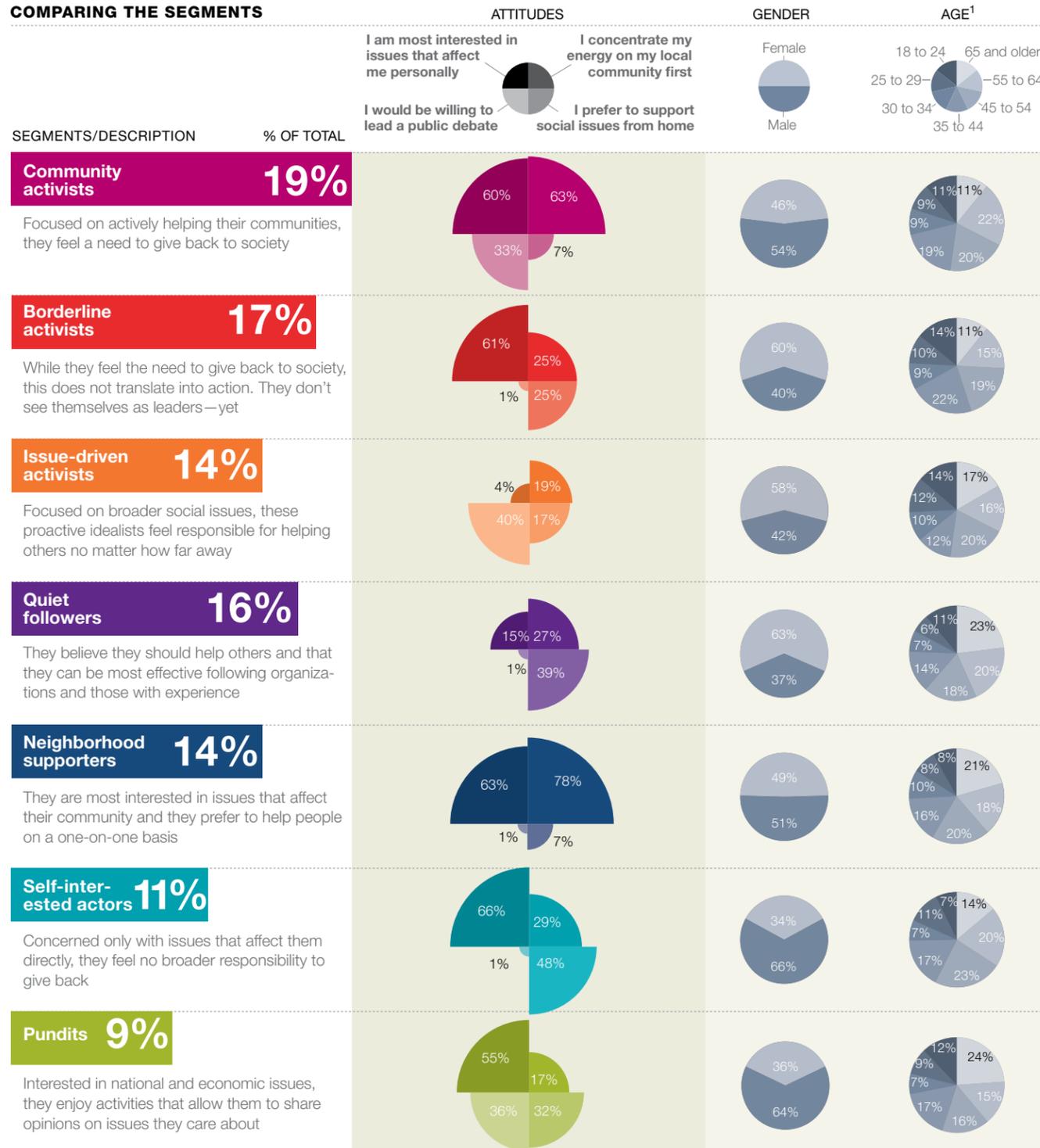


Activists, pundits, quiet followers, oh my

Our recent research shows that people who get involved in social issues differentiate most strongly based on their needs and attitudes, not demographics or behaviors. We have identified seven distinct needs-based segments among Americans who support at least one social cause; the chart below highlights the key differences among the segments.

COMPARING THE SEGMENTS



¹Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding. Source: 2009 McKinsey Public Engagement Survey (n=1,540 US adults)

Which segments support which issues?

