HOW TO TALK
BRIDGEY

**Lessons and Takeaways from PACE's
2023-2024 Civic Language Perceptions Project**

A REPORT BY:

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Introduction

Over the last few years, there has been an increased focus in many organizations to advance strategies that help Americans connect, communicate, and problem-solve with people who are different from them. From StoryCorps' One Small Step to the establishment of a National Day of Dialogue to the emergence of New Pluralists, to the adoption of bridging priorities within government agencies like Americorps, groups are finding ways to push against the currents of polarization otherwise gripping Americans.

In these efforts to help Americans bridge across differences, one important component has been overlooked: the words we say. Are there words that inherently carry the power to help us connect with people different from ourselves? Are there words that make things worse? How do we appeal to a politically broad audience without sending unintended signals that stop a conversation before it even begins? In other words... in our efforts to "bridge," **how do we talk bridgey?**

To offer guidance, we turn to PACE's Civic Language Perceptions Project. PACE has been leading research on the impressions and relationships American voters have with various civic terms since 2019. For its third round of research, PACE worked with Citizen Data to survey a nationally representative sample of 5,033 American registered voters in November 2023. From January to August 2024, PACE analyzed the survey data, resulting in a portfolio of approximately 500 data visualizations and 25 presentations. In each analysis, we explored a different question or came into the data from a different angle to understand what signals civic terms send and how to navigate them in our pursuit to talk bridey-er.

Civic Terms Surveyed in 2023

Advocacy
American
Belonging*
Bipartisan
Bridging
Citizen*
Civic Engagement*
Civility*
Community
Constitution
Democracy*

Diversity*
Equality
Freedom
Liberty*
Patriotism*
Racial Equity*
Republic
Service
Social Justice*
Unity*

* indicates tested in 2021 and 2023

What does it mean to talk **bridgey**?

Full disclosure: the term "bridgey" is made up.

It's not in the dictionary, but maybe it should be. When something is bridgey, it has qualities that make lots of different types of people able to connect to it. Think of that kid in high school who was friends with everyone and sat at a different lunch table everyday–she was bridgey. She was able to find ways to connect to different groups of people and what they cared about, no matter how different they might be.

"Talking bridgey" is a similar concept. It is about finding ways to say something so the broadest possible audience can connect to it–no matter how different those audiences might be. Many people share core values and want to connect with those who are different from them; the trick is to minimize the potential for words to get in the way. As Frank Fernandez of the Atlanta Community Foundation said in a meeting with us once, "Language matters, because not only does it determine whether someone understands you, but whether they're even willing to try."

Of course, people are different in lots of ways –generation, education, race/ethnicity, gender, religion, and more–and none of these identities are monolithic. The truth is that some bridges are shorter and longer than others, and our research finds that no identity matters more in our perceptions of civic language than our political identities.

To understand this more, we looked at the "poles" of various identity groups (that is, the groups people often think are most different from each other within a category). We compared the poles to see the difference in their positivity scores across the 21 terms we surveyed. The analysis in the graph below shows us that when our gender identity is activated, there is a small chance men and women are likely to feel differently about a term on the basis of their identity difference. However, the opposite becomes true when people are thinking about a term in the context of their political identity. It is nearly 4x easier to talk to someone of a different gender than a different political ideology. For this reason, when we think about "talking bridgey," we pay particular attention to words and ways to communicate that appeal across the political spectrum.

What is the average difference between groups?

For each term, the positivity score of one group listed below (e.g., male) was subtracted from the other group listed (e.g., female). The absolute values of these differences were averaged across all terms. This average difference score is shown for each comparison (e.g., female & male).

Comparison	Average difference
Very Liberal & Very Conservative	22.4%
Democrat & Republican	17.3%
White & Black or African American	11.7%
Older (>44) & Younger	9.8%
Christian & Non-Christian	7.3%
Urban & Rural	7%
College Grad & Non-College Grad	6.5%
Female & Male	6.3%
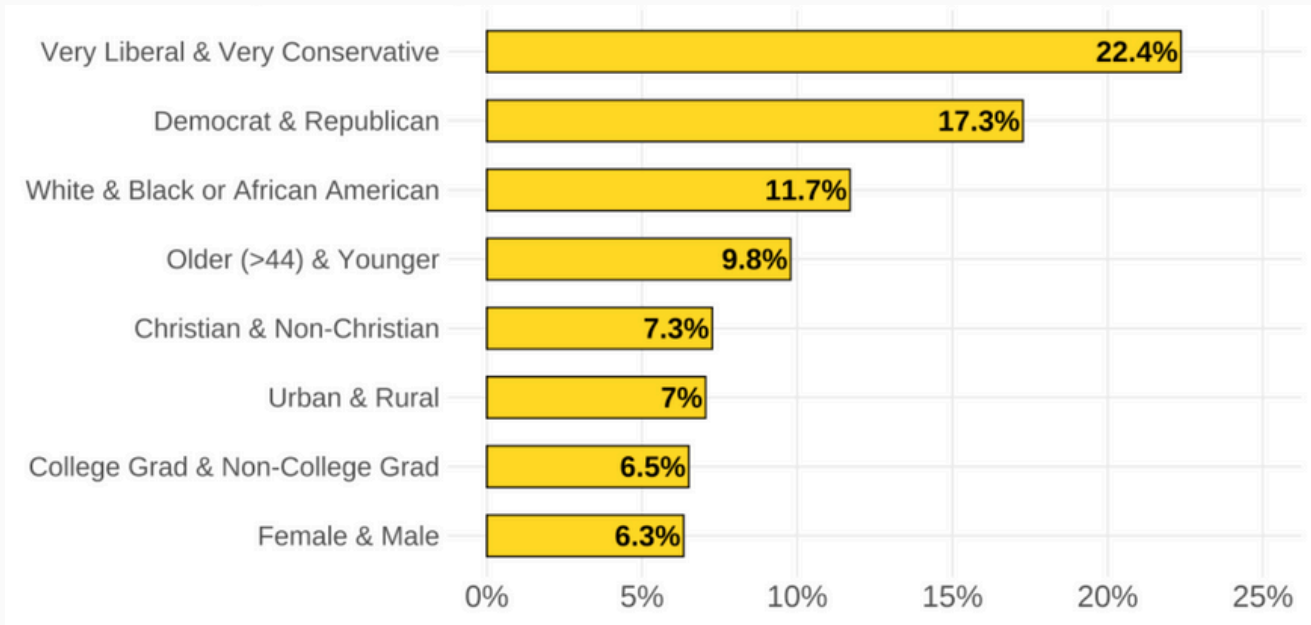
Why does talking bridgey matter?

The stakes are high for us to learn how to talk bridgey with each other. We hear reports all the time that language has become deeply coded and loaded, leaving little space for productive discussion within our communities. Where we used to think we were just saying words, we now realize we are speaking in signals – sometimes constructive, sometimes destructive, sometimes intentional, sometimes unintentional. Think of your experience saying words like *democracy, patriotism, citizen*, or *social justice* today versus 10 years ago. If you're anything like the hundreds of civic leaders and funders who have engaged with our research over the last year, you are likely to tell us you're having a very different experience.

The rise in polarization in the United States is well documented, and as polarization has increased, so too has the response from the civic field and philanthropy. These efforts are critical, and yet, we think some of the lowest hanging fruit may have been overlooked. For people and organizations looking for ways to bridge across difference, learning the skill of talking bridgey might be the right place to start.

How To Talk Bridgey is a guide for Americans that shares lessons for how to use civic terms in a way that the broadest possible audience will connect to it. In the pages that follow, you will see four lessons for how to talk bridgey with supporting analysis, you will have the opportunity to reflect alongside us as we make sense of how the lessons invite us to evolve our language, and, in the end, you will be encouraged to apply this guide to a moment we might most need to talk bridgey–the day after Election Day 2024.

