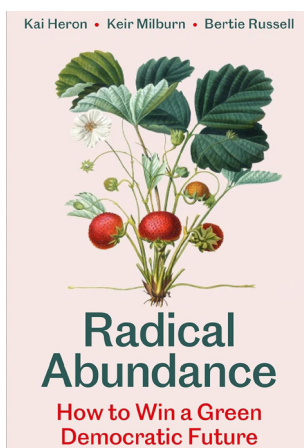


**Radical Abundance. How to Win a Green Democratic Future By Kai Heron, Keir Milburn and Bertie Russell.
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Radical Abundance. How to Win a Green Democratic Future is a book about a possible political agenda that combines a sophisticated and complex theoretical proposal with tangible and concrete examples for a post-capitalist future. The authors, Kai Heron, Keir Milburn and Bertie Russell, are all co-editors of the organisation and collective *Abundance* (www.in-abundance.org) that promotes a socio-ecological transition through action-research expanding, fostering and supporting

'Public-Common Partnerships' (PCPs) around the world. The book follows the same aim and proposes a just transition to democratising the economy and getting collective control over services and public wealth.

At first, the reader is triggered by a profound critique of what the book calls «bullshit abundance» that is produced by the imposed artificial scarcity affecting both most humans and non-humans, deeply, inherently embedded in capitalist modes of production. The tangible antithesis to it is a world of radical abundance that becomes possible through the democratic control of the collective well-being. In this way, the book directly offers an alternative to the recent liberal publication *Abundance: How We Build a Better Future* (Avid Reader Press, 2025), which instead proposes pathways within still capitalist means (p.15). Heron, Milburn and Russel rather directly engage with the thinking of radical anthropologist and activist Davide Graeber in a twofold way: on the one hand, the book echoes his proposition of «bullshit jobs», making this pervasive bullshit proliferation an objective effect of the capitalist system; on the other, referring to his latest publication together with David Wengrow *The Dawn of Everything* (Allen Lane, 2021) they bring the reader

to imagine that societies can exist without poverty. Radical abundance is thus the material possibility to reorganise social life, transforming how things are owned and how things are governed. The book focuses on the problem of transition – what it takes for it, how to achieve it, the actions needed –, reversing its core and sustaining it as a process already in action, not the result of a decisive rupture; therefore, the collective call to action is about the possibility to let different logics emerge. Transition is taken seriously by the authors and takes shape through two non-negotiable features: «Popular Protagonism» borrowed by radical Chilean intellectual Marta Harnecker, and «Contested Reproduction» developed from Canadian Marxist Michael Lebowitz's thinking. Popular protagonism is the idea that the revolution is going to be taken forward by the working classes, in their own interests, fostered by institutions that drive forward for that transition and build collective capacity for action. Contested reproduction is the recognition of the interrelated dimension of transition, characterised by both elements «subordinated to the system of community» (p. 53) and elements of capitalism, these latter pushed by «capital metabolic control» (p. 54). The controversial and contested character of transition is a process of both deconstruction and construction. Contested reproduction indeed refers to the creation of institutions and practices that begin to reduce capital's control over the conditions of everyday life. Flipping this understanding of transition in a relational and processual way, rather than as a rupture, allows the authors to observe where these forms of contestation take place.

Public-Common Partnerships are framed indeed as the institutions that can address the transition. PCPs are the mechanisms able to reverse the effect of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and «establishing different types of social property or social ownership» (p. 129). A key aspect of this model is the possibility to create shared forms of governance around specific enterprises or assets. The aim is to de-risk common PCPs by creating institutional arrangements that protect collective control and democratic decision-making. In this model, a proportion of the surplus generated by the entity would be redirected into what the authors call a «Common Association» (p. 183). This association would then redistribute resources in a self-expanding dynamic, supporting further collective initiatives and strengthening the broader circle. In this way, PCPs are imagined not as isolated projects, but as part of a

wider expanding ecosystem of democratic control.

The book is organised into two main parts. The first one draws its theoretical and strategic horizon by introducing the conceptual companions of its argument. After the introduction, Chapter Two addresses the urge of transition to be thought of as a political struggle that links short-term tactics with long-term strategies and durable institutions. Chapter Three examines five examples of institutional experiments and movements around the world that could be considered as concrete attempts at building popular protagonism, experimenting with popular sovereignty, affordable housing accessibility, alternative ownership, and production models, or decentralisation of planning and development. Chapter Four proposes a conjectural analysis of contemporary global capitalism and closes the first part of the book.

The second part explores concrete examples and proposes institutional pathways. The PCPs are here indeed introduced in Chapter Five, to reassert democratic control over economic decision-making and to shift 'de-risking' away from capital and towards the commons. This model is then explored through three lines of inquiry and production sectors, further developed in the following chapters: urban development (Chapter Six), pharmaceuticals (Chapter Seven) and Food Systems (Chapter Eight). These chapters are among the book's most peculiar contributions as they move beyond abstract calls for transitions and examine how these institutional forms might be designed, governed and expanded in practice. In this second part, the book challenges the static understanding of transition and proposes how to bridge an abstract form of a public common partnership with some possible shapes it takes.

Indeed, rather than technical solutions, the book proposes a political framework with a strategic orientation that is, for sure, one of its strengths. The authors do not simply call for actions in abstract terms but rather enter details about institutional and legal reorganisation of assets, workplaces and services that characterise the PCPs, taking also the time to consider the criticalities and the difficulties of their political projects. This attention to struggles is important as it gives the book optimism, not a naive allure, but it roots its argumentation in the claim that transformative politics requires patience and institutional work crossing scales and modalities.

At the same time, the book's ambition also creates some

limitations. The theoretical vocabulary is rich but demanding. The concepts presented are powerful but may be difficult for readers not already familiar with Marxist political ecology and degrowth debates on socialist transition. The book is at its clearest when these concepts are connected to concrete cases; it is more challenging when the argument remains at a high level of abstraction. This tension between the abstract and the practical remains the core of the book and makes *Radical Abundance* an original contribution that combines a critique of capitalism with a concrete concern for institutional capacity across scales. This makes the book especially relevant for scholars and activists working on the politics of transition: it provides a compelling framework for thinking about how radical abundance might be built, defended and expanded.

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