



EXPLORING THE
PANDEMIC IMPACT
ON CONGREGATIONS

Finances in U.S. Latino Congregations: Analyses from FACT and EPIC

Rev. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi, Ph.D.
Iliff School of Theology

The Center for Church Management
Villanova University
February 16, 2024

Faith
Communities
Today



Overview

- Latinos = 18.7% of the US population
- Second fastest growing racial-ethnic group (half of total US population growth from 2010 to 2020)
- From a variety of countries and ethnic groups of people who trace their heritage to Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Spain
- Many monikers: Latino, Hispanic, Latin American, Latinx/Latine/Latin@; more specific terms like Chicano, Hispano, Boriqua, etc.
- Languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Indigenous languages



EXPLORING THE
PANDEMIC IMPACT
ON CONGREGATIONS

What Are FACT and EPIC?

- Organized by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research and Dr. Scott Thumma
- **Faith Communities Today (FACT):** First survey conducted in 2000, with periodic surveys conducted since then; tracks trends in U.S. congregational life
- **Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations (EPIC):** Five-year research project to research “possible changes and long-term implications the pandemic might have on congregational life across the United States”



The Data

- **FACT 2020 National Survey of Congregations:** 15,278 congregations
 - 276 majority Latino congregations (1.8%)
- **EPIC 2021 First Wave Survey:** 2,074 congregations
 - 30 majority Latino congregations (1.4%)
- **EPIC 2022 Regional Case Studies:** 8 majority Latino congregations with 120 attender surveys

