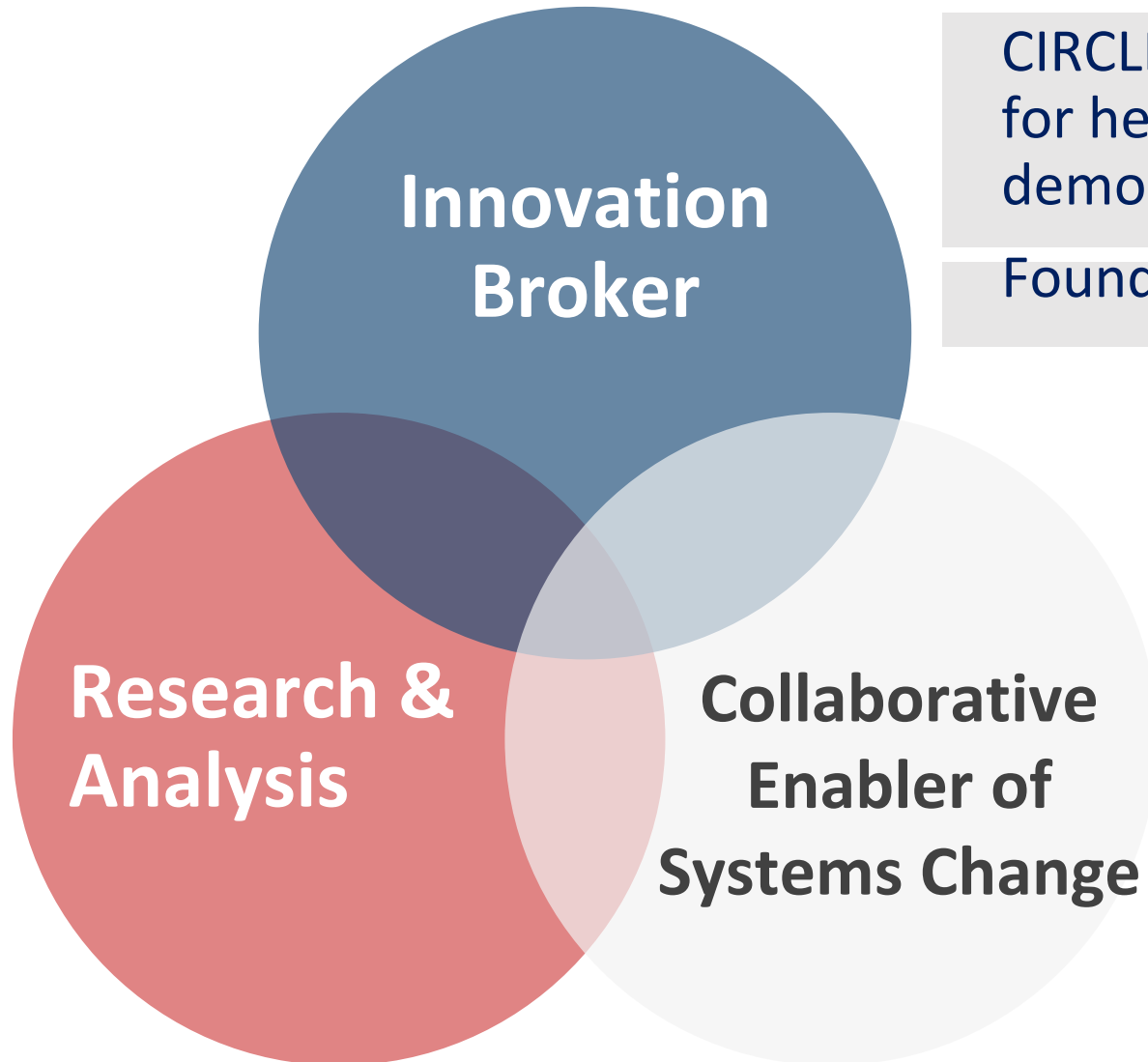


# Building Youth Civic Engagement

**Abby Kiesa, Director of Impact**  
**November 2018**

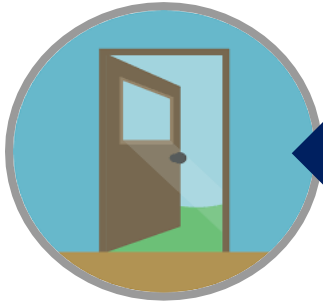


A national, nonpartisan research center focused on young people in the US, especially those who are marginalized or disadvantaged in political life.

CIRCLE's scholarly research informs policy and practice for healthier youth development and a better democracy.

Founded in 2001.

# Our Approach to Youth Civic Engagement



Early engagement increases the likelihood of lifelong engagement



We are concerned with **HOW MANY**, **HOW**, and **WHICH** young people participate



Participating in civic engagement can support civic and other types of youth development



Research is a tool to help reduce **SYSTEMIC GAPS** in youth civic opportunity

How do we make those entry points...



