



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FROM THE  
AMERICAN RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION  
SURVEY (ARIS) AND  
THE FAITH COMMUNITIES TODAY (FACT)  
SURVEYS

This information was compiled by the Unitarian Universalist Association. For other statistical information about Unitarian Universalism, please visit <http://www.uua.org/directory/data/demographics/index.shtml>. To contact that Unitarian Universalist Association, call (617) 742-2100 or email [info@uua.org](mailto:info@uua.org).

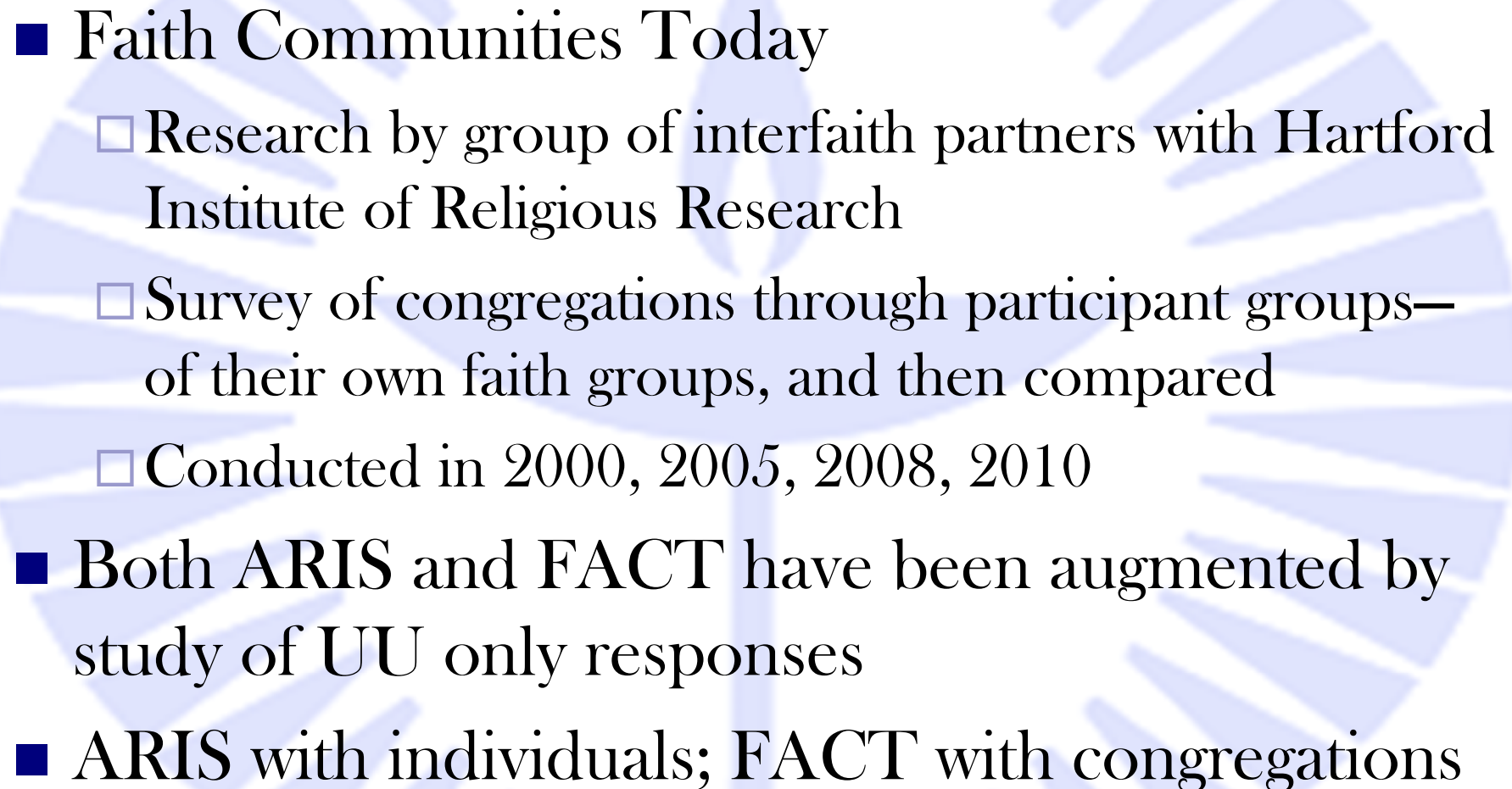
# ARIS AND FACT

## ■ ARIS:

- American Religious Identification Surveys
- Studies in 1990, 2001 and 2008
- Random-digit-dialed telephone interviews
- Open ended questions
- 2008 Study: February-November, 54,461 people
- 2001 Study: 50,281 people
- 1990 Study: 113,713 people
- Trinity College, Hartford, CT; same team all studies



# ARIS AND FACT

- Faith Communities Today
    - Research by group of interfaith partners with Hartford Institute of Religious Research
    - Survey of congregations through participant groups—of their own faith groups, and then compared
    - Conducted in 2000, 2005, 2008, 2010
  - Both ARIS and FACT have been augmented by study of UU only responses
  - ARIS with individuals; FACT with congregations
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# ARIS: Population Size and Geography

- Those identifying as UUs (estimates):
  - 1990: 463,000
  - 2008: 586,000
  - 27% increase
  - Similar to increase in US population of 30%
  - UUs over-represented in Northeast: in 1990 about 1 in 4
  - 2008: increase in West and South
  - Percentage US Population 1990 .26%
  - Percentage US Population 2008 .25%

# ARIS: Population Size and Geography

	1990 UUA	1990 % UUA	1990 USA	2008 UUA	2008 % UUA	2008 USA
<b>TOTAL</b>	463,000	100%	175,440,000	586,000	100%	228,182,000
Northeast	121,000	26%	21%	111,000	19%	18%
Midwest	106,000	23%	24%	101,000	17%	22%
South	99,000	21%	35%	139,000	24%	37%
West	138,000	30%	20%	236,000	40%	23%

# ARIS: Gender

- Those identifying as UUs:
  - More women than men
  - Gap narrowed from 1990 to 2008

