# Preface

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The 25th International Conference of the International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies (IAICS) was held at Masaryk University in the beautiful historic city of Brno, Czech Republic on July 12th-15th, 2019. The special theme of the conference was "East/West: New Divisions, New Connections in a Populist Political Reality". IAICS expresses its deepest gratitude to the Deans of the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University, Associate Professor Břetislav DANČAK (Dean, September 2011 - August 2019, and Vice-Rector for Internationalisation, September 2019 - present) and Professor Stanislav BALÍK (Dean, September 2019 - present); the conference organizers: Jakub MACEK, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Media Studies and Journalism; Lenka WASCHKOVÁ CÍSAŘOVÁ, Assistant Professor and Vice-Dean for External Affairs; Charles Michael ELAVSKY, Assistant Professor; Rudolf BURGR, Assistant Professor; Monika METYKOVÁ, Senior Lecturer in Media Communications/Journalism Studies, University of Sussex, UK; and all of the faculty and staff of the Faculty of Social Studies and the Department of Media Studies and Journalism of Masaryk University. Thank you for your perfect organization, warm-hearted hospitality, wonderful food and memorable cultural tours. We left our hearts in Brno!

The 2019 IAICS conference included 124 scholars (paper authors, co-authors, and other participants) from 23 countries and territories: Australia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada, China, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hong Kong SAR, Hungary, Japan, Macao SAR, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of South Africa, Russia, Taiwan, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. A total of 82 papers were presented at the conference.

This issue of Volume XXVIII of *ICS* contains several sections: Presidential Address, Education, Interpersonal Communication, Media Studies, and Online Communication. Nine of the ten selected papers (featuring twenty-nine authors and co-authors) represent the 2019 IAICS conference at Masaryk University.

The first section contains the Presidential Address delivered by Robert W. VAAGAN. The author encapsulates the theme of the conference by outlining the concepts of populism, nationalism, political rhetoric and intercultural communication in the present era of renewed cultural clashes and political tensions, which engender threats to the political systems of parliamentary democracies and to the harmonious conditions of international cooperation in a globalized world. As the outgoing President of IAICS, the author encourages intercultural communication scholars to "reach out through trans-border and cross-cultural communication and dialogue to bridge gaps like the East/West division and forge new connections".

The section on Education contains two articles. Wei Chin WONG and Xun WANG present a survey of the state of the art in teaching the Southeast Asian languages of ASEAN member states across different universities in the various provinces of China. The survey includes programs offering instruction in Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Melayu, Burmese, Filipino, Khmer, Lao, Thai, and Vietnamese. In the second article, Ulrike NOTARP examines current Russian children's books on history, with the aim of characterizing the concepts of Russian identity and Russian history presented therein. Her semantic analysis reveals the profiles of the concepts of "Russia", "Russian Empire", "Soviet Union", "Great Patriotic War", and "Russian people", that are propagated through the Russian educational system.

The third section, on Interpersonal Communication, contains two empirical studies using qualitative research methods. The article by Hongyan LAN summarizes the author's PhD dissertation research on intercultural marriages between Chinese wives and Japanese husbands, based on in-depth interviews with six participants. The article is notable for its detailed analysis of the various dimensions and challenges of the intercultural marriages. In the second article, Bruce F. WICKELGREN, Raquel A. STUART and several co-authors, who were the first two authors' students at Wenzhou Kean University, interview twelve Chinese participants about their experiences with online dating websites, in the communicational context of switching from the modality of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) to face-to-face (FtF). In contrast to previous studies of US subjects, this study finds that Chinese also commonly switched CMC venues, e.g., from a dating site to WeChat, before meeting FtF, and also, that they tended to establish a romantic relationship already in CMC, "and the FtF meetings helped to cement the romantic relationship".

In the Media Studies section, the first article by SUN Kejia analyzes and contrasts the news reporting of Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro's death by China Global Television Network (CGTN), and concludes that "China's international cross-cultural communication still lacks its national position"; contrary to expectation, Castro's death was given much less coverage, even though Cuba is a communist country. In the second article, Yowei KANG and Kenneth C. C. YANG use quantitative methodology to investigate the extent of country animosity among Taiwanese consumers towards Japanese cultural products, and specifically, towards Japanese television dramas. They find that while economic animosity fails to predict the consumers' intention whether to watch the dramas, the construct of historical social animosity is "a more robust and stable predictor". This internal differentiation within the general construct of country animosity suggests that future studies should "treat the country animosity construct as multi-dimensional in the study of cultural products".

The final section extends the scope of research on Online Communication with three articles, all of which show interdisciplinary overlap with the preceding three sections. The first article, by Robert GODWIN-JONES, is also relevant to the section on Education. The author describes student-to-student online exchanges in blended-learning collaborative courses on intercultural communication at universities in the US and Taiwan. Conclusions are drawn encouraging "best practices of using

telecollaboration for developing intercultural communication competence (ICC)". In the second article, which is also relevant to the section on Media Communication, Yanshu SUN investigates the intention of viewers to interact with media personae in a live-streaming setting. The data were collected from sixteen Chinese viewers, using focus groups and in-depth interviews, and grounded-theory coding. All of the subjects were in the 18 to 24 age group. The findings address the general use pattern of live streaming, the influence of interaction rituals on interactive behaviors, the motivational factors of interactive behaviors, and peer influence on interactive behaviors. The author finds that "audiences' interactive behaviors are encouraged by emotional energy, group identity, external motives, and peer influence". The study is a contribution to "the current understanding of new media, youth, and intercultural studies". In the final article, which intersects also with the section on Interpersonal Communication, Renae E. REINTS and Bruce F. WICKELGREN examine "what happens when online communicators meet face-to-face" in a dating context. The researchers recruited sixteen participants in the Boston area, ranging in age from 21 to 27, and conducted in-depth interviews. The findings address the perceptions of communication partners via CMC; the individuals' self-presentation via CMC; and the effect on expectations and relationship of the length of time spent on CMC before modality switching to face-to-face, with "a short time period" being defined as less than one week, and "a longer time period" being one week or more. Contrary to previous research, the length of time did not affect the proportion of participants who reported having negative vs. positive experiences when finally meeting their online-chat partner face-to-face in a dating context. On the other hand, "[p]articipants did report having positive experiences when expectations were fulfilled, and majority negative experiences when expectations were violated", which accords with previous research. The authors call for more extensive use of qualitative data in similar future research.

Finally, it should be noted that the authors in this issue of *ICS* represent eleven different universities in six countries and territories: China, the Czech Republic, Japan, Norway, Taiwan, and the United States. This shows the diverse international membership of IAICS and reflects the great success of the 2019 conference at Masaryk University.