Lean on inherently bridgey words

What makes a word bridgey?

One of the key questions we have been trying to understand through our research is to what degree American voters perceive "democracy and civic engagement" terms to be polarizing or unifying, which helps us understand their bridgeyness potential. We intentionally designed our survey to help us explore this further, and as a result, we have many variables available in our data that could be considered indicators of "bridgeyness." So while the word "bridgey" is made up, here is the criteria we chose to determine if a word *is* bridgey:

People generally agree they like the word **+** **People do not perceive the word to be polarizing** **=** **BRIDGEY WORDS**

What makes a word bridgey?

Of the 21 terms tested in 2023, we calculated bridgeyness by looking at each term's:

1. **Net positivity** (the overall percent of people who feel positive towards the term minus the overall percent of people who feel negative). Terms were ranked from highest net positivity to lowest.
2. **Positivity range** across demographic categories (the differences in positivity within and between nine identity groups: age, community type, education, employment sector, gender, political party, political ideology, race, and religion). Terms were ranked from lowest positivity range, which signals more agreement, to highest.
3. **Perceptions about whether a term drives people apart.** Terms were ranked from lowest rate of selection that a term drives people apart a lot or a little to highest.

Taken together, these three indicators tell us the **bridgeyness strength** of terms. Below is the breakdown and more detail can be found in the addendum.

Bridgeyness Strength of Civic Terms

	Net Positivity	Range Across Demographics	Perceptions of Driving Apart	Bridgeyness Strength	
	Higher net positivity is scored higher	Lower range is scored higher	Lower perception is scored higher		
Community				89%	
Service				89%	
Belonging				84%	
Liberty				83%	
Freedom				79%	
Citizen				76%	
Unity				75%	
Civility				65%	
Constitution				59%	
Equality				59%	
American				59%	
Civic Engagement				56%	
Bridging				54%	
Advocacy				51%	
Democracy				51%	
Bipartisan				40%	
Patriotism				38%	
Diversity				38%	
Republic				35%	
Racial Equity				30%	
Social Justice				27%	

Ranking: TOP MIDDLE BOTTOM

✓ **One of the most bridgey words on our list is *community***, and that's good news. In our last round of civic language research, one of the <u>major findings</u> was that terms that include "civic" or "civil" as an adjective were not landing with the American public. *Civic engagement, civic health, civic infrastructure, civil society*–respondents were telling us they had little relationship with these words. Hearing that data-informed finding, many civic leaders asked us what they should say instead, and in particular, if replacing it with *community* might be more effective (community engagement, community health, etc). Seeing that *community* scores so high in bridgeyness strength in our analysis is an indicator that "community" could be a proxy word for "civic" in a way that could make our field's language more bridgey.

✓ **People have told us they have incorporated *freedom* into their language more as a result of our research.** It's a term that connects across difference and many people feel positive towards it. While interpretations of *freedom* vary across groups, leaning on the term itself is likely to increase people's connection to your message and invite them to continue listening.

✓ **Ironically, *bridging* isn't very bridgey, but there's more to the story.** In our analysis, *bridging* is in the bottom half of our terms for bridgeyness strength. With a deeper look, we find some good news, especially for people who are leaning on this word in their messaging and branding. First, respondents told us they did not perceive the word to be driving people apart. The term drops in bridgeyness strength because respondents gave it lower net positivity. However, that is *not* because their negativity was high on the term; in fact, negativity was just under 4%. Rather, it's because unfamiliarity and neutrality were considerably high (21% and 41% respectively). In other words, *bridging* has low bridgeyness because people do not have a strong relationship with the word–yet.

> ⚠ **CAREFUL!**
>
> ***Don't throw away the less bridgey words!*** *Our bridgeyness strength analysis should not be understood as a "do say this and don't say that" list or recommendation. Instead, we offer it as one input to understand the potential mechanics of how to bridge across differences. All these words carry a lot of meaning and represent important values for a lot of people; none of them are inherently "good" or "bad." For those seeking to communicate across differences, we hope acknowledging the less bridgey words will be an invitation to better interrogate what signals they send, why, and how to leverage those signals for what you are trying to achieve. In other words, it's an invitation to go another level deeper, and our next three lessons provide guidance to support you.*

Understand what signals civic terms send

While some words are bridgey-er than others, all of them have an important place in our civic communication. Even when a word is less bridgey, that does not mean we should stop using it. In fact, as one civic leader said earlier in this project: "If we abandon these words, I suspect someone else will eventually claim them." As citizens and leaders who are investing in this era of the great American experiment in democracy, part of our responsibility is to steward the language of our democracy.

A critical component of that stewardship is knowing what signals terms are sending. To understand that more, we looked at two major inputs from our data:

- **Term Positivity**: Which groups of people are demonstrating higher rates of positivity towards a term?

- **Term Ownership:** Which groups of people are telling us they perceive a term to be meant for them?

The combination of these two pieces of data allows us to see a story emerge for each term. To be sure, terms can send lots of signals in many different ways. In the chart that follows, we are showing analysis related to three signals we get asked about the most: **political signals**, **age signals**, and **urbanicity signals**.

Do civic terms signal to liberals or conservatives, older or younger people, rural or urban residents? Are those signals strong and entrenched or weak and potentially moveable?

The analysis provided in the following chart is our own interpretation of the data inputs. We purposefully color coded the chart to align across signal categories: the darker the purple, the more liberal, young, and urban the signals are and the darker the orange, the more conservative, old, and rural. We fully acknowledge this is an oversimplification and not true for every person or community, but we did this because we often find that these demographics function as monolithic groups in many people's minds, and we wanted to test if civic terms are signaling in consistent ways to these groups.

Supporting graphs can be found in the addendum; we invite you to review them alongside us and consider your own interpretations.
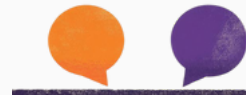
The Political, Age, and Urbanicity Signals Civic Terms Send

Term (in alphabetical order)	Political Signals Liberal | Conservative	Age Signals Younger = <34 | Older = >55	Urbanicity Signals Rural | Urban
Advocacy	Strong Liberal	Weak Younger	Bridgey
American	Strong Conservative	Strong Older	Weak Rural
Belonging	Weak Liberal	Bridgey	Bridgey
Bipartisan	Weak Liberal	Weak Older	Weak Urban
Bridging	Weak Liberal	Weak Younger	Strong Urban
Citizen	Weak Conservative	Strong Older	Bridgey
Civic Engagement	Weak Liberal	Bridgey	Strong Urban
Civility	Weak Liberal	Weak Older	Bridgey
Community	Bridgey	Bridgey	Bridgey
Constitution	Weak Conservative	Strong Older	Weak Rural
Democracy	Strong Liberal	Strong Older	Bridgey
Diversity	Strong Liberal	Strong Younger	Strong Urban
Equality	Strong Liberal	Weak Younger	Bridgey
Freedom	Weak Conservative	Strong Older	Weak Rural
Liberty	Bridgey	Strong Older	Weak Rural
Patriotism	Strong Conservative	Strong Older	Strong Rural
Racial Equity	Strong Liberal	Weak Younger	Strong Urban
Republic	Strong Conservative	Strong Older	Strong Rural
Service	Bridgey	Weak Older	Bridgey
Social Justice	Strong Liberal	Weak Younger	Strong Urban
Unity	Weak Liberal	Bridgey	Bridgey

TAKEAWAYS

✓ **The signals civic terms send indicate more bridgeyness potential than we might think**. The color coding in this chart–while an acknowledged oversimplification–allows us to test if terms are signaling to urban, young, liberals as one category and rural, old, conservatives as a second category. When we look across the 21 terms we surveyed, only three words fit this mold: *diversity* sends strong liberal, younger, and urban signals; *patriotism* and *republic* send strong conservative, older, and rural signals. But for over 80% of the terms we tested, we see lots of potential for bridgeyness–either because a term is bridgey in one or more categories or because the intensity of its signals are weak and there is potential for openness. We think it is important to call out that one term–*community*–is bridgey across all three categories; it does not signal one way or another by politics, age, or community type.

