

“We the Citizens?”:

**▀ A Corpus Linguistic Inquiry
into the Use of “People” and
“Citizens” in the Founding Era**

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Agenda

- Spring Seminar Research
- Current Research Question
- Corpus Linguistic Analysis
 - Methodology
 - Observations & Examples
- Implications

Tenth Amendment

- “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

Tenth Amendment

- “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or **to the people.**”

Seminar Research Question

- Are “the people” a third sovereign in the Tenth Amendment such that the “to the people” phrase is an invocation of popular sovereignty?

Popular Sovereignty

- The principle that the authority of a state and its government are created and sustained by the consent of the people, who are the source of all political power, through their elected representatives.





Seminar Corpus Methodology & Results

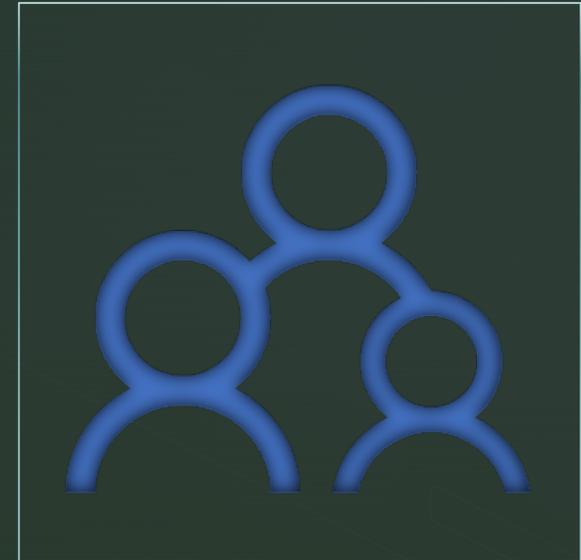
- 556 concordance lines for “people” in COFEA
- *People* strongly collocated with *power** (4 to L and 4 to the R)
- *Delegated* occurred in the top 15 pre-modifiers of *power* in these concordance lines

Tenth Amendment

- “The powers not **delegated** to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or **to the people.**”

Observations

- People always delegated power.
- Power was never delegated to the people.
- Whenever *people* and *power* appeared near each other, the ultimate government-related power resided in the people.



Which specific powers?

- People's elective power.
- Related to elective power, many of the *COFEA* texts seem to suggest that the people's elective powers are a way to indirectly assert their own sovereign powers and hold their legislators politically accountable.
- This political accountability appears to be largely aimed at protecting the people's individual rights, including protecting themselves against an infringement on their individual liberty.

“The People” and Popular Sovereignty: An Example

- “[T]here can be but one supreme power which is the legislative , to which all the rest are and must be subordinate ; yet the legislative being only a fiduciary power , to act for certain ends , *there remains still , " in the people , a supreme power to remove , or alter , the legislative when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them. "*

- James Otis, political activist and Massachusetts legislator (1764)



Citizens?

- The Constitution is written in terms of *people* and *citizens*.
- If *people* were truly considered the source of elective political power, where did that leave *citizens* during the Founding Era?
- 21st century American rhetoric chiefly refers to *citizens* rather than *people* as those who effectuate voting.
- Voting rights are one of the most characteristic rights associated with citizenship.
- Yet the Bill of Rights, the protector of individual rights, used the word *people* and not *citizens*.



Research Question

During the Founding Era, how were the words *people* and *citizens* used differently, especially in terms of constructs that convey agency?

Corpora

Corpus of Founding Era American English

- Over 136,800,000 words
- 1760 - 1799

Public Papers of James Madison from Founders Online

- 10,729,712 words
- extends into the 1800s

Methodology

Frequencies of occurrence

Collocations (with a focus on verb collocates of search words and phrases)

Fixed Recurring Phrases (n-grams) – extracted via AntConc, using the James Madison Corpus

Frequencies

- *People*: 886.4 per million words (118,325 instances) in COFEA
- *Citizens*: 199.2 per million words (26,585 instances) in COFEA

People was significantly more frequently used than *citizens* during the Founding Era.

