



# Democracy Deficit Disorder: Learning Democracy with The Next Generation

Adam F.C. Fletcher and J. Cynthia McDermott

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A succinct summary of the challenges facing young people and the actions they are taking to meet those challenges, *Democracy Deficit Disorder* focuses on the current erosion of democracy happening today. In a three-part examination, this book identifies the end of the democracy deficit disorder, the battle against the disorder, and learning to challenge the disorder. It positions young people as active agents of transformation throughout a society hellbent on demeaning, condemning and otherwise negating them until they are adults. In the meantime, it calls out the behaviors, attitudes and beliefs of adults of all persuasions, including teachers and parents, youth workers and counselors, as well as conservatives, liberals and others. While squarely identifying young people as targets though, it also demonstrates and advocates how children and youth are the answers to these problems.

To the first part of this book, the authors identify what democracy is, how democracy deficit disorder happens, and the symptoms of the disorder, including adultism and the youth-industrial complex, both of which rely on the pacification, oversimplification, and infantilization of young people throughout society. Calling for direct action to meet the challenges of democracy, a careful pathway towards holistic youth development is identified, and the need for democracy education is clearly rationalized. The authors then identify how action can be taken as individuals and in community.

In the second part, a call to action to defeat the democracy deficit disorder is made clear by identifying the issues and actions that are being taken currently by young people across the United States and around the world. The rights of young people are made central to this argument, as well as the roles of adults as equitable partners with children and youth in learning, teaching and leadership throughout democracy.

In the final part of this book, readers can find a clear pathway for learning about democracy, learning from action. Exploring the literal, there are activities, locations, and other possibilities for defeating democracy deficit disorder. The position of the child at home is also examined here, and the possibilities of parenting, families and living situations are made central to the

democratic experiment overall. Finally, the book explores the necessity of praxis in uplifting democracy and sustaining learning about democracy into the future.

Ultimately, this book provides a summary unlike any other available today by positioning young people as the answers to the miserable condition democracy is in, and by illustrating how adults can support their active, powerful and long lasting impact on the world we share today.

“Democracy Deficit Disorder is a brilliant book that takes on not only the current war on youth, but also illustrates how young people are writing themselves back into the future at time when democracy is under assault. Combining a language of critique and hope, the book offers a sobering analysis of the ongoing struggle over agency, identity, social values, and justice young people now face. The book makes clear how crucial critical education is to this current crisis and offers an indispensable guide to both understanding it and meeting the call for a democracy in which justice, equity, and compassion matter.” — Henry Giroux, PhD, McMaster University Chair Professor for Scholarship in the Public Interest

#### **Details**

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