> **TRY THIS!**
>
> If you're trying to reach **both liberals and conservatives**, lean on politically bridgey words or pair words together that signal to each group.
>
> **Politically Bridgey Words**
>
> *Community*
> *Liberty*
> *Service*
>
> **Politically Bridgey Pairings**
>
> *Patriotism + Democracy*
> *American + Diversity*
> *Republic + Equality*

✓ **We should not stop saying *democracy*.** Lots of civic leaders have reported to us that they are struggling with the term *democracy*. We hear this so much that we hosted an entire webinar in August 2024 asking "Should We Say Democracy?" People tell us that they find *democracy* signals liberal, has become an unfavorable word in conservative circles, and young people are not connecting to it–and yet, we know the brand of *democracy* still has very high appeal in the United States and globally. Looking at our analysis, we want to hold up two important signals that *democracy* is sending, which indicates to us that we should not stop using it:

- While we see that most other terms follow a pattern of signaling to young and liberal or old and conservative, *democracy* is the only word in the chart that sends a strong signal to liberals and a strong signal to older people-- demonstrating its uniqueness and potential for diverse appeal.

- *Democracy* sends bridgey urbanicity signals, reinforcing that there are no "bad" words–there are just more effective ways and contexts to use them.

💡 **TRY THIS!**

If you want to **talk to young people about democracy**, we encourage you to:

Do It

Overcome concerns that young people are not interested in democracy and remember that 61% of people 18-34 are positive on the term and 48% believe it's meant for them.

Connect It to Equity Values

Our data indicate that young people are most positive towards and motivated by terms that signal equity values. Try pairing *democracy* with terms like *equality, diversity,* and *social justice.*

✓ **In high-stakes and high-sensitivity moments–especially ones that involve politics–it's important that we refocus on what is required of us to maintain a culture of democracy.** When we feel intensity and emotion, it can be tempting to use civic terms as weapons. Our hope is that this analysis supports you in leveraging words to send signals to groups that they belong and have a place in America's future. If you want to talk bridgey, we suggest your communication mindset focuses on the ultimate goal of strategic connection rather than a goal of self-expression. In other words, it might be a time to prioritize what people need to hear over what you feel like you need to say.

Understand what people mean

It can be tempting for people to say "it's just a word," but the power of words is not in the letters themselves; it's the meaning they convey. We also know people define a lot of words in very different ways– sometimes we can say the same word and mean something fundamentally different, and other times, we might be using completely different words to convey the exact same thing. Either way, we risk talking past each other and potentially furthering some of the divides we're trying to bridge.

Our survey asked respondents to define one civic term–either *democracy, civic engagement,* or *racial equity*–giving us rich insights about what American voters mean by these terms in their own words. In the definitional responses, we see a lot of commonality among respondents' understanding of these civic terms, but we also see a lot of important distinctions and nuances.

Deep Dive on Definitions of Democracy

To explore this further, we looked deeply at respondents' definitions of the term *democracy*. Overall, definitions revolved around six key themes:

How American voters understand democracy

Government by the People
Power derived from the people

Freedom & Autonomy
Freedom of speech
Freedom from oppression
Freedom to live freely

Accountability
Leaders are accountable to people and must govern ethically, not serve their interests

Equal Representation & Rights
Equal rights to vote, express opinions, participate

Elections
Ability for citizens to choose leaders and influence governmental decisions

Inclusivity
Allows various voices and viewpoints to be heard

Differences emerged, however, when we dissected the definitional data in various ways. For example:

- White respondents included historical and constitutional details in their definitions of *democracy* significantly more often than other racial and ethnic groups. To be more specific, of the 111 (or 7%) *democracy* definitions that included historical and constitutional details, 74% of them came from people who identified as White, 11% from people who identified as Black or African American, 5% from people who identified as Asian, and 5% from people who identified as Hispanic, Latino, or Latina.

- Some definitions expressed skepticism, and where they did, there are nuanced–yet meaningful–differences in *why* people are skeptical of democracy. For example, when looking at political ideology, people who identified as very or somewhat liberal critiqued democracy for its inequalities and lack of representation, whereas people who identified as very or somewhat conservative critiqued democracy for its government overreach and loss of personal freedoms. By race, Black and Hispanic respondents expressed skepticism of democracy related to its failures to be inclusive and fully representative, whereas White respondents expressed skepticism related to corruption in the system.

- Fifteen-percent of *democracy* definitions included the words "vote," "voting," or "election," and people who included those concepts in their definitions tended to be more white, more female, more suburban, and less moderate (more Democrat or Republican leaning) than the sample overall.

Perhaps most interesting is how Democrats, Republicans, and Independents defined *democracy*. Especially in an election year, we frequently hear elected officials and candidates across the spectrum make attempts to define and influence our understanding of democracy and perceptions of whether it's working. But how are American voters defining *democracy* for themselves, and how does that differ between political parties?

**The words most frequently used by
<u>Republicans</u> to define Democracy**

**The words most frequently used by
<u>Independents</u> to define Democracy**
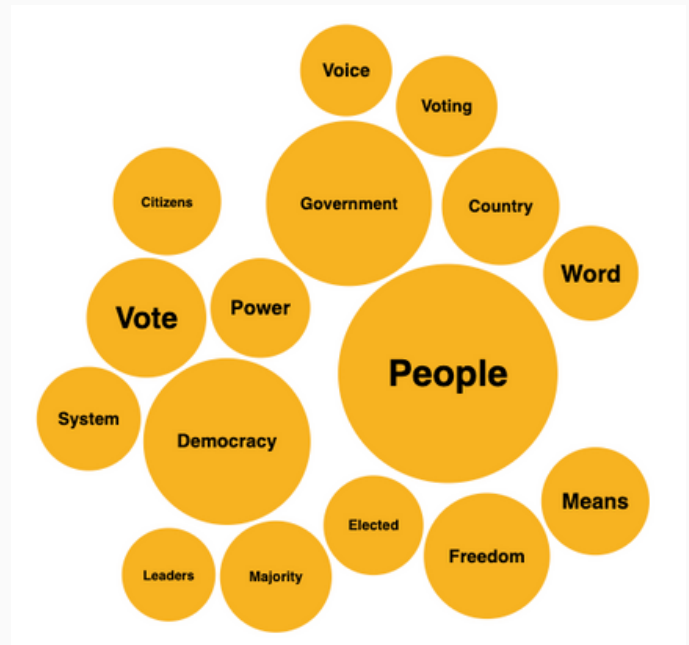
Note: Graphics map words mentioned 15 times or more in definitions, excluding common and routine words.