Collocates

Top 10 collocates of “citizens” and ”people” in COFEA (5L, 5R)

Citizens

People

Collocate	Frequency	Per Mio	Range	Collocate	Frequency	Per Mio	Range
the	26,699	200.0	4,396	the	133,675	1,001.4	12,951
of	24,160	180.1	4,591	of	76,759	575.0	10,999
and	9,795	73.4	2,594	and	42,089	315.3	7,166
to	9,523	71.3	2,809	to	41,607	311.7	8,301
our	4,098	30.7	1,506	a	22,892	171.5	5,344
states	3,733	27.9	1,132	in	22,633	169.5	5,916
their	2,973	22.3	1,242	that	17,824	133.5	5,143
fellow	2,953	22.1	1,403	by	11,549	86.5	3,742
by	2,792	20.9	1,105	are	10,772	80.7	3,976
or	2,783	20.9	809	their	10,267	76.9	3,358

Discussion

- Overlap: *the, of, and, to, by, and their.*
- Given the importance of phrases in meaning creation, we decided to look beyond single words that co-occur.
- This led us to examine longer, fixed sequences of words that contained the search terms (3- to 5-grams).

Per Mio	Frequency	Range	Cluster	Per Mio	Frequency	Range	Cluster
144.9	1555	1034	of the people	64.7	694	575	citizens of the
87.6	940	717	the people of	50.0	537	446	the citizens of
39.4	423	348	to the people	36.4	391	338	citizens of the united
35.4	380	300	people of the	36.3	389	336	citizens of the United states
29.6	318	260	the people of the	30.4	326	287	of our citizens
24.4	262	189	by the people	24.1	259	224	the citizens of the
24.1	259	220	of the people of	21.9	236	218	of the citizens
19.2	206	187	that the people	15.1	162	133	our fellow citizens
18.3	196	185	the people in	14.53	156	135	my fellow citizens
16.1	173	154	people of this	13.4	144	133	of the citizens of
14.5	156	142	the people of this	12.9	138	128	the citizens of the united
12.9	139	127	to the people of	12.7	136	117	citizens of the u

Per Mio	Frequency	Range	Cluster	Per Mio	Frequency	Range	Cluster
12.4	133	124	the people are	11.5	123	109	citizens of this
11.9	128	123	the people to	10.9	118	107	to the citizens
11.6	125	109	the American people	9.2	99	87	of our fellow citizens
11.1	119	99	the people at	8.1	86	79	to the citizens of
10.9	117	99	people of the United	7.4	79	71	of American citizens
10.6	114	97	people of the united states	7.1	76	67	to our citizens
10.3	111	99	the people, and	7.0	75	71	the citizens of this
9.4	101	84	people at large	6.9	74	67	our own citizens
9.4	101	89	the people of the united	6.8	73	66	U.S. citizens
9.1	98	81	the people at large	6.7	72	66	of my fellow citizens
8.7	93	91	of the people in	6.5	70	63	to citizens of
8.4	90	82	among the people	6.2	66	66	his fellow citizens

Per Mio	Frequency	Range	Cluster	Per Mio	Frequency	Range	Cluster
8.3	89	77	of the people of the	6.2	66	59	of its citizens
8.2	88	73	people of America	5.9	64	60	of the citizens of the
7.6	82	76	and the people	5.6	60	57	of citizens of
7.5	81	78	people in the	5.5	59	51	the citizens of the U
7.4	80	66	the people of america	5.5	59	54	to the citizens of the
7.3	78	72	body of the people	5.4	58	52	class of citizens
7.3	78	74	that the people of	5.3	57	56	your fellow citizens
7.0	75	64	on the people	5.2	56	54	their fellow citizens
6.8	73	69	the people have	4.9	53	51	by the citizens
6.5	70	63	of our people	4.8	51	48	fellow citizens of
6.2	66	54	representatives of the people	4.5	48	43	to the citizens of the

by the people and by the citizens in COFEA

- *By the people*: 2,882 (21.6 per million words)
- *By the citizens*: 417 (3.1 per million words)
- We decided to take a closer look at the phrases *by the people/citizens* as these identify *people* and *citizens* as objects of the preposition *by*, and therefore the agents of an action.
- We also focused on verbs that specify what is “done” *by the people* or *by the citizens*.