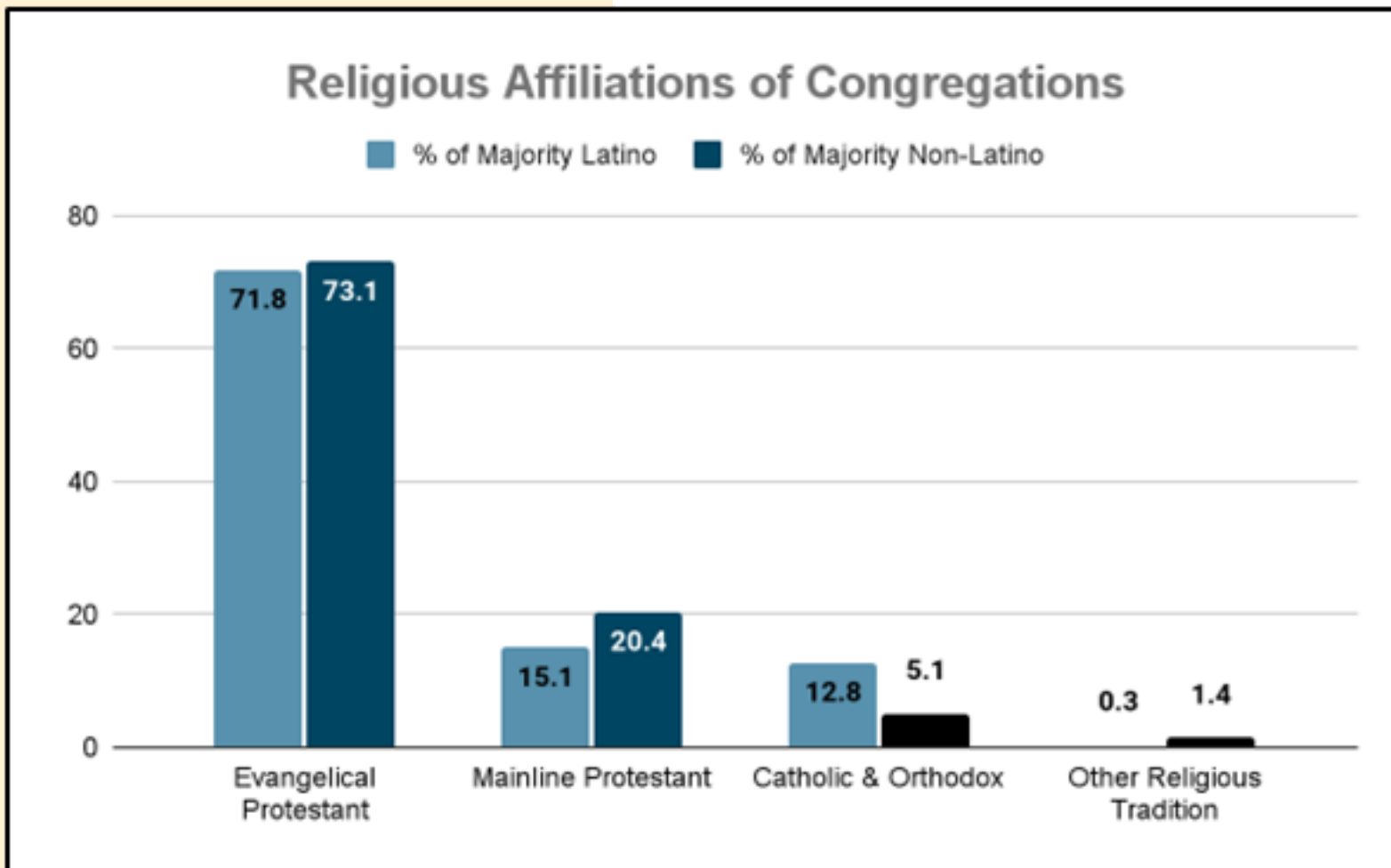


EXPLORING THE
PANDEMIC IMPACT
ON CONGREGATIONS



Overall Patterns and Findings

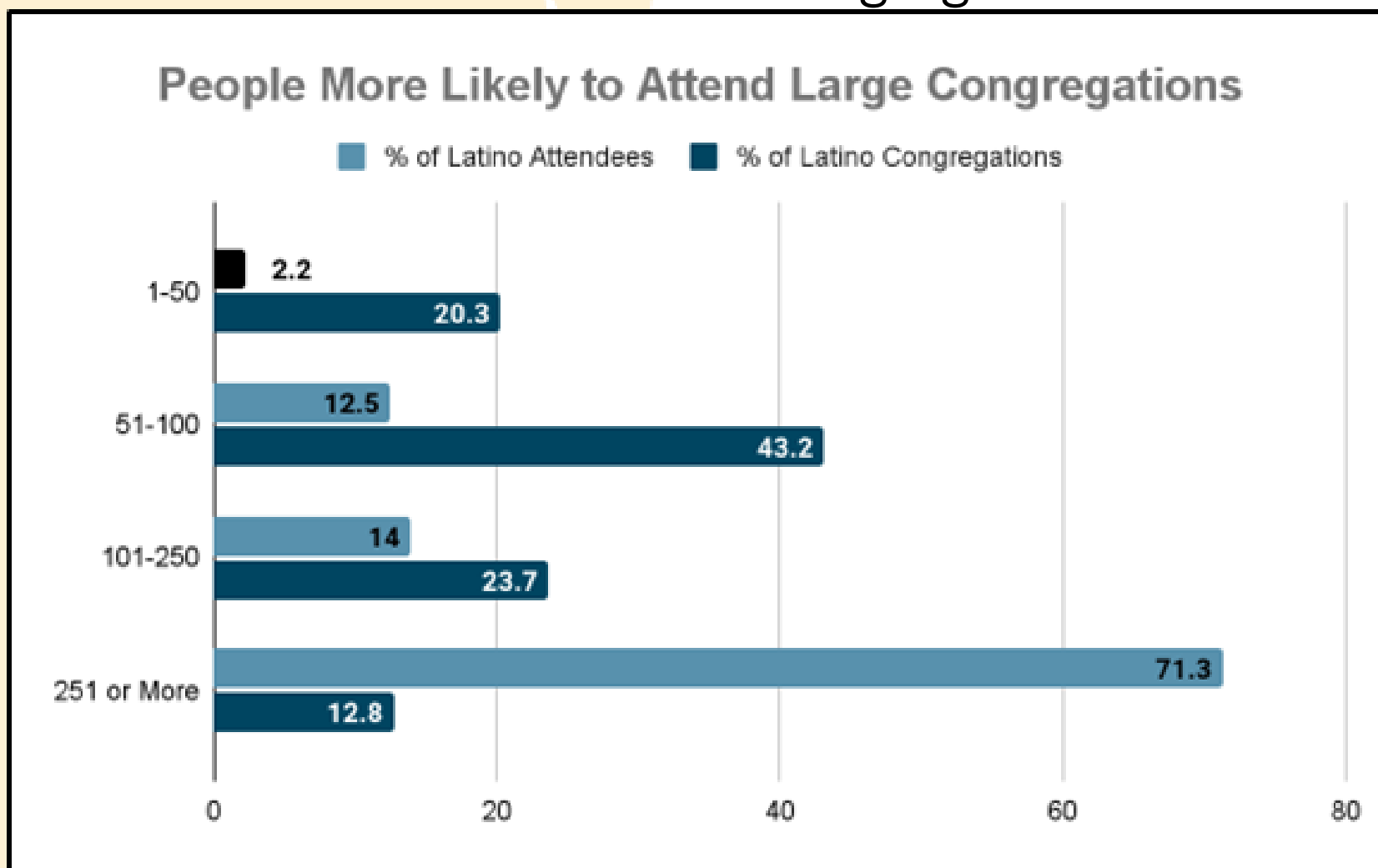
Affiliation and Attendance Patterns



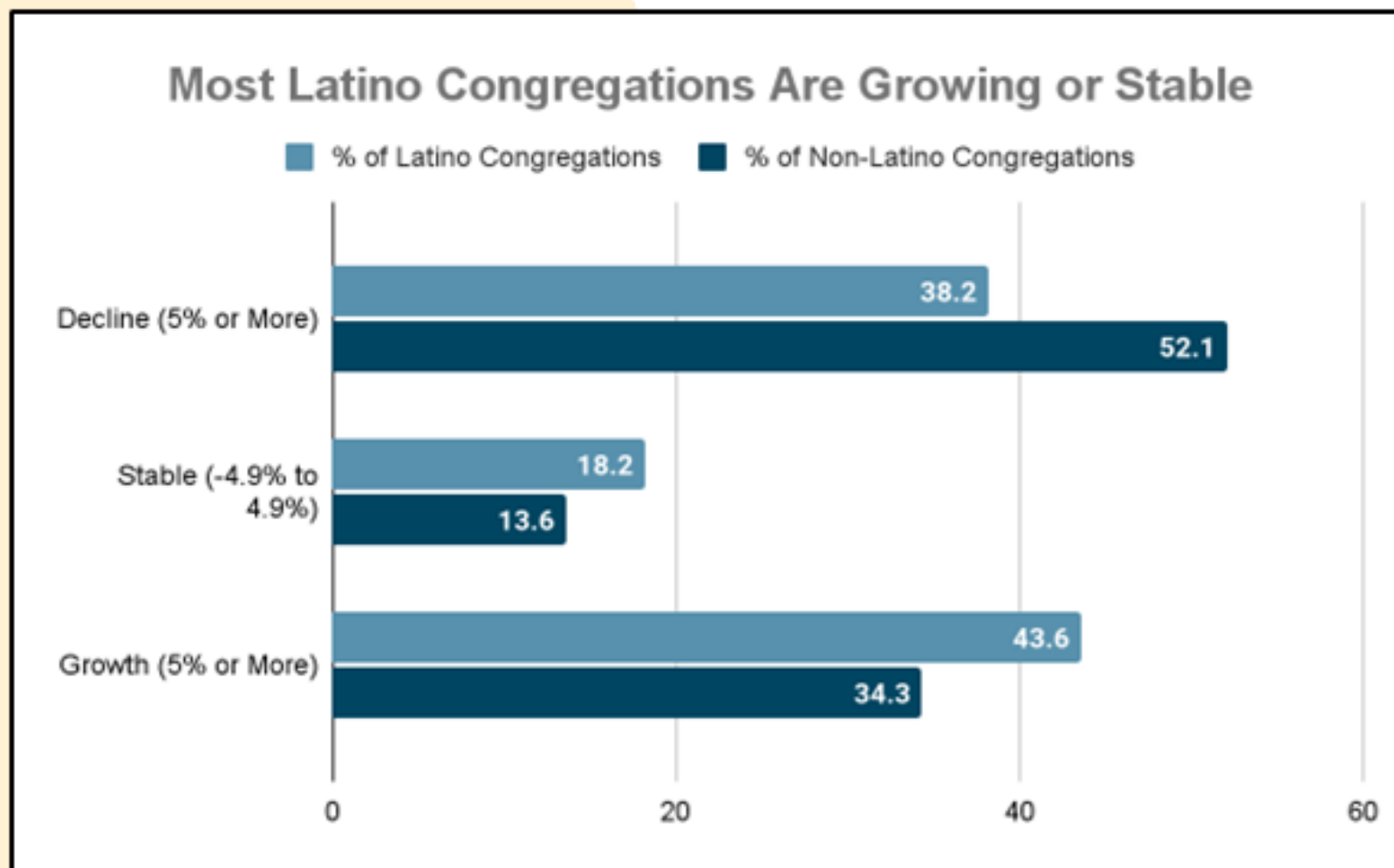
Catholic churches are home to 33.8% of all Latino congregational worshipers, roughly 2.5 times the total percentage of Catholic churches. Evangelical Protestant churches are home to 61.7% of Latino congregational worshipers, and Mainline Protestant churches are home to only 4.4% of worshipers.