Words used by both Democrats and Republicans to define Democracy

Political Party ■ Democrat ■ Republican

	Democrat	Republican
People		
Democracy		
Government		
Vote		
Freedom		
System		
Means		
Country		
Rights		
Citizens		
Equal		
Elected		
Majority		
Free		
Choose		

Horizontal axis: 200 150 100 50 0 50 100 150 200
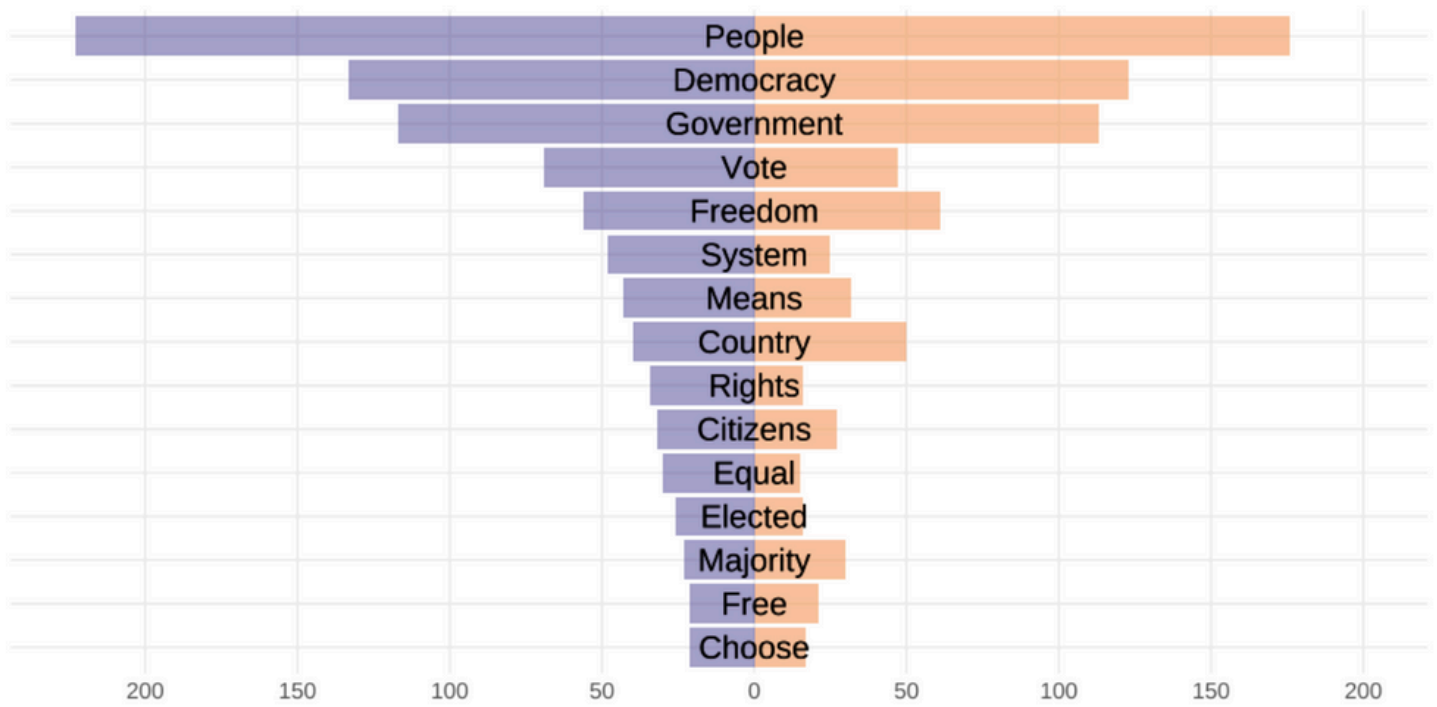
Words and word pairings that were used by one party but not the other to define Democracy

Political Party ■ Democrat ■ Republican

Democrat:
- Understand Democracy (~7)
- Care (~6)
- Love (~6)
- Dictatorship (~5)
- Branches (~4)
- Built (~4)
- Land (~4)
- Local (~4)
- Matter (~4)

Republican:
- Agree (~4)
- American People (~4)
- Current (~5)

Horizontal axis: 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

15
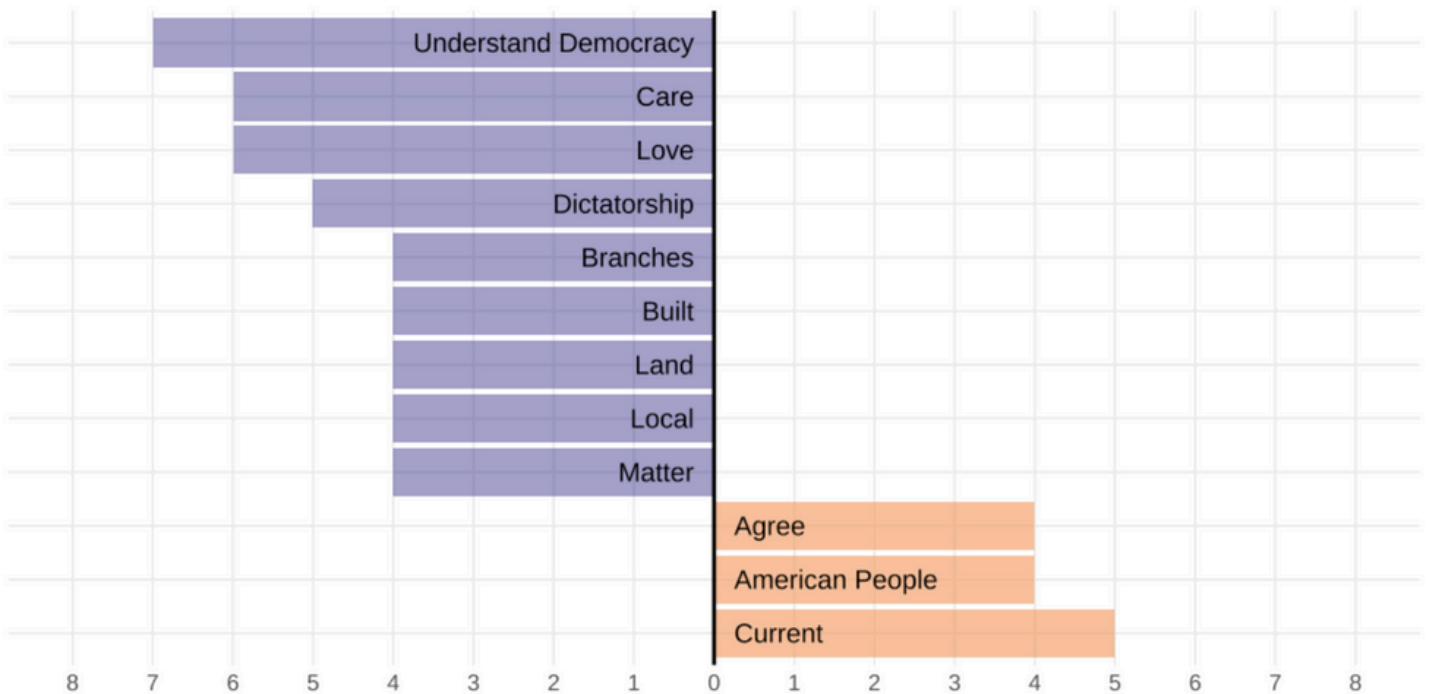
TAKEAWAYS

✓ **Nuances matter**. While the definition of a term (like *democracy* in the example above) might center around a few key themes in how American voters define it, we need to be careful to not let the strokes be too broad. The nuances and distinctions in how different groups define terms is a huge clue into where we might be missing each other as we increasingly get more diverse in our communities and our nation.

For example, in our analysis of how people of different political parties define *democracy*, we see that Democrats, Republicans, and Independents use the same top three words: people, democracy, and government. It's in the next layer of words that we see distinctions: Republicans and Independents next use freedom, vote, and country while Democrats next use vote, freedom, and system. A high-level review of the word clouds presents a different "vibe" for each of the parties, and while one could argue that we are mostly saying the same things when defining *democracy* across political parties, different emphases and prioritizations emerge when we look a layer deeper.

✓ **Our data present evidence that politics and partisanship are shaping our understanding of democracy.** Overall, 3% of definitions of *democracy* mentioned a specific political party or political leader. While that is not a significant percentage on its own, a substory emerged that feels important to highlight: 8% of people who had a negative impression of *democracy* named a political party or leader by name in their definition, while the same was true for only 2% of people who had a positive impression. This suggests not only that political parties may be a driver of negative perceptions about *democracy*, but some respondents may be conflating democracy as a system and politics or partisanship as elements within a democracy.