Top 25 Verb Collocates (6L)

by the people

by the citizens

Collocate	Frequency	Per mio	Range	Collocate	Frequency	Per mio	Range
be	621	4.7	396	be	110	0.82	75
chosen	470	3.5	285	chosen	29	0.22	19
was	263	2.0	182	is	29	0.22	29
elected	224	1.7	162	was	26	0.19	26
is	205	1.5	159	are	22	0.16	20
are	190	1.4	141	been	15	0.11	15
been	183	1.4	145	held	15	0.11	13
were	162	1.2	127	enjoyed	14	0.10	13
made	83	0.60	71	sustained	14	0.10	12
appointed	82	0.60	69	made	12	0.09	11
being	80	0.59	69	paid	11	0.08	9
had	73	0.55	64	owned	10	0.08	9
paid	51	0.38	40	exercised	9	0.07	9
given	43	0.32	37	appointed	8	0.06	6
has	36	0.27	35	being	8	0.06	8
held	33	0.25	30	carried	8	0.06	8
received	29	0.22	22	elected	8	0.06	7
supported	29	0.22	28	were	8	0.06	8
enacted	28	0.21	20	given	6	0.04	6
approved	27	0.20	22	recovered	6	0.04	6
established	26	0.19	25	has	5	0.03	5
taken	25	0.18	24	led	5	0.03	5
considered	24	0.17	23	received	4	0.02	4
delegated	24	0.17	22	regarded	4	0.02	4

Constructions

- Passive constructions: *to be + past participle + by the people/citizens*

e.g. *were chosen by the people*

- A passive construction is often used when the action should be highlighted, instead of the doer or agent.

Discussion

- Overlap (verb form collocates of both nouns):
chosen, made, elected, held, appointed, paid, given, received
- *by the people only: supported, enacted, approved, established, taken, considered, delegated*
- *by the citizens only: enjoyed, sustained, owned, exercised, carried, recovered, led, regarded*

Verb Case Studies

- Analysis of concordance lines and legal contexts of three high-frequency verb collocates: ***elected, chosen, made***

<i>elected by the people</i>	<i>elected by the citizens</i>
153 instances	5 instances
<i>chosen by the people</i>	<i>chosen by the citizens</i>
266 instances	11 instances
<i>made by the people</i>	<i>made by the citizens</i>
39 instances	7 instances

Examples: *elected by the citizens*

	<u>Context Left</u>	<u>Elected by the citizens</u>	<u>Context Right</u>
(1)	These officers , it is true , are	elected by the citizens	, but they niuft by law be ele ~ ed , as well as the deputies to the biennial parliament or juntit general
(2)	The deputies	elected by the citizens	of Mecklenburg Lunenburg , Brunswick and Greenville to report to the President of the United States their Opinions of the Treaty
(3)	The Senators are to be chosen by eight electors , four whereof to be	elected by the citizens	of the Eastern , and four by the citizens of the Western precinct , which electors shall have the same qualifications as...
(4)	... for he , though born in a foreign country , had been	elected by the citizens	of this country to transact their Legislative business for many years...
(5)	We the Deputies of the District of Brunswick	elected by the citizens	thereof for this express purpose , do respectfully report the Opinions of our Constituents as follow...

Examples: *elected by the people*

- “But although the *legislative branch shall be elected by the people* , and amenable to them alone for their conduct , yet as the state sovereignties though qualified , will still remain , and of course the state spirit , in contradiction to a foederal one , from necessity be more or less influential in its councils , we should turn our attention to the other branches of the government , as our firm resource.”

- James Monroe



Examples: *chosen by the people*

[T]hat in cases of an abuse of the delegated powers the *members of the general government , being chosen by the people* , a change by the people would be the constitutional remedy ; but , where powers are assumed which have not been delegated , a nullification of the act is the rightful remedy[.]

The President and members of Congress are all chosen by the people . The Government is theirs , and in their hands , as clay is in the hands of the potter ,