Size and Attendance Patterns

Seven out of every ten participants attend the largest Latino faith communities of 250 or more congregants.



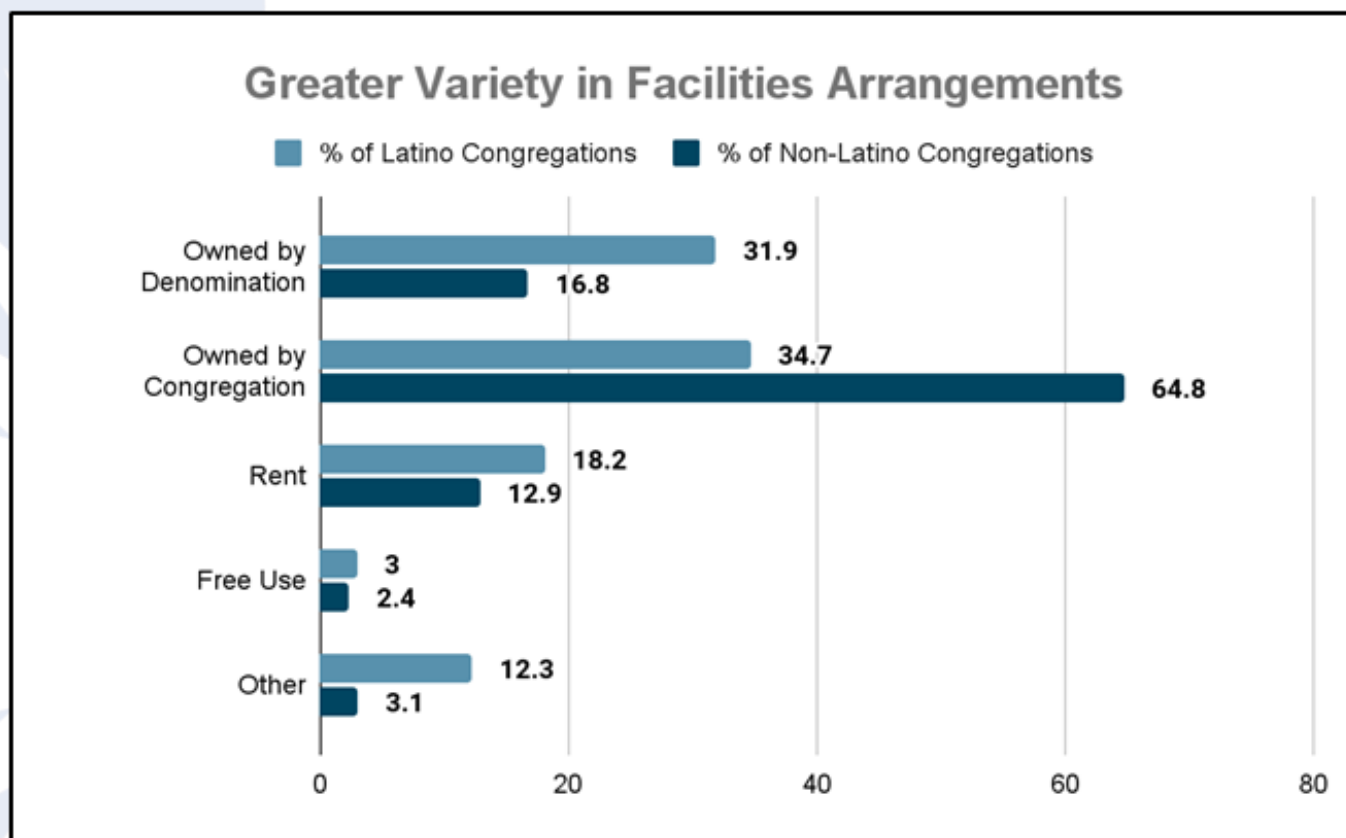
Growth and Stability



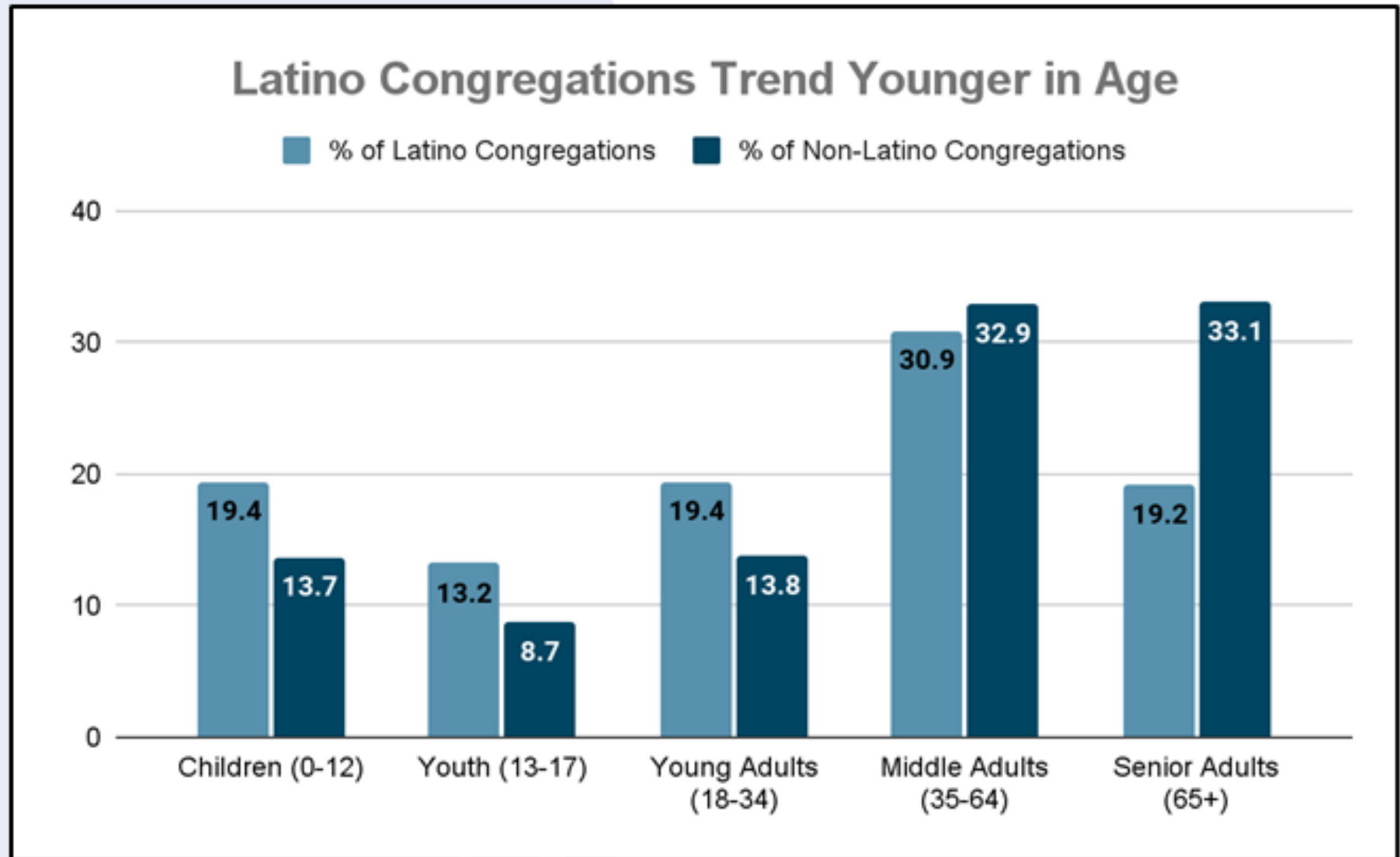
A majority of Latino congregations have experienced growth or remained stable in attendance over the past five years.