	1990		2008	
	UUA	USA	UUA	USA
% MALE	38	48	41	48
% FEMALE	62	52	59	52



# ARIS: Age

- Median age of US Adults

- 1990: 40

- 2008: 44

- Median age of UU Adults

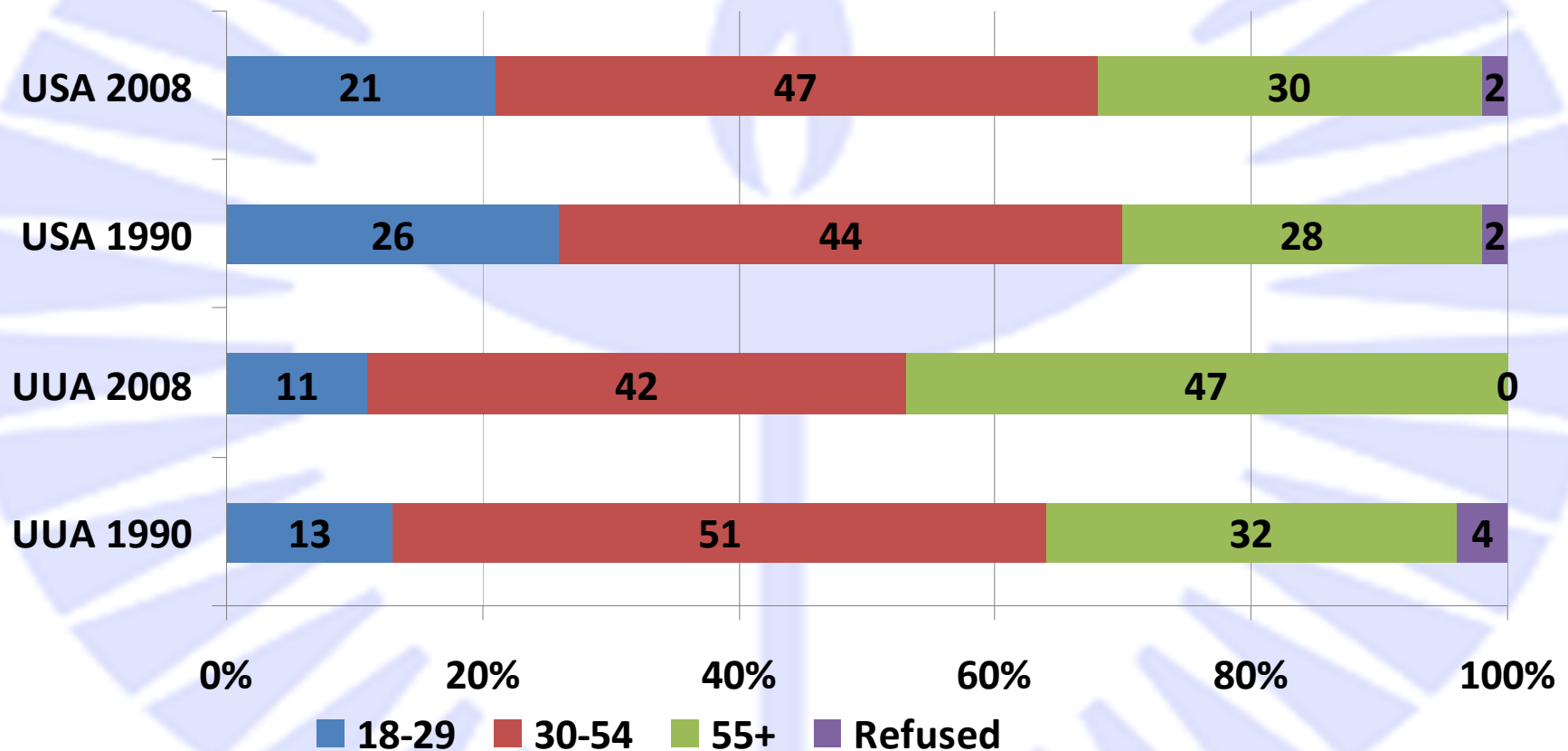
- 1990: 44

- 2008: 52

- UU congregations “aging” faster

- Those over 55 were about one-third in 1990, near half in 2008

# ARIS: Age Distribution



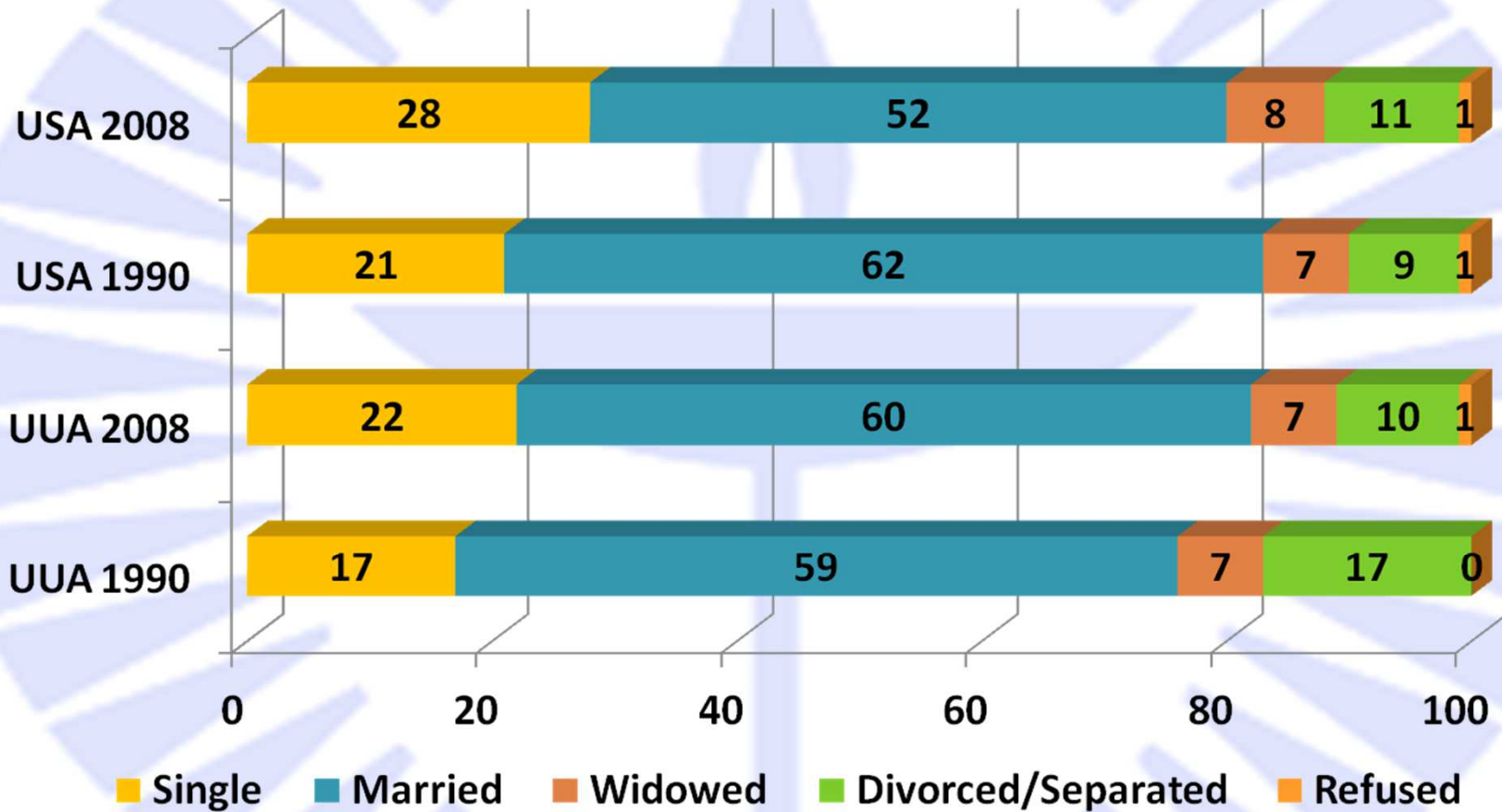




# ARIS: Marital Status

- UUs more unique in 1990 than 2008
  - Had nearly twice proportion of divorced in 1990
  - Reflect national norm in 2008
- Single-never married below national rate
- Percentage UU married people similar both years, while US fell over period

# ARIS: Marital Status

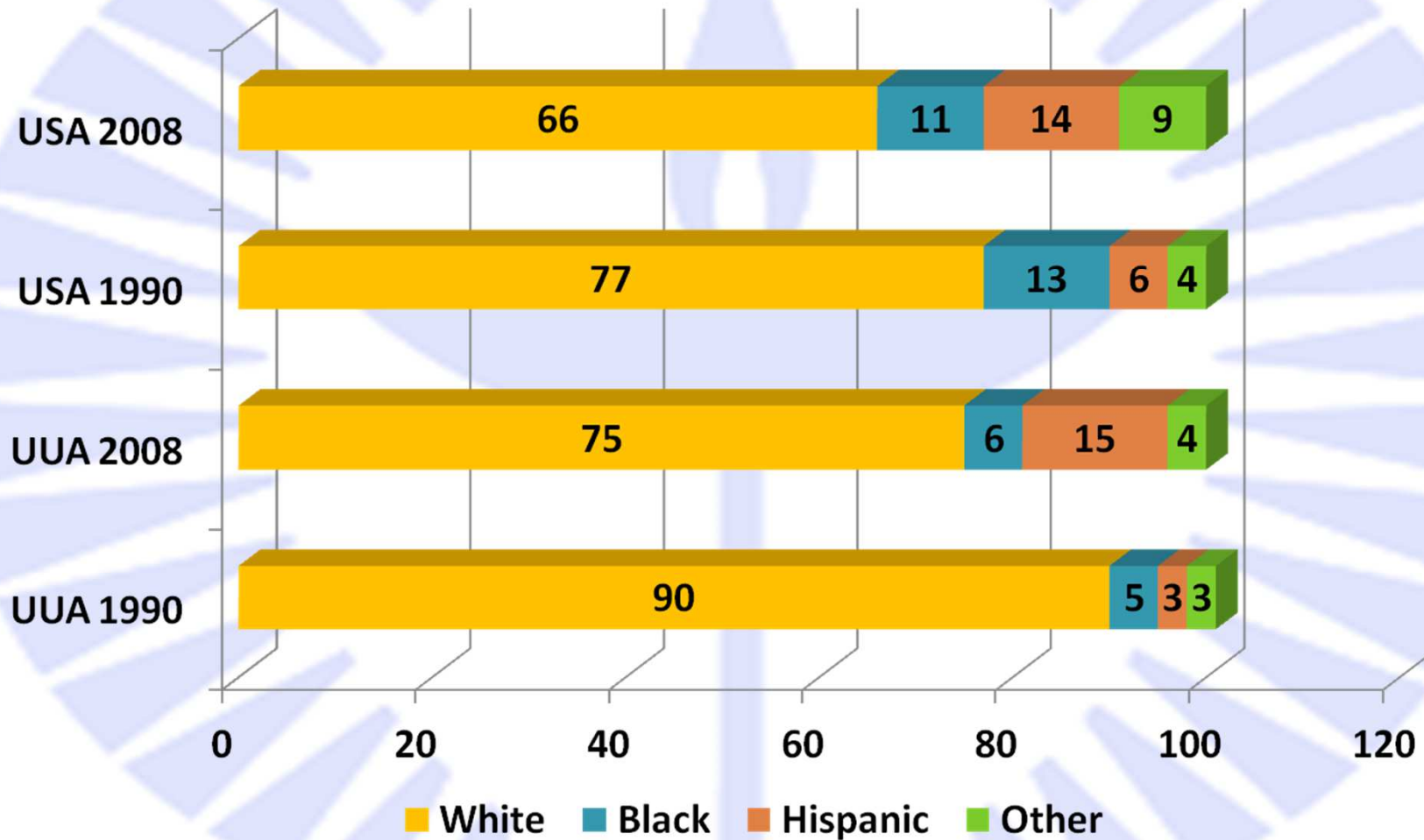




# ARIS: Race and Ethnicity

- UUs followed national trend and now more racially diverse
  - Between 1990 and 2008 share Non-Hispanic whites decreased from 90% to 75%
  - Largely due to increase Hispanic population
- Under-represented in the African American, Asian and Other Race groups

# ARIS: Race and Ethnicity

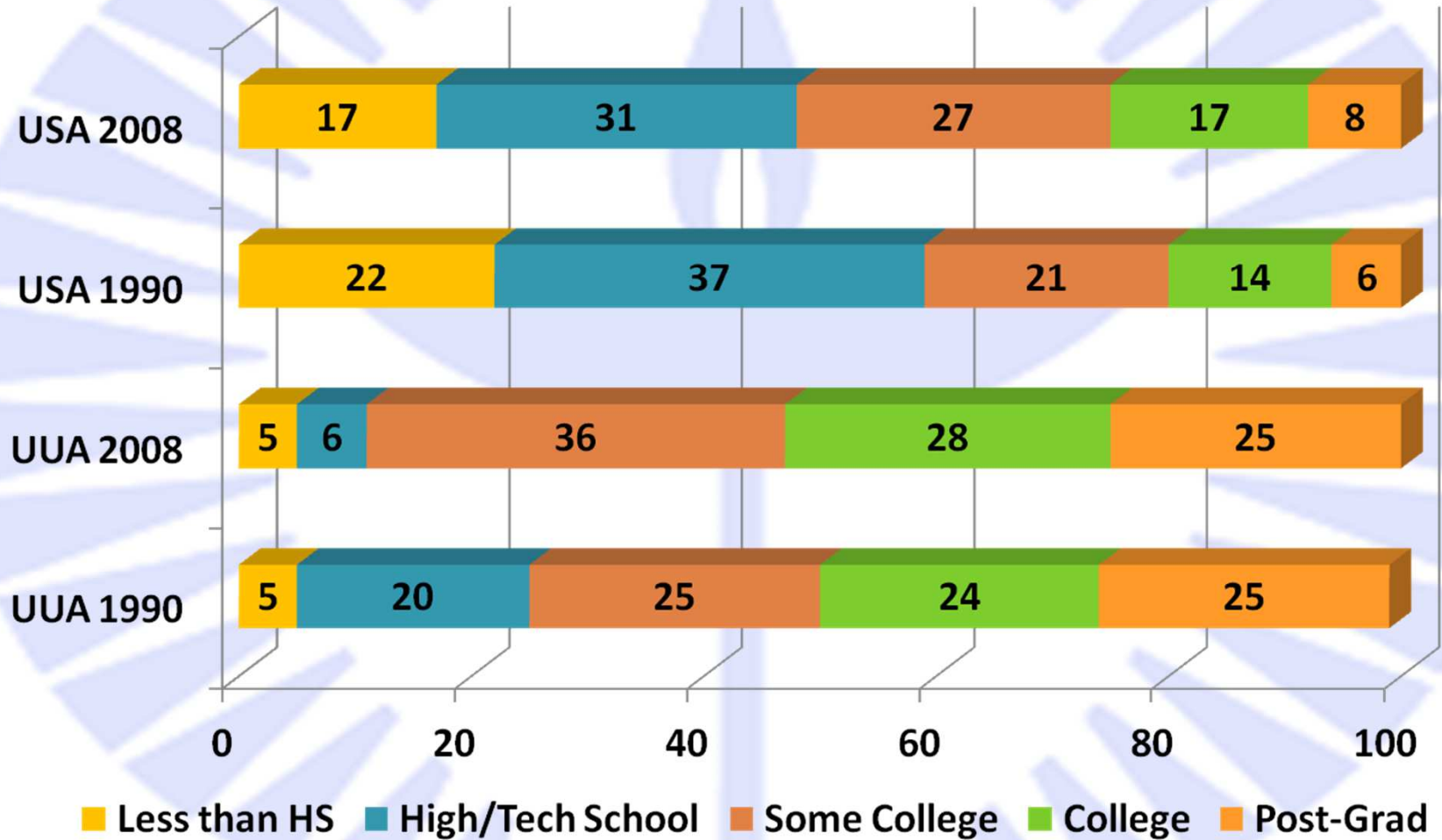




# ARIS: Education

- UUs highly educated, as we have been
- High proportion of UUs with post-graduation qualification
  - Post-grad rate three times US national rate
- Shift in 2008 from High/Tech School Graduation to Some College