Simply talk.

It's a tough time to be a word in America. Our modern forms of communication (texting, social media, etc) incentivize conciseness and wit, and we have been trained to be as efficient as possible with our words. As a result, we often lean on a few letters to represent full belief systems, values, and lived experiences. We are asking civic terms to carry incredible weight in our attempts to explain and connect to others.

Let us demonstrate this with our research. Referring back to the definitional data, on average, it took our survey respondents 9 words to elaborate what they meant by *civic engagement*, 11 words for *racial equity*, and 11 words for *democracy*. In fact, one respondent needed 156 words to tell us what they meant by *democracy*! This analysis demonstrates to us how much more Americans have to say about these terms, and how much we may be missing by relying on the terms themselves to communicate what we mean.

Breakdown of Definitional Analysis

Average number of words in definitions

Number of words in longest and shortest definitions

Civic Engagement

9 words

63 words ---- 1 word

Racial Equity

11 words

113 words ---- 1 word

Democracy

11 words

156 words ---- 1 word
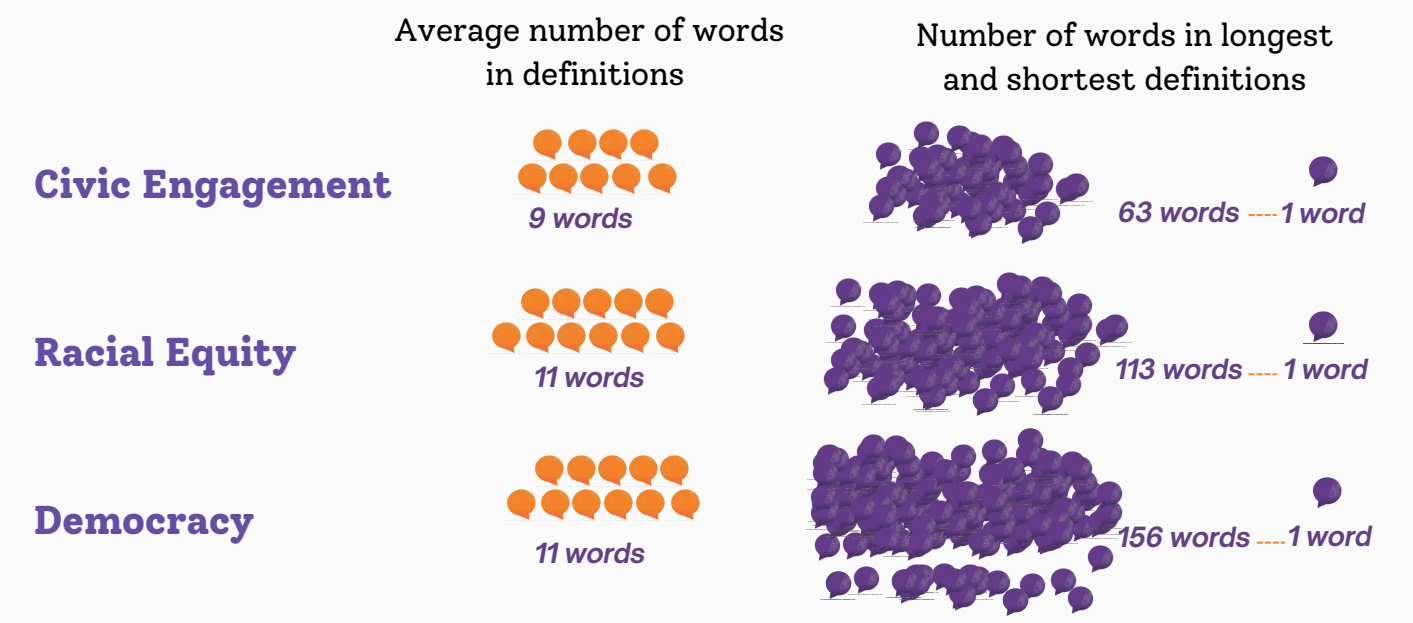
What's our takeaway from this? **Ask people what they mean and give people a chance to go deeper.** Respondents expressed confusion or an inability to provide a definition to a civic term in under 5% of responses. That means 95% of survey respondents had more to say about what they mean by civic terms, and their elaborations shed light on important differences in interpretations and meaning. It is rare to be asked to pause, reflect, consider, and articulate what we mean by civic terms. We invite you to extend that opportunity to others by asking "When you say democracy, what do you mean by that term? What does it mean to you?"

What to say on November 6th?

As we conclude this resource, we want to pull together all of our best thinking about how to talk bridgey and apply it to a moment we might most need to talk bridgey: November 6, 2024, the day after Election Day 2024.

No doubt, whether we know the results on election night and regardless of who the winners are, Americans will have just experienced an intense season of political rivalry. Millions of Americans will be celebrating and feeling hopeful about the future. Another group of Americans will be disappointed–perhaps even feeling scared about their personal future and the future of our nation. **The day after Election Day will be THE moment to talk bridgey**. Not necessarily for the sake of finding or forcing a false "unity," but to dampen the <u>dangerous flames</u> that can lead to deeper divisions–or even violence. In this moment, here are our top lessons to keep in mind:

- Words like *community, service, unity, belonging,* and *freedom* have significant bridgeyness strength. Lean on them.

- Terms send different signals, so check that against your communication goals.

If you're trying to connect to...	You might also lean on...
Conservatives	American, Patriotism, Republic
Liberals	Advocacy, Equality, Racial Equity
Younger people (<34)	Diversity, Social Justice, Advocacy
Older people (>55)	Citizen, Constitution, Liberty
Rural communities	Patriotism, Republic, Liberty
Urban communities	Civic Engagement, Bridging, Racial Equity

- To talk bridgey, we suggest your communication mindset focuses on the ultimate goal of strategic connection rather than self-expression. In other words, high-stakes and high-sensitivity moments–especially ones that involve politics–might be a time to prioritize what people need to hear over what you feel like you need to say.

- People are eager to elaborate. It's our responsibility to slow down, create space, and get curious about the differences in how we understand and relate to civic terms–and the values they represent. That is how we steward civic language for the next generation.

We fully acknowledge that talking bridgey is a choice. It might not always be the best path forward, and it likely will not feel comfortable or easy at first. It's a new skill, and it will take some practice before it gets easier. In this case, however, the return on investment is not just for yourself and the new communities you will bring into your work, but also for the strength and future of American democracy.

ADDENDUM

About PACE
Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) is a philanthropic laboratory of funders seeking to maximize their impact on democracy and civic life in America. Founded in 2005, PACE has over 80 members–grantmakers from diverse backgrounds who share a common commitment to civic engagement and democratic participation. PACE provides a range of services to its members, including organizing convenings and events, producing and curating research and resources, offering funder education programs, and facilitating collaborative initiatives. Learn more at www.PACEFunders.org.

About the Civic Language Perceptions Project
PACE has been exploring civic language since 2019. Since then, PACE has partnered with Citizen Data to run two more rounds of research–one in November 2021 and one in November 2023. The motivation for this project was born out of an observed disconnect between how the professional field and the public talk about civic engagement and democracy. At best, are we talking past each other? Or worse, are we furthering divisions, disillusionment, or disengagement? PACE's Civic Language Perception Project is known for its robust exploration of these questions, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and its findings have gained a lot of attention in the civic field. The data are consistently used by funders, practitioners, think tanks, messaging firms, journalists, academics, policymakers–civic leaders of all types. *For methodological insights about how PACE's 2023 Civic Language Perceptions survey was developed and collected, please visit* www.PACEfunders.org/Language.