Less Capital and Greater Use of Shared Space

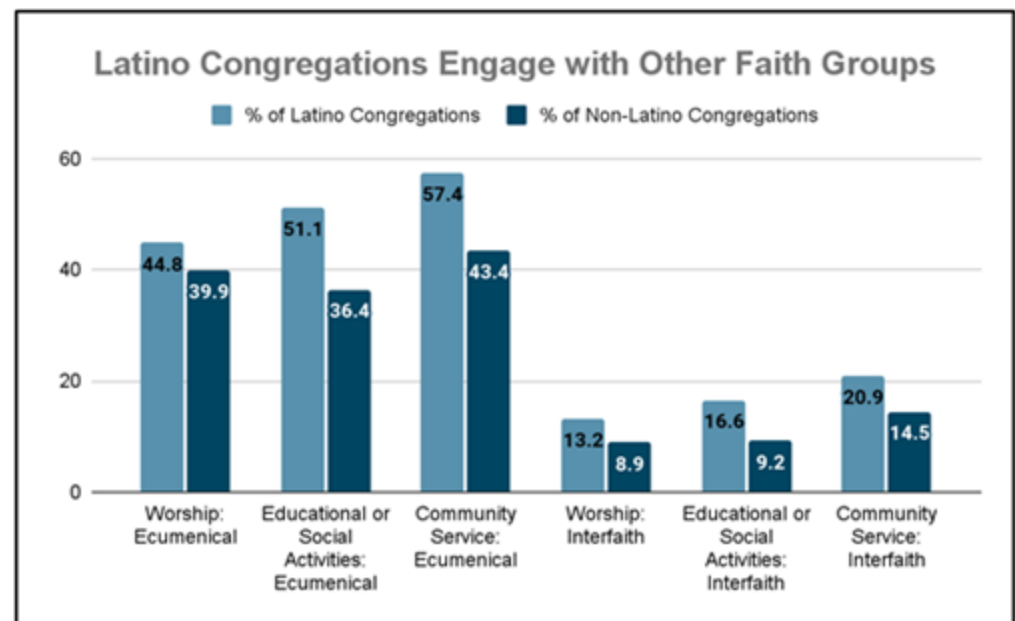
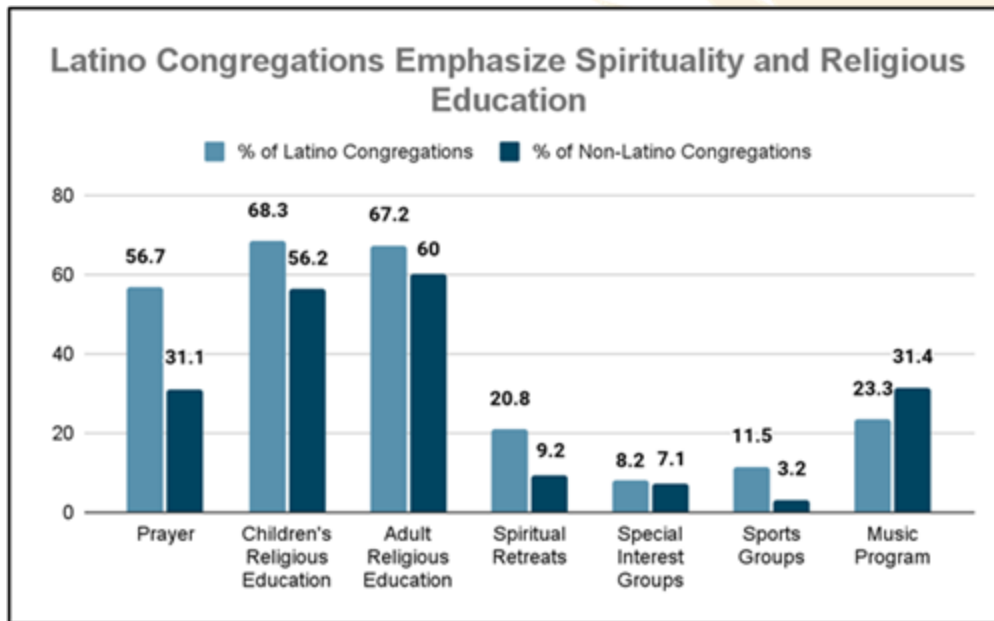
Latino congregations are half as likely to own their own facilities and almost three times more likely to worship in the same building as other congregations.