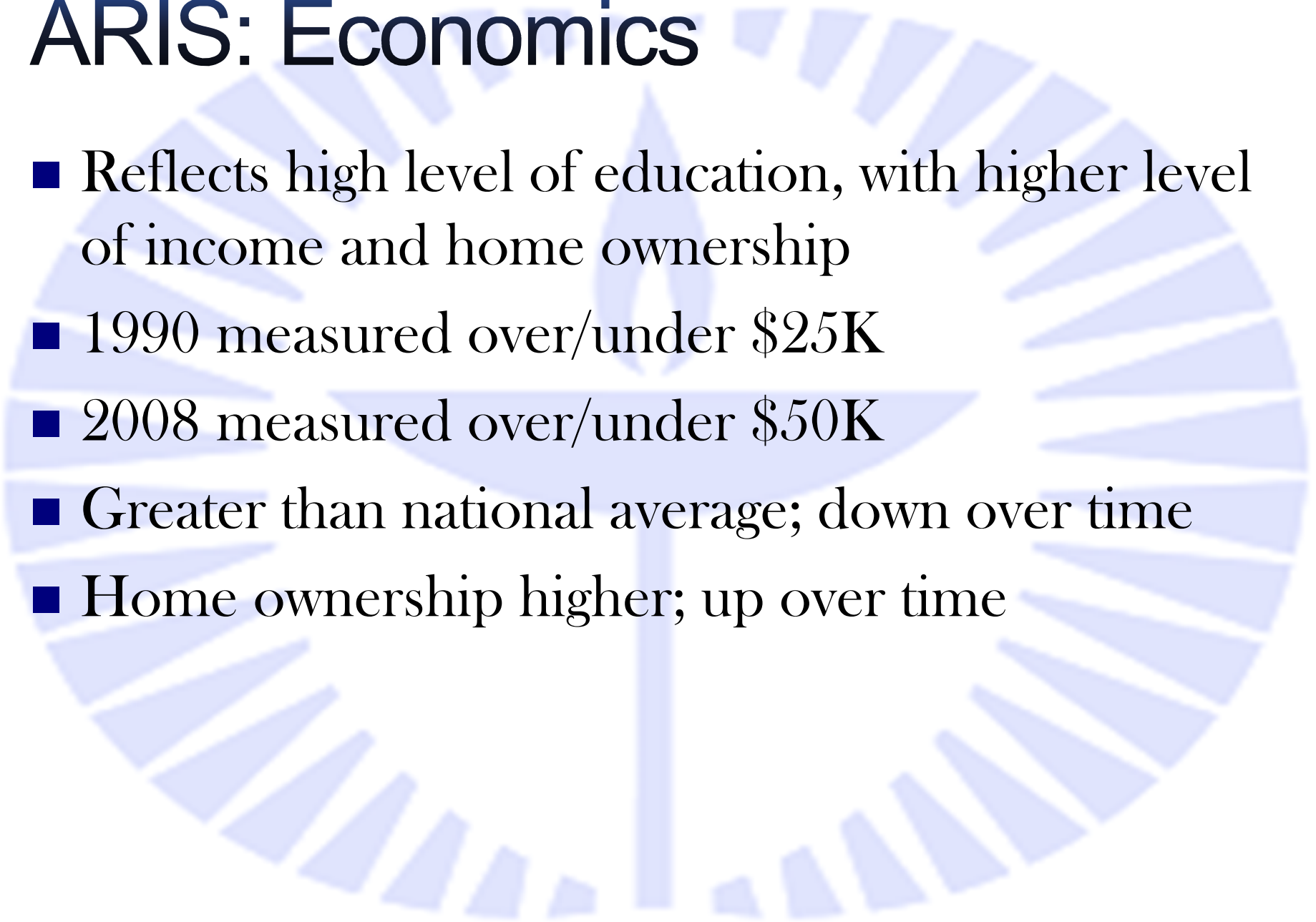
# ARIS: Education







# ARIS: Economics

- Reflects high level of education, with higher level of income and home ownership
  - 1990 measured over/under \$25K
  - 2008 measured over/under \$50K
  - Greater than national average; down over time
  - Home ownership higher; up over time
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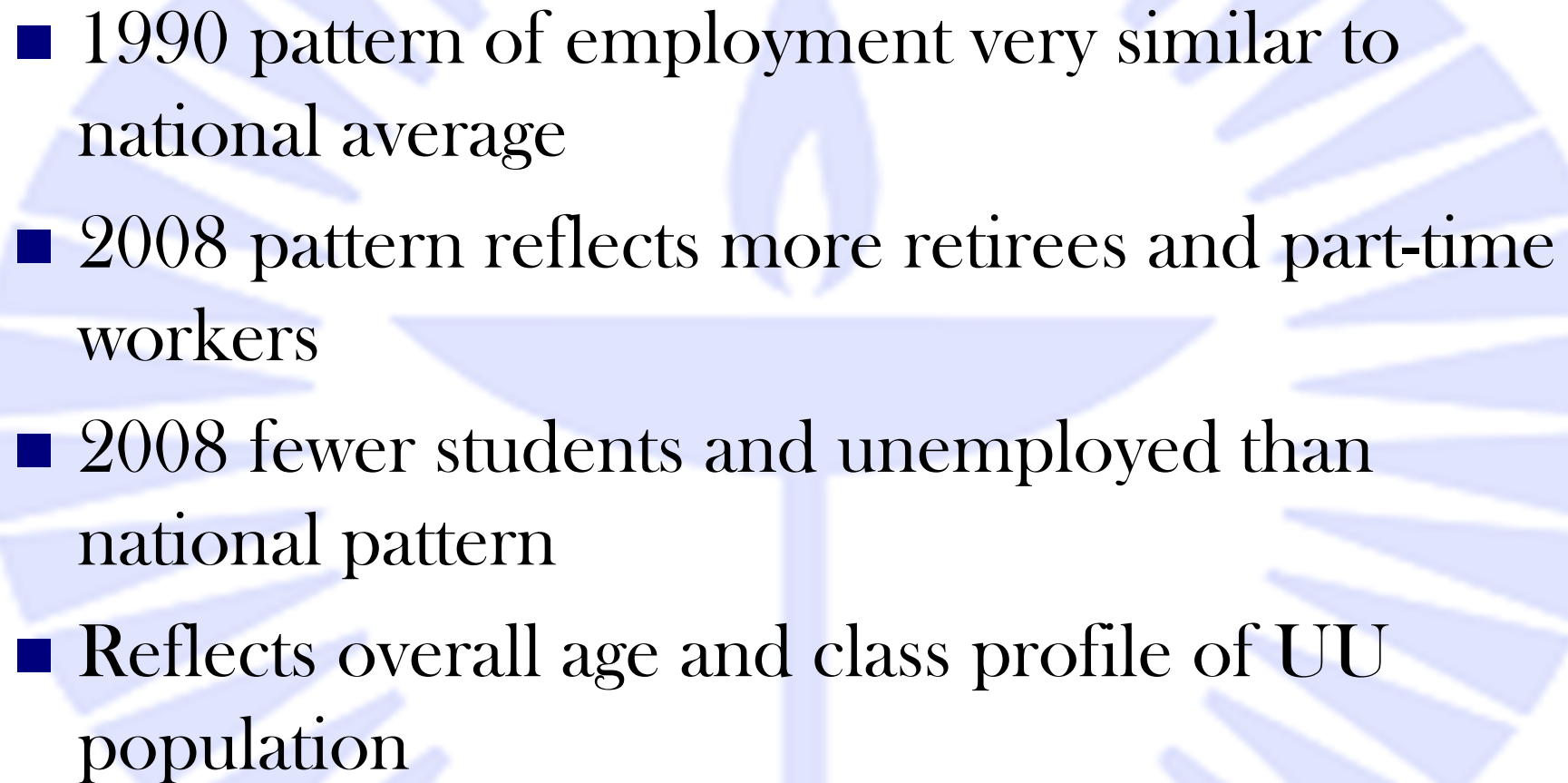
# ARIS: Economics

	1990		2008	
	UUA	USA	UUA	USA
<b>INCOME</b>				
<b>% UNDER \$25K/\$50K</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>% OVER \$25K/\$50K</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>REFUSED</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>HOME OWNERSHIP</b>				
<b>% OWN</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>% RENT</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>