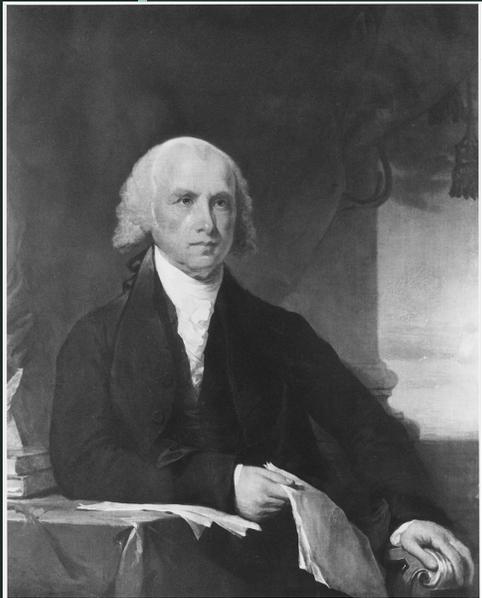
Examples: *made by the citizens*

<u>Left Context: “Item” being made by the citizens</u>	<u>Made by the Citizens</u>	<u>Right Context</u>
A noble stand	was made by the citizens	of Dublin
[T]he captures of our vessels	was made by the citizens	of France
[N]o small tumult	[was] made by the citizens	of the order of the twelve
The contracts”	were made by the citizens	of their own free will, and if the French government never . .
That the [election] of [electors], for the purpose of choosing the president and vice-president of the United States	will] be made by the citizens	of this (late, qualified to vote for members of the houses of delegates
That . . . [election] of representatives . . . in the [Congress] of the United States	[shall be] made by the citizens	of this Rate qualified to vote for [members] of the house of delegates
[I]f the same declarations and assurances are made by you, which it is required		should be made by the citizens to be assembled at Redstone

Example: *made by the people*

- “ . . . was of the opinion that the appointment of the Members to the first branch of the national *Legislature ought to be made by the people* for two reasons , -- one was that it would inspire confidence , and the other that it would induce the Government to sympathize with the people .”

- James Madison

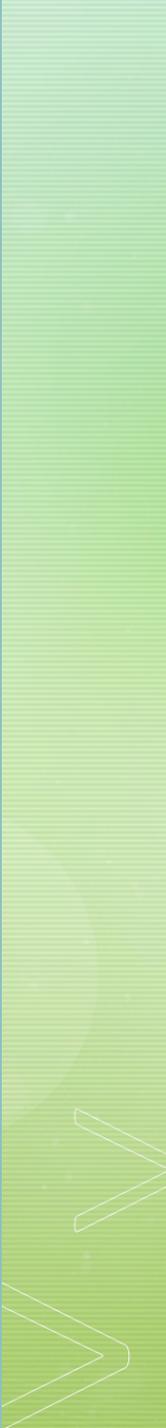


Conclusions

- The actions of the *citizens*—especially actions such as electing, choosing, and making—were of a lesser scope and frequency than the actions of the *people* associated with the same verb constructs.
- Our earlier research established that in the Founding Era, the people are a ground up source of power. This research further supports that proposition.
- Sheds light on why “We the People”—rather than “We the Citizens”—“do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”



Extra slides

- Mutual Information collocate scores for people/citizens & by the people/citizens
 - To the people
- 

*citizens**people*

MI-sorted collocates

5L, 5R

Collocate	Per Mio	Frequency	Range	MI	Collocate	Per Mio	Frequency	Range	MI
fellow	22.1	2,953	1,403	7.24	minds	8.8	1,168	752	3.37
class	3.1	412	237	5.14	among	25.1	3,353	1,570	2.88
foreigners	1.9	248	136	5.12	representatives	9.1	1,212	520	2.63
subjects	7.0	933	287	4.49	free	12.5	1,668	909	2.59
respectable	1.9	255	190	4.29	rights	8.3	1,105	576	2.36
citizen	2.1	285	88	4.04	large	9.9	1,327	780	2.19
virtuous	1.3	174	143	3.82	young	7.3	977	379	1.98
united	20.4	2,724	845	3.69	body	10.1	1,343	768	1.89
privileges	1.6	212	139	3.64	America	11.7	1,559	903	1.77
states	28.0	3,733	1,132	3.59	themselves	13.1	1,744	1,009	1.77

Collocate	Frequency	Documents	Mutual Info
disparage	14	14	10.55
elected	224	162	8.40
chosen	470	285	8.13
elected	7	6	7.48
disliked	6	6	7.22
delegated	24	22	7.14
detested	9	9	6.91
acquiesced	8	8	6.67
reposed	19	16	6.62
enatled	9	3	6.34
adored	5	5	6.21
surrendered	11	8	6.17
retained	24	21	5.98
hated	8	8	5.77
selected	8	8	5.73
framed	9	9	5.63
ratified	14	13	5.49
entrusted	10	10	5.26
enjoyed	21	19	5.20
exercised	22	22	5.11
approved	27	22	4.79
supported	29	28	4.73
esteemed	12	12	4.56
submitted	18	16	4.55
respected	8	8	4.54