Younger Participants than Other Congregations

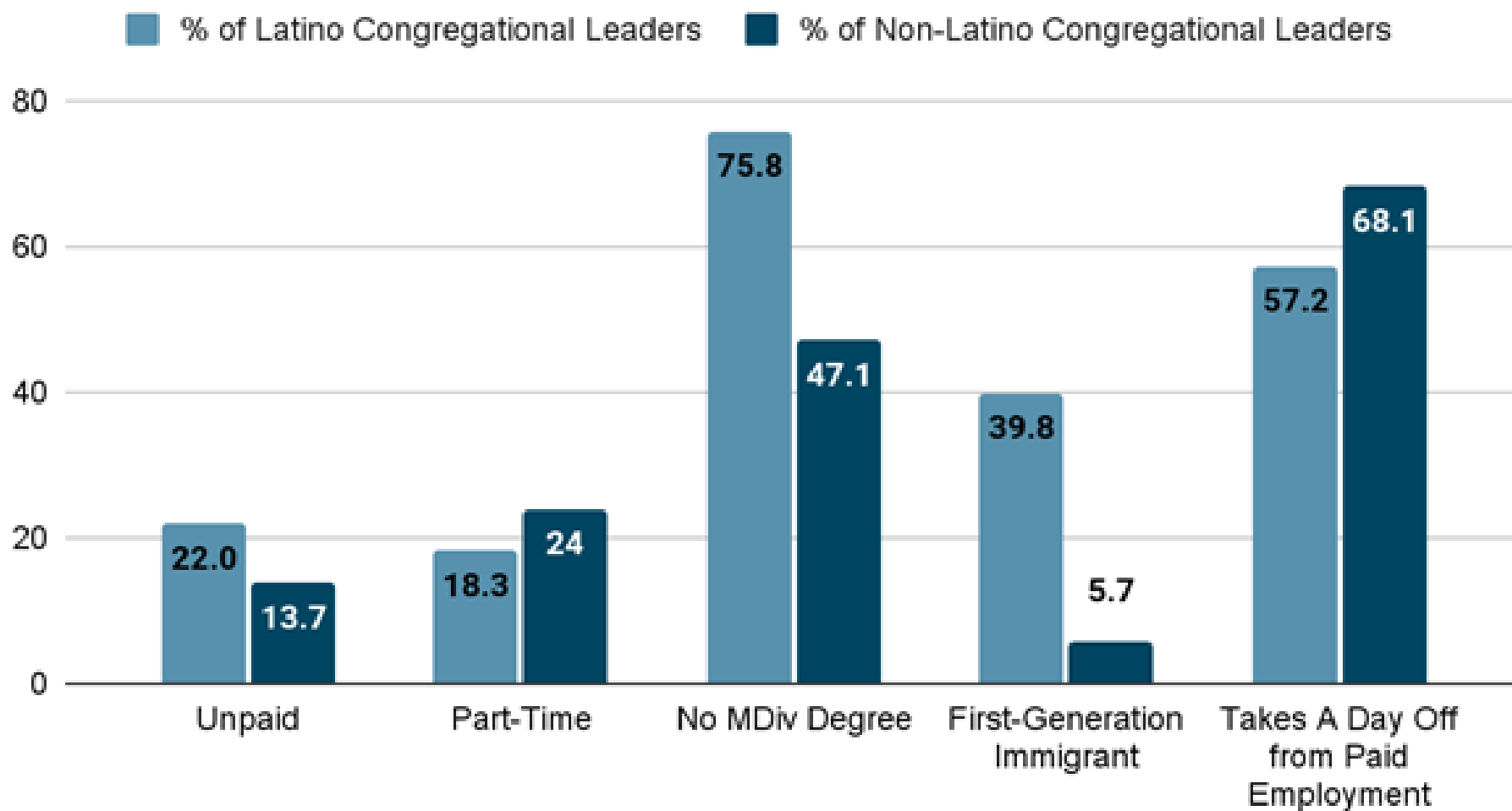


Engagement

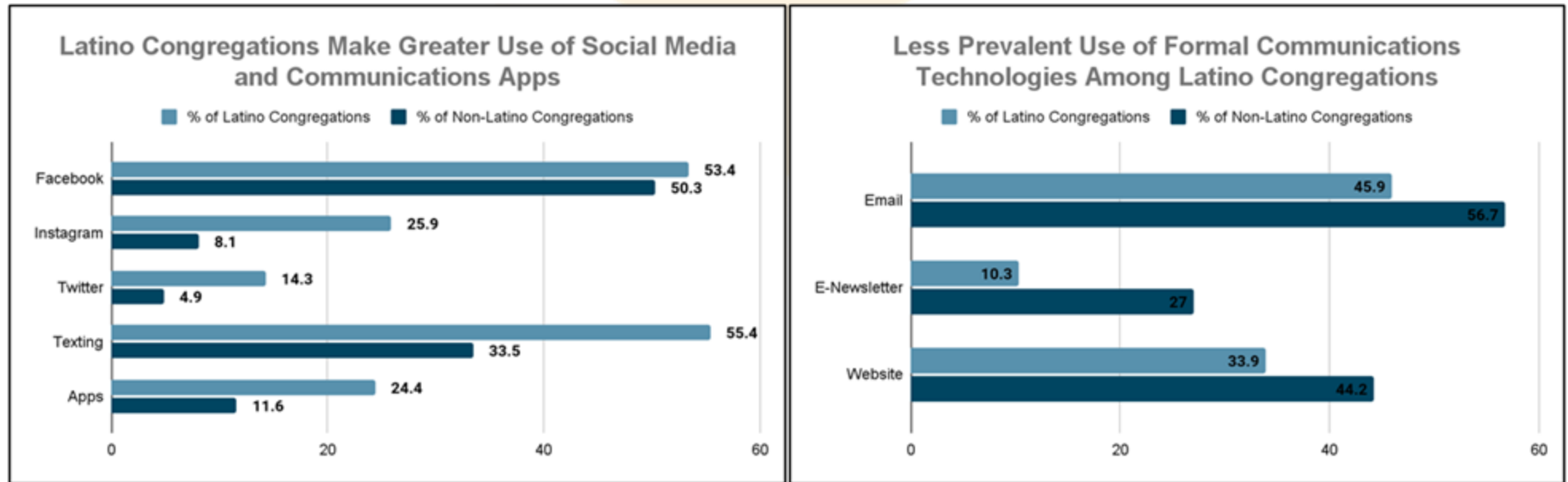


Leadership

Latino Congregational Leaders: Some Notable Facts



Communication and Technology



Latino faith communities rely more heavily than others on *informal* means of technology-based communication (social media, texting, apps) rather than more *formal* means (email, e-newsletters, websites) to foster connections within and beyond their congregations.



