

## **IUAES Inter-Congress 2015 Report**

The IUAES 2015 Inter-Congress was held on July 15-17 2015 in Bangkok, at the premises of the Faculty Law of Thammasat University, Tha Phrachan Campus. The conferences was organized by by the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology of Thammasat University in cooperation with the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, as well as with numerous other Thai educational institutions and research centres that are committed to the study of humanity.

The conference was titled 'Re-imagining Anthropological and Sociological Boundaries' and it invited scholars from all over the world to debate how already-existing tools for the study of societies may benefit from questioning long-held assumptions and categories, and how looking beyond the conventional boundaries of anthropology may help the discipline renew itself from a theoretical, methodological, and political perspective.

The conference was designed to attract scholars from all over the world, and in particular from geographical areas whose scholarship is normally underrepresented. The location of the conference allowed for special emphasis to be put on Asian scholarship. It was believed that the social diversity found in the region, paired with its often unstable politics and recent experiments with neoliberalism, would have provided with plenty of case-studies for re-evaluating anthropological approaches to the study of humanity.

The conference was also meant to be an opportunity to encourage dialogue between anthropologists from underrepresented areas, and in particular from Thailand, with social scientists worldwide.

The Academic Committee of IUAES 2015 selected 73 panels out of 117 panel submissions, and 503 papers out of 609 paper submissions. Altogether, 77 panels and 2 roundtables were organized. The conference recorded 389 registrations and 311 presenters. Of the presenters, 262 registered regularly, whilst 7 were exempted, 18 were funded, and 24 were invited. The countries that participated to IUAES 2015 were 26, with particularly strong representations from China, India and the Southeast Asian region. Among the invited speakers were Goh Beng Lan, Enseng Ho and Saskia Sassen, who gave separate keynote address speeches.

Following the organizing committee's original plans, IUAES 2015 looked at the issues described above by means of an array of panel discussions under the following nine sub-themes: 'Ethnicity and Religion Revisited', 'Modernity, Development, Mobility', 'Gender, Family, Generational Relations', 'Politics, Conflict, Security, Human Rights', 'Cultural Heritage Management, Creative Tourism, Culture Industry: Prospects and Expectations', 'Work/Play: Making Cultures, Making Persons', 'Science and Technology', and 'Anthropology and Sociology of/by the Global South'. Attendance to the panel discussions was high and all panels ended with Q&A sessions, which allowed for dialogues between the speakers and the audience.

It is felt that the high turnover of both panelists and of audience members, paired with an active participation and a creative and oftentimes innovative selection of panel topics, led to numerous constructive debates in an atmosphere that was both pleasant and stimulating.

The participants to the conference also had plenty of opportunities for socialization in more informal contexts, including at an open-air refreshment that was organized on the opening night at the university campus, and at a cruise dinner along Bangkok's Chao Praya River.

Several booklets containing all panel abstracts and all individual paper abstracts, as well as the keynote speakers' addresses, were published and distributed to the conference participants. This was deemed useful in order to both provide every participant with a written record of the panels, as well as to further encourage cooperation and socialization beyond the conference.

Following IUAES 2015 and as a result of its positive reception by the participants, the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology of Thammasat University, in cooperation with other Thai institutions that are committed to the study of humanity, have also decided to organize a series of open lectures, which will be given on a yearly basis by local as well as international social scientists, in order to both foster interest in the discipline within the local academic and non-academic communities, as well as to keep alive the dialogue between Thai scholars and the international community,