Suggested Citation
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Bridgeyness Strength of Civic Terms – Full Analysis

	Net Positivity		Average Range		Perceptions of Driving Apart		Overall Score	Bridgeyness Strength	
	Ranked from highest positivity to lowest		Ranked from smallest range to largest		Ranked from lowest perception to highest		Sum of three rankings	Math to get to bridgeyness strength is below; overall possible score is 63 (21 terms x 3 factors)	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank			
Community	78	2	22	4	3	1	7	63-7= 56 56/63=**89%**	
Service	77	3	20	2	5	2	7	63-7= 56 56/63=**89%**	
Belonging	68	6	18	1	8	3	10	63-10= 53 53/63=**84%**	
Liberty	77	3	20	2	13	6	11	63-11= 52 52/63=**83%**	
Freedom	83	1	23	5	14	7	13	63-13= 50 50/63=**79%**	
Citizen	77	3	21	3	18	9	15	63-15= 48 48/63=76%	
Unity	66	7	23	5	10	4	16	63-16= 47 47/63=**75%**	
Civility	59	9	24	6	14	7	22	63-22= 41 41/63=**65%**	
Constitution	73	4	31	9	26	13	26	63-26= 37 37/63=**59%**	
Equality	61	8	25	7	24	11	26	63-26= 37 37/63=**59%**	
American	70	5	39	12	18	9	26	63-26= 37 37/63=**59%**	
Civic Engagement	49	12	27	8	15	8	28	63-28= 35 35/63=**56%**	
Bridging	31	18	24	6	12	5	29	63-29= 34 34/63=**54%**	
Advocacy	56	10	36	11	19	10	31	63-31=32 32/63=**51%**	
Democracy	61	8	34	10	26	13	31	63-31=32 32/63=**51%**	
Bipartisan	34	16	34	10	25	12	38	63-38=25 25/63=**40%**	
Patriotism	54	11	51	16	25	12	39	63-39=24 24/63=**38%**	
Diversity	46	13	39	12	34	14	39	63-39=24 24/63=**38%**	
Republic	43	14	49	15	25	12	41	63-41=22 22/63=**35%**	
Racial Equity	35	15	41	13	45	16	44	63-44=19 19/63=**30%**	
Social Justice	33	17	42	14	40	15	46	63-46=17 17/63=**27%**	

Ranking: TOP MIDDLE BOTTOM

Signal Graphs

These graphs served as inputs into determining the political, age, and urbanicity signals of civic terms in the table on page 9.

Term perception by political ideology in 2023

Showing the percentage of respondents that selected each response

■ Positve   ■ Not familiar with this word   ■ Neither negative or positve   ■ Negative

Term ownership by political ideology in 2023

Showing the percentage of respondents that selected each response

Legend:
- ■ Fully meant for me
- ■ Somewhat meant for me
- ■ Neutral
- ■ Unsure
- ■ Somewhat meant for someone else
- ■ Fully meant for someone else

Advocacy

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	38	24
Somewhat liberal	19	27
Moderate	13	21
Somewhat conservative	9	22
Very conservative	16	12

American

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	48	15
Somewhat liberal	45	23
Moderate	50	21
Somewhat conservative	69	13
Very conservative	66	12

Belonging

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	33	32
Somewhat liberal	27	38
Moderate	26	31
Somewhat conservative	24	37
Very conservative	29	25

Bipartisan

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	11	23
Somewhat liberal	11	24
Moderate	10	14
Somewhat conservative	10	17
Very conservative	10	16

Bridging

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	12	25
Somewhat liberal	9	26
Moderate	8	13
Somewhat conservative	6	11
Very conservative	6	10

Citizen

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	52	18
Somewhat liberal	46	24
Moderate	48	21
Somewhat conservative	61	17
Very conservative	59	14

Civic Engagement

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	25	33
Somewhat liberal	10	33
Moderate	10	20
Somewhat conservative	13	22
Very conservative	12	19

Civility

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	35	17
Somewhat liberal	23	27
Moderate	24	22
Somewhat conservative	21	22
Very conservative	22	18

Community

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	44	30
Somewhat liberal	33	42
Moderate	28	39
Somewhat conservative	34	38
Very conservative	28	29

Constitution

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	41	18
Somewhat liberal	38	21
Moderate	37	19
Somewhat conservative	53	16
Very conservative	60	16

Democracy

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	53	21
Somewhat liberal	41	27
Moderate	30	22
Somewhat conservative	32	20
Very conservative	33	19

Diversity

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	34	23
Somewhat liberal	25	27
Moderate	14	18
Somewhat conservative	8	12
Very conservative	11	10

Equality

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	46	24
Somewhat liberal	33	29
Moderate	22	24
Somewhat conservative	14	22
Very conservative	23	14

Freedom

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	50	19
Somewhat liberal	51	22
Moderate	51	18
Somewhat conservative	66	18
Very conservative	65	13

Liberty

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	45	23
Somewhat liberal	41	26
Moderate	40	23
Somewhat conservative	52	24
Very conservative	57	15

Patriotism

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	18	13
Somewhat liberal	16	19
Moderate	24	24
Somewhat conservative	47	27
Very conservative	51	21

Racial Equity

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	34	17
Somewhat liberal	19	14
Moderate	13	14
Somewhat conservative	7	7
Very conservative	11	6

Republic

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	20	12
Somewhat liberal	13	13
Moderate	18	14
Somewhat conservative	33	21
Very conservative	47	17

Service

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	30	30
Somewhat liberal	24	38
Moderate	21	28
Somewhat conservative	29	33
Very conservative	30	30

Social Justice

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	37	22
Somewhat liberal	20	24
Moderate	13	18
Somewhat conservative	5	11
Very conservative	9	10

Unity

	Fully	Somewhat
Very liberal	39	22
Somewhat liberal	32	26
Moderate	26	23
Somewhat conservative	20	31
Very conservative	24	20

Term perception by age in 2023

Showing the percentage of respondents that selected each response

- ■ Positve
- ■ Not familiar with this word
- ■ Neither negative or positve
- ■ Negative

Advocacy
Age	Positive
55+	60
35-54	66
18-34	67

American
Age	Positive
55+	89
35-54	70
18-34	59

Belonging
Age	Positive
55+	73
35-54	70
18-34	71

Bipartisan
Age	Positive
55+	56
35-54	41
18-34	33

Bridging
Age	Positive
55+	34
35-54	36
18-34	33

Citizen
Age	Positive
55+	89
35-54	75
18-34	68

Civic Engagement
Age	Positive
55+	56
35-54	54
18-34	53

Civility
Age	Positive
55+	68
35-54	71
18-34	60

Community
Age	Positive
55+	84
35-54	79
18-34	77

Constitution
Age	Positive
55+	90
35-54	74
18-34	61

Democracy
Age	Positive
55+	81
35-54	62
18-34	61

Diversity
Age	Positive
55+	57
35-54	64
18-34	69

Equality
Age	Positive
55+	71
35-54	73
18-34	73

Freedom
Age	Positive
55+	92
35-54	84
18-34	80

Liberty
Age	Positive
55+	89
35-54	77
18-34	74

Patriotism
Age	Positive
55+	79
35-54	63
18-34	48

Racial Equity
Age	Positive
55+	53
35-54	56
18-34	59

Republic
Age	Positive
55+	68
35-54	44
18-34	48

Service
Age	Positive
55+	85
35-54	78
18-34	72

Social Justice
Age	Positive
55+	53
35-54	55
18-34	59

Unity
Age	Positive
55+	73
35-54	74
18-34	75

Term ownership by age in 2023

Showing the percentage of respondents that selected each response

Legend: ■ Fully meant for me ■ Somewhat meant for me ■ Neutral ■ Unsure ■ Somewhat meant for someone else ■ Fully meant for someone else

Advocacy
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	14	18
35-54	20	22
18-34	21	27

American
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	66	16
35-54	52	18
18-34	40	18

Belonging
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	24	34
35-54	28	32
18-34	30	28