**VISIBLE**



**ACCESSIBLE**



**MEANINGFUL**

**...TO ALL YOUTH?**



# A paradigm shift . . .

**FROM**

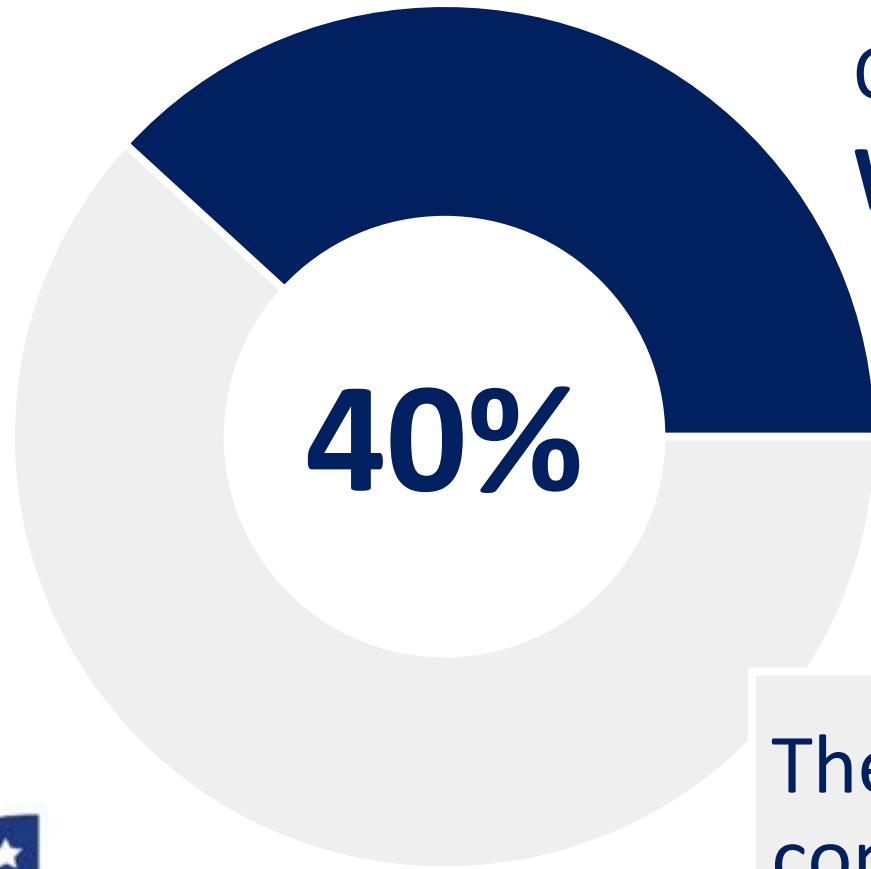
**“Mobilizing”  
Voters**

**TO**

**“Growing”  
Voters**



# Youth population ...is substantial



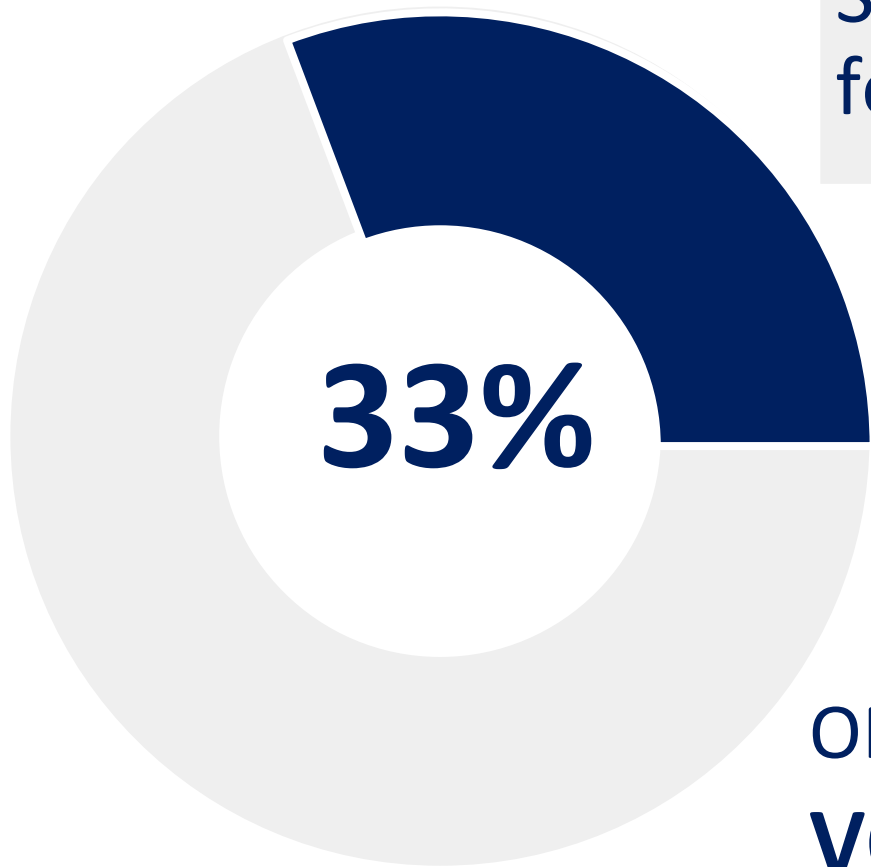
OF THE ELIGIBLE YOUTH ELECTORATE  
**WILL BE UNDER AGE 40 IN 2020**

They bring unique & critical perspectives to conversations about a range of public issues.



# Youth participation ...boosts engagement

Starting early builds broad civic engagement for everyone in all communities.



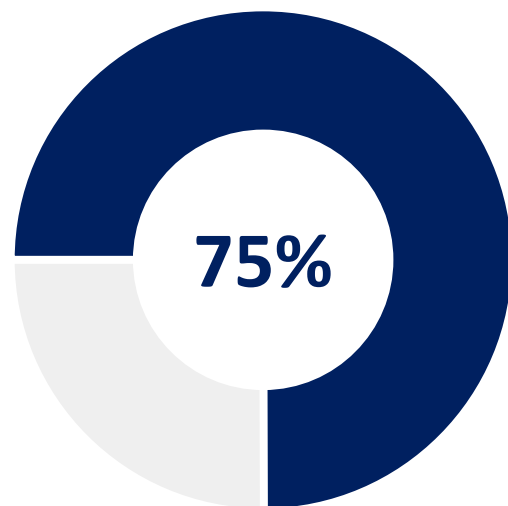
OF YOUTH 18-29 **WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO  
VOTE FOR THE FIRST TIME** IN 2020



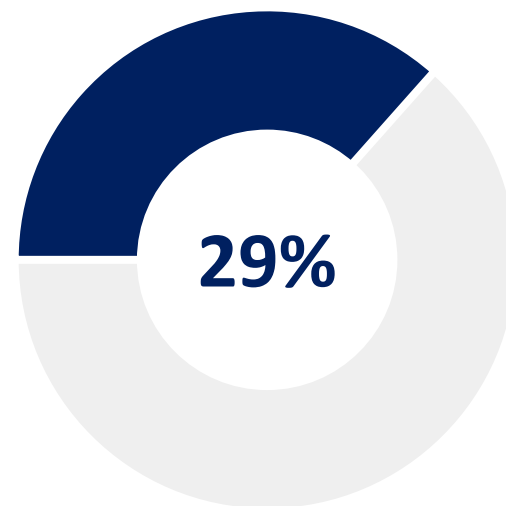
# Youth participation

# ...builds equity

## 2016 YOUTH TURNOUT



COLLEGE DEGREE  
TURNOUT



NO H.S. DIPLOMA  
TURNOUT

Race and education gaps among youth must be addressed to increase turnout overall.

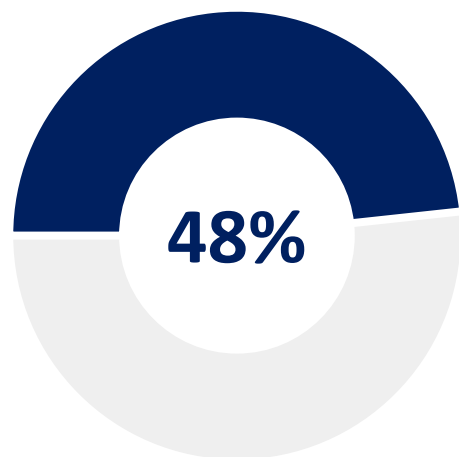




# Youth participation ...is undermobilized

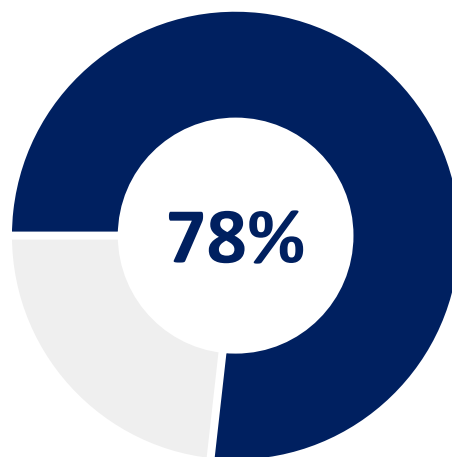
Registered & Voted

“Lost Votes”