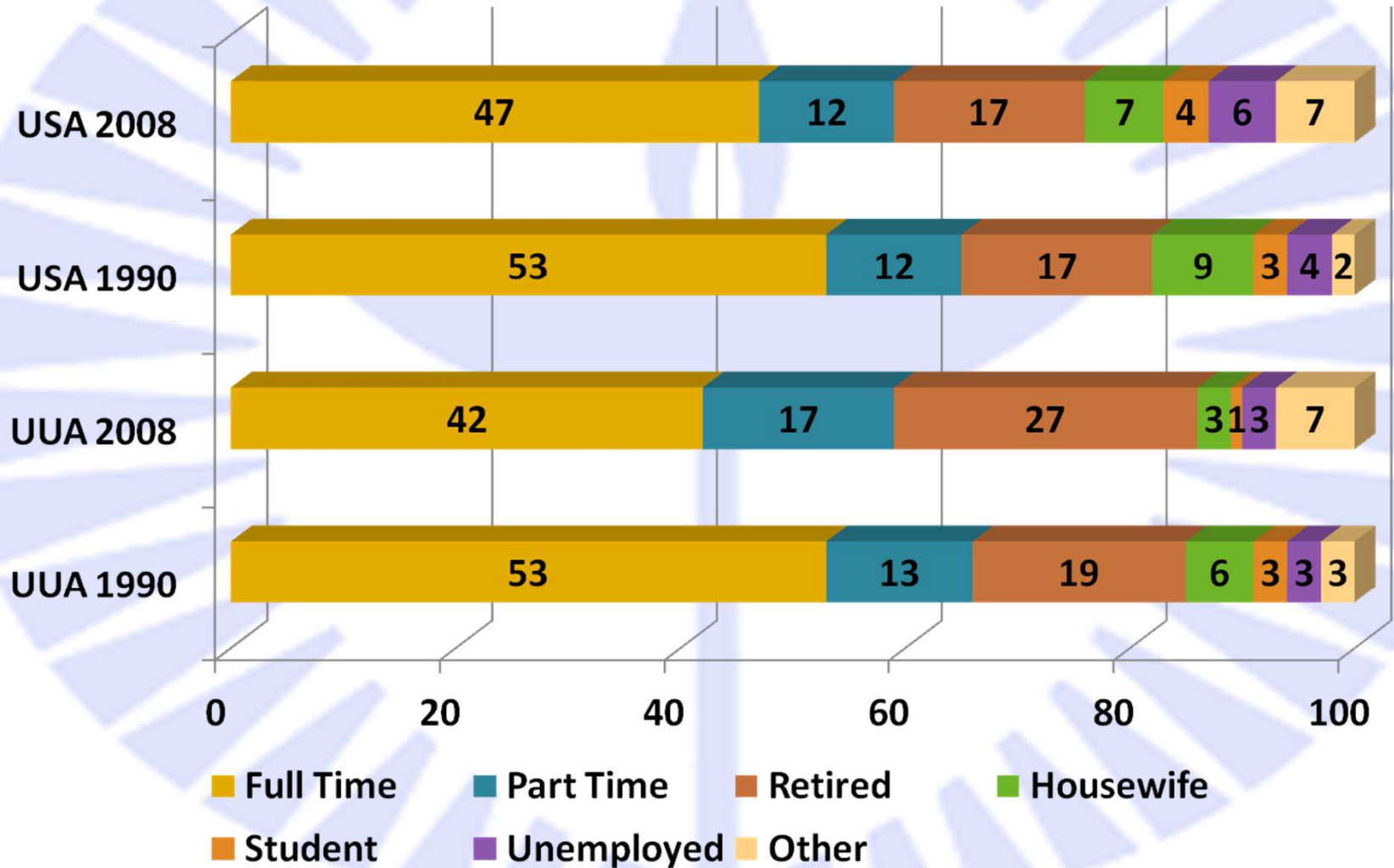




# ARIS: Employment Status

- 1990 pattern of employment very similar to national average
  - 2008 pattern reflects more retirees and part-time workers
  - 2008 fewer students and unemployed than national pattern
  - Reflects overall age and class profile of UU population
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# ARIS: Employment Status

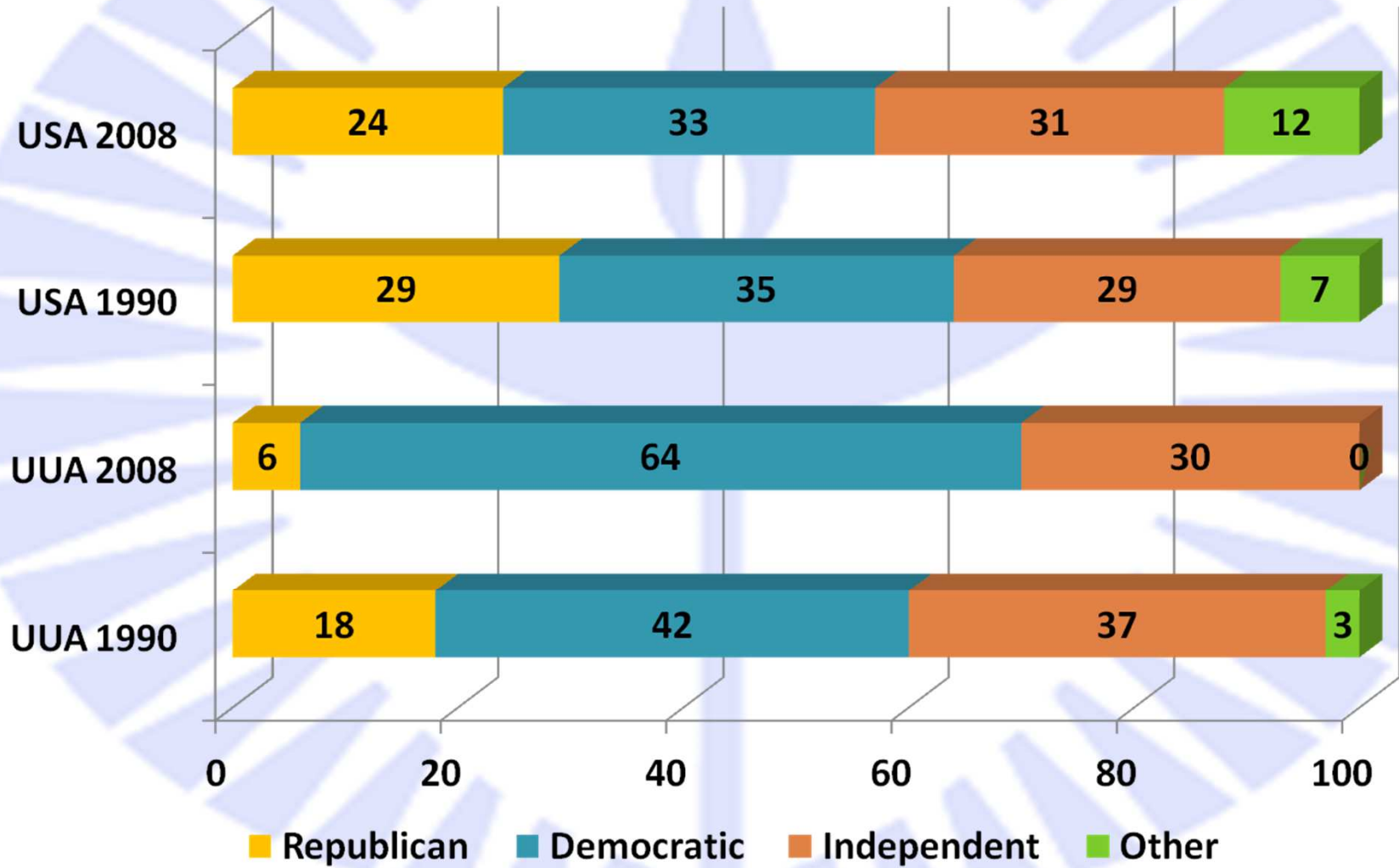




# ARIS: Politics

- More likely registered to vote: 90% compared to national average of 76% in 2008
- In 2008 identified as Democrats rate twice national average
  - Ratio Democrats to Republicans in 1990 was 2:1
  - Ratio Democrats to Republicans in 2008 was 11:1
- Similar proportion of self-proclaimed independents

# ARIS: Politics

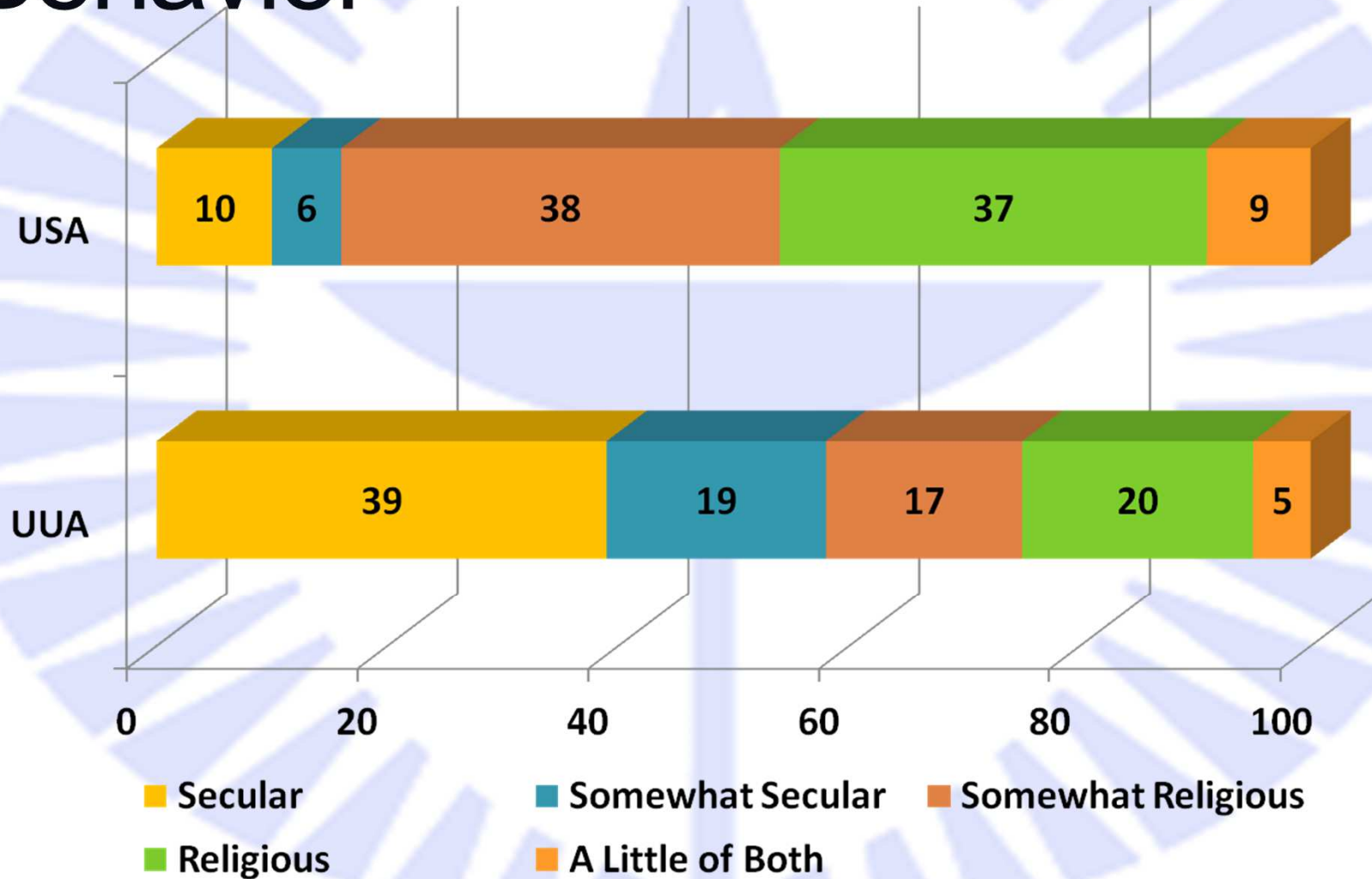




# ARIS: Religious Belief & Behavior

- Very small sample – subject to extrapolation error (17,000 households of which 77 reported as UU)
- Older data – from 2001 survey
- When it comes to your outlook, do you regard yourself as secular, somewhat secular, somewhat religious, religious?
- UUs similar to American Jews and “Nones”

