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PhD dissertations contribute toward the advancement of their disciplines and yet are commonly relegated to library collections and microfilm print-on-demand where their contributions often go unnoticed. When an outstanding contribution appears as a dissertation that not only adds to one or more disciplines but provides major impetus or new direction, electronic publishing can serve disciplinary development and knowledge diffusion not otherwise available.

As editors of *Structure and Dynamics*, we now establish a procedure by which at least some outstanding PhD dissertations can receive the attention they richly deserve. This procedure is initiated by PhD committees who, in recognition of the excellence of the contribution and polished quality of the presentation, and with consent of the author, forward an electronic copy or PDF of the dissertation for consideration. If the dissertation conforms to and advances the goals of this journal and then receives the unqualified support in our review process of at least two assigned referees, as well as by the editors, the author will be given the option of publishing the complete dissertation in *Structure and Dynamics* as a separate number of the journal. Authors, rather than the journal, will be responsible for copy editing since such dissertations would normally be published with minimum modification unless the editors ask for further revisions and resubmission. The author retains copyright so as not to inhibit further publication.

We are pleased to present the first of these outstanding dissertations in this issue of *Structure and Dynamics*, Camille Roth's *Co-evolution in Epistemic Networks—Reconstructing Social Complex Systems*, written for the École Polytechnique, Paris, in the domain of Economics and Social Sciences. The dissertation addresses the fundamental question of how epistemic communities, i.e., communities that identify themselves by a body of knowledge, develop and progress with an expanding ontological base. It recognizes that such networks might consist of people adhering to some subset of a culture or its subcultures for which the practitioners of a scientific discipline offer a concrete example. This contribution is fundamentally relevant to several anthropological subfields, including cognitive anthropology, network research, and ethnography, and to other areas of the social sciences. Within this journal's broad interdisciplinary range of topics, this inauguration provides new foci and a worthy publication venue and purpose.