Bipartisan
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	11	21
35-54	9	15
18-34	9	14

Bridging
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	4	14
35-54	9	19
18-34	12	14

Citizen
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	59	18
35-54	50	20
18-34	42	21

Civic Engagement
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	11	22
35-54	12	27
18-34	15	23

Civility
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	26	20
35-54	24	23
18-34	22	22

Community
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	28	39
35-54	33	35
18-34	35	32

Constitution
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	58	15
35-54	36	20
18-34	27	22

Democracy
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	47	20
35-54	29	22
18-34	23	25

Diversity
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	15	14
35-54	18	22
18-34	20	23

Equality
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	23	22
35-54	27	24
18-34	30	25

Freedom
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	64	16
35-54	52	18
18-34	44	20

Liberty
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	56	21
35-54	38	24
18-34	34	22

Patriotism
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	38	24
35-54	26	22
18-34	18	18

Racial Equity
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	12	11
35-54	18	11
18-34	19	17

Republic
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	32	13
35-54	19	15
18-34	15	19

Service
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	27	34
35-54	24	29
18-34	22	29

Social Justice
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	14	13
35-54	18	19
18-34	17	20

Unity
Age	Fully meant for me	Somewhat meant for me
55+	25	24
35-54	29	24
18-34	30	25

Term perception by community type in 2023

Showing the percentage of respondents that selected each response

■ Positve ■ Not familiar with this word ■ Neither negative or positve ■ Negative

Advocacy
Urban	65
Suburban	63
Rural	63

American
Urban	74
Suburban	74
Rural	82

Belonging
Urban	70
Suburban	73
Rural	71

Bipartisan
Urban	46
Suburban	48
Rural	40

Bridging
Urban	38
Suburban	35
Rural	28

Citizen
Urban	77
Suburban	80
Rural	83

Civic Engagement
Urban	58
Suburban	56
Rural	45

Civility
Urban	63
Suburban	69
Rural	67

Community
Urban	80
Suburban	82
Rural	79

Constitution
Urban	72
Suburban	79
Rural	84

Democracy
Urban	69
Suburban	72
Rural	70

Diversity
Urban	66
Suburban	62
Rural	56

Equality
Urban	71
Suburban	73
Rural	71

Freedom
Urban	82
Suburban	88
Rural	91

Liberty
Urban	78
Suburban	82
Rural	87

Patriotism
Urban	59
Suburban	68
Rural	72

Racial Equity