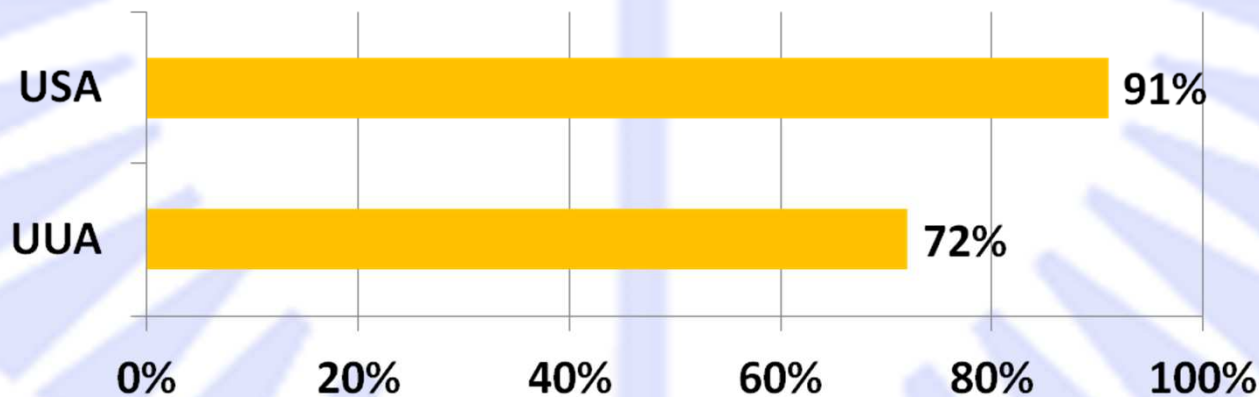
# ARIS: Religious Belief and Behavior





# ARIS: Belief about God

- Very small sample – subject to extrapolation error (17,000 households of which 77 reported as UU)
- Older data – from 2001 survey
- One-fifth of UUs didn't answer



# ARIS: Belief About God

- Supplement questions to those who expressed belief in God:
  - God performs miracles: 40% UUs disagreed, compared to 11% whole sample
  - God helps me: 60% UUs agreed, compared to 86% whole sample
- UUs tend to be more skeptical, and heterogeneous on matters of belief





# ARIS: Membership in Congregation

- Small sample, 2001, extrapolations uncertain
- Less than half (47%) of sampled UU households reported membership in congregation in 2001
- Similar to national pattern of 54% congregation membership reported by most other liberal religions
- Borne out repeatedly by census data that reports about twice as many UUs as our UUA membership

# ARIS: Religious Switching

- Small sample, 2001, extrapolation uncertain
- Half of adult UUs have changed religion
- Former religious preferences:
  - One-quarter Mainline Christian
  - One-in-five Roman Catholics
  - One-in-five Baptist
  - One-in-ten Atheist or None
- Results only suggestive




# ARIS: Religious Switching

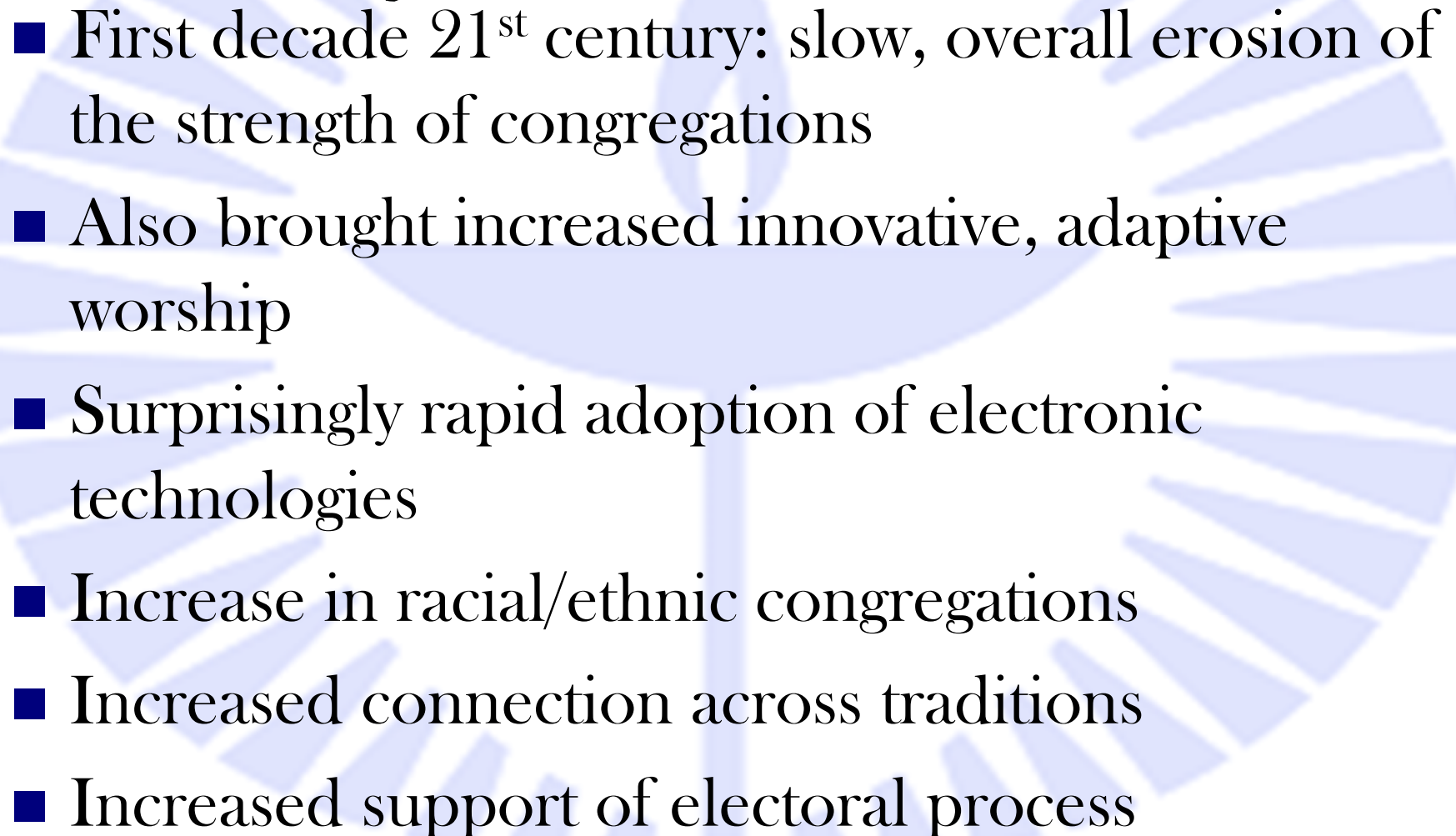
- Small sample, 2001, extrapolation uncertain
- Switching works both ways
- Of sample, .3% used to be UU, extrapolates to about 100,000
- Current religious preferences:
  - Over 40% now None
  - Other large groups Catholic and Mainline Christians

# ARIS: Religious Mixing

- 2001, 50,000 households
- Over half UUs were in mixed-religious relationships (other religion or none)
  - Clear selectivity in mixed-religious: half of these with partner who states either Jewish or None
- Raising children:
  - 1/3 UU, 1/3 None, 1/3 Christian