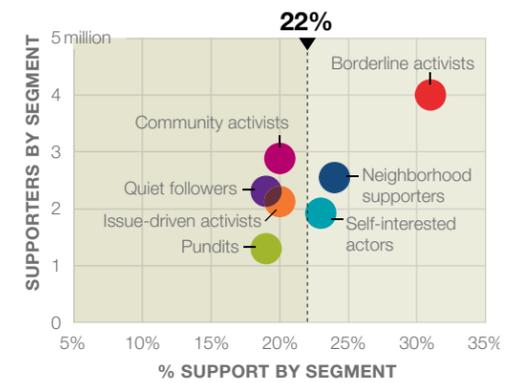
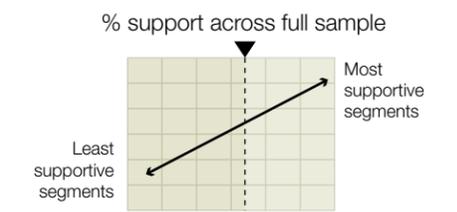
In the United States, the three issues with the greatest number of supporters are curing disease, the environment, and education. Here's how organizations focused on those issues might put needs-based segmentation to work.

THE TOP THREE ISSUES IN THE UNITED STATES

1 Curing disease

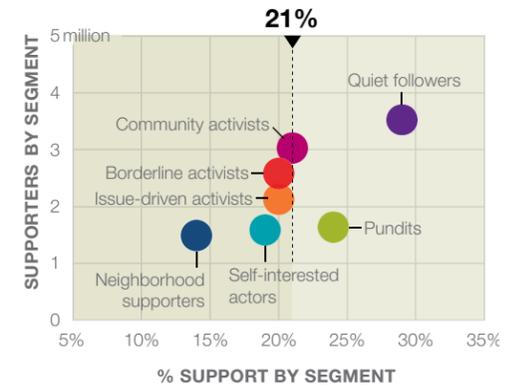
By targeting two segments that make up only 10 percent of the total US population—borderline activists and neighborhood supporters—organizations devoted to finding cures for diseases can reach almost 40 percent¹ of their likely supporters. Most people in these two segments are willing to participate in a range of activities but are hesitant to take the lead. An organization focused on curing disease or eliminating a major health problem should emphasize how its issue has affected (or could affect) individuals and local communities, provide engagement opportunities that don't require supporters to take on leadership roles, and give clear direction as to how supporters might follow more experienced leaders. They should also provide opportunities for supporters to attend events or join interest groups, whether in person or online.

HOW TO READ



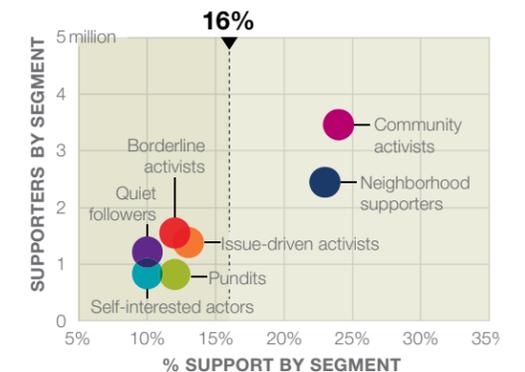
2 Environment

Organizations focused on environmental issues are likely to have a very diverse supporter base—no single segment will dominate, but about one-fifth¹ will probably be quiet followers. These organizations should create multiple ways for supporters to engage and educate themselves (eg, direct mail, magazine coverage) and get involved; communicate their work with regard to global issues and challenges; give clear guidance as to how supporters can help; and focus initial requests on actions that do not require social interaction (eg, allow them to sign a petition online rather than in person). Because quiet followers will not take on leadership roles, environmental organizations' recruiting efforts may need to target other segments with a stronger leadership profile, such as community activists.



3 Education

Not surprisingly, educational causes are likely to attract the support of people in segments most interested in helping their own communities: community activists and neighborhood supporters. In fact, these two segments make up more than half¹ of individuals active in education. Education nonprofits should therefore shape their communications and advocacy activities to cater to the preferences of these segments: they should host or participate in local events, make clear in their communications exactly how their work helps the local community, and organize activities that incorporate social interaction. For example, they might host letter-writing sessions at local venues instead of simply asking people to independently write letters to their members of Congress.



¹Percentages and fractions represent the combined number of supporters for a given cause in the named segments divided by the number of supporters for that cause in all segments.