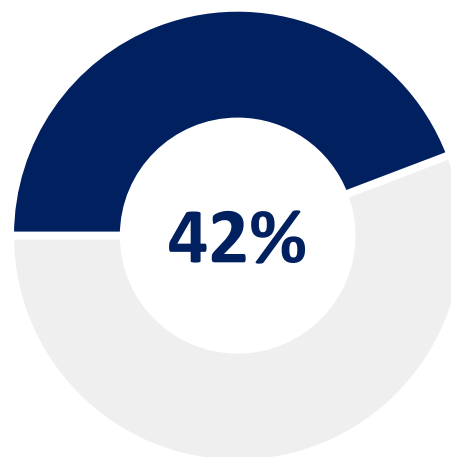
**2010**

Midterm



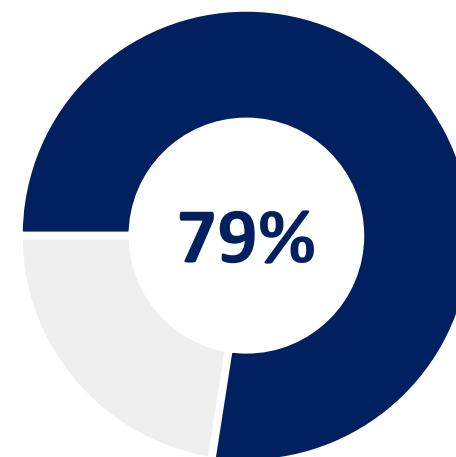
**2012**

Presidential



**2014**

Midterm



**2016**

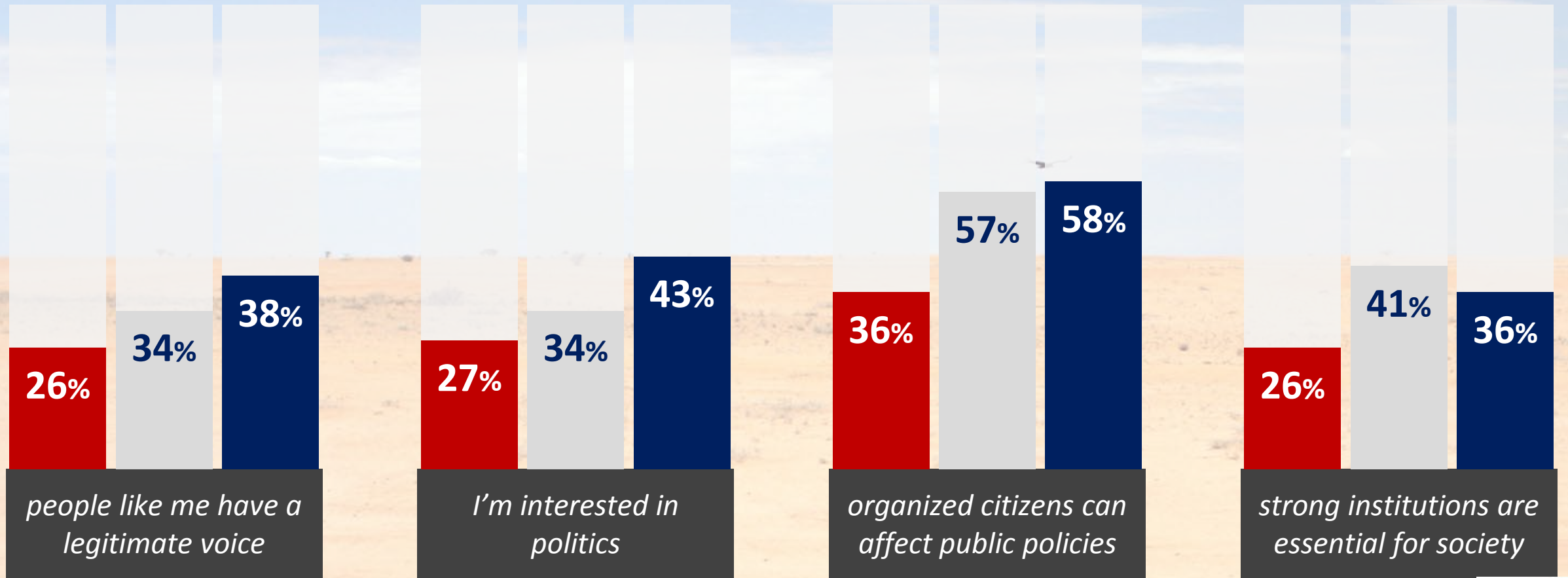
Presidential

Millions of “Lost Votes” occur in the youth population each election.

