition of musical instruments in the Huaihai Road of Shanghai. Under extreme time pressure and motivated by various non-musical agendas, the museum showcases items that play a role in the musical life of the historical Silk Road. Yet again, time frames are missing or vary remarkably, some data are straight forward unsubstantiated or misleading. Visitors may have no other choice than taking pictures and consulting later online literature. For example, one descriptive label carries the name and provenance of an instrument and some rather inconsistent information:



Figure 1. Left, a label showing insufficient information: “Lute / Country: Europe...[...] Source: Conservatory’s Old Collections.” Right, a label showing insufficient information: “Octagonal Frame Drum, Mainly of Manchu People / Nation: Manchu; Size: Diameter 17cm/Thickness 5.4cm.”



Figure 2. Left, a label showing insufficient information: Kou-Xian: Jew’s harp of Mongolia / Country: India / Reed length 9.5cm. Right, a label showing insufficient information: Klong Put = Vietnamese Bamboo Tube Aerophone / Purchased from Shanghai Expo 2010. (All photographs by the author).

It might have been an attempt to attract visitors who do not have any primary education in music, nor in history, nor in geography. Yet, allowing for this kind of simplification unavoidably leads to more problems. Not only the reasoning such as the lack of language skills among the visitors, the expectation of visitors who do not need any further clarification are possibly serious problems. This, according to what the author could observe over a long period of time, is not a counter current to academization. It is a shortcut into no academia within a city that recruits a large part of visitors from outside the city and from abroad.

Why simplifying? Why is the complexity of time, space, and agent information highly fragmented and, therefore, subject to manipulate a critical mass of people that has no reliable access to an up-dated resource of knowledge?

The answers can vary yet are directing into a dangerous assumption. Simplification means that there will be less to read, less to remember. There is also less to store, less to be concerned about, and less to be explained. Simplifying is not de-academizing. It promotes all appearances of vanishing knowledge, such as shaping more unsubstantiated statements. It leads to more visual comparisons, more primarily tactile experiencing, more immediate watching, and more feeling that replaces knowing or, what can be worse, is considered being to know. All that contributes to a manipulative state of knowledge applications which deny histories, changes, and mainly the very facts of practical use.

While places of simplified knowledge are often situated in large urban areas, these facts of practical use seem to be unprovable in direct contact since time and place are separated. If simplification happens, the appearances are taken in an historical and fragmented way to produce simplified knowledge that cannot satisfy neither the producer of display nor the visitors.

### Questioning Basic Assumptions

One obvious dilemma resulting from not questioning basic assumptions is the increasing gap in understanding academic discourses among non-academic members in research groups and/or the publicly interested addressees. It also limits the impact of research outcomes on social practice in the context of urban experiences. The cases presented and subsequent thoughts result from long term observations within academic communities of China, Vietnam, and Malaysia, that are dealing with organology. The discussion here is to stimulate a more radical work with regionally associated theories and philosophies which have yet to be explored.

There is a number of really hard dying assumptions that are worth to be interrogated and then step by step revised, at least the parts that cannot go further since there is too much evidence against them brought together by academically active people around the globe. Some of these *assumptions* are discussed here as follows.

‘Organology has to do with material facts, measurements, and acoustics. Therefore, it is a field of comparison that leads to classifications and categorizations.’ According to the author’s observations this statement needs revision of the contents because of the current fact the classifications and categorizations lead to cultural claims that help compare. These are the most applied tools in academic organology that have to be much better and in a more holistic way supported or ruled out. Also, according to the author’s observations this statement needs a revision of methods.

Related to this are failing logics such as the stream of rather complex thoughts considering academization being defined colonial and de-academization is prone to simplifications. Simplification is the core of a propagated ‘academia for everyone’ ((Kurylo & Yu, 2016). Further, according to the author’s observations this statement needs revision of intent.

Looking back at the assumptions mentioned in the first part, other assumptions have to be urgently questioned in their basic appearance and application, such as “Every musical instrument has a home culture or an indigeneity” and “Every musical instrument has a national identity.”

Questioning these assumptions leads automatically to a questioning of other assumptions following this list:

- The necessity of being a local in order to understand local developments.
- The principal existence of ethnic purity. Joppke (2004), Welsch, Amselle (2015), and others are essentially denying it for good reason, yet some ethnomusicological researchers are still not ready to overturn this point as it may question their goal integrity (Matusky & Tan, 2004; To, 1999).
- The search for a proof of an ethnic identity as a core achievement in an artistic expression as well as in an academic personality is one of these important goals set by non-academic carriers of social power. It leads to assumptions deriving from using a specific musical instrument, wearing a specific costume, speaking a specific dialect, using specific arguments regardless of who decides about what is right or wrong in the context of appearance and regardless of the given time frame. In urban circumstances, all of these core achievements are performative, which does not make them more wrong or less right.
- The re-categorization of “field-work-zones” regarding organology as seen by Morgenbesser and Weiss, or as seen by a number of ethnomusicologists who feel a particular belonging to specific zones of their past field work (Pugh-Kitingan, 2012).
- Among a number of researcher communities, musical instruments are seen as a proof of anything related to an identity in their physical appearance, way of playing, or related myths and legends. This also has to be questioned, or better, it has to be scrutinized and analyzed in-depth.
- This leads to questioning the validity of classifications which supports the ongoing creation of cultural boxes that are especially enforced through social media and other virtual spaces.

In short, the effort to de-colonize without scrutinizing academia for colonizing patterns has also to be examined.

## Conclusion

Recent developments in emerging areas, creating an urban face of Asia show that organology, a traditional subject of ethnomusicology and systematic musicology, becomes increasingly academized accompanied by an anti-movement in order to keep the academization on a rather simplified level reasoned through practical applications deriving from non-academic goals. This anti-movement is also seen as an opposition to academic demands imposed on communities and regional researchers and should serve to point out differences in scientific approaches to what is considered being music and musical instruments in that new urban context.

What actually happens is on the one hand the teaching of classification systems evolving through comparison with existing classification systems in the history of the West and, on the other hand, the specialization of some researchers into specific questions of local organology. Those are then criticized by museums and research administrators for being too particular and disturbing (Lin, 2019; To, 1999; Matusky & Tan, 2004).

While professionalism is in high demand, unpopular explanations are seemingly not welcome. They are considered bulky, not catchy, and boring for the people unfamiliar with the details. In a sum, those explanations are not resisted for their content, but for their disturbing emphasis on the academic aspect (Lin, 2019). This situation is delivering a further reason to suspect academia in general. Joppke (2003), Welsch (2017), and Amselle (2017) were repeatedly questioning the singularity of cultures and refer to inherent contradictions in current key theories. This basic insight helps understand the goal of modern organology that is inclusive, reaching beyond any kind of borders, and contextual in any thinkable dimension.

The methodical connotation of field work regarding organological questions in ethnomusicology has to be revised based on those insights. Assumptions that are spread over decades through earlier research and popularism or simplifications have to be questioned again and again in order to achieve a useful reflecting on human cultural needs in an experienced urbanity that is as different as the particular research communities dealing with them.

The mentioned insights already applied are not too radical to be widely adopted. According to the author's observations, they are not yet radical enough and could be better supported through organology. Therefore, simplifications find for a new urban audience and short-term stakeholders in performance or preservation projects are not de-academizing, and de-academizing is not de-colonizing either. Knowledge available has to instill the need of understanding the future in all its complexity. There is no future for a culture of simplification.

## Endnotes

1 <https://www.sdac.studium.fau.de>, last retrieved 12 February, 2020.

2 Names and dates are available as personal notes on request.

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