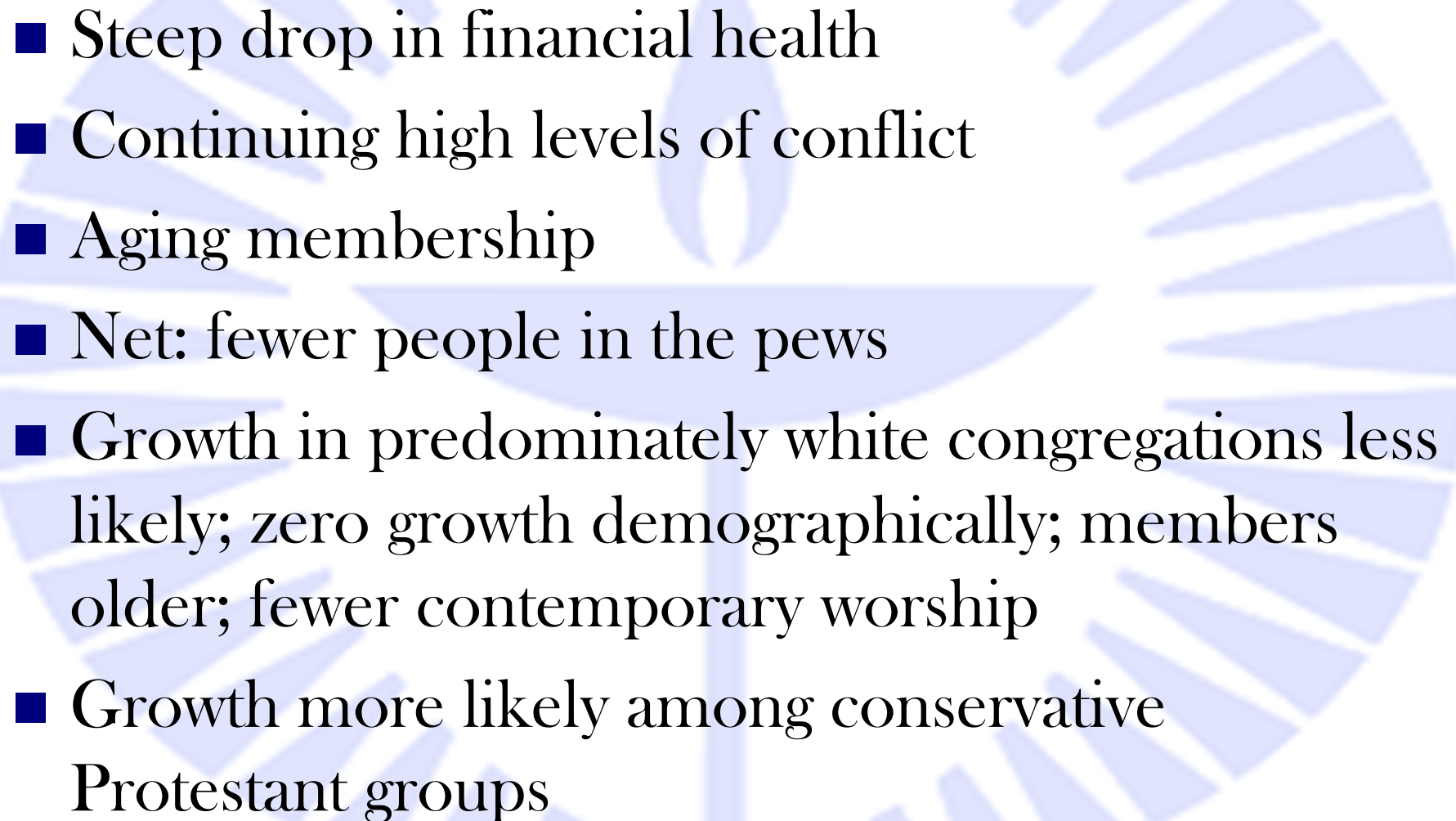


# FACT STUDY: Overall Summary

- First decade 21<sup>st</sup> century: slow, overall erosion of the strength of congregations
  - Also brought increased innovative, adaptive worship
  - Surprisingly rapid adoption of electronic technologies
  - Increase in racial/ethnic congregations
  - Increased connection across traditions
  - Increased support of electoral process
- 



# FACT: Overall Summary

- Steep drop in financial health
  - Continuing high levels of conflict
  - Aging membership
  - Net: fewer people in the pews
  - Growth in predominately white congregations less likely; zero growth demographically; members older; fewer contemporary worship
  - Growth more likely among conservative Protestant groups
- 



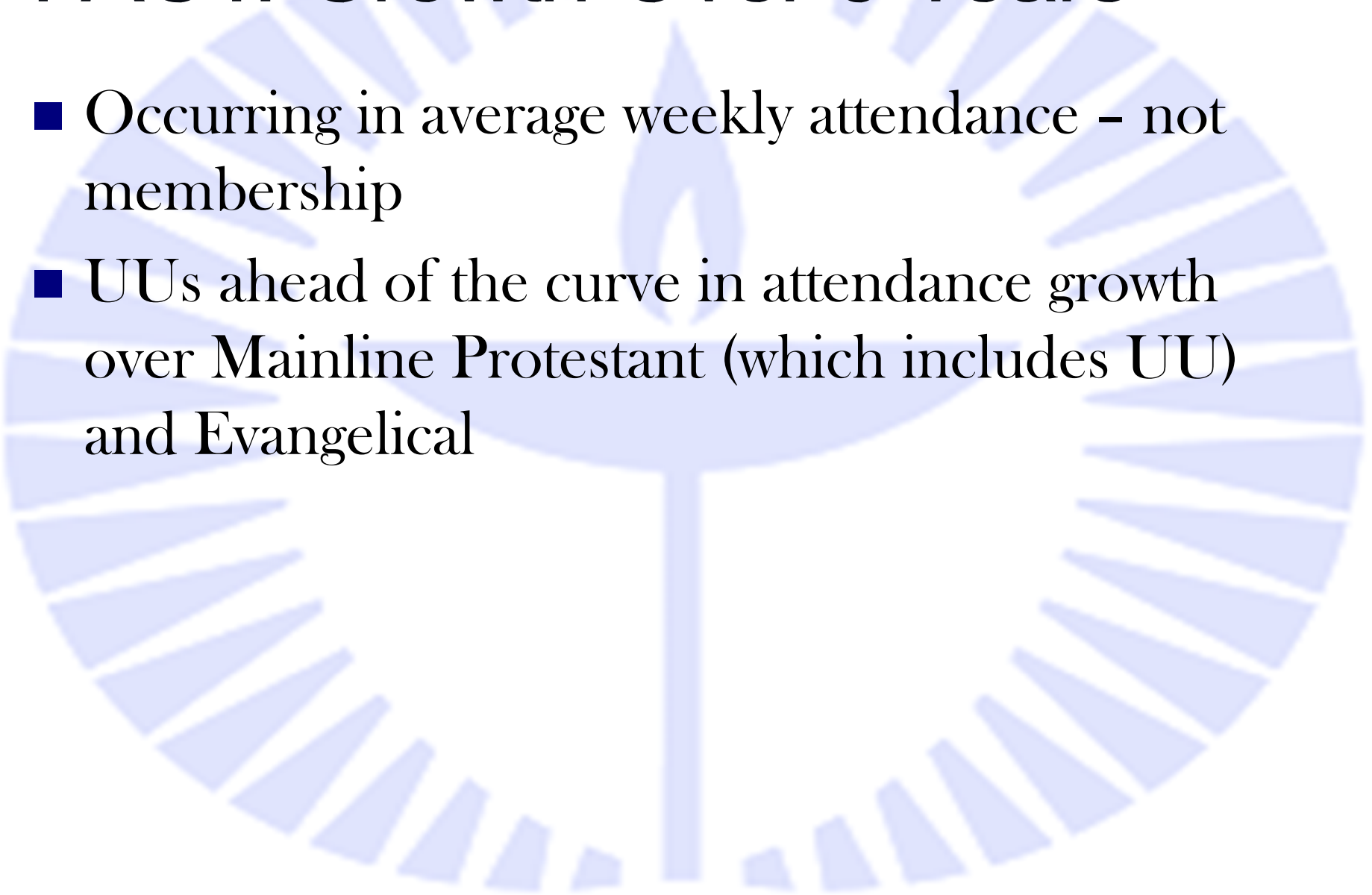


# FACT: Overall Summary

- Congregations that are growing more likely:
  - To be spiritually vital and alive
  - To have strong, permanent leadership
  - Enjoy joyful, innovative and inspirational worship

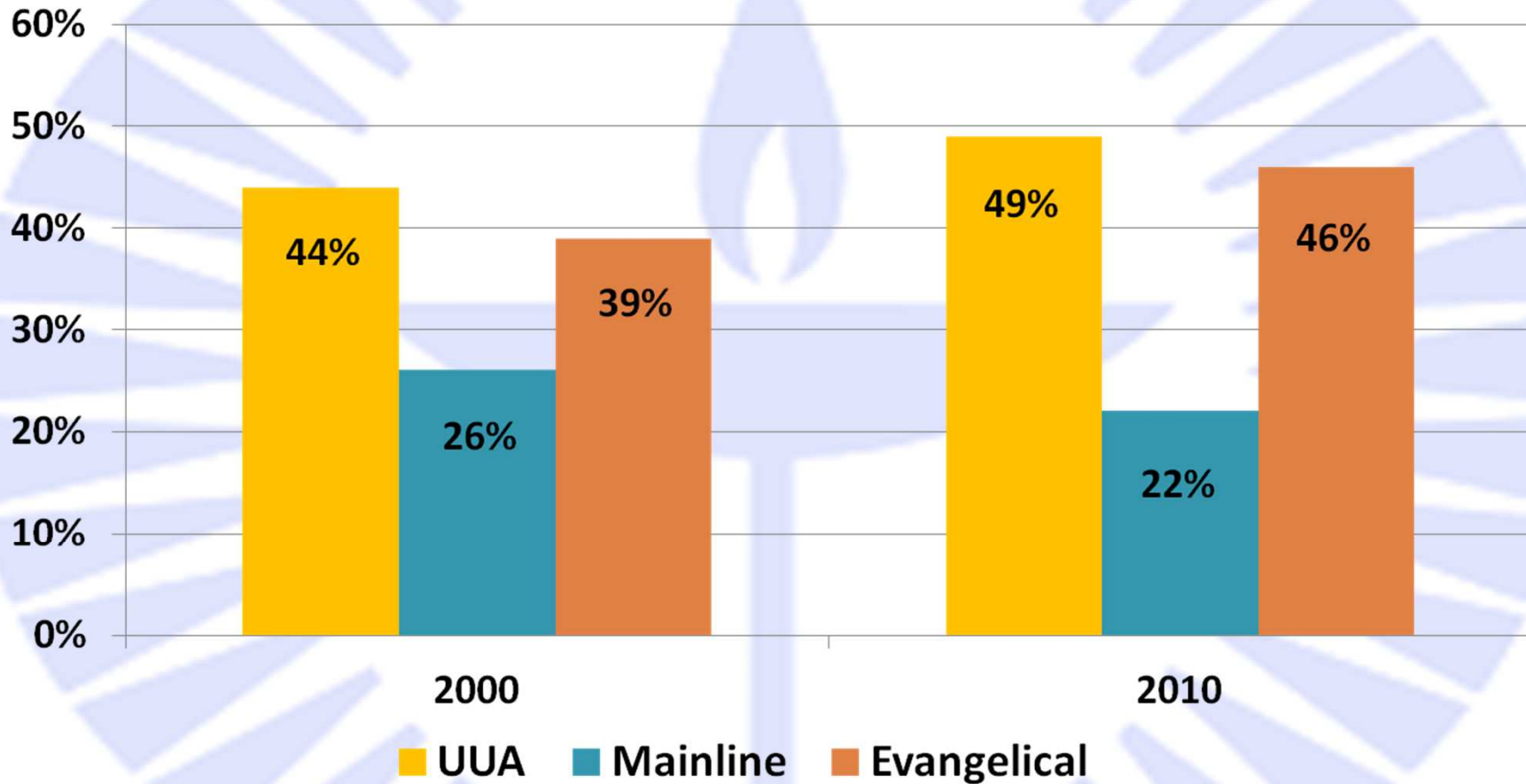


# FACT: Growth Over 5 Years

- Occurring in average weekly attendance - not membership
  - UUs ahead of the curve in attendance growth over Mainline Protestant (which includes UU) and Evangelical
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# FACT: Growth Over 5 Years