Urban	62
Suburban	54
Rural	50

Republic
Urban	47
Suburban	58
Rural	61

Service
Urban	81
Suburban	80
Rural	80

Social Justice
Urban	62
Suburban	55
Rural	47

Unity
Urban	73
Suburban	75
Rural	72

Term ownership by community type in 2023

Showing the percentage of respondents that selected each response

Legend: ■ Fully meant for me ■ Somewhat meant for me ■ Neutral ■ Unsure ■ Somewhat meant for someone else ■ Fully meant for someone else
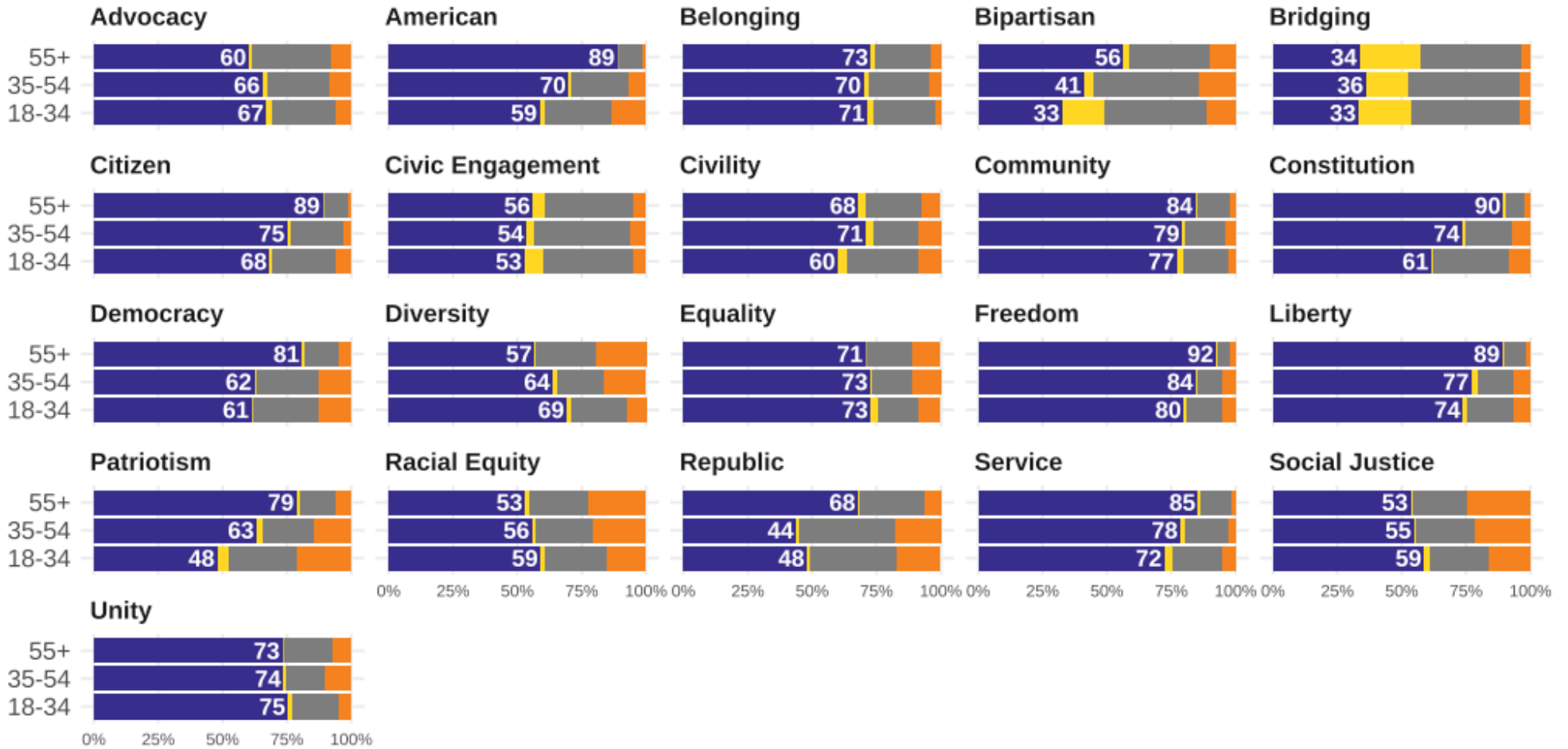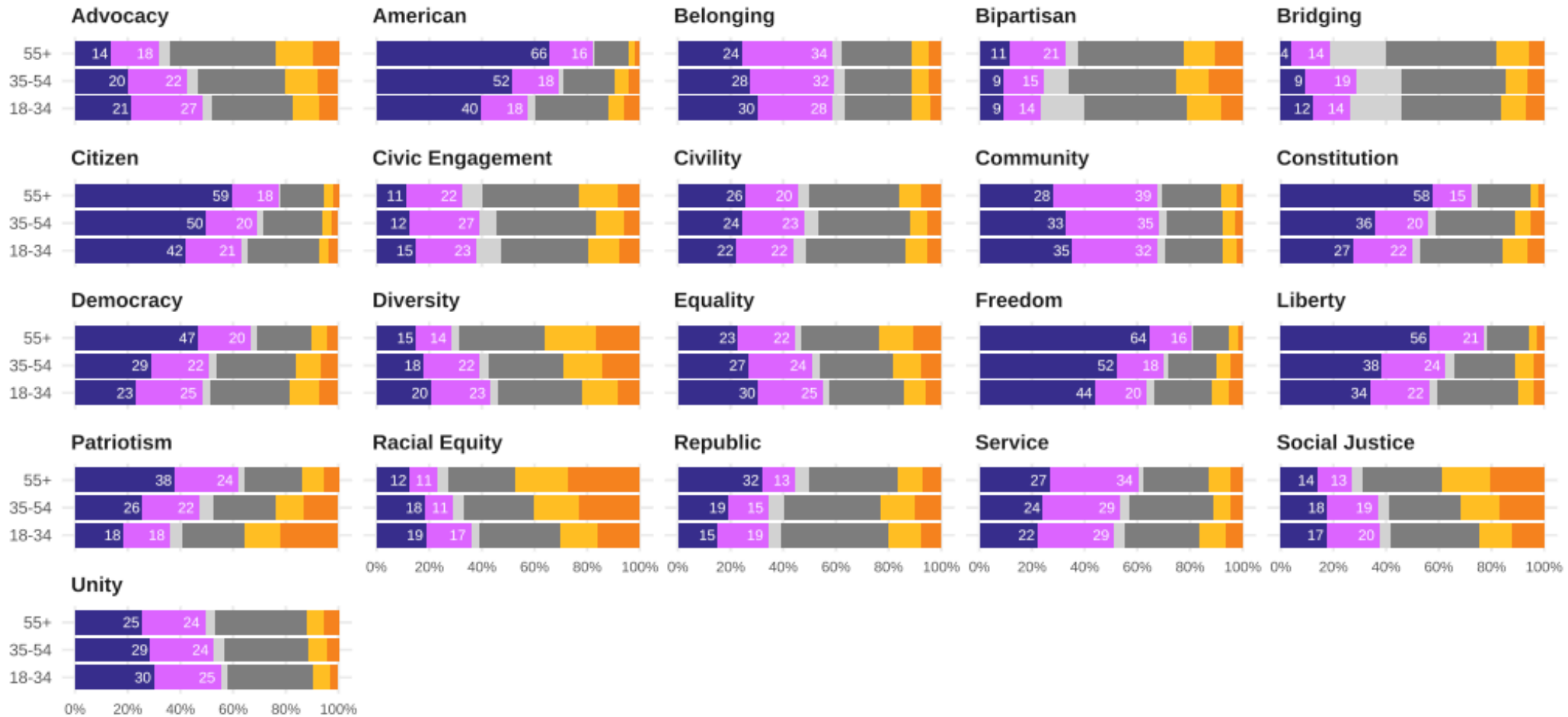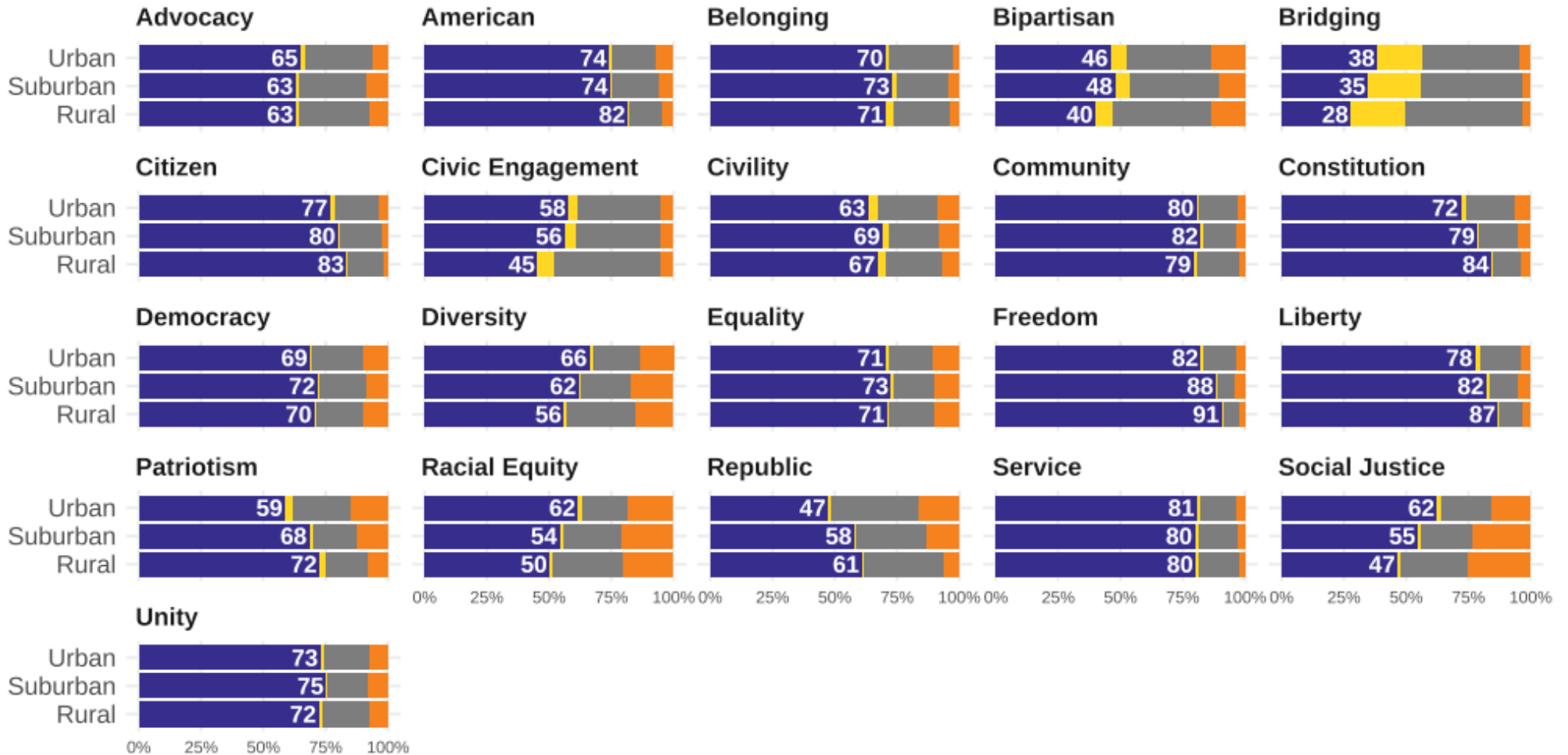

Advocacy
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	20	20
Suburban	18	20
Rural	14	26

American
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	48	20
Suburban	56	16
Rural	62	16

Belonging
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	28	31
Suburban	26	33
Rural	28	33

Bipartisan
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	10	18
Suburban	11	19
Rural	10	14

Bridging
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	11	18
Suburban	6	15
Rural	6	14

Citizen
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	48	22
Suburban	52	19
Rural	58	16

Civic Engagement
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	17	27
Suburban	11	24
Rural	10	19

Civility
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	24	21
Suburban	24	22
Rural	27	20

Community
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	35	35
Suburban	31	37
Rural	29	37

Constitution
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	36	19
Suburban	43	18
Rural	54	18

Democracy
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	34	22
Suburban	36	22
Rural	37	21

Diversity
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	22	23
Suburban	15	17
Rural	15	15

Equality
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	28	25
Suburban	25	22
Rural	26	23

Freedom
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	51	17
Suburban	56	18
Rural	60	18

Liberty
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	43	22
Suburban	46	24
Rural	49	21

Patriotism
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	24	18
Suburban	29	22
Rural	36	26

Racial Equity
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	24	14
Suburban	13	12
Rural	12	12

Republic
	Fully	Somewhat	
Urban	19	15	21
Suburban	24	16	
Rural	29	13	

Service
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	26	31
Suburban	24	32
Rural	24	30

Social Justice
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	22	21
Suburban	14	15
Rural	14	15

Unity
	Fully	Somewhat
Urban	30	22
Suburban	26	26
Rural	28	22