

Review of Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson's book *Abundance*

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I was already on board with stuff like YIMBYism, nuclear power, and generally favoring growth over degrowth, so I was an easy sell for the arguments in this book. One insight I appreciated is that being *pro-government* (in the sense of believing in the government's ability to accomplish positive things for the people) should not be confused with being *pro-regulation*. The book suggests that Democrats and Republicans both hamstring the government in their own ways: Republicans by refusing to fund or empower government projects, and Democrats by saddling those projects with debilitating levels of regulation. We shouldn't only associate deregulation with the idea that the free market will solve everything; sometimes deregulation is needed to allow the government solve things.

The book's discussion of cost of living in cities also gave me a new perspective. I'm sometimes annoyed when high earners see themselves as financially struggling due to the cost of homes/rent. I think sometimes they don't appreciate that even having the *option* to live in certain areas shows privilege; they could choose to save money by moving somewhere cheaper, but people of lower socioeconomic status may have no choice but to live in the cheaper (and, to many, much less desirable) areas. But the book points out that historically cities were a place that you moved *to* in order to seek opportunity; when we allow (by the effect of restrictive zoning laws) our cities to instead become mere luxuries accessible only to the already-well-off, something important is lost.