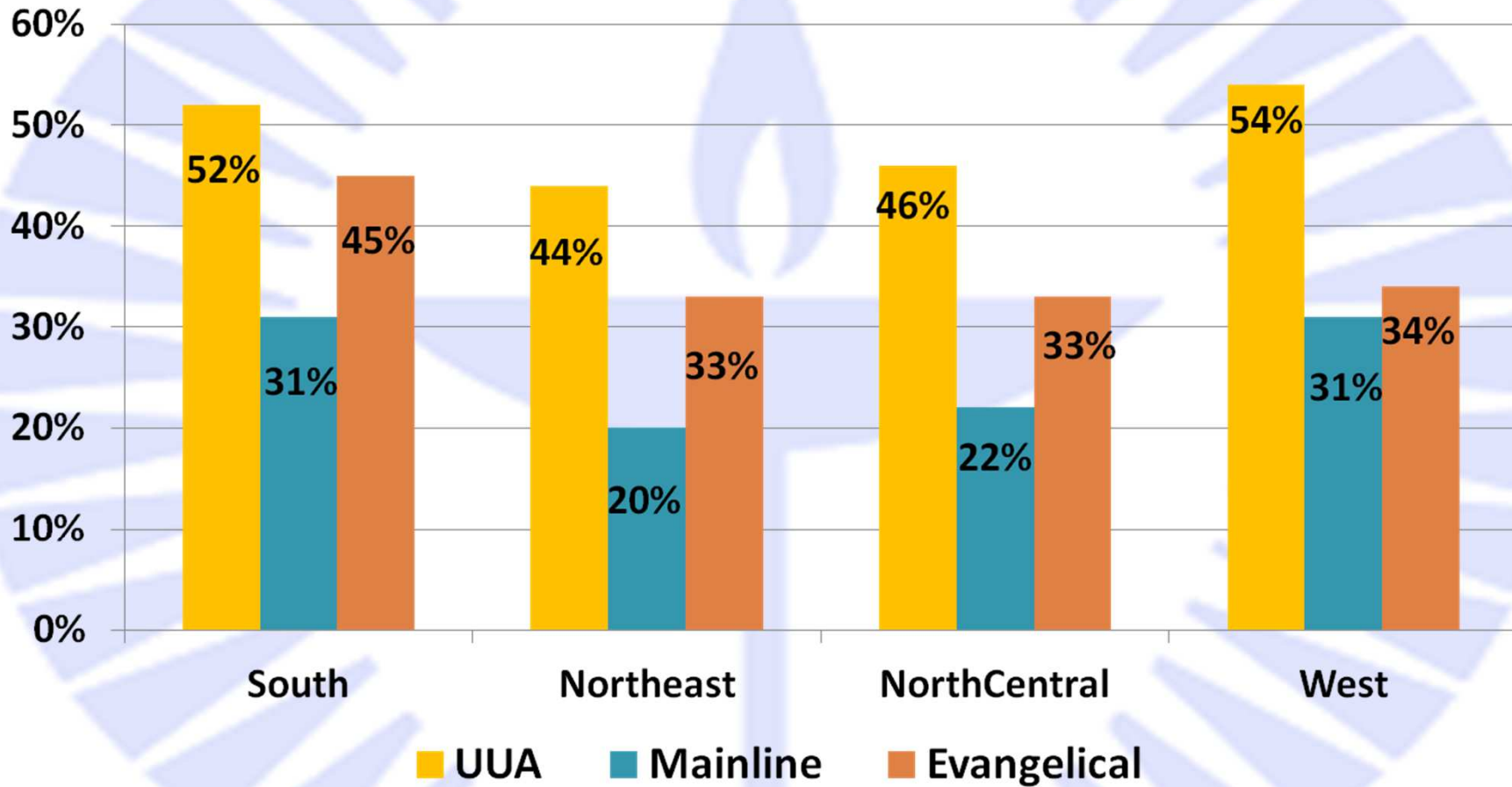




# FACT: Location by Region

- Regional location more important than rural, urban or suburban location
- For all, South is growing faster
- For UUs, South and West are growing most
- UUs have a higher proportion of growing congregations than Mainline and Evangelical in all regions of the country
- Substantial growth is 10% or more

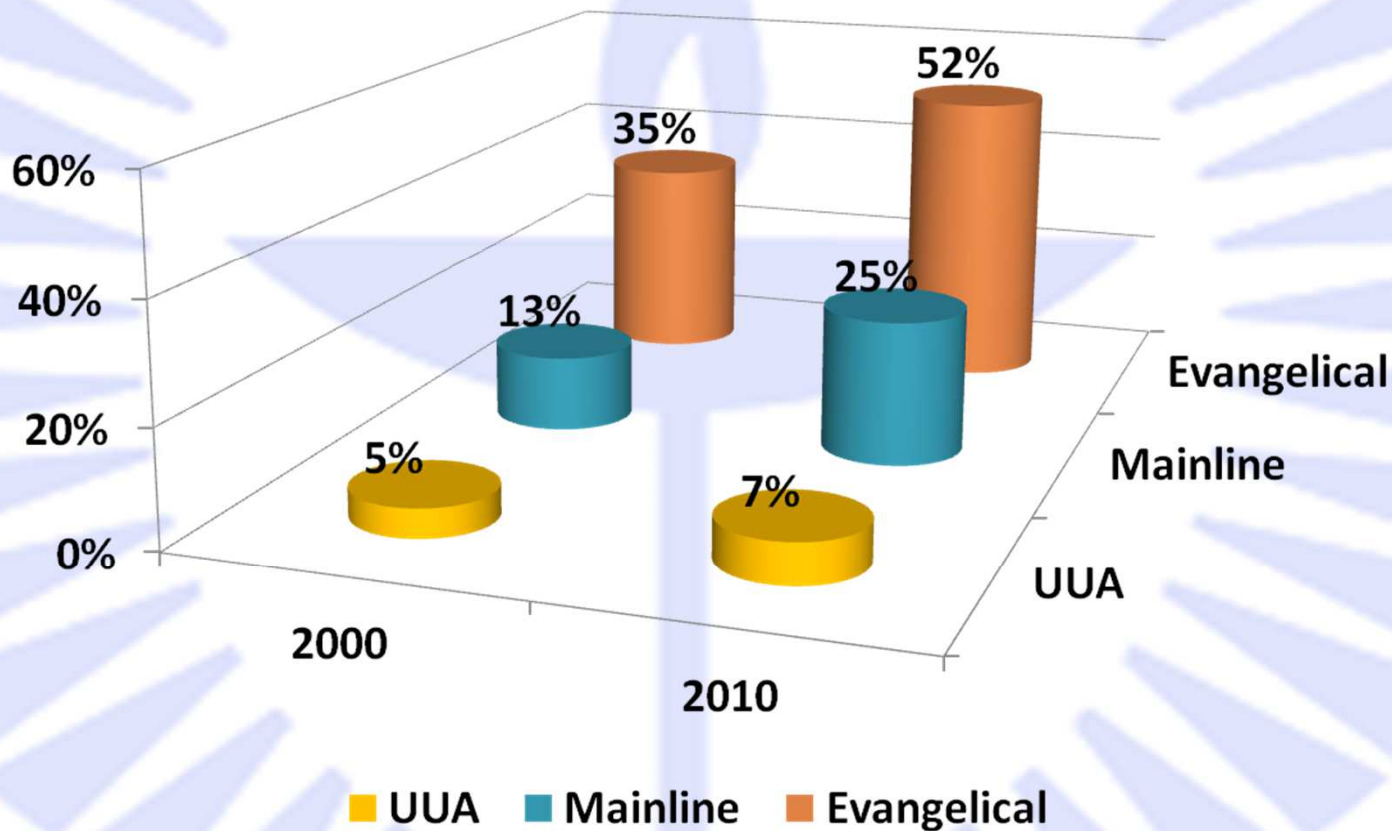
# FACT: Growth Over 5 Years



# FACT: Vital & Contemporary Worship

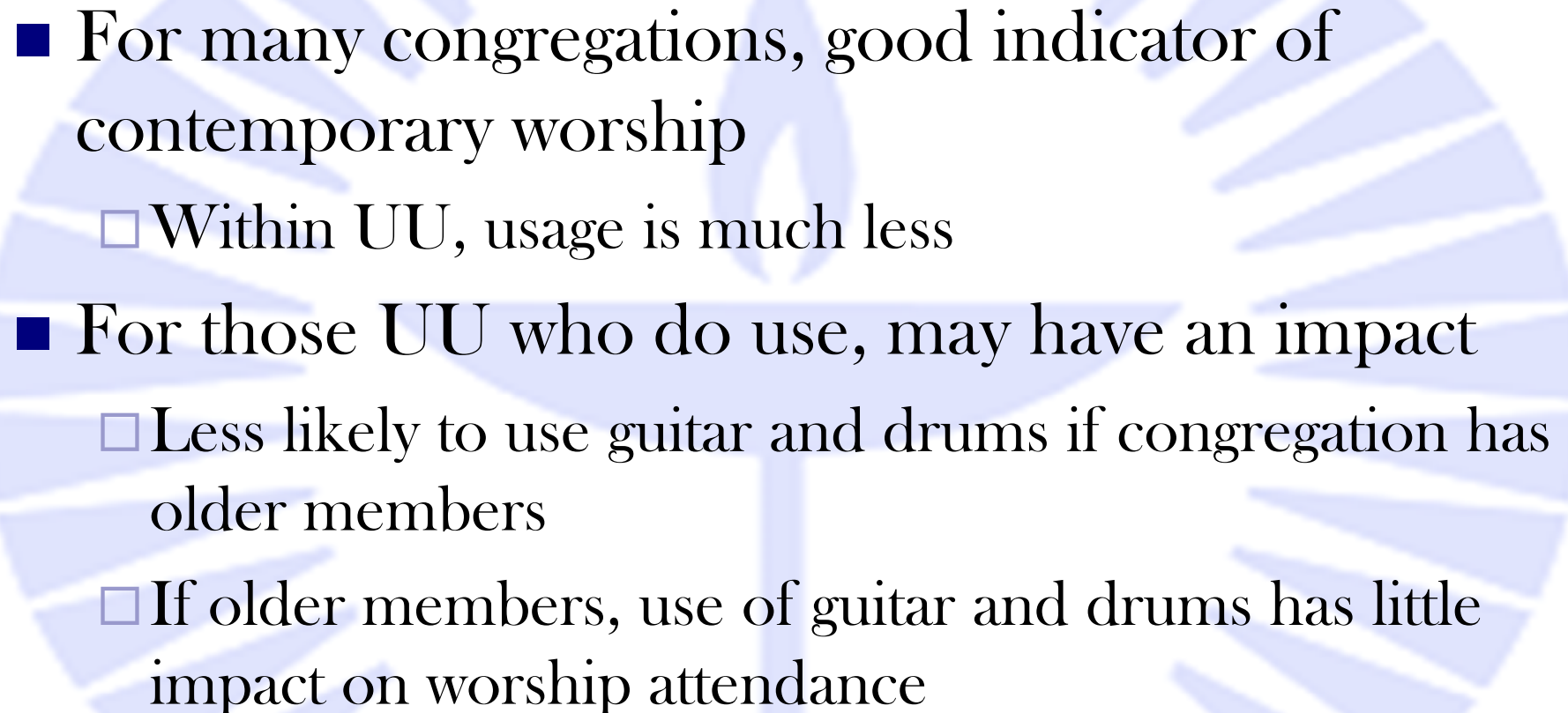
- Congregations named by leaders as “spiritually vital and alive” most likely to be growing
  - 67% of UU congregations growing attendance by 10% or more reported vital and alive (42% of Mainline, 52% Evangelical)
- “Vital and Alive” is different in UU context
  - For others, it can be indicated by drums and electric guitars - especially for Mainline
  - Not so for UU