*by the
people –
MI-
sorted*

Collocate	Frequency	Documents	Mutual Info
owned	10	9	7.95
sustained	14	12	7.77
enjoyed	14	13	7.40
chosen	29	19	6.90
exercised	9	9	6.61
elected	8	7	6.38
held	15	13	5.09
recovered	6	6	4.97
led	5	5	4.41
carried	8	8	4.26
paid	11	9	3.63
appointed	8	6	3.29
given	6	6	2.24
be	110	75	1.92
made	12	11	1.80
been	15	15	1.30
being	8	8	1.25
are	22	20	1.06
was	26	26	0.95
were	8	8	0.46
is	29	29	0.45
has	5	5	0.03

by the
citizens
– MI-
sorted

Results: *Made by the Citizens*

<u>Left Context: “Item” being made by the citizens</u>	<u>Made by the Citizens</u>	<u>Right Context</u>
A noble stand	was made by the citizens	of Dublin
[T]he captures of our vessels	was made by the citizens	of France
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That the [election] of [electors], for the purpose of choosing the president and vice-president of the United States	will] be made by the citizens	of this (late, qualified to vote for members of the houses of delegates
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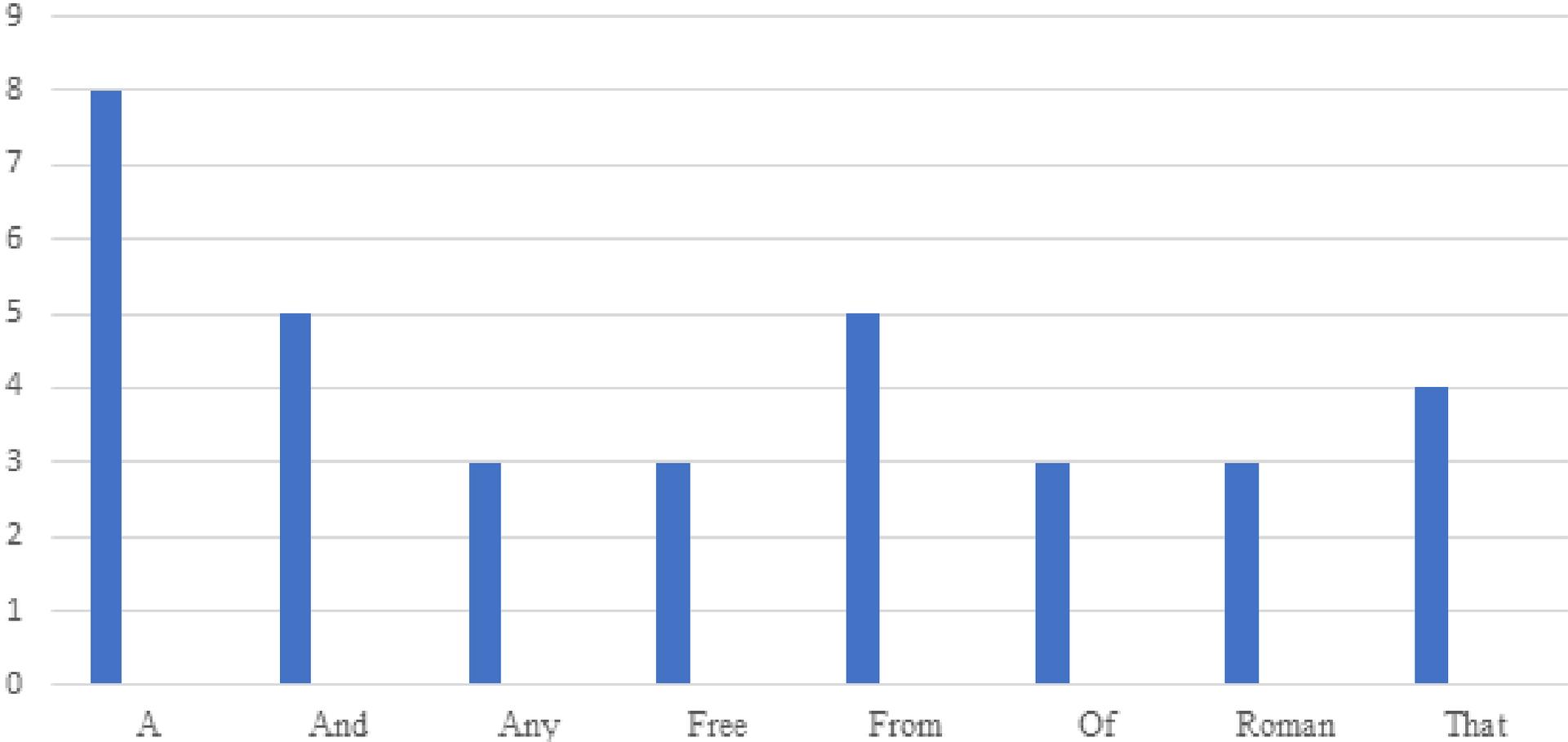
Results: *Elected by the Citizens*