**Civics Desert**  
*0 resources*

**Modest Access**  
*1-3 resources*

**High Access**  
*4-5 resources*



**Civic deserts have a lack of belief in civic engagement**





# barriers to engagement may start before age 18

**Lack of local opportunity  
structure**

**Negative Perception of  
Political Leaders**

**Low Exposure to  
Civic Practices**





**find opportunities to build engagement  
in all parts of young people's lives**

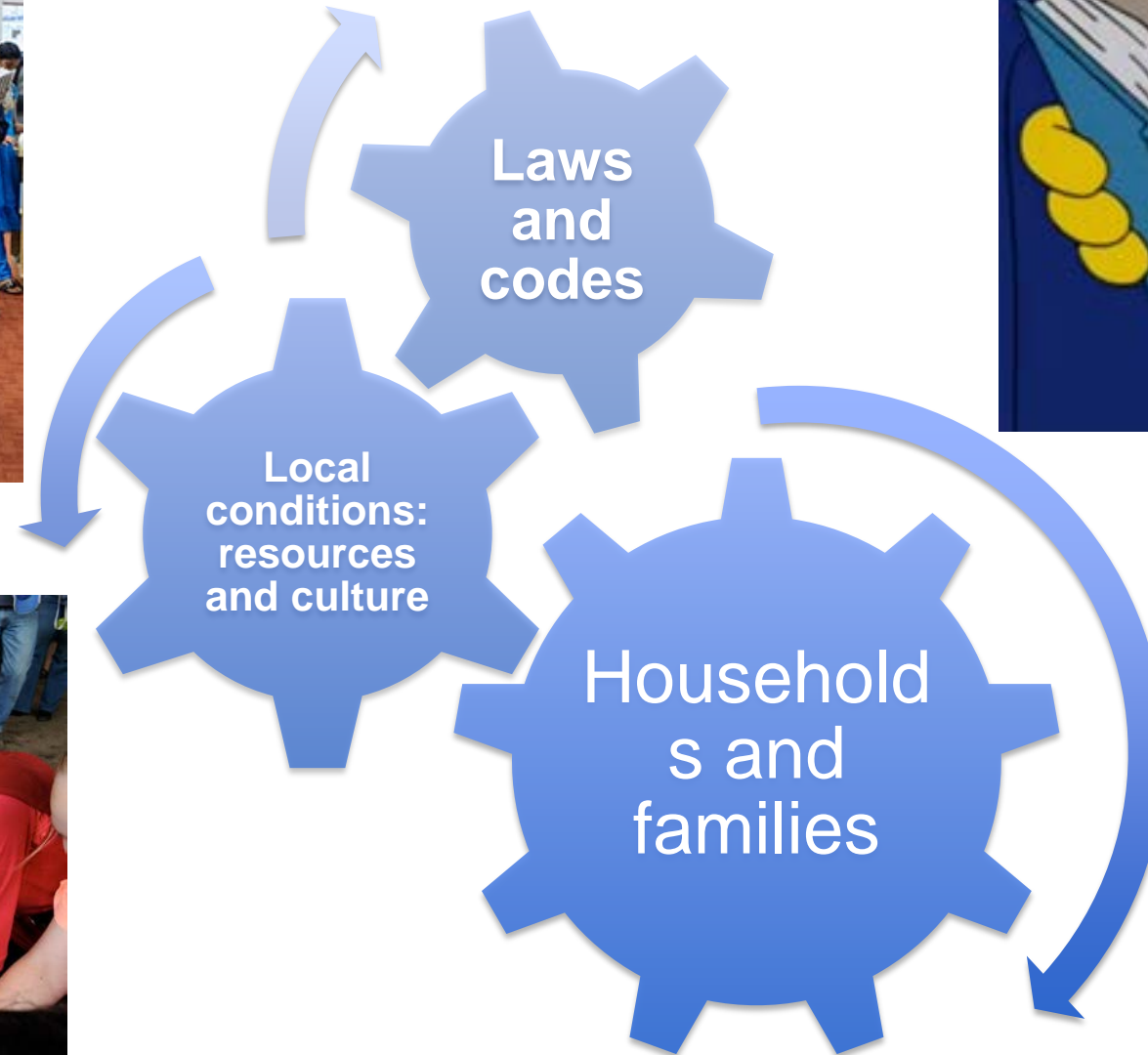
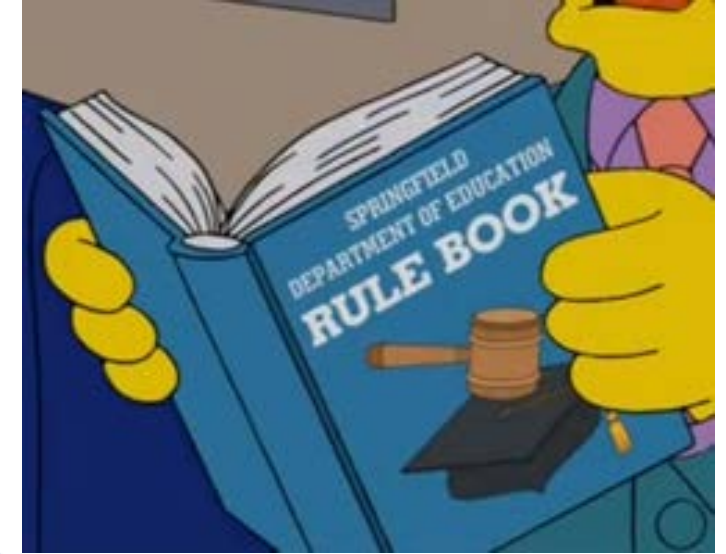
**COMMUNITY**

**HOME**

**WORK**

**SCHOOL**

# Opportunities in Different Parts of Young People's Lives



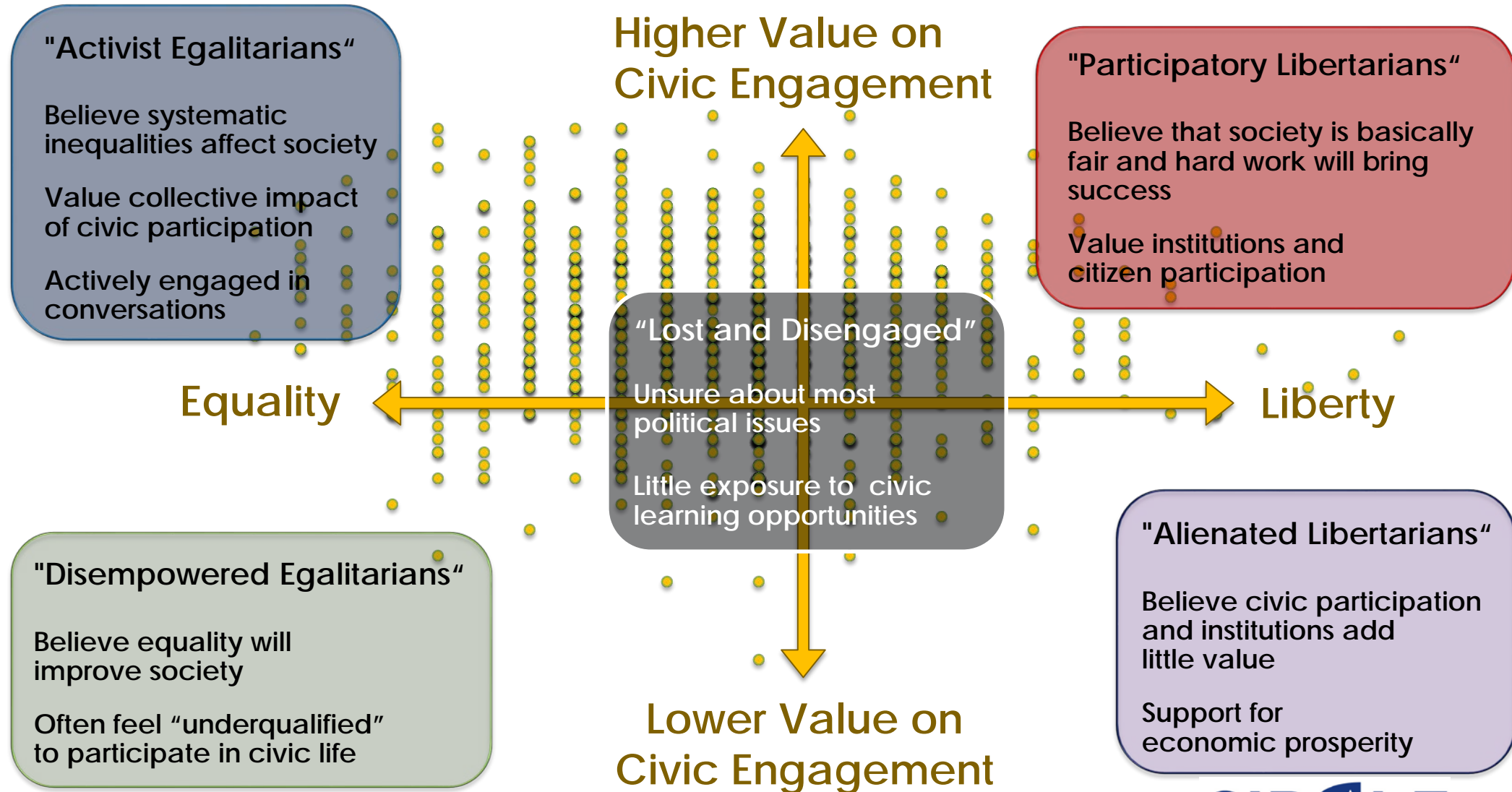
# Ideological Typology Analytic Strategy