# FACT: Guitar & Drums Often/Always





# FACT: Guitar & Drum Use

- For many congregations, good indicator of contemporary worship
    - Within UU, usage is much less
  - For those UU who do use, may have an impact
    - Less likely to use guitar and drums if congregation has older members
    - If older members, use of guitar and drums has little impact on worship attendance
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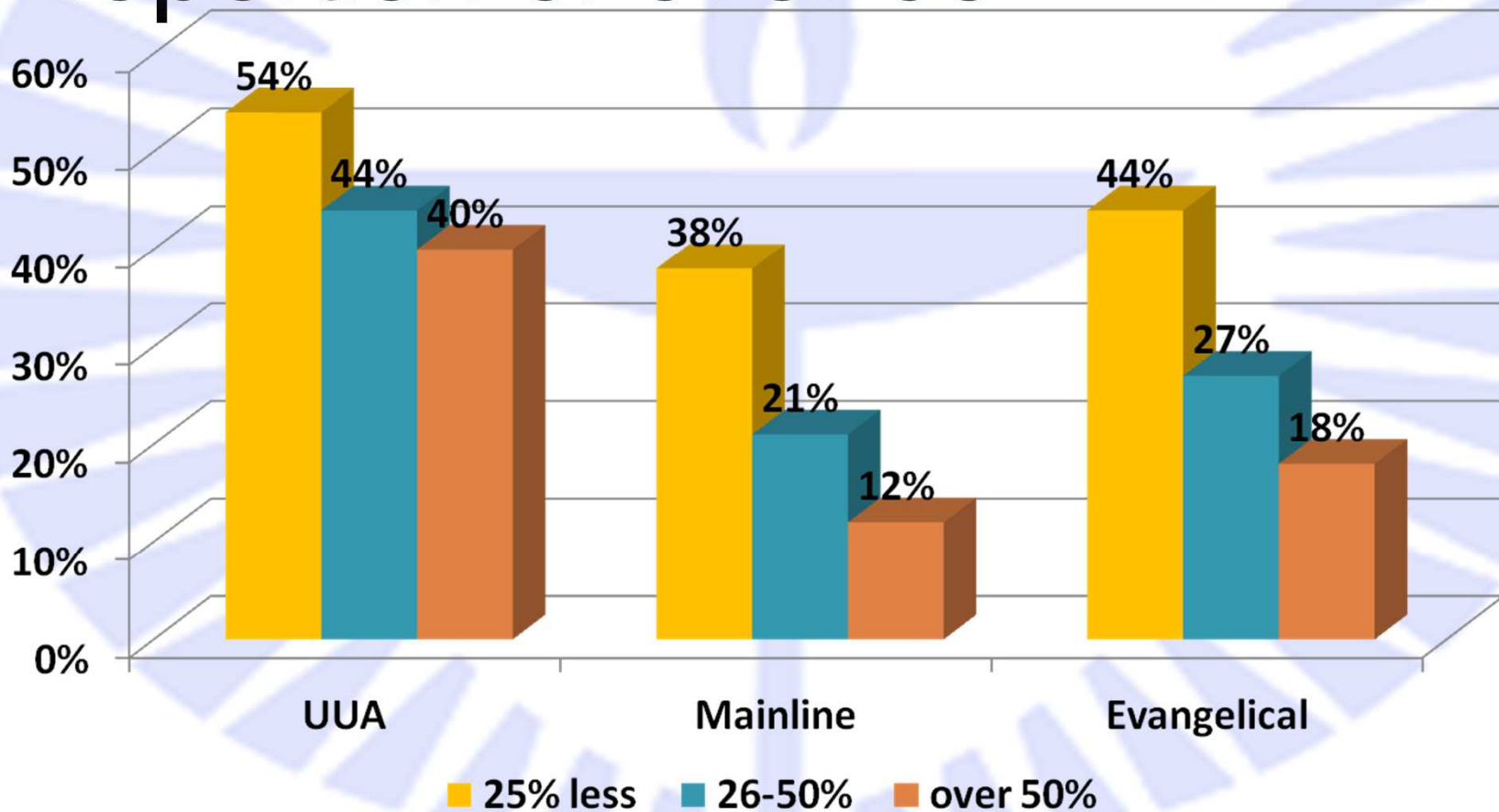




# FACT: Growing by Age

- Congregations with older populations less likely to have a 10% or more increase in attendance
- UU congregations growing more with older members
  - Is this better reporting or growth?
- Clear that if not attracting young people, are less likely to grow - demographic reasons

# FACT: Percentage Congregations Growing and Proportion of over 65



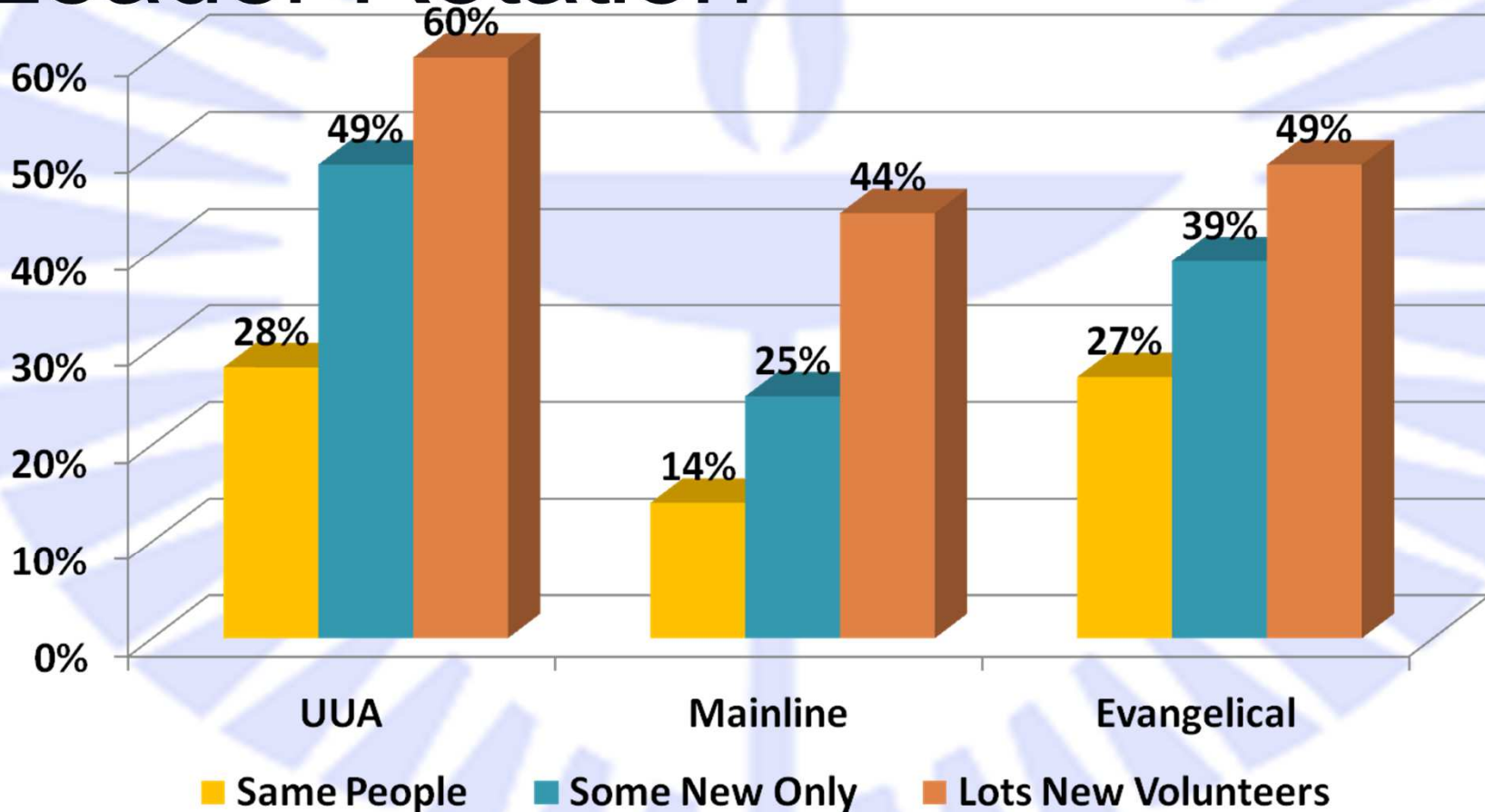




# FACT: Lay Leader Involvement

- Better predictor than age as to whether increased attendance
  - If more successful at increased lay leader involvement, then more likely growing
- Perception is what's seen here, not necessarily reality of leadership depth
- Reveals openness of congregation to change and new ideas (and therefore new people)

# FACT: Percentage Congregations Growing and Lay Leader Rotation





# STUDIES

- “Unitarian-Universalists in the United States 1990-2008: Socio-demographic Trends and Religious Patterns; A Report Based on the American Religious Identification Surveys,” Barry A. Kosmin & Ariela Keysar
- “A Report for the UUA: Growth and Change Over Decade With Comparisons to Congregations of Mainline and Evangelical Denominations,” Adair Lummis, Jan 7, 2012. Preliminary Report