EXPLORING THE
PANDEMIC IMPACT
ON CONGREGATIONS



Financial Patterns and Findings

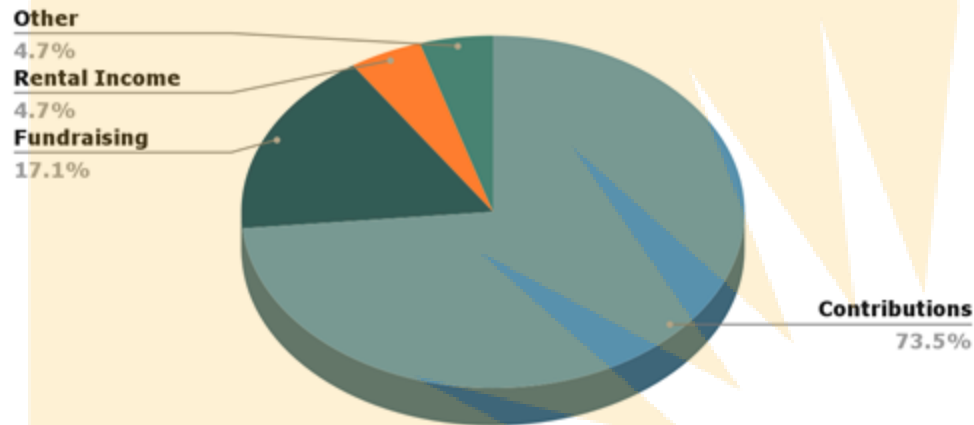
Median Income and Expenses by Size

Median income is \$100,000 (\$20,000 less than the overall median, despite a higher AWA).

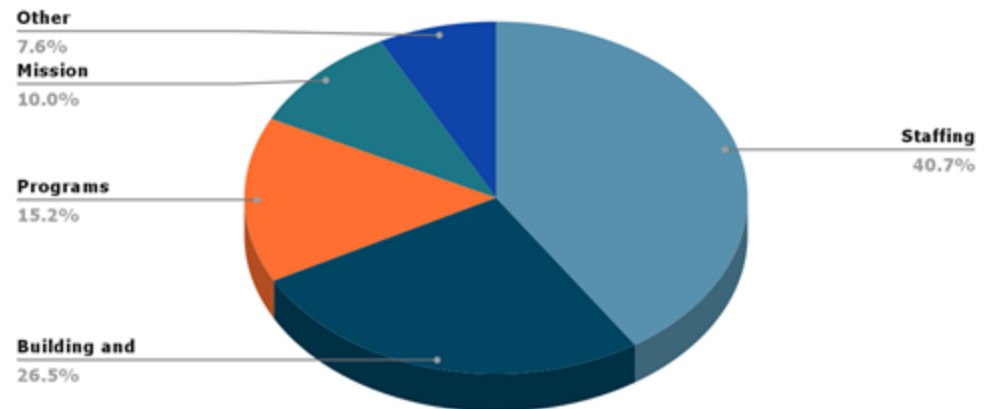
Majority Latino Congregations		
AWA	Median Annual Income	Median Annual Expenses
1-50	\$28,990	\$27,000
51-100	\$100,000	\$100,000
101-250	\$265,090	\$250,000
251-500	\$487,343	\$662,362
501-1800	\$1,548,469	\$1,696,680
1801+	\$3,740,744	NA

