

Preface

In late 2020, between the first and the second waves of the Covid-19 pandemic, Johannes Bjerling, scientific editor at Nordicom, reached out to us with a brilliant idea. He asked if we wanted to edit a book about Covid-19, more specifically, about how the pandemic was communicated in the Nordic countries. We all agreed this was a good idea, not least since some of us already had research projects running on this very topic or were planning for studies on the subject. The Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden – have received rather strong scholarly interest, not least because the Nordic model has been seen as a role model for governance and used for comparisons of governance, political communication, and other fields. So why not a comparative book on crisis communication? We all believed the management of Covid-19 would be suitable for comparisons of crisis communication and would contribute to a scientific field, which to a large extent has focused on single case studies of countries or organisations. What we did not know at the time was that the pandemic would return in one wave after another, and even if Covid-19 is no longer currently seen as a danger to society in the Nordic countries, citizens are still dying from the disease. And in a country like China, lockdowns are a part of everyday life as we write this preface.

In this volume, we have gathered a large number of communication scholars and political scientists from the Nordics, who, in their respective chapters, focus on different aspects of crisis communication related to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the moment, public attention tends to focus on the war in Ukraine, the protests in Iran, and other international events instead of Covid-19. However, even if the pandemic is not currently in the limelight, we believe the comparative analyses in this book will contribute to a deeper understanding of crisis communication and pandemics, but also on how crises are communicated more generally. This knowledge is important, as we live in a world where crises has become the “new normal” as we tend to move from one crisis to another. We can also be sure that Covid-19 is not the last pandemic; there will be future pandemics and our knowledge about crisis communication will be essential to our understanding of how they can be mitigated.

We are grateful to Johannes for bringing us together and for his hands-on approach as a scientific editor. The stellar work done by the Nordicom staff, including Josefine Bové, Karin Hjorthen Zelano, Sara Rebecka Stenkvis, Julia Romell, Karin Andén, and Kristin Clay, also needs to be acknowledged.

Lastly, we want to say a big thank you to all the contributors for trusting us with their work, as well as give a shout out to the anonymous reviewers for their phenomenal input that helped improve the book immensely.

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