	<u>Context Left</u>	<u>Elected by the citizens</u>	<u>Context Right</u>
(1)	These officers , it is true , are	elected by the citizens	, but they niuft by law be ele ~ ed , as well as the deputies to the biennial parliament or juntit general
(2)	The deputies	Elected by the citizens	of Mecklenburg Lunenburg , Brunswick and Greenville to report to the President of the United States their Opinions of the Treaty
(3)	The Senators are to be chosen by eight electors , four whereof to be	elected by the citizens	of the Eastern , and four by the citizens of the Western precinct , which electors shall have the same qualifications as...
(4)	... for he , though born in a foreign country , had been	elected by the citizens	of this country to transact their Legislative business for many years...
(5)	We the Deputies of the District of Brunswick	elected by the citizens	thereof for this express purpose , do respectfully report the Opinions of our Constituents as follow...

Spring Seminar Data

- *people* collocated with *power** 1,118 times – scrubbed to result in 556 concordance lines to manually examine
- *People* was preceded by *the* 482 times in the 556 lines – this high frequency indicates a unified agency of *the people* acting as a collective agent.

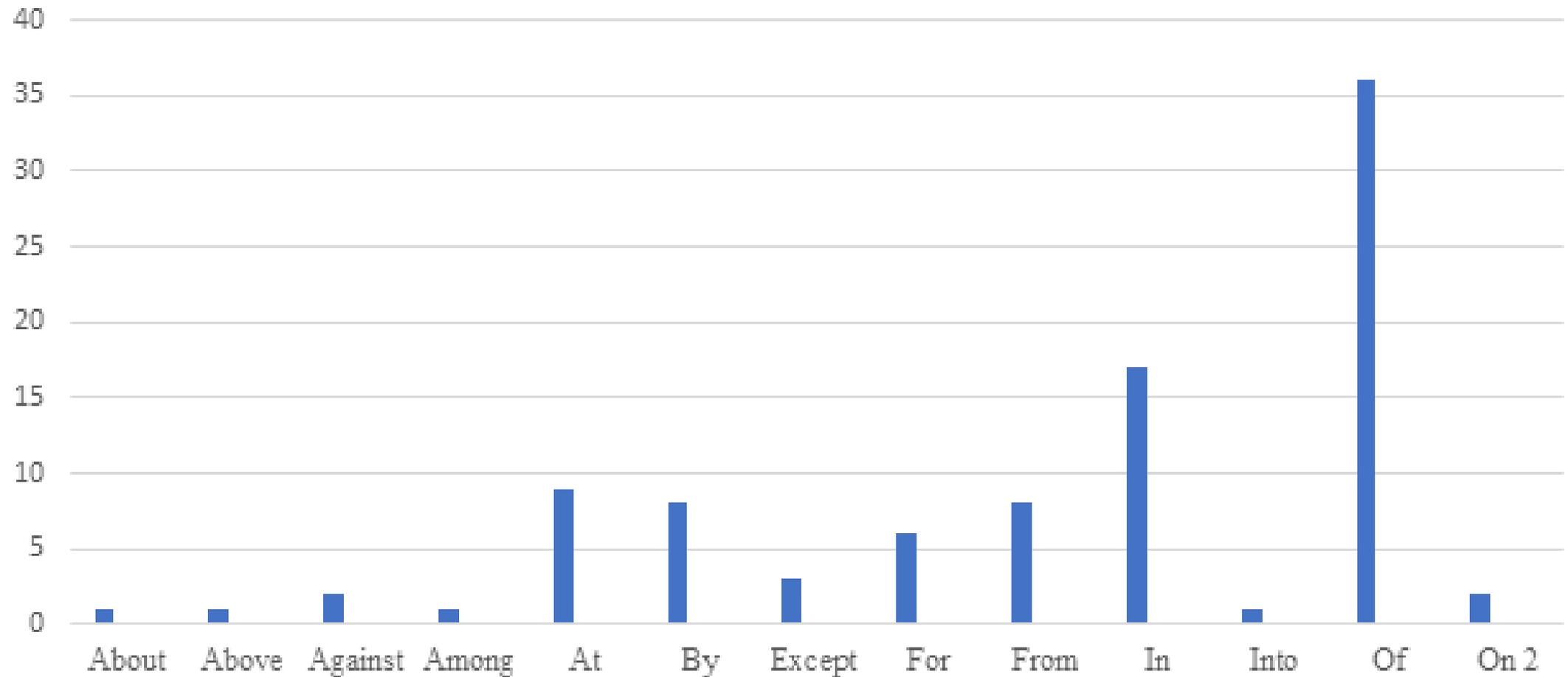
When "People" is not Preceded by "the": Pre-Modifier Frequency