Income and Expenses in Detail

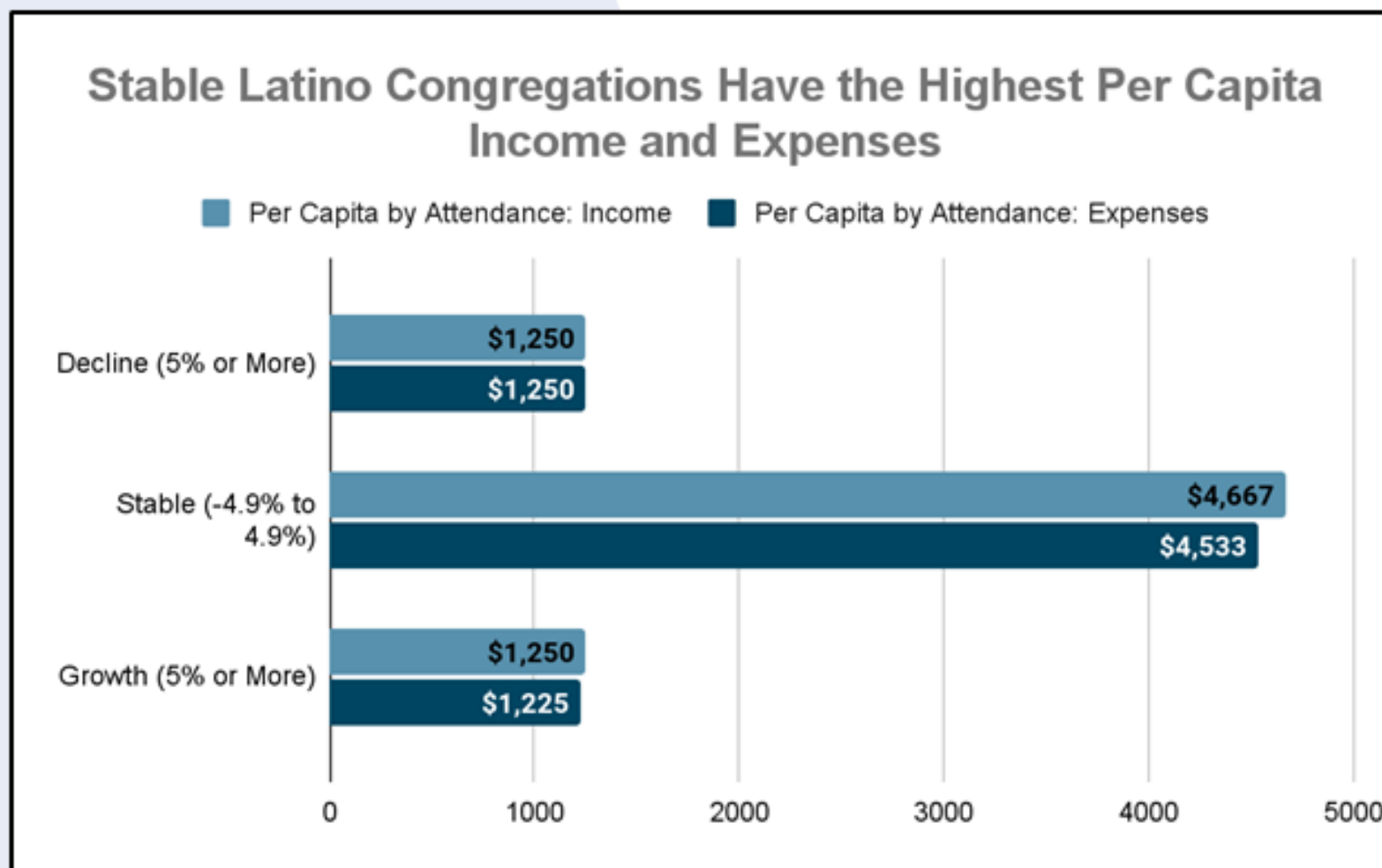
Income in Latino Congregations



Expenses in Latino Congregations



Per Capita by Growth Rate



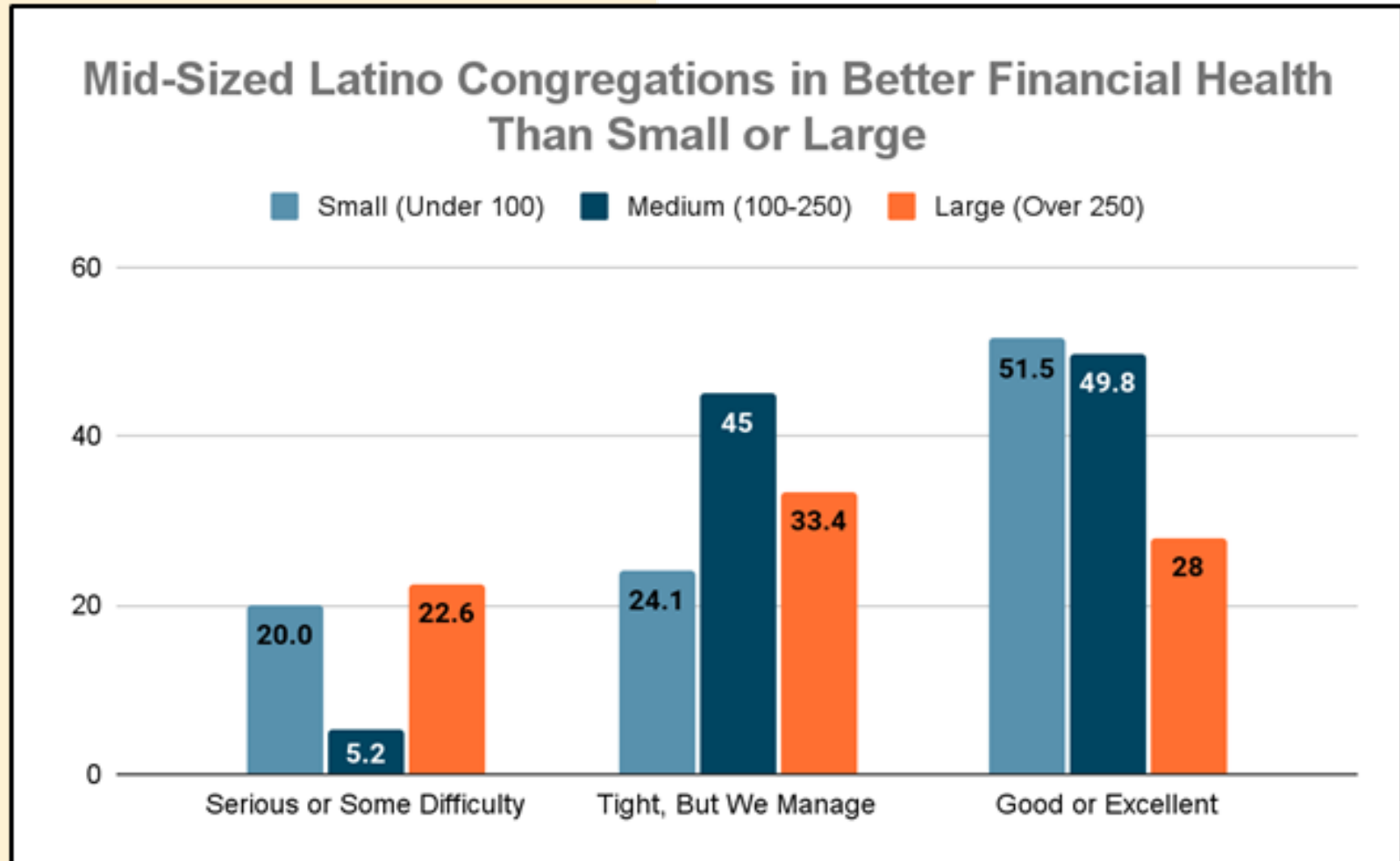
Overall per capita: \$1,250 (compared to \$2,000 for all congregations)

