



## EDITORIAL

# Creating a radical, commons-based, open-access journal for degrowth

Editorial collective

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## Information

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Welcome to the first volume of *Degrowth*. The time has come: the first publications are online.

Degrowth is a diverse, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and rapidly growing area of research which deserves its own space in the academic discourse; it cannot thrive across disconnected journals, expending considerable energy defending its own existence against established disciplinary norms. Our journal not only provides a **home for degrowth**, but it is a home built with values which are consistent with our vital research. It is a 'knowledge commons' free and open to all, with no barriers and no profiteering. This is the home we have been striving to create, and we are now delighted to welcome you in.

The process of building *Degrowth* began with a blog post written by Ben Robra and Timothée Parrique for [degrowth.info](http://degrowth.info) (see Robra & Parrique, 2020). Since then, we have published our manifesto (Degrowth journal, February 2022) and the editorial collective has worked tirelessly, but convivially, to make the journal a reality. We are a small group of volunteers who meet regularly to advance the idea in practice. It has not been an easy journey. All work is unpaid, from consultation to authoring, reviewing, editing, administration, copy-editing, and layout. Whilst we have learnt a great deal from other commons-based, peer-to-peer managed, open access, and non-profit scientific journals, most of our systems have been

developed from scratch, including systems for communication, submissions, website, data management, volunteer management, and publications to name but a few. After closing the first open call, the editorial collective handled 55 submissions, which include research article manuscripts, essays, perspectives, book reviews, and thesis summaries. Our energies are naturally also spread across our other responsibilities as scholars, educators and activists. **We are therefore immensely proud that our shared project is finally materialising.** We want to take this opportunity to shed some light on the choices we have made throughout this process concerning organization, technology, and our overarching ethos of slow science.

### **Academic publishing countering capitalist practices?**

The dominant model of academic publishing is absurd. Most journals are published by multinational companies who use the free labour of researchers to produce content, peer-review, and edit, then make profits from readers or researchers depending on the access model. Citation scores and impact factors have come to dominate. Quantity of publications often trumps quality. We, and many others, see a problem with how the academic system is designed because it pushes researchers, particularly those at an early stage, to survive by playing the game. It is 'publish or perish'. Too often, the publishing engine is not driven by the interests of sharing knowledge and recent scientific findings. The precarity of universities and research institutions themselves, which suffer from a reduction of fundings and political attention, is transferred onto their staff who perform unpaid labour for activities such as peer-review all the while contributing to the generation of profits of private publishing corporations. Many, including the members of this editorial collective, are able to volunteer their time for such activities because they come from (relatively) privileged backgrounds and positions of (relative) professional stability. In sum, the academic world operates according to the logics of productivism, innovation, efficiency, and growth (see Ruuska, 2019; Parker, 2018; Westervelt, 2022).

We at *Degrowth* emphasize a slow science approach which sits in direct contrast to the capitalist norms and values of the academic publication system. We have sought to practice post-capitalist academic publishing by following principles and practices that align with our understanding of degrowth itself. We are open access: free of charge for readers, but also for

authors. We have opted against including an impact factor for the journal. We have thought about how to use technology; even though it is a little talked about topic, we recognise that there are nuanced views of both technology and innovation in the degrowth scholarship that go beyond technophobia and have sought to adopt Ivan Illich's concept of conviviality (see Howson, 2021; Pansera & Fressoli, 2021; Vetter, 2018). Therefore we have aimed to engage in technical solutions that support the degrowth agenda, collaborating for example with noesya who specialise in sustainable websites. For communication we use Infomaniak.ch, a Switzerland-based organisation that uses renewable energy. By making these changes we are seeking to move the needle in academic publishing and to unsettle the status quo.

The journal is not a finished project and there is still much work to be done. Once all accepted submissions for the first volume are online, we will publish a further editorial with a focus on our intellectual interpretation of the published work. Over the coming year we will be integrating a new submission system, putting out a new call for papers, and addressing how to include new people in *Degrowth* from less privileged backgrounds. We will attend the Degrowth conference in Zagreb later this year, where we are looking forward to meeting the community and encouraging new collaborations. We will also be working on creating an arts section, which aims to foster cooperation between the arts and sciences around the topic of Degrowth as an underexplored dialogue.

We are grateful for being part of the community that embraces degrowth as an intellectual, material, and convivial movement beyond this journal. We hope that our contribution to the ever-expanding degrowth movement is useful and inspiring.

### **The Editorial Collective in May 2023**

Sabrina Chakori, Daniel Chester, Sofia Greaves, Eeva Houtbeckers, Gerry McCartney, Adrien Plomteux, Ben Robra, Peter Sutoris.

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