- Theoretical axes based on major influences that drive participation
  - Value on civic engagement
  - Significance of inequality in society
- More than 10 items for each axis/index, which lead to an aggregate score
- 5 clusters emerged
- Used those clusters to see whether/how they predicted media consumption and other civic behaviors

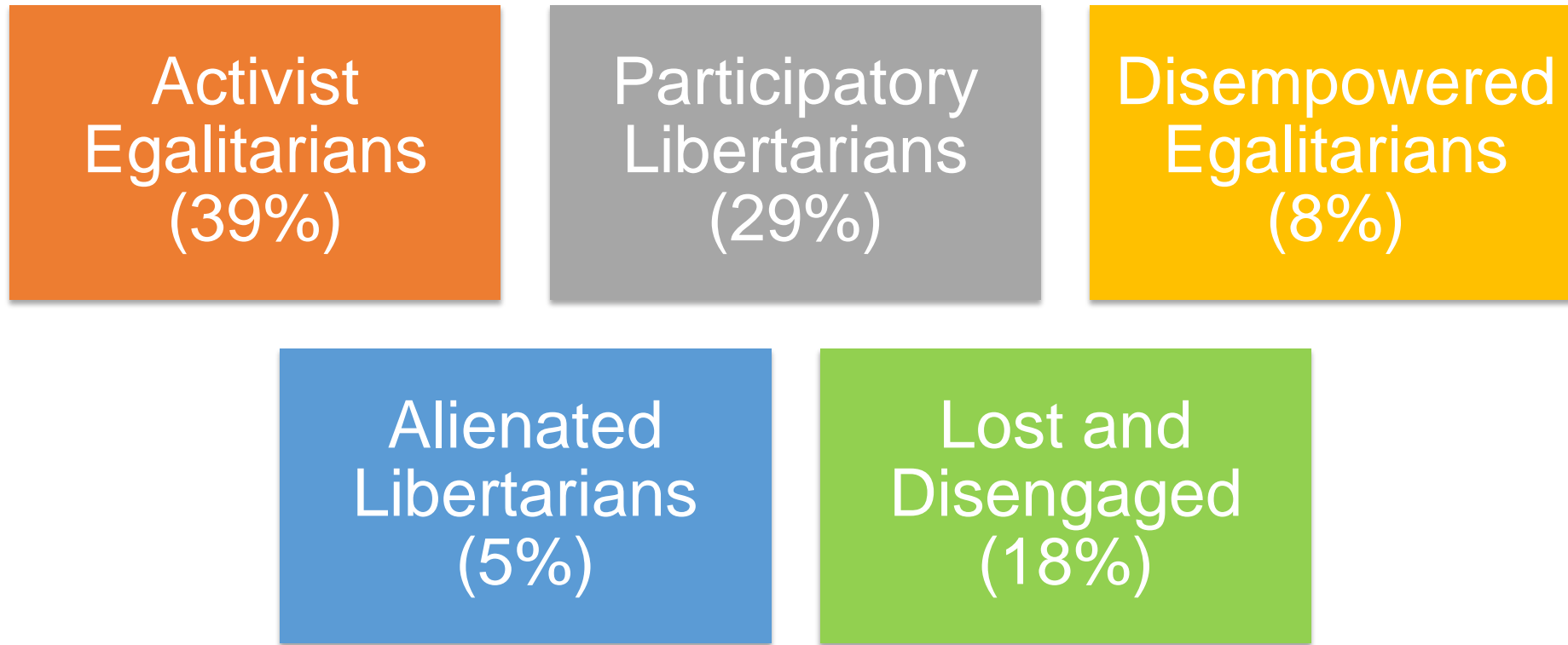




# Distribution of Youth Typology on Two Core Beliefs

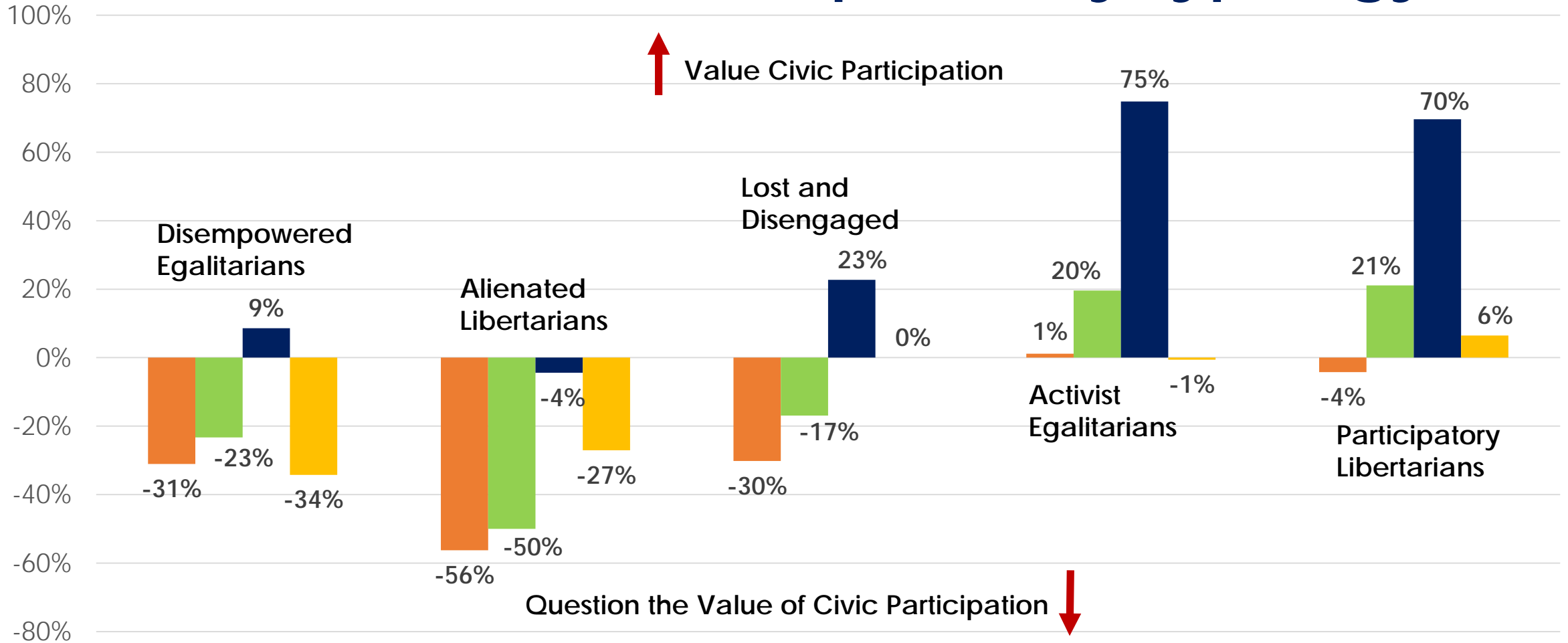


# Distribution of Youth Typology Among Millennials





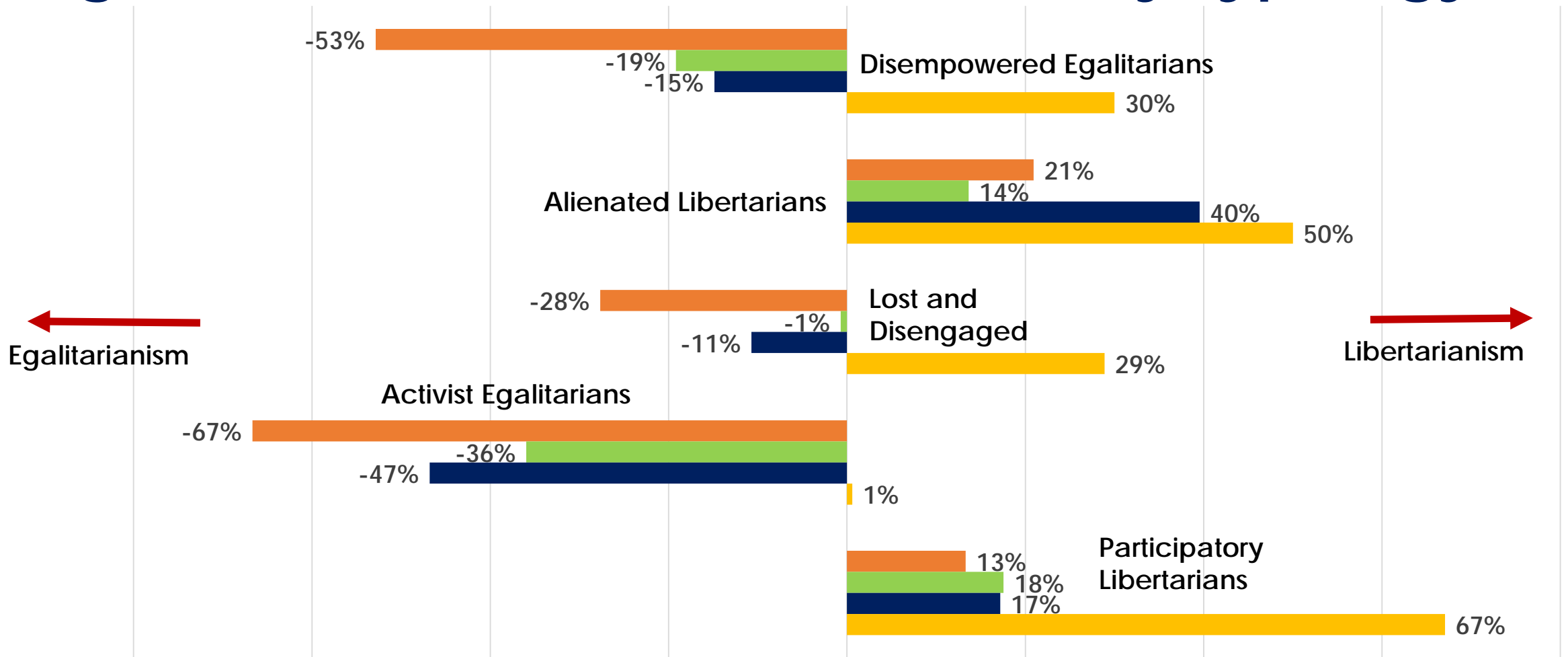
# Value of Civic Participation by Typology



- Participated in demonstration or protest
- Attended a meeting where local issues were discussed
- We can work together to promote important political goals
- People like me have a legitimate voice in political process



# Egalitarian and Libertarian Beliefs by Typology



- Our economic system is basically fair to all
- Hard work does generally bring success
- Blacks would be just as well-off as Whites if only they tried harder
- Poor people are too dependent on government assistance



# Activist Egalitarians (39% of Millennials)

- See racial & economic justice the problem and believe citizens can address problems
- Civically engaged, high turnout
- Majority have college education
- Economically diverse
- Live in communities with access to civic institutions
- Active on social media and engage with diverse perspectives



# Participatory Libertarians (29%)

- Believe society is fair and individual citizens should contribute to society
- Majority w/ college education and good income
- Do vote but not politically engaged
- Live in communities with access to civic institutions
- Surrounded by similar perspectives