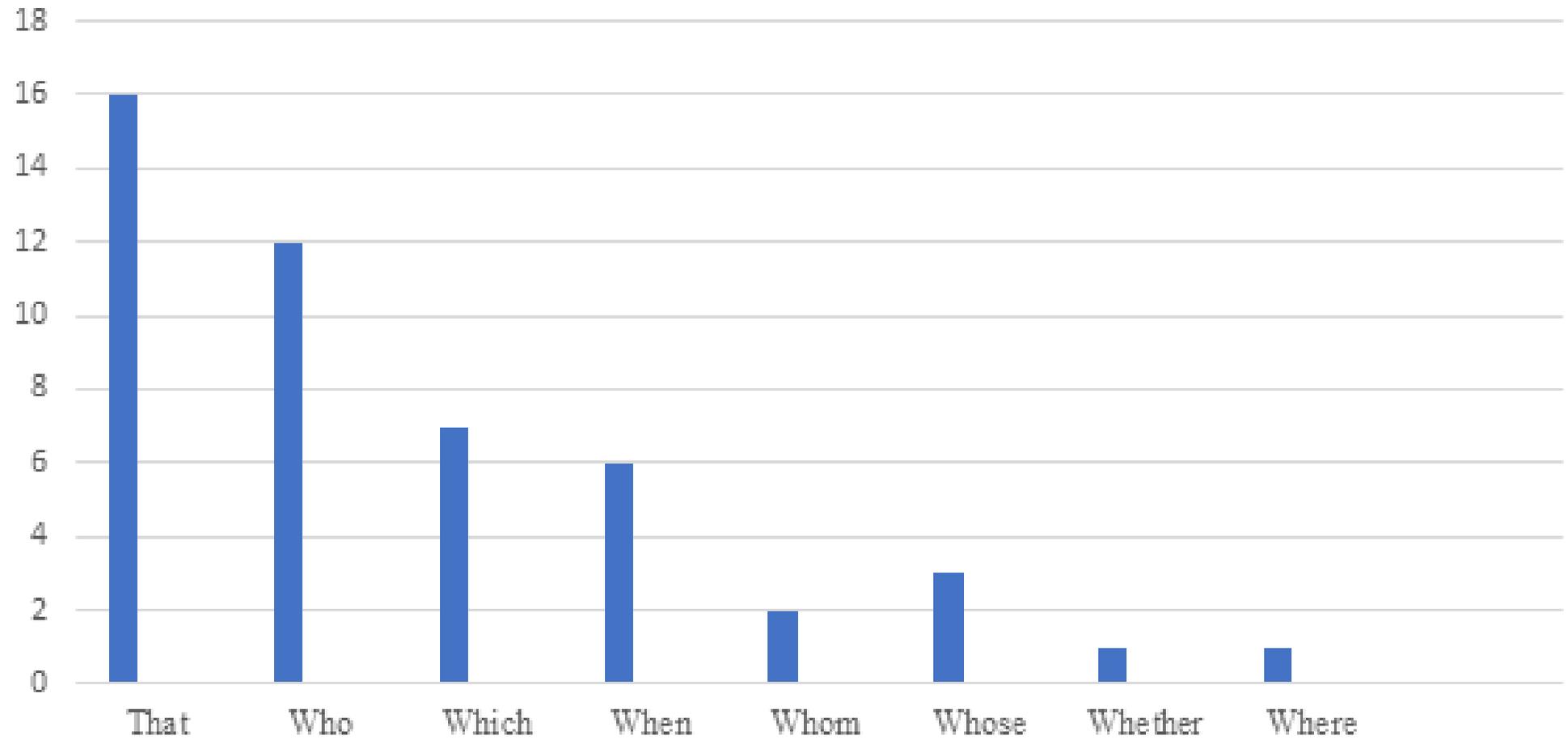
Eight Most Frequent Pre-Modifiers of People (notwithstanding “the”): By Category