Self-Assessed Financial Health Over Time

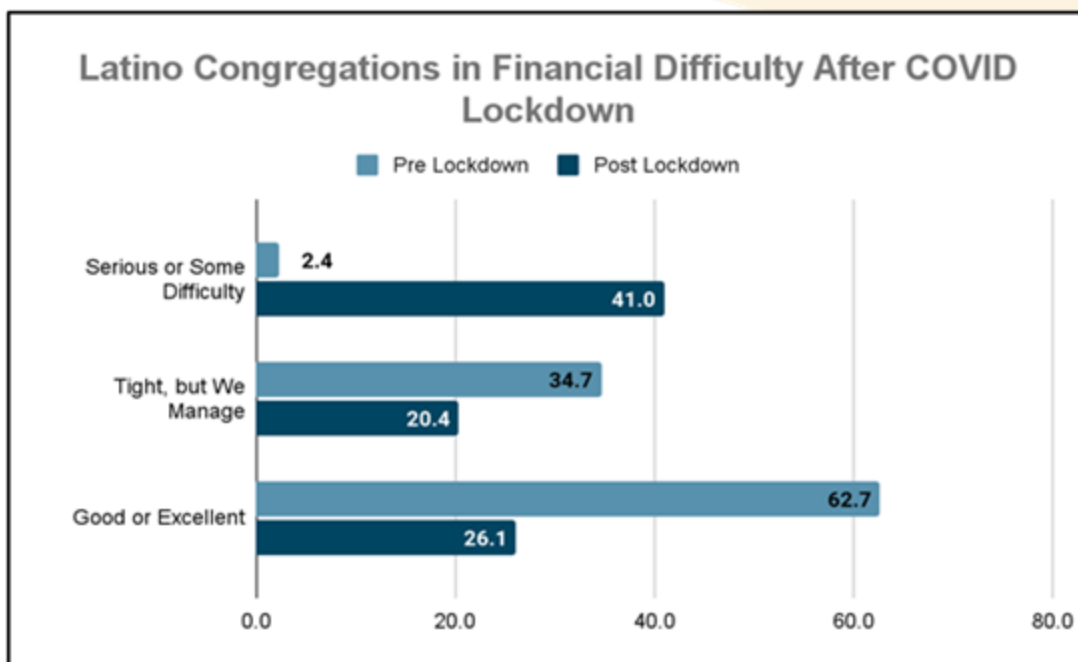
Description	% Today	% Five Years Ago
In Serious Difficulty	4.7	4.4
In Some Difficulty	12.2	19.4
Tight, but We Manage	29.4	44.5
Good	45.7	10.7
Excellent	3.5	14.9
N/A	4.4	6.0

In general, Latino congregations report that their financial health is better today than it was five years ago.

Self-Assessed Financial Health by Size



Financial Health Pre- and Post-COVID Lockdown



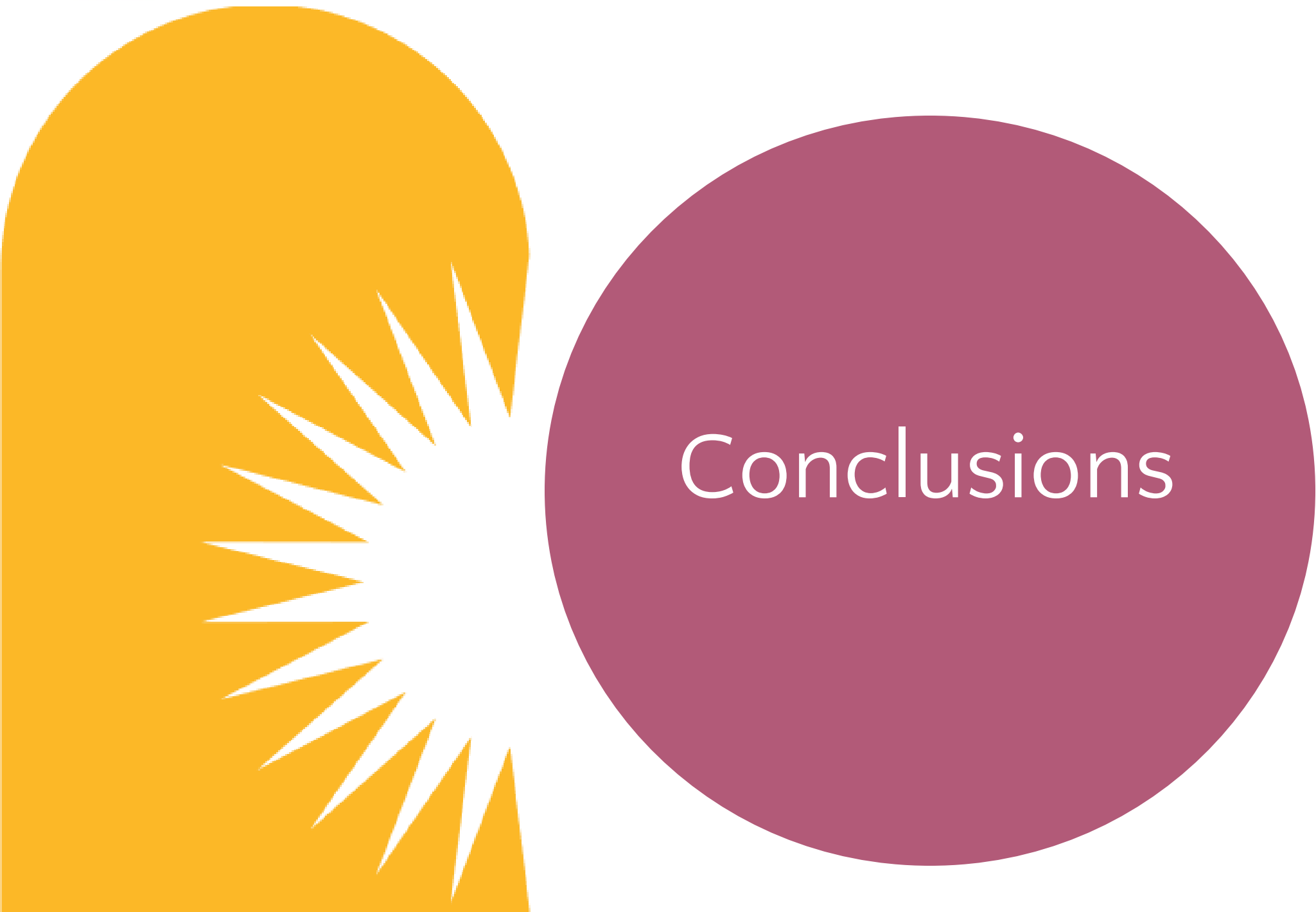
Post lockdown, more Latino congregations reported financial difficulties than pre lockdown.

	% Pre Lockdown	% Post Lockdown
Participants Giving Online	33.0	21.3
Total Monthly Giving Is Online	32.7	11.7

Online giving decreased despite an increase in congregations having an online giving option.



EXPLORING THE
PANDEMIC IMPACT
ON CONGREGATIONS



Conclusions