

## Foreword

The key objective of the boutique conference *Beyond the Impasse* in January 2013 that was organized by the Centre for Communication and Social Change, University of Queensland was to bring together academics who were involved in pushing the boundaries as it were of communication for social change in terms of theory and methods as they applied to practice. Many of us working in this area have recognized that some of the more interesting theoretical developments in this area have occurred either on the margins of CSC theory or wholly outside of it. We have also recognised that some of the more interesting developments in the theorizing of methods and engagements with the visual needed to have a platform.

The selection of articles in this special issue of the *Nordicom Review* is representative of some of the ‘thinking’ and ideas that were discussed and debated. We also think that this special section compliments the special issue of the *Nordicom Review* guest edited by Florencia Enghel and Karin Wilkins (2012:9) *Communication, Media and Development: Problems and Perspectives*. The two issues (2012, 2015) of the *Nordicom Review*, both as stand alone issues and together, offer students and researchers, an up to date introduction to CSC as a field that is both contested and that, at the very same time, offers many resources of hope.

In some ways the conversation between Silvio Waisbord and Jo Tacchi on some critical aspects of CSC – Participation, Scale, Praxis, Policies, New Technologies highlights some of the faultlines as well as the possibilities for “thinking through the gaps”. If we are to find a way out of the inertia and stagnancy in the theorising of CSC then we simply have to engage with approaches that have thrown light on ‘communication’ and ‘social change’ from a variety of theoretical perspectives – from the political economy inspired approach that Florencia Enghel has adopted as a means to critique the institutional basis for CSC as well as June Lennie and Jo Tacchi’s ‘deep’ evaluation approach that is based on an endorsement of a ‘mixed methods’ strategy that is key to the holistic evaluation of CSC projects.

These articles also highlight the fact that there still is a lot that extant CSC theory offers, for example learnings from CSC that can provide a useful framework for making sense of the social by socially engaged photographers such as Gemma Rose Turnbull. I certainly think that new excavations and

examinations of CSC, and engagement with new theory and new understandings of methods will contribute to the renewal of CSC.

I would like to acknowledge the role played by a former member of the staff of the CSC Centre, Claudia Sepulveda in coordinating this special issue and the support from Samantha Ryan and Elske van de Fliert. Last but not least, a special thank you to Ulla Carlson who was both enthusiastic when we broached the idea of a special issue and who did put up with the delays that we experienced in putting together this issue. We wish you well as you move on.

Brisbane, March 2015

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