



# Talking Together: Public Deliberation and Political Participation in America

*Lawrence R. Jacobs, Fay Lomax Cook, Michael X. Delli Carpini*

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Challenging the conventional wisdom that Americans are less engaged than ever in national life and the democratic process, *Talking Together* paints the most comprehensive portrait available of public deliberation in the United States and explains why it is important to America's future.

The authors' original and extensive research reveals how, when, and why citizens talk to each other about the issues of the day. They find that—in settings ranging from one-on-one conversations to e-mail exchanges to larger and more formal gatherings—a surprising two-thirds of Americans regularly participate in public discussions about such pressing issues as the Iraq War, economic development, and race relations. Pinpointing the real benefits of public discourse while considering arguments that question its importance, *Talking Together* presents an authoritative and clear-eyed assessment of deliberation's function in American governance. In the process, it offers concrete recommendations for increasing the power of talk to foster political action.

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