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This book is a follow-up of sorts to a similar volume on political communication in the Nordic countries – *Communicating politics: Political communication in the Nordic countries* – edited by Jesper Strömbäck, Mark Ørsten, and Toril Aalberg and published in 2008. As the editors of this new book point out in the introduction, a great deal has happened since then: the global financial crisis, the rise and gradual hegemony of global tech companies and social media, the rise of authoritarian populism and the global pandemic are just a few of the most obviously relevant developments. Thus, the new volume is a timely addition to the literature.

The text follows a similar approach to the 2008 volume: starting with an overview of the background and state of affairs in each country, followed by thematic chapters on topics of special relevance, co-authored in collaboration between political communication scholars across the Nordic countries. From the outset, this book aims for a more explicitly comparative approach than its predecessor *Communicating politics*; this is obvious in reading the country chapters, which regularly reference how each country's realities compare with those of the other Nordic countries. As the editors note in their introduction, Iceland is regularly left out of the comparison in the chapters covering the other Nordic countries and sometimes (e.g. in chapter 8 when discussing regional public service broadcasting) claims are made about 'all Nordic countries' that clearly do not apply to Iceland. As an Icelander myself, I support the editors and Icelandic contributors to the volume in encouraging future comparative (Nordic) research on political communication to include Iceland where feasible and to acknowledge that omission where it is not.

In that respect, it is interesting to note that Iceland is the only Nordic country that Jack Corbett and Wouter Veenendaal classify as a 'small state' in their 2018 book *Democracy in small states: Persisting against all odds*. Although the other Nordic countries are not exactly large, Ólafsson and Jóhannsdóttir highlight some interesting contrasts between Iceland and the rest of the Nordics in their chapter in the present volume: particularly the remnants of political parallelism still shaping the country's media system and the comparative lack of journalistic professionalism and public support for private media there. These contrasts seem to fit well with Corbett and Veenendaal's theoretical model of personalism in small state politics, characterized among other things by a limited private sphere, strong political dynasties and polarization.

Being a political scientist – who has also been active in politics in my home country – my expertise lies more in the 'politics' (and Icelandic) aspects of the book than in its media, communication and journalism aspects, which I approach more as an interested novice. As such, the thematic chapters about elections (chapter 11), populism (12) and political media effects on voter behaviour and attitudes (17) are of particular interest to me; but the chapters on 'fake news' and disinformation (14) and alternative right-wing media (13) also have an obvious relevance as they focus on one of the most worrying global developments of recent years: the rise of a post-truth information eco-system and the erosion of boundaries between credible information sources and disinformation. The book also includes a fascinating chapter on the status of Sámi minorities in Norway and Sweden in their political and media systems (10) and informative chapters about political journalism (7), local media (8), cultural communications (9), lobbying (15) and public bureaucracies (16).

There is no space here for reviewing each chapter in detail. However, a few particularly interesting parts stand out: the comparison between Nordic countries of the different status of populist parties in their respective media and political systems (12), the overview of the organization, content and readership of alternative media outlets in Scandinavia (13), the data presented on how more and more voters are making up their minds in election campaigns (and how similar this development has been in the different countries) (11), and survey data about citizens' trust in various types of media and their concern about fake news and disinformation (14).

The theoretical thread that, to some extent, guides and binds this overview together is the research question: can the Nordic media systems be considered a distinctive and coherent model? That thread has most of its roots in Hallin and Mancini's seminal trifold framework in their 2004 book *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics* and their controversial conclusion that the Nordic media systems can be grouped together with other Northern and Central European countries under the category of a 'democratic corporatist' media systems model: characterised by: (1) a 'corporatist' society (cooperation between different organised interests in society and the state when it comes to policy-formation); (2) a high degree of 'political parallelism' (a strong tendency for media outlets to represent particular political parties and social cleavage perspectives); (3) high levels of journalistic professionalisation, autonomy and ethical standards; and (4) important public sector involvement in the media system on one hand, coupled with a strong commitment to freedom of the press on the other hand. Later, Trine Syvertsen and colleagues in their book *The media welfare state: Nordic media in the digital era* (2014) argued that, while the Nordic countries shared important similarities with other 'democratic corporatist' countries, they also have distinctive common features that set them apart as at least a specific subgroup of media systems, if not a separate category of their own: namely, that they are nested within and based on strong welfare states and that they prioritize universal services, editorial freedom, a cultural policy for the media and consultation with both public and private stakeholders.

The answer provided in the present volume to its guiding question, and the overall theoretical contribution of the book that is outlined by the editors in the introductory and concluding chapters, is a bit underwhelming. The answer is that "it is hardly relevant to talk about a clear-cut Nordic model"; but also that "there are many observations that confirm the existence of prevailing Nordic system peculiarities" (p. 385). The main takeaways outlined are: that the small Nordic countries are similar but also different; that it is important to study change but also continuity; and that international and comparative studies are important but so are in-depth national case studies. Of course, it is difficult to offer an either/or answer to contested questions with many nuances, especially in a volume that includes many contributors who deploy different perspectives among themselves. But it does feel like the message could have been made more decisive at times.

Regardless, the book is a valuable and timely collection of contributions on many important topics from top scholars in all five Nordic countries. It provides a comprehensive and useful overview of the state of the academic field(s) of political communication, journalism and media studies and their subject matters in the Nordic countries today.

Viktor Valgardsson
University of Southampton
United Kingdom
V.O.Valgardsson@soton.ac.uk