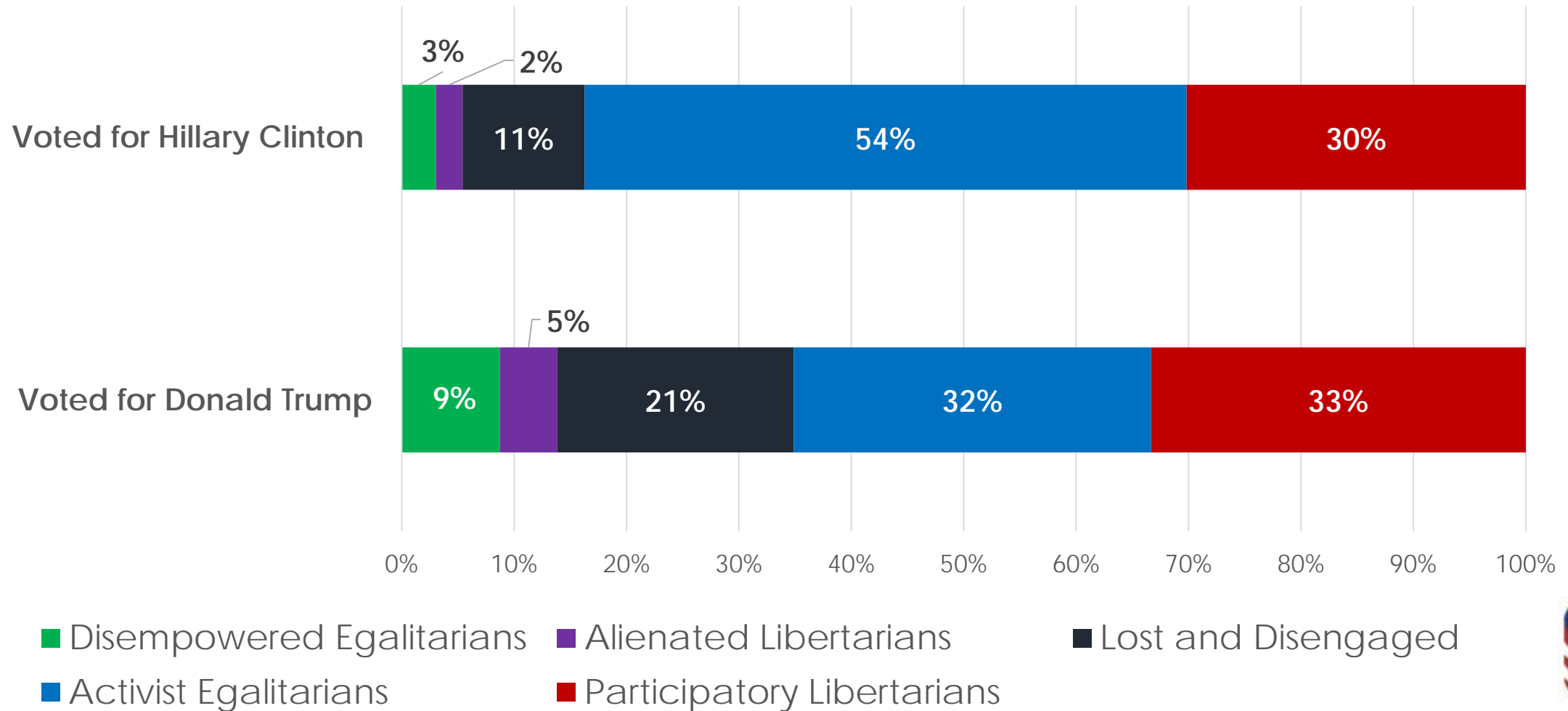
# Lost and Disengaged (18%)

- Don't know what to think of most social issues
- Low civic knowledge and turnout - disengaged
- Mixed view of inequality
- Little access to civic opportunities
- Relatively low educational attainment and income
- Most racially diverse group



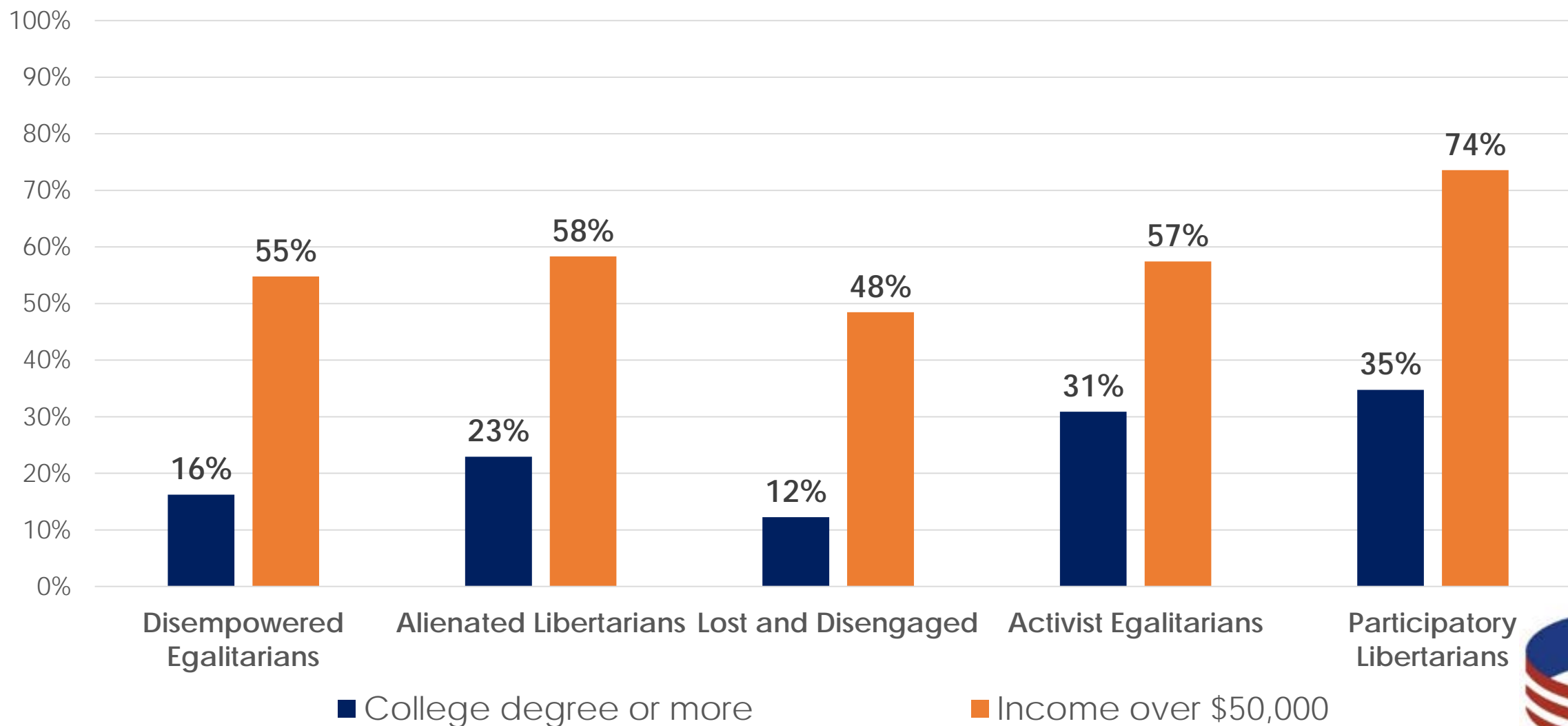
# Alienated and Disempowered Millennials More Likely to Vote for President Trump