<u>Determiners</u>	<u>Adjective</u>	<u>Conjunction</u>	<u>Preposition</u>
A	Any	And	From
That	Free		Of
	Roman		

Frequency When "People" is Post-Modified by a Prepositional Phrase



Frequency When "People" is Post-Modified by a Relative Clause

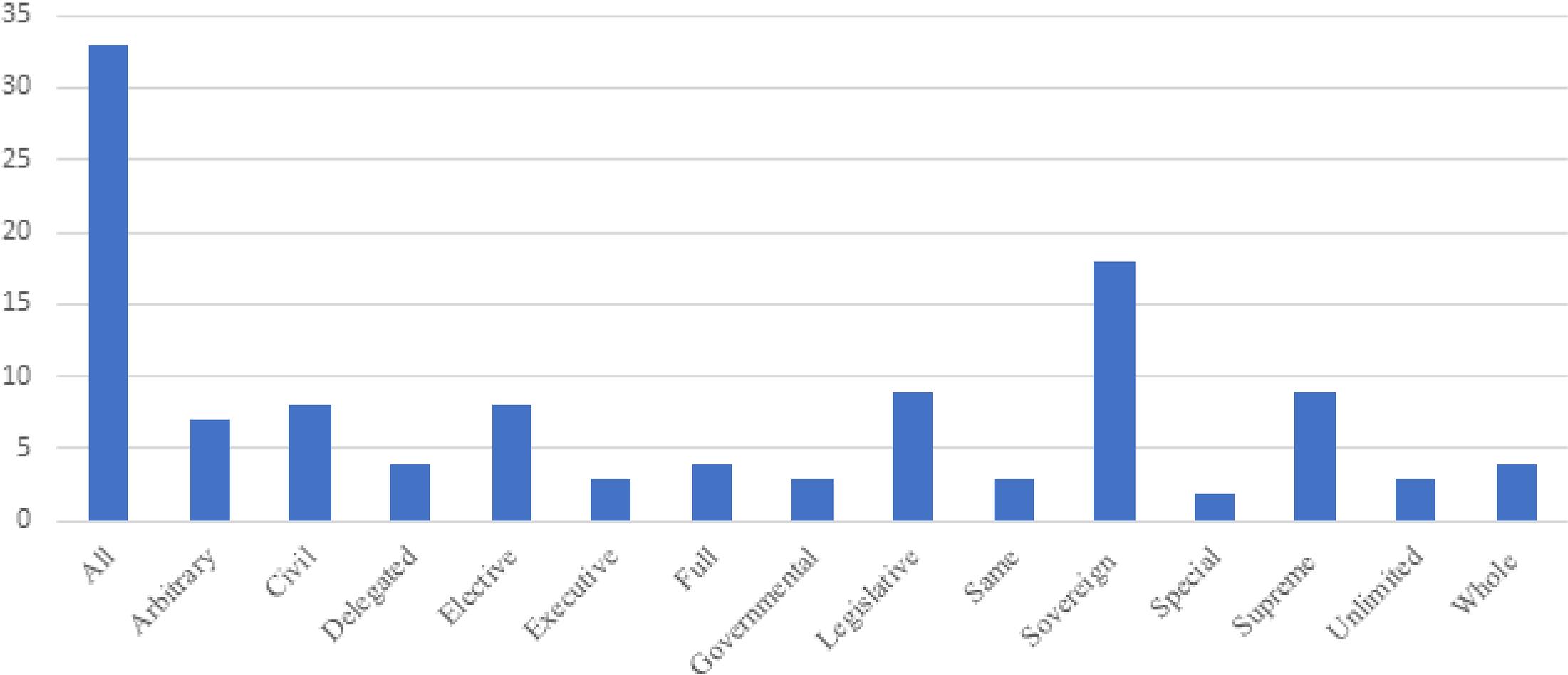




Power

- When collocated (4R, 4L) with *people*, *power* is possessed: 13 instances of *people's power*, 99 instances of *power of the people*

Most Frequent Pre-Modifiers of Power



Fifteen Most Frequent Pre-Modifiers of Power: By Category

<u>Measurable Amounts</u>	<u>Governmental in Nature</u>	<u>Value-Based</u>	<u>Action</u>
All	Civil	Arbitrary	Delegated
Full	Elective	Special	
Same	Executive	Supreme	
Unlimited	Governmental		
Whole	Legislative		
	Sovereign		

- 
- 41 instances of the root delegat* in the 556 concordances lines discussing *people* and *power*