Youth Ideological Typology by Vote Choice



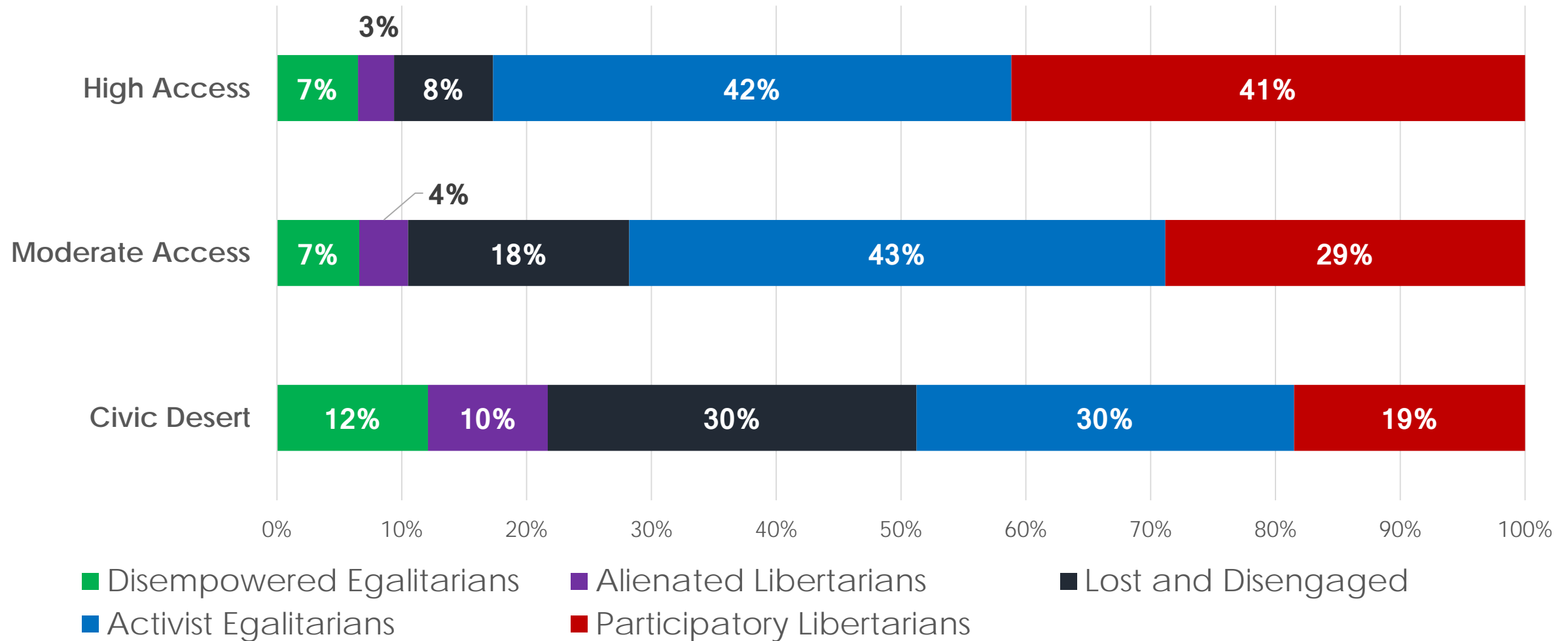
# Engaged Groups More Likely to Have College Experience

Education and Income by Typology



# Disempowered, Alienated and Lost Millennials More Likely to Report Living in a Civic Desert

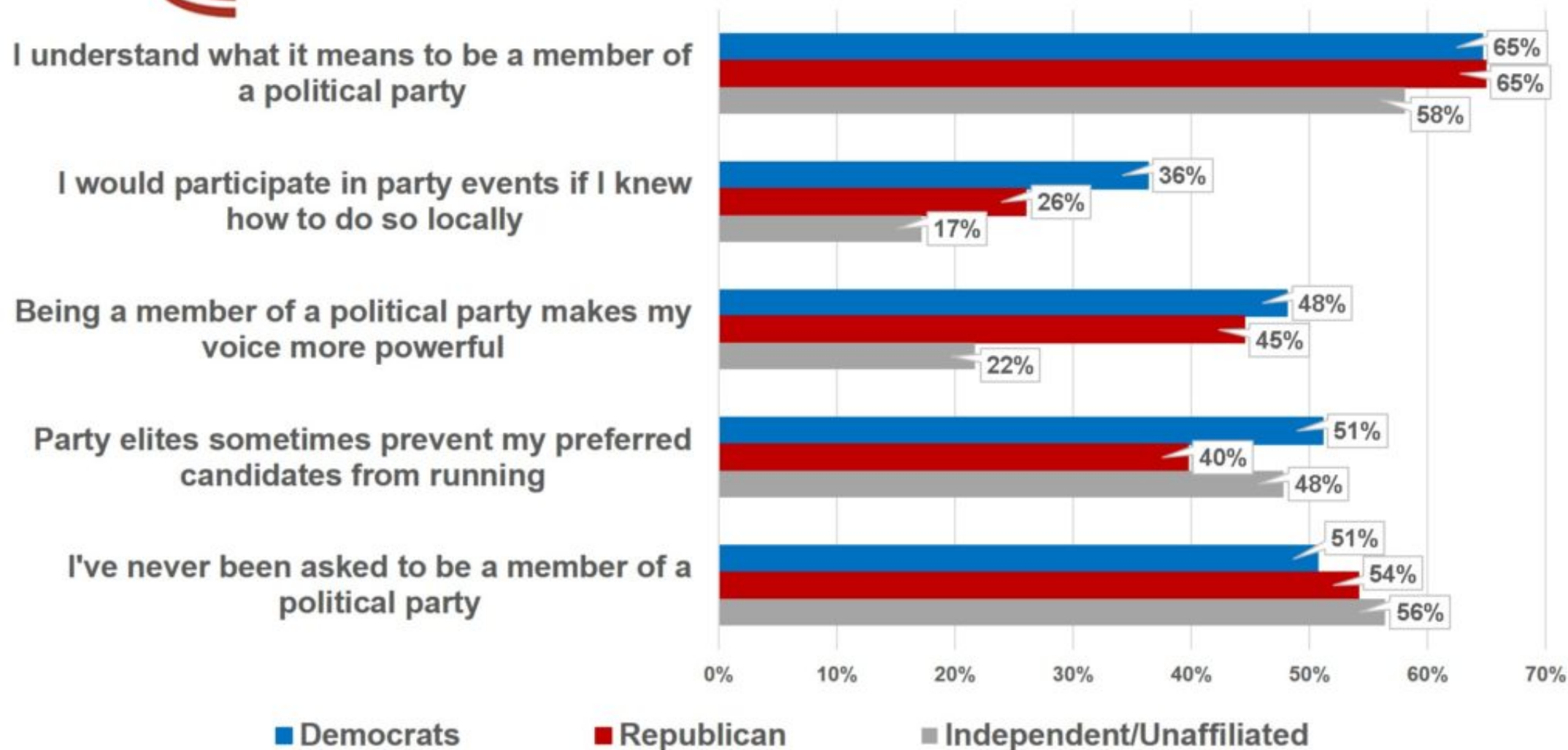
Youth Ideological Typology by Access to Community Institutions







## Percentage of Young People, Ages 18-24, Who Agree or Strongly Agree with Each Statement, by Party Affiliation



# Different Approaches are Necessary



Not everyone is on social media or trust it—  
many rely heavily on TV



Important to understand what/whom youth trust



Message AND Messenger (Some react negatively  
to party and organization outreach)



Family remains the most reliable way to  
encourage young people



Need to invest in longer-term and multi-faceted  
solutions



# Ask These Questions about Your Young People



How/where do they get information?



Whom/What do they trust?



What do they care about?



How can they be welcomed into community?



Who/what can be a bridge to their community?





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